

Summary

This thesis investigates Urban Food Policies (UFP) as tools for the governance of food systems, with the aim of reframing food not as a market commodity but, once again, as a matter of rights. To do so, this work undertakes a geography-grounded inquiry concerning UFP development by relying on the critical assessment and application of the City-Region Food System (CRFS) approach developed by FAO.

Chapter I presents the research, clarifying how, standing on action-research carried out in UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Reserve CollinaPo, this work combines a critical theoretical understanding of CRFS's three pillars with empirical research in the context of CollinaPo to assess what territorial knowledge of food systems is pivotal for the development of effective UFP.

Then, the thesis is divided into two parts.

First Part, "Geographical perspectives on the relocalization of food systems", addresses the theoretical basis to understand UFP within the existing large debates on the need of relocalizing food.

More specifically, Chapter II situates UFP within the current globalized food regime's failures and highlights how food relocalization approaches may provide solutions. The Chapter debates the possibilities of relocalization approaches implementation in relation to the issue of governance. Also, it selects the CRFS approach as a relevant paradigm for connecting the discourses of relocalization with the UFP framework. The CRFS approach comprises three key pillars: territoriality and city-regions, sustainable food systems, and multistakeholder engagement and participatory governance.

The thesis then undertakes a critical theoretical assessment of CRFS's three pillars.

Chapter III addresses the first pillar through a systematic literature review of CRFS, revealing a key conceptual gap: while the approach promotes the adoption of the city-region spatial dimension for the food systems' understanding, CRFS does not meaningfully address the complexity of the geographical theoretical background of this dimension, which leads to unsolid applications, as presented in a cases review, undertaken in the same Chapter.

Chapter IV addresses this gap by reconceptualizing the city-region in a way that is theoretically grounded in the literature and analytically relevant within the CRFS framework. The Chapter also suggests a set of criteria to assess potential CRFS city-region structures. This toolkit is applied within Turin's possible city-regions to compare the relevant scales at which Turin's CRFS might be studied and governed. The comparison is helpful to identify the CollinaPo Biosphere Reserve as a relevant extension for the present CRFS research.

Second Part, "Planning Urban Food Policies," focuses on CollinaPo and its food system, with the aim of identifying which UFP can be developed to govern the newly identified CRFS.

Therefore, more detailly, Chapter V introduces the CollinaPo case, as both a UNESCO-designated Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Reserve and a complex socio-spatial context. A territorial assessment is developed, offering a situated reading of CollinaPo's characteristics.

Chapter VI shifts to a systemic analysis of the food system, addressing the second pillar of CRFS, mapping CollinaPo's food system components and drivers, and relying on unstructured interviews with key players in the supply chains. The sustainability of the food system is investigated through the lens of resilience. Also, a SWOT analysis of the food system is

developed to display the conditions of CollinaPo's food system. The results of this full-scale assessment serve the purposes of Chapter VII, which investigates the third pillar of CRFS.

Chapter VII addresses the issue of governance, debating the lack of meaningful participation in the present development of UFP; then, by drawing on the current understanding of the need for democracy, the Chapter presents a multi-level stakeholder study to assess key actors and opportunities, in the context of CollinaPo, toward the development of a participatory UFP.

In the end, Chapter VIII synthesizes the whole research and suggests a policy proposal tailored to the CollinaPo context.

This research produces multiple outcomes. Its main contributions include a critical reassessment of the three pillars of City-Region Food Systems; a redefinition of the city-region perimeter with particular attention to its geographical dimension, a conceptual clarification of resilience within sustainable food systems, a deeper understanding of the issue of democratic participation in the context of governance.

In addition to these theoretical contributions, the study advances a set of methodological approaches for the assessment of food systems, with particular emphasis on multistakeholder engagement and participatory governance. These approaches are presented as replicable tools for analyzing and supporting food system transformations across different territorial contexts.

This thesis contributes to current academic debates on food systems and food governance, while offering insights of practical relevance for policymakers and practitioners.