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## URBAN FOOD POLICIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: THEMES, APPROACHES, REFERENCE CASES

*Introduction.* – The subject of urban food policies, originated from considerations and experiences in cities of the Global North, mainly in North America with the pioneering case of Toronto (Blay-Palmer, 2009), is affecting an increasing number of cities in the Global South. In fact, as noted by Kevin Morgan, «the most damaging effects of the new food equation are being wrought in the cities of the Global South, where the noxious interplay of poverty, hunger and climate change is most apparent» (Morgan, 2015, p. 1380).

The link between agriculture, food and cities is not new to cities in the global South, particularly those in Africa on which this paper is focused. For over two decades issues such as food supply in cities, markets and logistics networks, the role of urban and peri-urban agriculture, just to name but a few of the most important cases, are the focus of analysis and action, often with the support of international development cooperation in its various forms (bi- and multilateral, non-governmental, decentralized).

However, the scene of urban food policies – promoted by various networks and international initiatives <sup>(1)</sup> and effectively outlined and launched by the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) – provides a coherent approach for local actions as a whole, framing them within initiatives and policies both at the national and international level, towards greater food security and sovereignty and reticular action amongst territories and cities. As it will be shown in more details below, the new Sustainable Development Goals for the Agenda 2030 and the New Urban Agenda adopted at Habitat III Conference (Quito, October 2016) offer significant opportunities of engagement for urban action within global frameworks.

This requires a reinterpretation, in a systemic way, of the experiences started long ago in many cities of the global South. An increased visibility of such experiences is also needed, thus contributing to «feed» a growing debate and discussion around a relatively new space of action

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(1) There are a number of networks and initiatives that move around the theme of urban food policies, between advocacy and action. In 2001, FAO launched the multidisciplinary initiative *Food for the Cities* with the aim of facilitating relations between various actors on a global scale. In parallel with several other organizations such as the RUAF Foundation, ISU, HIC, ICLEI, IUFN FAO participated to a broad partnership that converges in the City Region Food System approach (CRFS Collaborative, *City Food Systems. Sustainable Food Systems and Urbanization*. Call for action on the occasion of World Urban Forum 7 Medellin, Colombia, 2014.) For a complete list of partners and prospects, see [www.cityregionfoodsystems.org](http://www.cityregionfoodsystems.org). In the research field, please see the Sustainable Food Planning group linked to the AESOP network: [http://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/en\\_GB/sustainable-food-planning](http://www.aesop-planning.eu/blogs/en_GB/sustainable-food-planning).

in which local food sovereignty can be defined operationally, that is the possibility and ability to locally adjust the food system towards desired and desirable objectives.

This paper, which brings together the authors' different backgrounds and research experiences, will focus in particular on the African context, highlighting firstly the evolution of the debate on food alongside with the institution of the African state in the post-colonial period, to then examine specificities and peculiarities of cities in the global South within the discourse of urban food policies, even with a certain level of generalization. A number of experiences and initiatives in African cities will be examined, also in light of their accession to the MUFPP and their connection to cities of the global North, in particular with the Italian ones.

*Food policies in the global South, between food self-sufficiency, food security and food sovereignty.* – There is a direct, structural link between the idea of the «global South» and food policies: the issue of hunger has played in fact a central role in identifying this part of the world, since Truman's 1949 speech on «underdeveloped areas». Therefore, the analysis of urban food policies in the global South cannot be detached from an assessment of the evolution of those paradigms with which the issue of access to food has been analyzed and managed politically. Pierpaolo Faggi (2012) identifies three phases – food self-sufficiency, food security and food sovereignty – each of which is characterized by specific goals, actors, procedures, resources and territorial structures. Following the same pattern, it is also possible to interpret the evolution of the role in food policies held by cities in the global South.

The phase of *food self-sufficiency* has marked in particular the decades following the Second World War, which in Africa and parts of Asia coincided with the emancipation from colonial rule. The declaration of food self-sufficiency has thus become a way for the newly independent states to gain political legitimacy among decolonized populations. The theme takes on particular significance in the African case where the new States are instituted on radically different characteristics from those of the precolonial past, thus lacking a historical legitimacy. There is, therefore, a close link between the political affirmation of the new elites and food policies, vividly described by Jean-François Bayart (1989) with the concept of the «*politique du ventre*». Increasing agricultural production towards food self-sufficiency passes through a large setup of hydraulic infrastructures, primarily in rural areas, but with a decision-making centre which is urban and with strategies based on political purposes rather than real efficiency (Dumont, 1986). In this context, the cities involved are essentially the capital cities and being far from representing an independent political subject, are identified with the State itself. At this phase, the food policy is shaped in the city, but it is exercised in rural areas, and local governments, when they exist, do not have actually any power.

The situation changed radically with the crisis of the seventies, especially with the structural adjustment policies of the eighties. The crisis the states went through, the forced opening of markets and the rapid urbanization define the framework for food policies focused on grain imports that move the pendulum of food policies towards the need for urban populations to have low-cost foods. The main objective at this phase is to ensure *food security* in cities, even at the cost of radically compromising the basic structures of peasant agriculture. The fundamental assumption of this policy is the ability to access the international market for low-cost food, something that happen in most cases, but not on a continuous basis, as evidenced by the Nigerian crisis of the eighties (Andrae and Beckman, 1985) or,

more recently, by the food crisis of the year 2007-08. This last event, in particular, has had a strong symbolic value as regards the relationship between food and cities: the urban riots that followed the uncontrolled growth of grain prices have highlighted the shift from the problem of food availability, a typical issue of the «rural» food crisis of the seventies to that of food access and the possibility of buying food available on the urban market (Cohen e Garrett, 2010).

The food crisis of the year 2007-2008 also underlines the emergence of a third phase of food policy, characterized by the concept of *food sovereignty*, a term introduced in contrast to the concept of food security, to later supplement it without replacing it, within the international agencies debate (Patel, 2009; Jarosz, 2014). The concept was established in the nineties by initiative of the international peasant network *La via Campesina* and has been defined in 2007 as «the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems» <sup>(2)</sup>. The failure of liberal policies in regulating access to food by the urban populations, on the one hand, and to support peasant farming, on the other, have shifted the attention to controlling production and quality of the food consumed. From a geographical point of view, this has led to a shift from the global market policies to the local dimension: on the one hand, agri-food policies seek to reconnect food production and consumption by shortening commercial networks in order to reduce exposure to fluctuations in the international market. On the other, the political and administrative decentralization policies of the nineties have produced new local public entities looking to establish their own strategy, including the food sector.

The debate and early plans aimed to consider food insecurity at the local level, and particularly at the urban scale, go back in the late eighties, early nineties. At the same time, there is an effort to understand the role of cities in the global challenge of achieving food security (Atkinson, 1995; Maxwell, 1999; Crush and Frayne, 2011), which will lead, as we shall see, an actor such as FAO, traditionally oriented to agriculture and rural development, to become interested in cities <sup>(3)</sup>.

This process is clearly not univocal. At the same time, there is an intensified presence of imported food and the spread of supermarkets and global shopping centers also in areas such as the sub-Saharan Africa that have remained relatively untouched by this kind of market. However, it is at this phase that the groundwork for proper urban food policies is laid, aimed at supporting urban and peri-urban agriculture and consolidating local trade networks.

*Global South and urban food policies: peculiarities and issues.* – Urban studies have often seen cities under a negative light, considered as anomalies compared to the standard established by the western model (Robinson, 2002). The same is likely to occur with the debate on urban food policies, which are increasingly gaining recognition in wealthy societies but face a profoundly different reality in the peripheries of the planet. It is therefore necessary to open up the gaze, adopt a «border thinking» (Mignolo, 2000) also in examining urban food policies. «What if the post-metropolis is Lusaka?» wonders Garth Myers (2011) calling for a

(2) *La Via Campesina*, Nyeleni declaration (Mali) 2007.

(3) See for example the materials of the FAO-ISPRA seminar (Dakar, Senegal 14 to 17 April 1997) on *Ap-provisionnement et distribution alimentaires des villes de l'Afrique francophone*, <http://www.fao.org/docrep/004/AB781F/AB781F00.htm#TOC>.

change of perspective which looks at cities' future from an African metropolis: what if we look at the theme of urban food policies from the point of view of the South?

*Food and Cities in the Global South.* – The first and foremost issue that distinguishes the situation of the cities in the global South from those of the wealthier regions is the demographic dynamics: while treated with due caution regarding the reliability of data and the variety of classifications, the urban population of «less developed» <sup>(4)</sup> countries has increased tenfold in the period from 1950 to 2015 (from 300 million to 3 billion people), while that of wealthy countries have little more than doubled (from 440 to 980 million). If we look at the forecasts for the coming years, the difference is clear and the absolute numbers of urban population growth are even more explicit: from 3 to 5 billion people in developing countries and from 980 million to 1.1 billion in wealthier economies. This is however not merely a quantitative issue: the urbanization of the global South was mostly unplanned and this underpins a substantial difference compared to what happened in the global North (Parnell and Pieterse, 2014). Such dynamics require that policies, including those on food, consider the informal dimension not as an anomaly, but as the norm to confront with in order to achieve effective results.

Closely related to the rapid unplanned urbanization is the environmental issue: peripheral informal neighbourhoods and many of the peri-urban areas lack basic water and sanitation infrastructure and are therefore in a situation of significant environmental degradation than those peripheries of wealthy cities. This fact raises specific issues relating to the integration between urban and rural areas, which is the basis of much thinking about local food systems in urban areas. Urban food policies in the global South will therefore have to specifically address the issue of safety of foods produced in cities' peripheries and thus the environmental restoration of peri-urban areas.

Urban and peri-urban agriculture has different characteristics in the global North and South as well: if in wealthy countries there is a quality turn (Goodman, 2003) founded on a «new-agriculture» (Ferraresi and Coviello, 2007) promoted by a new generation of farmers, in the cities of the global South agriculture is primarily a food and income support for middle-low and low-income groups (Simatele and Binns, 2008).

The debate on the role of urban agriculture in the global South is wide and multifaceted (Mougeot, 2000). Among the positive aspects, it is generally highlighted primarily the opportunity for the most vulnerable groups to access relatively easily a productive activity where the new urban dwellers often have acquired skills in rural areas from which they come from. Alongside these elements of socio-economic nature, mention is made to the potential environmental and cultural benefits of food production and distribution systems that are mostly rooted in the local context. This theme is also shared by the debate on urban agriculture in the North of the world.

The most critical elements are the environmental and health issues mentioned above and the extent of the contribution of urban agriculture to citizens' overall supply of food. A study on cities in southern Africa has shown that in these areas urban agriculture is more like a complement than a real alternative to other forms of food supply, and supermarkets and the informal market represent the largest part of food outlets in the city (Crush and

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(4) The definition and following data are taken from the United Nations Population Division: World Urbanization Prospects, the 2014 Revision, <https://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/DataQuery/>.

Frayne, 2014).

Just as in the North of the world, local agriculture in the global South is also subject to competition from low-cost products by the international market, however, the question of the price of food in the marginal areas of the world assumes a deeper and decisive meaning. In the cities of the global South, in fact, the percentage of the poor is much higher and food insecurity remains a central issue. Food policies in the cities of the global South must therefore take into account specifically the economic possibility of access to food by the urban population (Crush and Frayne, 2014) and thus cannot be separated from social assistance policies (such as the program Bolsa Familia in Brazil) or income redistribution. In this regard, it can be noticed that also in the global South, in prosperous urban centres attention to quality and local food is being developed by the wealthy, but given the strong social polarization that characterizes these cities, such practices are restricted to a small elite.

The social polarization of the cities of the global South, largely caused by poorly diversified and largely export-oriented production systems, opens up a second set of specifics that relate to the colonial past shared by most of these countries.

*The remains of a colonial past.* – Urban food policies in the global South have to be confronted with agri-food systems that are deeply different from those found in richer regions of the planet. This diversity comes in many forms; however, a unifying element is certainly represented by the weight of socio-territorial structures inherited from the colonial past.

Colonial territorialisation – and largely that of the post-colonial era – has been primarily oriented to the export of agricultural or mining products, thus producing a «territorial mass» (Turco, 1988) meant to that purpose. It is about an intricate system of tangible and intangible elements that still marks the societies of the South and is now a reality with which nascent local food networks must face. Some elements of this colonial heritage can be shown through a specific example taken from the African continent: the case of the Atacora region in northern Benin.

The first point to make is that, while in the global North urban food policies engage in a diversified agri-food system, in the global South production systems are often characterized by a very limited number of products. In this example, it is noted that until recently, and despite the crisis in the sector, cotton is still the first cultivation in terms of area coverage (100,000 hectares in the year 2014-2015, around a quarter of the cultivated land in the region).

In much of West Africa, cotton production was organized in the first place through a system framed in the colonial structures and subsequently controlled by postcolonial state enterprises: in Benin, in particular, is the SONAPRA (*Société Nationale de gestion de la Production Agricole*) to manage input distribution and product marketing. It is a complex system, structured hierarchically from the capital to individual villages, that includes farmers, orienting their production choices. The existence of consolidated, «vertical» systems of power (public and private) that hinder the development of alternative «horizontal» solutions, is another feature that influences the development of local food networks in the global South.

More concretely, export-oriented agri-food systems have resulted in a network of infrastructure centred on coastal cities that has heavily affected the local dimension: in sub-Saharan Africa, the poor state of local viability and the lack of basic services in local markets has made it more difficult to develop local business networks.

The result of these difficulties is that local agri-food systems (Muchnik, 2008) have developed, especially in times of export-crops crisis, but focused on low added-value products, unlike with what happened in the wealthier regions of the world. In Atacora region, for example, there is in recent years a rapid growth in cassava production, which is largely transformed into gari, a very commonly used flour in local cuisine. Nevertheless, one of the main problems for gari producers is the difficulty in enhancing the quality of the product: the price tends to remain low (10 to 25,000 CFA <sup>(5)</sup> per 100 kg, depending on the season), levelled to the lowest quality as there is no demand for a higher quality product.

This aspect introduces one final thought on the valorisation of local products within the post-colonial societies. Decades of colonial de-territorialisation have profoundly deconstructed the local socio-territorial systems, obliterating the «heritage of values, knowledge, typical behaviours and institutions» (Becattini, 2000, p. 132), which is the basis of local development processes. This heritage has not been completely lost, but it would be difficult not to notice how this overwhelming work has left clear signs in the colonized territories and constitutes an inescapable divide between the perception that the colonized and colonizing societies have of their own history and territory. The activation of local food nets in the global South necessarily goes through the not so easy task of recovering the local intangible heritage and deconstructing a system of values that directly associates development with export crops. For this reason, initiatives such as Slow Food's «food communities», aimed at enhancing agri-food products rooted in specific territories, are particularly important in the global South (Dansero *et al.*, 2015). In Kouba, in the region of the Atacora, there is an ongoing project aimed at the recovery of traditional cultivations and products, such as fonio, now almost disappeared from the daily diet <sup>(6)</sup>.

*The international context: New Urban Agenda and MUFPP.* – the colonial era left the continent organized around a few cities and many rural settlements; therefore, policies and investments have focused on major cities and agricultural interventions for the development of rural areas (Pieterse, Parnell and Haysom, 2015).

The current transition is rather reversing the perspective, strong rural-urban migration is making secondary towns grow although they are not at the center of political attention, increasing in such way the difficulties in city governance and in the management of food insecurity, which will be more and more an urban problem (Roberts, 2014). If the answer to food insecurity will only concern agricultural production, the scale of action for interventions will be national and not urban. The high growth rates of the urban population increase consumers in informal economies, which will increasingly become resource-catalysts, competing with the formal economy. If this, in Africa, is now quite evident, also in the global North the theme of food in cities shows similarities as regard environmental unsustainability and employment inequalities as well as differences in a more dormant social tension and slow growth (UN Habitat, 2014).

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(5) The figure is expressed in francs of the African Financial Community (CFA), corresponding to approximately 15-35 euros.

(6) The project, entitled «Social enterprise for women and educational programs for the promotion of local agricultural supply chains», is promoted by the NGO *Mani Tese* under the call «Feeding the Planet» (Cariplo Foundation, the City of Milan, Lombardy Region).

*The New Urban Agenda.* – These and other issues were at the center of the global debate of the New Urban Agenda (NUA), adopted in Quito, during the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development Habitat III. The conference offered a broad discussion program on urban issues, with a strong participation of local governments and the civil society. During the process of discussion and adoption of the NUA, which saw participating Member States involved through the drafting of a national report on urban policies, food and nutrition issues have only been addressed in the final period of negotiations. Additionally, the bulk discussions of the conference have remained within the authority of national governments (Forster, 2016). However, there is a fair margin for the involvement of local actors, especially in the implementation phase of the NUA, as several passages in the text emphasize the importance of the contribution of local governments to its operational definition and it is considered equally important the direct participation of the local actors involved. The Second World Assembly of Local and Regional Governments has also moved in this direction, working together in the design of this framework document that aims to steer the world's urban development policy over the next two decades.

It should also be noted that Habitat III has been one of the first major UN conferences since the adoption of the Agenda 2030, which encompasses 17 Goals for Sustainable Development (SDGs) including Goal 2 on hunger, food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture, and Goal 11 aimed at making cities and human settlements more inclusive and sustainable. A thesis which seems to reflect a growing consensus in the international debate is the dual need to «bridge the gaps» between Goals 2 and 11 on one side, thus addressing the importance of the food system in relation to sustainable urbanization; on the other, to present an agenda that is capable of promoting greater integration and overall coordination of policies and actions in the parallel and interconnected debate that leads to the implementation of the post-2015 and the new urban agendas (Forster *et al.*, 2015).

In all cases, the NUA, just like the Agenda 2030, has a universal scope and can be used as a tool to ground and implement the Agenda 2030 in cities in order to promote sustainable urban development, indicating specific references, strategic guidelines and action areas related to the connection between food and cities and vice versa. Specifically, the NUA, in its statement of principle consider that cities, in order to meet the essential needs of peoples, should also ensure equal access to goods and services related to food and nutrition safety, so as to provide the opportunity for all, in particular to vulnerable groups of the population, to have access to infrastructures (physical and social) capable of providing food that is sufficient, safe, accessible (both in physical and monetary terms) and nutritious.

The Implementation Plan included in the Agenda reiterates in several parts the importance of urban food security and the physical and functional link to be strengthened between urban and rural areas. The declared commitments include the promotion of those local systems that integrate urban-rural functions in territorial structures and in urban systems (paragraph 49), while specific mention is made for strengthening the food system planning (paragraph 51). Indeed, in affirming the recommendations to be implemented to ensure the implementation of such purposes, much attention is paid to the role of urban and territorial planning «to end hunger and malnutrition» (paragraph 123).

To manage the physical and administrative space, the Agenda encourages the development of a city-region model through the use of sectoral urban planning tools (such as metropolitan plans) to foster synergies by strengthened urban-rural connectivity. At the same time, it re-

commends to facilitate trade links that are able to provide small farmers access to regional and global agri-food chains. In addition, trade and local markets gain specific value in contributing to urban food and nutrition security. In this context, the scale of small and medium-sized cities is perceived as an optimal dimension for improving local food systems. In the context of local food security, urban agriculture is being promoted as an environmentally responsible and safe practice. The Agenda also promotes coordination between agri-food policies in urban, peri-urban and rural areas to facilitate the production, storage, transport and marketing of safe and healthy food and the reduction of food waste (paragraphs 95, 96).

*The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.* – In parallel to the path of the New Urban Agenda, the link between food and cities has been subject to a broad international debate, developed with increasing intensity over the last 15 years through networks facilitated partly by the United Nations (WHO, FAO, UNDP) and partly by a large, globally active technical-scientific community. On this basis, the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) has emerged, representing a new space for dialogue and exchange amongst cities around the world, specifically on issues regarding food security and food planning (CRFS Collaborative, 2014). Referring to the introductory chapter in this monographic issue for a presentation of the MUFPP, it is deemed important to emphasize that within the 134 participating cities (in October 2016) there are 21 cities from Latin America, 20 from Africa (including 18 in the sub-Saharan) and 17 from South-East Asia.

African cities, within the Milan Pact, can find solutions on the issues affecting the continent's rapid urbanization process. The MUFPP therefore represents the international framework within which to develop further local applications that meet the needs of each regional context. The FAO, in the context of the agreement, is facilitating the Pact's dissemination and contributing to speed up its implementation in Africa through decentralized cooperation mechanisms.

The 20 African signatory cities of the Pact are spread throughout the continent, including cities from English-, French- and Portuguese-speaking countries. In the vast majority, these are the main capitals of the continent, with only 3 being secondary cities.



Fig. 1 – *The 134 signatory cities of the MUFPP*

Source: Authors' processing on data from [www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org](http://www.milanurbanfoodpolicypact.org)

*The Milan Pact Award.* – In order to stimulate the dissemination and exchange of good practices, the first edition of the Milan Pact Award was launched in 2016. Altogether, 33 cities around the world were involved, compiling a compendium of 47 good practices. There were 4 African cities that were candidates for sharing their good practices: Nairobi (urban agriculture legislation), Dakar (horticulture and healthy school meals), Lusaka (women's empowerment) and Arusha (horticulture for a sustainable diet).

In September 2016, a forum was held in Dakar, Senegal, amongst the signatory cities of francophone African countries, with the objective to foster the development of a sub-regional network between these cities, with the attendance of representatives of the cities of Dakar, Abidjan, Brazzaville, Douala, N'Djamena, Niamey and Nouackchott. The debate within the forum brought forth issues concerning the African region which currently do not appear sufficiently considered in the MUFPP guidelines, in particular, the economic fragility of African cities and the attention to support local production, while it is reported the impact of imported food on the consumption of local products. During the Dakar Forum, cities have produced a statement <sup>(7)</sup> defining the actions of the Pact on which they intend to work on jointly. More specifically, they aim at enhancing participation for all actors in the food system, identify improved technologies for food storage and infrastructure for the peri-urban transport (Logical Framework n. 2 and n. 28, MUFFP 2015). These cities also aim to raise awareness amongst their citizens towards more sustainable diets, develop policies and practices to improve food distribution and food storage (MUFPP, 2016).

*The Italian institutional work in Africa and the MUFPP.* – The high diversity of African contexts allows the emergence of a possible mapping of the Italian work in Africa, in the light of the urban paradiplomacy activated by the MUFPP. The map helps to frame the priority countries for Italy in Africa (*ISPI-MAE 2012, SACE 2014 reports*), the two countries with a preferential relationship with Italy (Ethiopia and Mozambique), the cities participating in the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, cities that show, for the period 2010-2025, an estimated growth of more than 50% (*AfDB, OECD, UNDP, 2016*), the embassies established and high-level institutional visits since 2014. These new geographies could facilitate the activation of exchanges amongst cities in the global North and South with the aim of enhancing the «diplomacy of growth» and decentralized cooperation. Several Italian cities have already established relations of exchange and twinning with African cities, some of which (\*) are MUFPP cosignatories: Milan with Dakar\* 1979 (Senegal) and Algiers\* 2015 (Algeria); Turin with Maputo\* 2015 (Mozambique), Praia\* 2003 (Cape Verde), Tunis\* 2015 (Tunisia) and Ouagadougou 2003 (Burkina Faso). Genoa with Pointe Noire 2006 (Congo-Brazzaville), Kaolack 2006 (Senegal) and Polokwane 2011 (South Africa); Bologna with Saint-Louis 1991 (Senegal); Palermo with Bukavu 1998 (Congo-Kinshasa) and Bizerta 2000 (Tunisia).

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(7) MUFFP (2016). Dakar forum of African signatory cities. List of recommendations. 22 September 2016. Dakar.



Fig. 2 – *Geography of the Italian work in Africa in the context of MUFPP themes*

Source: A. Magarini, A. Calori, EStà, 2016

*Urban Food Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa: a number of ongoing initiatives.* – By looking at African cities through the lens of the food system, a wide-ranging scene of themes and issues is unfolded on which cities have started reflecting and working on. Of all, those emerging are urban agriculture programs developed in many cities throughout the continent (FAO, 2012) to ensure an acceptable level of food security, adapt and combat climate change, efforts to ensure access to land, the management of migration from rural areas to cities, access to water for food and urban agriculture, and urban planning initiatives that can have an impact on food production issues. These elements of urban interest, potentially addressed at sectoral level by specific policies and institutional departments, can increase the impact if they are gathered within a single strategy to act in an integrated manner on the city's food system. Being able to manage the food system in its entirety means in fact to extend the action of public policies in addition to food production alone, by integrating urban production into the issues of transformation, logistics, distribution, consumption and waste, or put in synthesis, into the structural elements of the food system. This is particularly true in Africa, where despite the high urban growth rates and high levels of urban food insecurity, there is little analysis of the food systems in their entirety able to restore the complexity of the elements that act within a city

(Battersby, 2013). These gaps in knowledge are identified at the processes in secondary cities, the role of local governments, the impact of inadequate transport systems, food distribution, the impact of supermarkets in cities and the impact of food imports (Smit, 2016).

In view of these shortcomings, several partial responses are emerging across the continent that could be linked to decentralized cooperation mechanisms between cities.

Among the cities which have adopted a food policy with a systemic approach, Johannesburg appears to be particularly interesting. On the one hand, this logistics and socio-economic hub serving the entire southern Africa, offers economic opportunities. At the same time, however, there are 1.9 million people considered as poor, on a population of 8 million inhabitants at the metropolitan level. The city in 2013 committed to increasing the level of food security through the expansion of easy-to-access food distribution systems, using economic incentives and peri-urban agriculture programs. As part of a multilevel governance, urban and intersectoral actions have been integrated with those carried out by its own province, Gauteng, through training courses for farmers to achieve greater sustainability in food production (Malan, 2015).

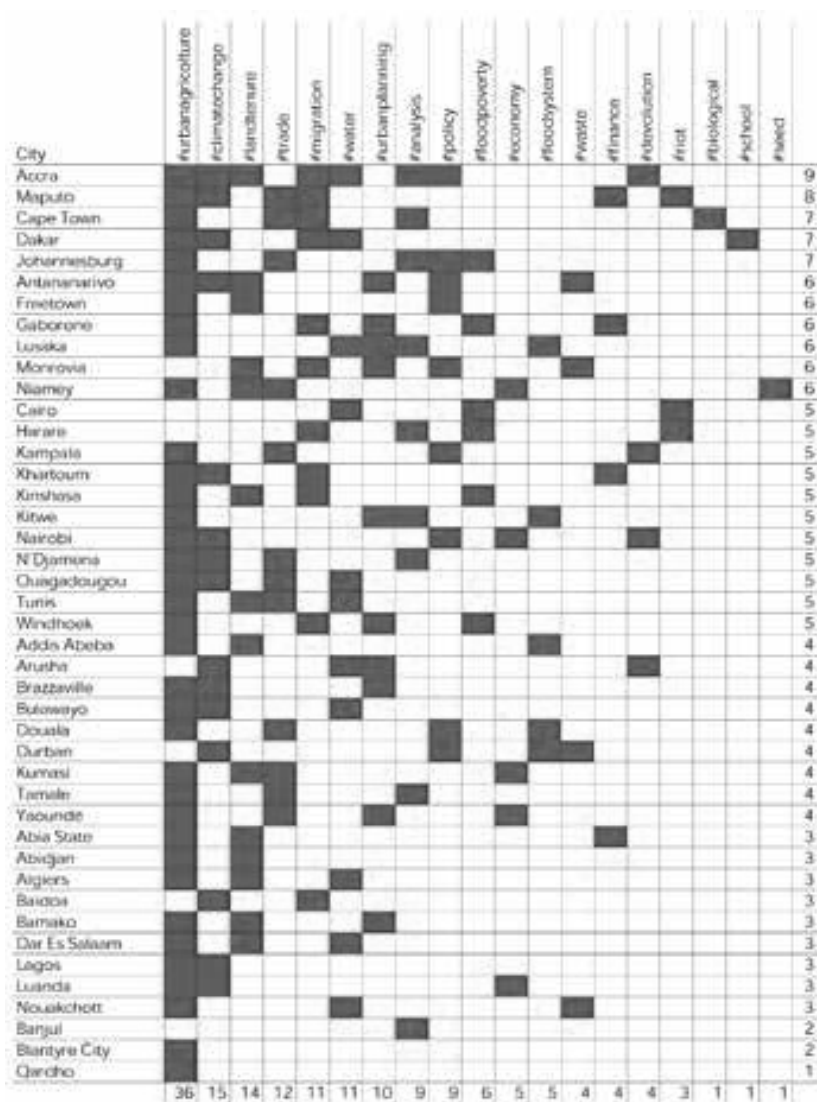


Fig. 3 – Matrix displaying the issues affecting the food system in 43 African cities

Source: A. Magarini, A. Calori, 2016

The city of Dakar (2.4 million inhabitants) is working with micro-gardens, an urban horticulture practice for self-consumption and marketing of produce to local markets. Thanks to the support of international cooperation, technical expertise and simplified hydroponics have been provided for the production of quality vegetables to approximately 7,000 people who cultivate 134 production centers, supported by 12 training centers. The local administration has included these practices in urban planning policies (Ba & Ba, 2007). The quality of water for micro-garden irrigation is often poor, pumped from the underground, where it can be mixed with waste water. For this reason, the city government, with FAO support, is experimenting with projects to equip the green belt of the city with facilities for the treatment of waste water (FAO, 2012).

In 2005 the local authorities in Douala (2.4 million inhabitants) promoted networking activities among the urban food system stakeholders to improve food supply and distribution, promoting coordination and technical cooperation between the different actors at the urban level, towards the definition of an urban food strategy <sup>(8)</sup> (CVUC, 2005). The city of Monrovia (1 million inhabitants) is engaged in a strategic planning process aiming to take action on the urban food system through multistakeholder platforms for land access, urban agriculture and waste management (GIZ, FAO and RUAF, 2016). These dynamics have taken a central role due to the Ebola outbreak, which has heavily affected the food supply in formal markets.

The relation between food and cities is also a key to understand some of the social tensions that have emerged in recent years. In Maputo (1.7 million inhabitants), the informal economy is still the largest source of food supply. In the wake of rising food prices, in February 2008, several food riots occurred in the Mozambican capital. A subsequent uprising was seen in September 2010 due to the announcement by the central government of the withdrawal of subsidies on wheat imports, resulting in an additional 25% increase in bread prices. These riots have forced the government to withdraw the proposal, maintaining the subsidy. Further studies have shown that all social groups in poor areas prone to food insecurity had taken part in violent demonstrations. The reasons for these tensions lie mainly in the high rate of food imports resulting in price fluctuations (FAO, 2012). These riots are a common problem in many urban areas in Africa, caused by the effects of excessive import of products from abroad.

This issue was at the centre of the Dakar Forum debate, which took place in September 2016 among the French-speaking African cities, signatories of the MUFPP. In the final recommendations, the cities of Dakar, Niamey, Brazzaville, N'Djamena, Nouakchott, Douala and Abidjan have denounced the impact of imported food products on the consumption of local products, with the consequent change in the eating habits observed in cities (MUFPP, 2016).

Although the city of Maputo has grown rapidly, most of its green areas remain intact and protected under urban legislation. Since 1980, the Maputo City Council has established a peri-urban green belt for horticulture, equipping the area with irrigation systems. This area is being cultivated by 13,000 farmers who have land use rights and can therefore use the land in micro-credit operations within a union of 200 agricultural cooperatives. The daily income

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(8) CVUC (2005), *Déclaration de Douala*, Communes et Villes Unies du Cameroun (CVUC).

of an urban farmer is \$4 against the \$0.5 average of the Maputo citizens, helping to improve the purchasing power of families and hence, their food security (McNordic, 2016).

Access to land is a major issue for urban food policies. Horticulture can be promoted within a legislative framework which should be guaranteed by municipal governments in urban expansion plans, allowing access to credit needed for investments in the food system. Kigali has allocated 40% of its surface to urban development, protecting the remaining 15,000 hectares for agriculture on the most fertile soils. The city of Lagos could allocate 4,400 hectares to food production. To limit hydrogeological disruption, Antananarivo has allocated free land areas to vegetable cultivation, which now involve a 43% of the urban surface, acting as a buffer zone to protect the city from flooding. Bamako in Mali has reserved 100 hectares of land for agricultural cultivation (FAO, 2012).

Access to water is one of the most important issues that African cities are facing in order to ensure food security to their inhabitants. Achieving food security involves access to water both for human consumption and irrigation for urban agriculture, and strongly depends on the presence of wastewater treatment systems (World Bank, 2012). Several cities such as Ouagadougou, Kinshasa, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Lilongwe, Maputo, Durban, Cape Town, and Johannesburg have taken action on this issue by deploying urban masterplans for access to water and wastewater disposal, keeping water capture infrastructures separated from those intended for disposal. Diversified infrastructures of this kind have been developed in Abidjan, Lagos, Ibadan, Abjula, Kano, Khartoum, Addis Ababa, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Lilongwe, Blantyre.

The experiences described herewith represent some of the initiatives that African cities are working on. The MUFPP may serve as a framework within which a cooperation mechanism between cities can be activated. Acting in an integrated and systemic approach will help to rebalance the territorial dynamics between cities and their hinterlands, crushed by strong demographic growth and climate change effects across the continent.

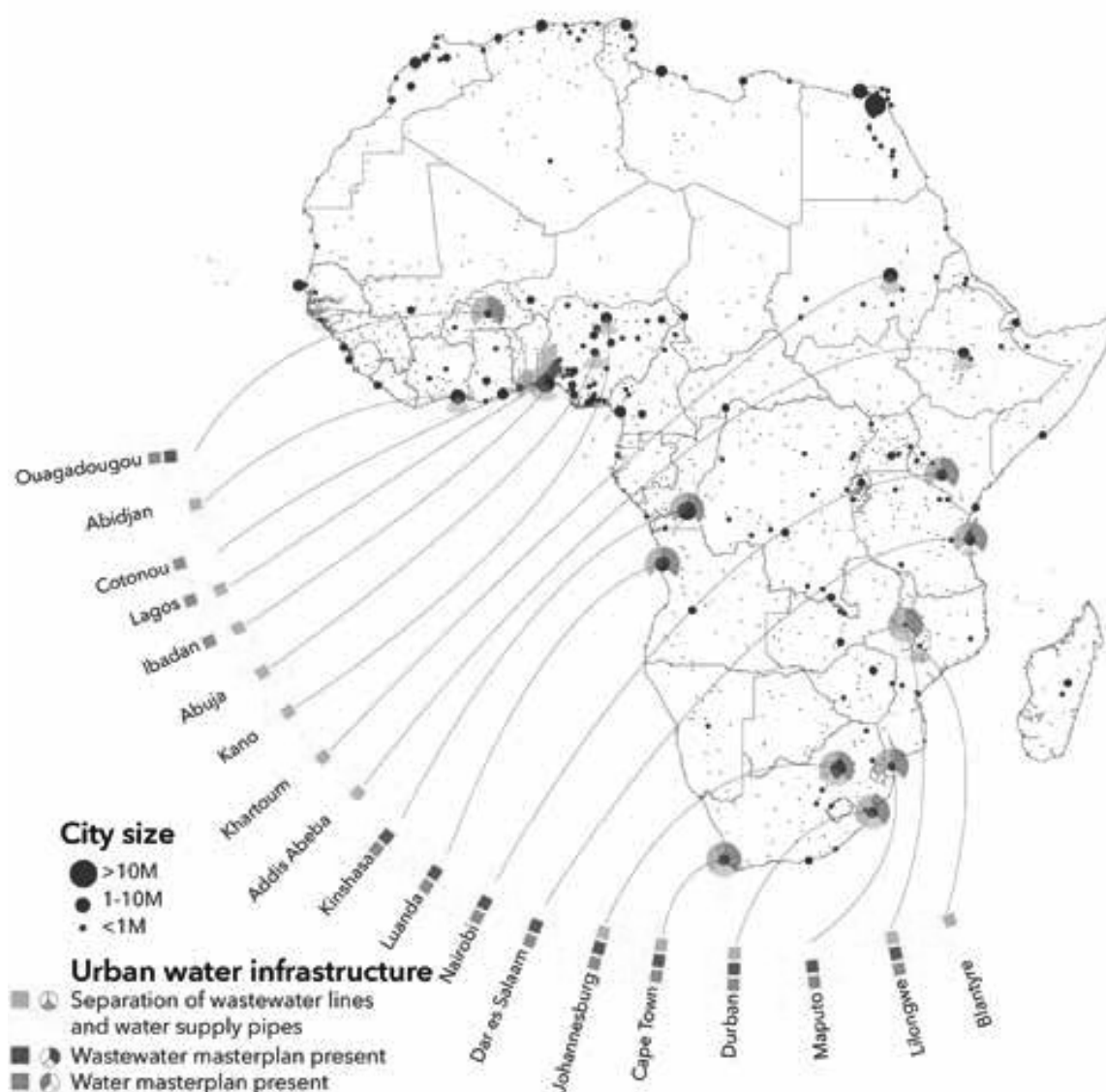


Fig. 4 – Masterplans and infrastructure for water access in African cities

Source: A. Magarini, M. Maggi (2016), *Water availability for food security in African Cities*, in «Water: an Atlas», Guerilla Cartography

*Conclusion: towards new territorial partnerships.* – Without any claim to completeness, this paper sought to highlight, focusing on the African continent, the contribution of cities in the global South in shaping urban food policies. It also aimed to underline the specifics and peculiarities within the debate and experiences influenced by cities in the global North (Morgan, 2015). It has been shown that, starting from the discussions generated by the MUFPP, there are a variety of relationships that the most active African cities have developed in different contexts and at different times, with Italian cities and the global North in general.

An opening element, rather than a conclusion, is to emphasize that urban food policies can be configured as a new and exciting field of decentralized cooperation and territorial partnership (a term introduced by the new Italian law n. 125/2014 on development co-

operation). Like other parts of this monograph have shown, Italian cities are also moving towards clear, informed and structured urban food policies, keeping in mind that this is a recent and an ongoing process. For this reason and for the differences in phases of the urbanization process and related issues, decentralized cooperation in the food sector between Italian (and in general cities of the global North) and African cities can be characterized by less asymmetry than traditional fields of intervention, where, as mutually enriching the exchange can be, the weight, in terms of urban history and accumulated experiences, as well as of economic power and social conditions, is undoubtedly felt.

The recent initiatives (the MUFPP, NUA) are expanding the number and type of actors involved in the international debate, from technical experts to politicians, enabling new players to the understanding of both problems and possible solutions. During the second MUFPP Mayors' Annual Summit the different speeds in implementing urban food policies emerged clearly between participating cities. This new space for political debate could be the ground from which to draw further strength and drive for existing decentralized cooperation tools, encouraging the sharing of experiences and boosting economic, social and institutional relations between cities around the world. Such relations could also bolster new forms of diplomacy towards economic growth, within a framework of action promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, activating an entire network of national mechanisms that further extend the number of stakeholders in the field. City-to-city cooperation mechanisms, city twinnings, partnerships for international projects with bilateral, triangular and multilateral partners constitute a new space where other actors (social, cultural, economic and institutional) can participate with conscious, balanced and proactive contributions.

Moreover, the realm of practices composing the framework of urban food policies is highly internationalized, with transnational and inter-local relations. In this regard, municipalities can act as a platform for these practices by connecting the global North and South (in triangular and horizontal manner) with the extraordinary wealth of experiences and actors. The very same NGOs working in the global South are becoming increasingly important actors in promoting food sovereignty in their home countries. The meeting point between the NGOs and policy-makers also represent a sharing of experiences accumulated in two different areas, the first being predominately in rural areas and the second at the urban and national scale. If the development of cities is also dependent on a positive relationship between urban and rural areas, these two families of actors can help shape the strategies and policies at the metropolitan scale, which can enhance in turn territorial cohesion and sustainable city development.

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URBAN FOOD POLICIES IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: THEMES, APPROACHES, CASES.

- Within the framework of the international debate focusing on experiences emerging from cities in the global North, this paper aims to explore urban food policies under the lens of a global South perspective, paying particular attention to African cities and taking into account the common elements they present -compared with other urban contexts and territories- but also the specificities with respect to the process of urbanization and the linkages existing amongst cities and food. Under this light, urban food policies in an African context are also placed, on the one side, into a path specified by a number of keywords such as food and nutrition security, self-sufficiency and food sovereignty; on the other, they are positioned in a context of internationalization of reflections and actions culminated in the New Urban Agenda and the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact. The prospect of urban food policies is finally presented as an inspiring and propelling opportunity for new forms of territorial partnerships.

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