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RE-PRESENTING LOCAL FOOD:

A STUDY OF FARMERS' SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AROUND LOCAL FOOD IN PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL

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Abstract

In the extensive literature on alternative food systems and food system localization, a body of work stresses the importance of critically reflecting on these phenomena. Several authors call for a demystification of local food practices and argue that progressing knowledge in this field necessitates context specific studies exploring the imperfect social-political processes which characterize the local. This thesis is based on an ethnographic research developed in this perspective, conducted in Porto Alegre, Brazil between March and June 2016. It explores the meanings, practices and governance mechanisms associated to local food from the perspective of the family farmers of the city region. By reporting farmers' social representations, it shows how, in the context of Porto Alegre, local food provisioning is often depicted as an opportunity for family farmers to actively engage in the food system and develop alternative practices. At the same time, the research sheds light on the heterogeneity and dynamism of the beliefs and practices linked to local food, varying between farmers, based on their social environment, history, interests and broader understanding of the world. In fact, it reports on a multitude of local experiences, among which the ones of farmers from the Landless Workers' Movement and urban agro-ecological family farmers. Drawing upon the analysis of these diverse representations, this thesis argues that the lack of common vision across farmers' collectives and local food networks complicates the systematization of local food practices (also referred as the development of the City Region Food System). However, it also advances that, rather than a result of the standardization of local food practices, the City Region Food System can be regarded as a terrain for diverse and novel experiences to emerge. Collected in a context of high political volatility (characterized by the suspension of the mandate of the president Dilma Rousseff), the reflections of the farmers of Porto Alegre raise a discussion on the importance and transformative potential of understanding local food as a tool for family farmers' creativity and autonomy.

Na extensa literatura sobre sistemas alimentares alternativos e localização de sistemas alimentares, um eixo de trabalho salienta a importância de refletir criticamente sobre esses fenômenos. Vários autores chamam atenção para a desmistificação das práticas alimentares locais e argumentam que avançar em conhecimentos nesse campo exige estudos específicos e contextualizados, que exploram os processos político-sociais imperfeitos que caracterizam o local. Esta tese é baseada em uma pesquisa etnográfica, realizada em Porto Alegre, Brasil, entre Março e Junho de 2016. A tese explora os significados, práticas e mecanismos de governança associados aos produtos locais a partir da perspectiva dos agricultores familiares da cidade-região. Ao relatar as representações sociais dos agricultores, ela mostra como, no contexto de Porto Alegre, o abastecimento de produtos locais é, muitas vezes, descrito como uma oportunidade para agricultores familiares se engajarem ativamente no sistema alimentar e desenvolverem práticas alternativas. Ao mesmo tempo, a pesquisa destaca a heterogeneidade e o dinamismo de crenças e práticas ligadas aos produtos locais, o que varia entre os agricultores com base no seu ambiente social, história, interesses e compreensão mais ampla do mundo. De fato, ela relata uma multiplicidade de experiências locais, entre as quais as de agricultores do Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra e agricultores familiares agroecológicos urbanos. Baseando-se na análise dessas diversas representações, esta tese argumenta que a falta de visão comum entre coletivos de produtores e circuitos alimentares locais dificulta a sistematização de práticas alimentares locais (também referidas como City Region Food System- Sistema Alimentar da Cidade-Região). No entanto, também aponta que, em vez de um resultado da padronização das práticas alimentares locais, o Sistema Alimentar da Cidade-Região pode ser considerado um terreno para o desenvolvimento de experiências novas e diversificadas. Coletadas em um contexto de alta volatilidade política (caracterizada pela suspensão do mandato do presidente Dilma Rousseff), as reflexões dos agricultores de Porto Alegre proporcionam discutir a importância e o potencial transformador de compreender produtos locais como ferramentas para a criatividade e autonomia de agricultores familiares.

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List of abbreviations

CAD	Centro Agrícola Demonstrativo Agricultural Demonstration Centre
CEASA	Centrais de Abastecimento State Food Supply Centres
CMDR	Conselho Municipal de Desenvolvimento Rural Municipal Council of Rural Development
COMSANS	Conselho Municipal de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional Sustentável Municipal Council for Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security
CONDRAF	Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Rural Sustentavel National Council of Sustainable Rural Development
COPTEC	Cooperativa de Prestação de Serviços Técnicos em áreas de Reforma Agrária Cooperative for Technical Assistance in Agrarian Reform Areas
CRFS	City Region Food System
CSA	Community Supported Agriculture
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CUT	Central Única dos Trabalhadores Central Workers' Union Confederation
DMLU	Departamento Municipal de Limpeza Urbana Municipal Departement of Urban Cleaning
EMATER-RS	Empresa de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural- Rio Grande do Sul Rural Extension Company
FPC	Food Policy Council
GIA	Grupo de Integração Agroecológica Group of Agro-ecological Integration
IBGE	Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
LFS	Local Food System
MAPA	Ministério da Agricultura, Pecuária e Abastecimento Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply
MDA	Ministerio do Desenvolvimento Agrário Ministry of Agricultural Development
MDS	Ministerio de Desenvolvimento Social a Combate a Fome Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger
MST	Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra Landless Workers' Movement
MUFPP	Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

NEA	Núcleo de Economia Alternativa- UFRGS Group of Alternative Economy
PAA	Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos Food Acquisition Program
PDT	Politica de Desenvolvimento Rural Policy for Rural Development
PFZ	Projeto Fome Zero Zero Hunger Project
PMDB	Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro Brazilian Democratic Movement Party
PMDR	Plano Municipal de Desenvolvimento Rural Municipal Plan of Rural Development
PNAE	Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar National School Nutrition Program
PRONAF	Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores Workers' Party
RAMA	Associação dos Produtores da Rede Agroecológica Metropolitana Producers' Association of the Agro-ecological Metropolitan Network
SFSC	Short Food Supply Chain
SMED	Secretaria Municipal de Educação Municipal Secretariat for Education
SMIC	Secretaria Municipal da Produção, Indústria e Comércio Municipal Secretariat of Production, Industry and Trade
SRT	Social Representations Theory
UFRGS	Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul

Introduction

"How to make localism an open, process-based vision, rather than a fixed set of standards, is one of the major challenges the alternative food systems movement faces today"
Dupuis & Goodman, 2005

As food systems have grown more global and complex, an increasing number of scholars and other civil society actors have called for a "quality turn" away from the dominant agri-food model that these systems embody (Goodman, 2004). As pointed out by Sonnino & Marsden (2006), this turn is motivated by different sets of arguments highlighting the negative impacts and the limits of current leading practices of food provisioning (e.g.: concentrated ownership and industrialization of the food sector). Especially since the early 1990s, these concerns instigated alternative food scholars and activists to experiment and discuss a wide variety of alternative food practices, both locally and in the form of global networks (Durrant, 2014). Today, developing differentiated food systems is increasingly a matter of public concern, as two thirds of the planet's population is expected to be living in urban areas by 2050 (ISU, 2015).

Many alternative food movements promoted the discourses and practices of food system localization, regarded as a transition opportunity towards more sustainable models of agriculture and food supply. In this perspective, local food represents a counteraction to "trends of economic concentration, social disempowerment, and environmental degradation" (Hinrichs, 2003, p.33). It aims at (re)embedding food in its context of origins and approximate consumers to local producers (Marsden *et al.*, 2000). Such increase in proximity becomes possible through the establishment of Short Food Supply Chains (SFCSs), which can vary from practices of direct selling such as farmers' markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) to regional branding and quality certification schemes. In the city, a growing number of people (e.g.: urban and peri-urban CSOs, the local government) are also engaging in local food efforts in order to (re)connect regional producers to urban consumers.

However, the high heterogeneity of discourses and practices around local food has led many scholars to question its potential and sustainability. Authors such Hinrichs (2003), Dupuis & Goodman (2005), DeLind (2011) argued that local practices are often inadequately contested amongst alternative food system advocates (e.g.,). Assuming a more critical perspective, these authors pointed out the risks of framing the local as a space where norms and values are "pure and conflict-free" (Dupuis & Goodman, 2005, p.359) and often underlined that, on the contrary, the heterogeneity of local food movements is linked to the "catalytic role of agency anchored in the local places and regions" (Hinrichs, 2003, p.34). This approach also underlines that understanding localization as "something done by people, [and] not something done to them" (Hines, 2000, p.31 in Hinrichs, 2003) has significant analytical and methodological consequences. Taking a closer look at the actual dynamics and context specificities in which Local Food Systems (LFSs) are grounded becomes central to the analysis of their potential for promoting progressive societal changes (Allen, 2010). By

exploring place-based, imperfect socio-political processes, research can contribute to the development of reflexive and sustainable local food practices.

This thesis is based on an ethnographic study developed in this perspective, aiming to investigate what local food is in the specific context of Porto Alegre, Brazil. More precisely, it inquires the social representations that the family farmers of the city region developed around local food. Based on Jodelet (1991):

> Social representations are images that condense manifold meanings that allow people to interpret what is happening; categories which serve to classify circumstances, phenomena and individuals with whom we deal, theories which permit us to establish facts about them.
>
> in Howarth, 2006, p.4

The social representations approach was adopted with the intention of exploring the (1) meanings, (2) practices and (3) governance mechanisms that the farmers associate to local food. The goal is to shed light on the various beliefs and practices that accompany local rural-urban food linkages and shape local food initiatives. Ultimately, it aims at discerning how farmers' social representations influence the systematization of local food initiatives, referred to, in this thesis, as the construction of the City Region Food System (based on Foster *et al.*, 2015). Through this thesis I wish to contribute to progressing knowledge around local food by reporting, analysing and reflecting on farmers' perspectives. Hopefully, this can raise additional discussions around local food practices and food system localization in the context of Porto Alegre and beyond.

The data was collected between March and June 2016 mainly through participant observation and nineteen semi-structured interviews. These four months were characterized by significant political changes marked by the suspension of the mandate of the president Dilma Rousseff and consequential shifts in the national political agenda. This period can also be regarded as a time of increasing public debate (especially with regards to the future of categories such as family farmers) and strong civil society engagement. As a consequence, many of the considerations gathered in this thesis are connected to broader concerns that distinguished this phase of high political volatility.

The first part of the thesis (chapter 2) introduces a set of studies around alternative and local food practices. It highlights the functions, practices and limitations that have been associated to local food in the literature. The second section of the literature review presents the context on the study, advancing some perspectives on the development of alternative food and agriculture arrangements in Brazil. Chapter 3 and 4 are elaborations on the theoretical framework (the concept of social representations) and the methodology on which the thesis is grounded. The main body of the thesis (chapter 5) reports the results of the fieldwork. It firstly described the existing local food initiatives in Porto Alegre and their characteristics. In a second moment, it sheds light on the social representations around local food by family farmers, distinguishing them into representations around the meanings, practices and governance mechanisms of local food. The discussion (chapter 6) furthers this analysis, by linking it to broader questions found in the literature. By answering the research questions, it also explores the links between farmers' representations and the (potential) systematization of local food initiatives. The concluding paragraphs include some final

reflections around the diversity and dynamism of these representations, the overall research experience and point out the limitations of this study.

1. Research objective and questions

1.1. Research objective

"we need to contextualize the local"
Allen, 2010

The objective of this thesis is to gain insights into farmers' social representations around local food practices in the city region of Porto Alegre, Brazil. More precisely, it aims to shed light on the meanings, practices and governance mechanisms that the farmers associate to local food. Through the study of these representations, I investigate how various, sometimes conflicting, beliefs and practices can accompany the development of local food initiatives and influence their potential systematization (also referred as the development of the CRFS). By highlighting farmers' views of local food, I wish to bring new insights to the growing body of literature that examines local food practices in city regions and points out the idiosyncrasy and fluidity that characterize them.

1.2. Research questions

GRQs: How do the social representations of local food by family farmers shape the development of the City Region Food System in Porto Alegre?

SRQ1: What meanings do family farmers associate to local food?

SRQ2: What practices do family farmers associate to local food?

SRQ3: What governance mechanisms do family farmers associate to local food?

2. Literature review

The following literature review presents the main concepts and discussions on which the thesis is grounded. The first section of the review presents some general literature on the development of alternative and local food systems (their rationale, practices and challenges). Secondly, the context of the study is introduced, advancing some perspectives on the making of alternative food and agriculture arrangements in the Brazilian context.

2.1. The rationale, practices and challenges of local food

2.1.1. Challenges in the global food system

Since the 1950s, in several countries around the world, agricultural production has intensified and industrialized. Over time, national governments (especially in Western societies) started to invest in their domestic farm sector and to develop policies aiming to increase agricultural production (Rosin *et al.*, 2012). Corporations also played a central role in these changes by supplying the necessary inputs to this new type of production as well as keeping control of colonial plantations (Rosin *et al.*, 2012, p.6). Over time, the establishment of a neoliberal approach to food trade enabled the corporate sector to grow larger and to develop a system in which a great part of the food is being produced, distributed and governed at the global level.

In the last decades, many scholars (e.g.: Friedman, 1982; Mittal, 2009; Lang, 2010; Rosin *et al.*, 2012) have studied the impacts of what became the dominant globalized food system. Its effects are of economic, social, environmental, political and cultural nature. While an exhaustive review of the critiques to the current agri-food system is not possible, it is important to identify several key arguments, specifically around the socio-political consequences of corporate influence and international trade. I focus on these dimensions because they often represent the starting point of the critique of the alternative food movement activists analyzed in this research project (both in the literature and in the field).

In terms of power relation, one of the characteristic of global food supply chains is that, in most cases, only few stakeholders are in control of the chain and its decision making processes. This is because, as argued by McMicheal (2009), the current era (that the author calls the *corporate food regime*) is distinguished by the consolidation of agribusinesses, which resulted in a whole range of concentration and dispossession processes. Land grabbing is an example in this sense, as corporate landowners are depriving local communities of resources such as land and traditional food sources (Hitchman, 2016). Moreover, the concentration of agribusinesses through the integration of agrochemical and seeds producers resulted in drastic changes in the governance model of agricultural production (e.g., Fritche *et al.*, 2015). Such concentration also occurred in food distribution as large food processors and retailers reorganized global food supply. In this perspective, the production of smallholders is often incorporated in global supply chains where wholesalers and retailers are setting conditions and prices. Most of the time, local actors (such as smallholders) have little power to get involved and influence the governance of the food

system. Patel (2008) argues that, overall, markets are being increasingly governed by fewer corporations and that food governance therefore became deeply undemocratic.
Moreover, as food production was mechanised and standardized, food chains extended and created a spatial decoupling of rural food production and urban food consumption (Fritshe *et al.*, 2015). At the local level, food availability is being increasingly dependent on globalized food chains, a phenomenon which often proved to reduce both the food security and the food sovereignty of communities (Lang, 2010). The global food crisis in 2007-2008 is an example in this sense as the rise in certain food prices affected countries all over the world. Many scholars linked that increase in the price of agricultural products to factors such as worldwide competition for land (exacerbated by the production of biofuels), the intensive production of meat driving up the price of grains and the increase in the price of fossil fuels used for food production and supply (e.g.: Patel, 2007; McMichael, 2009; Rosin *et al.*, 2012).

In addition to challenges mentioned above, many authors argue that the current agri-food model is not going to be able to adequately respond to the big challenges of our time, such as inequalities in food access, water scarcity or climate change, because its practices are part of the causes (e.g.: Godfray *et al.*, 2010; Morgan & Sonnino, 2010). Because of the reasons mentioned above, and more, civil society, academics, governments are calling for exploring alternative pathways and transition opportunities towards more sustainable food systems (Durrant, 2014).

2.1.2. An introduction to the concepts of Alternative Food Networks, Local Food System and Short Food Supply Chains

Over the last two decades, a wide variety of Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) have emerged, advancing different models of food supply and counteract the environmental, social and economic problems posed by the dominant food system (Renting *et al.*, 2003). AFNs are often associated with the concepts of “re-localisation”, “embeddedness” and “sustainability” (e.g., Roep & Wiskerke, 2012). Ilbery & Bowler (1998) argue that AFNs are part of a broader transition in rural development, a shift from a productivist to a “post-productivist” food regime. The “post productivist” food regime is distinguished by a new form of vitality in the agri-food sector linked to alternative production methods, citizens’ engagement and new possibilities to create and consume (Padiglione, 2015).

Many contemporary food movements are working for a broader adoption of this ideological transition. These movements often focus on matters of food provisioning and call for the development of alternative food supply chains based on the revaluation of local resources. Since the 1970s, especially in Western societies, a wide range of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have indeed been on the frontline to create a more direct connection between consumers and the local producers in their surroundings (Durrant, 2014). Feenstra (2002) defines this a local food system (LFS): the result of a collaboration between stakeholders aiming to develop more locally-based and self-reliant food economies. In a LFS, “sustainable food production, processing, distribution, and consumption [are] integrated to enhance the economic, environmental, and local health of a particular place” (Feenstra, 2002). Local food can indeed be understood as an economic strategy, a diet and a social movement (DeLind, 2011).

LFSs can have several benefits. Firstly, new alliances between producers and consumers often allows to create more space for producers to decide on the methods of food production and supply and reduce their dependency on large wholesalers (Galli & Brunori, 2013). These direct links also increase producers' access to the market and therefore contribute to a more sustainable development of the area (Galli & Brunori, 2013). Secondly, LFSs can provide benefits to consumers because they often sponsor a higher transparency over production processes, an increase in consumers' knowledge around food and might consequently foster the adoption of healthier diets. In this regards, Galli and Brunori (2013) showed that LFSs often increase the access to healthy food, particularly to fresh vegetables and fruits. It also generates a higher level of trust among the members of the community by building social cohesion around shared experiences relating to food and agriculture (DeLind, 2011). Finally, quite often LFSs are spaces of experimental practices and innovations. Innovations such as social farming, permaculture and biodynamic production methods are often carried out in the context of LFSs and represent new opportunities for the revitalisation of agriculture in marginalised rural areas (Galli & Brunori, 2013). However, as elaborated in section 2.1.4., several authors also pointed out the importance of developing more critical reflexions on localization as LFSs can be characterized by extremely diverse practices.

The mechanisms through which local or regional food distribution and consumption can be operationalised are often referred to as Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs). A wide variety of SFSCs exist all over the world but they often share some common characteristics, such as the objective to reduce the number of intermediaries along the chain and foster a local control of the economic activities (Galli & Brunori, 2013). The sub-classification of SFSCs developed by Kneafsey *et al.* (2013) includes the concepts of sales in proximity and sales at a distance. In both cases, the produce has to be traceable back to a named farmer.

Sales in proximity are the sales done close by to the area of production. They include practices such as on-farm sales (e.g. farms shop, pick-your-own), farm direct deliveries (such as delivery schemes or vending machines), Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and off-farm sales. Off-farm sales can be made in the commercial sector or in the public one. In the first case, products can be sold in farmers' markets, food festivals, farmer-owned retail outlets and, finally, to private retailers sourcing from local farmers. Farmers can also sell their products to the public sector, in public hospitals or schools for example. As further explored, the state can play a central role for supporting local food provisioning and fostering sustainable consumption and production practices (e.g., Galli *et al.*, 2014).

Sales at distance are sales done through distribution processes on larger distances and usually achieved through online sales or speciality retailers. This form of SFSC can boost the commercialisation of the typical products of a region all over the world. Nevertheless, these goods remain traceable to the original farm and are usually handled by few intermediaries. Renting *et al.* (2003) underline that the extension of SFSCs over longer distances "supposes the creation of more complex institutional arrangements". In these chains, the cooperation between farmers is often central in order, for example, to apply to certification labels or regional quality marks (Roep, 2002). Table 1 was developed in the European Innovation Partnership Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) (EC,

2014) focus group on SFSC management and gives an overview of a possible sub-categorization of SFSCs.

SFSC	Sub-classification
Sales in proximity. These may be achieved by farmers acting individually or collectively, but produce has to be traceable back to a named farmer.	*Community Supported Agriculture:* - These can vary in structure but follow same essential principles whereby subscribers receive a share of the harvest in return for money and labour. *On Farm Sales:* - Farm shops - Farm based hospitality (e.g. table d'hôte, B&B) - Roadside sales - Pick-Your-Own
	Off Farm Sales – commercial sector: - Farmers' markets and other markets - Farmer owned retail outlet - Food Festivals / tourism events - Sales directly to consumer co-operatives / buying groups - Sales to retailers who source from local farmers and who make clear the identity of the farmers. - Sales to HoCaRe[3] as long as the identity of the farmer is made clear to end consumers.
	Off Farm Sales – public sector: - Sales to hospitals, schools etc. The public sector institution in this case is understood as the 'consumer.'
	Farm Direct Deliveries: - Delivery schemes (e.g. veg box) - Vending machines
Sales at a distance These may be achieved by farmers acting individually or collectively, but produce has to be traceable back to a named farmer.	*Farm Direct Deliveries:* - Delivery schemes - Internet sales - Speciality retailers

Table 1 Sub-classification of Short Food Supply Chain Types. Source: EIP-AGRI, EC, 2014.

2.1.3. Local food provisioning in and around the city

A consistent number of studies exploring relations between AFNs and LFSs discuss their benefits and challenges in urban and peri-urban contexts (e.g.: Morgan & Sonnino, 2010; Block *et al.*, 2011). Some of this literature examines the possibilities to better connect producers and consumers across rural, peri-urban and urban areas, adopting a regional approach to sustainable food system development (e.g.: Donker, 2014; ISU, 2015). Authors and practitioners arguing in this perspective believe that developing better economic, social and political synergies across these areas can help facing present and future challenges of food supply in the cities.

As a matter of fact, according to the *World Urbanization Prospects* report of the UN DESA's Population Division (2014), in 2014, 54 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas. This percentage is expected to reach 66 per cent by 2050 (UN DESA, Population Division, 2014). 90 per cent of this increase will occur in Asia and Africa and will be characterized by a growth in the number of "mega-cities" (cities with 10 million inhabitants or more), a rapid expansion of small settlements (cities with less than 500,000 inhabitants) and a continue decline of the rural population (UN DESA, Population Division, 2014). This process represents extremely rapid and profound shifts in human history as at the beginning of the 19th century only 2 per cent of the world's population lived in urban areas (ISU, 2015). Today, rapid urbanisation involves new economic, social, political and environmental challenges and developing inclusive, equitable and sustainable management strategies of the cities is a central concern.

Governments, civil society, international organizations and academia are increasingly acknowledging that food production and food security are also urban issues. This recognition can be illustrated by several trends. Firstly, by the growth in international initiatives and declarations in which cities engage to place food on the urban agenda and to develop more sustainable urban food provisioning projects. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (October 2015) and the Seoul Declaration (April 2015) are two examples in this sense.

At the same time, food and nutrition policy are gradually more developed at the local level. A growing number of city- based food policy and programmes are connecting various fields (e.g., health, food safety, waste management) to build more resilient urban food systems. Food is also becoming a driver for the development of other sustainable urbanisation policies in the area of transport, land use planning and climate change adaptation for example (Dubbeling *et al.*, 2015). In this context, CSOs and the alternative food movement developed stronger networks and started calling for food policy reforms (Durrant, 2014). For example, Koc at al. (2008) analysed CSO activism for sustainable food systems in Canada where the decentralization of governance structures offered new opportunities for CSOs to influence political decision making process the local and regional level. In many cities, Food Councils became central to allow grassroots networks to influence food policy at the local level. In this perspective, city councils are spaces where local population and local politics can retake control over food and agriculture and create alternatives to the dominant food system (e.g., Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; Reed & Keech, 2015). Food policy councils (FPCs) are often advisory boards composed of different segments of the food system community and usually cover functions such as research and analysis, community education, community

development and policy advocacy (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999). Today, many FPCs are modelled on earlier experiments in North America, such as the food policy council of Toronto, established in 1991 as a subcommittee of the Board of Health to counsel the City of Toronto on food policy issues. Over the past decades, the FPC of Toronto has promoted significant food system innovations and facilitated food policy development. Its contribution to Toronto Food Strategy, Toronto Environmental Plan and Toronto Food and Hunger Action Plan are just a few examples in this sense.

Finally, academics are increasingly studying the potential role of cities as drivers for a transformation of the dominant agri-food system. According to Morgan & Sonnino (2010), cities are at the forefront of the development of a "new food equation" for mainly two reasons. On one hand, in order to drive the "ecological survival of the human species", cities are particularly pressed to find new ways of co-evolving with nature. On the other, cities are places where political protests are more likely to occur and where civil society has more opportunities to experiment and engage in democratic local governance processes.

The City Region Food System approach

In the literature, discourses and strategies related to food system change at the local level and urban food are examined from multiple perspectives. However, there is broad agreement that the concept of the City Region Food System is an approach that can be used for observing local food production and consumption in and around the cities. The concept of CRFS is being developed by a set of several international organizations and networks composed of: the FAO Food for cities initiative, Global Food Security Cluster/Urban Working Group, the Habitat International Coalition (HIC), ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, ILO, International Urban Food Network (IUFN), International network of Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food security (RUAF), UN-Habitat, United Nations Capital Development (UNCDF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Food Programme (WFP) and the Prince of Wales' International Sustainability Unit (ISU). Based on a meeting amongst these partners in Rome in December 2013, the CRFS was defined as:

> The complex network of actors, processes and relationships to do with food production, processing, marketing, and consumption that exist in a given geographical region that includes a more or less concentrated urban center and its surroundings peri-urban and rural hinterland; a regional landscape across which flows of people, goods and ecosystem services are managed.
>
> in Foster *et al.*, 2015, p.9

In the last years, several European research project in the fields of food system, food system localization and urban food systems significantly contributed to the maturation of this notion, even though they might not always directly refer to the term CRFS (e.g., Foodlinks, Supurbfood, Foodmetres). The CRFS can be considered as a relatively young concept, as a framework for reflections and actions.

A CRFS perspective can be helpful to analyze the ensemble of local food practices and reflect on the global diversity of food provisioning among and within the cities, which can be influenced by factors such as the geographical location, the history and local cultures (ISU,

2015). It sheds light on the way in which the food system operates, how people access food and the inequalities this might generate. Above all, this approach can ameliorate our understanding of the linkages between the urban centers and their surrounding rural areas. These numerous ecological, social and economic interconnections usually have a quite low visibility because of a frequent dichotomization of public discourses and policy into urban and rural (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; ISU, 2015). From this perspective, fostering better rural-urban connections is seen as a crucial component for ensuring better food access in the cities as well as to guarantee a more equitable and sustainable development of peri-urban and rural areas (Forster *et al.*, 2015).

On a more practical level, the CRFS can be regarded as a frame for action. It can incorporate a wide set of grassroots initiatives, public policies and programs fostering local food production and distribution in a specific city region (Jennings *et al.*, 2015). The CRFS can be a tool to strengthen SFSCs and build programs linking urban areas and consumers to nearby food producers and their lands (ISU, 2015). The CRFS is indeed based on initiatives sourcing food over short geographical distances, involving few intermediaries and strengthening the relationships between the consumers and the producers. The goal is to increase the resilience of the cities by relinking them with their surrounding from an ecological, socio-economical and governmental standpoint (Jennings *et al.*, 2015).

The CRFS can also be regarded as a frame for food governance including policy instruments based on a good understanding of the local context. It could endorse local authorities to invest in appropriate infrastructures (e.g., market places, rural roads), public procurement strategies, new spatial planning, innovation and forwards the availability of information (Jenning *et al.*, 2015). Based on Wiskerke (2015), a resilient CRFS should be constructed on integrated and inclusive governance mechanisms, enhancing a dialogue between local stakeholders and public authorities. If we regard localization as “something done by people” (Hines, 2000), CRFS strategies for good governance should indeed include appropriate mechanisms to involve local stakeholders in the definition of its principles. As stressed by Crivitz *et al.* (2016, p.17), drawing on Pretty (1998): “Organizing from the grassroots is key here—to start from the multiple, local, historically and culturally specific contexts in which people are trying to improve their social and environmental conditions”. According to the authors (2016), developing “cycles of democratic participation” at the city level are a potential strategy to foster a more inclusive and reflexive governance, to stimulate participation and representation.

Overall, it is argued in the literature that CRFSs have several benefits, among which, preventing growing inequalities in terms of wealth and access to resources and services, that are characterizing most of the city regions which undergo rapid urbanization processes (Broto *et al.*, 2012). A CRFS approach can also foster higher food security, regional economic growth, local food cultures and other health and environment related benefits (ISU, 2015).

2.1.4. Problematizing local food

> "The job of a critical social scientist [is] to go beyond surface impressions and uncover underlying social structures and conflicts as a way to empower people to improve society"
> Hassanein, 2003

Several authors have advanced critical analyses of local food practices mainly from political economy and rural sociology perspectives (e.g., Hinrichs, 2003; DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; Born & Purcell, 2006; DeLind, 2010). The starting point of these studies is what Brown & Purcell (2005) have called "the local trap", which refers to the "tendency of food activists and researchers to assume something inherent about the local scale" (Born & Purcell, 2006, p.195). According to Hinrichs (2003), such preconception is linked to the polarization between the concepts of global and local, through which localism came to be presented as a solution to the problems of globalization. Several scholars (Brown & Purcell, 2005; Purcell & Brown, 2005; Born & Purcell, 2006) argue that nothing is inherent to any scale and that assuming that local is good represents a danger in food-system research and planning. It is worth mentioning that the literature presented in this section does not postulate that food system localization is undesirable. It stresses that (local) food systems are highly heterogeneous and that their outcomes are shaped by its actors and agendas. As pointed out by Ward & Almas (1997, p.612 in Hinrichs, 2003): "heterogeneity at the local level remains an obvious feature of the agro-food systems of capitalist economies by virtue of the continuing importance of local and national cultures and histories". Authors such as Born & Purcell (2006) and DeLind (2011) therefore call on local food system advocates and researchers to develop more contextual analysis and use multiple approaches and methodologies.

As underlined in Tregear (2011), a first line of arguments from this perspective questions social justice and food democracy within LFSs. Allen (2010) notes that one of the primary goals of the alternative agri-food movements is to develop socially just food systems, which the author defines (based on the Activist Researcher Consortium, California, 2004) as "one in which power and material resources are shared equitably so that people and communities can meet their needs, and live with security and dignity, now and into the future". Allen (2010) stresses that social justice is not inherent to LFSs and that making social justice a priority firstly involves an in-depth understanding of the economic, political and cultural forces that compose the system. It necessitates an analysis of local human interactions and power dynamics embedded within the place itself. An argument in this sense is that local food practices such as direct selling, institutional food purchasing programs and labelling schemes have the potential to solve social justice problems but only when shaped and adapted to the specificities of local contexts (Allen, 2010; DeLind, 2010). DeLind (2010) therefore invites local food researchers to develop multi-disciplinary studies, questioning the contextual consequences of local food together with local actors and taking distance from the standardized discourses of "local food heroes" (e.g., famous journalists building general discourses and directives around local food).

Practicing food democracy is another essential element for socially just and sustainable food systems which involves a set of practices that cannot be taken for granted.

As underlined by DuPuis & Goodman (2005), LFSs are not composed by "a set of pure, conflict-free local values" and, on the contrary, their governance might involve managing disparate interests and values. Drawing on Harvey (2001), DuPuis & Goodman (2005) advance that localism might indeed be based on the interests of a narrow and sectionalist élite. The authors (2005) argue that such forms of "unreflexive localism" might lead to the establishment of an undemocratic and unrepresentative system, in which a specific group would dominate others by defining "right living" and "right eating". For example, the study of Yeatman (2003) reveals that, in four case studies within Australian local governments, policy action is often controlled by influential individuals and groups. Individual professionals and managers can indeed significantly impact policy processes and agenda (Yeatman, 2003). More generally, local governments might be influenced by trade associations and business lobbies and localism could be deployed to serve the interest of economic élites (Koc *et al.*, 2008). Counteracting these tendencies involves "a shift from politics of place to a politic in place", through which all local actors can dialogue and democratically influence decisions making processes (Amin, 2002, in DuPuis & Goodman, 2005). One of the fundamental components of this shift is a better analysis of urban-rural politics, regional power relations and the actual opportunities for rural producers to take part to local food debates is a first step towards a more inclusive and participatory governance of LFSs. According to Hassanein (2003), food democracy is indeed about people having equal opportunities to actively participate in shaping the food system by, for example, being involved in the formulation of agri-food policies. Including people in democratic processes (through the creation of food councils for example) can help to fight local asymmetries of power and privileges but should also be accompanied by an increase in the accountability of local institutions (Allen, 2010). Authors such as DuPuis & Goodman (2005), DeLind (2011) and Crivits *et al.* (2016) call for deeper investigations of the conditions and mechanisms through which LFSs can create opportunities for different stakeholders to participate in more democratic forms of food governance.

A second line of critical perspectives on food system localization discusses the concept of local itself. Several scholars pointed out that local is a social construction (e.g., Born & Purcell, 2006; Allen, 2010). They note that scales are produced through social and political struggles and that their attributes are therefore never given or eternal (Born & Purcell, 2006). Setting the boundaries of local contexts is a dynamic process usually influenced by particular plans. Assessing the transformative and democratic potentials of a food system is therefore tightly linked to understanding who is involved in the definition of local and the LFS's practices. According to Hinrichs (2003), based on who defines the local, food system localization can be approached defensively or receptively (even though this should not be understood as a static binary). "Defensive localism" produces LFSs in which local actors are concerned only for those in their own localities (Hinrichs, 2003; Allen, 2010). In this case, the construction of a local community is essential to the accumulation of resources within determined boundaries and the consequent exclusion of other regions from the food system. "Defensive localism" poses several ethical concerns, among which a fundamental question raised by Allen (2010, p.302): "What responsibilities do local food movements have to those in other regions that might be less endowed or, indeed, historically impoverished by their region?". A LFS might also be based on a "diversity-

receptive" approach (Hinrichs, 2003). In this case, the system encourages internal diversity and reflexive dialogues about inclusion and exclusion around the definition of local, which becomes dynamic and open to change. Developing more inclusive notions of local represent a fundamental challenge of LFSs and, at the same time, could result in sustainable and democratic food strategies, especially in and around culturally diverse cities (Morgan & Sonnino, 2010). As mentioned before, Morgan & Sonnino (2010) underline that cities can play a crucial role in developing a "new food equation", based on alternative and multifunctional agri-food systems, and, as part of this change, foster a "cosmopolitan localism" (multicultural and inclusive LFSs)[1]. Hodson & Marvin (2010) also stress that cities should not only be regarded as sites for receiving transition initiatives but as purposive contexts and call for in-depth investigations of socio-technical transitions at an urban scale.

Overall, the studies reviewed underline the complex dimensions of food system localization and, more generally, food system reform. They contributed to a broader shift in activists and academics' understanding of food systems, increasingly regarded as web of actors, processes, and interactions (IPES, 2015). In this perspective, analysis of a (local) food system need to incorporate research on the institutional and regulatory frameworks that influence it as well as the power dynamics and governance mechanisms that characterize it (e.g., Born & Purcell, 2006; Tregear, 2011). The sustainability of food practices should be defined and assessed with local actors, through multi-disciplinary and multi-methodological perspectives, fostering reflexive processes and context-specific knowledge (IPES, 2015).

2.2. Socio-political changes in the food and agricultural system of post-dictatorship Brazil

This section introduces the social-political context of the research and presents the literature on the changes occurred in the Brazilian agri-food system since the 1990s. It provides some insights that helped better analyse the practices of the CRFS of Porto Alegre, shedding light around the evolving relations between the state and civil society. The selected literature explores, more precisely, the institutional reforms that gave the space for the development of alternative pathways of food production and commercialization (alternative to the dominant industrialized and export-oriented model, characterizing the modernization of the country since the 1950s). These reforms allowed a greater societal recognition of the role of small-scale agricultural producers and the institutionalization of most rural social movements and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). In this context, food system localization is usually understood as a strategy (often State-sponsored) for the emergence of a more inclusive paradigm of rural development, helping small-scale producers to market their products. At the same time, it proposes an alternative solution for increasing communities' food security, which was, for a long time, addressed through centralized and aid-based mechanisms.

[1] The notion of "cosmopolitan localism" was firstly developed by Sachs (1999). It seeks to: "amplify the richness of a place while keeping in mind the rights of a multi-faceted world. It cherishes a particular place, yet at the same time knows about the relativity of all places. It results from a broken globalism, as well as a broken localism" (Sachs in Hinrichs, 2003).

2.2.1. Emerging alternatives perspectives on rural development in post-dictatorship Brazil

Within the context of Brazil's re-democratization process, the approval of a new constitution in 1988 opens the doors to the public recognition of new societal actors and the emergence of new social and political dynamics. The 1990s are characterized, among other changes, by a significant shift in the ways in which Brazilian state and civil society understand and support the development of rural areas (Grisa & Schneider, 2015). The creation of the *Programa Nacional de Fortalecimento da Agricultura* (PRONAF) (National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming) in 1995 and the restructuring of the *Ministerio do Desenvolvimento Agrário* (MDA) (Ministry of Agricultural Development)[2] in the early 2000s cleared the way to the creation of alternative policies for rural development and to the emergence of a wide variety of participatory governance bodies in the rural areas (Bracagioli Neto, 2014; Grisa & Schneider, 2015). Such changes corresponded to the formal political recognition of the role of family farming in Brazil and to the public acknowledgment of its need for appropriate and differentiated support strategies (Grisa & Schneider, 2015).

Until the 1990s, the function of small scale farmers had usually been neglected and this category had received little attention from policy makers (Falcão, 2006; Grisa & Schneider, 2015). Since the 1940s, the rural depopulation and the progressive industrialization of agriculture had fostered an increase of land concentration and the development of export-oriented cash crop production (Falcão, 2006). During the dictatorship, the State had actively supported the, so called, process of *modernização dolorosa* (painful modernization) which had furthered excluded small-scale agriculture from the public debate. Nevertheless, at the end of the 1970s, social movements had grown stronger and, in the rural areas, new syndicates had emerged. Smallholders and family farmers were mobilizing to protest against the regime, asking for better working conditions, for a land reform as well as a targeted support system. During the 1980s and 1990s these groups became more formally organized. Examples in this sense are the creation of the *Central Única dos Trabalhadores* (CUT) (Central Workers' Union Confederation) in 1983 and the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Terra* (MST) (Landless Workers' Movement) in 1984. Social movements and CSOs, which had long been working as autonomous agents opposing to the government, started to be incorporated in more institutionalized political processes (Grisa & Schneider, 2015) such as the definition and implementation of new agricultural policies, better targeted to the different needs of Brazilian producers.

As a matter of fact, the 1990s were marked by the formation of a new generation of policies benefitting family farmers (Grisa & Schneider, 2015)[3]. The PRONAF was one of the first policies targeted specifically to family farmers and Schneider *et al.*, (2010) explain that the agricultural policies that followed it were firstly based on *ações sociais e assistenciais*

[2] Ministry framing and supporting most of the food and agricultural policies targeted to family farming. It was extinguished in May 2016, as part of the institutional reforms of the current Brazilian interim government

[3] However, it is important to remark that the major part of agricultural policies kept supporting large-scale production and that the process of liberalization of the Brazilian economy limited the interventions of the State.

(social and assistance strategies). In a second moment, the state started to recognize the production capacities of family farmers and small-scale producers and launched a set of policies focused on the creation of (public) markets. In Brazil, interacting directly with markets often represents a challenge for these categories because of, among other, inadequate (or absent) physical access to markets, limited organizational capacity, lack of bargaining power and unbalanced market relations (Chmielewska & Souza, 2010). The *Programa de Aquisição de Alimentos* (PAA) (Food Acquisition Program) is an example of a State program that aims to provide family farmers with market opportunities and consequently support their livelihood. PAA is a public procurement strategy emerged in 2003 (law 10.696) as part of the actions of the *Projeto Fome Zero* (PFZ) (Zero Hunger Project)[4]. It provides an opportunity to family farmers to market their products and gets them distributed to the most vulnerable population[5].

2.2.2. Participatory governance and transforming social mobilization in food and agricultural system reforms

Since the 1980s, the process of re-democratization was characterized by a growth in associational life and social mobilization and, as mentioned before, a gradual political recognition of these new political actors (Cornwall & Shankland, 2013). The establishment of a wide set of participatory instances marked the progressive inclusion of citizens within the institutional political arena and, in extension to this, a radical change in the way public policies would come to be designed and implemented (Silva & Rocha, 2015). The concept of participatory governance – referred to as *gestão publica participativa* – was a central element of the Constitution of 1988 and the theoretical pillar of many of the reforms that followed (Bracaglioli Neto, 2014). The development of the new food and agricultural policies were indeed accompanied by the emergence of institutionalized participatory arenas. The goal of these articulations was to engage social movements and organizations in the implementation of the programs and to foster a joint management of the public policies.
The *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) (Workers' Party) was a key actor in the development of participatory governance in Brazil. The PT emerged after the end of the dictatorship, as a social movements party gathering all the actors that had been excluded from the formal political debate. Until the 1980s, the PT had a highly critical approach towards state institutions and called for actions outside of the formal political sphere. After that first period, the party started to engage in institutionalized political processes in order to expand the range of its strategies. Especially since the PT achieved electoral victory at the national level in 2003, it supported the setting up of participatory arenas at every governance level, inviting CSOs and social movements to take part to institutionalized decision making processes (and, in this way, become part of state apparatus).

[4] The PFZ was created by the federal government in 2003 to prioritize the issue of hunger on the policy agenda. It is composed by a set of actions aiming, among other, to increasing food access across Brazil and strengthening family farming. For more information on PFZ refer to, for e.g.: da Silva *et al*., (2010); Wittman & Blesh (2015)

[5] For more information on the PAA refer to, for e.g.: Porto & Grisa (2015)

The development of PRONAF, for example, involved the establishment of participatory arenas such as the *Conselho Municipal de Desenvolvimento Rural* (CMDR) (Municipal Council of Rural Development) and the *Plano Municipal de Desenvolvimento Rural* (PMDR) (Municipal Plan of Rural Development), which objective was to integrate family farmers in the decision making process of the program and the management of its initiatives. Another example of the emergence of Brazilian participatory arenas linked to food and agriculture reforms is the *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Rural Sustentavel* (CONDRAF). This national council was created in 2003 and became one of the main institutions at the basis of the MDA. Similarly, the creation of the *Ministerio de Desenvolvimento Social a Combate a Fome* (MDS) (Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger) was grounded on the development of a wide set of participatory councils, commissions and committee at all governance levels[6].

However, the integration of the (rural) population in the public sphere proved to be a challenging process, especially because many groups of the society had long been marginalized. Already in the 1990s, evaluations of the *conselhos* often revealed the predominant role played by the local élite in shaping these arenas (Bracagioli Neto, 2014; de Moura & Monteiro, 2010). More generally, scholars such as Cornwall & Shankland (2013) point out that the development of Brazilian experiments in participatory democracy are very much dependent on their contexts of origin (Cornwall & Shankland, 2013). In their analysis, the forms and degrees in which participatory reforms effectively impacted the local population varied according to a wide set of socio-cultural preconditions. The authors (2013) stress that the functioning of participatory practices are influenced by how local citizens traditionally engage in the public sphere, by their habits of engagement in other societal spaces (what the authors call the "culture of politics"). The reflections of Silva & Rocha (2015) on citizens' participation in the *Politica de Desenvolvimento Rural* (PDT) (Policy for Rural Development) are an example in this sense. The PDT is a federal policy which started to be implemented in 2003 and aims at supporting Brazilian communities by providing state support to local initiatives on a territorial basis. The program should foster a joint management of the territory through the creation of participatory institutions encouraging local actors to debate and negotiate alternative solutions for the development of their region. Silva & Rocha (2015) argue that each Brazilian territory presents a wide variety of actors with different capacities and intentions. The authors advance that the participatory mechanisms of the PDT should be shaped to the different local contexts but that this is rarely the case. Most of the time, new institutional mechanisms are simply added to fixed and persistent habits and values that may hamper a deeper renewal of the discourses and practices around participation in rural development.

In a way or another, the entrance of civil society in formal governance processes corresponded to an evolution in the nature of its relation to the state. On one hand, scholars such as Houtzager *et al.* (2003) argue that, in Brazil, the growing link between the PT and social movements has undermined their autonomy, limited their range of action and detached them from grassroots activism. Goldfrank & Schneider (2006) stress that these

[6] For more information on the structure and bodies of these ministries refer to, for e.g.:
Grisa & Schneider (2015)

new relations between the state and civil society can be regarded as a form of co-optation because institutionalized participation often increased the dependency of CSOs from political agendas and electoral prospects. On the other hand, scholars such as Silva (2010) and Walsh-Dilley & Wolford (2013) believe that the institutionalization of the action of social movements and CSOs should not be regarded as a loss of autonomy but as a strategic choice that can enable these organizations to gain more influence within political arenas. They argue that cooperating with the state did not prevent CSOs to be critical and keep acting beyond the institutional sphere. Silva & Schmitt (2014) look at the role of CSOs in the implementation of the PAA in the State Rio Grande do Sul. This program created in 2003 aims to support family farmers by creating an institutional market for distributing food provisions to food-insecure people. Most of the time, CSOs act as an intermediary between the producers and public authorities and are highly involved in the management of the food supply. Silva & Schmitt (2014) explain that, to a certain extent, the fact that these CSOs are called to become part of the implementation of public policies can create a reality in which these are working less from an oppositional standpoint, which was historically associated to their participation in the public sphere. However, the authors also underline that working within the institutional sphere does not curb movements and CSOs to keep a critical eye on the actions of the State and sometimes bringing together oppositional direct action and formal collaboration.

De facto, all of these studies underline the blurring of the boundaries between the state and civil society and the current struggle of Brazilian CSOs to position themselves and maintain their self-determination (Earle, 2010). In research, looking at these types of relations between the state and civil society is key to analyse institutional reform and, more generally, societal transformation (Baiocchi et al, 2008).

2.3. An introduction to the study of local food practices in Brazilian literature

This section introduces literature on local food in Brazil. It is grounded on the exploration of some, mostly Brazilian, studies around this topic and aims to provide an overview to how concepts around local food provisioning are being approached. According to Duarte & Thomé (2015), most studies around food system localization and SFSCs in Brazil were published from 2008 onwards, which demonstrates that these are quite recent topics to be addressed by national academia. Duarte & Thomé (2015) also point out that the majority of these works are case studies developed in the Southern region of Brazil and therefore mention the need for more research around local food practices, especially in other regions, in order to analyse its potentials and its challenges in Brazil's different contexts.

Brazilian literature focusing on SFSCs is usually grounded on conceptual frameworks developed by Marsden *et al.*, in the years 2000, and therefore approaches SFSCs as strategies that reconfigure food supply by increasing the proximity between the consumer and the producer to foster more sustainable model of food provisioning and territorial development. For example, the work of Scarabelot & Schneider (2012) and Niederle (2014) present SFSCs as an opportunity for producers to operate a quality turn from the production of export-oriented crops to traditional, diversified and organic products. More generally, local food practices are usually presented as a response to the crisis of the dominant agri-

food model and to an increase in consumers' concern around food quality (Duarte & Thomé, 2015). The study of SFSCs is approached through a multi-disciplinary perspective and often looks at the economic, social and geographical aspects associated to their development (e.g., the possibility for producers to determine their prices, to redefine their identity, the impact of this emerging phenomenon on land use). Overall, SFSCs are presented as an opportunity for increasing food security, provide consumers with information on the origins and quality of the products, promote socio-economic development through the creation of jobs and retention of surplus in the area of production. SFSCs are also often thought together to sustainable agricultural production methods such as agro-ecological practices. Finally, it is important to underline that most of Brazilian academia refers to SFSCs as a development strategy for family farming. The work of Fornari (2016) is an example in this sense. It presents the different strategies through which family farmers of the municipality of Tenente Portela (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil) can access markets and sell their products locally. Fornari (2016) points out that these family farmers usually sell directly to the consumers, in farmers' markets or through box schemes. Selling processed products is usually more difficult because only few family farmers have a kitchen conforming with the legislative sanitary standards. Products such as milk and cheese are therefore often sold informally. When possible, the family farmers of Tenente Portela form associations in order to process and commercialize their products jointly. Being part of producers' associations allow them to take part to institutional food acquisition programs and consequently sell their products to local institutions. Another study looking at local food as an alternative strategy for family farmers is the one of Oliveira *et al.* (2010), which sheds light on the selling practices of the producers of Ipê (Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil). The study stresses that the establishment of alternative food supply chains and commercialization practices can significantly increase the autonomy of family farmers, helping them to take distance from conventional capitalist markets (through processes of "des-mercantilização" and "re-mercantilização" – de-commodification and re-marketization-). Oliveira *et al.* (2010) also demonstrate that, when compared to conventional family farmers, the agro-ecological producers of the region of Ipê are usually more engaged in alternative and local food practices. Selling locally through different channels enabled agro-ecological family farmers to diversify their production, increase their revenues and decreased their dependency on global markets.

Moreover, many of the Brazilian studies approach the topic of food system localization by analysing the public policies supporting family farming through the development of SFSCs (Duarte & Thomé, 2015). The work of Triches & Schneider (2010), Silvestre *et al.* (2011), Bezerra & Schneider (2012) are examples of research exploring specific public support mechanisms and public policies which are in relation to food system localization. The two main policies studied in this perspective are the PAA (introduced above) and the *Programa Nacional de Alimentação Escolar* (PNAE) (National School Nutrition Program). The PNAE has existed for more than 50 years but, in the first place, all procurements were centralized. From the 1990s onwards, the procurements were decentralized and an emphasis was put on purchasing from family farmers. Since 2009, the law 11947/2009 determined a significant change in the implementation of the PNAE and fixed that at least 30% of the State funds provided to municipalities for school food purchases have to be directed to family farmers and their organizations (Grisa & Porto,

2015). It prioritize purchasing from farms in agrarian reform settlements, and farms from indigenous groups or quilombolas communities[7]. It also includes mechanisms for paying a price premium for agro-ecological and organic products. Studies such as the ones of Sonnino *et al.* (2014), Triches & Grisa (2015), Ghizzoni (2016) show that the PNAE represents a new, multi-dimensional approach to food security because its goals comprehend supporting family farming through local food provisioning. As a matter of fact, the municipality gives priority to local food production and, if the products needed are not available in its immediate surroundings it can search for suppliers in the rest of the region. The program is therefore based on the development of SFSCs and, most of the time, the producers deliver the products directly to the schools, dialoguing and establishing a trust relation with the schools' staff and students (Ghizzoni, 2016). Schools' managers get the opportunity to know about the origins and the quality of the food they serve and ameliorate the nutritional situation of the children by offering seasonal, fresher and less processed food. At the same time, the PNAE can represent a new marketing opportunity for family farmers, an incentive to diversify production, get organized and an increase in their social recognition and livelihoods.

Finally, several Brazilian papers on food provisioning in the city also refer to the concept of food system localization. An example is the work of Belik & Cunha (2015) on the growing challenges to food supply in Brazilian cities. The authors (2015) argue on the importance of developing more direct food supply strategies as the power of supermarkets and intermediaries is negatively impacting city regions. The authors refer to the notions of "foodshed", "food hubs" and "food miles" to present the different opportunities to conceptualize and implement local food provisioning in city regions. In his work, Belik (2013) often refers to the important role that the state can play in reforming food supply and distribution centres in the country, fostering higher levels of efficiency in the logistics as well as setting new guiding values. Among these principles: the valorisation of local products, a higher recognition of the producers and their rights, the development of a more transparent information system (allowing a clearer identification of the origins of the products), the promotion of better linkages between the regional production and gastronomical habits (Belik & Cunha, 2015). Moreover, the scholar stresses the potential of public acquisition programs (such as the PAA and the PNAE) as alternative and local strategies of food provisioning, connecting urban public institutions to close by regional producers.

[7] Descendants of Afro-Brazilian slaves who escaped from plantations and developed hinterland settlements. Today, quilombolas communities are present in both rural and urban areas.

2.4. Conclusion

The first section of the literature review provided a definition of the key concepts used in this thesis, such as the ones of SFSCs and CRFS. It also exposed the rationale of the research, which was developed in line with the considerations of scholars such as Dupuis & Goodman (2005) and Tregear (2011), calling for in depth and context specific studies of local food practices.

The second part of the review outlined the context of the study. More particularly, it shed light on some of the transformations of the Brazilian agri-food model and the evolutions in governance and civil society mobilization that accompanied these changes. A first introduction to this literature was central to comprehend the socio-political practices in the CRFS of Porto Alegre. Finally, getting an overview of how the notions of AFNs, SFSCs and food system localization are approached in Brazilian literature allowed to identify some key aspects associated to local food in the Brazilian context. Among these, it emerges that local food practices are particularly linked with family farming and state sponsored initiatives. It also showed that few scholars have approached these studies from a systemic perspective, using the concepts of LFSs or CRFSs. Moreover, little research has focused on the role of the municipality and their relation with the producers, as, on the contrary, most studies focus on the federal and state governance levels. Hopefully, this study can also represent a contribution in this perspective.

Finally, as mentioned in the introduction, the thesis fieldwork was conducted in a period of significant political changes in Brazil, characterized by the begin of the impeachment process of the President Rousseff and the consequent suspension of her mandate. These events firstly represented a major turn in the history of the PT, as it ended its 14 years of control of the presidency. They also involved shifts in the country political agenda, as the presidency was handed over a centre-right coalition. In his first month as interim president (May 2016), Michel Temer (PMDB) operated a series of administrative reforms which raised public discussions around, among other things, the future of agriculture in the country. As pointed out by several critical scholars, the new government agenda might represent a *restauração conservadora* (conservative revival), prioritizing a neoliberal approach to agriculture and large-scale production (e.g., Franca, 2016 May 16). From this perspective, these changes might put at risk the continuity of several of the programs developed under the PT presidency and directed to family farmers and/or minorities present in the rural areas. This was exemplified by the extinction of the MDA, today a secretary of the MAPA.

3. Theoretical framework

The thesis proposes to explore local food, including its associated meanings and practices, from the perspective of some family farmers of the city region of Porto Alegre. The research is based on the collection of their beliefs, ideas and perceptions, which can also be referred as social representations. This section introduces the concept of social representations, the reasons for which this approach was adopted to frame the thesis, and some of its limitations. In line with Elcheroth *et al.* (2011), social representations are at the basis of how individual act within their society, make political choices and direct societal changes.

The philosophical term social representations is used in social sciences to describe the categories of thought through which individuals observe, understand and question reality (Souza Minayo, 1998). Several authors, among which Durkheim, Weber, Marx and Bourdieu, contributed to the development of this concept. While an exhaustive review of the research around social representations is not possible, it is important to introduce the main concepts and interrogations with which this research is approached. Durkheim (1898) was one of the first authors to define the concept of *collective representations*. He described the latter as general mental categories that include elements such as science, ideology, worldview and myth. The author also affirmed that collective representations are neither given nor universal but associated to particular social facts (Durkheim, 1962). Because representations are observable and interpretable, they can be regarded as real phenomena characterizing specific social contexts (starting from the one in which they emerge) (Durkheim, 1962). This implicates that *collective representations* have an autonomous life: they mix, reproduce and, most importantly, are susceptible of exerting influence on individuals and collectives (Durkheim, 1898). From this perspective, representations are social because they are usually developed in societies, and single agents might not always be conscious about their existence (Souza Minayo, 1998). Following a Durkheimian approach, representations are forms of knowledge produced by sources of authorities, which have the power of binding collectives together and which are often strongly resistant to change (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005).

In his work, Schutz (1962, 1973) also point out the importance of studying representations as social phenomena as well as recognizing their influence on society (just as structures and institutions). Schultz (1973) uses the concept of *common sense* to describe the social representations present in individuals' everyday life. According to the author, peoples' understanding of the world is based on their experiences and knowledge. While experiences are usually shared, knowledge can be created through subjective and inter-subjective elaborations of these experiences (Schultz, 1973). For example, taking part to a farmers' market can be an experience shared among several participants. However, the meaning(s) associated to such practice can differ among farmers and groups of farmers, which often mature various feelings, opinions (and knowledge) around these activities. For Schultz (1973), knowledge functions as a frame through which reality is understood and is therefore at the basis of social representations. The author also stresses that representations result from both collective and individual processes of analysis of reality (the latter being relative to their personal history).

Independent from discussions on the extent to which social representations result from collective or individual dynamics, several authors such as Lukács (1971) pointed out that these are at the basis of the formation of the *collective consciousness*. Lukács (1971) defined *collective consciousness* as the set of aspirations, feelings and ideas that bring together the members of a group and oppose them to others (Souza Minayo, 1998). Similarly to Durkheim, Marxists believe that the ideas and representations of a group (or class) reflect the conditions and interests of its members (their position within a society) and consequently differentiate them from the ones of other groups (Souza Minayo, 1998).

Social representations are also studied in social psychology, a field in which Moscovici (1988) developed the Social Representations Theory (SRT). SRT explores the "shared, common-sense and everyday representations through which people orient themselves to the world" (O'Connor, 2012). To do so, Moscovici (1988) proposes to investigate people's opinions through the use of questionnaires, interviews and content analysis. In this way, the researcher can seize the diverse bodies of beliefs characterizing a specific context and the meanings that people attach to what they observe and experience (O'Connor, 2012). Moscovici (1988) also points out that emotional motivations play a part in the construction of specific representations. Most importantly, Moscovici (1988) distances himself from the Dukheimian notion of representations as homogeneous and shared phenomena. On the contrary, he emphasises the plurality of representations of reality that can coexist (and sometimes compete) even within collectives, as societies become less stable and more heterogeneous (Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). At the same time, the author also recognizes that representations (and people's understanding of the world) are developed through inter-subjective processes and dialogue. As underlined by Howarth *et al*. (2004, p.237):

> SRT draws on this tension between individual agency, society and history (Moscovici, 1984): we can, and do, change our representations, but always within the possibilities and constraints of past and present.

Furthermore, contributing to sociology and political theory, the psychologist Markova (2006) underlines that antinomies are often a key feature of social representations. Based on her perspective, antagonist social categories (such as good/bad, winner/loser) orient the positioning of people towards societal issues (Staerklé *et al*., 2011). *Social representations* also help members of a group to differentiate themselves from out-groups (Staerklé *et al*., 2011). Based on these considerations, political psychologists advance that representations are tightly connected with political stances (e.g., Elcheroth *et al*., 2011). They determine what is possible and desired and can therefore be regarded as factors constituting and changing the political field, and reality more generally (Elcheroth *et al.,* 2011).

In this thesis, farmers' reflections on local food are examined from a social representation approach. As illustrated in the Figure 1, the research investigates more precisely the meanings, practices and governance mechanisms associated to local food. To systematize the study of farmers' social representations in each of these dimensions, I decided to focus on the distinction between consensual and conflictual representations (e.g., Moscovici, 1998; Howarth, 2006). Following Howarth's studies on the critical potential of social representations, I assume that the formation of a representation can be operated in acceptance or contrast with common codes and dominant social representations. The

author, based on, among others, Moscovici (1998) stresses that modern societies are characterized by a lack of homogeneity of representations and meanings become increasingly contested and negotiated (Howarth, 2006). She points out that in each society "different knowledge systems coexist [and] compete in the struggle over meanings" (Howarth, 2006). In this thesis, classifying the representations of the farmers as consensual or conflictual (with regards to the dominant cultural order) helps exploring the positioning of these agents in societal "battles of ideas" around food (Moscovici, 1998, p. 403 in Howarth, 2006) and, to a certain extent, discern the transformational potential of their practices. In this way, it is possible to point out farmers' critiques (or oppositional representations) to the food system and their capacities to form new representations and consequently construct alternative realities (e.g., new local food practices), in accordance to their interests (and sometimes dismantling existing power relations). This framework was chosen inductively, as it is strongly associated to what I observed in the first period of fieldwork. To this regard, it is worth mentioning my first encounter with local family farmers (also presented in section 4.2.1.). It occurred during an occupation of the regional direction of the *Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária* (Incra) (National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform) organized by the women of the Landless Workers' Movement at the beginning of March 2016. During the event, the speeches of these women reflected their unconditioned oppositional stand with regard to the dominant food regime. For example, they depicted agro-businesses as malevolent bodies, hindering local farmers' agro-ecological life and production by contaminating the land and water with agrochemicals. After that, I keep reflecting on their strongly dichotomized vision of the world, thanks to which they could clearly identify the nature (bad/good; sustainable/unsustainable) of every action and people, both at the local and global level. Over time, I had the same perception about many of the farmers that I encountered.

More generally, I realized that collecting information on how individuals (and collectives) view and talk about reality is crucial to the study of their context and to the production of scientific knowledge in this sense. As advanced by several authors, I believe that all knowledge is influenced by representations and that:

> This implies that scientists too must rely on social representations to construct reality and to imbue their activities with meaning. They, therefore, must inevitably draw upon social representations when engaged in scientific work.
>
> Augustin and Walker, 1995, p.161, in Howarth, 2006

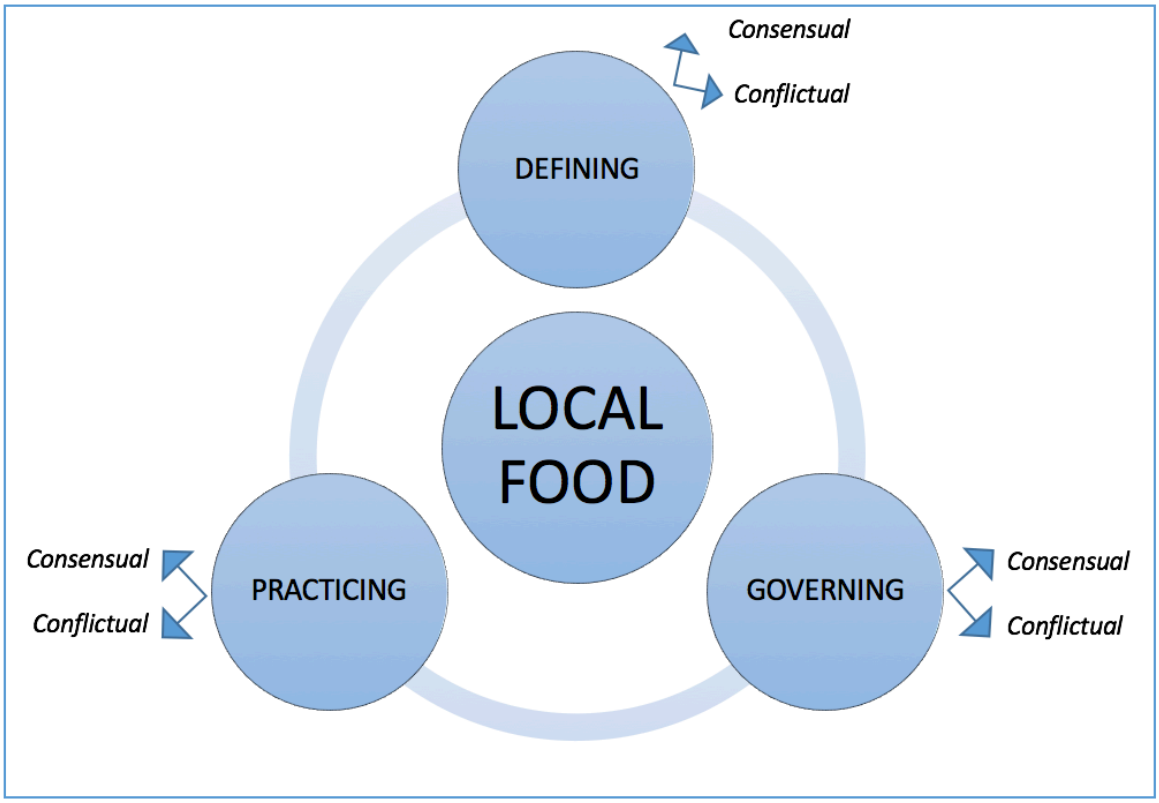


Figure 1 Studying consensual/conflictual representations associated to local food

The concept of social representations can be interpreted in many ways and its use is not exempt of controversial aspects and limitations. A first critique is that the definition of social representations remains contested, mainly because the phenomena might be too complex to be entirely captured (Moscovici, 1988). Moreover, the fact that different current of research worked on this concept also resulted in the development of fragmented and inconsistent definitions (Howarth, 2006). According to several critics of SRT, this lack of clear definition also reveals several theoretical ambiguities (e.g., Voelklein & Howarth, 2005). To be consistent, based on the work of Howarth (2006, p.26), I adopted for this research the following definition of social representations:

> [Social representations] are tools that orient our understanding of the worlds we live. In supporting a particular version of the social order they protect particular interests over others. Hegemonic representations pervade the dominant social construction of reality; oppositional representations contest these versions.

I consider this definition particularly suited to my analysis because it underlines the existence of both consensual and conflictual representations and their function in the reproduction or contestation of dominant order and practices.

Another significant critique is linked to questions around how to understand the concrete effects of social representations, alias their consequences on the social order. As stressed by Howarth (2006), discerning the relation between representations, practices and the social order is a difficult task. In this thesis, I acknowledge the limits of this approach by

recognizing that the social representations of the farmers are far from being the only factors shaping their reality and food system localization in Porto Alegre. Moreover, as argued by Potter (1996), I recognize that representations are alive and dynamic: they re-adapt as changes occur in the social contexts in which they operate. As it will be further elaborated, the data collected indeed reports particular reflections on local food, shaped and shaping a specific space and time.

In summary, in this research I assume that agents' social representations contribute to determine the social order of the context in which they operate. I also recognize that it is difficult to investigate the ways in which representations can translate into social practices and changes in the hegemonic order. Nevertheless, exploring farmers' representations remains relevant to investigate their engagement in local food initiatives and their governance. Moreover, as mentioned before, I believe that taking social representations into account is functional to the development of knowledge around the systematization of local food practices.

4. Methodology

4.1. Approaching the research

This thesis is based on qualitative research informed by ethnographic fieldwork conducted from March to June 2016 in the city region of Porto Alegre, Brazil. I arrived in Porto Alegre with the idea of studying local farmers' participation in food governance at the city level. More precisely, I wanted to explore farmers' participation in the construction of a localized food system. In the preceding months, I had followed the development of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) and had become interested in understanding more about its possible implementation. Two main points of the Pact in relation to the development of more sustainable, socially inclusive food systems had particularly captured my attention: (1) the importance of fostering more systematic rural-urban food linkages; (2) the importance of enhancing farmers' participation into local food governance. Converting these recommendations into practical actions sounded to me extremely complex, requiring in depth context specific studies (deciphering, among other things, the current food provisioning situation of each city).

However, once in Porto Alegre, I quickly decided to redefine my objectives. This is because I realized that the farmers were engaging in various local practices, for different reasons and with different intentions. I also understood that their participation in local food governance was mostly informal, often occurring through the development of local food networks and initiatives. Inspired by their stories and comments around food, I chose to center the research on their perceptions and representations of local food supply. I realized that exploring their views could be really helpful to understand contextual dynamics associated to the development and systematization of local food practices. I also understood that this new project would allow me to go beyond most of the assumptions that guided my former research proposal. Inspired by several remarks of my professors, I wrote in my journal: "How can I assume that formal participation is important to these farmers? How can I assume that they want to scale out their initiatives? How can I assume that they want to be part of a local food system?" (Fieldnotes, March 2016).

Deciding to analyze farmers' representations, I also resolved grounding the research in the assumption that the social reality of any food system is constructed by the actors that compose it (Nousiainen *et al.*, 2005). Because of this, getting a deeper understanding of local food provisioning in city regions necessitates the integration of the perspectives of the actors involved. As explained in chapter 3, I decided to do so through the collection and analysis of farmers' social representations. More practically, this involved interrogating and observing local farmers as well as working with them, as often as possible. During the whole period of my stay, I therefore worked voluntarily in farmers' markets, on farm, I assisted to municipal councils and at political demonstrations. All these experiences, presented more in detail in the section 4.2.2., helped me to grasp some of farmers' representations around local food and all of their reflections enriched me from both an academic and personal standpoint.

As will be further elaborated, the data was collected with qualitative research methods and analyzed through a partially inductive approach. The data was organized into sets of categories, mostly emerging from the descriptions of the participants, which helped me to identify patterns and propose a potential interpretation of the situation. As explained by Thomas (2006, p.238), the purpose of an inductive approach to data analysis is indeed to "allow the research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant, or significant themes inherent in raw data".

During the research, I recognized that my interactions with the farmers also influenced the information I collected. In this perspective, it is important to underline that my representations shaped my way of asking questions and understanding the information shared by the farmers. As a consequence, I also acknowledge that, to a certain extent, the data presented below was created through our specific interactions.

Finally, Figure 2, inspired by a model of Ajjawi & Higgs (2007), provides an overview of the research approach and the different stages of the project.

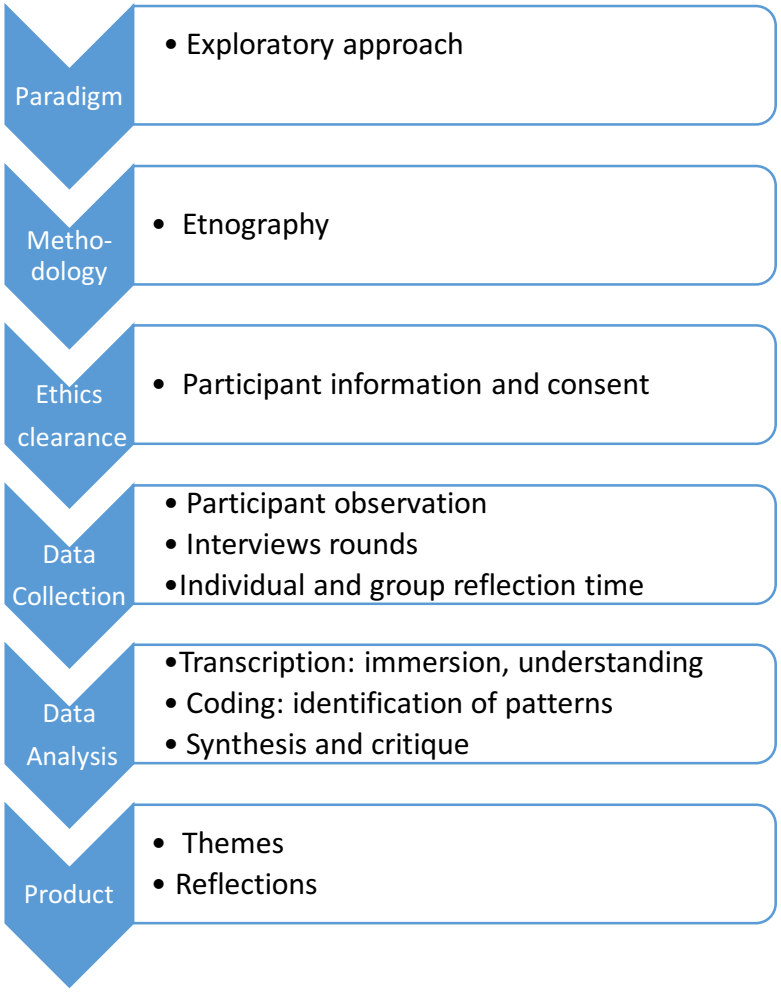


Figure 2 Overview of the research approach adopted

4.2. Collecting the data

4.2.1. The informants

During my first days in Porto Alegre, I had the feeling of being in a very large city. While moving from one area to the other, everything seemed far and reaching places and people much more complicated than I expected. At the same time, I was meeting incredibly open and supportive people, which helped me to get settled. The first encounter with local farmers occurred in random circumstances, as I walked by an occupation of the regional direction of the *Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária* (Incra) (National Institute of Colonization and Agrarian Reform) organized by the women of the Landless Workers' Movement. Approximately 1200 women were claiming, among other things, facilitated access to public programs (such as the *Kit Feira*, which could support their selling activities of agro-ecological products) and an increase in the debates around the expansion of the presence of agro-businesses in the settlements.

In addition to these first contacts, the assistance of my field work supervisor, Prof. Thomé da Cruz, from the department of rural development (PGDR) of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), was key to discover farmers' markets across the city and getting to know more local farmers. Her support was key to get a deeper understanding of local food initiatives in Brazil, to meet farmers such as Juca, Dodo and Silvana, (which we also visited on their farms) and get in contact with the employees of local rural extension services (Emater- RS). Moreover, discussing with the employees of Emater as well as Anselmo, the coordinator of the farmer market of Menino Deus, was central to better understand the situation of the farmers of the region. They shared with me many of their experiences and positions as well as introduced me to several farmers and other stakeholders (e.g., municipal employees). Over time, I also tried to increase the heterogeneity of my sample in order to reduce biases linked to snowball sampling. I made the rest of the contacts more randomly, by interacting directly with the population in other farmers' markets, visiting several departments of the municipality, attending municipal councils, meetings of producers' associations and political demonstrations.

As it will be further explained in section 4.2.2., during the fieldwork, I observed and/or interacted with many stakeholders (e.g.: farmers, government employees, politicians, consumers), whose reflections all significantly influenced the outcome of this research. However, most of the data was drawn out of nineteen in depth interviews. As shown in section 4.2.3., the interviews allowed to get more precise information on local food practices and gain a clearer understanding of the related farmers' social representations. Nine of these participants were family farmers (presented in Table 2), all engaged in local food initiatives. The research focused on family farmers because this is the main category of farmers engaged in local food practices, which represent, for most of them, the only opportunity to viably market their products. In Brazil, family farmers are defined in the laws 11.326/2006 and 12.512/2011, which underline the necessary conditions to be legally recognized as part of this category (Schneider & Cassol, 2013). Among these, limitations are set in relation to the size of the holding, the external sources of income as well as the labor employed on the farm. Moreover, most of the farmers interviewed are agro-ecological

producers. This is linked to the relatively strong presence of agro-ecological family farmers in the city region of Porto Alegre (to be explained by the development of several local agro-ecological movements since the decade of the 1970s) and their engagement in direct selling activities (which facilitate our encounters). It is also important to underline that I did not adopt a strict definition of the concepts of local and city region. This choice was mainly related to the recognition of the relativity of my understanding of space and distance, and its significant divergence from the one of the Brazilian actors encountered. For similar reasons, I did not want to apply boundaries theorized in the literature. I therefore let the definition open and considered all farmers presenting themselves as belonging to the region of Porto Alegre as such. My only restriction to this regard was that all of them had to be selling the major part of their products within the metropolitan area of Porto Alegre. This decision was linked to my interest in looking mostly at the socio-political dynamics around local food within the city.

	Farmer's name/ nickname	Characteristics
1	Jorge	Fruits and vegetables producer and retailer in the *feiras modelo*; President of the association of the *feiras modelo*.
2	Eliseo	Fruits and vegetable producer and retailer in the *feiras modelo*
3	Nilza	Fruits producer selling on the roadside
4	Rosa	Agro-ecological producer from the Landless Workers' Movement selling in one farmer market
5	Guilmar	Agro-ecological producer selling in three farmers' markets; President of Aecia
6	Graciela	Agro-ecological producer from the Landless Workers' Movement engaged in several small farmers' markets, direct deliveries and PNAE
7	Boca	Agro-ecological producer from the Landless Workers' Movement engaged in several small farmers' markets, direct deliveries and PAA/PNAE

8	Silvana	Agro-ecological producer selling in two farmers' markets; strong engagement in RAMA
9	Getúlio	Agro-ecological producer from the Landless Workers' Movement selling in one farmers' market and PAA/PNAE

Table 2 Farmers interviewed

Map 1 Location of production sites of the producers interviewed. Source: own elaboration

I also conducted several in depth interviews with other local actors whose work is tightly related to local food initiatives. These interviews were deemed necessary to better understand the overall situation, triangulate the information provided by the farmers and develop a more critical understanding of their representations. More precisely, these interviews were conducted with:

- **four employees of different departments of the municipality of Porto Alegre**:
- Rejane, working in the implementation of the PAA and the *Conselho Municipal de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional Sustentável* (COMSANS) (Municipal Council for Sustainable Food and Nutrition Security)
- Sandra, an employee of the *Secretaria Municipal de Educação* (SMED) (Municipal Secretariat for Education), responsible for school feeding and the implementation of the PNAE
- Jorge, an employee from the *Centro Agrícola Demonstrativo* (CAD) of the *Secretaria Municipal da Produção, Indústria e Comércio* (SMIC) (Municipal Secretariat of

Production, Industry and Trade), mainly responsible for monitoring organic farmers' markets in the city

- Marco Aurélio, an employee of the *Departamento Municipal de Limpeza Urbana* (DMLU) (Municipal Departement of Urban Cleaning), at the head of a project fostering local pig meat production and distribution within the metropolitan area of Porto Alegre[8]

- **two employees of local extension services**:

- P., an employee of the *Empresa de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural- Rio Grande do Sul* (EMATER-RS)
- Sandra, working for the *Cooperativa de Prestação de Serviços Técnicos em áreas de Reforma Agrária* (COPTEC), which support is specifically addressed to farmers of the settlements of the agrarian reform

- **two employees of the UFRGS**:

- Prof. Catia Grisa, professor from the department of rural development (PGDR), expert on Brazilian public policies for rural development and family farming
- José, one technician of the UFRGS responsible for the implementation of the PAA as a food supply strategy for the university canteens)

- **two coordinators of farmers' markets in Porto Alegre**, supporting the farmers to manage the market and conform to the local legislation:

- Anselmo, the coordinator of the agro-ecological farmers' market in the neighborhood of Menino Deus
- Gladis, a member of *the Núcleo de Economia Alternativa- UFRGS* (NEA) (Group of Alternative Economy) coordinating small farmers' markets of producers *assentados* (from the agrarian reform settlements) within the campus of the UFRGS

As further explained in section 4.2.3., several of these participants were identified on the website of the municipality and firstly contacted by telephone and/or met in municipal councils or meetings of producers' associations (for example, this was the case of Rejane and Marco Aurélio). Others were introduced to me by colleagues and professors from the PGDR (such as in the case of Sandra and José).

4.2.2. Procedures

As introduced in section 4.1., the data was collected through participant observation, document analysis and in depth interviews. Participant observation involved spending time with local stakeholders and discovering parts of their realities. To do so, I decided to engage in several activities, among which, volunteering in farmers' markets and carrying out extended on farms visits. While getting involved in these occupations, I kept notes of my thoughts and people's comments in a journal. However, I found this process quite challenging and sometimes did not manage to write down all of the things that I would have

[8] The project is called: *Programa de Reaproveitamento de Resíduos Orgânicos via Suinocultura* (Reutilization of Urban Organic Residuals through Pig Farming). It is further described in section 5.3.1.

liked to record. I therefore decided to audio record most of my conversations with the farmers so that I could, later, easily come back to their reflections.

The Table 3 gives an overview of the activities undertaken during the process of participant observation. It is important to stress that engaging in all these occupations was possible because of the openness of the local farmers, who always invited me to work with them and visit their farms.

- Volunteering in the organic farmers' market *Feira Agroecológica da Redenção* (assisting farmers in selling fruits and vegetables)
- Volunteering in two different farms (situated in Lami and Nova Santa Rita)
- Visiting seven farms
- Attending a meeting of the *Associação dos Produtores da Rede Agroecológica Metropolitana* (RAMA) (Producers' Association of the Agro-ecological Metropolitan Network)
- Attending a meeting of the COMSANS
- Participating to political demonstrations
- Participating to events and protests organized by the Landless Workers' Movement

Table 3 Activities undertaken during the process of participant observation

These activities allowed me to observe, discuss and jointly reflect on current socio-political issues, directly and indirectly related to local food. I particularly liked to spend time in farmers' markets where I could observe producers' interactions with the consumers and grasp the caesural social function of these spaces, which seemed to allow all kind of individuals to exist their private spheres (and maybe their isolation) and interact with one another.

4.2.3. Methods

Reflexive journal

Based on Ortlipp (2008), it is important that researchers take note of their experiences and perceptions all along the processes of data collection and analysis. This is particularly important to increase the transparency of the thesis as it helps the researcher to better realize his/her own choices, thoughts and biases. The latters will unconditionally influence the outcome of the research project and, in this perspective, transparency is what increases the validity and reliability of the process. Reflexivity becomes key and keeping a journal is what can foster and facilitate the researcher to gain a clearer understanding of the his/her work (Ortlipp, 2008). More precisely, based on Roller (2014), keeping a journal is said to help researchers to reflect on questions such as:

- What do I think I know about the participants? And how will these assumptions impact the course of the research?

- How did my personal values influenced the questions I asked as well as my listening skills?
- To what degree did my emotions with regards to the participant impacted the course of the interview?

Writing a journal was particularly important to keep track of my thoughts and impressions during the phases of participant observation. Moreover, as many characteristics of the context were completely new to me, it helped me to remember themes that I would have to research more in the literature. The journal was also key to critically reflect on which information had particularly captured my attention and, hopefully, better acknowledge my personal biases. For example, the journal helped me realizing the extent to which my initial literature review was inappropriate to the study of the context of Porto Alegre. This happened when I realized that most of my reflections linked the local situations to theories developed in relation to the European and North American contexts. As I became aware of this limit, I started reviewing much more Brazilian research on rural development, public policies, food and agriculture and civil society-state relations.

In addition to writing the journal, audio recording farmers' reflections (as well as the reunions that I assisted), photography and document analysis also helped me to better capture the situation that I observed. On one hand, I used photography as a supplemental way of keeping track of particular situations and visually record what I liked (or disliked). Photos also helped me to share my experiences with the farmers, many of which were curious to know about what I was seeing in Porto Alegre. On the other hand, document analysis mostly facilitated my understanding of the meetings, demonstrations and local projects. For example, getting a good understanding of the project directed by the DMLU necessitated the reading of related reports. Moreover, deciphering the frenetic political situation which characterized the period of my stay required a regular review of national and regional newspapers.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured in-depth interviews allowed me to focus my discussions with the farmers on the main themes of the research (alias local food meanings, practices and governance mechanisms). Keeping the interviews semi-structured also facilitated the creation of spaces in which the respondents could talk more freely, which allowed unexpected information to emerge. I undertook all interviews in Portuguese and each one of them lasted in between thirty minutes and one hour and fifteen minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed in English. When meeting a farmer for the first time, I always introduced myself and explained the reasons of my presence in Porto Alegre. I also asked if they consented to participate in the research. Based on their availability, participating could mean giving me the possibility to work with them and/or visit their farms and/or participate to their meetings and/or interview them. If the farmer agreed to take part to a formal interview, we would usually schedule a meeting in the following days, usually in their working space. The other respondents, such as municipal employees, were mostly contacted by telephone or met in public meetings and interviewed in their offices. Before starting any interview, I asked

for the permission to audio record our conversation and usually asked the respondent to excuse my Portuguese (which I do not fully master). To this regard, all respondents were very comprehensible and had the patience to explain me everything that I could not understand immediately. All interviews explored a range of issues pertinent to my research questions and objectives, which are illustrated in the table below.

Areas of investigation in semi-structured interviews
• General presentation of the farmer • On the local food initiative(s) that he/she is part of and its history • On the organization and governance of the local food initiative(s) • On the motivations of the farmer to work locally • On the motivations of the farmer to work jointly with other producers • On he/she relations with the local government • On the impacts of current political transformations • On local food in Porto Alegre: its current and future trends and the role of different local actors

Table 4 Areas of investigation in semi-structured interviews

The participants usually elaborated on some topics more than others, probably based on the relevance that they attached to the question. It is important to stress that, in their descriptions, several respondents tended to overlap the concepts of local, agro-ecological, fair, sustainable and I sometimes had to ask them to specify to which type of products they referred exactly. Similarly, especially during the first interviews, I sometimes had to ask them to specify the government level to which they were referring.

4.3. Analysing the data

I used *Atlas.ti* to code and analyse the fieldnotes, several audio recordings and all interviews transcripts. I performed a content analysis to organize the data, firstly according to the three lines of discussion guiding my investigation around farmers' social representations (top down coding): (1) farmers' comments on the meanings of local food, (2) farmers' comments on their practices and, more generally, practices associated to local food (3) farmers' comments on the governance (and political) mechanisms around the development of local food practices. At the same time, I followed a more inductive approach and developed sub-codes based on the observations of the farmers, following the directions that they had given to the interview (bottom-up coding). This second process allowed to better identify the different topics that were most relevant to the farmers. The figure below presents the main sub-codes that were identified as they emerged in the data.

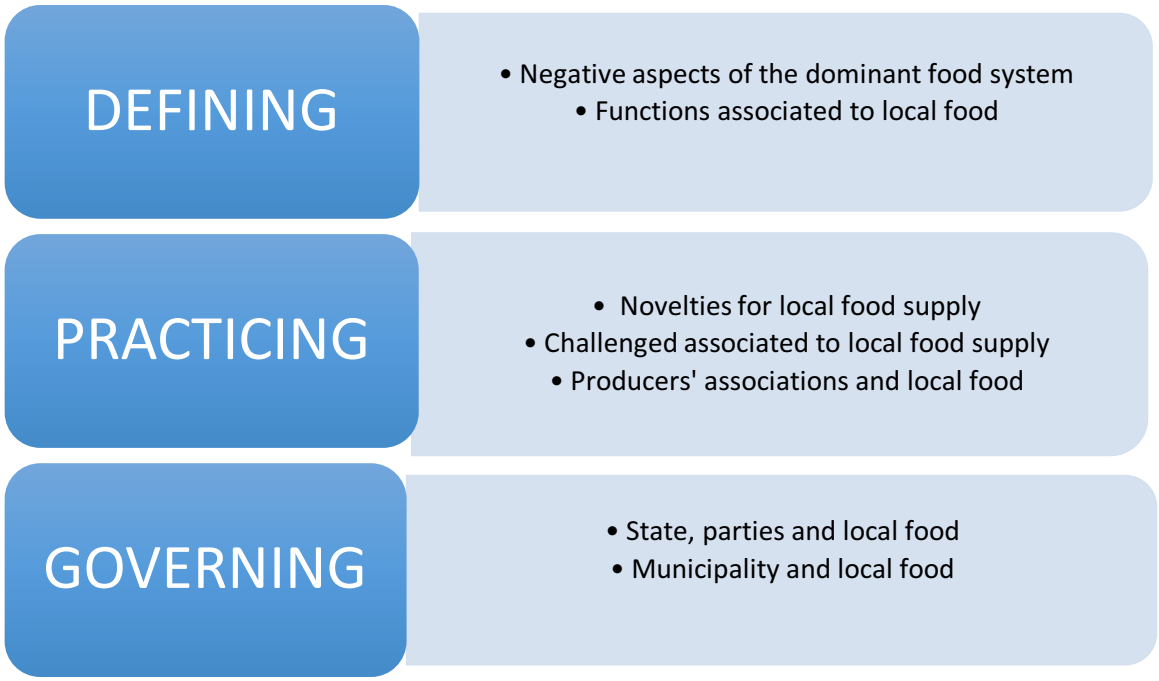


Figure 3 Main codes and sub-codes used in the data analysis

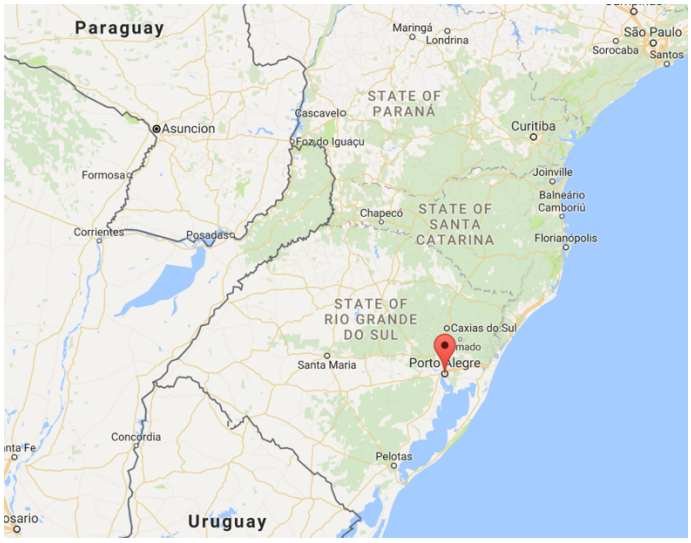
Each of these sub-codes contained more sub-categories, based on the classification of the specific positions of the farmers. For example, comments in relation to the negative aspects of the conventional agri-food system were classified in eleven sub-themes, each one of them mentioned by at least one of the respondents (e.g.: strong presence of multinational companies; health problems associated to an overconsumption of agrochemicals; individualism). Each interview contained communalities and divergences (in terms of sub-categories) and different farmers' profiles emerged based on their similar responses across sub-codes. For example, some farmers associated similar functions to local food provisioning and, at the same time, described their relations to the municipality in comparable terms. The chapter of the results is structured accordingly to these codes and sub-codes. Its first section contextualizes the study by briefly introducing the city of Porto Alegre and the main local food initiatives (in which the studied population engaged). In a second moment, it presents farmers' social representations with regards to the topics and sub-topics presented in Figure 3.

5. Results

This chapter starts by introducing the context of the case study. The sections 5.1. and 5.2. are general presentations of the city of Porto Alegre as well as the main local food initiatives in which the participants were involved. The sections 5.3., 5.4. and 5.5. represent the center of the thesis and describe the social representations of the farmers. Each of the sub-chapters provides insights in relation to one of the main sub-research questions guiding. The section 5.3. gathers data on the meanings that farmers associate to local food. More precisely, it presents farmers' representations around the dominant agri-food system and the alternatives associated to local food. The section 5.4. describes the practices that farmers associate to local food. It reports their considerations on novel practices for local food supply (and their challenges) and on the role of associations. The section 5.5. reveals farmers' representations around local food governance. It gives an account of their views (and critiques) of political mechanisms impacting local food and the role of political parties and the local government in this perspective. As introduced in chapter 3, each of these sections also contains comments on the nature of the social representations, which based on Moscovici (1988) and Howarth (2006) can be differentiated in consensual and conflictual representations.

5.1. The city of Porto Alegre

Porto Alegre is the capital of the state of Rio Grande do Sul. It was founded in 1752, after the Treaty of Madrid (1750) established that Portuguese could start organizing missions in the Northeast of the State. The city is situated on the delta of five different rivers, also called the Guaíba lake. It is considered to be the capital of the Pampa region, an area of vast plains characterizing Southern Brazil, Uruguay and part of Argentina.



Map 2 Porto Alegre, Pampa, South America

The region of Porto Alegre is distinguished by an extremely diverse population. Since the second half of the 19th Century, immigrants started arriving from all over the world, especially from Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland and Lebanon. Based the IBGE Census of 2010, the municipality covers an area of 496.682 squared kilometers and has an estimated population of 1.476.867 inhabitants (2015). This makes it the tenth most populous city of the country as well as the center of Brazil's fourth largest metropolitan area (IBGE, 2010).

Approximately 60% of the municipality of Porto Alegre is considered to be a *rururbana* (peri-urban) area (Porto Alegre, 2015). This is mostly the case of the southern part of the city, characterized by both urban allotments and areas of agricultural production. These spaces are demarked by the coexistence of small-scale agricultural activities, conservation areas, small business, industries and, as the city expands, both regular and irregular housing. It is worth mentioning that, according to the first urban development plan of the city (1979), 30% of the municipality was considered as a rural area. After its extinction in 2000, the rural area of Porto Alegre was reestablished in 2015 and now covers approximately 8% of the municipality. The recognition of the rural area was particularly important for its (family) farmers which, theoretically, now have a facilitated access to licenses and credit (Simon, 2015, September 15). The agricultural census of 2006 proved that the municipality included 7.285 family farmers' enterprises, covering over 74.000 hectares (IBGE, 2006 in Ghizzoni, 2016). The production in Porto Alegre is mainly composed of vegetables (green vegetables, tomatoes, eggplants, cabbages, broccolis, radishes, beetroots, bell peppers), sweet potatoes, cassava and fruits (melon, watermelon, strawberries, peaches, grapes, figs, guavas).

As described in section 4.1., I initially choose to study Porto Alegre as one of the cities which signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP). The research then took another direction. Still, Porto Alegre was a very interesting case, especially because of the tangibility of the many (conflicting) interests around the expansion of the city. Drawing on the comments of several respondents, section 5.4.2. further elaborates on how the increase in construction sites on the outskirts of the city is endangering the continuity of local small-scale agricultural production.

5.2. The context of the study

As explained in section 4.2.1., the farmers interviewed are all selling their products in the city of Porto Alegre. However, their supply and selling strategies are quite varied. I decided to interview farmers involved in mainly direct selling activities and/ or institutional food acquisitions programs mediated by the municipality. This choice was linked to mainly three reasons: (1) to practical challenges of meeting, getting closer and regularly interacting with farmers outside of the city; (2) to practical challenges relating to the assessment of the origin of a product sold by intermediaries in the city (and eventually getting in contact with its producer); (3) to my curiosity for looking at the role of the municipality in enhancing local food supply. The following paragraphs describe respondents' direct selling initiatives and the public procurement programs present in the city. I believe that presenting these different mechanisms is important to better contextualize the social representations of the farmers that are discussed in the following sections. Finally, in the last part of this section, I introduce

some of the local producers' associations, which support farmers in the commercialization of their products. These associations are often crucial components in the organization of local food supply and their functions are further discussed in section 5.3.2.

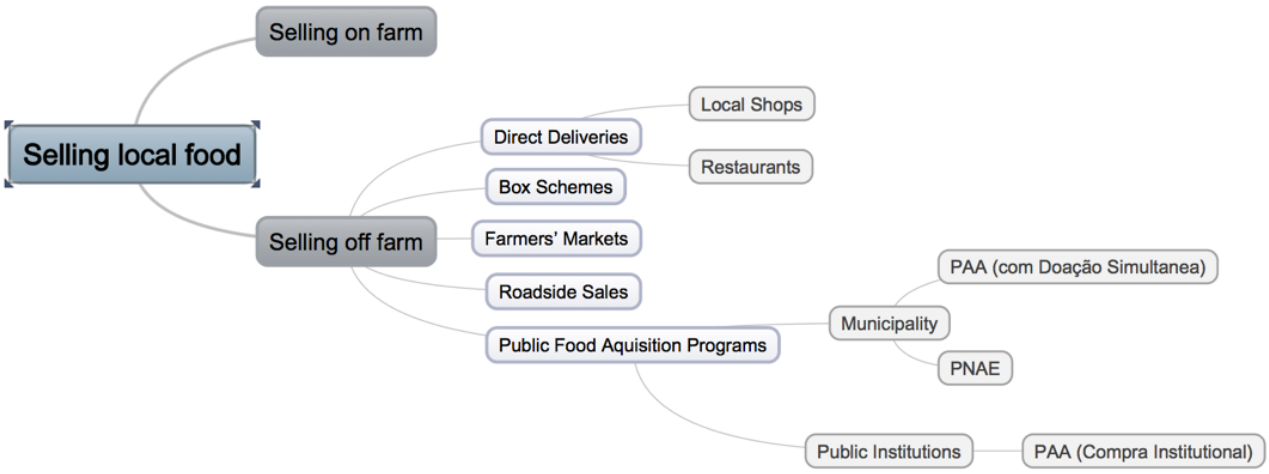


Figure 4 Observed local food selling mechanisms

5.2.1. Direct selling

Through farmers' histories of their activities in the city, I could understand that most of direct selling activities (such as in the case of agro-ecological farmers' markets) have been put in place by the producers themselves and, only in a second moment, co-monitored by the municipality. By getting organized and working in group, many of the respondents have managed to stop working with intermediaries and start selling their products directly. As mentioned by an employee of Emater, the farmers of the city region of Porto Alegre have the advantage of holding good possibilities to connect with the consumers of the city (especially when compared to more isolated producers of the inner part of the state). The high demand for food (and for fresh vegetables and fruits, more precisely) in the city also give the opportunity to local farmers to exit the dominant supply chain model (pivoting around state supply centres usually called CEASA – *Centrais de Abastecimento*[9]), experiment (e.g.: trying to market edible flowers) and develop novel practices. As a consequence, coming to sell directly in the city is attractive for producers of the whole region. Among the producers encountered in the city, some came indeed from outside of the metropolitan area. For example, this is the case of the agro-ecological producers of the cooperative Aecia, which live and produce in Antonio Prado (situated at 180 kilometers from Porto Alegre, in the Serra Gaúcha). As a member of Aecia, Guilmar explained that their cooperative has to

[9] For more information about the functioning of CEASA in Porto Alegre, refer to: Cunha & Belik (2012); Cunha (2013)

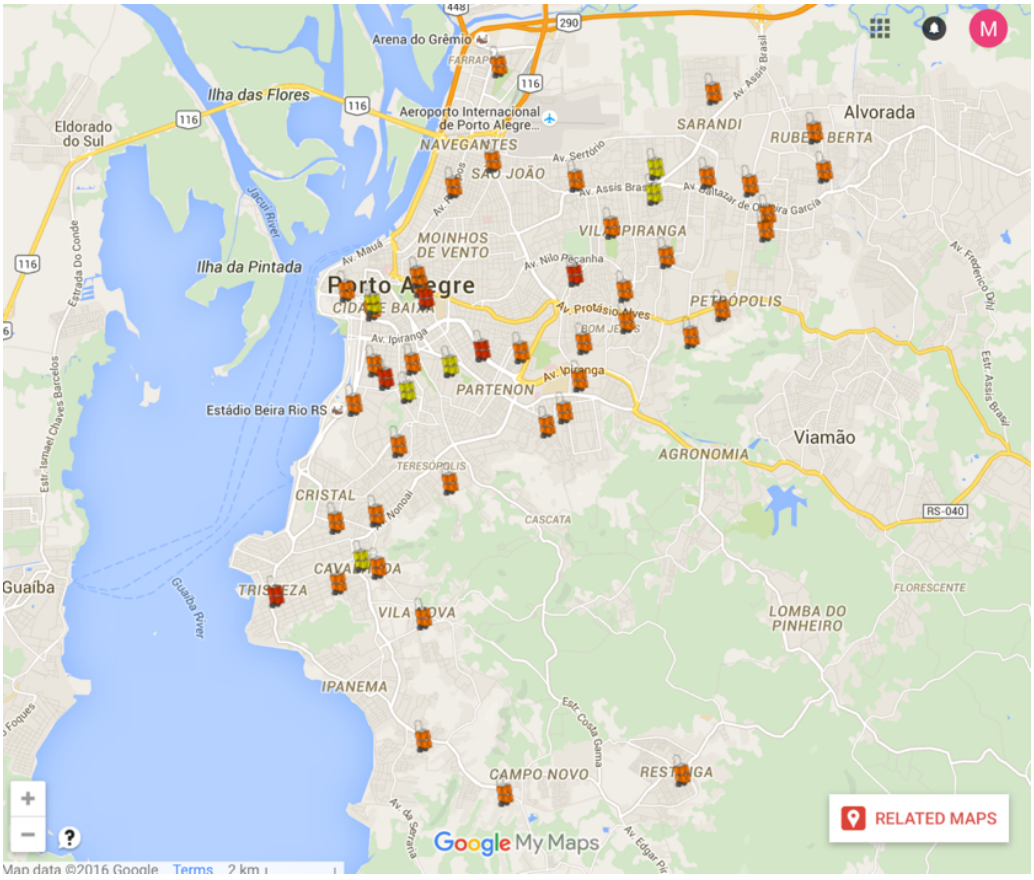
sell their organic products in bigger cities such as Porto Alegre. He argued that in their area of origin, it is quite complicated to market organic products as the people there are not interested in these products.

Based on my observations, most of the direct sales in Porto Alegre occur in farmers' markets. The term *feiras* (farmers' market) is used to describe markets gathering several groups of producers as well as smaller initiatives, organized by producers' associations composed by 2 to 5 families. These markets are present in both public (e.g., in the streets, in the courtyards of state and/or federal institutions such as the state Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation - *Secretaria da Agricultura, Pecuária e Irrigação*) and private spaces (e.g., in the courtyard of private health centres). Selling in public spaces requires conforming to federal, state and municipal legislation, and obtaining the necessary licences. However, the atmosphere in the markets is usually relaxed and informal. There, farmers take the time to talk with their colleagues, with their clients and often make people try their products.

The smaller *feiras* are usually organized in private spaces and ones belonging to federal institutions (e.g., within the UFRGS), based on direct partnerships between associations of local producers and the establishment (in these cases, the municipality is not involved). Based on the fieldwork, these type of *feiras* usually gather family farmers from agrarian reform settlements and/or small-scale agro-ecological producers. While visiting these *feiras*, the farmers often stressed to be selling more than just food. To them, buying their products means to support their fight for land reform, and that is what the establishment is doing by facilitating the commercialization of their production.

Porto Alegre is also distinguished by bigger *feiras*, organized in public spaces and divided in conventional and agro-ecological markets (*feiras agro-ecológicas*). The latters include seven official markets, co-supervised by the municipality and relatively well spread across the city. To this regard, it is relevant to mention that even though the *feiras agro-ecológicas* exist in several neighbourhoods, they are less frequent in the suburbs of the city, where the purchasing power of the inhabitants is often inferior (Cabette & Strohaecker, 2015). *Feiras agro-ecológicas* were usually busy and also functioned as gathering places for different people interested in organic food. Based on my observations, their clients represented a particular category of people, a sort of community sharing similar representations of the world (e.g.: on the importance of changing the food system and fighting against multinational companies). This was exemplified by the fact that many people encountered their friends at the market and that most of them shared the same opinion with relation to the ongoing political situation. Such apparent homogeneity reminded me of authors such as Guthman (2007), Griskevicius *et al*., (2010) and Slocum (2010), which demonstrate how buying local and/or organic is often associated with certain status and how farmers' markets might be less democratic and open than it seems. At the time of the investigation, at least two new agro-ecological markets were also being established (e.g., in the neighbourhood Auxiliadora) as the result of the joint organization of agro-ecological producers' associations and a neighbourhood association. The other official farmers' markets are usually called *feiras modelo*. That is where food produced conventionally (with the use of chemical fertilizers and

pesticides) is sold. These markets differ from the initiatives mentioned above as they developed with the support and supervision of the municipality mainly in the perspective of furnishing cheaper food to the population. There are 39 *feiras modelo* organized across the city and these are present also in more suburban neighbourhoods. They support local food producers but not exclusively as certain products available are purchased in CEASA and/or come from abroad. In the *feiras modelo*, the traceability of the products is less transparent than in the case of the other farmers' markets. This is because these markets are organized by both small dealers and producers (selected by the municipality), who do not sell only their own products and often do not know where exactly is the food he/she is selling comes from. Map 3 was developed by the SMIC and gives an overview of the location of the official farmers' markets[10]. In this map, the orange and yellow baskets represent, respectively, the *feiras modelo* and other conventional farmers' markets. The red baskets symbolize the *feiras agro-ecológicas*.



Map 3 Farmers' markets present in Porto Alegre. Source: SMIC Porto Alegre

Some of the respondents are also involved in other direct selling activities. An example is Graciela and her producers' association *Mulheres da terra* (land women), from the agrarian reform settlement of *Filhos de Sepé* in Viamão, which delivers around 60 boxes

[10] Retrieved from: http://www2.portoalegre.rs.gov.br/smic/default.php?p_secao=204

of fresh vegetables and fruits per week to different purchasing groups in the city. One of these is the *Grupo de Integração Agroecológica* (GIA) (Group of Agro-ecological Integration), which was created in 2012 with the goal of connecting local agro-ecological producers to consumers in the city (Viegas Preiss, 2016). Through this group, urban consumers get the opportunity to directly support these farmers, access healthy products and take part to activities and discussions around agro-ecology and solidarity economy. Other direct selling activities include on farm sales, roadside sales and deliveries to local food shops and restaurants. As it will be further analysed, most of these mechanisms are usually used as additional selling strategies by agro-ecological producers concurrently involved in farmers' markets.

5.2.2. Public local food Acquisition Programs

Several producers of the city region often participate in public procurement programs such as the PAA and the PNAE. As introduced before, the PAA was developed in 2003 as part of the Hunger Zero Project. The PAA is currently implemented through six different mechanisms (Grisa & Porto, 2015). However, this study focuses on two of these modalities: the *Compra com Doação Simultânea* (acquisition and donation) and the *Compra Institutional* (institutional acquisition). This choice is linked to mainly two reasons: (1) my interest in studying a modality (*Compra com Doação Simultânea)* coordinated by the municipality (in order to explore its engagement in local food supply); (2) comparing this with a case of public procurement in which the municipality is not involved (*Compra Institutional* implemented at the UFRGS). Both of these modalities are based on public acquisition of food directly from family farmers as well as producers of agrarian reform settlements and indigenous communities. In the case of the *Compra com Doação Simultânea*, the food is purchased by the municipality with the funds of the MDS and it is donated to the population in need (via CSOs such as urban soup kitchens). Since 2007, the municipality of Porto Alegre is directly engaged in this program. It is based on one-year contracts between local producers (or producers' associations) and the municipality, which coordinates the overall process. As mentioned by Rejane, the municipal coordinator of the PAA, encountered in a meeting of the COMSANS, producers are selected through calls and consequent meetings during which the project is presented and information are given on its logistics. To this regards, it is important to stress that in this system, it is usually the municipality which collects and distributes the products to the different CSOs across the city.

On the other hand, the *Compra Institutional* allows family farmers to directly participate to calls of local public organizations such as universities and hospitals. As introduced above, I only reviewed the case of the *Compra Institutional* of the UFRGS, which allows the university to supply its canteens with local food by developing calls to contract local producers (or producers' associations) directly, for a maximum of twelve months. José, the coordinator of the public procurement department of the UFRGS described the functioning of the *Compra Institutional*: "with direct calls we know exactly where the products are coming from. Of course, the more far they are produced, the less interesting it is for us. And for them" (José, *Interview*, 29.04.16). He also explained that since the

beginning of the year, the UFRGS launched four calls among which two failed mostly because the quantity of products requested was too high to be produced by single local family farmers. José stressed that it is difficult to find well organized cooperatives and that the MDA should better support farmers in this sense. More generally, he argued that a fluid implementation of this system is quite challenging as it requests broader socio-political transformations. In his opinion, farmers are also not adequately encouraged to participate and fear potential retaliations of local intermediaries. Even though these last points were not evoked by other respondents, they are consistent with other participants' more general comments on the importance of farmers' self organization. These perspectives reveal that, too often, state programs are not enough to deconstruct existing cultures and power relations (in line with the arguments of Cornwall & Shankland, 2013). In this way, their implementation is highly dependent on (the interests and good will of) diverse stakeholders. In order to bring forward their engagement in these programs, local family farmers therefore have to get strong enough to deal with local contrasting interests (through collaborations with other producers, for example).

For what concerns school feeding in Porto Alegre and the PNAE, is is interesting to mention that the Municipal Secretariat of Education (SMED) has officially worked on food provisioning with local family farmers since 2009. As introduced before, the law 11947/2009 established that a minimum of 30% of the PNAE funds have to be directed to buy products from family farmers. In reality, the municipality of Porto Alegre had already developed a similar pilot project in 2004 (mainly supported by the SMED, SMIC and CAD). It was called *Agricultura Familiar Urbana na Escola Cidadã* (Urban Family Farming in Urban Schools) and involved three schools of the southern area of the city and the family farmers in their surroundings. Based on Ghizzoni (2016), at that time, that single project was already involving 2300 students and 28 producers. According to Sandra, the coordinator of the department of nutrition of the SMED (by which the acquisitions are managed), today, the PNAE benefits 100 public schools (which corresponds to approximately 55000 students) and over 10 producers' associations and cooperatives across the city region.

5.2.3. Producers' associations for local food provisioning

The organization and management of most of the local food practices presented are linked to the strong presence of producers' associations and cooperatives. Among the farmers that were interviewed, 8 out of 9 were part of at least one producers' association. As it will be further explored, a first explanation to this phenomenon is that selling in farmers' markets usually requires being part of an association. For example, the management of the *feiras modelo* relies on its association, which was created in 1995 and brings together all producers and retailers taking part to these markets.

All agro-ecological producers interviewed are part of additional associations, which can take various forms. Some of them are small groups of family farmers which work together and joint their production and process, distribute and sell it in collaboration. Most of these smaller associations that were studied are composed by 3 to 10 families. This is the case of the collectives *Coletivo Mãos na Terra* and *Mulheres da Terra*, developed by agro-ecological farmers of settlements of the agrarian reform. The *Coletivo Mãos na Terra*, for

example, gathers producers from the settlement Santa Rita de Cassia II situated in Nova Santa Rita, in the metropolitan area of Porto Alegre. It is a group of mainly 3 families occasionally involving other producers, which, as mentioned by a member of the association, "need to be organic, agro-ecological and preferably coming from settlements" (Graciela, *Interview*, 16.03.16). These farmers produce fruits and vegetables and get together to commercialize them directly at farmers' markets. One of their members, presenting her collective, mentioned that they were also united by their common fight for the agrarian reform and for spreading more sustainable production methods such as agro-ecology.

The city region of Porto Alegre also presents several examples of bigger producers' associations. One example in this sense is the *Associação dos Produtores da Rede Agroecológica Metropolitana* (RAMA) (Producers' Association of the Agro-ecological Metropolitan Network). RAMA gathers more than 80 families of agro-ecological farmers producing in the metropolitan area of the city. They work together to facilitate the commercialization of their products but also in order to comply with the national legislation on organics and certify their production. In 2011, these producers agreed to form a *Sistema Participativo de Garantia* (participatory certification scheme) and developed RAMA as a managing and guarantor entity[11]. Thanks to participatory certification many family farmers can now sell their organic products in official farmers' markets. As observed during a meeting of RAMA, the association (which development was strongly supported by Emater) also provides local producers with the possibility to exchange knowledge and develop smaller joint projects (e.g., seeds exchanges, joint collaboration for direct deliveries to local restaurants). Another example in this sense is the cooperative Aecia, which gathers agro-ecological producers of the Serra Gaucha, supporting them in the certification, processing, distribution and commercialization of their fruits and vegetables[12]. Producers working with public acquisition programs are also usually part of associations or cooperatives. An example of such organization is the pig meat producers' cooperative *Ouro do Sul* situated in Harmonia, at 70 km of Porto Alegre[13].

5.3. Defining local food

This subchapter explores how farmers define local food. Its structure follows the argumentation of the respondents, which was most probably also oriented by the organization of the interviews. The first paragraph reports farmers' comments on the dominant food system (and associated dominant social representations) which characterizes their environment. The second paragraph reveals farmers' views on what local food is about.

[11] In Brazil, the decree 6.323 (27.12.16) regulated the certification of organic production. It established that farmers can certify their production through participatory certification schemes (Sistemas Participativos de Garantia de Qualidade Orgânica). For more information on participatory certification and the case of RAMA, refer to: Cruz *et al*., 2016.

[12] For more information on Aecia, refer to: http://www.aecia.com.br/historico.php

[13] For more information on the *Cooperativa Ouro do Sul*, refer to: http://www.ourodosul.com.br

5.2.1. A tool for opposing the dominant agri-food system

This paragraph presents some of farmers' representations around the current (dominant) agri-food system, which is, in their views, constituted by all processes of food provisioning involving large-scale production, intermediaries and distribution mechanisms. According to most of the farmers interviewed, the dominant model of food supply in Brazil does not recognize the importance of family farming and small-scale production. On the contrary, the dominant representations of food provisioning stress the importance of large-scale production and foster a homogenization of food practices. Consequently, this system only rarely supports the development of alternative and/ or localized food practices (which are, in Porto Alegre, usually based on the active engagement of family farmers). The coordinator of the farmers' market of Menino Deus, Anselmo, mentioned that such dominant representations are often used to justify political and economic decisions, which, since the 1950s, are discouraging Brazilian family farmers to work in the field. For example, this category historically lacked opportunities to bargain the prices of their products and get involved in decision making processes. Several farmers shared this perspective and commented that, over time, several of their colleagues had left the sector, facilitating the concentration of land in the hands of large-scale landowners and multinational companies. Through such remarks, these farmers advanced that dominant representations are serving the interests of large-scale multinational companies. Their visions are congruent with the postulates of many social psychologists which underlined that social representations serve the interests of the groups within which they emerge and that they might be used to maintain a certain social order. Graciela, provided an example in this sense by referring to the green revolution:

> They promoted the green revolution in Latin America in the 50s and the 60s. They said that it was going to end hunger around the world […]. But then we realized that hunger did not end and that this discourse was done by American and European enterprises that wanted to produce with chemicals because it was profitable for them.
>
> Graciela, *Interview* 16.03.16

A second line of dominant representations promoted through conventional food production and distribution (usually named by the farmers as "conventional food") can be referred to as the "culture of supermarkets". According to most respondents, this culture encourages unhealthy eating habits based on an extremely limited range of products. As stated by Silvana, this is linked to the progressive detachment of consumers from food production:

> [Supermarkets makes us] mix everything [seasonal and unseasonal products] and we lost our understanding of where the products are coming from. […] And supermarkets are also limiting the range of products that you eat.
>
> Silvana, *Interview*, 26.05.16

Moreover, this culture makes prices and aesthetics being prioritized over healthy and fresh food. Graciela argue in this sense by advancing that it makes financial matters became ubiquitous:

> Everything is associated to money: the land, the people, everything is marketed. They are sacrificing health, socio-ethical consciousness, exploiting workers, creating fields without farmers… […] Just to make money.
>
> Graciela, *Interview*, 16.03.16

Both the agro-ecological farmer Guilmar and an employee of Emater, Luís, added that this system encourages people (referring to both producers and consumers) to adopt strictly individualistic behaviors and dissuade them from cooperating with one another (e.g., Guilmar, *Interview*, 30.03.16; Luís, *Fieldnotes*, 26.04.16).

As demonstrated by these critiques, the farmers interviewed had developed reasoned representations of conventional food. Most of them opposed such dominant representations by underlying the unhealthiness of this system. For example, all agro-ecological farmers commented on the risks associated to the overconsumption of agrochemicals, characterizing dominant food production models. Several of them, such as Boca, referred to their past experiences in conventional production:

> I was working with poison, poison, poison and all my family was suffering from this. So I talked with my wife and we decided to change our life, our ideology, and stop killing ourselves in this way[...]. I stopped now, I don't want to touch chemicals products again and I am trying to convince my brothers to do the same.
>
> Boca, Interview, 15.03.16

Producers such as Graciela and Getúlio specified that public health problems associated to the use of agro-chemicals are particularly strong in the Rio Grande do Sul, because of the types of production that are being incentivized:

> The inhabitants of the Rio Grande do Sul consume eight liters of agrochemicals per year[14]. In Brazil, it is five liters on average … This is a contradiction, the society develops and the humanity is going backwards and becoming dumber.
>
> Graciela, *Interview*, 16.03.16

However, it is important to stress that not all of the farmers' critiques to the dominant food system referred to matters of health. For example, farmers participating to *feiras modelo* usually attacked this system (and supermarkets more precisely) by stressing the little bargaining power that it left to small-scale producers (and were not mentioning any health related concern). This example underlines the diversity of oppositional representations that were encountered in the field. Indeed, it proves that the critiques of different communities of beliefs (e.g., a group of farmers involved in specific sets of local food practices such as agro-ecological producers) can develop around dissimilar representations.

[14] This information is supported by an article found on a local newspaper explaining that, during the season 2009-2010, in the Rio Grande do Sul, 8.3 litres of agrochemicals per inhabitant were consumed (Kochhann, 2015).

5.2.2. A tool for developing alternatives

This paragraph reports some of farmers' remarks depicting local as a space for alternative food supply practices to emerge. Based on the argumentations of the farmers, I defined as alternative practices all activities which do not obey to dominant representations of food provisioning (e.g.: representations fostering large-scale and mechanized food production). On the contrary, these alternatives are mostly built upon contrasting representations, which acknowledge the power and capacities of small-scale family farmers to secure food to society. As illustrated in the following lines, the degrees to which farmers' representations and practices oppose the dominant agri-food system are various. Most dissimilarly, while some of them presented local food provisioning as an opportunity for family farmers to actively integrate the current food system, others viewed it as a strategy for resisting and transforming the food system.

Most of the respondents firstly associated local food, as well as production in the city region, to the possibility to produce healthier and more sustainable food. On one hand, all agro-ecological producers referred to the health related and environmental benefits of local food. For example, most of them stated that their transition from conventional to organic production had succeed because, at the same time, they had integrated other, localized and often direct food supply mechanisms. According to one of these farmers, Silvana: "producing in Porto Alegre facilitates the commercialization of your products [because you are very close to a big market: urban consumers]. This helps you a lot in your transition towards agro-ecology" (Silvana, *Interview*, 26.05.16). She added that taking part in local food initiatives also allows farmers to diversify their production, develop niche markets and reinsert a wide set of different products in the local diet: "we try to have a highly diversified production […] we produce little amounts of very different things and try to offer to people what they cannot find in the supermarket" (Silvana, *Interview*, 26.05.16). Similarly, Boca explained that making such transition to organic production in the inner part of the State (where he is coming from) is not possible, because, there, farmers are isolated and do not have access to direct demand for healthy food. Overall, both producers argued that demand for local food is key for the development of local food practices and the consequent increase in farmers' opportunities to better preserve their health, the one of consumers and the environment (e.g., act against environmental degradation, work with a more diversified and seasonal production). In a way, Silvana and Boca also expressed their concerns with regards to more isolated farmers, whose contexts do not facilitate a transition towards differentiated practices of food provisioning. In line with the arguments of Allen (2010) mentioned in section 2.1.4., their reflections pointed out that local food supply and direct selling remain a privilege of few producers and underline the importance of questions such as: "What responsibility do local food movements have to those in other regions that might be less endowed or, indeed, historically impoverished by their region?" (Allen, 2010, p.302).

Moreover, with regards to local food supply in Porto Alegre, some conventional producers underlined that this supports healthier diets in the city because local products are fresher. These farmers depicted local food practices as an opportunity to provide fresh and quality food to urban consumers. As a matter of fact, several agro-ecological producers, as well as the project of the *feiras modelo* aimed at providing quality food to poor people in the

city and generally render local food more accessible. The agro-ecological producer Graciela stated indeed: “We have the responsibility to produce healthy food but also the one of producing food for poor people […]. It is possible to produce organic and produce for poor people” (Graciela, *Interview*, 16.03.16). Comparably, the farmer Boca said:

> We do not want to work only with consumers from middle or high classes. We want to work with the lower class so that also poor people can manage to buy organic products. Our policy is about having accessible prices.
>
> Boca, Interview, 15.03.16

Overall, most producers represented local food initiatives as a mean to democratize fresh food and fight against the conventionalization and élitization of organics. From their point of view, local organic products are different (cheaper, fresher) than organic products sold in supermarkets, which target middle class consumers. Differently, in line with Allen (2010), these farmers argued that engaging in local food initiatives can represent an opportunity to develop more inclusive and just practices. This approach was also reflected in the behavior of several of the farmers observed in agro-ecological farmers’ markets. Some of them seemed to be quite flexible about their prices, often adapted to the profile of the consumers (e.g.: based on the frequency of their purchases). Moreover, products were regularly donated. I was particularly impressed by the generosity of older producers such as Tio Juca, who, although living in extremely simple conditions, did not believe that additional incomes would ameliorate his life and was therefore associating little value to money. At the same time, it is necessary to point out that these representations also need to be relativized: as mentioned in section 5.2.1., agro-ecological farmers’ markets are quite absent from the suburban areas of the city. To a certain extent, they are therefore usually addressed to middle class consumers living in central neighborhoods.

Contrastingly, seven of the interviewed farmers pointed out the economic benefits connected to their participation in initiatives of local food supply. They underlined that local food supply usually allows the producers of the city region to work less with intermediaries (e.g., selling their products to CEASA), sell directly to consumers and decide on the prices they set. For example, the producer Eliseo stated that taking part to the *feiras modelo* makes him receive prices that are 70% higher than in CEASA. He argued that this system is “really exploiting producers” and that “a family farmer selling to CEASA has no chance [to survive]” (Eliseo, *Interview*, 29.03.16). Interestingly, the economic benefits deriving from direct selling of local food were associated to the possibility of increasing farmers’ quality of life but also incentivize future generation to keep working in agriculture and creating employment in the city region. As mentioned by Rosa: “selling directly in Porto Alegre is helpful: it can help keeping the agricultural sector alive, it can help people finding some good reasons to remain in this sector” (Rosa, *Interview*, 23.03.16).

Furthermore, it is also important to underline that local food practices were depicted as mechanisms through which oppositional representations could be divulgated. As explored in the following lines, selling food close to its site of production helped producers to create awareness about their work and more actively participate in decision making processes in relation to food supply. Based on the remarks of the farmers, selling food in the city region involved several actions for creating awareness on the benefits of differentiated mechanisms

of food production and supply. As commented by the municipal employee Sandra (SMED): "it is important to create a new [food] culture […] and more people will buy [local products]." (Sandra, *Interview*, 16.05.16). Several farmers, especially the ones from settlements of the agrarian reform, perceived creating awareness as crucial part of their work:

> I think that what will enable the creation of more farmers' markets and more opportunities for direct selling is the contact between the producer and the consumer. [It is through that contact that] I can present our work: I explain what we are producing, why we are producing in this way, why we are selling in this way […].
>
> Graciela, *Interview*, 16.03.16

Based on the comments of the farmers and my observations in farmers' markets, the number of consumers visiting markets and seeking differentiate relations to food (e.g.: knowing food origins, supporting and valorizing its producers) is currently growing. Graciela, for example, commented in this sense:

> I believe that this market [the market of local and organic products] is growing. Maybe the situation is changing because of economic reasons but also because of changing beliefs: people start feeling more responsibilities towards the environment now […]
>
> Graciela, *Interview*, 16.03.16

Based on my research, I argue that this phenomenon is strongly associated with the active engagement of farmers (mainly agro-ecological ones) in projects for creating awareness. I found particularly interesting the activities that were organized for children. Several farmers such as Tio Juca indeed opened their farm to school visits, others were organizing markets and/or cooking classes in schools. As commented by Anselmo, the coordinator of the farmers' market of Menino Deus:

> You should see children talking about food, they are amazing! […] We go from one school to the other, trying to bring these concepts [the importance of healthy and local food]. And after playing in the schools the children usually bring their family to the market […]. We created were strong links with them!
>
> Anselmo, *Interview*, 17.03.16

Similarly, several producers based in Lami are part of project of rural tourism called *Caminhos Rurais* (Rural Pathways) which gathers 15 farms situated in the rural areas of Porto Alegre. Since the 1990s, several of these producers had started to offer singularly activities on their farms for tourists. The on farm activities proposed are various (e.g., horse riding, cooking classes). Juca (in the photo below) also dedicated a part of his land to cultivate a small forest of rare indigenous trees. His goal is to preserve these varieties and show them to his visitors: "this [showing the trees around him] is what I want to leave to this world. This is for people to discover the richness of Brazil, this is for people to remember" (Juca, personal conversation, 20.03.16).

Moreover, farmers' markets were spaces of dialogue and knowledge exchange. There, the farmers developed new friendships and getting recognized by the population. Producers from the Landless Workers' Movement advanced that selling in Porto Alegre

allows them to inform the population about the settlements nearby and create awareness around their activities and current challenges. These producers also informed people on matters of social exclusion and environmental degradation. At the same time, three different producers (Boca, Nilza and Silvana) mentioned that dialoguing with the population also gave them the opportunity to get feedbacks, develop new friendships, and I believe this also contributed to changing their representations of the word. As a matter of fact, I found most of the farmers open and curious, eager to know people's history and opinions. For example, I was touched by the fact that several agro-ecological farmers asked me to write something for them about what I add seen and what I was thinking. In my opinion, this demonstrated their reflexive attitude towards their practices and their deep engagement in the creation of alternative food solutions.

Finally, local food initiatives also gave the possibility to farmers to participate in their governance processes. Not all producers interviewed directly engaged in the governance their initiatives but all mentioned an increase in transparency and representativeness of such processes when compared to conventional FSCs. In the discourse of some producers, the fact that they were feeling better represented had to be linked to a decrease in the number of intermediaries. The participation of farmers was depicted as a way to reclaim their alternative representations (e.g., the importance of family farming), reaffirm the role of family farmers and prove their abilities.

Overall, farmers' social representations around the meaning of local food are varied. However, most farmers described local food provisioning as a way of resisting to conventional FSCs and their mechanisms, which downgrade family farmers and render them more vulnerable. Several respondents also defined local food initiatives as opportunities to create new, sustainable practices (described in the upcoming chapter), based on their creativity and closer linkages to consumers. Moreover, according to most agro-ecological farmers, local food initiatives allowed them to better divulgate their (oppositional) representations of reality through direct interactions with the consumers (e.g., by presenting their work in schools, hosting people on their farms).

5.4. Practicing local food

This section presents an analysis of the practices that farmers associated to local food. It firstly reports few examples of novel food practices adopted in the city region and stresses the challenges that farmers associated to such enterprises. The second part introduces farmers' representations around the importance of working together (and forming producers' associations) in order to develop stronger local food initiatives.

5.3.1. Challenging aspects of local food practices

As mentioned before, the farmers interviewed are actively engaged in the setting up of local food initiatives (e.g., through the construction of new farmers' markets). However, their ideas for expanding local food can be regarded as more or less conflictual with the dominant models of food provisioning. I decided to underline this distinction by firstly presenting novel

local food practices which are operated by farmers who hold less oppositional representations of the conventional agri-food system and, in a way, wish to incorporate such system. On the contrary, the second paragraph illustrates some practices based on more conflictual values and representations (when compared to the dominant system). By developing such practices, this second set of farmers hope to foster broader changes in the way Brazilian food system functions (and is being represented).

A first set of local food practices can be regarded as mechanisms through which family farmers hope to better integrate the current food system. In a way, these mechanisms replicate some dynamics of conventional FSCs within local food initiatives. A good example in this sense is the *papel moeda*, a differentiated currency system used in the *feiras modelo*. Jorge, a producer that had been tightly involved in the creation of the *papel moeda*, explained:

> This idea was developed by us [the producers and retailers of the *feiras modelo*] with the support of the municipality, the Banco do Brasil [Brazilian state bank] and Visa [American multinational financial services corporation] […]
>
> Jorge, *Interview,* 05.04.16

Jorge described that *papel moeda* is used in lieu of currency and was created with the idea of facilitating consumers' purchases in farmers' markets: "With this system the clients do not have to bring cash and they can buy *papel moeda* with their credit card (Jorge, *Interview,* 05.04.16). In his view, it is also beneficial for the producers, which get the money directly on their accounts within 30 days from the purchases. This mechanism approximates food purchasing process in farmers' market to the one of supermarkets. Based on my observations, the consumers in the *feiras modelo* seemed to like this system and find it practical, mainly in relation to matters of security in the street. *Papel moeda* is a good example to deconstruct the boundaries between local and global food systems, stress the porosity of these spaces as well as the pervasiveness of capitalist development. *Papel moeda* indeed exemplifies how local food can be managed through multilevel governance systems, which challenge existing scalar configurations (Winter, 2006). Finally, in line with the arguments of Jarosz (2008), it shows that globalization can also be part of the development of local food systems[15].

It is also interesting to point out that producers and consumers encountered outside of the *feiras modelo* were often critical about *papel moeda*, perceived as a tool for banks to get into local and/or alternative food initiatives. These contrasting opinions to its regards reveal farmers' divergent representations of what local food is and/or should be. Another project in this perspective was mentioned by two producers selling on the roadside. They remarked on the possibility of creating labels certifying the origins of their products. One of them, Nilza, explained:

> We would like to create our own quality mark. Because many people are lying about the origins of their products. They sell pineapples and they say they come from the

[15] As argued by Jarosz (2008), globalization, by contributing to rural restructuring, might particularly stimulate the development of small farms in proximity to urban areas.

> Terra de Arreia but often it is not true. There is already a label for the pineapples of the Terra de Arreia but it is just for big producers, the ones selling in the supermarkets: Zafari, Nacional, Bourbons… The big networks. But I believe that now also us, the small ones, will get a label.
>
> Nilza, *Interview*, 24.03.16

On one hand, a label can indeed help producers to gain consumers trust and better market their products independently. On the other hand, this can also be regarded as a sign of farmers' feeling the pressure to conform to practices of producers which are part of the dominant food system (that Nilza refers as "the big producers selling in supermarkets"). The case of Nilza is a second example demonstrating that, in order to get publically recognized, farmers often use the tools of the dominant system, re-adapting them to their representations and interests.

Several other producers developed novel local food practices which, on the contrary, aim to construct alternative systems of food supply. A first example are the direct partnerships linking family farmers to local CSOs and private institutions. Several of the farmers of settlements of the agrarian reform developed partnerships with research groups within the UFRGS such as the NEA. Among them, the group *Coletivo Mão na Terra* also works with a trade union of hospital employees called *Associação dos Servidores do Hospital de Clínicas* (ASHCLIN). Similarly, the activities in public schools coordinated by Anselmo, the manager of the farmers' market of Menino Deus, are examples of such direct collaborations between producers' associations and local entities. These joint projects give the farmers the opportunity to enter in a favored relation with different groups of consumers and allow them to diversified their selling strategies, without depending on a unique commercialization mechanism (which might render them more vulnerable to external changes). Moreover, some farmers also took part in experimental projects developed in the city region. For example, 15 pig meat producers of the southern part of Porto Alegre got involved in the project *Reaproveitamento de Resíduos Sólidos Orgânicos via Suinocultura* (Reutilization of Urban Organic Residuals through Pig Farming), forwarded by the municipality since 1992. The project is based on the reutilization of organic waste of various establishment (67 in 2014) across the city, such as food residuals in canteens. These residuals are collected by the municipality, processed and given to the association. Through this project urban waste becomes functional to local food production[16].

However, based on the argumentation of most of the respondents, developing local food practices remains a challenging process. First among these challenges, the absence of young people willing to work in agriculture. The comment of Eliseo is a good example in this sense:

> I come from a family of farmers but, you know, probably the next generation will not be farming anymore. My children do not want to work with me forever. I have a big family: we are eight brothers. And the situation is the same in their families
>
> Eliseo, *Interview*, 29.03.16

[16] For more information, refer to: Schorn *et al*., 2016.

Similarly, Silvana and Rosa observed that they would like to produce and sell more but that they are lacking labor. Silvana stated: "often we would like to offer more products but we lack the labor for doing it" (Silvana, *Interview*, 26.05.16). Rosa was especially worried about the decrease in family farmers and questioned who would sustain the local food supply in Porto Alegre in the future. She remarked:

> Here young people are close to the city and they can find better opportunities there. For example, I have two children, one is a doctor and the other she is married and she is working in a mall. And so it is just to two of us working there. And what will happen to our production when we will not be able to work anymore? And the situation is the same in many other families…
>
> Rosa, *Interview*, 23.03.16

Moreover, three producers selling directly in Porto Alegre stated that managing time was also a big challenge. They defined direct selling initiatives as extremely time spending activities. Such challenges is also underlined in the work of Jarosz (2008), which argued that, as the demand for local food grows, small-scale farmers might find their labor time increase. Based on her research, direct selling might render the work of small-scale farmers harder as it increases their labor and time demand (Jarosz, 2008). Eliseo made an interesting remark in this sense: "the problem is that being at the markets is a lot of work. And a lot of time taken from my work in the field. A producer really needs to get organized in order to be able to do this" (Eliseo, *Interview*, 29.03.16). Another farmer, Nilza, said: "in this moment we have some people helping us on the farm. How could I do everything alone? It is a lot of work: taking care of production, coming here, selling…" (Nilza, *Interview*, 24.03.16). Moreover, according to several farmers, direct selling activities also require producers to have highly varied production. In their view, consumers are looking for a differentiated set of products and responding to such request is not an easy task. Again, several respondents mentioned that facing these challenges necessitates a good organization of the sales and the cooperation between producers. Jorge, a farmer and retailer in the *feiras modelo*, feared such confrontation with the consumers:

> I cannot come here with my products only because I do not have enough to sell… The consumers will ask me for something more, for something different... That is why I need to have different types of fruits on my stand"
>
> Jorge, *Interview*, 05.04.16

Another limitation to the scaling out of local food practices is that, according to the participants, conventional producers do not really get involved in such practices. For example, Boca mentioned that some of them preferred to keep working with intermediaries and consequently supply their products to conventional FSCs across the country. He described this type of farmers as: "accommodated farmers… these farmers think that they are doing well in their reality and do not look for other, better opportunities" (Boca, *Interview*,15.03.16). Another agro-ecological producer, Silvana, explained that conventional farmers do not engage that much in AFNs and direct selling because they usually have monocultures and that selling great amounts of the same product is difficult:

> Conventional farmers produce much more than we do and they specialize themselves in one type of production, in one product. But you cannot work in farmers' markets if you have only one product, you need a certain variety [otherwise it is not profitable]
>
> Silvana, *Interview*, 26.05.16

She added: "if they sell to intermediaries they do not have control over the destination of their products […]. Most of the time their products are distributed in the whole state." (Silvana, *Interview*, 26.05.16). In the perspective of these agro-ecological farmers, taking part to local food practices therefore involves broader changes in farmers' mentality and way of producing. In their representations, many Brazilian farmers still need to be convinced about the benefits of local food provisioning and, for this, changes in their representations of the world are needed. When possible (alias when there is a local market and the production site is not too isolated), these "accommodated farmers" should be convinced that they can manage to make these changes and exist the oppressive order that characterize their reality. As discuss in the following paragraph, working together with other farmers might be key to the success of such transition.

5.3.2. The importance of working together

As introduced in section 5.2.3., most of the farmers encountered in Porto Alegre are organized in producers' associations and cooperatives. Part of the research was therefore dedicated to investigate the rationales at the basis of these organizations, which appeared as crucial components of local food supply. As I was expecting, many farmers mentioned that producers' associations facilitate their selling activities in the city by allowing them, for example, to get better organized. However, I discovered that for several producers, these practical reasons were accompanied by broader ideas and convictions on the importance of working together. Drawing on Cornwall & Shankland (2013), I decided to refer to such farmers' representations on cooperation as "local cultures of association". I use this concept to point out that, over time, local farmers had developed different set of representations and practices (alias cultures), which are key factors to be analyzed to understand the different ways in which farmers think about the organization of local food supply. The following lines firstly introduce the general (and more practical) rationales evoked by the farmers to justify the existence of producers' associations. In a second moment, some additional remarks of farmers belonging to settlements of the agrarian reform are reported and confronted with the beliefs of other farmers of the city region. This confrontation aims to underline the heterogeneity of cultures of association characterizing local food practices in the city region of Porto Alegre.

Again, farmers' motivations to work jointly can be mainly differentiated into (1) arguments around the importance of accessing the market and fitting into the current economic system, and (2) arguments explaining how producers' associations can be strategic for family farmers to ameliorate their livelihood but also resist to the dominant food system (and create alternative pathways). Most of the participants emphasized either one or the other point. With regards to the first set of arguments, most respondents explained that, singularly, family farmers have little opportunities to access the market both in terms of

quantity of food produced and logistics. Alone, they are also more vulnerable to be exploited by the stronger economic agents of the food system. As stated by Jorge in relation to the creation of the association of the *feiras modelo*: "We formed this association to be stronger. When you work alone you are like a grain of sand and together we are like a bull. We are stronger." (Jorge, *Interview*, 05.04.16). Some other farmers also argued in this sense by adding that these associations are even more important when the state is absent. Indeed, associations were represented as mechanisms that support small scale producers to get better organized and sell their products directly. As described by Rosa:

> It is important because through the association we manage to better organize ourselves. Not only in terms of facilities [material and logistic matters] […] we are also always well informed, even when we do not manage to directly participate in events because someone is going and brings back the information to the rest of us. And people that wants to live and produce alone, without an organization, will have a hard time. He will not manage to enter a market to sell. It is only through a group that you can manage to take part to a market and sell your products […].
>
> Rosa, *Interview*, 23.03.16

Associations were also seen as mechanisms to divide tasks among producers and reduce the amount of organizational and bureaucratic matters to be faced individually. For example, several farmers such as Guilmar and Silvana, rely on the vehicle of their associations to transport their products to the city (e.g., Guilmar, Silvana). Similarly, farmers taking part to public food acquisition programs often get organized in order to arrange joint food deliveries. Municipal employees also underlined that producers working within the PAA and/or PNAE are usually part of an association or a cooperative. In the opposite case, they are directly encouraged to do so by local authorities and CSOs, which often prefer to deal with organized groups of producers. As mentioned by Sandra, the coordinator of SMED department of nutrition:

> It is quite difficult for single farmers to take part to the program [PNAE] and, for example, distribute their products alone. […] Sometimes they work independent in the beginning and then start working with others. The meetings that we organize also have this goal: to allow them to meet each other, find joint solutions and work together to distribute food in the schools.
>
> Sandra, *Interview*, 16.05.16

In a similar approach, producers' associations were represented as fundamental apparati for farmers to get the necessary licenses and certifications to sell their products. This aspect was particularly present in the reflections of agro-ecological farmers. As a matter of fact, associations such as RAMA are key for producers undergoing organic certification processes. As explained by Silvana:

> Through RAMA, many producers got the chance to become part of participatory certification schemes. We discussed everything collectively and developed quite restrictive rules [for producers that want to get certified] […].
>
> Silvana, *Interview*, 26.05.16

Employees of public extension services also mentioned that, with regards to certification matters, it is indeed easier to support farmers in group and organize collective procedures.

On the other hand, producers' associations were also depicted as tools for resisting oppressive mechanisms and empowering family farmers. For example, it was mentioned that these organizations could help keeping producers informed and foster peer to peer learning. Both of these processes were presented as key elements for the empowerment of family farmers. Based on my observations, it was also often through producers' associations that most of the courses for farmers were organized. Indeed, both Graciela and Guilmar talked about courses that they had followed within their respective organization. More generally, the associations were also depicted as lieu of learning and exchange. For example, Jorge remarked:

> I think that it [the association of the *feiras modelo*] is good for people to share their strategies and improve together. We discuss different things and if you have an innovative idea you can talk about it […]. The producers help one another […]
>
> Jorge, *Interview*, 05.04.16.

Overall, while listening to the stories of the farmers, I had the impression that producers' associations had made them engage more actively in the development of alternative local food practices. It was together with other farmers that most of them had the courage to make important transitions in the way they produce and sell their products (e.g., starting to sell in the agro-ecological farmers' market as a collective). For example, many among the agro-ecological farmers had experimented differentiated production methods because encouraged and supported by a group of farmers in similar conditions. Moreover, based on my observations, it was through these associations that, over time, many of the interviewed farmers had constructed joint demands and developed a culture of resistance and political engagement. For example, this was the case of many members of the cooperative AECIA, which are currently engaged in the local government of their town (Antonio Prado). Indeed, Guilmar, a member of AECIA, mentioned: "Since almost 20 years several of the city councilors that are elected are members of AECIA […]". He added:

> Doing politics is necessary but it is successful only with the participation of the people. AECIA taught us that groups need to be organized and strong. Groups should be *uma classe unida* (a united class).
>
> Guilmar, *Interview*, 30.03.16.

A sense of community?

As mentioned before, by taking a deeper look at farmers' reflections, it was possible to identify two binary ways of thinking about cooperation. I find relevant to shortly comment on this difference because it proves that farmers' visions around the organization of local food supply can be culturally and therefore intrinsically divergent. This perspective can be useful to explain why, as pointed out in, for e.g., Baiocchi *et al*., (2008) institutional reforms can only partially foster changes in the social order. The authors point out that, indeed, most of the time, state sponsored reforms do not contribute to the capacity of civil society to self-organize. As explained in chapter 3, I argue that agents' representations help shaping

societal changes but that these also need time to evolve. In the case of local food in Porto Alegre, cultural divergences can partially explain why local food practices remain significantly different among farmers' collectives.

On one hand, since the first days of the fieldwork, it was possible to discern that most of the observed farmers had a strong group culture and sense of community. This was detectable by the fact that several respondents (such as Graciela and Guilmar) talked in the plural form, always referring to the larger group they are part of. Besides, the word *companheiro* (companion, comrade) was recurrent in their talks. Moreover, several producers often expressed their respect for their group, by stressing the importance of joint decision making. In this perspective, Rosa said:

> We meet every time that a decision needs to be made. Nobody can decide something alone. We always need to consider what the majority of the farmers are thinking. The majority always win."
>
> Rosa, *Interview*, 23.03.16

More generally, producers living and working in settlements of the agrarian reform had developed many common social representations, often stressing the differences between their group and the other farmers. Because of their participation in rural social movements (such as the Landless Workers' Movement), these farmers (e.g., Graciela) had developed a strong sense of belonging to the community, as a consequence of what learned and experienced jointly in the settlements. The schools of the social movements, for example, played a role in this sense by forming producers both technical and ideologically. As mentioned by Anselmo, who had worked as a professor in these schools, there, the producers learned the importance of cooperating and developing common struggles. I argue that it is, among other things, thanks to these schools that farmers developed the strong oppositional representations that guide their practices today. As expressed by Graciela, the Landless Workers' Movement was encouraging family farmers to develop new practices to be opposed to the ones of individualism, egoism and anthropocentrism (promoted by the conventional agri-food system). She mentioned:

> We know that we are part of a broader project: we stand for the *reforma agraria popular* and we defend agro-ecology […] I think that we often have some challenges but these challenges can be solved only if we think in a collective way. Our mentality is very different from the one of the consumerist society, the capitalist society. In this society people are more individualistic, they do not get organize, they do not protest. But when you are part of an organization you need to do all this.
>
> Graciela, *Interview*, 16.03.2016

By clearly delineating these divisions between dominant and alternative practices, producers belonging to rural social movements reinforce their rationales for working together. These common (oppositional) representations of the world make them feel united because highlighting their struggle and reinforcing their group identity (alias, drawing on Howarth, 2006, forming a community of beliefs). Such discourses were particularly visible during the events and demonstrations organized by the movements (e.g., Official opening of the harvest period of agro-ecological rice in the settlement of Filhos de Sepé, Viamão, 18.03.16).

In the period of the fieldwork, the Landless Workers' Movement was particularly involved in the co-organization of several demonstrations against the *golpe*, term with which they referred to the impeachment of the president Dilma Rousseff. In these protests, the producers were particularly united as their opponents were clearly identifiable. More than ever, the movement was calling the producers to stick together and support the president against the raising of conservatives and neoliberal politicians.

At the same time, I encountered farmers who had a significantly different approaches to working together and were therefore engaged in dissimilar practices, based on a more individualist approach to the organization of work. From this perspective, Nilza and Eliseo stated that they worked only with their family members. Nilza specified that, from time to time, neighbours were helping by selling them some of their production in the case in which the quantity they had was not sufficient (or buy from them in the opposite case). Additionally, they sometimes assisted her family with the harvesting. She argued that creating a formal producers' association was not needed: "we help each other […]. It is not an association, it is friendship." (Nilza, *Interview*, 24.03.16). Similarly, Eliseo, working in the *feiras modelo*, argued that he was grateful for being part of its association but that he did not want to engage too much in group discussions. He argued:

> When you have worked with intermediaries in the past, you understand that here [selling directly in the *feiras*] things are really better. I do not need to participate; I do not need to complain about anything […]
>
> Eliseo, *Interview*, 29.03.16

In the last part of the interview, he added: "I work alone because it is difficult to work in a group, it is better to work with your family. […] when money is involved it is difficult to make things work in a group." (Eliseo, *Interview*, 29.03.16). While talking with these farmers, I had the impression that both of them had never been embedded in a strong culture of association and, on the contrary, held quite defeatist representations of producer's associations. To a certain extent, their ethos also reminded me the notion of *amoral familism*, that Banfield (1958) depicted as "the inability of villagers to act together for their common good or, indeed, for any end transcending the immediate, material interest of the nuclear family" (Banfield, 1958, p. 10).

Overall, this section reveals that the practices that farmers associate to local food are highly heterogeneous. It stressed the distinction between practices that can be regarded as a continuation of the dominant, globalized food system (e.g.: *papel moeda*) and practices which, on the contrary, are developed as alternative mechanisms to contrast current models of food provisioning (e.g.: The *Programa de Reaproveitamento de Resíduos Orgânicos via Suinocultura*, DMLU). The section also points out that the respondents mentioned various challenges in connection to local food practices, such as the high time and labour demand of direct selling. Several farmers depicted producers' associations as a solution to these challenges and, more generally, a key component of family farmers' engagement in (novel) local food practices. However, this was not the case for all farmers, as some argued preferring to work alone. To this regard, the data showed that farmers' determination to work collectively is informed by their social representations around cooperation, which is, in turn, very much influenced by their past experiences and "cultures of association". The

diversity among “cultures of associations” appeared to be central for understanding farmers’ multiple approaches to local food practices.

5.5. Governing local food

This final section chapter 5 gathers farmers’ reflections around the governance of local food. I was particularly interested in understanding the role of the municipality in the development and systematization of local food practices in the city region. As a consequence, several of my questions investigated the relation between local farmers and the municipality. I also asked farmers their opinions on the current and potential functions of the local government in fostering local food initiatives. However, most of the farmers usually preferred to talk about the government as a whole and, overall, little differences were made between the national, state and local administrative levels. In general, public support to family farmers and local food practices were associated to national authorities (e.g., MDA) and programs (e.g., PAA and PNAE), and the municipality was only rarely associated to such processes. The following paragraphs firstly explore farmers’ representations of politics of local food, and, more precisely, their mental associations between the PT, family farmers and local food. In a second moment, I present and discuss farmers’ comments in relation to the municipality.

5.4.1. Politics and local food

This sub-section presents farmers’ perspectives (and concerns) in relation to the the government and its support to local food practices. Their comments are classified in two broad topics: (1) the volatile political situation characterizing the country at the moment of the fieldwork and (2) the linkages between political parties (and particularly the PT), their ideology and local food practices. It is firstly important to stress that farmers often mentioned their distrust with regards to the government. For example, according to farmers such as Nilza, Guilmar and Getúlio, the state had never guaranteed a linear support to their category. In their views, such support had always depended on the ideology and political agenda of the party in power. The ongoing political changes were additional element of concerns with regards to the future of family farming and local food initiatives. More precisely, most of the farmers perceived the impeachment of the PT president Dilma Rousseff as an attack to their category. Indeed, several farmers expressed their concerns over the uncertain future of their category: “I don’t know what will happen now […]” (Silvana, *Interview*, 26.05.16), “The government is changing and it is not easy to preserve this culture [of local food provisioning]” (Sandra, *Interview*, 16.05.16), “This program [referring to PAA] depends on the MDA and at the moment the government is changing so I don’t know whether it will be continued” (José, *Interview*, 29.04.16). In May 2016, the partial extinction of the MDA (now a secretary of the MAPA) confirmed such forewarning concerns and symbolized a clear shift in the government’s ideological line. The coming into power of the opposition was often represented as the rise of the interests of large-scale producers and multinational companies. As a consequence, several respondents feared a decrease in public

support to family farmers, rural social movements and alternative food networks. Their apprehension was quite visible during public demonstrations, in which exponents of the Landless Workers' Movement explained why this *golpe* constituted an attack to all of their achievements. In their opinions, these changes symbolized a general conservative revival and, for what concerns the agricultural sector, a further expansion of the power of the *bancada ruralista* (term used to refer to the parliamentarians working to preserve the interests of large scale rural landowners and the expansion of capitalism in agriculture)[17]. Farmers also rightly perceived the *golpe* as a phenomenon which would undermine the continuity (and possible expansion) of governmental programs fostering local food supply such as the PAA. Such concerns were not limited to the farmers and, for example, in relation to the PAA *Compra Institutional*, José, the coordinator of the public procurement department of the UFRGS, explained:

> We want to work with this system [PAA], because it gives us the opportunity to buy better products, which are fresher and less processed. At the same time, I am not sure what will happen now because this programs depends on the MDA… With this situation now [referring to the impeachment process] the government is changing and this program might not be continued"
>
> José, *Interview*, 29.04.16

Similarly, Prof. Catia Grisa, an expert professor in public policies for rural development also explained:

> In 2015 the government developed a new law to extent this system [referring to the compulsory 30% purchases from family farmers of the PNAE] to additional public institution such as hospitals, jails… Implementing this law will not require more money but it will encounter some resistances because the whole provisioning system will need to be readapted. And the big firms [usually responsible for food provisioning in such institutions] will be affected by these changes. So it is possible that if the government changes the implementation of this project might be more difficult… (Grisa, *Interview*, 08.04.16).

As a reaction, the farmers often explained that it was better for them to work independently from the government and its programs. They wanted to avoid such dependencies and several farmers had consequently made the choice to distance themselves from politics. Juca, for example, often argued: "they [referring to politicians in general] do their politics and we do ours" (Juca, *Fieldnotes*, May 2016). He explained that he is not interested in understanding national politics but to participate to more concrete changes in his immediate surroundings. Indeed, he seemed indeed quite engaged in several local projects aiming to strengthen agro-ecology and rural tourism. He is also very open to talk and create awareness around his experiences in relation to agro-ecology. Several other farmers also communicated such disenchantment around the public sphere and commented that getting the support of the state is something positive but not necessary. For instance, Getúlio noted: "this [local food provisioning in the city] is growing a lot. And it will keep

[17] For more information on the *bancada ruralista* refer to the work of e.g.: Costa, 2012

growing. With or without the support of the state […]" (Getúlio, Interview, 09.04.16). Such representations (stressing the importance of working independently) were also guiding famers such as Graciela and Boca which decided to engage in initiatives which do not require any form of cooperation with the public sector (e.g.: direct deliveries).

Moreover, when talking about food governance, all farmers made comments linked to the PT. In the representations of the farmers, the PT was positively correlated to Lula, to national programs such as the PAA and the PNAE and to two politicians of the Rio Grande do Sul: Olívio Dutra and Tarso Genro, which had governed the state in the periods of 1999-2003 and 2011-2015, respectively. As showed in section 2.2., the PT has been historically constituted and supported by members of social movements and CSOs and is therefore generally regarded as a *partido do povo* (party of the people). This was also the opinion of many of the farmers interviewed, which felt the PT particularly close to their causes. For example, the agro-ecological producer Silvana explained the PT had historically been supportive of agro-ecology and small-scale production:

> It was with them [the PT] that agro-ecology expanded here, starting over 20 years ago. Conferences were organized and so on. When the PT was in charge, the municipality and Emater supported this transition [from conventional to agro-ecological production methods]. After [when the PT was not leading the state nor the city anymore] there was a period in which the government cared less […]
>
> Silvana, *Interview*, 26.05.16

The conventional producer Jorge also expressed his positive outlook in relation to the party:

> I have always liked the administration of the PT, I cannot complain. Because if today we have a truck, if we have our own house, it is thanks to the PT which gave the opportunity to hard working people to grow. They [PT] gave credits and if you wanted to work you could get whatever you wanted. With other administrations [under the leadership of other parties], the producers never got such opportunities, never.
>
> Jorge, *Interview*, 05.04.16

Similarly, the farmer Guilmar, which recently became a PT councilor in his town, described that:

> It was the PT that helped us to develop this farmers' market [referring to the farmers' market of Menino Deus]. The other governments did not help that much. They often represented agribusinesses and did not supported family farming. They preferred larger producers rather than small ones […].
>
> Guilmar, *Interview*, 06.04.16

Overall, the PT was often presented as the party closer to their interests (when compared to other parties). Jorge commented that the project of the *feiras modelo* was developed by the PT and added that this was just one of the examples showing that the party was standing on the side of small-scale producers and entrepreneurs:

> The PT targeted its efforts towards small-scale producers. It did not do this [the project of the *feiras modelo*] for huge producers that were already very rich. The PT has a different vision of the economy. That is why they helped a lot the population.
>
> Jorge, *Interview*, 05.04.16

However, it is important to underline that not all respondents' representations were depicting positively the PT. For example, some participants mentioned that the PT had been promoting a *politica partidaria* (party politics) through which its support was directed to adherents only. To support this example a quote is reported but kept anonymous:

> There is a *politica partidaria* in these spaces [alternative food networks]. The party started encouraging the exchange of small favors, visits […] these things are complicating the functioning of our projects here…

Some other respondents commented on the risks of becoming dependent from the PT. This was perceived as particularly dangerous at a time in which the party was loosing its influence. In most of farmers' representations (even among the ones working with public programs), getting too close to the state could make them loose their autonomy. Anselmo argued in this sense, giving an example in relation to the Landless Workers' Movement:

> The movement now understand the importance of autonomy, the importance of criticizing the state and not only cooperate with it. It is dangerous for farmers to work only with public programs and believe that they are in paradise. They have to keep a critical look, to keep their autonomy. And now many producers do not trust political processes. They think that politicians are not very honest persons. It is becoming always more difficult for parties to get close to the producers.
>
> Anselmo, 17.03.16

Overall, the reflections reported in this section show that the observed farmers hold a general distrust in the state. However, most of them feel particularly close to the PT (even if sometimes maintaining regards to its administration), presented as the only party attempting to pushed forward the interests of their category. The start of the impeachment process of the PT president Dilma Rousseff was therefore depicted as an attack to their activities and raised concerns about the continuation of public support in this sense. As further elaborated in section 6.2., the high political volatility reinforced farmers' determination to work independently from the state, avoid depending on particular programs and develop autonomous projects.

5.4.2. The role of the municipality

These last paragraphs present some considerations around the municipal engagement in local food initiatives. This section firstly reports farmers' representations of the municipality, mostly perceived as a monitoring agent, often adopting, what can be referred as, a paternalist approach to its relation to the farmers (exemplified by the way in which rules are set and farmers accompanied in their adoption). In a second moment, I explore the different

faces of the municipality, alias why it is difficult to determine whether the municipality is supporting local food practices or not.

The municipality was mainly represented as a monitoring body, responsible for the control of local products sold in the city (as well as broader local bureaucratic processes). In several cases, farmers affirmed to interact with the municipality only when inspections are operated in public farmers' markets. In these occasions, municipal employees usually look at the permits of the producers and their eventual certifications. They also monitor the products exposed on the stands and whether the local (sanitary) rules are implemented correctly. As summarized by Sandra, an employee of the COPTEC (extension services for local agrarian reform settlements):

> In farmers' markets, the municipality is dealing with inspections, other bureaucratic works such as sanitary controls and helping with the logistics. That is how they participate. We also need their approval when we want to sell in a new location. In the end, many things are up to them.
>
> Sandra, *Interview*, 10.03.16

The municipality authority confirms (or rejects) producers' legitimacy to sell and always maintain a certain control over the production, processing and commercialization processes of local food. A good example in this sense is the changes occurred in the agro-ecological farmers' market of José Bonifácio in the last months of the fieldwork. At that time, the municipality had started undertaking a stricter implementation of a municipal resolution of 2012 establishing that all producers selling in agro-ecological farmers markets needed to certify their organic production. However, some of the producers did not have such certifications yet and were consequently expelled from the market. These producers were given the permission to sell on the other side of the street but forbidden to integrate the farmers' markets until they would regularize their situation. This process symbolized the strengthening of municipal control over agro-ecological farmers' markets and a stricter implementation of municipal laws in relation to the commercialization of organics. As commented by Jorge, an employee of the CAD:

> Since a few years, the municipality is particularly active in the organization of farmers' markets and their regulation. In my department, we evaluate sanitary standards of processed products of family farmers and help manage organic certification schemes and organic farmers' markets. We work with resolutions developed at the municipal level, which match with the national rules of course. This resolution on organic certification is from 2012 so it is very recent.
>
> Jorge CAD, *Interview*, 30.04.16

However, the CAD is also helping them to make the necessary changes to comply with the current legislation. Jorge explained:

we support the producers of the metropolitan area of Porto Alegre by visiting them on their farms, informing them, giving them advices […]. We also organize courses to teach them what do we understand by quality, in terms of sanitary standards.

Jorge, *Interview*, 05.04.16

Following the arguments of some respondents, these procedures could be understood as a quite paternalistic approach of the municipality, attempting to explain to the farmers what to do and to guide them towards a stricter compliance to these rules. In this perspective, I remember being quite impressed by the wording of a municipal employee:

> When we see that they are doing some things that do not fit with the program we tell them: no, this is not working like this. And we help them to make things better for them. We say: it is not like this, let's change this. We like to tell them all this and talk about it.
>
> Rejane, *Interview*, 14.04.16

In this reflection, the knowledge of the municipality is presented as the one to be followed and it symbolizes the extent to which, even within alternative and/or local food initiatives, the farmers are pushed to adapt to dominant and homogenized practices. I argue that these mechanisms are making producers dependent on the supervision and the approval of the municipality, teaching to producers how to fit into the system and often putting on the side the preservation of their tradition and identity. I was particularly touched when, during on farm visits in Lami, four different families showed me the reforms they had performed in their kitchens in order to get legally authorized to sell their processed products. Some of them had even constructed additional structures. Several respondents were quite critical of such process which, according to them, was not fitting with the situation of family farmers as they were designed for other types of producers. For example, two producers in Lami, Silvana and Esquiletti, explained that they were qualified enough to try to make the reforms without the assistance of the municipality. Silvana explained:

> I am an agronomist and I think that I can manage to makes these changes without the CAD […]. Their goal is to help but they try to transform what you do. I see how it goes with the producers they are following: they go on their farm all the time, they try to homogenize their procedures […], they try to teach and become indispensable.
>
> Silvana, *Interview*, 26.05.16

Finally, it is important to underline that assessing whether the municipality is being supportive of local food practices in the city region was much more difficult than expected. As a matter of fact, the municipality was depicted as an entity with many faces, with many departments and employees, all playing a role in the definition of the municipal agenda. If, on one hand, some departments are strongly engaged in supporting the family farmers of the city region and developing more localized food practices (e.g., Marco Aurélio's division of the DMLU), others appeared as fostering a very contrasting development of the city. For example, many departments supported the expansion of the urban area of the city, which represents a significant attack to the producers situated in the metropolitan area. As a matter of fact, the farmers within Porto Alegre mentioned that they are suffering from the increase in construction sites characterizing all areas in the outskirts of the city. The comment of Eliseo is a good example of such concern:

> Our farm in now surrounded by houses. They are constructing a lot there [in the neighborhood of *Lageada*] and very close to our property. It is becoming difficult to produce in Porto Alegre nowadays. It is still possible only in a few areas of the city

Eliseo, *Interview*, 29.03.16

Several farmers such as Juca, Silvana, Marco Aurélio (DMLU) and two Emater representatives mentioned that the expansion of the city and the changes in the classification of the different areas of the city (increasingly more urbanized) is related pressure made by the Real Estate industry. In their comments, the municipality was depicted as an organization serving the interests of these groups, perceived as the more powerful economic agents of the city. For example, pointing at construction sites in Lami, Silvana observed: "Look, it is like this for years now… they are constructing, constructing… I don't know if they really want us to produce here [in the area of Lami] anymore." (Silvana, *Fieldnotes*, 28.05.16). Drawing on Dupuis & Goodman (2005), it is important to consider that, even when sponsoring local food initiatives such as farmers' markets, the agenda of the municipality is determined by specific political interests. A good example is this sense is the comment of Jorge on municipal support to the *feiras modelo*. The farmer explained that these markets are key for local politicians to maintain a good contact with their electors:

> This project is the apple of the municipality's eyes. Why? Because it is a project directly linked to the population. On average five million people per month circulates in these markets and this is really good for them [local politicians]. They are fascinated by this kind of project because they can have a direct contact with the people that vote for them. That is why all of them have a special attention for the *feiras modelo*.
>
> Jorge, *Interview*, 05.04.16

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that a part from comments in relation to public procurement and the CAD, most farmers did not strongly associate their activities (and local food practices more generally) to the municipality. When I asked more specific questions to its regard, many respondents evoked its function as a monitoring agent. To this regard, the farmers pointed out that the municipality usually held a different representation of local food, which reflects national guidelines and calls for a regulation and standardization of local food provisioning. These representations were often contrasting with the ones of the farmers, which perceive local food as, among other, a tool for preserving their traditions and identity. However, most of them needed to adapt themselves to these representations and practices by, for example, normalizing their processing activities. More generally, the municipality was depicted as a multi-faceted agent, as some of its departments supported their local food initiatives and others hindered their continuation.

6. Discussion

The aim of this thesis is to explore farmers' social representations around local food and their influence on the systematization of local food practices. I use the concept of social representations mainly drawing on the theorizations of Durkheim (1898) and Moscovici (1988) to identify how farmers code their reality based on their (both individual and collective) identities and interests. In line with Howarth (2006), I also attempt to identify their nature as consensual or conflictual representations by pinpointing the differences between these representations and the dominant social order. Underlying these distinctions helps stressing farmers' capacity to deconstruct dominant representations of food, contest their relations to power, resist and transform food practices. This approach also allowed to investigate, based on the perspective of the farmers, Porto Alegre context specificities around the definition, practice and governance of local food. By following the reflections of authors such as Dupuis & Goodman (2005), Allen (2010) and Tregear (2011), contextualized analyses are indeed central for progressing knowledge on local food networks and LFSs. The following paragraphs firstly resume the results presented in chapter 5, by discussing, in the light of the theories, the meanings, practices and governance mechanisms that farmers associated to local food. In a second moment, I connect these findings to answer the general research question that guided the research: How do the social representations of local food by family farmers shape the development of the City Region Food System in Porto Alegre?

6.1. On local food meanings and practices

As reviewed in section 5.2., based on the design of the research and the reflections of the respondents, local food is defined as what family farmers produce, process and commercialize in the city region. All participants agreed that local food practices are opportunities for family farmers to better market their products and avoid dealing with (large-scale) intermediaries. Local food is indeed often associated with direct selling initiatives and to the development of producers' associations. Both of these processes require an active engagement of farmers outside of their farm and are depicted as chances for collaboration and empowerment. Several farmers also agreed that local food initiatives represent opportunities that only few can access. Their development is tightly related to matters of demand and logistics, usually facilitated in city regions (when compared, for example, to the context of more isolated farmers). At the same time, the results also present some divergences in the meanings and functions that farmers (and group of farmers) associate to local food. The following lines resume the most significant divergences which emerged in the data by comparing the perspectives of the producers of the feiras modelo with the ones of agro-ecological farmers.

By taking part to the *feiras modelo*, producers aim to market their products locally because this represents the best opportunity to integrate the current food system while maximizing their profit. They usually adopt representations and practices which do not clash with the dominant order, exemplified by the use of the *papel moeda*. The latter is an example showing the way in which local farmers might use the tools of the dominant system

in their favor and let multinational companies directly engage in local food initiatives. This example also stresses how, in several local food practices, the boundaries between local and global are difficult to discern. In line with the arguments of Dupuis & Goodman (2005), *papel moeda* represents a proof that dichotomous distinctions between local and global food need to be reconsidered. As advanced by the authors, local food practices should not be considered as "local resistances against a global capitalistic logic but as a mutually constitutive, imperfect, political process in which the local and the global make each other on an everyday basis" (Dupuis & Goodman, 2005, p. 369). In the representations of the farmers, these partnerships between local initiatives and worldwide famous companies increase the legitimacy of local food and the recognition of the *feiras*. The support of these companies is depicted as a mean of modernization which allows the *feiras* to resemble more to supermarkets. From their point of view, this is what makes consumers feel more at ease, because little disruptive with their everyday practices (e.g., allowing them to pay with a credit card). Farmers also perceive the homogenization processes that these sponsorships imply (e.g., standardization of farmers' stands and uniforms; presence of the logo of these companies all over the material used) as a way of creating a brand and reproducing dominant marketing logics. In this perspective, drawing on Swyngedouw (1997), local (food) is not incompatible with globalization and often remains open to the deployment of a "neoliberal glocal logic".

At the same time, the considerations of some farmers of the *feiras modelo* also help to recognize that local cannot be defined as a space of tolerance and inclusion per se (e.g.: Hinrichs, 2003; Allen, 2010). Several farmers and small retailers of the *feiras modelo* explained that taking part to this initiative was quite a challenging and bureaucratic process. They described that it involved obtaining several certifications and being selected by the municipality. They also pointed out that many other farmers had not been selected and had therefore to continue working with CEASA and/or other local intermediaries. I argue that these reflections showed that, again, these farmers acknowledged to be among few, privileged producers having the necessary courage and organizational skills, which changing commercialization strategy might require. These comments also prove that the development of local food initiatives is far from automatically realizing justice in the food system as many local farmers might remain excluded from its definition. Authors such as Cortes & Silva (2010) and Cornwall & Shankland (2013) argue in this sense, highlighting how individuals' habits of engagement are key in determining people' capacity to directly engage in novel societal experiences (e.g., city councils). In their studies (focusing on participatory governance), they stress that "the introduction of new institutions and practices does not obliterate older cultural forms" and that part of society might remain excluded from the construction of novel practices (even when these are theoretically being developed through a democratic and participatory approach) (Cornwall & Shankland, 2013).

On the other side of the spectrum, most agro-ecological producers often referred to local food as a broader societal project. In their representations, the concept of local food usually comprehended the ones of organic, socially and environmentally sustainable food production. Most of them expressed the feeling to belong to a broader struggle for more sustainable food production and distribution. According to them, local food practices are giving them the possibility to make new experiences in this perspective, talk about them and

divulgate their representations of the world. Differently than the producers of the *feiras modelo*, agro-ecological farmers had quite conflictual representations with regards to the dominant food system (and its "culture of supermarkets"). Most of these farmers mentioned that the practices associated to the dominant food system (e.g.: the use of agro-chemicals) are deeply unsustainable and that new food socio-spatial projects need to be carried out, allowing both producers and consumers to live a healthier life. From their rather dichotomous standpoint, local food is represented as a quality turn in food supply through which farmers are finally able to escape from the pressure of intermediaries and becomes central for proposing alternative food production and distribution methods (e.g.: the commercializing edible flowers). By constructing new knowledge and practices (e.g.: creating awareness around organic food in public schools), these farmers redefine their identity in opposition to the globalized food system and its power dynamics. In line with what has been by Jodelet (1991), their representations of the world and their identities are developed in a relational perspective, and their antagonism to the globalized food system is functional to sustain their particular construction of reality. In contrast with what presented above with regards to the farmers of the *feiras modelo*, for these farmers, developing practices which break with the everyday food habits of urban consumers can make the latters feeling more at ease. In spaces such as agro-ecological farmers' markets, consumers can evade conventional relations to food and people can rediscover the importance of socialization around food (e.g.: by dialoguing with the farmers). Most agro-ecological farmers also emphasized the importance of working together and engaging in autonomous projects. From the perspective of farmers such as Boca and Graciela, this is particularly important to differentiate their commercialization strategies but also to distant themselves from the logic of (agro-ecological) farmers working in farmers' markets coordinated by the municipality. Boca and Graciela underlined that their work was different than the one of these farmers because they adapted their prices to the necessities of their consumers and making profit was not among their first priorities. On the contrary, producers working in farmers' markets co-managed by the municipality were depicted as sharing different representations, closer to dominant logics of food provisioning (e.g.: switching to agro-ecology in order to make higher profits). The fact that farmers commented on such differences among agro-ecological producers shows that some of them recognize that their conflictual representations and innovative local practices distant themselves from dominant food practices to different extents, and that the creation of alternative pathways of food supply is not always motivated by the same intentions.

It is therefore also important to go beyond this dualistic presentation (stressing differences between agro-ecological producers and the ones of the *feiras modelo*) and conclude this section by underlying crosscutting similarities and contrasts in the definition of local food. Independently from their production and/or commercialization methods, some farmers had a more systemic understanding of local food practices than others. These farmers (among which Jorge, Graciela, Silvana) are all differently determined to foster local (and, for most of them, socially just) food practices. Belonging to larger groups and producers' associations helped defining these concepts and develop common representations and discourses around local food. The communalities among the representations of the farmers of the RAMA and the ones among the farmers of the Landless

Workers' Movement are all good examples in this sense. Amid other functions, associations support the development of farmers' feeling of belonging to a broader societal project. On the contrary, other farmers (mostly the ones working alone) adopt a more individualistic, short term and/or profit oriented perspective. For example, several comments of farmers such as Nilza and Eliseo highlighted the importance of local food practices for ameliorating their individual situation. In section 5.3., I referred to such attitude with the concept of "amoral familism", developed by Banfield (1958) to depict the inclination of certain people to "maximize the material, short-run advantage of the nuclear family" (Banfield, 1958, p.85). According to the author, this attitude emerges among people that, because of their habits and representations of the world, do not work or think towards a common good and consequently often cannot work in association with others. I believe that reflecting on their profiles is important to underline the diversity of farmers' perspectives brought together under the umbrella of local food.

Moreover, the tolerance and "diversity-receptiveness" of the farmers (when defining which practices and farmers were as local) also varied significantly across all typologies of producers. Drawing on the theorization of Hinrichs (2003), I identified that some farmers demonstrated a greater awareness of "the multiple meanings and struggles" that the notion of local food could embrace. These farmers were the ones open to broader definitions of local food, recognizing that local food practices could be various and open to change (e.g.: Graciela and other farmers from the Landless Workers' Movement supported the commercialization of organic bananas coming from settlements in the northern part of the state). This outlook can be opposed to the one of farmers such as Eliseo, promoting more "defensive" local food practices and willing to minimize internal differences (e.g.: Eliseo was quite critical of farmers from the Landless Workers' Movement which he did not considered as real farmers).

Finally, one interesting communality to be found among almost all observed farmers is the value associated to direct selling. In many of farmers' reflections, direct selling was strongly associated to local food as well as higher benefits for both farmers and consumers. As presented in section 5.1.3., several farmers also participated to public food acquisition programs but did not seem to attribute the same significance to these programs. During the interviews they often only briefly mentioned them and in the discourses of the farmers Getúlio and Boca (who participate to these programs), the distinction between the PAA and the PNAE was not very clear. This could be explained by the fact that the relations between the farmers and the purchasing entities are often mediated by producers' associations and that some farmers stay outside of the organization of these exchanges. For instance, producers *assentados* such as Boca and Graciela sell rice through the PNAE but the logistics are organized by the COPTEC, a local cooperative supporting the commercialization of the products of the settlement. Overall, it emerged that farmers engaged in both direct selling initiatives and public acquisition programs attributed more functions to the formers, which were presented as more than just a commercialization strategy. In most of their representations, direct selling was allowing farmers to socialize with their costumers, dialogue with them and get their work recognised.

6.2. On local food governance mechanisms

The political changes occurred in Brazil during the fieldwork surely impacted the results of the research, especially those related to (local) food governance. Even though most of my questions were inquiring into the role of the municipality in local food supply, many farmers made broader comments on the relations between family farmers, local food practices and Brazilian political parties. Also in this case, their reflections could be regarded as grounded on quite dichotomous representations of the (political) reality around them. Most of the time, the PT was presented as a key party for family farmers as it is perceived as fostering their recognition and participation into the public sphere. Most farmers mentioned that several PT's programs and politics are also contributing to the development of more sustainable food provisioning strategies based on local food practices (e.g.: the PAA and the PNAE). On the opposite side of the spectrum, the parties of the opposition (which were coming into power) were portrayed as defenders of the interests of large-scale producers and multinational companies. From the perspective of these parties, family farmers have little relevance in the economy of the country and are therefore almost invisible in their discourses around agriculture (and their representations of rural spaces). As a consequence, most of the farmers that took part in this research were openly against the impeachment of the president Dilma Rousseff, regarded as an attack to what had been achieved by the PT and family farmers in the last decades. However, the farmers showed disparate reactions to the impeachment: while the farmers of rural social movements were actively engaged in several protests and occupations in support of the PT, others reacted by distancing themselves from the whole political debate. This was the case of farmers which also underlined that local food initiatives should be organized and governed autonomously. From their perspective, farmers should not rely too much on the support of the state and develop instead stronger forms of cooperation. Over time, I perceived that such arguments also appeared in the discourse of farmers of rural social movements (particularly close to the PT), which started doubting about the continuity of the programs that they were taking part to.

With regards to the municipality, the examples given by the respondents, firstly shed light on the importance of abandoning a monolithic vision of the local government. As it was proved by the development of several contrasting projects (and little harmonized city level regulations), municipal engagement in local food practices varied significantly from one department to the other. Moreover, the type of engagement of the municipality was very much dependent on the representations and approaches of single municipal employees (some of which believe more than others in the self-organizational capacities of local farmers). Overall, most of farmers' comments referred to the departments SMIC and CAD, presented as monitoring agents of local food practices. It was mainly associated to the controls it operates in farmers' markets and, more generally, to the over-regulation of local commercialization processes. In the perspective of most farmers, the presence of municipal employees (at farmers' markets or in meetings of producers' associations) symbolized the determination of the state to keep a control over local initiatives and ensure their compliance with its standards (e.g.: sanitary requirements to sell both in farmers' markets and participate to public acquisition programs). At the same time, the municipality is present to support them acting accordingly to national legislation such as sanitary standards. For

example, several producers of RAMA are working closely with the employees of the municipal department CAD to adapt their processing infrastructures and procedures to the regulations in force. By organizing courses and working closely with the farmers, the CAD engages the farmers in the process of homogenization, and, as mentioned by some respondents, modernization of their practices. CAD's approach was quite criticized by some farmers and other local actors stressing that its employees adopted quite inflexible and paternalistic behaviours contributing to farmers' subjugation to state regulations and the progressive abandonment of their traditions. In a way, these actors perceived this paternalism as a limit to farmers' contribution to local food governance and, consequently, a limit to its democratization. Based on these reflections, local governance for local food does not guarantee a more democratic engagement of farmers in the definition and organization of food supply. In the case of Porto Alegre, municipal engagement in local food practices supports their development (e.g.: through the opening of new farmers' markets and management of the PAA) but also often involves the standardization of local farmers' practices and, to a certain extent, forces the adoption of its representations of local food (e.g.: the need for adding preservatives to their jams). In this way, the local governance limits the individual choices of the farmers and silences their conflictual representations. That is why, the most oppositional producers such as the ones belonging to the Landless Workers' Movement often preferred to develop alternative commercialization initiatives which do not involve the municipality and through which they feel more free to work according to their own representations and rules. These more critical farmers, perceived these regulations as the impositions of urban bureaucrats which elaborated rules far from their rural reality.

6.3. Linking farmers' representations to the development of a CRFS

Overall, the data analysis revealed the multitude of social representations that the farmers of the city region developed around local food. Each of their reflections revealed different beliefs and interests that can be associated to local food practices. As a matter of fact, the meanings, practices and governance mechanisms think of in connection with local food varied from a (group of) farmer to another, based on their broader interpretation of reality. Most contrastingly, while some farmers perceived local food as a strategy for taking part to the current conventional food system, others viewed it as a step towards its progressive dismantlement. Direct selling local food was indeed regarded as a simple economic strategy, a mechanism to avoid intermediaries, a space for fostering more sustainable strategies of food provisioning, an arena for enacting a struggle against corporate companies, and much more. The heterogeneity among these representations (and their related practices) depended on the diverse social environment of the farmers and both their individual and collective histories, which had significantly impacted their understanding of the world and definition of their interests. For example, the farmers belonging to movements and/or associations had usually developed a common ideology (defined as a system of representations, based on Oktar (2001) in Howarth, 2006) and consequently associated similar meanings and functions to local food practices. This was the case of agro-ecological producers belonging to collectives such as RAMA or the Landless Workers' Movement, which

functioned, among other, as ideological schools fostering a specific (political) engagement of family farmers. In their perspective, joining forces and commercializing their products directly represented great opportunities to engage in broader societal changes by experimenting differentiated production methods (e.g.: agro-ecology) and divulgating unconventional food practices (e.g.: recipes with spontaneous or wild edible plants). Differences among social representations also involved disparate visions of the role of the state in local food practices and their governance. For instance, according to the farmers of the *feiras modelo*, the support of the municipality had been key to the development of local food supply and enhanced their integration in the market. On the contrary, for farmers that preferred to commercialize their products through direct partnerships with local private agents, connecting to the municipality was depicted as a limit to their creativity and autonomy. Expanding the discussion beyond food governance, I realized that these different outlooks on the local government also influenced farmers' mode of engagements into (local) politics. Particularly in this period of strong political volatility, the farmers assumed quite radical positions: while some farmers engaged in political demonstration in defense of the PT (and its programs promoting family farming and local food provisioning), others distanced themselves from the political debate. By observing farmers' reactions to the instable political situation, it became clear that, as underlined by Howarth (2006), (their) social representations are not fixed but fluid visions, constantly re-adapting to external changes. For example, as the reforms enacted by the interim government were becoming public, most farmers started stressing the importance of engaging in autonomous local food initiatives. Indeed, already in May[18], much more comments were made in this direction, which demonstrated a change in their understanding of the government, now represented as an opponent rather than a supporter. More generally, the farmers increasingly questioned the utility of state-sponsored local food initiatives, as political changes seemed to be hindering their continuity.

With this research, I was also curious to look at the link between farmers' representations and the systematization of local food practices. Assuming that the development of a City Region Food System can enhance a quantitative and qualitative increase of local food practices (e.g.: harmonization of regulations affecting the commercialization of local products), I wanted to understand whether the farmers of the city region of Porto Alegre are thinking and/or working in such direction. The heterogeneity of social representations illustrated in chapter 52 revealed that the interviewed farmers, by associating different meanings and practices to local food, often lack a common vision in this sense. Even though most farmers' collectives developed shared understanding of their experiences (also in relation to local food provisioning), these usually formed differing local

[18] On the 12.05.16, the mandate of the president Dilma Rousseff was suspended after 55 senators voted in favour of the begin of an impeachment trial. On the same day, the vice president Michel Temer (PMDB) was nominated as interim president and announced his new ministers. For more information to this regard, refer to: Watts, J. (2016, May 12). Dilma Rousseff suspended as senate votes to impeach Brazilian president. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/may/12/dilma-rousseff-brazil-president-impeached-senate-vote

food networks with little cross-cutting visions and projects. Most importantly, most farmers belonging to a specific network or initiative usually perceived the other local farmers as part of a different enterprise. This demarcation was particularly strong between agro-ecological and conventional producers as well as between agro-ecological farmers selling in private spaces and the ones working in public farmers' markets (sometimes accused by the formers to contribute to the élitization of local organic products). On the other hand, one could argue that some farmers were united by their participation to local public acquisition programs. However, they did not seem to be feeling very close to these programs, which were depicted as being of great support but were not incorporated into the personal discourses and projects of the farmers. Moreover, various elements of uncertainty were associated to these programs such as questions around their sustainability and durability in the long run. Overall, I argue that the lack of communal representations and foresights across farmers' collectives and initiatives complicates the development of a more harmonized and coherent local food project. At the same time, highlighting the heterogeneous representations of the farmers can help us reflect on the feasibility and necessity of such project. What if the systematization of local food initiatives is not (perceived as) functional to the development of the projects of local farmers? What if local farmers do not perceive common necessities? What if this project requires the homogenization of their beliefs and practices (which, in this thesis, can be exemplified by the standardization of farmers' processing procedures prescribed by the municipality)? Why the systematization and institutionalization of farmers' practices often implies the conformation of their activities to a fixed set of standards? What if these processes, by limiting the creativity and autonomy of the farmers, are silencing their oppositional representations? What if they are diminishing our possibility to transition towards more sustainable and democratic food practices?

Overall, with these questions I stress that the desirability and sustainability of a CRFS needs to be assessed by taking into account the different interests and representations of the agents and collectives at its basis. Such analyses can help us understand the diversity and dynamism of local perspectives as well as teach us to appreciate the ideological battles and contrasting practices that the construction of a local system might contain and engender. In this perspective, following the arguments of authors such as Dupuis & Goodman (2006) and Born & Purcell (2006), as well as the reflections of several respondents, the development of a system within the local (or the city region) should not be thought as a procedure of homogenization (through, for example, the definition of fixed sets of standards) but, on the contrary, as a terrain for creativity, disobedience and democratic confrontations.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis research was to investigate and discuss the social representations that farmers of the city region of Porto Alegre associate to local food. The analysis of their comments firstly showed how their definition of local food relates to their broader understanding of the food system, often characterized by quite dichotomous representations of its agents and processes (e.g.: classified as good/bad, local/global, small/ large). For most respondents, local food was firstly depicted as a strategy for family farmers to resist to power dynamics and exclusion mechanisms inherent to the Brazilian conventional agri-food system. For several of them, local food was also a way of opposing themselves to this model and experiment alternative, more sustainable practices of food provisioning. Moreover, I have illustrated that farmers' representations were being developed as part of their, both individual and collective, histories, while remaining fluid and subject to change. Doing my research throughout a period of extreme political volatility was particularly interesting in this perspective. It helped capturing the dynamicity of farmers' representations, as some of them started to call into question their links to the state and discuss on the fragility of its support to their category and practices. The change of political parties in power contributed to the radicalization of several farmers' positions, which, without questioning their support to the PT, started doubting about the usefulness of participating to state-sponsored programs. Most respondents were indeed calling for higher levels of self-organization and cooperation among farmers to secure the continuity of their (local food) practices. While this neoliberal turn in the national political agenda could correspond to a significantly constraint to the progression of differentiated food provisioning strategies, this period can also be regarded as a time of resistance. All farmers were determined to continue engaging in local food initiatives, develop new solutions and their opposition to the interim government united them in the struggle for preserving their category.

Analyzing the diversity and dynamism of farmers' social representations also shed light on the complexity that this might engender in the systematization of local food practices. To this regard, I concluded by arguing that the development of a CRFS should be regarded as a non linear process, in which different (and often clashing) interests, ideologies and practices might coexist. From this perspective, rather than trying to contain this multiplicity through the standardization of local practices, the CRFS could be a space for farmers to engage in battles and dialogues around their local food practices, and reflect, with the rest of society, on the significance and transformative potential of their experiences.

7.1. Limitations of this research

It is important to identify some of the limitations of this research. A first set of arguments relates to my personal biases as a researcher. Porto Alegre was a new context for me. This surely prejudiced and/or influenced my understanding of local farmers' experiences. To this regard, I also need to underline that my Portuguese skills were limited, especially in the beginning of the fieldwork. However, I had the feeling that these boundaries were compensated by the fact of getting quickly integrated into the local community. Surprisingly, my Italian origins helped me to get closer to many local farmers, which were Italian descendants and wanted to talk with me about the history of their family. Moreover, I have to recognize that I shared many of the views of the interviewed farmers and that I also tend to adopt quite dichotomous representations of the world. Surely this influenced the way I presented myself, the way we communicated and consequently also affected the results of the research.

A second set of limitations is relative to the content of the research. Firstly, it is relevant to point out that focusing on two determined set of practices (direct selling and public acquisition programs) was a personal choice linked to my curiosity to look especially into state-civil society interactions around local food practices. As a consequence, the research did not include a consistent review of local food practices involving the private sector such as the activities of local restaurants, shops and food banks. However, based on the interviews, private companies also give a consequential contribution to the development of the local food market. Further research should be done to explore local stakeholders' beliefs and practices associated to such practices. Similarly, a part from the case of the *feiras modelo*, the research did not include the study of practices involving local intermediaries. In line with the argumentations of many respondents, I might have operated an overlap between the concept of local food and direct selling. Moreover, several people brought my attention on the limitations of working with non-native concepts such as the ones of CRFS and/or LFS. Based on the literature review, only few Brazilian academics and practitioners researched local food practices in terms of system, which, might reveal the unsuitability of these notions. However, using these concepts might also foster discussions around how the notion of system can be used and understood.

Finally, by focusing on the perspective of the farmers, this study only partially reviews the overall socio-political dynamics associated to local food in Porto Alegre. As a matter of fact, the development of local food practices is also shaped by many other (local) stakeholders. Moreover, as underlined by Born & Purcell (2006), there is nothing intrinsic to specific governance levels:

> Localization is a scalar strategy that can result in a range of outcomes -for example, social justice, oppression, food security, ecological destruction- depending on which agenda is advanced as a result of the strategy. If scale is a strategy, it is not a goal and it should not be thought of as such.
>
> Born & Purcell, 2006, p.197

In line with these arguments, I believe that further context specific empirical explorations are needed to research various stakeholders' interests and agendas associated to local food.

These investigations can help to shed light on the different societal outcomes that food system localization might engender in each context.

7.2. Final reflections

Researching in Porto Alegre was an extremely enriching experience. The overall process was facilitated by the openness and kindness of the farmers, which guided me in this new context. I had the opportunity to understand Brazil from their standpoint as well as to experience part of their struggles. In particular, getting to know farmers from the Landless Workers' Movement gave me the opportunity to participate in their protests against the impeachment of the president and follow this process closely. Experiencing Brazil through their perspectives also gave me the possibility to question and re-construct part of my representations of reality. Most importantly, spending time with people guided by strong ideological convictions was refreshing, inspiring and reminded me of the importance of actively engaging in societal discussions.

As a neo-researcher, I faced significant difficulties in defining the aim of the research and formulating pertinent research questions. I also encountered several challenges in the development of my recruitment strategy. To this regard, I believe that working with a more heterogeneous sample could have contributed to raise additional questions and increase the validity of the thesis. Assessing the saturation of the data was also a complicated process. I had the feeling that prolonging the phase of data collection could have brought many new insights and/or helped relativize previous considerations (especially in a period of high political volatility).

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Appendix

Picture 1 Feira modelo, Largo Zumbi dos Palmares, 09.03.16

Picture 2 Poster at the entrance of the regional direction of the Incra, Av. Loureiro da Silva, 515, 10.03.16

Picture 3 Woman from the landless Movement protesting during the occupation of the regional direction of the Incra, 10.03.16

Picture 4 A farmer from the Landless Movement demonstrating against the impeachment, 13.03.16, Parque da Redenção.

Picture 5 The PT state depute Preto at the 13th opening of the harvest of agro-ecological rice, Assentamento Filhos de Sepé, Viamão, 18.03.2016

Picture 6 Dodò on his farm, Lami, 20.03.16

Picture 7 On Juca's farm, Lami, 20.03.16

Picture 8 The feira of the collective Mulheres da Terra, UFRGS, 29.03.16

Picture 9 Farmers from the Landless Movement at a public screening of the impeachment process, Praça da Matriz, 17.04.16

Picture 10 At the agro-ecological farmers' market of José Bonifácio, 21.05.16

Picture 11 At the agro-ecological farmers' market of José Bonifácio, 21.05.16

Picture 12 Silvana picking edible flowers on her farm, Lami, 28.05.16