



**HAL**  
open science

## The french urban food issue emergence

Caroline Brand

► **To cite this version:**

Caroline Brand. The french urban food issue emergence. Bollettino della Società Geografica Italiana, 2017, X (XIII), pp.65-76. hal-02049593

**HAL Id: hal-02049593**

**<https://hal.science/hal-02049593>**

Submitted on 26 Feb 2019

**HAL** is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

CAROLINE BRAND

## THE FRENCH URBAN FOOD ISSUE EMERGENCE

*Setting the picture.* – France is well-known across the world as a country where food matters. In 2010, the UNESCO inscription of the French gastronomic meal as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity testifies of the centrality of food and its related social practices in the every-day life of the French people. But, at the same time, in the first paths of the food planning movement in Europe, French researchers and practitioners were conspicuously absent of the nascent debate on the absence of food in the planning agenda. The terms describing this acknowledgement in North-America and in Europe show the sudden realization of a missing piece in the planning thoughts and actions: «a puzzling omission» (APA, 2007, p. 1), «the dark side of urban dwelling?» (Wiskerke and Viljoen, 2012, p. 21), «this intellectual lacuna» (Morgan, 2014, p. 2). What about the French scene? What links are established between food and urban issues? How is the food issue integrated in the city policy and planning debate?

This article intends to establish a picture of the debate about food and the city at the local authorities' level. The research methodology followed is mainly based on observation (participant or not) of diverse scenes of emergence of the urban food issue in France between 2009 and 2014 (conferences, meetings). More particularly, establishing an informal collaboration with the Terres en Villes network (TEV) <sup>(1)</sup>, a major player in the emergence and dissemination of the notion of «food governance» in France, I was able to follow and participate in the progress of discussions. I conducted an interview with the technical secretary of TEV and made observations during my participation in the activities of the association. This allowed us to track the key features and actors of the emerging treatment of food in France.

We will present the agricultural prism through which the «food governance» notion

---

(1) Terres en Villes (TEV) is defined as the French network of local players in peri-urban agriculture. Created on the 15 June 2000, it is a joint association between elected officials and agricultural leaders developing reflections and actions on peri-urban agriculture in their territories and in France in general. It includes, at the beginning of 2013, 27 cities. The network aims to share the experiments conducted by its members, promote the exchange of know-how around the preservation and development of peri-urban agriculture. TEV is also promoting the peri-urban agriculture interests in France and abroad and contributes to the debate about the city and its agriculture. Its activities are divided into five projects: co-construction of peri-urban agricultural policies / protection and development of agricultural areas, forest and natural peri/development of short food supply chains and food governance of cities / consideration open spaces and peri-urban agriculture in European policies / peri-urban forest.

emerged. Then, we will develop the way this prism moves toward what we call an agri-food perspective. To finish, we will go through the difficulties in reaching the «food governance» notion's ambition and the discrepancy between its rapid diffusion and its all in all limited reception.

*The agricultural prism in the emergence of the «food governance» notion.* – Till the end of the 19th century, cities, represented by their «*maire nourricier*» (Bourguinat, 2008) managed the security of the food supply. If their regulator role has never really disappeared, cities have moved away from the strategical character of that regulation. By the end of the 19th century, the governance of the food system has been transferred at the national scale and to the private actors of the agro-food system. As a result, we can observe a form of disengagement as the local authorities still intervene on the food system but with motives distant from the only nourishing function of the promoted activities. Particularly, the strategical vision of the food system has been replaced by the standard approach of economical development of a sector of activity (Marty, 2013) or other arguments related to touristic or social policies (Delfosse, 2014). Nonetheless, in France, food issues are recently reinvested through the notion of «food governance» at the local authorities scale. The vital character of food is now brought to light for other reasons, such as the various failures of the food system and the rise of local production and consumption systems, and in another context, with the problems related to urbanization and metropolization, different from the initial government interventions on the food system.

The peri-urban agricultural issue was the breeding ground for the emergence of the food issue. Since the 1970's, that saw the beginning of the development of actions aiming at preserving and valorizing peri-urban agriculture, the short food supply chains have been mobilized (Brand and Bonnefoy, 2011; Marty, 2013, Bonnefoy and Brand, 2014). The initial motives were strongly related to the amenities generated by the agricultural activity and its multifunctional character. From punctual support, the interventions got structured by investing the diversity of the short food chains market shares and more recently public collective catering (Bonnefoy & Brand, 2014). The new consumer demands and the state recognition of the localized food systems, particularly since the Plan Barnier in 2009, as a way to answer in a cross-mannered to the agricultural and rural development issues have counted in those evolutions. Since the *Loi de Modernisation de l'Agriculture et de la Pêche (LMAF)* in 2010, the local authorities are explicitly invited to develop the short food supply chains (Kébir, 2012) and the collective catering appears as a good lever in this context. Since the state injunctions for organic food that followed the *Grenelle de l'environnement* in 2007, the food supply issue has grown in the local authorities' agenda. As a result, the nourishing function of agriculture is appearing more clearly in the motives for preserving peri-urban agriculture.

In this context, TEV was leader or co-leader of the first reflections on «food governance» through various partnerships with agricultural and local authorities' actors within the framework of the French National Rural Network (FNRN) workshops and calls for projects. TEV defines itself as a place of dialogue between the urban and the agricultural spaces. Since its creation in 2000, the short food supply chains have been invested in a site entitled «short food supply chains and the city food supply». The apprehension of the food issue in this network is intrinsically related to the Association of Development of

Grenoble Y's Agriculture structure (ADAYG) <sup>(2)</sup>. The ADAYG and TEV were created by the same person, the ADAYG director until its disappearance in 2012 and current technical secretary of TEV. It is within the ADAYG missions that the food issue began to draw attention, in the late 1990s with a mandate of coordinating the Taste Week national device in the Grenoble city region. At this period the food issue appears as a good way to tackle in a different manner the link between city and agriculture and to develop relation with the inhabitants, little integrated in those structures used to collaborate with the agricultural and institutional actors of the local authorities. From the mid 2000's, the embryos of reflection meet with a favourable national context as the short food supply chains are scaling-up and reflections are being developed on the territorialized food systems.

In 2008, within the scope of a workshop of the FNRN, TEV gathers many actors from various syndicalist tendencies supporting the national and local development of agriculture. Together they develop a project called «food governance and production relocalization» (TEV, APCA, FNCUMA, FNCIVAM & TRAME, 2009). This first occurrence of the «food governance» term reveals its initial opportunist use, its prospective significance and its initial link to the agricultural world: «the 'governance' term imposed itself at this time, it was at the heart of the local authorities policies. But it could have been 'agricultural governance' ... 'food governance', it was exploratory» (technical secretary of TEV). The choice of this term is also related to the nature of the actors implied. Each of them brings a specific expertise (national food policy, transformation tools, short food supply chains development, diversification of agricultural initiatives, and collective food actions) and some of them were particularly aware of the food issue, in its public policy dimension and its relation to the consumers. The project aims at studying the so-called food policies being developed supposedly because of the sustainability stakes in 18 of the local authorities' members of TEV network and in London, Torino and Barcelona so as to see the way they integrate short food supply chains and their consequences on the peri-urban agricultural policies. We speak of «so-called food policies» because if the term was used by TEV and its partners, at this time in France the only existing food policy was at the state level and it was just starting to connect food offer and demand stakes (Brand, 2015). At the state level, the food policy really appears by 2010 when it becomes an interministerial policy. At the local authorities scale, there were policies (social, health, culture, economical development, climate change) that treated only partially the food issue but there was no such policy gathering all these policies under a food policy banner. Following this project, another one was led in 2009-2010 to support food policies and short food supply chains (TEV, APCA, FNPNR, 2009). But in

---

(2) The ADAYG was founded in 1985. It groups the inter-communalities of the Grenoble's Y territory, the Chamber of agriculture from Isère department et the chamber of trade and industry of Grenoble. It led the suburban agricultural policy in the territory of the urban area of Grenoble until its demise in 2012. Its missions were oriented towards promoting agriculture as a partner of the urban region, «this is achieved through the management of an agricultural environment combining quality production needs and demands of the citizens, through the creation of quality products for the local market as in the external market, the emergence of agriculture in the service of citizens, recognised by all (source: <http://agriculture.gouv.fr/adayg-association-pour-le>, looked up on 06.04.15). As early as the years 2000, reflections appeared on this territory about the food link between city and agriculture (2002 creation of the collective trademark «Terres d'ici», 2004 beginning of the reflections on the links between public collective catering and agriculture, 2007 beginning of the project of setting up a vegetable processing plant for collective catering, reflection on the abattoirs of the Mure as early as in the years 2000 and the wholesale market (MIN) of Grenoble).

the end, the focus is mainly positioned on the development of the short food supply chains, justified by the new food stakes.

As a result, the first path of the «food governance» and of the local food policy issue were mainly used as a way to comfort the peri-urban agriculture position in an urbanization context. The ambition is to consolidate the relocating movements by structuring the short food supply chains so as to develop a city food supply, partly organized by the public power, which would incorporate more local products.

Also in that agricultural perspective, Europe counted on the emergence of the food issue in the French territories. The territorial brands and then the food governance issue were tackled between 2010 and 2011 by the Arc Latin and the Purple networks in which TEV was implied. We can also quote the Leader program that is widening the initial approach of the valorisation of agriculture through the short food supply chains and the collective catering. For the 2014-2020 programme, the Leader program in Rhône-Alpes region and other French regions includes an axis on «territorial food strategies» so as to better structure the initial short food supply chains approach that lacks of a strategic cohesion. Between 2009 and 2011, TEV is partly implied in the European Rururbal <sup>(3)</sup> project as two of its members from the Grenoble metropolitan area are implied (ADAYG and Pays Voironnais). This projects aims at linking the urban and the rural through food in the peri-urban territories and to initiate a sustainable development of peri-urban territories by relying on local agro-food resources.

The program is based on the acknowledgement of the process of urbanization of the territories, of the fragility of the agricultural activity in peri-urban contexts and of the potential role of the consumers in the emergence of more sustainable territorial models. The program ended with the production of a European « charter of territorial and nutritional governance » whose objectives are to develop a food policy at the local authorities scale and to engage connections between policies around the food issue. Even if the actors implied are mainly from the agricultural field, we will see that Rururbal counted in the French transition from an agricultural to what we call an agri-food perspective concerning the urban food issue.

*From an agricultural to an agri-food perspective.* – The agri-food perspective is characterized by a progressive sliding of the agricultural silo toward food issues (Bonnefoy and Brand, 2014). For TEV this sliding comes from the progressive investigation of other fields of action than the agricultural one.

The project developed within the scope of the FNRN leads to the first definition of the food governance: «the food governance designates a bunch of new cooperations between

---

(3) Rururbal is a transnational cooperation program Interreg IVB Med 2007-2013. It was developed between May 2009 and October 2011. It is part of axis 4 «promotion of a polycentric and integrated development of the Mediterranean» and Objective 1 «coordination of development policies and improvement of territorial governance». It brings together partners from 6 regions and 4 European countries (Spain, France, Italy, Greece) as follows: Generalitat of Catalonia, Barcelona Deputación, comarcal Council Vallès Oriental, Province of Torino, Siena Province, Pays d'Aix and Pays Voironnais urban communities, ADAYG and the University of Thessaloniki. The title of the programme is an acronym that stands for «Rurbal-Urban-Alimentation». The subtitle of the program is «draw your territories through eating». It featured the territorial diagnosis phases on the local food chain, the development of pilot projects and the creation of a joint document distributable, of diffusion tools and seminars dedicated to the themes.

various actors and scales of intervention around the common arena of the food stake» (TEV, APCA, FNCUMA, FNCIVAM & TRAME, 2009). This definition is formulated from the multidimensional scope of food. Five dimensions are identified, representing the main identified fields of action treating one facet of the food issue (social access, nutrition and health, cultural identity and gastronomy, agricultural production and short food supply chains, agro-food industry and distribution) and the variety of the actors related to them (Fig. 2).

In the study of the 18 city region members of the network, TEV analyses the relation between the peri-urban agricultural policies and the other fields of action defined as related to the food governance issue. The study reveals a very divided system concerning the treatment of the food issue which is split into distinct silos of action whose actors are little connected. Food is today partly tackled by the local authorities within the production arena (initially centred on short food supply chains, it opens to collective catering and combinations with long food supply chains and to other prospects) and also the consumption arena (collective catering, social food baskets, actions against climate change, sustainable purchase) through actions coming under the thematic fields of action of sustainable development (Climate plan, Green plan, Agenda 21), social economy, health, social cohesion. These fields are stimulated by the development of citizen actions (Community Supported Agriculture, shared gardens, social and solidarity food stores), the territorialisation of the state food policy (National Food Plan, National Plan on Nutrition and Health) and the international and national injunctions in terms of sustainable development. TEV progressively invests all those policy fields which are out of its bosom and partly related to urban planning issues.

In this investment the Rururbal program holds a responsibility. It allowed a first ac-culturation to the consumption silo and facilitated the echo between food and planning issues. The actors involved chose to use the term «food» instead of «agro-food» during the workshops so as to position the reflections out of the agricultural silo. In relation to the development of the «food governance» notion, two main inputs can be cited. The first is the willingness to exceed the short food supply chain approach in favour of a territorialized food sector approach. The program relied on the notion of «local agro-food systems» defined by the 27.01.11 Notice of the Region Committee. This definition is based on a large approach of the food chain taking into account a wide variety of actors at each stages and including the economical but also cultural and social dimension of those systems. The second input is the broadening of the type of actors included in a debate dominated by the agricultural professional culture as summarized by Torino partner: «the Rururbal revolution is that we started to see food from the perspective of the consumers and other actors». In the course of the program, each partner had to identify the actions conducted in their territories related to the food thematic and to develop pilot actions so as to establish links between those actions and the actors related. In Rururbal, Sienna had a strong approach centred on the everyday food habits of its inhabitants in all its dimensions, including gender. This partner counted in the evolution of the perception of the food issue by the other partners and in particular sensitized the technical secretary of TEV and explains the advanced position of the city region authority Pays Voironnais in comparison with the others regarding the first developments of the food issue in French city regions. Starting from the agricultural issue, the Pays Voironnais got sensitized to food issues by supporting organic production and short food supply chains on its territory before opening to the social and

health sector conducted by the city of Voiron. They try to establish links between consumption and production actors and they got opened to the inhabitant-consumer. The initial approach through short food supply chains has been exceeded in favour of a territorial food sector approach trying to integrate distribution and agro-food actors. Related to that agri-food approach, the metropolitan scale has been identified as a good scale so as to reach the objective of a better structuring of the local food supply. Since 2014, the food issue even appears as a potential factor of metropolitan construction as the food strategy is now thought in collaboration with other local authorities of the Grenoble metropolitan region, including the mountain surrounding territories.

At the end of the Rururbal program, the partners have gone through thematic out of the only support toward agriculture (Fig. 3).

- a. Support of access to local products for local consumption of production:
  - Increase of the share of local products in the supply of 'staple' products
  - Encouraging the use of local products through education, training, awareness raising, public dialogue and the implementation and dissemination of innovative initiatives
  
- b. Organisation and management of the supply and marketing of local dietary products:
  - Improvement of the diversity and quality of production and processing, while producers search for better exploitation/use
  - Support of placing products in the local market, including communication through the use of logos and labels
  
- c. Promoting dietary models as a means for expanding and reinforcing vicinity and solidarity networks, serving social and peri-urban territorial innovation:
  - Establishment of regular time periods and creation of physical locations dedicated to exchanges and meetings of producers, consumers and all nutritional system stakeholders;
  - Promotion of clear sustainable operations among producers, peri-urban social groups and other nutritional agencies, modifying nutritional and farming practices
  - Support of actions favouring inter-cultural exchanges concerning nutrition and the use of local products
  - Developing actions favouring fair relations among peri-urban areas and city-centres
  - Facilitation of the emergence of territorial innovation.

Points a. and c. show the investment of thematic related to the consumption field (accessibility of the local products, education, consciousness, intercultural exchanges). Point c. expresses the established link between food and planning issues. The research for synergies between spaces and actors (particularly from the civil society) is at the heart of the Rururbal program. The actors implied open-up to actors from the social economy, culture or health. They realized that many actions related to food were conducted on their territories but without being connected and that integrated food policies would request an articulation between siloed policies at different scales. In that context, a food policy implies that a red thread circulates between siloed policies or actions around the local food issue.



*Difficulties in reaching the «food governance» notion's ambition.* – The «food governance» notion has allowed a first broadened apprehension of the urban food issue. But, the first uses of the notion give the impression that «food governance» has just replaced the «city food supply» issue in the renaming of TEV work area in 2009 «short food supply chains and the city food supply» by «short food supply chains and food governance». The ambition to see the emergence of a food policy that would establish links between siloed related policies has not been reached yet. This, mainly because of the difficulties of going beyond the initial agricultural prism of formulation of the notion.

Till 2013, in the works conducted by TEV, the agricultural prism, namely the research and the consolidation of markets shares for the peri-urban agricultural economy, stayed strong. The new food demands and the injunctions for collective catering are tools at the service of the peri-urban agriculture maintenance. In this context, the promotion of the food governance is a way to reinforce agriculture as a food strategy would allow the structuring of the local supply at a city region scale. As a result, since 2011, TEV works have been reoriented toward the articulations between short and long food supply chains. If this allows the transition toward an agri-food perspective on food policies, going beyond the short food supply chains and taking into account all the stages of the food chain and the variety of the related conventional and alternative actors (production, transformation, distribution and consumption), it limits the food policy to the only city food supply issue leaving out the other dimensions of a food policy.

Another difficulty in reaching the «food governance» ambition results from an initial difficulty to establish links with the consumption field. The «food governance» term stems from the feeling of an eventual common destiny between the consumers and the producers but beyond that, it was not easy for TEV to seize the social dimension of the food issue and to really meet and engage fertile crossing with the consumer field. The technical secretary of TEV confessed that one of the errors of the ADAYG had been its incapacity to identify the societal movement issued from the urban consumers: «we did not understand the Community Supported Agriculture movement [...] the urban agriculture movement; we did not see it very well». In Grenoble, there was a mistrust *vis-à-vis* a movement of an urban militant consumer perceived as not supporting the agricultural values and somehow distant from the real agriculture of the territory as there is a major focus for market gardening. From this point of view, Rururbal was determinant in TEV vision of the role of the consumer and its acknowledgment in the evolution of the agricultural peri-urban policies (Bonneyoy & Brand, 2014). In 2013, the national encounter of TEV members asserts the non-reduction of the food policy to the food supply dimension. Within TEV, it is acknowledged that the agricultural policies can not be dissolved in food policies and that in return, food policies can not be limited to relocating of the food supply policies. If this assumption goes in the sense of the «food governance» notion, there is a separation between those two policies, which produces a discrepancy with the social reality as there is no such «food policies» in the French territories, apart from the state food policy. Health, social cohesion, gastronomic policies referred to as «food policies» in the report of the 2008-2009 workshops of the FNRN are not food policies in the reality. They are sectorial policies treating one facet of the food issue. A junction is established between production and consumption but the formulation frame remains agricultural and moreover lacks the waste management field. In fact, agricul-



tural policy is not soluble in food policies, just as health or social policies.

It is difficult to qualify the carried out actions as food policy because the integration of the agro-food transformation and distribution actors is still limited and complicated (Brand and Bonnefoy, 2011; ADCF *et al.*, 2012; Bonnefoy and Brand, 2014) as well as the effective link with all the consumption facets (health and nutrition, culture, education, accessibility, etc.). The convergence between agricultural and nutritional and social stakes has still a way to go. The existence of an «agri-food arena», «societal questioning arenas» and «sectorial arenas» seizing one facet of the food issue seems more able to display the diversity of the French scenes presently investing the facets of the food issue. Their concrete hybridization remains to be done. The food governance calls for a better articulation between the scenes and today there could be an interest in keeping those scenes divided so as to avoid conflicts: «Agenda 21, PCET [Territorial Climate Energy Plan], ESS [Social Economy] plans would deal with the civil society when agricultural policy would manage the relations between the professionals and the local authorities» (Bonnefoy and Brand, 2014, p. 102). As noted by TEV, the first approaches evolve between an agricultural and a militant conception and both of them are reductive of the food issue. The agricultural conception is limited to the relocating and for the militant conception is it difficult to make links with the real agriculture of the territory and the planning actors (Brand and Bonnefoy, 2011). From a general perspective, the link between food and planning issue stands still.

*The discrepancy between diffusion and reception of the food governance notion.* – The «food governance» term is used as a language component from 2008 and is strongly diffused since 2012. At the end of 2012, two conferences take place only a few days apart centred on the city-food issue (4).

The International Urban Food Network (IUFN) conference officialised the creation of this network which aims at contributing to the integration of the food criteria in the planning and political agenda and operationalizing the research on the food governance. There is no real prism in the seizing of the urban food issue if not the encompassing one of sustainability and the right to food. As the founder comes from a professional path focused on the sustainability issues, she has developed a transversal approach on this multidimensional issue. On this occasion, a booklet, written by IUFN, TEV, two representatives of the local authorities and researchers, on the city region food governance is diffused (5). The IUFN aims at questioning the local authorities on this theme and at making visible the existent elements on this issue. But, two surveys on initiatives on sustainable urban food and the food issue at the local authorities agenda, conducted in 2011 and 2013 got limited answers. So as TEV's first investigations, the surveys show that the local authorities do not have a global seizing of the food issue, that they are not familiar with the «food governance» notion, that it is far from being a priority on their agendas but that a growing interest comes from the urban sustainability issues. At the end of 2013, a more detailed survey is conducted on some city regions on the initiative of the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and

---

(4) *Hungry city. Nourrir la ville de demain*, International Conference organized by IUFN on city region food governance, 6-7.12.12, Paris. *Nourrir les villes ... et développer les campagnes : pour une alimentation durable et responsable*, conference organised by the World food systems UNESCO chair and the Breuil school, 13.12.12, Paris.

(5) ADCF, ETD, IUFN, Terres en villes, 2012, *Nourrir nos villes. Pour une gouvernance alimentaire durable et responsable des régions urbaines*.

Energy, of the IUFN and in partnership with TEV so as to avoid the difficulties of a national survey. The survey focused on the fields of action identified by TEV where the food issue potentially appears (Agenda 21, PCET, ESS). They establish that the food thematic appears in projects related to peri-urban and urban agriculture, waste management, health consciousness, food sector structuring. Quoting the difficulty to find a person in charge of the projects related to food, the report (Bastianelli *et al.*, 2013) tells again, in a naive way, the gap between the food governance conceptualisation formulated by some pioneers actors and the reality of apprehension of the food issue by the local authorities. But still, the food issue starts to diffuse more widely.

The French Region Association publishes in 2014 a Declaration in favour of the territorialised food systems. Concerning research on food systems, manifest evolutions are in progress. Mainly centred on the production side, the rural and agricultural geographers open to the consumption side through studies on the evolution of the agriculture in relation with the urbanization or through the arrival of new environmental and food concerns. Even if the agricultural perspective is, here also, difficult to overcome, they begin to seize the urban food issue (Brand, 2015). In this evolution they open up to the consumers and the cities as institutions in the construction of food policies (Perrin & Soulard, 2014). Also, at the end of 2012, the conference co-organised by the World food systems Unesco Chair of Montpellier scores the beginning of a number of encounters on the sustainable urban food systems in an enlarged approach since 2013 (nutrition regimes, taste education, agro-ecology, food security, food aid, right to food, etc.). With the rise of the food issue in civil society, on the agenda of the French state, all of this forms a background that starts to question the local authorities.

Nevertheless it is difficult for them to seize what this «food governance» term really means. This explains partly the limits observed for TEV. Its first investigations were pioneer but its members did not follow completely. The technical secretary reported that the members were mainly asking for operational elements so as to support the development of short food supply chains. The notion leaves the technicians of the local authorities with a fuzzy impression, beside the perception that it is a structuring framework for developing the local food supply of the city. When interacting with the technicians of French local authorities, we observed that they systematically had difficulties in expressing what it covers. Even, the technician of the Grand Lyon in charge of agricultural issues declared in 2011: «in TEV, we speak of food and for me it has always been a UFO». Despite the fact that food policy is a grey area, there is a latent injunction to use it. This field of action becomes evident and appears more clearly on the tables of discussion since 2013-2014. Since then I have been personally asked by the local authorities for general presentations on the topic that stresses the need for clarifying the general use of terms such as «food governance», «local food policy», «local food strategy». In the agricultural field of action, food is seen as the framework of evolution of the field and the «food» term appears in the titles of elected representatives and technicians. This also emphasizes the transition from an agricultural to an agri-food perspective and the way to go toward local food policies. In the Nord-pas-de-Calais region, the vice president in charge of food, agricultural regionalisation and rurality since 2011 fought for the mention of the « food » term in its delegation title. For him, it expressed the fact that the peri-urban agriculture need the alliance with the consumers.

*The French food policy paradox?* – This article intended to track the stages and factors of emergence of the urban food issue on the French territorial agenda. In the food planning community, one could speak of a French food policy paradox. Despite the centrality of food, France was little visible in the nascent food planning debate scene.

But, if the consciousness of action on the urban food issue was belated formulated compared to the northern American and European countries, France was not that late in terms of action. For instance, in the Urbact «sustainable food in urban communities» program (6), Bristol was first perceived by the other cities implied as an advanced city on the urban food issue. Bristol has developed the first city region food system assessment and set up the first food policy council in Europe. Also, Bristol example was largely diffused in and by the academic circles (Brand, 2015). But, in the course of the Urbact program, the other cities, and Lyon in particular, realized that they had lots of existing actions and actors mobilized and that Bristol was not that much in advance in terms of concrete actions and existing devices on the urban food issue. Bristol representatives even confessed they had difficulties in putting the issue on the public agenda. An apprehension of the topic had just been earlier formulated compared to the other cities.

In France, the diffusion of the «food governance» term preceded the social reality, mainly describing connections and absence of connections between thematic, actors and scales concerned by the food issue. The treatment of the food issue is siloed and the urban food issue has mainly been formulated through the agricultural prism. Siloes remain today in the global perception of the food issue. The «food approach», departing from the siloed glazes on the food issue, encounters the barriers of a sectorized territorial action. The agricultural prism still dominates the construction of the urban food issue. The focus is mainly put on the city supply issue and the approach struggles with the integration of the consumption side and of the conventional agro-food actors. The Territorial Food Projects device established by the national Loi Avenir pour l'Agriculture, l'Alimentation et la Forêt of the 13.10.14 appear as a tool to better cross actions related to consumption and production issues falling under state injunctions or under the initiatives of the local authorities. But here also, contradictions remain in the territorialisation of the state food policy and the emergence of local food policies as the «food» notion is not yet integrated in documents framing the local authorities action (7).

---

(6) Urbact is a programme of community initiative of the economic, social and territorial cohesion policy of the European Union. The thematic network «sustainable food in urban communities» is part of the thematic «environment with low carbon impact» of Urbact II (2007-2013). It groups 10 cities (Brussels, Amersfoort, Bristol, Oslo, Göteborg, Ourense, Lyon, Messina, Athens, Vaslui) wishing to reflect and conduct actions for more sustainable urban food system. Between 2013 and 2015 I accompanied the city of Lyon in this programme on an expert, supporting and capitalisation mission. Monitoring this programme was a support for analysing the rising territorial seizing of food at local authorities scale.

(7) In 2013, in the Loi pour l'accès au logement et un urbanisme rénové, an amendment proposing to recognize the nourishing function of the agricultural land in planning tools was rejected. In January 2016, the issue has been rediscussed as the Bonnet report on the planning of the rural and peri-urban territories proposed the creation of a «food competence for the local authorities».

## REFERENCES

- ADCF, ETD, IUFN and TERRES EN VILLES, *Nourrir nos villes. Pour une gouvernance alimentaire durable des régions urbaines*, 2012 (on line: [http://www.iufn.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Nourrir\\_nos\\_villes1.pdf](http://www.iufn.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Nourrir_nos_villes1.pdf)).
- APA, *Policy guide on community and regional food planning*, 2007 (on line su internet: <https://www.planning.org/policy/guides/adopted/food.htm>).
- BASTIANELLI L., DUPAS M., LHOSTE A., MEURUEY C. and PUGES A., *Gouvernance alimentaire urbaine*, Report achieved within the Mastère spécialisé Politiques et Actions publiques pour le développement durable. AgroParisTech, École des Ponts. Report requested by the Ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement Durable et de l'Énergie, Commissariat général au Développement Durable, 2013.
- BONNEFOY S. and BRAND C., *Régulation politique et territorialisation du fait alimentaire : de l'agriculture à l'agri-alimentaire*, in «Géocarrefour», 2014, 89, 1-2, pp. 95-103.
- BOURGUINAT N., *Le maire nourricier : renouvellements et déclin d'une figure tutélaire dans la France du XIXe siècle*, in «Le Mouvement Social», 2008, 3, 224, pp. 89-104.
- BRAND C., *Alimentation et métropolisation : repenser le territoire à l'aune d'une problématique vitale oubliée*, Géographie, Grenoble, Université Grenoble Alpes (Laboratoire PACTE, UMR 5194), 2015.
- BRAND C. and BONNEFOY S., *L'alimentation des sociétés urbaines : une cure de jeunesse pour l'agriculture des territoires métropolitains*, in «Vertigo», 2011, 11, 2 (on line su internet: <http://vertigo.revues.org/11199>).
- DELFOSE C., *Le métier de crémier-fromager de 1850 à nos jours*, Rinxent, Editions Mer du nord, 2014.
- FENECHERE F., DURAND G. and MARECHAL G., *Systèmes alimentaires territorialisés : les circuits courts comme vecteurs de développement territorial*, in MARECHAL G. (ed.), *Les circuits courts alimentaires : bien manger dans les territoires*, Dijon, Educagri Editions, 2008, pp. 161-174.
- KEBIR L., *Les cantines bio: que reste-t-il de l'esprit pionnier?*, in «Métropolitiques», 2012 (on line: <http://www.metropolitiques.eu/Les-cantines-bio-que-reste-t-il-de.html>).
- MARTY P., *Les appropriations urbaines de la question agricole. Le cas de Brive, de 1945 à 2012*, Histoire, Paris, Université Pantheon-Sorbonne-Paris I, 2013.
- MORGAN K., *Nourishing the city: The rise of the urban food question in the Global North*, in «Urban Studies», 2014, 52, 8, pp. 1-16.
- PERRIN C. and TOUSSAINT SOULARD C., *Vers une gouvernance alimentaire locale reliant ville et agriculture. Le cas de Perpignan*, in «Géocarrefour», 2014, 89, 1-2, pp. 125-134.
- TERRES EN VILLES, APCA, FNCUMA, FNCIVAM and TRAME, *La gouvernance alimentaire des agglomérations françaises et la relocalisation des productions agricoles*, 2009.
- TERRES EN VILLES, APCA and FNPNR, *Mise en perspective des circuits de proximité avec les enjeux alimentaires pour mieux accompagner les territoires. Présentation du projet*, 2009.
- WISKERKE J.S. and VIJJOEN A., *Sustainable urban food provisioning: challenges for scientists, policymakers, planners and designers*, in VIJJOEN A. and WISKERKE J.S. (eds), *Sustainable food planning. Evolving theory and practice*, Wageningen, Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2012, pp. 19-35.

THE FRENCH URBAN FOOD ISSUE EMERGENCE. – This article intends to outline the key features of the urban food issue emergence at the local authorities scale. France is well-known across the world as a country where food matters but surprisingly, France was almost absent of the first debates of the North-American and European food planning community. Though, food issues are recently reinvested through the notion of «food governance» whose breeding ground was the periurban agriculture issue. This emergence is particularly analyzed from the scope of the Terres en Villes network, leader of the first debates. The first paths of the urban food issue aimed at comforting the periurban agriculture position in an urbanization context. This initial agricultural prism is evolving toward an agri-food perspective. Progressively, the agricultural prism is opening toward other silos and in particular to the consumers. Nonetheless, the red thread of the food policy is not reached yet. Difficulties subsist in going beyond the initial agricultural prism. The city food supply issue dominates and leaves out the other dimensions of the urban food issue. France is characterized by the existence of several arenas seizing one facet of the food issue and their concrete connection stands still. Even if the «food governance» term is largely diffused since 2012, there is a gap between the pioneer of food governance conceptualization and the reality of apprehension of the food issue by the local authorities.

*Università di Grenoble-Alpes, Laboratorio PACTE, UMR 5194, Dipartimento Territorio  
Chaire Unesco en Alimentation du monde  
carolinebrand@hotmail.fr*