

FIRST WORLD FARMERS MARKETS REPORT





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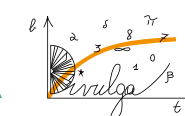
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FARMERS MARKETS IN THE WAKE OF COVID RICHARD MCCARTHY

POWERED BY CENTRO STUDI DIVULGA



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FOREWORD

This report provides precious information and analyses of the farmers markets, while presenting a superb opportunity to understand the incredible experience that has influenced the agri-food systems in many parts of the world.

It reveals the experiences of smallholder family farmers in rural areas as well as the big urban companies, that step by step have become a wide spread phenomenon at a large scale, contributing but also changing the relation between producers and consumers.

The first intuition was to go back to value the territories with focus on the quality of not only the products but more importantly, the human relations.

All these elements created trust and once again consolidated the credibility and the reputation of the famers markets among the population/citizens.

This is about social capital that doesn't take the quality of the products for granted, that cares about the stories of production, values the uniqueness of the local gastronomy as an alternative to homologation of the food industry that is why that every single Farmers Market is a unique and inimitable world of itself. As it has been highlighted many times, in markets, the citizens become co-producers and the result is not always evident for all. The Famers Markets are the squares

of trust and their contribution to the economy is now very significant. In many countries having the possibility to directly sell the products is one of the main sources of income support to the farmers, fishermen and livestock producers. And this is how a so-called multifunctional agriculture could be achieved.

Obviously there are still many problems to be solved and this report will help us to better understand some of the needs that should be addressed immediately in order to improve our current reality. Today this is our actual Challenge; how to strengthen and build on these valuable experiences? How to expand this initiative and to which areas? The information and the analytical work that you will find in this excellent piece of work can definitely help responding to these questions.

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PREFACE

THE TALE OF FARMERS MARKETS: A LOCALIZED AGRIFOOD SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE

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Territorial anchoring of agrifood chains is not a new phenomenon, but in the last years it has known a huge increase and has been identified as alternative to globalized way of food provisioning. The launch of the new rural paradigm (OECD, 2006) has empowered this trend, through the establishment of new territorially anchored markets. As emphasized by Horlings and Marsden (2014, p.6), this re-territorialization process results in *new linkages among sectors, businesses, producers and consumers, markets, and society*.

Questioning re-localization processes of food supply chains means to excavate anchoring factors, which may be declined through the Hess' (2004) three-fold embeddedness: societal, network and territorial. Societal embeddedness deals with the cultural background, network embeddedness describes farmers' networking skills, while territorial embeddedness considers the extent to which an actor is 'anchored' in particular territories or places (Methorst, 2019).

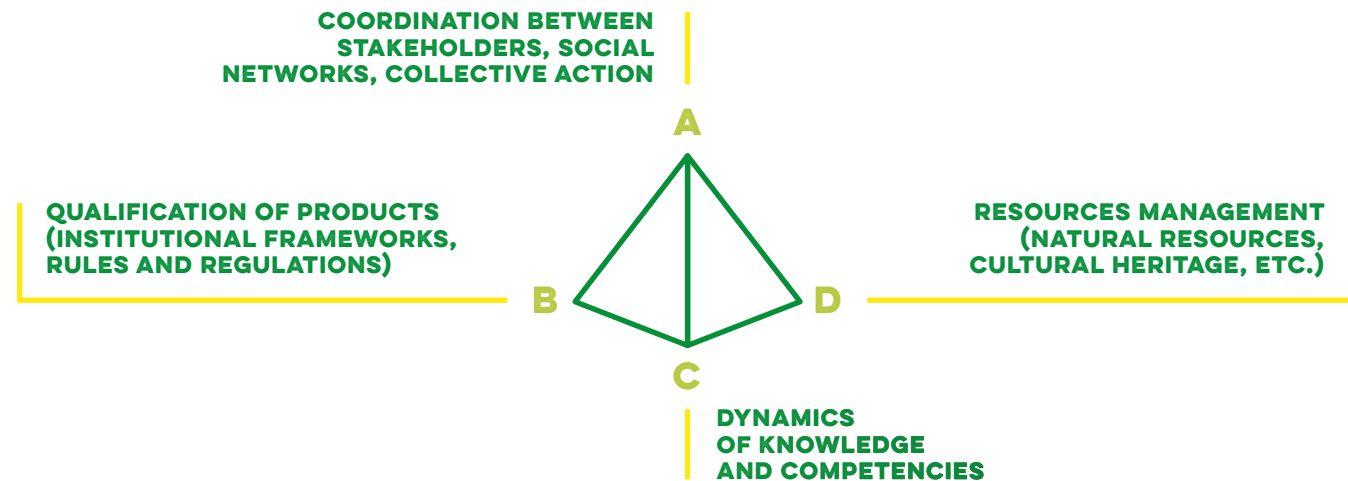
With the purpose of providing a rigorous analytical framework, the farmers markets phenomenon may be analyzed through the lens of the Localized Agrifood Systems (LAF), which are defined as "*production and service organizations (agricultural and agri-food production units, marketing, services and gastronomic enterprises, etc.) linked by their characteristics and*

operational ways to a specific territory. The environment, products, people and their institutions, know-how, feeding behaviour and relationships networks combine within a territory to produce a type of agricultural and food organization in a given spatial scale" (Muchnik, 1996). This definition raises also governance issues, which are crucial for organizing the markets, through increasing territorial coordination, which brings about economic, social and environmental benefits (Mantino, Vanni, 2018).

Set against the LAF background, the analysis should take into account the building pillars of the approach represented in figure 1 (Muchnik, 2009; Muchnik, De Sainte Marie, 2010).

A The first dimension deals with the collective dimension behind the setting up of farmers markets, which asks for collective actions, activated through the mediating role of social capital. Social capital enables actors and allow to act in a better coordinated way (van der Ploeg *et al.*, 2008), by stimulating coordination and networking between stakeholders, which represents a key factor to strengthen farmers markets. Nonetheless, a successful collective action is difficult to realize (Sanz-Cañada, Muchnik, 2016), due to a set of critical variables, underlined by Ostrom (2007; 2010), such as heterogeneity of participants and past negative reputation, that may put the initiative at risk

FIGURE 1 – FARMER MARKETS WITHIN THE LAF APPROACH



Source: Muchnik, 2009

of failure. However, farmers markets success mostly relies on the role of small and medium farms, which may benefit from collective action, so reducing the “risk of subtractability”. This happens thanks to face to face communication among actors bringing about the development of relational assets.

B The second pillar concerns qualification of products, which involves institutional frameworks, rules and regulations to be shared by all participants to the short food supply chain.

As far as farmers markets are concerned, this process is inspired by the idea of granting authenticity of products. Indeed, the “quality turn” (Goodman, 2003) has modified patterns of consumption through privileging local products, which represent the variety of different rural contexts, expressing alternative quality attributes (traditional and local products, freshness (Belletti, Marescotti, 2020)). To this end, farmer markets are provided with quality convention setting up the rules of the game, with the purpose of granting quality through collective action and commonly shared regulations. Moreover, it should not be neglected that quality building in farmer markets is a social construct, which is realized through dynamic relational mechanisms grounded on qualification convention (Marescotti, 2000) aiming to share skills and competencies in the evaluation of quality.

The skills and competencies at stake here are not conventional and not formal, as underlined in the following pillar.

C The third pillar regards knowledge and competencies involved in farmers markets.

This knowledge is usually assimilated to contextualized knowledge, which is drawn on local experience to be transmitted to the consumers.

More precisely, we agree with Crevoisier’s (2015) perspective of *significant knowledge*, which is economically valuable through diffusion and sharing and take on concrete forms being embedded in human interaction (Jeannerat, 2013).

As pointed out by Corsi *et al.* (2018), “*hereby authenticity and trust are directly provided by the producer-consumer interaction*”, through a domestic convention based on face-to-face and stable relationships, built either on trust, or on frequent transactions and on physical and cultural proximity (Belletti, Marescotti, 2009). This allows a reciprocal exchange of significant knowledge between producers and consumers through a dynamic process of quality co-construction.

D The fourth dimension deals with the management of natural resources. Farmer markets provides consumers with products which are mostly issued by environmentally friendly agriculture, through the setting of rules of production inspired by sustainable agricultural practices, respecting local variety and biodiversity.

This paves the way to alternative business models able to valorize local agro-biodiversity products (Scaramuzzi *et al.*, 2019) and to boost the adoption of agroecological pattern by farmers (Begiristain *et al.*, 2013). Additionally, as underlined in the “food miles” discourse, the reduced length of the supply chain is expected to bring about a sensible reduction in the environmental impact of long-distance transport (Corsi *et al.*, 2018; Schnell, 2013). Therefore, purchasing products from farmer markets implies a sort of “*tasting sustainability*” (Giampietri *et al.*, 2016).

Based on these theoretical considerations, the report on farmers markets over the world witnesses how this

phenomenon is designing a new geography of food, by building up a sound alternative to the conventional way of food provisioning. The Syal approach seems effective in explaining anchoring and embedding processes in the farmer markets, providing evidence of their “*alternativeness*”. As a matter of fact, the report investigates four domains of analysis, concerning not only descriptive aspects (structural and service domain), but also key topics related to a performance multidimensional analysis involving supply chain (fair distribution of the value at farm level), informational (reducing informational asymmetries) and environmental issues (promote agronomically sound and sustainable agriculture).

Therefore, the report represents a first important attempt to describe initiatives of collective marketing farming set against the reconnection perspective, which make consumers and producer more proximate from both geographical and social points of view.

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FARMERS MARKETS IN THE WAKE OF COVID

RICHARD MCCARTHY

The global pandemic wages war on public spaces. Prior to the crisis, individuals sought the warm embrace of community spaces, like farmers markets, precisely because they deliver mountains of casual and close contact with others. Instead, fear and COVID-19 restrictions put market organizers in the unenviable position of having to rethink how best to deliver the tactile experience of placemaking, vendor incubation and consumer access to fresh food. Individuals suspend shopping errands, farmers grow weary of facing the public in crowded city centers, and public officials deem markets as gathering events, first and foremost (thus sidelining their commercial and food access functions). Overnight, market managers all over the planet were forced to pivot operations. Amidst the lockdowns of 2020, reports from the world's public markets were alarming. In South America, governments singled out large public markets as dangerous institutions uniquely responsible for the spread of the virus. In Bangladesh's wet markets, organizers abandoned indoor operations to conduct commerce out in the open with safe social distancing.

Since the markets rely upon the gathering of the public, the fear to gather with others strikes at the core of operations. Vendors are both vulnerable victims and carriers, but so, too, are shoppers. With these two

constituencies saddled with fear and uncertainty, market managers had to act quickly. Throughout the United States, when many seasonal markets were scheduled to reopen for the spring season, instead, they encountered major roadblocks. In order for social and commercial activity to commence, local and state governments must first deem the activities as "essential." In response, many of the United States's 8,000 farmers markets lobbied local and national officials to deem the markets as essential. Markets lobbied decision makers to be recognized as essential services. Once recognized, they could resume operations (assuming that both shoppers and farmers would participate). During this boot-strapped campaign for survival, market leaders encountered public officials who had never fully understood whether markets are special events or places for commerce. While special events may be special, commerce (of foodstuffs) is essential.

Winning this recognition has proven to be critical for the survival of American farmers markets (most of which are small, limited-resource NGOs).

It is no small understatement that the pandemic has wrought havoc upon farmers markets.

And yet, the truly remarkable surprise (to date) is how well farmers markets have responded to the challenges. By design, farmers markets are agile operators: often expanding during the height of season and shrink-

ing to the bare minimum number of vendors during the low-ebb of the seasons or during the climatic uncertainty of drought or storms.

Perhaps, it is the innate agility to respond to real-time changes that has prepared farmers markets to respond to the pandemic with extraordinary creativity and leadership. While it is too early to report on the state of farmers markets internationally in the wake of the pandemic, below are several insights that may prove to be bellwether examples in leadership:

- In Italy, the national network of farmers markets organized beneath the banner of Campagna Amica report that despite the challenges to operate in the scary and fluid conditions of the pandemic, they report growth during this year of social distancing. Sales are up by 20 percent; markets are attracting 15 percent more people; and while much of retail is spiraling down, the organization has opened 43 new farmers markets in one year.

- In the USA, one of the oldest and largest network of farmers markets is in New York City, where its GrowNYC family of 50 plus markets also reports on similar positive outcomes and telling insights during the pandemic:

- During the rollercoaster month of May 2020, when the governor issued the “pause” in normal life on March 22nd, the New York City Greenmarkets were feeling the effects of public unease.

One indicator that serves as a proxy for the general public confidence in markets is to track the public benefit dollars in the markets (SNAP or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). The Greenmarkets utilize SNAP (and the incentives that increase the buying power of low-income shoppers) as a means to reach the general public. Sales in March 2020 were down by 20 percent (as compared to March in the previous year).

- After concerted efforts to secure the “essential services” monicker, GrowNYC noticed telling trends in the city’s many markets:

- By May 2020, SNAP sales had increased to numbers 20 percent higher than the previous year.

- GrowNYC’s flagship markets (e.g., Union Square in Manhattan and Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn) experienced major contractions in sales. Why would this happen? Many of the shoppers these large markets serve had vacated the city for safety reasons and relocated in what is called Upstate New

York (rural areas where many urban dwellers maintain second homes).

- Meanwhile, farmers markets in upstate locations experienced a 25 to 35 percent increase in sales (mimicking the demographic moves to rural areas during times of crisis).

- By contrast to the free-fall in flagship location sales, smaller neighborhood markets (serving mixed income populations) found sales increased by 20 to 30 percent. The lesson here is that farmers market networks that devote resources to serve consumers in their neighborhoods are better able to weather conditions in which people are unable to or afraid to venture far from home. This dynamic of drilling down closer to home has played itself out all over the planet.

For instance, impromptu markets have sprung up in Hanoi neighborhoods in Vietnam so as to reach neighbors unable or unwilling to travel to the large wet markets.

- Evidence of the farmers markets ability to respond to evolving conditions, many markets across the USA have reported how their commitment to public benefit cash transfers (SNAP) has grown from strength to strength. Again, in New York City, Greenmarkets in low-income neighborhoods have seen their SNAP transactions increase by over 50 percent.

With more than 200,000 New Yorkers now on Disaster SNAP, the Greenmarkets operating out in the open, with newly developed social distancing policies and embedded in neighborhoods made the markets an attractive alternative to ordering online or venturing into large and uncertain indoor supermarkets.

- Farmers markets pivoted in other interesting ways too:

- Many markets introduced or expanded fledgling efforts to offer online sales, pick-up and delivery of groceries.

- Many markets began to operate a uniquely American shopping experience of “drive-through farmers markets,” akin to the nostalgia of drive-through fast food establishments.

Shoppers pre-order products, market staff organize volunteers and vendors to pack and place in car trunks items that have been pre-ordered.

Market organizers, like Birmingham, AL’s Pepper Place Farmers Market, are currently exploring whether to maintain a hybrid walk-up and drive-through market into the future.

Of course, these sorts of pivots create undo stress upon market organizations to perform miracles with relatively few resources.

After all, if policymakers were unclear about farmers

markets’ true nature (food delivery providers or special event planners), so too are private funding sources and the general public. However, the peculiar tripartite nature of farmers markets (serving communities to provide safe public spaces, serving consumers with access to fresh food, and serving farmers with points of sale) has served as something of three-legged stool on which markets have stabilized operations during extremely unsturdy times.



INTRODUCTION

THE ROLE OF FARMERS MARKETS IN BUILDING UP NEW PROXIMITIES

INTRODUCTION

This report tries to analyze the importance of alternative localized food circuits as opposite to the globalized way of food provisioning, by emphasizing the relevance of farmers markets, which have revitalized many rural communities all over the world. Farmers markets are platforms where farmers bring their produce, with the purpose of directly selling them to the final consumers at affordable prices. This form of market provides a sound alternative mostly for small scale farmers and have the importance of revitalize local agricultural communities through re-emphasising relationships between consumers and producers (Gorton, Salvioni, Hubbard, 2014; Belletti, Casabianca, Marescotti, 2012).

As a consequence, they are based on territorialization strategies of food provisioning, well opposite to globalized ones. Globalized agrifood supply chains are typified by placeless foodscapes (Morgan *et al.*, 2006), where the role of territory is neglected. As Wiskerke (2009) points out, consequences of this mode of food provisioning are:

- A progressive **disconnection** among consumers and producers of food and services;
- A process of **disembedding**, that is of deterritorialization, which has brought about so-called food desert or place-less economies;
- **Disentwining**, which refers to the disconnec-

tion of producers of goods and services from each other's.

At the opposite site, we find localized modes of food provisioning, dominated by small farmers and organized around localized agrifood system, characterized by geographical proximity of farming, processing, distribution and food consumption. In this note, 'local' is not simply reduced to geographical proximity, but it is extended to territorial proximity.

Drawing on "proximity approach" (Rallet, Torre, 2004; Torre, Wallet, 2014), farmers' markets secure a dynamic process of localization bringing about organizational proximity, strictly attached to geographical proximity (figure 1).

Behind the geographical proximity there is not only a metric approach to space, but short distances between places of production and places of consumption there is an evident purpose of providing consumers with fresh, local products, with no impact on the environment. Organizational proximity refers to relational sphere and assumes interdependencies among local actors which rely on the two logics of belonging and similarity:

Belonging occurs when two members from a given organization are close to one another in the sense that they interact and because these interactions are facilitated by the rules or behavioral routines that they follow. Similarity implies that two individuals are close

FIGURE 1 –
TERRITORIAL PROXIMITY IN FM



to one another because they share one and the same systems of representations or even identical objectives (Filippi *et al.*, 2011).

In our analysis, logics of belonging fits to explain how farmers share rules and behavioral routines, synthesized by the idea of selling local fresh and quality food. On the other side, the logics of similarity in a farmers' market involve relationships between producers and consumers: similarity stems from the reconnection perspective, which align consumers' and farmers' systems of representation and objectives: that is to provide fresh local food (the farmers) and to be sure to buy local as synonymous of quality products (consumers). Territorial proximity is also fostered by innovative milieus, delimited geographical spaces where innovation takes place, thanks to both material and immaterial resources.

More precisely, innovation involves either resources that are traditionally considered as "extra-economic" and untraded interdependencies (Storper, 1997).

As Kebir *et al.* (2017) point out, new approach to innovation is grounded on social legitimization, with special reference to sustainability.

This means that paths of innovation are co-designed by both producers and consumers, within the so-called socio-technical transition processes (Geels,

2004). Nonetheless, this is not an easy transition, in that, building up short food supply chains implies activating new farming styles through "radical changes to knowledge and skills material assets, organizational patterns, communication practices, etc. To that end, the direct interaction with consumers as well as the co-operation and co-ordination with other farmers become crucial" (Brunori *et al.*, 2013).

Under this perspective, through strengthening short supply chain, it possible to provide a contribution to the sustainable development goals of Agenda 2030. As pointed out by UNIDO (2020), through farmers' markets it is possible to promote responsible food consumption and production, to contribute to poverty alleviation, fostering gender balance, to contribute to inclusive, resilient and sustainable cities and combating climate change. Moreover, farming activity channeled through FM is identifiable as multifunctional in its pure meaning, in account of its multiple role (van Huylbroek, 2007):

- Economic, that is to produce healthy food;
- Environmental, that is to provide food with low environmental impact;
- Social in that it creates a strong link between rural and urban contexts and revitalize communities, through reconnecting producers and consumers.

The new vision behind the development of farmers markets all over the world has brought about the relaunching of alternative techniques of marketing, more focused on the social relationships among actors. Brunori and Marescotti (2007) label this new approach as "radical marketing".

The new perspective keeps a distance from manipulative approaches of conventional marketing, by putting forwards new ethics of consumption.

As posited by Brunori and Rossi (2000):

"The common feature of these initiatives is the role given to involvement in business as a part of a more general strategy aimed at change society: all of them try to change the existing power relationships and to introduce social, ethic, and environmental values into business".

As a consequence, the common trait of the new approach of radical marketing is the link-value, which recall the tribal marketing approaches of Albert Cova (1997), which are oriented towards the creation of new communities of consumers, pooled by the idea of being motivated by the link value and strong social relationships. More precisely, as Brunori and Marescotti (2007) underlines:

With its "link value", Cova (1997) works out the anthropological concept of "totem" - a symbol which represents social links - and opens a quite new field

of research. To take this approach seriously, in fact, implies revising not only the logic of the marketing, and namely of communication, but also the way the production process is designed.

Against this background, a sound and inclusive analysis of farmers' markets needs to be multidimensional and has to take into account the various aspects motivating both producers and consumers. Therefore, in the report we will put forward a methodological approach aiming at evaluating diverse pillars around to which a farmer market effectively works.

METHODOLOGY OF ANALYSIS

In order to take into account all aspects shaping farmers' markets, we have carried out an analysis which is articulated in the following domains:

1 Structural domains, concerning the organization and the structures of the FM (localization in urban/rural areas, number of vendors, how often do FM take place, etc.)

2 Efficiency domain, which relates to three main dimension (Belletti, Marescotti, 2013):

- logistic-distributional, where the efficiency is drawn the capability of reducing costs of food

distribution, so raising the aggregate value to be perceived by the producers and consumers;

- informational, that is the capability of addressing quality attributes to the shoppers;

- environmental, which assumes that local fresh products have positive impact on the environment and provide consumers with products coming from sustainable agricultural practices.

3 Service/marketing domain, which analyses the set of activities aiming at supporting vendors;

4 Cultural/social domain, takes into account the FM's cultural and social dimension, referring to the impact on local rural economies and on the relational asset developing among producers and consumers.

With the purpose of identifying common traits of the farmers' markets all over the world, a questionnaire has been submitted to a sample of farmers markets in various countries: Australia, Denmark, Ghana, Italy, Japan, Norway, UK, USA. In the following chapters we will analyze the results in each country. This analysis has been integrated either by interviews with expert witnesses and documents published on relevant scientific circuits.



CHAPTER 1

FARMERS' MARKETS IN THE USA



1.1 INTRODUCTION

Farmers Markets have not a unique profile and mission in the world. As a matter of fact, in North America, local food has been identified in literature as “*driven by a political agenda that opposes the organization of the industrial agri-food system and is directed at establishing an alternative food economy based on the principles of social justice and environmental sustainability*” (Fonte, 2008).

In recent years, USA is gathering lots of useful information thanks to both USDA and to dedicated programs, like the Farmers Market Metrics program at the Farmers Market Coalition (Wolnik *et al.*, 2019). According to the USDA dataset, in the last decades, farmers’ markets have known a huge increase, moving from about 1,755 in 1994 to more than 8,755, with a percentage increase of 398,9%. Table 1 reports the States with the highest number of farmers markets.

TABLE 1- STATES WITH HIGH NUMBER OF FM

CALIFORNIA	768
NEW YORK	673
MICHIGAN	344
ILLINOIS	339
OHIO	336
MASSACHUSETTS	323
WISCONSIN	316
PENNSYLVANIA	308

Source: USDA

TABLE 2 - PRODUCERS/VENDORS BENEFIT FROM FARMERS MARKET PARTICIPATION

BENEFIT	%
INCREASED PRODUCT RANGE	77.4
INCREASED OVERALL PRODUCTION	67.4
INCREASED FARMERS MARKET PARTICIPATION	59.5
SOLD TO RETAIL MARKETS	46.1
SOLD THROUGH OTHER DTC MARKET	45.6
MADE ECONOMIC USE OF IMPERFECT PRODUCTS	39.6
INCREASED NUMBER OF EMPLOYED WORKERS	32.8
BEGAN RENTING KITCHEN FACILITIES	19.3
SOLD TO INSTITUTIONS	19.2
TRANSITIONED TO ORGANIC	15.1
INITIATED VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTION	14.7
TRANSITIONED FROM WORKING PART TIME	7.9
OTHER	7.7
NO BENEFIT	0.3

Source: USDA

The huge increase of FM in USA is related to the high impact at both micro and territorial level: as far as the last one is concerned, in the last national farmers’ markets week (August 2-8 2020), figures demonstrate how FM stimulate local economies. As a matter of fact, they posit that “*growers selling locally create 13million jobs per 1\$ million in revenue earned. Those not selling locally create 3*” (www.farmers-marketcoalition.org). At individual level, the strong encouragement in participating farmers’ markets is attributable to a set of benefits for producers and vendors, the most important of which are evidenced in table 2. The majority of farmers (77.4%) underlines the increased product range as the greatest benefit, strictly linked to the increase of the overall production posted in 67.4%. One third of producers or vendor declare to have employed other workers after adhering to FM. Another relevant information observable from the table is that almost 40% of farmers who were able to channel their imperfect products not sellable on conventional retailing systems. Therefore, an “imperfection” in their produce may engender an economic

return in a farmers’ market. Moreover, this aspect has positive impact on food waste reduction, if considering that only perfect products are admitted in the modern distribution channels. Most of farmers participating to farmers’ markets come from less than 50 miles, so configuring a clear meaning of the term “local”. Sometimes producers coming from 150 or even more miles are admitted (see, for instance, *12 south farmers market*). In what follow our purpose is to clarify the main characteristics taken on by the FM in USA, through a methodological approach grounded on the multiple dimensions qualifying FM’s activities.

1.2 METHODOLOGY

In order to catch the various characteristics of the FM in USA, we carried out an analysis grounded on both primary and secondary data. As far as secondary data are concerned, we refer to the dataset released on August 17, 2020 by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Agricultural Statistics Board, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Year of survey is August 2019.

A set of useful information are available to analyze the structural.

As far as cultural and value domain primary data were required. To this end, we used ethnographic approaches, which allow to understand relational processes and embeddedness of human beings in such processes. To this end, structured and semi-structured interviews have been realised with expert witnesses (Aoyama *et al.*, 2010). Interviews have been conducted with the following experts:

- Ben Feldman, Farmers Market Coalition
- Darlene Wolnik, Helping Markets Grow and Farmers Market Coalition
- Richard McCarthy, Think like pirates and Slow food international

Furthermore, information from direct interviews have been integrated through documentary researches (Scott, 2006): this methodology analyses text, documents (newspapers, magazines, internet sources, etc.) containing relevant information concerning the object of study. Content a semiotic analysis was carried out in order to identify relevant themes for our study (Bailey 1994; Manning, 2004).

1.3 RESULTS

1.3.1 STRUCTURAL DOMAIN

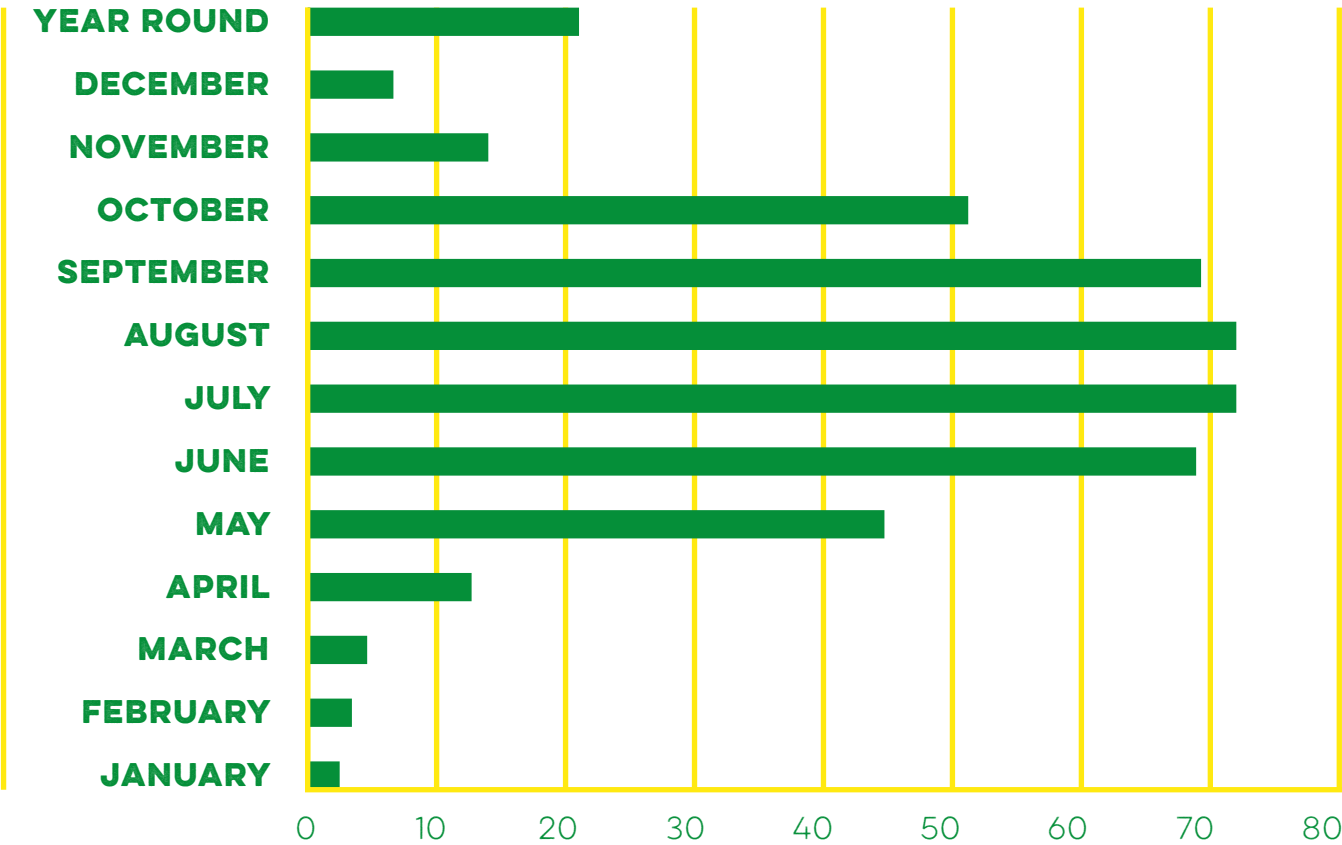
According to the USDA in 2019 8,140 farmers’ markets were working in the USA. As expected, the working period is prevalingly concentrated in May-October months (figure 1), with a peak in July and August (72%). Nonetheless, a significant percentage of markets provide service all round year (21%).

Geographical dimension adds further information, by splitting farmers’ markets according to urban, suburban and rural contexts (table 3).

As a matter of fact, in rural areas, concentration in summer months is really high and the percentage reaches 86.5% and 87.2% in July and August respectively. As a consequence, it is not surprising that in rural areas the all year round operation is really limited with small percentage (7.8%), while in urban areas the share of FM in activity increases to almost 26%.

As far as daily opening, we can see from table 4 that the highest percentage of farmers works one day per week with a prevalence for the day of Saturday (52.4%). The average amount of working hours per week is 7.1, with a peak of 8.2 in nonmetropolitan counties with an urban population greater than 2,500. In more than a half of FM, this number remains stable, while in more than 37% it has increased.

FIGURE 1 - MONTHS IN OPERATION – 2019 (%)



Source: USDA

TABLE 3 - MONTH IN OPERATION IN DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

MONTHS	URBAN	SUBURBAN	RURAL
	%	%	%
JANUARY	3.1	1.9	0.3
FEBRUARY	3.8	2.5	0.9
MARCH	5.3	3.6	2.2
APRIL	13.2	13.4	8.0
MAY	42.2	50.3	43.9
JUNE	64.5	78.2	78.1
JULY	66.8	81.3	86.5
AUGUST	66.6	80.6	87.2
SEPTEMBER	65.2	74.8	82.3
OCTOBER	50.3	53.2	52.5
NOVEMBER	15.4	12.1	7.9
DECEMBER	7.3	4.9	5.0
YEAR ROUND	25.9	11.9	7.8

LEGENDA
RURAL: NONMETROPOLITAN COUNTIES THAT WERE COMPLETELY RURAL OR HAD AN URBAN POPULATION OF FEWER THAN 2,500.
SUBURBAN: NONMETROPOLITAN COUNTIES WITH AN URBAN POPULATION GREATER THAN 2,500.
URBAN: METROPOLITAN COUNTIES

Source: USDA

TABLE 4 – DAYS AND HOURS IN OPERATION (%)

	DAYS IN OPERATION (%)	AREAS	HOURS IN OPERATION
MONDAY	5.4	URBAN	6.8
TUESDAY	16.2	SUBURBAN	8.2
WEDNESDAY	19.1	RURAL	7.2
THURSDAY	19.8	USA	7.1
FRIDAY	14.0		
SATURDAY	52.4		
SUNDAY	10.6		

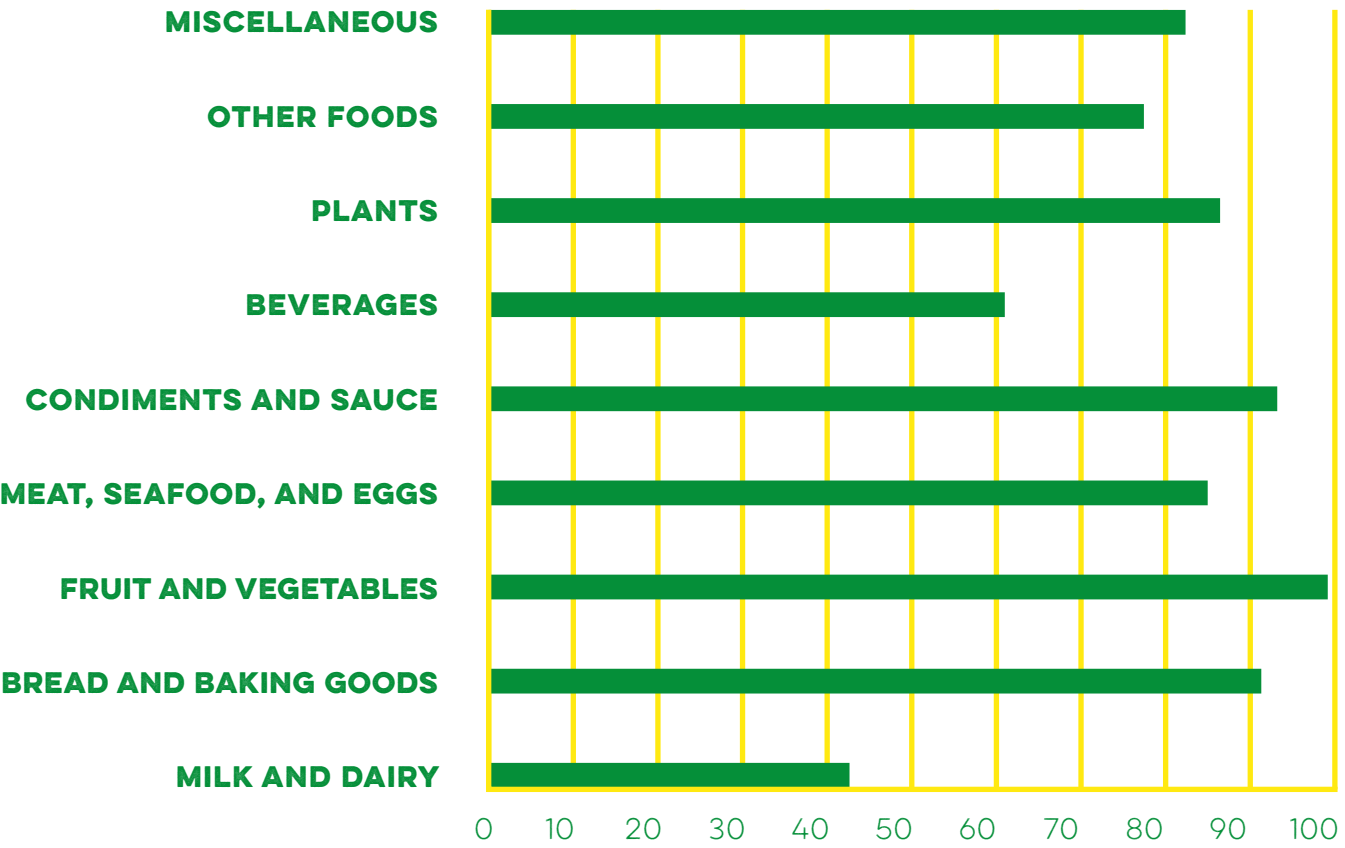
Source: USDA

70% of vendors receive no technical and managerial support or assistance in FM. As far as products to be sold are concerned, there is not a unique perspective, in that some farmers’ markets only sell local products. Figure 2 evidences the various categories of products consumers can buy in the FM. Fruit and vegetables are the most commonly sold products: in almost all FM in the USA it is possible to find fruit and vegetables; very important is also the share hold by condiment and sauce (above all honey and canned fruit or preserves) and by bread and baking goods. Less relevant are dairy products (cheese is the most important), which are sold in 44.2% of the FM. Among plants, which is possible to buy in 86.5% of the FM, cut flowers and plants in containers prevail. An important aspect of USA FM concerns quality cues, that is how vendors signal quality to the consumers. As evident from the graph, ‘locally-grown’ seems the most effective and used mark farmers use to attract final consumers, so confirming the fundamental meaning of the word “local”. As a matter of fact, despite about 40% of the vendors adopt organic farming certification, it seems that

organic is less used certification scheme with respect to local. Grass-fed and free range certify almost half of animal product, while the same percentage certifies gluten free products. As far as Federal Nutrition Program Benefits Accepted are concerned, table 5 evidences that about one third of markets usually accept Women, Infants and Children's (WIC), Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

1.3.2 EFFICIENCY DOMAIN
Efficiency domain is split in three dimensions: informational, logistic-distributional, environmental. As far as **information efficiency** is concerned, our research confirms FM are able to convey quality attributes incorporated in the supplied products to final consumers. Consequently, FM provide a sound tool to reduce transaction costs attributable to informational asymmetries about food quality (Hardesty, 2008). This happens thanks to an interpersonal world based on reciprocal trust: quality and relationships seems to be the winning spot for USA farmers markets “*Know Your Farmer/Know Your Food*”¹ is the better exam-

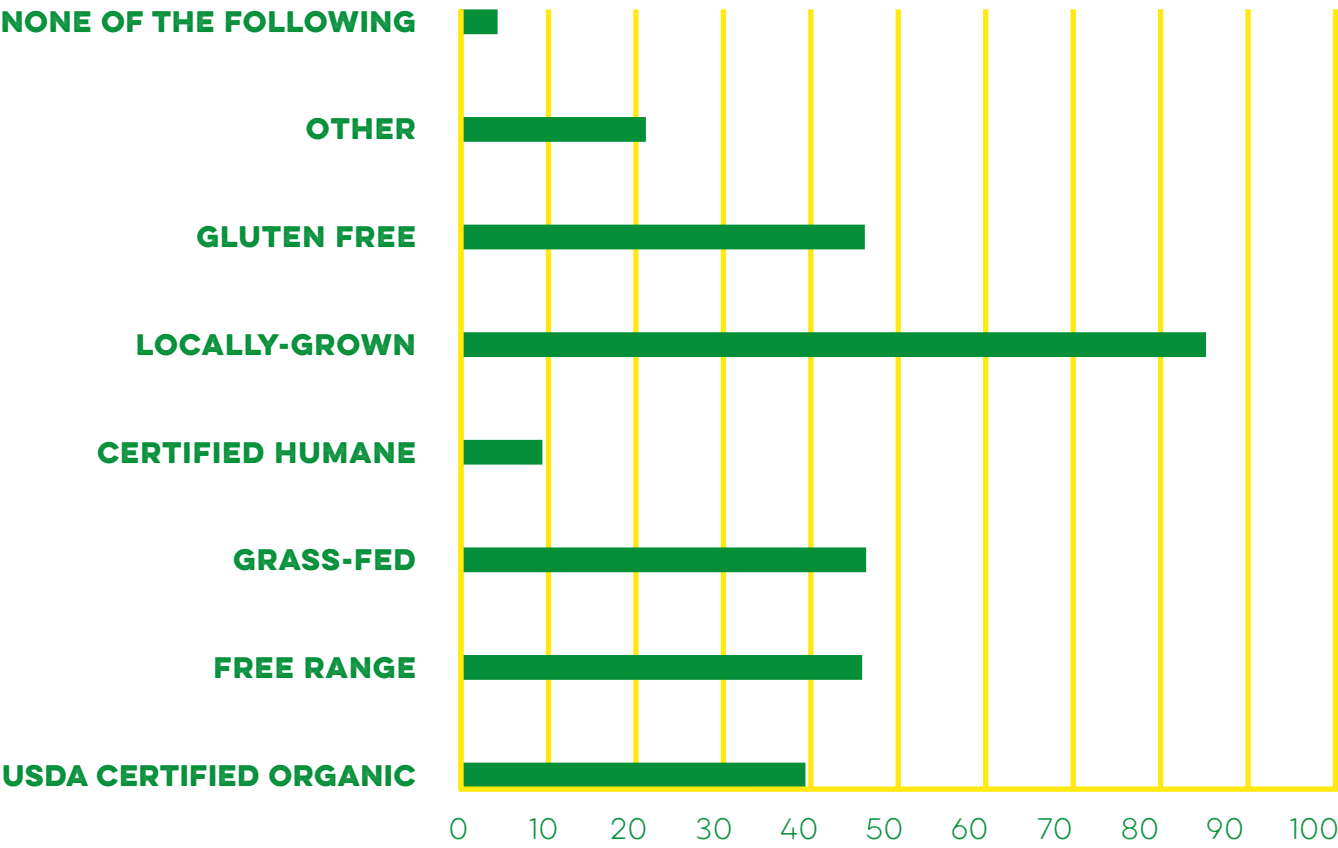
FIGURE 2 – PRODUCTS SOLD IN THE USA FARMERS’ MARKETS



Source: USDA

¹ <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/KYFCompass.pdf>

FIGURE 3 – CERTIFICATION SCHEMES IN THE FM



Source: USDA

TABLE 5 – FEDERAL PROGRAM BENEFITS ACCEPTED IN FM

WIC		
	NO	YES
N.	6,038	2,717
%	69,0	31,0

SFMNP		
	NO	YES
N.	5,890	2,865
%	67,3	32,7

SNAP		
	NO	YES
N.	5,809	2,946
%	66,4	33,6

Source: USDA

ples of intentional promotion around quality and relationships. As Darlene posits:

“While cleanliness of food (related to chemicals, organic versus conventional) may play a role, it has consistently fallen behind quality and personal relationships. These are promoted via the infrastructure design (direct contact between vendors and consumer), and promotional messaging of the market organization itself”.

Sharing information about nutrition, freshness, culturally significant, and taste to their shoppers: these are the main marketing activities carried out by the market managers.

As far as **distribution of value along the supply chain** is concerned, this is realized at both vertical and horizontal levels:

A At vertical level this means:

- for the final **consumers**, to spend the same or less with respect to the conventional markets. As a matter of fact, pricing policy is really convenient for consumers, as demonstrated in various researches, which empirically compare prices at farmers’ markets and other stores. To confirm this, a survey conducted in the last farmers’ markets week in USA (2-8 August 2020) low income consumers declares that *“FM had better prices than the grocery stores”*.

However, the perception among non-shoppers is still markedly different than the reality, based on other studies; often non-shoppers expect that the markets will be more expensive. According to a study carried out by the Food Trust association (Philadelphia), on a sample of customers, 87% of them declared to spend almost the same or less, with respect to conventional points of sales in the same area. Likewise, another research carried out in the Southeast and Appalachian region shows that the prices at the farmers’ markets are systematically lower than the prices of mainstream supermarkets (Flaccavento, www.ruralscale.com);

- for the **farmers**, to be awarded relatively higher prices with respect to modern retailing system and, consequently, to perceive higher level of income. As a matter of fact, Feldman and Wolnik (2019) demonstrate how farmers’ markets boost farm viability, despite in some cases profitability is downsized by relatively high marketing costs (Hardesty, Leff, 2010). However, pricing policy is under the complete farmer’s responsibility.

In oneFM’s website (www.12southfarmersmarket.com) it is recalled that *Pricing of goods sold at the market is the sole responsibility of the individual vendor. Fraudulent, dishonest, or deceptive merchandising or collusion to set prices among vendors may be grounds for forfeiture of the right to do business at the Market.*

B At horizontal level, many studies confirm how farmers’ markets represent an opportunity for small-size farms, which take also advantage for improving their entrepreneurial skills through training activities carried out within the FM (Hardesty *et al.*, 2016).

As a matter of fact, for smallest farms FM represent the main source of income, while for the largest one it is an alternative to complement their business (Feldman, Wolnik, 2019).

As far as **environmental dimension** of efficiency analysis is concerned, it refers to the idea that local food is healthy and environmentally friendly and sustainability is indirectly mentioned in communication strategies adopted by producers (Garner, 2018). As reported by Farmers Market Coalition²:

“Sustainability is the overarching theme in this system. Farmers engage in sustainable farming practices to produce healthy food to sustain the local community, who in turn provide the money necessary to sustain the farmers. Each shares in the success of the other in a mutually beneficial relationship that has become a model for sustainability”.

² <https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/>

Short food supply chain provides a great contribution to reduce pollution, if one thinks about the globalized agrifood chains. Moreover, FM boost biodiversity preservation, like in the example of the increase in mesclun mix greens and lettuces, the rise of arugula, heirloom tomatoes, etc. Furthermore, food miles have changed consumers’ diets and boosted land preservation strategies. Actually, small farms are rewarded for their management of soil, water, and general management. Finally, it is not possible to neglect that a great share of products sold at FM is organic: according to the USDA data set on farmers’ markets, 28% of USA farmers market provide organic products, so contributing to adopting sustainable agricultural practices with positive environmental externalities.

1.3.3 SERVICE/MARKETING DOMAIN

FM provide farmers with a set of services and marketing support to better perform in local markets.

More precisely, a diversified set of activities are provided, ranging from simple technical assistance to improved marketing and business strategies.

The following table 6 illustrates some of these services.

1.3.4 CULTURAL/SOCIAL DOMAIN

As emerges from previous pages, FM represent a sound basis for boosting transitions towards sustainable agricultural models following local place-based food systems approaches. Under this perspective, it has been widely recognized in literature that FM can be identified as ecosystems of innovation, in account of multi-actor and cross-sectoral innovations niches which are able to foster this transition towards sustainable agricultural systems (Pigford *et al.*, 2018).

This process is the outcome of cultural and social pushing factors. First of all, FM is a typical example of successful radical marketing initiative, which affects consumers’ preferences: in the USA, empirical analyses demonstrate that many consumers have changed their purchasing behaviours after attending a FM. This is also because FM provides positive effects on the health of local consumers. As reported by Farmers Market coalition, during the FM week (August 2-8 2020), proximity to FM is associated with a lower body mass index. A second element of relevance is associated to the development of relational capital. Consumers attending FM have, on average, 15-20 interaction per visit. This is in line with previous publications underlying how FM increase both social and human capital, by increasing knowledge about food thanks to (FEED, 2012):

- direct contact with knowledgeable market producers
- wider experience of seasonal local produce

TABLE 6 - MARKETS ASSISTED PRODUCERS/VENDORS WITH TRAINING AND/OR BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT

TYPE	
MERCHANDISING	41.0
MARKETING	72.9
PRODUCTION PLANNING	20.5
BOOKKEEPING/ACCOUNTING	16.7
FOOD HANDLING SAFETY	53.6
ON-FARM FOOD SAFETY	19.8
VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTION/PROCESSING	16.6
BUSINESS PLANNING	24.0
OTHER	21.6

SERVICES/FACILITIES	
PROVIDED	%
SHARED KITCHEN SPACE	7.1
STORAGE SPACE	14.0
PACKAGING SERVICES	3.6
PROVIDED OTHER	8.0
NONE OF THE ABOVE	87.1
MANAGED	
CSA PROGRAM	15.9
FOOD HUB	6.0
NEARBY SATELLITE MARKETS	13.8
MOBILE MARKET	7.1
MANAGED OTHER	4.7
NONE OF THE ABOVE	79.2

Source: USDA

- multiple transactions that provide opportunities to discuss food and food-preparation with producers and other shoppers

“FEED thus underscores the value of the farmers’ market as a platform for food education. The data indicate that the market is an effective vehicle for introducing shoppers to new foods, influencing the ways patrons shop for food elsewhere, and improving their ability to recognize and enjoy fresh produce. The Crescent City Farmers Market thus influences the social determinants of health and positively impacts human capital in its community” (FEED, 2012, p.8).



CHAPTER 2

FARMERS' MARKETS IN GHANA



2.1 INTRODUCTION

Farmers markets provide products grounded on multifunctional agriculture, which is gaining ground also in developing countries. If, on the one side, WTO and OECD (OECD, 2001; 2003) point out the multiple roles of agriculture (economic, social and environmental), on the other side, FAO contextualises its approach on developing countries by focusing on primary sector (FAO, 2000). More precisely, it emphasises its productive function in territorial contexts where food security is the priority. In other words, the original FAO approach is a context-related one, in that it considers the productive activity as the primary function of agriculture, but other secondary functions are mentioned, aimed at securing sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD) and, consequently, wellbeing of human society through poverty reduction.

Nonetheless, more recently, multifunctionality has been declined under a more “western” perspective, like in case of sustainable intensification in African countries (Leakey *et al.*, 2017).

Moreover, recent researches have underlined how also in developing countries it is possible to strengthen all the three function of multifunctionality.

Actually, in the COMACO (Community Markets for Conservation) experience in Zambia, Mfune *et al.* (2016) identify opportunities for empowering farmers through multifunctionality:

- from environmental point of view, by encouraging organic and high added value farming, preserving biodiversity and efficiency in the use of water;
- from a social point of view, by supporting small-holder farmers through empowering social capital and collective action;
- from an economic point of view, by adding value and gaining access to markets for small-sized farmers. As far as this last point is concerned, Authors quote (p.14): *Creating appropriate farmer-centered markets such as community markets allows agriculture to deal with these elements and contribute to resolving the perennial problem of unequal access to high paying markets.*

The emphasis on community markets opens great opportunities in relation to domestic markets. It has to be underlined that localised mode of food provisioning is a prevalent form in developing countries (Fonte, 2012), but, due to inefficiencies and other constraints, it is not always remunerative for small farmers. Nonetheless, recent studies have pointed out the presence of both traditional and innovative short marketing channels in developing countries (Moustier, Renting, 2015). In many rural areas, traditional local markets represent the main source of food security for rural population, despite traditional markets suffer inefficiencies like weight and measures issues which may en-

gender distrusts among actors (Antwi, Mutse, 2019). In some area of Africa, experiences of alternative food networks are becoming even more important, like in the example of Ghanaian pineapple vale chain, where a share of fresh juice is targeted towards local markets (FAO, 2014). Moreover, many urban centres, like Accra, represent a market opportunity for products in periurban agricultural areas.

Furthermore, as reported in a recent study conducted by Marras and Bendeck (2016), in Africa, short food supply chains, like street food vending and consumption, have proliferated in the last three and a half decades, in account of the growing urbanization. On the other side, hygienic and sanitary issues arise and have boosted wide reflection among policy makers.

Among innovative types of short supply chain, farmers' markets play a relevant role in securing either income opportunities for farmers and sustainable model of agricultural development. This characterises not only big urban centres, but it is also spreading out in small town. As a matter of fact, by adopting territorial approaches, recent literature on urban-rural linkages has started analysing the relevance of small town markets in boosting development in periurban areas (Lynch, 2018; Karg *et al.*, 2018).

Despite the fact that recently tertiary sector has gained ground in the economy of Ghana, agriculture is considered as a fundamental sector, accounting for about 33% of Ghana's GDP and more than 40 percent of its jobs (Thurlow, 2018).

Moreover, as pointed out by Thurlow (2018, p.31), *Agriculture is not going away; it is transforming. Subsistence farming may be gradually disappearing (...), but it is being replaced by a more dynamic, productive, market-oriented agriculture.*

According to FAO statistics, almost 77% of agricultural production is absorbed by five crops (cereals, roots and tubers, cocoa, fruit and vegetables); however, their competitiveness remains relatively low (Pauw, 2018). Actually, Ghanaian agriculture has been characterized by the predominance of small-scale farmers in rural communities, which has been keeping alive the debate as to whether small-scale rather than large-scale farming may provide sound basis of raising Ghana's agricultural sector.

If, on the one side, some scholars downsize the perspective of agricultural growth in Ghana till small-size farms will prevail (Collier, Dercon, 2014), contending that *"the world needs more commercial agriculture, not less"* (Collier, 2008, p.68), on the other side, smallholder-led approach to increase in agricultural productivity is invoked as successful for numerous

small farms, bringing about a good impact on rural economies and boosting people out of poverty (Rosegrant, Hazell, 2000; Hazell *et al.*, 2007).

Furthermore, previously small farms have known an autonomous transition towards medium-large scale farming over the years (Chapoto, Mabiso, Bonsu 2013). Nonetheless, transition paths have been constrained by limited access to both capital and land, then preserving the traditional structure of agricultural sector around the prevalence of small farms, especially in remote rural areas.

These constraints put at risks many small scale farmers in trading their products and reaching markets, then bringing about new strategies grounded on necessity diversification (Bosworth, Smith, McElwee, 2015) and community or village entrepreneurship (McElwee, Smith, Somerville, 2018). As a matter of fact, in Ghanaian rural communities, small scale farmers create markets on specific days, known as market days, as well as during some specific crop seasons to sell their farm produce.

Recent literature has pointed out the role of farmers' markets organizations in boosting small farms' competitiveness in African countries (Lutz, Tadesse, 2017). This chapter is set against this background and aims to analyse the role of farmers' markets in Ghana. The architecture of the chapter is in line with the previous one, in that it analyses the four dimension structuring a farmers' market.

2.2 METHODOLOGY

The analysis of farmers' markets in Ghana has been realised through the support of a questionnaire, which has been submitted to a sample of farmers' markets. Overall we gathered 25 valid questionnaires across the country. In the following paragraph we present the results, that are articulated according to the four domains of analysis: structural, efficiency, marketing-assistance, cultural-social.

The farmers' markets are mainly located in farming communities across the country.

The high farming communities in Ghana are situated in the following regions:

- The Northern Region;
- The Upper East Region;
- Upper West Region;
- The Brong Ahafo Region;
- Western Region.

The above regions are mainly known for crop farming, while the coastal regions, i.e. Greater Accra, Central Region, and the Volta Region are known for fish farming.

2.3 RESULTS

2.3.1 STRUCTURAL DOMAIN

Farmers' markets in Ghana represent a fundamental activity mainly oriented towards income integration. In few cases, it represents the only source of profits for farmers.

Price setting may be either autonomous, in that farmers decide the prices by themselves, or the prices are aligned to the guidelines defined by the markets.

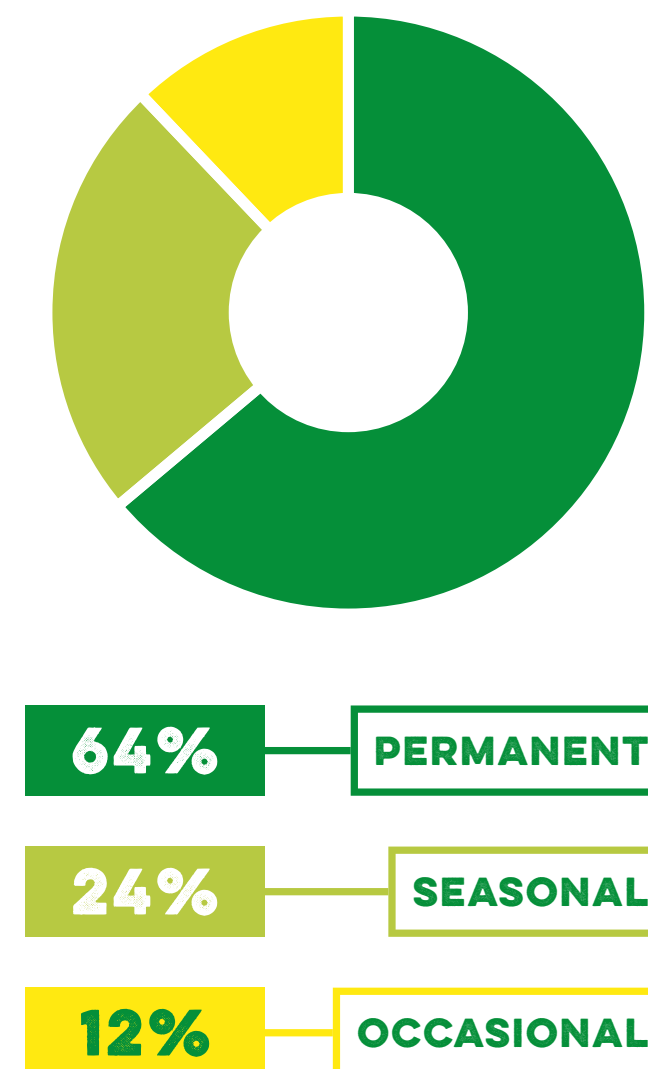
All markets include more than 20 vendors (except 1, which has 10-20 vendors) and the activity is prevalently permanent, as showed in figure 1.

As evident from the graph, 24% of markets are seasonal, while 12% are occasional.

The permanent activity is carried out as weekly (44%) or daily (32%) and it usually open all day.

Farmers participating to the markets are prevailing in the territorial agricultural systems, while only a small percentage of them is admitted from more distant areas.

FIGURE 1 – TYPE OF ACTIVITY



Usually the markets may host also other actors than farmers, so configuring despecialized markets.

Coherently with the Ghanaian agricultural specialization, products supplied at the farmer market are mainly fruit and vegetables, and, to a less extent, meat, dairy products and olive oil.

The farmers' market is usually managed by a director, who is in charge of carrying out several function, the most important of which are revealed in figure 2.

Administrative functions and the selection of potential vendors are the functions which have been found in most of Ghanaian markets (64%), followed by activities aimed at verifying quality sanitary standards in the products provided in the markets (60%) and at managing events and initiatives (56%).

Likewise, also the networking activities, related to the contacts with other markets' managers seem relevant in trying to build up a common strategy among the farmers' markets in this Country.

Less incidence is taken on by activities targeted either towards price monitoring/control and towards relations with institutions and consumers. Finally, financial activities are not relevant, being them practiced in only four out of 25 markets.

These data evidence some potential for upgrading managerial skills in farmers' markets.

As a matter of fact, in few cases agronomic skills have emerged as urgent in farmers' markets (3 out of 25 questionnaires), while managerial skills are claimed in 68% of interviewed, a higher percentage if compared with all the other countries examined (almost 60%). Similar percentage are found for training activities, aiming to upgrade marketing skills, while less importance is given to training concerning the increase of organizational efficiency and the acquisition of legal competencies.

Therefore, to summarize the "skills' gap", we may conclude that in managing Ghanaian markets, skills which are at the 'top of the pyramid' of the hierarchy of entrepreneurial skills seem to be strengthened, which means to raise the capability of (Vesala and Pyysiäinen, 2008):

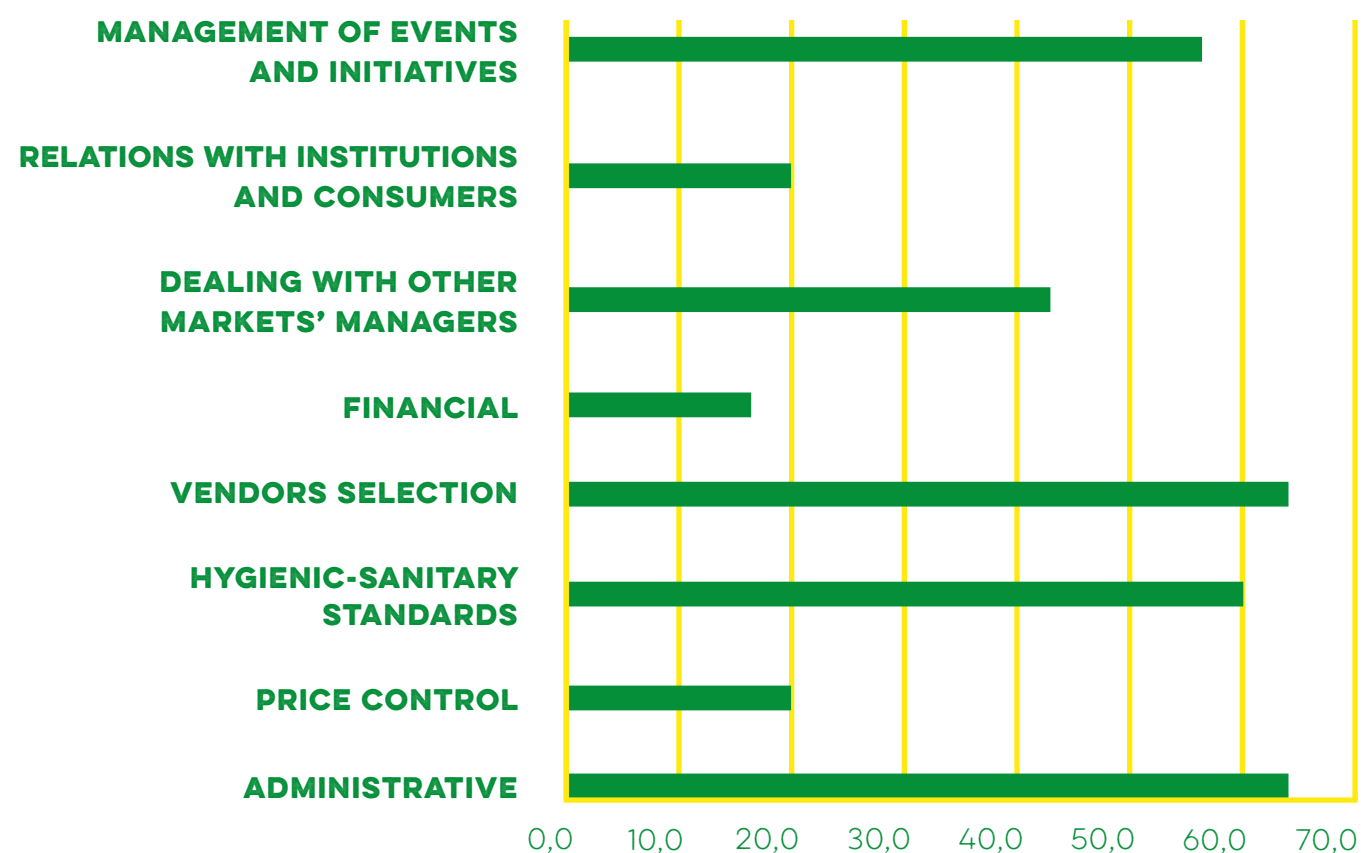
- Recognizing and realizing opportunities.
- Networking and utilizing contacts.
- Creating and evaluating a business strategy.

2.3.2 EFFICIENCY DOMAIN

The analysis of the efficiency domain is carried out by splitting this domain in three dimensions: informational, logistic-distributional, environmental.

As far as **information efficiency** is concerned, 64% of FM declared a good or optimal capability of conveying quality attributes to final consumers has been found. This confirms recent researches conducted on

FIGURE 2 - ACTIVITIES MANAGED BY THE MARKET'S DIRECTOR (%)



consumers' behavior in local markets, which have empirically demonstrated how health values and safety are the basic motivations for buying at local markets (Antwi, Matsui, 2018).

As demonstrated in previous studies, nutritional quality seems the quality meaning which consumers seem to give the most important to, thanks to the contribution provided with the children to nutrient intakes (Micah *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, as the main products sold in the FM are fruit and vegetables, FM become an effective vehicle for reducing informational asymmetries for final consumers, who do not know about the great quality properties of these products, as revealed in a recent empirical analysis conducted among street vendors in Ghana (Aitken *et al.*, 2015). As Adams *et al.* (2018) reveal in their analysis, healthy issues shape also the purchasing behavior of organic fruit and vegetable products in Techiman, the largest food and agricultural market in West Africa.

The second dimension of efficiency regards the **distribution of value along the supply chain**. It has been evaluated both:

- at **vertical** level, by verifying fair prices for both farmers and consumers. As a matter of fact, interviewees declare that either the farmers or the consumers get good and better prices with respect to conventional retailing systems.

Only in two cases out of 25, the prices do not remunerate farmers adequately, while in the case of consumers, only one case. This means the FM represents a good occasion for both consumers and farmers to save and to get higher income. Despite the cost advantage for consumers is appealing a decreasing percentage of consumers (Hiamey *et al.*, 2015), price remains a determinant variable in addressing purchasing behaviors on local markets.

- At **horizontal** level, to evaluate if the mechanism of efficiency is inclusive also for smallholder farm and for farms located in rural marginal areas. In this case, judgement is less enthusiastic: as far as small-sized farms are concerned, less than half of interviewees declared smallest farms benefit from accessing farmers' markets. Likewise, the share of benefitted farms localized in peripheral rural areas is even lesser. This may raise problems of elite capture (Ashby, 2009) or result paradox in targeting economic benefits from farmers' markets.

The third dimension of efficiency concerns **environmental** impact of farmers' markets, which links local markets to the multifunctional role of agriculture. In this case, there is almost unanimous consensus on the

positive externalities farmers' markets may provide. Literature has emphasised how conservation approaches to land management and community initiative are empowering these mechanisms of value creation through supporting sustainable agricultural practices. Moreover, local agricultural products are valorised by preserving biodiversity in rural areas. Finally, in some cases, organic products are sold at farmers' markets, so providing a contribution to joining public goods (positive environmental externalities) to the agricultural production.

2.3.3. SERVICE/MARKETING DOMAIN

In the Ghanaian farmers' markets, a set of activities is carried out with the purpose of supporting both farmers and consumers. Figure 3 highlights the most important service activities: from the graph training activities marketing oriented are practiced in 40% of Ghanaian farmers' markets. Technical assistance is also relevant in more than 35% of cases.

Finally, in almost 20% of FM both marketing and technical assistance are provided.

Beyond selling of agricultural products, many other activities are carried out in the Ghanaian FMs, which are depicted in figure 4. The most important activity joined to the selling is food services, with opportunity of consuming food in the farmer market.

That opportunity is verified in 72% of cases, so confirming recent researches affirming that the "convenience" is a key variable stimulating consumers to buy at the FM. This is particularly true in case of specific direct selling initiatives, like street food: as a matter of fact, in the Hiamey *et al.*'s (2015) analysis, 70% of consumers identify "convenience" as main determinant of purchasing of street foods, in account of food availability and accessibility of street foods.

Likewise, ready to consume food and lack of alternative are found as important determinants (Marras, Bendeck, 2016). Recreational activities are always present in farmers' markets, as declared in almost 60% of cases, like the training (48%) and cultural ones (40% of cases).

The analysis of the tools for promoting Ghanaian farmers' markets is explicative on how localization is also a relational issue.

As a matter of fact, promotional activities are mainly carried out by word of mouth among the shoppers.

To less extent, also fliers and magazines are promotional engines. Moreover, social media are used to advertise farmers' markets activities, particularly through Facebook, while other medias (Instagram, Twitter) are less used.

FIGURE 3 – SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES IN GHANAIAN FARMERS' MARKETS (%)

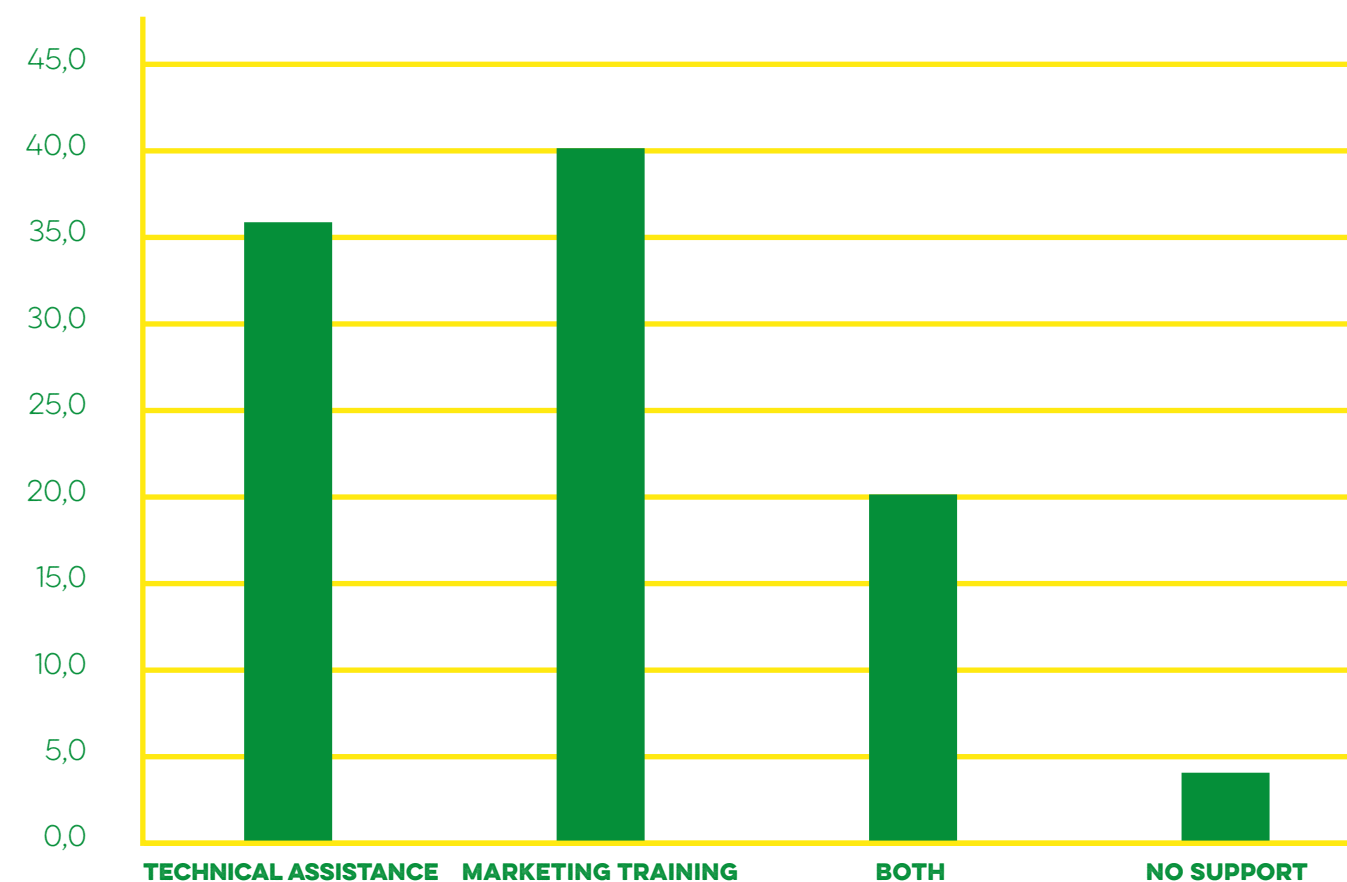
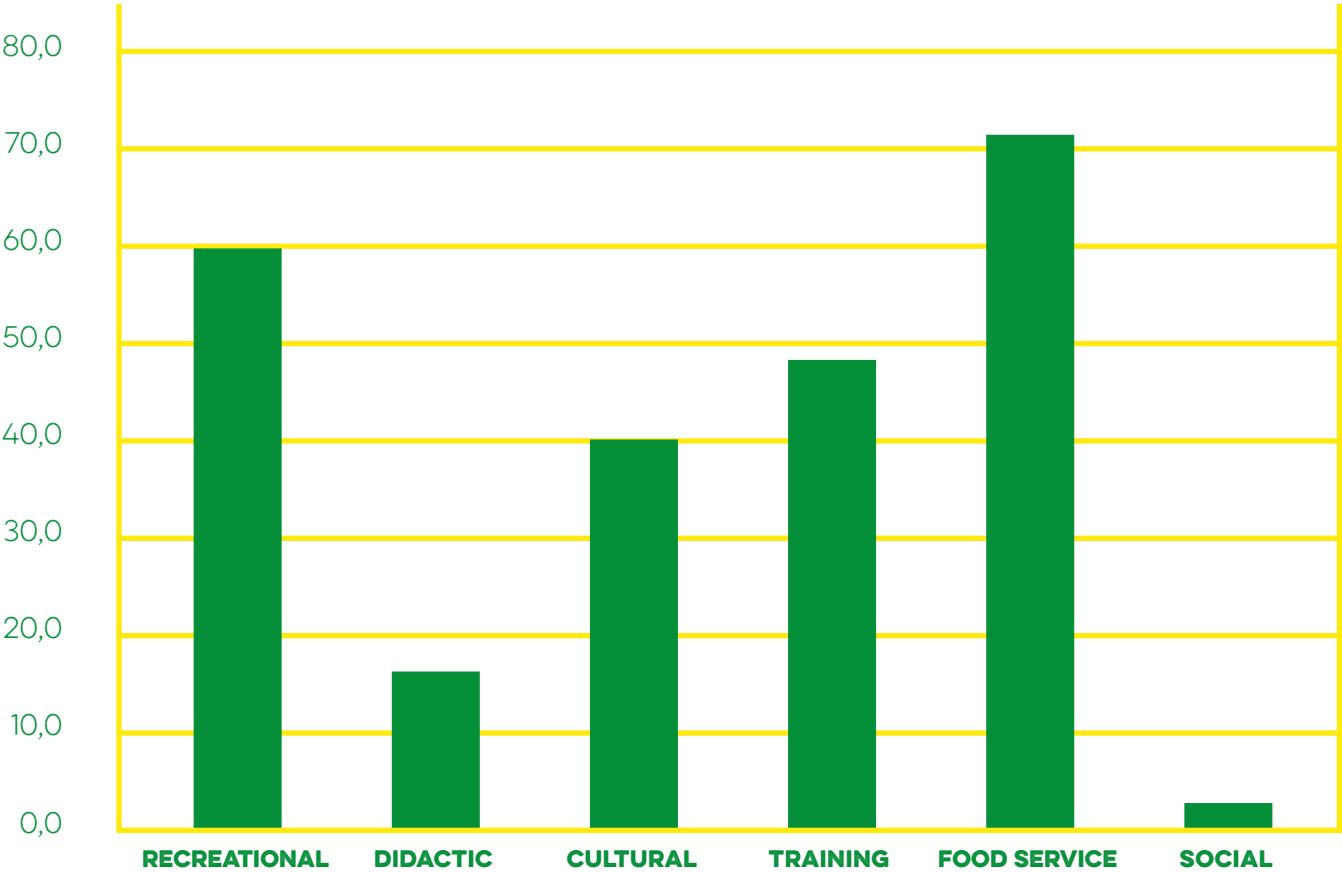


FIGURE 4 – ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE FARMERS’ MARKETS (%)



2.3.4. CULTURAL/SOCIAL DOMAIN
Farmers’ markets are considered as an example of relational re-localization process. In this paragraph, the relevance of cultural and social dimensions in Ghanaian farmers’ markets has been evaluated through a set of indicators. The first one is “**embeddedness**”, that is the links between localised modes of food provisioning and social, environmental and economic issues. From this point of view, figure 5 illustrates main factors affecting farmers’ markets, under cultural point of view. The strict links between markets and impact on rural areas is the most relevant one, declared in almost 90% of cases.
Very important is also the linking values with local actors of economic, political and social society (more than 70%).
In order to stress the importance of food communities in Ghanaian farmers’ markets and the high cultural values behind them other key aspects need to be taken into account. As a matter of fact, in many cases, these food communities are managed by women.
Therefore, cultural values are of paramount importance in Ghanaian farmers’ markets, raising the social dimension of this multifunctional activity. Actually, short food supply chain may represent a tool for boosting inclusion of women entrepreneurs in farming ac-

tivities. Many examples provide evidence of that, like evidenced in the Terra Madre Website (<https://www.terramadre.info/en/food-communities/>): for instance, the “Techiman women Yam producers” is managed by a group of women whose aim is to boost local production of food belonging to the Ghanaian diet, instead of importing these stuffs. Women are protagonist also in valorization processes of local products. In their analysis, Vecchio *et al.* (2020) evaluate the potential of a GI recognition for shea butter as strategic tool for building resilient local economies in the Yendi municipality of Ghana. This product belongs to the local tradition and its valorization through a GI involve mainly female entrepreneurs, able to renew a local cultural tradition in processing the products. Therefore, local markets may represent a starting point for preserving local tradition and legally protect high added values products embedded in geographical areas. A second element of evaluation of cultural aspects concerns the **meaning of local**, which is embodied in a farmers’ market. There is no unique perspective on the meaning of ‘local’. By making reference to recent literature, we have tried to synthesise the various meanings under different perspectives. More precisely, starting from the idea of "local" under not only a geographical sense but also as relational

meaning (the aforementioned relational re-localization), drawn on short distance relationships in a community and based on food habits and food traditions (Brnori, 2007; Bazzani, Canavari, 2012), we have explored these aspects through multiple lens, as reported in table 1.
From a simply functional point of view, in this case, farmers’ markets retain the purpose of satisfying taste and pleasure of consuming local food, despite in few cases also the healthy issues are raised. As far as ecological dimension of local, farmers’ markets let to preserve local biodiversity, by promoting local products which are expression of local natural resources. Through selling local products, not only biodiversity but also the landscape is valorised and preserved.
But local incorporates also an aesthetic value, aimed at enforcing distinctiveness, a mean for personalisation of the food diet. Strictly jointed with aesthetic, ethical dimension need to be taken into account, by emphasising identity and solidarity issues.

FIGURE 5 – EMBEDDEDNESS (%)

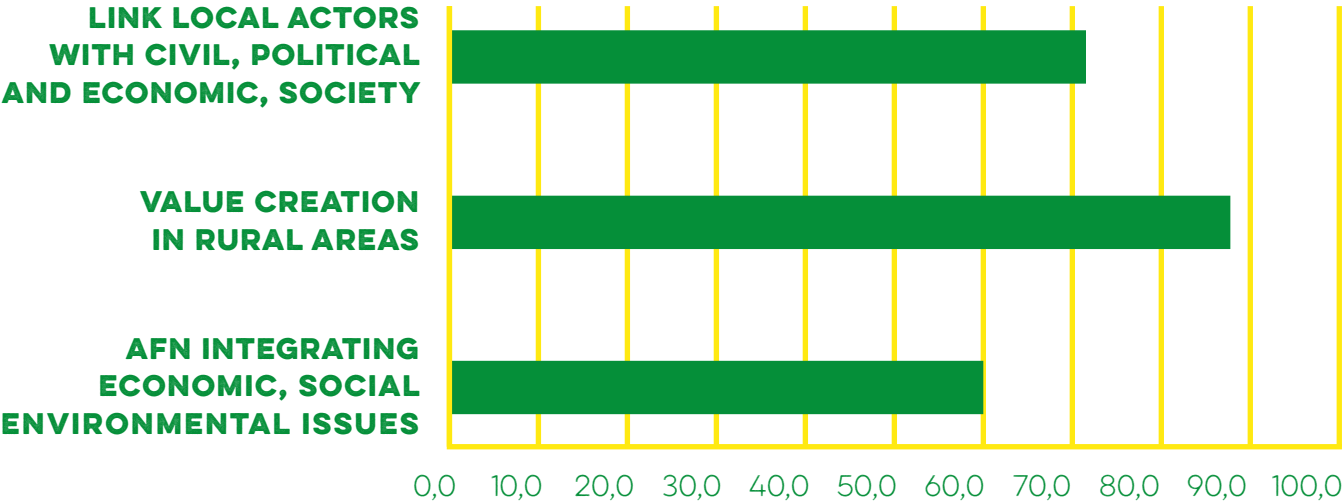


TABLE 1 – MEANING OF ‘LOCAL’

FUNCTIONAL	TASTE / HEALTH
ECOLOGICAL	BIODIVERSITY AND LANDSCAPE
AESTHETIC	DISTINCTIVENESS
ETHICAL	IDENTITY AND SOLIDARITY
POLITICAL	COUNTERVAILING CONTRACTUAL FARMERS’ WEAKNESS

CHAPTER 3

FARMERS' MARKETS IN JAPAN



Photo by Keita Harasawa

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, food cultures are particularly developed in Japan, where cultural values and the pleasure of food consumption overlap with simple satisfaction of functional needs (Murakami *et al.*, 2014). Nonetheless, in recent decades, globalized mode of food provisioning has become prevalent in Japan, like in many developed countries. For instance, as far as fruit and vegetables sector is concerned, in the report by MAFF in 2018, it is underlined that 81% of Japanese vegetables and fruits are vended through wholesale markets, while a residual share is sold through alternative and not conventional circuits.

Despite this scenario, alternative and more localized modes of food provisioning are gaining ground also in Japan through a diversified set of strategies, ranging from community supported agriculture initiatives, to communities of citizens like Slow Food Japan and Food Action Nippon (Assmann, 2019). Farmers' markets are a typical example of these "alternatives". Like in other parts of the world, farmers' markets in Japan represent possible means to bring producers together with consumers under direct marketing, through the activation of alternative food networks (Figuerola-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2019). The search for alternative food network is not new in Japan. Since 60s', processes of relocalisation of consumption-produce-

tion circuits are found in the Teikei system, an initiative aiming to "*develop a mutual relationship between farmers and consumers through natural farming*" (Miyake, Kohsaka, 2020). The Teikei movement was born in the 60s' with the purpose of reconnecting organic producers and consumers, who have a proactive role, in that they are engaged in mutual assistance, they share crop planning and set the price for mutual benefits and act alongside mutual trust and respect (Kondoh, 2015). However, during the 70s'-80s' the affirmation of modern retailing systems has watered down the cultural values of the *Teikei* initiatives, then boosting a shift in consumers' preferences towards more conventional food circuits. This processes were also speeded up by social changes, in particular the growing number of women holding jobs.

As a matter of fact, women were largely involved in the *Teikei* initiative and, as revealed by Kondoh (2015, p. 149): *the consumer culture that emerged in the 1970s blocked the further expansion of the Teikei movement. Once economic growth fulfilled people's basic needs, the Japanese cultural orientation shifted away from communal values and mutual support, and placed more emphasis on consumption.*

Nonetheless, alternative food networks did not disappear and in recent years they gained ground in consumers' purchasing behavior. This has brought about a paradigm shift with a huge growth of national move-

ments, which are trying to create socialization spaces and environments where “people who make food” can meet with “people who eat the food” (Brustad, 2017). Consequently, the logics of farmers markets is to be drawn on theories of conventions, by emphasizing their domestic (relationships between producer and consumer are informally shaped by trust and relational assets) and civic (being inspired by superior principles, like collective interests and solidarity) conventions as governing rule (Iizaka, Suda, 2010). The longstanding tradition of alternative food network in Japan has addressed also policy issues. In the recently published Annual Report on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas in Japan (MAFF, 2020), “regional policy for promoting the maintenance and implementation of agriculture’s multifunctional role” is encouraged. As a consequence, multifunctional agriculture becomes a keyword for the Japanese agricultural policies. Set against this background, the role of farmers markets is amplified, in that they take on the typical traits of a multifunctional activities, through:

- Preserving local fresh production and, as a consequence, local food traditions;
- Boost local farming with zero impact on pollution;

- Sharing local cultures and, therefore, create socialization spaces, where “people who make food” can meet with “people who eat the food” (Wood, Notaras, 2010).

Farmers’ markets have become a valid (even though with a residual “quantitative” relevance) alternative to the modern retailing system for both consumers and producers who do not purchase at the conventional distribution channels. Despite this growth, the lack of entry barriers and the fast increase in the number of farmers markets in both urban and rural areas has boosted a growing competitiveness among markets (Kikushima, 2019). In Japan, farmers’ markets play a relevant role for selling foods that are usually locally grown, jointly with numerous products which are not possible to find in the modern retailing systems. Therefore, from an economic point of view, they hold a fundamental role, by allowing the farmers to escape the price-costs squeeze. This happens by carrying out activities aiming at value creation, through skipping middlemen. The following figure 1 is drawn on the 2016 MAFF Annual Report on Food, agriculture and Rural Areas in Japan. With reference to the cabbage production, it clearly il-

lustrates this aspect, by showing the higher capability of farmers’ markets of remunerating producers. More precisely, despite the fact that direct marketing channels hold higher production costs (24% in conventional channels and 32% in direct selling), producers’ profits are systematically higher than conventional markets (53% vs 19%), in account of distribution and logistics costs (retail, intermediaries, wholesale, etc.), absorbing growing shares of the marketing bill. This is clearly stated in the annual report: *As the percentage of money received by producers is higher in a direct sales distribution than that in a market distribution, and shipment operations are carried out by producers themselves, producers are able to grasp the preferences of consumers directly.* In what follows we will try to classify Japanese farmers’ markets according to the structural domains of analysis.

3.2 METHODOLOGY

In order to get sound information on Japanese farmers’ markets, we carried out an analysis grounded on primary data and on documentary research. A questionnaire has been submitted to a sample of directors of Japanese farmers’ markets, articulated in the four domains of analysis. Eight valid questionnaires have been collected in either metropolitan, urban and non-urban areas. Moreover, documentary researches (Scott, 2006) allowed us to integrate information from questionnaires through information drawn on newspapers, magazines, internet sources, etc., containing relevant information concerning the object of study. Content a semiotic analysis was carried out in order to identify relevant themes for our study (Bailey 1994; Manning, 2004).

Finally, expert witnesses have been consulted for gathering other sound information able to better characterising Japanese farmers’ markets.

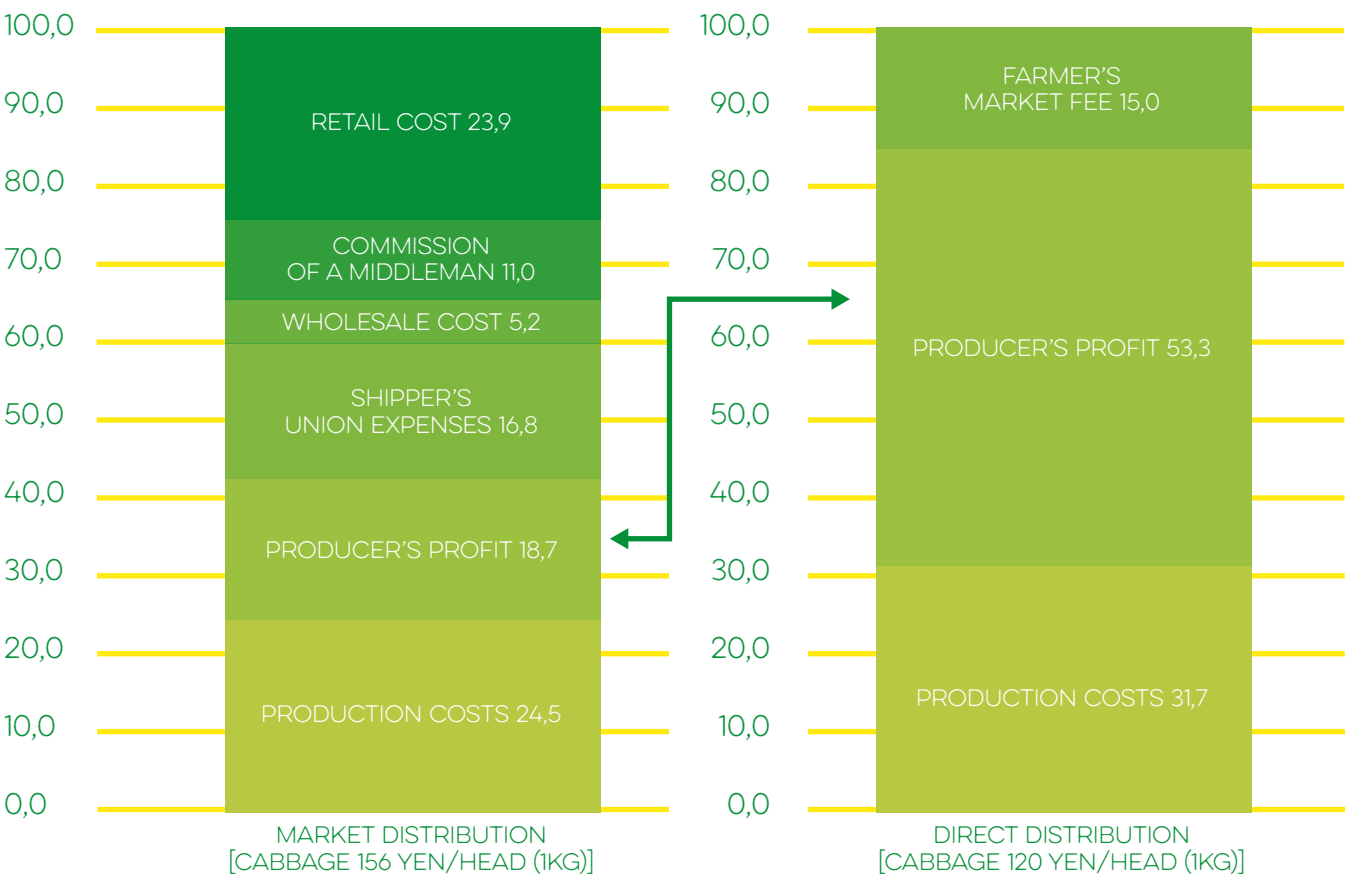
3.3. RESULTS

3.3.1 STRUCTURAL DOMAIN

What typifies short food supply chain in Japan is the variety of marketing channels, which do not include only single farmers directly selling their local fresh produce. In order to understand the characteristics of short food supply chain in this country, it is useful to distinguish between the “pure farmers’ markets” from other typologies. As far as pure farmers’ markets are concerned, the so-called *Marché Japon*, were launched in 2009. At the moment, there are about 170 farmers’ markets in the country. As underlined by Zollet and Maharjan Kershav, 2020), they are considered as part of *Chisan chishō* development, which has gained strong importance in recent year as an alternative movement of local food marketing (Kimura and Nishiyama, 2007).

Japanese farmers’ markets are usually developed through permanent activities, and, to a less extent, as seasonal activities. Dimensions of markets are variable, for instance table 1 reports information about farmers’ markets in the area of Tokyo, Osaka and Aichi. In urban areas, the average occupied surface is equal to 251 m³, while the smallest dimension is for farmers’ markets located in metropolitan areas, where the average size is of 198 m³. In non-urban the average surface is 273 m³. In other territorial contexts, dimension are profoundly different, as evident in the great differences between the two interviewed farmers’ market, whose dimension range from 1,530 m² and 65 m².

FIGURE 1 – MARKETING BILL IN JAPANESE CONVENTIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE FOOD NETWORKS (%)



Source: Data processed from MAFF Annual Report on Food, agriculture and Rural Areas in Japan (2016)



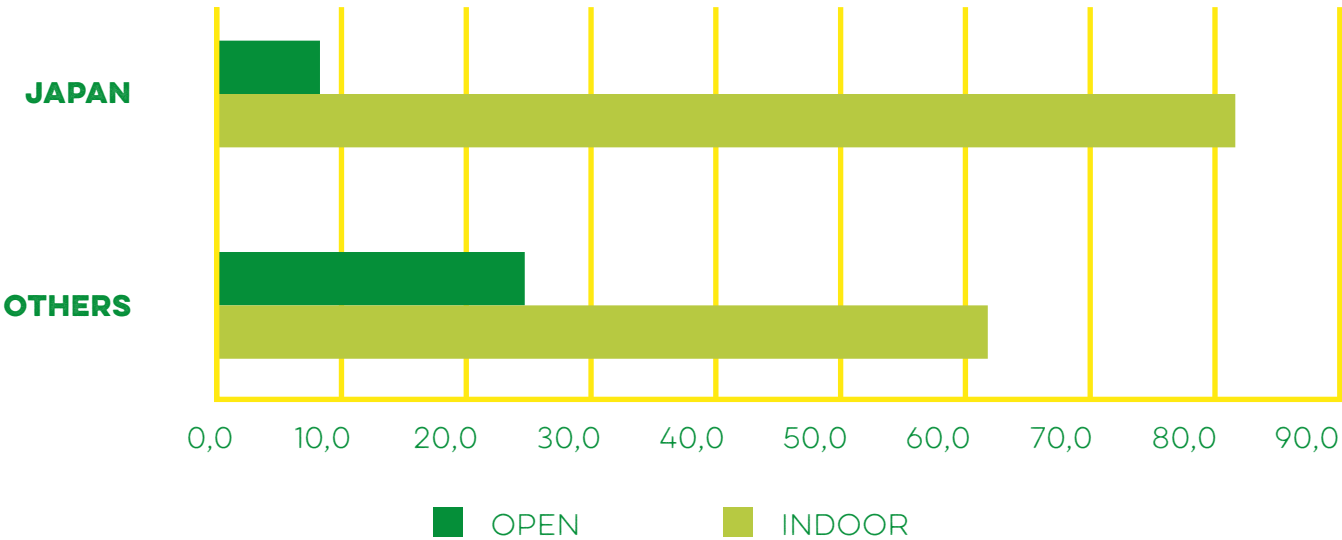
TABLE 1 – AVERAGE SIZE OF FARMERS’ MARKETS

	SIZE
METROPOLITAN AREAS (AVERAGE FROM URBAN AREA OF TOKYO, OSAKA, AICHI)	198 M²
URBAN AREAS (AVERAGE FROM URBAN AREA OF TOKYO, OSAKA, AICHI)	251 M²
NON-URBAN AREAS (AVERAGE FROM URBAN AREA OF TOKYO, OSAKA, AICHI)	273 M²
HAKATA FARMER’S MARKET IN FUKUOKA, KYUSHU REGION	826 M²
TERRACE MARCHÉ IN KANAGAWA, KANTO REGION	766 M²
UMEKIKI MARCHÉ IN OSAKA, KANSAI REGION	1,530 M²
UMEKIKI MOKUYO MARCHÉ IN OSAKA, KANSAI REGION	65 M²

Number of vendors varies too, ranging from the smallest range to more than 50 vendors. However, the highest frequency of answers concerns the average of 30-50 vendors. Farmers admitted to vending spaces are not exclusively local, but also non local farmers may offer their products. Moreover, a

diversified set of players is admitted, like food industries, artisans and, to a less extent, restaurants. Japanese farmers’ markets are prevailingly indoor markets, which marks a difference with other realities in the worlds, as shown in figure 2, enlightening the percentage relevance of outdoor and indoor markets.

FIGURE 2 – STRUCTURAL TYPOLOGIES OF FARMERS MARKETS– INDOOR OPEN (%)



3.3.1.1 THE ALTERNATIVE RETAIL FOOD OUTLET (ARFO): CHOKUBAIJO MARKETS AND ROAD STATION

In addition to the ‘pure’ farmers’ markets, there are other markets, which are grounded on stores organized by agricultural cooperatives, called “farmers market”, in the shape of supermarkets but which purchase directly from farmers. They are labelled as Alternative Retail Food Outlets (ARFOs) and represent another example of social innovation based on re-connecting producers and consumers (Parker, 2014). Nonetheless these markets are widely spread in Japan and they are not always recognized as farmers’ markets like the “pure” ones. A typical example of this kind of store are defined as “*Chokubaijo* (直売所)”. According to the report by MAFF in 2018, there are 3,683 *Chokubaijo* and the total sales amount is 1,078.9 billion yen. A second example of ARFO are the so-called ‘road station’, like the *Michi-no-eki*. This is a winning example of partnership public and private actors: as a matter of fact, they are the result of an agreement between the government, the prefectures, the local municipalities and the local producers, providing locally produced food and other services (shops, restaurants, etc.). As underlined by Parker (2010), these markets may offer great opportunities for boosting local and rural development either from economic and social perspectives. Actually, locally grown products are offered in this

stores, which are not possible to find in the modern distribution channels. Moreover, they are perceived by the consumers as an example of experiential marketing, where the purchase of food is not the only motivation, but it is jointed with the “consumption of the space”, enjoying the various services provided inside the road stations.

3.3.2 EFFICIENCY DOMAIN

As for the other countries, the various dimensions of efficiency have been explored in the Japanese farmers’ markets too. As far as **informational efficiency** is concerned, farmers’ markets reveal their efficacy in addressing quality issues and information to shoppers. This happens through a process underlying how economics may be an immaterial and relational process of “*conversation*” (Storper, 1997). Conversations between customers and farmers help the farmers to excavate consumers’ preferences and to better plan their crops. As revealed by Iizaka (1999), differently from supermarkets, Japanese farmers’ markets represent a learning occasion for consumers, who are able to learn place of production and preparation of their food. Out of 8 questionnaires, four responses considered farmers markets as a good tool for sending quality information, three as optimum and just one as a sufficient tool. Furthermore, our questionnaires have demonstrated the importance of FM in promoting a fairer **distribution of value along the supply chain**.

FIGURE 3 – DISTRIBUTIONAL EFFICIENCY – VERTICAL EFFECTS

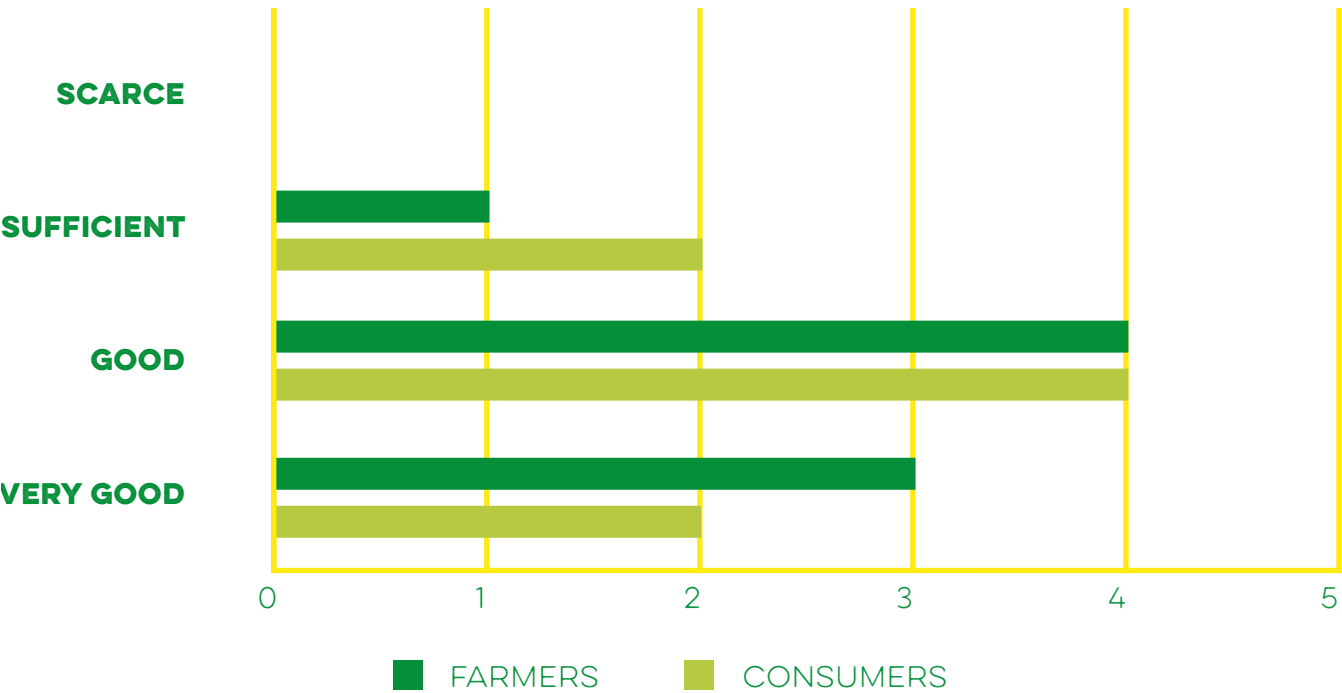
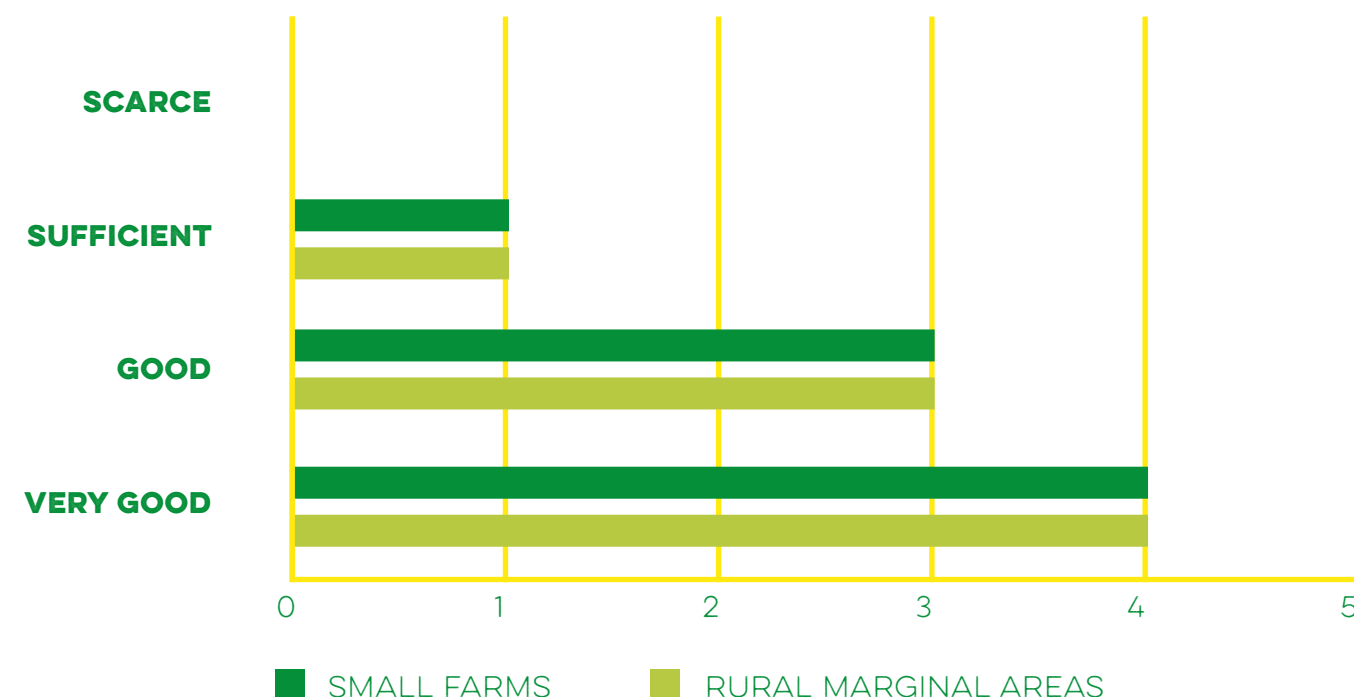


FIGURE 4 – DISTRIBUTIONAL EFFICIENCY – HORIZONTAL EFFECTS



This phenomenon is observed from both:

- a **vertical** point of view, in that the “right price” is secured to both farmers and, to a less extent, consumers (figure 3);
- an **horizontal** point of view, allowing small-sized farms and remote rural areas to “participate” economic processes to get higher economic performance than in conventional retailing systems (figure 4).

Finally, by taking into account the **environmental dimension**, all our questionnaires evidence a “sufficient” indication of the environmental performance of farmers’ markets in Japan, which includes FM’s effects on landscape preservation and promotion of local biodiversity. The relatively lower impact obtained by environmental issues confirms previous researches focused on the evolution of the Teikei system.

As Kondoh (2015, p.148) posits: *Rather, the market has gone in the opposite direction. The philosophical messages of teikei became detached from organic produce when conventional food businesses became involved as they paid almost no attention to the sociocultural and environmental values of organic food.*

3.3.3. SERVICE/MARKETING DOMAIN

Japanese farmers’ markets provide many services at both supply and demand level. As far as supply side is concerned, a director is provided, as the person in charge of managing farmers’ markets, whose main tasks are:

- administrative tasks,

- managing relationships with customers and local institutions,
- checking out the respect of hygienic and sanitary standards,
- deciding the assignment of spaces to vendors,
- starting up cultural and social initiatives.
- take care also the financial aspects of market management (in some cases).

As far as demand side is concerned, in some cases, the interviewees declare the presence of recreational activities, through which shoppers can catch the opportunity of enjoying from eventual leisure time.

Not surprisingly, in few cases, cultural activities have been found also, due to the multicultural settings, so confirming the role of farmers’ markets as gathering spaces and as engine for social and economic vitality of the local community (UNIDO, 2020).

Food services are also provided, through some restaurants featuring local products it is possible to find in the food they offer. Tasting products is the key activity provided to consumers, in order to address quality issues for consumers. These happen through dedicated events aiming at making consumers more conscious about the quality of local fresh products.

As far as marketing activities are concerned, farmers’ markets advertising is entrusted by the word of mouth, but in some cases, social media and promotional activities are also addressed through more “conventional” channels, where claiming is a key tool.

Information and communication technologies reveal

their importance in promotional activities too: social media marketing, through Facebook, Instagram etc., are prevailingly used by farmers’ markets to share initiatives, values, information with potential consumers.

3.3.4 CULTURAL/SOCIAL DOMAIN

Cultural and social dimensions are of paramount importance in the Japanese alternative food networks. As already said, food circuits are reconfigured as relational spaces where interaction between producers and consumers provides a strong contribution to co-produce innovation on a local scale.

This paragraph tries to excavate the relevance of cultural and social dimensions in Japanese farmers’ markets, by making reference to a set of indicators.

First dimension is **embeddedness**, which is grounded on Methorst *et al.*’s (2017) theorisation.

Embeddedness is meant as the capability of anchoring farmers’ markets from different points of view, here underlined in order of importance, according to collected answers:

- territorial embeddedness, in that farmers’ markets are perceived as engine for promoting rural development. This means farmers’ markets are considered as fundamental tool for preserving rural areas, through value creation and boosting local food valorization. As pointed out by Kimura and Nishiyama (2007) when dealing with *chisan-chisho* movement, a key rationale for consuming local food is to boost local economy indeed;
- societal embeddedness, which makes reference to the societal (i.e., cultural, political, etc.) background (De Rosa *et al.*, 2019). In this meaning, farmers’ markets become the link between local farmers and civil, political and economic society.

Moreover, health and environmental issues are also emphasised by interviewees as relevant pillars of Japanese farmers’ markets. This confirms Kirwan’s (2004)

analysis of farmers’ markets as alternative food networks aiming at emphasising social, environmental and health issues. As far as “**local food meanings**” are concerned, eating local is of paramount importance in the Japanese consumers’ choice. As revealed in the recent research carried out by Zollet and Maharjan Kershav (2020, p.148), *buying ‘local’ products ranked highest among stated reasons*. But local may retain various, dimensions as evidenced in figure 5, which points out the various definition of local emerged from our questionnaires.

Functional attributes (which evidence taste and healthy variables) are relevant, but less important with respect to the others. As a matter of fact, respondents put emphasis on either ecological, aesthetic, ethic and political meanings.

Ecological meaning regards the positive environmental externalities that farmers’ markets are able to generate, in account of food miles, preservation of landscape and biodiversity. As revealed by Dodds *et al.* (2014, p.401), “*Japanese rationale behind consuming local goods is that local goods are safer, more delicious, trustworthy, environmentally friendly*”.

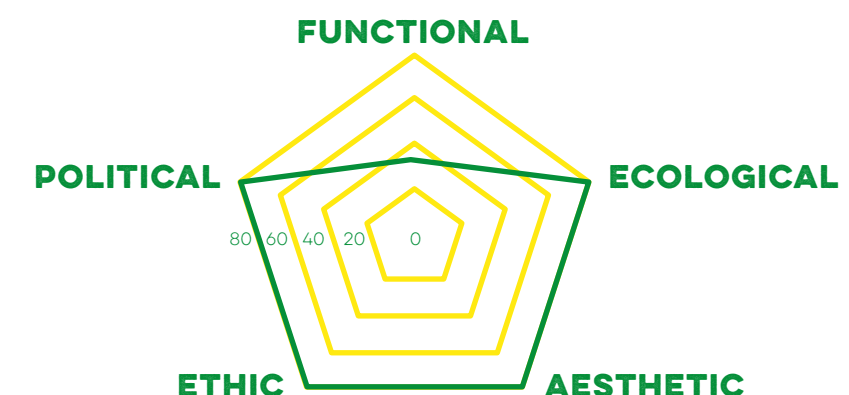
Aesthetic dimensions are also important, which contribute to distinctiveness in purchasing and consumers’ behaviour. Moreover, aesthetic dimension involves diversity versus standardisation, in account of “diverse food” provided at the farmers’ markets.

Ethical meaning is confirmed to be attributable to values like identity and solidarity, which confirms food consumption as an example of a social practice (Fonte, 2013). Finally, from a political point of view, farmers’ markets are perceived as:

A sound tool for farmers to escape the price-costs squeeze, through balancing contractual power in the food chain;

B fundamental instrument to re-orient models of consumption and purchasing behaviour.

FIGURE 5 – VALUES ATTACHED TO FARMERS’ MARKETS (%)



CHAPTER 4

FARMERS' MARKETS IN NORWAY



4.1 INTRODUCTION

Within the dual perspective of local food networks, Fonte (2008, p.202) posits that *the reconnection perspective takes into account grass roots initiatives for relocating the food system that aim at rebuilding the link among producers and consumers in an 'interpersonal world of production'*. As pointed out by Morgan *et al.* (2006), in Northern European countries industrialization contributed to the placeless foodscapes as typical feature of the agrifood sector. Therefore, localized mode of food provisioning has become a reaction to the food desert, boosted by consumers' dissatisfaction (Fonte, 2008). In this chapter, we analyze the relevance of farmers' markets in a Northern European country, Norway.

Traditionally in Norway, alternative food networks have essentially materialized into Community supported agriculture movement. In his analysis, Hvit-sand (2016) shows how both consumers and producers acting in the CSA circuits present distinct values, taking care of environmental and social values.

In the same line, it is possible to observe the dynamics of farmers' markets in Norway, whose tradition is not longstanding. As a matter of fact, with the purpose of securing small farmers with profitable markets and attracting consumers entrusted in local food, farmers' markets were launched in summer 2003 in some Nor-

wegian cities: as reported by Åsebø *et al.* (2007), in 2001 an attempt to apply the idea of farmers' markets in Norway was carried out by the Norwegian agriculture cooperative, naming this initiative as *Bondens Marked* (<https://bondensmarked.no/>).

Moreover, short food supply chain impacted on consumers' behaviours also in terms of widening consumer's knowledge concerning food practices and agricultural systems (Torjusten *et al.*, 2008; Kneafsey *et al.*, 2013). The scientific debate on Norwegian farmers' markets paralleled analyses on farm entrepreneurship, by taking into account entrepreneurship dimension in researching farmers' markets (Veidal, Flaten, 2011). Consequently, both economic and non-economic motivation for approaching farmers' markets have been discovered in literature, involving business characteristics, business dynamics and sociodemographic variables affecting the decision of taking part or not to farmers' markets.

Recent analyses carried out in Norway (Skallerud, Wien, 2019; Robertsen, Nyrud, 2018) have emphasized how farmers' markets emerged as a response to vertically integration processes in the most significant agricultural (where big national cooperatives were taking control of the agrifood supply chains) and seafood sectors (where multinational companies had acquired growing shares of produced value).

Moreover, other relevant (non-economic) issues have encouraged farmers' markets development, which take distances from standards economics (Hoff, Stiglitz, 2016). As a matter of fact, embeddedness is a key variable synthesizing non-economic values affecting consumers in purchasing local foods and, consequently, supporting local rural communities (Hinrichs, 2000). Against this background, by emphasizing food consumption as social process and recalling the theory of helping behavior, Skallerud and Wien (2019) put forward a conceptual model and an empirical analysis with the purpose of testing the relevance of socio-psychological variables as predictors for consuming local foods in Norway. Their analysis enlightens the following three variables: empathic concern, local patriotism, social concern for local food producers. These elements are of importance also in our investigation, which has been carried out through the aforementioned framework of analysis based on the four domains.

4.2 METHODOLOGY

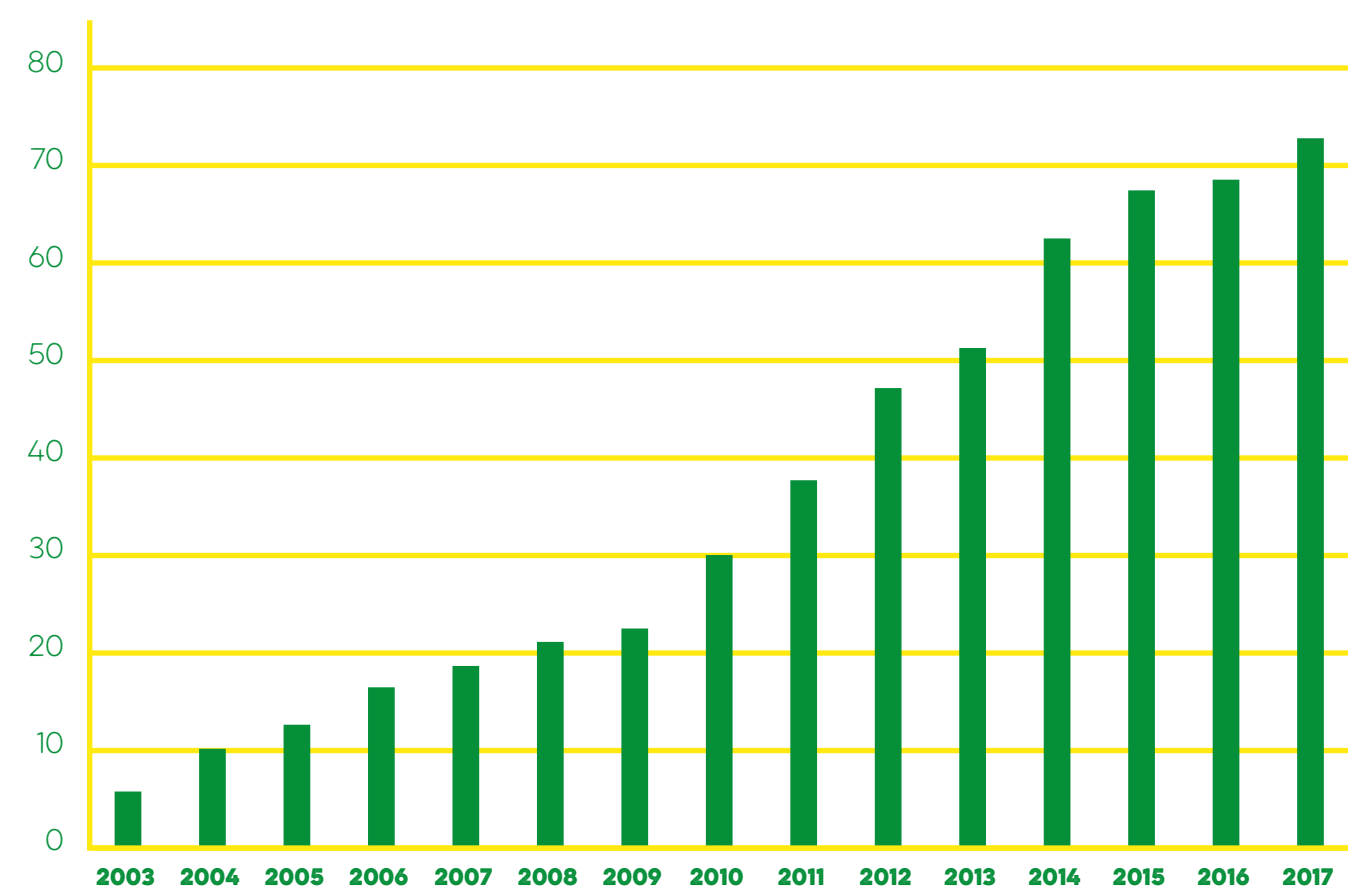
As for other countries, a questionnaire has been submitted to the responsible of Norwegian farmers' markets in order to acquire information on the four domain of analysis. The questionnaire has been sub-

mitted to Farmer Market Norway, an independent foundation associating various entities, like Norwegian Farmer Union, Norwegian Farmers and Smallholders Union, an association working in rural tourism (*HANEN*), the association of organic farming (*Oikos Norge*), and the Norwegian agricultural cooperatives. The local farmers' markets are cooperatives managed by the farmers. In order to integrate primary sources of information, documentary research has been carried out, allowing us to get a clear picture on the various dimensions affecting the functioning of these short supply chains. Finally, interviews with expert witnesses have been conducted. More precisely, Randi Ledaal Gjertsen, CEO of Farmers market Norway has supported our analysis.

4.3 RESULTS

In Norway there are 14 regional cooperatives owned by the vendors. They organize 150 different market places for a total of 300 market days per year. 25-30 of the market places are permanent, the rest are occasional. Since their start in 2003, farmers' markets initiative has known a huge growth in terms of turnover, so consolidating their affirmation as alternative food network in Norway. As shown in figure 1, it is evident that, despite they have been launched in relative-

FIGURE 1 – EVOLUTION OF TOTAL TURNOVER (MILIONS) IN BONDEN MARKETS



Source: [https://www.kisleptek.hu/ma_files/BOND-%20Farmers%20Market%20Norway%2010-10.4.18%20\(ID%20124116\).pdf](https://www.kisleptek.hu/ma_files/BOND-%20Farmers%20Market%20Norway%2010-10.4.18%20(ID%20124116).pdf)

ly recent time, farmers' markets have been recognized with great economic success, which could be quantified in terms of annual percentage average growth of about 20%, from 2003 on.

The following paragraphs provide a picture of the four domains around which analysis has been carried out.

4.3.1 STRUCTURAL DOMAIN

The most important farmers' markets in Norway are *Bondens Marked*, which aggregate almost 400 farmers. Farmers' markets are located both in the big cities and smaller cities: Oslo, Trondheim, Bergen, Tromsø, Kristiansand. Moreover, recently, numerous farmers' markets started up in non-urban areas, so contributing to the development of rural communities. Usually farmers' markets are positioned in traditional squares, parks or close streets. In the biggest cities an average of 20 vendors are involved, while in the market squares the average is 5-10. Finally, in the other markets 10 vendors are present on average.

In Norway, most markets take place outside, on sidewalk or other pedestrian area (such as a courtyard). However, a few markets in the northern part of the country go inside in the winter, from December to March. As far as average size is concerned, total square footage is from 300 m² and bigger. Furthermore, the vendors have one or two tents at their disposal, whose size is about 3 x 3 m.

As far as frequency of market is concerned, it differs from the cities:

- in the city of Oslo, a weekly farmer market is provided, but not in January and February;
- in Bergen and Trondheim: every 14 days;
- finally, in other places markets in the region are hosted almost every week in the season, but farmers may travel to different market places.

Usually the farmers market is open all day, and the farmers feel free of deciding how many times they want to participate. They have only to comply with the payment of fees which differ from regions.

Locally grown products are admitted into markets, despite "local" has to be interpreted in a relative meaning. The variety of delivered products is large, ranging from locally grown agricultural and processed products to organic produce. Moreover, most frequently bought products in farmers' markets are meat and sausages, and cheeses and other dairy products.

4.3.2 EFFICIENCY DOMAIN

At the farmers' markets openness and traceability are emphasized, with the purpose of securing final consumers about where and how food is produced. This address our analysis on the efficiency issues, which have been an-

alyzed according to the three conventional dimensions: informational, logistic-distributional, environmental.

As far as **informational dimension** is concerned, farmers' markets reveal their efficacy in sending the consumers specific cues, in terms of quality attributable to the origin of the food.

This confirms previous studies on alternative food networks (like the Box schemes) as learning arenas, aiming at setting up "experiential and situated learning", which may bring about a change in consumption practices towards more sustainable patterns (Torjusen *et al.*, 2008). This may be explicated through "*where*" and "*how*" questions:

- "*Where*" question concerns a metric vision of the space, by assuming local as a geographical space including producers localised about less than 100 km from the market. This attribute is associated with quality of fresh local produce.
- But the "*where*" is not the unique element to be taken into account in addressing quality cues; as a matter of fact, "*how*" question is also critical. Thus, to inform customers on how the food is produced and through which processes it is obtained become fundamental quality attributes for final consumers, as revealed in previous researches (Åsebø *et al.*, 2007).

Nonetheless, informational dimension goes beyond these elements and takes ground in the Norwegian institutional context. As previous studies have pointed out (Vittersø *et al.*, 2019), high levels of stability and trust in other people and political institutions is a basic factors addressing trust in farmers' markets as new institutional arrangement (Knickel *et al.*, 2008).

Finally, farmers' markets hold a pedagogic role, in that farmers "*understand the importance of educating consumers about contemporary agro-food systems and are eager to bring consumers into their local 'foodsheds'. They share a strong ambition to create the change they desire in society*" (McKelvey Bulger, 2017, p.67).

As far as the second dimension of efficiency is concerned, **distribution of value along the supply chain**, it has been evaluated at both vertical and horizontal level, as usual:

- at **vertical** level it is assumed that the farmers may reinforce their economic results: as a matter of fact, the elimination of the middlemen allows the farmers to get higher shares of added value. The price is not set up *ex ante* at the farmers' markets, but each farmer can autonomously decide the level of price they want to apply. On the consumer's side, it is not possible to affirm that

consumers spend less, because products are not cheap. Nonetheless, recent researches have empirically tested that consumers get more value for money from buying at the farmers' markets (Vittersø *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, perceived net benefits should be taken into account when evaluating this aspect.

• At **horizontal** level, the role of short food supply chain must be framed within the wider perspective of sustainable rural development, “*which redefines nature by re-emphasizing food production and agro-ecology and it reasserts the socio-environmental role of agriculture as a major agent in sustaining rural economies and cultures*” (Marsden, Sonnino, 2003, p.423). Set against this background, rural development paradigm is grounded on food re-localisation strategies allowing small farms and farms located in remote rural areas to survive. From our empirical analysis, it is confirmed that farmers' markets represent an occasion for smaller farms interact with final consumers, by retaining good and fairer prices. Therefore, farmers' markets offer unique occasion for consumers' to support local farms.

4.3.3 SERVICE/MARKETING DOMAIN

Norwegian farmers' markets are usually managed by a director. In Oslo, a full time manager is employed, while other markets have part time coordinators. Moreover, some markets use volunteers from the vendors. The main tasks provided by the managers regard administrative management, financial administration

of markets, management of relationships with local institutions and with the customers, and organization of initiatives and events. Nonetheless, with the growing trend of farmers' markets, skills gaps have been underlined, in terms of marketing, organizational, logistic and legal area skills. Lack of business and marketing skills have been specified in other precious empirical analyses on Norwegian farmers' markets (McKelvey Bulger, 2017).

The manager of farmers markets is also involved in both technical support and training activities on how to implement marketing and communication strategies. Moreover, other valuable activities are developed in the farmer's markets, which confirm their multi-functional role:

- recreational activities;
- didactic activities;
- cultural activities (conferences, book presentation, etc.);
- training activities (es. training courses, etc.);
- food service (es. lunch/dinner);
- social activities (es. drug rehabilitation);

The characteristic feature of farmers' markets is evident in Norway, where the organization has defined distinctive elements for the participants, like a brand and a specific clothing and stand's setting up.

As far as communication strategies are concerned, by word of mouth strategies, carried out also through digital channels, are privileged.

Online platforms and digital technologies are mainly used also for educating shoppers.

As evident from figure 2, farmers' markets are usu-

ally accessible through dedicated website and rely on social media to communicate with final consumers. Main social media are Facebook and Instagram.

4.3.4 CULTURAL/SOCIAL DOMAIN

By recalling Block's (1990) analysis, who explains consumer's attitude as ranging from embeddedness and marketness/instrumentalism, it is evident that social dimension is really relevant in describing Norwegian farmers' markets, in that pure values are thoroughly embedded in farmers' market initiatives.

More precisely, the two key elements of analysis within the socio-cultural domain (embeddedness and locality) reveal the farmers' markets effectiveness in Norway:

A Embeddedness, meaning that a broad range of variables may affect consumer's behavior. Actually, one of the most important motivation for buying local food is to support local, rural community, so confirming recent literature on the

relevance of non-economic values in performing purchasing attitudes, through which local economy is supported. As theories of helping behavior recognize, *it is important for local food consumers to support local businesses and the local community*, [being] *support based on shared values and reciprocity* [which] *implies some kind of helping behaviour from the consumer's perspective* (Skallerud, Wien, 2019, p.80).

In addition, either social, environmental and health issues are at stake in motivating consumers' purchasing behavior.

B The meaning of “**Local**” also deserves attention, due to the idea of not considering this as a mere geographical word. From a merely geographical perspective, as reported in Åsebø *et al.* (2007, p.72), “*Locally produced*” *is one of the quality promises at the market. They did not define any absolute limit for what could be sold*

FIGURE 2 – MAIN WEB TOOLS ARE USED TO PROMOTE MARKETS' ACTIVITIES

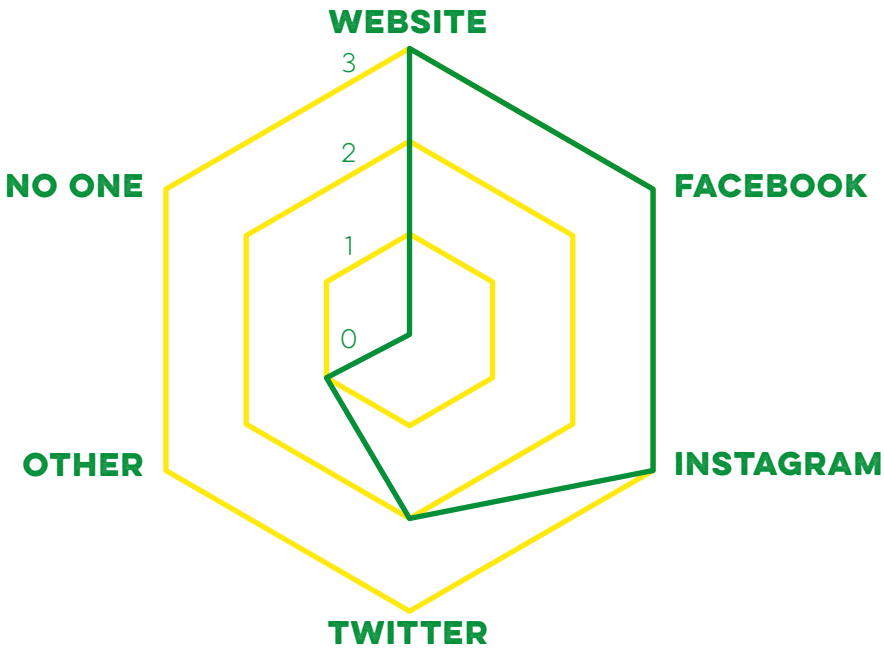


TABLE 1 – MEANINGS OF LOCAL

LOCAL	DIMENSIONS
FUNCTIONAL	• HEALTH
	• TASTE
ECOLOGICAL	• FOODMILES
	• BIODIVERSITY
	• LANDSCAPE
AESTHETIC	• DIVERSITY VS STANDARDIZATION
	• DISTINCTION
ETHIC	• AUTHENTICITY
	• IDENTITY
	• SOLIDARITY
POLITICAL	• TO CHANGE POWER BALANCE IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN
	• TO ORIENT CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION MODELS

as local, but there should be special reasons for exceeding a 100 km distance between site of production and site of the market. As a consequence, local is not a geographical word, as it evidences elements of distinctiveness. More precisely, as shown in table 1, all the elements taken into account in explicating the meaning of local have been found in our analysis.

As a matter of fact, all the investigated dimensions of 'local' have been emphasized in our empirical test, more precisely:

- *Functional* meaning considers elements of human wellbeing, then underlying the role of farmers' markets in performing the pleasure of consuming local food (taste), but also the opportunity of consuming healthy products;
- *Ecological*, which clarified the fundamental role of locally grown products in addressing environmentally responsible purchasing practices. As a consequence, by recalling convention theory (Boltanski, Thevenot, 1991), a civic convention is found, where consumers pay attention to method of production (for instance, through sustainable agricultural practices, animal welfare included).
- *Aesthetic* dimension is also relevant in contributing to the consumers' distinctiveness, through what Hvitsand (2016) defines as transformational act bringing about "distinct" behavior grounded on multiple motivation of purchasing. For instance, one of the point of strength of Bondens markets is the capability of co-producing quality through untraded interdependencies among producers and consumers, which configures a busi-

ness model grounded on relational foodspace (Goodman, 2016).

- *Ethic* dimension is also identified through authenticity, in that consumers reveal high propensity to consume authentic local fresh food, which is expression of a local identity and which involves solidarity values. This is clearly evident when comparing the prices at farmers' markets, which are systematically higher for consumers, who justify this expenses with the ethical and environmental standards to be respected, like the case of animal welfare in Norwegian farmers' markets demonstrate (Vittersø *et al.*, 2019).
- *Political* issues, finally, underline the importance of countervailing the contractual power of big retailers by repositioning farmers on alternative food supply chains. Under this perspective, we share the recent literature that refer to "patriotism" as "*a sense of pride in one's own country [...]. It is willingness to protect one's in-group/homeland against outgroups*" (Skallerud, Wien, 2019, p.81). Furthermore, from a "social inclusion" policy perspective, it has to be underlined the relevance of this alternative networks in boosting women farmers' participation. However, the political point of view is not limited to producers, but can be extended to customers, with the aim to reorient their consumer behavior. As revealed in Veidal and Flaten's (2011) study, farmers' markets represent a way of socially including women farmers, in account of their relevance in this direct marketing initiative.



CHAPTER 5

FARMERS' MARKETS IN AUSTRALIA



Alphington Farmers Market, Melbourne. Photo credit @markchew_photography

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with farmers' markets in Australia, with the purpose of both emphasizing how this initiative is gaining ground under a "quality turn" process and evidencing how farmers' markets may represent a key strategy for smallholder farmers, who, due to the pressures of modern and globalized agrifood systems, are threatened by the "price-costs squeeze".

As a consequence, a prevalent productivity approach and the lack of policy support for small farmers, which is commonly recognized in other developed countries, has raised risks for these farms to collapse (O'Kane, Wijaya, 2015; Andree *et al.*, 2010).

As in other parts of the world, a reaction consisting in a re-territorialization process emerged, resulting in new linkages among sectors, businesses producers and consumers, and markets (Horlings, 2014).

This has recently brought about the development of alternative food networks feeding the links between quality and locality and the 'transformational' power of local food, which brings about a change the consumers and the producers assign to food (Brunori, 2007).

To confirm this, it is enough to observe how twenty years ago, farmers' markets were a little known phenomenon, while today.

Farmers' markets in Australia are a relatively recent phenomenon, birth at the beginning of 2000s' and defined under the framework of two main organizations: the Australian Farmers Markets Association (AFMA), formed in 2003 and the Victorian Farmers' Markets Association (VFMA), formed in 2004 to strengthen and support emergent farmers' markets at national and one southern state level respectively.

The Australian Farmers Markets Association (AFMA) defines farmers' markets as those that are: "*Predominantly fresh food markets that operate regularly within a community, at a focal public location, that provide a suitable environment for farmers and speciality food producers to sell farm-origin and associated value-added speciality foods for human consumption and plant products, directly to customers*".

Furthermore, the Victorian Farmers Markets Association (VFMA), hosting the only formally recognized accreditation program in Australia, underlines some keywords, when stating that "*Accredited farmers' markets provide an opportunity for our farmers to sell direct and take full credit for their efforts. By shopping at authentic farmers' markets customers are guaranteed access to quality, freshly harvested produce whilst supporting local farmers and directly putting money back into regional Victorian communities*". Therefore, farmers' markets in Australia become a paths for empowering localized mode of food provisioning, through which:

- A** producers may directly sell their fresh products and interact with final consumers;
- B** consumers may get higher shares of added value through direct selling and providing a strong contribution to make local food systems more sustainable;
- C** socialization mechanisms are at stake, aiming at consolidating social legitimization of local farmers in the community (O’Kane and Yuliani Wijaya. 2015).

In the following paragraphs we will present the results of empirical analysis, by adopting the same framework of the other countries.

5.2 METHODOLOGY

The empirical analysis has been carried out with the support of a questionnaire that has been administered through the help of local representatives of Australian farmers’ markets.

Moreover, documentary research and access to internet websites of the various organizational bodies of farmers’ markets have supported data and information collection.

5.3 RESULTS

As already underlined, since 2003 farmers’ markets in Australia have been knowing a huge increase, then allowing stronger connections between urban and rural communities. The empirical analysis takes into account the usual domains that have been considered for the other countries: structural, efficiency, service/marketing and cultural domains.

5.3.1 STRUCTURAL DOMAIN

Australian farmers’ markets are mainly located in metropolitan areas, with an average size of 2,500 square meters. The vendors bring their own stalls and equipment, utilizing the market’s permanent infrastructure such as bathrooms, tables and chairs for the public, signage and roadway signage.

According to the Australian farmers’ markets association, two stall configuration options are possible: the first one is a single stall, which is in charge of a family farm business. The second one is a shared stall, which represent diverse farmers or family farm businesses.

As far as type of activity is concerned, temporary activities prevail, in that farmers’ markets occur once a week or once a month and involve 30-50 vendors or, in larger farmers’ markets, more than 50 vendors. However, the success of this initiative has pushed many farmers’ markets to increase the weekly presence. As a matter of fact, the *Weekly Times* magazine³ reports that an urban farmers’ markets may attract 3,000-5,000, with very positive economic returns. In order to better understand the positive dynamics of Australian farmers’ markets it is enough to think that about ten years ago these markets occurred once a month. Vendors are not exclusively farmers, because other enterprises may adhere, like agri-food farms of transformation, food artisans, restaurateurs, coffee and breakfast, etc.

In Victoria, in order to safeguard final consumers and a level playing field for farmers, a rigorous accreditation system has been introduced in 2009, which forbid wholesalers or resellers the access to markets.

For example, in the case of Victorian Farmers’ Mar-

kets Association, in order to be part of the association, the farm should be located in the state of Victoria. Moreover, the fee each producer pays a levy to the Victorian Farmers Market Association⁴ in addition to stall fees. This supports the accreditation program and promotion of accredited farmers’ markets. A ‘gold coin’ entry fee to the market is common and may be used for social purposes, like in the case of Melbourne Farmers Markets which targets the entry fees to the **community organizations**, such as Carlton Primary School.

Markets are hosted in council parks, school and University grounds. Markets usually take place in the morning, while in the University of Melbourne they are prolonged over lunchtime.

A great variety of products is delivered through Australian farmers’ markets, including fresh and processed products from local agriculture and breeding. Moreover, it is also possible to find high quality products, like organic and typical products (for instance, geographical indications). High quality products are assimilated to specialty foods: in case of organic products, healthy issue prevail in consumers’ purchasing behavior, while in case of typical products, the term “quality” incorporates cultural and social benefits, through valorization of products linked to the local tradition “transferred” into the product. This raises the perceived benefit from buying local products.

The most frequently bought products in farmers’ markets are fruit and vegetables (including added value fruit and vegetables), which absorb the highest percentage of sold products, with almost 35% of total. Almost 90-100% of vendors sell fruit, vegetables and value-added fruit and vegetables products in Australian farmers’ markets (Nelan *et al.*, 2017).

Furthermore, other products may be bought at the markets, like, wines, oil, meat and sausages, cheeses and other dairy products, etc.

The possibility of selling added value products is in charge of the specialty makers, who are defined by the VFMA as “*a specialty food producer of value-added food products that primarily comprise local, seasonal and regional ingredients, preferably sourced directly from farmers, and those specialty foods sold by the specialty maker or business staff*”.

5.3.2 EFFICIENCY DOMAIN

The business model of farmers’ market is organized around key principles providing benefits for both consumers and producers. The analysis of the efficiency domain in this paragraphs will support this hypothe-

sis, by taking into account three dimensions: informational, logistic-distributional, environmental.

As far as **informational dimension** is concerned, interviewed person have declared that Australian farmers’ markets have a relatively good performance (3 out of 5) in addressing quality cues to final consumers. Therefore, untraded interdependencies (Storper, 1997) among farmers and consumers feed sound information to circulate about quality attributes of fresh local produce. Relationships with final consumers are of paramount importance to better understand dynamics of consumers’ behavior. Therefore, farmers’ markets become an informational tool for addressing new instances, like gluten free or low sugar/salt consumption trends (The Weekly Times, 2019).

As far as the second dimension of efficiency is concerned, **distribution of value along the supply chain**, as usual it has been evaluated at both vertical and horizontal level:

- at **vertical** level, this has been verified through analyzing fair prices for both farmers and consumers. In both cases, very good results have been found.

- Regarding farmers, selling at farmers’ markets results in higher prices. As a consequence, localized forms of direct selling confirms their effectiveness in securing farmers with fair prices, then positively impacting on the farm incomes. This confirms other analyses which have pointed out how the search for adequate income is one of the most important motivations for adhering to farmers’ markets in Australia (O’Kane, Wijaya, 2015). As recently pointed out by Woodburn (2014), farmers’ markets represent a profitable direct consumer market link, more precisely, they are *A reliable distribution channel that can complement other distribution options available for farmers and other food businesses. It is particularly valuable for new and emerging businesses where products are still being tested and developed, and availability of produce can differ from market day to market day.* As a matter of fact, in their empirical research carried out in Australian farmers’ markets in 2014, they found almost 80% of farmers answering positively to the following question: *Do you make a profit through participating in farmers’ market (or similar community food markets)?* As reported on the online magazine “The Weekly Times” (2019) (<https://www.weekly-timesnow.com.au/agribusiness>), through local markets, farmers may “get the whole dollar”, then gaining up to 10 times more than selling at conventional markets.



³ <https://www.weeklytimesnow.com.au/agribusiness>

⁴ An association counting on 200-500 producers in its database, 100-150 of whom regularly trading each week and 1000-2000 customers per market.

◦ Likewise, in many cases, farmers’ markets represent a cheaper solution for consumers to buy food. Recent analyses have demonstrated how affordable is to buy at farmers’ markets, with reference to organic and not organic products⁵. Nonetheless, this is a not generalizable conclusion, because in some cases, final prices are found inflated, as demonstrated in the Woodburn’s (2014, p.18) analysis: *Our market used to be authentic, but with poor management too many stallholders are just purchasing products from wholesalers and passing it off as their own with an unjustly inflated price.*

This is in line with recent researches: for instance, Markow *et al.* (2014) highlight that short food supply chains should improve their affordability and should enhance higher access by low income consumers. Despite that, a clarification is needed: if prices are perceived as higher than conventional distribution channels, it could be of help to furtherly reduce informational asymmetries with final consumers, to better address quality attributes of locally grown products. This is coherent with the aforementioned average (not high) good (3 out of 5) capability of conveying information towards final consumers.

• At **horizontal** level, efficiency is evaluated through the opportunity that farmers’ markets represent for smallholder farmers and for remote rural areas. Farmers’ markets usually enhance viability of small farms and farms located in remote rural areas. However, recent researches underline that profitability of farmers markets located in rural areas seems less with respect to metropolitan farmers’ markets. This may put at risk the strategies of qualification and valorization of agricultural products through quality brands like organic and local, when they do not offer adequate returns for farmers (Woodburn, 2014). On the other side, the importance of farmers’ markets for entire rural communities cannot be neglected. As a matter of fact, building of local communities supporting local agriculture is of paramount importance for farmers’ markets and in Victoria, this is evident with the strong viability of many accredited regional markets. Additionally, the markets represent a solution for the younger generation to remain in rural areas and to get viable livelihoods on farms.

Moreover, they also have a *positive impact on mental health for an often-isolated demographic of the community* (Melbourne Farmers Markets, <https://mfm.com.au/>, accessed February 2nd 2021).

• Finally, regarding the **environmental dimension** of efficiency, Australian markets offer a contribution to the promotion of positive direct and indirect externalities. Direct externalities are drawn on reduced packaging, lower impact of transport (zero Km) and on the production of local/typical and organic products. Indirect externalities are realized through maintaining rural landscape and preserving biodiversity. As a consequence, farmers’ markets activity increases the degree of multifunctionality of local farming, under the perspective of strong multifunctionality. As posited by Wilson (2008, p.368): *High environmental sustainability plays a key role in strongly multifunctional systems, as does the focus on relocalised agro-food chains that reduce the need for long-distance food transport. Strongly multifunctional systems will also display low farming intensity and productivity.*

5.3.3 SERVICE/MARKETING DOMAIN

Inside the farmers’ markets, both elementary and complex strategies are implemented. The first ones are limited to providing farmers with a physical space to sell the products, while long-term strategies for valorizing farmers’ activity inside the markets are carried out by third parties with high experience. The Australian farmers’ markets are often managed by a formal organization such as a registered not for profit company or incorporated association, with a diverse range of activities:

- Technical advising.
- Financial and administrative functions.
- Control of the food safety standards and general rules set in the internal regulation
- Viable mix of food products
- Vendors registering and spaces distribution.
- Relationships with other markets.
- Relationships with institutions and customers.
- Promotion of the farmers and businesses, events and initiatives
- And, most recently, strict COVID19 regulations.

In relation to the promotion of events, other activities and initiatives are promoted inside the markets, with special reference to:

- recreational activities; as a matter of fact, ac-

- cess to farmers’ markets is usually joined to the possibility of day-tripping tourists, above all for urban citizens;
- didactic activities;
- cultural activities and community organization participation (conferences, book presentation, information stalls etc.);
- training activities (training courses, etc.);
- food service (coffee, community fundraising BBQ’s, lunch/dinner);
- social activities, like workshops and food related demonstrations;
- education in food security, local agricultural issues, home food production etc.

The activities carried out in the Australian farmers’ markets are usually promoted through communication initiatives relying on various channels, like by word of mouth among consumers, digital by word of mouth, street signs, leaflet and newspapers, promotional messages, social media, hospitality media etc. On the other side, the growing set of activities to be managed by the organizing group, emphasizes some training needs. In order to let farmers’ markets better performance, normative, marketing, managerial, logistic-organizational, agronomic, administrative competencies may be improved. In order to secure the effective working of markets, good relationships at institutional level are required.

More precisely, as far as national, regional and local institutions are concerned, figure 1 depicts the relevance of these institutions in boosting and promoting farmers’ markets. As evident from the graph, the local dimension, synthetized by the relationships with regional and provincial institutions is not always judged as positive. Nonetheless, as far as the community di-

mension is concerned, local communities play a fundamental role in preserving and supporting farmers’ activity along short food supply chains as alternative to conventional retailing models.

Likewise, the national government is of paramount important for farmers’ markets, acting as engine to address new paths for farm’s development alongside the trajectories of sustainable models of endogenous rural development.

As a matter of fact, in Victoria, municipal government administers the state food safety registration and businesses have important relationship with their environmental health officers who oversee the program from permanent premises to temporary event registration.

5.3.4 CULTURAL/SOCIAL DOMAIN

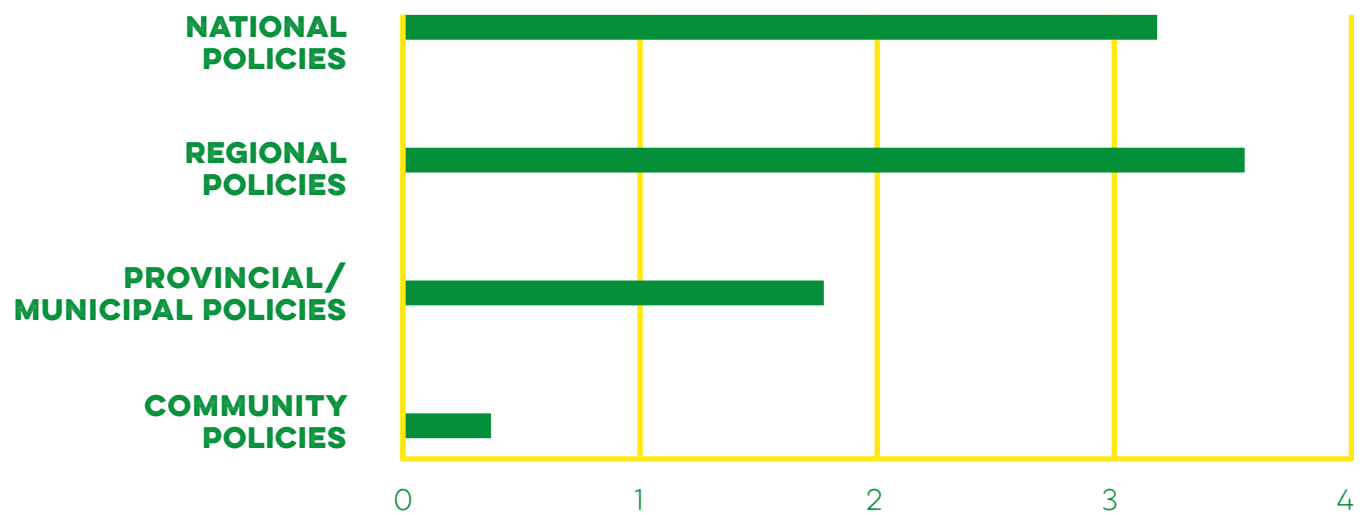
Being part of a community of farmers selling products through collective marketing initiatives calls for taking into account relational assets as basis for supporting local economies (Storper, 1997). As posited by Worden (2004), motivation for participating to farmers’ markets is not solely economic, but it entails the purpose of building an “*associative economy*” reconfiguring society’s relationships with respect to food and rural areas, then bringing about to greater equity and satisfaction for both producers and consumers (O’Kane *et al.*, 2015). This paragraph explores non-economic aspects of the farmers’ markets in Australia.

As usual, two main dimensions are investigated: embeddedness and the meaning of local.

A Embeddedness.

As far as embeddedness is concerned, figure 2 highlights the most important elements of embeddedness as declared by the interviewees.

FIGURE 1 – ROLE POLICIES HAVE IN ACTIVATING FARMERS’ MARKETS (1=LOW/4=VERY HIGH)



⁵ See, for instance, the research conducted by the Griffin University Dietetics and Nutrition students Jasmin More and Sara Why (<https://nswlhd.health.nsw.gov.au/health-promotion/files/2018/09/farmers27-markets-research-report-2018-executive-summary.pdf>)

FIGURE 2 – ELEMENTS OF EMBEDDEDNESS

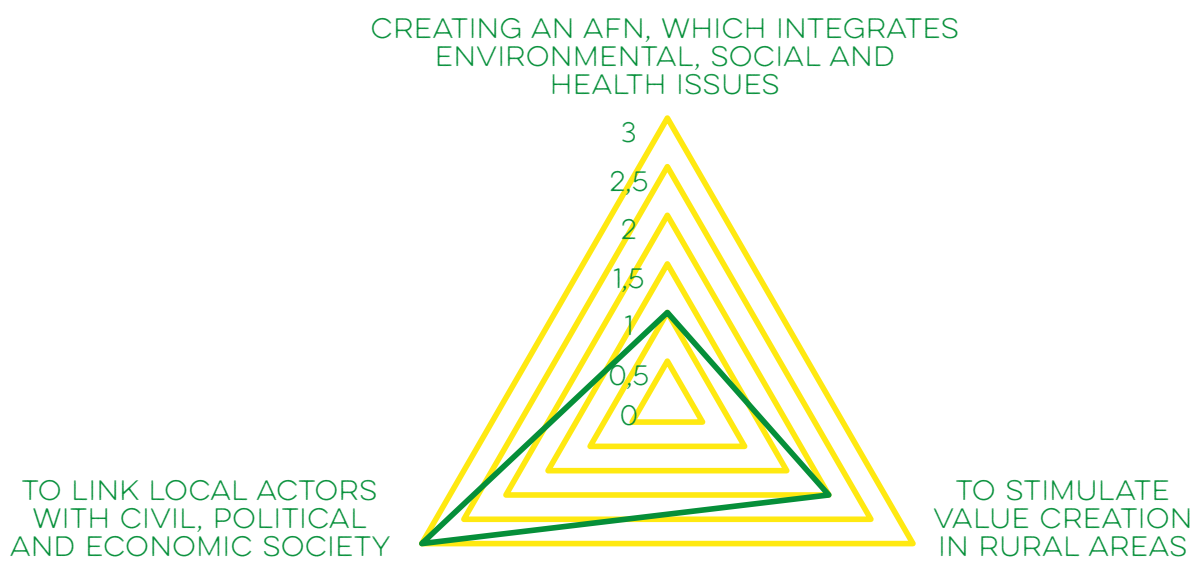


TABLE 5.1 – MEANINGS OF LOCAL

LOCAL	DIMENSIONS
FUNCTIONAL	• HEALTH
	• TASTE
ECOLOGICAL	• FOODMILES
	• BIODIVERSITY
	• LANDSCAPE
AESTHETIC	• DIVERSITY VS STANDARDIZATION
	• DISTINCTION
ETHIC	• AUTHENTICITY
	• IDENTITY
	• SOLIDARITY
POLITICAL	• TO CHANGE POWER BALANCE IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN
	• TO ORIENT CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION MODELS

As evident from the figure, linking actors with civil, political and economic society is the key aspect enabling farmers’ markets embeddedness in the Australian society, jointly with high capability of settling agricultural activity in rural areas through promoting community development. Finally, creating alternative food networks integrating environmental, social and health issues has been mentioned as third dimension in order of importance.

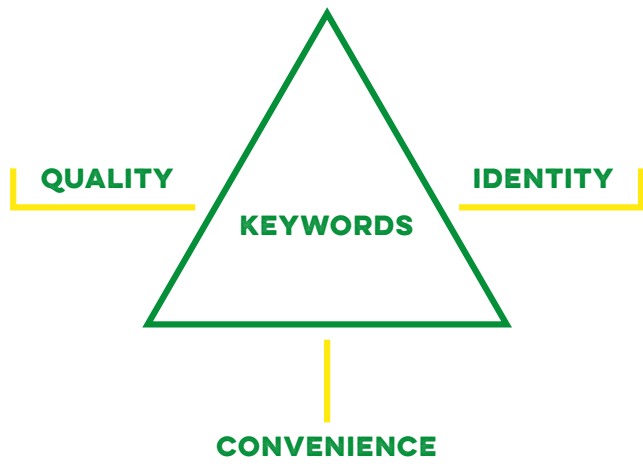
B The meaning of “**Local**” also deserves attention, Table 5.1 underlines how behind the term ‘local’ various meanings are revealed. Under a simply functional point of view, “pleasure” of consuming food, but also the consciousness of consuming safe food have been mentioned. Moreover, consuming ‘local’ has also positive impact on the environments, in terms of food miles, understanding of seasons and regions and the preservation of biodiversity and landscape. From the aesthetic point of view, purchasing at the farmers’ markets represents a mean of distinctiveness for consumers and provides them with the opportunity of consuming diverse food, alternative food with respect to the conventional and standardized product sold in the modern retailers. As far as ethic dimension is concerned, one challenging aspect is the issue of *authenticity*, that is the principle of selling only what the vendor grows or makes as opposed to the produce coming through a wholesale market or bought and re-sold from other growers. For instance, the Victorian Farmers’ Markets Association identified the importance of transparency early in its existence and established an its’ opt-in accreditation program, unusual in other short food supply chains. Moreover, identity and

solidarity have to be underlined as key elements of embedding process of farmers’ markets in Australia. Finally, from a political point of view, the purpose of countervailing the contractual power of the food industry and the big retailers, by generating more value at farming level, and the capability to reorient consumption models are positive outcomes of this collective marketing initiative. To sum up with, farmers’ markets in Australia are revealing their efficacy in performing diversification of income sources for farmers and promoting multifunctional agricultural systems, with the approval of even more conscious consumers. A final element of relevance we have drawn on our empirical analysis regards future strategies and the key words to carry out winning strategies for consolidating farmers’ markets. These have been pointed out in figure 3: convenience, quality, identity. Contacted persons underline these as relevant points to develop farmers’ markets along the binomial “modernity and locality”. More precisely, in order to make Australian farmers’ markets a more efficient and winning strategy, the following key point have been pointed out:

- improving **convenience**, which meaning in a farmers’ market – click and collect. Pre-order and pick up on market day for the best of both worlds. This may increase the perceived value of farmers’ markets by consumers;
- underlying ‘local’ as **quality** cue, meaning in a farmers’ market it is not possible to get fresher or more local;
- **Identity**, meaning in a farmers’ market, one should expect to find “real food direct from the people who produce it”.

Melbourne Farmers Markets, in reference to their management of accredited farmers’ markets in Victoria. Therefore, the importance of farmers’ markets in Australia cannot be neglected and has paved the way to alternative sustainable models of agriculture meeting the growing appreciation of final consumers.

FIGURE 3 – KEYWORDS FOR A WINNING STRATEGY IN AUSTRALIAN FARMERS’ MARKETS



CHAPTER 6

FARMERS' MARKETS IN ITALY



6.1 INTRODUCTION

The economic model based on long food supply chains and on globalized mode of food provisioning has depicted a contradictory scenario, which have raised either economic (food security), or social (increase in obesity rates, diseases and food scandals) or environmental (impacts due to the long distance transports and intensive production techniques) concerns. Moreover, the strengthening of industrial and a-territorial models of food production brought about “steady increase in geographical and cultural distances between consumers and producers” (Giuca, 2013). As for other countries all over the world, localized agrifood systems provided sound basis for launching alternative food networks, under the hypothesis of benefitting both producers and consumers. However, put under the perspective of localized agrifood systems, the analysis of farmers’ markets involves complex networks of actors to be taken into account, bringing about adjustment and cultural adaptation within the interactive mode of building the localized food system (Amilien *et al.*, 2019). On the other side, scholars have also questioned the real benefits of alternative food networks from the perspectives of both the supply (Sonnino, Marsden, 2006; Kjeldsen *et al.*, 2013 and demand (Tregear, 2007). In this chapter, we would like to provide sound answers. This chapter deals with farmers’ markets in Italy, with

the aim to provide evidence about their impact from different levels:

- Macro level, in that it explores territorial impact, with special reference to rural areas;
- Micro level at both:
 - Producers’ level, with the purpose of evidencing the capability of farmers’ markets to consolidate farm robustness;
 - Consumers’ level, by emphasizing the role of markets in addressing quality issues for final consumers, allowing them to give contribution to build up multifunctional farming and rural systems.

6.2 METHODOLOGY

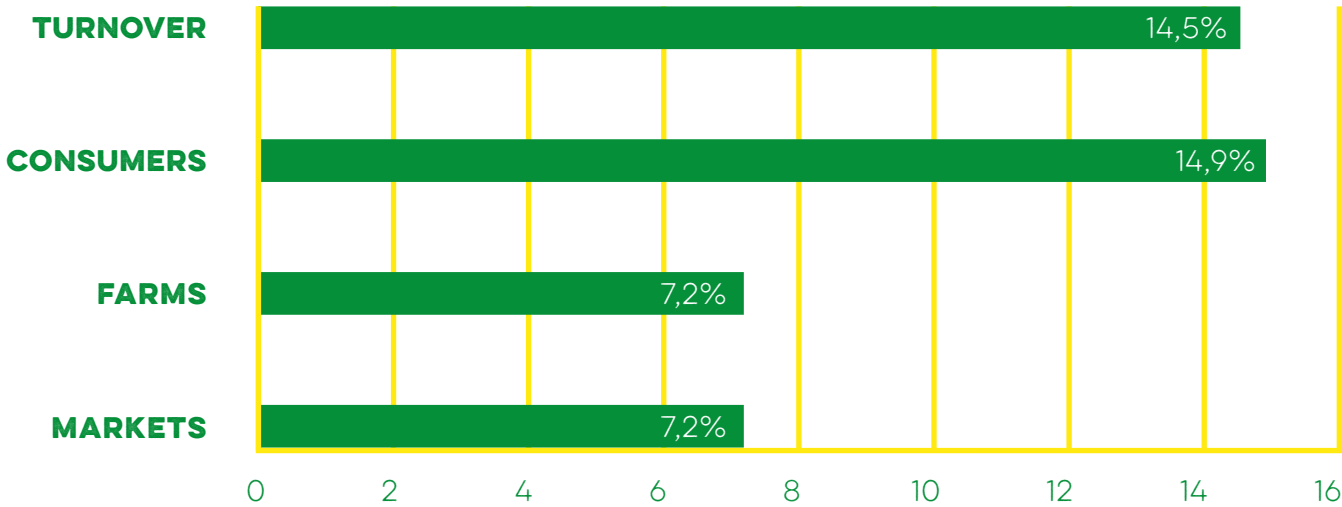
A questionnaire has been submitted to the managers of the Italian farmers’ markets distributed all over Italy. Respondents farmers’ markets adhere to the “*Campagna Amica*” Foundation, a thirty years old organization, which has identified short food supply chains as sound alternatives to conventional modern distribution channels. Campagna Amica is run by Coldiretti, the most important farmers organization in Italy. Overall, 51 questionnaires have been collected; as a consequence, in order to manage a relatively high quantity of data, both descriptive and multivariate analyses have been carried out. More precisely, after describing Italian farmers’ markets according the

shared strategic domains, a cluster analysis has been carried out, with the purpose of grouping homogeneous farmers' markets with special reference to the impact of farmers markets in creating values. Accordingly, the variables of the efficiency domain have been considered as active in the cluster analysis, while the other domains were considered as illustrative variables, so allowing a wider and more precise description of each cluster.

6.3 RESULTS

Farmers' markets in Italy have been knowing a tremendous expansion and his success is witnessed by very good performance. According to the *Campagna Amica Coldiretti* database, in the last ten years, Campagna Amica farmers' markets expanded from less than 600 to almost 1,200, with more than 12,000 farmers involved. By making reference to number of markets, farms, turnover and consumers, figure 1 reports the annual rate of variation. Both markets and farms adhering to direct selling increased at an annual rate of 7.2%, while data regarding turnover and consumers are more than double. What is interesting to note is also that these figures are increasingly higher also in the pandemic period. Actually, the increase of turnover is more than 14%, while the purchasers' annual rate of variation is 14.9%. Therefore, farmers' markets not only impacted on the farms' economic performance, but they changed consumers' behavior and quality perception of food. As a matter of fact, the success of farmers markets is the consequence of a real cultural turn marked by the idea of “*tasting sustainability*” (Giampietri *et al.*, 2019).

FIGURE 1 – TREND IN FARMERS' MARKETS (% ANNUAL RATE OF VARIATION 2011-2020)



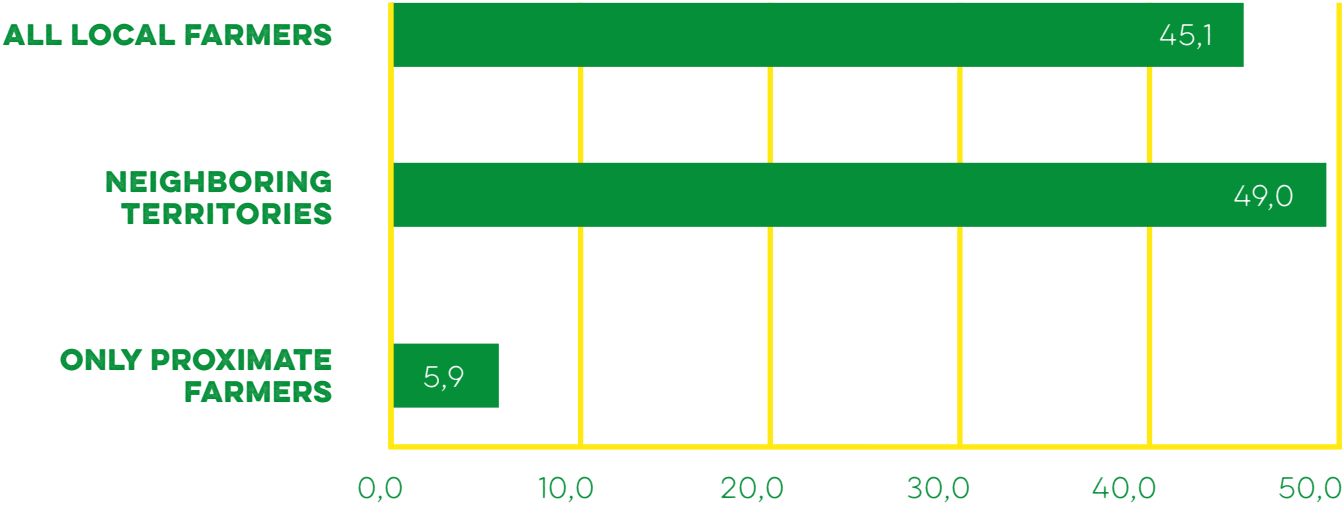
Source: Coldiretti Campagna Amica

The aforementioned figures provide a first insight on the economic impact of farmers' markets in Italy. Furthermore, as declared in a recent interview by Carmelo Troccoli, founder of Campagna Amica Foundation (Il Sole 24 Ore, 20.02.2021), farmers' markets played a fundamental role in boosting a U-turn of the farm marginality in the supply chain, through a functional repositioning of the small farms alongside the lines of strong multifunctionality of agriculture (Wilson, 2008). In order to appreciate these aspects through the multiple lens of this report, in the following paragraphs we will describe each domain of analysis, as for other countries of this report.

6.3.1 STRUCTURAL DOMAIN

Italian farmers' markets represent a unique opportunity to integrate farm revenue. Organizations managing farmers' markets involve an average number of 200 associates. Usually farmers' markets operate in a permanent way and 86% of markets are organized under covered structures. Furthermore, in the majority of cases (60%) dedicated structures are assigned to the markets. Farmers admitted to markets are mainly local (figure 2), but there is the opportunity for more distant (but regional) producers to gain access to them. As showed in figure 1, 45.1% of farmers' markets accept all local farmers, with a small percentage of markets with only geographically proximate farmers are admitted. Finally, a relevant percentage, 49% may host also non local farmers, but they have to come from the regional boundaries.

FIGURE 2 – ACCESS TO MARKETS (%)

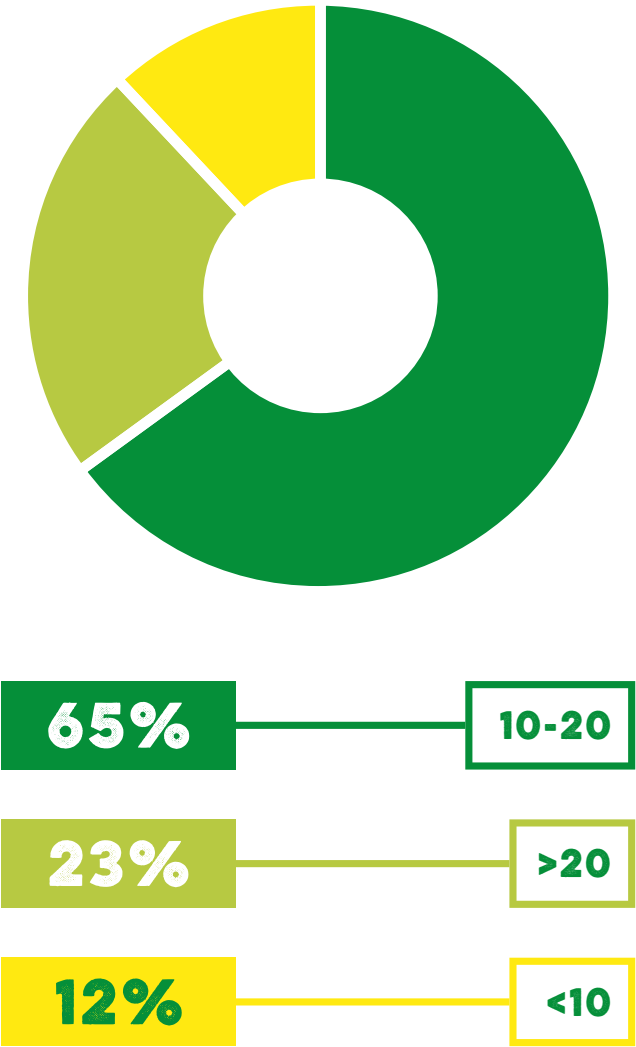


Actor working in the markets are mainly farmers, but some managers declared to host also non-farming actors (for example agrifood industries, artisans, etc.). Markets occur once a week, but some markets twice or three times a week (39,2%), prevailingly in morning hours (76%). A big variety of products may be found at farmers' market, ranging from fruit and vegetables to meat, cheese and other dairy products, oil, wines, etc. The vendors admitted to markets are variable too (figure 3), ranging from less than 10 vendors (12% of cases), to more than 20 in 23% of cases, while in the majority of markets (65%), 10-20 vendors are at work.

6.3.2 EFFICIENCY DOMAIN

As for other farmers' markets in the worlds, we have proceeded to an evaluation of the impact of markets on a set of economic, social and environmental dimensions. A synthetic comparison between these dimensions is provided in figure 4, which depicts answers articulated in positive (sufficient, good, optimal)/negative (scarce, none) evaluations. The first one is the **informational dimension** and concerns the farmers' markets aptitude to address quality attributes to final consumers. As evident from figure 4, no negative judgment has been revealed by the market leaders. In 84,3% of cases, good or optimal results have been found, in account of the domestic convention prevailing in this mode of food provisioning. Quality issue are therefore addressed through reconnecting producers and consumers and creating relational assets which set up the basis for reciprocal trust in supporting information about food quality. In general, farmers' markets confirm their role in creating value for all actors along the supply chain, which is posited by 69% of the interviewed.

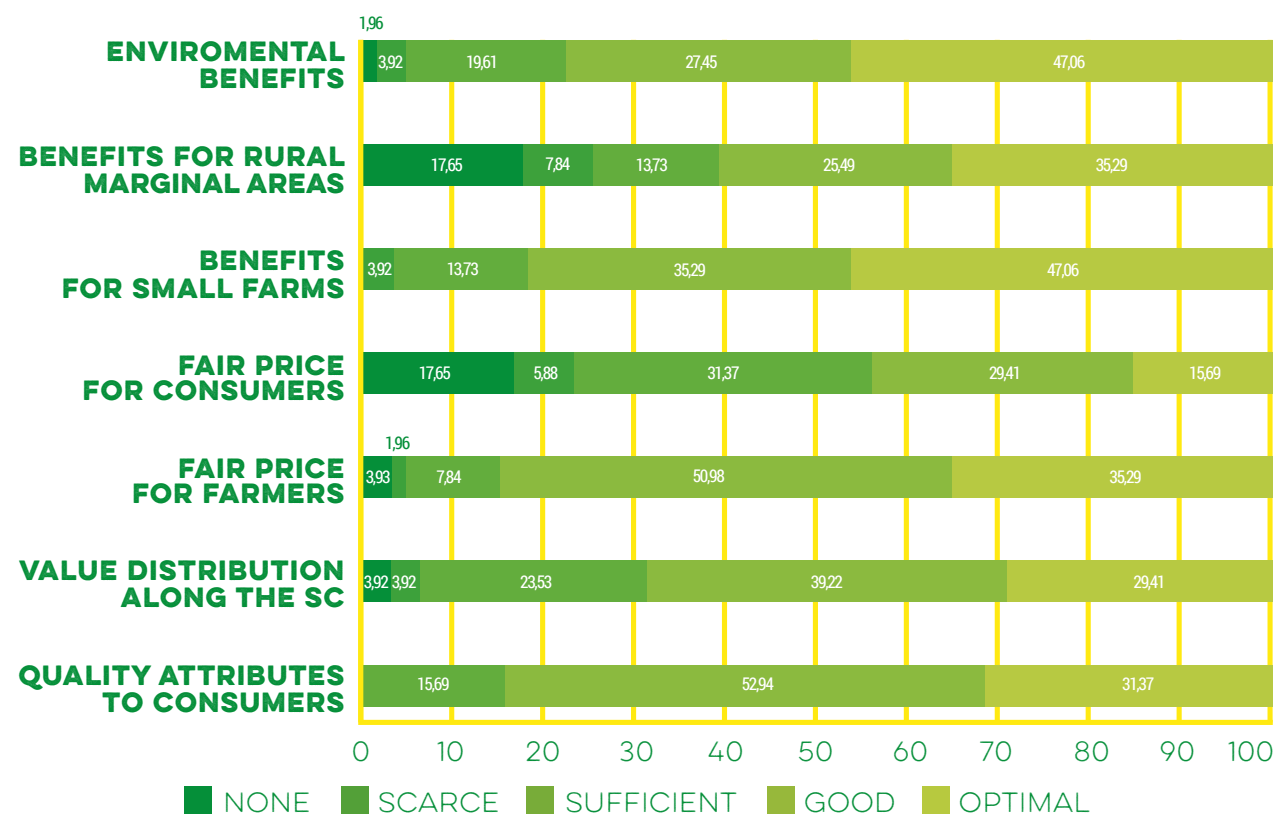
FIGURE 3 – NUMBER OF VENDORS IN FARMERS' MARKETS



Less than 10% have declared a relatively scarce importance (3.92 no importance, 3.92 scarce importance) of these markets in providing value. Positive economic performance greatly benefits farmers: 86% of the interviewees declared good/optimal performance at farm level, in terms of **higher prices** perceived by farmers. Specific benefits are evidenced **for small-size farms**, which take advantages from short food supply chains. escaping the modern distribution channels is a winning strategy for small farms. Moreover, 61% of the managers have also declared (good/optimal) benefits for **rural marginal areas**, then confirming positive impacts of direct selling in remote rural areas. On the other side, a reduced impact has been found at **consumption** level, with 45% of leaders stating that consumers benefit of fairer prices. More than one fifth of markets managers have indicated either scarce and, mostly (17.65%), no benefits for final consumers. A final dimension to be considered is the **environmental** impact of farmers' markets: farmers' markets confirm their ecological relevance, which has been confirmed as good and optimal in 75% of cases. Therefore, as in other parts of the world, farmers' markets provide a strong contribution in building up sustainable model of agricultural production.

Therefore, from the aforementioned impacts, a model in line with the European design of farming system emerges, relying on a strong perspective of multifunctionality (Wilson, 2008) which is at the same time competitive and agronomically sustainable. Actually, competitive agrifood systems were pointed out as strategic by van der Ploeg (2010): *In this respect the European Parliament took a stance (in its resolution of the 8th of July of 2010) that is far better targeted, in as far as it centred on (1) “high-added-value farming with high-quality primary and processed products [...], (2) farming open to regional markets and (3) farming geared to local markets [...]” (point 29, see also consideration Q).* *The Resolution of the 23rd of June of 2011 is also far more precise (and outspoken) than the Proposal from the Commission where it defines “agronomically sound and sustainable agricultural systems as vital to guaranteeing competitiveness on local, regional and international markets” (point 4). [...]* *Competitiveness does not stand on its own. It crucially depends on other, increasingly decisive features such as quality, sustainability, animal welfare, contributions to the quality of life, and trust (i.e. the acceptance on the part of society at large).*

FIGURE 4 – EFFICIENCY DOMAINS



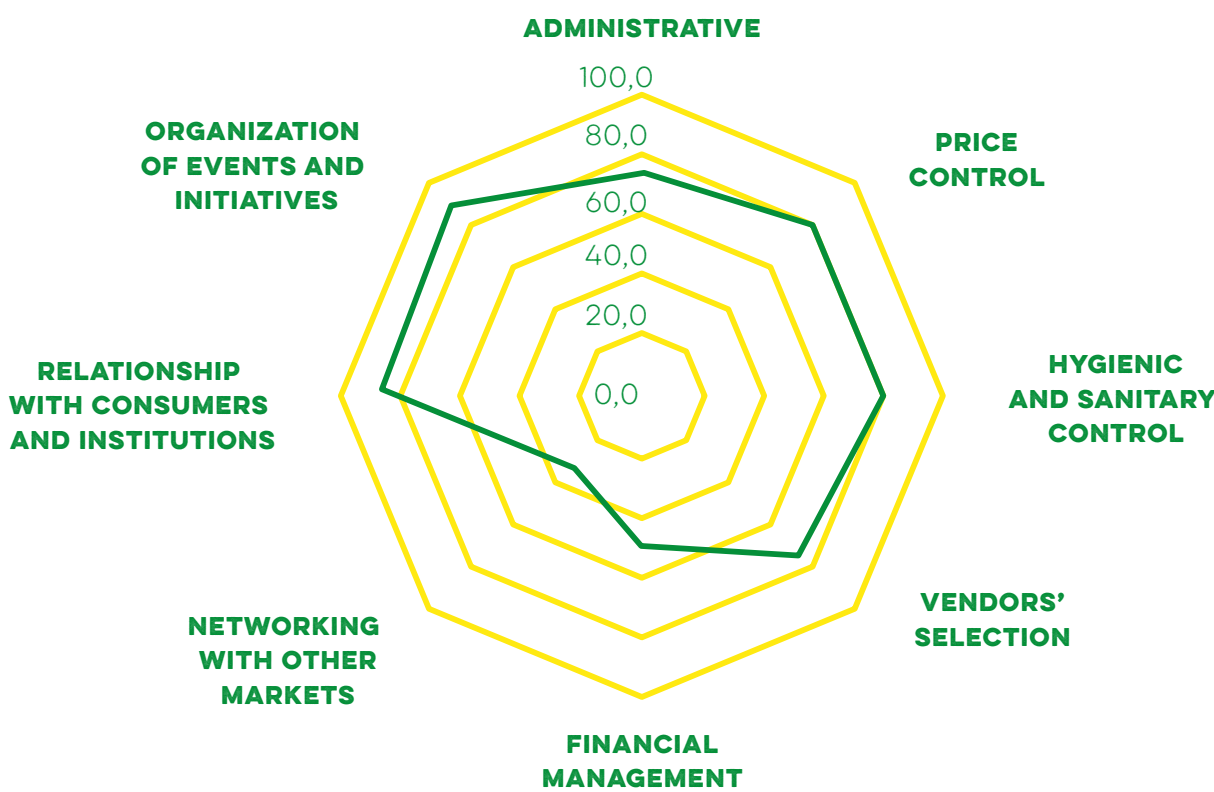
6.3.3 SERVICE/MARKETING DOMAIN

Italian farmers' markets are usually managed by a director, who takes on the responsibility of various markets. In many cases (19 questionnaires), directors are responsible of more than 7 markets, followed by the management of 4-7 markets. 15 directors manage a reduced numbers of markets (≤ 3). Manager's tasks are diversified, as reported in figure 5. The majority of markets develop activities related to the organizations of initiatives, events etc. (88.2%), relationships with customers and institutions (86.3%), price control (80,4%) and sanitary inspections (80.4%). Moreover, almost 75% of markets take care of vendors' selection and manage administrative tasks too. The less developed activities refer to financial management (49%) and networking with other markets (33.3%). The growing number of function and activities in charge of the directors allowed some training needs to emerge: more precisely, acquisition of marketing and managerial competencies have been revealed as urgent by the majority of farmers markets. Furthermore, agronomic capabilities, legal issues and competencies related to organizational and logistic aspects deserve to be improved.

6.3.4 CULTURAL/SOCIAL DOMAIN

Quality turn boosted by farmers' markets is grounded on the concept of embeddedness, linked to food rreocalization. As evidenced by Oñederra-Aramendi *et al.* (2019), this may originate different explanatory factors of embeddedness, in account of different attitude to participate in farmers' markets. This paragraph tries to identify different levels of embeddedness and different perceptions of the meaning of “local”. **A** As far as **embeddedness** is concerned, three different perspectives have been explored: the first one concerns farmers' markets impact on either environmental, social and health issues. 72.5% of managers agree on that point (5.9% strongly agree). The second dimension test the impact of farmers' markets on value creation in rural areas. In this case, more than 84% of respondents agree (66.7% strongly agree) with the positive impact of farmers' markets in value creation in rural areas. Finally, 86.3% consider farmers' markets a fundamental tool to link actors with civil, political and economic society. From aforementioned results, it is confirmed that either a geographical or a social embeddedness (Brinkley, 2017) characterize Italian markets, through strengthening

FIGURE 5 - ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE MANAGERS (%)



re-connection between producers, consumers and society. As far as geographical embeddedness is concerned, our analysis confirms previous studies, for instance where farmers’ markets represent a sound basis for embedding mountain agriculture in urban markets (Blasi *et al.*, 2015). Regarding the social dimension of embeddedness, it is confirmed that embeddedness is the outcome of complex processes of construction and defense of relationships between a product and a place (Sonnino, 2007).

B As far as “local” is concerned, our analysis reveals different meanings which have been attributed to this word. From a functional point of view, both health and taste are terms used by respondents, with a preference for healthy issues (34.5%) motivating consumers’ behavior. But also the willing to buy fresh local and tasty food gets high importance in consumer’s choice (29.4%). A relevant share (more than 29%) of respondents declares both. By considering an ecological perspective, biodiversity and landscape preservation are the main dimensions associated to local produce, declared by 70% of the interviewees. Farmers’ markets are therefore cornerstones for securing biodiversity preservation and to provide contribution to positive externalities in terms of amenities, grounded on rural landscape with a big variety of produce, rooted in each rural context. To a lesser extent, also food miles are perceived as important contribution that farmers’ markets offer on environmental protection. From an aesthetic point of view, distinctiveness is the key feature stressed by respondents: they posit that local products are distinct, that is of high quality, which confirms literature underlying that distinctiveness relies on traditional and artisan skills which are locally distinctive (Kneafsey *et al.*, 2013). One fourth of the respondents underlines the alterity of farmers’ markets in promoting diverse and not conventional products. From an ethic standpoint, identity and solidarity are keywords. This means that farmers’ markets are a brand which consumers identify themselves to.

More than 45% indicate this dimension of local, so confirming other studies indicating farmers’ markets as identity resources, by assimilating them to intangible heritage (Vukušić, 2018). Identity is strictly associated with solidarity, which poses Italian farmers’ markets in line with similar forms of community supported agriculture (Swisher, 1998). The second relevant dimension

is “authenticity”, which is mentioned by almost 30% of respondents. In 17.6% of cases both dimensions were recalled. The final point regards political dimension of locality: from this perspective, farmers’ markets are perceived as valid tools for orienting new models of both production and consumption, which escape the standardization inside globalized mode of food provisioning.

However, 11 managers have identified in farmers’ markets a relevant tool for countervailing contractual power along the food supply chain.

6.4 AN ATTEMPT TO CLASSIFY ITALIAN FARMERS’ MARKETS: A MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

As mentioned in the methodology, due to relatively high number of collected questionnaire, we put forward a cluster analysis, with the aim to aggregate homogeneous groups of farmers’ markets. More precisely, with the purpose of deepening the distributional issues along of farmers’ markets, we consider efficiency dimension as active variable, while other dimensions are considered as illustrative ones.

Therefore, starting from 51 questionnaires we have processed this multivariate approach through the statistical software SPAD, by choosing a hierarchic procedure following a Ward aggregation criterion.

Classification procedure gave back three clusters of farmers’ markets which present similar characteristics with special reference to the efficiency domain.

The three clusters include respectively 13, 21 and 7 markets. The following characterization of the clusters is grounded on the analysis of the value test and on the relevance of active variables, while the illustrative ones provide an integrative description of the markets in the group.

Cluster 1 – markets with high levels of efficiency

The first cluster includes 17 markets in various regions and provinces of Italy (table 1). Region Veneto is the mostly represented region in terms of farmers’ markets in this group. The markets of the first cluster declared high level of efficiency in all the considered domains (value distribution, informational, economic and environmental).

The first variable characterizing the efficiency of the cluster refers to the capability of markets to secure fair prices to the farmers (T-value: 4.05). Therefore, direct selling through farmers’ markets become a winning strategy to escape the price-costs squeeze (van der Ploeg, Marsden, 2008).

The second element of efficiency emerging from the

analysis concerns horizontal efficiency, in that the markets boost processes of development of rural areas (T-value: 3.54). In rural remote areas, resiliency is not an easy task and many farms face risks of collapsing; however, the alternative provided by the short food supply chains raises their capability of persistency. This is particularly true for small-size farms, which may take advantage from the direct selling, by retaining higher shares of added value at farm level (T-value: 2.98). Moreover, as evident from the third dimension of efficiency, markets offer a strong contribution to building up multifunctional agricultural systems, by emphasizing their environmental positive impact. Preservation of biodiversity and landscape, fresh produce, foodmiles are all elements of the environmental dimension affecting the positive role of the markets in the first cluster. The environmental dimension holds a paramount importance in the qualification of the term “local” as recalled by the markets of the first

cluster. As a matter of fact, the ecological dimension has been stressed with specific reference to biodiversity and landscape preservation which can be strengthened through consolidating localized mode of food provisioning. Moreover, according to the manager of this market leaders of this cluster locality entails also food taste and distinction from conventional approach to consumption. Finally, from an institutional point of view, the role of local institutions must be emphasized, in that farmers’ markets find support on provincial institutions in the creation of alternative food networks.

To sum up with, first cluster confirms what widely underlined in literature about the importance of farmers’ markets in securing fair income to small farmers, through the promotion of agronomically sound agriculture (Jarzebowski *et al.*, 2020). As a consequence, by recalling Wilsons’ definition of strong multifunctionality (Wilson, 2008), we posit that this strategic configuration of farming activity provides a contribu-

TABLE 1 – NUMBER OF MARKETS IN THE FIRST CLUSTER BY REGION

REGION	N° OF MARKETS
ABRUZZO	3
CALABRIA	2
CAMPANIA	1
LAZIO	1
LOMBARDIA	1
MOLISE	1
PIEMONTE	1
SARDEGNA	1
TOSCANA	1
UMBRIA	1
VENETO	4
TOTAL MARKETS	17

tion to building up business models based on strong multifunctionality. This brings about three typologies of positive externalities hold by the markets of this cluster (Mollard, 2003):

- Direct externalities, linked to external benefits from agricultural techniques which are not intensive, preserve biodiversity, respect seasonality and have low impact due to *foodmiles*.
- Indirect externalities, in account to the relevance of markets in terms of landscape preservation.
- Territorial externalities, drawn on both geographical and organizational proximity (Torre, Wallet, 2014).

Cluster 2 – markets with relatively average efficiency
The second cluster is the largest group and is represented by 21 markets localized in various parts of Italy, with a relative concentration in the regions Emilia Romagna and Tuscany (table 2).

Cluster 3 – markets with relatively low efficiency
The third cluster comprehends 7 markets reported in table 3.

These markets maybe defined as “markets in transition”, that is markets where the mechanisms of re-localization and reconnection have to be fully implemented. Accordingly, if, on the one side, the transition starts benefitting all actors of the short food supply chain, on the other side, the benefits have still to be fully realized (T-value: 1.95).
As far as consumer side is concerned, as for other farmers’ markets in the world, food at these farmers’ markets is not always cheaper (T-value: 1.91).
However, consumers’ perception of the “fair” price deserves clarification, in that consumers are not always able to perceive real value of food and, consequently, of “*making informed judgement of the fairness of the prices*” (Vittersø *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, price is considered of paramount importance in the political dimension of “local”, with special reference to the farmers’ markets countervailing power balance in the supply chain (T-value: 2.76).
According to the leaders of the markets belonging to cluster 3 the importance of farmers’ markets in promoting sustainable and multifunctional agriculture is



TABLE 2 – NUMBER OF MARKETS IN THE SECOND CLUSTER BY REGION

REGION	N° OF MARKETS
BASILICATA	1
CALABRIA	2
CAMPANIA	1
EMILIA ROMAGNA	5
FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA	3
LIGURIA	1
LOMBARDIA	1
MARCHE	1
PIEMONTE	2
PUGLIA	2
SICILIA	2
TOSCANA	4
VENETO	1
SARDEGNA	1
TOTAL MARKETS	27

TABLE 3 – NUMBER OF MARKETS IN THE THIRD CLUSTER BY REGION

REGION	N° OF MARKETS
FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA	1
LAZIO	1
MARCHE	1
SARDEGNA	2
TRENTINO ALTO ADIGE	1
VENETO	1
TOTAL MARKETS	7

considered as really high. Actually, the ethic dimension of “local” is stressed as relevant (T-value: 4.95) and coincides with authenticity, identity and solidarity. From an ecological point of view, farmers’ markets are considered a fundamental tool for generating positive externalities from farming activity, through low environmental impact (*foodmiles*), maintenance and valorization of biodiversity and landscape preservation (T-value: 4.91). Another distinctive factor mentioned in the perception of the “local” regards the idea of diversity versus standardization (T-value: 4.03). This means local produce entails high heterogeneity, in account of biodiversity rural territories may generate and which is incorporated in the agricultural products. As a consequence, local markets break the mould with a standardized perspective on food consumption. Finally, from a strictly functional point of view, health and taste are considered characterizing dimensions (T-value: 3.03). As a consequence, farmers’ markets in Italy may satisfy consumers’ need relating to both healthy and taste issues.



CHAPTER 7

FARMERS' MARKETS IN UK



7.1 INTRODUCTION

Despite in the late 90s' literature has emphasized the relevance of *placeless foodscapes* in the UK, characterized by food crisis, globalization and industrialization, the UK agro-food system has become a “complex and socially contested process” (Kirwan, 2004; Ilbery, Kneafsey, 2000).

As a matter of fact, alternative strategies based on a growing demand for re-embedding both food production and consumption gained ground.

As underlined, by Sonnino (2007), territorial networks took place in many areas of the UK, shaping *new platforms of action and actor-space were created*, aiming at empowering “alter” places. “Alterity” means a “heterotopic space” where different purchasing behavior characterize actors buying at local markets, with respect to conventional supermarkets (Spiller, 2010). More precisely, in the UK, “*a farmers' market is a market in which farmers, growers or producers from a defined local are present in person to sell their own produce, direct to the public. All products sold should have been grown, reared, caught, brewed, pickled, smoked or processed by the stallholder*” (Certified Farmers' Markets in the UK 2002).

Accordingly, as for other farmers' markets, the pillars the UK farmers' markets rely on the lack of middle-

men, the preference for locally grown products, traceability (meaning that consumers are equipped with adequate product knowledge and communication skills), high quality (fresh produce, which preserve environment and respect animal welfare)⁶.

In this chapter we will focus on the UK farmers' market, by assuming the same theoretical framework adopted for the other countries.

7.2 METHODOLOGY

As usual, a questionnaire has been submitted to a sample of farmers' markets. Manager and leaders of UK markets were interviewed. Farmers' markets under investigation are located in metropolitan, urban and rural areas, then offering the possibility of analyzing different contexts and providing a clear picture of this phenomenon in the UK. Expert witnesses too have been consulted for gathering other sound information able to better characterising farmers' markets. Finally, documentary research has been carried out, meant as much more than “recording facts”, being it a reflexive process allowing to integrate information drawn on newspapers, magazines, internet sources, etc., containing relevant data concerning the object of study (Scott, 2006; Ahmed, 2010).

⁶ See <https://www.kfma.org.uk/>

7.3 RESULTS

7.3.1 STRUCTURAL DOMAIN

The UK farmers’ markets are characterized by an “*inclusive approach*”, in coherence with the multi-cultural British society: all local producers respecting standards of farmers’ markets association are welcome disregarding their dimension. Usually, UK farmers’ markets are provided permanently, despite in some cases they occur weekly. Average number of vendors vary on the basis of urban/rural contexts. More precisely, as evidenced in table 1, the metropolitan farmers’ markets may host an average of 20-30 sellers, with peaks of almost 50. In urban areas, the average dimension absorbs 20-30 vendors, while in rural areas dimensions are relatively lower, with 10-20 vendors on average. In urban areas, the farmers’ markets take prevalingly place in pavement or other pedestrian areas, such as a courtyard. In metropolitan areas it is also possible to find them in car park, in school playground and on the street too, but they are also present weekly, monthly or seasonally in buildings which serve other purposes. As far as rural areas are concerned, farmers’ markets are prevalingly hosted in not dedicated structures, but accommodated for weekly, monthly or seasonal farmers’ markets. Usually markets occur in the morning, but in some cases they open all day. From our interviews an inclusive approach characterizes farmers’ markets in the UK, in that a diversified set of actors is admitted for selling their products. Thus, in these markets it is possible to find either farmers, or artisans and craft stalls, or other sellers. A full inclusive approach is adopted in metropolitan markets: as revealed by the interviewed person, anyone is admitted “*who qualifies if they make a product using over 50% locally grown ingredients, or make a sprit or beer within our rules, or bread within our rules, plus fishermen and plant/flower growers*”. Therefore, main restrictions to gain access to farmers’ markets is represented by the distance. Locally grown products are of course privileged, but in metropolitan areas local is codified through 100

miles, or 150, in case of specialty products, while in rural contexts local is restricted to only farmers and producers within a certain distance from markets that should not exceed 30 miles. At UK farmers’ markets a great variety of products is provided, above all in urban markets. As a matter of fact, the more the degree of urbanization, the higher is the range of products. Table 2 confirms this, by evidencing the great variety of products offered in metropolitan markets, ranging from fruit and vegetables, to meat and sausages, cheese and dairy products, honey, self-made juice, etc. In urban markets, the main foods are meat and sausages, cheese and other dairy products. Moreover, in some markets urban and metropolitan, it is possible to find also organic and typical products, which provide a good contribution to positive externalities and, in general, to build up a multifunctional agricultural system. Contrarily to urbanized areas, rural farmers’ markets present a lesser diversified basket of products, limited to meat and sausages, and to cheese and other dairy products. Nonetheless, similarly to urban areas, many products are processed through organic method of production, then increasing external positive effects of agricultural activity.

7.3.2 EFFICIENCY DOMAIN

The efficiency domain has been explored through diverse lens, informational, economic (distribution of value) and environmental. As far as **informational dimension** is concerned, farmers’ markets reveal their efficacy in sending the consumers specific cues, in terms of quality attributable to the origin of the food. Therefore, reducing informational asymmetries becomes essential for building customer loyalty. Additionally, as pointed out in recent researches carried out in the UK, customer’s loyalty is key factor for the success of farmers’ markets (Youn- gs, 2003). This confirms previous studies on alternative food networks (like the Box schemes) as learning arenas,

aiming at setting up “experiential and situated learning”, which may bring about a change in consumption practices towards more sustainable patterns (Torjusen *et al.*, 2008). This may be explicated through “*where*” and “*how*” questions:

- “*Where*” question concerns a metric vision of the space, by assuming local as a geographical space including producers localised about less than 100 km from the market. This attribute is associated with quality of fresh local produce.
- But the “*where*” is not the unique element to be taken into account in addressing quality cues; as a matter of fact, “*how*” question is also critical. Thus, to inform customers on how the food is produced and through which processes it is obtained become fundamental quality attributes for final consumers, as revealed in previous researches (Åsebø *et al.*, 2007).

As far as the second dimension of efficiency is concerned, **distribution of value along the supply chain**, as usual it has been evaluated at both vertical and horizontal level:

- at **vertical** level, it is possible to confirm that farmers’ markets boost fairer distribution of value among actors in the supply agrifood chain. This aspect is confirmed from a double perspective: the consumers’ one, in that purchaser

buy fresh and local food at affordable prices, as already underlined in literature (Archer *et al.*, 2003). From the producer side, in that farmers may retain higher values at farm level, escaping the price-costs squeeze of conventional retailing channels.

- At **horizontal** level, we found that farmers’ markets represent a sound channel to revitalize smaller farms and to positively impact on rural areas. This is also possible thanks to the consolidation of “helping behavior” involving rural communities in supporting local farmers’ markets (Skallerud, wien, 2019).

Finally, as far as the **environmental efficiency** is concerned, farmers’ markets provide a contribution to support environmental externalities, in terms of selling local fresh products originating from sustainable methods of production.

7.3.3 SERVICE/MARKETING DOMAIN

Farmers adhering to organized farmers’ markets association are less than 200 in metropolitan areas, while in rural territories they can count on more than 500 farmers. In some farmers’ markets, contribution may be required. For instance, in *Shipbourne Farmers Market*

TABLE 1 – NUMBER OF VENDORS IN DIFFERENT AREAS

METROPOLITAN	20-30 / 30-50
URBAN	20-30
RURAL	10-20

TABLE 2 – PRODUCTS SOLD AT UK FARMERS’ MARKETS

	METROPOLITAN	URBAN	RURAL
WINES	–	–	–
OIL	–	–	–
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES	X	–	–
MEAT AND SAUSAGES	X	X	X
CHEESES AND OTHER DAIRY PRODUCTS	X	X	–
OTHER FOOD PRODUCTS, SPECIFY	–	–	–
FISH	X	–	–
BREAD	X	–	–
PLANTS, HERBS AND FLOWERS	X	–	–
HONEY AND PRESERVES	X	–	–
JUICE MADE BY FARMERS FROM FRUIT THEY’VE GROWN	X	–	–
ORGANIC PRODUCTS	X	X	–
PDO + PGI PRODUCTS	X	–	–
PROCESSED PRODUCTS	X	–	–

TABLE 3 – MAIN TASKS OF FARMERS’ MARKETS DIRECTOR

METROPOLITAN	URBAN	RURAL
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT	ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT
CONTROL OF HYGIENIC ASPECTS	SELECTION AND REGISTRATION OF SELLERS WITH RELATIVE ALLOCATION OF SALES SPACES	SELECTION AND REGISTRATION OF SELLERS WITH RELATIVE ALLOCATION OF SALES SPACES
SET UP THE MARKET, GIVE STALL SPACES, CHECK LIST OF TASKS RE SAFETY ETC. PUT UP SIGNS, LIAISE WITH CUSTOMERS, RUN TAKE DOWN AND MORE.	MANAGEMENT OF EVENTS AND OTHER INITIATIVES	MARKET FINANCE ADMINISTRATION

(in a rural area) a contribution of £57 has to be paid by the market, while for each producer it is £50 for membership.

Farmers’ markets in the UK are usually managed by a director, taking on a set of diversified activities, which, to some extent, may differ according to the area of markets’ localization. Table 3 illustrates different tasks of the manager.

Administrative activities are common to all UK farmers’ markets, while in metropolitan we can also find inspection activity aimed to verify the respect of sanitary standards of the produce. Finally, organizational activities are found in the three areas with additional tasks provided in metropolitan contexts, due to more diversified activities carried out in metropolitan markets with respect to the other areas.

Despite numerous activities implemented in the markets, urban areas do not evidence further training needs, while rural areas underline how marketing knowledge should be upgraded. This would let higher capabilities to emerge, which would bring about a transition for rural spaces from spaces of consumption to spaces of consumption too (van der Ploeg *et al.*, 2012).

Promotional activities are supported by a variety of tools ranging from both ‘classic’ and digital by word of mouth, to street signs, leaflet and newspapers, promotional messages, etc. Moreover, organization has defined distinctive elements for the farmer’s market traders, in particular:

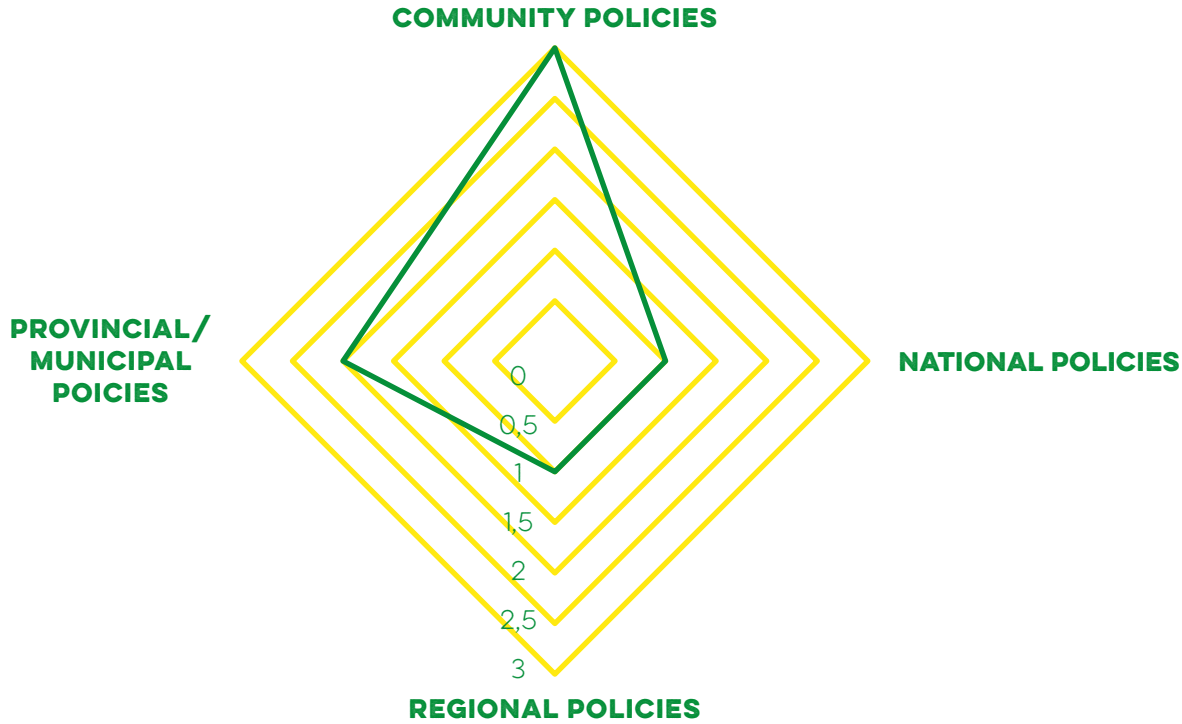
- Clear brand/market identity.
- Aligned signage across the market.
- Aligned signage for each trader.

Finally, social media marketing is a privileged tool to promote farmers’ markets, like websites, facebook, instagram and, to lesser extent, twitter.

The relationships with institutions are based on different degree of “**connectedness**”: if, on the one side, relevance of institutions at national, regional and local level are considered of paramount importance to boost farmers’ markets, on the other side, institutional effectiveness does not get the same helpfulness.

As a matter of fact, as showed in Figure 1, the perceived benefits from local / national institutions evidences a variety ranging from the high legitimization of farmers markets inside the community policies, the good impact at the provincial and local level, to the relatively low legitimization within both the regional and the national policies.

FIGURE 1 - LEGITIMIZATION OF THE FM WITHIN POLICIES



7.3.4 CULTURAL/SOCIAL DOMAIN

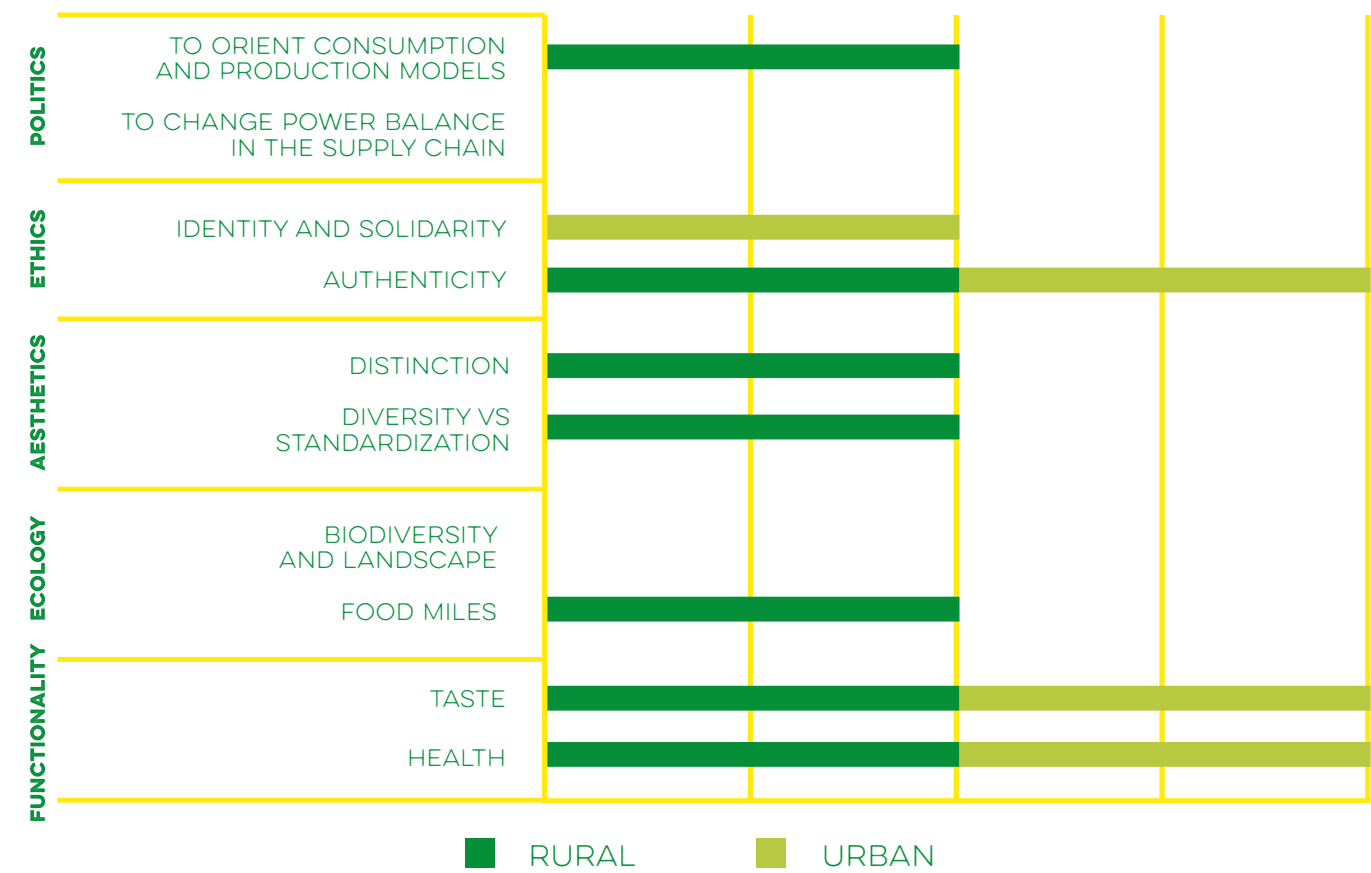
The role of farmers’ markets in shaping foodscapes are widely recognized, in account of the cultural assets developed inside the short food supply chains. This impact is drawn on embedding processes and on a deep meaning of the term “local”.

A As for the other countries, **embeddedness** has been explored from different perspectives. The first one concerns the potential for integrating civil society and to identify it with farmers’ markets. This is confirmed in our research and in recent studies, where farmers’ markets are perceived as a *kind of ‘local community-thing’* (Vittersø *et al.*, 2019). Farmers’ markets are also a tool for integrating social, environmental and health issues, then meeting instances of an even higher share of consumers. As a matter of fact, in the aforementioned study of Vittersø *et al.* (2019), local markets represent *a more naturally embedded production system emphasizing animal welfare standards and strengthening biodiversity*. Finally, positive impact on rural development are drawn on stringer interlinkages between urban and rural contexts, which confirms literature on the contribution of local markets on territorial development (Wiskerke, 2009).

B The research has also investigated how “**local**” is perceived by farmers’ markets, in that local may take on different meanings (Smith Maguire, 2013). In Figure 2, we have evidenced these mea-

nings according the four domains (Functionality, Ecology, Aesthetics, Ethics, Politics). The figure shows some differences between urban and rural contexts: as far as functionality is concerned, taste and health are both present in either rural and urban areas. In account of the variety of consumers in farmers’ markets, this points out that the markets second either the demand for safe food or the demand for enjoying tasting food. Ecological dimensions of farmers’ markets are less relevant, above all in urban areas, while in rural territories, food miles play a relevant role in performing the perceived meaning of local. The aesthetic dimension of farmers’ markets is underlined by the leaders of markets located in rural areas, who have stressed the importance of diversity versus the commodification of food (Vivero-Pol, 2017) and the importance of food as mean of distinction. This is in line with Kirwan’s (2004) analysis, when, among various notions of quality redefined in the alternative strategies of agrifood systems (like farmers’ markets), he identifies ‘*distinctiveness*’. From an ethic point of view, in urban areas identity, solidarity and authenticity are indicated as symbols of food re-localization, particularly in urban farmers’ markets, while in rural areas authenticity is the key mentioned word.

FIGURE 2 – THE MEANINGS OF ‘LOCAL’



CHAPTER 8

FARMERS' MARKETS IN DENMARK



Photo by Markus Oxelman

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Farmers Markets have not a unique profile and mission in the world. As a matter of fact, in North America, local food has been identified in literature as “driven by a political agenda that opposes the organization of the industrial agri-food system and is directed at establishing an alternative food economy based on the principles of social justice and environmental sustainability” (Fonte, 2008). In recent years, USA is gathering lots of useful information thanks to both USDA and to dedicated programs, like the Farmers Market Metrics program at the Farmers Market Coalition (Wolnik *et al.*, 2019).

According to the USDA dataset, in the last decades, farmers' markets have known a huge increase, moving from about 1,755 in 1994 to more than 8,755, with a percentage increase of 398,9%. Table 1 reports the States with the highest number of farmers markets. The quality turn is gaining ground in Scandinavian countries, with a growing interest towards specialty food and alternative food network, thanks also to the governmental support, which encourages the growth of specialties, such as in Denmark (Halkier *et al.*, 2016). The growing interest in alternative food networks in Denmark is also inspired by the consumer's recognition of the benefits in participating in short food supply chains (Kneafsey *et al.*, 2013). Nonetheless, beyond the simple economic variables, what marks the

difference in these alternative channels refers to the relational assets being developed thanks to the reconnection between producers and consumers. This stimulates intangible capital which is a key ingredient for revitalizing rural communities and boosting positive economic performance (Svensden, Soerensen, 2007). In this chapter we will focus on the farmers' markets in Denmark, with the purpose of emphasizing the growing importance of these alternative food networks in the country.

8.2 METHODOLOGY

Both quantitative and qualitative analysis has been carried out, with the support of a questionnaire. More precisely, data are collected from a questionnaire submitted to the most important farmers markets association, Grønt Marked. Moreover, in order to better qualify Danish markets we collected useful information from expert witnesses which, jointly with a documentary research, allowed to get a clear picture of the structure and the working of a typical Danish farmers market.

8.3 RESULTS

In Denmark farmers markets are conceived as an opportunity to integrate income by distributing sales across multiple commercial channels. Grønt Marked is a community-based farmers market association,

managing 15 markets and working on a local and seasonal base in Copenhagen. The project, volunteer based, brings together farmers, producers and citizens that aim to contribute and support a shift toward a more sustainable and fair food system. In order to be part of the association, farmers must be located in Denmark and Skåne Region and have to pay 350kr fees for each market. The total number of associates is less than 200 and the association manages 15 markets.

8.3.1 STRUCTURAL DOMAIN

The farmers market is located in urban area, more precisely in Copenhagen and is organized around an area of 2,500 m². It works on a seasonal basis and it is opened from May to December, with a monthly frequency and an all-day opening, from 10am to 3pm. Market's permanent infrastructure includes vendor stalls, bathrooms, signage or roadway signage. The total number of farmers involved in this short food supply chain is between 20 and 30 farmers. The name of the producer must be clearly displayed.

The market is hosted either in the sidewalk or other pedestrian areas, like courtyard, or in the street. Only local farmers have the right to access to farmers market and specific guidelines were set up to introduce rigorous methods of monitoring. As established in the guidelines, farmers sell directly to the public in a fair, balanced and open-air marketplace. They may only sell products, which are produced, grown or cultivated themselves. Exceptions are allowed for farmers who sell small quantities of neighboring or partner producers that also follow the market guidelines. Furthermore, producers selling jams, juice, preserves, ferments and similar, may only sell products that are hand-made using ingredients produced by themselves or bought from local suppliers when the ingredients are in season and align with the Grønt Marked values. Main products admitted to the Grønt Marked are:

- Fresh vegetables and fruit (fruit, grain, herbs, legumes, mushrooms, sprouts and vegetables)
- Dry fruit and nuts
- Meat (fresh meat and meat products)
- Fish (fresh fish and fish products / cultivated or wild shellfish)
- Dairy products & Eggs
- Bakery products
- Preserves (jam, honey, chutney, pickles, vinegars etc.)
- Juices
- Artisanal beers and ciders
- Liqueurs and Spirits
- Seeds
- Flowers & Plants

- Handcrafted products from local materials, such as wood, wool, hemp, leather, wax etc.
- Compost and soil
- Worms and worm farms

As far as animal production is concerned, requirements in the product guidelines specify that:

- Stall holders must follow the best-practices on animal welfare (space, access to outdoors, free range etc.).
- Rare and indigenous breeds are preferred.
- 100% fed with the farm's own feed or local products (closed loop).
- Only handmade dairy products from the farm itself.
- Producers may only sell milk from herds they manage and milk themselves.
- Only fish from sustainable and small-scale local fishing operations (small boats, local waters, sustainable and selective fishing methods).

External inspectors ensure the compliance with the rules and that what is sold on the market is grown on local farms.

Farming activity is highly oriented towards multifunctionality, more precisely towards strong multifunctionality (Wilson, 2008): as a matter of fact, Grønt Marked's product guidelines identifies the sustainable producer according to the Environmental Protection Agency definition: *"A Farmer practicing environmentally friendly methods of farming that allow the production of crops or livestock without damage to the farm as an ecosystem, including effects on soil, water supplies, biodiversity, or other surrounding natural resources. The concept of sustainable agriculture is an "intergenerational" one in which we pass on a conserved or improved natural resource base instead of one which has been depleted or polluted. Terms often associated with farms or ranches that are self-sustaining include "low-input," organic, "ecological," "biodynamic," and "permaculture"*. Moreover, a sustainable production model should include the ethical treatment of individuals working at the farm.

Therefore, based on the previous definition, among admitted agricultural practices, product should be obtained according to organic methods of production, regenerative farming practices, natural resource preservation, best practices on animal welfare etc. despite there is no need for certificating these practices, farmers have to demonstrate which method of production they have followed. To confirm this, a preference is given to producers who follow practices that increase biodiversity and support healthy soils and water environments. Indigenous and organic seeds

are also preferred (local and old varieties). Therefore, organic production has great importance in local markets, also thanks to a local organic certification, which reinforces the degree of multifunctionality of these markets, involving not only economic, but environmental and social instances.

8.3.2 EFFICIENCY DOMAIN

As far as the efficiency aspects are concerned, on the whole, data collected evidence a relatively high ability to increase the value created for all actors of the agri-food chain (4 out of 5). As in previous chapters also for Denmark, the efficiency domain has been explored through diverse lens, informational, economic (distribution of value) and environmental.

Regarding **informational dimension**, farmers' markets reveal their efficacy in sending the consumers specific cues, in terms of quality attributable to the origin of the food. More precisely, this ability is evaluated in the Likert scale with 4 out 5 points.

As far as the second dimension of efficiency is concerned, **distribution of value along the supply chain**, as usual it has been evaluated at both vertical and horizontal level:

- at **vertical** level, it is possible to evidence that if, on the one side, the farmers are asked to pay a fee for adhering the farmers markets, on the other side, they get higher prices with respect to conventional food supply chains. As a consequence, the level of efficiency is relatively high, because the farmers can obtain high revenues. On the other side, consumers are available to spend more for receiving high quality products. Therefore, in order to rigorously analyze this aspect, it is necessary to evaluate perceived benefits, by comparing the sacrifices and the benefits by both consumers and producers side. Against this perspective, we can posit that consumers receive higher benefits in consuming products of excellent and not comparable quality. Moreover, farmers receive higher income, thanks to higher prices, despite they have to sustain costs of access to farmers markets.
- At **horizontal** level, our data show very good performance: farmers markets represent a unique occasion to involve small-size farms in competitive food supply chains. These farms are at risk of exclusion when operating in conventional supply chains. The possibility of finding an alternative within the reconnection between producers and consumers eliminate intermediaries, then raising the value obtained at farm level. Likewise, a territorial balance must be pointed out: as a matter of

fact, we need to underline that farms localized in remote rural areas are able to participate and find benefits from short food supply chains, which is a great stimulus for rural development in marginal contexts.

Finally, as far as the **environmental efficiency** is concerned, Danish farmers' markets present high environmental impacts, through positive externalities, both direct and indirect (Mollard, 2003). Direct positive externalities are drawn on sustainable methods of production, while indirect externalities stem from the preservation of biodiversity and landscape.

8.3.3 SERVICE/MARKETING DOMAIN

At Grønt Marked there is a manager who gets the responsibility of the market and performs different activities, ranging from administrative management to the control of hygienic and sanitary aspects.

Moreover, managers are in charge of selecting and registering the sellers with relative allocation of sales spaces. They have also to manage financial aspects and relate with external actors, like consumers and local institutions. Farmers markets are also places where a variety of activities are carried out: for instance didactic activities which involve also local schools, and food service (e.g. lunch/dinner). The management of events and initiatives is another directors' task, jointly with promotion and fundraising.

Moreover, farmers markets manager has grown really good skills in terms of logistic and organizational set up over the last years.

Communication strategies are essential for make consumers more aware about the quality of local food. More precisely, the main communication tools are targeted to reduce informational asymmetries with final consumers and to provide consumers with a direct information channel on local products.

Advertising tools are street signs and digital by word of mouth, jointly with social media marketing (Instagram and Facebook).

8.3.4 CULTURAL/SOCIAL DOMAIN

Cultural and social domain are drawn on intangible capital the farmer market is able to stimulate through reconnecting consumers and producers. As pointed out in the introduction, geographical proximity is jointed with organizational proximity, which is grounded on relational assets bringing about territorial proximity and understanding "place as socio-cultural construction" (Chiffolleau, Dourian, 2020). Therefore, social and cultural issues are analyzed with reference to the **embeddedness** process and on the meaning of the term "local". As for the other countries, embed-

dedness has been explored from different perspectives. Figure 1 shows that interviewees have confirmed that also in Denmark farmers markets raise the potential for integrating civil, political and economic society (embeddedness value = 3). Moreover, farmers markets allow to create a not conventional supply chain which represents an alternative food networks grounded on multifunctional agriculture, then integrating environmental, social and health issues (embeddedness value = 4). Nonetheless, the highest importance of farmers markets in terms of degree of embeddedness (value = 5) resides on its capability of stimulating value creation in rural areas, then acting as engine to boost sustainable rural development, which confirms recent researches on the impact of alternative food supply chains on well-being of rural communities (Warsaw *et al.*, 2021). As far as the meaning of the term local is concerned, this is explored from different perspectives:

- the first one regards the functional dimension, being farmers markets a fundamental tool to grant healthy and tasty food;
- from an ecological point of view, differently from other countries, environmental dimension is mainly related to the preservation of both biodiversity and landscape, as pointed out by Galli and Brunori (2013);
- as far as the aesthetic point of view is concerned, diversity seems the keyword of Danish farmers markets, as a mean to take distances from the commodification of the modern agrifood system;
- from an ethic point of view, identity and solidarity represents Danish farmers markets, through a distinctive identification of farmers working in these alternative networks, where solidarity is synthesized by the fairness of the value distribution among actors of the food chain.

FIGURE 1 – ELEMENTS OF EMBEDDEDNESS (1=DISAGREE/5=AGREE)

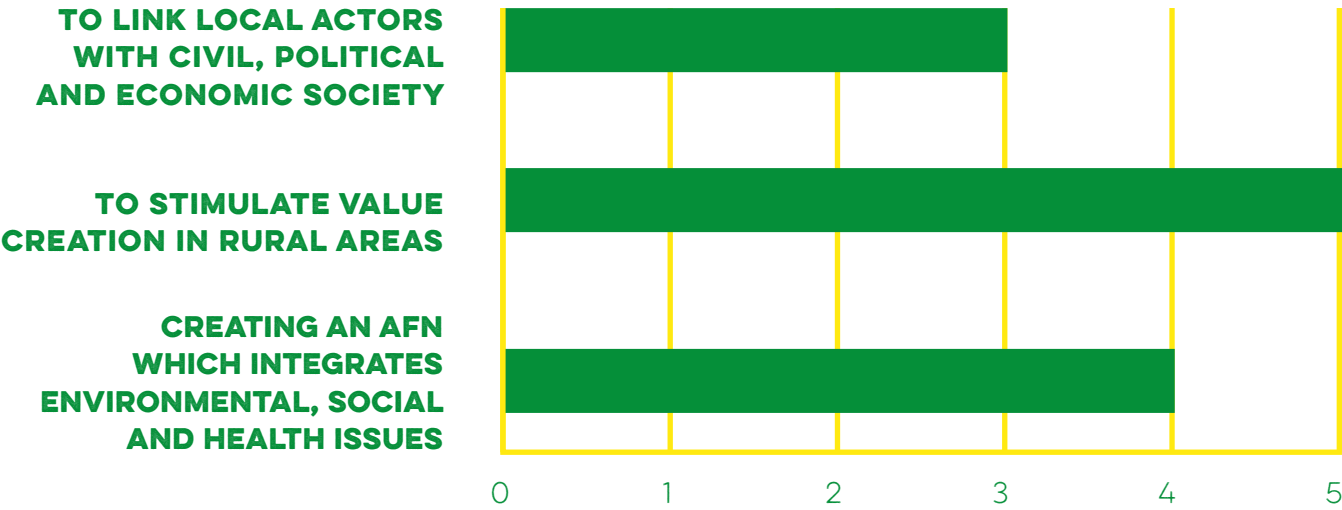


Photo by Julien Reverchon



CONCLUSIONS

Alternative food networks and, more precisely, farmers' markets are sparking increasing interest among the rural world and the civil society. As a consequence, developing short food supply chain is in the policy agenda at international level, under the idea of consolidating this phenomenon, which may provide a contribution to reaching urgent policy targets.

Many studies have been conducted with the purpose of exploring impact of short supply chains in urban and rural contexts (Gonçalves, Zeroual, 2017). This research has to be considered a first step towards a wider analysis of the mechanisms governing value creation and relationships between producers and consumers in the short circuits of supply chain. Born as alternative to the modern distribution channels, short food supply chains have become really important all over the world, so reconfiguring the agrifood systems through processes of relocalization of production and consumption. Dynamics of relocalization of food production and consumption engender mechanisms of territorial anchoring, which are fostered by territorial proximity, drawn on the sum of both geographical and organizational proximity. This means that farmers' markets do not configure a simple physical metric perspective of the space, but also a relational one, grounded on the socialization space which set up rela-

tionship and domestic conventions between producers and consumers.

Set against this background, farmers' markets may be considered as an example of social innovation. More precisely, we agree with Murray *et al.* (2010) in positing the dual meaning of social innovation: the first one regards the challenges it addresses, in that it involves a sociotechnical transition, the second concerns untraded interdependencies and social capital originating from reconnection perspective of food consumption and production. As a matter of fact, read in a consumer's perspective, analysis evidences what deeply underlined in literature, in particular by Fonte (2008), when configuring purchasing at farmers' markets as social practice, which empower both producers and consumers.

This assimilates farmers' markets to engine of innovation which brings about alternative business models grounded on multifunctional agriculture. This transition fosters a diversified set of benefits we have declined under an economics, environmental and social point of view.

As a matter of fact, our research evidences that there are many benefits from adhering a short food supply chain, with special reference to farmers' markets. More precisely, in most cases, farmers' markets provide a strong contribution to stabilize farm revenues, with respect to more conventional and modern distri-

bution channels. Moreover, through diversification of farming activity (production and selling) these markets may secure the family farm business with higher job opportunities. Agricultural practices are usually based on sustainable methods of production, then pointing out an environmental positive impact of farmers' market, in terms of integrated approaches to farming, biodiversity preservation, limited effects on pollution (Zero Km). Furthermore, from a social and territorial point of view, impact on local and rural economies seems not negligible, likewise in terms of capability of re-growing local communities, within a deeper perspective of community supported agriculture. As emerged from the empirical analysis, many consumers may benefit a wider experience, by visiting farms and directly experiment local produce freshness. As a consequence, behind what seems a simple commercial transaction, a wider basket of services is supplied, like information, tasting territory, securing on the quality of food. This brings about the recognition of farming activity developed through farmers' markets as multifunctional farming (Wilson, 2008; Jolly, 2012).

From aforementioned impact of farmers' markets, it is possible to frame their business model within territorial economy, by recalling the initial idea of territorial proximity (figure 1 in the introduction), where territorial anchoring mechanisms provide sound basis for developing a "territorial atmosphere". As posited by Corade *et al.* (2019), territorial atmosphere acts as catalyst/barrier for developing a composited set of both material and immaterial local resources, bringing about a commonly shared systems of representations. As a consequence, farmers' markets amount to alternative strategies aiming at creating "alterity" with respect to conventional markets. As posited by Kirwan (2004), alterity is drawn on the creation of otherness within a reconnection perspective of food production and consumption. Therefore, alterity is framed within a place-based strategy connecting food to social, cultural and environmental contexts, in that farmers' markets are not only outlet for food produce, but they "*reflect seasonality and distinctiveness of the regional landscape and climate*" (Francis, Griffith, 2011).





The analysis highlights that the success of farmers' markets is drawn on a diversified set of specific resources, to be identified, revealed and specified within a collective process. Our research points out what evidenced in recent literature about the typologies of resources impacting on territorial performance of farmers' markets (Corade *et al.*, 2020):

- 1 Material resources, divided up into:
 - A Infrastructural resources (micro-logistics, areas available for markets, etc.).
 - B Agronomic resources (soil, water, sustainable agricultural process, biodiversity, local specialties, etc.).
- 2 Individual human resources, acquired through experience of producers, citizens, tourists, institutions.
- 3 Organizational and collective resources, like social capital facilitating circulation of information, making consumers more conscious, fostering relational assets
- 4 Patrimonial resources (collective reputation), grounded on a shared systems of common values bringing about shared conventions, habits and informal norms.

Therefore, combinatorial and composite resources contribute to develop successful farmers' markets, thanks to the consolidation of a "territorial atmosphere" which increase the value markets for either the farmers, or the territory and the community (Maz-zocchi, Marino, 2018)

As a consequence, the contribution of farmers' markets to multifunctional agricultural systems is indisputable. Additionally, we think the farmers' markets evidence how strong multifunctionality is a possible target, despite the skepticism some literature has underlined. As a matter of fact, when defining strong multifunctionality, Wilson (2008, p.368) posits that: *However, I also acknowledge that striving for strongly multifunctional agricultural systems may often represent a theoretical ideal rather than a fully achievable goal.*

Set against this research, we disagree with his negative aptitude, by recalling his definition of strong multifunctionality and underlying (bold) elements that we have found in our analysis to characterize farmers' markets activities all over the world:

Actors in the strongly multifunctional agricultural regime show strong tendencies for local and regional embeddedness. [...] High environmental sustainabili-

ty plays a key role in strongly multifunctional systems, as does the focus on relocalised agro-food chains that reduce the need for long-distance food transport. Strongly multifunctional systems will also display low farming intensity and productivity. [...] Strongly multifunctional systems will also be characterised by high(er) food quality associated with more differentiated food demand by consumers, a demand for food products with high (often regionally based) symbolic characteristics, the creation of additional value for rural regions, and enlightened visions about food and health.

Therefore, we do posit that multifunctional and sustainable business models are possible and that farmers' markets may be considered as a winning strategy of a radical marketing approach to food network, grounded on identifying food as "*link-value*" (Goodman, Dupuis, 2002). As suggested by Brunori and Marescotti (2007, p.14), link-value synthesizes the ability of products to strengthen social links between consumers and producers "*as consumers mature awareness of the need to sustain economically local producers as a way to avoid quality erosion*". The radicalism of this marketing approach resides on the fact that in conventional distribution channels identify an individualized approach to consumption, while the "quality turn" of farmers' markets reorient food within social relationships, which reconfigures an economy of regard in the form of a mutual exchange of knowledge and status (Lee, 2000). This mutual relationship raises levels of embeddedness as alternative to the so-called instrumentalism of conventional markets (Thornburg, 2013; Hinrichs, 2000). Moreover, benefits are not limited to the actors of the supply chain, but provide rural areas and rural communities with positive impacts. This configures a territorial atmosphere where rural entrepreneurship is assimilated to village entrepreneurship, involving all actors of rural communities (McElwee *et al.*, 2018). In some cases, the analysis has set up a particular kind of village entrepreneurship characterized by "helping behavior models" that brings about preferences for local food (Skallerud *et al.*, 2019). In other cases, a co-production system is at stake with the contribution of both consumers and producers, able to boost a sounder transition towards sustainable and multifunctional agricultural, models.

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