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Nourishing Urban Resilience through a Territorial Food Systems Approach

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Abstract

The global scientific and political discourse on sustainable urban transition has gradually acknowledged the significant role of food in enabling a more equitable, just and ecological scenario for city-regions. Emerging research and policies underline the effectiveness of adopting a food system perspective to address food sustainability's complex nature, providing ways to understand and analyse barriers and synergies within food scenarios (Sonnino, 2023). The system perspective provides a holistic scope accounting for all food-related socioeconomic activities and stakeholders participating in (producers, delivery companies, resellers, and consumers) or influencing (policy-makers, advocates, organisations) the food supply chains (Cabannes & Marocchino, 2018). However, translating such a comprehensive approach into policy frameworks involves significant challenges. In such circumstances, cross-scale and multidisciplinary planning can help overcome sociopolitical and institutional limitations and resistance to change in planning systems (Béné et al., 2019; Kassis et al., 2021). Therefore, the current international food debate supports integrating food and spatial planning policies as a means to promote and implement a food system perspective in policies.

Spatial planning can offer procedures to protect and manage peri-urban and rural farmlands and reconnect them to the nearest cities through a food relocalisation process, allowing physical and cultural proximity between producers and other food stakeholders (Brandt et al., 2019). Nevertheless, policy frameworks with such integration are scarce and often limited to sectoral approaches, lacking a more significant commitment to a food system perspective, such as in the Portuguese context.

In Portugal, the COVID-19 pandemic scenario sped up the creation of the first National food strategy (*Estratégia Nacional de Segurança Alimentar e Nutrição*), explicitly but timidly referring to the food system and food relocalisation in their guidelines (Portuguese Government, 2021). The strategy acknowledges local-regional self-provisioning as crucial for a just, sustainable, resilient food transition. Nevertheless, the National food policy framework still needs to refine the approaches to translate the strategic plan's vision and goals into local actions and establish methods to monitor the policies' progress and effectiveness.

Given those circumstances, the present project aims to analyse to what extent the current policy frameworks in Europe support food and spatial planning's policy integration and how it can promote a more sustainable, just, and resilient food transition. The research argues that spatial planning can significantly contribute to creating territorialised/localised food systems, fostering linkages between urban centres and agricultural landscapes and territorial cohesion. Therefore, this research will conduct a literature review examining the contextual policy frameworks in which i) food planning embraces a systemic perspective, ii) spatial planning procedures contribute to the territorialisation of food systems, and iii) food planning practices inform spatial development strategies. Moreover, the literature review's results will help illustrate the primary rationales and practices while developing a conceptual framework related to the food system perspective and spatial planning. The conceptual framework will assist in a deeper analysis of the Portuguese scenario, considering its

differences in spatial planning systems and governance to elaborate a new conceptual proposal for promoting food relocalisation strategies at a city-region level across the country.

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