

Land as a common resource to achieve urban food relocalization. A farmland property rights approach to urban food commoning

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This paper investigates the role of land management in the way urban food relocalization initiatives can shape different food commoning practices (Tornaghi, 2014; Labonarska, 2015; Vivero Pol, 2016). It focuses on projects in which land is claimed and managed as a common resource. We explore how alternative land ownership models change the practices and representations of food towards several systemic goals. To do so, we build on Lavigne Delville's (2010) theoretical framework on farmland property rights to study a set of ten farms and community gardens located on publicly or collectively owned land in Lyon (France).

Lyon is one of the first French cities where agriculture and food have been addressed as planning issues (Brand, 2015). Local authorities currently develop strategies aimed at relocalizing food provisioning and gradually connect them with farmland preservation or acquisition policies. Such emerging public initiatives coexist with projects led by groups of eaters-growers and by the *Terre de Liens* movement, a civic land trust supporting a fairer land access for peasant's agroecology farmers.

Our analysis is based on twenty semi-structured interviews, complemented by documents' analysis. We investigate two community gardens (where food is produced on 5 ha by a paid market gardener and eaters-growers, which is very unusual in France) and eight farms, covering around 30 ha (where farmers produce, transform and sell food). All supply local city dwellers. Five cases are in a hilly and wealthy suburb, four in a floodable and socially-deprived suburb and one in a periurban village.

We distinguish three systemic goals: i) food self-sufficiency, at the family and community scales, when eaters-growers control directly food production and provision: food is in these cases a material commons; ii) food sovereignty, at the city-region level, when eaters have a say as citizens: food appears as a territorial commons; and iii) food democracy (Collard Dutilleul, 2013), also at the city-region scale, when eaters involve in agricultural and food policies. The type of goal is less influenced by the social context than by the distribution of property rights on land. These small-scale initiatives open pathways to achieve a "resourceful agroecological urbanism".

References

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