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This is the final peer-reviewed author's accepted manuscript (postprint) of the following publication:

Published Version:

Renata Lizzi, Maria Stella Righettini (2022). Collaborative Governance in Italian Urban Food Policies: Towards an Analytical Framework for Differentiated Governance Arrangements. RIVISTA ITALIANA DI POLITICHE PUBBLICHE, / (3), 301-317 [10.1483/105510].

Availability:

This version is available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/11585/924595> since: 2023-05-02

Published:

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.1483/105510>

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Collaborative Governance in Italian Urban Food Policies: Towards an Analytical Framework for Differentiated Governance Arrangements

Renata Lizzi and Maria Stella Righettini

The introduction to the special issue outlines Collaborative Governance (CG) as a sub-field of the governance literature and as an emerging framework within food policy studies. CG pays attention to the potentially transformative policymaking arrangements enabling knowledge holders and stakeholders to participate in decision-making, enhancing capacity for better outcomes, increasing legitimacy, and building trust through frequent interaction among actors. First, the introduction highlights the distinctive aspects of urban food governance. Then, drawing on the theoretical and empirical literature, it proposes an analytical framework that considers urban food-related policies to grasp different configurations of actors, (alternative) networks and stages of the evolution of urban governance arrangements. Finally, the special issue investigates a wide range of food policies and CG patterns in the Italian urban contexts.

Keywords: Collaborative governance; Food policy; Urban Scale; Alternative networks; Italian case studies.

Introduction Collaborative Governance to Overcome Silos and Address Wicked Problems

The introduction to the special issue is devoted to outlining Collaborative Governance (CG) as a sub-field of the governance literature and as a promising approach to highlight the distinctive aspects of urban food policy governance in addressing complex and wicked collective problems.

CG belongs to the broader literature on governance (Ansell and Torfing 2022; Pierre and Peters 2020) and interactive governance (Torfing *et al.* 2012), a composite analytical and theoretical framework

widely used since the 1990s and 2000s now essential for the study of a wide range of political processes of steering society and the economy through collective decision-making and community actions. The governance approach emerged when the state lost its monopoly on policymaking, while private actors progressively became involved in formulating and implementing public policies. A broad academic debate about modes of governance highlights the novelty of governance developments in governing disaggregated societies, fragmented policymaking, and dealing with complex and wicked problems (Ansell and Torfing 2022). An increasing number of policy problems – such as environment, public health, climate change, sustainable economy, poverty, and food – defined as «wicked problems» (Rittel and Weber 1973) require cross-cutting and transboundary policy solutions. They trigger the interactive modes of governance to be a strong candidate in these policy areas characterized by uncertainty, conflicts, and the need to pool or exchange resources (Torfing *et al.* 2012, 32). Governance and CG literature intersects with public policy studies when addressing siloed and fragmented policymaking, New Public Management (NPM) literature, and recent research about developments on the co-production and co-delivery of public services. The CG approach shares interest in coordination challenges of cross-department organizations, jurisdiction fragmentation, public agencies delegation, and private bodies' involvement in policymaking. Collaboration in public administration studies has been considered for a long time a policy instrument to overcome government territorial and functional fragmentation to better coordinate resources, departments, and intergovernmental relations (Dickinson and Sullivan 2014; Scott and Thomas 2017). However, after the deregulation turn and co-management experiences in public services, the governance debate developed and focused on network governance, horizontal and coordinated governance (Rhodes 1997; Kooiman 2003), and multilevel governance (Hooghe and Marks 2001).

The governance framework has increasingly highlighted the pluralistic arrangements in policymaking, emphasizing the plurality of interconnected policy arenas, the interrelationship between public and private actors, the reciprocity in the exchange of knowledge and resources, and the use of formal and informal structures and mechanisms. In addition, scholars have highlighted new governance modes without government (Rhodes 1997, 2000), referring to different horizontal and non-hierarchical coordination modes, network governance, and interactive governance (Torfing *et al.* 2012). Indeed, new governance approaches, and the democratic governance perspective,

refer to enhanced interaction between public policymakers and relevant stakeholders, knowledge-based decision-making, innovative policy solution, flexible and coordinated policy implementation (Torfing *et al.* 2012; Torfing and Triantafillou 2016). Furthermore, interactive governance and collaborative governance pay attention to the potentially transformative policymaking arrangements since they enable a wide range of knowledge holders and stakeholders to participate in decision-making to capture different values and interests, and enhance capacity for better outcomes.

Recent academic debate on public governance recovers the role of the government in steering, mediating, supporting, and facilitating better problem-solving, and highlights that collaborative modes – including economic, social, and civic actors – allow for achieving a more effective outcome (Capano *et al.* 2015; Agranoff 2006; Ansell and Gash 2008; Dickinson and Sullivan 2014; Emerson *et al.* 2012; Emerson and Nabatchi 2015; Klijn and Koppenjan 2016; Scott and Thomas 2017)¹.

However, CG differs from other governance modes, such as polycentric governance (Capano *et al.* 2012), interactive governance (Torfing *et al.* 2012), and network governance (Rhodes 2000). It refers to a clear and formal strategy of incorporating private actors and stakeholders into policy process, in order to make policy responses to a complex problem more effective (Ansell 2012; Ansell and Gash 2008). Specifically, three aspects differentiate CG from the other modes of governance: *i*) the private actors involved in collaborative processes are not merely participants but co-operators; *ii*) the clear and formal strategy for incorporating stakeholders and civil society organizations leads to institutionalizing a community capacity through collaboration between public and private actors; *iii*) the transformative procedures increase shared problem-solving competencies and capacity to facilitate policy change and become potentially innovative (Ansell 2012; Emerson *et al.* 2012; Emerson and Nabatchi 2015).

Therefore, the institutionalization effort of the collective decision-making process is central to the definition of collaborative governance (Ansell and Gash 2008). While the network governance can temporarily interlink different actors and interests, the collaborative mode

¹ The academic debate between various modes of governance highlights limits in transparency, accountability efficiency, and coherence. However, and despite these limits, governance studies highlight the novelty and inevitability of governance developments in steering disaggregated societies, fragmented policymaking, and dealing with complex and wicked problems (Klijn and Koppenjan 2016, 162-3).

aims to create stable relationships to give specific wicked problems continuative attention, and collective capacity to adapt intervention. Institutionalized CG modes do not necessarily mean organizational standardization, such as creating new agencies. In contrast, it means creating policy arenas where public actors promote and facilitate, in a shared way, private stakeholders' involvement and public and private actors' collaboration in pursuing common objectives around a shared problem definition. The community of policy actors acting and interacting in these policy arenas can be multifaceted in their configuration without compromising reciprocal trust-based commitment to collaborate.

Shared values and norms are the glue that holds the complex set of relationships in a collaborative policy arena. Trust is essential for cooperative behaviours and, therefore, the network's existence². Ansell *et al.* (2020) consider trust based on reciprocity as the 'grease' that can allow collaboration and affects stakeholders' participation decisions. Therefore, reciprocity and interdependence are relevant CG characteristics. Indeed, collaborative governance may maintain specialization without increasing the fragmentation of policymaking. Collaborative dynamics aim to overcome the drifts of the siloed policy-making, precisely policy design gaps and tool-mixes inadequacy, in order to enhance policy integration mechanisms and joined-up government (Maggetti and Trein 2019; Trein *et al.* 2021; Trein *et al.* 2019).

Ansell and Gash have defined, «collaborative governance is a type of governance in which public and private actors work collectively, in distinctive ways, using processes to establish laws and rules for the provision of public goods» (Ansell and Gash 2008, 3). It is not merely a consultative process and implies two-way communication and co-decision among public agencies and private stakeholders. The authors more specifically highlight that «collaborative governance implies ongoing and institutionalized interactions that provide for negotiation of potentially conflicting interests, the establishment of shared strategies and goals, and the joint implementation and funding of these strategies and goals» (*ivi*, 12).

Therefore, CG's distinctiveness consists of three fundamental dimensions: temporality, jointness, and institutional forms of interac-

² The Anglo-governance school conceives of networks as a unique coordinating mechanism notably different from markets and hierarchies and not a hybrid of them. Moreover, they associate networks with characteristics such as trust. Trust is essential because it is the basis of network coordination (Bevir 2006, 4).

tion. Temporality in CG requires ongoing, progressive structured arrangements to focus on public policies and issue changes (Ansell *et al.* 2020). Jointness refers to consensus-oriented, deliberative, and collective decision-making to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets (Ansell and Gash 2008). Finally, institutional forms work as cross-boundary arrangements of 'multi-partner governance' including state, private sectors, civil society, and communities, as well as joined-up government and hybrid community-based collaboratives involved in collective resources management (such initiatives can be developed in private or civic sectors approaching forms of participatory governance and civic engagement) (Emerson *et al.* 2012, 3; Emerson and Nabatchi 2015).

The above elements and dimensions of CG increase legitimacy and create shared knowledge to attempt to change beliefs and practices, increase familiarity through frequent interactions and build trust among public and private actors, improving policy outcomes (Scott and Thomas 2017). Thus, the CG fosters policymakers' and managers' capacity to address and solve wicked and cross-sectoral problems (*ibidem*) by unpacking and sharing definitions, explanations, and solutions to political problems. Furthermore, collaborative practices are fundamental in domains where ambiguities characterize policy issue definition and institutional settings (Hajer 2003), as in the case of sustainability policy transition.

Dealing with such a complex policy issue requires forms of governance that institutionalize interaction and collaboration among actors from different levels of government, from the local to the international level, from different interdependent issue sectors, as well as actors from government, the private sector, and research institutions (Moragues-Faus and Battersby 2021). Moreover, dealing with wicked problems that are cross-sectoral, transboundary, and complex requires innovative forms of governance. Difficult and highly uncertain issues «cannot be clustered within single organizational boundaries because they possess dynamic and complex characteristics involving multilevel, multi-actor, and multi-sectoral challenges» (Bianchi 2021; Bianchi *et al.* 2021, 1581).

Of course, there are essential limits in CG. For example, CG is a time-consuming and place-based activity, involves costs to obtain uncertain results, even if the CG toolbox creates stable interactions and more effective responses to fragmented decision-making and inter-organizational dilemmas in uncertainty and turbulence. Furthermore, the place-based nature of CG highlights its nested dimensions and

context specific conditions that make it difficult to generalize (Emerson and Nabatchi 2012; 2015). Nevertheless, the literature proposed conceptual maps and integrative meta-analytical frameworks and identified factors and critical variables that influence collaborative governance (Emerson and Nabatchi 2012; Ansell and Gash 2008).

From the literature, it is possible to derive some nested dimensions and main drivers of CG. *System context* and *starting conditions* are those factors that create opportunities and constraints and set the level of trust and social capital for collaborative governance (Emerson *et al.* 2012, 20; Ansell and Gash 2008, 8). *Collaborative dynamics* and processes (Ansell and Gash 2008) draw on shared motivation and understanding, interactive face-to-face dialogue, commitment to joint solutions, and *intermediate outcomes*. All those are conditions for enhancing and sustaining a virtuous collaborative governance circle which may generate collective action capacity (Emerson and Nabatchi 2012, 20). Drivers of CG successfully unfolding the impetus for collaboration, include: *uncertainty* which, in turn, 'helps' initiate and set the direction for CG; *facilitative leadership* that is a critical ingredient in bringing parties to the table and for steering them through the rough patches of the collaborative process (Ansell and Gash 2008, 12); *consequential incentives*, and *interdependence*. The *collaborative outcome* can generally alter pre-existing conditions, fostering changes in processes or joined actions and outputs, but they are highly dependent on the context.

Collaborative Governance for Food: Scale Dimension, Institutional Settings, and Transformative Mechanisms

The extensive international academic literature is grounded in on local and urban food policies and devote increasing attention to analyzing the actor's constellations, alternative networks' dynamics, and mechanisms of local food governance. In addition, numerous policy initiatives have developed over the last decades in American and European cities; they also have made it possible to deepen from a comparative perspective the scale of food problems, their institutional setting variants, and the transforming capacities of the local and urban experiences in food governance.

This variety of urban and local food governance studies highlights the utility of the CG approach to spotlight changes in governance configurations and dynamics. They have been focusing on the widespread trends to counter the adverse effects of wicked problems in global and

regional food regimes. Moreover, food governance studies have analysed how local policy strategies overcome the mainstream market and big farmers' chains, replacing them with shorter food chains between farmers and consumers. Furthermore, scholars have emphasized alternative food networks and hybrid regimes, including civic food networks and solidarity purchasing groups.

It is helpful to partially order these studies referring to relevant dimensions such as the urban scale, the institutional setting variety in different contexts and cases, and the transformative mechanisms addressed.

With reference to the scale, studies explore local food network and changing agri-food local governance dynamics as expressions of the revitalized role of civil society-based governance mechanisms and strategies to re-balancing centralized dynamics through new alliances, rules, and institutional arrangements (Lamine *et al.* 2012; Renting *et al.* 2012). Local and urban governments and civil society groups define concrete plans of action for improving agri-food systems at the local level and innovating food provisioning through social economy and solidarity. Empirical research addresses food policies in the way they are rooted in local urban communities to define local policy solutions to global problems. The scale of food governance focused on the contingent mechanism of governance at the local urban level triggers community capacity building and transformative potential of Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) and collaborative modes of governance for a new geography of food policies (Wiskerke 2009).

With reference to the institutional setting, some contributions highlight how local food governance increasingly occurs in collaborative venues and brings out institutionalized arrangements such as food policy councils (FPCs). FPCs work as governance tools to improve deliberative and multilateral decision-making by including stakeholders, civil society organizations, and charity associations to drive policy development. Collaborative food policy networks are complex and varied. It is not entirely clear how their structure, membership, and relationship to public authorities can lead to specific collaborative institutional settings – such as FPC – and influence local policy agendas, priorities, and policy processes. Therefore, in most empirical research, the FPC's organizational structure, composition, relationship with municipal authorities, and policy priorities become the analytical focus (Bergsten *et al.* 2019; Deakin *et al.* 2018; Gupta *et al.* 2018; Koski *et al.* 2018). Food policy councils (FPCs) embody food democracy, providing a space for community members, professionals, and government to learn together, deliberate, and collectively devise place-

based strategies to address complex food issues (Bassarab *et al.* 2019; Vara-Sanchez *et al.* 2020).

Moreover the literature covers a wide range of urban transformation processes where FPCs play a strategic role by alleviating the risk of food insecurity, improving local welfare systems, or fostering democratic policymaking. In addition, some authors study FPCs to understand how policies structure the stakeholder composition and policy goals and facilitate or impede performance (Siddiki *et al.* 2015; Koski *et al.* 2016).

As regards the transformative potential, numerous studies on food governance pinpointed collaborative mechanisms that potentially transform patterns of processing and delivery, recovery and consuming in short-chain; collaborative mechanisms trigger alternative food networks, restructure the asymmetric power relations between main actors; furthermore they transform and redesign the role of public actors toward a mediating and facilitating role instead of a mere authoritative one. More specifically, transformative mechanisms in local food governance refer to the different roles of public actors, such as food councils in American cities, in eliciting non-governmental inputs and participating in or supporting urban welfare tasks (Deakin *et al.* 2016).

Collaboration and cooperation concepts also serve within the framework of interagency public management; they are meant as efforts and resources to accomplish a common goal for society in obtaining food and nutrition security (Montoya *et al.* 2015). Collaboration emerges when specific conditions exist: a strong sponsorship that may come from a central government policy or a distributed interagency consensus; a clear definition of the participating agencies; stability of the staff assigned to the coordination system; and mechanism to reward or punish the collaboration level of each individual in the interagency effort (Montoya *et al.* 2015).

CG is emerging as a new framework within food security policy. Food security governance is broadening and diversifying, resulting in organizations coming together in novel collaborative actions and alternative food initiatives coexisting alongside traditional charitable, emergency-based approaches. However, there is limited knowledge of how converging interests interact within collaborative intervention. Empirical studies in this field pinpoint benefits, including more effective communication, information sharing, understanding of diverse needs, more frequent and customized referrals, and the development of community food centers (Díaz-Méndez and Lozano-Cabedo 2020; Edge and Meyer 2019).

As observed above, civil society involvement in agenda setting and problem-solving draws on, and therefore, unfolds various initiatives and solutions (Renting *et al.* 2012; Clark 2019). For example, urban gardens development intended as a space for volunteerism and grass-roots initiatives for citizenship practice (Ghose and Pettygrove 2014), or food charity initiatives in the United Kingdom (UK) that have transformed themselves from pastoral care measures to urban food and social policies (Meads 2017). Moreover, CG is a strategy to strengthen democracy and augment welfare, such as Food Banks linked to local welfare programs in South Korea (Kim 2010). The transformative potential of collaborative food governance is generally associated with a local/urban scale (Marsden and Sonnino 2012). It is a harbinger of further developments such as co-producing sustainability and solidarity initiatives (food banks) and service co-delivery (school canteens).

As Clark (2019) noted, new policy arenas and collaborative mechanisms emerge around food at local and urban scales because it is not a highly formalized policy domain. Food is a policy domain with uncertain boundaries, cutting across traditional policy issues, highlighting interdependencies between economic, social, and environmental policy actors, and relying on growing civil society expertise and commitment and frequent partnerships between for-profit and non-profit organizations. CG emerges for dealing with problems without prepared solutions in cases where local food initiatives highlight interdependencies among local actors such as local municipalities, public schools, and the local community (Kursaal *et al.* 2020). CG arrangements in local food initiatives look for more adequate institutional long-term settings as the co-learning vein of power-sharing and learning in wicked problems solving capacity (Clark 2019).

Grasping the CG in the Food Policy Domain: The Analytical Framework

Drawing on the theoretical and empirical literature examined above, we propose an analytical framework to investigate collaborative governance that suits the local-urban level and the food policy area. Considering the food issue as a multidimensional and place-based issue (Lang *et al.* 2009), the special issue aims to grasp the different configurations of actors, (alternative) networks, and various stages of the evolution of collaborative governance, remaining anchored to

a set of relevant aspects and dimensions identified in the literature³.

The literature on CG in general, and applied to food policies, highlights a significant presence of non-state actors and the vital role played in a time of uncertainty by the Third Sector and the voluntary sector (Sundqvist-Andberg and Åkerman 2022). These actors, especially in Italy, characterize the functioning of the so-called local «second welfare» (Maino *et al.* 2016). Moreover, their active role is widely recognized, confirming the appropriateness of the CG analytical perspective with its inclusiveness and participatory nature. Furthermore, using the conceptual lens of CG (Ansell and Gash 2008; Emerson and Nabatchi 2012), the special issue aims to highlight the variety of starting conditions, actors' constellations, alternative networks, and dynamics that can emerge in the context of urban food policies in Italy. We argue that CG as a place-based arrangement may consist of different actors' configurations and modes of deployment in local food policies. Therefore, through various contributions, the special issue investigates a wide range of initiatives, and food policies in the Italian urban contexts. The authors have been called upon to answer the following question: how does collaborative governance emerge, configure, and evolve in the context of urban food policy, also considering the pandemic crisis?

The evolution of collaborative governance is grasped through dimensions and variables that all the authors, to varying degrees and in various combinations, have outlined in the case studies:

- 1) Starting conditions and evolution trends/dynamics: the focus will be on networks and the nature of relationships (type and number of actors) distinguishing the food policy in question up to the pandemic crisis, illustrating if and how it has modified and strengthened or widened these networks. New situations of exchanging knowledge or other resources arise between private and public actors, and new incentives can emerge to participate and share resources. During the pandemic, there were some breaks in previous policy strategies. However, continuity and strengthening of food policy strategies are also observable, especially concerning food donations and the fight against poverty;

³ The authors identify the following characteristics as conditions and dimensions of CG functioning: consent, inclusion, and participation; public and private actors' involvement act as entrepreneurs or facilitator, mediator, or initiator of CG; public agencies (city councils, city committees) work together with stakeholders on an equal basis.

- 2) Facilitative leadership: in some cases, it is possible to identify an individual or collective actor or a coalition of actors that plays a role in mediation, composition, and crafting solutions fostering /triggering collaborative arrangements through networks of public actors, third sector, experts, food banks, and volunteering;
- 3) Institutional-policy design: the organizational methods and tools, and their degree of formalization, shape the food policies evolution, the development of urban food strategies, and the variety of institutional outputs (protocols, atlases, resolutions, conventions, European projects, food councils). In addition, legitimacy and, therefore, the institutionalization of collaborative governance pursued in practice are relevant aspects before and after the pandemic crisis;
- 4) Collaborative processes: they are mechanisms that create a virtuous circle and a stable collaboration (interaction) between actors who share motivation, understandings, and objectives (of the meanings and boundaries of the policy), which can give rise to policy integration processes between sectors, leading to the sharing of responsibilities, to formalize governance arrangements, and to the extension of the space of collaborative governance.

More specifically, contributors highlight the mechanisms of collaborative governance that emerge from the analysis of individual cases: various drivers, material and symbolic incentives may lead the actors to collaborate in food policies. Finally, the articles highlight how channels and places of communication and exchange of knowledge foster trust by overcoming the asymmetry of resources and creating collaboration. Moreover, some contributions examine the urban governance ability to adapt and respond to the crisis occurs by strengthening the transversal action of food policy.

The Special Issue Content – Articles' Overview

The special issue illustrates the significant variability of issues, institutional arrangement, and processes that characterize the collaborative governance in Italian urban food policy areas. Contributions analyze the relations and collaboration between public and private actors: public actors are often not the first movers of these policies; they do

not have a dominant or even exclusive role in policy process; private actors are traditionally more active and progressively more involved in formulating and implementing local food policies.

The contribution of Lizzi focuses on the starting conditions, the facilitating factors, the various actor constellations, and essential mechanisms of the CG within the cross-sectoral policy area of food waste and food donation. Collaborative processes and bottom-up initiatives with a prevalence of private and third-sector players characterize most of the overall policy experiences of the Italian cities. Trust, shared understanding and learning, and innovation capacity emerge as crucial mechanisms in triggering collaborative processes. The article focuses on actors configurations, which mainly consists of economic actors, food bank network, and urban charitable associations; stakeholders, profit and non-profit actors and their networks, and experts have a crucial role in fostering a collaborative process; while the public actor is present with a facilitating and supporting role.

The research article of Maino and De Tommaso analyzes collaborative dynamics in the field of food policies and, more particularly, those to combat food poverty among children. The research compares two local multi-stakeholder networks in the pandemic era from COVID-19 which acts as a driving force to accelerate initiatives already started.

The research reconstructs the picture of policy interventions to combat food poverty which, directly or indirectly, target vulnerable minors through the services provided by local solidarity networks. The authors highlight the configuration of all the public and private actors who interact in combating child food poverty, looking at the facilitating processes towards social innovation and collaborative society. Two contexts are open to social innovation: in both cases, the pandemic has brought out the need to strengthen, partly by redefining, interventions to combat food poverty.

Righettini's article analyzes collaborative governance in turbulent times, specifically in the Italian capital cities' food security policy implementation and management. The urgency to improve the food security policy outcome during the pandemic led local government and private actors to interact more actively and frequently and to exchange resources to improve the take-up system of food vouchers. As a result, two governance dimensions develop towards more collaborative arrangements. The first is an intra-organizational collaboration reducing the silo-based administration and enhancing greater integration and collaboration. The second is an inter-organizational collaboration be-

tween public and private non-profit, third sector, and voluntary sector, which is more pronounced in the first phase of the emergency.

Magarini's article outlines how the pandemic crisis has transformed and consolidated the trajectories and strategies of the Milan food policy. The contribution analyzes the recent developments but proposes a reconstruction of the institutionalization process and collaborative governance around the Food City Council. In the Milan area, a food policy model is being tested (2014-15) and implemented (2015-ongoing) by the Municipality of Milan and the Cariplo Foundation. These two institutions have worked to integrate their objectives, tools, and structures, overcoming the sectoral approach between thematic areas, public and private actors (horizontal integration), and connections with metropolitan, regional, and European authorities (vertical integration). At the beginning, the food policy development took place without the construction of new institutions, then ordinary efforts were oriented and coordinated over time by many public and private actors towards achieving the defined objectives of the food policy.

Cuomo and Ravazzi's contribution offers an analysis of the CG structures that supported the various food projects in Turin. The collaborative governance framework identified the factors that favored or inhibited the transition from shared objectives to concrete actions. Essentially, the analysis shed light on two crucial factors relating to the institutional design dimension and the dimension of the operating mechanisms. The institutional design concerns, in particular, the configuration of the relationships between the actors: in the Turin case, the configurations of actors with variable geometry, targeted on the single project and flexible in form, favored the stability and solidity of the collaborative structure, compared to the fixed geometry configuration, in principle highly inclusive, designed for the creation of a food council which instead remained on paper.

The contribution of Mazzocchi, Minotti, and Marino traces the long path of the institutionalization of the Food Policy of Roma Capitale. It highlights the role of political and social actors and economic forces involved, and the evolution of the governance process. Benefiting from direct observation and direct participation in the process, the study shows the institutionalization of food policy, coinciding with the change in municipal political leadership, as well as a different relationship with the citizen movements for food policy. The pay-off of institutionalization and more collaborative and inclusive governance reduced the number of salient issues included in the institutional agenda of the Roman food policy.

In his contribution, Caglioti analyzes the role of the Food Banks, the FBAO Foundation, and the territorial organization of the Banco Alimentare Network in policies aimed at combatting food insecurity in Italy. FBAO operates through a growing capacity to recover food surpluses. Caglioti highlights the collaborative role played by the FBAO between networks of profit actors (Siticibo) and local non-profit actors, such as local communities, canteens, street units, and emporiums, solidarity benches, which assist people affected food poverty. The growing demand for collaboration and intervention during the pandemic emergency was possible thanks to increased human resources (volunteers) and a lowering of their average age.

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