



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Journal of Rural Studies

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jrurstud)

# Food policy integration in small cities: The case of intermunicipal governance in Lucca, Italy

Sabrina Arcuri<sup>a,\*</sup>, Bianca Minotti<sup>b</sup>, Francesca Galli<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of Pisa, Department of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Via Del Borghetto, 80, 56124, Pisa, Italy

<sup>b</sup> Czech University of Life Science, Department of Humanities, Faculty of Economics and Management, Kamyčká 129, 165 00, Praha-Suchbát, Czechia

## ARTICLE INFO

### Keywords:

Food policy  
Governance  
Policy integration  
Intermunicipal  
Plain of food

## ABSTRACT

Food and food security are not areas where municipalities have roles prescribed by law; nonetheless, they are responsible for a range of overlapping services and functions related to food. Competences for policymaking are divided across many different departments, local authorities, and agencies whose functions involve multiple actors, and both scholars and policymakers have called for a more integrated approach to food policies and for cities to play a prominent role in addressing food system challenges through new, place-based, and carefully crafted governance systems. In this study, we examined a unique case study and process that led to the establishment and further development of the first intermunicipal food policy (IFP) in Italy, called Piana del Cibo (literally “Plain of Food”), a governance arrangement through which five municipalities within the province of Lucca (in the Tuscany region, central Italy) reach out beyond their administrative and functional boundaries. Despite the food policy agenda in Lucca being currently underway, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the possible pathways of policy integration and of the implications of such processes in small cities, highlighting potential enablers and obstacles to integration. The findings indicate that the governance structure currently tested is an institutional unicum in the Italian food policy landscape and is shaped as joint management of food policy functions (gestione associata) combined with an elaborate structure of participatory governance. The presented case study illustrates how a process of (food) policy integration should be understood as processes entailing different and mutually interacting dimensions. It also showcases a set of factors that can reveal potential enablers and obstacles in such processes.

## 1. Introduction

Food and food security are not areas where municipalities have roles prescribed by law; nonetheless, they are responsible for a range of overlapping services and functions related to food. These include public food procurement, urban planning, waste management, health and social services, and the regulation of retailing and markets. However, the responsibilities of policymaking in these sectors are divided across many different departments, local authorities, and agencies, the functions of which involve multiple actors (Coulson and Sonnino, 2019). Both scholars and policymakers have called for a more integrated approach to food policies and for cities to assume a prominent role in addressing food system challenges through new, place-based, and carefully crafted governance systems (Sonnino, 2019; Sonnino et al., 2019; Halliday and Barling, 2018; Candel and Pereira, 2017; Barling et al., 2002). The idea

that cities are best positioned to facilitate the transition toward more sustainable food systems has been emphasised by international cities networks: the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), which is currently signed by 211 cities<sup>1</sup>; the City Food Network; and the C40 Food Systems Network, just to name a few, and by the rise in the number of urban food policies (UFPs) across the globe. Defined as “the tools of governance that help connect stakeholders and issues related to food, defining spheres of action, objectives, and procedures necessary to define, implement, and measure policy” (Calori and Magarini, 2015), UFPs are providing tangible examples of synergies between diverse stakeholders and traditionally disjointed policy domains (Wiskerke, 2009). The model of the Food Policy Council (FPC) is increasingly being used at the subnational level to transcend the boundaries of traditional policymaking and establish new governance systems able to address the cross-cutting nature of food (Halliday and Barling, 2018). FPCs aim at

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [sabrina.arcuri@agr.unipi.it](mailto:sabrina.arcuri@agr.unipi.it) (S. Arcuri), [minottibianca@gmail.com](mailto:minottibianca@gmail.com) (B. Minotti), [francesca.galli@unipi.it](mailto:francesca.galli@unipi.it) (F. Galli).

<sup>1</sup> On June 25th, 2021.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.12.005>

Received 21 October 2020; Received in revised form 26 November 2021; Accepted 12 December 2021

Available online 20 December 2021

0743-0167/© 2021 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

coordinating formerly disconnected actors and actions under a coherent umbrella of policies and goals by working “across sectors, engaging with government policy and programs, grassroots/non-profit projects, local business and food workers” (Harper et al., 2009: 16). Therefore, integration is at the core of the new food governance systems between sectors, scales, and relevant actors. The body literature examining the relationship between FPCs and governments is growing (Moragues-Faus, 2021; Gupta et al., 2018; Bassarab et al., 2018; MacRae and Donahue, 2013; Scherb et al., 2012; Hodgson, 2011; Fox, 2010; Schiff, 2007; Borron, 2003; Hamilton, 2002). Many studies focused on the shape of this relationship in the implementation of food strategies at the subnational level (Giambartolomei et al., 2021; Sibbing and Candel, 2021; Cretella, 2019; Blay-Palmer, 2009).

Sibbing and Candel (2021) examined the process of the institutionalisation of the integrated food policy in the particular case of the Dutch municipality of Ede. They emphasised how a food strategy, dedicated financial resources, and organisational innovations are crucial in this process, but can also become inhibiting factors. However, considering the different contexts in which local policymakers operate, in terms of powers and responsibilities, political priorities, governance systems, and culture (Sonnino, 2017), policy options available to cities across the world change accordingly (Candel, 2020).

The aim of this study was to contribute to a deeper understanding of the processes of policy integration around food and the implications of such processes for local governments in small cities, especially concerning opportunities for and obstacles to integration. To this purpose, we examined the unique case of the first Intermunicipal Food Policy (IFP) in Italy, called *Piana del Cibo* (literally “Plain of Food”, from the Plain of Lucca), a governance arrangement through which five municipalities within the province of Lucca (in the Tuscany region, central Italy) reach out beyond their administrative and functional boundaries to share decision-making powers on food. Despite the food policy agenda being underway, the questions addressed in this study are the following: (1) what would an integrated food policy governance look like in a subnational context and (2) what enabling factors and obstacles to integration are identifiable in a case of intermunicipal cooperation between small cities?

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: The next section outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the analysis, which is a processual approach to policy integration. Section 3 presents the methods used for data collection and analysis, and Section 4 describes preliminary research findings, broken down into the four dimensions identified as relevant to the integration process. Section 5 provides a discussion on the findings and presents a set of enabling and hindering factors. After outlining the implications for the integration process, the paper ends with identifying future avenues of investigation.

## 2. Conceptual framework: food policy integration

Different terminologies and approaches to address policy integration have been suggested by scholars and practitioners in different fields (Galli et al., 2020; Tosun and Lang, 2017; Candel and Biesbroek, 2016; Jordan and Lenschow, 2010, Rayner and Howlett, 2009). Characterised by the “cooperation of actors from different policy domains or policy sectors” (Tosun and Lang, 2017, 554), integration is pursued particularly when cross-cutting issues affecting multiple policy domains (Jochim and May 2010) are targeted, such as food security, climate change, migration, and similar “wicked problems” (Termeer et al., 2015). A consensus exists among scholars that policy “silo” approaches have manifold shortcomings and might lead to policy failures (Sibbing et al., 2021; Tosun and Lang, 2017), but it is not yet clear if replacing sectorial policies with integrated strategies leads to an optimal policy mix (Rayner and Howlett, 2009) or results in better policy outcomes (Candel, 2017). In addition, the question of the optimal level of integration is recognised as a challenge (Candel and Pereira, 2017), and recent attempts were devoted to assessing the desirability and feasibility of

pushing toward policy integration (Candel, 2021). The approach developed by Candel and Biesbroek (2016) was drawn from earlier theoretical debates and aims to provide a starting point for advancing policy integration studies. They criticised the dominant view of policy integration as an ideal, with a static outcome to be achieved, and proposed a processual approach to policy integration, understood as a multifaceted process having an inherent dynamic nature and multiple dimensions. These dimensions encompass the policy frame, and the involvement of different subsystems, goals, and instruments, with the former two being more related to institutional aspects and the latter two predominantly focused on the policy level (Candel, 2018). Candel and Biersbroek’s original framework identifies two ideal types of the degree of (dis)integration in relation to each of the four dimensions, exemplified by Candel (2021). The first dimension is the policy frame, i.e., the presence of an overarching framing embedded within a polity fostering integrative action (Candel, 2021; Candel and Biesbroek, 2016). “How a particular problem is perceived within a given governance system” (Candel and Biersbroek, 2016: 218) affects policy formation and institutionalisation (Béland, 2009). In Candel and Biersbroek’s processual understanding of the policy frame dimension, the degree of integration ranges from a narrow definition of the problem, which is considered to fall within the remit of a specific subsystem (lowest), to the recognition of the cross-cutting nature of the problem and the shared understanding of the need to adopt a holistic governance approach (highest).

The second dimension distinguished is subsystem involvement: “the range of actors and institutions involved in the governance of a particular cross-cutting policy problem” (Candel and Biersbroek, 2016: 218). Distinguishing between subsystems might reveal difficulties in that they do not possess clearly defined boundaries, being constructed for analytical purposes. In addition, individuals or groups within a subsystem sometimes engage to assign prominence to a certain cross-cutting issue, eventually leading to the general recognition of the problem within the whole subsystem. An example is related to food poverty: an issue pertaining to different domains (social policies and health), which different groups of actors have been addressing from their own perspective (and made relevant in their own subsystems), e.g., charities distributing surplus food to people in need, social services officials participating in welfare programs, NGOs advocating for basic income schemes, food industries through surplus food recovery, and environmental task forces using waste prevention guidelines. How a policy problem is framed, however, affects the number and type of subsystems and domains that will eventually address it through specific initiatives and policies (Béland, 2009).

For the purpose of this study, following Candel and Biesbroek (2016), we distinguished policy domains from subsystems and considered policy domains as “substantive fields of policymaking within a broader governance system”, such as agriculture, health, or economic development (Section 4.3). Policy domains can therefore include more than one subsystem. In our specific case study, we recognise policy domains as those represented by political decisionmakers<sup>2</sup> and public officials, whereas we use the term subsystem to identify all other groups or actors, such as food system stakeholders, civil society organisations, and NGOs, the activity of which is related to one or more food issues. This specific categorisation allowed us to differentiate between the public policy level, and actors therein, and the participatory level, encompassing the engagement of the broader community (Section 4.3).

Candel and Biersbroek suggested two indicators for the subsystems’ dimension: the first pertains to which subsystems are (or are not)

<sup>2</sup> For the purpose of this study, we considered the executive body of the municipality, i.e., the Giunta Comunale (City Board), which comprises Deputy Mayors, who are appointed by the Mayor (including from members of the council), who delegates some of their power to Deputy Mayors. The City Board implements decisions taken by the Consiglio Comunale (City Council), elected by direct universal suffrage.

involved in the governance of the cross-cutting issue, which the actors explicitly consider a matter of their concern, to address through policy initiatives. The second is the density of interactions between subsystems, allowing for a distinction between dominant subsystems and subsystems only indirectly concerned by the cross-cutting issue. The degree of integration would then move on a scale between one dominant subsystem governing the problem with no interactions with other subsystems (lowest) to the involvement of, and interactions between, all potentially relevant subsystems (highest).

The dimension of policy goals pertains to the range of sectoral policies in which a cross-cutting problem is explicitly addressed and the coherence between these goals. Goals can be broad and generic or very specific (Candel, 2020). A further distinction can be identified between main and sub-goals, where the former represent key concerns addressed as policy priorities. Coherence (or lack thereof) relates to whether sectoral subsystems jointly contribute (or not) to achieving a common objective. On a scale, low integration would mean that concerns about a problem are only addressed by the goals of one or a few subsystems, with no or low coherence. Higher degrees of integration manifest when a problem is addressed as a concern in all relevant subsystems, possibly with an overarching strategy.

The fourth dimension concerns the policy instruments, i.e., the means implemented to achieve the goals, and their level of consistency. A distinction can be made between substantive and procedural instruments: the former allocates governing resources of nodality (information), authority (legal powers), treasure (financial resources), and organisation (organisational capacities) available to governments (Hood, 1983, cited in: Candel, 2020). Procedural instruments include those instruments manipulating the policy process to ensure coordination. Consistency refers to the capacity of the different policy instruments to be mutually supportive in the pursuit of different goals. A low level of integration is then exemplified by one or a few sectoral instruments deployed and no procedural instruments to facilitate coordination, whereas high integration levels encompass a balanced instrument mix deployed by all relevant subsystems, procedural instruments including boundary-spanning structures to coordinate, and high consistency.

In this study, we adopted the dimensions identified by Candel and Biesbroek (2016) and Candel (2021) as organising concepts for the analysis. The processual idea involving non-hierarchical and non-linear pathways toward integration fits particularly well with the notion of food policy governance, as significant differences in the implementation of food strategies can be expected, the success of which is subject to many external and internal factors, and long-term outcomes are often involved. So far, no methods of operationalising and evaluating coherence and consistency have been agreed upon by public policy scholars (Candel, 2018, 2020); therefore, we did not consider coherence or consistency in our analysis.

### 3. Methods

We conducted a single exploratory case study, drawing on an extended period of research, between May 2018, the date of the MUFPP signature by the Mayors of Lucca and Capannori, and April 2020, when we decided to obtain some preliminary research findings. Despite this limitation, the nature of the study assumes that the development of the IFP is a long-term and reflexive process, and the study has been continuing since.

We have been actively contributing to the process addressed by the study through two main streams of activity: first, two of us were partners in the ROBUST H2020 project,<sup>3</sup> aimed at enhancing rural-urban relationships in 11 European regions selected as place-based case studies. The latter included the Province of Lucca, whereby a Living Lab was

created (Voytenko et al., 2016), and run for 2 years as an interactive space for collaboration and knowledge co-creation and exchange between researchers and practitioners. Although having a different scope compared to this study, namely a rural-urban focus on potential governance instruments for enhancing peri-urban land, the Lucca Living Lab has provided several opportunities for participation in meetings and workshops involving IFP representatives (Table 1). Second, in our capacity as members of the Laboratorio Sismondi,<sup>4</sup> we were able to participate in informal meetings in close contact with the leaders of the initiative and to make direct observations and field notes on the actors' interactions. We adopted a qualitative approach to data collection, including in-depth, semi-structured interviews (n = 6) and participant observation. In-depth interviews (Table 1) were conducted in Italian and then transcribed verbatim. Key informants were selected using an expert sample.

During fieldwork, we attended all major public events (Table 1) related to the IFP and participated in internal meetings between public officials in charge of food policy tasks and members of the (meanwhile constituted) FPC. During all the attended meetings and events, notes were taken and then used to gain first-hand insights into the process. All

**Table 1**

List of interviews carried out and major events attended for data collection. Source: authors' own elaboration.

Interview	Time	Topics addressed
Staff 1	2.12 h, live	CIRCULARIFOOD and IFP process; IFP Plan and joint management
Researcher 1	54 min, live	IFP Plan and joint management
Deputy Mayor	1.01 h, live	Political perspectives
Researcher 2	1.21 h	Context and actors
Staff 3	1.20 h	Context and actors
Staff 4	1.34 h	Background, context and actors
<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	
CIRCULARIFOOD territorial workshops 1-5	Oct 2018	Guiding principles and priorities for the food policy, starting from the MUFPP
CIRCULARIFOOD thematic workshops 1-5	Nov 2018	Lifestyles, local food production, access to food and food waste, school and food education, urban agriculture and related actions to be included in the IFP Plan
CIRCULARIFOOD Final event	Jan 2019	Launch of the IFP Plan
"Il buono, il giusto e il cattivo" – Reflecting on food policies	Nov 2019	Local/urban food policies meeting and connection with ANCI (National Association of Italian Municipalities)
ROBUST workshop I	Sept 2019	Rural-urban synergies and cross-sectoral interactions in the Plain of Lucca
Launch of the FPC	Jan 2020	Elections of the members and Chair of the FPC and Agorà – 1st meeting of thematic tables
ROBUST workshop II	Jun 2020	Governance arrangements for enhancing access to land and valuing local food
FPC 1st (online) meeting	Apr 2020	COVID-19 situation and progress on the work of the 5 Thematic Tables

<sup>4</sup> Laboratorio Sismondi is an association for cultural studies on agri-food and rural development policies. Members include practitioners and researchers from different private and public international institutions. Among their competences, the design of participatory processes has been applied to the second stage of the IFP planning in the Plain of Lucca (<https://www.laboratorisimondi.it/>). Since the onset of the initiative, senior members of the Laboratorio have also been contributing as external advisors to the IFP Steering committee (Section 4.1).

<sup>3</sup> See ROBUST website at <https://rural-urban.eu/>.

data were triangulated with official documents, including the Intermunicipal Food Policy Strategy and Plan (IFP Strategy, 2019), the Intermunicipal Food Policy Bylaw (IFP Bylaw, 2020), and official notes circulated after meetings. Content analysis of the gathered data was then conducted, starting from the first round of open coding followed by categorisation according to the dimensions identified in the conceptual framework.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. About the IFP of the Plain of Lucca

The area identified as the Plain of Lucca is located in Tuscany, central Italy, in the middle between the coast on one side and hills and mountain ranges on the others. The capital city, Lucca, exerts economic and political influence in this city-region (Arcuri et al., 2021), which encompasses both rural and urban areas and maintains a well-defined historical, cultural, and landscape identity. Five out of seven municipalities comprising the city-region are involved in the food policy initiative: Capannori, Lucca, Porcari, Altopascio and Villa Basilica. . These are heterogeneous municipalities in terms of dimension, geographical features, and demographics (Table 2), but also, as one of the interviewees commented, in terms of governance traditions and administrative culture (Interview IFP Staff 1).

The Intermunicipal Food Policy of the Plain of Lucca is configured as an ongoing process of coordination and cooperation on food policies, formalised as *gestione associata* (joint management (JM)) between the municipalities involved (Comune di Capannori, 2019). In addition, the IFP adopts a participatory governance model, which includes the *Agorà* (i.e., the open assembly, where participation and consultation occur), the Food Council (which has both participatory and decision-making aims), and the Assembly of Mayors (the political decision-making body). Playing a role of day-to-day coordination and support, the Food Policy Office entails two public officials and is formally included in the Mayoral Cabinet at the Municipality of Capannori (IFP Bylaw, 2020) (for a detailed account, see Section 4.4).

The food policy process (Fig. 1) officially started in May 2018 with the signature of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact by the Mayors of Capannori and Lucca, the former also Chair of the Province.<sup>5</sup> The role of proactive leader of the food policy initiative lies with the Municipality of Capannori, which initiated the process by setting up a *cabina di regia* (literally “control room”), an informal steering committee including public officials, academics and external experts, NGO representatives, and members of the civil society working on food-related matters. The steering committee has been supporting the process throughout, creating momentum at the onset of the food policy initiative, leveraging both civil society’s engagement and political support to move the food policy agenda forward (Interview Researcher 1).

The IFP was formally established in January 2019 after a six-month preparatory process supported by a project named CIRCULARIFOOD. As

**Table 2**

Main features of the municipalities involved in the IFP. Source: authors’ own elaboration.

Municipality	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Inhabitants (2011)
Altopascio	28,58	15 731
Capannori	155,96	46 774
Lucca	185,79	90 107
Porcari	18,05	8911
Villa Basilica	36,57	1540

<sup>5</sup> The provinces are second-tier institutions between municipalities and regions, corresponding to NUTS 3 level in EU statistics.

shown in Fig. 1, the participatory project CIRCULARIFOOD<sup>6</sup> ran from June to December 2018, with the explicit aim of eliciting input from civil society and food system stakeholders for the definition of shared priorities and objectives to improve the local food system. The project was financed by the Tuscany Regional Authority for Participation and involved overall more than 300 citizens, representatives from NGOs and the third sector, farmers, public officials, and businesses from across the five municipalities. Public consultations conducted during the CIRCULARIFOOD project were also explicitly meant to create a broad territorial understanding of the local food system in the area (Interview IFP Staff 1).

The IFP Strategy and Plan,<sup>7</sup> an 11-page document released in January 2019 and marking the formal start of the IFP, is the substantial outcome of CIRCULARIFOOD.

In between the launch of the IFP Strategy and the following step, i.e., the phase of ratification by all the five City Councils of the *Convenzione per la gestione associata* (Convention for the Joint Management) local government elections were held in Capannori (May 2019). Considering the high-profile mayoral support of the food policy initiative and the proactive role of the municipality, it was a decisive moment when the election result confirmed the former mayor for another five years (also as Chair of the Province) (interview IFP Staff 1).

Below, we interpret the four dimensions identified in the conceptual framework (Section 2).

### 4.2. Policy frame

The IFP initiative did not originate from a single, specific concern, but from a holistic view of the (local) food system by the leaders of the initiative (Interview Researcher 1). The latter can be identified among members of the steering committee including also, at a later stage, the political representatives who sustained the initiative. Their understanding of food as a lever to simultaneously address multiple policy domains is echoed in the IFP Strategy, representing the main symbolic legacy of CIRCULARIFOOD. The IFP Strategy is aimed at providing a set of ideas and values as starting points for future decision making on food, particularly valuable in that they have been collectively defined and agreed upon, and a set of objectives (illustrated in detail in Section 4.4). The focus on integration was then made explicit through statements concerning “the development of integrated and coordinated food policies” to “build a sustainable local food system” (authors’ own translation from IFP Intermunicipal Food Policy Strategy and Plan, 2019).

Food systems discourses, from food sovereignty to sustainability, were not new to the area of the Plain of Lucca. When the IFP Strategy was launched, it was readily adopted as an umbrella framework by many well-established initiatives and projects on food issues, both grassroots and institutional, which had been running for many years (Interview IFP Research 1).

Although the cross-cuttingness of food issues was thus largely acknowledged in the discourses of a certain number of actors and institutions (Section 4.3), in addition to being formally embedded in the IFP Strategy, what most interviewees identified as a complex step was integrating this notion in the continued interactions between the engagement of citizens, food system stakeholders, and civil society at large on one hand, and municipal decision-making on food on the other (Interview IFP Staff 1, Research 1, Research 2, Staff 4). Taking into account the different stages of the process, we therefore identified two main complementary framings in relation to this concern: the food policy is framed as a matter of responsibility and responsiveness, and of substantive participation and engagement (Fig. 2).

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the project, visit the website (in Italian): <http://open.toscana.it/web/circularifood>.

<sup>7</sup> In the remainder of the paper, we refer to the IFP Strategy and Plan simply as the IFP Strategy.



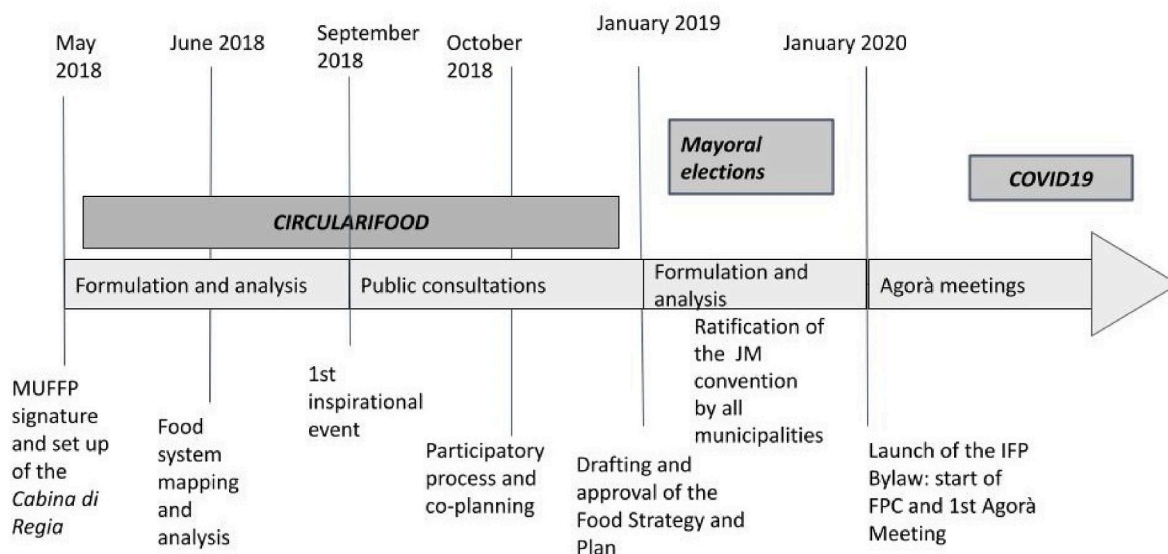


Fig. 1. Timeline with phases and milestones of the IFP until April 2020. Source: authors' own elaboration.

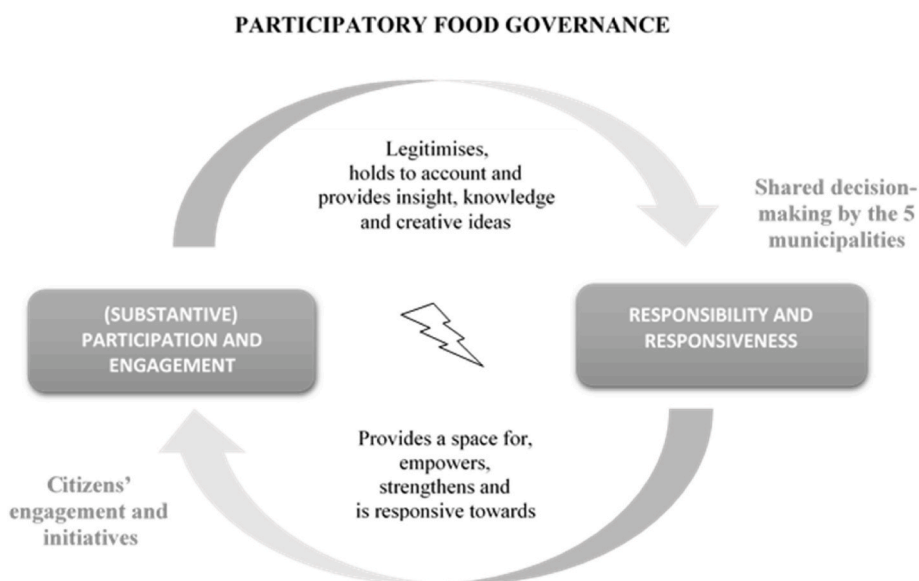


Fig. 2. Complementarity and tensions between the two framings under the main policy frame of participatory food governance. Source: authors' own elaboration.

The responsibility and responsiveness framing is related to the necessity of local authorities taking on a leading role in crucial food-related issues affecting the municipal sphere (e.g., school meals, local food production and consumption, food education, access to food, and urban agriculture) and, particularly, to do so in a way that meets the expectations and needs raised at the participatory stage. This framing emerged in the interviews from reflections concerning how to make the most of previous experiences and wealth of grassroots initiatives, how to build and co-create a space for (formalised practices of) collective participation and shared deliberation, how to ensure the uptake from the five mayors and city boards, and ultimately “how to create participation dialogue with the bureaucracy that regulates administrative procedures” (Interview IFP Staff 1).

The substantive participation and engagement framing is complementary and is related to concerns regarding maintaining the engagement of citizens and other food system actors, hearing their voices, and setting a shared food agenda. This resonated in some of the interviewees' reflections (Interview IFP Staff 1 and Staff 3) about how to

involve citizens in a systematic and structured process of co-creation, how to keep participation alive and meaningful, how to make sure all interests are represented, and how to avoid inflated expectations.

The two framings, the “two major challenges”, as more than one interviewee stated, are mutually reinforcing: a lack of engagement by citizens means lacking legitimisation for decision making on food-related policy domains. At the same time, political prioritisation is needed: municipal institutions ought to take on responsibility toward, and acknowledge and provide prompt response to, the issues raised by the participatory body. This finding is consistent with that of [Van de Griend et al. \(2019\)](#), who highlighted the tension between municipal leadership on food policymaking and a more open and reactive attitude toward participation. Commenting on tensions likely to arise between and within the two framings, one interviewee commented that:

designing a suitable model of participatory food governance is a real bet [...] Despite the regional [of Tuscany] context offers many opportunities for participation, through the Regional Authority for

Participation which supported the IFP, participatory processes remain difficult to accommodate within a bureaucratic system such as public administration (Interview IFP Staff 1).

Talking about this matter, another interviewee commented:

if you don't transform a principle or an idea into administrative procedures, if you don't translate ideas into measurable objectives and competences, you won't reach the final goal. The difficulty in these processes is that the machine [the public administration] works along, either horizontal or vertical, but still linear processes (Interview Researcher 1).

#### 4.3. Subsystems involvement

The anticipated distinction between policy domains and subsystems (Section 2) is particularly relevant in relation to the identification of (networks of) actors and institutions involved in the food policy process.

Since the onset of the CIRCULARIFOO project, mayors and/or deputy mayors from the five city boards have adhered to the food policy initiative by voluntarily attending the main events and open consultations. Specifically, these political representatives from the five city boards included: one mayor (of the smallest municipality) and four deputy mayors with delegated power in terms of education and civic economy (1), social policies (2) and participatory processes (2).<sup>8</sup> Their policy domain of reference, in no case directly related to the food system, indicates the sector in which each municipality identifies both opportunities and needs for undertaking coordinated action on food (Interview IFP Staff 3). For instance, school and education is a policy domain where food-related themes have been addressed for many years in the city of Capannori, particularly about school meals, their educational value, and the relationship with the (local) food system (Interview IFP Staff 1).

The subsystems involved in the design and initial stages of the new governance resulted from previous policies and ideologies (Jenkins-Smith et al., 1991). Food issues have been occupying civil society space in the Plain of Lucca since many years. For instance, well-established networks are involved in diverse initiatives of short food supply chains (especially farmers' markets and solidarity-based purchasing groups<sup>9</sup>); actions against food waste have been undertaken to pursue not only recovery and redistribution but also prevention objectives; the local Slow Food Convivium has been active in promoting initiatives centred on food sovereignty, urban agriculture, and heritage foods; civil society organisations (CSOs) and charities working with vulnerable groups have been implementing innovative measures to tackle food poverty; and research projects by food and agriculture scholars have been conducted in this area<sup>10</sup>. Such wide-reaching networks have found common ground under the food policy umbrella and, during the preparatory phase of CIRCULARIFOOD, a dense net of interactions already in place emerged from the participatory food system mapping.

Considering the different stages of the process, we identified various subsystems involved in the IFP initiative, i.e., reflecting, although to a different extent, a certain level of awareness of the cross-cuttingness of food system issues. We grouped them according to macro-categories, roughly overlapping the IFP Strategy's key priorities:

- Local food and agriculture includes heterogeneous actors, from the various stages of the food supply chain to urban agriculture and food movements, but all united by an ambition to build a sustainable food system as a key leverage to a sustainable future. These belong mostly to NGOs and the civil society sphere and specific segments of the private sector (specific local shops, coops of farmers, solidarity purchasing groups, and farmers' markets).
- Social care and community food provision is a subsystem is mostly composed of CSOs targeting vulnerable groups, which they address through nutrition- and food-related support and, in most cases, rely on volunteers. This is the case, for instance, of networks built around projects for charitable food provision, surplus food redistribution, and urban gardens for disadvantaged groups. Social enterprises employing vulnerable individuals and social farms are also included.
- Schools and food education: Schools have traditionally been a prominent playing field for many initiatives encompassing sustainability, food waste campaigns, food literacy skills, nutrition, and the food environment. In addition to strong mayoral support of the opportunity of having students of all ages engaged in these themes, which is certainly the case in Capannori and Lucca, this subsystem entails a large civil society component (teachers and all school staff, and students and their families) and private businesses (two large companies from the catering industry). Parents' involvement also occurs through the *Commissione mensa*.<sup>11</sup> In addition, this subsystem covers gastronomic traditions and knowledge by way of the presence of a famous cookery school and food festival networks.
- Eco-sustainability: Environmental NGOs and especially the *Rifiuti Zero* (Zero Waste) research centre form the core of this subsystem. Rifiuti Zero, in particular, has developed a zero waste approach targeting municipal waste management, making Capannori a leader in waste management and recycling in Italy.<sup>12</sup>
- Healthcare and wellbeing: Local public health<sup>13</sup> units deliver public health services, guidance on healthy habits and wellbeing, and, in particular, regulation and control on food safety and hygiene. This subsystem also includes organisations operating in the field of nutrition, food disorders, sport, and wellbeing.

#### 4.4. Policy goals and instruments

Here, we jointly report on the third and fourth dimensions of our conceptual framework (i.e., policy goals and instruments). The IFP Strategy contains six main goals, with related sub-goals, in five main action areas echoing the themes identified as key priorities in the participatory phase:

- i. Enhancing knowledge of the local food system of production and consumption;
- ii. Encouraging best practices of food provision by creating a network of actors and reducing food waste;
- iii. Improving the wellbeing through knowledge and communication on sustainable and healthy lifestyles;
- iv. Facilitating access to local food for all;
- v. Reinforcing sustainable agricultural practices.

A sixth, cross-cutting objective concerns the necessity to "work on common rules", to better address other goals (Interview IFP Staff 1).

Such broad and generic goals confirm the rather broad scope of the

<sup>8</sup> Deputy mayors can hold delegated power in multiple policy domains.

<sup>9</sup> *Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale* (GAS, literally "Solidarity-based Purchase Groups") are groups of consumers who purchase collectively through a direct relationship with producers, according to shared ethical principles (Brunori et al., 2011).

<sup>10</sup> See, for instance, H2020 SALSA project (<http://www.salsa.uevora.pt/>) and ROBUST H2020 project (<https://rural-urban.eu/>), to name a few.

<sup>11</sup> The Canteen Commission is an advisory tool aimed at monitoring the quality of food served and the catering service.

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.rifiutizerocapannori.it/rifiutizero/mappa-numeri-successi-crita-dei-comuni-italiani-rifiuti-zero-a-cura-del-comitato-di-garanzia-nazionale-di-zero-waste-italy/>.

<sup>13</sup> Local public health unit is the authors' translation for *azienda sanitaria locale* (ASL).

Strategy (depicted in Section 4.1) and serve more as long-term objectives pointing toward a direction for change than delineating punctual interventions to implement (Interview IFP Researcher 1). Nonetheless, the IFP Strategy moves further to include implementation plans, detailed as a set of possible actions and stakeholders, to engage in view to achieve each of the objectives. As no targets are set, no resources are allocated, and no time frame is indicated for any of the action plans, their meaning is to be looked for in the agenda-setting capacity by the stakeholders and groups involved until then.

As policy instruments are concerned, the IFP Strategy indicates the necessity of a participatory governance system as the primary tool to achieve stated goals. This fits well with the idea of boundary-spanning governance structure discussed by Candel and Biersbroek as the “structure or overarching authority that oversees, steers and coordinates the problem as a whole” (Candel and Biersbroek, 2016:223). The interviewees unanimously acknowledged that implicit goals are related to the very idea of integration and governance innovation. For instance, one interviewee belonging to the political sphere commented:

[I]t is obvious that different things must be accommodated: different interests, different municipalities, different offices within each municipality ... another characteristic of public administrations is that nobody talks with those working next door. Instead, here an office has been created to talk [...], which might seem obvious but, believe me, it is a kind of Copernican revolution! (Interview Deputy Mayor).

The governance arrangement foreseen in the Strategy came one year later (in 2020), epitomised in two main instruments: (1) the *convenzione per la gestione associata* (Joint Management Convention (JM)) and (2) the system of governance delineated in the IFP *Intermunicipal Food Policy Bylaw* (2020).

The JM is one of the four forms of intermunicipal cooperation strongly supported by the national legislator since 1990 to address municipal fragmentation and increase the efficiency of local public services provision (Bolgherini et al., 2018). In particular, smaller municipalities (<5000 residents) must share basic functions, although the coercive approach has been subject to criticism and is currently being reconsidered (Bolgherini et al., 2018). As such, the JM does not represent a novelty per se. In Tuscany, for instance, intermunicipal cooperation is encouraged through financial incentives, and JM conventions have been an increasingly common tool used by municipalities to share functions especially related to Real Estate Registry management; *protezione civile* (civil protection); local police; and social, educational, and healthcare services (Brazzini and Zutti, 2016). What makes the IFP of the Plain of Lucca an institutional unicum is that, at the time of this study, it represented the first case of JM applied to food policy functions in Italy. As the latter is not among the basic functions identified by law, but are instead strategic functions, adopting a convention for the JM, as one interviewee explained:

[the Joint management] implies strong and shared political will, as there are several steps to be made. It requires a financial endowment, which must therefore be included in the [municipal] budget, whatever the amount, but there must be a budget allocation, and then the matter must be submitted to the municipal councils for approval (Interview Researcher 1).

Among the procedural instruments available under current legislation,<sup>14</sup> which were reviewed by the steering committee, the decision to establish a JM convention had the explicit intent to make the food policy governance more resilient to political volatility and coherent with administrative language and procedures. “Commenting on the future implication of the new institutional set-up, one of the interviewees

stated[i]n case one day one of the municipalities says ‘I don’t want to be into this anymore’, it’s fine, you have to go before your City council and state the reasons why you signed [the convention for] the joint management, say, last year [...] and now you have decided to quit. It’s a mini Brexit!” (Interview Researcher 1).

Noticeably, at the time of the JM ratification, the municipalities had no experience with JM conventions on other policy functions. However, being based on procedures and routines embedded into administrative culture, the JM is expected to facilitate the coordination, co-design, and implementation of policies around food by the municipalities involved (Interview IFP Staff 1). The instrument is therefore targeted particularly at the city board level, as it implies that the municipalities involved must coordinate their food policy efforts and devolve “a share of sovereignty to the IFP” (Interview Deputy Mayor).

The JM model is combined with a rather elaborate participatory governance structure, conceived for striking a balance between civil society’s engagement and decision making on food. The functioning of the participatory governance structure and relationships among underlying entities (Fig. 3) are regulated by the IFP Bylaw passed in January 2020.

The Agorà is an open entity, designed to encourage participation by civil society and other food system stakeholders. The name Agorà was preferred among others to recall the public arena in ancient Greece, conceived as a space for political, cultural, and commercial exchange. The Agorà here comprises five thematic tables, identified according to the key themes included in the IFP Strategy (and partly overlapping with the subsystems identified earlier), namely food habits and lifestyle, local food production, access to food and food waste, school and education, and urban agriculture. From the steering committee’s idea, this body is meant as an open space for “stimulating, reflecting and identifying strategies to submit to the food policy council, which in turn makes proposals to the Assembly of Mayors, which will eventually arrive to the City boards and be developed as specific food policies” (Interview Researcher 2).

The Agorà has to be flexible enough to facilitate a bottom-up process, include a diverse range of groups and interests, and ensure representation across a large geographical area, but at the same time it must be defined enough to adapt to current modes of operation without “being assigned to certain death as typically happens with the *consulte*<sup>15</sup>” (Interview Deputy Mayor).

On the other end of the governance spectrum is the Assembly of Mayors, the political body of the structure, comprising mayors or deputy mayors and representing the both symbolic and substantial commitment made by the five city boards.

In between, “operating as a sort of transmission belt” (Interview IFP Staff 1) is the Food Policy Council. This is formed by eight representatives, appointed by the municipalities on the basis of their experience or expertise on food issues, and five representatives selected as coordinators within each Thematic Table. The FPC was designed with a view to provide a further and more focused participatory stage, to account for territorial and experts’ specific contribution and give legitimation to the whole participatory process. It is meant, as one interviewee put it, as

a synthesis between the fluidity of Agorà’s participation process and fixed [municipal] administration procedures [...]. We would like it to achieve a leading role in decision-making, not to replace or compete against local governments, indeed there are no city councillors for food policies but there is a Council for food! (interview IFP Staff 1).

A crucial component of the new governance structure is the Food

<sup>14</sup> The *Testo Unico degli Enti Locali* (TUEL) is the law No. 267/2000 on administrative procedures, functions, and tools of local authorities in Italy.

<sup>15</sup> “*Consulte*” is a common type of advisory/participation committee, used more to deliberate on top-down decisions than to make new policy proposals.

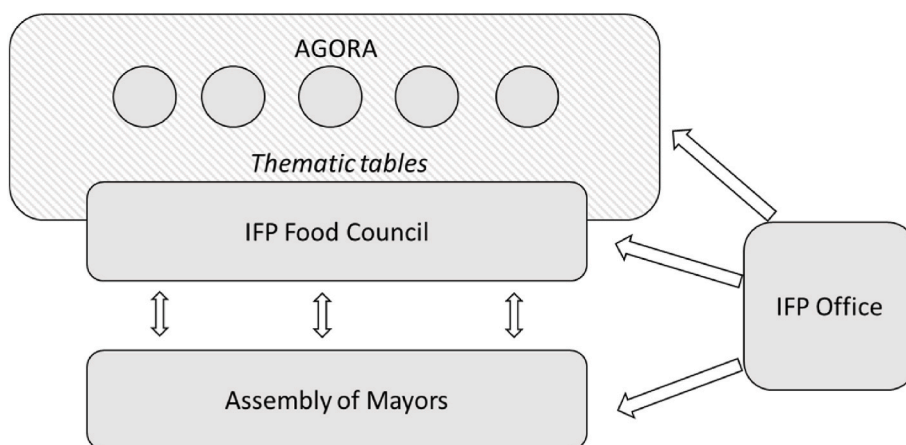


Fig. 3. The governance system of the IFP of the Plain of Lucca. Source: authors' own elaboration.

Policy Office, initiated before the other bodies were established and comprising members of the former steering committee. As a coordination and support entity, it provides the municipalities and new constituted entities with the technical capacity needed to carry out food-policy-related tasks. Human and material resources at the Food Policy Office represent the endowment of the Municipality of Capannori to the first food policy budget, the remainder of which amounts to EUR 20 000 (for the period 2019–2023). The two officials appointed to running the Office, however, are not exclusively assigned to food policy functions, which they perform alongside the ordinary administrative duties within the Mayoral Cabinet.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The case study presented in this paper illustrates an example of how a process of (food) policy integration should be understood as *processes*, entailing different and mutually interacting dimensions. These neither necessarily proceed at the same speed nor occur at the same level. The case of the IFP of the Plain of Lucca showcases a set of factors that can reveal potential enablers and obstacles in such processes. These factors are related to elements of the governance described in the case study and to what we identified as three target levels of integration:

- 1) Between the departments/sectors within each municipal government;
- 2) Among the five City boards; and
- 3) Between citizens' and other food system stakeholders' engagement and municipal decision making.

For integration analysis, it is important to highlight that the framework does not explicitly address intermediate levels of integration but only identifies ideal types on a spectrum of low to high degrees of integration. We think, instead, that because integration can be interpreted as an ensemble of processes, intermediate levels are a fundamental part of the analysis. Hence, Table 3 summarises key findings by highlighting the manifestations of higher (+) and lower (–) degrees of integration, also including ambivalent elements, according to our interpretation of the spectrum proposed by Candel and Biesbroek (2016) and Candel (2021). Furthermore, Table 3 also highlights which level of integration, among the three identified above, is affected by these elements in the case of the Plain of Food:

In addition, we identified three key factors that are specifically interesting to discuss as they potentially affect (the spectrum of) integration by triggering processes across all the dimensions (policy frame, subsystem's involvement, policy goals, and policy instruments) and levels of integration. In the specific case of the IFP of Lucca, these are as follows:

Table 3

Manifestations of higher (+), lower (–), and ambivalent (±) degrees of integration and relevant levels for the IFP of the Plain of Lucca: summary of key findings divided along four dimensions of integration. Source: authors' own elaboration.

Dimension	Degree of integration	Level of integration
Policy frame	+ General acknowledgment of the cross-cutting nature of food system's issues and of the necessity to adopt a holistic governance approach +/- Complementary framings of responsibility and citizen engagement mutually reinforcing and/or weakening	(1) Between the departments/sectors within each municipal government (3) Between citizens' and other food system stakeholders' engagement and municipal decision making
Subsystem's involvement	+ More than one subsystem involved in the IFP process + Awareness of the cross-cuttingness of food issues is established for the actors and institutions belonging to different subsystems - Involvement of different subsystems has yet to translate into formal takeover of policy responsibility and adoption of policy goals to tackle the cross-cutting food issue	(1) Between the departments/sectors within each municipal government (3) Between citizens' and other food system stakeholders' engagement and municipal decision making
Policy goals	+ Shared goals embedded in an overarching strategy - Policy goals too broad and generic to go beyond agenda-setting purposes	(2) Among the five City boards
Policy instruments	+ Establishment of an ad hoc boundary-spanning governance structure with no inherent powers, but advisory functions + Adoption of procedural instruments for (food) policy coordination at intermunicipal level ( <i>gestione associata</i> ) +/- Financial resources allocated to the IFP (but limited) - Main instruments deployed are organisation-based and procedural types	(2) Among the five City boards (3) Between citizens' and other food system stakeholders' engagement and municipal decision making

1. Implicit bonds in the JM convention for food policy functions

We showed that this component of the IFP governance bestows food policy functions to the city boards of the five municipalities involved



and has been explicitly adopted because, under current legislation, it is the most binding form of intermunicipal coordination. This choice reveals the remarkable political backing of the food policy initiative and a strong commitment to go beyond short-term projects. As such, this governance configuration is also promising with respect to reducing the vulnerability to electoral change (Halliday and Barling, 2018) and the ensuing risk of policy reversal, corroborating the idea of De Schutter et al. (2020), who identified the need for new policy frameworks to be designed to coordinate actions beyond the short-termism of electoral cycles. In the specific case of the IFP, JM adoption has been instrumental to ensuring equal representation to all the cities involved, regardless of their political and economic weight, as well as equal responsibilities for food policies. Moreover, the establishment of one food policy council in each city, which was one of the options under consideration, was avoided, therefore creating more favourable conditions for broader integration among the five city boards. The case also showed that the combination of JM with a budget, whatever limited, could act as an incentive to the uptake of the food policy agenda by the city boards, or at least discourage its dismissal. With an overall budget of EUR 20 000 allocated to the IFP Strategy implementation for the 2019–2023 period, the current food policy governance would require, in case one municipality falls back, that the withdrawal decision be justified before, and approved by, the City Council. These results are consistent with those of Sibbing and Candel (2021), who found the allocation of financial resources is a key element in the process of food policy institutionalisation in Ede (The Netherlands).

However, despite having its institutional home (Halliday and Barling, 2018) in the JM convention, the inherently strategic nature of the food policy exposes the latter to the constant need for recognition, public legitimisation, and organisational support in order to progress and succeed. Hence, the JM creates a good degree of integration between city boards regarding subsystem's involvement and policy instruments (see Table 3) but also a lower level of integration when considering the missing formal takeover of policy responsibility and adoption of policy goals.

## 2. The virtuous (vicious) cycle of participatory food governance

We described (in Section 4.4) the mechanisms behind the elaborate governance of the IFP, regulated by the IFP Bylaw, and uncovered (in Section 4.1) the complementary framings underpinning such structure, as a complex and mutually reinforcing relationship between substantive citizens' engagement and municipal responsiveness. This highlights both the strengths and drawbacks of this governance structure that are linked to the delicate balance between the different components, and to their functioning currently being tested.<sup>16</sup>

Two participatory levels, the Agorà and FPC, complement one another by fulfilling different roles in the IFP, with their tight relationship being embodied in their common Chairperson. The Agorà, in both plenary form and thematic tables, addresses the need to both legitimise and capitalise on existing projects and initiatives, both grassroots and institutional, as well as the need to create new networks between food system stakeholders, to create new ideas and knowledge. Networking, facilitating inclusiveness, and voicing different groups are major capacities of food policy councils (in the broadest sense) according to Schiff (2008). The specific role played by the FPC in the IFP is crucial, as it aims to take food issues from the open assembly (Agora) to the political assembly (Assembly of Mayors), to inform policy development from below. The FPC only has an advisory function, which means that mayors are under no obligation to follow the advice or meet the demands of the FPC. However, the more citizens and food system

stakeholders that participate in the open consultation, the more likely it is that advice will be considered when weighing decisions on food, particularly when addressing controversial issues. Conversely, the lack of ownership of the food policy agenda by the mayors and deputy mayors could potentially feed a vicious cycle, generating participatory frustration, which would, in turn, translate into a lack of legitimation for decision making and policies alike. The participatory food governance topic is in constant balance between high and low level of integration because of the complementary framings of responsibility and citizen engagement mutually reinforcing and/or weakening (see Table 3).

## 3. The Food Policy Office: Institutionalised Policy Entrepreneurs

We observed the major challenges that the IFP initiators had to confront in the implementation phase were (are) related to maintaining political momentum and citizens' engagement, and securing adequate resources to ensure the continuity of the initiative. Since the beginning of the process, an indispensable role was played by the informal steering committee, where we observed several food champions or policy entrepreneurs at work (Moragues-Faus and Morgan, 2015), which are key actors "investing their own resources, such as their time, expertise and reputation to perform important functions in the policy process" (Giambartolomei et al., 2021). Such functions, as this study showed, include framing problems and solutions, building networks and trust, gaining political support, and aligning available resources and goals. One major enabler of integration in the processes observed in the Plain of Lucca has been the institutionalisation of integrative capacity and leadership (Candel, 2021) and assigning the two posts in the Food Policy Office to former members of the Steering Committee. They fulfilled a hybrid role, performing the political and administrative functions needed to provide coordination and support to the whole governance structure (IFP Bylaw, 2020). In this respect, one important finding of this study is related to the operational capacity necessary, at the whole governance system level, to translate policy goals into a set of measurable and administratively sound procedures. As well in this case, the nuances between high and low integration degrees of integration are fundamental to understand the case study. There is a general acknowledgment of the cross-cutting nature of food system's issues and of the necessity to adopt a holistic governance approach, but policy goals are too broad and generic to go beyond agenda-setting purposes and the main instruments deployed are organisation-based and procedural types.

To conclude, the scope of this study is limited in that we examined the specific processes of policy integration at play in one single case study. Moreover, the timing of the research allowed us to draw only preliminary results, which should therefore be read with caution. Despite these limitations and the exploratory nature of the study, this is the first study addressing the unique case of institutionalised intermunicipal cooperation on food policy in Italy. In addition, it offers some valuable insights into the different dimensions and levels affecting and affected by the multiple processes of policy integration, with particular reference to small cities.

In terms of future investigations, it would be helpful to expand this research with respect to the further implementation of the IFP Strategy, to understand to what extent paper commitments are translated into effective changes in governance and, ultimately, in the food system. The operationalisation of goals and deployment of instruments beyond the organisation-based and financial instruments observed in this study would provide useful insights into the direction and intensity of the integration process. Furthermore, the role of researchers in this and other subnational food policy cases deserves much attention. The IFP has so far enjoyed a certain level of fame within national and European food policy networks and beyond due to the ability of its representatives

<sup>16</sup> At the times of writing (July 2021), the IFP Bylaw, which was to be applied on an experimental basis for one year, has been confirmed for another year due to former COVID restrictions.

to bring their experience to a wider, national and international audience,<sup>17</sup> and not least because of a number of researchers who have identified, in this case, elements of innovation and replication opportunities (cf. The specific contribution by Arcuri et al., 2020, Halliday et al., 2019 and Spadaro, 2019).

Lastly, the governance of the IFP illustrated in this paper has only recently been designed and implemented and has been tested since January 2020. Clearly, the difficulties connected with the COVID-19 pandemic (just one month after the Bylaw was ratified) and related mobility restrictions have inevitably affected all the actors and institutions involved, resulting in a slowdown in the activities and adding unforeseen challenges to the whole experiment.

### Author statement

Sabrina Arcuri: Conception and design of study; Methodology, Analysis and Interpretation of data; Writing – original draft, review and editing. Bianca Minotti: Data collection; Analysis and Interpretation of data; Writing – original draft, review and editing. Francesca Galli: Data collection; Writing - review & editing.

### Funding

This research has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727988. The information and views set out in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union.

### Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### Acknowledgments

The authors thank all of the interviewees for participating in this study and the two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts.

### Abbreviations and acronyms

UFPS	Urban Food Policies
MUFPP	Milan Urban Food Policy Pact
FPCs	Food Policy Councils
IFP	Intermunicipal Food Policy
IFP Bylaw	Intermunicipal Food Policy Bylaw
IFP Plan	Intermunicipal Food Policy Plan
JM	Joint Management

### References

Arcuri, S., Belletti, G., Bottiglioni, S., Brunori, G., Galli, F., Innocenti, S., Marescotti, A., Pensa, A., Rovai, M., Soldani, L., 2020. Innovazioni istituzionali e approcci multi-attore nelle politiche alimentari Locali: il piano intercomunale per il cibo della Piana di Lucca. In: Dansero, E., Marino, D., Mazzocchi, G., Nicolarea, Y. (Eds.), *Lo spazio delle politiche locali del cibo: temi, esperienze e prospettive*, Celid, Torino, ISBN 978-88-6789-187-0, 2019.

Arcuri, S., Galli, F., Rovai, M., Belletti, G., Marescotti, A., Lazzaroni, M., Casini, M.P., 2021. WP3 Living Lab Report – Lucca LL. ROBUST H2020, Grant Agreement No 727988. (Forthcoming).

<sup>17</sup> The city of Capannori, in particular, has received a special mention for the theme Governance in the Milan Pact Award (Cf. Milan Pact Award, Edition 2019). The case of the *Piana del Cibo* is included in the list of food policy observed by the Italian Network on Local Food Policies (cf. <https://www.politichelocalicibo.it/mappe/>), and its representatives participate in the network guided by the Milan Food Policy (<https://foodpolicymilano.org/italia/>).

Barling, D., Lang, T., Caraher, M., 2002. Joined-up food policy? The trials of governance, public policy and the food system. *Soc. Pol. Adm.* 36 (6), 556–574.

Bassarab, K., Santo, R., Palmer, A., 2018. Food Policy Council Report 2018. Johns Hopkins Center for A livable Future. Food Policy Networks.

Béland, D., 2009. Ideas, institutions, and policy change. *J. Eur. Publ. Pol.* 16 (5), 701–718.

Blay-Palmer, A., 2009. The Canadian pioneer: The genesis of urban food policy in Toronto. *Int. plan. stud.* 14 (4), 401–416. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563471003642837>.

Bolgherini, S., Casula, M., Marotta, M., 2018. Pursuing defragmentation at the municipal level: signs of a changing pattern? *Mod. Italy: J. Assoc. Stud. Mod. Italy* 23 (1), 85–102.

Borron, S., 2003. Food policy councils: practice and possibility. In: *Hunger-Free Community Report*. Congressional Hunger Center, Washington, DC.

Brazzini, A., Zuti, A., 2016. Consiglio Regionale Della Toscana. Note Informativa Sull'attuazione Delle Politiche Regionali N. 36. Ottobre 2016. Available online at: <https://www.consiglio.regione.toscana.it/upload/COCCOINA/documenti/Fattibilit%C3%A0/nota%20info%2036.pdf>.

Brunori, G., Rossi, A., Malandrini, V., 2011. Co-producing transition: innovation processes in farms adhering to solidarity-based purchase groups (GAS) in Tuscany, Italy. *Int. J. Sociol. Agric. Food* 18 (1).

Calori, A., Magarini, A. (Eds.), 2015. Food and the cities: politiche del cibo per città sostenibili. Edizioni Ambiente.

Candel, J.J., 2018. Diagnosing integrated food security strategies. *NJAS - Wageningen J. Life Sci.* 84, 103–113.

Candel, J.J., 2020. What's on the menu? A global assessment of MUFPP signatory cities' food strategies. *Agroecol. Sustain. Food Syst.* 44 (7), 919–946.

Candel, J.J., 2021. The expediency of policy integration. *Pol. Stud.* 42 (4), 346–361. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2019.1634191>.

Candel, J.J., Biesbroek, R., 2016. Toward a processual understanding of policy integration. *Pol. Sci.* 49 (3), 211–231.

Candel, J.J., Pereira, L., 2017. Towards integrated food policy: main challenges and steps ahead. *Environ. Sci. Pol.* 73, 89–92.

Coulson, H., Sonnino, R., 2019. Re-scaling the politics of food: place-based urban food governance in the UK. *Geoforum* 98, 170–179.

Comune di Capannori. Com. Stampa 03.07.2019. Politiche locali del cibo sempre più al centro: nasce la gestione associata dei comuni della Piana. (Accessed 29 June 2021).

Cretella, A., 2019. Alternative food and the urban institutional agenda: challenges and insights from Pisa. *J. Rural Stud.* 69, 117–129.

De Schutter, O., Jacobs, N., Clément, C., 2020. A 'Common Food Policy' for Europe: How Governance Reforms Can Spark a Shift to Healthy Diets and Sustainable Food Systems. *Food Policy*, p. 101849.

Fox, C., 2010. Food Policy Councils. Innovation for Democratic Governance for a Sustainable and Equitable Food System. Prepared for the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force. UCLA Urban Planning Department.

Galli, F., Prosperi, P., Favilli, E., D'Amico, S., Bartolini, F., Brunori, G., 2020. How Can Policy Processes Remove Barriers to Sustainable Food Systems in Europe? Contributing to a Policy Framework for Agri-Food Transitions. *Food Policy*, p. 101871.

Giambartolomei, G., Forno, F., Sage, C., 2021. How Food Policies Emerge: the Pivotal Role of Policy Entrepreneurs as Brokers and Bridges of People and Ideas. *Food Policy*, p. 102038.

Gupta, C., Campbell, D., Munden-Dixon, K., Sowerwine, J., Capps, S., Feenstra, G., Van Soelen Kim, J., 2018. Food policy councils and local governments: creating effective collaboration for food systems change. *J. Agric. Food Syst. Comm. Dev.* 8 (Suppl. 2), 11–28.

Halliday, J., Barling, D., 2018. The role and engagement of mayors in local food policy groups: comparing the cases of London and Bristol. In: *Advances in Food Security and Sustainability*, vol. 3. Elsevier, pp. 177–209.

Halliday, J., Platenkamp, L., Nicolarea, Y., 2019. A Menu of Actions to Shape Urban Food Environments for Improved Nutrition, GAIN. MUFPP and RUAF.

Hamilton, N.D., 2002. Putting a face on our food: how state and local food policies can support the new agriculture. *Drake J. Agric. Law* 7 (2), 408–454.

Harper, Shattuck, Holt-Giménez, Alkon, Lambrick, 2009. Food Policy Councils: Lesson Learned. Food First, Institute for Food and Development Policy.

Hodgson, K., 2011. Food policy councils: helping local, regional, and state governments address food system challenges. *Am. Plan. Assoc.* Available at: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/marinfoodpolicycouncil/files/178441.pdf>.

Intermunicipal Food Policy Bylaw, 2020. Regolamento di funzionamento degli Organi della Piana del Cibo.

Intermunicipal Food Policy Strategy and Plan, 2019. Piano Intercomunale del Cibo della Piana di Lucca – Documento finale. English version available online at: <https://pi-anadelcibo.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/piano-del-cibo-englisha-piana-1.pdf>.

Jenkins-Smith, Hank, C., Clair, Gilbert K. St, Woods, Brian, 1991. Explaining change in policy subsystems: analysis of coalition stability and defection over time. *Am. J. Polit. Sci.* 35 (4), 851–880.

Jochim, A.E., May, P.J., 2010. Beyond subsystems: policy regimes and governance. *Pol. Stud. J.* 38 (2), 303–327.

Jordan, A., Lenschow, A., 2010. Environmental policy integration: a state of the art review. *Environ. Pol. Govern.* 20 (3), 147–158.

MacRae, R., Donahue, K., 2013. Municipal Food Policy Entrepreneurs: a Preliminary Analysis of How Canadian Cities and Regional Districts Are Involved in Food System Change. Toronto Food Policy Council and Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute, Toronto.

Moragues-Faus, A., 2021. The Emergence of City Food Networks: Rescaling the Impact of Urban Food Policies. *Food Policy*, p. 102107.

- Moragues-Faus, A., Morgan, K., 2015. Reframing the food scape: the emergent world of urban food policy. *Environ. Plann.* 47, 1558–1573.
- Rayner, J., Howlett, M., 2009. Introduction: understanding integrated policy strategies and their evolution. *Pol. Soc.* 28 (2), 99–109.
- Scherb, A., Palmer, A., Frattaroli, S., Pollack, K., 2012. Exploring food system policy: a survey of food policy councils in the United States. *J. Agric. Food Syst. Comm. Dev.* 2 (4), 3–14.
- Schiff, R., 2007. Food Policy Councils: an Examination of Organisational Structure, Process, and Contribution to Alternative Food Movements. PhD Dissertation. Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy, Murdoch University, Perth, Australia.
- Sibbing, L.V., Candel, J.J., 2021. Realizing urban food policy: a discursive institutionalist analysis of Ede municipality. *Food Sec.* 13 (3), 571–582.
- Sonnino, R., 2019. The cultural dynamics of urban food governance. *City Cult. Soc.* 16, 12–17.
- Sonnino, R., Tegoni, C.L., De Cunto, A., 2019. The challenge of systemic food change: insights from cities. *Cities* 85, 110–116.
- Spadaro, C., 2019. Le buone politiche del cibo che fanno crescere le città. *Altresonomia* 214 – Aprile 2019.
- Termeer, C.J., Dewulf, A., Breeman, G., Stiller, S.J., 2015. Governance capabilities for dealing wisely with wicked problems. *Adm. Soc.* 47 (6), 680–710.
- Tosun, J., Lang, A., 2017. Policy integration: mapping the different concepts. *Pol. Stud.* 38 (6), 553–570.
- Van de Griend, J., Duncan, J., Wiskerke, J.S., 2019. How civil servants frame participation: balancing municipal responsibility with citizen initiative in Ede's food policy. *Polit. Govern.* 7 (4), 59–67.
- Voytenko, Y., McCormick, K., Evans, J., Schliwa, G., 2016. Urban living labs for sustainability and low carbon cities in Europe: towards a research agenda. *J. Clean. Prod.* 123, 45–54.
- Wiskerke, J.S., 2009. On places lost and places regained: reflections on the alternative food geography and sustainable regional development. *Int. Plann. Stud.* 14 (4), 369–387.