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Toward local food systems? Building new links between policy domains and between actors in the French policy of Projets alimentaires territoriaux (PATs)

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Fostering more sustainable and resilient food systems is a growing concern of public policies (Kugelberg et al., 2021). The rebuilding of local food systems is often seen as a key factor in achieving these objectives. It supposes integrated strategies that connect different issues and policy domains at the local level (Doernberg et al., 2019). However, several authors observed incremental changes rather than integrated strategies in their studies (Okner, 2017; Doernberg et al., 2019).

The optional French PAT policy encourages territories to relocalize their food system by promoting local agriculture and food quality. We studied in 2020 five urban and rural areas in South West France engaged or engaging in this policy in order to understand the links built between domains and issues.

Our study highlights the reconnection between local production and consumption by the renewal of food production and the focus on public procurement as a way to enhance the consumption of local products. Actions concerning food processing, the input and the output of food production and consumption are scarcely observed (cf. Philippini et al. 2019). The integration of broader issues, particularly local ecological and energetic transition, supposes an articulation between various policies, which level of achievement varies from one territory to another.

The policy governance relied / relies mainly on a partnership between local authorities and farmers' representatives to support local farming and link it to local consumption. Nevertheless, the policy gathers various actions in a same territorial project. That leads to integrate other participants who further their actions and promote their views of the local food system reshaping, which could pave the way towards more integrated local policies.

Mots clés : Local food system|Local food governance|Partnership|Projet Alimentaire Territorial|France

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