Urban / rural co-productions

Planning and governance approaches for improving the relationships among city and countryside in Italy and England

LUCA LAZZARINI

Doctoral dissertation in Urban and Regional Development - XXXI Cycle
Polytechnic University of Turin, Italy

In the cover page:
Diego Mayon, Grey Grass

“Grey Grass is a photographic survey on the East of Milan, Italy. The work focuses on the transformation of the countryside during the four years before Expo Milano 2015, and completed in the following year, 2016. Around a thousand hectares of fertile agricultural land were swept away to build two new highways, involving many local farmers and threatening the survival of the lombard agriculture”.
Source: diegomayon.com/grey-grass/



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI
DI TORINO

Doctoral Dissertation
Doctoral Program in Urban & Regional Development (XXXI Cycle)

Urban / rural co-productions

Planning and governance approaches for improving the relationships among city and countryside in Italy and England

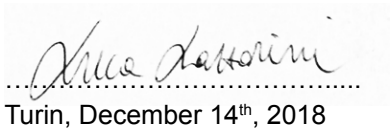
Luca Lazzarini

Supervisors:
Prof. Giuseppe Cinà, DiST/Polytechnic University of Turin, IT
Dr. Matthew Reed, CCRI/University of Gloucestershire, UK, Co-Supervisor

Doctoral Examination Committee:
Prof. Anna Maria Colavitti, Referee, University of Cagliari, IT
Prof. David Fanfani, Referee, University of Florence, IT
Prof. Angela Barbanente, Referee, Polytechnic of Bari, IT
Prof. Gabriel Pascariu, Referee, University “Ion Mincu”, RO
Prof. Umberto Janin Rivolin, Referee, Polytechnic University of Turin, IT

Polytechnic University of Turin
December 2018

I hereby declare that, the contents and organisation of this dissertation constitute my own original work and does not compromise in any way the rights of third parties, including those relating to the security of personal data.



…….....

Turin, December 14th, 2018

Summary

The thesis explores the relationship among local governments' cooperation and planning policies in two domestic contexts, Italy and England. The purpose is to investigate the relational politics, processes and practices of cooperation by which local governments can shape planning policies addressed to improve the contribution of agricultural production in building stronger ties among city and countryside.

The research problematized this topic by looking at the planning actions and interactions, connection and disconnections among local governments in two domestic contexts, Italy and England, and in three cases of contrasting administrative and geographical size and configuration: the metropolitan area of Milan, the Aso Valley in Marche region and the City Region of Bristol.

The thesis adopts a qualitative research methodology, in which the data collection relies mainly on a series of semi-structured interviews, addressed to institutional actors and civil society representatives, and a documentary analysis on reports and official planning documents. A further methodology employed by the research is the scenario-making, which is used for evolving the planning and governance processes of the three case studies towards more effective collaborative arrangements.

In the metropolitan area of Milan, the two forms of cooperation investigated within the space of the South Agricultural Park —the Park Authority and the Rural Districts— although spatially overlapping and sharing a common space of action, they have not established any significant relationship yet and they have been expressing two different planning rationales. While the Park Authority's planning policy has a narrow focus on land-use regulation due to important financial and management constraints, the Rural Districts have shown a high transformative potential which has conveyed a process of critical reconnection between food consumers and producers across the urban/rural continuum.

In the Aso Valley, a number of spaces of cooperation among local governments and civil society, which intersect and overlay, can be recognised. They have constructed a collaborative landscape of variable geometries where local actors have promoted a strategic and forward thinking towards local development. These cooperative geometries have resulted in reformulating the urban/rural dichotomy into a multifunctional and strongly interdependent countryside. Current challenges lie in guiding local governments to construct a consistent and efficient joint planning policy able to express a coherent vision of development for the whole valley.

In the City Region of Bristol, the relevant issues of transparency and accountability raised by the Local Enterprise Partnership —the newly business-led inter-municipal body established in 2011 by central government— come together with a planning policy only addressed to housing and infrastructure demands. The result is that, in the process of delivering new developments, the Plan has discarded the quality of agricultural land and the location of green and blue infrastructures. Hence, it has originated negative impacts

on the agro-ecological resources of the city region and, more importantly, it has overlooked the contribution of the countryside in addressing city region's social and economic growth.

The study offers a contribution on planning research and practice by investigating three different governance and planning approaches to the issue of agricultural production within the urban/rural interface. What the three cases elicit is a delicate tension among city's pressing social and economic needs and countryside's unexploited contribution to more localised patterns of agricultural production.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my two supervisors, Giuseppe Cinà and Matt Reed, for the continuous intellectual and personal support to my work. They have shown patience, confidence and understanding, and they gave me precious feedbacks for shaping the contents and the approach taken by this thesis.
A special mention goes to Liam for believing in what I do, for tolerating the unusual life rhythm of a PhD student and for holding up the many commitments and the travels around Europe without getting too angry.
I am also grateful to Marco Mareggi for the support on what I do and for the harsh, but always fertile, critiques on my research work.
I would like to acknowledge the institution that allowed me to become what I am today, the Inter-university Department of Urban and Regional Studies and Planning (DIST) of the Polytechnic University of Turin. Thanks also to the Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) of University of Gloucestershire (UK) for hosting me as a visiting PhD student and for giving me the opportunity to present my research and get useful hints from a very inspiring audience.
Thanks to all the members of DIST that have supported me during my career with their emotional understanding and esperiential feedbacks, especially Benedetta Giudice, Massimiliano Granceri, Giuditta Soccali, Qi Mu and Merve Demiroz.
These three years have been full of passionate and fruitful encounters and exchanges with researchers, local administrators, public officers from the whole Europe. I would like to thank them all for sharing their knowledge and their perspectives on reality.
Thanks to my friends that have been always there to fill my free time with a lot of fun, in particular Simone Giorgetta, Stefano Crespi, Andrea Pesaresi, Guido Benigni, Minoo Javareshkian, Ambrogio Moretti and Chiara Di Pentima.
Last but not least, I feel my PhD would have not been the same without the group of students and researchers of Laboratorio del Cammino. I am grateful to Cristiana Rossignolo for believing in this crazy project. Serena Marchionni and Daniele Cinciripini are the sources of tireless energy, creativity and sincerity from which I learnt a lot on how to take the best from this world. The two experiences, the ViaSalaria and the Summer School “Sicilia coast to coast”, and the 500 km of distance walked in two years, have been two fundamental steps for me to grow as a researcher.
This work is dedicated to my family that has never stopped to believe in me and in what I do, the strongest support a researcher can get during his or her PhD career.

Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of acronyms

AAS: Strategic Agricultural Areas
AEA: Agro-Environmental Agreement
AONB: Area of Natural Beauty
AQST: Accordo Quadro di Sviluppo Territoriale (Territorial Development Framework Agreement)
BCC: Bristol City Council
BFN: Bristol Food Network
BFPC: Bristol Food Policy Council
CAP: Common Agricultural Policy
CPRE: Campaign to Protect Rural England
CTFS: City Region Food Systems
DAM: Milanese Agricultural District
EAFRD: European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
GI: Green Infrastructure
GLC: Greater London Council
JSP: Joint Spatial Plan
JTEC: Joint Transport Executive Committee
IEB: Incredible Edible Bristol
IMC: Inter-Municipal Cooperation
LAG: Local Action Group
LEP: Local Enterprise Partnership
NHS: National Health Service
NPPF: National Planning Policy Framework
OECD: Organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development
PASM: Milan South Agricultural Park
PGT: Piano di Governo del Territorio (Local Plan)
PHCC: Planning, Housing and Communities Committee
PI: Principal Investigator
PIT: Territorial Framework Plan
PPAR: Regional Landscape Environmental Plan
PRG: Piano Regolatore Generale (Local Plan)
PTC: Territorial Coordination Plan
PTCP: Provincial Territorial Coordination Plan
PTR: Regional Territorial Plan
PUB: Urban Belt Plan
RDA: Regional Development Agency
RDP: Rural Development Plan
REM: Ecological Network of Marche
RER: Regional Ecological Network
RPG: Regional Planning Guidance
RTPI: Royal Town Planning Institute
RSS: Regional Spatial Strategy
SADMP: Sites Allocation and Development Management Policies
SDL: Strategic Development Locations

TDR: Transfer of Development Rights
TES: Territorial Ecosystem Setting
WECA: West of England Combined Authority
WoE: West of England

«Tutti questi studi tendono ad integrare la campagna alla città.
Essi quindi devono condurre a un'urbanizzazione della campagna.
Se le forze attive, che sono ora concentrate nelle città,
fossero suddivise in modo uniforme,
esse potrebbero estendersi all'intero paese;
città e campagna si avvicinerebbero l'una all'altra
influenzandosi reciprocamente in modo positivo
dal punto di vista culturale, materiale e spirituale.
Si ristabilirebbero ovunque sane condizioni di vita.
I vantaggi della vita cittadina si aggiungerebbero
a quelli della vita della campagna,
e i reciproci svantaggi sparirebbero».

«All these studies tend to integrate the countryside to the city.
They must therefore lead to urbanise the countryside.
If the active forces, which are now concentrated in cities,
were uniformly distributed,
they could extend themselves to the whole country;
city and countryside would get closer
mutually and positevely influencing each other
from the cultural, material and spiritual point of view.
Healthy living conditions would be restored everywhere.
The advantages of city life would be added
to those of the countryside life,
and the mutual disadvantages would disappear».

Ludwig Hilberseimer, 1967

Introduction

There is a wide acknowledgment today both in institutional and research environments that planning the development of cities and regions has never been so complex and uncertain due to the social, environmental and economic forces that shape and influence urban and territorial transformations. While the world population is turning to be more urban than ever, the density of social and economic problems increases in cities, and this results in enlarging the gap among rich and poor people, and among qualified and untrained workers. Cities and metropolitan areas have been expanding at fast rhythms, often without proper planning and management rules. At the same time, the interdependency among rural and urban areas has increased significantly, due to the massive movements of people, resources and knowledge that link together cities and countryside.

In the Global South, the rhythm and intensity of these processes are such that governments meet difficulties to tackle their negative impacts. Here, the last decades have seen a dramatic increase of poverty, malnutrition and environmental degradation, dynamics that become more visible at the peripheries of settlements (Marshall *et al.*, 2009). At the same time, climate change disasters periodically shed light on the vulnerability of territories and on the urgency to implement effective policies and actions oriented to increase their level of resilience.

In the Global North, the consequences of the financial and economic crisis have deeply altered the political, social and economic order of cities, and have transformed the role of institutions in promoting processes of transformation. The social and territorial cohesion, the inclusiveness and openness of decisional arenas, but also the efficiency of coordination among a set of private, semi-private and public investments are some of the current challenges met by local governments in the construction of decision making processes. At the same time, new political narratives are deeply transforming the relationship among local, central and transnational institutions, according to what seems to be a new role of Nation States in international arenas.

Alongside these trends, a growing concern on the urgency to address the issue of sustainability and to tackle the alarming climate crisis has emerged, often pushed by the tremendous impacts of increasingly frequent natural disasters.

Having significant relationships with issues of poverty and health, food has become one of the major challenges for contemporary urbanization processes both in the North and Global South. Its importance relates to the impacts on a host of other sectors —such as public health, social justice, energy, water, land and transport— (Morgan, 2009) together with the direct contribution on citizens' quality of life. Alongside the rapid transformations that urban and rural communities have been experiencing in the last decade, there is a growing awareness that the construction of spatial policies oriented to reinforce urban/rural linkages can be an effective way to achieve the transition towards more sustainable food systems (Renting & Florin, 2015).

Stronger relations of proximity among food producers and consumers, lower carbon emissions due to shorter food chains, higher levels of food security, the opportunity to tackle more effectively land-related conflicts, but also more livable urban peripheries, are some of the benefits that a better consideration of the productive and landscape contribution of agricultural areas can have for the sustainability of cities and territories.

Spatial planning allows to tackle a number of issues and challenges already mentioned due to its crucial role in regulating the use, guiding the productivity of agricultural land and in shaping the functional relations among urban and rural areas. While the contribution of planning for the development of agricultural areas has been broadly overlooked at least until the end of 1950s, especially in Italy (see section 3.3.1.), today it is widely acknowledged in the debate that planning can have an important role in protecting and developing the productive potentials of the countryside to feed the city (Morgan, 2009) and in improving the livability of urban population.

A consideration of agriculture in spatial planning presupposes a reflection on the institutional dimension of territories, on what Calafati (2009) interprets as the relationship among territorial and institutional facts. As part of the rural hinterland which surrounds a number of urban cores, agricultural areas are often subdivided among a number of municipal jurisdictions. Thus, investigating how to improve the role of farmland in a perspective of urban/rural relationships means to increase the understanding on why and how local governments cooperate in planning for sustaining the contribution of farmland to achieve more localised food systems.

The thesis has the following research questions:

Why and how local governments cooperate for protecting agricultural areas and for developing their contribution to shape stronger functional urban/rural ties?
What are the governance and planning approaches through which local governments can build more localised food production systems?
How the policies and practices of building cooperation happen in different geographical, administrative and planning frameworks and what are the related policy implications for agricultural areas?

The objective of this research is to investigate the relational politics, processes and practices of cooperation by which local governments can shape planning policies addressed to improve the contribution of agricultural land in constructing stronger ties among city and countryside. By placing the emphasis on public sector-led cooperation, the aim is to frame local government as the key —but not the only— actor in the process. Nevertheless, this does not mean to underestimate the role that civil society organisations can play in shaping and influencing public decisions. As it will be demonstrated in section 5.4.3., sometimes civil society can have a major role in constructing innovative planning spaces that challenge statutory and regulative models and innovatively promote the multifunctional nature of the countryside. This is the reason way I decided to define these cooperative processes “Urban/rural co-productions”. Here I take as a reference the recent work by Albrechts (2012) in which the author underlines a transition that in the

last decade the concept of co-production, originally coined by Ostrom (1997), has experienced. From expressing a process in which citizens are actively involved in producing a good or service (Ibid.), co-production started to be interpreted as a "political strategy", as a way to challenge the "fundamental political issues through its implication for the distribution of power between citizens and state" (Albrechts, 2012: 53). The original contribution of Albrechts lies in having explored the notion of co-production as an immanent characteristic of strategic spatial planning, following the idea that it can significantly influence the ways in which "actors select issues [...], define problems, challenges, opportunities, practices; interact with the dynamics and tensions of a place and a situation; and shape actions (plans, policies, projects) as a result" (Ibid.: 52). Accordingly, through the use I make of the term co-production, I would like to highlight the crucial role that non-statutory and civil society organisations have in affirming innovative and alternative ways to frame agricultural areas in a perspective of urban/rural relationships.

The thesis focuses on two domestic contexts of the Global North, Italy and England, and investigates three case-studies, the metropolitan area of Milan and the Aso Valley in Italy, and the City Region of Bristol in England. They have been chosen on the basis of the opportunity to investigate different geographical and administrative configurations of local governments' cooperation[1] across the urban/rural interface.

To begin with, I present a brief analysis of the theoretical foundations of the thesis. Emphasis is placed on Habermas and Giddens' thoughts and their translation into the communicative or collaborative planning theory (Healey, 2006; Innes, 2013). They are interpreted as fertile tools for making sense of what I observed and developed through the case-study investigation. I am also convinced that they are useful for understanding the role that planners have in contributing to shape the interaction among institutions and civil society in the urban/rural interface and the ways in which political communities cooperate in institutional and civil society arenas.

Theoretical foundations

The thesis lies its theoretical foundation on two strands of the social theory, the *communicative approach*, mainly based on Jürgen Habermas' thought,

1 In this thesis, local governments' cooperation is a term I use as a synonym of Inter-Municipal Cooperation (IMC). This because IMC is mainly used in the political science debate for defining forms of cooperation among local governments that, despite characterised by different degrees of formality and stability, are often the product of a coalition of (only) institutional actors. Moreover, IMC is a term being commonly used mostly by the literature focusing on Southern and Central European contexts where the forms of local governments' cooperation have a high statutory definition, a solid policy framework and where local governments themselves have a stronger historical-political identity and financial autonomy than in Northern Europe (see section 1.1.2. & 1.1.4.). Given the fact that in this thesis I focus on a Northern European context such as England, I prefer to use the term local governments' cooperation which is more general and less specific from the disciplinary point of view. Hence, I use the term IMC just when I directly refer to the contents of the debate on inter-municipal cooperation in political science, as I do mainly in Chapter One.

and the *theory of structuration* by Anthony Giddens. Giddens and Habermas' formulations start from a common critique of the intellectual hegemony of modernity in Western thought. This critique claims that the application of scientific inquiry and technological innovation, despite having improved the material circumstances of everyone's lives, has been translated into "governance institutions which have generated new bastions of power and new ways in which people are made unequal" (Healey, 2006: 39).

It is only during the 1980s that a stronger awareness of the specificities and diversities of communities, together with a greater attention on local embeddedness and cultural rootedness of social relations, originated alternative theoretical routes (Healey, 2006: 40-41). The post-modern turn draws on the assumption that "individuals are not isolated from each other, but live in complex webs of relations, through which cultural resources, ways of thinking, organizing and conducting life, are developed, maintained, transformed and reproduced" (Healey, 2006: 44). Doreen Massey (2005) was among the intellectuals that more insightfully described the transformation of the nature of space within and after modernity. She pointed out that what has changed after modernity is not the spatial form but the relational content of this spatial form and, in particular, the nature of the embedded power-relations (Massey, 2005: 93).

Drawing on Marxist critical analysis and on Wittgenstein's hermeneutic understanding on language, the philosopher Jürgen Habermas (1984) focused on the contents of the communicative action. Through his research, Habermas aimed at reconstructing the public realm through an open and public debate. The author also underlined that the consciousness of people is socially constructed, and through interaction, persons can develop ideas of responsiveness towards others (Healey, 2006: 50). According to Healey (Ibid.), Habermas' most relevant contribution lies in providing the criteria for a democratic reasoning process based on communicative practices.

Planning theory has been deeply influenced by Habermas' communicative approach (Fainstein, 2000; Healey, 2006; Bianchetti, 2016). Following this view, planners have a role in forging the ways in which political communities communicate and interact in public arenas. The ideas of reciprocity and collaboration are inherent in planners' communicative effort (Healey, 2006: 53). Susan Fainstein (2000) noticed that, in the communicative planning theory, "rather than providing technocratic leadership, the planner is an experiential learner, at most providing information to participants, but primarily being sensitive to points of convergence".

Sociologist Anthony Giddens draws mainly on Marxist and Weberian traditions of sociology and offers a social theory built on the concept of structuration (Giddens, 1984). Every individual is born into social relations that are "structured" by "pasts", which are closely interwoven with local histories and geographies. Giddens states that we are culturally made and socially constructed as much as we are makers of cultures and social structures (Ibid.). As highlighted by Healey, Giddens theory is at the heart of the institutional conception of social life because individuals are active agents that "live in multiple relational webs, each with their own cultures that is, modes of thought and systems of meaning and valuing" (Healey, 2006: 47). When looking at the meaning of Giddens' theory for planning practice,

planning regulation can be considered a structure and planners are daily involved in making choices whether to follow the rules or transform them, according to a reflexive attitude. In other words, “local planning activity becomes an effort in shaping or framing the webs of relations through which people give value and take actions” with respect to the space in which they live (Ibid.: 49).

By using Giddens and Habermas theories, Patsy Healey developed at the end of the 1990s a planning approach which focuses on the process of building relations among people during their daily lives. The idea of Collaborative Planning is based upon the density of relational webs and on the nodes that these relational webs are creating, that is to say “the arenas where systems of meaning, ways of acting and ways of valuing are learned, transmitted and sometimes transformed” (Healey, 2006:57). Nodes can be households, firms but also public organisations; the places where a policy discourse originates. As Healey pointed out, nodes and networks are closely intertwined with the idea of governance because “governance processes themselves generate [and transform] relational networks” (Ibid: 59). This view focuses on how dynamics of social change can actively construct through governance processes policy agendas, and contribute to shape new projects or policies. Within this approach, planning becomes an activity oriented to construct new systems of meanings. It has a role in “building up the institutional capacity of a place”. As a consequence, rather than being concerned with a specific end-state, the collaborative planner does focus on guiding the process by which participants can arrive to an agreement on an objective which expresses their mutual interests (Fainstein, 2000).

Despite the elements of innovation and the wide diffusion in the debate (Albrechts, 2012; Watson, 2014), the communicative / collaborative planning approach has few theoretical weaknesses, limits that were widely investigated by Susan Fainstein in two very insightful works (2000; 2010). According to Fainsten, the main limit is the gap between rhetoric and action, “Communicative planners have found a subject but they lack an object”, because they place the spotlight just on the process, without investigating “what is to be done about cities and regions” (Fainstein, 2000). By reformulating this limit into a “Process vs. outcome” critique, Judith Innes (2013: 21-22) recently underlined that “stakeholders engage in a process because they care about the outcome” and she added that “planners do not normally opine about desirable places, they do study processes that have consequences for places”. Starting from the same assumptions, Gabellini explored the role of planning as a practice characterised by a dialogic approach according to which actors, by interacting, shape new plans or policies. This vision is framed by a critical interpretation of interaction since it is based on the involvement of actors that communicate in different ways and with different time lags and on the recognition of the language as a knowledge producer (Gabellini, 2010: 81).

Here four brief clarifications are needed, in no particular order:

The first is that the thesis has a more critical understanding of the “object” mentioned by Susan Fainstein that communicative planners should aim at, which in this work is the achievement of more localised patterns of agricultural production and the improvement of the contribution of agricultural areas to

shape more sustainable functional relationships among city and countryside (Allen, 2003; Gallent et al., 2006; Gant et al., 2011).

The second is that this work frames in a more sophisticated way the notion of conflict recalled by communicative planners. “Collaboration is about conflict” claimed Innes (2013:14) answering to the critics that accused communicative planners of assuming collaboration as the opposite of conflict. Here I look at the potentials of conflicts, as dynamics that can drive collaborative processes, as chances through which groups of stakeholders can gain new insights, construct new governance possibilities and move forward in achieving agreements (Gabellini, 2010; see also what I argue in section 7.5.1. for the case of Bristol). Moreover, I look at the possibility that “practices of co-production [would] enter into conflict with political regimes” and at the opportunity for planners “to work in the face of conflicts” (Albrechts, 2012: 55). As the case studies will underline, conflicts are often characterising not just the interaction among the statutory and civil society forms of cooperation (see section 4.5.1. and 7.5.1.) but also the ways in which one group can access or influence the policy arena of the other (see section 7.5.2.).

The third clarification is that, for interpreting the data collected by the research, I had to look beyond the communicative planning theory towards other theoretical strands. Thus, even if I interpret the collaborative planning theory as a relevant theoretical foundation of this thesis, the research does not frame it as the only approach to understand the empirical findings. Other approaches from political science, geography and planning have been employed to guide the interpretation of the results gained from the case-study analysis (see sections 4.5., 5.5. & 7.5.).

Finally, as it will be further explained in section 1.2.5., the influence that collaborative planning had in some geographical contexts has sometimes produced what I think are some distortions, more or less evident, of the original interpretation made by communicative and collaborative planning theorists (Healey, 2006; Innes, 2013). An example is the model of Regional Cooperative Planning (“Pianificazione Regionale Cooperativa”) recently depicted by few Italian scholars (Lingua & De Luca, 2012). The problem here lies in what I think is a scarce consideration of the inherent disconnections that the local plan itself presents —at least in its Italian normative declination—in terms of temporal and spatial coherences, openness of the interests represented and flexibility of the transformative action (Palermo, 2004. On this topic, see also: Bianchetti, 2011).

Research motivations, goals and methodology

The choice to work on local governments’ cooperation has three main motivations. The first motivation relates to the need to gain a better understanding of the crucial transformations that local governments have been experiencing in the last decade (Teles, 2016; Hulst et al., 2007; Swianiewicz, 2011). Surely, the increasing horizontal interactions among local governments is one of the more relevant manifestation of this transformation, which is the result of the intersection among multiple forces and trends and it depends on social, economic and institutional factors.

If one looks at the trends having an impact on the transformation of the local state, a process of decentralization of functions and responsibilities which have been gradually transferred from central to local governments emerges (VNG, 2010: 6-9). With regard to the impacts of this trend, some researchers have described the ways in which the administrative landscape is experiencing a process of "municipalization", which has resulted in increasing in the power of local administrators and communities in managing cities and territories (Ciapetti, 2014). Others have shed light on their immobilization because of the austerity cuts and the reduction of State transfers, which have jeopardized the financial autonomy of municipalities, often in a deficit status (Tubertini, 2015). As a consequence of these changes, the recent decade has seen an increase of the cooperative arrangements among local governments in the management and implementation of services, facilities and projects, a phenomenon which is evident in Italy as well in other European Countries (see section 1.1.4.). A second trend can be expressed in what Teles (2016: 4) mentioned as the "changes in the nature of the relationship among government and governance". Teles argues that this transition is bringing about the development of "soft boundaries between territories and fuzzy delimitation of competencies amongst agents, where previously bureaucratic clear-cut boundaries were in place" (Ibid: 5). Although many researchers have used the soft paradigm to explain the changes in territorial governance (see section 1.2.1.), what is relevant here is that the evolution of governance has resulted in the production of more horizontal forms of interactions among local governments and civil society. This process also led to multiplying the border crossing effects emerging from the end of state monopoly over public policy and the new role of private and voluntary sectors in decision making processes (Teles, 2016: 9). Another relevant factor to consider when talking about the transformations experienced by local governments is the democratic deficits that often characterise inter-municipal arrangements; what it is widely acknowledged as the problems of accountability (Teles & Swianiewicz, 2018; Teles, 2016; Tallon, 2013), an aspect that I will investigate especially in section 7.4.2.

The second motivation refers to the scarce attention that the research agenda has given to the topic of local governments' cooperation, despite being a widespread institutional phenomenon in a number of European domestic contexts (Teles & Swianiewicz, 2018). The few researches dealing with this topic have investigated, on one hand, the joint management and implementation of public service delivery (Wollmann, 2016) and, on the other, the set of administrative architectures and planning policies that should frame them (De Luca, 2016; Lingua, 2014), also by producing some fertile comparative studies (Hulst et al., 2007; Swianiewicz, 2011). The reasons behind the lack of a coherent body of research on local governments' cooperation are multiple. First, the diversity and the complexity of the phenomenon. Comparative analyses are not easy since, as I already mentioned, the phenomenon is rooted in different institutional, economic and cultural traditions, some of which differ a lot from country to country. Teles (2016:7) highlights that these differences discourage a broader and comprehensive analysis on local governments' cooperation, which could run the risk of appearing chaotic and contradictory.

The third research motivation relates to the need to investigate the consequences of the administrative and institutional changes mentioned before, in two domestic contexts, Italy and England, recently subjected to significant territorial reforms which have also impacted the planning system. Italy, for example, has seen an important administrative and territorial reorganisation which has had important consequences in territorial planning and management (see section 3.1.). The introduction in 2014 of Law no. 56 (the so called "Delrio Law") carried out a deep reorganization of the sub-regional scale of government. Provinces were transformed into non-elected bodies and rearranged in some of their functions. A new tier, the Metropolitan Cities, was created and it replaced the Provinces in 14 major cities. According to some researchers (Fedeli, 2016; Ciapetti, 2014), the limit of the law is that, despite the new planning competencies on strategic planning, Metropolitan Cities started to be seen as successors of the previous Provinces, rather than new institutions. This because "they inherited a number of problematic issues such as critical budgetary conditions and a fragile political role" (Fedeli, 2016) which have had an important impact on their capacity to construct effective planning policies at sub-regional level (Colavitti & Pes, 2017). What occurred in England in the last ten years is analogous in terms of the transformation of the relationship among central and local governments. In 2011 the Coalition Government approved the Localism Act, interpreted as a pivotal step which deeply changed the architecture of governance and the trajectories of territorial planning. Regional planning was abolished, and a new sub-regional tier was created, the Local Enterprise Partnership, a business-led inter-municipal space of cooperation endowed with significant competencies in strategic and spatial planning at City Region level (see section 6.1.).

The research investigates planning processes resulting from cooperative arrangements among local governments that aim at safeguarding or developing the contribution of agricultural areas for constructing more sustainable food systems.

The notion of cooperative planning is often the product of the narrative of working across municipal borders for addressing cross-boundary issues. As I will deepen in section 7.5.2., in some plans and policies, reasoning across borders means to address Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMAs) (Curtice, 2017; WoE, 2017). FEMAs are single geographical units characterised by high levels of functional containment. They match with a combination of different factors such as the commuting geography of travel-to-work areas, the employment markets, the relationships among workforce jobs and resident labour force (Central Bedforshire, 2017). At the basis of this notion, there is the idea to work on the spatial interdependencies originated across a group of municipalities, hence on the density and intensity of functional relationships among different urban and rural centres. Functional relationships depend on the ways in which the physical environment is utilized and the production, consumption and communication patterns are arranged (Bengs & Schmidt-Tomé, 2006: 16). As already addressed by some recent research works, the connotation of functional relationships is two-fold (Calafati, 2009; Bengs & Schmidt-Tomé, 2006). On the one hand, they have a territorial dimension, since they deal with and are influenced by the spatial

configuration of territory, hence from the ways in which the location of natural resources, settlement patterns and infrastructures appears. On the other hand, they have an institutional dimension because they concern the ways in which institutional processes take place and administrative structures are arranged in a territory. These two aspects are obviously closely intertwined.

Rodrìguez-Pose (2008) frames the issue of functional relationships among different local authorities by adopting a city-region approach and by highlighting the policy implications unfolded by the interaction among an urban core and its rural hinterland. By taking this approach, Dansero et al. (2017) pointed out that one of the current challenges of the city region model lies in understanding how agricultural areas can contribute to shape the relational spaces of food and how consumption and production patterns interact and overlap in what it is increasingly interpreted as a geographically "fluid" space.

Taking Rodrìguez-Pose (2008) & Dansero et al. (2017) as references, this thesis aims at investigating the governance and planning approaches that can support and convey better functional relationships among urban and rural areas by focusing on the contribution of agricultural areas to create more localised food systems within inter-municipal contexts.

The research problematized this by looking at the planning actions and interactions, connection and disconnections among local governments (Marsden & Franklin, 2015) in two domestic contexts, Italy and England, and in three cases of contrasting size and configuration: the metropolitan area of Milan, the Aso Valley and the City Region of Bristol. The thesis adopts a case-study research strategy since it has the purpose to understand how contextual conditions influence and determine the investigated phenomenon (Yin, 2003: 13). It employs a qualitative research methodology, in which the data collection mainly relies on a series of semi-structured interviews. Other data collection methods have been a literature review, especially in planning and political science fields, and a documentary analysis on reports and official planning documents. The interviews were addressed to institutional actors primarily involved in local governments' cooperation, and to civil society representatives with an interest towards the objectives or the process of cooperation.

Another methodology employed by the research is the scenario-making. Unlike the other methodologies that were used to collect the empirical data, the scenario has been used to build a project for improving the governance arrangements of the three case studies and for transforming the related planning policies. Thus, through the application of the scenario method, the case-study strategy has gained a crucial design dimension, according to the idea that the empirical data can sustain a change in the three geographical and administrative contexts.

The construction of the case-study strategy has been framed by a specific relationship among myself and the phenomena observed which most of the times I have been aware of. My positionality as an outsider with regard to the processes investigated has framed and influenced my understanding of the research topic, the construction of the interview sessions and, more importantly, the interpretation of the data collected during the field work. Despite being outside the phenomena investigated, I have established a

relation of reciprocal knowledge exchange with the interviewees, since I have learnt a lot while collecting data through interviews. In other words, I am aware of the reflexive process on what was being studied and, simultaneously, of how the research process has affected myself (see section 8.3.) (Probst & Berenson, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

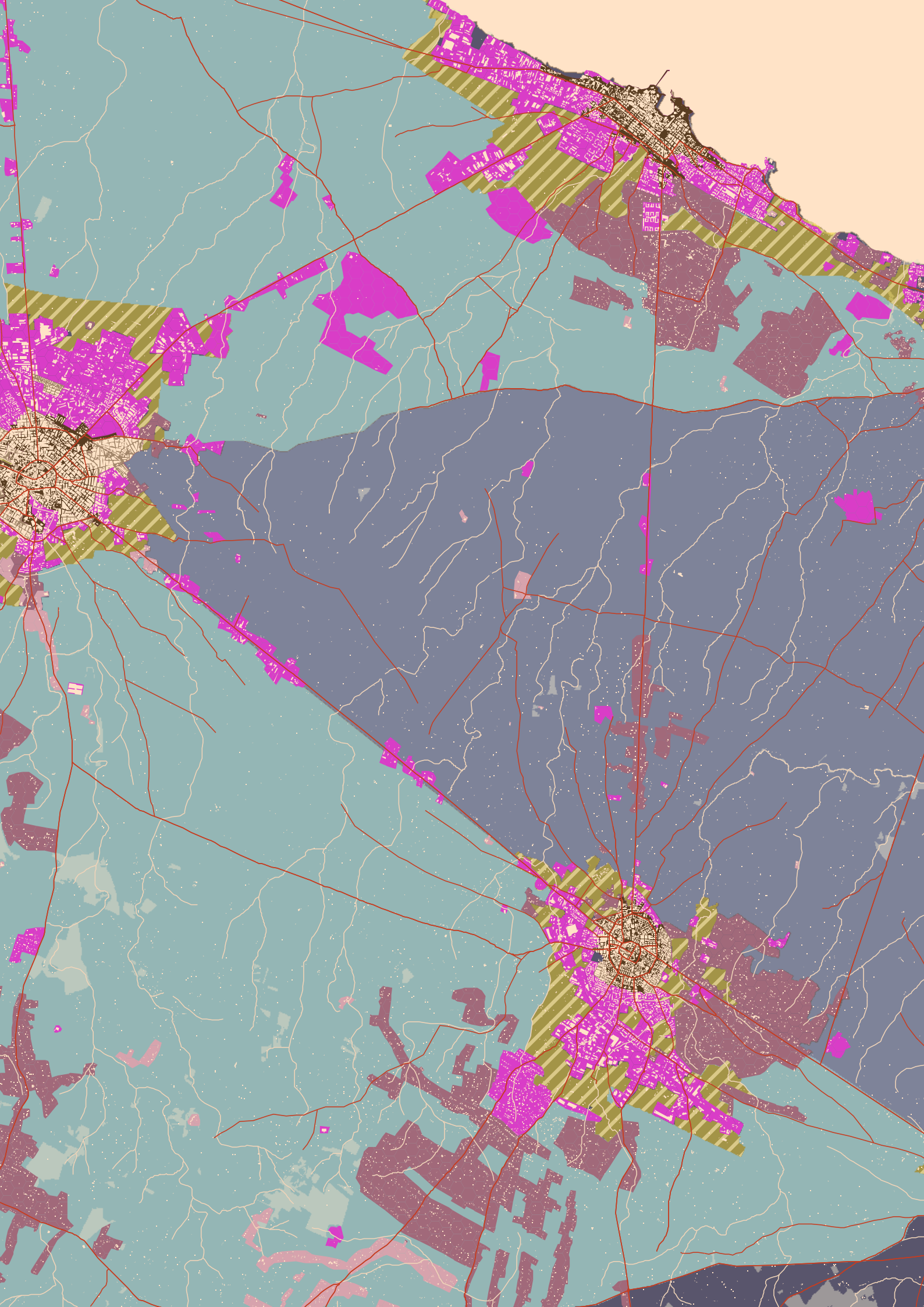
The structure of thesis

The thesis is organized into 8 chapters, which are included in 3 parts. Each part is dedicated to answer to a specific purpose of the research.

The Part 1 "Theories and Approaches" is dedicated to theoretically frame the topic of the thesis. Chapter 1 investigates the theme of local governments' cooperation by referring to the recent institutional and administrative trends that have involved the transformation of the local state in Europe. Chapter 2 deepens the topic of local governments' cooperation within the planning field. It presents planning approaches which acknowledge the contribution of agricultural areas in shaping better functional relationships among cities and countryside.

Part 2 "Policies and Discourses" includes the empirical part of the research and it analyses the three case studies. Chapter 3 and 6 briefly present the domestic contexts where the case studies are placed, Italy and England. Their purpose is to draw a background of national institutional dynamics for providing a better understanding of the local governance and planning processes investigated in the case studies' chapters. Chapter 4 analyses the case of the Milan South Agricultural Park in Northern Italy. Chapter 5 focuses on the case of the Aso Valley in Marche, in Central Italy. Chapter 7 investigates the case of Bristol City Region, in the South West of England.

Part 3 "Trajectories and Scenarios" draws the conclusions of the research. Chapter 8 includes few assumptions which are common evidences from the three case studies. By applying the scenario-making approach to the case-study research (see sections 8.2.1., 8.2.2. & 8.2.3.), it also draws a reflection on the possible improvements to the investigated governance and planning processes. It ends with a section which elicits author's learning process and another one which includes few possible follow-ups.



PART 1
Theories and approaches

In the previous page:
City-Countryside Pact, Territorial Plan of Apulia Region
Source: Regione Puglia, 2015b.

Chapter 1
Genesis, profiles and trajectories of local governments' cooperation

In his book "The Evolution of Cooperation", Robert Axelrold (1984) highlights that the problem of cooperation lies in guiding people to understand that good outcomes depend more from mutual cooperation than from mutual defection. By identifying the factors according to which mutual cooperation can be promoted, the author states that one possibility is to "enlarge the shadow of the future", thus to let people understand that future is more important relative to the present. According to Axelrold, the importance of this lies in ensuring that the interaction among players is durable but also frequent, since the frequency of interactions helps to promote stable cooperation. The work by Axelrold has the merit of having increased the knowledge about the foundations of cooperation: "[it] is not really trust but the durability of the relationship [...] whether the players trust each other or not is less important in the long run than whether the conditions are ripe for them to build a stable pattern of cooperation with each other" (Axelrold, 1984: 182).

Also Richard Sennett has engaged in the topic of cooperation in a recent book published in 2013. His purpose is to investigate the skills that people need to sustain everyday life. In Sennett's view, studying cooperation means to focus on "the responsiveness to others and on the practical implications of responsiveness at work or in the community". He addresses the problem of "how people shape personal effort, social relations and the physical environment" (Sennett, 2013: IX-X). While Axelrold is more concerned in studying how cooperation can emerge among people without the presence of a central authority, Sennett's point of departure is the materiality of the craftsmanship: by investigating the conditions through which a social asset intersects with practical work, he frames cooperation as "[the thing that] oils machinery of getting things done" (Ibid.). At the roots of his interpretation of cooperation, there is the ancient version of the workshop as the most important institution anchoring civil life, spawning an idea of justice and enjoying a condition of political autonomy, a real "model for a sustained cooperation" (Sennett, 2013: 56).

Despite their different points of departure, Sennett and Axelrold's thoughts intersect when they write about territoriality. Since the idea of territory is framed by processes of exchange and by a delicate balance among competition and cooperation, the result is that territoriality strongly influences the effectiveness of cooperation. While in Axelrold the territoriality conveys a delicate tension among natives and newcomers in the ways in which they differently practice reciprocity, Sennett defines it as a "fragile balance" that differentiates exchange, a process that happens within or across constantly shifting edges (Sennett, 2013: 79).

Starting from the idea to reason upon notions of reciprocity and territoriality, this chapter intends to focus on the relational politics, processes and practices

of building cooperation in the local state. Thus, the focus is on investigating genesis and profiles of cooperation among local governments and to describe the processes that influence and foster local cooperative processes.

1.1. Current trends and challenges of local governments

1.1.1. Devolution and rescaling processes in a period of austerity

In a number of European Countries, the mid-1970s were the period during which the first onsets of economic decline started to emerge. According to Shaw & Tewdwr-Jones (2016), this has produced not only the legitimization of an austerity agenda but, more importantly, the incorporation of the local state into "high politics". Local governments started to go beyond the mere local service delivery such as schools, roads maintenance and trash collection. They gradually began to play a crucial role in innovating policies, modernizing public services and in shaping social and economic restructuring. In other words, local governments started to be actively involved in the construction of local development strategies (Bobbio, 2005). As pointed out by Tallon (2013) this process has contributed to reformulate the relationships among local authority (seen as the main provider of services) and the citizen (as the user of these services), in what has been defined as a transition between Managerial to Entrepreneurial mode of governance experienced by western cities within the last twenty years.

In some countries like United Kingdom, this process happened in the substantial absence of an intermediate and effective tier of governance between the center and the local (Ibid.). As a consequence, deep problems of policy integration and delivery at the regional and sub-regional scale emerged (within the so called "missing middle", Shaw & Tewdwr-Jones, 2016). In other countries like Italy, recent territorial reforms do not seem to have decreased the distance among local institutions and current territorial problems, which made even more urgent the need to address the governance of increasingly differentiated and structurally more complex urban regions (Fedeli, 2016).

The impact of territorial reforms on local governments is not a specific feature of the Italian context. Kuhlmann and Wollmann (2011) have pointed out that the Austerity agenda has pushed a number of European Countries to implement multiple reforms aimed at improving local governments' administrative efficiency by, for example, increasing their territorial and demographic extension. These reforms are obviously rooted in different political-institutional settings as well as influenced by many and heterogeneous functional, territorial and political factors. Despite this diversity, some convergent indicators can be identified: the trend towards decentralization through the transfer of responsibilities to local administrative structures; the strengthening of the power of local government institutions and the development of accountability mechanisms for political decisions

(VNG, 2010; Teles, 2016).

Although still not fully investigated by past researches, the long and intricate process of local governance reforms has been recently analysed by few comparative studies which focused on domestic administrative systems from the point of view of administrative geography and public law (Ferlaino & Molinari, 2009; Baldersheim & Rose, 2010; Maurcou et al., 2016). Alongside the many elements taken into consideration by these works, a particular emphasis is placed on the territorial factors and, more importantly, on the related territorial viability of local governments. At this regard, two models can be recognized, a Southern European model and a Northern European one (Kuhlmann & Bouckaert, 2016).

The Southern European model is historically characterized by a small-sized and fragmented administrative mosaic, which often extends back to the late Middle Age and relates to the setting of parish communities. This system was left unchanged since the Ancien Régime, despite the mutation of political orders occurred in the following centuries. It brought to the parcellisation of the municipal level which was applied also to other Countries that were influenced by the same cultural and administrative tradition (Ferlaino & Molinari, 2009). In these States the reforms, which were aiming at reducing the fragmentation of local territorial structures, largely failed. Basically the approach of reforms was to make mergers among municipalities reliant on local consent, for example by the way of a local referendum. In these cases, strategies termed trans-scaling have been more successful in ensuring the viability of small municipality, for instance, by establishing local inter-institutional cooperative patterns (Baldersheim & Rose, 2010). As already demonstrated by some researchers (see: Kuhlmann & Bouckaert, 2016; Teles, 2016), these reforms have been the response to and a substitute for the lack of formal territorial reforms oriented to foster the amalgamation of municipalities.

On the contrary, the Northern European model, despite being originally characterized by larger municipalities, has experienced between the 1950s and 1970s significant territorial reforms through massive mergers. These territorial reforms were typically initiated and enforced by central government who, after leaving local authorities a period of “voluntary” adjustment to the centrally proposed territorial scheme, then imposed the territorial reorganisation (Norton, 1994). This model was termed up-scaling as a basic guideline of the territorial reforms that aimed at improving the demographic size of local governments and their efficiency by increasing their administrative and economic performance (Baldersheim & Rose, 2010).

Among the most recent attempts to investigate the factors explaining the up-scaling trend, Askim et al. (2017) developed a model using statistical indicators to analyze changes in the local governments that experienced this phenomenon. Their framework took into consideration four factors for explaining territorial upscaling: fiscal stress (based on a direct relation between size and cost), decentralization (related to the functional expansion of the Welfare State), urbanization (referred both to population decline in rural areas and to population growth in urban areas) and recent territorial upscaling (consisting in the previous disruption of the nature of local government systems).

Despite the characterization of both models, territorial rescaling processes

have entailed measures of functional reallocations of tasks between the different levels of governments (Kuhlmann & Wayenberg, 2016). Alongside this trend, what has been observed since the 1980s is a movement of political and administrative decentralization, partially counterpoised by a reverse movement of recentralization happened recently (Bobbio, 2005), especially after the economic crisis of 2010s. Kuhlmann & Wayenberg (2016) have also observed that the political decentralization has fostered the improvement of the territorial coordination capacities of local governments. In this sense, the redefinition of the administrative spaces brings to the diffusion of reticular cooperative patterns, variously articulated on the basis of the actors' capacity to organize themselves and on the possibility to set out effective partnerships with successful management practices (Ferlaino & Molinari, 2009).

1.1.2. Local governments in Europe: diversity and historical embeddedness

Although size and number of municipalities do not explain the complexity of local governance in Europe and the processes of territorial rescaling, these factors can suggest a certain degree of diversity in the territories under reform process. As observed by Teles (2016), beside decentralization and efficiency, together with democratic innovation and accountability, "there is a third trend in post-war Europe local government reforms: the frequent changes in municipal territorial structures through comprehensive national reforms".

If one looks at the total number of municipalities in Europe (**Table 1**), the past 30 years (1973-2013) have seen an overall reduction of 29,3% (Steiner et al., 2016). In some Countries, such as Belgium and Greece, this reduction has been dramatic, of around 90% (Teles, 2016). In the case of Greece, the amalgamation process resulted from a national reform imposed by the fiscal and debt crisis. Here the prefectures ("nomarchias") were abolished and some tasks have been "up-loaded" to the 13 regions which were politically strengthened, and some other tasks have been 'down-loaded' to the 325 amalgamated municipalities. In this country, the average population of each municipality significantly increased after the Kallicratis Reform of 2010, from 10.750 in 2010 to 33.660 in 2015.

Over this period, Germany, the Netherlands and Iceland achieved a reduction in the number of municipal entities of more than 50%. In Denmark in 2007 the intermediate tier of local government was totally abolished, and the number of municipalities decreased from 275 to 98. Also most of the Central and Eastern European EU-accession Countries, such as Bulgaria and Lithuania, have moved closer to the Northern European administrative profile (Kuhlmann & Bouckaert, 2016), with a trend towards amalgamation. In Latvia, for example, the average population significantly increased after the reforms of 2010, going from 4.300 in 2010 to 16.000 in 2015. However, these Countries still reveal significant differences in the average population size of their municipalities, from 138.000 of United Kingdom to 11.000 of Norway.

Alongside these decreases, other Countries such as Poland, Portugal and Spain behaved differently, together with Slovenia, where municipalities

increased of 44% in the past 20 years.

In France and Italy, countries more representative of the Southern European model, the absence of amalgamation reforms resulted in the overall scarce variation in the number and size of municipalities. The stability and relative inertia of these two systems are due to the fact that local government systems are deeply historically embedded (Bobbio, 2005; Askim et al., 2017). Despite some attempts of innovating institutions, rules and territorial policies, the "conformism" still prevails (Palermo, 2009). The actors interested in defending their status quo have been creating barriers to the territorial consolidation reforms (Swianiewicz, 2010). Quite emblematic is the French case, which is characterized by a certain solidity of the cultural and political structures that is hindering any significant process of amalgamation. As explained by Hertzog (2010), "today's French municipal structure has been decided, in fact, by local governments themselves or, more exactly, by the local political class, very strongly mixed with the national one". Here, it is evident the interest of the legislator on local governments: nearly the 90% of deputies and senators in the National Assembly are mayors, presidents of an IMC entity, or people that in the past have done a mandate in local governments. Kuhlmann & Bouckaert (2016) underlined that "the reform project of 2010 hinged on the functional, financial and democratic strengthening of the communautés as a pragmatic move towards a territorial reform, without the explicit acknowledgement of the amalgamation".

In Italy, the introduction of the Metropolitan Cities remained quite ambiguous due to the decision of keeping the Provinces after the rejection of the Constitutional Referendum in December 2016 (Fedeli, 2016). Although the variation in the number of Italian municipalities has been close to zero in the last twenty years, on a long-term basis we observe how the trend of the number of small municipalities (less than 5.000 inhabitants) has been pretty unstable, while the number of municipalities with more than 5.000 kept growing, even if at a low rate (**Figure 1**).

These different courses suggest that consolidation and up-scaling strategies are not the only trends in territorial reforms in Europe and that a

Country	1995	2004	2014	Δ1995-2004	Δ2004-2014	Municipal population
Austria	2.353	2.358	2.353	0,2%	0,2%	3.510
Belgium	589	589	589	0,0%	0,0%	18.620
Denmark	275	271	98	-1,5%	-63,8%	56.280
Finland	455	444	320	-2,4%	-27,9%	16.151
France	36.683	36.685	36.64	0,0%	0,0%	1.720
Germany	14.688	12.513	11.040	-14,8%	-11,8	5.010
Greece	5.827	1.031	325	-82,3%	-68,5%	33.660
Iceland	170	104	74	-38,8%	-28,8%	4.349
Ireland	114	114	31	0,0%	-72,8%	37.300
Italy	8.100	8.100	8.071	0,0%	-0,4%	7.310
The NL	633	483	403	-23,7%	-16,6%	41.000
Portugal	305	308	308	1,0%	0,0%	34.293
Spain	8.108	8.114	8.118	0,1%	0,0%	5.815
Sweden	2.761	2.726	2.352	-1,3%	-13,7%	33.240
The UK	539	468	433	-13,2%	-7,5%	138.920

Table 1: Number of municipalities in some European Countries. Source: Ladner, Keuffer & Baldersheim (2015). Teles (2016).

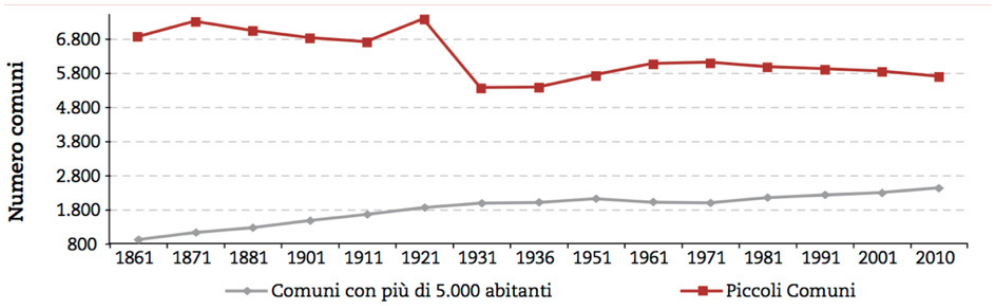


Figure 1: Variation of the number of municipalities in Italy.
Source: ANCI & Fondazione IFEL, 2011.

certain diversity of the phenomenon in Europe is present, together with the relevance of the cultural and political structures as well as the historical and administrative traditions.

1.1.3. Gaps between territorial and institutional profiles

Despite their diversity, one of the common purposes of rescaling reforms is to bridge the gap between capacity and expectations. Nørgaard (1996) underlined that this gap is rooted in the mismatch between existing structures and underlying realities. This is also valid for local governments due to the continuous divergence between the institutional arrangement of a territory (e.g. the ways in which it is split into various municipal entities), and its actual territorial structure, which comprises the shape of settlements and their provision of services and infrastructures, the location of natural resources. The importance of this lies in the fact that the relationship between these two levels, together with the balance between the territorial and the institutional dimensions of an economic system, influences the economic performances on a long-term basis by determining the space, the efficiency and the effectiveness of public policies (Calafati, 2009:102).

Therefore, most of the attempts to reform local governments in the last 30 years have been oriented to solve this issue, given its interpretation as an important “explanation for change” (Askim et al., 2017). Following this view, the effectiveness of a process of reform is given not only by its ability to reach the specific purposes but also to break down the stability and the inertia of institutional structures and to overcome the mismatch between capacity and expectations.

Ferlaino & Molinari (2009) describe the same phenomenon by using the expression “gap between the traditional institutional territories and the socio-economic ones”. According to the two researchers, this gap stands as a fundamental issue for the administrative and socio-economic future of a country. In their opinion, a possible answer could be to implement an effective “re-composition process” able to orient the long and conflictual reforms process towards autonomy and federalism (Ferlaino & Molinari, 2009).

By studying the “territorial revolution” started in Italy during the 1950s, the urban economist Calafati realized how the territorial articulation of the political system was not matching with the new spatial and relation organization (Calafati, 2009; 2014; Fedeli, 2016). He pointed out that

“Already in the Seventies, when the outcome of the spatial and relational trajectory of three decades before became consolidated and irreversible, the territorial facts should have been aligned to the institutional facts” (Calafati, 2009:11).

According to Calafati, alongside the new urban systems emerged in the post-war period, the new cities should have been transformed in “units of self-regulation” by means of turning the new spatial and relational organization into a new institutional configuration. On the contrary, what happened in Italy was the impossibility to release what Calafati defined as “the standing-off of the institutional evolution”. In this sense, the inertia in conceptualizing the urban question is due to a failure of policy-makers but, more importantly, to the incapacity both by public opinion and scientific community to influence significant changes at the institutional level (see: Habermas, 1984; Bianchetti, 2008; Calafati, 2009).

Baldersheim & Rose (2010) have recently worked on the factors that ensure the successful implementation of a reform of local governments and that allow to overcome the previously mentioned gaps and mismatches between existing structures and underlying realities. Among these, the ability of the reforms’ promoters to frame policies “lifting policy ideas out of a primeval soup of competing possibilities”, the capability of policy entrepreneurs to support advocacy coalitions, and of opponents to form veto alliances, and the possibility that various stakeholders take part to decision-making processes emerge as the aspects that more than others ensure the success of a project of reform.

At this regard, according to Hertzog, the chance to act within a “window of opportunity” is the main factor for guaranteeing the success of a territorial reform (Hertzog, 2010; Kulesza, 2002).

“The favorable moment during which the central bureaucracy (who is usually defending its position) is weak enough to allow any substantial changes, is usually very short. The issue of timing is crucial. If the reformers are not ready to present their concepts and its particulars exactly when it is needed and possible (from the viewpoint of the political situation), then the proper time is probably over... young democracies do not like large structural reforms, which hit economic and political interests of many parties and groupings by destroying their positions and mechanisms present in the functioning of the state, economy, and politics...” (Kulesza, 2002).

Therefore, many are the factors that come into play and guarantee the success of a reform process. The ability of promoters to organize themselves and to form coalitions of support stands as a relevant factor as much as the presence of an active public opinion and of a supportive scientific community that claim the need of the reform.

1.1.4. Amalgamation vs. Cooperation: the search for efficiency

As already mentioned by Teles (2016), the argument here is that the search for efficiency is the main driver of local government reforms in Europe. Around the mechanisms that local governments use to achieve and sustain such efficiency, there are consolidation and inter-municipal cooperation (IMC). Each solution among IMC and amalgamation has itself some "advantages or problems but the choice of one or the other is often dictated by politics or doctrine" (Hertzog, 2010). Although amalgamation and cooperation have both the objective to provide local services more efficiently (Sancton et al., 2000), they do not have to be considered as mutually exclusive but as complementary strategies (Hertzog, 2010).

Both the models are characterized by their own strengths and negative factors. According to Swianiewicz (2010), among the arguments in favor of territorial consolidation reforms, i) the higher capacity to provide a wider range of functions, ii) the more efficient provision of services in larger local governments units, iii) the reduction of the mismatches between administrative boundaries and catchment areas of services, and iv) the higher efficiencies in planning policies are the most relevant. Nevertheless, the positive factors of a South European model of local government are often related to the better conditions of democracy. There are several researches that show that citizens of small municipalities have a higher level of satisfaction to local government performances (Hajnal, 2001; Borecky & Prudky 2001). Swianiewicz (2002) also notices that "citizens' interest in local public affairs, expressed by the turnout in local elections, is usually higher in small municipalities".

While amalgamation means that two or more existing communities merge into a single one having the same territory and population as the former ones but with only one legal entity, one budget, one assembly and one executive staff (Hertzog, 2010), for intermunicipal cooperation things are more complex. In fact, it is its complexity that has put pressure on the research agenda and has challenged conventional categories of thinking, also in relation to comparative attitudes.

According to Kopriç (2012), IMC can be interpreted as a functional substitute for territorial consolidation. From the financial standpoint, IMC should make possible both to achieve economies of scale by diminishing average costs per user, and to take advantage of grants from the State or the European Union (Council of Europe, 2008).

The operational definition of cooperation provided by William Zartman (in: Hertzog, 2010: 297) refers to "a situation in which parties agree to work together at some cost to produce new gains for each of the participants that would be unavailable to them by unilateral action". According to the Manual of the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR), IMC is defined as

"the process involving local authorities in proximity to one another, which join forces to work together on developing and managing public services, amenities and infrastructure to better respond to the needs of their users and

with the aim of local development" (Council of Europe, 2008).

IMC forms can be either horizontal, if the cooperation happens between municipalities belonging to the same tier of government, or vertical if the relations are between grassroots authorities, intermunicipal entities and higher level authorities such as a region, a department or a state administration (Hertzog, 2010; Council or Europe, 2008).

1.2. Local governments in cooperation: forms, approaches and tools

While interesting experiments at the policy level have been changing orders, arrangements and performances of local governance systems, the significant territorial reforms experienced by many European countries over the past four decades have not been followed by an accurate attention from the research agenda. Until now the research has not developed yet a theory of local government reorganization that explains cross-national variation in timing and content on the basis of the broad societal, economic or political trends (see: Teles & Swianiewicz, 2018. Despite some recent attempts to explain why territorial change occurs, still researchers are struggling to generate insights of value going beyond their own case studies (Askim et al., 2017).

For IMC as a specific topic within local governments' field of research, the debate is even less developed. "Very few pages written on the mechanisms of inter-municipal cooperation" claimed recently Felipe Teles (Teles, 2016). Then he asked himself "Why the need for a specific topic of research as IMC when both the transition from government to governance and its impacts on public services and management have been extensively addressed by several scholars?".

The reasons why IMC should be considered as a relevant topic for analysis have much to do with its prominent role in improving the capacity of local governments within an administrative system. The emphasis on partnership working that is characterizing the current forms of public administration and management suggests that effective governance is achieved only by building cooperation. This paradigm has obvious implication for local governments and it suggests that IMC is a crucial problem to be addressed when studying local governance. A recent research in six European countries has highlighted that the main obstacles of IMC are i) the insufficient legal frame, ii) the lack of a national strategy and of organized support for municipalities which engage in cooperative actions, iii) the availability of few concrete territorial studies taking into account the demographic, socio-cultural and economic data and iv) the lack of a national policy for financing investments by local governments (CoE, 2008).

1.2.1. Governance and cooperation: some theoretical assumptions[1]

A crucial pre-condition to understand the ways in which local administrations cooperate and shape horizontal and vertical relations with other institutional and civil society actors is to define and clarify the concept of governance. Definitions of governance are multiple and diverse, given the ambiguity that often characterises the use of this term, which has been defined by Osmont (1998) as conceptually "flabby". One of these definitions interprets governance as a way of coordinating economic and social dynamics which is based on the involvement and participation of a multiplicity of actors (Salone & Governa, 2002). The attention on governance patterns and forces matches with the need to better understand the ongoing processes of modification in which the redefinition of the role of institutions in policy arenas and the emergence of an increasing number of public, private and semi-private actors are prominent factors.

According to Metzger & Schmitt (2012: 265–266), this multiplication of actors relates to an increasing complexity of forms of spatial governance at the basis of which there is a deliberate tactic or strategy to "work across formally established boundaries and scalar levels of planning and across previously entrenched sectoral divides".

Haughton et al. (2013) distinguish between the hard spaces of government and the soft spaces of governance to underline the progressive trend towards the experimentation of innovative forms of spatial thinking or new political-juridical spaces in neoliberal governmentality (see section 5.5.1.). The reinterpretation of the Marxist theory happened during the 1970s provided new insights for understanding the ways in which the capital is reproduced in the city but also for re-interpreting the nature of space. Policy scientists, geographers and planners have started to frame space as a socially dynamic and experienced entity, overcoming its interpretation as an "unproblematic fixed container" (Allmendinger et al., 2015). Hence, the conceptualisation of soft spaces gemmates from the influence that this new relational understanding of space, brought by the post-structuralist perspective (Massey, 2005; Murdoch, 2006), exercised in planning theory and practice (Lazzarini, 2017) (see Introduction).

Metzger & Schmitt (2012) provide a definition of soft spaces as those "informal or semiformal, non-statutory spatialities of planning with associations and relations stretching both across formally established boundaries and scalar levels of planning and across previously sectoral divides". Boundaries of these spaces have been defined "fuzzy" (Haughton et al., 2013) since they are dynamic devices that change according to the presence of territorial strategies which are often the result of a complex interaction between top-down policies and bottom-up practices. Haughton et al. (2013) argued that soft spaces are the result of a new relation between State and civil society, in which the appearance of new actors in the scene of government has permitted to open up hybrid and multi-jurisdictional governance processes

1 Some of the contents of this section have been already published in Lazzarini (2017).

and the displacement from formal to informal techniques of government. Geographies of soft spaces, while transcending the existing political and administrative boundaries, have fostered a "new thinking" to emerge and to establish testing grounds for new policy interventions (Allmendinger et al., 2015).

The important point to be underlined here is that the soft spaces' governance has not emerged as detached or in contraposition from existing policies and institutional forms but as the product of the evolutionary path of contemporary geo-institutional dynamics and thus as closely related to their increasing differentiation (Brenner et al., 2010; Haughton et al., 2013). This implies the relevance of considering the continuous redefinition of the role of the State and of the boundaries among private and public sector (Lemke, 2007). Although being generally considered as spaces of resistance and as chances to break down old rigidities, Haughton et al. (2013) have demonstrated that soft spaces of governance are about "maintaining existing social order, rather than challenging or transforming it".

While analysing the role of governance in the debate about the transformations of the forms of collective actions in urban and territorial policies, Salone & Governa (2002) underlined the risk of researchers to narrow their focus on the knowledge dimension of policies. The two geographers highlighted that in territorial and urban studies since few years it became more relevant to investigate the dialogue, difficult and often conflicting, among the dimension of the knowledge and the one of action. Moving the focus towards the actions means to study and describe the role that actors play within real decision making processes, the related concrete mechanisms of interactions and the cooperative and conflictual forms of policy construction (Ibid.). Surely, at the basis of this theoretical approach, there is the awareness that the relationship among space (and territory), subjects and actions is crucial to fully understand the "geographies of policies", thus how to "improve the performances of the investigated systems through the action of policies" (Governa & Salone, 2002; Massey, 2005).

The most important effect of considering governance as a possible key interpretation for the transformations of collective action is the multiplication of tools and programs (or a new use of traditional ones) of territorial action. According to Governa & Salone (2002) this process of diversification is moving towards three trends: the inter-sectoral ways of action, the redefinition of the role of subjects with the growing importance of inter-institutional coordination and public/private cooperation, and the territorial integration. Beyond these trends, one of the important aspects to be understood concerns the recognition of the different forms and approaches that these tools and programs of territorial collective action are conveying.

1.2.2. Forms and institutionalization of local cooperation

Intermunicipal cooperation (IMC) is constantly changing. It can bring to many different arrangements, ranging from lowly cooperative procedures, sometimes temporary ones, to highly united and permanent institutions.

Hertzog (2010) identifies four constituent elements of IMC: i) a work of

collaboration, ii) a formal agreement to do so, (iii) a cost and (iv) a common objective. He also describes six main forms of IMC:

1. "Informal cooperation: meetings between staff leaders to solve practical questions or coordinate a policy, ending with handshake agreements which can be quite efficient;
2. Contract: a legal agreement with binding provisions;
3. Private NGO status: agreement (very popular in France) for cultural events, tourism and social services;
4. Business firm: several municipalities often with private investors have shares of an enterprise whose activity produces commercial revenues;
5. Public entity for a single service;
6. Multi-purpose public body" (Hertzog, 2010).

If one looks specifically at the governance literature, the soft/hard conceptualization by Haughton et al. (2013) previously recalled is taken as a framework by some researchers (Teles, 2016; Zimmermann & Getimis, 2017; Lazzarini, 2017) to describe different forms of IMC. On one side, "soft cooperation is usually driven through informal relations between agents with non-legally binding agreements" (Teles, 2016). This form is seen as an easier way to include new and diverse stakeholders in the process since there is no real power of sharing commitments and no distributive issues involved (Teles, 2016). On the other side, hard cooperation often takes a legal form and results in contracts between all partners involved through the support of stable structures of decision-making. Following this approach, by taking into consideration the degree of institutionalization and the nature of the cooperation, Teles (2016) recognizes four different types of IMC, each of which corresponds to a specific intermunicipal arrangement (**Table 2**). Looking at the institutionalized cooperation, the soft forms refer to policy coordination between local authorities, while the hard forms are produced as a consequence of establishing a new tier of government with specific competencies and its specific legal status. Conversely, the non-institutionalized forms of cooperation are soft whereas the cooperation is not a routine but "an "ad hoc" feature of sporadic nature in local governance action, usually used as a tool to address specific problems with no expected continuity", and hard in the case in which contracts are established among local public or/and private actors interacting at supra-municipal level (Teles, 2016: 19).

Table 2: Forms of inter-municipal cooperation. Source: Teles, 2016

	Institutionalization	
Nature of cooperation	High	Low
Hard	Service Delivery	Contracts
Soft	Coordination	Information

Alongside these typologies, the author underlines that "one of the main current trends is that inter-municipal cooperative arrangements are moving towards more plastic and hybrid solutions, where light, adaptable, networked and trust-based associations are replacing the previously diffused structure patterns of institutionalized cooperation" (Teles, 2016:45). This is supporting

what Palermo (2009) has already stated while referring to the innovation that the policy tools are currently facing:

"nowadays what is growing is not just the variety of the instruments available to local governments but also the extension of the indirect intervention, the discretion of the public actors, the demand for partnership among public and private actors and the complexity in the problem-solving of collective decisions". (Palermo, 2009:122-123).

It should be underlined, as shown by the theoretical frameworks already mentioned, that there is no single way to analyze the phenomenon of inter-municipal cooperation. This because the diversity of its configurations, together with the many interdependencies among economic, social and cultural factors and the administrative traditions of countries, have increasingly diversified the ways in which and the reasons why local governments' cooperate and collaboratively shape policy making processes.

1.2.3. Learning how to cooperate

In the last few years, IMC has been the object of a good number of manuals and reports having the purpose to provide guidelines and roadmaps for local governments to activate or consolidate successful forms of IMC. By orienting local administrators and public officers towards cooperative patterns, these documents aim at responding to specific objectives of efficiency and at improving the management of public services. Few of them are recalled below. They were chosen among the most relevant examples of manuals on IMC.

One of the most known document is the one edited in 2010 by Irene Oostveen, product of a research funded by the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities (VNG International). The document is a general description of all phases of the process and key issues that municipalities should take into account in the decision making, implementation and evaluation of IMC (VNG, 2010). As reported, "there are several situations in which a municipality can be too small to supply certain goods or services, or can be a lot more efficient when it is serving a bigger part of the Country" (Ibid.). It is also possible that "projects simply are too big to handle for just one municipality due to the high costs, high risks or geographical structure that the project involves" (VNG, 2010). From the "task identification" to "setting objectives and targets" until the "planning and control phases", the Manual is a useful source of knowledge, of clear structure and easy readability, able to guide local governments towards the setting out of collaborative policies and practices. Although introduced briefly and not fully developed, the examples reported help the reader to understand the practical implications of the different forms of cooperation, suggesting similar courses of action.

2010 is also the year when the Toolkit Manual on IMC was published. The document has been prepared by the combined effort of the Council of Europe (CoE), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the

Local Government Initiative (LGI) of the Open Society. At its basis there is the need to deliver good governance and to reinforce the capacity of local governments for consolidating democracy and responding effectively to communities' expectations. Compared to the previous document, the Toolkit Manual pragmatically identifies the main issues at stake (national or regional policy, the system of incentives, the legal framework and the financial support) but also the obstacles and risks that could be obtained within the process. This work is primarily addressed to Eastern and South-Eastern Countries, where some of the problems faced by municipalities are the lack of cooperative culture, the poor understanding of the legal mechanisms and the high fear of political costs (CoE, 2010). As it will be highlighted in section 5.4., these are problems that can be found also within more mature and advanced democracies such as Italy (see also: Lazzarini, 2017). Among the most crucial aspects highlighted by the document, the need for a national IMC policy able to orient, legally guide and encourage municipalities toward cooperative arrangements clearly emerges (CoE, 2010). Nevertheless, the lack of national strategy often relates to the inertia of the national administrative and legislative apparatus, scarcely willing to innovate himself (Palermo, 2009; Hertzog, 2010). At this regard, gathering and sharing information among the relevant actors, multiplying and encouraging the meetings among ministries and local government representatives and creating occasions for debate (see Introduction) are some of the ways to unblock that inertia and to orient a successful program of reforms (CoE, 2010).

Another quite known work in this area is the Manual on IMC of the European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR) published in 2008. It is based on a survey through questionnaires which concerned key intermunicipal cooperation themes. These were addressed to and completed by 23 member states with an emphasis on the delivery of public services (CoE, 2008). In this document, it is argued that "the municipal organization plays a decisive role in the efficiency of the global public system" and that the "importance given to IMC is directly related to the importance given to municipal developments in its institutional dimensions and in its economic and financial sense" (CoE, 2008). The main issues of this Manual are the nature of IMC, powers, responsibilities and competencies, management and effectiveness, and democracy. Aim of the document is to identify and promote good practices and issuing guidelines on inter-municipal cooperation (CoE, 2008).

The 2015 edition of the Italian Atlas of Small Municipalities, edited by ANCI and IFEL, presents an entire chapter dedicated to IMC. The document interprets it as a growingly relevant issue in Italy, being one of the more representative countries among the highly fragmented territorial institutions (ANCI & IFEL, 2015). As written in the Atlas, the main aims which an IMC policy should be oriented at are the rational use of natural resources, the environmental protection, the energy self-reliance, and the realization and joint management of new eco-compatible energy plants. Moreover, an effective implementation of IMC gives the possibility not just to improve the quality of local services but more importantly to strengthen the territorial governance and to find out new tools of cohesion (ANCI & IFEL, 2015).

1.2.4. Cooperation and planning: the search for the optimal governance[2]

Only recently the focus of planning research has been oriented to analyze the spatial impacts produced by the reorganization and the rescaling of territorial governance. This resulted in some attempts to study and interpret the transformation of metropolitan governance (Zimmermann & Getimis, 2017; Fedeli, 2016; Shaw & Tewdwr-Jones, 2016). Just few were the researchers that have reasoned about IMC policies and practices in planning. While most of them have referred to metropolitan areas, very few focused on local governments' cooperation within rural contexts or sparsely populated areas (Brunori & Rossi, 2007). Among the one focusing on metropolitan contexts, Zimmermann & Gemitis (2017) underlined the recent developments of "metropolitan narratives" in six Countries (Germany, Italy, France, Poland, Spain and England). They have claimed the relevance of the local context as a (still) decisive factor for the success or failure of metropolitan governance. Crucial issues such as perceptions or definitions of the built environment, the periphery/center relations and the appropriate form of metropolitan governance for each agglomeration relate to the contents and objectives of metropolitan policies and practices (Zimmermann & Getimis, 2017; Tomàs, 2017).

By describing City-Region governance in United Kingdom, Shaw & Tewdwr-Jones (2016) investigated the legislative changes brought by the recent Localism Act in 2011 (see section 6.1.). The Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), the City Deals and the Combined Authorities are some of the ways through which English local authorities have been cooperating, also in planning. What emerges is a picture of "disorganized devolution" which is increasingly going toward a "patchwork" of different spatial imaginaries in which the exact relationship between the different cooperative arrangements is chaotic and at worst confusing (Shaw & Tewdwr-Jones, 2016).

In Italy, the recently adopted normative framework that led to the introduction of the new metropolitan institutions has given rise to a debate mainly related to the efficacy of the solutions provided by the Law no. 56/2014 and to the ways in which local contexts actually interpreted these solutions (Colavitti & Pes, 2017). As argued by Fedeli (2016), problems like the definition of boundaries, the competencies and tools for action and the ability to deal with regional urbanization are the main issues at stake within the process of implementation of the metropolitan tier in Italy. This has resulted in incrementing, rather than reducing, the distance between the "de facto" and the "de iure" city, widening the previously recalled mismatch between territorial and institutional profiles (see section 1.1.3.) (Calafati, 2014; Fedeli, 2016).

Already before the introduction of Metropolitan Cities, planning in Italy was characterized by multiple forms of local cooperation. The theoretical model[3]

2 Some of the contents of this section have been published in: Lazzarini & Cinà, 2018.

3 The theoretical model has been conceived mostly with reference to the Italian case.

Table 3: Features and tools of the three models of inter-municipality. Source: Cinà & Lazzarini, 2018

	Structural model	*Strategic model*	*Consortile model*
Typical form	Union of Municipalities	Pact / Agreement	Consortium
Policy action	Stable, with a general scope	Flexible, inter-sectoral	Stable, sectoral
Cooperative form	Long-lasting	Voluntary, short-term and purpose-oriented	Sectoral
Configuration	Autonomous legal-institutional structure	Absence of a formal legal and institutional structure	Autonomous legal structure
Temporal projection	Long-term	Short-term and pre-defined	Long-term
Planning	Statutory	Strategic	Statutory / sectoral
Planning tools	Inter-municipal plan / Joint Local Plan	Specific tools and policies	District Plan (Piano Comprensoriale)

highlighted by Cinà & Lazzarini (2018), developed from De Luca (2012), elicits three dimensions of cooperation experienced by local authorities in planning (**Table 3**).

The first dimension is the structural model of planning ("modello strutturale") which refers to the statutory dimension of planning that still frames the Plan ("Piano") as the main and pivotal tool for governing urban and territorial transformations (see section 2.3.1.). Structural experiences of intermunicipal planning have expressed a territorial project that gave rise, especially in Italy and France, to some results in terms of management of natural and agricultural resources (Barattucci, 2004). In those cases, the implementation of some planning tools (green belts, urban growth boundaries, periurban agricultural parks, etc.) has resulted in preserving landscape and environmental qualities, even though by putting in place a harsh normative framework (Gennaio et al., 2009; Koomen et al., 2008). Sometimes, the use of the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) has allowed to decrease the building pressure on high-landscape value areas, consolidate their agricultural vocation, protect the ecologic-environmental assets and initiate important processes of regeneration of former industrial spaces (Balducci et al., 2006; Bruzzo, 1999) (see section 2.3.1.).

On the other side, the strategic model of inter-municipal cooperation allowed local authorities to conceive and manage joint projects through Conventions, Pacts or Agreements of various kinds. In this case, the policy action is flexible and inter-sectoral and it is oriented towards the achievement of clearly defined objectives, on the basis of a short-term temporal projection. From the operational point of view, these forms convey a strategy which has a strong transformative dimension. In planning, the strategic model leads to a strategic, selective and purpose-oriented planning action (Healey, 2007) according to a collective governance, aimed at answering to specific local priorities.

In between the two there is the consortile model, which relies to the establishment of a Consortium, a separate and independent legal body that enjoys of its own statutory and financial autonomy. It is set up with the aim of jointly managing services or activities. In planning terms, this model of local governments' cooperation does not correspond to a specific planning policy as for the other two models. Despite this, it often conveys some management

tools or policies that are set up in order to ensure a specific and continuous function of territorial valorisation and protection through some actions of maintenance and transformation. The most recurring example in Italy is the so called “Consorzio di Bonifica”, a sub-regional-level body operating in the field of water safety, management of water resources, agro-zoo technical and forestry production and management.

1.2.5. Regional Cooperative Planning: a theoretical formulation and its limits

This section presents the cooperative planning approach as it was theorised by the De Luca & Lingua in their recent work about Regional Cooperative Planning (De Luca & Lingua, 2012). It attempts at reconstructing its theoretical bases and it tries to discuss its contents in relation to the current possibility for planning to provide open, inclusive, interactive spaces of deliberations.

According to the two authors (2012: 19), the roots of cooperative planning lie in the model of collaborative governance that was developed in late Eighties starting from Habermas’ theory of communicative action (see Introduction). According to this approach, the public debate is framed not as a tool for aggregating preferences but as a process for dealing with and transforming them through discussion (Habermas, 1984 in: De Luca e Lingua, 2012). This theory interprets planning as a communicative practice, as a process of extended interaction, which involves the institutional and social actors and transposes theoretical knowledge into empirical knowledge through cooperative actions (Friedmann, 1987). Fisher & Forester (1993) pointed out that the concept of cooperative governance in planning aims at interpreting planning as a social interaction process that is as much “open and inclusive” as possible. As a result, the construction of urban development projects is a process which requires critical listening and public discussion. This practice, however, as highlighted by Palermo (2004: 157), runs the risk of ignoring the “practical and symbolic” forms of interaction which are inherent in the majority of decision-making processes. It also does not prevent communication from the risks of being distorted.

Following this framework, De Luca & Lingua (2012: 23) interpret cooperative planning as the result of an evolution from the rational and comprehensive planning model to the argumentative, communicative and collaborative approach, which interprets strategies and policies as the product of an interactive process of construction among different actors. However, Palermo (2004: 160) suggests that if we critically look at the interpretation of collaborative planning made by Patsy Healey, it can be noticed that this approach is still not free from a rational vision. This because it aims at conveying an inclusive re-composition of the plurality of interests, where the planner remains the custodian of the rationality of the process and where the knowledge of the influential expert still plays a relevant role in the process.

Despite this, at least in its prerequisites, the collaborative approach claims a profound and radical change of the role of planner in spatial planning processes. The planner is no longer an expert delegated by the public actor, but becomes an “[active] participant to the debate, capable of synthesizing

different positions [...], of favouring the re-composition of conflicts through inventing new solutions and acquiring greater awareness and mutual knowledge on reality" (De Luca & Lingua, 2012: 23-24). The planner should therefore mainly perform the role of facilitation and mediation in order to favour the cooperation among autonomous and differentiated interests (Palermo, 2004: 160).

Within De Luca & Lingua's approach, the plan becomes a "privileged place" for cooperative governance to express the joint construction of strategies and policies above mentioned. It also becomes "an interactive and pluralist arena, a product of the cooperative and argumentative dialogue which derives from the interaction among a multiplicity of actors with different interests who become the subjects of a joint action" (Crosta, 1989 quoted in: De Luca & Lingua, 2012: 24). Accordingly, the construction of plans and policies are seen as processes of social interaction as much open and inclusive as possible (Ibid., 22).

Here I take the view that interpreting the plan as the medium of cooperative processes and as an open and inclusive product of social interaction is at most optimistic and ambitious. At this regard, Mazza (2010) reminds that the frustration which surrounds the plan relates to the many expectations and excessive ambitions that have historically accompanied it (Mazza, 2010). According to the author, it is crucial to understand the weaknesses of current planning system and to reason about the too high expectations that has itself conveyed. As it will be demonstrated later in the thesis (see section 7.3.1.), plans that are the outcome of collaborative planning processes are often shaped by the more powerful interests which dominate and influence the process itself, leaving no room for alternative interpretations or narratives. Thus, plans turn to be not inclusive spaces able to synthetize different interests but rather impermeable devices shaped by the power relationships that intervene in the planning process, undermining its inclusiveness (see section 7.5.2.).

Another issue to consider in the collaborative planning approach is the transformation of the role played by local governments within the cooperative planning processes. According to Lingua & De Luca (2012)

"[It] consists in defining long-term strategies and guidelines, through the construction of visions of the future that imply the contribution of various expertise and that involve the interaction and participation of institutional and non-institutional stakeholders. In particular, the public actor should [...] protect weak interests and long-term collective interests, by guaranteeing principles that are only partially negotiable, such as the sustainability for future generations and the subsidiarity" (De Luca & Lingua, 2012: 25).

A concern emerges from this passage and it relates to the ways in which the cooperative planning model outlined by De Luca and Lingua (2012) is

able to express a *polity*[4], and particularly

"how this can be achieved in the current context in which we do not know well who represents what, how it can be represented who is not" and above all "what is the real correspondence between civil society and access to representation" (Bianchetti, 2011:112).

According to Palermo (2004: 87), moving the attention to the polity means to overcome the mismatch between "knowledge and action" and the awareness that communication is a primary component of the planner's action. Rather, it means to interpret communication as just one of the dimensions of planner's action. It also means to reflect upon the exercises of authority, on public debate, on the search for agreement and on the ability to organize and jointly manage processes of collective choice.

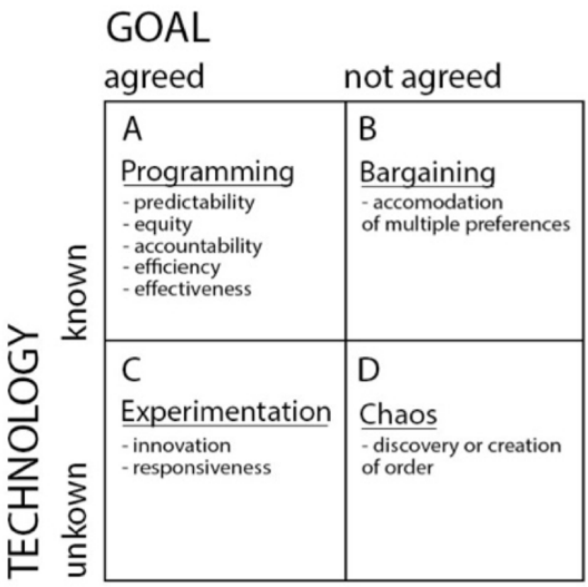
It is on this opacity that the planner's role as social mediator outlined by De Luca e Lingua (2012) crunches. A similar role could have been motivated just by a deep transformation of current political and governance conditions. At this regard, Dente & Melloni rightly pointed out that an interpretation of the planner as the shaper of inclusive and interactive planning processes, as the one made by De Luca & Lingua (2012), implies new methods of governance and a different approach to policy and planning (Dente & Melloni, 2005).

At this point, the underlying question is "How this work interprets the plan?"

Starting from the assumption that the we cannot state *a priori* that the plan is able to convey any inclusive and socially equitable idea of city or territory, here I take the view that the Plan is not more than the product of a decision taken by one or more institutional actors to condensate —within a set of policies and their spatialisation— a knowledge, which is not necessarily collective and inclusive and which does not emerge from a linear process but from a circular one (Viganò, 2010). The *loop* is the conceptual figure that can express this process, a course in which is not possible to distinguish among analysis and project as two separate and consequential steps of the planning action (Longo & Mareggi, 2012). Rather, the circularity interprets the Plan just as a stage of the knowledge, a moment in which the planner or the policy maker arbitrarily decides to leave the circumference and move to the centre, the moment in which the outcomes of the Plan crystallise and express

4 Here it is taken the definition by Dente (2011) of *policy* as a way of treating a collective problem, polity as the political/institutional system and politics as the distribution of the political power among the subjects endowed with authority. According to the Encyclopedia of Political Communication, "Polity is used in the sense of "community" and it "comes from the Greek word polis and includes not only the city state, but also other forms of politically organized societies such as the nation-state and the empire. *Politics* describes the theory and practice of the power struggle between the players inside the polity. It constitutes the core of the political system. *Policy* aims at the planned formation of social domains such as economy, environment, or education through collectively binding decisions" ("policy making")" (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2008).

Figure 2: Responses to planning problems. Source: Christensen, 1985.



a policy dimension[5]. It is crucial to emphasize that the Plan is and remains an incomplete product, it is an eternal unfinished. The planner could in fact decide at any time to enter the loop and start again the process of knowledge production, potentially without reaching an end.

A second crucial aspect to underline is that the Plan is the product of uncertainty and complexity that characterise contemporary cities and territories. Rather than the unstable market conditions or the economy, the term uncertainty refers here to the conditions that characterize decision-making processes in the rational model (Balducci, 1991). Following the trajectories of some researchers (Viganò, 2010; Dente, 2011), I am convinced that talking about uncertainty when dealing with planning processes is essential because the conditions in which the Plan is constructed are deeply uncertain and unstable and the knowledge that enters or influences the plan making is strongly affected by these limits.

The model which I refer to is the one of a Plan where objectives, resources and technologies are placed within an articulated and not always coherent system (Viganò, 2010). Christensen (1985) elaborated a matrix (**Figure 2**) which represents the problematic conditions of the plan making. Her aim was to put into discussion the rational decisional paradigm of planners and policy makers.

Along the horizontal axis, the goals range from conflictual to consensual. Along the vertical axis, the means or technologies vary from known to unknown, if they are or not available. Going through the matrix, we pass from conditions of certainty of means and objectives where the planning action matches with requirements of reliability, efficiency and effectiveness,

5 The reference here goes to the complex and articulated process of the landscape part (pit/p) of the Territorial Plan of Tuscany Region. Here the end of the process corresponded to the end of the administrative mandate of the Regional Government, thus to a political decision by Regional administrations to bring the Plan to the approval. In this case, the knowledge produced by the planning process could have gone on further but a political decision led the process to an end (see section 3.3.1.).

to conditions of increasing uncertainty, when the goals become multiple and conflictual with each other and the means are not known or available. The condition of chaos that may result is able to catalyse a design action. This consists in making the problem tractable, helping to identify it, to deconstruct and reconstruct it. This vision emphasises the importance of having an issue that is not treatable. Here, reference is made to the unresolved exercise, an exercise potentially without conclusion (the so called “wicked problems”). Also in planning uncertainty has an important role since it influences goals and technologies. Therefore, the Plan is a moment of design and evaluation where uncertainty is not only part of the process but it may lead to find a solution to problems difficult to tackle.

However, uncertainty is never a block to the planning action. Recognizing uncertainty means to admit that the risk can produce an incentive to change directions. The conception of Plan which I refer to frames the risk as a normal dynamic in its process of evolution and construction. This interpretation does not just remove any claims of absolute rationality in planning processes, but it also reveals some opportunities related to the production of alternatives. This is the reason why the contents of Christensen matrix are often linked to the construction of scenarios (Viganò, 2010). Hence, when we deal with uncertainty as a normal condition (Christensen, 1985), the construction of scenarios (see section 2.4.3.) allows planners and policy makers to investigate the potential risks, and to experiment new possibilities for the plan’s development. Accordingly, the scenario is a “design form”, one of the different forms that the planning project can assume in the process of construction and transformation of cities and territories.

Chapter 2
Planning approaches for shaping urban/rural relationships

> "The countryside has long had special relationships with urban areas [...] one point remains clear: whether the exact relationship between countryside and city, and whether the countryside's main function is providing food, a place to live or a place to 'play', city and countryside are integral part of the same social and economic system. [...] Thus, changes in city and countryside are interdependent".
>
> (Bryant et al., 1982: 4-5)

This chapter aims at investigating the topic of local governments' cooperation within the planning field and in particular with reference to policies and practices that acknowledge the contribution of agricultural activities in shaping better relationships among cities and countryside. In other words, the purpose here is to understand if and how planning policies and practices implemented by the initiatives and joint activity of local governments have been able to safeguard agricultural land and strengthen its role in supporting sustainable local food systems and in improving the liveability of urban settlements.

The chapter is organised in four sections. Section 2.1. presents on overview of the concept of urban/rural relationships focusing on two underlying perspectives in the debate and of the ways in which this concept is applied in UN and EU policy documents. Section 2.2. includes few preliminary clarifications about the contribution of planning in improving urban/rural relationships. Section 2.3. focuses on the planning approaches that deal with the contribution of farming in bridging urban/rural dichotomy by distinguishing among mainstream and innovative. Last section (2.4.) clarifies the motivations at the basis of the choice of the three case-studies, focusing on three distinctive criteria.

2.1. Urban/rural relationships: the birth of the concept and its policy application

2.1.1. "Anti-urban" versus "pro-urban" perspectives

The concept of urban/rural relationships has recently gained a wide success both in the academic literature and in policy documents and programs. The reasons of this success lie in the increasing awareness that the social and economic complexity of urban/rural interface cannot be treated without overcoming the conceptual and operative dichotomy among urban and rural

areas.

Bengs & Schmidt-Thomé (2006) argue that the first step to fully understand urban/rural relations should be to define them in terms of structural and functional relations. While structural refer to the ways in which physical environment is constituted and shaped (for example consolidated land-use patterns, settlement structure and the distribution of population), the functional relations are determined by the ways the physical environment is utilised such as, for example, certain production or consumption patterns (Bengs & Schmidt-Thomé: 2006: 16). This distinction is useful to highlight that some of the ties linking urban and rural areas are stable and consolidated over time as they are attached to long-lasting conditions, while others are slighter since they deal with the ways in which the territory is inhabited and its physical resources utilised by people.

Functional and structural relations are at the basis of what Lapadula (1983) defines as the two interpretations of city-countryside ties, one made by planners and the other one by geographers. While the first is more "political", the second is based on the combination of heterogeneous units perfectly interrelated from the functional point of view. This combination is manifested through the presence of some flows that diminish when the distance increases from the node.

By looking at its genealogy, Davoudi & Stead (2002) argue that the term urban/rural relationship was introduced for the first time in England to mark a departure from the traditional view of urban/rural dichotomy. According to the two researchers, two school of thoughts can be recognised in the debate, the "anti-urban perspective" and the "pro-urban view". The two researchers pointed out that the persisting contraposition and lively debate among the "anti-urban perspective" and the "pro-urban view" show that the rural/urban dichotomy is still a powerful concept in framing the debate about urban growth and development in Great Britain and, possibly, elsewhere in Europe.

The point of departure of the "anti-urban perspective" is the accelerated urbanisation, the massive increase in urban population and the progressive social, economic and health degeneration of cities that the UK had been experiencing during the Nineteenth Century (Tallon, 2013). Particularly from the 1880s, urban areas started to witness the emergence of slums, material and social dereliction but also municipal corruption and moral dangers, which were partly associated to the perceived threat coming from the working-class' protests (Atkinson & Moon, 1994). Emerging from these premises, this perspective was calling to stop the uncontrolled urban growth by adopting tools and policies to protect the countryside (Colavitti & Usai, 2008). According to Fernand Braudel (1977), the struggle among city and countryside was the first, longest class struggle ever known by history because "cities have made the territory suffer throughout the centuries, both the ground on which they rest and from which they were born, either the lands surrounding them". This approach contributed to shape the underlying orthodoxy of the post-war planning system in England, particularly the Urban Containment (UC) policies (see section 2.3.1.2.) according to which city and countryside need to be rigidly separated and urban developments firmly restricted (Davoudi & Stead, 2002; Colavitti & Usai, 2008). Despite emerging more than 50 years ago, in recent times this view has continued to actively influence and

orient the debate, especially in UK where the concept of Urban Containment has been used by groups and organisations to fight against the review of Green Belts, in particular in support of the so called “protectionist approach” (Lazzarini, 2018). Although leaving behind the rigid “anti-urban perspective” stepping into more progressive positions, one of the current flags of the protectionist approach is the defence of Green Belt land from being used for housing developments (see section 6.2.). This position aims at fighting the housing demand argument by tackling in a critical way the link between wants and economic demands (Helm, 2015; Jenkins, 2014; Dorling, 2014). The protectionist approach has been sometimes criticized for affirming an idyllic view of rural life which actually is very distant from contingent economic and social circumstances of rural areas (Sturzaker & Mell, 2017). At this purpose, Davoudi & Stead (2002) highlight that this idyllic interpretation has produced two consequences.

“The first one is a persisting failure to observe the growing problems of under-development in rural areas, which often stem from agricultural decline coupled with little economic diversification and a lack of access to jobs, education and the kind of services that bring life to villages. [...] The second phenomenon associated with the idealisation of rural life and the desire to live in countryside is the increasing rural immigration: people moving out of cities to live in the nearby villages. [...] The urban-rural migration has tended to be highly socially selective leading to a progressive gentrification of the countryside particularly through competition for scarce housing”.

Hence, rural contexts are not extraneous to certain processes of social polarization normally connoting urban areas. In the Europe of the 1950s, social and economic decline of the countryside was already a major issue, as well as one of the objectives laying down the foundation of the Common Agricultural Policy, which established the need to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community (Treaty of Rome, 1957).

As widely acknowledged, today’s rural areas are increasingly influenced by urban dynamics, particularly by the housing and real estate markets and by the urban mobility factors that are leading to increase the competition for the use of rural resources.

On the other hand, the “pro-urban view” interprets urbanisation as a progressive phenomenon that would be counterproductive to stop. At the basis of this interpretation, there is the idea that cities are “incubators of advanced culture and repositories of scientific and artistic knowledge and innovation” (Davoudi & Stead, 2002; see also: Florida, 2002; Markusen, 2006) and that there is a direct and necessary correlation among urbanisation and economic development. This approach has often been supporting the idea that the policies put in place to stop or limit the city expansion should be cancelled or overcome to “enable towns once again to grow organically and spontaneously and people to live nearer to their jobs” (Papworth, 2015). In England, one of the major argument currently fuelling this view is the need to seriously tackle the housing crisis by building more homes in rural areas and especially in Green Belts, due to their favourable location in proximity to existing infrastructures and work places.

In the last decade, the debate among the two positions has been increasingly influenced by the need to recognise the spatial complexity of the interface, together with the clear effects of the visible and invisible movements of people, capital, goods, information and technology between rural and urban areas (Davoudi & Stead, 2002). These spatial phenomena are calling the need to build more effective inter-sectoral and integrated policies able to address this complexity. This need is also supported by the awareness that the many topics concerning neighbouring municipalities, be them urban or rural, should be managed together through a set of collaborative policies and projects (Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning, 2012).

2.1.2. The UN and European approaches on urban/rural relationships

One of the better ground to evaluate the policy influence of the urban/rural relationships concept is the one of the policy recommendations implemented by working groups, alliances and policy conferences of United Nations (UN), European Union and other international bodies. These have been having a relevant role in influencing the policies addressing urban/rural relationships in domestic contexts and lower administrative levels. Understanding this game of influence is crucial to fully acknowledge what are the material and immaterial forces that push and orient the action of local governments across the urban/rural continuum.

At the level of the UN, the New Urban Agenda, implemented during the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III) held in Quito (Ecuador) in 2016, underlines the explicit commitments by an arena of Heads of State and Government, Ministers and High Representatives, together with a representation by sub-national and local governments, civil society, to “support territorial systems that integrate urban and rural functions into the national and subnational spatial frameworks and the systems of cities and human settlements, promoting sustainable management of land and natural resources, ensuring reliable supply and value chains that connect urban and rural supply” (UN Habitat III, 2016). The emphasis is on encouraging urban/rural interactions and framing agriculture as one of the crucial elements whose factors and activities have a role in shaping this relationship. Small scale farmers and local markets and commerce are seen as important actors and places able to guarantee local sustainable food consumption and production and to contribute to sustainable food systems and food security (UN Habitat III, 2016).

At the European level, the Common Agricultural Policy through its reforms has increasingly promoted agriculture as an activity which has a role in building stronger ties among city and countryside (see also section 3.3.2.). For example, the CAP reform in 1992 has introduced the agro-environmental entrepreneur, a farmer that has a social role in providing benefits for the local community and in practising an agriculture that respects nature and environment (see section 5.4.3.1.). He/she does not just practice agricultural activity but adopts a multifunctional and integrated view on territorial

development (Giacchè, 2012). It is with the Regulation n. 1698/2005 that for the first time the periurban areas are interpreted as areas to consider when planning the development of rural areas. In this case, as noticed by Giacchè (2012), the adjective periurban takes a negative connotation since it recalls unemployment, low demographic density and distance. In 2008, the resolution of the Conference on rural development of the Assembly of European Regions (AER) in Lillehammer proposed to overcome this approach by developing an integrated approach on periurban areas. This is one of the first attempts at European level to conceive rural areas as strinctly associated and linked to urban areas and activities (Ibid.).

The translation of the concept of urban/rural relationships to the European policy agenda is also framed in the form of "urban/rural partnerships", a policy tool and an approach to spatial development officially recognised by the European Union (Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning, 2012; EU Territorial Agenda 2020). It must be highlighted that this form of partnership is related to the idea of Good Governance which has been actively promoted by the European Commission in the last decade (Bengs & Schmidt-Thomé, 2006).

According to a recent document by the German Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (2012), the idea of introducing the urban/rural partnerships as a policy tool emerged during the 1990s after a series of important events and circumstances. First of all, the organisation of the Conference on "equilibre et solidarité urbain-rural" in France, which was supported by Ministère de l'Aménagement du Territoire et de l'Environnement in 1999. This conference was one of the first initiatives to put the issue of urban/rural ties at the centre of the academic and institutional debate. Secondly the launch of one of very first documents addressing the need for urban-rural partnerships, the European Spatial Development Perspective (ESPD) (1999), a document that stressed the importance of treating city and countryside as a unique functional and spatial entity within which diverse relationships and interdependencies can be recognised (Jacuniak-Suda et al., 2018). The ESDP brought into being the Study Program on European Spatial Planning (SPESP). The SPESP initiated a vast research activity involving 38 case studies throughout Europe working on urban/rural interdependencies. Although some of these case-studies were not explicitly addressing the topic (Caffyn and Dahlstroem, 2005: 286), one of the most important result of SPESP was its contribution in setting the ground for initiating another project, the ESPON Programme, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and, in particular, the project 1.1.2 on urban-rural relations in Europe. This project, lead by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies of the Helsinki University of Technology and initiated in the year 2000, had the purpose to analyse some case-studies in terms of their socio-economic diversification and interconnectedness of urban and rural areas, trying to explore these relations "in a systematic way in order to provide knowledge for a discussion on policy implications" (Bengs & Schmidt-Thomé, 2006).

Building from ESPD, the EU Territorial Agenda (European Commission, 2007) and the EU Territorial Agenda 2020 (TA 2020) have provided crucial steps for promoting rural-urban partnerships and for spreading their use in the Member States, although this is still not fully acknowledged by every

domestic context (European Commission, 2011). By taking into account the diverse links among urban and rural areas, the TA 2020 frames the urban/rural interdependence as an integrated governance and planning issue based on "broad partnerships" and place-based strategies. This is interpreted as a fertile approach for achieving and promoting the subsidiarity principle (European Commission, 2011). The important element of this strategy lies in recognising these policy guidelines as one of the six territorial priorities, in particular the one named "Encouraging integrated development in cities, rural and specific regions".

Among the European Research Projects addressing and contributing to apply the concept of urban/rural relations to policy making processes, the PURPLE (the acronym for "Peri Urban Regions Platform Europe") project had the aim to achieve a greater recognition of periurban regions in European policy and regulation by influencing European regional, urban and rural policy making, sharing knowledge and good practice, and promoting trans-European initiatives in the field (purple-eu.org). One of the last key achievements of the PURPLE network is its participation as full partner to the Horizon 2020 ROBUST Project which was approved by European Commission in 2016, having the overall objective "to advance the understanding of the interactions and dependencies between rural, peri-urban and urban areas and to identify and promote policies, governance models and practices that foster mutually beneficial relations" (Ibid.).

The Sustainable Urban Fringes (SURF) Project, part of the INTERREG IV B Northern Periphery Programme Area, involves partners and experts from across five Countries of the North Sea Region to develop a common approach on urban fringe development and to raise the knowledge on the specific potentials and problems of peri-urban areas. As mentioned in the project presentation, the aim is to review urban fringe policies, implementing policy guidelines to influence regional, national and EU policies in tackling issues of governance and spatial planning (German Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning, 2012).

The URMA (Urban-rural partnerships in metropolitan areas) Project was funded within the INTERREG IV C by the European Union's Regional Development Fund. The project had a two-year duration (2012-2014) and involved nine partners from five EU member states, working together to "create new impulses for a concept of decentralized cohesion, enriching the European discussion on large-scale urban-rural partnerships and serving as a laboratory and testbed for innovations in supra-regional co-operation" (urma-project.eu). One of the objectives of URMA project was to identify sectors in which urban and rural actors could benefit from cooperation. In the case of regional food and product cycles, the actors involved identified and developed tools to "promote regional production chains and to better match food supply and demand" (Jacuniak-Suda et al., 2018).

The above mentioned EU funded projects have not just developed a knowledge base at the level of academic and public institutions, but they have produced impulses and hints for national, regional and local institutions to implement a policy response to address urban/rural functional and structural interdependencies. Before looking at some of these policy responses from local governments (see section 2.3.), the purpose of next section is to briefly

introduce few clarifications about the contribution of planning for improving urban/rural relationships. These clarifications draw from the consideration of the border, as a crucial factor for investigating the potentials of planning in working across the urban/rural continuum.

2.2. The role of planning in shaping urban/rural relationships

Traditionally the focus of planning research on urban/rural relationships has been mainly oriented to investigate spatial dynamics, including spatial configurations and specific phenomena (among the many: Bruzzese & Lapenna, 2017; Bedini & Bronzini, 2016; Agnoletto & Guerzoni, 2012; Gallent et al., 2006). Some of the more interesting attempts aimed at analysing urban materials and open spaces of the periurban territories (Gabellini, 2010; Pascariu et al., 2012b), exploring the patterns of public spaces and their reconceptualization and redefinition (Donadieu, 2017), investigating the settlement structure and the redefinition of urban boundaries (Zanfi, 2012), and studying the impacts of land use changes on farmland (Pucci, 2012; Gant et al., 2011; Della Rocca & Lapadula, 1983).

Only few were the researchers that investigated urban/rural linkages in the light of analysing the role that local actors play in protecting and developing the productive potentials of the countryside to feed the city and its urban population (Buchanan, 1982; Garano, 1983; Bryant, 1995; Vandermeulen et al., 2006; Clark & Munroe, 2013; Lazzarini, 2018). Following this idea, working on urban/rural relationships means to explore the contribution of local governments to develop innovative and sustainable ways of territorial management, to integrate policies of land protection with strategies of local development, and to coordinate platforms for the exchange among private sector and civil society, typically among farmers and local communities, for originating spaces of institutional and social proximity (Mininni, 2012) (see section 2.3.2.1.). It also means to push people to frame rural hinterland not merely as a productive space but as a ground with potentials for recreation and social interaction, as an arena that could serve to improve the living conditions of urban communities. But also to dissolve the conceptual dualism among urban and rural spaces (Pucci, 2017) and to originate a new vision that sees city and countryside working together as a system.

In this sense, the role of planning is crucial in setting the right conditions for the best use of farmland surrounding cities and urban areas. Planning can safeguard a portion of land because of its fertility or location. It can provide the right financial incentives or rewarding towards the transition from a type of production to another. It can guide behaviors of farmers or city users regarding the use of land. On the contrary, it can even alter the potentials of farmland by creating negative externalities by, for example, forecasting in its proximities infrastructures, factories and other facilities.

Planning and its policies are relevant tools for institutional actors to work together for improving and protecting the conditions and the ways of use of farmland surrounding cities. Planning and its policies can also be used

by civil society (farmers and their representatives, grassroots initiatives, and local citizens) through its power and ability to orient, influence or subvert the agenda of local institutions towards a better consideration of the economic, social and environmental benefits of farmland (see the case of Bristol Food Policy Council in section 7.4.3.).

2.2.1. The reconceptualization of borders

Borders are one of the crucial issues when addressing urban/rural relationships in planning. Here it is chosen to present and discuss a double interpretation of border as spatial and institutional constructs. The choice to investigate the relevant aspects related to boundaries is due to three main motivations:

- to investigate what is the most appropriate spatial dimension of planning policies or, in Calafati's words, to explore the role of planning in bridging the gap among territorial and institutional facts (see section 1.1.3.);
- to understand how overcoming current administrative barriers and a too rigid and univocal interpretation of boundaries (Colavitti & Pes, 2017);
- to support the idea that looking at processes which happen across borders can be a good way to investigate the capacity of different local governments to work together to reach a common objective.

2.2.1.1. Borders as spatial constructs

As mentioned in section 2.1.1., the recent years have seen the wide acceptance by researchers and policy makers that the traditional notion of rural/urban dichotomy is simplistic and not able to describe the diversity of the interface, the rates of coexistence and hybridisation of multiple factors (Pucci, 2017; Simon & Adam-Bradford, 2016). Hence, a more dynamic and mutual interpretation of the interface discloses the chance to fully understand the conceptual and design possibilities of this space to spatially and functionally reconnect cities with their rural hinterlands (Colavitti & Pes, 2017). At this regard, the term 'interface' comprises the idea of a border not much as a line of separation among inner and outer space but rather a band of variable extension, formed by a combination and hybridisation of urban and rural areas (Poli, 2014: 62), as a space of complementariness in which the interdependence among natural resources, agriculture and urban processes is one of its prominent features (Marshall et al., 2009). This idea had already found some applications after the II World War when municipal administrators and planners have sought to adopt innovative models for urban growth trying to overcome the traditional concentric expansion. The case of Copenhagen's Five Finger Plan adopted in 1947 is surely one of the more relevant for its ability to reinterpret the notion of city border by establishing city fingers and green wedges that cross municipal borders and extend in the whole region (Danish Ministry for the Environment, 2015).

According to Poli (2014), when talking about borders among city and countryside, the crucial issue is to observe and investigate the diversity of situations and to describe which are the factors that make the extension of this band.

"Sono le relazioni fruitive ed economiche di prossimità che definiscono questa ampiezza, che si colloca da una parte e dall'altra del bordo [...] La linea che segna il bordo è spesso frastagliata, irregolare, composta da tessuti misti di scarsa qualità, spesso sprovvisti di spazio pubblico[1]" (Poli, 2014: 62).

Hence, interpreting border as a spatially diverse space on which a variety of settlement patterns, functions and ways of use can be observed is a precondition to fully understand how to overcome the physical and functional separation between city and rural hinterlands. Poli (2014) also argues that this process of transition towards conceiving borders as soft and dynamic -even fragmented- devices requires the re-semantisation of the reciprocal relations among city and countryside, hence the transformation of the boundary as a "space of action". This is also the interpretation made by Raffestin (1981) who argues that "every time we trace a border, we contribute to territorialise the space, turning it into a space of action; we also mark a diversity expressing the material delimitation among different forms of territorialities".

Daniela Poli describes two conceptual images, a "rural city" and an "urban countryside" to argue that agriculture should be interpreted as a primary element for defining form and structure of the urban (Ferraresi, 2009) and for developing a real transition towards more sustainable patterns. The researcher highlights that the "rural city" and the "urban countryside" (partially overlapping with the powerful concept of "city's countryside" by Bryant, McLellan, Russwurm, 1982) represent the achievement of a new pact among urban and rural domains, on the basis of the idea that food is the first and more important element able to functionally and spatially link city and countryside.

This urban/rural hybridization has also brought some researchers to conceptualise forms of "ruralisation" of cities, that replaced the traditional urbanisation processes according to which the countryside was considered uniquely a terrain for city's expansion. According to Agnoletto (2012:14), at the basis of the idea of ruralisation there is a need to develop new urban models made of alternative densities and characterised by a new equilibrium among urban and agricultural spaces. Ruralisation is also the term used by Quaglia & Geissler (2017) to describe the food narrative currently connoting the City of Milan, recovering what was already identified as the main focus of the Milanese Rural District (see section 4.4.3.), a group of local farmers working to enforce the ties among local producers and consumers.

After all, the ecological and biodiversity importance of borders and vacant spaces located within and at the margin of cities are one of the dominant rhetorics of contemporary planning debate (Bianchetti, 2012: 90). At this regard, Sturzaker & Mell (2017) argue that rigid and static interpretations

1 "Recreational and economic relations of proximity define this amplitude, which lies on both sides of the edge [...] The line that marks the edge is often jagged, irregular, composed of mixed fabrics of poor quality, often without public space".

of borders are one of the main causes hindering a biodiversity perspective, especially with reference to the consideration of natural and ecological performances of settlements. In the same vein, Allen (2003) underlines the need to consider the urban/rural interface as a "complex mosaic of rural, urban and natural sub-systems" that should be framed in an integrated and systemic vision.

It is important to underline that this discourse has brought to the emergence of a critique addressed to those planning tools and policies that have enhanced, rather than overcome, the physical separation among urban and rural areas, such as the rigid zoning mechanisms and other traditional planning devices such as Green Belts and Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB) (see section 2.3.1.2.) (Mell and Sturzaker, 2017; Lazzarini, 2018). These policies have been implemented often as tools of a traditional model of sustainable urban form, the Urban Containment (Jabareen, 2006; Bengston & Youn, 2003) in which the emphasis was placed on limiting the sprawl of scattered, low-density settlements in rural areas, overlooking the role that the interface could have played in enhancing hybrid forms of inhabiting the space.

Starting from these assumptions, approaches such as landscape urbanism, open and green space planning, ecological planning (Ndubisi, 2003), rural design (Thorbeck & Troughton, 2016) share the common interpretation of borders as design devices, as components that can meaningfully guide the territorial project. The common aspect of these approaches is the attempt to break the spatial and conceptual separation among urban and rural areas by building multiscale green infrastructures (GIs). GIs can have different purposes: they can lower the impacts of industrial settlements on residential areas, mitigate climate change, shape urban and rural landscapes for providing water resources, increase food production and protect natural amenities, often pushed by the idea to bring nature into the lives of people (Mell and Sturzaker, 2017).

Thus, attempts to create linear wedges or fingers transcending boundaries and connecting outer areas with inner parts of cities using vacant green spaces and urban greenery is one of the solutions that have been experimented and implemented (Beatley, 2000). At the basis of these attempts, there is the awareness that vacant and marginal spaces should be considered not as mere urban greenery but as elements of a complex system with cultural, ecological and historical values (Lazzarini et al., 2015; Gambino, 2012).

2.2.1.2. Borders as institutional constructs

Borders can be natural or artificial. The artificial dimension sometimes relates to the political or administrative construction of borders separating different institutional and administrative jurisdictions. Since "lines of maps still matter" (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009), institutional boundaries at any level are crucial devices to understand the ways in which societies organise themselves and manage territories.

When talking about institutional borders, one can refer to various scales, from the national to the neighbourhood scale. Our research about urban/

rural relationships has mainly to do with the local and municipal scale, hence with the borders separating different municipal jurisdictions. So, at local level, the issue of borders is often associated to the need to work together to address common and cross-boundary solutions, considered that certain local demands (about mobility, water, food) need to be addressed by a joint effort of a group of local authorities.

A major contribution in the debate about the institutional landscape of the urban/rural interface was given by Adriana Allen in 2003 in a seminal paper about the role of environmental planning and management in addressing relevant social and economic issues.

"The problem of institutional fragmentation is particularly relevant for understanding the constraints faced in environmental planning and management within this interface. Peri-urban areas often share the territory of more than one administrative unit. Weak links and limited municipal power in sectors such as transport, water, energy, solid and liquid waste management, and land-use planning often result in uncertainty as to which institution administers which specific area or activity" (Allen, 2003: 138).

The issue of institutional fragmentation at the local level is also addressed by Italian urban economist Antonio Calafati (2009). According to Calafati, the process of redefinition of the relational and spatial density occurred over the past fifty years, already defined "territorial coalescence", has never brought to a respective institutional rearrangement in most of European Countries. By looking at the so called "territorial facts", the space where this phenomenon is more visible is the periurban territory, that is to say the territory at the border of cities, where different Municipalities merge up to constitute a single territorial unit, which is in a sense also "functional". By looking at institutional facts, Calafati highlights that what we see today in many urban centres is a mosaic of municipal entities, each characterized by its own administrative organization, planning tools, and institutional challenges. Hence, there is a discussion on what is the right scale of local policies to deal with the territories and how boundaries should be periodically rearranged to adapt to the changing "territorial facts" (Calafati, 2009) (see section 1.1.3.).

After all, boundaries delineate responsibilities and competencies of institutions. A recurrent situation is that the interests of municipalities in urban areas are not matching with those of the rural areas or that the knowledge of what happens outside the own borders is low (Mattingly, 1999). Moreover, Fanfani (2014: 83-84) underlines the habit by administrators and officers to deal with problems affecting the interface on the basis of pre-defined institutional settings and administrative tasks, so failing to grasp the interconnected nature of phenomena crossing the urban/rural domains (see also: Colavitti & Pes, 2017).

A major problem relates to the process of drawing new borders, which needs to be dynamic and change over time (Mattingly, 1999; Colavitti & Pes, 2017). In fact, as the interface shifts ever outward because of the enlargement of urbanised areas and the transformation of related spatial processes, also the involvement of local institutions changes.

The belief of the necessity to put in place a strategy of coordination is due

to the many interdependencies that link together bordering municipalities. It is not a case that the idea of proximity is often expressed to describe the need to cross different policies and actions in the interface. This is the innovative concept taken by the Landscape Territorial Plan of Puglia Region (2010) in which the idea of institutional proximity intersects with the one of social proximity to build a "City Countryside Pact" interpreted as a policy tool to regenerate the marginal spaces starting from the periurban farmland (Mininni, 2012) (**Figure 3**). The Pact is intended as a social and spatial laboratory, a platform for municipalities and other public and private stakeholders to work for the implementation of actions to enhance the quality and liveability of marginal territories (see section 2.3.2.).

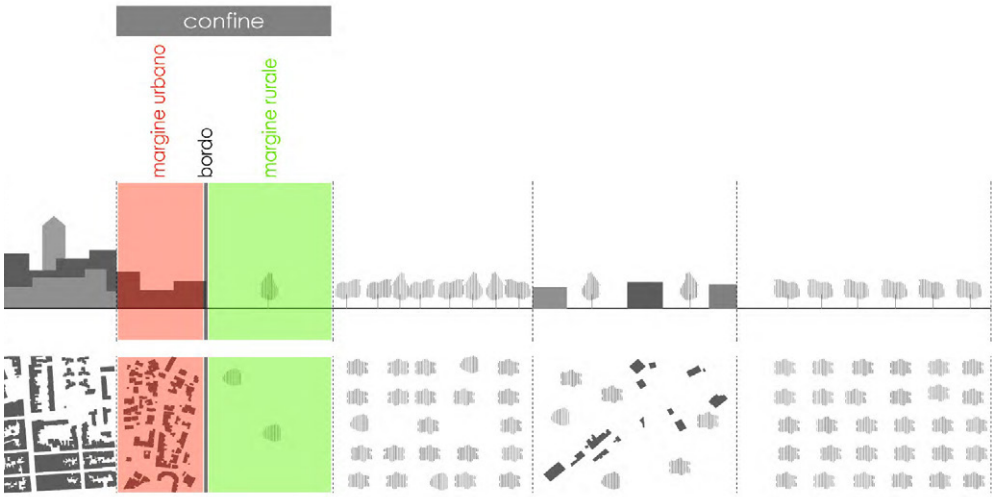


Figure 3: The role of margin among city and countryside in the Puglia PPTR. Source: Regione Puglia, 2015b.

Overcoming borders to create alliances among actors often relates to the need to abandon top-down approaches, in order to develop more dynamic forms of urban governance through open decision making processes and continuous and structured dialogue and collaboration among institutional actors and social groups. Thus, "the creation of effective local platforms that allow for genuine and efficient collaboration between different levels of government and interest groups" is needed to achieve "social participation and the expression of cultural diversity" (UN, 2016). The quality concern about governance is highlighted by Mattingly (1999) according to whom what matters is the feature of the relationships between government and civil society.

Starting from the idea to investigate more in depth the processes of alliance building across boundaries, next section presents an overview of collaborative approaches through which local governments have worked together for implementing policies and actions to preserve and develop the potentials of the farmland surrounding urban areas and to shape new spatial and functional relationships between city and countryside.

2.3. Planning approaches for addressing urban/rural relationships

A distinction among 'mainstream approaches' and 'innovative approaches' is presented with the aim to facilitate the understanding of a complex landscape of collaborative planning approaches, policies and actions through which local governments have cooperated, among themselves and with a set of other institutional and non-institutional actors, for acknowledging the role of farmland in building stronger urban/rural ties (see **Figure 4** and **Table 4**). The purpose is not to give back to the reader a complete picture of all the possible ways in which the issue of urban/rural relationships was developed by local governments, but rather to describe what are according to the author the more representative approaches through which local governments have dealt with the role of farmland in bridging the urban/rural divide, especially focusing on Italy and England as the domestic contexts which this thesis focuses on.

The word 'mainstream' refers to those policies and approaches that are currently of common and consolidated application in planning practice. Their range of action is usually sectoral and they usually have a high policy definition, meaning that they have a well established and definite corpus of policies to which refer to. For many of them, there is a stable EU and national policy framework which has been able to orient their application at lower levels and which local governments have looked at if willing to implement these approaches. Their rationale is usually oriented to create a land-use designation aiming at preserving agricultural land from developments (Cinà, 2016), although sometimes this can be combined to a set of positive policies addressed to cope with multi-functionality and diversification of agricultural economy (Paül & McKenzie, 2013).

Instead, 'innovative' refers to those approaches, policies and actions which are still relatively marginal in the planning practice but that are the result of forward thinking by local governments with an interest in dealing with urban/rural relationships. These approaches aim at intercepting dynamics currently underway in the territories, giving impulse to the creativity of those who live

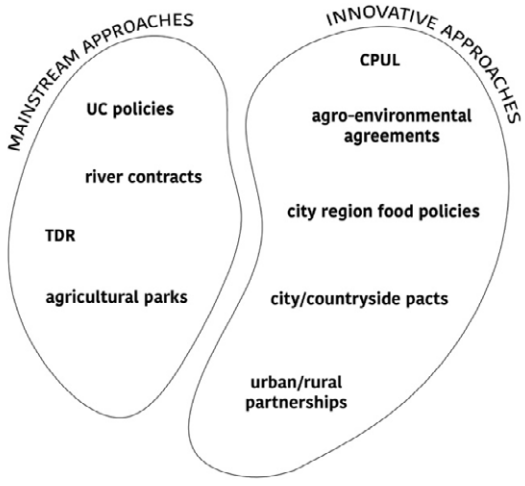


Figure 4: Distinction among mainstream and innovative approaches.
Source: elaboration by the author.

Table 4: Features of mainstream and innovative approaches.
Source: Elaboration by the author.

	Mainstream approaches	Innovative approaches
Range of action	Mostly sectoral	Integrated
Policy definition	High	Low
Policy framework	EU & domestic	Ongoing construction
Rationale	Land-use preservation	Building urban/rural relationships
Application in planning practice	Consolidated	Still limited
Involvement of civil society	Not mandatory	Constitutive

and work within these territories. They are often based on a knowledge which emerges both from a debate among stakeholders and from site-specific and contextual cultural, geographical and economic conditions. Hence, while in the previous case the involvement of civic society is not a requirement of policies, innovative approaches emerge themselves from the active contribution of local actors, often local community groups, associations, researchers with an explicit interest in shaping the contents of policies.

2.3.1. Mainstream approaches and policies

2.3.1.1. Agricultural Parks: a policy framework for a stable protection

Agricultural Parks are planning constructs oriented to address and promote integrated policies for farmland preservation and development. These are often the product of stable and statutory forms of intermunicipal cooperation (IMC) in which, through a voluntary agreement, a group of local authorities define and implement a joint planning policy, sometimes answering to the outcomes of a participatory process involving actors from the farming sector, local and higher level institutions and other members of civil society.

The Agricultural Park is currently framed as one of the most common and used planning tool in Italy and in Southern-Central European Countries to give coherence and stability to perspectives of preservation and enhancement of agricultural areas (Cinà, 2016). Being conceived as a model of territorial development based on multifunctional agriculture, Agricultural Parks have gained a success for their contribution in intersecting practices of new urbanities with strategies for a more sustainable urban and periurban agriculture (Cinà, 2016; Colavitti & Pes, 2017). According to Fanfani (2014), the Agricultural Park can serve both as a “territory for the project” and as a “project of territory”, hence jointly interpreting it as a ground for experimentation and as the object itself of that experimentation, considering its physical and land-use components.

Drawing on a review of some experiences of Agricultural Parks in Italy, Cinà (2016) presents the Agricultural Park as one of the best ways

from the side of planning and management to articulate the complexity of periurban farming within a multiscale framework of policies and actions in which different stakeholders intersect on the basis of various contractual geometries. Alongside the overall potentials of initiatives and experiences of social mobilisation that have increased the perception of agriculture as an urban phenomenon, current limits of Agricultural Parks lie in the still scarce stabilisation of agricultural land-use designations and in the difficulty to implement an integrated vision with other policies for bridging the functional and spatial weaknesses of farms. In this sense, the more evident limitations are the scarce accessibility and the fragmentation of agricultural plots, the barriers encountered by local producers to access urban markets and alternative food networks and the precariousness of land contracts, based on unstable conditions of land property (Cinà 2016; Fanfani, 2009).

Two of the more interesting cases of Agricultural Parks in Italy are the Milan South Agricultural Park and the Agricultural Park of Florentine Plain. While an empirical analysis of the first will be developed in chapter 4, in the second case the Agricultural Park is framed as one of "integrated territorial projects" part of the review of the Plan of Territorial Guidelines ("Piano di Indirizzo Territoriale Regionale PIT") of Tuscany Region. The relevance of this case lies in its contribution in setting the ground for a stable preservation of agricultural areas and for the creation of governance mechanisms aimed at stabilising farming activity by reinforcing the environmental, productive and recreational role of agriculture and by decreasing the development rights foreseen in agricultural areas (Fanfani, 2016). These governance mechanisms provide the possibility for municipalities and other local actors to stipulate planning agreements, having at their focus the need to consolidate the rural vocation of the territory. According to Fanfani (2016), the Agricultural Park of Florentine Plan has the potential to increase the spatial impacts of rural development policies and of territorial integrated projects activated and implemented within the Rural Development Plan of Tuscany Region (Fanfani, 2016). Current limits regard the absence of a governance body able to carry on an action of planning, technical advice and coordination among the range of involved actors for implementing the contents of the Agricultural Park. Moreover, the Park has still not significantly contributed to influence the re-localisation of major infrastructures forecasts and to reduce the agricultural land consumption and the persisting processes of property fragmentation. A major challenge of this case lies in re-orienting agriculture towards short food chains, increasing the economies of proximity among producers and consumers and around more diversified productive patterns (Cinà, 2016).

The Agricultural Park of the badlands of Atri, in the province of Teramo in the Centre of Italy, is another case of interest in Italy since it employs a set of policies in the Park's Plan related to a system of planning incentives, provided to those farmers or citizens owning land within the Park that contribute through their actions to the meaningful improvement of rural landscape. In detail, actions as creating greenery with ecological value, tackling hydrogeological risk and getting rid of buildings incompatible with rural setting allow them to gain higher development rights to be employed in urban areas through the use of the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) (see section 2.3.1.3.) to achieve what local planning officers have interpreted as an "urban infilling"

(Ciabò & Nonni, 2016). Despite the positive contribution of these mechanisms to increase the quality of the agrarian landscape, some major issues regard the scarce diffusion of cooperation among farmers. According to Ciabò & Nonni (2016), policies do not ensure that local community would benefit from the possibilities offered by the Agricultural Park. The two researchers argue that a more collaborative setting among local institutions and farmers would allow to better intersect local communities' needs, particularly in terms of food and recreation, with those of the Park's farms, an encounter that today is still rare, even with the presence of a strong interdependence among agricultural activity and natural capital (Ciabò & Nonni, 2016).

Despite still lacking a policy frame, the project for the "Metropolitan Agricultural Landscape Park of Padua" in the North of Italy is an interesting case of construction of a collaborative network among local institutions and associations and groups around the contents, aims and actions of an Agricultural Park. The process started in 2012 when the municipality of Padua began a participatory process answering to the invitation by a group of citizens and farmers to create an Agricultural and Landscape Park in the metropolitan area (Ferrario & Lironi, 2016). The innovative idea lies in conceiving the park not as a way to merely separate city and countryside but as a chance to elaborate and implement policies for better linking rural and urban areas, on the basis of their necessary coexistence in a perspective of economic, social and environmental sustainability. In fact, the geographical context where the Park is located, the Veneto Region, is characterised by the so called "città diffusa", also defined as "horizontal metropolis", a context in which houses, factories and fields are strongly closed to each other (Indovina, 1990). Here the different scales (local, national and global) of the food system are coexisting: even though the agri-food industry is still remunerative despite the economic crisis, an increasing number of citizens is changing food behaviours towards local food chains and more sustainable consumption practices (De Marchi, 2018). The project of the Park has allowed to consolidate the role of existing social forces, coordinate their actions towards the production of policy impacts. Despite the approval in 2014 by the Municipality of Padua of the Guidelines document, articulated in nine themes and a hundred actions to be implemented by public and private actors, the Park has not been implemented yet. The slowness of the process of Park's creation is due to the lack of political support by the current local administration. Despite this, few actions have been co-produced autonomously by some municipalities of the metropolitan area. Moreover, the association for the promotion of the Park is sustaining a spontaneous facilitation among those farmers that would like to produce organic biologic products and to sell them in local markets. Still much needs to be done for acknowledging the Park into current planning policies (see section 2.3.1.3.). According to Ferrario & Lironi (2016), a modification of the Intermunicipal Plan of Padua is needed to develop a policy focus on urban and periurban agriculture able to protect agricultural land from urban expansion and consolidate its recreational value.

Out of Italy, one of the more relevant and known example of Agricultural Parks is the Baix Llobregat Agricultural Park (BLAP) in Barcelona (Spain). This case has shown a positive integration among planning, farmland protection and alternative food networks (AFNs) management (Paül & McKenzie,

2013; Callau & Dorda, 2009). Here, the agricultural park is managed by a consortium formed by a set of institutional and non-institutional actors: the Catalan Government, the Barcelona Provincial Council, the Baix Llobregat District Council, fourteen municipalities and a farmers' union. The importance of this case lies in the crucial role that the public-private and inter-agency partnerships have had in policy making processes. Rather than an imposed land protection device, the BLAP was conceived as a "farmers' initiative to preserve their livelihood" (Paül & McKenzie, 2013). BLAP served as a catalyst for the development of AFNs, also outside the borders of the Park. Specific actions such as the setting up of marketing and technical workshops for support and knowledge exchange among farmers, the creation of a labelling for the park's products, and the launch of touristic programs and promotion strategies have complemented the land-use policies related to farmland protection according to what has been defined as a "unique combination of planning, marketing and policy making strategies" (Paül & McKenzie, 2013).

AGRICULTURAL PARKS	PROMOTERS	VOCATION	ACHIEVEMENTS	LIMITS
Florentine Plan	A group of local actors named "Forum per il parco agricolo della piana di Prato"	Recognition and protection of periurban agriculture	Raise of the awareness of local communities and administrations towards periurban agriculture	Absence of a governance body
Badlands of Atri	Municipality of Atri (TE)	Biodiversity of the agrarian landscape; hydrogeological risk	Creation of incentives for the protection and enhancement of agrarian landscape	Lack of cooperation among farmers and local government
Metropolitan Padua	A group of local associations with few academics	Rural/urban relationships; economic, social and environmental sustainability	Consolidation of existing social forces; production of some policy impacts at local level	Lack of political support; absence of a governance body at intermunicipal level
BLAP Barcelona	Province of Barcelona, Baix Llobregat Concil, Local Farmers' Union	Multi-functional agriculture, development of AFNs	Combination of policies of preservation with food system policies	Still low self-sufficiency in terms of food supply in city of Barcelona

Table 5: Main distinctive features and challenges of agricultural parks.
Source: Elaboration by the author.

The experiences of Agricultural Parks recalled above show a variegated picture of the ways in which this policy can be used as a device to frame and implement actions that have at their focus the preservation and development of periurban agriculture (**Table 5**). While the case of Florentine Plain shows how crucial is the activity of coordination among a variety of actors and initiatives to implement the park's territorial project, the Atri and Padua parks, despite their innovative contents, confirm how difficult, and at the same time crucial, is to put in place a stable policy framework able to interpret Agricultural Parks as real catalysts of successful practices and not as empty containers or ineffective super-structures. The BLAP, on the contrary, demonstrates the importance of involving farmers in building the Park's partnership and of going beyond a mere regulative framework of farmland protection towards fully considering the potentials of food in building an integrated territorial strategy.

2.3.1.2. Urban Containment policies

The concept of Urban Containment (UC) refers to a set of policies aiming at creating geographical constraints to urban growth. UC has often been related to the idea of compactness according to which reducing the urban sprawl and minimising the transport of energy, water, materials, products, and people (Elkin et al., 1991). Notably, the Countries that have included UC policies as central components of their land-use planning systems are United States and United Kingdom according to the influence that the recognition of the costs of sprawl has prompted in policy making processes. These policies are top-down established and merely involve zoning mechanisms that spatially contribute to separate the city from its rural hinterland. The three most known and used policies are Green Belts and Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB) and Urban Service Areas (Pendall & Martin, 2002).

UGB are boundaries among urbanised and rural areas (see section 2.2.1.) and they have been extensively used to minimise land conversion and the environmental impacts of urban expansion by concentrating developments in urban areas. Sometimes UGB are established on a Country basis, as in the case of Washington State for example (Jabareen, 2006) and they are reviewed over time. According to Paül & McKenzie (2013), UGB changes cause uncertainty for farmers regarding their long-term business plans, often inhibiting their investment capacity and resulting in farmers selling their land to developers.

Differently from UGB, Green Belts are intended to be permanent or at least

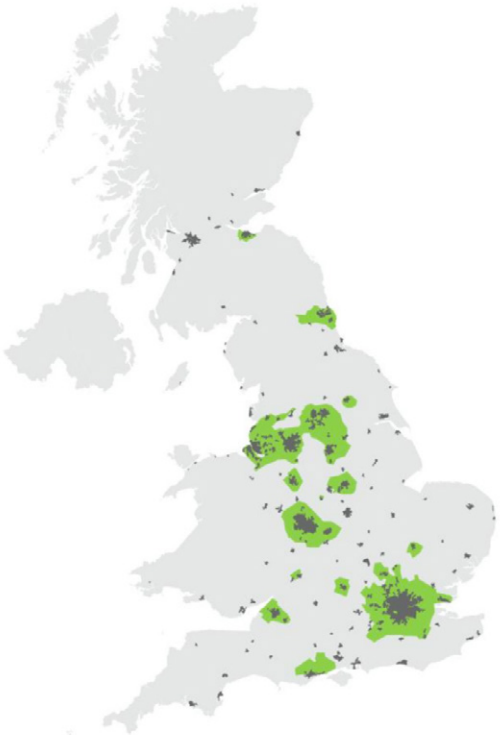


Figure 5: Green Belts in United Kingdom: Source: Sturzaker & Mell (2017).

very difficult to review (see the case of England in section 6.2.). They are edges that surround cities and urban regions where urban development is significantly reduced. Already interpreted as founding figures and real raison d'être of the English planning system (**Figure 5**), as well as one of the most mature and tested tool of land use regulation, the Green Belts are today grounds for dispute and debate (Lazzarini, 2018; Sturzaker & Mell, 2017; Gallent et al., 2006). "Green Belt is a topic around which there is a great deal of heat and not a lot of light" recently argued Sturzaker & Mell (2017). What is clear is that today Green Belts are contested policies for having no real concern on the land included within themselves and for their emphasis on rigid land-use regulations, focusing on permanence and control rather then on integration among different uses and functions (Lazzarini, 2018; Papworth, 2015; Gallent et al., 2006; Albrechts, 2004).

Urban Service Areas are more flexible policy tools than UGB and they define a strategy for growth management aimed at orienting urban expansion in a period of time. One of their goals is to create higher densities and mixed land use patterns on the basis of the maximisation of the use of existing and planned infrastructures. Urban Service Areas often make use of adequate public facilities ordinances aiming at restricting developments unless they are served by necessary roads, public sewers and other technical infrastructures (Pendall & Martin, 2002).

Two are the main limits and weaknesses of UC policy approaches. First of all, these policies are often top-down established and thus they do not usually convey collaborative or participatory processes among local authorities and civil society. This prevents local actors and the citizens that will be affected by the policy to have a say on its content. The second argument regards the quality of land. UC policies establishes a land-use designation without any real concern for the fertility and quality of the land itself (DETR, 2001; Gant et al., 2011). Moreover, the content of the policy has nothing to do with ecological and environmental aspects and on the potential role that the interface could play in improving the ecological performances of City Regions. These aspects will be further developed in chapter 8 in which the case-study analysis of Bristol City Region will be developed.

2.3.1.3. Statutory intermunicipal plans[2]

Purpose of this section is to present the role of intermunicipal plans in addressing the contribution of agricultural areas for shaping relationships among urban and rural areas within a context of a group of municipalities. In Europe, France is surely the Country where the policy discourse about intermunicipal planning has reached the more advanced and sophisticated results. Below a brief analysis of the evolution of intermunicipal planning within the French planning system is presented with the aim of underlying the steps that led to a growing adaptation of the system to the rapidly changing territorial conditions.

2 Some of the contents of this section have been already published in Cinà & Lazzarini (2018).

In France, the Inter-Municipal Plan is interpreted as a “rational tool of territorial organization” (Giudice, 2018). It was introduced in French planning system in 1967 in the “Loi d’Orientation Foncière” (Lof) according to the principle of joint elaboration of two planning tools: the inter-municipal plan called Sdau (“Schéma Directeur d’Aménagement et d’Urbanisme”) and the local plan called Pos (“Plan d’Occupation del Sols”) (Barattucci, 2004: 52). At the end of the 1970s, the number of Sdau elaborated was extremely low and this led some observers to highlight that their scarce role in managing the city growth was a negative consequence of the decentralisation from central to local governments (Merlin, 1994; Barattucci, 2004). In 1995 the Law “Pasqua” gave to inter-municipal planning a new fundamental role in guiding and controlling the urbanisation processes. It produced a new season of reflection and elaboration for inter-municipal plans, which was different from the past for being more flexible and focused on rehabilitating the city and its parts, rather than dealing with quantitative urban growth. Laws “Chevenement” and “Voynet” adopted in 1999, contributed to consolidate the intermunicipal level in planning and other policy sectors. The first carried on a reform of inter-municipality by introducing the “communautés d’agglomération”, the “communautés urbaines” and the “communautés de communes” that come under the name of EPCI (“établissement public de coopération intercommunale”) which are differentiated and, in some specific cases, endowed with an autonomous tax system . The second law has introduced two territorial bodies, the pays and the agglomération, with the task of implementing a territorial project of economic development and urban management (Giudice, 2018: 67) and the “Projet d’Agglomération”, a non binding document for a 15-20-year period as well as a basis of the future seven-year “contrat d’agglomeration”. This document is elaborated in a joint cooperation with a local forum formed partly by members of local civil society (ESPON, 2006). One year later, in 2000, the Law SRU introduced the “Schéma de Cohérence Territoriale” (SCoT), an intermunicipal plan with a strategic role which substituted the previous “Schéma Directeur”. This became a fundamental tool for guaranteeing coherence among different policies such as housing, mobility and infrastructure. The important point is that the SCoTs became mandatory for municipalities since without an approved plan they were not allowed to plan any development. Moreover, the perimeters of each SCoT are not fixed and they do not necessarily correspond to the EPCI administrative level, leaving freedom to municipalities to define the territorial scope of the plan in relation to functional areas or other factors. Each SCoT is made of three documents: a “rapport de presentation”, which is a sort of survey including a diagnostic and an environmental evaluation, the “Projet d’Aménagement et de Développement Durable” (PADD), which constitutes its structural and strategic part, and the “Document d’orientation et d’objectifs” (DOO).

An important step for the integration of issues of biodiversity and ecology in planning processes is made through the approval in 2010 of the Grenelle Law, which introduced and defined a new tool, the “Trame Verte et Bleue” (the green and blue infrastructures). Their main objective is to reduce the habitats’ fragmentation and vulnerability and to preserve biodiversity through ecological networks (Giudice, 2018: 71). Although the relationships among

the scales that address the Trame Verte et Bleue is not clearly specified (Ibid.), the role of SCoT has been reinforced by the Law because it is given a higher relevance to the management of open spaces and the analysis of agricultural and natural land take.

A recent policy evolution is the Law n. 366 (Loi ALUR) approved in 2014 which transferred the planning functions to inter-municipal bodies as a mandatory requirement. It introduced the Plan Local d'Urbanisme Intercommunal (PLUI) which is implemented by a single EPCI. It also established the obligatory of presenting a land take analysis in the past 10 years for justifying the development forecasts (Ibid.: 71).

By looking at the experiences of French intermunicipal plans, the case of Rennes appears crucial for being one of the first inter-municipal administrations in France to elaborate a project of agglomeration (Barattucci, 1994). The "Schéma Directeur" approved in 1994 represented the spatial translation of this project, although in a smaller area because of the difficulty of setting up an integrated plan in a territory of more than one hundred municipal administrations. Prescriptions of the Schéma are oriented to control the sprawl of urbanisation through a set of policies addressed to protect open spaces. The land-use designation underlines the need to preserve agricultural spaces for local economy and recreational uses. In 1999 Laws Voynet and Chevènement has established the Communauté d'agglomération de Rennes Métropole, which included 36 municipalities with more than 300.000 inhabitants, although the administrative status changes but not the perimeters. In the process of elaborating the new SCoT, the borders of the Rennes Métropole were interpreted as too tight. Hence, the Plan kept into consideration the whole metropolitan area covered by the Pays and including 67 municipalities, gathered together in 5 EPCIs. The Pays' guidelines are oriented to rationally utilise territorial resources by protecting agricultural activities and preserving rural landscape. The aim is to achieve a sustainable growth and to manage in a more sustainable way the interdependences among urban, periurban and rural territories and their inhabitants (Barattucci, 2004: 203-204).

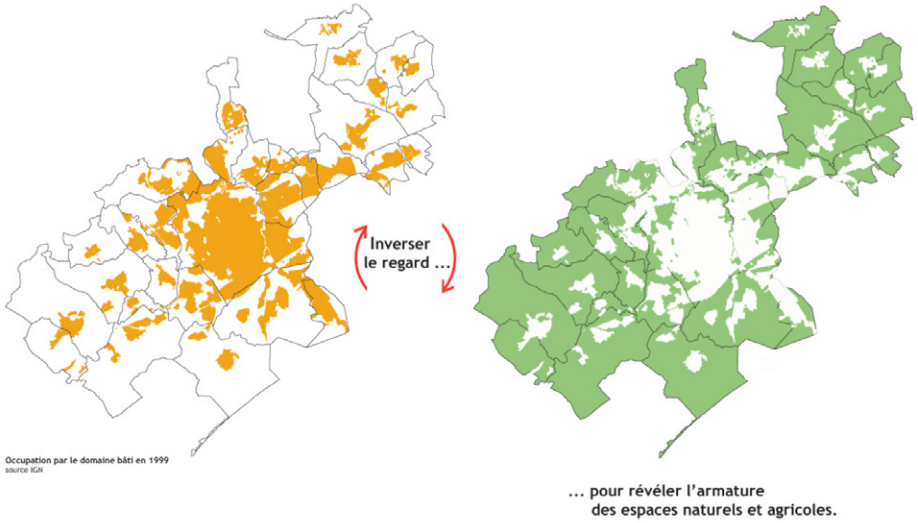


Figure 6: L'inversion du regard. Source: SCoT de la Communauté de l'agglomeration de Montpellier, PADD, 2005.

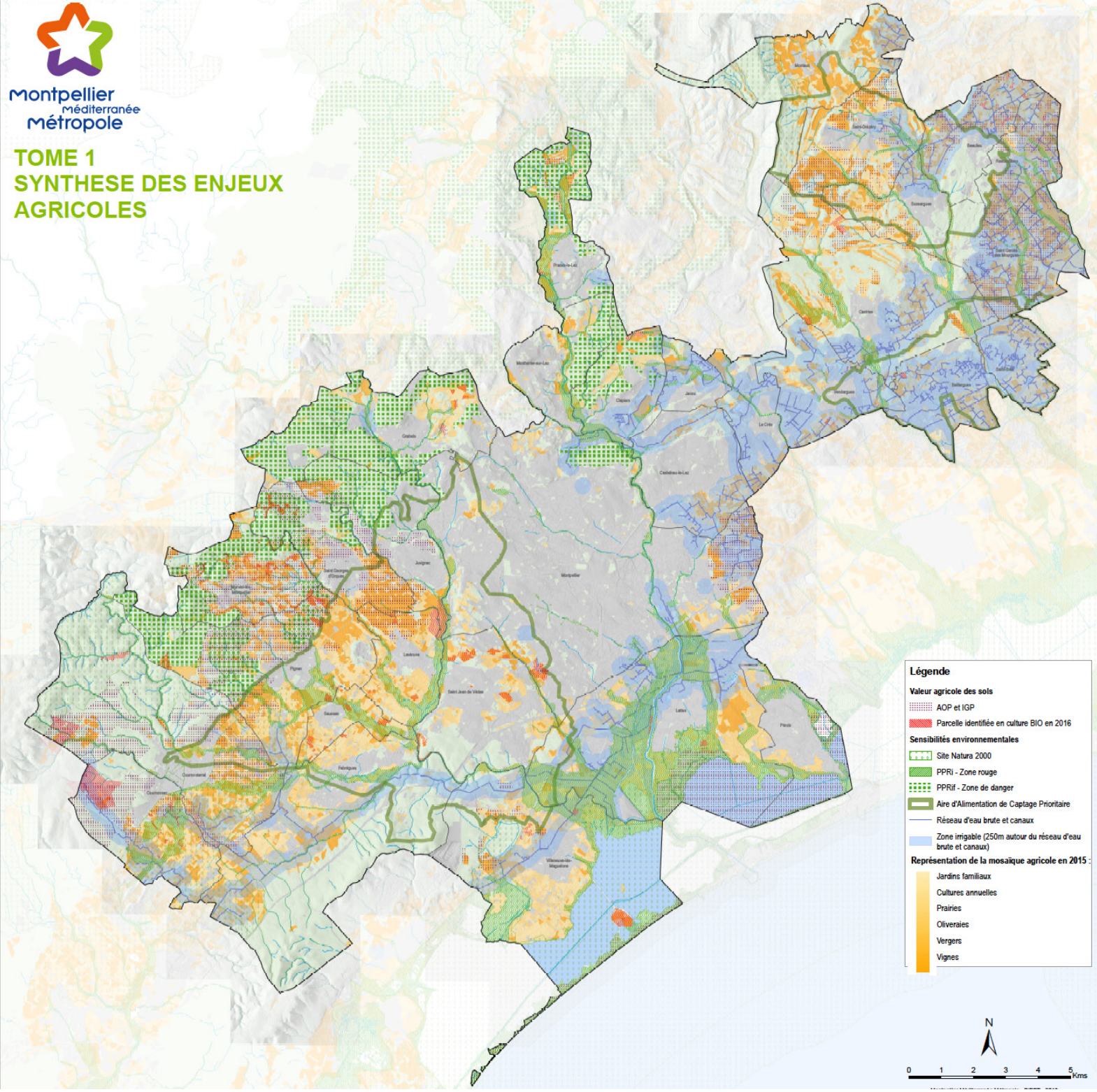


Figure 7: Synthese des enjeux agricoles. Source: Review of the "SCoT de la Communauté de l'agglomeration de Montpellier", 2016.

Also the case of Montpellier presents some interesting clues for the concepts and the policies put in place by the two generations of SCoTs in the metropolitan area covered by the 31 municipalities. The first SCoT was approved in 2006 and it introduced the innovative idea of "inverser le regard", that means to interpret as backbone of territory the green spaces (natural and agricultural areas) and not the urbanised areas, moving the focus from built to the open landscapes (**Figure 6**).

The idea had implications for the urban expansion since the Plan required new developments to deal with the concept of limit which can be "déterminées" or "à conforter" if it is enduring (for the presence of contiguous valuable open spaces) or needs to be consolidated.

In 2015, the Montpellier metropolitan body decided to initiate a process of review of the SCoT around the objectives of preserving the environmental

biodiversity of the region, guiding the economic and demographic development and adapting the territory to the climate change. The process of plan making is still ongoing but some policy guidelines and reports have been already published . Concerning the agricultural spaces, the purpose of the plan is to improve the multi-functionality of periurban farmland by implementing the concept of "lisiéres", which is complementary to the previous "limites" and refers to the opportunity to shape the interface among the city and the countryside. The aim is to recover the fragile equilibrium of agro-natural spaces by preserving their biodiversity and supporting the ecological and energetic transition of agricultural activity (Montpellier Méditeranée Métropole, 2018). Moreover, the SCoT's review provides a map of the agricultural areas (**Figure 7**), which puts in relation the different agricultural productions with the quality of soils. It also underlines the strong interdependencies that municipal territories have in terms of continuity of agro-natural resources. This identifies the SCoT as the crucial scale in terms of its role in managing open spaces and defining ecological strategies.

In Italy, Inter-Municipal plans have never had a wide diffusion as happened in France. The reasons of this lie in the scarce development and unclear administrative and policy definition of inter-municipal associations in Italy, especially with regard to planning (see section 3.2.). The regional contexts where inter-municipal planning has had a higher experimentation are those having well articulated regional legislative framework that promote and guide their implementation, also through an effective system of incentives, like Tuscany, Emilia Romagna and Veneto (Giaimo, 2007).

Among the most relevant experiences of Inter-Municipal Plans addressing agricultural areas in Italy, the case of the Padua Joint Plan ("Piano di Assetto del Territorio Intercomunale") emerges for issues related to the scarce coherence among the objectives and the policies that were put in place (Fregolent, 2014; Ragona, 2009).

The PATI involves 17 Municipalities in the Padua metropolitan area, where about 400,000 inhabitants reside. In year 2000, these Municipalities signed a memorandum of understanding to start the plan making that led in July 2011 to the approval of a new joint structural plan. The PATI follows the guidelines of the Regional Law 11/2004 "Norme per il Governo del Territorio" which allows local governments to cooperate in planning. As reported in article no. 16 of the Law, "the PATI is a medium-term plan [...] that aims at defining [...] the overall objectives and planning configuration of territory without, however, producing consequences on the land-use regime and without making use of any process of expropriation".

The territory of the Plan is the so called Veneto "città diffusa" (Indovina, 1990), a sparsely populated territory, where in the last decades extensive urbanisation processes have deeply transformed the rural landscape, its historical-environmental values and also its weight in local economy. The Municipalities of the metropolitan area have cooperated for developing a joint territorial policy with regard to environmental and soil protection, joint municipal services, mobility system, renewable energy provision and location of inter-municipal industrial areas. The PATI also includes a policy for the protection and enhancement of agricultural landscape, in a context in

which the countryside is now deeply compromised by a relevant amount of development proposals which are foreseen in the Local Plans. By using the expression “landscapes to be regenerated”, the plan indicates those territories in which promoting and protecting farmland and permanent meadows. Within these areas, the plan prohibits activities and interventions that may lead to the deterioration of the natural resources and biodiversity (Comunità Metropolitana di Padova, 2011). Furthermore, the PATI identifies the areas where “Metropolitan Parks” can be established. These parks should have the purpose of connecting valuable environmental and landscape elements, enhancing their value and protecting the historical and cultural emergencies of the agricultural landscape.

An analysis of the Plan has highlighted few inconsistencies, mostly regarding the coherence among the PATI policies and the contents of the local plans. In fact, in the plan’s report (Comunità Metropolitana di Padova, 2011), it is specified that “among the plan’s essential aims there is the protection of the agricultural landscape”, according to what is defined as “a new planning vision that aims at protecting natural, environmental and cultural resources and at ensuring an effective control of the processes of land consumption and fragmentation of rural matrices”.

A first limit emerges from the fact that agriculture has been one of the domains excluded from the competencies of the PATIs. In fact, the land-use policy concerning open space preservation and development forecasts has been assigned to the PATs (“Piano di Assetto del Territorio”), the Local Plans that each municipality is required to produce (Ragona, 2009). As a consequence, it emerges a well-known dynamic according to which, despite the presence of a sub-regional planning policy, municipalities are not required to be consistent with it and they adopt a different vision in their local planning policies.

A second contradiction emerges from the prescriptions included in regional law n. 11/2004. These introduce the principle of “ecological sustainability and environmental resources’ preservation” at the foundation of the new local plans. The law requires municipalities to use greenfield for new developments only when there is no possibility of using previously developed land. In the metropolitan area of Padua, as underlined by a recent report written by a local environmental group (Ibid.), there are more than 3 million sqm of areas foreseen by the Local Plans of the various Municipalities for industrial and commercial activities. Despite this, the new PATI not only does not reduce these amount of developments, but it adds other 1.446.315 square meters of new urbanisations, which bring the urbanized areas to 4 and a half million sqms. As reported in the same document, the foreseen developments are going to generate additional CO2 emissions of about 617,000 tons per year, which will bring an increase of about 23.45% compared to current emissions (Ragona, 2009). The ambiguities reported above materialize a gap that clearly undermines the credibility and effectiveness of the Plan with respect to the objectives of protection and enhancement of the agricultural landscape.

Among the planning tools used by inter-municipal plans, it is relevant to mention the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) for its role in distributing the positive and negative externalities of a new inter-municipal development

among the local governments involved in the Plan. The interest of TDR for farmland protection and development lies in its potential contribution to an overall vision of sustainable urban development according to the need to limit as much as possible the use of fertile and valuable agricultural land for hosting city's expansion. This policy can be employed by local, intermunicipal or territorial plans for moving development rights from one area ("sending area") to another one ("receiving area"), with the result of minimising the use of land for new developments. The use of TDR is twofold. It can be used by a local government as a viable alternative to expropriation for acquiring areas to host public facilities and for preserving valuable landscape areas from being urbanised. It can also be exercised by a group of local authorities as an inter-municipal form of planning that aims at reorganising the developments foreseen by Local Plans to reduce soil consumptions, to maximise the use of brownfields or of previously developed land for hosting new urbanisation, and to protect farmland or high-value environmental areas from being urbanised (Lazzarini & Chiarini, 2017).

2.3.1.4. Other mainstream policies and tools[3]

Another group of tools and policies is the one interpreting rivers and other hydrographic elements as infrastructures around which projects and actions of environmental regeneration and protection can be activated. These policies and tools consider water as the primary element around which a collaboration among a variety of actors can be set up in order to implement joint policies and interventions. The interest of this tool with reference to urban/rural relationships lies in the fact that rivers are often elements used for connecting the inner parts of cities with their peripheral and hinterland areas or mountainous areas with valley floor and coastal areas within a systemic vision. In Italy Law n. 183/1989 "Norme per il riassetto riorganizzativo e funzionale della difesa del suolo" introduced a set of tools to ensure soil conservation, water rehabilitation, fruition and management of the hydrogeological heritage and protection of the related environmental resources. The Law defined the approach of the watershed planning ("Pianificazione di bacino"), an integrated form of planning aimed at dealing with hydrogeological risk by setting up guidelines regarding the ways of use of territory. The tool of this form of planning is a river basin plan ("Piano di bacino idrografico") whose main objectives are to elaborate an integrated knowledge framework, to identify the phenomena of degradation and the works needed for solving and compensating them (Gaeta et al., 2013). Its importance lies in the opportunity to convey territorial planning policies and to tackle the relationships among the water system and the other territorial resources, including agriculture (Fanfani, 2014).

One of the more common policy tool belonging to this group is the river contract. This is a negotiated and participatory strategic planning tool aimed at protecting and managing in a sustainable way the water resources, enhancing the river areas and reducing the hydraulic risk. At the European

3 Some of the contents of this section have been already published in Lazzarini (2017).

level, the legislative framework of the river contracts is the European Water Framework Directive 60/2000 of the European Commission and the European Landscape Convention of year 2000. The river contracts have developed especially in France, Belgium ("contrats de rivière"), Italy and recently also in other European Countries (Bastiani, 2012). As reported in the National Charter of River Contracts of Italy (2011), the role of negotiation between public administrations and private actors involved at different levels in the Contracts takes the form of multi-sectoral and multi-scalar agreements where the voluntary nature and the flexibility of action are the connoting features of decision-making processes. Another key aspect is the contribution of the River Contract in reorienting and integrating the content of urban and territorial planning tools.

2.3.2. Innovative approaches and policies

2.3.2.1. Integrated planning policies for city/countryside relationships

The objective of improving functional and spatial relationships among city and countryside has pushed in the last decade the experimentation of innovative forms of planning policies, both at territorial, intermunicipal and local level. The innovative features of these policies lie in overcoming the physical and conceptual separation among urban and rural areas and in working on the functional interdependencies that frame periurban farmland as a spatial system closely integrated both to cities and countryside. More than a peripheral space in which sectoral local policies intervene in a patchy way, the interface is interpreted as an arena for experimenting open decision making processes involving both public and non-institutional actors and

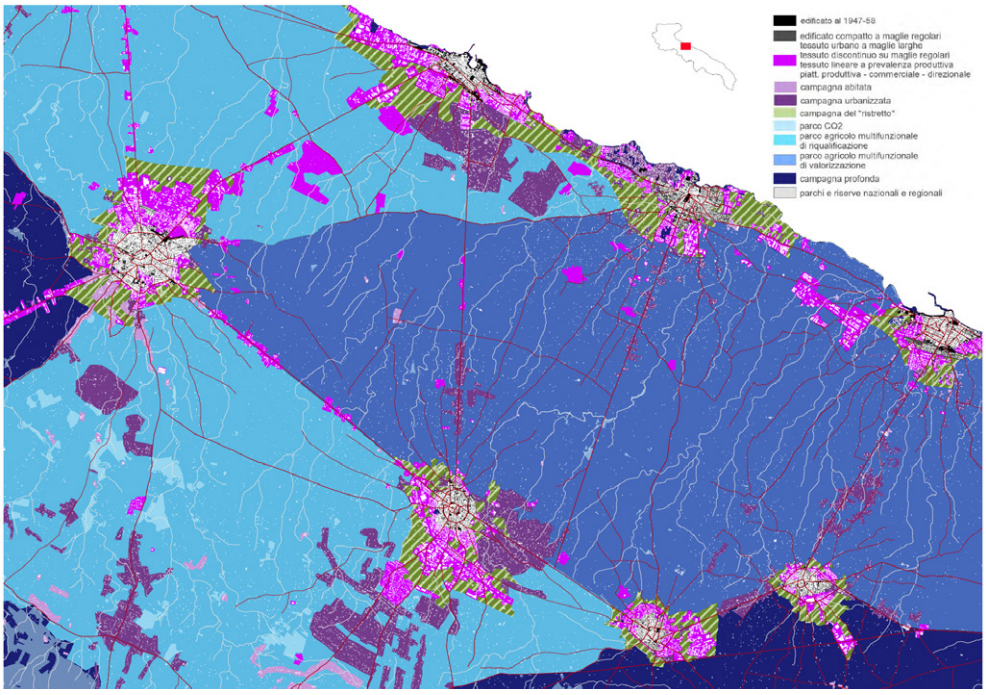


Figure 8: Extract from the City-Countryside Pact of the Puglia PPTR. Source: Regione Puglia, 2015b.

for testing innovative policies and tools bridging the traditional urban/rural dichotomy.

The experience of the Territorial Landscape Plan of the Puglia Region is relevant for the multi-sectorial approach taken to coordinate different actions addressed to improve the landscape quality of the regional territory and qualify their social, cultural and environmental resources (Barbanente, 2015b). By interpreting landscape as a continuously evolving and socially constructed project, and as being continuously affected by a process of attribution of values and meanings (Barbanente, 2015a), the Plan has the purpose to "intercept dynamics currently underway in the territories, giving impulse to the creativity of those who live and work in local realities, and search for interaction with other ongoing or future projects aimed at promoting the rebirth of places and their care" (Barbanente, 2015a). In this sense, the policies of the Plan are interpreted not as arrival points but as "meta-norms" able to inform and influence actions and projects, prescriptions, guidelines and directives, coming from lower administrative levels.

The contribution of the Plan to design and reframe urban/rural relationships comes from the contents of one of the five territorial projects, the "City-Countryside Pact" (**Figure 8**), whose aim is to "raise the landscape quality of urban and rural territories through active policies of preservation and qualification" (Regione Puglia, 2015). According to Mininni (2012), the importance of the Pact lies in helping to better clarify the role of the periurban space at intermunicipal and local scale and to define the level of social, geographical and economical approximation among regional and local planning policies.

The Pact frames periurban farmland as a crucial arena for improving the quality of the countryside and for developing the multifunctional potentials of farming in providing services for cities and urban settlements. The application of the PPTR's "City-Countryside Pact" at the local scale has been able to support policies of regeneration of urban peripheries, environmental rehabilitation and redesign of rural spaces through a process of elaboration, adaptation, redefinition of its contents (Mininni, 2013). The focus is not narrowed just to urban or rural areas but jointly on urban and rural territories with the purpose of clearly defining the boundaries, functions and public spaces of the city and of stopping the degeneration of the countryside (PPTR Puglia, 2015: 22). More specifically, the three categories of planned interventions are oriented to create intersections among the Landscape Territorial Plan and the Rural Development Plan (RDP) following the idea that an integrated approach among rural development, ecological and landscape planning, urban regeneration and infrastructural planning is needed to address the challenges of the interface. Hence, the indication is to include in the RDP Tenders some selection criteria coherent with the PPTR and to use some of the RDP measures to improve the responsibility of farmers in guaranteeing or improving the quality of agrarian landscape. From the governance point of view, what is needed is a coordination among a variety of strategies and projects, hence the convergence of a system of incentives and resources coming from different programs and involving various set of actors which belong to different decisional and operative settings. Although local communities were not always ready to take advantage of the potentials

of the Pact to develop actions for safeguarding and developing the territorial capital, the use of a heterogeneous set of tools and policies, together with the openness and the relative freedom of approximation, have allowed to conceive the Pact as a social and spatial Laboratory and to frame periurban territory as an arena for building spatial and institutional alliances (Mininni, 2013).

Starting from the same idea of interpreting the periurban agricultural land as a resource around which improving urban/rural relationships, the Bologna's "City-Countryside Park" has gathered a group of municipalities to work together with the supervision of the Province (now Metropolitan City) of Bologna for improving the livability of the countryside (Deriu, 2009). The area where the project operates is the western portion of the province of Bologna, a context characterized by the transformation in the last 20 years of the relationship among open spaces and urban areas in what has been defined as a "hybridization of agricultural, residential, manufacturing and tertiary uses" (Deriu, 2009: 138). The roots of this project lie in the inter-institutional committee which was formed to jointly elaborate the structural plan of the City of Bologna. It was set up with the purpose to run for regional funding to elaborate a territorial project for developing the multi-functionality of agricultural territory[4]. By signing an agreement, the local authorities involved in the Committee, helped by a group of local associations, planned a set of actions on a portion of 50 hectares' agricultural land aiming at its requalification for maintaining its productive use and fostering its recreational and social role. Actions range from the creation of a system of soft mobility paths, the qualification of the centrality of Villa Bernaroli through the improvement of public spaces to the establishment of new attractive functions, and the re-use of abandoned agricultural areas for recreational uses (Deriu, 2009).

Looking beyond Italy, an interesting and consolidated experience of innovative interpretation of urban/rural relationships is the French case of Pays du Mans, an area of 270.000 inhabitants including 48 municipalities, formally recognised as an intermunicipal form of cooperation that was established in 2002. The strategy for sustainable development implemented by the body has at its focus the strengthening of the relationships among urban and rural areas (German Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning, 2012). One major project within the program is oriented to support farming and to guarantee a better access to local food products for local inhabitants. In this sense, actions aimed at strengthening the links among farmers, school canteens, restaurants and households in the light of improving the interdependencies among cities and surrounding rural areas. Crucial for achieving the objectives has been the involvement of the 142 members of the Pays du Mans body in the formulation and implementation of the strategy, breaking down the isolation of rural areas and creating more effective arenas of exchange among rural and urban stakeholders.

4 The project obtained funding from the Regional funding program of Emilia Romagna in 2007, according to regional law n. 20/2000.

2.3.2.2. City Region Food policies[5]

The City Region Food System (CRFS) approach is based on the idea that the full consideration of sustainable food systems in urban policies cannot avoid to consider the interdependencies that link together cities with their rural hinterlands. This approach interprets City Region as the most suitable and appropriate scale for implementing integrated and comprehensive solutions for a future-proof urban food system (Renting et al., 2015). The city-region concept is defined in general terms by the presence of an urban core interrelated to its semi-urban and rural hinterland by functional ties (Rodríguez-Pose 2008). Current research perspectives look at City-Regions not as geographically predetermined and static constructs, but as dynamic spaces of mutual interactions, kept together by common interests and functional links (Jonas, 2012), and as spaces in which the relational dimension becomes fundamental (Massey, 2005; Paasi, 2011; Dansero et al., 2016) (see section 1.2.1.).

By demonstrating how the issue of governance is central to the analysis of the City-Regions, Reed et al. (2013) describe the multiple connections that link together policies and strategies, underlining the critical contribution of public and private interests in overcoming the traditional dichotomy among urban and rural and in affirming new approaches - incremental or radical – of policies' territorialisation. Also according to Dansero et al. (2017), governance is the key-feature making the City-Region Food System (CRFS) model the more fertile approach to describe and investigate the relational spaces of food. Dubbeling (2015) underlines the potentials of this concept to address food spaces in the frame of urban/rural relationships: "Food governance can be improved by setting up and strengthening new organisational and multi-stakeholder structures that facilitate the involvement of different government departments and jurisdictions (local and provincial), of various stakeholders and those that link civil society activities and initiatives to more formal food policy and planning".

Among the more interesting attempts to analyse the City Region dimension of food systems there is the "Who feeds Bristol?" report. In the report it is stated that the food system of Bristol (United Kingdom) is inextricably linked, now and in the future, with the one of the neighbouring authorities and hence it cannot be viewed in isolation (Carey, 2011). The report had the merit to shed light on the importance of food for local economy of the West of England. Despite the presence of an active Food Policy Council and of many local food initiatives that have influenced in some ways the policy level, still the lack of an official food strategy or food plan adopted by Bristol City Council or by the City Region authority (West of England LEP) is a sign of the poor interest by local authorities in setting up coordinated actions in the field of food policies (see Chapter 7).

A good case for measuring the changes introduced by local food narrative at the policy level is coming from the City of Pisa (Italy), where an arena of exchange and discussion about food policies among citizens, researchers

5 Some of the contents of this section have been already published in Cinà & Lazzarini (2018).

from local university, planning officers and entrepreneurs from the production and distribution sectors was created in 2008. Here the role of Province has been crucial in coordinating the group of municipalities (19 of 39 municipalities of the Province have taken part to the process) and in guiding the process of construction of a Provincial Food Plan (Di Iacovo et al., 2013). In 2010, a formal document of guidelines for building a Food Plan was formally adopted by the Province. In reality, the process, still ongoing, brought to the production of three main documents, a Food Chart, a Strategy and a Plan. While the Chart defines the general objectives concerning health, education, equity and sustainability, raising the urgent need to improve the coordination among and the sectoral approach of the actors involved, the Strategy and the Plan have seen the commitment of public and private actors to work together for realising the contents of the Chart (Butelli, 2015).

United States and Canada are the countries where the policy discourse on food systems has found a more advanced development. This is due to the urgency with which the problems related to unhealthy lifestyles of populations together with the many inefficiencies characterising the food system emerged. Toronto, for example, is one of the first cities in the world to develop, in 1991, a food strategy. The Toronto Food Policy Council (TPFC) has among its objectives, the facilitation of the dialogue among various actors differently involved in food system and the promotion of advocacy actions to guide the activity of local administrations. The most relevant element lies in the active role that the TPFC has had in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), the metropolitan authority, concerning the innovation of the agricultural policies and the diversification of farming. One of the more relevant results of this activity is the implementation of the Food Action Plan 2021 which has a metropolitan scale and it involves 5 strategies and 18 actions, whose process of monitoring is entrusted to municipalities (Calori & Magarini, 2015).

Also the San Francisco City Council has had since few decades an active involvement in the field of food policies. The presence of the San Francisco Food Alliance, born in 2003 with the purpose of creating a dynamic platform for the city and the county, and a Food Policy Council, formed by members of different sectors of the local administration and open to the participation of other social actors, are two arenas for discussion and exchange for improving the sustainability of the urban food system. Although not formally recognised as a food policy, in 2009 an act by the Mayor gave the indication to the sectors of the local administration to implement the food strategy, which was previously elaborated on the basis of an assessment and a project made by the Food Alliance and by the San Francisco Department of Public Health. The territory of application of the policy is the City Region as the city government administers both the municipal and the county territory (Calori & Magarini, 2015).

2.3.2.3. The Urban Bioregion approach

The bioregion concept was introduced in Italy in the last decade as an evolution of the ‘territorialist’ approach, conceptualised at the beginning of 1990s by a group of Italian academics with research interests in urban

planning and sociology. The 'territorialist' approach interprets the territory as an historical product of long-lasting co-evolutionary processes among human settlements and environment, nature and culture, on the basis of layered cycles of civilisation (Magnaghi, 1990). One of the major concept at the basis of the territorialist approach is heritage, interpreted as a depositary of a 'genetic code', capable of transmitting the long-term 'transformation rules' of the various natural and cultural environments, a constant result of a long series of evidences and errors constituting the co-evolutionary and co-adaptive process of local societies with their environment (Gisotti, 2015). Compared to other approaches to sustainable development, the territorialist approach distinguishes itself for the greater attention to the local scale and for the consideration of environmental sustainability as inseparable from cultural, social, political and economical aspects (Magnaghi, 1990).

Starting from territorialist assumptions, the concept of Bioregion explicitly recalls the definition by Patrick Geddes of the "valley section", in which a co-evolutionary relationship is established between the specific characters of the geo-morphological structure of hydrographic basins and the productive cultures and lifestyles of communities. This relationship is framed by a strong interconnection among place, work and inhabitants (folk) (Magnaghi, 2014). The bioregional approach takes Geddes' assumptions and reframes them for developing a dimension of local project as a way to interpret territory not as a mere support to economic development but as a central entity in which the redefinition of the relationships among places, productive factors and local communities needs to be continuously investigated (Magnaghi, 2011).

Beyond Geddes, the theoretical roots of Bioregionalism may be tracked on what Cappuccio (2009) defines as the cultural movements, comprising ecological, socialist, utopian and anarchist positions, emerged in United States during the 1950s in opposition to the Cartesian paradigm. Among the bioregional thinkers, Peter Berg is surely one of the more influential. According to Berg, bioregionalism could be viewed as a way to transform societies and enact a "biocentric philosophy" (Glotfelty & Quesnel, 2015: 3) for achieving three goals to be realised locally. First a rehabilitation requiring the restoration and conservation of natural systems; second "the people of each bioregion should find ways to meet basic human needs sustainably, relying as much as possible on local materials and resources", including food, shelter, energy and transportation; and third, "there must be support for individuals engaged in the work of sustainability" (Glotfelty & Quesnel, 2015: 3). In 1973 Berg created with his partner Joy Goldhaft the Planet Drum Foundation, a bioregional activity centre that rapidly became a global node for radical politics such as the ecologist New Left as well as a network that facilitated the communication among groups and people advocating bioregional principles from all around the world (Cappuccio, 2009).

While the intellectual activity of Berg was more focused on spreading the principles of the so called "deep ecology", Murray Bookchin explored the social and political connotations of bioregionalism, particularly the problems of self-government of local communities. By criticising harshly all political approaches that do not lead toward municipal self-management (Ibid.), he defines the municipality as the fundamental social and political reality "from which everything else must emerge: confederation, interdependence,

citizenship, and freedom" (Bookchin, 1987). Bookchin also interpreted the municipal entity as "delicately attuned to the natural ecosystem in which is located". This led Clark (1998) to underline that Bookchin's thought was able to build strong intellectual links among the municipalist movement and the principles of the socio-ecological politics.

Drawing on Bookchin and Berg, but also on Sale (1991), Magnaghi defines the Urban Bioregion as a local territorial system characterised by the presence of:

- a plurality of urban and rural centres organised in reticular and non hierarchical order;
- complex and differentiated hydro-geomorphological and environmental systems, which have a relation with urban and agro-forestry systems;
- forms of self-government finalised to the sustainability of the system and to the wellbeing of inhabitants (Magnaghi, 2014).

The consideration of the Urban Bioregion as a field of interaction between cities and agro-forestry systems and of identification of positive relationships and rules of spatial transformation (Magnaghi, 2014) has allowed to frame it as a fertile paradigm for the production of planning policies and visions (Colavitti & Pes, 2017). Particularly during the last few years, the theoretical assumptions of the bioregional approach have been applied to a number of plans, projects and planning tools both at territorial and local levels. Some of the more representative cases in Italy have been the Structural Plans of Scandicci, Follonica and Lastra a Signa in Tuscany, the Territorial Coordination Plan of the Province of Prato and the Regional Landscape Plans of Apulia (see section 2.3.2.1.) and Tuscany (Gisotti, 2015:26). In particular, the case of Lastra a Signa is interesting for the participatory process developed during the revision of the Local Plan and Building code. The main theme was the environmental, territorial and landscape regeneration of the Ponte a Signa neighbourhood through the ecological and functional reconnection of open spaces. By involving a wide range of local actors, including students from secondary schools and local inhabitants, the strategic scenario proposed by the local administration was enriched with a group of other local projects, moving the focus towards issues that were previously overlooked (Rubino, 2014).

Among the territorial projects influenced by the bioregional approach, the one that deals more explicitly with farmland is the "Progetto Territoriale di Agricoltura periurbana in riva sinistra dell'Arno" promoted by the Province of Florence in 2012. The project aimed at safeguarding the agricultural vocation of the plain on the left side of river Arno on the basis of an agreement among the Regional and the Provincial governments, 4 Local authorities and the University of Florence. The idea was to implement a Rural Laboratory according to which initiating policies of land-use conservation and putting in place a set of incentives aimed at encouraging the birth of young entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector (Giliberti, 2015).

2.3.2.4. Other innovative approaches

Continuous Productive Urban Landscape (CPUL) is a concept aiming to

coherently integrate urban agriculture into interlinked, multi-functional and productive open urban space networks (Bohn & Viljoen, 2012). It was coined at the end of the 1990s by Katrin Bohn and André Viljoen during their design research activity while exploring the possible interlink among farming and urban design. What distinguishes CPUL from other design approaches, is its underlying physical and design strategy aiming at investigating the potentials of urban agriculture in jointly contributing to more sustainable and resilient food systems and improving the urban realm (Bohn & Viljoen, 2012). The need to give to CPUL a clear planning framework has pushed the authors to develop a CPUL City Toolkit, interpreted as a planning and design guide for implementing more localised urban food systems. The Toolkit is made of four distinct methods of action, all of whose calling for inter and trans-disciplinary approaches (Bohn & Viljoen, 2012):

- Action U+D: integrating bottom up and top down initiatives to give urban agriculture projects the best chance to be successful on the long term basis;
- Action VIS: visualising ideas, data and best-practice examples in various forms such as exhibitions, installations, talks, websites and publications, to raise public awareness and influence decision makers;
- Action IUC: promoting as “inventory of urban capacity”, namely the capacity of stakeholders and managers to mediate among different initiatives;
- Action R: accommodating change within theory and practice by developing applied design research.

The authors identified the cases of Berlin and London as two urban regions that have applied some of the actions above mentioned and thus have explored the impacts of CPUL in local policy making processes and in their planning systems. Beyond the recognition of the real policy impacts of the CPUL concept, its interest lies in the power it had on challenging the professional activity and the design approaches of architects and planners towards a better acknowledgment in the project contents of the challenges related to the transition towards more sustainable urban food systems.

A more theoretical approach is the one taken by the Agroecological Urbanism. The concept was launched in 2017, during the 8th Annual Conference of the AESOP Sustainable Food Planning (SFP) in Coventry (United Kingdom) by the Chair, Chiara Tornaghi. Based on the idea to include food provision control and localisation in the urbanisation processes, the main goal is to enlarge the conversation and the knowledge exchange among “innovative practices, political strategies, alternative economic models, different forms of land management and a new valuing system” to make up an alternative form of urbanism (Tornaghi & Dehaene, 2017). By incorporating food production and consumption in all their dimensions, the purpose is to use the value-based approach of urban agroecology (among the many: Van Dyck et al., 2017) and its emphasis on social and environmental justice and on building coalitions of actors striving for food sovereignty across urban and rural domains, for originating what Tornaghi and Dehaene define as a “resourceful, reproductive and agroecological urbanism” (Tornaghi & Dehaene, 2017), an urbanism where practical knowledge on sustainable food systems challenges pedagogies and paradigms of urban planning. While an

evaluation of the effective application of this concept in policy and practice is still premature, it is clear the attempt to re-frame the traditional urbanisation paradigm in the light of bringing back food at the centre of urban dynamics.

2.4. The choice of case studies

After the general presentation of what I interpreted as the more meaningful collaborative planning approaches addressed to shape urban/rural relationships, I am going to investigate in depth three case studies to reflect upon some of their specific institutional and geographical features. The identification of the case studies is based upon three main criteria, which derive from the conditions of indicativeness, representativeness and usefulness of the cases for describing phenomena that can be found also in other contexts. The three criteria are the following:

1. the case studies are indicative of different spatial configurations of urban/rural relationships (Jacuniak-Suda et al., 2018; Bengs & Schmidt-Thomé, 2006; OECD, 2013);
2. the case-studies are representative of different forms of local governments' cooperation in two distinctive institutional contexts and planning frameworks (Teles & Swianiewicz, 2018; Teles, 2016);
3. the case-studies are useful grounds to apply the scenario-method for achieving a transformation of the governance and planning models (Viganò, 2010; Myers & Kitsuse, 2000).

Below it is provided an explanation of the three criteria with reference to the three case-studies chosen by the author, Milan, Bristol and Aso Valley cases.

2.4.1. First criterion: investigating different spatial configurations of urban/rural relationships

In the first case the purpose is to interpret the three case studies, Bristol, Milan and the Aso Valley, as three indicative cases of the spatial dimension of urban/rural relationships. In this sense, the motivation relates to the need to fully understand the typologies of functional and structural relations that can shape the interdependencies among city and countryside (Bengs & Schmidt-Thomé, 2006), focusing specifically on the contribution of agricultural areas.

The reference here goes to the interpretation of the concept of urban/rural relationships made by EU official documents, which has emerged in relation to the need to form partnerships, alliances and coalitions among actors that share the intention to work together across the urban/rural continuum for achieving common objectives. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2013), urban/rural relationships are not attached to a special size of towns or to a certain spatial extent. This vision appeared in year 2000 in European projects and programs, as for example in the URMA project in which urban/rural cooperation happened in a number of different spatial systems (Jacuniak-Suda et al., 2018), from

regions and metropolitan areas to small municipalities (see section 2.1.2.)[6]. Conversely, “they are a concept both for metropolitan regions and for small and medium sized towns” (Ibid.). OECD (2013) has proposed a distinction between three kinds of spatial backgrounds for rural-urban partnerships:

- Metropolitan regions, where “rural areas mainly have the role of servicing the urban region”;
- Networks of small and medium sized-cities with a spatially diffused economy where “rural areas act as semi-autonomous growth poles”;
- Sparsely populated areas with market towns where “urban areas do not play a role as engines of growth” and where the “regional economy depends on resources and activities located in rural areas”.

Hence, it can be acknowledged that the three case-studies are indicative of the three spatial backgrounds introduced by OECD in 2013. Accordingly, the case of Milan and its agricultural park is indicative of a metropolitan region in which agricultural areas in the hinterland are increasingly recognised as providers of local and fresh food and of natural and recreational places for local urban communities. The case of Bristol City Region has a geographical configuration in which few small-medium sized cities are strictly interconnected to a cluster of rural areas, most of which safeguarded by the Green Belt designation, and where the hotspots of local urban economy are distributed not in a single location but in a variety of poles and areas often within or in proximity to rural areas. Moreover, the case of Aso Valley is indicative of a rural context where urban areas have a small size and where economic resources and activities are located mainly in rural areas, from which they draw the means of their existence.

Accordingly, the investigation of these three cases —a metropolitan area, a city region and a rural valley— is able to give back to the reader a picture of the different spatial configurations that urban/rural relationships can assume in contemporary territories. The analysis is also able to describe how and through with policies planning can address the role of farmland in building stronger functional ties among city and countryside.

2.4.2. Second criterion: analysing local governments’ cooperation efficiency within different planning systems

The second criterion is framed by the idea to look at Milan, Bristol and the Aso Valley as representative cases of three different forms of local governments’ cooperation and cooperative planning policies which have an impact on the farmland surrounding urban areas and on functional urban/rural relationships. The three forms of cooperation represented by the three case studies are: the Authority of an agricultural park in the case of Milan (see section 4.4.2.), the Union of Local Councils in the case of Aso Valley

6 Despite this, already in the 1990s, some planning policies interpreted urban/rural relationships as a concept able to explain different spatial situations, regardless of the scale and spatial characters of the territory under investigation. One of the more interesting case at this regard is the “Piano di Inquadramento Territoriale” (PIT) of Marche Region (see section 5.3.1.).

(see section 5.4.2.), and the Local Enterprise Partnership (see section 7.4.2.) in the case of Bristol.

This criterion relates to the opportunity of studying the administrative efficiency of three different Inter-Municipal arrangements and of their planning policies. In particular, the purpose is to reflect upon some trends of Inter-Municipal Cooperation (IMC) such as:

- the efficiency of horizontal interaction among a variety of local governments across the urban/rural interface and the ways in which different actors from public, private and non-profit sectors work together for framing a vision of farmland and agricultural activity as a functional system that could rethink the urban/rural dichotomy (Teles & Swianiewicz, 2018);
- the level of democratic legitimacy and political leadership characterising intermunicipal cooperative arrangements (Teles & Swianiewicz, 2018);
- the link between austerity policies and cooperative arrangements in Italy, a domestic context where recent territorial reforms attempted to rationalise the architecture of local governments (Bolgherini, 2016) and in England where devolution processes in 2011 have created massive consequences for local governments financial autonomy (Pugalis and Townsend, 2012) (see Introduction);
- the effectiveness of IMC within two planning systems, the Italian and the English one, characterised by two different rationales which have "respective cultural assumptions and technical procedures producing, in virtue of juridical effects, different operational consequences on spatial development and on territorial governance" (Janin Rivolin, 2008). Janin Rivolin (2008) defined the Italian and the English planning systems as expressions respectively of a "conformative" planning model, aimed at conforming spatial developments to general strategies in accordance with some specified standard or authority, and of a "performative" planning system in which local authorities are not conditioned by binding zoning regulations and are endowed with discretionary powers to admit those developments that are coherent with some collective strategies proposed by the plan.
- the effectiveness of different collaborative planning approaches to frame and shape more effective urban/rural relationships. Hence, I chose Milan, Bristol and the Aso Valley as representative of three planning approaches to address urban/rural relationships. I interpreted the case of PASM in Milan as a meaningful example of an agricultural park, which is one of the mainstream approaches to address urban/rural interdependencies (see section 2.3.1.1.). In case of Bristol City Region, I have investigated an Urban Containment policy, the West of England Green Belt, which represents a second mainstream planning approach (see section 2.3.1.2.). In the case of Aso Valley, I analysed an innovative planning approach because of the presence of soft and multi-purpose spaces of cooperation (see section 5.4.3.) having at their focus an interpretation of agriculture as a phenomenon strictly embedded in the economic, social and functional system and which overcomes the traditional dichotomy among urban and rural areas.

2.4.3. Third criterion: building scenarios for policy transformations

The third criterion draws from the idea that the intellectual identity or mission of planning is “foresight” (Markusen, 1998), thus a focus on future and pathways of change over time. By recalling the assumption that “decision making in planning cannot avoid addressing the future” (Myers & Kitsuse, 2000), the purpose is to direct the case-study analysis towards investigating how to improve current local governance processes and answer to specific policy-related problems emerged from the preliminary evidences, the literature survey and the results gathered from the analysis. As it will be deepened later on in the thesis, the issues arising from the case-study analysis are multiple: administrative inefficiencies, communicative gaps, mismatches among territorial and institutional processes, knowledge and financial barriers to innovation, land-use and space-related conflicts and lack of coordination among actors and scarce technical expertise. These provide the chance to intervene by exploring future possibilities and transforming current conditions towards the achievement of a desired change. Accordingly, the case studies were chosen because they served as useful grounds for building up three hypotheses of transformation of the current governance and planning processes.

The approach I use here is the scenario-making approach. It is interpreted as one of the representational methods through which planners have addressed a discussion about possible futures (Myers & Kitsuse, 2000; see also: Albrechts, 2012). According to Secchi (2000), the scenario building is a useful way to look forward to construct new orders and to originate alternative ways of framing current realities. Stojanović et al. (2014) pointed out that the advantages of the scenario technique lie in dealing positively with the complexity of systems and the uncertainty of impeding changes, to think “outside the box” and to adapt to rapidly changing economic and social conditions (see section 1.2.5.).

The merit of establishing the scenario and the other future-oriented approaches comes from the American futurist thought, which had emerged during the 1970s as an answer to the so called “Naive projection” according to which current trends were simply extrapolated to the future (Kahn & Bruce-Briggs, 1972). For example, Herman Kahn, one of the most known American futurists and nuclear theorists, used in early 1970s the scenarios to imagine the future of America, looking at a necessary adaptation, “as a carefully thought out description of how future events might occur” (Kahn & Bruce-Briggs, 1972). Kahn is not the only protagonist in the review of the “horizons of change” of the planning project made recently by Viganò (2010). There is also Gaston Berger who introduced the word “prospective” in 1957 (look forward), which is counterpoised to “retrospective” (look back). According to Berger, the prospective approach questions the evolutions of current phenomena, it is a pragmatic description of future situations, a phenomenology of becoming (Berger, 1959).

With respect to the use of the scenario making often made by planners

and urbanists, typically oriented to build a project of physical transformation (Viganò, 2010; Secchi, 2000), in this case I emphasised the use of scenario to transform the contents of decision making processes. Accordingly, more than exploring spatial alternatives, here the purpose is to build discontinuities in the ways in which planning policies are constructed, to investigate a different role that local actors can play in decision making arenas, and to transform the processes of building coalitions and alliances among those actors for improving urban/rural relationships. In other words, the scenario is a way of building *co-production* in planning processes (see Introduction) (Albrechts, 2012). The assumption supports the idea that spatial planning can express an "ontology of becoming" in which "actions, movement, relationships, conflicts, process and emergence are emphasised" (Albrechts, 2012: 58).

The importance is placed on the process rather than on the end-state of the scenario. The reference here goes to Schwartz (1996)'s definition of "planning-oriented process scenario", interpreted as a scenario in which "the value lies not in predicting the future but in preparing planners to respond intelligently to whatever the future holds in store" (Myers & Kitsuse, 2000). Despite this emphasis on the process, it must be underlined that, behind these assumptions, there is the willingness to use the change in the process to guide a transition in the role that local governments play in framing the potentials of farmland to bridge the urban/rural divide. Hence, the change in the process should not be self-referential but guide and foster a physical change towards the multiplication of spatial interactions among city and countryside.

Accordingly, for every case study, a scenario of policy transformation will be defined in section 8.2. Every scenario will be different since it is rooted in contextual conditions and oriented to overcome the blocks to innovation that the analysis of the case studies is going to show. In the construction of scenarios, it is taken as a reference the theoretical framework depicted by Myers & Kitsuse (2000) about the "Continuities of Past, Present and Future".

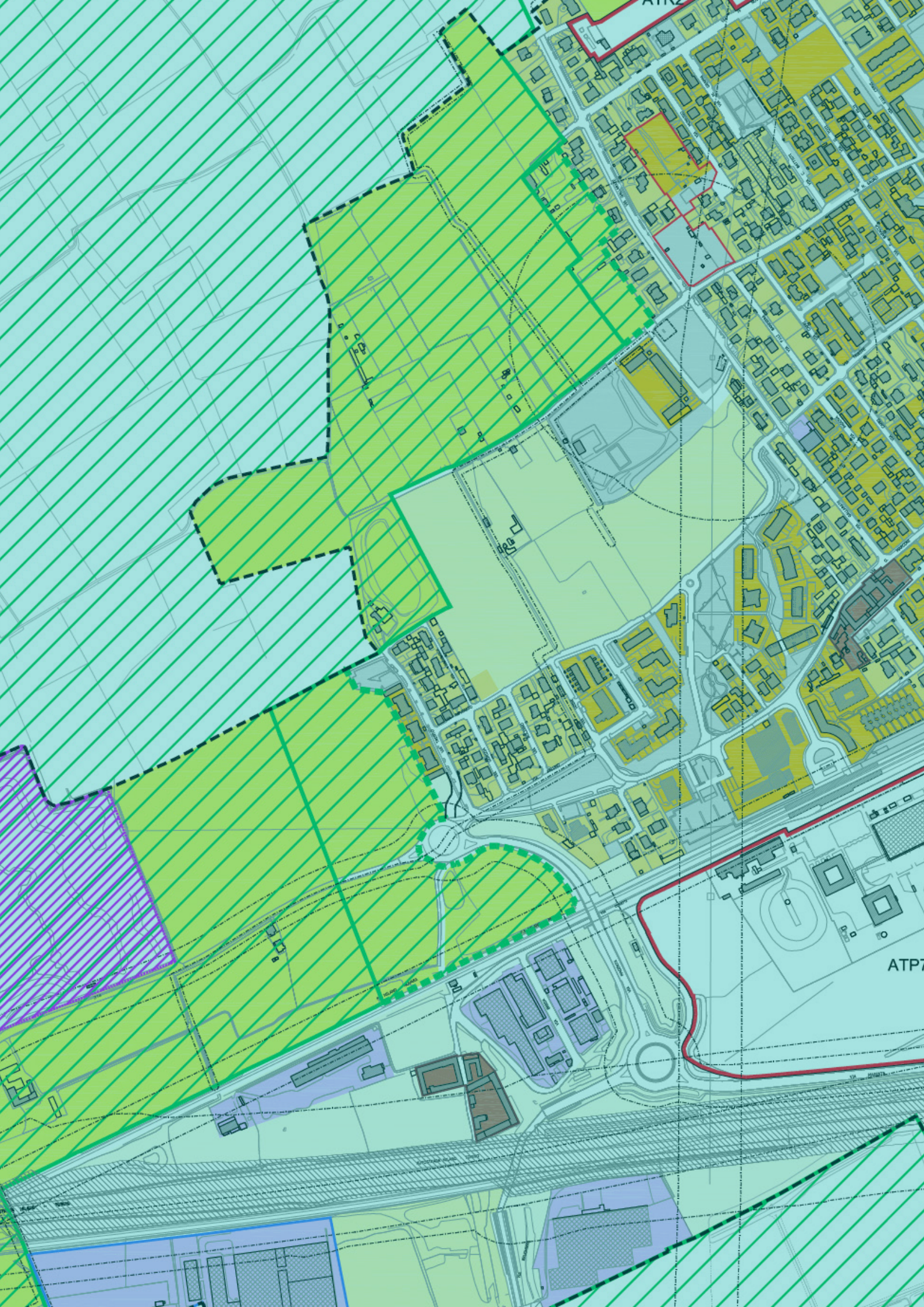
"The future is not a disconnected end-state that exists only in the future; instead, the future should be viewed as a continuous unfolding in time that is rooted in both the past and present. The first task of planners is to establish a baseline of continuity between what Harvey Perloff has termed the past, present and future components of the future. Planners must master all three components if they are to effectively shape the future".

While the future components of the future are those "problems, possibilities and opportunities we see on the horizon", the past components of the future refer to those elements which are inherited from the past to the future. These can be tangible (infrastructures, settlement patterns, open spaces, etc.) or intangible such as demographic patterns, or institutions, economic and cultural sources (Myers & Kitsuse, 2000). The present elements of the future, such as the state of consciousness of civil society and the decision-making power of administrators, are able to keep the future and the past together. Although each case-study of the thesis has a different interpretation of the continuities of past, present and future, I have identified them in the following

way:

- the *past component of the future* is the existing systems of farmland surrounding cities which is considered a source where a more critical understanding by planners and local decision makers is needed;
- the *future component of the future* is the need to conceive agricultural areas as planning arenas where to overcome the urban/rural divide and to increase the structural and functional relationships among urban and rural areas;
- the *present component of the future* includes the existing institutional and administrative structures and the decision making abilities of local governments to work together and to implement effective policies for shaping better urban/rural relationships.

This theoretical framework will be deepened in the last chapter of the thesis (see section 8.2.) in which the scenario making approach will be applied to each of the case-studies for guiding a transformation of the governance arrangements and of the planning policies.


ATR2
ATP7

PART 2
Policies and discourses

In the previous page:
Local plan of Pregnana Milanese (MI)
Source: Comune di Pregnana Milanese, 2016b.

Chapter 3

ITALY: framing local governments' cooperation in the national policy discourse

> "La scala comunale [...] in Italia è troppo ridotta dal punto di vista territoriale, demografico ed economico, per studiarvi dell'agricultura la questione del suo sviluppo ed individuare soluzioni economiche e spaziali appropriate per il rilancio della produzione, come d'altronde è troppo grande la scala regionale essendo[...] in realtà assai diverse tra loro. La scala minima più appropriata per approfondire lo studio dei problemi dell'agricoltura è certamente quella sub-regionale"[1].
>
> (Patrizi, 1983: 158)

3.1. Institutionalization of local governments' cooperation in Italy

Although its still weak diffusion, local cooperation in Italy has been quite a frequent topic touched by central government, particularly since the 1990s. Given the high local institutional fragmentation and the need to improve the efficiency of local governments, the intention was to provide incentives to municipalities that decide to amalgamate and to formally require small municipalities[2] to cooperate. A recent report edited by Formiconi and Fulghieri for the Italian Association of Municipalities (ANCI) provides a synthesis of the legislative path of national policies dealing with Inter-Municipal Cooperation (ANCI & Fondazione IFEL, 2015). The framework defines three main phases in the evolution of Italian IMC, which match with three decades, from 1990 until today.

The first phase goes from 1990 to 2000 and is characterized by the introduction of Law 142/1990, the so called "Testo Unico Enti Locali" (TUEL) that establishes the "Union of Municipalities" (UdC), which can be considered the more structured and long-lasting form of IMC in Italy. UdCs are institutional cooperative bodies created by two or more municipalities. According to this law, UdCs should have produced the amalgamation of single municipalities into a new entity after 10 years from their establishment

1 "The municipal scale [...] in Italy is too small from the territorial, demographic and economic point of view, to study the issue of agriculture development and to identify suitable economic and spatial solutions for strenghtening the production, as indeed the regional scale is too big, being [...] actually very different from each other. The more appropriate minimum scale to deepen the analysis of the problems of agriculture is certainly the sub-regional one".

2 ANCI defines small municipalities those municipalities with a population of equal or less that 5.000 inhabitants. In Italy there are 5.627 small municipalities which represent the 16,6% of the total national population (ANCI & Fondazione IFEL, 2015).

or, if this did not happen, to their dissolution. Also, some incentives were foreseen for ten years to the small municipalities that decided to begin a process of amalgamation (art. 11). Beyond the UdC, other voluntary forms of cooperation were introduced, like the Agreement ("Convenzione") (art. 24) and the Consortium ("Consorzio") (art. 25), which were endowed with an operative dimension (see section 1.2.4.). Law 142 also introduced the "Metropolitan Areas" but this institutional level would not be implemented until 2014. One of the innovative aspects of the law is the principle of *differentiation* according to which functions are attributed to local institutions on the basis of their demographic and territorial features (Ferlaino & Molinari, 2009: 333). A crucial point in this decade is the introduction of Law 59/1997 ("Legge Bassanini"), a fundamental step in the decentralization and devolution process based on the principle of *subsidiarity* (Innamorato, 2011). This Law gave to regions and to the other local institutions every function that was not explicitly listed among the functions of central government. As a result, the regional and local governments became much more autonomous and relevant as institutional and administrative tiers than they were in the past. According to Ferlaino & Molinari (2009: 320), the Bassanini Law moved the administrative focus from traditional features of uniformity and authority towards a more bargaining and cooperative approach able to construct more participative and voluntary decisions.

In the second phase, ranging from 2000 to 2010, the Law 267/2000 ("Testo Unico delle Leggi sull'Ordinamento degli Enti Locali") has the purpose of better specifying the contents of the TUEL, recalling the competences of local governments and their forms of cooperation. Particularly, the Law required regions to promote and guide the integration among municipalities and to identify the most suitable areas for inter-municipal management of functions and services. One year later, the Law 3/2001 ("Riforma del Titolo V della Costituzione") had confirmed and specified more precisely the functions attributed to central government and those to regions. The law introduced the principle of "equordinazione" according to which central government, regions and municipalities are considered at the same level, producing what has been defined as a "three-point model of federalism" (Ferlaino & Molinari, 2009: 323). The formal requirement for small municipalities to cooperate for some of their functions[3] came from Law 122/2010, according to which the cooperation should happen through UdCs or formal Agreements ("Convenzioni"). It is during this phase that a real boom in the proliferation of UdCs happened (316 Unions were established), mostly on a voluntary basis (ANCI & Fondazione IFEL, 2015).

The third and last phase goes from 2010 to nowadays. This period is

3 According to Law 42/2009, the functions for which small municipalities are required to cooperate are the following:
a) general administration, management and control functions;
b) local police functions;
c) public education functions, including services for nursery schools and those providing school and school support, as well as construction and maintenance of school buildings;
d) functions in the field of traffic and transport;
e) functions concerning the territorial and environmental management (with the exception of functions related to town planning);
f) functions of the social sector.

connoted by the introduction of the very controversial Law 56/2014 (the so called “Delrio” Law from the name of the main promoter). This law provides an epochal change in Italian administrative landscape. Its main point of innovation is the decisive step in the implementation of the Metropolitan Cities as a new institutional tier (that was already introduced by law 142/1990), which involved all the major Italian cities and an amount of inhabitants of more than 30% of the total national population (ANCI & Fondazione IFEL, 2015). Provinces, already considered as a non-relevant institutional level producing unnecessary expenses (Fedeli, 2016), were transformed into non-elected bodies with less functions and resources. Alongside these changes, some incentives and a simplification of procedures were introduced for the amalgamation of municipalities.

Today, evaluating the results of the national policies on IMC is not easy, also for the fact that every region, although in the presence of a national policy framework, has adopted a different policy framework. Looking at the UdCs as the statutory form of inter-municipal cooperation, in 2015 there were 414 UdCs, 33 more than the previous year. The regions were there is a higher concentration of UdCs are Lombardy (60), Piedmont (52) and Sicily (47), which together represent almost the half of the total amount of UdCs in Italy (ANCI & Fondazione IFEL, 2015) (**Figure 9**).

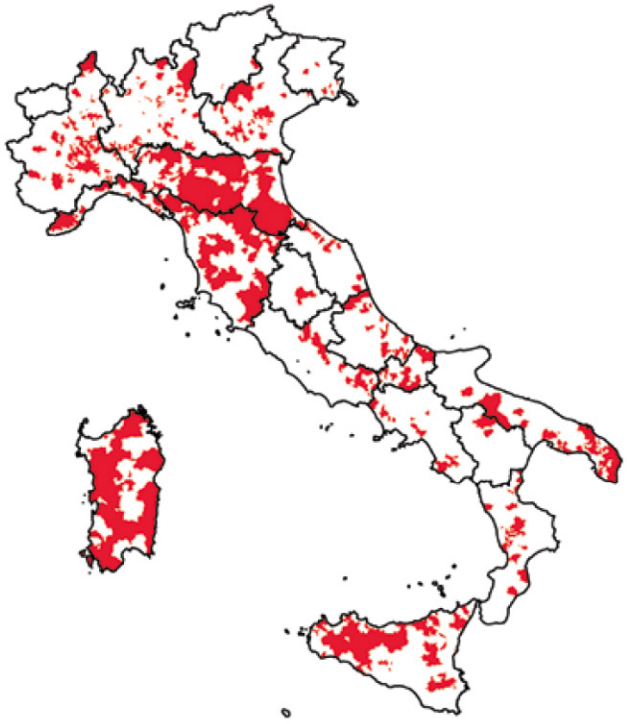


Figure 9: The Unions of Municipalities in Italy. Source: ANCI, 2015.

For what concerns the policies oriented to foster the decrease of the number of municipalities and their amalgamation, it must be underlined that these were quite unsuccessful. In the last 7 year-period (2011-2017), the number of municipalities decreased just minimally, from 8.094 to 7.978. Accordingly, despite the rooted awareness of the need to reduce the costs of public administration, there is still a strong will to avoid the loosening of local administrative identity (see section 5.4.2.). As a consequence, a wide range of

institutional and non-institutional forms of cooperation among municipalities have been flourished in the last twenty years, also with the production of few experimentations in planning.

3.2. Regional policies and inter-municipal planning

The Law 3/2001 has included the "territorial management" (in Italian "governo del territorio") within the list of concurring functions among regional and central government. Therefore, territorial management started to be one of those functions for which the legislative authority is given to regions and, instead, the identification of the fundamental principles belongs to central government. The important change brought by the Law relates to the competencies as much as the terminology because the term "urban planning" ("urbanistica") has disappeared from the article 117 of the Constitution in favour of "territorial management" which refers to a competence which focuses on the whole territory and not just on urbanized areas.

As mentioned before, during the last three decades, regional governments in Italy have followed different trajectories for guiding and promoting local cooperative planning policies. De Luca (2015b) has recently pointed out that regions should be considered as the more suitable level for building a policy framework able to orient and guide local governments in shaping joint planning. Because of their position "quite close to the territory for being able to catch suggestions and proposals, but not too much to flatten in front of every single and specific ripple coming from the ground" (Ibid.), Regions have the potential to be the right policy arena to foster the collaboration among municipalities and a set of other stakeholders.

Currently, many are the ways in which regional planning laws address the issue of intermunicipal cooperative planning. It is also important to underline that not all of the 20 Italian regions have a clear policy framework focusing on or addressing IMC. For example, the case of Lombardy region (the Law 12/2005) is particularly meaningful because the Regional Planning Law, despite being quite a recent document, does not discipline in any way local inter-institutional cooperation (Giaimo, 2007). It limits its focus on cooperation just by stating that the "territorial management is implemented through a multiple number of coordinated and differentiated plans, which have a role in planning the territory" (art. 2). Nevertheless, in the process of drafting and implementing their local plans, local governments are not required to cooperate with other institutions, neither in horizontal nor in vertical terms.

Among the more advanced Italian regional contexts addressing the topic of IMC, the case of Tuscany is particularly relevant, being traditionally a case of "good regional planning" (Ibid.). The Law 65/2014 aims at responding to the need to improve the effectiveness of "territorial governance", as a relational space among institutions in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, differentiation and adequacy. It also gives each stakeholder a specific responsibility within the planning process (Marson, 2017). Forms of inter-municipal planning are foreseen by the law (through the so called

"inter-municipal structural plans"). The purpose is to build coherency with the national and regional legislation on local autonomies through the so called "co-planning conferences" ("conferenze di co-pianificazione") (Ibid.). These are sort of formal collaborative moments of mutual discussion and knowledge exchange among institutions finalized to reach consensus on local plans' and other planning policies' implementation. Moreover, forms of inter-municipal (also called territorial) Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) (see section 2.3.1.3.) are foreseen, even if not compulsory as they were in the first draft of the law, for cross-boundary developments.

The case of Piedmont is interesting for the evolution that regional planning experienced from the first regional law (n. 56/1977) to the more recent season of policies and plans. The Law n. 56, still in force but deeply modified through a number of revisions, is characterized by the involvement of the Region and Municipalities in territorial planning processes according to a hierarchical relationship. One of its more important features is the introduction of sub-regional planning in the form of "piani comprensoriali" which focus on different

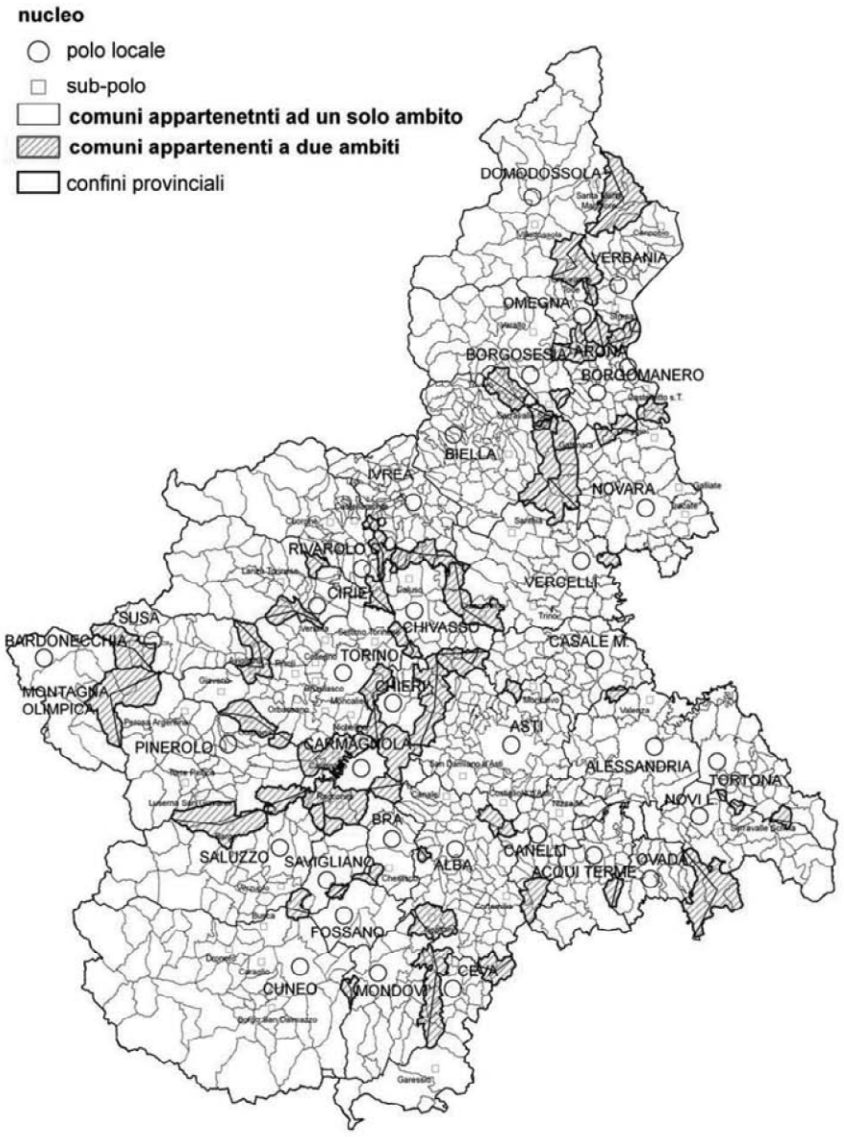


Figure 10: Original partition of regional territory in AITs with the identification of the areas belonging to more than one AIT. Source: Regione Piemonte, 2007: 16.

aspects such as agricultural areas, service provision, ecological areas, etc. They had the purpose to overcome sectoral policies and to improve the coherence through integrated territorial policies. Unfortunately, the making of "piani comprensoriali" had a long duration and a lack of resources needed for their implementation. As a consequence, Regional Law 57/1985 gave back to the Provinces the role of being the main actor of sub-regional planning, also aiming at solving the problems of accountability that connoted the "comprensori" (De Luca & Lingua, 2012: 214).

By bringing forward the debate on sub-regional planning, the Regional Territorial Plan adopted in 2011 proposed the identification of 33 Territorial Integrated Settings (AIT) ("Ambiti Integrati Territoriali") on the basis of the relational proximity "among facts, actions and projects that coexist in the same place" (Regione Piemonte, 2011: 66). Rather than a passive planning layer, the AITs should have represented a "collective actor of territorial development" (Ibid.), which would have overcome the conformative planning approach towards a model focused on multi-level governance and coordination among local governments (De Luca & Lingua, 2012: 220).

Their identification is based upon the levels of functional containment related to internal displacements of people[4]. The innovative approach behind the AITs is the consideration of the policy implications of functional relationships, which had also questioned the administrative structure of the regional territory (see for example the map of areas which belong to more than one AIT in **Figure 10**). Despite its innovative routes, the final map of AITs included in the Territorial Regional Plan overcomes some of the issues highlighted above. For example, it divides the AITs on the basis of the administrative structure, thus following the borders of local and provincial administrations. Moreover, it does not fully develop their policy implications. As a consequence, despite the massive surveys made for each of the 33 AITs and included in the Plan (Regione Piemonte, 2011: 68-122), this has not been able to guide or promote any meaningful process of definition of territorial strategies or sub-regional planning, leading some researchers to criticize the scarce "territorialisation" of this model (De Luca & Lingua, 2012: 219).

3.3. Planning and rural development policy framework for agricultural areas

To analyse the normative framework that disciplines agricultural areas in Italy and guides their transformation it is crucial to consider not just planning policies but also rural development policies since they both have a role in steering landscape, territorial and environmental transformations in agricultural areas. While planning is traditionally more oriented to put in place "command-and-control" instruments and guidelines in the countryside,

4 In the case of England, a similar approach is taken by the Local Enterprise Partnerships as an attempt to explore the policy implications of Functional Economic Market Areas (FEMAs) (see section 7.5.2.).

rural policies typically make use of economic incentives addressed to invest in a number of projects involving farms and other activities in rural areas (Lodigiani, 2017).

3.3.1. The legislative path: from the National laws until landscape Regional planning

The point of departure is Law 1150/1942, the National Planning Law which is still today the main law regulating the Italian planning system, from the regional to the municipal and neighbourhood scale. The Law requires local governments to adopt the local plan ("Piano Regolatore Generale"), which is articulated in a cartographic and a normative part. These two parts are strictly complementary since land-use rights are spatialized.

In the two decades following the end of the II World War, Italy had experienced an economic boom which had also pushed urbanisation processes in the whole country. The construction of large housing estates at city's peripheries has been promoted and funded directly by central government due to the urgent need to address the housing shortage and to tackle the hygienic and health problems characterising most of existing dwellings (Di Biagi, 2010). One important point to consider is that the extensive urbanisation processes happened in the substantial absence of any land-use policy dealing with the protection of farmland. Agricultural areas were considered as white areas (from the colour used in Local Plans, **Figure 11**) on which there was no significant control by local governments on urbanization processes (Agostini et al., 2010).

Just few local plans, such as the PRG of Siena (1954) and the PRG of Assisi (1958), had a more sophificated consideration of agricultural areas. These cases included a "deep analysis of the morphological features and economic profile" of agricultural areas to which corresponded differentiated nuances of regulation to preserve and enhance landscape qualities (Lodigiani, 2017: 9). It is in this period that Astengo developed the concept of fed ("unità nutritive elementare") corresponding to the primary food unit or the average agricultural area needed to feed an average person in a given region, and applied it to some plans. At the basis of this concept, there was an idea of agriculture oriented to achieve the food-self-sufficiency of cities (Astengo & Bianco, 1945; Patrizi, 1983).

In the same years, also some interesting experiments of territorial planning were put in place. One of this is the case of the Inter-Municipal Plan of Milan (1963) in which farmland was designated as "agricultural and preserved open spaces". In this case, the "turbine" was the planning figure chosen to describe the complex shape of the metropolitan area where agricultural areas were conceived as the "wedges between the blades of the turbine" (Città Metropolitana, 2016a; Lodigiani, 2017). This plan is crucial not just because it became part of the imaginery of planners, geographers and policy makers but also because it laid down the routes for innovative experiences of protection of open spaces, such as the Milan South Agricultural Park (see chapter 4).

Figure 11: Extract of the Local Plan of Rovigo (1959). Source: Laboratorio Rapu, Politecnico di Milano.

In 1967, to limit the chaotic urbanization and the land speculation processes, Law n. 765/1967 (the so called "Legge Ponte" literally a bridge-law because it was initially conceived as a temporary norm) extended the focus of Local Plans to the whole municipal territory, according to the logic that also the countryside needs to be planned[5]. Among the innovative elements of the Law, local governments were required to authorise developments only if public infrastructure costs were foreseen and fully funded by developers. The Ministry Degree n. 1444/1968 fixed the thresholds (the so called "standards") for the land-use areas in which new developments were located. The system introduced the subdivision of the municipal territory in zones, each matching with a specific building index and some general criteria to which developments needed to conform. Agricultural areas were included in zone E for which the minimum amount of public facilities is 6 square meters per inhabitant.

Already in 1970 the introduction in the Italian administrative landscape of the regions according to Law n. 281/1970 made the first and important step in reorganising functions and responsibilities of central government for improving country's administrative efficiency. A following ordinance approved in 1977 (d.P.R. n. 616) specified the details of the competence "Agriculture and forestry" which includes interventions to agricultural enterprises and to single or collective agricultural properties, the communication and promotion of cooperation in the agricultural sector and the improvement and modernisation of the land property structure.

A very important step for the protection of the natural areas comes from the Law n. 431/1985, the so called "Galasso Law" from the name of the main promoter, Giuseppe Galasso. The Law introduced a designation of protection for a range of areas endowed with particular quality and value, including also the agricultural areas which belong to the national and regional parks.

The Code of Landscape and Cultural Assets (also called "Codice Urbani")

5 For deepening the contents of the "Legge Ponte" and its effects on planning the countryside, please see Patrizi, 1983: 160-163.

approved in 2004 represents the transposition in Italy of the guidelines included in the European Landscape Convention, approved in Florence in 2000. The Convention established principles and values which interpret the landscape as a layered and complex product of the identity of communities and it affirmed the innovative idea of "active protection", which is the result of the interaction among protection, planning and management of the whole territory (Voghera, 2015). While the European Convention represented "an open method of coordination" that proposed to European countries a governance model for constructing the domestic policy frameworks, every country has re-elaborated and adapted the contents of the Convention to its own planning system and contextual conditions. In the case of Italy, the Urbani Code introduced the landscape planning at regional level by requiring Regions to develop the Landscape Plans in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture. Other innovations introduced by the Code regard the cognitive and regulatory levels, such as the Regional Atlas of Landscape, the Landscape Committees and the Observatories at regional and local level (Ibid.).

With reference to landscape planning, the Code requires Landscape Plans to ensure that developments are compatible with the landscape values, and to set up actions for restoring the qualities of protected areas and interventions for enhancing the landscape (Ibid.: 140). Agostini et al. (2010) pointed out that the Code gives to agricultural areas a particular relevance because it requires planning guidelines included in Plans to be compatible with the qualities of agricultural landscape. Voghera (2015) highlighted that, while emphasising the landscape preservation, the Code overlooked the involvement of communities to decision making processes and to the policy implementation and, more importantly, it expressed a weak and unclear relationship among territorial management and landscape planning.

Fifteen years after the introduction of the Code, a great diversity in the trajectories that Italian Regions have followed for landscape planning emerges. De Luca (2015b) defined the Italian landscape planning framework a "cacophonic eclecticism" in which every Region has followed a different planning model made of a different combination and hybridisation among regulatory, structural and strategic policies, guidelines, pilot projects and governance constructions. When looking at the number of Landscape Plans approved, the picture is not positive since at 2018 just four Regions (Piedmont, Tuscany, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Puglia) up to twenty have completed the process of landscape planning and have adopted and approved Landscape Plans. Other regions are currently involved in drafting or updating their landscape plans as a component of the Regional Territorial Plan or as a separate plan.

For these reasons, the ways in which Landscape Plans treat agricultural areas are numerous and they produce a normative framework that has influenced the production at the local level of a number of different cognitive and normative settings. While the cases of Marche and Puglia are deepened respectively in sections 5.3.1. and 2.3.2.1., here it is provided a brief overview of the case of the Tuscany Territorial Plan[6] which is meaningful both

6 The Territorial Plan of Toscany Region (Pit) has been approved with Dcr n. 72/2007. The landscape integration (Pit/p) has been approved with Dcr n. 37/2015.

for the Plan making process that saw the convergence of multiple expertise from universities and public administration for constructing the cognitive, interpretative and normative framework of the Plan, and for its approach directly referring to the territorialist planning school funded by Magnaghi and other Italian scholars during the 1990s (section 2.3.2.3.). In this case, the Regional Government opted in 2010 to implement a landscape plan, although after a harsh internal debate (De Luca, 2015a). This Plan (Pit/p) is not an autonomous planning document since it is formally comprised within the already adopted Regional Territorial Plan (Pit), implemented during the previous Regional Government's mandate. Despite this, as noticed by De Luca (2015a), the differences among the planning approaches of the two documents are substantial since they are the result of a different political identity of the two administrations. It is crucial to underline that the Landscape Plan, at least in the intentions of the policy makers and promoters (Marson, 2017), is the product of a transition from an esthetical-perceptive approach to a structural-historical approach which expresses the adherence to a set of statutory rules ("regole statutarie") aimed at guaranteeing that transformations would follow certain performances and would not harm the landscape qualities. Among the four territorial invariants[7] ("invarianti") that are recognised in the Plan, the agricultural-rural territory (**Figure 12**) plays an important role since it is the product of the extensive use and transformation

7 Maggio (2014) defines the structural invariants as the "relationships among social groups and territories in their historical articulation". They can also be interpreted as "tools for producing and re-producing identity and social and environmental qualities in the territory".

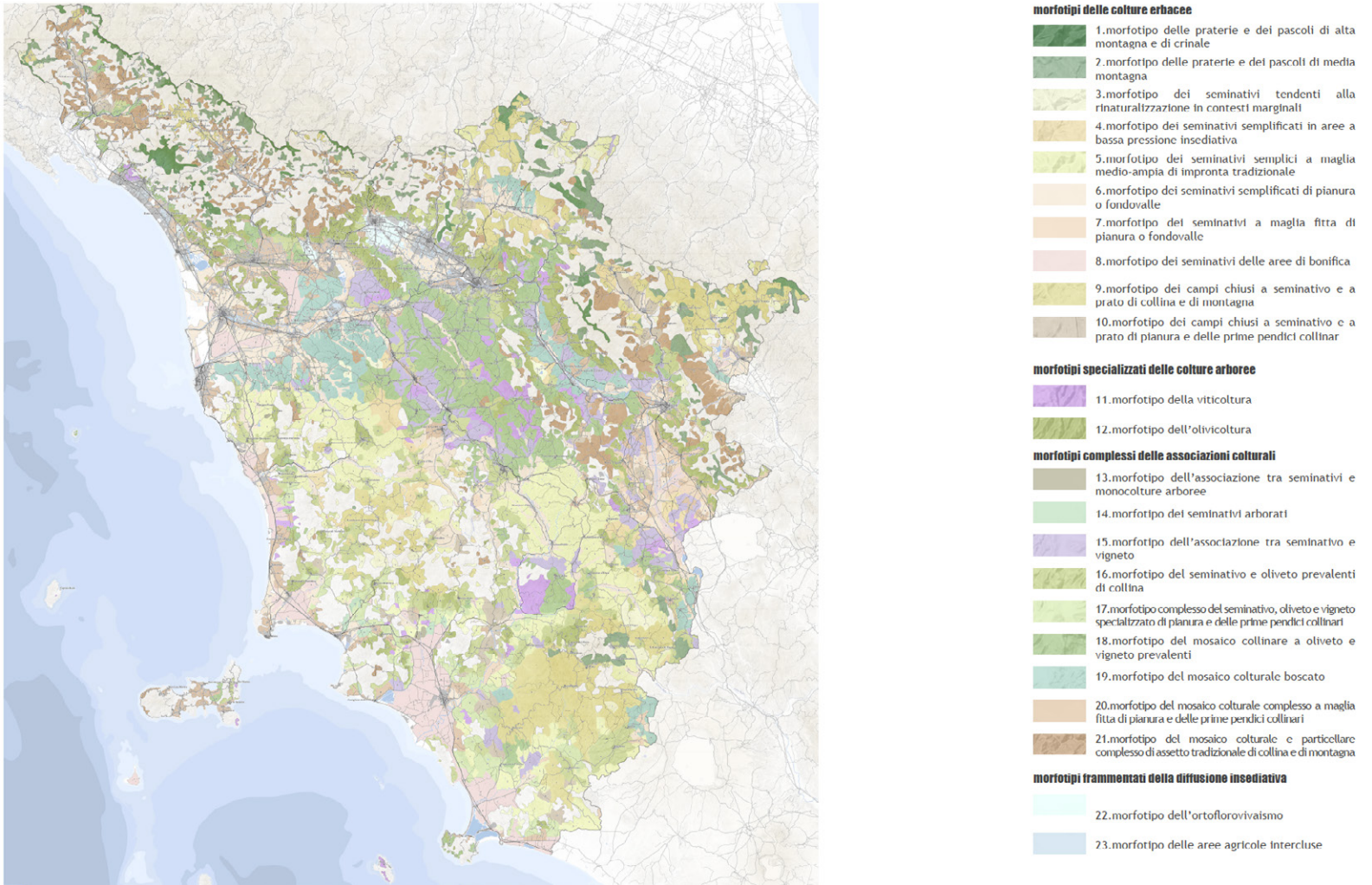


Figure 12: Rural morpho-typologies in the Landscape Plan (Pit/p) of Tuscany.
Source: Regione Toscana, 2015: 140.

of territorial resources made by farmers, defined by the Plan as “managers of a collective heritage” (Regione Toscana, 2015: 138).

Within this “territorial invariant”, the Plan identifies three main factors of identity: the direct and coherent relationship of the agrarian territory with the settlement system, the rural infrastructures and the historical land property which in many mountainous and hilly areas is still intact, and the diversification of the land uses at the scale of the farm and land property, which is the basis of biodiversity (Regione Toscana, 2015: 139). The identification of the invariants provides a methodology able to indicate for the 20 territorial focuses the related quality objectives in the form of guidelines and a set of recommendations for drafting the provincial and local plans.

3.3.2. The relationship among rural development policy and planning

If planning intervenes on agricultural areas mainly through a regulative approach, the rural development policies implemented by Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union provide economic incentives that drive and influence agricultural capacity.

The CAP was introduced in 1957 and entered into force in six European Countries in 1962 according to the Treaty of Rome (see section 2.1.1.). The main objective of the CAP is to increase the agricultural productivity and to make the agricultural markets more stable for ensuring satisfactory living conditions for farmers (Lodigiani, 2017) It consists of two pillars: the market and income policy and the rural development policy. While the first “includes a number of measures which provide a range of different tools for improving the functioning of agricultural markets”, the second is oriented to invest on individual projects of farms and on other activities in rural areas, on the basis of the priorities set up by the Rural Development Programs (RDPs) (Lodigiani, 2017: 60). The priorities of the RDP for the stage 2014-2020 are six:

1. “Fostering knowledge transfer and innovation in agriculture, forestry and rural areas;
2. Enhancing farm viability and competitiveness of all types of agriculture in all regions and promoting innovative farm technologies and sustainable forest management;
3. Promoting food-chain organisation, including processing and marketing of agricultural products, animal welfare and risk management in agriculture;
4. Restoring, preserving and enhancing ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry;
5. Promoting resource efficiency and supporting the shift towards a low carbon and climate resilient economy in agriculture, food and forestry sectors;
6. Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and economic development in rural areas” (ENRD, 2012).

Since its introduction, a number of reforms have significantly changed the PAC’s orientation because of the need to tackle the transformation of

agricultural landscape and economy. Technological development, increasing concentration and specialisation of productive areas and marginalisation of others, large-scale application of fertylizers and chemical products and dramatic environmental impacts are some of the more relevant aspects of this transformation. At the same time, from the end of 1990s, the new trend of sustainability influenced the contents of CAP. In 1992, the MacSharry reform of the CAP coinceded with the Rio Earth Summit that launched the principle of sustainable development (Lodigiani, 2017). The main point of innovation of the reform is the introduction of the agro-environmental measures[8] that resulted in guiding farmers to achieve the reduction in the use of agro-chemical inputs (see section 5.4.3.1.), the promotion of extensive forms of production, the recoversion of arable crops into extensive pastures, the reduction of the density of livestock for unit of forage area (Adornato et al., 2011). One of the impact of 1992's CAP reform in Italy was the introduction of Law n. 57/2001 and its following decrees, which oriented agricultural enterprises towards more sustainable agricultural practices and laid the foundations for the introduction of the agri-food districts. The law made a distinction among Rural Districts, as productive systems characterised by a homogeneous historical and territorial identity resulting from the integration among agriculture and other local activities (see section 4.4.3.), and Agri-food Districts, defined as those areas endowed with a strong interdependence among agricultural and food enterprises (Agostini et al., 2010: 132).

While many were the attempts to build a comprehensive knowledge on the evolution of CAP (Lodigiani, 2017; Adornato et al., 2011), fewer were the researches on the possible relationships that can be established among planning and rural development policies for improving the development conditions of agricultural areas (Lodigiani, 2017; Cassatella, 2014; Agostini et al., 2010). Giacchè (2012) suggests that one of the possibility to improve the effectiveness of socio-economic programs of development would be to create a permanent concertation among local administrators and farmers' associations, which would aim at redefining new forms of complementary relationships among urban and rural areas.

Here, the focus is on understanding how planning can support the territorialisation of rural development policies for improving the functional relationships among city and countryside.

According to Cassatella (2014), the more suitable level where achieving this integration would be the regional since every regional government is in charge of developing its own Territorial Plan, the Landscape Plan, the Rural Development Plan and the related strategic environmental assessment (SEA) tools, each with a specific role in improving the social, environmental and economic conditions of agricultural areas. Sharing sectoral experise within regional governments is, according to Cassatella, the key to achieve an effective integration among landscape planning and rural development policies, an integration that should happen mainly in the following domains:

- knowledge frameworks on land-use, ecological and landscape

8 For a wider and more comprehensive analysis of the agro-environmental measures, please see: Adornato et al., 2011.

features;
- strategic objectives concerning ecosystems and landscape;
- a part of their assessment frameworks, mainly concerning landscape indicators (Cassatella, 2014).

Following this view, the integration among planning and rural development policies would happen primarily by interpreting planning policies as enablers for improving the territorialisation of RDPs. Following this perspective, nature conservation, environmental regeneration and landscape maintenance would be the main results of this integration (Lodigiani, 2017).

I interpret this view as an interesting attempt to achieve a more integrated intervention on rural landscapes. As reported by Lodigiani (2017), this integration was experimented in some regional contexts such as in Piedmont and Apulia (see also Cassatella, 2014) (see section 2.3.2.1.), but an assessment of the results achieved so far still needs to be produced.

While the emphasis is placed on the landscape assets of agricultural areas, what still seems to be weak is the consideration of their productive factors for strenghtening urban/rural interdependencies in terms of more sustainable and localised food systems. Here the reference goes to food as the element that would allow to achieve a successful integration among rural development policies and planning. A viable possibility would be to conceive measures able to support and provide incentives to local food productions in building short food chains and stronger relationships among consumers and producers in areas characterised by high levels of functional containments, and to strengthen the role of local markets in supporting the marketing of local products[9] (on this topic, see also Curry et al., 2015).

According to Fanfani, the planning framework able to integrate more effectively the objectives of rural development policies with the zoning regulation is the agricultural park (Fanfani, 2009). Despite the experimentations made in recent decades especially in Southern European Countries, the application of this model in Italy has not conveyed yet effective governance arrangements able to construct more sustainable food systems (see the case of Milan South Agricultural Park in section 4.4.2.). One pioneering experience is the food plan of the province of Pisa where the construction of a solid planning and governance framework for coordinating the actions among a number of private and public actors in the field of food was created (see section 2.3.2.2.). Brunori et al. (2013) pointed out that in this case the challenge lies in rethinking the system of incentives and the measures foreseen by the Rural Development Plan towards a stronger support on the forms of social innovation already existing, rather than just foreseeing measure in support of farmers' income.

9 An interesting example of these measures comes from the Call launched by the Piceno LAG for the sub-measure 19.2.16.4. "Support to short food chains and local markets" available at the link: http://www.galpiceno.it/uploads/allegati_bandi/BANDO_GAL_PICENO_16.4.pdf.

3.3.3. The issue of land take and the recent policy developments

An issue that in recent years has become crucial in the planning debate is land take (Giudice, 2018). The importance of that for agricultural areas lies in the fact that the land use where urbanization processes more often takes place is farmland. According to ISPRA (2018), in five years (2012-15), the class more subjected to new developments has been the arable land (55,7%), followed by grassland (18,7%). Looking at the overall picture, in the past year (2016-17), the 70,6% of the urbanisation happened in agricultural areas.

Despite the continuous erosion of land which has been happening in a situation of substantial demographic stagnation[10], and the requirements by European Union to tackle this issue[11], still no effective policy from Central Government has been put in place to tackle this issue.

At sub-national level, every Regional Government has implemented its own legislative framework, although the definition of land take is almost everywhere not coherent with the European and National legislation. What happened is also that in regional laws significant exceptions are included such as the fact that law prescriptions do not apply to the development forecasts already part of Local Plans. In the case of Piedmont, for example, the Regional Territorial Plan preserves the more versatile agricultural areas (1st and 2nd class of use). Also it introduces a threshold of the 3% of additional urbanisations which cannot be overcome in each five-year administrative mandate (ISPRA, 2018: 9). The Emilia Romagna region has a Law (24/2017) that has the objective of reaching a zero land-take not later than 2050. Here municipalities are required to deliver the ongoing or foreseen developments in a three-year period. After this phase, all development forecasts included in the local plans are cancelled. In Marche Region, law 16/2015 emphases the reduction of land take with the objective of promoting urban regeneration processes. Municipalities cannot adopt new local plans if development forecasts included in the previous plan are not delivered for at least the 75% of the total amount of forecasts. At the contrary, local plans can always be adopted if they are finalised to the reduction of land take and to the recover of brownfields and previously developed sites (ISPRA, 2018: 11-12) (for the case of Lombardy Region, see section 4.3.1.).

Past central governments, starting from the one led by Mario Monti in 2014, have tried to legislate in the field of land take, unfortunately without any success. By taking as reference the contents of the law proposal promoted by the Minister of Agriculture of Monti's Government, Mario Catania, in 2016 a network of more than 100 associations and thousands of individual citizens

10 The National Institute for Environmental Research and Protection (ISPRA) (2018) has recently reported that in year 2017 52,1 square kilometers of land has been urbanized in Italy, bringing the total amount of land take to 23.062,5 square kilometers. In year 2016, the urbanized square meters have been 23.039 with an annual increase of 50 square kilometers (ISPRA, 2017).

11 In 2013 the European Union has required the Member Countries to reset the soil consumption before 2050 and to align it to the demographic growth and to not improve the degradation of territory before 2030 (European Parliament and Council, 2013).

belonging to public administration, university and professional sectors, jointly worked at a law proposal addressed to contain soil consumption and to foster the reuse of previously developed land (Forum Salviamo il Paesaggio, 2018). In 2018 the proposal has been updated. It touches the following aspects:

- no refund is provided to land-owners in the case in which the government decides to acquire the land that is abandoned, since the owners have no pursued the social function of their good according to article 42 of the Italian Constitution (art. 1);
- no further land consumption is allowed for any use or function, provided that the new infrastructural or residential needs have to be satisfied just through the reuse and regeneration of existing built structures or settlements (art. 3);
- each local government is required to identify in its planning policies both the urbanized and abandoned areas. The details of the latter category should be mapped in a Census of underused and empty buildings and areas (art. 4);
- a system of incentives for the reuse, regeneration and decontamination of previously developed sites (art. 6);
- the urbanization charges (the so called “oneri di urbanizzazione”) should be used by local governments just to fund interventions that would allow no soil consumption (art. 7) (Forum Salviamo il Paesaggio, 2018: 12-14).

Last General Elections in Italy held on March 4th 2018 brought to government a coalition of Lega and Five-Start Movement after almost three months of consultations among the political parties. The Government Contract signed at the end of May by the two party leaders, Matteo Salvini and Luigi di Maio, expresses the flagships of the two parties with regard to a variety of political issues such as immigration, welfare policies and, to a latter extent, also environmental protection (Lega & Movimento 5 Stelle, 2018). This last topic is declined by the Contract mostly with regard to the need to promote and guide a transition of the national economy, currently based mainly on carbon and fossil fuels, towards a circular economy based on the principle of sustainability and reuse of existing resources. The document does not include any specific reference to policies of land take preservation, despite this principle is included in the strong presumption against the use of resources like soil, water and forestry than cannot be higher than the environmental capacity to regenerate them (Ibid.). Concerning agriculture, the Contract highlights the need to reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), towards a better integration among the measures supporting agriculture and the collective objectives such as landscape and hydrogeological preservation and food security (Lega & Movimento 5 Stelle, 2018: 9). Until today, after 5 months since the beginning of the political mandate, no significant policies in these areas have been put in place by Central Government, despite the direct commitment by the Ministry for Environment, Territory and Sea, Sergio Costa, to bring forward the debate on land consumption and approve a Law

on land take containment. In a recent public speech[12], the Minister expressed the will to approve a law taking as reference the law proposal on land take previously mentioned (Forum Salviamo il Paesaggio, 2018) that the past Government did not approve because of the insufficient support from the Council of Ministers and the majority of MPs.

12 See the recent speech by Sergio Costa, the Ministry for Environment and Territory at the ISPRA seminar on last July 17th in Rome (the speech is available at: http://www.minambiente.it/content/rapporto-ispra-su-consumo-suolo-lintervento-del-ministro-costa-fonte-vistatv).

Chapter 4

Cooperating in an agricultural park: the case of PASM

> "What is increasingly evident in the Milan City Region is a growing interest for approaches analogous to those of food sovereignty able to articulate the different dimensions of the binomial agriculture / territory and of which in different ways producers, inhabitants, local governments, associations, networks and the business sector are protagonist".
>
> (Calori, 2009: 101)

4.1. Brief introduction to the case-study

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the Milan South Agricultural Park as a relevant case of local governments' cooperation across a metropolitan area where preservation and enhancement of agricultural land are the main objectives shaping contents and rationales of the cooperation. The purpose is to understand the ways in which local governments, through their cooperative policies and actions, frame agricultural land as a space where building and shaping stronger urban/rural interdependencies in Milan urban region.

The Milan South Agricultural Park (PASM) is the largest agricultural park in Europe and a meaningful example of a regional protected area whose vocation is the preservation of agriculture and its integration with the needs of local population (Regione Lombardia, 2000). The multiple territorial and institutional factors, combining urban, rural and periurban factors, give an idea of the complexity characterizing the Park's structure and governance. As it will be better explained in next sections, the main aspect of complexity lies in coupling the high number of local governments with one sub-regional authority managing and planning agriculture preservation and development. Another aspect of relevance regards the scale of the Park. Given the identification by a number of researchers and policy-makers of the sub-regional level (also defined in Italy "comprensorio", see section 3.2.) as the most appropriate level to set out economic and spatial solutions for boosting the agricultural production (Predieri, 1978; Giacchè, 2012), the PASM represents a suitable case to test the effectiveness of a sub-regional planning policy to preserve the productive factors of agricultural areas and to frame them in terms of urban/rural relationships.

The chapter is organised in five sections (**Figure 13**). Sections 4.2. and 4.3. present a territorial and an institutional profile of the case study. In the territorial profile, two paradigmatic imagines are chosen to represent some distinctive spatial features of the context under investigation. The institutional profile focuses on the regional and metropolitan planning policies affecting

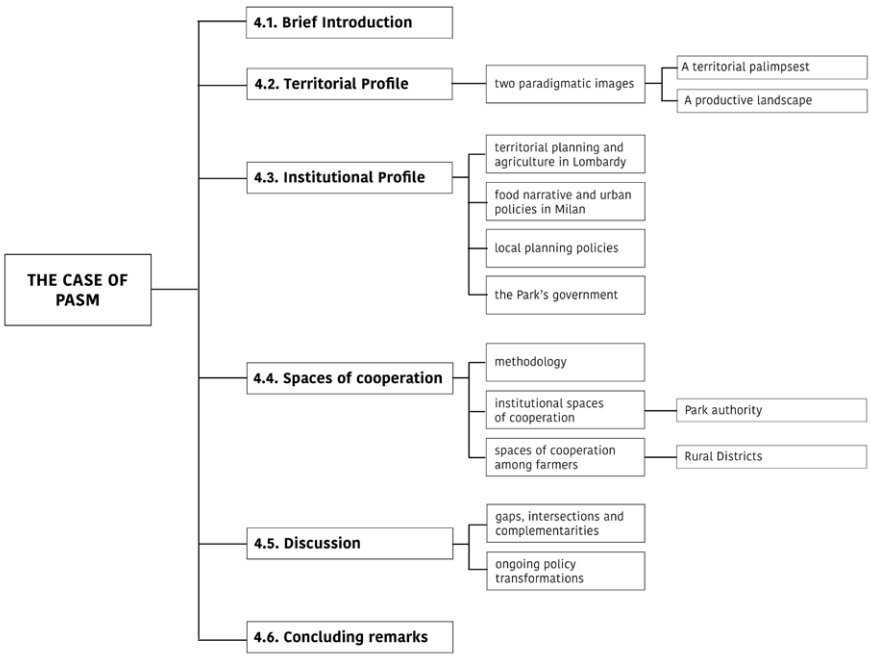


Figure 13: Flow diagram of chapter 4. Source: Elaboration by the author.

the territory of the Park from the planning point of view, and it describes the government of the Park and the related planning policies. Section 4.4. analyses the spaces of cooperation, distinguishing among the Park Authority and the Rural Districts as two forms of cooperation characterised by different rationales and range of action. In section 4.5. a discussion of the research findings is presented. Last section (4.6.) presents some concluding remarks.

4.2. Territorial profile of the case study

The South Agricultural Park has the shape of a belt surrounding the city of Milan (see **Figure 14**), from the west, through to the south, to the east. As already mentioned, its surface covers the agricultural areas of 61 municipalities and it extends over one third of the total metropolitan surface, covering more than 47.000 hectares where a population of almost 800.000 inhabitants reside. Its most distinctive spatial feature is that the urbanized areas, together with some free areas surrounding the edges of towns and villages, are out of the borders of the protected area, resulting in the distinctive "hole shape" of the Park. To describe the territorial profile of the Park two are the images chosen. The first one is a territorial palimpsest and the second one is a productive landscape.

4.2.1. A territorial palimpsest

Understanding the strong dependency among typology, structure and function of rural settlements is a crucial precondition to fully acknowledge the historical value of the agricultural landscape of the Park (Agostini et al., 2010). The typical settlement of the Po valley is the large farmhouse (called

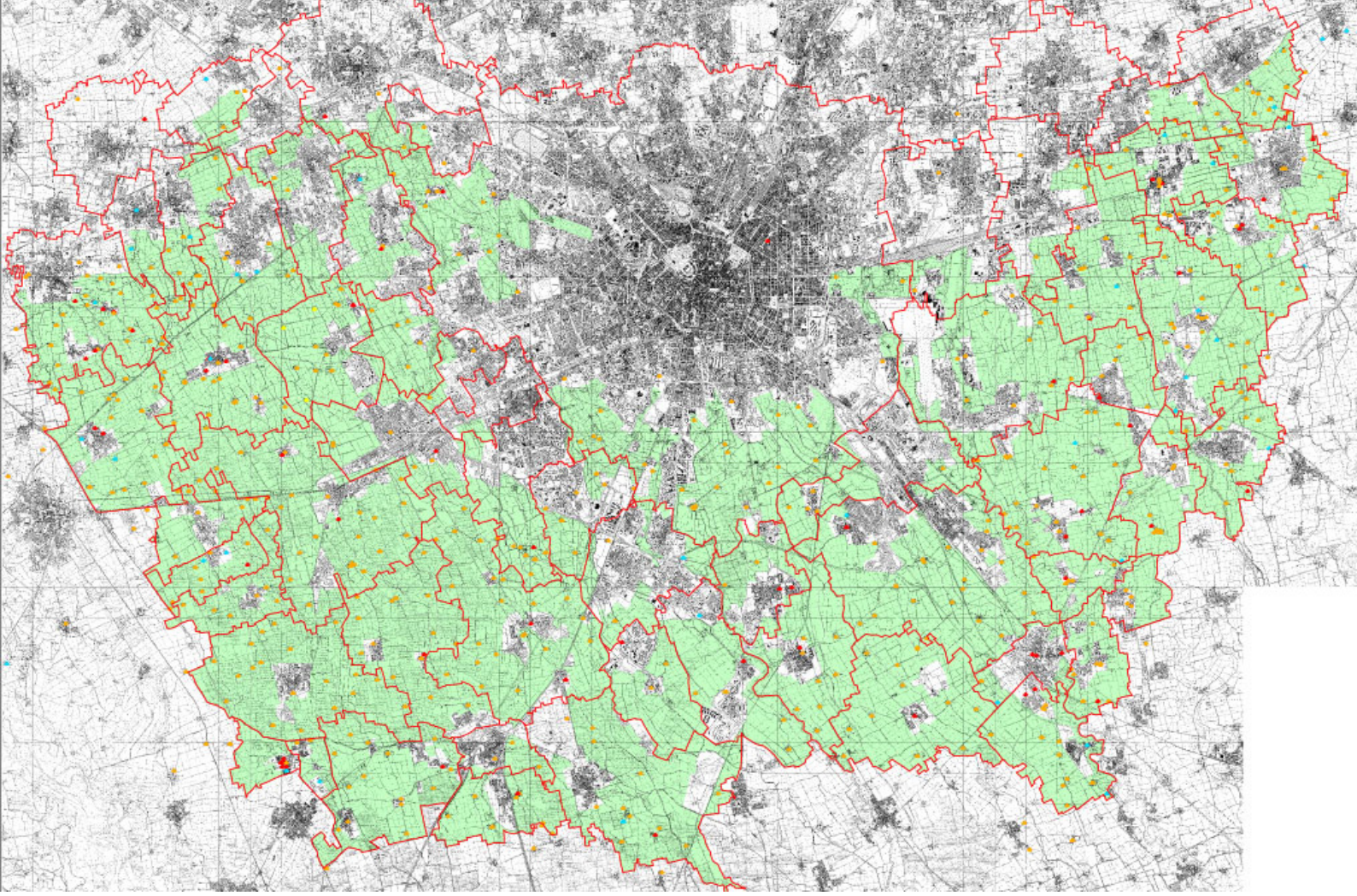


Figure 14: The Milan South Agricultural Park with municipal jurisdictions. Source: Source: Provincia di Milano, 2007

"cascina") organized around a common open space, the yard. The home of the landlord, the stalls and barns, few common facilities, a wing of the building for agricultural workers ("salariati") are the buildings surrounding the yard. This structure responds to the kind of intensive agriculture which in the past required a large amount of workers and their related facilities.

In the territory of the park, there are more than 800 active farms to which refer about 1000 productive centers. Of this amount, the 84% of the farms have the productive center hosted in a typical Lombard farmhouse (Provincia di Milano, 2007). Hence, the agriculture of the Park is closely related to the traditional typology of the local farmhouse. Despite this, as shown by some researchers (Agostini et al., 2010; Provincia di Milano, 2007), the traditional farmhouse has not always been fully compatible with the machinery and facilities required by modern agriculture. For this reason, a relevant number of farmhouses (23%) is today in a poor state of preservation and the production has been moved to modern buildings. Anyway, it can be noticed how this number is relatively low compared to other rural Italian contexts because agricultural entrepreneurs have frequently decided to demolish/ rebuild or renovate existing settlements to make them more efficient to the new productive needs. Apart from these traditional settlements, there are few modern rural complex (6%), built in the last 40-50 years, located in the proximity to traditional farmhouses, while these were converted in residential or in other uses (Provincia di Milano, 2007).

Alongside the constellation of valuable architectural settlements, outside the borders what we observe is a variety of settlements patterns that juxtapose according to different rationales and criteria. According to Faravelli & Clerici (2013), three settlement "figures" can be recognized. The first one is bordering the park in its north-west side and it consists in some radial clusters of areas surrounding Novara street with the shape of a linear multi-

centric conurbation. The second one is placed at the south of Milan and is formed by a number of roads and settlements forming a sort of net which has been enclosing a number of agricultural lots. The bypass road ("tangenziale") represents another strong element that has guided developments in the last twenty years, particularly around the junctions. The resulting image is quite a complex pattern of settlements where the spatial and visual fragmentation is recurrent and often an issue for the management of marginal and interlocked agricultural areas (Faravelli & Clerici, 2013).

Hence, what we observe in PASM is much more than a stratification of objects and settlements. It is a rich, complex and layered landscape, but weakened since the 1950s by the contradictory urbanisation processes often happening without a coherent and clear planning scheme (RURBANCE, 2015). The image that more than others can better describe how the territory appears in the park is the palimpsest since it implies a selective accumulation and a process of continuous renewal (Corboz, 1985) to which the landscape of the park was subjected. According to Corboz (1985), an important condition at the basis of the definition of a territorial palimpsest is that the creation of new territorial structures implies the irreversible modification of existing ones. Thus, the historical farmhouses of the Park have been modified, in some cases irreversibly and some of which demolished, to host the new functions and spaces required by modern agriculture. At the same way, the settlements surrounding the park have been affected by a variety of forces and processes that have deeply changed their dimensions and rationale, especially regarding their relationship with the park.

4.2.2. A productive landscape

Strongly related to the previous one is the picture of productive landscape. One of the most crucial aspect allowing the strong productivity of the territory is the presence of water. Most of the technologies of water use come from the historical practices introduced during the 11th and 12th centuries by Cistercian monks, living in the abbeys located all around the south of Milano.

Figure 15: The "sliding" irrigation system in Milan South Agricultural Park. Source: parcoagricolosudmilano.it.

During this period, thanks to the high assets and workforce, they initiated onerous works of land transformation, consisting in the reclamation of marshlands. The innovative idea was to take advantage of the ground-water springs, a landscape feature making this territory unique from the agricultural point of view. They created a system called “marcita”, where the water coming from the springs flows on the field’s surface through a succession of slightly inclined planes. The water has a temperature of 9° in winter and 14° in summer. Hence it prevents the ground from freezing during the winter and allows fresh grass throughout the year. Unfortunately, the “marcite” have now become very rare (today there are just 41 in the Park) because of the advent of different types of animal feed and by the modification of traditional farming practices (Città Metropolitana di Milano, 2018).

Today, the more popular irrigation system is the “sliding” which is a common system in the Po River Valley (see **Figure 15**). This method provides that the water flows constantly as a continuous layer covering the entire field. On the upper side of the field there is the so called “adacquatrice” which is a sort of water adductor, and on the lower side there is the “colatore”, aimed at collecting the exceeding water from the field. Despite its high onerousness in terms of labor needed to properly arrange the field’s surface and of the amount of water required (Provincia di Milano, 2007), the system is the most common in the territory of the park.

Farms in the park are specialized in the production of cereals, mainly maize and rice, and wheat (**Table 6**). While rice is the prevailing cultivation in the west side of the park, maize and other cereals prevail in the east side. A minor part is dedicated to soybean, sunflowers and spelt, while vegetables and fruit trees are grown in small plots or family gardens (Provincia di Milano, 2013). Alongside the crops, livestock represents the other important sector of agricultural economy. As shown by the Agricultural Management Plan (Provincia di Milano, 2007), the ratio among the vegetable and animal components of the gross production is 1 to 1. The number of farms specialized in livestock production is estimated around 300 farms, covering a surface of the 30% of the Park (2013). The principal activity is the breeding of pigs and dairy and beef cattle. While pigs are generally raised in very large farms, for

Productive specialization	Hectares	%
Arable crops (mainly rice & corn)	30.467	87 %
Arboriculture and woods	799	2 %
Permanent forage	217	1 %
Vivarium and seedbeds	54	0%
Woody crops	19	0 %
Family gardens	17	0 %
Other	3.530	10 %
Total	35.103	100 %

Table 6: Utilisation of agricultural surface in PASM.
Source: Città Metropolitana, 2018.

diary and beef cattle the dimension of farms is smaller. About 60% of diary cattle livestock are characterized by less that 200 stocks and just 16% reach dimensions of more than 300 stocks. The same happens for beef cattle with the 85% do not go over the 100 stocks (Provincia di Milano, 2007).

The two images chosen express the multifaceted profile of a rural landscape where a high number of punctual architectural objects has a strong relationship to the productive vocation of the countryside. The form and use of the rural farmhouses were -and in most cases still are- serving an intense and advanced agricultural activity that has deeply transformed the landscape characters of the territory. This landscape richness and its attractiveness for urban populations, combined to the diffusion of new ways of inhabiting the territories at the borders of the park, also regarding food production and marketing (see section 4.3.2.), has generated a great potential for multiplying the functional and spatial relationship between the city and the countryside. Next section will give back the most relevant institutional features of PASM, focusing both on the current regional and metropolitan planning policies that have an influence on the Park, and on the inner characters of its government.

4.3. Institutional profile of the case study

Aim of this section is to analyze the planning policies that influence and affect at regional and sub-regional level the agriculture of the Park. Hence, a brief compendium of regional, provincial and municipal planning policies is presented below with the purpose of placing the dynamics characterizing the Park within a planning policy framework. Then, an analysis of the government of the Park is provided, with a particular focus on the objectives and main contents of the Territorial Plan in force.

4.3.1. Regional planning policies tackling agricultural areas in Lombardy

At the regional level, Law 12/2005 is the major planning law of Lombardy Region (see section 3.2.). It reviewed the set of rules dealing with the development activity and redraws the entire regional planning system by introducing a new typology of local plan, called “Piano di Governo del Territorio” (PGT) that substitutes the old “Piano Regolatore Generale”, introduced in Italy by the national law 1150/1942. Differently from the PRG, the PGT is made up of three distinctive documents:

- the Plan Document (“Documento di Piano”) which identifies the programmatic and analytic framework for the social and economic development of the municipality and the strategic objectives (also quantitatively) of development, improvement and conservation of the territory;
- the Plan of Rules (“Piano delle regole”) which provides the quantitative and qualitative requirements and parameters guiding new interventions or the renovation of existing settlements or of their parts;

- the Plan of Services ("Piano dei servizi") which identifies the areas for public facilities and collective/public interest, social housing, green areas, ecological corridors or green spaces, linking rural and urban spaces, and mobility infrastructures.

The document disciplining and designating agricultural areas is the Plan of Rules which expresses their ways of use, valorization and preservation. It also contains the policies that regulate the modifications of existing buildings that are not occupied by agricultural uses anymore and sets the values of planning indexes and the typologies of interventions allowed in agricultural areas.

A relevant aspect of Law 12/2005 is that it gives to the Province the duty to identify the strategic agricultural areas ("ambiti agricoli strategici", hereafter AAS) through their Provincial Plans. The AAS are defined as those "specific and peculiar areas from the viewpoint of agricultural activity, extension and agronomic features of territory" (Lombardy Region, 2008). According to the implementing regulation of Law n.12 (D.g.r. n. 8/8059), the identification of these areas should be carried out on the basis of the presence of an agricultural activity with particular relevance, of the territorial extension and of the continuity and conditions of specific land productivity. The regulation also specifies that the parts of territories designated as areas of transformation by PGTs cannot be included in the AAS (Ibid.). Municipal Plans, through their Plan of Rules, are called to assume the provincial identification of AAS and eventually introduce some "corrections, clarifications and improvements" based on further analysis, able to improve the knowledge on agricultural system and land use (Ibid.). As pointed out by Lodigiani (2017), this system has proved to be not very efficient in reducing land take since provinces receive proposals by municipalities that are often willing to leave more space than needed for developments.

The Law also specifies the general objectives and contents of the Regional Territorial Plan (PTR), defined as "the fundamental regional policy addressing sectoral planning, and orienting territorial planning of municipalities and provinces" (Lombardy Region, 2005). This Plan represents the main regional planning tool in charge of defining the general aims of development through guidelines and prescriptions and through the identification of the so called "territorial systems". Concerning the "rural/landscape/environmental system", the Plan interprets open spaces as parts of a complex system in which "it is essential to consider the relations among the different parts of the unbuilt territory, according to the plurality of functions present, since [these parts] are fundamental elements of a wider system" (Lombardy Region, 2017: 29). The heterogeneity of the rural/landscape/environmental system is due to the articulation of its settings:

- agricultural areas of strategic interest (already explained above);
- areas of prevalent environmental and natural significance where there is a prescriptive regime dictated by regional, national and European policies;
- areas of landscape significance for which the Landscape Plan of Lombardy Region identifies strategies, policies and actions of valorization and the guidelines of interventions;
- network systems (green infrastructure network or regional ecological

network) including the priority elements whose identification and reference is crucial during the processes of transformation of open spaces, which must be implemented with attention to preserving the continuity of networks.

- other areas of the system as those spaces not included in the other three categories but identified as essential by other planning tools for a variety of reasons.

Hence, the Territorial Plan[1] interprets these settings as crucial elements that should guide sectoral policies and the implementation of planning tools at different administrative levels. The Territorial Plan also comprises the Regional Landscape Plan which is dedicated to landscape interpretation and enhancement. One of its section includes some territorial policies addressed to preserve the rural landscape. In this Plan is reported that "the Lombardy Region is committed to define with the farmers' associations voluntary forms of agreement [...] aimed at locally protecting specific aspects of the traditional agricultural landscape and at promoting its knowledge and appreciation to younger generations, and at contributing to the requalification and reconstruction of degraded landscapes and the construction of the green regional network" (Lombardy Region, 2010: 65).

One of the fundamental tool of the rural/landscape/environmental system of the Territorial Plan, as well as the major typology of green infrastructure, is the Regional Ecological Infrastructure (RER). This is defined as a "multi-purpose network able to generate positive synergies with those sectoral policies that contribute to territorial and environmental governance" (Lombardy Region, 2008). The RER is framed as a fundamental tool to achieve sustainable development on the basis of three aims: preservation (of biodiversity and ecosystem functionalities), valorisation (of territory and of its usability), reconstruction (of natural heritage and biodiversity). According to Di Marino (2010), one of the most distinctive character of RER is its contribution to design since the aim is to constitute a fundamental programmatic policy for other regional sectors and a guideline for sub-regional planning policies. Therefore, the interventions provided in the Territorial Plan concerning the enhancement of the ecological network are quite specific and concrete, such as creation or requalification of green bands at the side of roads, plantation of trees, maintenance of the water network, etc.

In 2014, the Regional Government has approved the Law 31/2014 addressing the problem of reduction of land take ("Legge regionale per la riduzione del consume di suolo e per la riqualificazione del suolo degradato"). The law has produced effects on the territory because it required municipalities to approve new expansions just if they were already foreseen in previous Local Plans. According to Pavesi et al. (2018), there is an important difference among the approach taken by Law 31 and the national policy proposal on land take promoted by the Monti Government (see section 3.3.2.). While the regional law acts on development forecasts by limiting their amount, the national proposal intervenes on the current status of urbanisation processes,

1 The Territorial Plan of Lombardy Region (which comprises also the Landscape Plan) has been approved with Dcr n. 951/2010. It is currently under review following the Dgr n. 137/2014.

attempting to reduce the areas that can be urbanised already foreseen within Local Plans. The amount of the reduction required by the law ranges between the 20 and 30 % for the residential land uses, while it is of 20% for the non-residential uses.

Moreover, the Law requires Municipalities to review their Local Plans on the basis of the new prescriptions on land take and to integrate the Plan with a new planning survey called the Map of Land Take ("Carta del Consumo di Suolo"). This map should subdivide the municipal territory in three categories: urbanised area, area that can be urbanised and agricultural/natural area. The important point here is that the Map should provide clear and univocal information on the agronomic, pedological, landscape and natural qualities of land, in order to consider them while reviewing the urbanisation forecasts. While it is too early to provide an evaluation of the effectiveness of the law, the main problems of application lie in the difficulty that municipalities, especially the small ones, have to build accurate maps reporting the land qualities (Pavesi et al., 2018).

At the level of the Metropolitan Area, the Strategic Metropolitan Plan of Milan is the main tool setting out the strategy for the metropolitan area. "Agriculture as a factor of economic valorisation and founding element of the territory" is within the contents of one of the design objectives of the strategy "Milano Intelligente e Sostenibile". This strategy provides the need to define a new arrangement for the system of parks foreseen in the urban region, beyond the urban belt (**Figure 16**).

Metropolitan and regional parks are interpreted as a "single collective service" and as an "infrastructural network of the social and territorial system" (Città Metropolitana, 2016b). In the Plan, the Metropolitan City of Milan identifies itself as the main stakeholder in charge of defining a green policy and of reorganising the management of the protected areas with respect to the single identities (see section 4.5.2.). The aim is to overcome the current

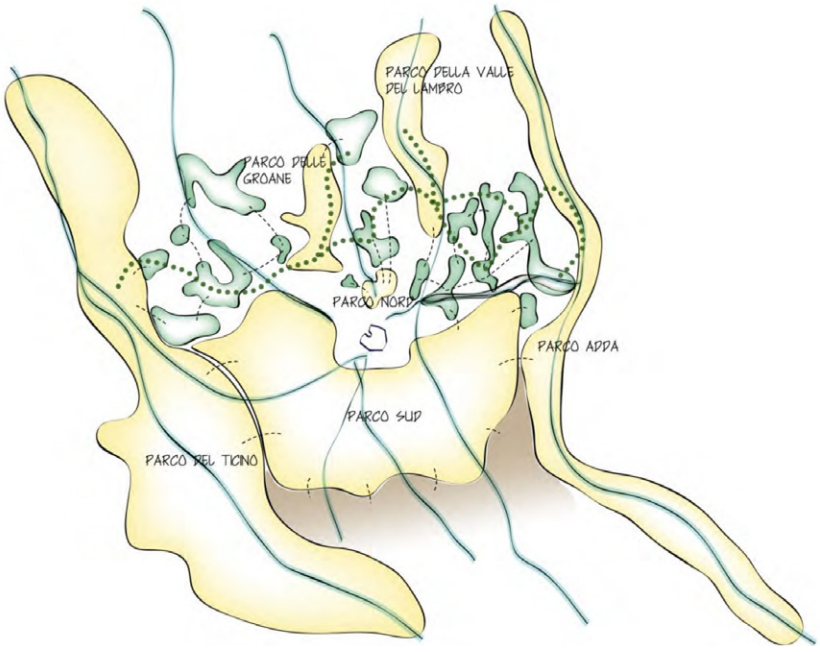


Figure 16: New metropolitan arrangement of regional and local parks in Milan City Region. Source: Città Metropolitana, 2016a.

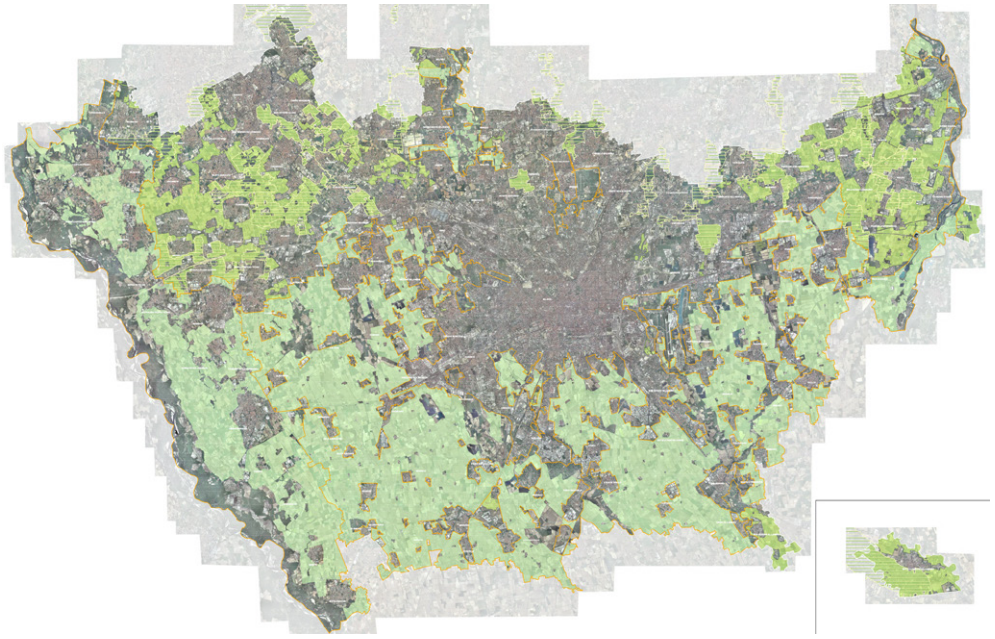


Figure 17: Figure 17: The strategic agricultural areas in Milan City Region. Source: Città Metropolitana, 2016a.

fragmentation and variety of forms of protection and the scarce design attitude characterizing the management of Parks. As reported in the main document of the Plan, this is particularly evident in the case of the Milan South Agricultural Park in which the need to activate projects of territorial valorisation able to integrate the productive vocation of agriculture with the generation and promotion of goods and services for local communities clearly emerges (Città Metropolitana, 2016a:148). By enhancing the productive and agri-food dimensions of agriculture, the current fragilities of periurban spaces could be turned in occasions to re-establish functional and spatial links between Milan and its rural areas.

Another layer of sub-regional planning policy affecting Park's agricultural land is the Territorial Provincial Plan (PTCP), which was implemented and adopted by the former Province of Milan in 2013, now turned into Metropolitan City. The interest of this Plan lies in identifying two land-use designations for the agricultural areas designated by the Park's Territorial Plan: the strategic agricultural areas (art. 60-61) (**Figure 17**), category based on the prescriptions set by Regional Law 12/2005 already mentioned, and the agricultural areas with landscape relevance (art. 28). In the first case, policies are mostly addressed to tackle the use and the productive assets of agricultural areas, and they are oriented to promote agro-environmental products for replacing intensive and high-environmental impact agriculture with organic farming and certified-quality productions, and to support traditional local food productions for promoting food security, short food chains and farmers' markets (Provincia di Milano, 2013: 44). In the second case, emphasis is put on the landscape assets by sustaining and preserving rural territory to achieve the eco-systemic equilibrium, the regeneration of water sources, and the landscape valorisation and by keeping its continuity, by focusing on re-composing edges among urban and rural areas (Ibid.: 22).

4.3.2. Food narrative and urban policies in Milan

Despite the long-standing distance among food and planning policies (Morgan, 2009), which is particularly evident in the Italian context (Cinà, 2016), an increasing attention to the relationships between food production, processing and distribution has emerged in Milan, often tied with the need to re-frame the spatial and functional connections among urban and rural areas (see section 2.3.2.2.).

In Milan, this debate was surely fostered by the emerging social involvement of local food initiatives and networks and by their ability to interact with Milan City Council (Calori & Magarini 2015). Another important element is the policy impact created by international mega-events such as Expo2015, held in Milan between May to October 2015, and particularly the document "Milan Urban Food Policy Pact" (2015) signed by 165 Cities from all over the world.

One of the focus of the Pact is on providing an environment able to facilitate the cooperation among sectors and departments of public administration, foster the participation of local actors within food policy arenas and develop/update food policies or plans that put at the centre the reconciliation of producers and consumers. Governance is identified as one of the recommended actions of the Pact because of the need to improve the coordination among municipal and community levels and to integrate and to better consider food into social, economic and environmental policies.

Although the spatial and temporal proximity does not still allow to assess the impacts that the Expo had on developing urban food policies in Italy, what is evident is the attempt by local institutions, including also Milan City Council, to set the conditions for broadening the social and cultural impacts brought by the event, particularly in terms of keeping the cultural and social attention to food on the public debate (Dansero et al., 2017).

Albeit the crucial role that Expo2015 had on highlighting the importance of sustainable food policies in the range of action of local governments, the interest on food was already a relevant component of Milan urban policies. According to Calori & Magarini (2015), an important element behind the recent success of Milan in the food policy sector is the fact that the city has the highest concentration of educational, training and research enterprises and facilities related to the food system in Italy. These actors work mostly with schools and public education service to improve the knowledge of children and young generations on food. The Milan collaborative network for food education finds its crucial expression during "Fa' la cosa giusta"[2], the most important fair of solidarity economies which has a wide section dedicated to food and to training practices related to food consumption choices (Ibid.:70).

The active involvement of municipality in food sector is also evident by looking at the social policies supporting low-income populations. One example is the active participation of Milan municipality to the "Siticibo" project[3], promoted by the Banco Alimentare ONLUS Foundation. The project has the aim to save cooked and fresh food surpluses coming from public and private restaurants, canteens and supermarkets from trash and to redistribute them

2 https://falacosagiusta.org.
3 https://www.bancoalimentare.it/it/siticibo2012.

Figure 18: The agricultural areas belonging to Milan municipal territory . Source: milanocittastato.it/ evergreen.

to 124 facilities all around the city that give free food to low income people.

Looking at the side of production, just in the city of Milan there are a couple of hundreds spaces for urban horticulture. These express a high social capital since most of them have to do with forms of social agriculture, shared and community gardens. What Calori & Magarini (2015) have shown recently is that there is a high level of integration among urban horticulture and the market agriculture in Milan. The latter is run by about 100 farms on 3000 hectares of cultivated land inside the Milan municipality. The 40% of these agricultural land belong to the "Distretto Agricolo Milanese" (DAM) (see section 4.4.3.) a consortium gathering farms that are cultivating publicly owned land (see Figure 18).

One of the evidences of the new attention on food in local planning policies is its acknowledgement within the Strategic Metropolitan Plan of Milan already mentioned in previous section. In this sense, the "food policy and the enhancement of the agro-food system" are defined as two of the overarching issues because of the weight that food currently has in local economy. The Plan provides the need to improve the role of agriculture as a factor of production and social integration as well as an element of landscape and environmental preservation (Città Metropolitana, 2016a:182).

4.3.3. Local planning policies: development pressures and local governments' responses

As already mentioned, the park extends over 61 municipalities, most of which with a small size, both in terms of number of inhabitants and amount of surface. Thus, institutional fragmentation at the local level is a distinctive

feature of PASM and, as we have already seen in section 1.1.2. also of the whole Italian administrative context. Despite this, by looking at the local level, many are the differences among municipalities, both regarding the settlement configuration, the ratio among urbanized and open spaces and the planning policies implemented by each local government.

This because in Milan urban region development pressures have been greatly influenced by the geographical location and by the proximity of municipal territories to mobility infrastructures and to the main attractors of jobs and economic activities. Accordingly, the municipalities bordering the City of Milan were subjected to greater pressures from developers and investors, which have been resulting in denser urbanization processes and higher rates of soil consumption.

Although the urbanization has not completely stopped after the creation of the Agricultural Park (see section 4.4.2.), in the South of Milan the rigid regulative policies of the Territorial Plan have allowed to safeguard the agricultural vocation of the area and to contain the real estate speculation. This recalls what was already stated by Faravelli & Clerici (2013) according to whose, before the creation of the South Agricultural Park in the 1990s, the destiny of the South of Milano could have been analogous to the one of the north of Milano, where urbanization processes have proceeded intensively within the last fifty years, and the once-separated towns have progressively joined to the Milan periphery, producing a continuous urban landscape (Bolocan Goldstein et al., 2013).

It must be underlined also that the presence of a consistent amount of free areas (defined also “white” as agricultural areas waiting to be urbanized)

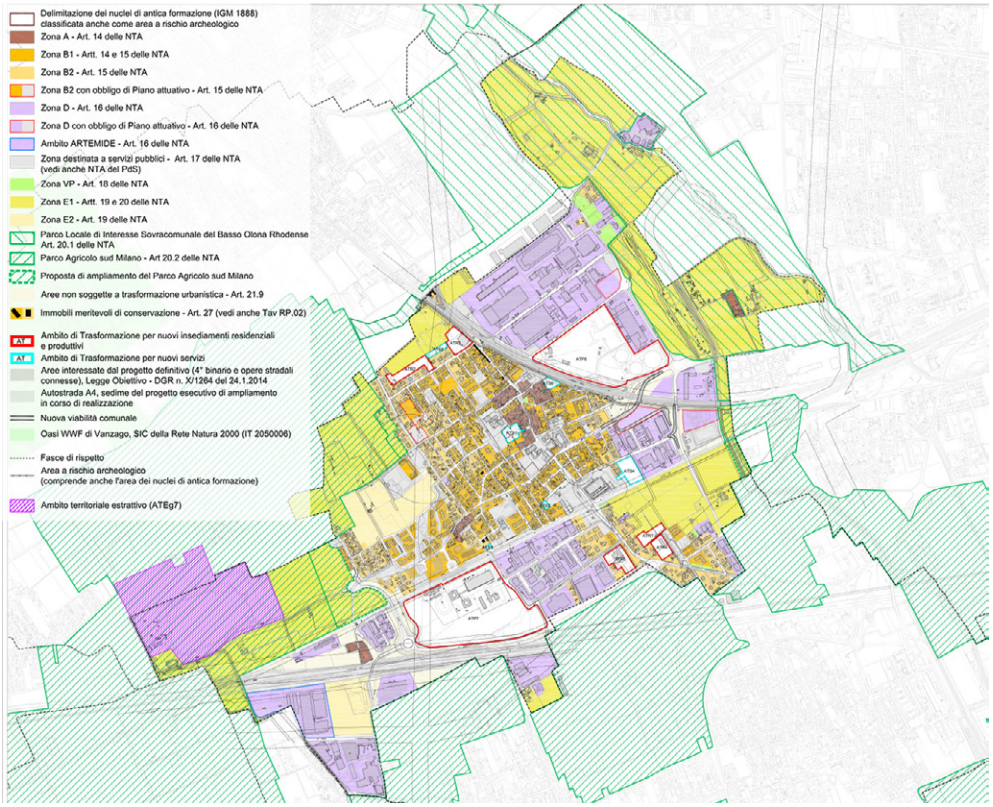


Figure 19: Carta della disciplina delle aree (map with land-use designation). Source: Comune di Pregnana Milanese, 2016b.

located in-between existing settlements and the borders of the park, due to its distinctive "hole shape", has allowed municipalities to continue their expansion even after the establishment of the Park.

Despite higher pressures and instances from developers that local authorities closer to Milan witnessed, the response of every local authority to development has been different because of the different political and planning visions that local administrators have expressed for their municipal territory. Accordingly, some small municipalities of the Park, even those not bordering Milano such as Noviglio, Cerro al Lambro, Carpiano, Pantigliate, have doubled their urbanized surface, leaving very few areas for further developments (Faravelli & Clerici, 2013). In the case of other municipalities, the proximity to Milan has played a crucial role for enhancing the construction of residential and infrastructure developments. This is the case of municipalities such as Assago, Buccinasco, Rozzano and Cesano Boscone (Faravelli & Clerici, 2013) where the planning vision has been to expand in open land more than using previously developed areas or brownfields.

In recent years, the growing sensitiveness on the reduction of soil consumption as well as the environmental and ecological degradation of contemporary territories, have pushed some local administrators to produce local plans that are framing the conflict among protection of agricultural land and housing growth in innovative terms. The case of Pregnana Milanese (MI), a small municipality in the North-West sector of the Agricultural Park is meaningful for the political choices that shaped the contents of the Local Plan (Comune di Pregnana Milanese, 2016a). Starting from the presumption that a consistent amount of development forecast of the former Plan of 2002 has not been realized (17% of residential and 69% of productive areas), the new Local Plan establishes a zero-soil consumption strategy and concentrates new developments in previously developed, derelict or underused areas (Comune di Pregnana Milanese, 2016a: 80). Hence, a major concern of the new Plan is the protection of existing agricultural areas (the yellow areas in the map) and the increase of the amount of designated land in Agricultural Park through the review of its borders and the inclusion of land within the Park (**Figure 19**). Despite its emphasis of protection, the Local Plan is calling to increase the accessibility of agricultural areas through the design of soft mobility paths and the location of sport facilities at the edge among urban and rural areas. The purpose is to frame the agricultural areas designated by PASM as a territory where active policies of environmental preservation are needed to enhance the "social profitability" of local agriculture (Comune di Pregnana Milanese, 2016a: 82).

4.3.4. The Park's government

As a manifestation of Inter-Municipal Cooperation (IMC) (De Luca, 2012; Cinà & Lazzarini, 2018) and one of the most significant legacies of territorial planning in Milan urban region since the 1970s (Faravelli & Clerici, 2013), the Milan South Agricultural Park can be considered the most institutionalised among the forms of local governments' cooperation taking place in the space of the park. The administrative and technical structure of the Park Authority

not only conveys the ordinary management of the park, which directly reflects land use regulations, but manages and coordinates the most important negotiation processes connected to the transformations taking place within and in the proximity of the park's boundaries.

The current form of the Park's government is the Park Authority ("Ente di Gestione"), an administrative body belonging to the Metropolitan City of Milan, which was established by the Regional administration by Law 24/1990, now replaced by Law 16/2007. The main decision-making body of the Park authority is the Executive Committee ("Consiglio Direttivo"), made up of members appointed directly by the Metropolitan Council of Milan. The Committee is chaired by the metropolitan mayor (or his/her delegate), and includes the Mayor of Milan (or one of his/her delegates), three Councillors of the Metropolitan City, four members representing the Municipalities belonging to the Park and two members chosen respectively from farmers' associations and environmental associations (**Figure 20**).

The Executive Committee represents the more significant arena on which investigating the ways in which local governments contribute to shape the governance of the Park. Here, the meaningful aspect is the fact that the governance of the Park is meaningfully constructed by the active participation of farmers' representatives and environmental associations. The role of non-institutional actors in Park's decision-making processes is one of its original characters, due to the historical context when this was implemented (the beginning of the 1990s), but also with respect to the following application to other Italian and Southern-European cases (see the case of the BLAP of Barcelona in section 2.3.1.1.).

At the management level, the Executive Committee is accompanied by three other committees. The first one, the Agricultural Technical Committee ("Comitato Tecnico Agricolo"), is entrusted with the examination and advisory opinions on every direct and reflected action concerning the agricultural

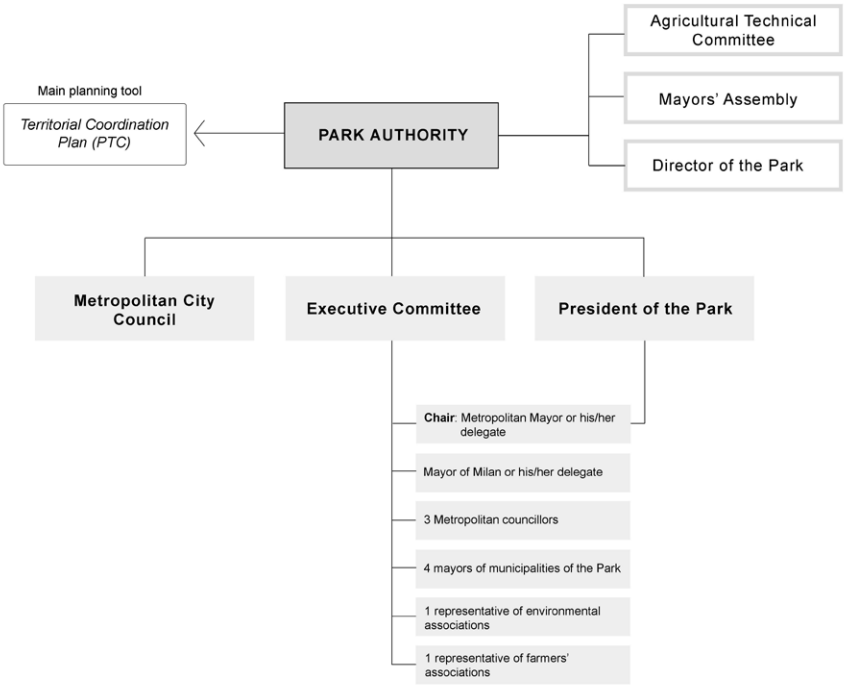


Figure 20: The structure of PASM government. Source: elaboration by the author.

activity (art.14, Park Regulation). The second one is the Mayors' Assembly, which formulates opinions on the Park's regulations and amendments, on the proposal for the Territorial Plan (PTC) and other planning tools (art. 13, ibid.). The last one is the Technical Director, who is responsible for the technical and operative management of the park (art. 10, ibid.).

The Territorial Coordination Plan is the official statutory planning policy in force in the Park. Its main objective is to preserve the farming activity and the agro-pastoral-forestry vocation of the Park (art. 15, PTC). The Plan's policies have the aim of:

- maintaining and developing agricultural activity in its conventional form, obtaining agricultural products and producing environmental services to the community;
- fostering the reduction of environmental impacts of agriculture;
- integrating agricultural activity with the social and economic development of rural territory;
- orienting the agricultural productive activity towards the vegetational-faunistic and landscape protection;
- fostering the maintenance of residual agricultural lots as green spaces from farmers and other public or private stakeholders.

The planning objectives reach a higher level of definition by the subdivision in "territories" (see **Figure 21**). Every territory matches with a specific planning vocation and, particularly, with a more detailed set of policies and guidelines. The three territories defined by the Plan are the following:

- *agricultural territories belonging to the metropolitan belt* (art. 25, PTC). These territories, for their compactness, location and continuity, have a major role for preserving the productive role of agricultural activity. Hence, policies are oriented to: protect their integrity and compactness, avoiding those developments potentially fragmenting or marginalizing agricultural areas; safeguard the exiting rural built heritage as a witness of the territorial historical vocation.
- *agricultural territories and green areas belonging to the urban belt* (art. 26, PTC). The PTC identifies the perimeter of these areas and it states that their discipline needs to be further specified by the Plans of Urban Belt ("Piani di Cintura Urbana") as implementation tools of the Park. Given the crucial role of these areas in-between city and countryside, these plans should combine the instances of agriculture preservation with the realization of interventions concerning the accessibility of the park such as green areas, recreational and sport facilities.
- *territories linking city and countryside* (art. 27, PTC). These territories are sort of "linking strips" between the territories belonging to the metropolitan belt and the conurbations not included in the Plans of Urban Belt. Here, incentives are provided to those agricultural activities that more than others contribute to the landscape recovery and fight degradation, particularly through the creation of urban gardening.

Despite their positive contents and aims, the Plans of Urban Belt (PUB) have never been implemented. They remained only a policy which was not able to achieve an effective integration among the needs of farming with the improvement of recreational opportunities of the periurban interface. Vescovi

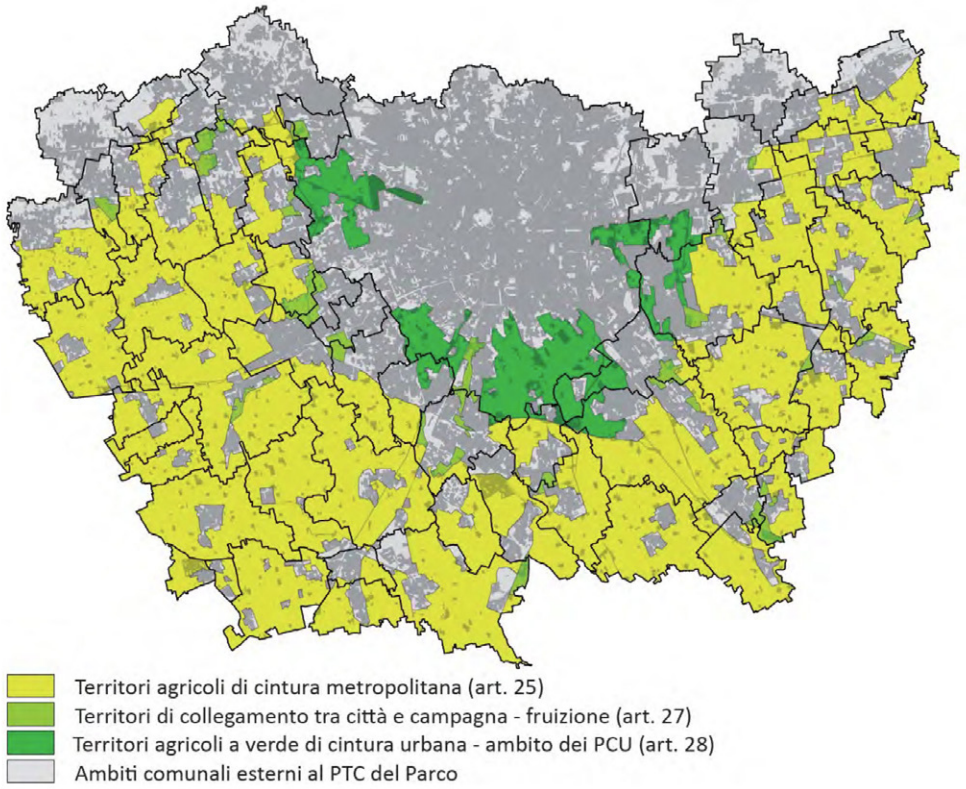


Figure 21: Figure 21: The territorial settings identified by the Territorial Coordination Plan. Source: Vescovi, 2015.

(2015) argued that the failure to implement the PUB is due to the fragility of balances regulating the plot of interests of Milan's periurban interface. In fact, as specified in the Plan, municipalities would have had a crucial role in implementing these plans by adopting the "Accordo di Programma" or "Piani Integrati di Intervento", policy tools through which various stakeholders coordinate their activity during the realization of interventions or programs. However, it has been noticed that sometimes the political position of municipalities, especially the one of Milan municipality, had gone against the implementation of PUB because of political conflicts related to land-use transformations foreseen by the Local Plan (Vescovi, 2015). The lack of PUB as implementation tools of the Territorial Plan has originated a normative gap in the planning policy of the Park because all the policies related to PUB (art. 26, PTC) have been not implemented.

4.4. Spaces of cooperation in the South Milan Agricultural Park

4.4.1. Methodology

To analyse rationales, aims and success of the spaces of cooperation in the Milan South Agricultural Park, two qualitative data collection methods have been adopted by the research. The first is a documentary analysis which involved the consultation of the Territorial Plan of the Park (PTC), the

Agriculture Management Plan ("Piano di gestione del settore agricolo") and other official reports and policy documents of the Park. The documentary analysis comprised also the review of existing literature and online sources, both of which were particularly rich in terms of number and quality of contributions to the debate. The second is a number of semi-structured interviews addressed to a sample of local actors involved in the spaces of cooperation of the park. The interviewees were local administrators such as mayors and local councillors (n=8), farmers (n=4), representatives of local associations (n=4), planning officers (n=2) and researchers (n=2) for a total of 20 interviews (**Table 7**). The survey has been carried out from December 2017 to February 2018.

Table 7: Number and role of actors interviewed in PASM.

Number of interviewees	Role / Position
7	Mayor
1	Local councilor
4	Representative of local associations
2	Planning officer
2	Researcher
4	Farmer

The questions addressed to the interviewees, even with a common structure, dealt with different aspects related to the following objectives:

- identifying the main strengths and weaknesses in the current governance of PASM and exploring possible trajectories for improving it;
- understanding the main constraints to the innovation of planning policy of PASM;
- understanding how to increase the effectiveness of the Park Authority as a policy arena where improving the agri-food relationships between Milan and its rural hinterland.

Institutional and non-institutional members of the Park's Executive Committee were contacted through the institutional mail and the majority of them answered positively to the invitation to be interviewed. With regard to farmers, due to difficulty of using pre-existing strong ties and entry-points, partly related to the distance among the principal investigator (PI) and the sample under investigation, a 'horizontal weak-tie networking' has been used as a valuable alternative to snowball sampling (Scott et al., 2018) (see section 8.3.). Accordingly, it was asked to mayors to suggest the names of a couple of farmers that could have been potentially interested to take part to the interviews. Then they were contacted by phone-calls and met directly in their farmhouses. The contacted farmers were all willing to be interviewed. Mayors have been chosen as the entry points because they usually have extensive social ties on the municipal area which is related to their political and institutional role.

The 20 interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 1 hour in length and,

after having asked the permission, they were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The results presented below come from the main points extracted from the interviews transcription.

4.4.2. The Park Authority: An institutional space of cooperation

As already mentioned, the Park authority represents the space where the cooperation among local governments finds the more institutionalised expression. The interviews allowed to underline the main strengths and weaknesses of the governance of the Park.

The first aspect raised from the majority of the interviewees is the level of complexity characterizing the administrative structure of the park. Thus, acknowledging this complexity is a crucial precondition to fully understand the articulation of the governance processes of the park. The variety of interests represented in the Executive Committee, gathering at the same table mayors, councillors and representatives of the environmental and farmers' associations, and the connection with local communities are at the same time strengths and a weaknesses of the Park authority.

"L'ente di gestione è [...] complesso, articolato, [...] quindi soffre anche nell'ambito decisionale di questa complessità ma dall'altro canto ha il pregio di rappresentare tutta questa varia articolazione degli interessi del parco"[4] (Farmer).

"L'elemento più faticoso è mantenere lo stretto legame tra la parte gestionale [...] e la connessione con i territori"[5] (Mayor).

The complexity of governance is often associated with the scarcity of financial resources and personnel connoting the Park Authority. The inadequate number of officers dealing with planning issues has had the effect of producing a permanent status of 'urgency' in Park's planning policies. This means that the ordinary planning of Park has been replaced by the examination of urgent paperwork coming from other institutional levels. Hence, the status of urgency is deeply undermining the capacity of planning to manage land use conflicts and to foster the territorial impacts of other rural policies.

"Noi ci occupiamo della parte di pianificazione e purtroppo ad oggi stiamo facendo solo la parte di valutazione della pianificazione che fanno gli altri, e non facciamo la nostra di pianificazione, è quello il punto [...] Ci scontriamo con delle urgenze clamorose e devi lavorare sul risolverle e la pianificazione non è mai un'urgenza perché è una cosa di lungo periodo e non si sa mai... Il parco lavora per urgenze e basta. Peccato che con la pianificazione le urgenze non ci sarebbero. Sarebbe molto più semplice gestire le cose. Nessuno ha mai capito che con la pianificazione il parco

4 "The Park Authority is [...] complex, articulated, [...] therefore it suffers also in decision-making processes from this complexity but on the other hand it has the merit of representing all this diverse articulation of interests of the park".

5 "The most difficult element is to maintain the close link between the management part [...] and the connection with the territories".

avrebbe funzionato di più in tutti i sensi"[6] (Planning officer).

According to some interviewees, it is understandable that the financial limits deeply undermine the efficiency of the authority's administrative action. One of the more evident consequence is the creation of time lags (Reed et al., 2013) in decision-making processes, among the time required by policy makers and local administrators to take decisions and the one by farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs to modernise their businesses. Therefore, the temporal gaps among the two processes have generated negative interferences on the plans put in place by the agricultural entrepreneurs with the result of slowing them down and hindering a number of entrepreneurial initiatives of the Park.

"Certe risposte i tecnici dovrebbero darle in tempi un po' più celeri, così come i pareri, le richieste di parere a partire da qualsiasi altro ente al parco sud [...] si arriva sempre in scadenza o dopo la scadenza"[7] (Mayor).

"I tempi di gestione della pratica sono molto lunghi [...] talvolta è accaduto che in passato le pratiche rimanevano anche ingestite per tempo... Per avere un'autorizzazione mediamente io ricordo che si supera anche l'anno, soprattutto se si tratta di una nuova costruzione..."[8] (Farmer).

The limited number of officers does affect also the role of coordination and direction of the Authority. Accordingly, the position of the Technical Director (see section 4.3.1.) is not covered by an external expert nominated through a public Tender as specified in the Law. On the contrary, the decision of the Metropolitan City of Milano was to nominate an internal manager from its staff. Since the technical and operative management of the Park is just one among the functions held by the Manager, the need to have a full-time Director emerges. This is mostly due to the poor coordination of planning decisions taken by the Committee.

"Noi non abbiamo fisicamente una persona che presiede... cioè siamo lasciati un po' allo sbaraglio. XY è sicuramente una persona valida, tecnicamente anche... Ma non lo vediamo mai. Facciamo fatica ad incontrarlo, è molto impegnato..."[9] (Planning

6 "We have been dealing with the planning part and unfortunately until now we have been doing just the part of assessment of planning policies that others do, and we do not do our own planning policies, that's the point. We face clamorous urgencies and we have to work solving them and urban planning is never an urgency because it is a long-term thing and you never know... The park [Authority] works by dealing with urgency and that's it. It's a pity because with planning the urgencies would not exist. It would be much easier to manage things. No one has ever understood that with the planning, the park [Authority] would have worked better in every sense".

7 "Officers should give you certain answers in a shorter time, as well as opinions, requests for advice from any other body to the Park Authority [...] you always get them close or after the deadline".

8 "The time of paperwork's management is very long [...] it also happened in the past that the paperwork was left forgotten for much time... To get an authorization, I remember that you need on average more than one year, especially if it relates to a new construction..."

9 "We do not physically have a person who manages... that is, we are a bit left "in the fray". XY is definitely a valid person, also from the technical point of view... But we never see him. We struggle to meet him, he is very busy..."

officer).

Problems of administrative efficiency also regard some communicative gaps in policy making processes among different administrative levels. The interviews found out that the interaction between the Executive Committee and the municipalities of the Park is often weak, especially concerning planning processes. Some local administrators stated that in the past there were some problems in knowing the outcome of the consent from the Park authority regarding the approval of local plans or their planning modifications (the so called "varianti urbanistiche").

"Col parco sud non c'è un dialogo straordinario, formalizzato..."[10] (Mayor).

A further issue regards the compatibility among different administrative positions. As already reported, 5 up to 11 components of the Executive Committee are also Mayors of municipalities of the Park. The positive side of this coexistence is that it significantly brings decision-making processes of the park closer to the needs of local communities. Nevertheless, it results in a manifest prejudice to the functionality of both administrative levels. According to one member of the Executive Committee, the burden of mayors' administrative and institutional responsibilities is such that their performances within the Executive Committee are not always exhaustive. This produces an evident knowledge deficit, mining the efficiency of decision-making processes of the park authority.

"Il problema dell'Ente Gestore è che si arriva al Consiglio Direttivo... dove pochi si sono preparati sulle delibere perché... sono sindaci che hanno tante altre cose da fare, giustamente... e non possono permettersi di studiare le delibere prima di arrivare in Consiglio Direttivo. Per cui lì a volte c'è un po' di improvvisazione..."[11] (Representative of local association)

As stated by a couple of interviewees, the more knowledgeable members of the Executive Committee on the contents of deliberations are the two representatives of agricultural and environmental associations of the Park. This underlines the positive role of civic society in informing decision making processes and in positively contributing to shape the contents and the range of action of the park authority.

"X e Y sono i più attivi nel Consiglio Direttivo... X sa persino quante virgole abbiamo messo nelle delibere...!"[12] (Planning officer)

The management problems characterizing the Park Authority have a direct reflection also in planning policies. At the moment, the territorial plan in force

10 "With the South Park there is no extraordinary, formalized dialogue..."

11 "The problem of the Park Authority is that members get to the Executive Committee... where just few people have read the deliberations because... they are Mayors who have many other things to do, right... and they can not afford to study the deliberations before arriving at Executive Committee. So sometimes there is a bit of improvisation there..."

12 "X and Y are the most active in the Executive Committee... X knows how many commas we put in the deliberations...!"

in the park (the PTC), is the only plan ever developed and approved by the Authority, more than 15 years ago.

In the past, the few attempts to update its contents have failed. Although the Plan has been effective in containing, even if without completely stopping (Arcidiacono et al., 2012; Pileri & Maggi, 2008), the pressures from the real estate sector to urbanized agricultural areas, the regulative nature of the plan soon proved to be unable to adequately support the initiatives coming from farmers and other local actors. Looking at the reasons behind its missing update, a feeling of worry emerges from all the interviewed actors because some transformative instances may emerge from local authorities or private actors and lead to a negative review of the park area and to a weakening of its role of protection.

"Io capisco che la questione dei confini non viene aperta perché se venisse aperta ci sarebbe la corsa a mangiarsi il parco"[13] (Mayor).

A second element hindering the process of plan review is the excessively dilated temporality of the plan process which, in fact, takes more than the length of the administrative mandate (5 years). This results in making the plan's review strongly dependent from the political will of the Executive Committee and of the Milan Metropolitan Authority.

"Una variazione del PTC che prevede tutta una serie di passaggi fino all'approvazione finale di regione Lombardia non riesce a stare dentro i 5 anni della programmazione politica per cui spesso le cose che sono iniziate con una giunta poi vengono riviste da un'altra giunta..."[14] (Farmer)

The state of inertia that planning is experiencing, rather than hindering the transformative demands, has rather generated, especially in the last ten years, a series of tensions. These have been originated as a result of the attempts from local private and public stakeholders to introduce changes in planning policy of the park. Their land use-oriented demands clashed with the final deliberations of the Executive Committee, with the result of generating open conflicts in the space of the Park. These demands for transformations do not only concern major developments from the real estate sector or some large infrastructures of regional scale, whose interventions have produced lively contrasts between different administrative levels (Associazione Parco Sud Milano, 2017; 2018). But they also refer to a constellation of local facilities (roads, urban parks, sports centres, services) requested by the municipal administrations and related to the needs of the local communities[15].

Despite the high number of developments rejected by the Executive Committee since it started its activity, during the last two decades the soil consumption in the South Agricultural Park has not stopped. According to

13 "I understand that the issue related to borders has not been discussed because if it was then there would be a rush 'to eat' the park".

14 "A modification of the Plan including a series of steps until the final approval by the Lombardy region can not stay within the 5 years of the political mandate so often things that started with an administration are then reviewed by another one..."

15 For deepening the issue of land-related conflicts in metropolitan contexts see: Pascariu et al. (2012a).

a recent study made by the Land-Use Research Centre based on DUSAF data, in the decade 1999-2009 1,042 hectares of land were lost in the park together with other 2,042 hectares of areas out the park edges within a buffer zone of 500 metres (Arcidiacono et al., 2012). And it is not a coincidence that the growth trend in soil consumption of the South Agricultural Park was the highest among the Lombardy regional parks (Ibid.).

In addition to the requests for urbanising some portions of land within the Park, a considerable number of planning applications for modifying its perimeter concerns the inclusion of agricultural land within the park. This 'planning phenomenon' relates to the presence of some areas, located outside the boundaries of the park, on which in the past local plans have foreseen development rights. The crisis experienced by the real estate sector has hindered many of these development forecasts. Moreover, the new sensitivity towards issues of soil consumption reduction has led some local administrations to delete or reduce the development forecasts, turning these areas back into agricultural land use in local plans (Cinà, 2015; Fiora et al., 2014). These land use processes have often generated some conflicts with the owners of these areas, which also resulted in judicial appeals.

4.4.3. The Rural Districts: spaces of cooperation among farmers

Lowering the glance to the ground of practices, a number of cooperative spaces emerge. These are collaborative practices among farmers and other local actors, born and developed on the basis of a common need for constructing strategies of development in the area of the Park. Complementarity, strong rooting in territorial vocations and high transformative potential are some of the features characterizing these initiatives. The goal is to share and network energy and resources for responding to new market conditions, jointly promoting products and services and improving the communication with local institutions and consumers with the purpose of significantly multiplying the relationships with the city.

The degree of formality of these cooperative spaces varies. They range from the informal dialogue among farmers, arising from spatial proximity and conveying the exchange of knowledge and good practices, to the strategic sharing of structures, facilities and services, to participation to more consolidated forms of cooperation (such as the Rural Districts) with a more defined institutional and legal framework. The perimeters of these spaces are not fixed or stable, but they are soft, because the number of actors involved and the field of action change, and different planning rationales intersect.

Today cooperation plays a crucial role in the rural economy of the park. Although often accused of being little inclined to collaborate ("farmers are all a bit individualistic [...] we always say many words but we are never united..." Famer X), during the last ten years farmers have started to cooperate more intensively, mostly driven by the need to respond proactively to the new market conditions, particularly to the overall decrease of product prices, and to focus on diversification and on the activation of short supply chains to

better respond to the urban market. These choices aim at building income alternatives in order to facilitate the transition from a farm economy highly specialized in the production of an asset, to one characterized by a greater differentiation of activities.

"Noi stiamo facendo tutto questo per stare in piedi, eh? Perché la monocultura non va più avanti, le vacche fino ad un anno fa [era un] disastro, il latte te lo pagavano 32 centesimi al litro e lo vendevano ad 1€ perché l'intero non fan niente, lo prendono, vanno al loro frigo e poi lo mettono sul mercato"[16] (Farmer).

"É venuto qua per caso un cuoco a cercar del riso. Lui si è trovato bene poi c'è stato il passaparola [...] ora abbiamo un po' di ristoranti... cioè vendiamo. [...] Sono contento, vorrei ampliarla e anche cercare di andare all'estero"[17] (Farmer).

Alongside the needs above mentioned, some recent research works have shown that in the Park, the activity of farms shows a high interrelation among cooperation and diversification. For example, Gaviglio et al. (2017) considered a sample of 50 farms in the Park with different characteristics in terms of geographical location, type of production, amount of agricultural area used (SAU), degree of multi-functionality, and economic size. By using a set of indicators, it was assessed the degree of environmental, social and economic sustainability of farms. Participation to short food supply chains, ethical purchasing groups (GAS), trade associations and, more generally, to cooperation with other producers and consumers was evaluated in order to describe the degree of social sustainability of farms and the ways in which this can determine or influence their economic self-sufficiency and agri-environmental performance. The research has led to outline that the two categories of farms having a greater predisposition towards cooperation are the biological and multifunctional farms. The research has also shown that these two categories are expression of a high social capital (Gaviglio et al., 2017), demonstrating that there is a link between the intensiveness of social relationships of farms with local communities and their agro-environmental performance and degree of multi-functionality.

As the spaces of cooperation between farmers become more structured, the active involvement of a range of social actors becomes crucial and it contributes significantly to define the aims of cooperation. For example, in the case of the District of Ethical Rural Economy (DESR), the territorial network involves ten farms which cooperate with solidarity purchasing groups, actors of ethical finance, fair trade shops, local associations and groups but also local administrations, which are intervening at various levels in shaping the District's operational field.

In the case of PASM, the one of Rural Districts is the most significant and consolidated space of cooperation between farms (Vescovi, 2015). The

16 "We are doing all this to survive, got it? Because the monoculture does not go well, the cows a year ago [it was a] disaster, they were paying the milk at 32 cents a litre and they sold it at 1€ because they don't make anything to the whole milk, they take it, put it in their fridge and then sell it on the market".

17 "A cook came here by chance looking for rice. He found himself well then there was some "gossip" [...] now we have a bit of restaurants... we sell [...] I'm happy, I would like to expand it and also try to go abroad".

idea of Rural Districts emerged in Italy in late 1990s as an adaptation of the concept of 'Industrial District' coined by Becattini and developed by a number of Italian regional economists (Becattini, 2000; Brunori & Rossi, 2007). At the Districts' basis there is the same idea to transfer to the agricultural sector the benefits originated from inter-business relationships related to proximity and supply chain processes, traditionally recognized to the manufacturing sector Vescovi (2014). According to Brunori & Rossi (2007), a crucial element of distinction among the two typologies of Districts lies in the consideration of the natural environment as one of the main 'basic ingredients' of the Rural District.

Rural districts were introduced in Italy about fifteen years ago by Law 228/2001. This Law carries on a reorganisation and modernisation of the agricultural sector in Italy, according to a growing interest for strategies of re-localisation of agricultural production and for endogenous development (Brunori & Rossi, 2007). The law defines Rural Districts as "local production systems characterised by a homogeneous historical and territorial identity due to the integration among agriculture and other local activities and to the production of very specific goods or services, coherent with natural and territorial traditions and vocations" (Ibid.).

Brunori & Rossi (2007) define Rural Districts as a new pattern of governance, as a particular relationship between local actors and the environment, embodied in their 'contextual knowledge'. Similar is the interpretation given by Cesari (s.d.), according to whom the Rural District, rather than a new institutional level, it should be interpreted as a way of interacting with institutions, a sort of partnership or network putting in communication different stakeholders operating in the territory. The author also argued that "the Rural District can be considered a development model from below [...], a form of cooperation among different networks and institutional actors able to determine a critical valuable mass and develop activities of promotion and marketing of the territory".

Law 228 gives to Regions the possibility to establish Rural Districts and to further develop the policies guiding their functioning. Through Law 1/2007, Region Lombardy has incorporated within its legislation the national guidelines about Rural Districts. Moreover, Law 8/2009 (Deliberation of Regional Council 8/10085) has specified the requirements that farms need to present for being recognised as Districts by the Region. Criteria range from the representativeness of the district at sectoral and territorial level, the availability of scientific and technological sources, to the integration of functions among the members and the guarantees for the correct operative and financial management of the District. Once recognized, all farms belonging to the District should establish a so called "Society of the District" and should elaborate and approve a "Plan of District". This document describes the main objectives and the planned interventions of the District, focusing on the integrated use of European, national and regional financial tools. Hence, the plan has the aim to strategically identify District's trajectories of action and the financial sources needed to achieve them.

There are currently five active Rural Districts in the park (**Figure 22**). The sixth one, the DESR District, although commonly defined as a District, is formally an association as it was born before the approval of the Regional

Law 8/2009 already mentioned. Although with different purposes, the Districts share a common idea of consolidating the agricultural vocation of the park territory, activating projects aimed at multiplying the territorial capital and at promoting a direct relationship between farms and other actors within the area of the Park (**Table 8**).

The five Districts of the Park all share a wide territorial extension, ranging from 1.500 to 3.000 hectares. Apart from the DAM District, whose farms are all located within Milan municipal territory, the agricultural areas of the other four Districts extend over a number of municipalities and this gives to the District a crucial inter-municipal dimension, as well as a territorial governance profile (Peano, 2006).

Looking at the actors who have had a leading role in the creation of the Districts, the role of municipalities is prominent in DAM, DiNAMo and Adda Martesana Districts. Instead, in the case of "Rice and Frogs" and DAVO Rural Districts farms and farmers were the promoters of the Districts. Despite this distinction, while municipalities have mostly had the role of setting the framework and coordinating the members, farmers, particularly some of them, have played a major role in defining the aims, in turning the strategy into concrete actions and in fostering its territorial impacts.

Given the strong link to territorial features, Districts' aims are quite variegated. "Rice and Frogs" Rural District focuses on developing coordinated actions among agricultural enterprises by building common and more efficient market strategies related to the production and marketing of rice as the main local product. DAM District is more oriented to originate a collaborative environment aimed at co-generating an urban-rural landscape where the cooperation with

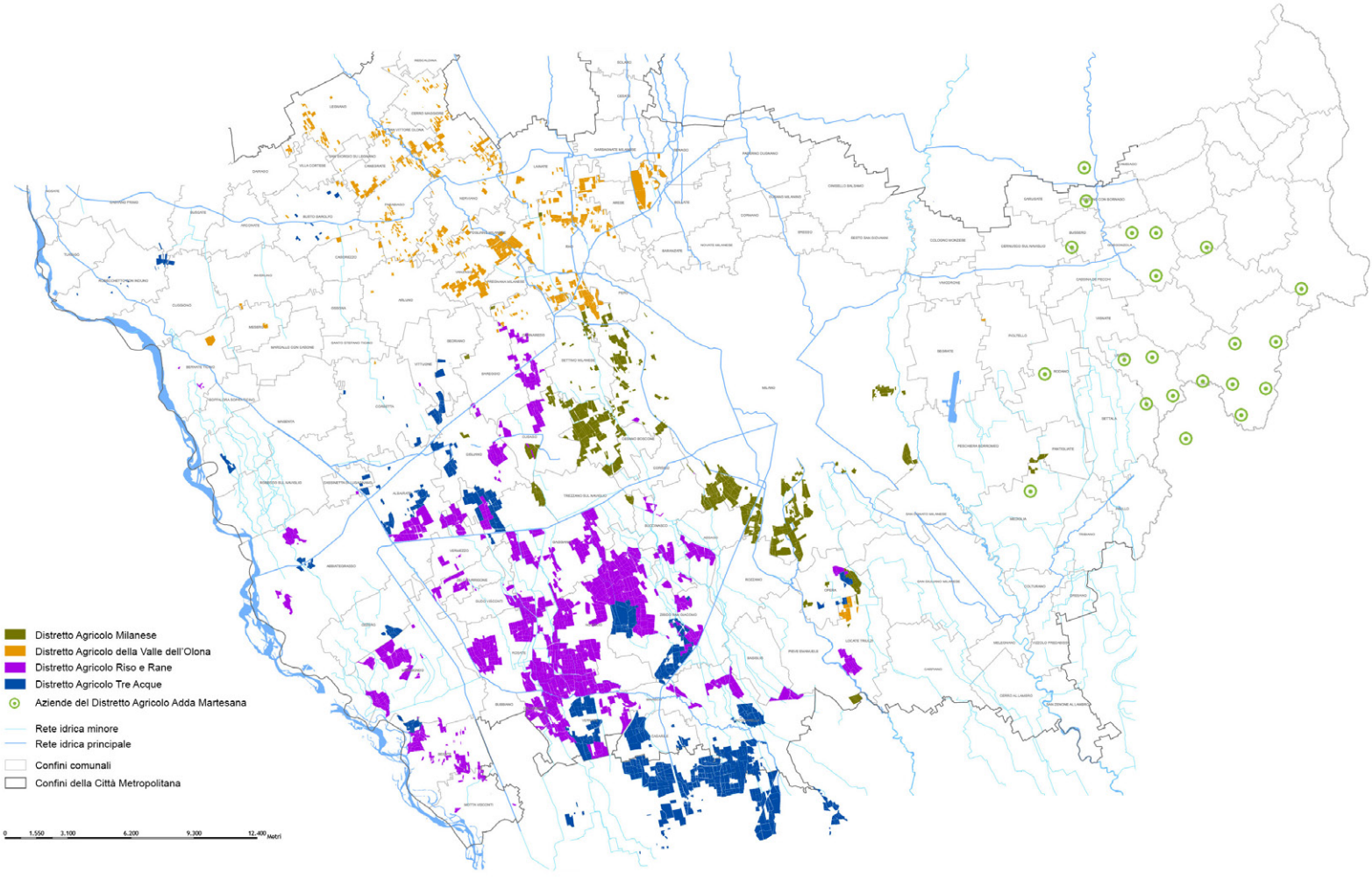


Figure 22: Farms belonging to the Agricultural Districts in the Metropolitan City of Milan. Source: Re-elaboration by the author on a cartography of the Province of Milan with SIARL data and cadastre.

Rural Districts	Accreditation year	Promoter	N. of farms involved	Spatial extension
Distretto Agricolo Milanese (DAM)	2011 (DGR n. 624 del 13/10/2010)	Municipality of Milan	31	1.500 ha (1 municipality)
Distretto Agricolo della Valle dell'Olona (DAVO)	2012 (DGR n° 3592 del 6/6/12)	Consorzio del fiume Olona	29	1.500 ha (22 municipalities)
Distretto Neorurale delle Tre Acque di Milano (DiNAMo)	2012 (DGR n° 4243 del 25/10/12)	Province (today the Metropolitan City of Milan	35	3.000 ha ca. (20 municipalities)
Distretto Rurale Riso e Rane	2011 (DGR n° 1810 del 31/5/11)	A group of rice farms	63	5.000 ha (23 municipalities)
Distretto Agricolo Rurale Adda Martesana (DAAM)	2017 (DGR n° 6552 dell'8/5/17)	Municipality of Liscate (MI)	26	11 municipalities

Table 8: Rural districts in PASM. Source: Elaboration by the author.

public administrations and civic society can improve the recognition of the value of agricultural activity and protect the safety of agricultural contracts. The Adda Martesana District, the youngest among the districts of the Park, aims at promoting the direct purchase and sale of products at farms and farmers' markets and other forms of promotion and development of services for local communities. Finally, the DiNAMo District has a more multifunctional vocation since it promotes the tourism of proximity as a way to improve the job opportunities of local enterprises.

The potential of the Districts in trying to re-connect cities and countryside by creating more sustainable food chains does not match with an equally evident institutional support. Looking at the relationship between the Rural Districts and the park's government some contradictions emerge. For example, Faravelli & Clerici (2012) argued that the park authority should have taken care of the territorial capitals, it should have become a real "social construction", as an expression of civil society, but now it is actually separated from it. Beyond its contribution to protect the agricultural values of the territory, the limits concern the inability to integrate aspects of food security and sustainable transformation of supply chains into the contents of land use management policies (Quaglia & Geissler, 2017).

At the basis of the disjunction between Districts and the park's government there is not only a difficult compatibility of its emphasis on regulation with the active management of peri-urban areas. In the past it has even been an obstacle to the establishment of initiatives by farmers and other local actors.

"...In molte situazioni [l'Ente Parco Sud] ha pure rotto le scatole, devo essere sincero. Siccome è arrivato dopo, era un po' scocciato... e ha visto i Distretti come concorrenti rispetto alla sua politica cioè perché [...] soprattutto nel caso di Milano... noi abbiamo bypassato completamente il parco, bypassato nel senso che non l'abbiamo neanche visto... Perché ci siamo interfacciati subito con il Comune di Milano"[18] (Farmer).

18 "...In many situations [the Park Authority] has also "broken the balls", I have to be honest. When the Authority arrived "later", it was a bit annoyed... seeing the Districts as competitors to its policies, because [...] especially in the case of Milan... we have completely bypassed the park [authority], bypassed in the sense that we have not even seen it... Because we immediately negotiated with the City of Milan".

This contradictory relationship cannot however overlook the positive externalities deriving from the forms of protection established and consolidated by the Park Authority.

"In effetti prima dei Distretti ci sono state anche delle altre forme che si erano sviluppate precedentemente, ad esempio dei piccoli consorzi agrituristici dove si mettevano insieme per gestire la comunicazione, [...] perché vedevano, essendo all'interno del parco, delle prospettive di valorizzazione dei loro territori in ordine proprio a questo nuovo rapporto che si sarebbe dovuto instaurare con la città. Per cui in effetti un po' come brodo di cottura ci stiamo..."[19] (Farmer).

The need for greater financial self-sufficiency and clarity in defining development objectives has pushed some Districts to adopt rather advanced and innovative forms of planning. The Plan of the Rural District of Milan (DAM) identifies as a key topic an agriculture integrated with the territory, following the awareness that within the city it can carry out "a public service for protecting and enhancing of common goods, water and soil, and for the environmental and landscape regeneration, within a vision of a city where urban and rural development harmoniously dialogue" (Consorzio DAM, 2011: 10).

The document aims at making the policies more effective and at planning the needed investments to develop the territory of the District, outlining the projects that promoters want to put in place on the basis of their real needs. Therefore, the 31 companies participating to the District have the chance to have a say and contribute to large-scale projects, sharing financial and human resources, taking part to national and regional tenders, and improving the degree of interaction with other institutional levels, especially with the regional one within the rural development plan and the related policies (Consorzio DAM, 2011: 69). Despite the multiple relationships that should regulate their intersections, mutuality and reciprocity, the relations between the DAM and the park government appear quite blurred. In particular, the District plan completely exclude the Territorial Coordination Plan (PTC) from its cognitive and operative framework. It also avoids considering its, albeit weak, contribution to the social and economic development of the Park. It just mentions the presence of the Province of Milan as the Managing Body of the South Agricultural Park, as a useful partner to meet and listen to for understanding the needs of the Milanese territory.

Despite the scarce collaboration between Rural Districts and the Park Authority, in the last few years some of the local institutions of the urban region have been involved in defining some common actions addressed to the urban/rural interface. One of the experiences that originated more impacts in local decision making processes is the one framed within the RURBANCE project, granted in the framework of the transnational cooperation program

19 "In fact, before the Districts there were also other forms that had developed previously, for example the small agri-tourism consortiums where farmers got together to manage communication, [...] because, being inside the park, they saw potentials for the enhancement of their territories in order to develop this new relationship that should have been established with the city. So we could say that it is exactly as a 'cooking vegetable stock'..."

Alpine Space 2007-2013. The project aims at increasing the competitiveness and attractiveness of the Alpine territories by developing and testing new planning and governance approaches addressed to territorial requalification processes (RURBANCE, 2015). Alongside this program, the Lombardy Region has used the tools provided by the project to develop an urban/rural development strategy for the Milan metropolitan territorial system. The negotiated planning tool chosen to establish the governance model and to achieve the objectives was the "Territorial Development Framework Agreement", named "Milan Rural Metropolis" (AQST) which was coupled with a strategic scenario of consolidation and enhancement of the rural matrix and an Action Plan made of actions and activities. The AQST took the form of a collaborative agreement among Lombardy Region, Metropolitan City of Milan and the four Rural Districts active in PASM[20]. As reported in the final project report, "the agreement defines the common goals for the future development of the rural-urban metropolitan system according to a shared scenario: these goals will be reached thanks to the implementation of several Development Measures" (RURBANCE, 2015). It was signed in 2015 and it defines actions oriented to address some overall objectives like the improvement of water resources management, the environmental and landscape requalification, the renovation of rural estate, the innovation of product/processes and supply chain and the promotion of rural heritage and culture. Beyond these general aims, the AQST had the positive effect of coordinating and putting together financial resources coming from a wide range of institutional and non-institutional actors and addressed to implement some local projects and actions. These range from the improvement of the commercialization of local products (especially rice) in large supermarket chains (such as Esselunga), to the renovation and update of lease contracts of farmers cultivating land which belongs to Milan Municipality, the improvement of the water management system for agricultural activity. According to Quaglia & Jeissler (2017), the AQST had the merit of sharing the neo-ruralisation strategy already included in the Strategic Plan of DAM District to the other Rural Districts, and creating a hybrid network of actors committed to work together for improving the functional and spatial connections between Milano and its rural hinterland.

4.5. Discussion

4.5.1. Gaps, intersections and complementarities

The survey above mentioned has highlited a number of issues related to Park Authority's decision-making processes and to its capacity to convey effective planning policies. I have demonstrated that one of the factors undermining Executive Committee's efficiency relates to the knowledge deficits expressed by its members, whose gaps affect the processes of delivering policies. This supports what some recent studies on public policies (Dente, 2011) and on

20 The four Districs involved in the AQST are Consorzio DAM, District of Olona River Valley, District of "Tre Acque di Milano" and "Rice and Frog" District. The "Adda Martesana" District was not existing yet.

Inter-Municipal Cooperation (CoE et al., 2010) have shown, that the lack of knowledge and technical know-how in public administrations is one of the crucial aspects blocking innovation in local governance processes (Lazzarini, 2017). In PASM, this aspect is made even more evident by complexity of the territorial context, given by the number and variety of territorial situations characterizing the Park space and by the high institutional fragmentation, which makes it an original case compared to other contexts with similar governance profiles and conveying similar forms of land-use regulation (Paül & Mckenzie, 2012) (see section 2.3.1.1.).

Moreover, the obsolescence of the Territorial Plan is in line with what was already highlighted by Paone (1997) and Giacchè (2012) concerning the failure of inter-municipal planning in Italy (the so called "pianificazione comprensoriale") (see also section 3.2.). According to them, the political weakness often characterising inter-municipal associations, together with the longer time and stronger political commitments needed for the elaboration and management of joint plans, deeply undermine the possibility to reach concrete results in integrating territorial planning with agriculture preservation and development. This is evident also in the case of PASM, where the obsolescence of planning policy is due to the scarce support by the Metropolitan City, both in term of financial resources and political committment. At the same time, while supporting the idea and the importance of the park for safeguarding farmland, the mayors of the park's municipalities do not have sufficient political influence to guide a process of innovation. They also have a vulnerable position of leadership because it is strongly related to the local electorate and to the administrative mandate (CoE, 2010).

The proposed analysis underlined that the two spaces of cooperation analysed, the Park's Executive Committee and the Rural Districts, despite having distinctive and separate goals and activities, they share a common space of action. Also, they are expression of two different planning rationales. In the case of the Park Authority, the discipline established by the Territorial Coordination Plan (PTC), a tool dated but still representing the main expression of the park's government, has a harsh regulatory focus which has hindered, rather than promoted, projects and initiatives put in place by local governments and private sector. This is indicative of what Marsden & Franklin (2015) showed when they investigated the processes of disconnection among sustainable-led communities and local governments in England, that "land-use planning systems are very often perceived to be contributing to urban development problems, rather than functioning as tools of environmental improvement". In order to answer to these limits, the Park Authority has recently put in place some policies for supporting and promoting the agricultural sector which anyway have a weak impact since they are undermined by deep management and financial problems.

On the other hand, the Rural Districts have conveyed the entrepreneurial dynamism of farms, capable of implementing strategies aimed at overcoming individual interests and traditional ways of managing the agricultural enterprise towards an innovative business activity connoted by high transformative potential. Also the short food chains, whose number is constantly increasing in the Park, often linked to the Districts' activities, as well as promoting a

process of critical reconnection between consumers and producers (Ilbery et al., 2005; Marsden & Franklin, 2015), they have created significant opportunities for diversifying the agricultural production and valid income alternatives for local farms with the result of strengthening their social and territorial capital.

It seems therefore that, although being divergent from the operational point of view, the Park Authority and the Rural Districts are characterised by a high degree of complementarity in their ways to frame agricultural production within a vision of urban/rural relationships. Thus, while the Park Authority has provided a strong framework of protection for agricultural areas and conveyed a strict urban containment policy, the Rural Districts have built experimentations in the field of sustainable food systems by affirming positive forms of cooperation among farmers and of reconnections among producers and consumers across the urban/rural interface. At the same time, the Districts have undoubtedly benefited from the Park's institutional contextual conditions and regulatory planning framework (see section 4.4.2.), demonstrating, as already stated by Vandermeulen et al. (2006), that the significant externalities produced by the institutional context are crucial in influencing the attitudes of farms to diversification. In this sense, even in the case of the South Agricultural Park, the institutional and regulatory context has given stability to the conditions of protection of agricultural landscape and, albeit indirectly, has allowed the demands for projectuality coming from the civil society (what are often define as bottom-up practices) to find greater consolidation in the Park.

Despite this, the inability to stop soil consumption within the Park's perimeter (Arcidiacono et al., 2012), shows that the regulatory planning tools, while having significantly limited real estate speculation, have not been sufficient to preserve the productive value of agricultural land at the edge of the city. Moreover, as demonstrated by Paül & Mckenzie (2012), the use of rigid land-use regulation devices, already tested and evaluated in other western metropolitan contexts, not only have failed to completely stop urban expansion in the countryside, but they have not been able to deal with the social, economic and ecological complexity of the fringe areas (see also: Gallent & Shaw, 2007; Lazzarini, 2018).

The disconnected nature of the relationship among Park Authority and Rural Districts shows that in this case the public sector, despite having a key role in the planning process, has not attempted to build any significant and stable bridges with the farmers' associations. This resulted in Rural Districts' emergence as spaces of deliberative opportunities, as actors endowed with a strong co-productive attitude, which has been able to define problems and issues and to shape plans and projects, as in the case of the Milanese Rural District and its Plan (Albrechts, 2012: 52). They have contributed to co-create synergies for enhancing the social and economic development of countryside, on the basis of the idea that more functional interdependencies with the city are fundamental to improve the economic strength of agricultural sector, its market opportunities and its capacity to compete with urban land-use transformations.

4.5.2. Ongoing policy transformations

As emerged from the interviews, the members of the Executive Committee and, more in general, the representatives of local institutions and civic society of PASM are fully aware of the weaknesses characterizing decision making processes of the Park Authority. In the previous section I have demonstrated how these aspects are not specific and distinctive of PASM but they are issues typically connoting local governments in Italy and, more in general, they are dynamics recurrent and common to IMC in many Western-European Countries.

In order to answer to these problems, the Regional Government has recently promoted a process of simplification of the arrangement of regional protected areas. Law 28/2016 proposed the reorganisation of the system of management and protection of regional and local parks of territorial interests (the so called "PLIS"). This reorganisation aims at creating a new arrangement of protected areas through the integration of the existing Park Authorities and of their planning and management policies. It is also oriented to improve the efficiency of governance processes for safeguarding the landscape and biodiversity through the creation of Territorial Ecosystem Settings (TES). The PASM is involved by the contents of the Law since it belongs to the 8th TES (**Figure 23**).

The crucial aspect of the Law is that it does not establish itself the amalgamation of the regional and local parks but it gives to park authorities the possibility to voluntarily decide how and with which authority amalgamate. Obviously, these decisions have to respect the arrangement of TES and the roadmap included in the law, which specifies the schedule that should guide the process. The law was approved on November 2016 and it had the effect of

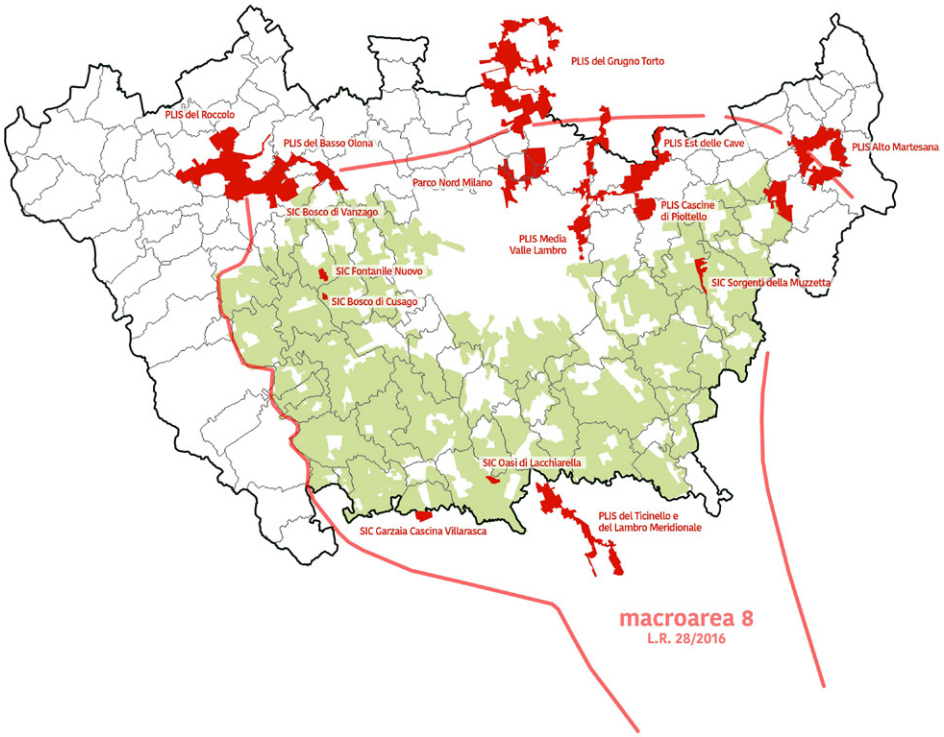


Figure 23: Parks and safeguarded areas of the Metropolitan City of Milan falling within the 8th TES and involved in the proposal to reorganize the management and protection instruments in accordance with Law no. 28/2016. Source: elaboration by the author.

fostering in the following months a lively debate within all the Park Authorities of the Region, and also in the Executive Committee of PASM.

Will the amalgamation of PASM with other parks be a chance to solve the financial and management constraints of the Park Authority?

Will this process undermine the agricultural vocation of the Park?

Will it increase the distance and gaps among the Park government and needs of local communities and farmers?

These were some of the questions and issues raised by the interviewees. After an internal debate lasted few months, the Executive Committee has approved in 2017 a deliberation in which it is stated that the Committee has a positive opinion on the reorganisation proposed by Law 28/2016 and the related 8th TES. Anyway three prescriptive guidelines have been proposed by the deliberation:

- The need to safeguard the PASM territorial vocation;
- The importance to define a governance model ensuring that the new authority will be representative of all territorial, institutional and civic society stakeholders, and that the Metropolitan City of Milano will remain the guarantor of this governance arrangement;
- The need to define an arrangement that will not alter the proportional financial contributions from Municipalities to the Park Authority.

Looking at the contents of the deliberation, surprisingly planning is not included, either mentioned. Despite the weaknesses both at the level of the tools and of decision making processes connoting the planning policies, there is no mention of the need to overcome the underlined problems. According to few interviewees, this is due to the scarce communication among the different sectors and offices of the Authority. Hence, who conceived and developed the contents of the deliberation did not interact at all with planning officers of the Park Authority.

"Eh ma non è stato fatto un ragionamento [...] Tra le priorità non c'è un tema urbanistico [...] Lo stesso parco è un po' strutturato a comparti... É un problema anche nostro, interno..."[21] (Planning officer).

After its approval by the Executive Committee, to make the amalgamation operative the deliberation would have been approved by the Region Lombardy. However, it has been rejected by the 5th Commission "Territorio e Infrastrutture" of the Regional Council in November 2017. According to the interviewees, the rejection was due to the imminent regional elections and to some political discussions internal to the Regional Council. Despite this rejection and the inevitable slowdown of the process of amalgamation, there are good possibilities that after the regional elections, planned for March 2018, the new Council will carry on the process of amalgamation.

To explain the dysfunctional nature of the Park Authority in planning, here I take the position that the problems of interactions among planning officers and the other sectors of the Authority are due to the way in which planning is understood and conducted within the Park Authority. Following

21 "Eh but no reasoning has been done [...] Among the priorities there is not planning [...] The park itself is a bit structured in compartments ... It is also our problem, internal [problem]".

the communicative planning approach outlined in the Introduction, the model of functioning of the Park Authority overlooks the communicative dimension of decision making processes, hence the “listening, inclusion, dialogue and deliberation among diverse stakeholders”, practices that would achieve “well informed and socially desirable outcomes” (Innes, 2013). Thus, planning action is not effective since it is not framed by the construction of discourses that can guide actions (Ibid.) and, more importantly, it does not imply stable cooperation and durable relationships among the players (Axelrold, 1984). This means that the improvement of the governance and planning processes of the system of Parks in Milan should not result just in transforming the management of Park Authorities, but it should convey a transformation of the role that planning officers play in the interactive arenas of the Park authority. From being mere observers of the process, they should be active agents (Giddens, 1984) and mediators of the dialogical processes among members of the Executive Committee, in charge of guiding the process by which participants can agree on the planning policies that can improve the contribution of agricultural areas to more localised food systems.

4.6. Concluding remarks

This chapter has allowed to gain a better understanding on the current planning and governance processes characterising the Milan South Agricultural Park as one of the more acknowledged and consolidated experiences of agricultural parks in Europe. The investigation of the Park Authority and of the Rural Districts as two relevant spaces of cooperation endowed with an inter-municipal territorial dimension and whose dynamics raise aspects of interest for analysing the interdependencies among Milan and its rural hinterland, has allowed to build a fertile picture of the current challenges that the Milan Agricultural Park is currently facing. Moreover, it shed light on the tensions emerged in the last ten years regarding land-use transformations within and around its borders.

Even with a clear planning policy framework (the Park Territorial Plan), local governments have been actively involved in promoting the Park’s objectives and in safeguarding its agricultural land from unpermitted developments and land speculation. Despite the relevant financial and personnel deficiencies of the Park authority, they have attempted to open the Park up to the city by strengthening its recreational use for urban communities. Nevertheless, scarce and often unsuccessful have been the attempts by local governments to think forward about improving the contribution of agricultural areas for building more localised food systems and for increasing the overall sustainability of Milan urban region. These limits have been partially attuned by the active role of Rural Districts in implementing territorial projects and activating local food chains able to reconnect Milan with its rural hinterland, on the basis of the need to re-shape the geographies of local food systems and overcome spatial and functional separation among the city and its agricultural park.

Looking at planning processes, the obsolescence and the lack of implementing tools of planning policies put in place by the Park Authority

have deeply undermined the capacity of planning to manage effectively the land-use processes of the periurban interface. This has created tensions and conflicts due to the requests made by farmers, local administrators and private citizens to construct, restore or plan new facilities or buildings, or transform existing ones, with the purpose of answering to pressing social and economic needs.

The dynamics analysed in PASM have also shown that sub-regional and local authorities, through their planning policies, have been interpreting agricultural land as a spatial context to be protected and safeguarded from urbanisation. This has happened even without the presence of a clear strategy or vision for its social and economic development. This support the idea that the agricultural park has framed a traditional interpretation of the relationship among urban and rural areas by perpetuating a strong physical and functional separation among the city and its rural hinterland on the basis of an emphasis on the physical containment of urban areas and on the protection of agricultural areas.

Chapter 5
Cooperating in a rural valley: the case of Aso Valley

5.1. Brief introduction to the case study

The aim of the chapter is to present the governance and planning dynamics of the Aso Valley as a representative case of local governments' cooperation which happens in a rural valley. This context is indicative of a sparsely populated territory characterized by a pattern of small towns and villages and by a regional economy highly reliant on resources and activities located in rural areas. The purpose is to understand how the role of local governments and of their collaborative actions address and acknowledge agriculture and its multifunctional activities for strengthening the relationship among urban and rural areas.

The choice of the Aso valley as a case study of the thesis lies in the chance to study the ways in which the impacts of territorial reforms on local governments and the high degree of administrative fragmentation at the local level have fostered the emergence of multiple spaces of cooperation among a number of local institutional and non-institutional actors. As it will be demonstrated below, these cooperative spaces are challenging the traditional top-down and statutory institutional narrative and the mainstreaming interpretation of urban/rural relationships towards defining innovative policy and planning interpretations endowed with a high degree of innovativeness in their contents and spatial dimension. Moreover, Aso Valley is presented here as a spatial context in which the role that alliances have in placing agriculture as the backbone of a strategic project of urban/rural relationships can be investigated. Framing it in 'post-ruralist' terms (Brunori & Rossi, 2007; Cloke, 2007; Murdoch et al., 2003), Aso Valley has the potential to show how diversity, rather than homogeneity, characterizes development strategies of local actors and, more importantly, how the traditional 'top-down' approach framing rural areas as "passive recipients of general movement of capitals and labour" is inadequate for explaining the drivers of change promoted by local governments and civil society (Brunori & Rossi, 2007). The analysis of Aso Valley highlights that planning policy represents one of the crucial challenges due to the fact that forms of Inter-municipal planning currently lack in the valley and that the long-standing debate among local administrators has still not produced yet any significant advancements at the level of decision making processes.

The chapter is organized in five sections (see **Figure 24**). The first two sections present respectively the territorial (section 5.2.) and the institutional profile (section 5.3.) of the case study. The institutional profile focuses on the

administrative arrangement of the territory and on the regional and provincial planning policies that have an influence on agricultural land-use in Aso Valley. Section 5.4. investigates the spaces of cooperation in Aso Valley, highlighting the main differences among the statutory space of cooperation (the Union of Municipalities) and the other multi-actor and multi-purpose spaces of cooperation, in terms of rationales, actors involved and objectives. In section 5.5. a discussion of the findings is presented drawing on the theoretical paradigm of hard & soft spaces of cooperation. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks (section 5.6.).

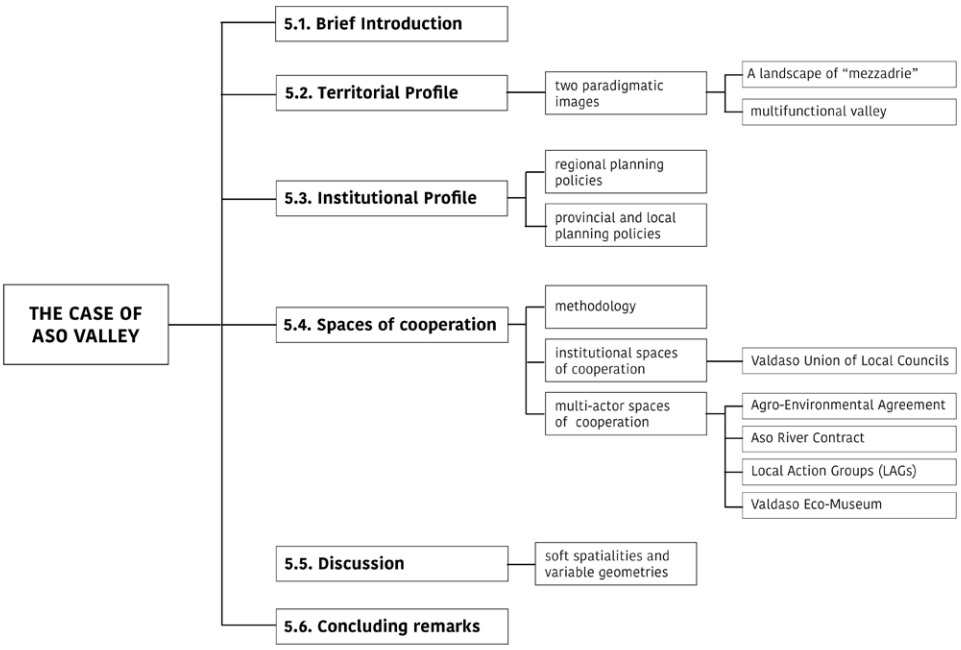


Figure 24: Flow diagram of chapter 6. Source: Elaboration by the author.

5.2. Territorial profile of the case study

The territory of Aso valley is a narrow strip of land extending about 60 kilometres, from Sibillini mountains and their foothills to the Adriatic seacoast. As in section 4.2., also for this case, two paradigmatic images are chosen and described in order to highlight some meaningful spatial aspects of Aso Valley. The two images, 'a landscape of mezzadrie' and 'a multifunctional valley', are presented below with the aim of giving to the reader a preliminary knowledge about the peculiar characters of the territory with respect to the topic of the thesis.

5.2.1. A landscape of "mezzadrie"

Despite its small territorial surface, the territory of Aso Valley presents a landscape variety and manifests a various set of productive and settlement patterns, each of whom leans on a specific mobility network. While in the hills the infrastructure system is made of a dense network of local rural roads which is typical of the Marche territory, in the valley floor a couple of longitudinal

provincial roads are connecting in a direct and fast way the mountainous areas with the great infrastructural systems of the Adriatic coast made of the A14 highway, the Adriatic national road and the Bologna-Bari railway. The dense road network serves as a support for the diffused built landscape characterizing the valley. In this case, the term “diffusion” does not refer to the settlement patterns colonizing extensively some of northern Italy such as Veneto Region (among the many, see: Tosi & Munarin, 2005), but it stands for the peculiar settlement structure made of a number of micro and small historical centres covering almost homogeneously the territory of the valley. These centres were significantly enlarged and fortified during the Middle Age when the territory was politically belonging to the “Marca Fermana”, a jurisdictional and administrative subdivision in force during the X Century and headed by the City of Fermo. It is during this period that the distinctive boundary walls and the lockout towers often bordering the main square of villages were built to secure them from enemy attacks. After the Middle age, during the XV and XVI Centuries, the settlements have been subjected to a first evolution when a deep transformation of local economy started to take place. For example, the introduction of domestic manufacturing within rural homes and the construction of the very first urban factories inside towns are two of these important changes (GAL Fermano, 2016). Today these medieval villages constitute the more evident physical manifestation of Aso valley’s heritage. Being appreciated nationally and even abroad, some of them, such as Monterubbiano and Moresco, have also been recently awarded by the qualification of “Most beautiful medieval villages of Italy” (in Italian “Borghi più belli d’Italia”) given by the Italian branch of Touring Club.

Outside the medieval villages, the landscape in the rest of territory leans on the historical rural subdivision of fields related to the “mezzadria” system. Differently from the “cascina” settlement observed in the South Agricultural Park (see section 4.2.1.), the “mezzadria” is the result of specific land property and local political and institutional conditions. The name relates to subdivision in two equal parts of the agricultural products: 50% goes to the land-owner and 50% to the farmer. The “Mezzadria” consists in an isolated building, dimensioned on the basis of the working capacity of the farmer’s family (on average with 6-7 members) and placed in a dominant position in the plot, often on the top of a hill to easily control the fields (**Figure 25**).

The shape of this settlement results from the kind of agrarian contract according to which the farmer was required to permanently live in close

Figure 25: the ‘Mezzadria’ landscape in Marche. Source: marchecountryhomes.com

proximity to the agrarian plot (Agostini et al., 2010: 108). Despite the wide amount of surface available, the “mezzadria” is often a ‘high rise’ architecture because of the “urban” mind-set connoting the land-owner who financed its construction, usually living in close villages or towns (Agostini, 2008). This is the reason why, as also stated by Moroni (2013), the development of the “mezzadria” system in Marche region is closely related to the history of towns and it is the expression of the domination of cities on the countryside. For what concerns the functional distribution, the domestic spaces of the local family coexist with the spaces hosting animals and facilities needed for the work in the fields, both placed in the same building. Hence we often find at the ground floor the rustic and the stall, and at the first floor, which is usually accessible through external stairs, the domestic spaces of the family.

Already defined as a real “nucleotide of the Marche’s DNA” (Betti, 2013), the “mezzadria” is currently an important cultural and historical element of the landscape of Marche region. Despite this, in recent decades and especially from the 1990s, the mezzadria has been subjected to a marked modification caused by processes of re-adaptation of historical buildings to new uses and functions. These processes have framed and used rural landscape and its built heritage as a support for tourism and as a mean to attract visitors and generate new sources of income. B&B, restaurants, farmhouses were settled down in historical rural buildings, carrying on a process of rehabilitation and restoration of the historical morphological and typological characters and opening the use of these buildings for temporary populations.

5.2.2. A multifunctional valley

The first epochal transformation of the “mezzadria” system started during the Napoleonic period in early XIX Century, when the emergence of the small merchant bourgeoisie gave rise to a process of economic and social development of valley floors and coastal areas. This process expresses a passage from a predominantly rural system to a more diversified economic system, where agriculture started to become increasingly integrated to industrial and commercial activities. In the following century, after the II World War, the economic and social development affected progressively the whole Country, also peripheral rural areas, left until that moment in a marginal position.

The spatial impacts of these phenomena are also visible in Aso Valley, where a number of residential and productive settlements were built from the 1960s in the valley floor (particularly in Petritoli and Monterubbiano municipalities) due to good accessibility and geo-morphological conditions. Despite these phenomena, urbanization processes did not happen with the same speed and pressure as in other close valleys (such as the Esino or Tronto valleys), leaving almost intact the rural vocation of the territory. The reason lies probably in a long-standing trend of demographic decrease that Aso Valley has experienced, mostly related to consistent internal migrations, the progressive abandonment of historical villages and the displacement to coastal areas. Today this process has not stopped: in years 2007-13 the Aso Valley has had a slight negative demographic rate (-2,83%), with

Figure 26: Cultivations of peaches in Aso Valley. Source: ipatechproject.eu

decreasing population from 31.792 to 30.893 inhabitants (GAL Fermano, 2016). Moreover, also external conditions played a crucial role in preserving the rural vocation of the valley.

It is worthy to mention what happened to Tronto territory, a valley located at the South of Aso river. This basin was the northern offshoot of “la Cassa del Mezzogiorno”, the financial body in charge of fostering the industrial development of the South of Italy. Here, from the 1950s, local entrepreneurs received investments for building sheds to host manufacture and logistics with the result of deeply changing the vocation of local economy, since these activities were interpreted as the only viable possibilities for local development. With the advent of the economic crisis in 2007, the scarce competitiveness of enterprises, together with their low specialization and small size, resulted in the descendant parable of the manufacturing sector of the Tronto valley, today in deep downsizing and restructuring. Although very close, luckily these phenomena have been extraneous to Aso Valley where the industrial sector did not receive the same system of incentives. Thus, agriculture had remained the most important activity and the major vocation of local economy.

In the last half-century, these processes, together with the favourable soil conditions and the increasing use of machineries and fertilisers, set the ground for the rapid increase of the agriculture productivity and for its specialisation around some major productions. One of these is surely the cultivation of fruit-trees, which concentrates nearly the 60% of production and transformation of fruit at regional level, placing the valley among the most advanced agricultural contexts in Italy (**Figure 26**).

Here the activity of the 2.800 agricultural enterprises, operating in a surface of 26.000 hectares in total, is more diversified compared to the regional average. The cultivation of tree crops (not just fruit trees but also olive trees and vines) reaches the 18% in the Aso Valley, compared to the 8% in Marche Region (**Table 9**) (GAL Fermano & GAL Piceno, n.d.). Interestingly, also the number of organic farms (6,1%) is higher than the regional average (4,0%)

Table 9: Utilisation of agricultural surface in Aso Valley.
Source: GAL Fermano & GAL Piceno, s.d.

Production	Aso Valley	Marche Region
Arable crops	71,31%	79,45%
cereals	30,94%	38,56%
dried vegetables	0,39%	2,77%
potatoes	0,21%	0,04%
Sugar beet	0,24%	0,56%
Industrial plants	11,74%	9,38%
Horticultural	2,53%	1,53%
Flowers and ornamental	0,05%	0,03%
Seedlings	0,08%	0,10%
Alternated forage	18,05%	20,67%
Seedbeds	0,30%	0,86%
Fallow land	6,77%	4,93%
Woody crops	18,00%	7,93%
Fruit trees	5,55%	0,95%
Vines	7,55%	3,59%
Olive trees	3,24%	2,86%
Family gardens	0,68%	0,45%
Permanent forage	10,02%	12,19%
Total	100,00%	100,00%

(ibid.).

The analysis of the Agea data (2007) shows that Aso valley is a context where the dualism among traditional and innovative forms of farming is particularly marked, especially in the areas belonging to Fermo province. Here, alongside the majority of small agricultural enterprises (8 ha) carried on by aged farmers, there is a small amount of innovative enterprises conducted by younger farmers and operating on larger surfaces (38 ha) with a stronger attitude towards exporting products abroad (Provincia di Fermo, 2013).

According to the "Progetto Integrato Territoriale" (2012) of the Province of Ascoli Piceno, two are the main weaknesses of farming activity and these relates to the growing mechanization of the production and to the increasing dependency of farms to European funding of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (see section 3.3.2.). On one hand, the process of "farm de-structuring", facilitated by the small dimensions of farms and by the presence of aged farmers, often making use of third parties, has generated in the last twenty years the overall decrease of the production capacity. On the other, the progressive fragmentation of agricultural fields has created problems of accessibility, often resulting in abandonment of some portions of land (Provincia di Ascoli Piceno, 2012).

Despite these weaknesses, as reported in some official planning documents (Ibid.) and recent researches (Coderoni, 2011), agriculture in Aso Valley is strongly integrated to the social and economic system. A clear example of this integration is provided by rural tourism, a sector currently experiencing

a harsh increase according to the innovative reinterpretation of landscape, environmental and cultural vocations of the territory. This success is quite evident by looking at the system of accommodations of the valley, in which the increasingly qualified tourists have pushed the supply to become more heterogeneous and dynamic and to furnish also a range of supplementary services and facilities. Hence, the presence of traditional accommodations, such as hotels or holiday-houses, matches with the increasing number of complementary accommodations (+96,7 in 2007-14), like hostels and country-houses, and of bed & breakfasts (+121,7% in 2007-14). Also, the pattern of accommodations is supported by a variety of restaurants, taverns and farm-houses, most of which hosted in “mezzadrie” and serving (and selling) local products according to traditional receipts.

The territory of the Aso Valley currently attracts a target of qualified tourists looking for holidays of relax, far from the chaos and the frenetic rhythms of cities. It is not a tourism made of big numbers, but of families and individuals wishing to dive in a quiet atmosphere, searching for good food, getting in touch with the natural and cultural beauties of the place, and exploring the local traditions and life styles of medieval villages and historical rural settings. Thus, what one can observe in Aso Valley is the presence of a crucial interrelation among environmental, natural and cultural heritage. Despite the constant increase of its attractiveness and the good conditions of livability, Aso Valley still scarcely expresses its potentials. This is due to high competitiveness coming from closer rural contexts (see the Chianti case in Brunori & Rossi, 2007) and for the lack of a clear and coherent strategy of development that could further consolidate local vocations and promote them unitarily to the external world.

5.3. Institutional profile of the case study[1]

From the administrative point of view, the valley territory is a mosaic of 24 small municipalities, with a population ranging from 400 to 3.100 inhabitants (**Figure 27**). The high institutional fragmentation has historically fostered the cooperation between local councils in order to guarantee an adequate service provision to local inhabitants. In 2004 the situation turned to be more complex by the introduction of the new province of Fermo (FM), which juxtaposed to the previously existing province of Ascoli Piceno (AP) according to Law 147/2004. Therefore, the valley territory was spit into two provinces, with the Aso river being the border between the two. Thus, Aso Valley is a context that over time has experienced an increase of the density of borders, according to an external change that has evolved the fragmentation of the administrative landscape but also has generated new demands for local cooperation.

The background of these institutional and administrative changes has been the already mentioned process of policy rescaling running in the last 20 years, which was not followed by an adequate financial restructuring to give local governments the financial resources to fulfill to their functions (see

1 Some of the contents of this section have been already published in Lazzarini (2017).

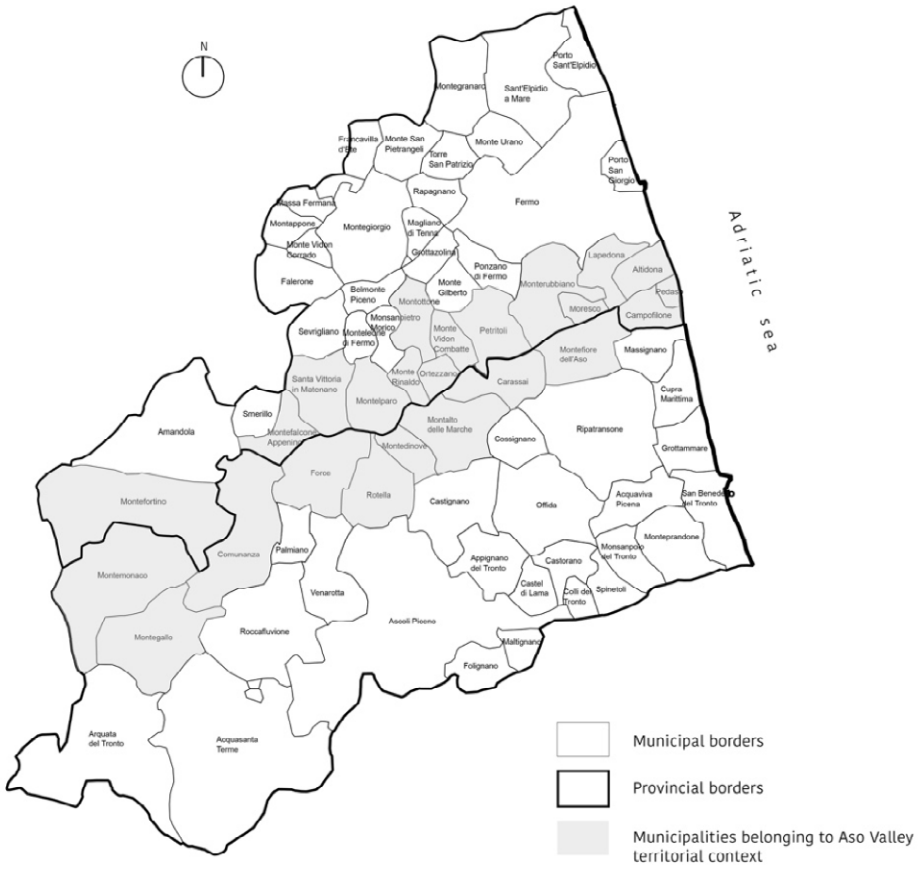


Figure 27: The institutional profile of Aso Valley. Source: Author's elaboration.

section 1.1.1.). This already unstable panorama worsened in 2014 by Delrio law, which deeply restructured the Provinces, disempowering their role in coordinating and managing the territory at the large-scale.

Below is presented a survey on territorial planning policies that guide, or simply have an influence, on the agricultural land in Aso Valley. Emphasis is placed on the peculiar elements of regional and provincial planning policies and especially on those guidelines and prescriptions oriented to preserve and develop agricultural activity in the context under investigation.

5.3.1. Regional planning policies: acknowledging the historical and natural assets of the agrarian landscape

Differently from the case of Lombardy Region where the planning law 12/2005 sets the clear planning framework and discipline for agricultural areas (see section 4.3.1.), the planning law of Marche Region 34/1992 does not directly deal with agricultural areas. Thus, the reference in this case goes to Law 12/1990, which includes policies affecting or regulating developments in agricultural areas. In particular, the law addresses the parameters (regarding, for example, the heights and volumes of buildings that can be built) to be respected when constructing or renovating existing buildings.

The main planning document of Marche region is the Regional Landscape-Environmental Plan (PPAR). The entire regional territory is preliminarily

recognized by the Plan as a historical-cultural asset, being entirely modelled by the anthropogenic action. The PPAR elaborates a specific synoptic cartography through which the landscape complexity is filtered through thematic subsets and landscape categories. In the part related to policies, the “Norme tecniche di attuazione” and, in particular, in the section titled “Constituting categories of landscape”, both the (i) “diffused elements of the agrarian landscape” and the (ii) “agrarian landscape of historical-environmental interest” are identified and described. This identification is made on the basis of geometric or specific cartographic indications through which applying the given policies or activating the needed processes of valorisation (Regione Marche, 1989). The “diffused elements of agrarian landscape” are, for example, tree species protected by regional law, rows of trees and hedges bordering the agricultural fields and the riparian vegetation. The Plan prohibits the destruction or the impairment of these natural elements, and gives to Municipalities the task to better identify them and to establish adequate prescriptions for their conservation, restoration and extension (art. 37). Instead, the agrarian landscapes of historical-environmental interest, identified through related cartography, are those areas for which elements and traces of traditional ways of cultivation and widespread agricultural built heritage with abundant, even spontaneous, vegetation, are persisting. As shown in **Figure 28**, the territory of Aso Valley is covered by three agrarian landscapes of environmental and historical interests.

These are listed above together with the related municipalities belonging to the Aso Valley:

- n. 36 covering the municipalities of Santa Vittoria in Matenano and Montelparo (FM);
- n. 37 covering the municipalities of Petritoli, Monterubbiano, Campofilone, Pedaso (FM) and Montefiore sull’Aso (AP);
- n. 38 covering the municipality of Montefiore sull’Aso (AP).

Also in this case, the Plan gives to Municipalities the commitment to further

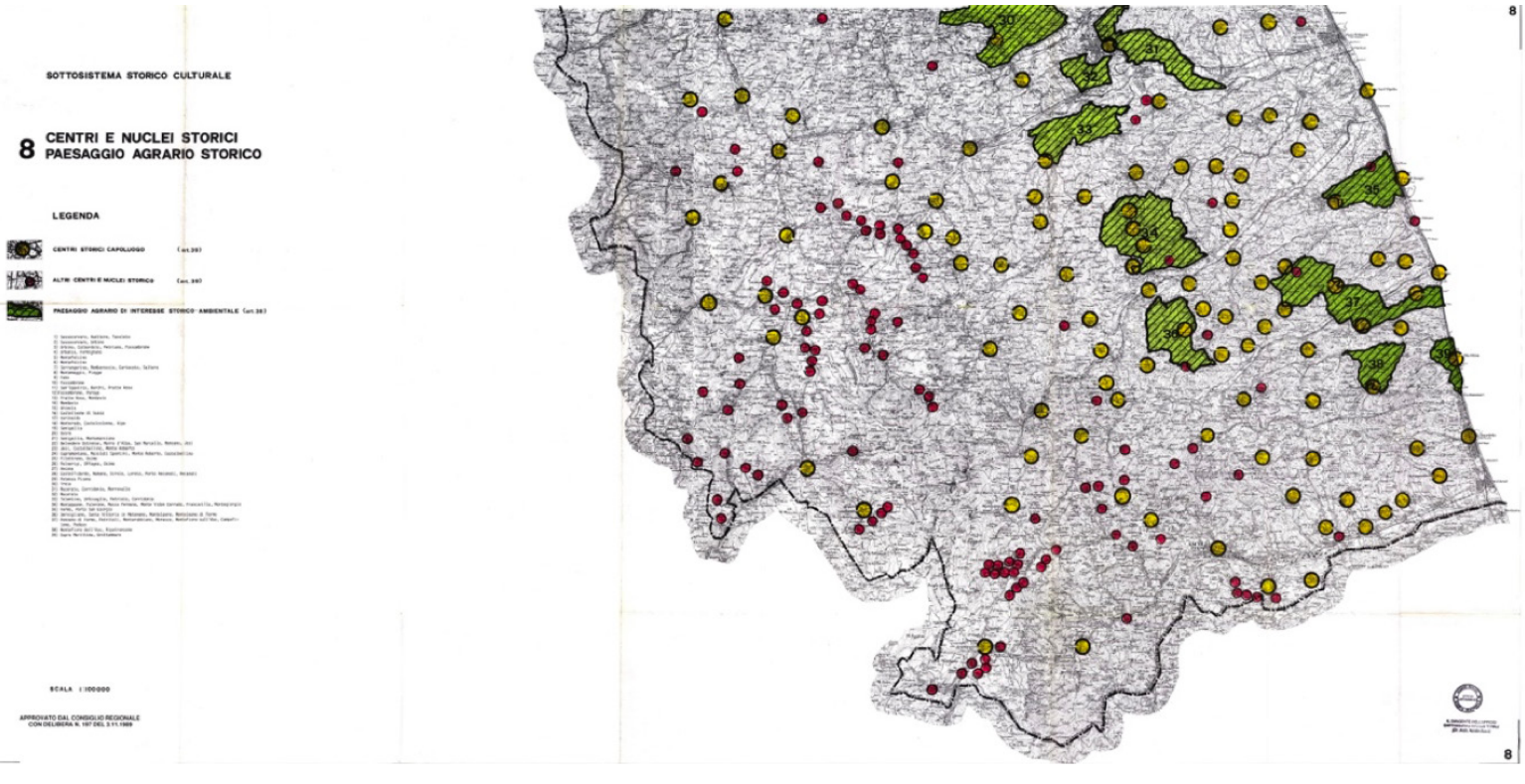


Figure 28: Historical Agrarian Landscape of the Southern Marche. Source: PPAR, Regione Marche, 1989

specify the setting and scope of protection, with particular reference to built, vegetational and agrarian structures and the evidences of agricultural, productive and historical elements. It is also stated that "in order to preserve and increment the diffused elements of the agrarian landscape, the Region recognises the priority in granting economic and financial contributions to those agricultural entrepreneurs for the protection of environmental and landscape characters of these areas on the basis of a project to be presented in coherence with the related European Community directives" (art. 38).

A further specification of these designations comes from the deliberation 1287/1997 by the Marche Region containing the guidelines for drafting or updating local plans on the basis of the contents of PPAR. Concerning the agrarian landscapes of historical and environmental interest, the document states that municipalities should: i) test the indications made by PPAR and eventually update and better specify them; ii) clearly perimeter these areas; iii) and assign to them the related planning and management prescriptions (Regione Marche, 1997). Agricultural areas are specifically addressed by this document in the "zoning" chapter, where the description of the contents of the so called "homogeneous areas" is provided. In particular, agricultural areas are addressed by "Zone E", as specified by the national Law ("Decreto Ministeriale") 1444/1968. It is interesting to notice that the PPAR interprets agricultural areas as "fundamental" since

"le zone agricole delle Marche [...] sono il risultato di precisi segni che l'uomo ha depositato nel tempo fino a comporre un chiaro disegno soggetto a regole e a rapporti tra gli elementi che le strutturano: la forma dei campi, la posizione e i tipi edilizi delle case coloniche, gli edifici isolati della produzione e del culto, la rete stradale e così via: sono "oggetti" da tutelare non solo perché costituiscono patrimonio ambientale, ma anche perché sono ricchissime testimonianze culturali"[2].

By giving them a prominent role in determining the urban form and its expansion, the Plan argues that "the configuration of agricultural areas conditions urban areas and not vice versa" (Ibid.). From the point of view of policies, the translation of the PPAR's guidelines at the municipal level should be carried out on the basis of the identification of different land-use designations, each one matching with a level of protection and a related policy. The most important objective of the document is to provide a set of criteria that should guide the survey on agricultural areas made by local plans. These criteria are: the productive vocation and the current use of soils, the vegetational apparatus and any related form of degradation; the presence of diffused or punctual built rural and historical/cultural heritage; the geology, geomorphology, hydrogeology and stability of agricultural land (ibid.).

According to Betti (2013), despite its marked sensitivity on the debate on

2 "The agricultural areas of Marche [...] are the result of precise signs that man has deposited over time until making a clear drawing subjected to rules and relationships between the structuring elements: the shape of the fields, the position and typologies of the farmhouses, the isolated buildings of production and worship, the road network and so on: they are 'objects' to preserve not only because they constitute an environmental heritage, but also because they are rich cultural testimonies".

the concept of landscape, the binding emphasis ("enfasi vincolistica") of the Plan, together with its too comprehensive and wide range of action, became a sort of obstacle to its successful implementation, producing some gaps in the ways in which regional landscape, also in its ordinary and residual signs, is scarcely acknowledged by the Plan. Despite this, a distinctive and innovative element of the Plan is that, in the process of landscape values recognition and preservation, a decisive role has been entrusted by the plan to municipalities (Bucci, 2015).

In 1993/95, a working group with researchers from University of Ancona and Macerata and planning officers from Marche Region cooperated for elaborating the "Piano di Inquadramento Territoriale" (PIT) which has a pioneering character because of the lack of analogous or similar practices in Italy (Bronzini & Paolillo, 1997). This plan has a territorial focus and thus could be compared to the Regional Territorial Plan of Lombardy Region already presented, even if this latter has been produced more than ten years before and hence it expresses quite a different approach. As reported in its presentation:

"all'idea forte si associa un "Piano Debole", che rinuncia al Sistema impositivo di vincoli e all'utopia determinista di definire a priori "l'assetto ottimale". Il PIT quindi assume il carattere di guida che raccoglie segnali problematici e criteri prestazionali, indirizzi e modalità comportamentali, riferiti alle diverse specifiche situazioni territoriali regionali in rapporto a possibili trasformazioni urbane e territoriali"[3] (Bronzini & Paolillo, 1997:6).

The innovative character of this plan lies in moving the rationale of planning to performative criteria, guidelines and behavioural modalities, overcoming the emphasis on land-use regulation and on setting-up constraints on people's behaviours. Accordingly, the Plan sets objectives that can be reached through a system of qualitative-performative and reward policies ("norme qualitative-prestazionali e premiali"). Another aspect of interest is the shift of the focus on decision making processes, aimed at establishing structured collaborations among public and private actors in order to achieve the consensus of social stakeholders (Bronzini & Paolillo, 1997:6). Concerning the agro-forestry sector, the underlying assumption is that

"tra la città e la campagna non sussiste unicamente un rapporto di conflittualità e/o competitività ma piuttosto una stretta connessione economica, sociale e funzionale [...] L'impostazione metodologica del Pit [...] considera allora l'agricoltura come un fenomeno infra-reticolare all'interno dell'armatura insediativa, ovvero come un settore produttivo che, da un lato, è strettamente connesso al sistema socio-economico complessivo traendone stimoli e vantaggi e che, dall'altro, compete con esso per l'uso delle risorse

3 "To the strong idea corresponds a "weak plan", which avoids the use of a system of constraints and the deterministic utopia of defining a priori "the optimal setting". The PIT therefore assumes the guiding character that collects problematic signals and performative criteria, guidelines and behavioural modalities, referring to the different specific regional territorial situations in relation to possible urban and territorial transformations".

Figure 29: Matrix of rural areas and related guidelines of interventions. Source: PPAR, Regione Marche, 1989.

MBR - Matrice dei bacini rurali.

Bacini	Caratteristiche	Indirizzi di intervento urbanistico (regime di conservazione, manutenzione, restituzione, qualificazione, trasformazione relativi ai sistemi geomorfologico-naturalistici, storico-culturali e paesistico-agrari).
1. Agricoltura complementare	Agricoltura non specializzata né marginale, media intensità di utilizzazione delle risorse agricole, in aree urbane marginali, a bassa intensità demo-insediativa, medio consumo di suolo, elevata redditività.	Rafforzamento della funzione e della integrazione intersettoriale per il mantenimento di un consumo modesto di suolo e per la salvaguardia degli attuali livelli di redditività.
2. Agricoltura periurbana ad elevata conflittualità intersettoriale	Agricoltura tipica di zone periurbane, in area consolidata o a marcato sviluppo urbano con media o alta intensità di utilizzazione, media o alta intensità demografica e insediativa, stabile redditività e produzione.	Provvedimenti di riorganizzazione territoriale per un migliore equilibrio spazio-funzionale e infrastrutturale per le attività agricole residue, per quelle specializzate ad alta redditività, per le altre attività in armonia con la forte urbanizzazione.
3. Agricoltura intersettoriale a bassa dinamicità	Agricoltura di natura periurbana, fortemente condizionata da alti livelli di pressione insediativa, elevato consumo di suolo, alta urbanizzazione e competitività nell'uso delle risorse. Agricoltura anche ad alta redditività al sud.	Provvedimenti di protezione delle poche risorse agricole presenti ad elevata produttività da usi alternativi del suolo. Utilizzo delle risorse agricole come protezione dall'inurbamento continuo costiero e come fattore ambientale.
4. Agricoltura periurbana a bassa integrazione intersettoriale	Agricoltura di una limitata zona del sud regionale ad alta redditività, ad indirizzo intensivo ed agricoltura specializzata in aree ad alta intensità demografica e insediativa.	Salvaguardia dei valori elevati di specializzazione e sostegno dello sviluppo agricolo intensivo e delle opere infrastrutturali a suo servizio. Contenimento e delimitazione di processi insediativi.
5. Agricoltura a media stabilità	Agricoltura di aree pedemontane a bassa intensità di utilizzazione delle risorse agro-forestali, zona a carattere prevalentemente rurale a bassa intensità demografica, a medio-basso o basso consumo di suolo.	Incentivi al sostegno delle aziende vitali e alla sperimentazione di nuove forme colturali. Rafforzamento dell'organizzazione infrastrutturale e colturale. Massima liberalizzazione delle iniziative imprenditoriali agricole locali.
6. Agricoltura marginale	Agricoltura montana marginale, anche ad alta utilizzazione boscata e indirizzo zootecnico e a bassa intensità demografica e insediativa, con medio-basso consumo di suolo.	Interventi concentrati nelle aziende agricole vitali, con tutela del capitale aziendale e rafforzamento dell'organizzazione aziendale. Salvaguardia delle potenzialità delle aziende marginali.

MPA - Matrice delle risorse paesistico-ambientali e tesnsioni abitative.

	1. sub-area ad altissima tensione abitativa	2. sub-area ad alta tensione demografica e abitativa	3. sub-area a media tensione demografica e abitativa	4. sub-area a bassa tensione demografica e abitativa	5. area costiera di pregio paesistico-ambientale
A. Aree di eccezionale valore del paesaggio e dell'ambiente	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
B. Aree di rilevante valore del paesaggio e dell'ambiente	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5
C. Aree di qualità diffusa del paesaggio e dell'ambiente	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5
D. Resto del territorio regionale con valori paesistico-ambientali puntuali e localizzati	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5

fisiche del territorio, per l'utilizzo dei fattori produttivi e per la destinazione degli investimenti"[4] (Bronzini & Paolillo, 1997: 223).

Hence, the dominant interpretation that sees agriculture in opposition with the city and its functions and uses is replaced by a more critical vision, looking positively at the functional, social and economic urban/rural interconnections. Thus, at the basis of this idea there is the awarness that city and countryside are strongly interconnected. The most interesting aspect lies in the consideration of the place where these reflections are made, the Marche region, a territory characterised by the presence of a diffused and networked system of strongly interconnected small and medium towns, and by the absence of metropolitan cities. Accordingly, the physical proximity of agricultural and urban uses, a connoting feature also of Aso Valley, is a value that needs to be considered while planning the territory. Moreover, the identification of a type of agriculture, as one of the seven territorial matrixes, matches with specific interventions and planning guidelines (**Figure 29**). These guidelines define not rigid interventions to be realised but indications that are coherent with the plan's objectives (Bronzini & Paolillo, 1997: 223).

The emanation of the "Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio" in 2004 (D.Lsg. n. 42), required all Italian Regions to update the contents of their landscape plans. It has also pushed the Regional Council of Marche to define the general framework for revising its Landscape Plan, which officially started

4 "Between the city and the countryside there is not only a relationship of conflict and / or competitiveness but rather a close economic, social and functional connection [...] The methodological approach of the PIT [...] considers agriculture as an infra-reticular phenomenon within the settlement armature, hence as a productive sector which, on the one hand, is closely connected to the overall socio-economic system drawing its stimuli and advantages and which, on the other, competes with it for the use of territorial resources and productive factors and for the allocation of investments".

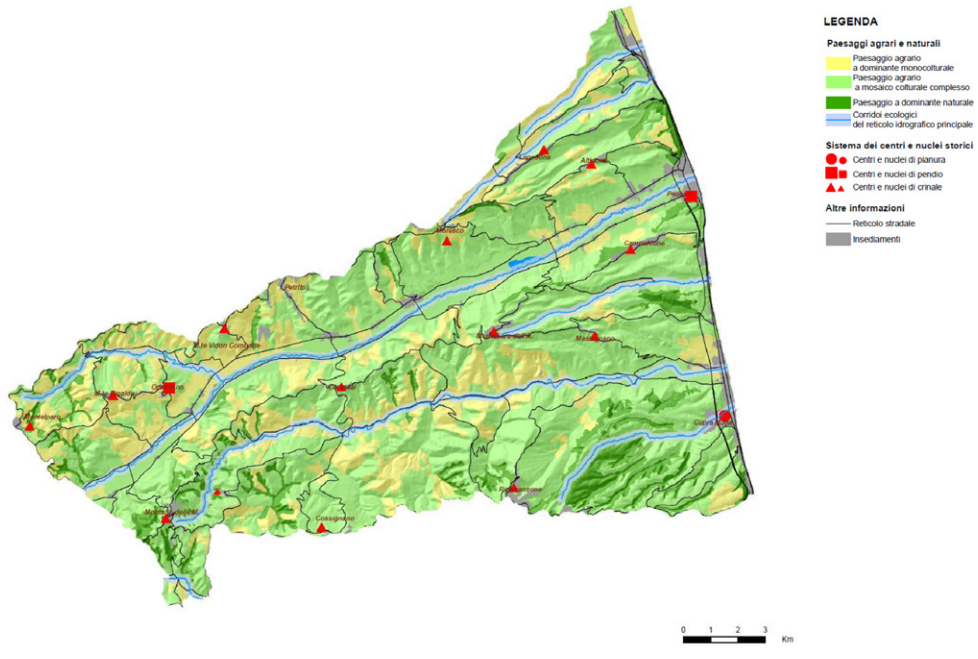


Figure 30: Natural and agricultural landscapes. Source: review of PPAR, Regione Marche, 2010.

in 2010. The structure of the Plan Revision has been articulated on the basis on two "different and complementary approaches to landscape" (Bucci, 2015), the "regulative approach" which frames the objective of protection in the perspective of the conservation of the existing landscape form, and a more "design-oriented approach". The latter is the innovative character of the document since "it has the aim of identifying a number of strategic options, of trajectories and design actions, in which the protection of the landscape quality is framed in a perspective of the inevitable transformation and evolution of the territorial form" (ibid.). Some tools and documents were produced to reach these purposes, such as the Atlas of Landscape Settings or the Strategic Agenda of the Regional Landscape. With concern to the territory of the Aso Valley, the reference goes to the "F2 setting" of the Atlas, in which the valley is recognised as a distinct landscape setting. It also shows, as reported in **Figure 30**, that most of the territory is covered by the agrarian landscape with complex cultural mosaic and the agrarian landscape with dominant monoculture. The common elements are the strong rural vocation and the high degree of naturalness of agricultural areas, although with some problems of diffused hydrogeological instability, fragmentation of productive fields and scarce dimension of farms.

The Regional Ecological Network of Marche Region (REM), approved with Regional Law 2/2013, has a complementary position with respect to the PPAR and its revision. In the Framework of proposals ("Quadro Propositivo"), it is provided a description of the different environmental systems of the regional territory (Regione Marche, 2013). Agro-ecosystems are described as the most important ecological systems in the Region from the quantitative point of view. The general objective here is to increase the biodiversity of the agrarian landscape respecting local cultivations and fostering the integration between cultivated and natural elements. The interesting part of REM with regard to agriculture lies in identifying for each type of production the current weaknesses and a set of actions to increase their levels of biodiversity. For example, concerning the woody crops, it is stated that "the frequent agronomic interventions, like the posture and the pruning modalities, are factors going strongly against the possibility for animals to settle permanently in them. On the contrary, they could perform a trophic function especially when the other crops leave the fields naked during the winter" (Regione Marche, 2013:72).

Thus, in this case, the indication is to increase low-environmental impact agricultural techniques by for example, maintaining or increasing the herbaceous cover, creating opportunities for birds sheltering and nesting. These typologies of crops should also be considered crucial in the connections among wooded surfaces since many animal species use them as safe sites to move (ibid: 73).

In the Documents of Guidelines for Urban planning of the REM (Regione Marche, 2015), some indications for transferring the contents of the Ecological Network to local plans are provided. As reported in the document, a crucial role in creating, valorising and rehabilitating the ecological continuity among urban settings is played by the vacant spaces. These can be rural plots designated for developments and often localised in marginal positions to

urban areas and those residual areas left from the incremental process of city growth, which has been not always coherent and organic. Thus, emphasis is placed on the role that these vacant spaces could play in increasing the biodiversity and the ecological continuities among external areas and built settlements. The guidelines refer to the need to act in specific ways according to the presence of agricultural or wooded areas in contiguous or separated position from existing settlements. For instance, in the case of agricultural areas located in close proximity to a compact settlement in which there are vacant spaces, the indication is to create a green edge that could serve as a buffer between the built area and the agricultural system, and, within this edge, a system of green areas that can allow the biodiversity's penetration within the settlement (Regione Marche, 2015).

5.3.2. Provincial and local planning policies: unsuccessful experiments and mainstream policies

I have already mentioned that the density of borders connoting the Aso Valley concerns not just the local but also the provincial level since the Aso River matches with the border among the Province of Ascoli Piceno and the Province of Fermo. Hence, from the planning point of view, two are the provincial planning policies in force on the territory of the valley.

In its part related to policies ("Norme tecniche di attuazione"), the Provincial Plan (PTCP) of Ascoli Piceno, adopted in 2007, provides some general objectives oriented to coordinate local plans in agricultural areas. Among these, there is the restoration of hedges and rows of trees among the fields and the use of appropriate cultivation practices aimed at mitigating the ecological damages brought by the advent of industrial agriculture. The PTCP also requires local plans to identify and map the rural buildings on the basis of their architectural-typological features, thus worthy to be safeguarded by damages or modifications. In the cartographic apparatus, it is provided a map of the existing productive development forecasts of local plans (Provincia di Ascoli Piceno, 2007). In the valley territory, as in other parts of the Province, a high number of productive developments were foreseen by local plans in the last two decades. It is interesting to notice that this map has been produced in 2006, hence before the advent of the economic crisis. Although no report or map have been produced after that year, it is likely to imagine that most of these forecasts have not been implemented and that the local plans have downgraded most of these forecasts, according to the same phenomenon reported in the South Agricultural Park (see section 4.3.1.).

A different approach is taken by the "Progetto Integrato Territoriale" (PIT) elaborated by the Agriculture Sector of the Province of Ascoli Piceno (Provincia di Ascoli Piceno, 2012). More than a planning policy, this is a programmatic framework in which the identification of some strategies (such as the safeguard of biodiversity, the definition of a system of shared territorial planning policies and the promotion of tourism) correlates with the three measures that can be activated according to the Leader program:

- Measure 3.1.3. "Incentive of touristic activities";

- Measure 3.2.1. “Implementation of essential services for rural population and economy”;
- Measure 3.2.3. “protection and rehabilitation of rural territory”.

To the identified strategies and the set of related actions to be implemented by the coordinated activity of local stakeholders corresponds the financial program through which the Province of Ascoli Piceno planned to manage and coordinate European and Regional funding.

The Provincial Plan of Fermo, adopted in 2013, overcomes the comprehensive focus of the PTCP of Ascoli Piceno, by developing a set of strategic objectives accompanied by specific actions addressed to the whole provincial territory. Accordingly, the objectives of ensuring the landscape and environmental compatibility of transformations and mitigating the environmental impacts of agricultural production find a more effective implementation (Provincia di Fermo, 2013). A second aspect of interest concerns the urban form: in this case the aim is to limit processes of urban sprawl and to locate developments in areas characterised by lower environmental and productive values. Alongside these aims, the innovative character of this plan lies in promoting local inter-institutional cooperation as a way to sustainably manage services and environmental, cultural and socio-economic resources. As explained in the plan, these forms of cooperation should be based on territorial interdependencies whose relations and contents should define development trajectories and potentials (Provincia di Fermo, 2013:150). Despite the innovativeness of the contents of these policies, still the focus is limited to the elaboration of common territorial projects based on a communality of interests and objectives among actors and on jointly reorganising development rights at intermunicipal level (see section 2.3.1.3.), without a proper consideration of the needs coming from the rural sector. Thus, intermunicipal planning is addressed on the basis of a recent trend, particularly evident in some regional contexts more than others (Balducci et al., 2006), to develop structural and strategic forms of territorial planning able to overcome the fragmentation of local planning policies. Despite this new interest, still there is a scarce consideration of the potential to use this tool to plan and manage rural areas (Lazzarini, 2017).

It is also interesting to notice that a reflection on intermunicipal planning was already developed few years ago, in 2008, by the Province of Ascoli Piceno during the elaboration of the “Piano Direttore e Perequazione Urbanistica in Valdaso”. In this document the planning mechanism of the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) at intermunicipal level has been developed, unfortunately without any subsequent applications (Province of Ascoli Piceno, 2008). In this case, the purpose was to plan in a coherent way the development forecasts at the scale of the valley. This tool aimed at preventing small municipalities to have their own developments and at carrying on an effective management of benefits and impacts of new settlements.

The survey on planning policies conducted at the local level[5] has not brought to the emergence of any significant elements of discussion for the thesis' topic. Generally, local plans have quite a traditional structure, with a focus on land use designations and related binding policies. Also concerning agricultural areas, the overlapping of different degrees of protection on agricultural areas is the common approach employed by local plans. Thus, the idea is to identify and map in the municipal territory those elements of the agrarian landscape of any architectural-environmental or landscape value and to define the related regulations and policies in charge of protecting or disciplining their use and guiding the potential transformations. This is what happens for example in the Local Plan of Campofilone (FM) where agricultural areas are classified according to different levels of protection of the agrarian landscape. Hence, while the so called "avarage agricultural areas" are those disciplined by the already mentioned Regional Law 12/1990 (see section 5.3.2.), "the agricultural areas of landscape interest", those characterized by panoramic ridgeline and historical elements (the "historical countryside"), according to the local plan they need a higher level of protection and more restrictive designations (Comune di Campofilone, 2003).

5.4. Spaces of cooperation in Aso Valley

5.4.1. Methodology

As in the South Agricultural Park, also in the Aso Valley the methodology comprised a documentary analysis and a series of semi-structured interviews. The first covered the planning and governance documents produced by the two Provinces dealing with Aso Valley territory, such as the already mentioned "Piano Direttore della Valdaso" (Provincia di Ascoli Piceno, 2008), and the documents and reports produced by the Local Actions Groups (LAGs). Regarding the planning tools, given the absence of a Territorial Plan focusing on the valley itself, the reference went to the two Provincial Plans of Ascoli Piceno and Fermo, already presented (see section 5.3.2.). The semi-

5 It is important to underline that the process of analysis of local plans was limited by the fact that few local plans (and/or some of their parts) were not available online. Hence the problem of accessibility has been one of the major issues affecting the study of the documentary sources.

Number of interviewees	Role / Position
6	Mayor
2	Local councilor
2	LAG technical supervisor
2	Agronomy officer from Regional government
1	Researcher

Table 10: Number and role of actors interviewed in the Aso Valley.

structured interviews were addressed to a sample of local actors actively involved in the spaces of cooperation in the Aso territory (**Table 10**). The interviewees were local administrators such as mayors and local councillors (n=8), technical supervisors of LAGs (n=2), agronomy officers (n=2) and researchers (n=1) for a total of 13 interviews made. The survey has been carried out from November 2016 to February 2017.

The questions addressed to the interviewees, even with a common structure, dealt with different aspects and were oriented to reach the following objectives:

- understanding the impacts of the territorial reorganisation reform approved in 2014 (the so called "Delrio Law") on Aso Valley institutional and administrative dynamics;
- identifying forms, contents and rationales of the spaces of cooperation, their related strengths and weaknesses and how they contribute to shape the interdependencies among urban and rural areas;
- understanding the main constraints to the implementation of an intermunicipal planning policy;

To identify the interviewees, a mail was sent in a first phase to all mayors of the municipalities of the lower part of Aso valley and in a second phase to other actors involved at different levels in the spaces of cooperation, presenting the idea of the research and the general topics of the interviews. The choice was to focus on the lower part and to exclude the mountainous areas, since this is the part of the territory where local economy is more oriented to agriculture production.

The 13 interviews ranged from 20 to 45 minutes in length and, after having asked the permission, they were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The findings presented below are the result of a critical re-elaboration of the main points extracted from the interviews.

5.4.2. The institutional spaces of cooperation: the Valdaso Union of Local Councils[6]

The only statutory space of local cooperation in Aso Valley is the Valdaso Union of Local Councils. It is form of Local Government Association (LGA)[7] (CoE, 2010). The Union was founded in 2001 and includes seven municipalities[8] of the medium and low Aso valley, who decided to get together for reducing the administrative and management costs and for keeping the standards in service provision. A great push to form the Union came from the regional government because of some financial incentives that were transferred from national to regional government according to Law 267/2000 ("Testo Unico delle legge sull'ordinamento degli Enti Locali") (see section

6 Some contents of this paragraph have been already published in: Lazzarini (2017).

7 The Union is a local body consisting of two or more municipalities entrusted with statutory autonomy and and finalized to the joint exercise of functions and services (see section 3.1.).

8 Altidona, Monterubbiano, Moresco, Campofilone, Lapedona and Pedaso belonging to the Province of Fermo (FM) and Montefiore dell'Aso to the Province of Ascoli Piceno.

3.1.). As reported in its statute, the Union's main objectives are to promote and pursue the socio-economic development of Aso Valley, to progressively integrate Union's municipalities, and to maintain relationships with other local authorities in order to fully implement the principle of subsidiarity. The services that are currently devolved to the Union are the municipal police, the taxation service, the consultancy and assistance service for commercial activities, youth policy, the staff management and the press office.

Although the Union has not a direct electoral basis, its field of action is strongly dependent to the elected tiers of the seven municipalities.

According to the interviewees, when it was born in 2001, the Union was considered an innovative experience of IMC, originated to respond to the long-lasting structural deficits characterizing the Aso Valley in terms of efficacy of public action and political representativeness.

"L'Unione dei Comuni Valdaso nasce proprio dalla mancanza strutturale di rappresentatività di questo territorio. Se creiamo l'Unione forse riusciamo ad essere interlocutori più efficaci"[9] (LAG Technical supervisor).

Despite this initial innovation, the Valdaso Union is currently experiencing deep problems regarding a wide range of issues. The first is the lack of territorial homogeneity because of marked territorial, economic and social differences among the municipalities.

"Una Unione di Comuni deve essere secondo me omogena, noi non siamo omogenei"[10] (Mayor).

The profound differences between municipalities concerns the demography and the economic vocations of municipal territories. For instance, the municipalities facing the Adriatic coast have a larger population (a couple of thousands), they host a relevant number of seasonal tourists and present a peculiar demand for services and vigilance, which are quite different from the hilly municipalities, much smaller in terms of demography (few hundreds of inhabitants) and less affected by tourism, extended throughout the year.

The second aspect concerns the political and interpersonal relationships among mayors and local administrations of the Union.

"I sindaci tra di loro non vanno assolutamente d'accordo perché ci sono delle situazioni di incomprensione per cui la ricucitura non è gestibile"[11] (Local councillor).

"Le sette teste dei sindaci ragionano in maniera completamente diversa"[12] (Mayor).

Hence, some conflicts and tensions among mayors arise, and some of them

9 "The Valdaso Union of Municipalities was born from a structural lack of representativeness of this territory. If we create the Union, perhaps we can be more effective interlocutors".

10 "A Union of Municipalities must be homogenous in my opinion; we are not homogeneous".

11 "The mayors among themselves do not absolutely agree because there are situations of misunderstanding for which the re-stitching is not manageable".

12 "The seven mind-sets of mayors work in complete different ways".

have a direct influence on Union's administrative efficiency. These contrasts have an implicit relation to what was already defined as an expression of "campanilismo"[13] according to which local administrators and communities are not always willing to loose or delegate their political and administrative identity to an external body or actor. Despite this, the awareness is that, without cooperating, the range of action of the municipality narrows a lot, both from the administrative and the strategic points of view.

"Se non cominciamo a pensare di muoverci in maniera unitaria, credo che riusciamo a portare a casa poco [...] in linea di principio [noi sindaci] siamo tutti d'accordo nel [...] lavorare insieme. Poi di fatto dobbiamo ancora superare lo spirito del campanile, dell'orticello, dove poi alla fine l'obiettivo finale di ognuno è quello di ottenere qualcosa per il suo Comune"[14] (Mayor).

According to some mayors, the need to work together has become today more urgent also because of the recent administrative changes brought by Law 56/2014. Thus, the reorganization of the provincial level and the transfer of some functions back to Regions have created problems of coordination among municipalities, according to what was already defined as the creation of an empty space among the municipal and regional level (Ciapetti, 2014). Mayors defined the situation after the law n. 56 and its lack of full implementation[15] by using topical expressions such as "a great chaos", "a lot of confusion and disease" and "a huge black hole". The lack of coordination is particularly relevant because of the high local institutional fragmentation characterizing the Aso Valley, in which a number of very small municipalities have a weak strategic thinking and are scarcely able to interact with the regional government for obtaining financial resources.

"[La provincia] disponeva di personale, poteva dedicarsi a tempo pieno a questo, i vari assessorati avevano le competenze specifiche [...] c'è stata la perdita di un soggetto che poteva raccordare i Comuni e la Regione perché poi c'è bisogno necessariamente di una forza politica, di qualcuno che vada a confrontarsi con la Regione perché poi è la Regione che finanzia questi tipi di progetti"[16] (Mayor).

---

13 "Campanilismo" (in English also "parochialism") symbolizes a sense of identity, of pride, and of belonging to the place of your birth, a feeling which is usually much stronger to an Italian than any sense of national identity. The term derives from "campanile" (the bell tower), traditionally the tallest and most prominent building in any town or village.

14 "If we do not start thinking about moving together, I think we can take home just a little [...] in principle we [as mayors] all agree in [...] working together. Then in fact we still have to overcome the spirit of the bell tower, of the little garden, where at the end the final goal of everyone is to get something for his or her municipality".

15 The Law 56/2014 did not fully abolish the Provinces, but it turned them into non-elected bodies with fewer functions than before. These are school buildings, environmental protection and development, transport and road systems and territorial planning. For the total abolition, a Referendum was needed in order to modify the Italian Constitution. This happened on December 4th 2016 and was rejected by the majority of Italian populations, leaving the provinces as they are today. To know more about the administrative changes and the open issues brought by Law 56/2014, see: Fedeli, 2016.

16 "[The province] had the staff, it could devote its full time to this, the various sectors had the specific skills [...] we lost a subject that could link the Municipalities and the Region because then there is the need to have a political actor, someone who is going to deal with the Region because then it is the Region that finances these types of projects".

The role of Provinces as coordinating actors is underlined by an interviewee who argued that most of the failures of the Provinces were due to the fact that they were exercising too many functions with the result of producing a fragile political maturity and failing to represent a clear tier of government with specific competences and roles (see also: Fedeli, 2016).

"Probabilmente le Province prima facevano troppe cose [...] secondo me le Province non si devono occupare di turismo, agricoltura, di politiche comunitarie, non si devono occupare di policy. Deve essere il management la competenza del soggetto intermedio"[17] (LAG Technical coordinator).

It is relevant to underline that, despite mayors interpret cooperation as an increasingly urgent need, this has not produced in Aso valley any cooperative planning policies yet. Thus, planning is not among the joint functions exercised by the Valdaso Union or of any other group of municipalities in the valley. Therefore, every local council in Aso Valley is acting autonomously in planning by implementing its own local plan and deciding upon its own land use forecast concerning urban and rural uses. The impacts of a lack of intermunicipal planning is visible in the settlement configuration of the Aso Valley, already presented (see section 5.2.2.) according to which a number of small and medium industrial settlements were built in the valley floor without any clear or coherent scheme for the location of development or facilities at territorial level (Lazzarini & Chiarini, 2017).

"Noi c'abbiamo in Valdaso zone artigiani piccole sparse, disseminate su tutto il territorio, zone industriali per fortuna un pochino meno però anche quelle. Non è accettabile avere questa dispersione"[18] (Local councillor).

Interestingly, most of mayors interviewed do agree to start to reason with the other local administrators for setting up processes of intermunicipal planning. Despite this general agreement, some obstacles emerge and deeply undermine their achievement.

The first and most important obstacle reported by mayors concerns the scope of the cooperation, planning, which is interpreted by the majority of respondents as a "delicate and sensitive matter", hardly delegable to others and therefore to be managed at municipal level.

"Spesso l'amministratore è un po' debole, perché perde consensi. L'elettore non è come una volta... La pianificazione urbanistica intercomunale è articolata..."[19] (Mayor).

17 "Probably in the past the Provinces were doing too many things [...] in my opinion the Provinces should not deal with tourism, agriculture, EU policies, they should not be concerned with policies. Management must be the competence of the intermediate subject".

18 "In Aso Valley we have small scattered artisanal areas, disseminated throughout the territory, fortunately industrial areas a little less but also few. It is not acceptable to have this dispersion".

19 "Often the administrator is a bit weak, because he loses consensus. The elector is not as it used to be... Inter-municipal planning is articulated..."

As emerged from the interviews, forms of cooperative planning would compromise local authorities' faculty to decide how many developments foresee and where to locate them within their municipal area of jurisdiction. Accordingly, an intermunicipal planning policy is seen as a restriction of their decisional autonomy. Despite this, recent studies have shown how planning could be one of the most relevant field of cooperation because of the need to rationalize other policies (housing, enterprise zones, roads...) and to deal effectively with cross boundary issues (CoE, 2010). This is especially true in cases in which these needs involve rural contexts such as the Aso Valley, where the maintenance of the visual and landscape quality of the countryside clashes with demands for housing developments.

Another obstacle is the lack of knowledge resources needed to understand the major benefits of inter-municipal planning and, ultimately, to reach success in policy implementation. As recent studies on public policy analysis (Dente, 2011) and inter-municipal cooperation (CoE, 2010) have already investigated, the lack of expertise and technical knowledge is one of the crucial aspect hindering innovation in local governance processes. What emerged from interviews is that some mayors are not fully aware of the pros and cons of inter-municipal planning in terms of reducing costs and sharing resources, facilities and technical knowledge.

"E' che le necessità urbanistiche nostre sono contenute, quindi iniziare un discorso di pianificazione insieme comporta [...] dei costi che noi non siamo in grado di sostenere [...] non vedo ora come ora nell'immediato un discorso di questo genere"[20] (Mayor).

The obstacles above mentioned, although specific and rooted in the context of Aso Valley, are representative of the limits that often characterize the local institutional spaces of cooperation. In Aso Valley, the persisting 'parochialism' and the related high institutional fragmentation, together with the new external conditions brought by territorial reorganization reforms, have fostered the emergence and proliferation of multiple forms of cooperation between local councils and different sets of local actors. Some of these spaces have also attempted at answering to the lack of forms of intermunicipal planning, strategic thinking and political representativeness historically characterizing Aso Valley.

In the next section, an overview of these spaces of cooperation is presented. It was chosen to define them hybrid, multi-actor and multi-purpose spaces of cooperation because of their heterogeneous nature and contents, their wide participatory attitude and the many objectives they have. Differently from the case of the Aso Valley Union, these forms of cooperation are involving a wide range of stakeholders such as farmers' associations, no profit associations, local cultural and environmental associations or groups that are positively cooperating with municipalities to achieve a range of purposes. In the survey, emphasis in placed on the objectives of the cooperation (what keeps together these actors), on the kind of actors involved and on the innovative elements

20 "The point is that our planning needs are limited, so starting a planning discourse together involves [...] some costs that we are not able to sustain [...] I do not see right now the need to start this process".

and the spatial impacts of the cooperation.

5.4.3. Multi-actor and multi-purpose spaces of cooperation[21]

The spaces of cooperation analysed are the Aso Valley Agro-Environmental Agreement (1), the Aso River Contract (2), the Eco-museum (3), and the two Local Action Groups (4). The choice to study these experiences is due to the fact that these represent the more innovative spaces of local cooperation in Aso Valley in which alliances among local institutional and non-institutional actors have challenged the traditional vertical and statutory approach and built, although in different ways, strategies of rural development.

5.4.3.1. The Agro-Environmental Agreement

In the last decades, the intensive cultivations in Aso Valley implying an excessive use of chemical products have given rise to problems regarding the health conditions of local farmers and the high levels of pollution of water system. To answer to these problems, in 2008 few local farmers, supervised by an agronomist working for an environmental safety agency belonging to Regional Administration decided to start applying some alternative methods of cultivation in some portions of their land. Few months later, the idea to engage European funds to sustain these practices was launched by the Regional administration through the creation of the Agro-Environmental Agreement (AEA), a policy tool introduced by the Rural Development Plan (RDP) 2007/13 and proposed again by the current RDP 2014/20. Already defined as “one of the most innovative attempt of integrate planning in environmental policies” (Coderoni, 2011), the agreement is oriented to protect agricultural soils and to reduce water pollution from pesticides and nitrates. The Agreement aggregates public and private stakeholders around a project, which is the result of a process of sharing environmental problems

21 Some of the contents of this paragraph have been published in: Lazzarini, 2017.

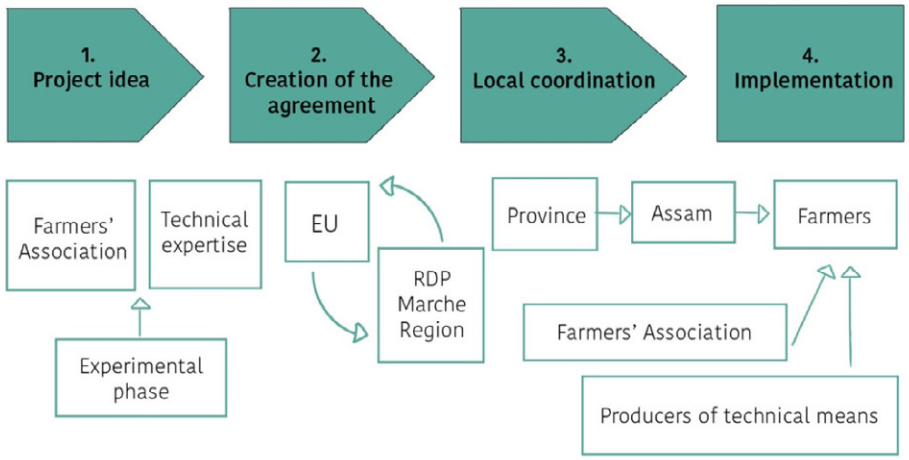


Figure 31: Development of the first generation of AEA. Source: Author’s elaboration based on Coderoni, 2014.

Figure 32: One of the meeting among farmers and technical officers from Regional administrations during the first generation of AEA. Source: G. Porrà.

and objectives of agricultural protection and food security. This policy tool implies a specific agreement between a Promoter (a public actor) and a group of local farmers which takes the commitment to apply more sustainable techniques of cultivation.

The project can be considered a good example of strategic, time-limited and target-oriented cooperation, around which a wide and heterogeneous group of local farmers collaborated with local councils and regional administration, driving local agricultural economy towards more sustainable methods of cultivations (**Figure 31**).

Some innovative aspects characterize the nature and content of AEA. Firstly, AEA is expression of the recent governments' willingness to integrate environmental conservation and protection and enhancement of the countryside in the new agro-environmental measures (Moir et al., 1997). Accordingly, the integrated dimension of the agreement combines agricultural and environmental policies and it promotes the multi-functionality of agricultural enterprises, reorienting agriculture toward territorial management policies (Roggero et al., 2006). A second aspect regards the originally bottom-up dimension of the agreement. AEA idea and aims were deeply rooted in local farmers' initiative, which later was able to raise the interest of higher institutions, such as the Region, which then decided to create a specific measure in the RDP oriented to support farmers in achieving sustainable methods of cultivation (**Figure 32**).

Last but not least, the key role played by AEA in shaping local governance processes, which was evident after the territorial reform in 2014 that radically reduced the powers of Provinces, giving a central role to municipalities in policy making processes. In fact, in the second generation of AEA introduced by the current 2014/20 RDP, the restructuring of Provinces has triggered the self-organization of a group of 13 municipalities whose cooperation has played a crucial role in managing the AEA beneficiaries consisting in more than 100 farmers operating in an area of about 8000 hectares.

Although the impacts of this experience are still not clear due to problems of monitoring and control given by the high number of farmers involved (Coderoni, 2011), the AEA has demonstrated that innovative collaborative networks can meaningfully trigger integrated policies towards reducing the environmental impacts of agricultural practices. The success of AEA has also pushed the Region and the local farmers' association to create an Integrated Supply Chain Project ("Progetto Integrato di Filiera") within the quality brand of Marche ("Qualità Marche, QM"). This represents the attempt to collectively operate to improve the marketing of products of the farmers participating to AEA. During the RDP 2007-13, 58 were the farmers who had benefitted from the QM for their products obtained while joining the Agreement. According to Coderoni (2011), this has allowed local farmers to better communicate to consumers their commitment towards sustainability and, more in general, to guarantee and certify local products.

5.4.3.2. The Aso River Contract

Also Marche Region has joined through DGR 1470/2014 the National Charter of River Contract. This allowed also in its regional territory the constitution of partnerships among local stakeholders to use this policy tool.

The Aso River Contract was born in 2016 and it currently brings together 11 local governments and other public and private actors of the valley. The constitution of the Executive Committee of Aso River Contract, formed by three local councils (Altidona, Montalto M. & Monte V. Combatte), by Legambiente (environmental association) and by the two LAGs, took place in April 2016. It has officially launched a strategic participatory planning tool with the purpose of gathering around some specific environmental objectives (protection and correct management of Aso waters and the control of hydrogeological risk) a set of local actors sharing a common territorial project. The relevance of the strategic perspective of the Contract is underlined by one interviewee, according to whom it should be considered as a framework for policies rather than a superstructure.

"Il contratto di Fiume dev'essere una prospettiva di strategia, non deve essere una sovrastruttura [...] non è semplice pensarlo come prospettiva strategica, come contenitore di politiche perché questo è un territorio che non ha la maturità di utilizzare in maniera pienamente innovativa questo strumento, strumenti di governance, pattizi, volontari"[22] (LAG Technical coordinator).

In the "Manifesto of Intents" signed in February 2016, the aim is to orient the activity of the River Contract and to generate an operational methodology aiming at defining and coordinating the objectives at the scale of the entire river basin. The main purpose of the Contract is to frame some ongoing policies, such as the Agro-Environmental Agreement, into a more general

22 "The River Contract should be interpreted as a strategic perspective, it should not be framed as a superstructure [...] it is not easy to conceive it as a strategic perspective, as a container of policies because this is a territory that does not have the maturity to use in a fully innovative way this tool, tools for governance, voluntary agreements".

and coherent plan for the entire valley, defining amount and origin of the financial resources to be activated.

The current limits of the River Contract are the scarce availability of funding needed for coordinating the actors involved and for implementing the contents of the policies.

"Sul Contratto di Fiume, il prossimo passo è che bisogna investirci [...] non basta essere fiduciosi di questa esperienza. L'apporto economico è necessario perché altrimenti non ho i facilitatori e il personale esperto che gestisce i tavoli tecnici. Io, pur essendo un tecnico, non riesco a coprire tutti gli aspetti, quindi..."[23] (Regional officer).

Unfortunately, some recent natural disasters (a series of earthquakes in August and October 2016 and a heavy snowfall in January 2017) have further slowed down the activity of the Contract river, because of the urgency to deal with emergency issues. The activities of the River Contract have started again with a plenary meeting in Altidona in August 2017 and a set of three public meetings in early 2018 in Montalto delle Marche among local administrators to gain better awareness on the advantages of the policy tool. Three thematic groups have been established: the blue table for the hydro-geological risk management and the rehabilitation of river areas, the green table on the qualities of water, soil and agriculture and the orange table dealing with sustainable landscape and tourism. The activity of the three groups, currently ongoing, is gathering local authorities and representatives of local associations to discuss together for bringing forward the strategy and exploring new funding opportunities.

5.4.3.3. The Aso Valley Ecomuseum

The Aso Valley Eco-museum is a cultural project aiming at promoting the socio-economic development of the valley through the enhancement and networking of local cultural attractiveness, the creation of synergies with the touristic and economic sector and the integration of the system of touristic accommodations with local artistic and gastronomic heritage[24]. The Eco-museum underlines the broad definition of the cultural values of the territory and fosters the multiple interrelations between the artistic and local traditional values. The proposed project has identified some places to be included in the Eco-museum in order to improve their attractiveness to visitors. These are local museums, historical town halls, wash-houses, small rural churches, old railway stations and small traditional fisherman harbors (**Figure 33**).

The Eco-museum is currently joined by eleven local councils of Aso Valley. It is a form of cooperation in which municipalities operate synergically to improve the touristic attractiveness of the valley. It can be conceived as a tool for local authorities and communities to share and deepen their creativeness,

23 "On the River Contract, the next step is that we need to invest on it [...] it is not enough to be confident of this experience. The financial contribution is necessary because otherwise I do not have the facilitators and the experts to manage the technical meetings. Even though I am a technician I can not cover all aspects, so...".

24 http://www.ecomuseovalledellaso.it.

but also to experiment professionality and to realize animation activities for local inhabitants. The project, launched on an experimental basis during the biennial 2011-2012 by the Valdaso Union of Local Councils, has seen the initial involvement of 7 municipalities, as well as 14 local cultural and youth associations acting in the valley.

The enthusiasm of the youth and cultural associations has influenced, in June 2012, the adhesion of other 4 municipalities to the Eco-museum, expanding the network of actors involved.

"L'ecomuseo è secondo me una grande opportunità per questo territorio per lavorare insieme, per promuovere e valorizzare le nostre identità culturali. Io ci credo tantissimo"[25] (Mayor).

Despite the initial enthusiasm on this experience, some local councils, such as Lapedona and Monte Vidon Combatte, decided not to joint the association of the Eco-museum, because of some problems regarding the implementation and the coordination of the activities, and the weak territorial impacts obtained by the project so far.

"L'Ecomuseo è un organismo che è nato da poco, ci sono delle criticità a mio avviso, che hanno portato il mio comune a non aderire immediatamente. L'idea è sicuramente buona però c'è da migliorare qualcosa, c'è da capire come farlo funzionare al meglio"[26] (Mayor).

25 "In my opinion, the Ecomuseum is a great opportunity for this territory to work together, to promote and enhance our cultural identities. I believe in it a lot".

26 "The Ecomuseum is a body that was born recently, there are critical issues in my opinion, which led my municipality not to join it immediately. The idea is certainly good but there is something to improve, we need to understand how to make it work better".

Figure 33: The Community map of the Eco-museum produced by local schools. Source: ecomuseovalledellaso.it.

"Come tutte le progettazioni innanzitutto occorre capire come viene attuata. L'Ecomuseo è uno di quelli che o il territorio lo percepisce come proprio, e allora funziona, altrimenti ha le sue carenze"[27] (LAG Technical Supervisor).

Currently the Ecomuseum is a network of municipalities and local associations and groups (including also 7 "pro loco") that are organising cultural events and local festivals dealing with the promotion of local landscape and natural beauties, gastronomy and art through the idea of a diffused museum, with the purpose of putting together a number of attractive places and improving their visibility to tourists.

5.4.3.4. The Local Action Groups

The Local Action Group (LAG) is a non-profit organization gathering public and private actors to define and implement a shared policy. LAG's field of action is the development of the rural territory through the Leader approach, employing mainly (but not exclusively) the financial resources coming from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). LAGs periodically implement their Local Development Plan (LDP), setting out the actions to be implemented in coherence with the measures provided by the Rural Development Plan (RDP) and with objectives of European Union and of the regional, provincial and local development plans. According to OECD (2013), the LAGs, through their work in partnerships, have also the opportunity to strengthen relationships and networks between urban and rural areas. Their effort to diversify and modernize rural economy by creating more linkages in the supply chain with the urban environment and to encourage the development of leisure and recreation for urban populations are two of the main reasons by which they contribute to shape more urban/rural interdependencies (OECD, 2013: 246).

The LAGs acting in the Aso Valley are two, the Fermano LAG and Piceno LAG. These are two complementary spaces of cooperation having within their partnerships a broad representation from socio-economic sectors that, in various ways, have an interest in promoting and contributing to rural development. The LAGs activity, through the action of the LDP, is geared to enable a broad and comprehensive involvement of local communities in the definition of the actions to be implemented. This is reached through a listening phase, aimed to raise awareness on the opportunities for territorial development and to define the operative framework of local economic operators, associations and public authorities, and a programmatic phase where the demands scheme outlined by the previous stage is crossed with a context analysis, for outlining the objectives to be implemented in local development strategies.

The tool to achieve these objectives is a pragmatic and selective Action Plan which includes the identification of the technical solutions and the most appropriate types of measures matching with the emerging local needs.

27 "Like all the co-design processes, first of all it is necessary to understand how it is implemented. The Eco-museum is one of those things that if the territory perceives it as its own, then it works, otherwise it has its shortcomings".

These measures range from the transfer of knowledge and information (19.2.1), to the development of local farms and other enterprises (19.2.6), to the enhancement of main services and renewal of historical centers in rural areas (19.2.7) and to cooperation (19.2.16). For every measure, some sub-measures clarify the operative dimension of the strategy, with a scheme defining the main objectives, the thematic scope, the description and the efficacy of the intervention, the selection criteria and the eligibility. LAG has been already interpreted as a space of debate, as a platform where a variety of local public and private actors join together to draw the trajectory of development.

"Il GAL è un tavolo di concertazione su cui noi discutiamo dei fabbisogni dei Comuni ma anche dei vari soggetti privati, delle rappresentanze imprenditoriale"[28] (LAG Technical supervisor).

The range of action of the Local Development Plan is deeply selective and target-oriented since it aims at establishing the exact objectives to be achieved, the actions to be carried out, and the local actors potentially interested to implement the measures.

"Il piano di sviluppo locale approvato da poco diventa una sorta di presa d'atto di quelli che sono i fabbisogni iscritti all'interno di una visione più ampia [...] in questo piano siamo molto selettivi rispetto a quelle che sono le possibilità che ci sono date dal PSR o comunque dalla programmazione comunitaria"[29] (LAG technical supervisor).

It is interesting to analyse the role and contribution of the two LAGs in shaping the contents of the spaces of cooperation above mentioned. This is particularly true for the case of the River Contract where the two LAGs are not just members of the Executive Committee, but they have also funded a number of actions and projects related to the management and accessibility of riverside areas. Hence, within the frame of the River Contract, LAGs have contributed to implement the contents of the strategy by providing some financial resources.

Nevertheless, the coherence among the River Contract's strategy and the LAGs was set up by an intense and long-standing collaboration among the two LAGs, which has produced also some relevant governance impacts. The most important is the Project of Cooperation titled "Valdaso. Un nuovo modello di governance per un territorio rurale di qualità" in which the two LAGs have cooperated to define a model of governance through which the Aso valley would have been able to "design, protect and valorise its cultural material and immaterial heritage in an integrated way" (GAL Piceno & GAL Fermano, 2015). In this document, coherently with the National and Regional legislation, the River Contract is indicated as the right governance tool that can frame the activation of multi-sectoral actions able to generate plans and

28 "The LAG is a consultation table on which we discuss the needs of the Municipalities but also of the various private stakeholders, of business representatives".

29 "The recently approved local development plan becomes a sort of acknowledgment of those requirements that are part of a broader vision [...] in this plan we are very selective compared to the possibilities given from the RDP or in any case from the EU funding".

projects addressed to intervene on the river and its surrounding areas. The strategic scenario proposed by the document interprets the Aso river as the main element of territorial identity, as the backbone of the integrated strategy "Environment – Agriculture – Tourism". Accordingly, the specific actions addressed to the agricultural sector (such as those foreseen by the Agro-Environmental Agreement) should be considered within the general strategic framework and closely interconnected with the other territorial settings of the Valley. This document had the merit to originate a participatory process of knowledge sharing among the local stakeholders of the valley through three panels of discussions, matching with the three levels of the strategy. These initiatives have conveyed a fertile discussion on the priorities and actions to be implemented among the key-actors having an interest on that level of the strategy, and, more importantly, they have also set the ground for defining the programmatic guidelines of the two LAGs with reference to the opportunities coming from the 2014/20 Rural Development Plan.

5.5. Discussion

5.5.1. Soft spatialities and variable geometries[30]

While presenting the spaces of cooperation in the Aso Valley, I decided to set a clear distinction between the Valdaso Union of Municipalities and the other multi-purpose and multi-actor spaces of cooperation. This distinction is motivated by the presence of different rationales connoting these two cooperative forms but also the different approach they have on the issue of inclusiveness and participation of civil society to the scope of cooperation. In fact, behind the Union of Municipalities there is a statutory form in which a group of municipalities has defined a set of rules and principles for jointly managing services. I have demonstrated that the stability of this space has been hardly able to face the increasing complexity and the rapidly changing needs of the local context. In the other spaces analysed, the perimeters of the cooperation are ductile and change according to the goals and the interests involved. This has produced a collaborative landscape of variable geometries in which a wide range of local public and private actors have provided themselves the resources and the knowledge needed to achieve a set of shared objectives and to implement specific actions.

Figure 34 represents the actors involved in each space of cooperation. It clearly highlights a strong interdependency among interests and topics of collaborative arrangements. Non-profit and trade associations, farmers' associations, local financial corporations and entrepreneurs are positively cooperating with a range of institutional actors at various levels for achieving a set of objectives and, ultimately, for producing spatial impacts. Looking at these objectives, a certain complementarity among these spaces emerges, as already underlined for the case of the Milan South Agricultural Park in section 4.5.1.

30 Some of the contents of this section have been already published in Lazzarini (2017).

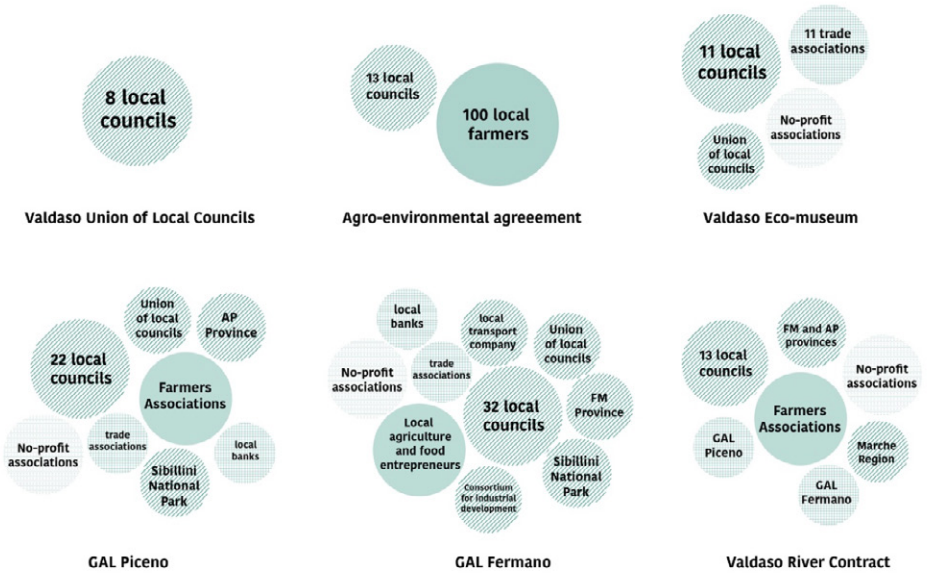


Figure 34: The local actors involved in each space of cooperation.
Source: Author's elaboration.

With regard to the Agro-Environmental Agreement, an innovative and bottom-up policy tool has driven farmers towards developing more sustainable methods of cultivation and it helped them to improve their appeal and to enlarge the market opportunities of their products. Although recently established, the River Contract has served as a strategic framework for giving coherence to sectoral interventions and for conveying an integrated development vision for the Aso Valley. A more cultural vocation is representative of the Eco-museum. Here local councils and associations are working together in an open platform for improving the attractiveness of the territory, according to the idea that the material and immaterial heritage needs to be jointly enhanced. Another type of policy action is the one connoting the two LAGs, which can be framed as a collaborative activation of strategic thinking for pragmatically and selectively defining local priorities to gear local contexts towards improving their social and economic conditions.

Alongside the distinctive features of each space, the emerging dualism among the institutional and the more hybrid and multi-actor spaces of cooperation already mentioned is not specific of the context of Aso Valley. These phenomena can be framed and better understood according to the conceptualisation of soft spaces of neoliberal governmentality which were discussed during the last ten years by a number of authors (among the many: Lovering, 2007; Allmendinger et al., 2015; Haughton et al., 2013) (see section 1.2.1.). Here it is argued that this conceptualization, although not fully expressing the complexity and the specific and contextual features of collaborative spaces in Aso Valley, it can be useful to frame these experiences within the overall trend of transformation of the local state towards the emergence of soft and non-statutory spaces of governance, as one of the more paradigmatic feature of neoliberal governmentality. This is coherent with what pointed out by the CoE (2010) who reported that one of the major feature of inter-municipal cooperation is its pragmatism and the tendency towards the development of informal practices and "agreements over unilateral, legislative, regulatory, or constitutional arrangements" (CoE,

2008: 24).

In cases as in UK at the level of sub-regional and local bodies following 2011 Localism Act (see section 6.1.) but also in the Aso Valley, especially after the territorial reorganization reform on 2014, soft spaces have provided the incentive to think strategically and spatially about the gaps created in territorial management and planning, already defined by Cloke et al. (2014) as the cracks created within neoliberal governance. This is the case of the River Contract that, although being a policy tool recognized by the regional and national legislation, has framed interventions at the inter-municipal scale oriented to enhance river areas and tackle flood risk.

As the description presented in section 5.4.3. has shown, in Aso Valley soft spaces have transcended administrative borders and they have created alliances among a number of institutional and non-institutional actors that have got together to define and achieve shared objectives. Accordingly, this process has created a "space for debate", going beyond formal political territorial entities. As recent studies on soft spaces have already investigated (Paasi, 2011), in these spaces elected and unelected actors have interacted to share some kind of interest around a particular strategy or a development program. Thus, drawing together stakeholders from a variety of spheres into new networks (Denters et al., 2005) has meant also to enhance the consensus around a scheme, garnering private sector confidence and finance (Haughton et al., 2013). This is particularly evident in the case of AEA, where the interaction of farmers with experts and public officers from local and provincial administrations has allowed to increase their understanding on the advantages of the project, and to be confident and trustful and to apply more sustainable methods of cultivations.

Despite the positive contribution of some of these spaces to management of territorial resources such as soil and water, the soft cooperation in Aso Valley has not been able to influence or orient planning policies yet. Hence, urban planning is still outside both from the joint functions exercised by the Valdaso Union of Municipalities and from the soft spaces of cooperation. As already shown, some past attempts to produce inter-municipal planning policies at the scale of the valley have failed (Provincia di Ascoli Piceno, 2008) for obstacles regarding the process of implementation related to the scarce political and administrative commitment by local administratos. Also the policy guidelines coming from higher administrative levels, such as from the Provincia di Fermo (2013), have not produced any effects at the level of local decision making processes yet. This is not surprising considering the lack of knowledge resources expressed by mayors as underlined by the interviewees and shown in section 5.4.

5.6. Concluding remarks

The investigation of the spaces of cooperation in Aso Valley has led to investigate the ways in which the multiple coalitions of actors have collaborated for shaping the territory of the valley. It was demonstrated that the more open is the scope of cooperation and the softer is its boundary

(Haughton et al., 2013), the more effective is the activity of cooperation in achieving the predefined goals and in building a more interdependent and multifunctional countryside.

I have also demonstrated the relevant contribution that local authorities play in shaping this vision. Local governments are a key actor that guide or shape these spaces. This process is happening without the presence of a sub-regional statutory policy or body that is performing as a mediator of the cooperative activity. Accordingly, despite the problems of coordination, the self-organisation by local governments seems to be effective in filling the gaps brought by recent territorial reforms (see section 3.1.) and in obtaining the financial resources needed for implementing territorial projects. At the same time, local authorities are not playing their role alone but they are embedded in and dependent from a network of actors, each performing a specific role, and bringing specific resources to the process. Hence, different trajectories of a number of governmental and non-governmental actors are crossing in the same cooperative arena, and different resources and knowledge coming from various spheres and sectors are combined and assembled together for achieving a specific purpose.

Looking at planning processes, I have highlighted the difficulty for local governments to implement a joint planning policy at the scale of the valley. Barriers such as the lack of knowledge resources needed to understand the benefits and the scarce willingness to delegate planning from the local to the sub-regional level are hard to be removed. Current challenges lie in guiding local administrators to understand the advantages that planning can provide in supporting —and not flattening— the spatial and functional specificities of municipal territories and in improving the spatial impacts of rural development policies (Brunori & Rossi, 2007; Fanfani, 2016).

Despite planning is out of the scope of the cooperation, the collaborative spaces presented in section 5.4.3. have framed an innovative, although implicit, interpretation of urban/rural relationships. I have pointed out how the strategic focus of the already investigated collaborative spaces overcomes the spatial dichotomy among urban and rural areas by considering the territory of the valley as a single asset where to act through programs and strategies. Accordingly, depending on the specific purpose and scope of the cooperation, local actors cooperate for promoting a vision that is going beyond the urban and rural spatial configurations and categories, considering both material and immaterial heritage, social, cultural and agro-ecological aspects, punctual and diffused, urban and rural settlements, on the basis of the idea that territorial interdependency, rather than spatial and functional separation, shapes the content of the strategy.

Chapter 6
ENGLAND: framing Local governments' cooperation in the national policy discourse

> "Whether it is a metropolitan area, one of the largest non-metropolitan urban areas, a new LEP, or even a non-governmental functional urban region with defined structural links beyond individual local authority boundaries, the UK city region is undergoing fundamental change from political and economic sources. This change is at once real, in terms of institutional restructuring, or more informal arrangements resting on collaboration and partnership, but the likely implications are uncertain".
>
> (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012: 155)

Aim of this chapter is to briefly present the national background of the Bristol City Region case-study. The background has been depicted with an emphasis on the governance of English city regions, interpreted as the institutional and geographical level chosen to deepen a reasoning on the role of farmland in shaping relationships among urban and rural areas. Of course, behind this choice, there is a vast literature, partly presented in section 2.3.2. when the collaborative planning approaches dealing with urban/rural relationships have been investigated, and in section 2.4.1., when the opportunity to analyse different spatial configurations of urban/rural relationships has been explained.

It is fair to specify that it was chosen to focus in this chapter not on the whole United Kingdom but specifically on England because crucial differences characterize the English planning system from the Welsh and the Scottish ones, differences originating from a long-standing process of reforms introduced by National Governments in the last 50 years and for the specific declination that regional and sub-regional planning policies have taken in answering to the pressing social and economic needs of the different UK Nations and to peculiar political instances. I will try to deepen these aspects in sections 6.1. and 6.2.

The chapter is organized in four sections. First section explains the evolution of the concept of city region in England, focusing in particular on the relationship among political narratives and governance transformations. The second section deals with the policy impacts brought by Localism Act after 2010 on English city regions. The following section goes on to discuss the contents of the Green Belt policy, and the two contending positions in the national debate. Last section analyses the relevance of investigating the case of Bristol City Region for the unique hybridization of different political and planning narratives resulting from a diverse interpretation of urban/rural

relationships.

6.1. Evolution of city region governance in England[1]

The model of City Region has had a contested political history in England. Despite some precedents of creating a public concern on the strategic and metropolitan policy making during late 1940s, the first official governmental discussion about city regions started in mid 1960s when the Labour Government decided to consider the possibility to review local government boundaries into larger administrative units, named city regions (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012) reducing the number of entities. Following this discussion, in 1968 a Royal Commission was created and at the end of its activity it reported that in England and Wales a city region model should have been introduced. Nevertheless, Tewdwr-Jones (2012) highlighted that the implementation of a formal city region model in Britain was compromised by the outcome of 1970 general election and by the victory of Conservatives. In fact, the new government led by Edward Health rejected the findings of the Commission and preferred to opt for a two-tier local government structure based on counties and districts (Ibid.). Hence, the rural and the urban spatial domains continued to be administratively separated.

The advent of the Thatcherism in 1979 brought to the emergence of a strong ideological economic policy that involved a crucial restructuring of the relations among central and local governments (Peck, 1995). Massive cuts in expenditures of local authorities and a new proactive role played by local business leaders in policy making processes were two of the more relevant changes of this governmental policy. The underlying rhetoric was that liberating entrepreneurial activity and freeing the market would have produced benefits on the social and economic development. Peck (1995) noticed that the ideological terrain established by Thatcher's government since the end of 1070s had the consequence of introducing in the policy and academic language the "partnership" emphasis, unfolding the need for local authorities to work closely with the private sector, and calling for multiplying the economic and managerial rationalities within their activity. The concrete policy effects of this ideological turn were the abolition of the Greater London Council (GLC) and of six metropolitan county councils across England in 1986.

It is at the end of the 1990s that strategic and regional planning was introduced in UK policy after some previous intermittent attempts to create some forms of regions in England in post-1945 British governments. The pushes came from the increasing tensions regarding the metropolitan level due to the lack of political leadership and democratic accountability, together with the challenges created by the overheating of South East's economy which had placed severe problems and pressures to villages in London and in the Home Counties (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012: 159). Thus non-statutory

1 Some of the contents of this section have been already published in Lazzarini (2018).

Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) was created to deal with land-use issues of regional importance. From 1994, RPGs were enforced by requiring them to include not only a regional but also a sub-regional strategy able to deal with specific needs of local authorities. These were prepared by conferences of local actors that were coping with issues such as economic development, marketing and funding cooperation (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012: 159).

The 1997 general election brought into power the Labour party. The new government established the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) and Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs), the latter replacing the RPGs, in what was already defined as a real "regional reform" (Mawson, 1997: 191-2). RDAs came into operation in 1999 in ten regions in England, and had the powers over implementation of strategic development of regional economic strategies, social, physical and economic regeneration and development of rural areas (HM Government, 1997). The Agencies comprised a board of 12 members, with a chair chosen by ministers, and the majority of members were coming from the private sector, the others drawn from local authorities, voluntary organisations and unions and education (Jones, 1999).

In the period 1996-98 the government undertook also a local government reorganisation in some parts of UK. As Tewdwr-Jones (2012:161) correctly pointed out, although the introduction of unitary local governments resembles the recommendations made by the Royal Commission in 1969, this should not be interpreted as a meaningful step in bringing forwards the concept of city region since "the largest urban areas, although becoming single-tier all-purpose authorities with the abolition of the two-tier counties and districts, remained administratively cut off from the hinterland".

Ten years after the introduction of regional agencies in UK, the political debate was polarised around two main issues, both related to the tensions and conflicts emerging from problem of regions' policy definition. The first regarded the relationship among economic development and spatial planning.

"Was economic development nested within spatial planning and sustainable development, or was spatial planning intended to find and promote the spatial implications of economic investment?" (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012:166).

The second concerned the difficulties by which the RSS were dealing with housing growth areas and planning and provision of regional infrastructures, problems that had created what has been defined a "game of transfer of problems and difficulties" from one policy tier to another one, without any possibility to resolve them (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012:171)

Being major challenges for regionalism as well as having polarised the political debate and created hard contestations, these issues had not found a proper terrain of resolution until the Conservatives won the General Election in 2010 and the newly established Coalition Government decided to get rid of RDAs and RSSs.

What occurred in England in the last ten years in terms of policy transformations has been deeply transforming the relationship among central and local governments. Here, the path to decentralization has followed a chaotic and unclear direction for the ambiguous impacts of the policy reforms

(Williams et al., 2012) and for the continuous shifts in the perception of the government and other agencies towards cities, regions and city-regions (Tewdwr-Jones, 2012).

The White Paper "Local Growth: realising every place's potential" published in 2010 has been interpreted as a pivotal step in the English devolution for the impacts of the changes it produced in the architecture of governance. This paper has provided a road-map for Government's ambition of rebalancing UK economy, particularly by devolving economic and social responsibilities down to cities and local communities (HM Government, 2010; Pugalis and Townsend, 2012). At the basis of the Localism reform it was rooted the idea that the social-democratic and Fabian approaches to government had failed to reduce deprivation and inequalities and that, on the contrary, they had promoted "selfish individualism and passive dependency" (Cameron, 2009). The "Big Society" flagship policy refers to the intention of Coalition government to place distinctiveness and subsidiarity at the heart of the mode of administration (Conservative Party, 2010), by envisaging devolution of powers to enable local communities and individuals to take an active role in their communities (Williams et al., 2012; Pugalis and Townsend, 2012). Although the Big Society's ideas are by no means new (Ishkanian and Szreter, 2012; Williams et al., 2012), the main differences with the past period relate to the important political and philosophical distinctions with the former New Labour civic renewal due to the unprecedented size, speed and effects of policy cuts (Taylor-Gooby and Stoker, 2011; Tewdwr- Jones, 2012).

The limits of this model have been already discussed by a number of researchers. For example, Clarke and Cochrane (2013) argued that the main deficiencies of the reform lie in its failure to recognize the highly uneven geographical impact of public sector cuts and the differential capacities within and between local communities. This last point is underlined by Featherstone et al. (2012) according to whose austerity localism has refused to engage with power relations and inequalities within local communities and this means that the actors empowered by localism have been those with resources, expertise and social capital, leaving behind the weakest.

As I already mentioned, among the bigger administrative changes brought by Localism Act, there is the abolition of the Regional Planning Guidance. Despite this, the Government recognised the importance to have an intermediate strategic level among the defunct regions and the local authorities. Thus, the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) have emerged as public-private bodies, intended to guide self-determining local priorities and to drive local businesses towards economic growth. LEPs are joint local authority-business bodies aimed at improving the coordination of public and private investments in transport, housing, skills, regeneration and other areas of economic development (Tallon, 2013). Already interpreted as an expression of the move between Managerial and Entrepreneurial mode of governance that British cities have been facing in the last two decades (Harvey, 1989; Shaw and Tewdwr-Jones, 2016; Tallon, 2013), LEPs underline local governments' shift from the management of public services towards the promotion of economic competitiveness. Their primary focus is now on ensuring new sources of economic development through a 'new marketing approach for cities' (Pacione, 2009; Harvey, 1989). Geography is

an important dimension in the territorial focus of LEPs. This is mainly due to their adherence to functional and economic areas (Centre for Cities, 2010; Marlow, 2015; Pugalis, 2010). Hence, given their potential to steer the broad complex of spatial interactions, LEPs have been conceived as a mechanism for enabling collaboration across municipal boundaries (Pugalis and Townsend, 2012). They are part of the broader Government's Duty-to-Cooperate for which local authorities are required to cooperate constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis between themselves and with other public bodies to maximize the effectiveness of policies for strategic matters in Local Plans (DCLG, 2014). As reported in the National Guidance

"the Duty-to-Cooperate seeks to ensure that local planning authorities lead strategic planning effectively through their Local Plans, addressing social, environmental and economic issues that can only be addressed effectively by working with other local planning authorities beyond their own administrative boundaries" (Ibid.).

Issues mentioned in the Duty-to-cooperate are typically housing market and travel-to-work areas, river catchments and ecological networks. The National Guidance also underlines that the impacts of the Duty should be clear and measurable. In other words, cooperation should produce effective policies on cross-boundary issues (Ibid.). Beyond the Duty-to-cooperate, other ways for local governments to cooperate are when they opt to prepare Joint Local Development Documents, although their use is not common in the practice (DCLG, 2004).

Another important policy development enthusiastically embraced by Coalition government and included in Localism Act is the introduction of the Combined Authorities and of directly elected mayors at City Regional level. According to Tallon (2013), directly elected mayors are the expression of a place-based leadership, because to be elected they need to have a strong political, managerial and community influence. Morgan & Moragues-Faus (2015) highlighted that "city governments and mayors are the most effective political agents for 'getting things done' at a time when national governments are mired in ideological gridlock" (Morgan & Moragues-Faus, 2015). The first phase of mayoral elections involved the local level: in August 2012, 47 referenda across England decided whether to establish a directly elected mayor in Local Authorities. Just a minority (13) have been passed by the electorate in cities like Bristol, Birmingham, Nottingham, Coventry and Manchester. Five years later, on May 4th 2017, Mayors have been elected for the first time in six English City Regions on the basis of the Devolution Deals agreed among local and central governments. The decision to create City-Region Mayors was strongly supported by the two Conservative Governments that advocated the need to have a single point of accountability and contact in the City Region for Government (Curtice, 2017).

6.2. The Green Belt policy in England[2]

All City Regions in UK are surrounded by a Green Belt. The Green Belt is a major top-down established policy that has an evident influence on the planning processes at local and city region level. I noted previously (see section 2.3.1.2.) that Green Belts have been one of the possible planning approaches by which national and local governments have limited the city sprawl and the harsh spatial separation among city and countryside, by putting in place a specific form of urban/rural relationships (Lazzarini, 2018).

Initially suggested by Ebenezer Howard in the late 19th century (Howard, 1898), Green Belts extend over 1639,090 ha, around 13% of the total land area of England. Five are the purposes served by Green Belts:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
- to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns;
- to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land (DETR, 2001).

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires local authorities to plan positively to "enhance the beneficial use of the Green Belt", hence to improve opportunities to provide access and outdoor sport and recreation, to retain and enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity, and to improve derelict land. Once established, Green Belt boundaries can only be altered in exceptional circumstances, through the preparation or review of Local Plans (DCLG, 2012).

Despite the absence of any mention on agriculture and food growing in the NPPF and the rooted idea that farming is a marginal economic activity in Green Belt, in 2010 it was reported that the 66% of total Green Belt land is classified as farmland (CPRE, 2010). This dominant understanding is partly justified by the overall low quality of Green Belt land (just the 12% of green belt farmland is classified as grade 1 and 2 land) and by a range of additional problems that periurban farming is facing such as damages due to trespass, vandalism and fly tipping (Gallent et al., 2006). Although regarded by many as "one of the greatest achievements of planning" (CPRE, 2012; RTPI, 2016), in the last decade a number of voices have been debating on Green Belts and on the contents of the national policy. In the academic and political debate two main approaches can be recognized. They will be named here as the pragmatic and the protectionist approaches.

The pragmatic approach is questioning the broader value of the policy in various arguments. The main argument relates to the quality of Green Belt land. As reported by Gallent et al. (2006), currently all land within designated Green Belt areas enjoys the same protection while some of it is of little amenity value. Therefore, Green Belt policy continues to operate as a mechanism "to preserve the integrity of the built-up areas on one side of it and the countryside on the other" (Shoard, 2002), without any real concern for the land within the Green Belt itself (DETR, 2001; Gant et al., 2011). A second argument deals with the number of problems associated with the severe limits placed to the

2 This section has been already published in Lazzarini (2018).

urban growth (Tallon, 2013; Neate, 2014). Since Green Belts are interpreted as key-mechanisms closely identified with the land-use planning model, this approach sees them as too rigid and permanent designations and calls for a more flexible attitude. Albrechts (2004) argues that until Green Belts will be viewed as regulatory zoning instruments, they will continue to promote separation rather than integration as part of a traditional model of land-use planning. To answer to the rigidity of the tool, some have suggested that Green Belt policy should be kept under review like any other planning policy (Bovill, 2002; Neate, 2014). "Green belt boundaries may well need to change" argued the Royal Town Planning Institute in the recent report "Where should we build new homes?" (RTPI, 2016). Following this view, Neate (2014) suggests to address the misconception that all Green Belt land is sacrosanct and that a release of it for housing is needed in order to achieve the extensions of major urban centres. A close but more radical view is the one promoted by those calling for the complete abolition of Green Belt policy given "its rootedness in erroneous assumptions, flawed concepts and ill-defined notions" (Papworth, 2015). A recent report commissioned by the Adam Smith Institute has attempted to demonstrate that the Green Belt policy has brought a number of welfare costs such as the increased cost of accommodation, imposed by the severe limit on the supply of developable land around major urban areas, and environmental damages, created by the lack of account of the policy for the quality of land itself (Ibid.). The report also underlined that, after the abolition of regional planning by Coalition Government, there have been deep problems of planning management of periurban areas because Green Belts extend across a number of local authorities and a significant lack of coordination has arised among local authorities that decide to treat differently the Green Belt (e.g. prioritising the protection of Green belt land or utilising it for housing provision) (Papworth, 2015) (see also the debate on Avon Green Belt in section 7.5.1.).

The Adam Smith's position supports the idea that what is needed is a replacement of Green Belts with different land-use restrictions that would better reflect environmental designations and free up land for housing while continuing to preserve the environment (OECD, 2011; Papworth, 2015).

Differently from the pragmatic approach, the protectionist approach opts for the defence of Green Belt land from being used for housing developments. The focal point is to fight the housing demand argument by tackling in a critical way the link between wants and economic demands (Helm, 2015; Jenkins, 2014; Dorling, 2014). Being more variegated than usually depicted, this approach includes a wide range of journalists, academics, politicians, planning officers of almost any political positions, including also part of the environmental and green lobbies. Although centred on the idea that Green Belt land and its qualities should be wholly protected from urban expansions, this position is calling for a "more positive, integrated and strategic approach to land-use" (CPRE, 2017) where the Green Belt areas should be better managed to maximize their green benefits, to increase their access and to exploit their multi-functional potentials (Helm, 2015; CPRE, 2010). According to Helm (2015), the argument to open up Green Belts for housing development is based upon a chain of economic and empirical evidence all of which are

questionable and some of which are wrong. These suffer from the deep failing in conceiving Green Belt as a natural capital resource, providing a social primary good as important as access to housing. The protectionist approach interprets Green Belts as spaces where combining and integrating a range of activities – such as production of local food, educational visits, access for recreation and provision of sustainable energy (CPRE, 2010).

In March 2018, the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government published a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework, opening a phase of consultation on the draft text. Also the Green Belt policy was reviewed by a more specific definition of the exceptional circumstances needed to justify the release of Green Belt land (DCLG, 2018). In the document, it is stated that while using Green Belt land for development, local authorities should demonstrate that the local strategy:

- "makes as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and under-utilised land;
- optimises the density of development, including whether policies promote a significant uplift in minimum density standards in town and city centres, and other locations well served by public transport;
- has been informed by discussions with neighbouring authorities about whether they could accommodate some of the identified need for development, as demonstrated through the statement of common ground" (DCLG, 2018).

Also in this latest version of NPPF, no consideration is placed both on the fertility and the environmental value of the Green Belt land used by new developments. Accordingly, local authorities will be likely to focus on the reasons regarding the best use of previously developed land and on the increase of urban densities, without requiring them to effectively cope with the need to preserve the best and most fertile agricultural land from new developments. The RTPI has written a response to the draft version of NPPF, including some criticism on the approach taken by Government of Green Belt policy:

"We are disappointed that the draft NPPF does not introduce a broad review of green belt policy in England. A managed approach to urban expansion, whilst avoiding urban sprawl has been successfully achieved through planning policies, with green belts working hand-in-hand with planned growth areas. The planning profession has championed this policy for over 60 years. But it is now necessary to revisit the purposes that green belts need to fulfil over the coming generation. The issue of green belts concerns not simply about what is ugly and what is attractive as some argue. There should now be a discussion of who green belts are for, about their social impact, along with their continued role in shaping and managing urban growth" (RTPI, 2018: 18).

The lack of an in-depth reasoning on what are today Green Belts is the main aspect of concern for RTPI. This matches with the urgency to adapt the contents and purposes of the policy to the current social and economic contexts of English Cities. Anyway, although critical, the view by RTPI does agree to keep the Green Belt as they are, provided that a National

Review of Green Belt would shift them spatially outward, freeing some inner land for development and turning some external rural land into Green Belt designation. According to this view, agricultural land closer to cities would be used for developments while other portions of land in outer parts of Green Belt would become designated.

6.3. Combining different planning approaches: the relevance of Bristol City Region

By presenting the Green Belt's narrative in England, the purpose is to interpret it as a central factor that has deeply influenced the planning configuration of English City Regions. City Region planning policies in England, currently managed by LEPs and Combined Authorities, have been strongly affected by the contents of the Green Belt national policy. Moreover, the ways to cope with designated Green Belt land represent one of the major challenges and reasons of conflicts and tensions that planning authorities have been facing in the last few years, an aspect that will be investigated in next chapter focusing on Bristol City Region.

Whether considering the Green Belt policy as a barrier to the experimentation of City Region planning or not, I will come back later on this aspect. The opinion I take here is that researchers and policy makers should acknowledge the City Region as a scale that has the potentials for considering the role of farmland in building more localised relationships among urban and rural areas in England, also in terms of innovating the related policy mechanisms (Dansero et al., 2017; Renting et al., 2015). Hence, as documented by a vast literature and a high number of experiences, City Region food systems have the relevant scale for testing the contribution of agricultural land in building more localised relationships among urban and rural areas.

This is the reasoning made by Joy Carey (2011) who, in the final recommendations of the report "Who feeds Bristol?", supports the idea that to gain a better understanding of Bristol's current food system, what is needed is the development of denser collaborative relationships of the City Council with the neighbouring local authorities. According to the author, this has the potential to achieve a better consideration of the multiple benefits arising from sustainable agriculture and land management and to ensure that "productive land in the city region remains available for food production" (Carey, 2011: 119).

At the basis of these assumptions, there is the consideration of food as a *raison d'être*, or main factor of an integrated and systemic vision of city region. As it was highlighted in section 2.3.2.2., the City Region Food System (CTFS) approach aims at developing a policy arena for local governments and civil society to work together for improving the sustainability of local food systems and for implementing food planning solutions able to bridge the spatial and functional dualism among urban and rural areas (Renting et al., 2015).

Here it is contended that one of the more distinctive features of the English case is the possibility to investigate at the City Region level the

coexistence and overlapping of mainstream and innovative approaches dealing with the urban/rural interface, namely the Green Belt and the City Region Food System approaches. The overlapping of different approaches is able to produce a unique terrain of reflection for planning both in terms of experimenting territorial policies and of analysing the underlying narratives that these approaches are perpetuating.

At this regard, the case of Bristol City Region is interesting for a unique combination among a stable framework of land-use protection (the Avon Green Belt) and a consolidated food narrative originated by a constellation of food initiatives and movements and by the activity of influential food organisations with the capacity to unpack and affect public policies. Although Bristol City Region still lacks a comprehensive food system approach, few relevant reasoning have been done (the “Who Feeds Bristol Report?” is one of them) to originate a debate around the need to adopt a City Region Food system approach.

Chapter 7
Cooperating across a Green Belt: the case of Bristol City Region

> "The configuration of Bristol's local food initiatives, which include new financial, organisational and retailing methods, have led the city to become culturally identified as a place for food innovation in the south-west. This could be a prelude to a discussion about the relationship between urban and rural areas in the region, and a move towards opportunities to create a more equitable and sustainable food system".
>
> (Reed & Keech, 2016: 94)

7.1. Brief introduction to the case study

The aim of this chapter is to investigate the case of Bristol City Region by analysing the cooperation among local governments and the dynamics characterising sub-regional governance. In particular, the focus is on local and sub-regional planning policies dealing with or having an impact on agricultural land in the City Region hinterland. Purpose is to study which idea of urban/rural relationships local governments convey through their cooperative planning policies, strategies and actions put in place at local and city region level.

Bristol and its City Region are a relevant case of sub-regional governance in England for the presence of the West of England Local Enterprise Partnership and the Mayoral Combined Authority, two sub-regional bodies introduced respectively by Cameron's Coalition and May's Conservative Governments. By working in the WoE LEP, local governments have been involved in shaping the City Region spatial planning by taking important choices regarding housing and transport planning. As it will be explained in next sections, these choices have had a deep influence on the preservation of agro-ecological assets and in the overall environmental sustainability of the city region, although impacts have not objectively assessed yet. Compared to the other two cases (PASM and the Aso Valley), in Bristol City Region the discussion on the approach that spatial planning should take on agricultural land has been influenced by a local food narrative, emerged in the last ten years thanks to (and not only for) the vibrancy of the many food initiatives present in the city.

This chapter has five sections (**Figure 35**). Section 7.2. depicts a territorial profile of Bristol City Region on the basis of two paradigmatic images. In section 7.3., an institutional profile of the case-study is presented by analysing the most important sub-regional and local governance and planning processes. The section ends by tracing an evolution of the food narrative in Bristol City Region with the purpose of understanding the increasing recognition of food

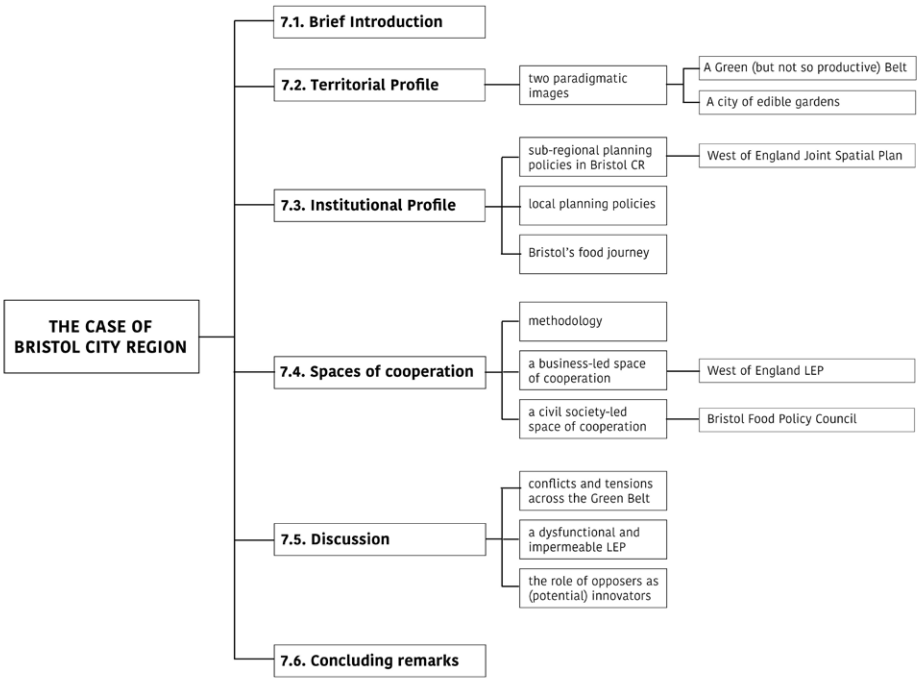


Figure 35: Flow diagram of chapter 8. Source: Elaboration by the author.

as an issue for the city. Section 7.4. presents the analysis of two spaces of cooperation involving at different extend local governments, the WoE LEP and the Bristol Food Policy Council. A discussion in section 7.5. summarises the findings of the previous section by crossing them with the ongoing debate. The chapter concludes with some ending remarks.

7.2. Territorial profile of the case study

Bristol lies on the river Avon and it is the main city in the South West of England. Its City Region covers an area of 1,343 km2 and comprises a population of 1.1 million inhabitants of which approximately 435.000 reside in Bristol, 94,000 in Bath and 84,000 in Weston-Super-Mare. Population is expected to grow at a sustained rate during the next 20 years. Just the city of Bristol is projected to increase of 26% between 2006 and 2026, reaching about 520.000 inhabitants (Bristol City Council, 2011).

As a major seaport in England, Bristol has a long history of global trading commodities. Nowadays the city has a diverse economic base and it is mostly reliant on aerospace technology, creative industries, media, financial services and tourism, where the 22% of employment is within high-tech economy (WoE, 2018). Bristol is recognised as a nationally important location for banking, insurance, professional services, as well as a significant place of public sector employment, provided mainly by National Health Service (NHS), Bristol's universities and government agencies (Bristol City Council, 2011). In 2017, the city was awarded by the Sunday Times as the best place to live in Britain for "its ideal combination of extraordinary culture, impressive schools, buzzing culinary scene, exciting redevelopment and community spirit" (Davies, 2017).

7.2.1. A Green (but not so productive) Belt

Bristol forms with Bath, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset and the in-between rural areas, the Bristol-Bath City Region. Most of rural areas in the City-Region are included within the Avon Green Belt, a portion of territory in which developments are restricted on the basis of the National Planning Policy Framework (DETR, 2001) (see section 7.3.). The Avon Green Belt counts 74.000 hectares in total, equal to 48% of the City Region area. Looking at its physical shape, one can notice how Green Belt land surrounds most of Bristol's built up area and completely the City of Bath and other settlements, the most important of which is Keynsham. The outer edge of Green Belt extends up to 12.5 kilometres from Bristol and Bath's urban boundaries (**Figure 36**). There are also a number of settlements of the City Region who currently lie completely outside the Green Belt like Yate, Clevedon, Thornbury and Portishead (WoE, 2015a).

The Avon Green Belt includes 48.000 hectares of agricultural land corresponding to the 72% of its surface. The quality argument is one of the major concern at the centre of the debate for the use of land surrounding Bristol (CPRE, 2016; Lazzarini, 2018). In the case of Avon Green Belt, the fertility values are lower than the average values for England. According to a study by CPRE (2010), the 11% of the Avon Green Belt land is classified as 1st and 2nd grade agricultural land, lower than the average value for Green Belt land in England (16%) and the average value for the whole England (17%). Despite this, some periurban areas are endowed with extraordinary qualities. This is the case of the Blue Finger, a strip of land at the north of Bristol having Grade 1 agricultural land which is within the top 3% of land in England for growing food (**Figure 37**).

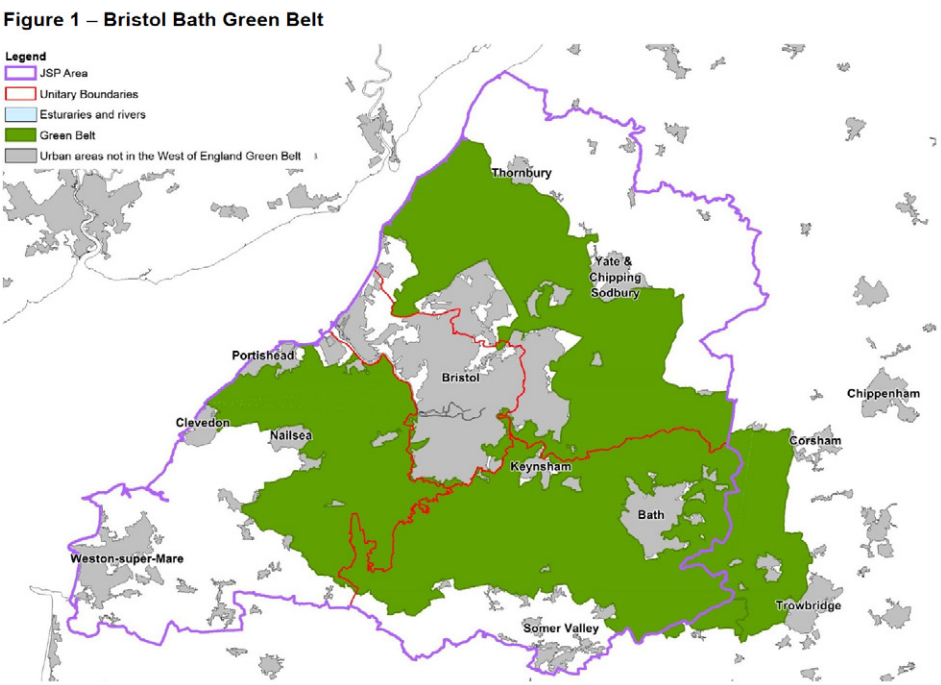


Figure 36: The Avon Green Belt. Source: WoE, 2015a.

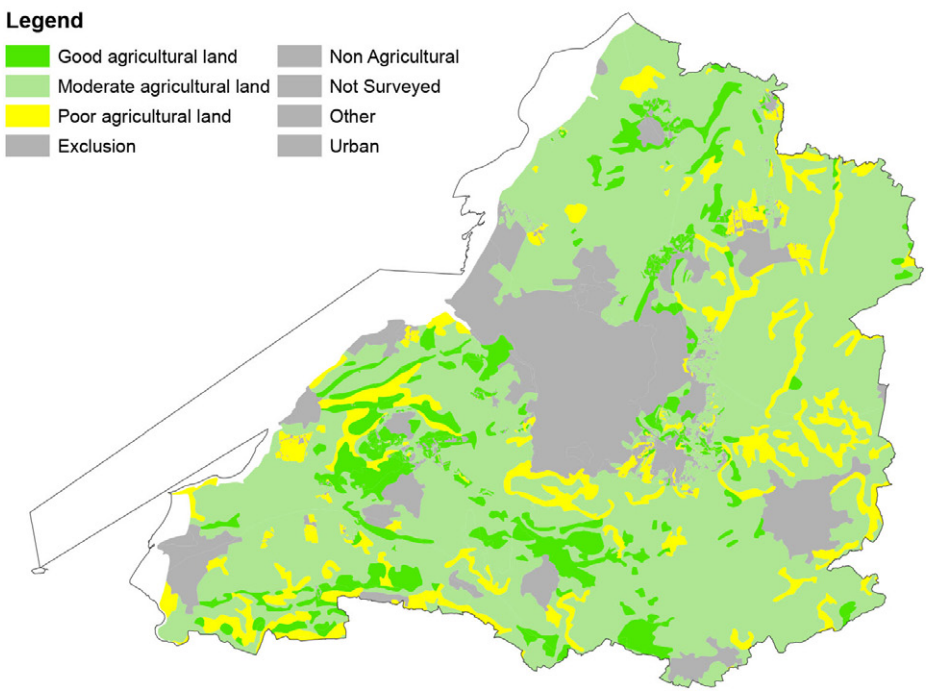


Figure 37: Land suitable for agriculture in Bristol City Region. Source: WoE, 2015b

7.2.2. A city of edible gardens

The overall poor quality of agricultural land in Bristol's rural hinterland is counterpoised by a diverse landscape of allotment gardens and city farms within the city, most of which are managed by community initiatives, local groups and food movements. Reed & Keech (2015) report that in Bristol and its region there are currently more than 200 food initiatives, whose scope and scale are diverse and which are involving regularly just in the city of Bristol a range of 700-1000 people[1].

Bristol's vibrant food scenes can be also explained by looking at the rate of people that regularly use open spaces for recreation, exercise and health. As reported in a recent survey which considered six City Regions in England (Green Alliance et al., 2017), the 31% of the population is constantly connected to wild place and wildlife in urban and rural areas for exercise and recreation, while the average value for England is 18%.

The independent company Geofutures has created in 2017 a food map of United Kingdom, in which some food resources, such as farmers' markets, supermarkets and allotments, were investigated and geo-localised (Geofutures, 2017). Zooming to Bristol City Region, it can be noticed how the articulation of allotments is distributed all across the inner fringe of the city, with sizes ranging from 1.500 to the 85.000 square metres of the Ashley Vale Allotments. Other major concentration areas in the City Region are placed in Bath and in Weston-Super-Mare (**Figure 38**). Moreover, nine are the farmers' market currently active in the City Region area, two of which in

1 Data mentioned by Joy Carey's speech during the Festival of Future City in 2017 (source: https://www.joycarey.co.uk/work-examples/).

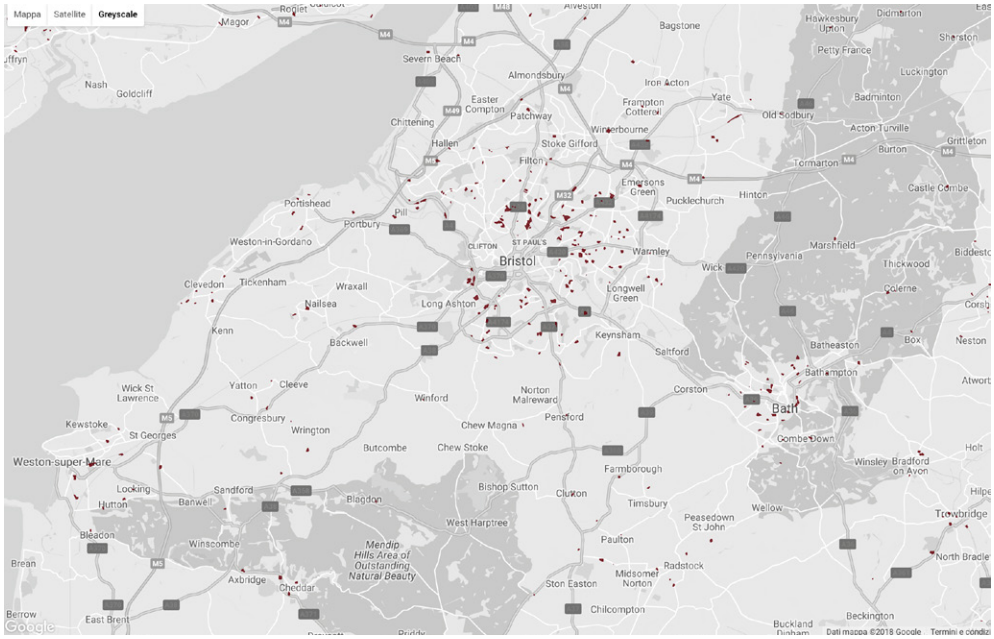


Figure 38: Allotment gardens in Bristol City Region. Source: Geofutures, 2017.

Bristol. Concerning the provision of allotments in Bristol, Geofutures reports that the city has a number of 2,25-3,24 allotments provided by local authority, higher than the average value for England (2,0) (Geofutures, 2017).

The Bristol Food Network provides the most complete map of the community food initiatives currently operating in Bristol (**Figure 39**). It distinguishes among community gardens, community orchards, the Incredible Edible Bristol's beds and gardens and City farms. Aim of the map is to gather people interested to join and support local food initiatives and to improve the

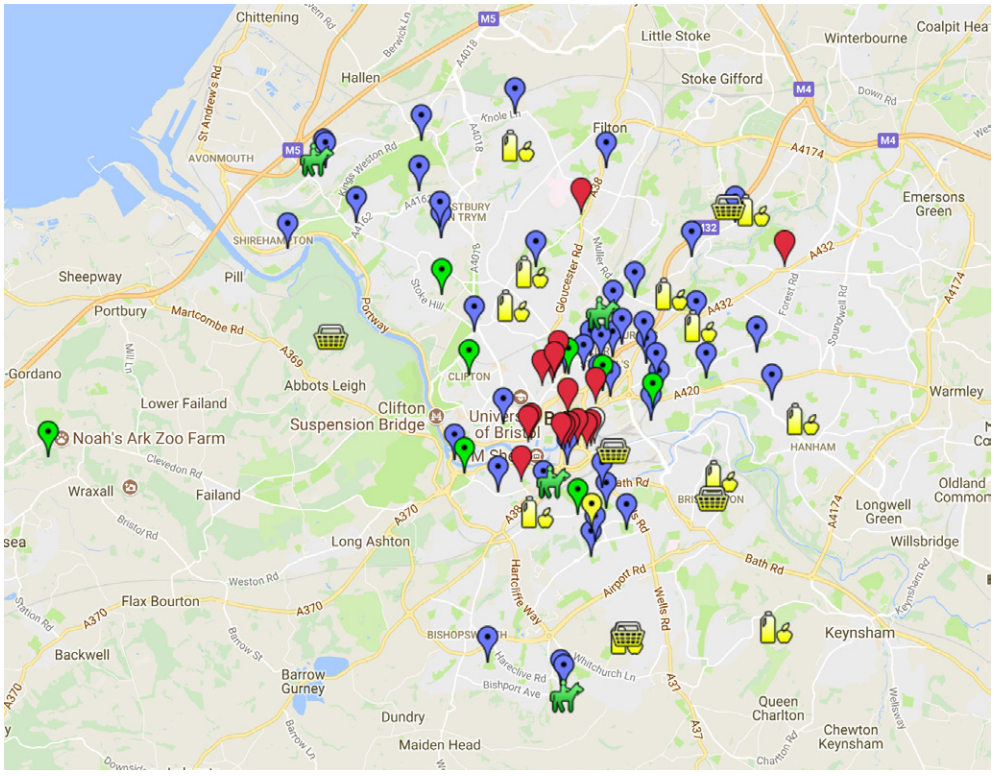


Figure 39: Community food initiatives in Bristol City Region.
Source: Bristol Food Network.

networking among existing groups and individuals interested in local food production and consumption.

Alongside the food initiatives in Bristol, the experience of Incredible Edible Bristol[2] (IEB) can be considered one of the more meaningful in terms of civic involvement and number of food producing spaces built and planted. The main mantra of IEB is that "any piece of land has potential to grow food". In the last 4 years, more than 30 gardens, beds, fruit gardens and urban allotments have been created across the city thanks to a number of volunteers. Some of the projects like the Urban Food Trail have created an itinerary made of 14 gardens from Temple Meads to Millenium Square, with the aim "to bring vegetable tourism to Bristol". The local influence of IEB has grown a lot during the past two years, also due to the powerful use of web and media communication by members and volunteers, the active involvement of project leaders in social media networks and their participation to school programs and training workshops.

Looking at Bristol's city farms, Sims Hill Shared Harvest[3] has a consolidated position in the city for the number of members and volunteers it gathers (85 members are regularly buying vegetables from Sims Hill) and the strong ties among producers and consumers. These relations happen in the form of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), which is the legal scheme taken by Sims Hill. The stability and support for farmers in terms of growing the seasonal food requested by consumers is one of the strength of this form of partnership, based on a shared risk and responsibility[4].

Outside Bristol there is the more long-standing experience of local farms in the City Region, the Community Farm[5], established in 2008 on a portion of 15 acres in North Somerset. The Farm is a community-owned social enterprise which gathers a network of organic producers and farmers together and a group of volunteers growing and selling through a box delivery service organic and locally produced food. Currently 8.3 acres of Grade 1 agricultural land are cultivated. Organic products of the Community Farm are sold also in the Organic Farm Shop open 5 days a week hosted in the farmers' market in Bath.

7.3. Institutional profile of the case study

From the institutional point of view, Bristol City Region corresponds to the administrative space of four local authorities: Bristol, North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and Bath & North-East Somerset. The following two sections present the institutional dynamics of the City Region by focusing on one hand on the planning processes of the recently established West of England Local Enterprise Partnership (WoE LEP) and the Combined Mayoral Authority,

2 http://ediblebristol.org.uk.

3 https://simshill.co.uk.

4 Sims Hills cultivates a portion of land far just 4 miles from the centre of Bristol, in a site belonging to the Blue Finger, a narrow stripe of Grade 1 agricultural land. It uses natural growing methods and permaculture principles to produce high quality vegetables and support innovating social action through land-based projects.

5 https://www.thecommunityfarm.co.uk/.

and on the other hand on local planning policies of the four local authorities. The survey on local planning policies, as for the other two case studies, has been done with a special focus on those policies focusing on and/or affecting agricultural areas and their contribution in building stronger relationships among urban and rural areas. A particular emphasis has been placed on those policies affecting Green Belt, since most of agricultural areas and food growing spaces in Bristol's rural hinterland are under Green Belt designation. A third and last section presents an analysis of Bristol's food journey with the purpose of tracing the evolution of local food narrative and of investigating the roots of its influence in local and city regional policy making processes.

7.3.1. Sub-regional planning policies in Bristol City Region[6]

In 2010, as part of the Localism Agenda, the Coalition Government established the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) (see section 7.2.) as bodies independent from local governments, non-statutory and with no legal powers, aiming at promoting economic growth and creating platforms of exchange and cooperation among local authorities and businesses (Shaw & Tewdwr-Jones, 2016). In Bristol City Region, the West of England LEP (WoE LEP) was introduced by Coalition Government in 2010, together with other 37 LEPs across the Country.

As outlined by Reed & Keech (2015), the cooperation of Bristol with the other surrounding municipalities did not emerge out of nowhere but it has some meaningful historical precedents. Between 1974 to 1996 the four local authorities (Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset) were united under the County of Avon, which was abolished after the reorganisation of local governments at the end of 1990s, on the basis of the decision taken by the four local authorities to get full responsibilities in public services provision. Since early 1990s, the four local authorities were also part of the South West regional administration which has been significantly strengthened by Labour Government in 1997 with the creation of the Regional Development Agencies and Regional Government Offices (Curtice, 2017) and finally abolished in 2010 by the Localism Act.

Since every LEP aims at allocating resources in local leading economic sectors, the WoE LEP supports those that are the main sources of Bristol's economy such as the creative and media sectors, advanced engineering, aerospace and defence, micro-electronics and silicon design, environmental technologies and tourism.

WoE LEP's organizational structure is complex in terms of number of groups and committees participating to LEP's decisional processes. The guiding role is performed by a Board, whose members are mainly coming from business and education sectors with a minor representation from the

6 Some of the contents of this section are already published in: Lazzarini (2018).

four local councils[7]. LEP's structure is also comprising 12 sectors groups (one of which is the Rural sub-group), that provide a way for businesses to work together, and 4 cross-cutting groups that bring together a range of private and public enterprises to tackle particular themes of interest for LEP vision. Until 2017, local authorities were committed to work together inside the LEP through the Joint Transport Executive Committee (JTEC) and the Planning, Housing & Communities Committee (PHCC), both formed by a number of up to 2 members per council. Due to the recent establishment of the West of England Combined Authority (WECA), members of JTEC & PHCC no longer meet. Decisions are taken by the Joint WoE Committee. Despite these recent changes, planning continues to be one of the crucial policy areas in the activity of WoE LEP. In the last two years, the four local authorities have been involved in the process of the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), a plan that is going to guide the future growth of the City Region in the next 20 years.

The WECA exercises devolved powers from central government on three of the four local authorities of the City Region, Bath and North East Somerset (BathNES), Bristol and South Gloucestershire. It has been established after Mayoral Election in May 2017 when Tim Bowles, the candidate from

7 The Board is currently formed by: prof. Steve West (Chair, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West of England Bristol and president of President of Business West and Chair of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce and Initiative), Tim Warren (Leader of Bath and North East Somerset Council), Marvin Rees (Mayor of Bristol), Nigel Ashton (Leader of North Somerset Council), Matthew Riddle (Leader of South Gloucestershire Council), Tim Bowles (West of England Mayor), Andrew Hodgson (Office Senior Partner for KPMG in Bristol), Christopher Grier (Head of Filton Plant for Airbus), David Brown (Chief Executive Officer of the Bristol Port Company), David Pester (managing partner at Bristol headquartered law firm TLT), Dick Penny (Chief executive of Watershed, Bristol's international film culture and digital creativity centre), Hugh Brady (Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Bristol), James Durie (member of the Bristol Chamber of Commerce & Initiative), Jon Reynolds (Regional Director for BT in the South West), Katharine Finn (Regional Leader of the West and Wales practice and the Bristol Office Senior Partner at PWC), Martino Burgess (associate director of Gregg Latchams and Company Secretary for Bristol Food Network), Mohammed Saddiq (Independent Chair of the Bristol Green Capital Partnership and Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts), Neil Douglas (Managing Director of Viper Innovations).

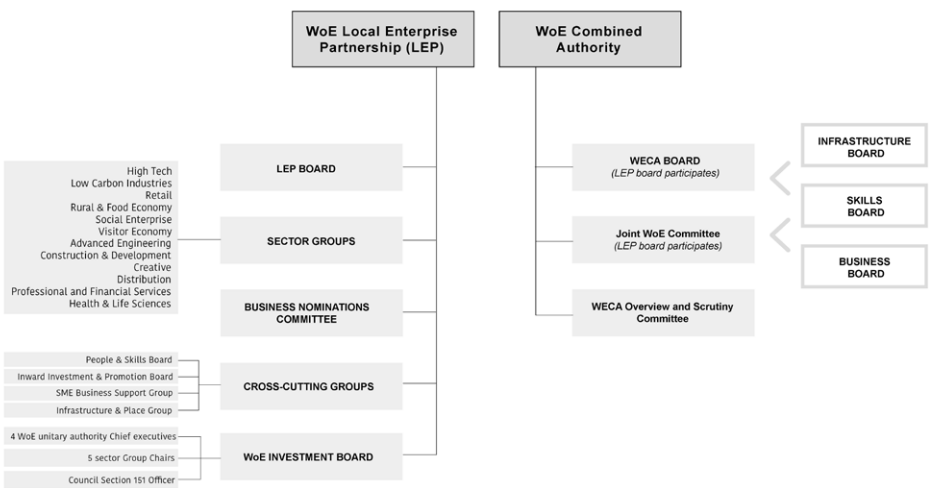


Figure 40: West of England governance. Source: Elaboration by author

Conservative Party has been elected[8], together with other six metro mayors across England. WECA comprises a Board, formed by the WoE Mayor, the Mayor of Bristol and the two leaders of BathNES and South Gloucestershire Councils, and a Joint West of England Committee, formed by members of the Board plus the leader of North Somerset Council. The LEP Board Chair can participate to the Board and the Joint Committee, drawing also, when needed, from the expertise of LEP's sectors (**Figure 40**).

The Combined Mayor assumed powers devolved from central government over matters such as transport, housing, planning, skills and economic development. As reported by BBC (2017), 1 billion of pounds are overseen to be transferred to the Authority over 30 years to build new homes, regional transport and to plan business growth, with priorities such as taking charge of a new "key route network" that will be managed by the Combined Authority.

Despite the importance of the devolution deal, North Somerset Council decided not to join this election. The Leader of the Council motivated the decision by arguing that "the deal is not attractive enough" as "any future resources or powers would be controlled autonomously by the proposed mayor leaving the local authorities with no say in it whatsoever" (BBC, 2016).

Although the recent diffusion of directly elected mayors and their increasingly relevant role played in the last ten years in local English politics (Tallon, 2013: 109-110), a visible disaffection and scepticism have emerged during recent Metro-Mayoral Elections. A recent survey has highlighted a certain resistance and a lack of understanding by people in the City Region on the Combined Authority (Paun & Thimont Jack, 2017). This was clearly shown by the rate of voters who participated to the Mayoral Election. Turnout across the region was just under the 30%, with Bristol performing higher (31%) and South Gloucestershire lower (27%). As highlighted by Paun & Thimont Jack (2017), a rate of abstention of more than 70% is a clear sign of the scarce involvement of people to issues discussed during the elections. This is what was underlined by the survey, conducted using Google Consumer Surveys, in which several questions were asked to people to find out how much they knew about the new metro mayor. Results expressed people's dominant scepticism and confusion not just regarding mayor's role but also the deals of devolution which motivated the Mayoral election. This is supporting what was recently noticed by Haughton (2018), according to whom each time a new policy tier is created, there are difficulties to get people involved because of a weaker sense of "shared identity, belonging or mutuality".

7.3.1.1. The West of England Joint Spatial Plan (WoE JSP)

With its emphasis on addressing the social and economic growth of the region, JSP's main focus is on setting out the more appropriate spatial strategy and strategic locations where the housing growth should be met in the West of England. As mentioned in the official publication document, the aim of the Plan is to cope with the following issues:

8 The elected mayor, Mr. Tim Bowles won with 70,300 votes. Turnout was only 29.7%, with 199,519 voting out of a possible 671,280 (source: BBC, 2017).

29a (125ha)	Green Belt Purpose 1, 2, 3, 5
Contribution to purpose 1	**Major contribution**
This area of Green Belt is immediately adjacent the existing urban area of the east fringe and Bath Road. Along the northern edge of the Green Belt cell the A420 road acts as a potential conduit for sprawl beyond the boundary of the east fringe of the urban area. The A420 has potential to cause coalescence of the east fringe and Bridgeyate. This area of Green Belt therefore has a major contribution checking sprawl by preventing coalescence of the east fringe with the village of Bridgeyate by preventing sprawl along the A420.	
Contribution to purpose 2	**Limited**
Beyond this cell there is still as significant distance between the eastern fringe of the urban area to Bath would reduce to approximately (5.35km). There are also significant topographical features between this cell and the urban area of Bath to limit any perception of merger between the two. Therefore this cell is considered to make only a limited contribution to preventing merger of Bristol and Bath.	
Contribution to purpose 3	**Contribution**
This cell is predominantly flat, open farmland and agricultural buildings. There are a small number of employment uses within this area of Green Belt, giving small, very contained pockets a more urbanised character, though these are not considered to be so numerous as to effect the overall openness and countryside character of the Green Belt in the cell. The cell is connected visually and physically to the wider countryside and Green Belt to the east.	
Contribution to purpose 4	**-**
Not applicable	
Overall contribution	**Major contribution**
This area of Green Belt makes a major contribution to checking sprawl by stopping the coalescence of the east fringe with the village of Bridgeyate and sprawl along the A420. Green Belt within this cell protects the countryside from encroachment.	

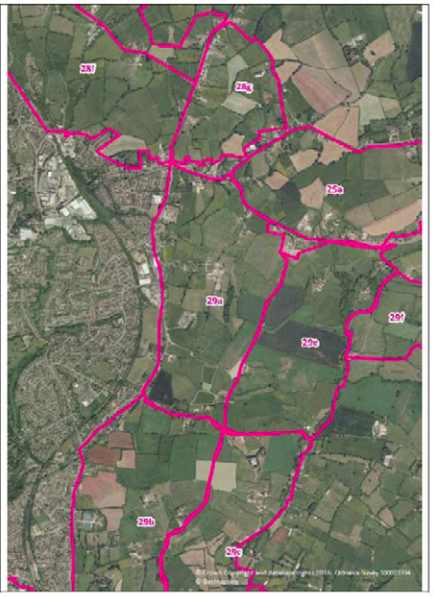


Figure 41: Extract from the second stage of the Green Belt Assessment of the WoE JPS. Source: WoE, 2016.

- "Identifying the number of new market and affordable homes and amount of employment land that is needed across the West of England 2016–2036.
- Identifying the most appropriate spatial strategy and strategic locations for this growth.
- Outlining the strategic transport and other infrastructure that needs to be provided in the right place and at the right time to support sustainable growth and to provide certainty for our communities and those that want to invest in our area" (WoE, 2017: 6).

To support the publication of the JSP, a range of reports have also been published. In 2011, a 'Strategic Green Infrastructure Framework' was adopted by WoE LEP with the purpose of identifying a shared vision for Green Infrastructure (GI) in the City Region. Although the document was not signed by one of the four local authority (North Somerset), the strategy has provided an evidence based to support GI policy within local planning tools (WoE, 2011). Also, a two-stage 'Green Belt Assessment' was implemented and it outlined the contribution that each of the 79 cells in which the Avon Green Belt has been divided plays in relation to the five purposes set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (WoE, 2015, 2016). In the second stage of the assessment, the analysis has focused on the cells where the consequences of development locations may need to be examined more in detail in order to understand how each portion of Green Belt land performs with respect to the five purposes.

Taking for example the land at the east fringe of Bristol (the area of Kingswood/Warmley, Bridgeyate and Longwell Green) (**Figure 41**), it can be noticed how the spatial dynamics are investigated in detail to highlight the potential "major, normal or limited contribution" that a new settlement would create with respect to Green Belt purposes. Thus, for the purpose of "assisting in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment", it is mentioned the presence of a predominantly flat land with open farmland and agricultural buildings with very few pockets of urbanisation that do not alter

the openness of the area (WoE, 2016). It is stated that the area makes a major contribution for purpose one ("checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built up areas") because of the potential sprawl that could happen along the A420 motorway and beyond the boundary of the east fringe. Despite the interesting and detailed analysis carried out, a major concern regards the absence in the assessment of any consideration regarding the fertility of soils within the cells which would be instead fundamental to address the agro-environmental impacts of new developments. This weakness is probably due to the lack in the Green Belt national policy of any assumptions regarding environmental and agro-ecological value of designated land (Sturzaker & Mell, 2017; Papworth, 2015).

The JPS had undergone two consultation phases, the first in Autumn/ Winter 2015 and the second in Autumn 2016. During the second consultation phase, over 1500 people representing a range of residents, businesses and other stakeholders responded to the draft proposal, giving their opinions on the preferred spatial strategy among the five proposed scenarios comprising a wide range of options with reference to Strategic Development Locations (SDL). The five spatial scenarios proposed were the protection of Green Belt (i), the concentration at Bristol urban area (ii), the transport focus (iii), a "more even spread development across the region" (iv) and "new settlements or a limited number of expanded settlements" (v). The majority of responses outlined the scenario referring to the protection of Green Belt (61% over a total of 531 responses). Also, with reference to Green Belt, the majority of respondents (60 up to 110) specifically outlined that its land should not be used to locate new housing.

According to the Plan, 105.000 are the number of new homes to be built in the West of England up to 2036, 30% of which affordable. Of this amount, 66.000 homes are already planned in the Core Strategies of the four local authorities and 39.000 have still to be planned (WoE, 2017). Although the JSP is not a qualifying document for establishing planning permissions, it identifies a set of new Strategic Development Locations (SDLs), which then needs to be brought forward by the Local Plans of the four local authorities. Looking at the locations of the housing supply, SDLs are fundamental to meet the Housing Requirements defined in the West of England Strategic Market Housing Assessment (WoE, 2015). In fact, the majority of homes that still to

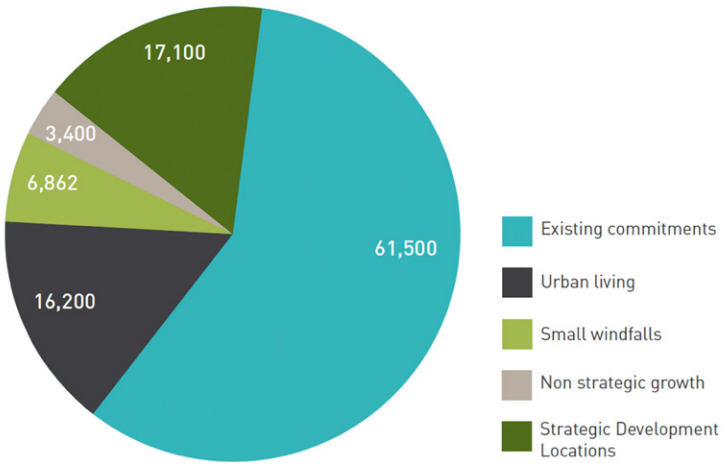


Figure 42: Components of housing supply of the WoE JPS's spatial strategy. Source: WoE, 2017.

be planned (17.000) will be allocated in SDLs in greenfield in and outside Green Belt, while the left amount of homes will be in “Non-strategic growth”, “urban living” and “small windfalls” sites[9] (**Figure 42**).

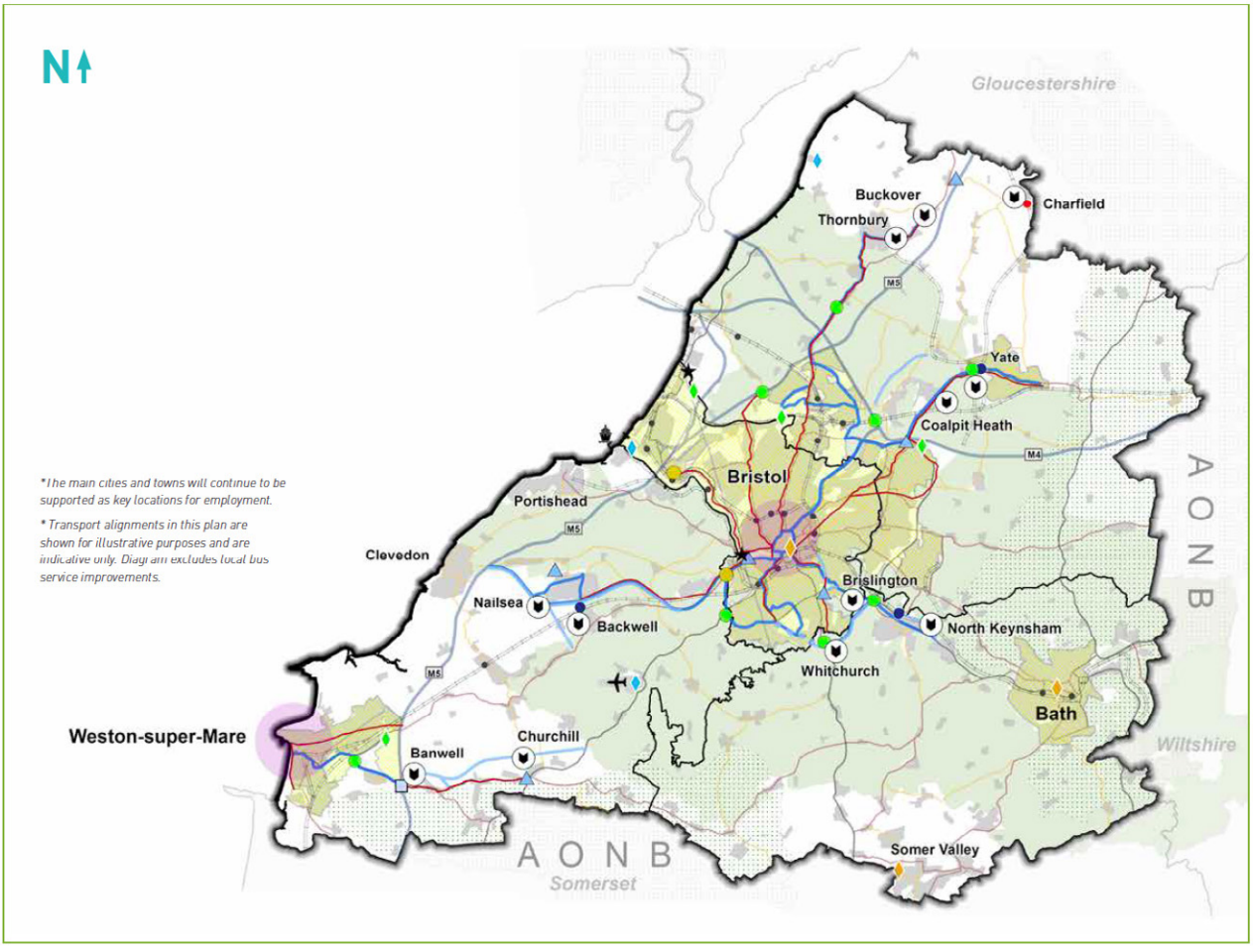
Despite the results of the consultation phase and the spatial scenario chosen by the majority of respondents, the final strategy endorsed by the plan foresees 9.000 locations within or partially within the Green Belt. As can be noticed in the Key Diagram (**Figure 43**), six of the twelve SDLs will use designated land to host new housing for a release of 0,65% of the Avon Green Belt. By looking at the motivations, these interestingly recall the nostalgic idea of planning “new free-standing garden village settlements” whose idea seems to evoke Howard and Unwin’s urban models of garden cities (Howard, 1898; Unwin, 1920).

“Technical work and transport modelling have shown that it is not possible to sustainably accommodate all the identified growth needs entirely outside the Green Belt. [...] In response to concerns expressed through public consultation, the spatial strategy aims to minimise the impact on the Bristol

9 “Non strategic growth sites” refer to “those sustainable locations to accommodate smaller scale development in villages and towns which is needed to enable local communities to thrive”. “Urban living” are those locations placed within existing urban areas (vacant lots, brownfields, leftover spaces). “Small windfalls” are sites hosting a number of 9 dwellings or below (WoE, 2017).

Figure 43: Key Diagram of the WoE JPS. Source: WoE, 2017.

Figure 7: Apendix A: JSP Key Diagram



and Bath Green Belt. However, due to the scale of provision required and the extensive nature of the Green Belt, the Plan does include some Strategic Development Locations currently with Green Belt designation as explained in the Spatial Strategy Topic paper. Finally, the opportunity for new free standing garden village settlements forms part of the strategy" (WoE, 2017: 16).

The West of England Joint Spatial Plan (WoE JSP) is currently in an advanced state of implementation. On April 2018, it has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government who appointed two independent Inspectors that are undergoing a careful process of plan's review to ensure that the Plan conforms to planning rules and laws in force. Once the observations will be taken into consideration by the JSP Team and the Plan will be modified, then the four local authorities will need to officially adopt the Plan to make it effective.

In a preliminary document including the examinations of the WoE JSP Observations sent by the Inspectors on June 2018 to WoE Planning Officers, observations regard the need to provide "substantive evidence" demonstrating that the four local authorities "have engaged constructively, actively and on an on-going basis with neighbouring local authorities beyond the plan area" (Rivett & Lee, 2018). Another important observation is a question if the five alternative spatial scenarios identified have been developed just in relation to the Strategic Development Locations and not considering the other types of location (urban living, non strategic growth and small windfall sites) which nevertheless count more that the half of the housing target. A further observation regards the existence of exceptional circumstances to review Green Belt boundaries. This concerns what it is stated in the JSP according to which "local plan will provide the mechanisms to amend local Green belt boundaries" in order to test it through examination (WoE, 2017). Hence, inspectors are asking if "the Councils have concluded in principle (emphasis in the original document) that exceptional circumstances exist, but that the final decision as to their existence would be made through Local Plans having regard to precise boundaries proposed at that time". (Rivett & Lee, 2018).

The brief analysis above has shown the Plan's emphasis to achieve the needed housing requirements and to locate the foreseen amount of new developments across the City Region. The location of these developments expresses the importance that the proximity of SDLs to public and private existing infrastructures has had in the definition of the spatial strategy. Nevertheless, one can again notice that the JSP's strategic focus has been mainly limited to urban growth and infrastructure planning without considering the active role that the countryside plays in contributing to the City Region's sustainable development. This has been noticed also by CPRE Avonside (2016), according to whom the JSP has cut down rural areas from its strategic focus excluding them from the scope of joint planning policies. Accordingly, the active contribution of the countryside to the liveability of city region's communities in terms of providing spaces for recreation and of maintaining people's health and wellbeing has not been taken into consideration by the plan.

7.3.2. Local planning policies in Bristol City Region[10]

7.3.2.1. Bristol Local Plan

Local Plans in England typically are made of two documents: the Core Strategy (CS) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (SADMP). The Core Strategy sets out the Spatial Portrait (i), which identifies the main social, physical and economic characteristics of the city and the strategic issues it faces, the Spatial Vision (ii) and the Strategic Objectives (iii), which sets out the desired city, and the Delivery Strategy (iv), which highlights the means and policies to deliver the vision and objectives. As regard the second document, the SADMP includes the development management policies, which consist in detailed planning policies used by the council when assessing planning applications, designations, and which identify which land should be safeguarded or where specific policies apply, and the Site allocations, the sites to be allocated for developing particular land uses.

Bristol's Local Plan has been adopted in 2014. Core Strategy's overarching issue is "ensuring a sustainable future for Bristol". This is defined by a set of social, economic and environmental issues, whose most important are the following:

- (social) "Having enough homes to meet current and projected population need, with a wider range of unit sizes and tenure type, including affordable homes, particularly where there is inadequate provision and high demand;
- (economic) Providing for the land use demands of a thriving economy whilst balancing the competing demands on land for housing, employment and social and physical infrastructures;
- (economic) Improving transport movement and accessibility to employment and community facilities throughout Bristol, with particular need to improve public transport linkages [...] and to ease congestion in the centre;
- (environmental) Protecting and enhancing Bristol's built and historic environment, ensuring high quality sustainable urban design and attractive and better places and spaces throughout the city;
- (environmental) Protecting and enhancing the natural environment and ensuring best use is made of open spaces to meet the needs of residents and employees in the city" (BCC, 2011: 13-14).

These objectives contribute also to shape the Spatial Vision for Bristol 2026 in which emphasis is placed on the need to "keep, improve and add to the special physical character of Bristol as a place [by] embracing opportunities for change and regeneration which exist in all parts of the city [...] to improve people's lives in those areas and to foster the progress of the whole city" (BCC, 2011: 16).

Although there is no specific mention of the role of agriculture and

10 Some of the contents of this section are already published in: Lazzarini (2018).

food growing spaces, the spatial vision interprets open spaces as the city backbones to keep and improve the environmental quality and to enhance the urban public life.

"We will aim for a city with ample and high-quality green open spaces and public realm with new green links and enhanced public access throughout. We will protect, where within our control, the Green Belt that surrounds our city to keep open countryside within reach of all who live here" (BCC, 2011: 16).

Policies addressing Green Belt areas come into play when the Core Strategy addresses the issue of housing provision. While Policies BCS5 and BCS20 mention that development of new homes will primarily be one previously developed sites across the city, Policy BCS6 states that:

"Countryside and other open land around the existing built-up areas of the city will be safeguarded by maintaining the current extent of the Green Belt. Land within the Green Belt will be protected from inappropriate development as set out in national planning policy".

Despite this, a long-term contingency site for 800 homes within Green Belt area is identified in the case in which "monitoring provision will not be delivered at the levels expected" (BCC, 2011: 55).

Green infrastructures are addressed by Policy BCS9, in which it is stated that "the integrity and connectivity of the strategic green infrastructures, comprising waterways, biological sites, wildlife network corridors, school grounds, private gardens, allotments and city farms, will be maintained, protected and enhanced". The loss of green infrastructures will be permitted just when "is allowed for as part of an adopted Development Plan or necessary, on balance, to achieve the policy aims of the Core Strategy" (BCC, 2011: 74). Moreover, the planning guidance requires new developments to incorporate green infrastructures of an appropriate type, standard and size, including also spaces for local food production.

The SADMP document, adopted in 2014, provides a set of more detailed policies that have the purpose to achieve the general contents presented in the Core Strategy. For example, Policy DM27 requires new developments to make an efficient use of land, providing inclusive access and taking account of local climate conditions. By focusing on Green Infrastructure Provision, Policy DM15 requires all new residential developments to be designed and located to facilitate opportunities for local food growing. It sets out a statutory provision of allotment plots in new developments when the level of residential development creates a need for 1750m² of statutory allotments, equivalent to 7 statutory allotment plots (BCC, 2014: 31). Very few other policies deal with the local food system, such as Policy DM9 which is expecting new developments to maintain the role of civic centres as providers of groceries and fresh food in contributing to day-to-day shopping needs.

On the overall view, it can be noticed how Bristol's Local Plan emphasises

the role of open green spaces as providers of good and healthy urban environments, without explicitly acknowledging their potentials to produce local and fresh food for the urban community. This is clashing with the number and size of allotments gardens, urban farms and food growing spaces that have been flourishing in the last ten years across the City Region (see section 7.2.2.) and that have been significantly reshaping the agri-food relationships of Bristol with its rural hinterland.

7.3.2.2. North Somerset, South Gloucestershire and BathNES Local Plans

North Somerset local plan has been adopted in 2017. The Core Strategy states in Policy CS6 that the boundaries of Bristol-Bath Green Belt will remained unchanged and it will be applied the strong presumption against inappropriate developments within Green Belt. Policy CS14 reports that priority will be given to the re-use of previously developed land and that in all cases new developments must not conflicts with environmental protection, Green Belt and nature conservation. In the Development Management Policies document, adopted in 2016, policies dealing with rural areas (DM12) focus on providing detailed guidance concerning built developments in Green Belt and on clarifying the circumstances where development is not regarded as inappropriate. Policy DM51 states that planning permission will be granted for agricultural and forestry developments on existing or new holdings or developments for purposes of farm-based businesses or diversification provided that:

- "the re-use of existing buildings is given priority over new buildings;
- the siting and design of the building respects its rural setting and does not harm the character of the rural landscape;
- in the case of diversification proposals, there is sufficient certainty of long-term benefit to the farm business as an agricultural operation" (North Somerset, 2016: 118).

In South Gloucestershire Local Authority, a Core Strategy document was adopted in 2013 and it sets out the spatial portrait of the municipal territory by explicitly referring to the need to answer to the lack of physical and social infrastructures characterised by substantial levels of development occurred in the last half century (South Gloucestershire, 2013). The urban/rural connectivity is explicitly addressed by the spatial vision:

"The green network will be enhanced through opportunities to provide new and improved green spaces, within the existing urban area and which connect to the wider countryside [...] Green spaces, walking and cycling routes will lead through and out of the area into the open countryside".

Policy CS34 provides an insight on rural areas focusing both on strengths (rich and varied habitats for a wide range of biodiversity, highly valued, distinct and attractive landscapes, recreational and touristic asset for the residents of the urban areas and nearby towns and visitors, etc.) and current issues

("development pressures on the edge of the urban area and within villages; lack of affordable housing, significant number of commuting trips for shopping, employment and education, poor public transport and accessibility"). The policy is oriented to protect, conserve and enhance rural areas' distinctive characters, protect the most versatile agricultural land and opportunities for local food production and the Green Belt and Cotswolds Area of Natural Beauty (AONB) from inappropriate development (South Gloucestershire, 2013: 154). The Core Strategy establishes that the Green Belt boundaries will remain unchanged with the exception of two major developments (defined "exceptional circumstances") that will be permitted to meet housing requirements (South Gloucestershire, 2013: 49).

South Gloucestershire local authority has recently started the process for adopting a new Local Plan (2018-2036), which is now facing the "ongoing issues and options consultation" phase, after the consultation phases of Stakeholder and Community Engagement that took place from January to February 2018. The new Plan is produced to conform with the new housing target provided by the Joint Spatial Plan of the WoE LEP (see section 7.3.1.1.) which sets out a number of 32.500 homes to be delivered in South Gloucestershire and in the other three local authorities within the plan period. The Consultation document proposes a new vision for South Gloucestershire and identifies 5 large-scale development locations and a number of smaller scale developments both in rural and urban areas. It contains a set of questions and policy discussion points, some of which regard the future location of new developments. For example, concerning the approach to rural growth (1,800 new homes to be built within rural areas), the document proposes three options, as follows:

- distributing new homes in rural locations outside the Green Belt;
- distributing new homes in rural locations inside the Green Belt;
- distributing new homes both inside and outside the Green Belt.

For every option, a summary of potential negative, uncertain and positive impacts is provided with the aim of stimulating the inhabitants to pose some issues in the consultation phase.

Until the new Plan is not implemented, former Local Plan adopted in 2007 remains in force. This Plan sets guidance for the location of new developments in agricultural areas, for the conversion of rural buildings and for proposals of farm diversification (South Gloucestershire Council, 2006). At this regard, by recognising farm diversification as "vital" for the continuing viability of many farm enterprises, Policy E8 establishes criteria for farms to introduce farm shops, plant nurseries, farm-based food processing and packaging, farm sport or workshops by providing indications on the volume and nature of goods sold, the level of traffic attracted, and the impacts on surrounding residential or environmental amenities (South Gloucestershire Council, 2006: 180-181).

Also Bath and North East Somerset municipality is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, pushed by the new targets set out by the West of England Joint Spatial Plan. The Core Strategy adopted in 2014 states in Policy B1 the need to regenerate and repair a number of areas within the built-up city and optimising the contribution of brownfields to city's development needs. At the same time, Policy B3A locates four development

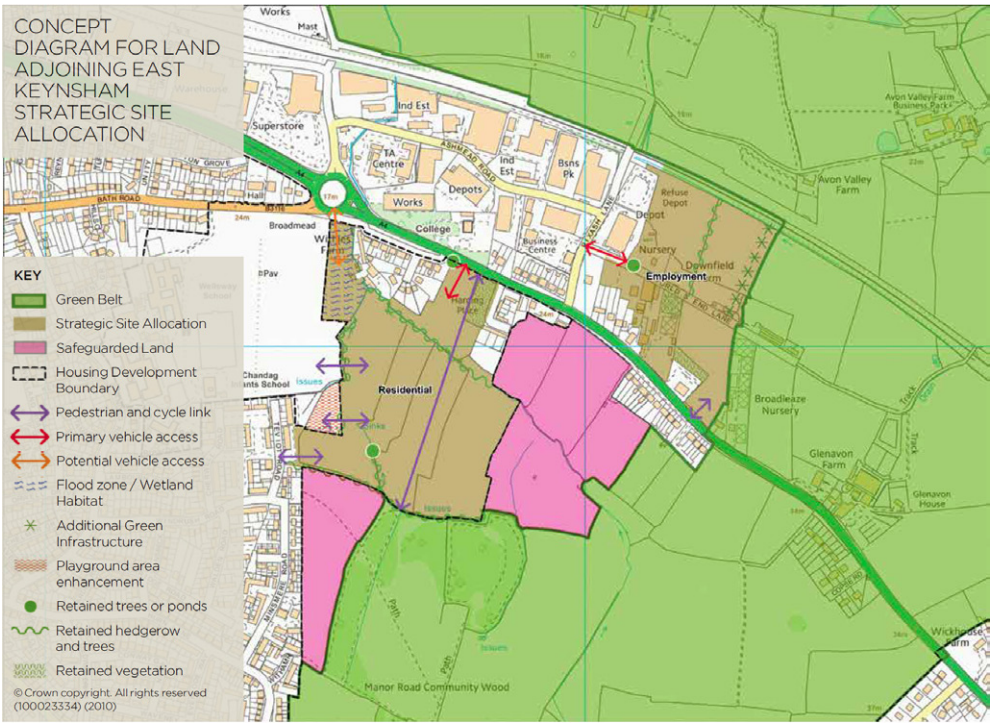


Figure 44: Concept diagram for East Keynsham Strategic Site Allocation in BathNES. Source: BathNES Local Council, 2014.

sites within Green Belt for a total of 950 homes covering the period 2011-29 (BathNES, 2014:62). For the strategic locations, a concept diagram shows the portion of land subtracted from Green Belt for housing development, the land safeguarded from expansion, the pedestrian and cycle links, the vehicle accesses to be designed, and the additional green infrastructure elements to be retained or designed (**Figure 44**). In Policy RA5 it is expected that new developments will meet the foreseen provision of Green Infrastructure, including multifunctional green spaces such as formal, natural and allotments (BathNES, 2014: 129).

The contents of the three local Plans above mentioned show the planning guidance that Local Authorities sets on rural areas located inside or outside Green Belt designation. Most of the policies of the local plans dealing with Green Belt refer to the need to clarify circumstances for the release of its land, to protect it from inappropriate transformations and to provide a guidance for new developments. Just very few policies show a focus on topics and issues related more directly with urban/rural relationships. For example, as I have shown for the case of South Gloucestershire Local Plan, there is a concern about farm diversification, although the emphasis of policies is on development control through attempts to avoid the adverse impacts on the environmental, social and economic vitality of rural areas, rather than on enabling forces to positively contributing to the countryside development.

7.3.3. Bristol's food journey: a story of vibrancy, diversity and conflicts[11]

The City of Bristol is renowned in United Kingdom for the 'vibrancy' and diversity of its food culture. This position can be explained by looking at the evolution of the local food narrative on the basis of what happened in Bristol in the last 20 years (see **Figure 45** at the end of the section). Joy Carey (2015) identifies year 1992 as the 'official' beginning of Bristol's food journey, when the Rio Earth Summit brought the Agenda 21 to the international debate. The Agenda 21 is an action programme for implementing the sustainable development at the local level. Also UK took part to the international discussion and Bristol was within the group of the first UK local authorities to sign the commitment of the Agenda. In 1997 the first farmers' market was opened in Bristol as the second in the UK, following the one in Bath in 1996 (Carey, 2015). In 2006 a new regional centre of FareShare, was established in Bristol. Fareshare[12] is the UK's longest running food redistribution charity which brings the surplus from the food industry to frontline charities and community groups providing meals to vulnerable people.

A more intense path of the food journey begins from 2007, when the growing number of food initiatives and networks, the new independent food businesses and the changes in local government policies have seen a substantial shift in attitude (Raffle & Carey, 2018). It is not a case that in 2007 the Transition Bristol movement was initiated. The movement brought together a group of volunteers who effectively helped to trigger a number of projects and initiatives. 2007 is also the year when the Bristol Green Capital Partnership was launched by the leader of the City Council. This was the outcome of a careful process of involvement of hundreds of organisations and groups across the city, although with some concerns of transparency, due to the transfer of many responsibilities to the new company, which lead to the removal of its chief executive three months before the start of the year event (Henfrey, 2017).

In 2008 the Report "Building a Positive Future for Bristol after Peak Oil" was commissioned by the Bristol Green Capital Partnership (Osborn, 2009). The document sheds light on the issue of peak oil and its potential impacts on the prosperity of the city. In the dedicated chapter about food, it is reported that Bristol's food retail system is reliant on daily deliveries from around the UK, Europe and other parts of the world with more than the 50% of main food shopping reliant on just 7 main stores. This trend is related to the decrease in the number of shops and small retails that has fallen down of 11% from 2000 to 2005 (Osborn, 2009: 42). The report also suggests the important role that planning decisions could have in protecting enough agricultural land in and around the city from developments and in allowing for a more sustainable local food system.

In the following year, the Bristol Food Network (BFN) was established. It includes a number of food activists acting to achieve a better food system. By

11 The title is taken by Joy Carey (2015). Some of the contents of this section have been already published in Lazzarini (2018).

12 http://fareshare.org.uk/what-we-do/.

getting some funding from the City Council and other private actors, the BFN initiated an intense activity, like hosting events, connecting people and editing an electronic newsletter, 'Local Food', which is now distributed to over 1,400 members (Raffle & Carey, 2018). Raffle & Carey (2018) pointed out that 2010 was the year when Bristol has seen a growth in the public concern about the increasing monopoly by multinational supermarkets and the related impacts on local independent street shops.

"During two years there had been 21 planning permissions granted in Greater Bristol for new supermarkets from the Big Four Chains – Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, Morrisons - and the number of Big Four stores had risen to 76 compared with 19 in 2004. A planning application for demolition of Bristol City Football Club's Ashton Gate stadium, with replacement by a Sainsbury's superstore, attracted strong opposition. Planning permission for the store to go ahead was initially refused then granted at appeal stage, but the delays associated with the linked permission for the new stadium build meant that the Football Club eventually opted instead for enlarging the existing stadium" (Raffle & Carey, 2018). In April 2011, intense protests were mobilized after the approval of the planning application to build a new Tesco Express on Stokes Croft, which is home of a radical local community. Marches, demonstrations, application for judicial review and occupations triggered local protestors against this planning permission. Protests went on until April 29th when a peaceful demonstration was subverted by a small group of masked riots who damaged the store and attacked the police, resulting in 30 arrests. According to Reed & Keech (2017), that violent event can be interpreted as the most extreme backdrop against which contemporary citizenship in Bristol has being performed and continually remade, and in which food has been one of the focal societal challenges of contemporary debate.

The formation of the Bristol Food Policy Council (BFPC) in 2011, with members drawn from key sectors including health, business, grassroots, non-governmental organizations, education and local government, have helped to create a systemic sustainable food approach in the city and to significantly influence local policy making processes. The BFPC was launched during the Food Conference at the City Hall, when also the report "Who Feeds Bristol? Towards a resilient food plan" was presented. This report underlines the importance of food for local economy, by highlighting that one in ten jobs in the West of England is related to food and drink (Carey, 2011 in: Lazzarini, 2018).

At city regional level, the creation of a "Public Sector Procurement Group" in 2012, involving 14 organizations in the West of England, has led to sharing of good practices and bringing together procurement officers, caterers, suppliers and other decision makers to achieve a major shift in public sector food procurement policies.

In autumn 2013, the BFPC launched its Good Food Plan for Bristol which had the purpose to enable the actors in the city to see how and where they could influence the food system. The Plan was produced with the support of the Bristol City Council and URBACT, a European exchange and learning program promoting sustainable urban development (BFPC, 2013).

In 2014, the first edition of the Food Connection Festival tool place. The

idea came from BBC as a way to strengthen existing partnerships with the Bristol City Council, BFN and other institutions involved in food. It was a success and it rapidly became the Bristol's flagship sustainable food event: first and second editions engaged over 100.000 people at more than 300 events throughout the city (Raffle & Carey, 2018).

As mentioned by Carey (2015), despite food was not one of the criteria of the European Green Capital award, the City Council decided to include food as one of the five sustainability themes of the year event. The Bristol Green Capital Partnership established a grant awards programme to allocate £ 0,5 million to over 30 food projects. During the Green Capital year, many projects and initiatives were brought forward, most of which continued also after 2015. In the same year, other protests fuelled the political debate because of a plan for a new entry road in Stapleton for a Metrobus route, located on the "best and most versatile agricultural land". As a consequence of the protests, George Ferguson, Mayor of Bristol, took the explicit commitment to protect the land in the area, which belongs to the so called "Blue Finger", blue from the colour of the Land Classification Map for its being a strip of Grade 1 agricultural land, the top 3% of land in the Country for growing food.

The Bristol's Good Food Action Plan, published in 2015, had seen the involvement of the Bristol City Council to the Plan making process, also due to the influence exercised by BFPC in local policy making processes. The Plan has helped the city to achieve beneficial change to the food system by describing actions to be carried on over the next two to three years. It has been written with the active involvement of a number of people and organizations that have added their own plans through blank templates (see section 7.4.3.).

Alongside the variety of projects and initiatives brought by 2015 European Green Capital Event, Bristol Food Producers was born as a diverse network of local independent growers, farmers, food processors and distributors working together for improving local food system in five working areas: Access to Land, Access to Skills, Access to Markets and Network and Solidarity[13]. The Land Seeker's Survey Report, promoted by Bristol Food

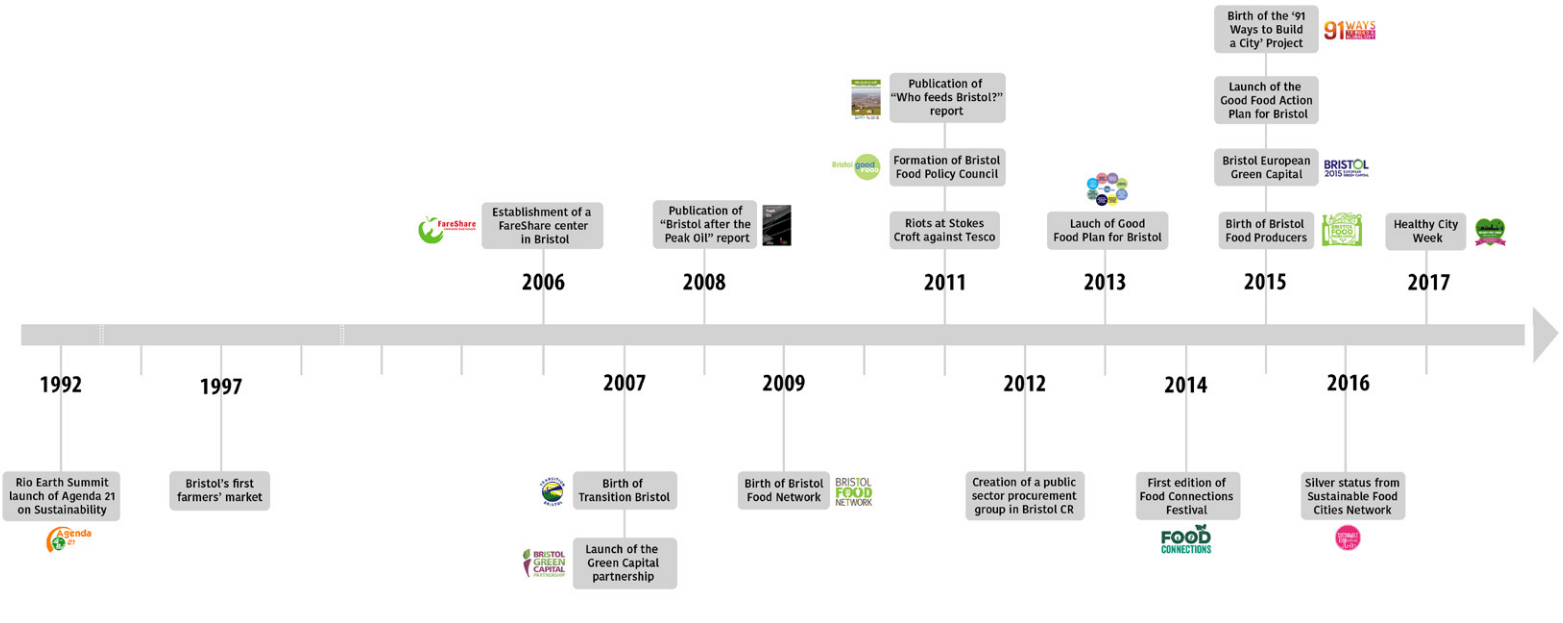


Figure 45: Bristol's food journey. Source: Elaboration by the author.

13 http://bristolfoodproducers.uk.

Producers, has explored the demand for growing land in or around Bristol, the characteristics of land seekers and the potential support for them (Chan, 2016). It highlighted that half of the 43 respondents are demanding for land smaller than 2 acres while the rest would like a field larger than 2 acres. The report has shown that the most popular products that land seekers would like to grow are vegetable, fruit and salad, and that they would like to sell the products directly to customers and through farmers' markets.

In 2016 Bristol has scooped the award of Silver Status from the Sustainable Food City Network, designed to "highlight and celebrate the success of those places taking a joined up, holistic approach to food and that are achieving significant positive change on a range of key food issues" (BFPC, 2016b). It is the second city to be awarded by this status, after Brighton and Hove, places with a long history on green activism.

During the second edition of the Festival of the Future City in 2017, the event "Building a Healthy City" brought together a series of speakers to reflect upon the existing programs and local projects who are contributing to create a healthier and more environmentally sustainable food city. The event was organised as a follow up of the Bristol Green Capital Partnership's Healthy City Week 2017, held from October 7 to 14, a platform of events and discussions for individuals and organisations to exchange ideas and explore connections among health and environmental sustainability.

Nowadays, Bristol's food journey is still in progress. Current processes of spatial and social transformation of Bristol's urban and periurban landscapes by local food initiatives and the continuous evolution of city's food agenda are led by a vibrant and innovative civil society engaging with a fast-shrinking local state (Morgan & Moragues-Faus, 2015).

7.4. Spaces of cooperation in Bristol City Region

7.4.1. Methodology

The methodology for investigating the spaces of cooperation in Bristol City Region comprised a documentary analysis and a series of semi-structured interviews. The documentary analysis focused on the official planning documents, strategies and reports of the West of England LEP and of the four local authorities of the City Region, and on the recent literature about two

Table 11: Number and role of actors interviewed in Bristol City Region.

Number of interviewees	Role / Position
3	Local councilor
1	Planning officer
2	Food activist
2	Researcher

thematic areas: the first is the Localism Act and Big Society governmental reforms with the aim to understand how the administrative system of Bristol City Region responded and adapted to the reforms; the second is the food narrative in Bristol, which was investigated through the research papers and online sources dealing with the role of food initiatives and groups in influencing the policy level.

As for the cases of Milan and Aso Valley, the semi-structured interviews were addressed to a sample of local actors with a direct role or an interest to the contents of the spaces of cooperation analysed, the WoE LEP and the Bristol Food Policy Council. Interviewees were local councillors (n=3), planning officers (n=1), food activists (n=2) and researchers (n=2) for a total of 8 interviews made (**Table 11**). The survey has been carried out from May 2017 to July 2017.

The questions addressed to the interviewees, even with a common structure, dealt with different aspects and they were oriented to reach the following objectives:

- understanding the impacts at the local level in Bristol City Region of the Localism reform approved in 2011;
- understanding the effectiveness of the Duty-to-cooperate and the potential role of agriculture as one of the aspects that can be tackled by the policy;
- identifying strengths and weaknesses of the WoE LEP, and its role on planning processes at City Regional level;
- investigating the current and potential contribution of food in planning processes at the local and city regional level;

To identify the interviewees, a contact mail which presented the idea of the research and its general objectives was sent to a range of local actors. In a first phase the mail was sent to all members of the Planning, Housing & Communities Committee (PHCC) of the WoE LEP and of the planning Team in charge of drafting the WoE Joint Spatial Plan, and in a second phase to other actors involved at different levels in Bristol's food policies and activism.

After the first stage of contacts, problems of identifying a sufficient amount people to be interviewed (few 'entry-points') emerged. This was due to the fact that the author was a complete outsider with respect to the context analysed (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016: 63-64). Just a small sample of interviewees answered to the contact mail, which was sent to ten people. In most cases, the mail address was the only contact available due to the distance among the principal investigator and the researched community. It was not even possible to identify alternative ways for contacting more people in the sample using those who responded positively, because of the lack of social relations among the groups and the high level of independency of some of them, especially the WoE Planning Team. Probably, members of the WoE Planning Team were not keen to be interviewed because of the lack of confidentiality and the presence of tensions that could have potentially originated by the questions posed by the investigator on the contents of the Joint Spatial Plan. The two researchers were identified within the academic environment where the author spent a six-month period of visiting in 2017 and according to their research interests in food policies in Bristol City Region.

The 8 interviews ranged from 30 to 60 minutes in length and, after having

asked the permission, they were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The results presented below are the result of a critical re-elaboration of the data collected from the interviews.

7.4.2. The West of England Local Enterprise Partnership: a business-led space of cooperation[14]

As an arena to allow local authorities to discuss about and tackle cross-boundary issues, the WoE LEP represents the more relevant space chosen to investigate the collaborative planning processes among local governments in Bristol City Region. Despite being established just 7 years ago, the WoE LEP matches with the former Avon County, abolished in 1996 as part of the ongoing government reorganisation. Therefore, there is an intense past activity of cooperation among local governments in the region. This ongoing reformulation of sub-regional entities allows to understand the evolutionary paths taken by local governments' cooperation in the region as well as the role that they have played in different policy arenas.

The policy backbone of the WoE LEP is the national "Duty-to-Cooperate", conceived by interviewees as a major incentive and framework for local authorities to cooperate with each other. This assumption does not overlook, as underlined by one interviewee, the fact that effective cooperation happens just if there is a political alignment and an agreement among local administrators.

"I think the duty-to-cooperate is a good think. Local authorities should cooperate with each other to address cross boundary issues" (Local councillor)

"The Duty-to-Cooperate has brought us together. But these things work when there is consensus of opinions and willingness to work together and I think our local authorities have politically alignment that really helps". (Local councillor)

"I think it is good to have a duty-to-cooperate. It is difficult the fact that it isn't very well defined. It doesn't have great details. This was part of the legislation that didn't want to be overly prescriptive". (Local councillor)

The role that businesses have in defining LEP's policy agenda and in influencing decision making processes is a major argument of concern among interviewees. According to a councillor, the LEP is one of the more evident product of the political narrative brought by Coalition Government, which aims to shift powers from public to private sector.

"The LEP is about National Government trying to give power over things that should really be controlled by local authorities to private sectors. It is a formal privatisation. I don't see the LEPs as positive things in terms of local governments. They may do good things. They are bypassing local authorities and passing more powers to businesses" (Local councillor)

14 Some of the contents of this section have been already published in Lazzarini (2018).

The relatively weak (or at least hybrid) administrative role of LEP is a relevant difference from the previous County Councils and Regional Agencies, whose approach was comprehensive across the Country and able to establish a stable and coherent administrative tier with clear functions and competencies.

"The trouble is that [LEPs] don't have full time professional staff [...] They're not consistent throughout the Country. Their approach on economic development is different across the Country" (Planning officer)

Alongside this assumption, it should be underlined that their diverse approach on economic development recalls the fact that LEPs match with Functional Economic Areas and hence they need to cope with different economic and territorial conditions (WoE, 2017:9), but they also need to address structural and functional relationships among urban and rural areas in different sub-regional contexts. Thus, this diversity is positive as much as LEPs are able to flexibly adapt to local conditions and shape place-based policies and strategies. Nevertheless, as recently pointed out by Curtice who recalls the cases of North East, East Anglia, Central-Southern England (2017), this becomes not easy in rural and semi-rural areas where the opportunities for development are often hidden or difficult to activate due to long-lasting structural social and economic conditions.

The problem of accountability is, according the interviewees, the issue that more than others influence the interpretation of WoE LEP as a body characterised by scarce levels of democracy and transparency in policy making processes.

"The LEP is not democratically accountable. It doesn't have the same levels of openness that local authorities would have. And it has no democratic mandate" (Local councillor).

To provide an example of this issue, one interviewee describes the levels of transparency of the consultation phases during planning processes.

"LEP's are relatively undemocratic. There are some consultation phases but at the end of the day members do not sit around the table whether [the consultation comments] are okay or not. Consultation in LEP Plans doesn't have the same weight as it had in the Regional Development Plans" (Planning officer).

A more radical view is the one expressed by an activist involved in a local food initiative in Bristol as well as in Bristol Food Policy Council.

"The way in which LEP works is fairly dysfunctional. They're kind in a dreamland. The game they play is to build houses to make more money, keep everybody happy, keep politicians happy, don't have vision, don't hope, because you'll only be disappointed" (Food activist).

As for LEPs in general, planning is one of the crucial policy areas also in the activity of WoE LEP. As described previously, the four local authorities are

currently involved in the process of implementing the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP), a plan that will guide the future growth of the City Region. The Plan is the result of the joint work of the four local authorities participating to the WoE LEP, in particular of their local councillors and planning officers, answering to the need to plan the future growth of the City Region, in term of housing and transport.

"We have to come up with housing number, housing targets and ambitions for infrastructure development" (Local councillor).

"We are coming together very well because I think there isn't a single cabinet member in Bath and North East Somerset that doesn't understand the huge bonus and benefits of having that extra layer of planning policy in place [...] If this [JSP] comes off, we are really properly planning, we are properly developing in the way that it is all planned for a system" (Local councillor).

The definition of the spatial strategy has created conflicts among the four local governments involved in the plan making, particularly concerning the number of developments and their location across the City Region.

"One think that caused a lot of conversations is the different market areas you have with the housing because it has been evidenced that Bath and North East Somerset has a separate housing market area to the rest of the West of England. There were heated discussions" (Local councillor).

"In terms of the Spatial Plan, the Green Belt is actually one of the areas of conflict among local authorities because North Somerset is saying "we don't want any new development in Green Belt land in our local authority area. North Somerset attitude is Nimbyism, they don't want Bristol to expand into their area. They also got large number of campaign in their villages and towns against taking more housing into those places" (Local councillor).

Thus, as clearly highlighted in the extract above, discussions among local administrators around the location of new developments express two contrasting ways of coping with the problem of housing targets across the region. One view, typically the one of North Somerset local authority, is framing the problem as a "not-in-my-backyard" position, hence "no developments in my territory". The other view, which is requesting to locate new developments in the more accessible land, is typically the one expressed by Bristol City Council.

Although in different ways, both of these views express the strong commitment by local administrators to defend the needs and wants of their local communities and support the idea that there is a strong relationship among local councillors' political will and the constituents' view (Haughton, 2018).

In the case of North Somerset, the way of framing the problem explicits the pressures that local councillors receive from local communities to keep existing amenities and avoid the enlargement of settlements and the related increase of traffic congestion. In the case of Bristol, the councillor's position relates to the urgent need to limit the physiological and environmental

damages of traffic congestion on Bristol's local community.

It is interesting to notice that the narratives of these conflicts are not just local, but exemplify also the contents of the debate around Green Belt and housing provision at national level (see chapter 6). A demonstration of that comes from UK Prime Minister Theresa May's endorsement to the conservative candidate Tim Bowles, when he was running to become the WoE Mayor (BBC, 2017).

"We need a mayor who is serious about protecting our Green Belt. Tim Bowles would be a mayor for the whole West of England. As a local business man who's been a South Gloucestershire councillor for the last 6 years, Tim knows the local area well and has the knowledge and experience to make it even better"[15].

In a two-minute video, May underlined her strong support in favour of the commitment that the candidate will take to protect "our Green Belt", openly showing her Green Belt protectionist view.

Being a terrain of conflicts and policy contestation, Green Belt is interpreted by few interviewees also as a barrier to innovation for environmental policies.

"I don't think Green Belt around Bristol at the moment is sustainable either in terms of meeting housing needs but also environmentally [...] The Green Belt is working against environmental policies" (Local councillor).

The urgency to carry on a comprehensive review of Green Belt both at National and City Regional level is shared by many interviewees.

"Green Belt should be shifted, further out. [...] We need to protect land for environmental reasons, for farmers, and other things" (Local councillor).

"I don't think that the Joint Spatial Plan considers Green Belt as a cross boundary issue. If you're going to do donut […] is that the most efficient way? […] Just move the Green Belt boundary out of it a bit more. But they haven't done that…" (Planning officer).

"I'd quite like to see a National review of Green Belts, not to actually reduce green belt but to actually start to look at smaller areas that are now in danger of sprawl" (Local councillor).

The need for a comprehensive review of Green Belt at city region level is recalled also by the CPRE Avon that in the response to the JSP's consultation phase stated that "the plan provides no logical rationale for intrusion into remote green field locations and makes no mention of a full West of England Green Belt Review which we consider would be necessary to deliver the plan" (CPRE Avonside, 2016). A local councillor describes the CPRE position, by saying that this would have negative impacts from the economic point of view.

"I welcome that report, I think it doesn't accommodate the ambitions for the region

15 The video has been uploaded on May 1st in the Facebook page of Tim Bowles (@timbowlesofficial).

significantly. To take on CPRE position would be a massive economic sacrifices which would have a negative impact on the region" (Local councillor).

A certain mistrust emerges regarding the real political commitment to carry on a Green Belt review, as stated by a local planning officer:

"No politician has the balls to do it because it's so politically dangerous" (Planning officer).

One food activist questions the location of development across the City Region stating that these decisions should be based upon a more sophisticated understanding of agroecological factors.

"Our decisions about which land to use for what should be based on a much more sophisticated understanding of how the West of England works as an ecosystem. So, I wouldn't take a protectionist approach on Green Belt if I was confident that the pragmatic decisions were actually based on sophisticated understanding of ecology and on green and blue infrastructures" (Food activist).

JSP's focus to housing and transport provision has not just produced concerns in the location of new developments across the region for the lack of consideration towards the most versatile agricultural land to be preserved in rural hinterland. LEPs' identification as economic leadership groupings supporting investments in strategic sectors for local economy has also left apart all what considered as 'non-strategic'. This is also true in the case of WoE LEP where rural areas are under-represented both in the JSP and in the Strategic Economic Plan. Only recently, the establishment of a "Rural and Food Economy" sub-group in the WoE LEP and its official recognition in the WoE Strategic Economic Plan (WoE LEP, 2013) has been interpreted as a first step towards the recognition of the vital role of farming industries and of the diversity of food businesses for City-Region economy (Raffle and Carey, 2018). Nevertheless, concerns arise when looking at the agri-food businesses involved in the sub-group. For example, just a few large-scale and influential food businesses are currently part of the group. There is no representation of small and medium scale local food producers and processors, that are considered to be alternative to the industrial model of farming (WoE LEP, 2013).

Some of the interviewees are aware of the limits of the WoE LEP and JSP's approach. This overlooks the strategic role of farmland and food growing spaces in the hinterland, which could in turn build better linkages among urban and rural areas.

"It's important that we understand food and agriculture as part of an overall regional strategy, which probably goes beyond the boundaries of the four local authorities, because there's a concern in the way we treat the soils, in terms of capacity of the land we got" (Local councillor).

This relates to the potential role that planning has in dealing with the sustainability of food supply chain as recalled by a councillor.

"I think there is a role for planning because there is a capacity to influence local economy food production. We have a role in pushing those things forward. Our planning needs to understand our subtleties of need for agricultural economic growth" (Local councillor).

7.4.3. The Bristol Food Policy Council: a civil-society-led space of cooperation

Bristol Food Policy Council (BFPC) can be considered a meeting place for civil society, private actors and the local government to develop a new food governance system in Bristol (Morgan & Moragues-Faus, 2015). The idea behind the BFPC is to create a place for local actors to map and think strategically together about what are the current challenges and solutions that can be achieved to improve the sustainability of Bristol's food system. It was established in 2011 as a response and explicit commitment of some civil society members to bring forward the recommendations coming from the "Who feeds Bristol?" report (Carey, 2011). BFPC is the first Food Council in United Kingdom, and its innovative idea lies in the creation of a permanent relationship of coproduction between the civil society groups and the municipality in what has been already defined as a reciprocal game of alignment for civil activists with local council's strategy (Morgan & Moragues-Faus, 2015). The Council is currently formed by 10 members drawn from Bristol City Council, National Health Service (NHS), local food initiatives and businesses and independent consultants.

Morgan and Moragues-Faus (2015) have recently framed the BFPC as a "space of deliberation" where governance and policy making processes have been significantly reinvented in a process of reconceptualization of the social and spatial processes related to the redefinition of everyday food practices.

As one of the very first concrete result of the holistic 'good food' vision implemented by the BFPC, the Good Food Plan for Bristol (BFPC, 2013) advocates the "food systems planning" approach, already mentioned by the "Who Feeds Bristol?" report, by identifying eight spheres of action:

1. "transform Bristol's food culture;
2. safeguard diversity of the food retail sector;
3. safeguard land for food production;
4. increase urban food production and distribution;
5. redistribute, recycle & compost food waste;
6. protect key infrastructure for local food supply;
7. increase the market opportunities for local and regional suppliers;
8. support community food enterprises" (Ibid.).

The Plan invites every individual, group, organisation and business to identify what influence and action they can exert and to take action on one or more of the identified spheres. The importance of the Plan lies in promoting a cross-sectoral and integrated approach to Bristol's food system, a vision that keeps together producers, processors, distributors, retailers and caterers. One of the spheres that deals more explicitly with planning policies is the third one as it focuses on the need to protect "the best and most suitable quality food growing land" and to turn the "many thousands of dormant hectares of

high grade agricultural land in and around Bristol" into food growing spaces (BFPC, 2013).

The approach taken by the Plan has been further developed in the Bristol Good Food Action Plan (2015-2018) which, through ten themes, sets up a coordinated action among a wide range of people and organisations within the City-Region and makes the system's aims and actions more open and transparent (BFPC, 2015). As an example, for the topic "safeguard land for food", key local organisations such as the Blue Finger Alliance, CPRE Avonside, Create Centre, Bristol Food Policy Council, BeeBristol and Bristol Regional Environmental Centre have identified project outlines and outcomes, actions and funding information, which were inserted in the Plan through blank templates.

A food activist has underlined the relevant role that the Plan making has had in changing the mind-sets of people towards the need to better consider food in local policies, particularly at the level of the City Region, although this has not happened without problems.

> "What we're trying to do with this [Bristol Food Action Plan] is to build such a shift in the mind-set that it becomes impossible not [interviewee's emphasis] to have a West of England Food Strategic Plan. And all the conversations we had in the last ten years have been... they say: "food isn't the topic on our mind, we have land use planning, retails strategy, we have a policy air strategy, we have a transport strategy, we're not responsible for food", and then you look at the Government policy which is that Tesco does food. And that's it. It is such a disconnect" (Food activist).

Since its creation, the BFPC has attempted to influence and positively change planning policies, both at the local and City Regional level. This has happened mainly through its active participation to planning consultation phases. This contribution to local planning processes aimed at bringing the food system planning approach developed by the two Food Plans to official planning documents. In 2011, during the formal consultation phase on the Development Management Policy, BFPC wrote five representations on crucial issues relating to Bristol's sustainable urban food system, such as the required characteristics of new developments, town centres use and supermarket car parking. Despite just very few suggestions were accepted by the City Council and consequently adopted in local planning policies, this was a sign of the attempt by BFPC to create a space of change within urban policies and to push official plans to include the recommendations of the Good Food Plan.

Also during the process of WoE JSP making in 2016, BFPC actively participated to the consultation phases by writing responses to the questions posed by the WoE Planning Team to decide upon the most appropriate strategy to endorse in the Plan. Comments made by the Council and written by the Vice-Chair Angela Raffle are deeply questioning the focus that the Plan takes on agricultural land and on what are recognised as "pressing and urgent" issues that the Country is facing.

> "The terms 'food' 'agriculture' 'farming' and 'agricultural land' do not appear in the current consultation version of the West of England Joint Spatial Plan. It therefore appears that the process of creating the Joint Spatial Plan is stuck within a way of

thinking that fails to recognise the pressing and urgent issues facing the UK and the rest of the world" (Food activist).

An important critic regards the approach taken by the JSP that, according to BFPC, 'flattens' the productive qualities of land. According to the BFPC, the Plan does not take any "intelligent" recognition of the more versatile land within the City Region and on the role that food plays in ensuring good environmental and ecological standards for new developments.

"The JSP needs to take a more detailed and intelligent look at Green Belt, it needs to differentiate the land that is needed for food production. [...] The building of new homes needs to work around the considerations of food, ecology, and use of existing buildings" (BFPC, 2016a).

BFPC has represented an important arena for Bristol's civic society to collaboratively achieve a systemic vision on the City Region Food system and a momentum around food in the making of a greener and more sustainable city.

Current challenges that the BFPC is facing are the lack of a dedicated budget and its dependency to other bodies to implement its goals. These challenges have an obvious connection with the unprecedented budget cuts imposed by Central Government in the last twenty years, since the Council is acting mainly at the local level and it could get a significant financial support from Local Authorities to implement its agenda. This situation has created two main consequences. On one hand, the limited budget has made the success of its activity, strongly dependent on the enthusiasm, voluntarism and individual commitment of its members (Morgan & Moragues-Faus, 2015). On the other, the lack of funding has been pushing the BFPC to widen its sources of financing well beyond the City Council towards establishing more links with food businesses and other public and private organisations.

7.5. Discussion

7.5.1. Conflicts and tensions across the Avon Green Belt

Although not explicitly addressing the issue of urban/rural relationships, the approach taken by WoE LEP in planning, especially in the WoE JSP, provides a clear idea of what can be the role of inter-municipal planning in addressing City Region functional relationships and in coping with a stable framework of land-use protection as the one of Avon Green Belt. As already seen, in its identification of the strategic development sites, JSP has not taken into account the location of the most versatile agricultural land and the green and blue infrastructures. As a consequence, new developments are potentially going to generate negative impacts on valuable agro-ecological and environmental assets of the City Region. Nevertheless, the scope of JSP has also left out a critical understanding on what role agricultural areas of the region could play in bridging the functional separation and in building

more social, economic and agro-ecological interdependencies among city and countryside (Rodrìguez-Pose, 2008).

In section 7.3.2. I have seen how the content of the National debate about Green Belt, with the two contending positions, is also affecting the ways in which the problem of housing allocation is framed at the local level. This is particularly true for the case of Bristol City Region where the Joint Spatial Plan has openly adopted a pragmatic approach to Green Belt land, opting to distribute a part of housing provision on locations under Green Belt land use designation.

As a delicate site of contentions, the Avon Green Belt is a planning construct where harsh conflicts and tensions regarding land-use management have emerged in the last decade. These are involving not just the local authorities within WoE LEP due to their refuse to put at risk their political status and the local landscape assets (see the case of North Somerset), but also among the pro-countryside lobbies and organisations, due to their strong commitment to protect their interests and ideas (Sturzaker & Mell, 2017). It must be said that the emergence of contentions spaces in Green Belt is not exclusive of Bristol City Region but it has been observed also in other English City Regions. The case of Greater Manchester is notable for the power of conflicts emerged due to the Green Belt releases foreseen by the Great Manchester Spatial Framework and for the creation of coalitions of local actors aimed to strongly oppose to the decisions taken by the Framework (Haughton, 2018). Nevertheless, the phenomenon of land-related conflicts has been explored also in other European metropolitan contexts, often in the light of investigating “the differentiated spatial dynamics” of the urban/rural interface which originate and fuel these conflicts (Pascariu et al., 2012a).

Another meaningful element that the analysis has shown is the ongoing process of reinterpretation of the Avon Green Belt carried out by local governments in their collaborative cross-boundary activity. By using part of the Green Belt land for housing developments, local governments in Bristol City Region have been implicitly reformulating and reconstructing the Green Belt narrative through a cooperative planning policy that incrementally change purposes and contents of the national policy by applying a new set of criteria for the review of Green Belt borders. Hence, local and city region planning policies have been the tools by which a new narrative on Green Belt has emerged, and the Green Belt designation has been reworked to make space for housing developments. Thus, it can be noticed how the “exceptional circumstances” mentioned by the national policy become in the case of Avon Green Belt less “exceptional” and much more frequently recurring. While planning has been the mean, the deliberative space of WoE LEP has been the policy arena where to develop and perpetuate this narrative and where to re-think the contents of the national policy.

The analysis of planning processes in Bristol City Region has highlighted that the Avon Green Belt is a meaningful ground where investigating the conflicts between the need to provide new housing and the instances of preservation of agricultural land. In other words, Green Belt is a planning construct on which conflicts upon the best use of periurban land clearly emerge and opposite views on the social and economic development of the City Region are challenged. Moreover, the analysis has shown the crucial

role that a deeper investigation of the governance processes happening across Green Belt has in understanding the planning dynamics of English City Regions and the role that agricultural areas play in the interface among rural and urban areas. This approach moves from the awareness that an in-depth analysis of the positions of local institutional actors and civic society is crucial to understand the contending positions, the contents of debate and the nature of conflicts. With respect to the current debate, this analysis has shown that, alongside the national discussion, the local level shows a certain complexity of the Green Belt narrative and this is due to the number of actors having a voice in the policy arena and by the interests that come into play in decision making processes.

7.5.2. A dysfunctional and impermeable LEP

WoE LEP has served as an arena in which the sub-regional governance in Bristol City Region has been investigated, with an emphasis on discovering the ways in which the forms of knowledge and the social and political forces have been able to shape a planning project (Healey, 2006). What the interviewees led to emerge is a set of dysfunctions that characterise the ways in which sub-regional governance is constructed and co-produced in Bristol City Region.

Issues of transparency and accountability in WoE LEP's decision making processes support what was already underlined by Pugalis and Townsend (2012) according to whose if LEPs take on a more formal role in planning processes significant tension can arise between the needs of business and of democratic accountability. As shown by the interviews, the analysis of WoE LEP governance well exemplifies the problems related to the delegation of risks, responsibility and accountability from Central Government to the local level recalled by Cloke et al. (2014) according to what has been defined as an "incomplete and uneven diffusion of neoliberal rationalities, technologies, and subjectivities" that is perpetuating "new modes of governance are thereby less reliant on direct technologies of control".

Moreover, asymmetries between the administrative geographies of the LEP and the Combined Authority increase the complexity of City Region governance and extends the incongruences among local authorities in coping with transferred responsibilities from Central Government within an overall picture of lack of clarity over the purposes of devolution arrangements (Curtice, 2017).

The results of consultation phases in the WoE JSP have also demonstrated that the WoE LEP acts as an impermeable device to the instances and demands coming from local actors. Therefore, responses and pressures from opposers such as CPRE Avonside or BFPC to transform the contents of the Plan have been rejected and the spatial strategy has not been altered after the

results of the consultation phases[16]. In this way, the political orientation of the Plan was left unchanged by pressures of local actors. These findings extend those of Healey (2006), confirming that collaborative planning processes sometimes show traditional instances of managing the governance arena or situations where the institutional actors are unwilling to be involved in a learning experience with a set of outsider actors, as in this case where LEP's members are scarcely willing to collaborate with CPRE or BFPC.

Alongside these weaknesses, it is recognised as a positive element that WoE LEP works on a Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) (Curtice, 2017; WoE, 2017) which strongly performs as a single geographical unit due to its high levels of functional containment (90% of City Region population is living and working in the area). Hence, since its establishment, LEP has created a meaningful political and policy arena on which local governments have been able to discuss and collaboratively address cross-boundary issues. Moreover, inside LEP's deliberative space, a reasoning on economic, housing market, travel-to-work, marketing and retail catchment factors (Rodrìguez-Pose, 2008) can be combined to policy responses on flows, cycles and products of the food system, from production to commercialisation and consumption (Dansero et al., 2017). In other words, there are all the pre-conditions to consider LEP as the right governance arena on which building effective solutions for improving the sustainability of City Region Food Systems.

Despite this potential, the analysis has shown that WoE LEP has rejected the consideration of the food system planning approach as a criterion and framework for the construction of planning decisions. This has had the consequence of undermining the potentials of LEP in addressing agro-ecological and environmental challenges of the City Region.

7.5.3. The role of opposers as (potential) innovators

I have already mentioned the many attempts by actors such as CPRE and BFPC to modify the contents of planning policies at the level of LEP. The importance of this lies in understanding the ways in which opposers to public decisions have been able to introduce hints and arguments in policy making process that were not initially considered by public decision makers and officers (BFPC, 2016a; Dente, 2011). As opposing actors to the JSP process, the BFPC and the CPRE Avonside, through their observations to the spatial strategy of the Plan, have underlined how the spatial strategy had

16 During the second consultation phase, over 1500 people representing a range of residents, businesses and other stakeholders responded to the draft proposal, giving their opinions on the preferred spatial strategy among the five proposed scenarios comprising a wide range of options with reference to Strategic Development Locations (SDL). The five spatial scenarios proposed are the protection of Green Belt (i), the concentration at Bristol urban area (ii), the transport focus (iii), a "more even spread development across the region" (iv) and "new settlements or a limited number of expanded settlements" (v). The majority of responses outlined the scenario referring to the protection of Green Belt (61% over a total of 531 responses). With reference to Green Belt, the majority of respondents (60 up to 110) specifically outlined that its land should be used to locate new housing (Lazzarini, 2018).

clearly overlooked the contribution of agricultural land and food and, more in general, of the whole countryside, in addressing the environmental, ecological and health challenges of Bristol City Region (BFPC, 2016a; CPRE Avonside, 2016). Thus, this confirms what already underlined by Dente (2011), that opposers can have the role of innovating the contents of decisions in policy arenas, making the public opinion more aware of the topics discussed and, possibly, changing the decisional path towards a different end. “Governance actors that are continually challenged by energetic and conflicting arguments about issues of collective concerns are likely to be much more attentive to the qualities of governance processes” pointed out Healey (2006: 335).

The positive interpretation of opposing actors within neoliberal governance processes draws mainly from Clock et al. (2014) and it frames the possibility that contemporary neoliberal governance mechanisms, shaped in England by the Localism Act, can be meaningfully reworked and transformed by the activity of alternative local philosophies and narratives. Here it is argued that, in the case of Bristol City Region, the opposers already mentioned, and particularly the food initiatives and movements that in Bristol create an important and powerful collective actor, have the possibility to re-work the deliberative spaces of LEP and to affect and influence the contents of decision making processes. Through their work within the cracks and interstices of contemporary neoliberal governance mechanisms (Clocke et al., 2014; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009), they can originate a space of resistance, potentially enabling the social identities and practices of food to enter in the planning process. According to Clock et al. (2014), at the basis of this assumption there is the awareness that the changing architecture of governance brought by Localism reform has opened up new “opportunities for the direct appropriation of governmental structures by local groups seeking progressive outcomes”. In other words, the rapid change in UK governance structures and the not-always-coherent Devolution processes have created some cracks and interstices that can be filled in by the contrasting activity of local movements and civil society.

Despite sharing the view on the opportunities brought by Localism Reform in terms of challenging the governance mechanisms, according to me it seems very unlikely in the case of Bristol City Region to think that progressive movements will appropriate the LEP structures. This does not exclude the possibility for key-actors, such as the Bristol Food Policy Council, to take a more active role in influencing the planning processes at City Region level as much as it happened at the local level within the Bristol local plan and other urban policies. Then, it is very true that this game of influence by BFPC can be played within the existing cracks and gaps of LEP structures to push local governments and actors to better acknowledge the importance of agro-ecological assets and green and blue infrastructures and, more in general, of the food system planning approach, in City Region planning policies.

7.6. Concluding remarks

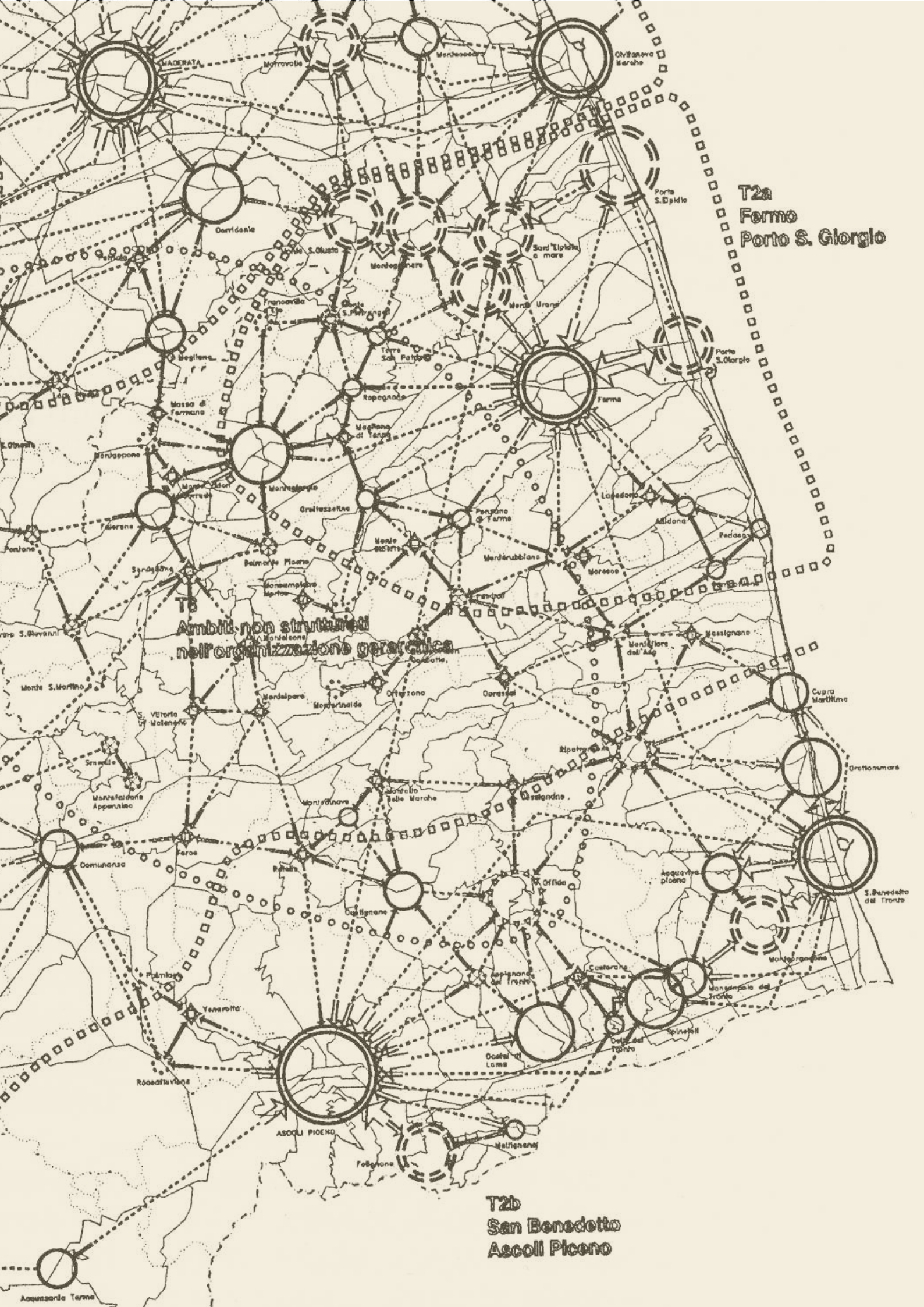
The investigation of Bristol’s rich and lively food scene has been a crucial

step to understand the cultural and social value that urban agriculture has for Bristolians. By reconstructing city's food journey, I have shown how contentious, and sometimes conflictive, have been the use of the inner and periurban land by the City Council. I have also mentioned the circumstances that have allowed local food movements to be successful in being heard by institutions, changing existing plans or decisions taken by local administrators.

The analysis of local governments' cooperation in recently-established bodies, such as the WoE LEP or the WECA, highlighted the still immature definition of these governance arena and the search for a more stable and consolidated narrative by local administrators which is currently missing, as clearly shown by the scarce participation by voters to the Combined Mayoral Elections in 2017 (see section 7.3.1.). Nevertheless, the scale of LEP has the potential to develop good policy thinking in terms of unfolding the interdependencies among urban areas, periurban interface and the countryside of the City Region, both in housing and transport planning —as the WoE JSP has objectively done that properly— and in considering the role of farming in building more localised food system and in turning Bristolians' food practices into more sustainable consumption and production patterns. This last point is, according to the author, the greatest limit in the WoE LEP's current range of action.

Planning is surely one of the major challenges of today's English City Regions. This not just because housing and transport have become urgent and pressing social and economic needs for cities but —and this is what the thesis attempts to do— because, when planning homes and infrastructures, a full consideration of the agro-ecological assets of City Region is fundamental to ensure that developments are not going to further compromise existing natural and environmental resources and, ultimately, decrease the overall sustainability of our regions.

While still much needs to be done for gaining a better understanding of the policy potentials of LEPs, what is widely acknowledged is the still fundamental role of Green Belts in bringing forward an urban model where the spatial separation among urban and rural domains is one of its prominent features. Despite this, by looking at the case of Bristol City Region, I have contented that this univocal understanding of Green Belts is being reworked and discussed by the incremental activity of local governments and other local actors, that are attempting to develop and disseminate new interpretations of Green Belts, putting into discussion the contents of the National Policy.


T2a
Fermo
Porto S. Giorgio
T6
Ambiti non strutturati
nell'organizzazione gerarchica
T2b
San Benedetto
Ascoli Piceno

PART 3
Trajectories and scenarios

In the previous page:
Nodes and functions in the regional territory
Source: PPAR, Regione Marche, 1989.

Chapter 8
Conclusions and follow-ups

8.1. Learning from the case-studies

This section aims at presenting few assumptions emerging from the case-studies' chapters. Although the thesis has not taken a comparative approach to the case-study analysis since it had the purpose to investigate the different geographical, governance and planning configurations of local governments' cooperation within a framework of improving urban/rural relationships, a number of hints for reflection have arisen and they deal both with theoretical and empirical assumptions.

8.1.1. Governance: spaces of tensions and impermeable devices

The first assumption refers to the issue of borders. In the three cases, institutional borders are crucial spaces around which conflicts have emerged during the last decades, conflicts which have involved a wide range of governmental and private sector's actors: not just local administrators, but also real estate decision makers, farmers and agricultural entrepreneurs, civil society and their representatives. I have demonstrated how these conflicts have been generated around decisions involving or related to the use of land: they occurred because an actor wanted to turn the land into a different use, but statutory designations, planning policies, even consolidated local narratives (see the case of North Somerset and the Nimbyism attitude in section 7.4.2.), have hindered this change. In other words, these conflicts arise because divergent interpretations of borders, which are unfolding different views on the use of agricultural land for shaping urban/rural relationships, are contrasting in the same governance arenas.

In the case of Milan, the borders of the Agricultural Park are daily and incrementally challenged by a constellation of demands coming from private actors (real estate companies, but also agricultural entrepreneurs and citizens) which are opting to use some of the designated land to accommodate developments. Often with the help of local councilors, these actors are trying to take advantage of the cracks of an obsolete statutory planning policy and of the administrative inefficiencies of a sub-regional authority (Vescovi, 2015; see also the case of MAPEI in Mediglia in: Ass. Parco Sud, 2015b).

In the case of Bristol, tensions became evident by analysing the Green Belt debate and the ways in which local governmental actors have continuously reworked, through their local plans, the contents of the national policy. The "exceptional circumstances" mentioned by the policy are justified by the pressing major social and economic needs of English cities, specifically the

urgency to build more homes in the more accessible land (DCLG, 2018). As recently demonstrated by Haughton (2018) for the city of Manchester, borders of Green Belt condense the rationales of a long-lasting discussion among divergent political views. This discussion also involves influential lobbying and progressive positions which show themselves to be scarcely ductile and strongly dependant on the interests that fuel them, also financially.

In the Aso Valley, conflicts on borders relate to the consolidated parochialism that this context, as the whole Country, has been experiencing since the Middle Age. This historical-institutional condition is one of the factors able to explain the fragmented administrative structure and mayors' scarce willingness to work together and to reason upon cross-boundary issues on a long-term basis. This provides compelling evidence for what was argued by Allen (2003), that one of the major challenges for addressing the processes of change of rural villages is to develop a long-term perspective for the sustainable management of periurban environmental resources and to ensure the production of structural and stable benefits for rural communities.

The analysis of the transformative demands condensing at the borders has allowed to unfold the delicate tension among cooperation and conflict in the three cases (see Introduction). The approach taken by this thesis has led to understand how the construction of coalitions of actors has disclosed spaces of conflicts due to the attempts by outsider actors to disrupt and modify the contents of the cooperation, or to enlarge the coalition arena[1].

Here it is taken the view that the collaborative planning processes investigated in the thesis have revealed sites of contestations and struggles, according to what Healey (2006: 320) defined as a "continuing dialectic between forces pushing towards a more just and inclusionary approach to the governance of collective concerns", a process that is strongly rooted to the spatial dimension of planning policies.

Conflicts are not just unavoidable but they are often the central dynamics that drive collaborative planning process. Following this interpretation, cooperation and conflicts are strongly dependant and they need to be addressed by a joint effort by planners "to enlarge the pie [...] to build new meanings of the problem, create recognition of shared purpose, and build networks through which communication can flow among diverse players (Innes, 2013: 15).

A second assumption concerns the inclusiveness and the identity of the statutory spaces of cooperation. If one looks at the decision making processes put in place in planning and in other policy sectors, the three sub-regional authorities (The Park Authority, the Union of Municipalities and the Local Enterprise Partnership) are acting on the basis of the need to establish boundaries and criteria which must be maintained and consolidated over time. They prevent, through their rigid organisational rules, any attempt from external actors to transform the content of the decisions or their management or internal procedures. Mount (2012) describes this attitude as "unreflexive" or "prescriptive" because the governance discourse provides a cohesion

1 A similar approach is taken by Pascariu et al. (2012a) for investigating the land-use conflicts in the metropolitan areas of Bucharest and Chisinau.

among group members on the basis of a set of prescriptions, and establishes a focus on giving them "a clear sense of who is involved, who is excluded, and why". In this case, the set of values and goals established by this attitude does not change significantly over time. A different stance is taken by the "reflexive" approach in which the identity is continuously strengthened by a process of inclusive negotiation in which central "is the understanding that collective decision-making will reflect a diversity of interests, interpretations and priorities and, as such, will generate legitimacy more through a general satisfaction with the nature of the process rather than the nature of the consensus" (Mount, 2012: 23).

It is interesting to notice how close is Mount's reflexive approach to the contents of the Communicative Planning Theory that I highlighted in the Introduction of the thesis. Both of these attempts focus on learning about the process, on understanding how players can learn, influence and build relationships and how power relationships themselves can change (Innes, 2013: 21).

What I have noticed is that the three statutory sub-regional authorities behave according to a prescriptive or un-reflexive attitude. Thus, the Aso Valley Union of Local Councils, although interpreted by every interviewee as an inefficient and costly administrative body, is resisting to any attempt by local administrators to renegotiate its governance. Mayors, despite showing criticism on the Union's profile, do not challenge its functioning because of the lack of political and knowledge resources and of trust on the effectiveness of the transformation. At the same time, the WoE LEP is bringing forward, through its new Joint Spatial Plan, a spatial vision that is rejecting the diversity of interests, interpretations and priorities from real estate and civil society's members and groups and from the citizens who participated to the consultation phases. Although having among its members some civil society representatives, the Park Authority of PASM is rigidly opposing, through its harsh statutory land-use policy and internal management rules, to any demands for transformations coming from local authorities, developers and agricultural entrepreneurs.

Despite endowed in different institutional landscapes and planning systems, it is interesting to notice that the three inter-municipal bodies have been similarly reluctant to embrace any change in their decision making processes, acting as impermeable devices to demands coming from actors placed outside their policy arenas. They seem to have a high degree of resistance to the aspirations opting to modify their policy focus and action, for the presence of barriers hoisted to maintain the current status of things. A commonly reported frustration emerging from non-institutional actors is that policy-makers and local administrators do not fully understand or share the view that the suggested change would bring positive effects in the administrative efficiency of the inter-municipal body. In the case of Milan, members of the Committee are all aware of the need to change but they think to have any power upon it since it depends from higher levels. As Marsden & Franklin (2015) noted, these dynamics can be framed by the notion of disconnectivity because some governmental forces and standards are limiting the non-institutional initiatives and the dynamic mobilisation of civil society towards more sustainable conditions.

A second trend I highlighted is that the un-reflexivity has fostered the emergence of alternative spaces of cooperation which have materialised the willingness of local actors, especially civil society groups, to self-organise for reaching specific purposes and for influencing the policy level in the light of affirming innovative trajectories of development.

This suggests that disconnecting with standards and regulatory approaches to planning can become a necessary dimension for civil society to reach some objectives that governmental actors would not be able to achieve by themselves (Marsden & Franklin, 2015). Most of these collaborative spaces have originated crucial arenas of exchange where participating organisations have brought different resources and a strong personal commitment to reach the set objectives (see the case of BFPC in section 7.4.3.). They have also affirmed non-statutory and soft planning spaces (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009), often characterised by a high degree of complementarity to the official planning policy. These have addressed issues that statutory planning spaces have not tackled and have been characterised by an attitude to disruption or experimentation towards a new way of working together or of setting priority in an area (Ibid.).

It is interesting to notice that most of these spaces, like the Rural Districts in Milan and the Bristol Food Policy Council in the West of England, have at their basis a strong presumption towards the interpretation of agricultural land as the space where an innovative and alternative vision of urban/rural interdependencies can be developed. In the case of Milanese Rural Districts, this is evident in their attempt to create and develop alternative local food networks across the interface on the basis of the need to re-localise the food system and to multiply the social and economic benefits of farms for urban population. In the case of Bristol Food Policy Council, the strong commitment of its members aimed at developing and disseminating a vision for the city, answering to the urgent need to address contemporary health and environmental challenges and to affirm more sustainable food consumption and production patterns across the region.

These findings therefore indicate that the way in which statutory planning spaces work is indicative of a traditional interpretation of urban/rural relationships where city and countryside are rigidly separated and agricultural areas do not play any significant contribution in transforming local food systems towards more sustainable conditions. At the same time, civil society actors have been co-producing innovative ways of framing agricultural areas as part of sustainable food systems. Their proactive role suggests that the co-production among farmers and civil society representatives represents an effective way to build alternative strategies for improving the functional ties among city and countryside from the side of food production and consumption flows. Local governments are not necessarily excluded from the co-production activity (as the case of Bristol and Aso Valley have shown), but they perform a minor role within these spaces of cooperation.

8.1.2. Planning: layers of regulation and control

While depicting the institutional profiles of the three case studies, I carefully

investigated the regional, sub-regional and local planning policies addressing or having an impact on agricultural land, trying to see which idea of urban/rural relationships comes out from these policies. Alongside this complex normative landscape, two are the main plans that have been at the centre of my investigation: the Territorial Coordination Plan (PTC) of the Milan South Agricultural Park (see section 4.3.4.) and the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (WoE JSP) implemented by the WoE Local Enterprise Partnership in Bristol City Region (see section 7.3.1.). Both of them are meaningful examples of inter-municipal planning and gave me relevant hints for identifying the deficiencies experienced by planning in treating the social, economic and agro-ecological complexity of the rural hinterland (Cinà, 2015; Gallent et al., 2017). In the case of Milan, the Territorial Plan is lessening this complexity by putting in place a strong presumption against any land-use change. In this case, the policies, adopted almost twenty years ago, are strongly "conformative" (Janin Rivolin, 2008), have a negative normative nature and they have a focus limited on land-use designation. The only attempt to treat the contribution of agricultural activity in building more functional relationships among city and countryside for recreational uses and local food production comes from the Plans of Urban Belt (PUB), although these, unfortunately, have not been implemented for lack of funding and political resources (Vescovi, 2015).

The WoE Joint Spatial Plan is a recent and outstanding attempt by the WoE LEP to produce a strategic planning framework at city region level, addressed to deliver the needed amount of housing and infrastructures. As this is not a sectoral plan, it should have focused on rural issues as much as it focused on urban issues (CPRE, 2017). On the contrary, the Plan did not consider in any way the agro-ecological assets of the rural hinterland, nor the economic and social contribution of agricultural sector in Bristol City Region's economy. The result is that major developments were placed without any consideration of the fertility of land and of the location of green and blue infrastructures across the city region territory. The only way of the Plan to treat the rural is when it provided accurate justifications for the release of Green Belt land for housing developments, although the content of the national policy does not address in any way environmental or agro-ecological aspects.

Despite their embeddedness in different planning systems, the local planning policies dealing with agricultural areas, both in Italy and in England, have shown a common emphasis on regulation, on protecting countryside from inappropriate developments, preserving landscape qualities, rather than putting in place innovative land-use or spatial planning approaches that look at the differentiated and multifunctional nature of the countryside (Gallent et al., 2017). Here regulation is interpreted as a "structure", thus what Giddens defines as "the rules and resources [...] allowing the 'binding' of time-space in social systems" (Giddens, 1984: 17). What the case studies have shown is that land-use regulation in the countryside is enduring and it is the product of the attitude by planners and policy makers to narrow the scope of planning to the protection of existing resources.

While in England, local policies dealing with rural areas mainly aim at ensuring that developments in the countryside would respect the rural settings and not harm the aesthetic and landscape values of the countryside on the basis of a set of rules to be further negotiated during the planning application,

Italian plans show a harsher approach on land-use regulation. They make use of different layers of regulation according to the value and/or location of agricultural land. Despite providing a strong framework of protection, in this case little is the attention paid by planners and policy makers to provide the conditions for the social and economic development of agricultural areas and for shaping stronger urban/rural ties.

In both local and inter-municipal scales, planning for agricultural areas suffer from a lack of experimentation and innovation. Orientation on negative rather than positive norms, emphasis on regulating and controlling behaviours rather than guiding and promoting spatial change, use of stable and enduring land-use designations rather than guidelines and suggestions, are the focuses of planning, with a limited consideration of the role of agricultural activity in bridging the urban/rural spatial dichotomy. The very few innovative policies encountered in the case-study analysis are oriented at providing incentives for promoting farm diversification, requiring new developments to encompass multifunctional land-use (see section 7.3.2.), improving the accessibility of the periurban interface for urban populations and supporting the integration of environmental and ecological practices into agricultural activity (see section 5.4.3.1.).

The examples above mentioned demonstrate that the construction of good planning policies in the interface territories is still a challenge for research and policy making processes (Ibid.). Much needs to be done to develop a more sophisticated normative understanding of the role that agricultural areas can play for the overall sustainability of contemporary cities and territories. At the roots of this discussion, there is the long-lasting scarce attention that the issue of planning for agricultural areas in the frame of shaping better urban/rural relationships has received in the last decades, as already highlighted in section 2.2. This is also partly related to planning's deficiencies in addressing and acknowledging countryside's social, environmental and economic challenges, (Allen, 2003; Bryant, 1995; Della Rocca & Lapadula, 1983; Buchanan, 1982), due to what Gallent et al. (2017) defined as the planning's "disjointedly focus on distinct policy regimes".

Here it is taken the opinion that planning has the potential to become a "place-shaper" of the relationships among city and countryside by acting to consolidate, through policies, plans and the actions of local groups, the role of agricultural areas in providing food for city-regions, in hosting recreational uses for permanent and temporary populations and in strengthening the natural and environmental performances of the interface territories. Next section aims at developing this interpretation by applying the scenario-making approach to the governance and planning processes of the three case studies.

8.2. Applying the scenario approach: towards more "enabling" rather than "controlling" governance arrangements

After having analysed and discussed the case studies, one of the relevant

step of the research process is to think forward about the governance and planning innovations to be introduced for improving the contribution of agricultural areas to shape better functional relationships among urban and rural areas and to increase the overall sustainability of the urban regions investigated. The methodology used is the scenario making approach, in particular the model discussed by Myers & Kitsuse (2000), Secchi (2000) and Viganò (2010). In this case, the scenario is a tool for evolving the collaborative planning forms of the three case studies, for widening "the range of voices and values which get to shape governance agendas" (Healey, 2006: 323). According to this methodology, the governance processes are transformed and reworked towards "forms and practices within which critical, dialogic and discoursive forms of deliberative democracy can flourish" (Healey, 2006: 317) (see section 2.4.3.). The three scenarios are different because different are the contextual conditions in which the three cases are rooted, concerning administrative, institutional and geographical factors and dynamics. The goal is to develop governance arrangements which are more "enabling" rather than "controlling", opting to overcome the strong regulative focus highlighted in the empirical analysis and explained in section 8.1.2. which is hindering the construction of a multi-functional countryside and of more localised systems of food production.

8.2.1. The scenario for the Agricultural Park: constructing a Metropolitan Park Authority

The Agricultural Park of Milan is a good case for analysing the ways in which a group of local governments has cooperated for preserving a large portion of agricultural land in a metropolitan interface of a Western Europe urban region. As some recent research works have shown (Faravelli & Clerici, 2012; Vescovi, 2014; Calori & Magarini, 2015), the planning debate has historically interpreted the case of the Milan Agricultural Park as a positive example of how civil society has been able to guide local governments towards the recognition of the qualities of an agrarian landscape and the construction of a planning framework able to safeguard these qualities (Cinà & Di Iacovo, 2015). By crossing together local state and civil society, at the end of the 1990s a new narrative has been originated, bringing forward an idea of Agricultural Park as an open construct where agriculture, in its productive and historical-landscape significance, has been placed at the centre of the development model of the South of Milan. After a while, this positive interpretation started to change. The emergence of austerity cuts from central to local governments, the scarce financial autonomy of the Park Authority from the Province, the discontinuous political support from Provincial and Municipal governments to the Park, the growing perception from civil society that the Park was far from being a stable construction and that opposing forces from governments and real estate sector could have easily got rid of it (Ibid.), has gradually switched the hopes off. From a positive case of social mobilisation, the Park became a story of inertia regarding both the level of management (no changes have been introduced in governance of the Park which has remained the same in

the last twenty years) and of policies (planning, as the main policy sector of the Park, remained as it was at the beginning).

In chapter 4 I have mentioned some of the challenges that the Park Authority is currently experiencing, aspects that motivate the scenario of transformation proposed below. The first problem relates to the conflicts and tensions arising within the space of the Park. These are due to pressures and demands from the real estate sector and local governments to review the Park's borders. I have shown that borders are currently experienced by the majority of interviewees as spaces of tensions, as planning constructs whose inertia is a direct measure of the Park Authority's resistance to any transformative demand coming from local institutional and non-institutional actors. Moreover, the resistance of the Park Authority to review the borders is often linked to the perception that this process would lead to get rid of the land-use designation on agricultural areas. Other issues relate to the problems of management of the Park Authority and to its financial constraints, mainly due to the budget limitations characterising the Metropolitan City of Milan (Fedeli, 2016) and to the scarce coordination among the internal sectors of the Authority. Last but not least, the detachment of the Park Authority from the civil society's world, thus what I have identified as the scarce cooperation and communication among the Park Authority and the other local actors such as farmers' associations, Rural Districts, local environmental groups, ethical purchasing groups and no-profit associations.

The scenario aims at improving the governance of the Milan South Agricultural Park. It has been constructed on the basis of the contents of the recent policy proposal (Law no. 28/2016) set by the Regional Government to reorganize the systems of regional and local parks in Lombardy. This proposal is interpreted by the author as a good chance to improve the ways in which the management of periurban open spaces, agricultural and natural areas, is carried out. As I pointed out in Chapter 4, the weaknesses of this system refer to the inertia that PASM is currently undergoing, both from the level of investments and of spatial planning policies. In section 4.4.2. I highlighted that one of the main issue concerns the scarce ability of planning policy to promote and guide the social and economic development of agricultural areas: the only result achieved so far is a set of harsh regulatory policies that has preserved farmland, limiting significantly the urbanisation processes and the related phenomena of land speculation (see also section 4.3.3.). Instead, no consideration about the beneficial contribution of farmland for urban communities in terms of recreational use and sustainable food production and consumption (what the Plans of Urban Belt were aiming to) has been done.

Starting from the contents of Regional Law n. 28/2016, the scenario foresees the re-arrangement of the system of local and regional Parks in Lombardy according to the identification of what the law has defined as Territorial Ecosystem Settings (TES). The metropolitan area of Milan matches with the 8th TES, comprising the South Agricultural Park, the North Park (Parco Nord) and a number of other local parks and natural reserves (see section 4.5.2.). The law provides the amalgamation of Parks belonging to each TES and the re-organisation of their governance system and of their planning and management tools. In the case of Milan, a lively debate has arisen in the past

year both in administrative and political arenas, as reported in section 4.5.2. (Associazione Parco Sud, 2017). The main point of the discussion regards the possibility to amalgamate two regional parks that are quite different in terms of territorial vocation, land-use, extension and relationship with the city. In fact, while the South Agricultural Park has a mainly productive vocation with a network of highly specialised and competitive farms, the North Park is above all an urban park where the majority of its surface is occupied by woods, with a small portion of agriculture mainly in the form of urban orchards and allotments.

When the Law guidelines will find a policy implementation and the policy makers would have to plan how reorganising the governance of the Parks and elaborating a planning policy, a window of possibility could open for improving the effectiveness of its governance and its horizontal and vertical interactions with other institutions and local actors. The scenario proposed here, and summarised in **Figure 46**, is articulated in two aspects. The first refers to those factors that should guide the improvement of the governance of the Parks. The second one expresses the ways in which, according to the author, planning policy should be set out for overcoming the limits outlined before and for improving the contribution of agricultural areas in localising the city region food system and in shaping better functional and structural interdependencies among urban and rural areas in the metropolitan region.

8.2.1.1. The scenario for the governance: a wider representation of farmers' associations within the Park Authority

The first aspect of the scenario outlines a stronger representation of actors from the agricultural sector to decision making processes of the new metropolitan Park Authority. According to this view, the Executive Committee would have among its members not just local institutional actors (the mayors of the municipalities of the Park) but also a wider representation of the social and economic forces active in the space of the Park. Thus, the Park Authority would be expression of the local environmental and farmers' associations

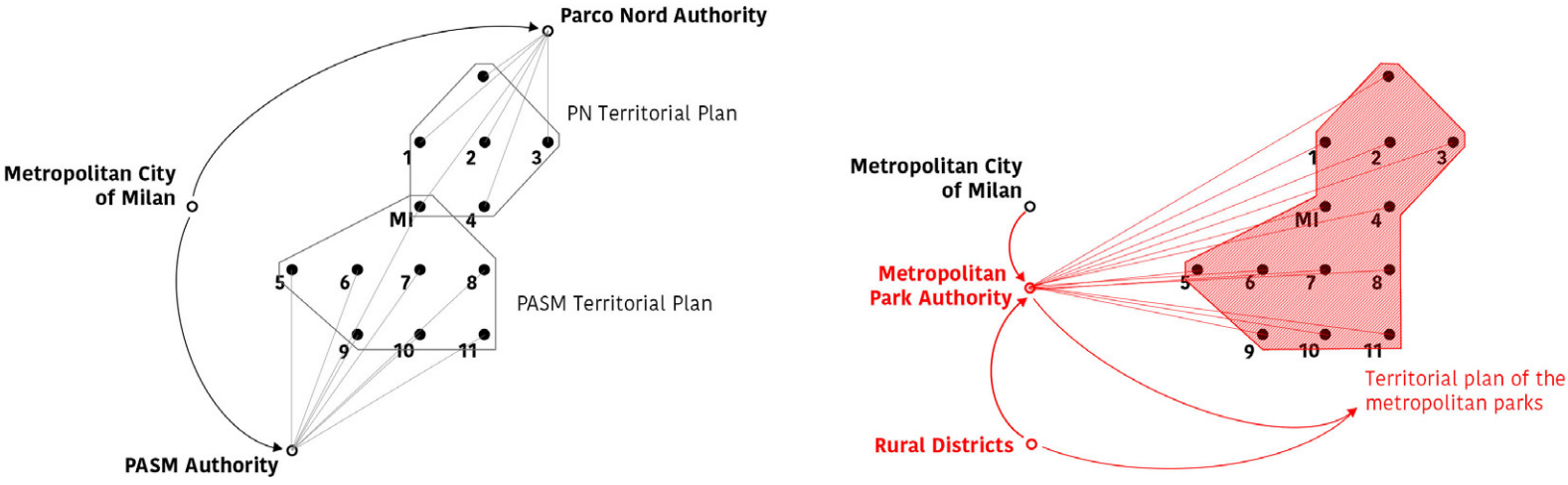


Figure 46: The governance in PASM (on the left the current situation, on the right the scenario)[1]. Source: Elaboration by the author.

1 The numbers stand for a sample of municipalities of the metropolitan city of Milan. Those from 1 to 4 belong to the Parco Nord Authority and those from 5 to 11 belong to the PASM Authority.

(currently expressed in two members of PASM Committee) and of the four Rural Districts of the Park, whose representatives would enter in the Committee. As already reported almost forty decades ago by OECD (1979), the active participation of farmers and their representatives to territorial planning processes set the conditions for a better management of urban fringes and for the acknowledgement of the social and environmental role of farms within institutional arenas (see also: Giacchè, 2012: 41). Therefore, having a more direct representation of Rural Districts in the Park's governance would allow to improve the connectivity among farmers' initiatives and the Park Authority's policy action (Marsden & Franklin, 2015), overcoming the problems of competitiveness already emerged in section 4.5.1. Moreover, it would achieve a stronger coherence among the development plans of the Rural Districts and the planning policy of the Park Authority.

8.2.1.2. The scenario for planning: a spatial vision and a set of multi-sectoral policies for localising the food system

For what concerns planning, the scenario moves the focus of the Territorial Plan from a regulatory to a design approach, able to integrate more effectively the productive potentials of agricultural areas with the city's demand for fresh and local food. The design approach would be the main feature of the Territorial Coordination Plan that the new Metropolitan Park Authority is going to produce once that the governance and management mechanisms will be defined.

Moreover, the design focus of the Territorial Plan would be framed by a new spatial vision addressed to improve the role of agricultural areas as functional connectors of more interdependencies among Milan and its rural hinterland. This vision would be defined according to a phase of participatory planning made of a set of collaborative meetings (see Introduction) among the interests involved with the aim of increasing the level of accountability of the Plan.

Here it is taken the position that the priority of the vision would be to define a trajectory of development for what are currently considered the marginal agricultural areas, hence all those under-used, neglected or degraded areas at the borders of the Park, some of which in urgent need of environmental or landscape requalification. The Plan would act on these areas in an integrated way, adopting a selective approach which would look at their multidimensional nature and at enhancing the conditions to favour innovative farming, recreational uses and natural habitats as a way to frame urban/rural relationships. In particular, two are objectives that the Plan would aim to achieve within these areas:

- to improve the liveability of urban peripheries. This would mean to: re-define the physical edges among urban and rural areas through punctual interventions and projects (see section 2.2.1.); increase the accessibility of periurban agricultural areas by re-designing and better connecting, through soft mobility paths, the countryside with the urban periphery; improve the benefits, in terms of recreation, health and job opportunities, of multi-functional farms for urban communities;

- to implement forms of agro-ecological urban agriculture addressed to city's demand, hence a typology of agriculture that is addressing food consumption practices, organic production, local and proximate food economies and food security with the purpose of reinforcing urban/rural linkages (Renting, 2017). As an example, the new Plan should include policies addressed to use part of this marginal agricultural land for horticulture and, in cases of soil contamination, forestry and other forms of soilless and innovative agriculture, such as aquaponics or horticulture in beds. Beyond land-use policies, which would have a crucial role in setting the ground for guiding new uses of the land or consolidating existing ones, other policies would be oriented to set up forms of agreement and mechanisms for establishing urban agriculture within these spaces. These forms would be facilitated by the fact that most of land is publicly owned and the Milan municipality would be in charge of defining the criteria and the land contracts through which allocating land (Calori & Magarini, 2015). A viable possibility could be to involve in the process of land allocation the farmers' associations (for example the DAM District) or cooperatives of young agricultural entrepreneurs which would be the more motivated actors to implement innovative and economically self-sustaining business models, also through the activation of some measures provided by the RDP.

The Territorial Plan would be shaped according to two priority actions. The first action concerns the need to conceive a mechanism and a set of policies able to address the issue of borders modification. According to Vescovi (2012: 24), the redefinition of margins should be oriented not just to trace new perimeters but it should be the chance to introduce qualitative policies through which defining those landscape features that should connote marginal agricultural areas. Here it is taken the view that the fundamental step of shaping new borders would be effective just if policies of land transfer and compensation would be defined. In particular, there would be the need to clarify the criteria according to which some portions of land will be urbanised and others would be included within the park borders. These criteria would consider different conditions of agricultural areas both related to qualitative and quantitative aspects such as:

- classification of soils based on capacity and fertility;
- classification of farms based on social, economic and environmental indicators (Gaviglio et al., 2014a) and on direct observation (see: Cinà & Sini, 2015);
- mapping of strategic agricultural areas and other planning designations made by local, provincial and regional plans (see section 4.3.);
- mapping of ecological networks, green and blue infrastructures and punctual and diffused elements of natural and landscape heritage.

During the process of borders review, planning officers of the Park Authority would act as mediators and supervisors of the process of land transfer ensuring that all the actors, especially local authorities, would act on the basis of the collective interest and that the criteria would be respected, avoiding real estate speculations. The new Plan should also set out the general contents of the policy of compensation, according to which developments within or in close proximity to the park should generate a compensation of the environmental

and landscape losses or damages produced by transformations. This would mean also to identify the areas where localising the compensation.

The second action of the Plan is to put in place a set of policies oriented to localise the metropolitan food system and to better integrate production and consumption patterns in the urban region. Here it is taken the position that this set of policies should be multi-sectoral and take a food system approach, integrating land use and planning regulations, rural development policies (mostly the contents and measures of the Rural Development Plan) and food policies. These policies would specifically look at:

- supporting the multi-functionality of farms (e.g. setting out a land use regulation allowing agricultural entrepreneurs to increase the built volume of their farms for accommodation and other multi-functional uses, integrating the system of incentives of the Rural Development Plan with the planning and agro-environmental performances set out by the Territorial Plan).
- supporting diversification of farms' agricultural production for establishing more interdependencies among food demand and supply in the urban region (e.g. outlining the planning guidelines and financial opportunities for those farms that would like to use part of their land for horticulture or local food productions; improving the cooperation and communication among farms and alternative food networks (AFNs) (such as Campagna Amica, ethical purchasing groups, DAM District, etc.);
- consolidating local food procurement policies in the Milan urban region (e.g. setting out the right conditions for a more extensive use of local products from farms of the Agricultural Park in school canteens and in public administration and private companies) (Calori & Magarini, 2015)
- setting out marketing strategies for the products of farms for increasing their use in local restaurants, cafes, and local food shops.
- improving the ecological, environmental and landscape performance of the agriculture of the Park (e.g. more extensive use of ecological buffer edges with forestry; putting in place actions for orienting the productions towards agro-ecological systems and/or agro-environmental practices (see the case of Aso Valley in section 5.4.3.1.).

For implementing the proposed policies what is needed is a careful review of existing policy frameworks as well as a process of knowledge exchange with farmers and their representatives which would help to set out the right policy regime. The set of policies above mentioned is multi-sectoral since it covers different policy sectors that planning, alone, would not be able to cover[2]. For this reason, the crucial role of cooperation and communication among the sectors of the Park Authority and of the Metropolitan City would be a fundamental step towards implementing effective policies for improving the sustainability of Milan food system.

2 A couple of good examples of multi-sectoral plans addressing the problems of land development and the transition more sustainable patterns of production in a rural context is included in: van den Berg (1989: 47-75).

8.2.2. The scenario for the Aso Valley: defining an inter-municipal planning policy

The local state in Aso Valley articulates itself in a fragmented administrative landscape made of a mosaic of small municipalities, both in territorial and demographic terms. As a consequence of the territorial reforms implemented by central government in the last decades and of the structural historical-institutional factors connoting Italy already investigated in Chapters 1 and 3, local governments in Aso Valley have been recently involved in multiple inter-municipal spaces of cooperation (see section 5.4.3.), each conveying a specific spatiality and a functional relationship across formally established boundaries (Haughton et al., 2013).

I have distinguished among institutional and multi-purpose/actor spaces of cooperation with the aim of clearly defining their specificities for what concerns the underlying strategy, the degree of inclusiveness to civil society and the territorial and economic impacts, especially those produced so far on agricultural activity. In section 5.5.1., I borrowed the theoretical definition developed by Haughton et al. (2013 & 2015) and by other authors that have distinguished among hard spaces of government and soft spaces of governance for describing the cooperative patterns and the innovative approach towards spatial development taken by what I defined as the soft spaces of cooperation in the Aso Valley (Lazzarini, 2017). It is when I investigated the planning policies of the valley that I noticed relevant incongruences among the forward thinking and strategic vision of these soft spaces, and their capacity to convey effective planning policies, that are at the moment lacking in this context. Thus, the presence of an evident gap among the policy implications of the networked governance and the contents of planning policies emerges. Current challenges faced by planning in the Aso Valley refer to the need to define sustainable land-use patterns, integrate agro-environmental aspects in land-use and spatial planning policies, reduce the conflicts between agricultural and industrial activities and manage the competition among municipalities for the location of sub-regional services

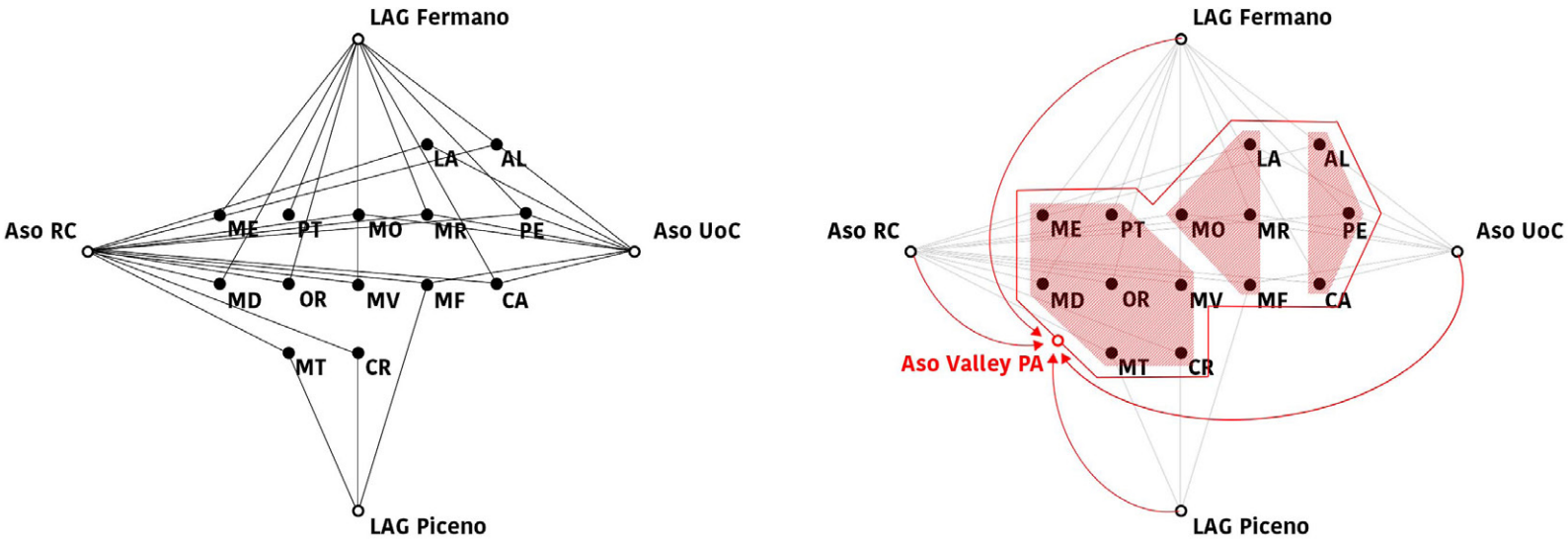


Figure 47: The governance in Aso Valley (on the left the current situation, on the right the scenario) . Source: Elaboration by the author.

and facilities.

The scenario proposed here addresses this gap by making a hypothesis of transformation of the valley's governance for developing a new planning policy. The scenario articulates the planning policy in two layers: a sub-regional spatial strategy for the Aso Valley and a set of inter-municipal plans implemented by groups of local authorities. Both of these levels are conceived as grounds for experimentation on the basis of the theoretical model drawn by Myers & Kitsuse (2000) and expressed in section 2.4.3. According to this view, the two planning policy levels condense a forward thinking, deeply rooted both in tangible and intangible factors, what the two researchers defined the "past components of future". The tangible factors are the territorial resources of the valley and the physical components of the rural landscape heritage. The intangible factors are the soft governance patterns of cooperation among local authorities. Both of them are able to achieve, through the decision making powers of local administrators ("present components of future"), the scenario goal of preserving the countryside and better shaping valley's urban/rural interdependencies ("future components of future").

As shown in **Figure 47**, the spatial strategy would operate on the area covered by 14 municipalities and matching with the Valdaso inter-municipal management setting ("Ambiti di gestione intercomunale") established by the Provincial Coordination Plan of Fermo (Province of Fermo, 2013: 153). The strategy would be produced by a newly ad-hoc intermunicipal panel of discussion and policy arena, the Aso Valley Planning Authority, coordinated and mediated by the two technical advisors of LAG Action Groups and including the mayors of the 14 local authorities of the Valley, the representatives of the farmers' association and other local associations and groups. The role of LAGs' technical advisors as coordinators is justified by their expertise in planning and by their being "super partes" from the patterns of personal and political relations among mayors. To bring external expertise and technical resources to the discussion, the Authority would be supervised by two officers from the planning sector of the Regional Government.

An important element of concern would be the position of the Planning Authority with respect to the existing collaborative patterns among local authorities: the Authority would act closely to the existing spaces of cooperation of the valley in a process of continuous knowledge exchange with the purpose of working across sectoral policies and strategies. Its activity would be oriented to coordinate the actions of different governmental and private sector's actors in the territory with the aim of generating, through an inclusive dialogue, a coherent, shared and sustainable path of development for the Valley, and to negotiate it over time through an appropriate, mutually satisfactory, course of action (Mount, 2012).

The spatial strategy would achieve two core objectives: on one hand, it would define the criteria according to which preserving the agro-ecological qualities and visual amenities of the rural landscape and, on the other hand, it would develop, through specific policies, the potentials of planning to be a place-shaper of the functional and structural interdependencies among urban and rural areas (Bronzini e Paolillo, 1997). In particular, the strategy would aim at:

- identifying the natural, environmental and agro-ecological systems and the punctual and diffused elements of the landscape to be protected and enhanced in the Aso Valley, on the basis of the prescriptions coming from the adopted provincial and regional planning policies (see section 5.3.);
- explaining the crucial spatial choices for achieving a sustainable land management at the level of the valley for what concerns the type, scale and broad location of housing, industrial, commercial and infrastructure developments and the location of services and public facilities according to a long-term plan of ten/fifteen years;
- defining the criteria, tools and mechanisms for the Transfer of Development Rights (see section 2.3.1.3.) in the valley, a policy needed to achieve the previous objective and, particularly, to equally re-distribute among local authorities the benefits and costs of inter-municipal developments (Balducci et al., 2006; Lazzarini & Chiarini, 2017);
- setting broad quality standards for new developments and for the reuse of brownfield or previously developed land (maximisation of land consumption, reuse of empty buildings and vacant lots, multi-functional land-use, accessibility);
- defining the policies aimed at integrating planning and rural development sectoral policies and strategies (Fanfani, 2016) (e.g. planning policies in local plans that answer to specific targets set by the Rural Development Plan or by the Local Development Plans made by LAGs; planning policies that provide incentives for farm diversification and agricultural multi-functionality; planning policies guiding farmers to restore natural elements or improve biodiversity of farmland (Marche Region, 2015); planning policies that support the transition towards agro-environmental farming practices);
- setting out planning interventions for improving the accessibility and the habitability of agricultural areas for permanent and temporary populations such as parks, social and recreation facilities, networks of soft-mobility paths and local roads.

While the spatial strategy would address the whole Valley, the inter-municipal plans would be implemented by a number of three-up-to-seven local authorities, defined on the basis of ongoing processes of social and spatial integration among municipal territories. A hypothesis is made in **Figure 47**, also according to the results of the interviews carried out in the past months. In particular, the area of Altidona, Pedaso and Campofilone has been already suggested by Mayors when they mentioned the inefficiencies of service management in the Valdaso Union of Local Councils (see section 5.4.2.). Moreover, since these municipalities currently share some technical expertise in planning, the production of an inter-municipal plan would be a coherent evolution of this joint management process. Rather than being another planning layer overlapping to existing ones, these plans would replace current local plans ("piano regolatore generale"), thus they would be binding and translate in detailed interventions and land-use management policies the general content of the spatial strategy above mentioned.

Therefore, the two layers articulate a double scale for local governments'

cooperation in planning, reinforcing the effectiveness of horizontal governance in Aso Valley and the ways in which it is able to produce spatial outcomes. The scenario opts to reinforce the idea that not just one subject intervenes in the construction of policies and in the production of territory but that a multiplicity of actors has a role in intervening within decision making processes (Governa & Salone, 2002). Hence, an idea of planning as a policy arena where local actors are involved in different ways and with different roles and tools in co-producing the relationships among urban and rural areas.

8.2.3. The scenario for Bristol City Region: innovating the WoE LEP's planning towards a better consideration of food systems

As I already explained in section 7.5.2., the underlying issues rising from the WoE LEP governance relate to the lack of consideration of agro-ecological aspects in planning processes. Since it is a recently established body with a still ongoing policy definition, it seems easier to think forward upon the construction of alternatives for modifying its governance. In the scenario proposed here, emphasis is placed on the active role that civil society members, as the Bristol Food Policy Council, can take in shaping sub-regional planning policies, on the basis of the model of co-production recalled before (see Introduction). Starting from the assumption that in the last decade the BFPC has had a prominent contribution in influencing policies at the level of the Bristol City Council for what concerns the inclusion of food within planning policies, the purpose here is to construct a scenario taking as reference the model of collaborative planning (Healey, 2006; Innes, 2013). By considering Giddends' interpretation of relational webs (Giddens, 1984), through a communicative effort the expertise of BFPC's members can influence the decisions taken within the webs created by LEP. Rather than constructing a new planning policy as happened in the Aso Valley, the purpose here is to transform the governance of WoE LEP and to change the contents of its planning policies towards a better consideration of agro-ecological aspects for building stronger functional urban/rural relationships.

As for the previous case, a distinction between the past, present and future components of future is provided with the aim of clarifying how the scenario acts with respect to existing spatial resources and future dynamics (Myers & Kitsuse, 2000). In the case of Bristol, the past components of future are not just the network of agricultural areas and the green and blue infrastructures stretching in and around the city, but also the related planning designations consolidated over time, such as the Green Belt policy. These planning constructs are crucial devices to consider since they influence significantly the decisions taken on land-use patterns in the City Region. The present component of future is the current ability of opposing actors, such as BFPC and CPRE, to influence the policy level and to take advantage of the current cracks in LEP's decisional arenas for changing the contents of decisions (see section 7.5.3.). Moreover, the future components of future are the cluster of actions and policies needed to frame a sustainable food production and

consumption, which are interpreted as the factors capable of building stronger functional interdependencies among urban and rural areas.

The opportunities to use the past and present factors of future to achieve the future components of future lie in the presence of cracks and interstices in contemporary neoliberal governance mechanisms (Cloke et al., 2014; Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009) already mentioned in section 7.5.3. According to this view, these cracks can provide a room of action for those actors who are opposing to the strategic thinking brought forward by the dominant narrative put in place by leading actors. In other words, the LEP presents in itself some in-between spaces where the resistance of actors such as BFPC can be used to influence or modify the contents of the policies.

Furthermore, the analysis of LEP's way of functioning has highlighted the presence of a decisional arena, the Rural Sector Group, that could serve as a potential ally for supporting the activity of the BFPC. As a cluster of local agri-food enterprises, the Rural Sector Group could build an alliance with all those stakeholders performing a strong presumption in defence of the interests of the agricultural and food sectors. Moreover, by acting from within the LEP's governance, the Rural Sector Group could serve as a catalyst of the external resistance of BFPC to introduce a change in the policy focus of LEP. Accordingly, the scenario aims at using the expertise present within the BFPC and the Rural Sector Group to guide the construction of a new policy discourse for including demands and interests of the countryside within LEP's governance.

The scenario proposed (**Figure 48**) opts for a modification not just of the governance of the WoE LEP with a better representation of the actors and interests coming from local agri-food sector, but also of the planning policies in force in the city region. Accordingly, the Joint Spatial Plan would be re-defined to include a deeper consideration of the agro-ecological aspects in the spatial development of Bristol City Region. More in details, the changes at the level of the WoE JSP would be the following:

- the spatial focus of the plan would turn from the location of housing and infrastructure developments across the region to the construction

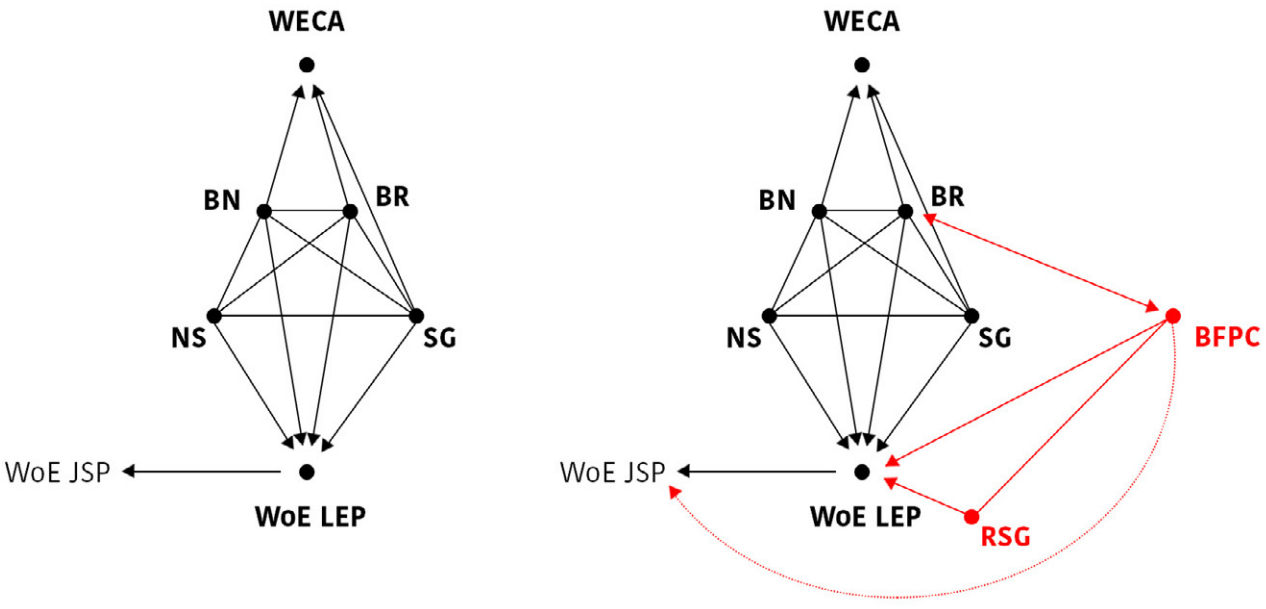


Figure 48: The governance in Bristol City Region (on the left the current situation, on the right the scenario)[1]. Source: Elaboration by the author.

1 NS: North Somerset; SG: South Gloucestershire; BR: Bristol; BN: Bath and North East Somerset; RSG: Rural Sector Group of LEP.

of a sustainable vision of development for Bristol City Region;

- decision upon the location of new developments across the city region would keep into consideration not just an assessment of the best locations in terms of accessibility and Green Belt preservation but also the need to protect green and blue infrastructures and safeguard the best and most versatile agricultural land (grades 1, 2 and 3A), including existing food growing gardens and allotments;
- the plan would introduce the Local Green Space Designation to protect local food growing areas across the City Region (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012);
- the plan would provide a set of policies on the basis of the previous responses from BFPC to planning consultations such as: facilitate and promote the use of most versatile agricultural land across the city region, especially within Green Belt designation, for food production; retain and strengthen links among Bristol and the other urban centres with local wholesale markets, and nearby abattoirs, dairies and farms; "enhance the diversity of local food retailing, including the provision of street markets and pop-up shops"; encourage the planning proposals that include or integrate food growing spaces (BFPC, 2013).

8.3. Learning from the PhD research

The identification of what I consider the weaknesses of the thesis is interpreted as a fundamental step of the learning process which results from the PhD research. The goal of this section is to gain awareness on the limitations that the thesis currently has in order to build a critical understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the work done so far and ultimately build the conditions for improving my abilities to cope with similar issues in future research.

The first weakness is the case-study design of the thesis. Yin (2003:21) defines the case-study design as the "process that guides the investigator in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting observations", a phase that, according to Philliber et al. (1980), should identify "what question to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect and how to analyse the results". Taking the framework by Yin (2003: 21), in this case, the problem deals with a weak arrangement of work plan of the PhD thesis, rather than with the logical sequences of the research design. The more relevant issue is that the number of case-studies chosen was not proportionate with the time available to investigate them. As explained in section 2.4., the justification behind the choice of three case studies lies in the opportunity to investigate the role of agricultural areas in shaping better urban/rural relationships within different geographical and institutional contexts, according to a criteria of representativeness. However, in the last twelve months, the difficulty to have enough time to investigate in depth the three case-studies emerged. This problem manifested in the difficulty to analyse in detail how local actors' preferences influence inter-municipal cooperative arrangements and to understand possible improvements to put in place for answering to the issues

highlighted in the case-study analysis. Moreover, the presence of case studies belonging to different institutional and planning frameworks (as Italy and England) raised the need to employ more time than I expected to fully understand the domestic contexts and to trace an exhaustive institutional and geographical profile of the case studies. Another aspect of interest is that the choice of the three case studies happened in different steps and not at the same time, and this caused some problems. While Bristol and the Aso Valley have been defined as case studies in the first year, the case of Milan South Agricultural Park was chosen in a second step, at the beginning of the second year. This brought to re-define the thesis plan, even though it resulted in enriching the knowledge on the phenomenon and its institutional and spatial configurations, despite increasing the amount of work to be done. Thus, an ex-post suggestion would be to dedicate more time during the first year to the process of case-study choice, and to develop a more solid understanding of the time needed to fully develop the case-studies. In fact, in a three-year PhD thesis, the application of a qualitative methodology as the one used in this thesis, made of a relevant number of semi-structured interviews, documentary analysis and planning surveys in the three cases investigated above, would have required at least seven/eight months more of careful on-site analysis in order to achieve a fully satisfactory and in-depth understanding of local governance and planning processes.

Another thesis limitation relates to the exploration of the possible trajectories for improving the effectiveness of inter-municipal planning policies. This aspect concerns the impacts that the thesis (or its process) is able to generate in the external world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). What the thesis does not provide yet is a pragmatic reasoning of the possible answers for improving current conditions and the problems highlighted in each of the case-studies. The three scenarios above mentioned are just a very first understanding of the ways in which current conditions can be improved. They do not include an analysis of the positions of local governmental and civil society actors on how to initiate a process of change and what are the barriers to its achievment. While some of the policy solutions were elaborated on the basis of the positions of some interviewees, it was not possible to place these solutions within an arena of exchange among the interests involved. In other words, it would have been interesting to test the efficacy of the proposed policies within real governance arena through participatory and collaborative processes. This would have implied a change in the positionality of the researcher from an outsider to an insider status, hence would have set the condition for the researcher to have a direct influence on the investigated phenomena (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016: 63). Concerning the time needed, it is estimated that this would have required at least one additional year of research just to begin a similar process and to reach satisfactory results in at least one of the cases investigated.

In the case of the Aso Valley, for example, a plan to gather mayors around a table to discuss the opportunity to introduce an inter-municipal planning policy was set up but unfortunately not implemented for lack of time (**Figure 49**). The plan had at its core the organisation of a focus group mediated by myself with the help of the supervisor. The focus group aimed at collecting basic data in a group setting regarding the preferences of local administrators to implement an inter-municipal planning policy (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016:

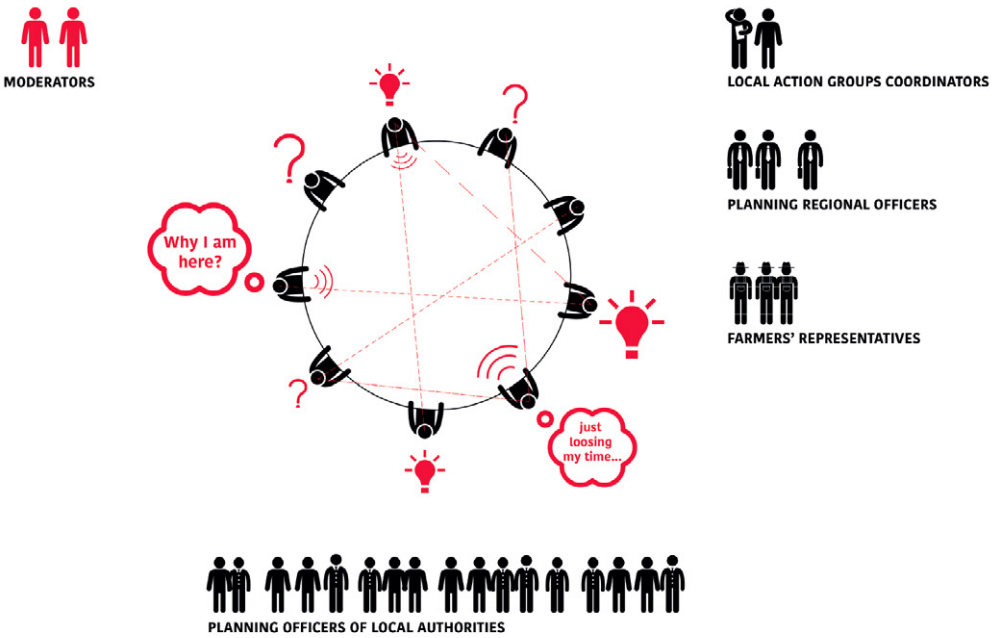


Figure 49: Proposal for a focus group in Aso Valley. Source: Elaboration by the author.

114), but more importantly to activate a debate for initiating a policy making process. The focus group was conceived as a chance for the Mayors of the valley "to share their views, hear the views of the others, and perhaps refine their own views in light of what they have heard" (Ibid.: 114). Accordingly, they would have been able to discuss together about the effectiveness of planning policies with the participation of other relevant actors having an interest to and the knowledge on the topic discussed. These actors were the two LAG coordinators (expressing a place-based knowledge), the regional officers from the planning sectors (representing technical expertise) and the farmers' representatives (representing the main economic sector of the valley). In order to guide the knowledge exchange at the level of the planning practice within each municipality, it was planned to have among the audience of the focus group also the local planning officers, in order to inform them with the benefits of having an inter-municipal planning policy.

A third and last limitation of the thesis deals with the construction of the interview sessions and the ways in which I collected qualitative data. This limitation relates to the fact that I was an absolute beginner in the process of interview making. As a consequence, difficulties emerged because some of the interviewees responded to questions through highly politicised speeches, most of which contributed to the data collection in a different way from expected. These speeches also required me to handle a great flexibility concerning the relationships with participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016: 63 & 111; Yin, 2003: 58-59), a skill that at the beginning I did not really have. Thus, the fact that interviewees were mayors and local councillors required an effort from my side to re-orient their speech flow within the thematic perimeter of the interview. Sometimes I decided not to do it because I thought that limiting too much their speeches would have erected more barriers among the interviewer and the intervieweee.

Accordingly, sometimes what it was planned to be a semi-structured

interview turned to be even less structured, with a loss of time on aspects that were out of the research topic and the production of unconnected pieces of information which were difficult to use in the research. Anyway, during the last interviews I noticed an increase in my abilities to set up effective interviews and to handle problems. This can be explained in what Merriam & Tisdell (2016: 64) defined as the awareness of how the research process affects the researcher and "changes both the participants and the researcher at least to some extent".

This concerned not just the process of adaptation of the observer to the interviewee, which was the main problem encountered, but also the use of language. For some mayors and councillors, but also farmers and other actors, this last point has been an important issue because sometimes respondents had not the skill to fully understand my technical language and this pushed myself to do an effort to make the communication more effective by simplifying the language to increase the interviewees' understanding of the topic discussed.

8.4. Research challenges and follow-ups

Purpose of this section is to introduce three possible trajectories for the follow-up of the PhD thesis. These trajectories constitute a likely evolution of the thesis in the light of deepening some aspects that during the three-year activity I had not the opportunity to investigate for a number of reasons.

The first follow-up relates to the in-depth investigation of the dynamics of local governments' spaces of cooperation, which can be explained on the basis of internal and external forces. When investigating the context of the Aso Valley (see chapter 5), I made a distinction among statutory and multi-purpose/multi-actor spaces of cooperation to highlight their differences in terms of actors involved, policy focus and degree of openness to civil society. Looking at the second group, the LAGs have at their focus the implementation of local development strategies based on the external sources of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). At the same time, also other spaces such as the Aso River Contract, are dependent upon other regional and national financial sources. While the internal factors have been thoroughly analysed by the research, the external forces have been identified but unfortunately not fully investigated. More that a limit, this can be considered a trajectory of the research that opted to study the dynamics related to the processes of coalition making among local actors and how these coalitions have been able to build and perpetuate a narrative of urban/rural relationships, as other researchers have done for other contexts for for different narratives and spatial representations (Brunori & Rossi, 2007).

Accordingly, a possible follow-up of the thesis would be to deepen these external factors, hence to investigate the role that European Union's investment policies has had in guiding sub-regional cooperation in Italy and in other European Countries. This topic has been extensively investigated by the stream of literature which looks at the contribution of European policies in providing incentives to sustainable development in rural areas (among the

many, see: Coderoni & Pagliacci, 2018; Woodruffe, 1989). The challenge here lies in exploring the possible relationships that can be created among planning and rural development policies (Lodigiani, 2017; Giacchè, 2012), already emerged as one of the major problems of policy effectiveness both in Aso Valley and in Milan Agricultural Park. As I tried to do for the case of Milan (see section 8.2.1.2.), some multi-sectoral policies can be conceived for turning a sectoral approach into a more integrated framework that would look at the multifunctional nature of the countryside and at its relationships with the city.

A second possible follow-up of the research would be to understand the relationship among ownership and use of agricultural areas in the three cases investigated. This trajectory would explore the ways in which land ownership influences the use of land, discovering if this does hinder the conversion of extensive productions (for example arable crops) into more localised productions (horticulture, fruit trees, etc.). What are the barriers that ownership creates to farmers that would like to innovate their production and to diversify their activity? How land contracts influence the long-term business strategy of farms? And how policies and plans react on the rights of land and property owners?

The issue of land ownership has been rarely investigated by planning researchers, though agricultural scientists and urban economists did investigate it more often (among the many: Munton, 1976; Bryant, 1982). Among the few, Paul Cloke highlighted that recognizing property rights is crucial since "[they] can limit the scope of interventionary planning and reduce the "art of the possible" in land-use policy" (Cloke, 1989: 265). By analysing the case of the Agricultural Park of Casal del Marmo in Rome, Cavallo et al. (2015) defined land ownership allocation as a crucial factor for investigating the interdependencies among human, natural and productive features of the Park.

A recent and insightful work on land ownership comes from the blog "Who owns England"[3], which aims at investigating the spatial data on land ownership in England, Wales and Scotland. It is carried on with the help of volunteers from public administrations, some of whose choose to remain anonymous for the sensitivity of the information. Data of the blog are coming from the Land Registries and the Landowner Deposit Maps, always not easy accessible from common users. The purpose is to shed light on who are the land owners and to spatialize them in an open source map. In almost two years of activity, the blog brought to underline that just 710 "aristocratic individuals" —this is the expression used by the author— own a quarter of the entire Country (Shrubsole, 2017). As stated by the blog's author, concentration of land ownership in hands of few is a factor undermining the process of housing delivery which is "caused at least partly by housing developers' "stranglehold" on land supply" and hindering from tackling seriously the problem of farm subsidies "which for too long have rewarded land owners simply for owning vast estates rather than providing public goods" (Ibid.).

One way of deepening the land ownership problem is to investigate the

3 https://whoownsengland.org/. I would like to thank Angela Raffle for having suggested me this source.

process of land conversion. This is the path taken by Bryant (1982: 52), who has explored the actors involved in the process of land conversion, the land values and the spatial impacts produced at regional scale. His research resulted in highlighting the crucial role played by land speculators (or "land dealers") as intermediaries in the process of land conversion and as the people who get reward without improving in any ways the conditions of land. Land dealers usually get a great financial benefit at the expense of the so called "pre-development land-owners" (such as farmers and those defined by Bryant as "non-farm residents with land of an area beyond that necessary for personal residential purposes") that have not acquired an interest on the development of land (Bryant, 1982: 54).

Another crucial element of discussion is the ongoing decrease in the amount of public land available for ethical and social purposes, including young agricultural entrepreneurship, that local authorities in England are currently experiencing. By analysing the phenomenon of County Farms, a recent post in the blog "Who owns England?" has shown their harsh decrease (from 426,695 acres in 1977 to just 215,155 acres in 2017 equal to 10 million hectares of public land in England), a process that has been accelerated by the central government's cuts to local authorities' budgets (Shrubsole, 2018). Since County Farms are usually let out to young and first-time farmers, often at below-market rents, they are often providers of income as well as of possibilities to access the job market for the "next generation of farmers". Shrubsole (2018) observed that, once dismissed, the County Farms' land goes to ever-larger industrial farm units, swallowing the relationships with the local context in terms of social, economic and health benefits.

Hence, these are some of the elements which outline the relevance of investigating the dynamics related to land ownership and to the process of land conversion, an aspect that it would be interesting to explore in the future. In this case, emphasis would be placed not just on the process that brings agricultural land to being developed but more importantly on the barriers and potentials related to the transition towards different types of agricultural production. Thus, to explore the conditions that favour the best and more sustainable use of agricultural land for localising the food systems of contemporary cities and regions.

Another interesting point would be to investigate how digital knowledge could provide a greater understanding of the dynamics investigated in the thesis. For example, to analyse if and how digital connections have improved –or simply reworked– the relationships among city and countryside, or to understand if rural communities have gained a social and economic benefit from the accessibility of digital resources. Also, it would be interesting to explore how digital knowledge could improve the effectiveness of planning processes and turn the institutional spaces of deliberation into more open and reflexive arenas of exchange among local actors.

8.5. Concluding remarks

The thesis has investigated the barriers and the potentials for planning to strengthen the role of agricultural areas in building more localised food systems and in shaping more sustainable relationships among city and countryside. Some general observations have emerged from this work.

The first is that planning for urban/rural relationships needs more flexibility and discretion. For better adapting to local circumstances and for supporting the contribution of agriculture within localised food systems, planning policy needs to rely less on harsh regulations and more on soft, fuzzy and enabling forms of designations that can convey multi-functional land-uses, support small holdings and innovative farming, and sustain the coexistence among urban and rural functions in a diversified countryside. Incentives, guidelines, suggestions, qualitative and performative policies, agreements and non-statutory forms of planning would be the means to achieve this. Collaboration and reciprocal interaction among a range of institutional and civil society actors, including farmers, would be a fundamental step to achieve significant results (Healey, 2006).

The second observation is that more cooperation among local governments is needed for improving the effectiveness of planning policies across the urban/rural interface. Especially in highly fragmented administrative landscapes like Italy, local governments should be guided to cooperate on cross boundary issues by solid and consistent regional and national policy frameworks. The thesis highlighted that the only way to construct adequate governance and planning arrangements addressing functional relationships among cities and their rural hinterlands is to produce stable and durable patterns of cooperation among local governments (Axelrold, 1984) which are more effective if well connected to civil society.

Last but not least, the challenges of contemporary cities and territories, including those related to sustainable food systems, require more integration among policies and agencies (Gallent et al., 2017). Planning alone can do little to address the many social, environmental and economic forces that shape and influence the agricultural production in a given area, especially when this area is located in a periurban setting. What is needed today is the construction of more integrated policies, able to overcome the sectoral intervention and to shape actions and practices jointly tackling health, climate change, environmental, rural development and planning aspects. This means to build spatial policies which can reinforce the idea that agriculture is not just a rural phenomenon anymore but it has established a competitive and conflictual relationship, as well as a strict economic, social and functional connection with the city.

References

Adornato, A., Lattanzi, P., Trapè, A., Le misure agro-ambientali. In: Costato, L., Germanò, A., Rook Basile, E., eds. (2011), *Trattato di diritto agrario*, Torino: UTET, pp. 567-579;

Agnoletto, M., Utopie Rurali. In: Agnoletto, M. & Guerzoni, M. (2012), *La campagna necessaria. Un'agenda di intervento dopo l'esplosione urbana*, Macerata: Quodlibet, pp. 9-16;

Agnoletto, M. & Guerzoni, M. (2012), *La campagna necessaria. Un'agenda di intervento dopo l'esplosione urbana*, Macerata: Quodlibet;

Agostini, S. (2008), *Recupero e riuso degli edifici rurali. Elementi di progetto e di piano. Integrazione nel paesaggio*, Rimini: Maggioli Editore;

Agostini, S., Erba, V., Di Marino, M. (2010), *Guida alla pianificazione territoriale sostenibile. Strumenti e tecniche di agroecologia*, Rimini: Maggioli;

Albrechts, L. (2004), Strategic (spatial) planning reexamined, *Environment & Planning B: Plan. Des.* 31: 743–758;

Albrechts, L. (2012), Reframing strategic spatial planning by using a co-production perspective, *Planning Theory* 12(1): 46-63;

Allen, A. (2003), Environmental planning and management of the peri-urban interface: perspectives on an emerging field, *Environment and Urbanisation* 15(1);

Allmendinger, P. & Haughton, G. (2009), Soft spaces, fuzzy boundaries and meta-governance: the new spatial planning in the Thames Gateway, *Environment and Planning A* 41: 641-633;

Allmendinger, P., Haughton, G., Knieling, J., Othengrafen, F. (2015), *Soft Spaces of Governance in Europe: A Comparative Perspective*, London: Routledge;

Arcidiacono, A., Salata, S., Ronchi, S., Nota CRCS sul consumo di suolo nei parchi lombardi. In: Arcidiacono, A., Di Simine, D., Oliva, F., Pareglio, S., Pileri, P., Salata, S. (2012), *Centro di Ricerca sui Consumi di Suolo. Rapporto 2012*, Roma: INU Edizioni, pp. 43-47;

Askim, J., Klausen, J. E., Vabo, I., Bjurstrøm, K. (2017), Territorial upscaling of local governments: a variable-oriented approach to explaining variance among West European Countries, *Local Government Studies* 43(4);

Astengo, G. & Bianco, M. (1945), *Agricultura e urbanistica*, Torino: Viglongo;

Atkinson, R. & Moon, G. (1994), *Urban policy in Britain: the City, the State and the Market*, London: Macmillan Press;

Axelrold, R. (1984), *The Evolution of Cooperation*, New York: Basic Books Publishers;

Baldersheim, H. & Rose, L. E. (2010), Territorial Choice. Rescaling Governance in Eurpean States. In: Baldersheim, H. & Rose, L. E., eds., *Territorial choice. The politics of boundaries and borders*, New York: Palgrave, pp. 1–20;

Balducci, A., Fedeli, V., Manfredini, F. & Pucci, P., (2006), *I Territori della produzione. Riorganizzare gli spazi della produzione in provincia di Vicenza*, Florence: Alinea;

Barattucci, C. (2004), *Urbanizzazioni disperse. Interpretazioni e azioni in Francia e in Italia 1950-2000*, Roma; Officina Edizioni;
Barbanente, A. (2015a), Il Piano Paesaggistico della Regione Puglia, *Sentieri Urbani* 7(17): 46-53;
Barbanente, A. (2015b), Dieci anni di governo della Puglia. Un Bilancio, *Urbanistica Informazioni* 259-260: 5-6;
Bastiani, M., ed. (2012), *Contratti di fiume. Pianificazione strategica e partecipata dei bacini idrografici*, Palermo: Flaccovio;
Beatley, T. (2000) *Green Urbanism: Learning from European Cities*, Washington: Island Press;
Becattini G. (2000), *Il bruco e la farfalla. Prato nel mondo che cambia* (1954-1993), Firenze: Le Monnier;
Bedini, M. A. & Bronzini, F. (2016), The new territories of urban planning. The issue of the fringe areas and settlement filaments, *Land Use Policy* 57: 130-138;
Bengs, C. & Schmidt-Thomé, K. (2006), *Urban-rural relations in Europe*, ESPON 1.1.2. Final Report, Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, Helsinki University of Technology;
Bengston, D., Youn, Y. (2006), Urban Containment Policies and the Protection of Natural Areas: the case of Seoul's Green Belt, *Ecology and Society* 11(1): 3;
Berg, P. (1978), *Reinhabiting a Separate Country. A Bioregional Anthology of Northern California*, San Francisco: Planet Drum;
Berger, G. (1959), *Le monde en devenir, L'Encyclopédie Française*, t. XX. Then published in Phénoménologie du temps et Prospective, 1964:270;
Betti, S., Le Marche nel paesaggio. In: Adornato, F. & Cegna, A., eds. (2013), *Le Marche nella mezzadria. Un grande futuro dietro le spalle*, Macerata: Quodlibet, pp. 67-79;
Bianchetti, C. (2008), *Urbanistica e sfera pubblica*, Roma: Donzelli;
Bianchetti, C. (2011), *Il Novecento è davvero finito. Consolderazioni sull'urbanistica*, Roma: Donzelli;
Bianchetti, C., Un cattivo Darwin. In: Agnoletto, M. & Guerzoni, M. (2012), *La campagna necessaria. Un'agenda di intervento dopo l'esplosione urbana*, Macerata: Quodlibet, pp. 90-94;
Bloch, B. & Caraher, M., Integrating health, environment and society – introducing a new arena. In: Viljoen, A. & Wiskerke J., eds. (2012), *Sustainable Food Planning: evolving theory and practice*, Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publisher;
Bobbio, L. (2005), Italy: after the storm. In: Denters, B. & Rose, L., eds., *Comparing local governance trends and developments*, London: Palgrave, pp. 29-46;
Bohn, K. & Viljoen, A., The CPUL City Toolkit: planning productive urban landscapes for European Cities. In: Viljoen, A. & Wiskerke, J., eds. (2012), *Sustainable food planning. Evolving theory and practice*, Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publishers, pp. 479-494;
Bolgherini, S. (2016), Crisis-driven reforms and local discretion: An assessment of Italy and Spain, *Italian Political Science Review*, 46(1): 71–91;
Bolocan Goldstein, M., Botti, S., Pasqui, G., eds. (2011), *Milano Nord Ovest.*

Uno studio geografico operativo, Milano: Mondadori Electa;
Bookchin, M. (1989), *Per una società ecologica*, Milano: Elèuthera;
Borecky, J. & Prudky, L. (2001), Public Perception of Local Government in the Czech Republic. In: P. Swianiewicz, ed., *Public Perception of Local governments*, Budapest: Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative–OSI;
Bovill, P. (2002), Loosening the Green Belt, *Regeneration and Renewal* 12;
Bryant, C., Russwurm, L. & McLellan, A. (1982), *The city's countryside. Land and its management in the rural/urban fringe*, London & New York: Longman;
Bryant, C. (1995), The role of local actors in transforming the urban fringe, *Journal of Rural Studies* 11(3): 255-267;
Braudel, F. (1977), *Capitalismo e civiltà materiale (secoli XV-XVIII)*, Torino: Einaudi;
Brenner, N., Peck, J., Theodore, N. (2010), Variegated neoliberalisation: goegraphies, modalities, pathways, *Global Networks* 10: 182-222;
Bronzini, F. & Paolillo, P. L, eds. (1997), Studi per il Piano di Inquadramento Territoriale delle Marche, *Urbanistica Quaderni 11*, Roma: INU Edizioni;
Brunori, G. & Rossi, A. (2007), Differentiating countryside: social representations and governance patterns in rural areas with high social density: the case of Chianti, Italy, *Journal of Rural Studies* 23:183-205;
Bruzzese, A. & Lapenna, A., eds. (2017), *Linking Territories. Rurality, Landscape and Urban Borders*, Milan: Planum Publishers;
Bruzzo, A. (1999), Un'ipotesi di compensazione fianziaria a livello intercomunale finalizzata alla gestione sostenibile dello sviluppo economico ed urbanistico in ambito metropolitan. In: Camagni, R., ed., *La pianificazione sostenibile delle aree periurbane*, Bologna: Il Mulino;
Bucci, A. (2015), Pianificazione paesaggistico ambientale nelle Marche, *Urbanistica Informazioni* 259-260: 26-29;
Buchanan, S., Power and planning in rural areas: preparation of the Suffolk county structure plan. In: Moseley, M., ed. (1982), *Power, Planning and People in Rural East Anglia*, Norwick: Centre of East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia, pp. 1-20;
Butelli, E. (2015), Pianificazione Ambientale autosostenibile e alimentazione: il Piano del cibo della Provincia di Pisa, *Scienze del Territorio* 3: 125-130;
Caffyin, A. & Dahlström, M. (2005), Urban-Rural Interdependencies: Joining up Policy in Practice, *Regional Studies* 39 (3): 283-296;
Calafati, A. (2009), *Economie in cerca di città*, Roma: Carocci;
Calafati, A. (2014), *Città e aree metropolitane in Italia*, GSSI Urban Studies Working Paper 1, L'Aquila;
Calori, A., Dal Parco Agricolo alla regione milanese: empowerment degli attori per la riconquista della sovranità alimentare. In: Fanfani, D., ed. (2009), *Pianificare tra città e campagna. Scenari, attori e progetti di nuova ruralità per il territorio di Prato*, Firenze: University Press, pp. 91-114;
Calori, A. & Magarini, A., eds. (2015), *Food & the Cities. Politiche del cibo per città sostenibili*, Milano: Edizioni Ambiente;
Callau, S., Montasell, J., Il Parco Agricolo del Baix Llobregat di Barcellona. Uno strumento di conservazione, gestione e sviluppo di uno spazio agricolo periurbano. In: Fanfani, D., ed. (2009), *Pianificare tra città e*

campagna, Firenze: University Press;
Cappuccio, S. (2009), *Bioregionalism as a new development paradigm*, Conference Proceedings ENTI Salerno 2009 - International Conference of Territorial Intelligence Territorial intelligence and culture of development - November, 4th-7th 2009;
Carey, J. (2015), Urban and Community Food Strategies. The case of Bristol, *International Planning Studies* 18(1): 101-128;
Cassatella, C. (2015), Politiche rurali e politiche del paesaggio: un'alleanza (forse) possibile. In: *Atti della XVIII Conferenza Nazionale SIU - Società Italiana degli Urbanisti ITALIA '45-'45. RADICI, CONDIZIONI, PROSPETTIVE*, Roma-Milano: Planum Publisher, pp. 446-451;
Cavallo, A., Pellegrino, D., Di Donato, B., Marino, D. (2015), Values, Roles and Actors as Drivers to build a local food strategy: the case of the Agricultural park of "Casal del Marmo". In: Cinà, G. & Dansero, E., eds. (2015), *Localizing urban food strategies. Farming cities and performing rurality*, 7th International AESOP Sustainable Food Planning Conference Proceedings, 7-9 October 2015, Torino, Politecnico & Università di Torino;
Centre for Cities (2010), *Beyond Boundaries: Why Cross-boundary Collaborations Matters and What This Means for Local Enterprise Partnerships*, London: Centre for Cities;
Clark J. & Munroe D. (2013), The Relational Geography of Peri-urban Farmer Adaptation, *Journal of Rural and Community Development* 8(3), 15-28.
Cerruti But, M., Kërçuku, A., Setti, G., Vassallo, V. (2017), *Tensioni Urbane. Ricerche sulla città che cambia*, Siracusa: Lettera Ventidue;
Cesari, M. (s.d.), *I distretti rurali: potenzialità e sviluppo del marketing territoriale. Caso studio: l'area del Fermano*, tesi di laurea, APAT agenzia per la protezione dell'ambiente e per i servizi tecnici;
Ciabò, S. & Nonni, E. (2016), Parchi agricoli per piccoli produttori, *Urbanistica Informazioni* 265: 21-23;
Ciapetti, L. (2014), Il territorio tra efficienza e sviluppo: la riforma delle province e le politiche di area vasta, *Instituzioni del federalismo* 2;
Cinà, G., Somewhere the city slows down and the country comes back. Features of a starting change of course in many Italian urban fringes. In: Cinà, G. & Dansero, E., eds. (2015), *Localizing urban food strategies. Farming cities and performing rurality*, 7th International AESOP Sustainable Food Planning Conference Proceedings, 7-9 October 2015, Torino, Politecnico & Università di Torino;
Cinà, G. (2016), Aree agricole periurbane. Lavori in corso, *Urbanistica Informazioni* 265: 10-26;
Cinà, G. & Sini, A. (2015), Torino: il ritorno delle aree agricole periurbane nella pianificazione urbana, *Urbanistica Informazioni* 261-262: 78-81;
Cinà, G. & Di Iacovo, F. (2015), Top down policies and bottom up practices in urban and periurban agriculture: an Italian dilemma, *Future of Food: Journal on Food, Agriculture and Society* 3(1): 9-20;
Cinà, G. & Lazzarini, L. (2018), *Food narratives and planning spaces in Milan City Region*, NEWDIST s.i. AESOP SFP Workshop, June 28-30 2018;
Cinà, G. & Lazzarini, L. (2018), Intercomunalità e agricoltura: pratiche e politiche di sviluppo in contesti periurbani, *Archivio di Studi Urbani e Regionali* 122: 146-160;

Clarke, N. & Cochrane, A. (2013), Geographies and politics of localism: the localism of the United Kingdom's coalition government, *Political Geography* 34: 10–23;
Cloke, P., ed. (1989), *Rural Land-Use Planning in Developed Nations*, London: Unwin Hyman;
Cloke, P., Rurality and creative nature-culture connections. In: Clout, H., Ed. (2007), *Contemporary Rural Geographies*, London: Routledge, 96-110;
Cloke, P., Williams, A., Goodwin, M. (2014), Neoliberalism, big society, and progressive localism, *Environment and Planning A* 46(12): 2798-2815;
Coderoni, S. (2011), L'accordo d'area della Valdaso. Un esempio di approccio territoriale per l'azione agroambientale, *Agrimarcheuropa* 0;
Coderoni S., L'accordo agro-ambientale d'area della Valdaso. In: Vanni, F., ed. (2014), *Agricoltura e Beni Pubblici. Azioni Collettive per la Governance del Territorio*, Rome: INEA;
Coderoni, S. & Pagliacci, A. (2018), The territorial dimension of environmental sustainability in Italy along the urban/rural continuum, Journal of *Environmental Planning and Management* 61(8):1318-1339;
Colavitti, A., Usai, N. (2008), *Environmental Planning as a tool for place memory evaluation and as valorisation strategy of territorial context*, Icomos Scientific Symposium 2008;
Colavitti A., Pes, F. (2017), *Verso quale Città Metropolitana? L'area vasta di Cagliari secondo una prospettiva bioregionalista*, Proceedings of the XIX National SIU Conference, Catania June 16-18th 2016;
Corboz, A. (1985), Il territorio come palinsesto, *Casabella* 516: 22-27;
Curry, N., Reed, M., Keech, M., Maye, D., Kirwan, J. (2015), Urban agriculture and the policies of the European Union: the need for renewal, *Spanish Journal of Rural Development* V(1): 91-106;
Curtice, J., ed. (2017), *Governing England: Devolution and mayors in England*, London: the British Academy;
Dansero, E., Tecco, N., Bagliani, M., Peano, C. (2017), Verso il sistema locale territoriale del cibo: spazi di analisi e di azione. *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana* X:19-38;
Davoudi, S, and Stead, D. (2002), Urban-Rural Relationships: an introduction and a brief history, *Built Environment* 28(4): 269-277;
De Luca G., *L'efficacia della pianificazione di area vasta nell'esperienza italiana e comunitaria*, atto del convegno INU La provincia e la pianificazione intermedia nell'area vasta: nuovi scenari per il governo del territorio, Perugia, Sala dei Notari, April 16th 2012;
De Luca, G. & Lingua, V. (2012), *Pianificazione Regionale Cooperativa*, Firenze: Alinea;
De Luca, G. (2015a), L'integrazione paesaggistica al piano di indirizzo territoriale vigente della Toscana, *Urbanistica Informazioni* 259-260: 24-25;
De Luca, G. (2015b), A che punto piamo con la pianificazione territoriale regionale e paesaggistica? *Urbanistica Informazioni* 259-260: 10-12;
Della Rocca, G. & Lapadula, B. eds. (1983), *Rapporti fra agricultura e urbanistica nello spazio peri-urbano*, Padova: CEDAM;
De Marchi, M. (2018), *Foodspace: conflicts and paradoxes in the food system of Veneto region*, NEWDIST s.i. AESOP SFP Workshop, June

28-30 2018;
Dente, B. & Melloni, E. (2005), Il piano strategico come strumento di "governance" locale. Il caso di Torino, *Amministrare III*: 385-420;
Dente, B. (2011), *Le decisioni di policy*, Il Mulino, Bologna;
Denters, S. & Rose, L. E. (2005), *Comparing local governance Trends and Developments*, Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan;
Deriu, M., Il Parco Città Campagna nella pianura bolognese. In: Fanfani, D., ed. (2009), *Pianificare tra città e campagna. Scenari, attori e progetti di nuova ruralità per il territorio di Prato*, Firenze: Firenze University Press, pp. 138-151;
Di Biagi, P., ed. (2010), *La grande ricostruzione. Il piano INA-Casa e l'Italia degli anni cinquanta*, Roma: Donzelli;
Di Iacovo, F., Brunori, G., Innocenti, S. (2013), Le strategie urbane: Il piano del cibo, *Agriregionieuropa*, 32;
Di Marino, M., Le reti ecologiche nei piani della Regione Lombardia. In: Agostini, S., Erba, V., Di Marino, M. (2010), *Guida alla pianificazione territoriale sostenibile. Strumenti e tecniche di agroecologia*, Rimini: Maggioli, pp. 217-237;
Donadieu P. (2017), Building agri-urban commons. In: Bruzzese, A. & Lapenna, A., eds. (2017), *Linking Territories. Rurality, Landscape and Urban Borders*, Milan: Planum Publishers;
Dorling, D. (2014), *All that is solid: wow the great housing disaster defines our times, and what we can do about it*, Bristol: Allen Lane;
Dubbeling, M. (2013), *Cityfood: linking cities on urban agriculture and urban food systems*, ICLEI and the RUAF Foundation;
Elkin, T., McLaren D., and Hillman, M. (1991), *Reviving the city: Towards sustainable urban development*, London: Friends of the Earth;
Fainstein, S. (2000), New Directions in Planning Theory, *Urban Affairs Review* 35: 451;
Fainstein, S. (2010), *The Just City*, New York: Cornell University Press;
Fanfani, D., ed. (2009), *Pianificare tra città e campagna*, Firenze: University Press;
Fanfani, D., Il progetto del territorio agrourbano per una conversione economica biregionale. In: Magnaghi, A., ed. (2014), *La regola e il progetto. Un approccio bioregionalista alla pianificazione territoriale*, Firenze: Firenze University Press, pp. 69-96;
Fanfani, D. (2016), Il Parco Agricolo Periurbano della Piana Fiorentina, *Urbanistica Informazioni* 265: 24-26;
Faravelli, M.L. & Clerici, M.A. (2013), Verso una nuova alleanza città/campagna: riflessioni sul parco agricolo sud Milano, *Archivio Studi Urbani e Regionali* 106: 18-39;
Fedeli, V. (2016), *Metropolitan Governance and Metropolitan Cities in Italy: Outdated Solutions for Processes of Urban Regionalisation?* Wissenschaftlicher Beitrag, Springer;
Ferlaino, F. & Molinari, P. (2009), *Neofederalismo, neoregionalismo e intercomunalità. Geografia amministrative dell'Italia e dell'Europa*, Bologna: Il Mulino;
Ferraresi, G., ed. (2009), *Produrre e scambiare valore territoriale. Dalla città diffusa allo scenario di forma Urbis et agri*, Firenze: Alinea;

Ferrario, V. & Lironi, S. (2016), Padova: il progetto del Parco Agro-paesaggistico riparte dal basso, *Urbanistica Informazioni* 265: 13-16;
Featherstone, D., Ince, A., Mackinnon, D., Strauss, K., Cumbers, A. (2012), Progressive localism and the construction of political alternatives, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, New Series 37:177–182;
Fiora G. F., Pagliero, B., Mortari, I., Boggio Merlo, P., Turchetto, N., Viotto, L. (2014), Riduzione del consumo di suolo: varianti parziali ai PRG e assistenza tecnico amministrativa agli enti locali, *Urbanistica Informazioni* 257;
Fischer F. & Forester J. (1993), *The argumentative Turn in Policy analysis and planning*, Durham: Duke University;
Florida, R. (2002), *The Rise of the Creative Class: and How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*, New York: Basic Books;
Fregolent, L. (2014), *Conflitti e Territorio*, Milano: Franco Angeli;
Friedmann, J. (1987), *Planning in the Public Domain*, Princeton: Princeton University Press;
Gabellini, P. (2010), *Fare urbanistica. Esperienze, comunicazione, memoria*, Roma: Carocci;
Gaeta, L., Janin Rivolin, U., Mazza, L. (2013), *Governo del territorio e pianificazione spaziale*, Milano: Città Studi Edizioni;
Gallent, N., Bianconi, M., Andersson, J. (2006), Planning on the edge: England's rural-urban fringe and the spatial planning agenda, *Environment Planning B: Plan. Des.* 33: 457–476.
Gallent, N., Shaw, D. (2007), Spatial planning, area action plans and the rural–urban fringe, *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management* 50 (5): 617–638;
Gallent, N., Tewdwr-Jones, M., Hamiduddin, I. (2017), A century of rural planning in England: a story of contestation, fragmentation and integration, *Special Issue. Planum Scientific Committee. Planum. The Journal of Urbanism II* (35): 91-104;
Gambino, R. (2012), Un territorio in bilico tra permanenze e trasformazioni. In: Sargolini, M. & Talia, M., eds., *Riconoscere e riprogettare la città contemporanea*, Milano: Franco Angeli, pp. 26-38;
Gant, R., Robinson, G., Fazal, S. (2011), Land-use change in the 'edgelands': policies and pressures in London's rural-urban fringe, *Land Use Policy* 28: 266–279;
Garano, S., Crescita urbana e gestione del territorio agricolo. In: Della Rocca, G. & Lapadula, B. eds. (1983), *Rapporti fra agricultura e urbanistica nello spazio peri-urbano*, Padova: CEDAM;
Gaviglio, A., Bertocchi, M., Silvestri, S., Pirani, A. (2014a), The use of Environmental, Economic and Social Indicators as decision support for the advancement of Farms towards Sustainability. In: *Proceedings of the 50th SIDEA Conference*;
Gaviglio, A., Pirani, A., Bertocchi, M. (2014b), Sustainable Development for a model of agriculture in the metropolitan system, *Advanced Engineering Forum* 11: 417-423;
Gaviglio, A., Bertocchi, M., Demartini, E. (2017), A tool for the Sustainability Assessment of Farms: Selection, Adaptation and Use of Indicators for an

Italian Case Study, *Resources* 6 (60);
Geddes, A., Parker, C. & Scott, S. (2018), When the snowball fails to roll and the use of horizontal networking in qualitative social research, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 21(3): 347-358;
Gennaio M. P., Hersperger A.M., Bürgi M. (2009), Containing urban sprawl – evaluating effectiveness of urban growth boundaries set by the Swiss Land Use Plan, *Land Use Policy* 26: 224–232;
Giacchè, G. (2012), *Verso una maggiore integrazione dell'agricoltura nella pianificazione territoriale. Analisi e proposte per i comuni di Assisi Bastia Umbra, Bettona e Cannara*, PhD Studies Series: Volume 8, anno 2012, Associazione "Alessandro Bartola";
Giaimo, C., ed. (2007), *Le conferenze di pianificazione per il governo del territorio*, Roma: INU Edizioni;
Giddens, A. (1984), *The Constitution of Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press;
Giliberti, G., Il paesaggio rurale: una costruzione dell'agricultura, un interesse della collettività. In: Gisotti, M.R., ed. (2015), *Progettare parchi agricoli nei territori intermedi: cinque scenari per la piana fiorentina*, Firenze: Firenze University Press, pp. 15-24;
Gisotti, M.R., ed. (2015), *Progettare parchi agricoli nei territori intermedi: cinque scenari per la piana fiorentina*, Firenze: Firenze University Press;
Giudice, B. (2018), *Ecological planning strategies for a qualitative land take. Suggestions from France to Italian approach*, Doctoral Thesis, Politecnico di Torino;
Glotfelty, C. & Quesnel, E., eds. (2015), *The Biosphere and the Bioregion. Essential writings of Peter Berg*, London & New York: Routledge;
Governa, F. & Salone, C. (2002), Descrivere la governance. Conoscenza geografica e modelli di azione collettiva nelle politiche urbane e territoriali, *Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana,* Serie XII, vol. VII: 29-50;
Habermas, J. (1984), *The Theory of Communicative Action: Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalisation of Society*, London: Polity Press;
Harvey, D. (1989), From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: the transformation in urban governance in late capitalism, *Geografiska Annaler Series B* 71: 3–17;
Hassink, J. & van Dijk, M., eds. (2006), *Farming for health*, Amsterdam: Springer Netherlands;
Haughton, G., Allmendinger, P., Oosterlynck, S. (2013), Spaces of neoliberal experimentation: soft spaces, post-politics, and neoliberal governmentality, *Environment and Planning A* 45: 217-234;
Haughton, G., Constrained governance rescaling and the development of a new spatial framework for Greater Manchester. In: Lingua, V. & Balz, V., eds. (2018), *Shaping Regional Futures – Designing and Visioning in Governance Rescaling*, Berlin: Springer Nature;
Hajnal, G. (2001), Hopes and Reality: The First Decade of the Hungarian Local Government System in the Eyes of the Public. In: Swianiewicz, P., ed., *Public Perception of Local governments*, Budapest: Local Government and Public Service Reform Initiative–OSI;
Healey, P. (2006), *Collaborative Planning. Shaping places in fragmented societies*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan;
Healey P. (2007), In search of the "Strategic" in Spatial Strategy Making,

Planning Theory & Practice, 10-4: 439-457;
Helm, D. (2015), *In Defence of Green Belt*, Paper Presented at the Seminar "Green Belt of the Future", 16 February 2017, GLA building, London.
Henfrey, T., Resilience and Community Action in Bristol. In: Henfrey, T., Maschkowski, G. & Penha-Lopes, G., eds. (2017), *Resilience, Community Action and Societal Transformation*, East Meon: Permanent Publications;
Hertzog, R. (2010), Inter-municipal co-operation: A viable alternative to territorial amalgamation? In: Swianiewicz, P., ed., *Territorial consolidation reforms in Europe*, Budapest: OSI/LGI, pp. 289–312;
Howard, E. (1898), *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, London: Sonnenschein;
Hulst, R. & van Montfort, A., eds. (2007), *Inter-municipal cooperation in Europe*, London: Springer;
Jabareen, Y. R. (2006), Sustainable Urban Forms, *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26(1): 38-52;
Jacuniak-Suda, M., Knieling, J., Obersteg, A. (2018), Urban-rural partnerships as a tool of territorial cohesion. A conceptual approach delivered from INTERREG IV C URMA "Urban-rural partnerships in metropolitan areas", *Special Issue. Planum Scientific Committee, Planum The Journal of Urbanism* 35(2): 117-130;
Janin Rivolin, U. (2008), Conforming and performing planning systems in Europe: an unbearable cohabitation, *Planning Practice + Research* 23(2);
Jonas, A. (2012), City-regionalism: Questions of distribution and politics. *Progress in Human Geography*, 36 (6): 822–829;
Jones, M. (1999), *The regional state and economic regulation: Regional regeneration or political mobilization?* Paper presented at the 6th International Conference of the Regional Studies Association 'Regional Potentials in an Integrating Europe', University of the Basque Country, Bilbao, September 1999.
Kahn, H., Bruce-Briggs, A. (1972), *Things to come*, New York: Hudson;
Kaid, L. L. & Holtz-Bacha, C. (2008), *Encyclopedia of Political Communication*, London: Sage Publications;
Koomen E., Dekkers J., Van Dijk T. (2008), Open-space preservation in the Netherlands: planning, practice and prospects, *Land Use Policy* 25: 361–377;
Koprić, I. (2012), Consolidation, fragmentation, and special statues of local authorities in Europe, *Croatian and Comparative Public Administration* 12(4):1175-1196;
Kuhlmann, S. & Wollmann, H. (2011), The evaluation of institutional reforms at sub-national government levels: a still neglected research agenda, *Local Government Studies* 37(5): 479-494;
Kuhlmann, S., Bouckaert, G., eds. (2016), *Local Public Sector Reforms in Times of Crisis: National Trajectories and International Comparisons, Governance and Public Management Series*, Basingstoke: Palgrave;
Kuhlmann, S. & Wayenberg, E. (2016), Institutional Impact Assessment in Multi-Level-Systems: Conceptualizing Decentralization Effects from a Comparative Perspective, *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 82 (2): 233-254;
Kulesza, M. (2002), Methods and techniques of managing decentralisation

in CEE Countries: the Polish experience. In: Peteri, G., ed., *Mastering decentralisation and public administration reforms in Central and Eastern Europe*, Budapest: The Open Society, pp. 189-217;
Ilbery, B., Maye, D. (2005), Alternative (shorter) food supply chains and specialist livestock products in the Scottish–English borders, *Environment and Planning* A 37: 823–844;
Indovina, F., ed. (1990), *La città diffusa*, Venezia: Daest;
Innes, J. (1995), Planning theory's emerging paradigm: communicative action and interactive practice, *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, 14(3):183-90;
Innes, J. (2013), *A Turning Point for Planning Theory? Overcoming Dividing Discourses*, UC Berkeley, IURD Working Paper Series;
Ishkanian, A., Szreter, S. (2012), T*he Big Society Debate: A New Agenda for Social Welfare?* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar;
Ladner, A., Keuffer, N., Baldersheim, H. (2015), *Local Autonomy Index for European countries (1990-2014)*, Release 1.0, Brussels: European Commission;
Lapadula, B., Agricultura nelle regioni metropolitane. In: Della Rocca, G. & Lapadula, B. eds. (1983), *Rapporti fra agricultura e urbanistica nello spazio peri-urbano*, Padova: CEDAM, pp. 101-119;
Lazzarini, L., Javareshkian, M., Brambilla, C. (2015), Bologna Agri-urban Clusters, *Changing Cities. La Mostra*, Milano: Di Baio Editore;
Lazzarini, L. (2017), Soft Cooperation and Rural Development in Aso Valley in Italy, *Journal of International Scientific Publications: Agriculture & Food* 5: 238-251;
Lazzarini, L. (2018), The role of planning in shaping better urban-rural relationships in Bristol City Region, *Land Use Policy* 71: 311-319;
Lazzarini, L. & Chiarini, C. (2016), The reorganization of development rights at inter-municipal level: different scenarios for an alternative land use forecast in Seriana Valley in Italy, *Internatonal Journal of Sustainable Development and Planning*, 12(3): 406-415;
Lemke, T. (2007), An indigestible meal? Foucault, governmentality and state theory, *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 8(2): 43-64;
Lodigiani, A. (2017), *Governing the peri-urban agricultural territory. Opportunities and obstacles of integration between spatial planning and the Common Agricultural Policy*, doctoral dissertation XXVII Cycle, Politecnico di Milano;
Longo, A. & Mareggi, M. (2012), Learning by design in an international Urban planning and Policy design Master Program, *Planum, The Journal of Urbanism*, October 2012, 25(2);
Longo, A. & Calvaresi, C. (2004), La governance dei parchi peri-urbani nell'area Milanese, *Territorio* 28: 165-170;
Longo, A. & Dezio, C. (2017), Milano Bioregione: re-conceptualize the metropolitan area in relation to the Food-City system, *8th Annual Conference of the AESOP 2017*, Coventry;
Lovering, J. (2007), The relationship between urban regeneration and neoliberalism: two presumptuous theories and a research agenda, *International Planning Studies* 12: 343-366;
Maggi, M. (2014), *Invarianti strutturali nel governo del territorio*, Firenze:

University Press;
Magnaghi, A., ed. (1990), *Il territorio dell'abitare*, Milano: Franco Angeli;
Magnaghi, A. (2011), Il progetto locale. Coscienza di luogo e auto-sostenibilità, *Il progetto sostenibile* 29: 12-21;
Magnaghi, A. (2014), *La Regola e il Progetto. Un approccio bioregionalista alla pianificazione territoriale*, Firenze: Firenze University Press;
Marcou, G. (2010), La réforme territoriale. Analyse du nouveau projet de réforme des collectivités territoriales. In: Némery, J. C., ed., *Quelle nouvelle réforme pour les collectivités territoriales françaises?* Paris: Harmattan, pp. 21-80;
Marcou, G., Wollmann, H., Koprić, I., eds. (2016), *Public and Social Services in Europe. From Public and Municipal to Private Sector Provision,* Governance and Public Management Series, Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 55-69;
Markusen, A., The Future of Planning: Gains for the Craft, Threats to the Philosophy. In: Lowney, S. & Landis, J. (1998), *50 Years of City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley,* pp. 293-301;
Markusen, A. (2006), Urban development and the politics of a creative class: evidence from a study of artists, *Environment and Planning A* 38: 1921-1940;
Marlow, D. (2015), *Scotland and England: Local Government Devolution -lessons and Issues*. August 11, 2016;
Marotta M. (2015), Quante Unioni, quali Unioni. Studio sulle Unioni dei Comuni in Italia. In: *Atti del XXIX Convegno SISP Società Italiana di Scienza Politica*, Arcavata di Rende, September 10-12 2015;
Marsden, T. & Franklin, A. (2015), (Dis)connected communities and sustainable place-making, *Local Environment. The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability*, 20 (8): 940-956;
Marshall, F., Waldman, L., MacGregor, H., Mehta, L. & Randhawa, P. (2009), *On the edge of sustainability. Perspectives on peri-urban dynamcs*, STEPS Working Paper 35, Brighton: STEPS Centre;
Massey, D. (2005), *For Space*, London: Sage;
Mattingly, M. (1999), *Institutional structures and processes for environmental planning and management of the peri-urban interface*, Research project on Strategic Environmental Planning and Management for the Peri-urban Interface, Development Planning Unit, University College London;
Mawson, J. (1997), New Labour and the English regions: A missed opportunity? *Local Economy*, pp. 194-203;
Mazza, L. (2010), Le difficoltà della pianificazione dello spazio, *Territorio* 52: 7-24;
Merlin, P. (1994), *La croissance urbaine*, Paris: Puf;
Merriam, S. & Tisdell, E. (2016), *Qualitative research. A Guide to Design and Implementation*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass;
Metzger, J. & Schmitt, P. (2012), When soft spaces harden: the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, *Environment and Planning A* 44: 263-280;
Mininni, M., La prossimità come dispositivo interscalare delle sfere d'azione nelle politiche del paesaggio. Azioni e reazioni sul paesaggio in Puglia. In: Agnoletto, M. & Guerzoni, M. (2012), *La campagna necessaria. Un'agenda di intervento dopo l'esplosione urbana*, Macerata: Quodlibet,

pp. 140-150;
Mininni, M., Dalla campagna urbana al periurbano. In: Donadieu P., ed. (2013), *Campagne urbane. Una nuova proposta di paesaggio per la città,* Roma: Donzelli;
Moir, J., Rice, D., Watt, A. (1997), Visiual amenity and housing in the countryside. Scottish planning local authority approaches, *Land Use Policy* 14(4): 325-330;
Morgan, K. (2009), Feeding the city: the challenge of urban food planning, *International Planning Studies* 14: 341–348;
Morgan, K. & Moragues-Faus, A. (2015), Raframing the foodscape: the emergent world of urban food policy, *Environment and Planning A* 46: 1558-1573;
Moroni, M., La mezzadria marchigiana in una prospettiva storica. In: Adornato F. & Cegna, (2013), *Le Marche nella mezzadria Un grande future dietro le spalle*, Macerata: Quodlibet;
Mount, P. (2012), Growing local food: Scale and local food systems governance, *Agriculture and Human Values* 29: 107–121;
Munton, R. J. C. (1976), An analysis of price trends in the agricultural land market of England and Wales, *Tijdschrift voor economische ed sociale goegrafie* 67(4):202-12;
Murdoch, J., Lowe, P., Ward, N., Marsden, T. (2003), *The differentiated countryside*, London: Routledge;
Murdoch, J. (2006), *Post-structuralist geography. A guide to relational space*, London: Sage;
Myers, D. & Kitsuse, A. (2000), Constructing the future in planning: a survey of theories and tools, *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 19(3);
Ndubisi, F. (2003), *Ecological Planning. A historical and comparative synthesis*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press;
Neate, S. (2014), Ministers Must Review Green Belts, *Planning*, no 1988. pp. 12;
Nørgaard, A. S. (1996), Rediscovering reasonable rationality in institutional analysis, *European Journal of Political Research* 29(19): 31-57;
Norton, A. (1994), *International handbook of local and regional government. A comparative analysis of advanced democracies*, Cheltenham: Aldershot;
Osmont, A. (1998), La “gouvernance”: concept mou, politique ferme, *Les Annales de la Recherche Urbaine* 80-81: 19-26;
Ostrom, E., Crossing the great divide: coproduction, synergy, and development. In: Evans, P., ed. (1997), *State-society synergy. Government and social capital in development*, pp. 85-118
Paasi, A. (2011), Geography, space and the re-emergence of topological thinking. *Dialogues in Human Geography* 1: 299-303;
Pacione, M. (2009), *Urban Geography: A Global Perspective*, London: Routledge;
Palermo, P. C. (2004), *Trasformazioni e governo del territorio*, Milano: Angeli;
Palermo, P.C. (2009), *I limiti del possibile. Governo del territorio e qualità dello sviluppo*, Roma: Donzelli;
Paone F. (1997), Urbanistica e campagna urbanizzata. Alcune riflessioni, *Paesaggio Urbano*, 1: 7-15;
Papworth, T. (2015), *The Green Noose. An Analysis of Green Belts and*

Proposals for Reform, London: The Adam Smith Institute;
Pascariu, G., Ianos, I., Sirodoev, I. (2012a), Land-use conflicts and environmental policies in two post-socialist urban agglomerations: Bucharest and Chisinau, *Carpathian Journal of Earth and Environmental Sciences* 7(4): 125-136;
Pascariu, G., Ianos, I., Sirodoev, I. (2012b), Built-up space dynamics complicates the present-day urban land use in Bucharest, *Analele UniversităŃii din Oradea – Seria Geografie* 1/2012: 48-53;
Patrizi L., Normative in zona agricola. In: Della Rocca G. A., Lapadula B. F., eds. (1983), *Rapporti fra agricoltura e urbanistica nello spazio peri-urbano*, Padova: Fondazione Aldo della Rocca, pp. 153-190;
Paül V. & McKenzie F. H. (2013), Peri-urban farmland conservation and development of alternative food networks: Insights from a case-study area in metropolitan Barcelona, *Land use policy* 30: 94-105;
Paun, A. & Thimont Jack, M., Test for the West: Devolution to the West of England. In: Curtice, J., ed. (2017), *Governing England: Devolution and mayors in England*, London: the British Academy;
Pavesi, F. C., Federici, M., Pezzagno, M., Il consume di suolo tra stato di fatto e stato di diritto in Regione Lombardia. In: ISPRA (2018), *Consumo di suolo, dinamiche territoriali e servizi ecosistemici*, 288/2018, Edizione 2018;
Peano, A., ed. (2006), *Il paesaggio nel futuro del mondo rurale. Esperienze e riflessioni sul territorio torinese*, Firenze: Alinea;
Peck, J. (1995), Moving and shaking: business elites, state localism, and urban privatism, *Progress in Human Geography* 19: 16-46.
Pendall, R., Martin, J., Fulton, W. (2002), *Holding the Line: Urban Containment in the United States*, Washington: The Brookings Institution Centre on Urban and Metropolitan Policy;
Philliber, S., Schwab, M., Samsloss, G. (1980), *Social research: Guide to a decision-making process*, Itasca: Peacock;
Pileri, P. & Maggi, M. (2008), Cambiamenti di uso e coperture del suolo in aree periurbane: risultati e prospettive per il governo del territorio, *Conference Proceedings, X congresso nazionale SIEP-IALE*, Bari;
Poli, D., Per una ridefinizione dello spazio pubblico nel territorio intermedio della bioregione urbana. In: Magnaghi, A., ed. (2014), *La regola e il progetto. Un approccio bioregionalista alla pianificazione territoriale,* Firenze: Firenze University Press, pp. 43-67
Predieri A., Il trasferimento di funzioni alle regioni: evoluzione del quadro legislativo. In: INU (1978), *Agricoltura e governo del territorio*, Venezia: Marsilio Editori, pp. 59-74;
Probst, B. & Berenson, L. (2014), The double arrow: how qualitative social work researchers use reflexivity, *Qualitative Social Work* 13(6): 813-827;
Pucci, P., Campagna e nuove infrastrutture in Italia. Un quadro incerto. In: Agnoletto, M. & Guerzoni, M. (2012), *La campagna necessaria. Un'agenda di intervento dopo l'esplosione urbana*, Macerata: Quodlibet, pp. 151-159;
Pucci, P. (2017), Urban and rural areas are not symmetrical categories. The challenge of the hybridisation processes. In: Bruzzese, A. & Lapenna, A., eds. (2017), *Linking Territories. Rurality, Landscape and Urban Borders*,

Milan: Planum Publishers;
Pugalis, L. (2010), Looking back in order to move forward: the politics of evolving subnational economic policy architecture, *Local Economy* 25 (5–6): 397–405;
Pugalis, L. & Townsend, A. R. (2012), Rebalancing England: sub-national development (once again) at the Crossroads, *Urban Res. Pract.* 5(1), 159–176;
Quaglia, S. & Geissler, J.P. (2017), Milan Rural Metropolis. Neo-ruralisation of the City, *ISOCARP Review* 13: 85-98;
Raffestin, C. (1981), *Per una geografia del potere*, Milano: Unicopoli;
Raffle, A. & Carey, J., Grassroots activism, agroecology, and the food and farming movement: ten years in Bristol's food story. In: Waterman, T. & Zeunert, J., eds. (2018), *Routledge Handbook of Landscape and Food*, London: Routledge;
Reed, M., Curry, N., Keech, D., Kirwan, J., Maye, D. (2013), *City-region Report Synthesis*, Work Package 2/Deliverable 2.3, SUPURBFOOD. Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community;
Reed, M. & Keech, D. (2015), Building a Bristol Food City Region from the Grass Roots Up: Food Strategies, Action Plans and Food Policy Councils, *Urban Agriculture Magazine* 29;
Reed, M. & Keech, D., Making the City Smart from the grassroots up: the Sustainable Food Networks of Bristol. In: Deakin, M., Diamantini, D., Borrelli, N., eds. (2016), *The Governance of City Food Systems*, Milano: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, pp. 78-98;
Renting, H., Dubbeling, M., Hoekstra, F., Carey, J., Wiskerke, H. (2015), Food on the urban agenda, *Urban Agriculture Magazine* 29: 3-4;
Renting, H. & Florin, M. (2015), Building sustainable food systems beyond the urban/rural divide, *Urban Agriculture Magazine* 30: 6-8;
Renting, H., Exploring Urban Agroecology as a Framework for Transitions to Sustainable and Equitable Regional Food Systems, *Urban Agriculture Magazine* 33 "Urban Agroecology", November 2017;
Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2008), The rise of the 'city-region' concept and its development policy implica-tions, *European Planning Studies*, 16:1025–1046;
Roggero, P. P., Toderi, M., Seddaiu, G. (2006), Agro-ecologia e politiche agro-ambientali, *AgriRegioni Europa* 2(4);
Rubino, A., Un approccio bioregionalista ai progetti partecipati a scala locale. In: Magnaghi, A., ed. (2014), *La regola e il progetto. Un approccio bioregionalista alla pianificazione territoriale*, Firenze: Università Press.
Sale, K. (1991), Le ragioni della natura. La proposta bio-regionalista, Milano: Elèuthera;
Sancton, A., James, R., & Ramsay, R. (2000), *Amalgamation vs. inter-municipal cooperation: Financing local and infrastructure services*, Toronto: ICURR Press;
Schwartz, P. (1996), *The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World*, New York: Doubleday;
Scott, S., Geddes, A., Parker, C. (2018), When the snowball fails to roll and the use of 'horizontal' networking in qualitative social research, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 21(3): 347-358;

Secchi, B. (2000), *Prima lezione di urbanistica*, Roma-Bari: Laterza;
Sennett, R. (2012), *Together. The Rituals, Pleasures and Politics of Cooperation*, London: Penguin;
Shaw, K. & Tewdwr-Jones, M. (2016), *"Disorganised Devolution": Reshaping Metropolitan Governance in England in a Period of Austerity,* Wissenschaftlicher Beitrag, Springer;
Shoard, M., Edgelands. In: Jenkins, J., ed. (2002), *Remaking the Landscape: The Changing Face of Britain*, London: Profile Books, pp. 117–146;
Simon, D. & Adam-Bradford, A., Archaeology and Contemporary Dynamics for More Sustainable, Resilient Cities in the Peri-Urban Interface. In: Maheshwari, S., Singh, V., Thoradeniya, B., eds. (2016), *Balanced urban development. Options and Strategies for Livable Cities*, Cham: SpringerLink, pp. 57-83;
Steiner, R., Kaiser, C., & Eythórsson, G. T. (2016), A comparative analysis of amalgamation reforms in selected European countries. In: Kuhlmann, S. & Bouckaert, G., eds., *Local public sector reforms in times of crisis. National trajectories and international comparisons*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 23–42;
Stojanović, M., Mitković, P., Mitković, M. (2014), The scenario method in urban planning, *Architecture and Civil Engineering* 12(1): 81-95;
Sturzaker, J. & Mell, I. (2017), *Green Belts: Past; present; future?* London: Taylor and Francis;
Swianiewicz, P., ed. (2002), *Consolidation or Fragmentation? The size of Local governments in Central and Eastern Europe*, Budapest: Open Society Institute;
Swianievicz, P., ed. (2010), *Territorial consolidation reforms in Europe,* Budapest: OSI/LGI;
Swianiewicz, P. (2011), *Working Together: Intermunicipal Cooperation in Five Central European Countries*, Budapest: Open Society Institute;
Tallon, A. (2013), *Urban regeneration in the UK*, New York: Routledge;
Taylor-Gooby, P., Stoker, G. (2011), The Coalition programme: a new vision for Britain or politics as usual? *The Political Quarterly* 82(1): 4–15;
Teles, F. (2016), *Local governance and Inter-municipal cooperation*, Houndmills: Palgrave Pivot;
Teles, F. & Swianievicz, P., eds. (2018), *Inter-Municipal Cooperation in Europe. Institutions and Governance*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan;
Tewdwr-Jones, M. (2012), *Spatial planning and governance. Understanding UK Planning*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan;
Thorbeck, D. & Troughton, J., Connecting Urban and Rural Futures through Rural Design. In: Maheshwari, S., Singh, V., Thoradeniya, B., eds. (2016), *Balanced urban development. Options and Strategies for Livable Cities*, Cham: SpringerLink, pp. 45-55;
Tomàs, M. (2017), Explaining Metropolitan Governance. The Case of Spain, *Raumforschung und Raumordnung* 75 (3);
Tornaghi, C. & Dehaene, M. (2017), From Agriculture in the City to an Agroecological Urbanism: The transformative pathway of urban (political) agro-ecology, *Urban Agriculture Magazine* 33: 8-10;
Tosi, M.C. & Munarin, S., eds. (2005), *Tracce di città. Esplorazioni di un territorio abitato: l'area veneta*, Milano: Franco Angeli;

Tubertini, C. (2015), *La città metropolitana tra Regione, Comuni ed Unioni. Analisi delle relazioni istituzionali*, Roma: Urban@it (working paper).
Unwin, R. (1920), *Town Planning in practice. An introduction to the art of designing cities and suburbs*, London: T. Fisher Unwin (I ed. 1909);
van den Berg, L. M., Rural land-use planning in The Netherlands: integration or segregation of functions? In: Cloke, P., ed. (1989), *Rural Land-Use Planning in Developed Nations*, London: Unwin Hyman, pp. 47-74;
Van Dyck, B., Maughan, N., Vankeerberghen, A., Visser, M. (2017), Why we need urban agroecology, *Urban Agriculture Magazine* 33: 5-6;
Van Veenhuizen, R. (2006), *Cities farming for the future: Urban agriculture for green and productive cities*, Leusden: RUAF Foundation;
Vandermeulen V., Verspecht A., Van Huylenbroeck G., Meert H., Boulanger A., Van Ecke E. (2006), The importance of the institutional environment on multifunctional farming systems in the peri-urban area of Brussels, *Land Use Policy* 23: 486–501;
Voghera, A. (2015), Quindici anni dalla Convenzione Europea del Paesaggio, *Sentieri Urbani* 7(17): 46-53;
Vescovi, F. (2012), *Proposte per il Parco Agricolo Sud Milano. Criticità e risorse dell'agricultura periurbana*, Cremona: Ronca Editore;
Vescovi, F. (2014), Parco Agricolo Sud ed Expo 2015: per una nuova governance dell'agricoltura periurbana Milanese, *Territorio* 70: 92-100;
Vescovi, F. (2015), Fragilità e risorse dell'agricultura periurbana: il caso dei Distretti Rurali del Parco Agricolo Sud Milano, *Italia 45-45. Radici, Condizioni, Prospettive. Atti della XVIII Conferenza Nazionale della Società Italiana degli Urbanisti*, Venezia, 11-13 June 2015, Planum;
Viganò, P. (2010, *I territory dell'urbanistica. Il progetto come produttore di conoscenza*, Roma: Officina Edizioni;
Viljoen, A. & Bohn, K. (2009), *Continuous Productive Urban Landscape(CPUL): essential infrastructure and edible ornament*, London: Open House International, 34 (2): 50-60;
Viljoen, A. & Bohn, K. (2016), *The productive city: urban agriculture on the map*, London: Urban Design, 140: 21-24;
Viljoen, A. & Wiskerke J., eds. (2012), *Sustainable Food Planning: evolving theory and practice*, Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publisher;
Watson, V. (2014), Co-production and collaboration in planning - The difference, *Planning Theory & Practice* 15(1): 62-76;
Williams, A., Cloke, P., Thomas, S. (2012), Co-constituting neoliberalism: faith-based organisations, co-option, and resistance in the UK, *Environment and Planning A* 44: 1479–1501;
Wiskerke, J. & Roep, D. (2010), On Governance, Embedding and Marketing: Reflections on the Construction of Alternative Sustainable Food Networks, *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 25(2): 205–221;
Woodruffe, B. J., Rural land-use planning in West Germany. In: Cloke, P., ed. (1989), *Rural Land-Use Planning in Developed Nations*, London: Unwin Hyman, pp. 104-129;
Yin, R. K. (2003), Case study Research. Design and methods, London: Sage;
Zanfi, F., Tra inerzie di figure consolidate e condizioni emergent. Un'ipotesi di lavoro nell'urbanizzazione diffusa dopo la crescita. In: Agnoletto, M. & Guerzoni, M. (2012), *La campagna necessaria. Un'agenda di intervento*

dopo l'esplosione urbana, Macerata: Quodlibet, pp. 23-31;
Zimmermann, K. & Getimis, P. (2017), *Rescaling of Metropolitan Governance and Spatial Planning in Europe: an Introduction to the Special Issue*, Wissenschaftlicher Beitrag, Springer.

Planning, policy documents and reports

ANCI & Fondazione IFEL (2011), *Atlante dei Piccoli Comuni 2011*;

ANCI & Fondazione IFEL (2015), *Atlante dei Piccoli Comuni 2015*;

BathNES Bath and North-East Somerset (2014), *Core Strategy. Part 1 of the Local Plan*, adopted July 2014;

BCC Bristol City Council (2011), *Core Strategy. Bristol Development Framework*, adopted June 2011;

BCC Bristol City Council (2014), *Site Allocations and Development Management Policies*, adopted July 2014;

BFPC Bristol Food Policy Council (2013), *A Good Food Plan for Bristol*;

BFPC Bristol Food Policy Council (2015), *Bristol Good Food Action Plan*;

BFPC Bristol Food Policy Council (2016a), *Response to the Consultation questions for the West of England Joint Spatial Plan: Towards the Emerging Spatial Strategy*;

BFPC Bristol Food Policy Council (2016b), *Bristol Sustainable Food Cities Award 2016 Silver, Bristol: Bristol Food Policy Council* (available from: http://bristolfoodpolicycouncil.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/04/Bristol-SFC-2016-Silver1.pdf);

Carey, J. (2011), *Who Feeds Bristol? Report commissioned by the Bristol City Council and NHS Bristol* (available from: https://bristolfoodpolicy council.org/who-feeds-bristol/);

Chan, W. (2016), *Land seeker's survey report 2016*, Bristol Food Producers;

Città Metropolitana di Milano (2016a), *Milano, metropoli reale, metropoli possibile. Piano Strategico triennale del territorio metropolitano* [2016-2018], adopted with deliberation n. 16 of April 11th 2016 (available from: *http://www.cittametropolitana.mi.it/PSM/*);

Città Metropolitana di Milano (2016b), *Milano metropoli intelligente e sostenibile. Rigenerare territorio e ambiente* (available from: http://www.cittametropolitana.mi.it/PSM/);

Communauté de l'agglomeration de Monpellier (2005), *Le Schème de la Cohérence Territoriale (SCOT)* (available from: http://www. montpellier3m.fr/connaitre-competences-amenagement-du-territoire/le-schema-de-coherence-territoriale-scot#title0);

Comune di Campofilone (2003), *Piano Regolatore Generale. Norme Tecniche di Attuazione* (approved with deliberation of Municipal Council n. 22 of 30 September, 2003);

Comune di Pregnana Milanese (2016a), *Piano di Governo del Territorio. Variante 2016. Piano delle Regole,* 12 December 2016;

Comune di Pregnana Milanese (2016b), *Piano di Governo del Territorio. Variante 2016. Carta della disciplina delle aree*, 12 December 2016;

CoE Council of Europe (2008), *Inter-municipal cooperation. Manual of the*

European Committee on Local and Regional Democracy (CDLR);
CoE Council of Europe (2010), *Toolkit Manual on Inter-Municipal Cooperation*;
Comunità Metropolitana di Padova (2011), *Relazione di Progetto, Piano di Assetto del Territorio Intercomunale di Padova*;
Consorzio DAM (2011), *Il piano del Distretto Rurale di Milano. Un processo di neo-ruralizzazione di Milano*, settembre 2011;
CPRE Campaign to Protect Rural England (2010), *Green Belts. A greener future* (available from: http://www.ruaf.org/ruaf_bieb/upload/3284.pdf);
CPRE Campaign to Protect Rural England (2012), *Green Belts Under Renewed Threat?* CPRE Briefing Paper August 2012;
CPRE Campaign to Protect Rural England (2017), *Landlines Why We Need a Strategic Approach to Land* (available from: http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/item/4534-landlines-why-we-needa-strategic-approach-to-land).
CPRE Avonside (2016), *CPRE Response to the West of England Joint Spatial Plan*, December 2016;
Danish Ministry of the Environment (2015), *The Finger Plan. A strategy for the Development of the Greater Copenhagen Area* (available from: https://danishbusinessauthority.dk/sites/default/files/fp-eng_31_13052015.pdf);
DCLG Department for Communities and Local Government (2012), *National Planning Policy Framework* (available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework—2);
DCLG Department for Communities and Local Government (2014), *Duty-to-Cooperate: Assists Councils in Working Together on Strategic Matters in Line with Duty to Cooperate*, London: Department for Communities and Local Government, (available from: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/duty-to-cooperate);
DCLG Departimenti for Communities and Local Government (2018), *Revised National Planning Policy Framework* (available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework);
DETR (2001), *Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts*, Department of Environment, Transport and the Regions, London: The Stationery Office;
ESPON (2006), *ESPON Project 2.3.2. Governance of Territorial and Urban policies from EU to Local Level*, Final Report Part 1;
European Commission (2007), *EU Territorial Agenda*;
European Commission (2011), *EU Territorial Agenda 2020 Towards an Inclusive, Smart and Sustainable Europe of Diverse Regions*;
European Parliament and Council (2013), *Decision n. 1386/2013/UE of European Parliament and Council of November 20th 2013 on the Union's action program on environment up to 2020 "Living well, within the limits of our planet"*, GUUE, L.354, 28.12.2013: 171-200;
ENRD European Network for Rural Development (2015), *Rural Development Priorities 2014-2020* (available from: https://enrd.ec.europa.eu);
FAO (2013), *Sustainability Pathways*, Retrieved October 2013 (available from: fao.org/nr/sustainability/en/);
Federal Office for Building and Regional Planning (2012), *Partnerships for Sustainable rural-urban development: existing evidencies*, report n° 2011. CE.16.0.AT.017;
Forum Nazionale "Salviamo il Paesaggio" (2018), *Norme per l'arresto*

del consumo di suolo e per il riuso dei suoli urbanizzati, Proposta di legge di iniziativa popolare, January 31st 2018 (available from: http://www.casaportale.com/public/uploads/62280_PDL%20Forum%20Salviamo%20il%20Paesaggio.pdf);
GAL Fermano (2016), *Piano di Sviluppo Locale 2014-2020* (approved by the Marche Region with DDS n. 77 of 14 November 2016);
GAL Fermano & GAL Piceno (s.d.), *Documento programmatico preliminare per una governance partecipata della Valdaso*;
GAL Piceno & GAL Fermano (2015), *Valdaso. Un nuovo modello di governance per un territorio rurale di qualità* (available from: http://156.54.184.76/repertorio/marche/Valdaso/Valdaso.php);
Green Alliance, Campaign for Better Transport, CPRE, National Trust, The Wildlife Trusts (2017), *Greening the City Regions. Opportunities for new metro mayors* (available from: https://www.green-alliance.org.uk/greening_the_city_regions.php);
HM Government (1997), *Building Partnerships for Prosperity: Sustainable Growth, Competitiveness and Employment in the English Regions*, Cm 3814. London: Stationery Office;
HM Government (2010), *The Localism Bill*, London: The Stationery Office;
ISPRA (2018), *Consumo di suolo, dinamiche territoriali e servizi ecosistemici*, 288/2018, Edizione 2018;
Lega & Movimento 5 Stelle (2018), *Contratto per il Governo del Cambiamento*;
Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, 15 October 2015, Milano;
Montpellier Méditeranée Métropole (2018), *Le Schème de la Cohérence Territoriale (SCOT), Tome 3. Document d'Orientation et d'Objectifs* (available from: http://www.montpellier3m.fr/ connaitre-competences-amenagement-du-territoire/le-schema-de-coherence-territoriale-scot);
North Somerset Council (2016), *Development Management Policies. Site and policies plan. Part 1*, adopted July 2016;
OECD (1979), *Agriculture in the Planning and Management of Peri-urban Areas*, Paris: OECD Publications and Information Center;
OECD (2011), *Economic Survey March 2011 United Kingdom Overview*, 16 March 2011;
OECD (2013), *Rural-urban partnerships. An integrated approach to urban development* (Available from: https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/urban-rural-and-regional-development/rural-urban-partnerships_9789264204812-en#page2);
Osborn, S. (2009), *Building a Positive Future for Bristol after Peak Oil. Bristol: Bristol Local Strategic Partnership* (available from: http://transitionbristol.net/wpcontent/uploads/2013/03/Peak-Oil-Report_01.pdf);
Provincia di Ascoli Piceno (2007), *Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento Provinciale di Ascoli Piceno. Norme Tecniche di Attuazione* (adopted with deliberation of the Provincial Council n. 90 of 6 September 2007);
Provincial di Ascoli Piceno (2008), *Piano Direttore e Perequazione Urbanistica della Valdaso*, Terra srl, April 2008;
Provincia di Ascoli Piceno (2012), *Progetto Integrato Territoriale* (approved with deliberation of the Provincial Council n. 204 of 19/07/2010);
Provincia di Fermo (2013), *Piano Territoriale di Coordinamento. Elaborato A. Relazione Generale* (adopted with D.C.P. n°58 of 19/12/2013);

Provincia di Milano (2007), *Piano di Settore Agricolo*, approvato dal consiglio direttivo del Parco Agricolo Sud con delibera n. 33 del 17 luglio 2007;
Provincia di Milano (2013), *Osservatorio economico ambientale per l'innovazione del Parco Agricolo Sud Milano*, prima fase (available from: http://www.cittametropolitana.mi.it/parco_agricolo_sud_milano/pubblicazioni/opuscoli.html);
Ragona A. (2009), *Osservazioni al Piano di Assetto Territoriale Intercomunale (PATI) della Comunità metropolitana di Padova*, adottato con delibera di Consiglio Comunale n. 129 del 22 dicembre 2008 (report made by Legambiente Padova);
Regione Lombardia (2000), *Approvazione del piano territoriale di coordinamento del Parco regione Agricolo Sud Milano* (art. 19, comma 2, l.r. 86/83 e successive modificazioni);
Regione Lombardia (2005), *Legge regionale 11 marzo 2005, 12, Legge per il governo del territorio* (BURL n. 11, 1º suppl. ord. del 16 Marzo 2005);
Regione Lombardia (2008b), *Rete ecologica regionale e programmazione territoriale degli enti locali* (attached to DGR 8/8515 of 26 November 2008);
Regione Lombardia (2010), *Piano Territoriale Regionale (PTR), Piano Paesaggistico Normativa* (available from: www.ptr.regione.lombardia.it);
Regione Lombardia (2017), *Piano Territoriale Regionale (PTR), Documento di Piano* (available from: www.ptr.regione.lombardia.it);
Regione Marche (1989), *Relazione. Piano Paesaggistico Ambientale Regionale (PPAR) delle Marche* (approved with D.A.C.R. n. 197 of 3 November 1989;
Regione Marche (1997), *Documento di orientamenti agli enti locali in materia di pianificazione urbanistica – Linee guida per la redazione degli strumenti urbanistici generali comunali per il loro adeguamento al P.P.A.R.*, Bollettino Ufficiale della Regione Marche, 29 May 1997;
Regione Marche (2010), *Documento preliminare. Adeguamento al P.P.A.R.* (approved with deliberation n. 140 of 2 February 2010);
Regione Marche (2013), *Rete Ecologica Regionale. Relazione Generale. Quadro Propositivo*, Terre, Università degli Studi di Camerino;
Regione Marche (2015), *Linee Guida per il governo del territorio*, February 2015, Terre, Università degli Studi di Camerino;
Regione Piemonte (2007), *Il Piano Territoriale Regionale (PTR), Il quadro di riferimento strutturale* (available from: http://www.regione.piemonte.it/territorio/pianifica/ nuovo_ptr.htm);
Regione Piemonte (2011), *Il Piano Territoriale Regionale (PTR), Relazione* (available from: http://www.regione.piemonte.it/territorio/pianifica/ nuovo_ptr.htm);
Regione Puglia (2015a), *Il Piano Paesaggistico Territoriale Regionale (PPTR) della Puglia*, adottato con delibera della Giunta Regonale n. 176/2002 (available from: https://www.paesaggiopuglia.it);
Regione Puglia (2015b), *Linee Guida per il Patto Città-Campagna: riqualificazione delle periferie e delle aree agricole periurbane, PPTR Regione Puglia*, February 2015;
Regione Toscana (2015), *Piano di Indirizzo Territoriale con valenza di Piano Paesaggistico, Abaco delle invarianti strutturali*, approved by Dcr n. 37 of

27/3/2015;
Rivett, M. & Lee, S. (2018), *Examination of the West of England Joint Spatial Plan, 1 June 2018* (available from: https://www.jointplanningwofe. org.uk/consult.ti/JSPPublication/viewContent?contentid=354419);
RTPI Royal Town Planning Institute (2016), *Where Should We Build More Homes?* RTPI Policy Statement November 2016;
RTPI Royal Town Planning Institute (2018), *Briefing Note July 2018* (available from: https://www.rtpi.org.uk/briefing-room/news-releases/2018/august/ rtpi-publishes-detailed-analysis-of-the-national-planning-policy-framework/);
RURBANCE (2015), *For a balanced development of the relations between urban and rural areas*, Alpine space, project co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund;
South Gloucestershire Council (2006), *South Gloucestershire Local Plan. Written Statement*, adopted January 2006;
South Gloucestershire Council (2013), *South Gloucestershire Local Plan. Core Strategy 2006-2027*, adopted December 2013;
The Treaty of Rome, 25 March 1957;
UN Habitat III (2016), *Issue papers and policy units of the Habitat III Conference*, Quito, October 2016;
West of England LEP (2013), *Strategic Economic Plan 2015-2030*;
West of England LEP (2015a), *Joint Spatial Plan. Green Belt Assessment*, Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset Councils;
West of England LEP (2015b), *Joint Spatial Plan. Ecosystem Service Evidence. Part 1*, Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset Councils;
West of England LEP (2016), *Joint Spatial Plan. Green Belt Assessment. Stage 2*;
West of England LEP (2017), *Joint Spatial Plan. Publication Document*, Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset Councils;
West of England LEP (2018), *Strategic Economic Plan, Sector prospectus*;
VNG International (2010), *Inter-municipal cooperation. Introduction Guide to the VNG International Approach to a Successful IMC*, The Hague: VNG Press.

Online sources and blog posts

Associazione Parco Sud Milano (2013), *Oltre 5 milioni di mq tolti all'agricoltura del parco agricolo sud*, (available from: assparcosud.org/14-istituzioni/517-oltre-5-milioni-di-aree-agricole-tolte-al-parco.html);

Associazione Parco Sud Milano (2015a), *Parco Sud: uscire dalle secche si può ecco le nostre proposte per il suo rilancio al nuovo Direttivo dell'Ente Parco* (available from: assparcosud. org/component/content/article/14-istituzioni/1602-parco-sud-uscire-dalle-secche-si-può-ecco-le-nostre-proposte-per-il-suo-rilancio-al-nuovo-direttivo-del-parco.html).

Associazione Parco Sud Milano (2015b), *Cari Pisapia e presidente Parco Sud vi scriviamo perché la Mapei non sottragga suolo agricolo* (available from: assparcosud.org/14-istituzioni/1426-cari-pisapia-e-presidente-parco-sud-vi-scriviamo-perché-la-mapei-non-sottragga-suolo-agricolo.html)

Associazione Parco Sud Milano (2017), *Parco Sud e Nord uniti? Per la maggior parte dei sindaci del Sud si può fare (sia pure con qualche paletto)* (available from: https://www.assparcosud.org/2-uncategorised/2700-parco-sud-e-nord-uniti-per-la-maggior-parte-dei-sindaci-del-sud-si-può-fare-sia-pure-con-qualche-paletto.html);

Associazione Parco Sud Milano (2018), *Che fine hanno fatto i 133mila mq agricoli che l'outlet Scalo Milano di Locate Triulzi aveva promesso al Parco Sud 6 anni fa?* (available from: assparcosud.org/component/content/article/2-uncategorised/3298-scalomilanoterreniparco.html);

BBC (2016), *North Somerset Council vote against West 'Metro Mayor' plan* (available from: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-36478350);

BBC (2017), *Tory Tim Bowles sworn in as West of England mayor* (available from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-39843572);

Cameron, D., (2009) *Big society can fight poverty. Big government just fuels it*, Guardian 10th November (available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2009/nov/10/big-society-government-poverty-inequality);

Città Metropolitana di Milano (2018), *Coltivazioni* (available from: http://www.cittametropolitana.mi.it/parco_agricolo_sud_milano/agricoltura/coltivazioni.html);

Clark, J. (1998), *Municipal Dreams: Social Ecological Critique of Bookchin's Politics*, The anarchist library (available from: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/ library/john-clark-municipal-dreams-social-ecological-critique-of-bookchin-s-politics.html#fn54);

Conservative Party (2010), Invitation to join the Government of Britain. In: *Conservative Party Manifesto 2010* (available from: https://www.conservatives.com/~/media/Files/Manifesto2010);

Davies (2017), *Best Place to Live 2017*, The Sunday Times (available from: https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sunday-times-best-places-to-live-2017-3qkwjnvrm#/);

Di Giacomo, A. (2016), *L'Aquila, oltre il diluvio di immagini le ragioni del progetto Lo stato delle cose* (available from: lostatodellecose.com/diario-di-lavoro/);
Geofutures (2017), *How well Britain is served by allotment gardens* (available from: http://www.geofutures.com/food/allotments/);
Jenkins, S. (2014), *Housing Crisis? No, Just a Very British Sickness*, Guardian 21 May 2014 (available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/21/no-housing-crisis-just-very-british-sickness);
Marson, A. (2017), *Le ragioni del piano paesaggistico della Toscana* (available from: https://www.a-architettitrento.it/le-ragioni-del-piano-paesaggistico-della-toscana);
Shrubsole, G. (2018), *How the extent of County Farms has halved in Forty years* (available from: https://whoownsengland.org/2018/06/08/how-the-extent-of-county-farms-has-halved-in-40-years/).
Shrubsole, G. (2017), *Utopian thinking: to 'take back' control of England we must find out who owns it* (available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/mar/20/take-back-control-england-land-ownership).
Jenkins, S. (2014), *Housing Crisis? No, Just a Very British Sickness*, Guardian 21 May 2014 (available from: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/21/no-housing-crisis-just-very-british-sickness).