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Full Research Article

Exploring governance mechanisms, collaborative processes and main challenges in short food supply chains: the case of Turkey

Yaprak Kurtsal*, Emel Karakaya Ayalp, Davide Viaggi

University of Bologna (Italy)

Abstract. There is a growing scientific interest and public debate on the potential contributions that Local Food Systems (LFS) and Short Food Supply Chains (SFSCs) can make towards overcoming sustainability challenges and creating societal impact. In the case of Turkey, where local agricultural systems are particularly vulnerable, lacking of resilience and innovative capacity, understanding the governance mechanisms of SFSCs would have strong implications for policy making. To this end, our aim in this study is to explore the mechanisms through which civil society driven SFSCs are governed in the city of Izmir (Turkey), referring to the actors involved in the process, institutional frameworks that are adopted and challenges experienced, that could inform policy discussions towards establishing more sustainable local food systems. In this direction, the questions we aim to answer are: (1) what are the mechanisms through which community level SFSCs are initiated and governed, (2) how collaboration takes place within these groups and through which processes, and finally (3) what the outcomes of these processes are, with respect to individual, community and local impacts experienced on the ground, and challenges associated with them. We use a descriptive case study methodology, to study seven SFSC initiatives (four food community networks, two farmers' markets and a local shop) in the city of Izmir; and collect data through qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews (41 with producers, 32 with consumers, 11 with coordinators and 5 with experts). Our findings suggest that different mechanisms are at play within our cases, depending on aspects including their governing structures and their way and purpose of operation. While farmers had difficulties relying solely on their income from these initiatives for their livelihoods, organizational challenges experienced by food communities were mainly related to difficulties associated to managing tasks on a voluntary basis. Moreover, arriving at a shared understanding about mutual goals, in addition to finding a way to include stakeholders in the process, were among the most prevalent challenges of all initiatives.

Keywords. Short food supply chains, local food systems, collaborative governance, alternative food networks, governance challenges.

JEL Codes. Q13, Q12, D71, R12.

*Corresponding author. E-mail: yaprak.kurtsal2@unibo.it

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1. Introduction

Over the last few decades, a wide range of grassroots movements have been gaining momentum around the globe, through a range of collective practices that are organized around the idea of promoting more socially just, culturally appropriate, environmentally conscious and healthier ways of food provisioning for communities (Kirwan et al., 2013; Renting et al., 2003). These movements aimed at empowering consumers to shift to proactive actors, and rural producers to become autonomous providers of sustainable goods and services (Matacena, 2016; Lamine et al., 2012). These food networks have been analyzed widely in the literature, not only with regards to their capacity to create societal change (Seyfang and Smith, 2007), but also because they growingly claim new roles in governance mechanisms, through mobilizing new forms of relationships, values, knowledge and skills (Dominguez Garcia et al., 2017; Knickel et al., 2009). In this regard, the concepts of "food democracy", "food citizenship" and "Civic Food Networks (CFNs)" are increasingly being used in public discourse, drawing attention to the role of local actors, citizens and civil society in shaping the new governance mechanisms in the food system (Andrée et al., 2019). Seyfang and Smith, (2007) introduced the term grassroots innovations to describe networks of activists and organizations generating novel bottom-up solutions that involve people at the community level experimenting with social innovations and the capacity to build resilience at a community level.

In this study, our aim is to explore the mechanisms through which civil society driven SFSCs are governed in the city of Izmir (Turkey), referring to the actors involved in the process, institutional frameworks that are adopted and challenges experienced, that could inform policy discussions towards establishing more sustainable local food systems. In this respect, we intend to answer the following questions: (1) what are the mechanisms through which community level SFSCs are initiated and operated, (2) how collaboration takes place within these groups and through which processes, and finally (3) what are the outcomes of these processes, in terms of individual, community and local impacts experienced on the ground, and challenges associated with them.

Numerous studies seek to explore the governance mechanisms of food networks and movements, especially in the European context. Andrée et al. (2019) examine a food movement that is led by the partnership of civil society organizations (CSOs) and local governments, focusing on building relationships, trust, and shared values. Renting and Wiskerke (2010), that study emerging roles of public institutions and civil society in LFS, argue that currently we are lacking an adequate conceptual framework to think through the implications of governance issues. Manganelli et al. (2019) identify the main governance challenges experienced by SFSCs, including pressures in management, access to resources and creation of supportive institutional spaces. Galli et al. (2014) discuss the cultural, organizational and institutional changes needed in the scope of SFSCs. We see that a recurring theme that is common in this line of thought and related theories is collaboration and how relations and networks are shaped around these. In this regard, some studies propose collaborative governance, for dealing with complex problems, without readily available solutions (Andrews and Entwistle, 2010; Emerson et al., 2012). Brink and Wamsler (2018) make use of collaborative governance to conceptualize how shared learning can filter back into participating organizations in addressing climate risk. Other studies, discuss the collaborative

governance processes and their implications from a perspective of local food banks (Meads, 2017), food policy councils (Koski et al., 2018; Siddiki et al., 2015), small holder agriculture and its connection to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Florini and Pauli, 2018), school meal services (Galli et al., 2014), and local food action planning (Andrée et al., 2019). However, the processes and mechanisms through which local food network actors get collectively organized and govern these systems, especially through collaborative governance structures, are not studied widely. This calls for a need to understand the existing place-based structures, their organization, the facilitating circumstances or challenges, and consider the role of different governance mechanisms that allow such networks to function (Lamine et al., 2012). Moreover, to the best of our knowledge, studies that seek to explore the governance mechanisms and main challenges and outcomes related to SFSCs in Turkey are very rare. For this reason, the experience of such networks and their associated organizational and operational dynamics are unknown.

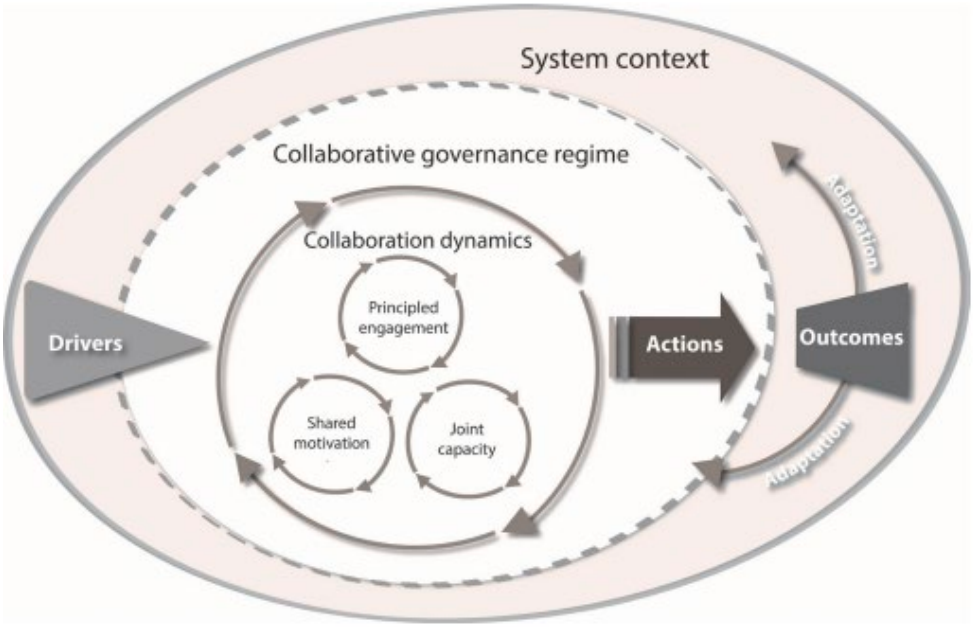
This study contributes to the literature on governance mechanisms of SFSCs through the lens of collaboration, which can shed light on how social innovation practices within LFS can be enhanced and provide important implications for policy making especially on the local level. It can also shed light to the understanding of an emerging country context, where a new and novel local food movement is being shaped, and where local agricultural systems are being criticized in particular for the lack of innovative capacity and for the poor knowledge base, in the face of sustainability challenges. In this context, the city of Izmir provides many opportunities as a city-level case, as it is the leading city in organic agricultural production in Turkey (Vatansever, 2017) and is the rising city of alternative food initiatives, providing a diversity of alternative agro-food practices (Ozatagan and Karakaya Ayalp, 2018). In addition, Izmir, being surrounded by rural areas where agricultural production is persevering, also gives an opportunity to observe the re-organization of urban-rural relations through which SFSCs can flourish. Izmir is also attractive for urban-rooted producers (producers coming from urban families but who started pursuing agricultural production later in life) (Karakaya, 2016), who migrate from other metropolitan cities to Izmir, with a dream to engage with agricultural production and start a new life, which in other cities could not be clearly observed. In Izmir it is also possible to see a sufficient number of civil society-led initiatives that allows us to identify and understand the governance mechanisms that are at play.

This paper is structured as follows. After providing the conceptual framework that we utilize in this study in Section 2, we present our cases and methodology in Section 3, and findings in Section 4. Lastly, we discuss our findings in Section 5 and present our conclusions in Section 6.

2. A multi-perspective collaborative governance framework for short food supply chains

In this study, we make use of Emerson and Nabatchi (2015)'s Integrative Collaborative Governance Framework (ICGF) (see Figure 1), while we integrate a range of studies to further propose an adapted version of the framework (see Figure 2) (Ansell and Gash, 2007; Pascucci et al., 2016; Manganelli et al., 2019; Barbazza and Tello, 2014). According to Emerson and Nabatchi (2015), within a Collaborative Governance Regime (CGR),

Figure 1. Integrated Framework for Collaborative Governance Regime.



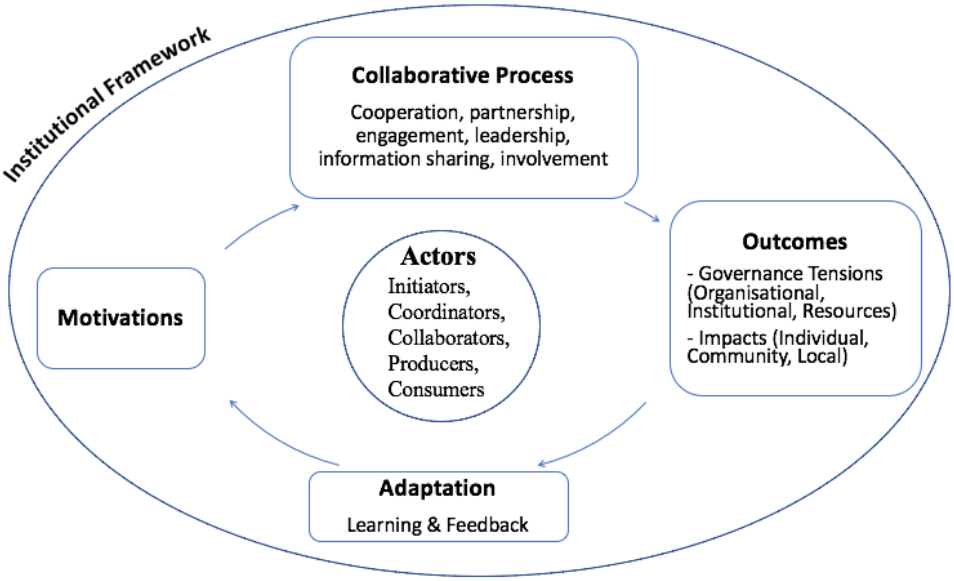
Reference: Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015

"collaborative dynamics" consisting of "principled engagement", "shared motivation", and "capacity for joint action" work together to result in actors to initiate collaborative actions to reach their collaborative goals. Together, collaborative dynamics and actions shape the overall quality and the extent to which a CGR is effective". Actions, then lead to outcomes, which in turn through an adaptation process, feed back into the CGR and the system context. In the framework, departing from Krasner (1983)'s definition, CGR is conceptualized as the "sets of implicit and explicit principles, rules, norms, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given area".

Below, we present in Figure 2, a multi-perspective collaborative governance framework to assess the governance mechanisms of SFSCs through which collaboration actions take place.

Departing from ICGF, the adapted framework aims to assess the motivations of actors to bring their forces together to organize SFSC initiatives, in which collaborative processes take place. Within these collaborative processes, collaborative actions are taken, including building of partnerships, cooperation and information and experience sharing (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015; Barbazza and Tello, 2014). The extent to which these occur is influenced by factors such as shared understanding, trust building, face-to-face dialogue and commitment to process (Ansell and Gash, 2007), as well as the institutional frameworks that shape the initiatives (rules, procedural arrangements, norms, inclusion criteria) (Emerson and Nabatchi, 2015). These processes then lead to governance tensions, and individual, community and local impacts within the groups. The governance tensions arise

Figure 2. A Multi-Perspective Collaborative Governance Framework for SFSCs.



Reference: Elaboration of the authors

in the form of organizational, resource and institutional tensions, as these newly emerging initiatives grow, scale-up and out (Manganelli et al., 2019). This iterative cycle is then completed, as these outcomes lead to an adaptation process, through feedback and learning. In this study, we do not make connections between the governance regime (where collaboration dynamics take place) and the system context that shape this regime, the reasons of which are discussed in the Discussion section.

3. Data and Research Methodology

3.1 Methodology

Our study follows a descriptive multiple case study approach based on the framework explained above. We studied seven cases to examine the governance mechanisms, challenges, and collaboration processes and outcomes of SFSCs in Turkey. Each case was examined independently and then a cross-case analysis was made between cases. The case study method is recommended when realities and dynamics of a phenomenon is not clearly explored beforehand (Hollweck, 2016). We believe this methodology could help us unravel the dynamics of SFSCs and outcomes associated with their performance in Turkey, which are almost completely unknown. Our aim was hence to maximize information richness and comparability, rather than to generalize statistically to a broader population of cases (Hollweck, 2016). An additional reason for preferring a multiple case study analy-

sis was to collect as much information as possible from a variety of actors and groups to identify mechanisms at play.

3.2 Selection of the Cases

A preliminary field research has been conducted to have an initial set of in-depth interviews with experts, academicians and local government representatives, followed by informal initial contacts with network coordinators to understand the ecosystem of SFSCs in Izmir. Thus, we have selected our seven cases with special emphasis on how and through which support mechanisms they are initiated, their governance structure, their development processes, organization capacity, innovation capacity and stakeholder variety. In this regard, it was important to include only the cases that have been operational for at least two years, as cases that have been initiated more recently did not have stabilized institutional mechanisms and participant profiles in place. Hence, our selected cases fall under the categories of: (1) A local shop (Doğa's Shop), (2) Farmers' Markets (Foça Earth Market and EcoBazaar[1]) and (3) Food Community Networks (Aegean University Environment and Human Friendly Agriculture Group, West Izmir Community Supported Agriculture Group (BITOT), Gediz Ecology Collective (GETO) and Homeros Food Collective). In this study, we use the term food community networks (FCNs) introduced by Pascucci (2010) to define a governance structure where consumers and producers strongly integrate their functions by organizing a "club", in which resources, decisions, and responsibilities are shared among participants, towards more sustainable, just, and resilient food systems. Hence, we use this term to refer to the four food community cases that we study in this research, which are organized by consumers, where individuals engage in common actions, such as co-producing and distributing food products, or sharing resources or risks, in order to produce and have access to ecological food products (Pascucci, 2010). Table 1 provides a summary of each case.

3.3 Data Collection

The qualitative semi-structured in-depth interviews were the central method used to collect the primary data for this research. We collected qualitative data from 41 producers, 32 consumers, 11 coordinators and 5 experts. Different questionnaires were used for each stakeholder group. The interviews directed at coordinators aimed to understand when, how and why the initiative is established, which stages it has gone through, the profile of consumers and producers, aspects regarding the institutional framework, how activities are organized and managed and the main challenges and needs of the groups. The interviews with producers questioned their motivations for being part of these networks, their selling channels, livelihood aspects, their main challenges and needs, and aspects regarding their sharing and learning behavior. Consumers, on the other hand, were asked what

[1] Although we referred to EcoBazaar as a farmers' market, it should be noted that it is not obligatory to be a farmer selling their own products in order to be able to sell at EcoBazaar. Sellers of intermediary products are also permitted, as long as these products have an organic certificate.

Table 1. Introduction of Cases.

	Initiative	Information about the Initiative
Local Shop	Doğa's Shop	12 rural-rooted producers selling their olive only through this network.
Farmers' Markets	Foça Slow Food Earth Market	The 1st Slow Food (SF) Market in Turkey and 28th in the World. Only targets small-scale producers within a radius of 40 kilometers, 13 producers: 12 rural-rooted and 1 urban-rooted.
	EcoBazaar	1st organic farmers' market in Izmir. 11 producers (10 rural-rooted, 1 urban-rooted) and 2 intermediary sellers (selling organic products such as packaged food or beauty products).
Food Community Networks	Aegean University Group	1 rural-rooted main producer that delivers weekly and numerous supporting ones.
	BİTOT, GETO and Homeros	28 producers in BITOT, GETO and Homeros altogether (12 part-time rural rooted, 10 urban-rooted, 6 full-time rural-rooted producers). This number is presented together, as there are producers that are shared among these 3 groups.

their main motivations for being part of these networks were and to what extent they are involved in the operation of the group.

We first contacted the coordinator of each case and decided on the meeting days that could provide the presence of the highest number of producers and consumers. Following semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with 11 coordinators, we were directed to producers of the initiatives. In the case of FCNs, consumers and producers were met during organized purchase days, while for the case of the remaining initiatives, the consumers and producers were reached at farmers' markets or other organized events.

3.4 Interpretation of Data

First, all in-depth semi-structured interviews were voice-recorded and the discussions have been categorized and subcategorized under each aspect in relation to our research questions and objective. Then, the re-occurring concepts as well as answers that are falling outside of the repeated concepts have been coded. Here, the triangulation of the data was possible when concepts such as institutional mechanisms, collaborative processes and challenges experienced within SFSCs have been asked to each of the participating actor (coordinators, consumers, producers). In this way, different explanation of the same concept by different actors have made it possible to strengthen our data.

4. Results

The findings related to our study are presented in this section. The cases we investigate consisted of four food community networks (FCNs), two Farmers' Markets (FMs) and one local shop. While, FCNs have been initiated by organized consumers, CSOs played a key role in initiating the rest of the three initiatives.

4.1 Actors and Motivations

The first FCN that has been established in Izmir with the initiative of consumers is the Aegean University "Environment and Human Friendly Agriculture Group", which later inspired the other food community initiatives to be formed in the following years. The group was established in 2013, with the initiation of two academicians at the Aegean University. The Aegean University Group is different than the others in the sense that it is a "workplace" organization and it is both founded and managed by the "employees" of the University. The second group is called BITOT (West Izmir Community Supported Agriculture Group), which has been established in the Urla Province of Izmir in 2014 by a group of consumers. When BITOT reached a certain number of consumers, the decision to scale-out also in other provinces of Izmir has led to the establishment of GETO in 2015 (in the Karşıyaka Province) and Homeros in 2016 (in the Bornova Province). The motivations behind establishment of all of the groups are similar: to support local small-scale producers that conduct environmentally-friendly production and to be able to supply healthy food products to its members.

The first FM of our case study, Foça Slow Food Earth Market, was founded by Slow Food Convivium "Foça Zeytindalı" in 2011, in line with the principles of the International Slow Food Movement. The Foça Municipality also acted as a collaborator and has supported the Convivium, which also provided the space for the market to be held each week on Sundays. Meanwhile, the District Directorate of Agriculture also contributed as a training partner, which helped identify and train the farmers in the initiation phase of the market. Slow Food International representatives were also involved in the process to provide direction and guidance. For the case of the Foça Earth Market, the motivation behind establishing the market was to give smallholders the chance to sell directly, without intermediaries. The second FM of our case study, EcoBazaar, on the other hand, was established in 2010 in the partnership of Ecological Agriculture Organization Association (ETO), Izmir Metropolitan Municipality and Karşıyaka provincial Municipality, as the first organic farmers' market in the city of Izmir. The main motivation behind its establishment was to initiate an all-organic market in Izmir, as part of efforts of the Izmir Municipality to promote organic production.

Finally, Doğa's Shop ("Yavaş Dükkan" which translates to "Slow Shop") was established in 2015, by the School of Nature, a project of the grassroots organization of Doğa (Nature) Foundation. In 2013, Doğa Association founded the School of Nature in the Orhanlı Village of Seferihisar province in partnership with the Seferihisar Municipality, which also donated the School's building to the Doğa Association to perform its activities. Other partners of the School are Orhanlı Village Society and several other local groups in Anatolia. The motivations behind its initiation were to establish a collective, where all steps of production can take into account preservation of biodiversity and traditional olive oil production methods of the Orhanlı village. Preserving the biodiversity in this location carries significant importance, as Orhanlı Valley is one of the final production sites where traditional stone pressed olive oil production continues.

4.2 Institutional Framework

We illustrate in this section, the criteria for inclusion of producers, how these criteria are controlled, and the general manner of operation for each initiative. For producers, the required specifications for being part of FCNs are to be pursuing local production, the production to be conducted by the producers themselves and not by others, organic production, using heirloom seeds or organic seeds, respecting biodiversity and to having a sufficient buffer zone between the producer's land and those others that pursue production using chemicals. These specifications are decided iteratively and may be subject to changes as a result of learning processes. Field visits are made prior to being accepted into the group, and later unannounced visits are held at certain intervals. In the case of the Aegean University Group, members meet for the purchase day each week. Coordinators, that are also academicians of the University, establish and facilitate communication among consumers and producers on a voluntary basis. The group meets in the workplace (the University) and the main producer is making weekly deliveries to the participating consumers. No rent is paid or needed for the meeting place. Normally, the group members only pay for the products that they buy. However, in case of any problems or challenges on the part of the producer (e.g. drought, flooding), practices of solidarity are operationalized in the form of direct donations or upfront payments for overcoming challenges on the farm. Meanwhile, as part of the other three FCN cases, nearly 10 people take part in the coordination of the groups on a voluntary basis, take rotations on different tasks, including communication with producers and consumers, weighing the products and arranging the finances during the purchase days. Orders are collected from consumers through communication via a Facebook Group or a WhatsApp Group.

Within the case of the Foça Earth Market, unlike the other two CSO-organized initiatives, everyone who take part in the coordination do so on a voluntary basis. The producers, on the other hand, are expected to comply with certain rules: firstly, they have to sign a contract each year, and to reveal, every 6 months, the products that they are going to sell in the market. Secondly, they need to be present every Sunday, when the market takes place; thirdly, they are expected to engage in "good agricultural" practices, that are in line with the "good, clean and fair" aspects of the Slow Food Movement. Last but not least, the locality aspect is taken seriously, such that producers that are outside the radius of 40 kilometers are not accepted to take part. These criteria are being controlled by the auditing committee, that consists of the Convivium partner, Provincial Agricultural Organization, Foça Municipality and the Municipal Police. The producers, on the other hand, only pay a symbolic fee of 20 TL (3,14 euros) yearly, to pay for the maintenance costs of their counter, and do not have to pay any other rent or similar fees. As for the EcoBazaar, the aspect that distinguishes this market from all other initiatives is the fact that it is an organic bazaar, where each of the products sold have to have an organic certificate, hence it is subject to very strict auditing processes. The audit is conducted in partnership with ETO, Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Provincial Police. Producers have to pay for their counters in the market.

As part of Doğa's Shop, the coordinators are either employees of the Doğa Foundation or have strong ties to it (through projects or collaborations). The initiative collaborates with the peasants of the Orhanlı Village, providing them with a higher price than that

of the market price for their olives, and operates by producing olive oil with traditional methods, from the olives collected from peasants. To be part of Doğa's Shop the peasants need to comply with 21 criteria covering 4 areas, that are developed by efforts and research conducted by School of Nature employees: Local products produced by small-scale producers; pursuing traditional production; producing in harmony with nature; not bringing energy or water from farther distances. These criteria are taken very seriously, and if a producer fails to comply with one or more of the criteria, they are excluded from the yearly olive oil production collective, and they are considered again for the following year. The audit is made during the packaging stage by authorities. The initiative, by creating and making visible a "village olive oil brand", helps establishing a selling channel for peasants, and make sure the olives of the village are getting the value that they are worth. To market the products, the initiative uses online selling channels (a website), while the products are also sold during the workshops, local food festivals and educational activities being organized by the Doğa Foundation. Earnings from sales are re-invested in trainings provided by the Foundation.

4.3 Collaboration Dynamics

School of Nature names the process of olive oil production within their initiative as: "collective oil", which signifies that it is a process undertaken "altogether", "as a family" and in "conviviality". The initiators and coordinators of the initiative also moved to live in this village, which have further strengthened their relations with peasants, rurality and the production process. Hence, the coordinators not only stay in contact with the producers to lead the process, but also share a life together. Foça Earth Market, being a part of the Slow Food Movement", adopts principles of the movement. Slow Food uses the term "co-producer" as part of its vocabulary and coins the term as "a consumer who goes beyond their passive role and takes an interest in producers, production processes and associated challenges". Hence, the idea of a community and co-production exits in the movement's culture, yet, to diffuse it among all members of the initiative will need further efforts. For both Foça Market and EcoBazaar, the interviewed consumers did not mention "the idea of a community" or used any terminology or language linking to "co-production". In this direction, events such as trainings, workshops, or food festivals are held when consumers can come together and accustom with each other as well as with producers. One of the "collaborative actions" taken in the context of Foça Earth Market has been establishing the "Foça Earth Kitchen", with funds and donations received from Foça Municipality and citizens, with an aim to bring the actors of the initiative together.

At Aegean University Group, the members, that are employees of the University, share a big part of their days together; hence, communicating and decision-making within the group are easier. Although this is helpful in terms of organizing purchases, it creates difficulties in terms of establishing a shared understanding of a community, "as the reason to be part of these networks for most members of the group is only to have access to healthy food". In all of the FCNs, the initiation phase was aimed to be made participatory through public meetings held and decisions on the general framework and inclusion criteria were decided following ideas and feedback from participants. Meanwhile, some solidarity actions were taken within groups. Some examples are the potato and corn projects,

where producers have been supported financially to install trickle irrigation system and then provided with guarantee of purchase for all their products to be bought (BITOT); the egg project, where farmers were supported to build a poultry house and obtain chickens and paid for the 6-month worth of eggs as an advance payment (GETO). Homeros, on the other hand, has established an urban orchard in order to conduct collective production practices. The Aegean University Group, in order to compensate for the loss of their producer after a serious hail incident, has established a funding system, through which consumers could provide financial support. Moreover, a "solidarity pricing" practice was implemented, which allowed those consumers with a lower purchasing power to pay 25% less for buying eggs, as the remaining amount was compensated by the other consumers.

As part of FMs, the understanding of knowledge sharing and learning from each other are not very common among producers. Producers of these initiatives, being mostly rural-rooted and having learned agricultural practices from their families, noted that they do not feel the necessity to exchange knowledge or information with other farmers. However, although producers did not feel this need, they have underlined the importance of social networks established in these groups. In the FCNs however, our findings suggested that there is a stronger culture of knowledge and experience sharing, which is consistent with the community aspect of these groups. Especially, urban-rooted producers in these groups, which consist of almost half of the total number of producers, have argued to have the need to learn from others, hence engaging in knowledge and experience sharing as much as they could.

4.4 Individual challenges, governance tensions and adaptation

In this section, we illustrate challenges experienced in the investigated cases in four sub-sections. In the first sub-section, we present individual and farm-level challenges put forth by producers, and in the remaining of the section (sub-sections ii-iv), we present governance tensions arising in the groups under three categories: organizational, resource and institutional tensions.

i. Challenges at the individual and farm level

For the case of FMs, setting up and dismantling the counters might require time and effort, as well as to be present in the market and to work on the farms. Especially, for the case of Foça Earth Market, the obligation to be present in the market place every Sunday "even during harsh weather conditions or when there are almost no consumers" is one of the biggest difficulties. As Foça is a province that is a vacation destination and attracting many visitors during summer, the demand is sufficient in summer, yet in winter it is more challenging. Conversely, EcoBazaar, being located in a residential area in central Izmir, experiences a significant fall in consumer demand during summer. Hence, producers that are tied to both FMs are experiencing difficulties related to the amount of time that has to be spent in the market each week, in addition to the seasonal fluctuations of consumer demand that is experienced. For Foça Earth Market, as the profile of producers mostly consists of very small-scale producers, another difficulty is also being able to bring an adequate amount of products to sell to their market counters each week.

Another significant problem raised by producers was that these networks were not sufficient to guarantee their livelihood. Especially most producers of FCNs noted that sell-

ing only in these groups is not sufficient to make a living, as they can only meet their costs. For these producers, being here had more significant effects in terms of networks and social ties established, rather than financial gains. In this regard, a few producers noted: "Small-producers could earn sufficiently, if they could back-up their SFSC activity with other activities such as eco-tourism or gastronomy linked to their agricultural production".

ii. Organizational tensions

For the case of FCNs, which have a governance mechanism that relies on voluntary and informal organizational structures, one of the biggest organizational tensions experienced was regarding the lack of volunteerism and lack of members willing to take responsibility, which leads to the burden and responsibility of all tasks to be loaded on a few people, creating fatigue in the long-term. This challenge is exacerbated especially during the purchase days, which may lead to the meetings to be "chaotic" at times. This lack of workforce also results in some of the events or meetings that are wished to be organized by the groups, to not be realized. In addition, lack of time and active participation also lead to some problems experienced in control and audit mechanisms, which are also undertaken on a voluntary basis. Some of the recommendations to deal with this issue include: raising the efforts to increase the number of volunteers and active participants, switching the tasks and responsibilities of volunteers every 6 months and in a more planned way, and to facilitate the ordering and distribution processes through online applications or through online portals, rather than using excel sheets and similar methods. Other recommendations on the other hand were towards switching the coordination task from voluntary to a professional one, in order to give the worth of efforts, eliminate this fatigue and, in turn, to have a more stable coordination mechanism. Meanwhile, some interviewees noted that the groups are growing more quickly than they can establish a strong organizational structure; hence, slowing down and taking firmer steps were also proposed. Another organizational tension arises from lack of or difficulties related to communication within groups, and especially communication with producers. In many instances, lack of communication with producers leads to disruptions in delivery processes, in addition to not being able to follow-up on the challenges the producers are faced with. Another point, on the other hand, is related to the decision-making processes within the groups. Interviewees noted that while inclusive and democratic decision-making process is favored, this usually leads to a trade-off between members to have their voice in decisions, and actually arriving at a decision. Members argued that most of the time due to lack of communication, the decision-making processes are ineffective. It has been noted that it is a big necessity to learn how to communicate within groups and arrive at decisions as a community. Lastly, lack of a shared understanding and a common purpose was also regarded as a significant challenge. It was argued that "when the members focus only social networks without embracing social awareness, it is hard for groups to be long lasting". In this regard, some consumers of the groups are criticized for "seeing these groups as organic shops or supermarkets", who are "only focused on accessing healthy products, and complain about the products they receive or the time they have to invest".

For the case of EcoBazaar, which is a market where only producers that have an organic certificate can be part of, the biggest organizational challenge is related to the formal processes of certification and regular controls. While, these processes are monitored

by a cooperation of multiple organizations, the coordination among stakeholders is a delicate task, as these processes can be costly and time-consuming, for both producers and the auditing organizations.

On the part of both of the FMs the issue of creating a sense of community and involving consumers to the processes are the biggest challenges. It was noted that "consumers are often only here for healthy food, and to be a community is not one of their motivations". Hence, coordinators try to promote the idea of community through additional activities, such as seminars or workshops (e.g. a kitchen project where consumers and producers come together to cook, and share experiences and recipes).

iii. Resource tensions

The operation, development and upscaling of local food projects require resources: funds, quality agricultural land and physical infrastructure, as well as knowledge and human capital (Manganelli and Moulaert, 2018). One of the challenges that has been mentioned by all groups was the difficulties of finding a place and space for the initiatives. In the case of the three cases initiated and organized by CSOs (2 FMs and the local shop), the place of operation is provided by local authorities, which ensures a stable space to conduct activities. In the case of FCNs, however, finding a space to perform their activities is more challenging. In the case of Aegean University Group, which is a work-place organization, the premises of the University provide the members with a comfortable space. With the rest of the other FCN cases, however, while the spaces where the purchase days take place are provided free of charge by some municipalities and organizations, these spaces often cannot be kept for a long time, which results in a continuous search for new places to operate and conduct activities. Apart from purchase days, the FCNs do not have a stable space or area to undertake other activities, such as meetings or seminars, as well as to store food products or to use as a base for logistical arrangements.

Another challenge that has been noted by all of the producers and coordinators of the group has been lack of consumer demand, especially in certain periods of the year. Consumer demand is regarded as a resource challenge mainly because this aspect influences all groups in the way of not having access to sufficient financial resources and creating difficulties for producers regarding their livelihoods. This difficulty was pointed out mostly by the two FMs. In the case of EcoBazaar the coordinator argued that the main challenge of the initiative is to reach a sufficient number of consumers. "The number of consumers are decreasing; especially during summer when citizens escape from city center to go to vacation destinations, the demand decreases significantly, putting the market in hardship". It is believed that the lack of consumer demand is due to two main reasons: Firstly, lack of information about EcoBazaar ("not even some people living across the street know about the market"); and secondly "low level of awareness about organic production, and skepticism towards organic products". In the case of FCNs, however, all coordinators and most members believe that there is sufficient amount of consumer demand around the city of Izmir, yet the problem is linked more to these groups not having a strong base and structure, to be able to accept more consumers. In addition, for FCNs, another challenge is finding producers to include in their groups. "Almost all small-scale producers have given up, especially those that produce ecologically".

iv. Institutional Tensions

Our findings show that FMs and the local shop, as being civil society organized initiatives, have a more formal structure and already established formalized relationship and links to other organizations, including CSOs, local authorities and municipalities. As a consequence, they collaborate often with these organizations in the context of some activities or projects, which also provides them with visibility. FCNs, on the other hand, do not have ties to other FCNs, as well as to formal organizations, such as local municipalities. In this regard, FCN coordinators, while acknowledging that these ties are either insufficient or missing completely, also noted that the steps need to be taken carefully and meticulously towards building strong relationships with other organizations.

Meanwhile, all producers and coordinators, regardless of the type of initiative they belong, have touched upon lack of government policies, support mechanisms and underlying laws in place, which results in financial uncertainty and lack of trust. Underlining that agriculture has long been a neglected sector in Turkey, producers noted that they were feeling "left alone". They further noted that they were in need of support from the government both in the form of direct (i.e. subsidies) and indirect support (i.e. training) to be provided to organic producers; and awareness raising programs for consumers. Producers further noted that they tried convincing other peasants to switch to organic or ecological production, but they were regarded as "crazy" for pursuing organic production. "If this proposition comes from the official authorities, then other producers would consider listening".

4.5 Local, community and individual outcomes

Regarding actual outcomes, our findings suggest that experience of farmers differed in terms of well-being and livelihoods, mainly in relation to whether the farmers were from urban or rural backgrounds. In the case of the two FMs and Doğa's Shop, where all farmers were rural-rooted, with an exception of a few, and very small-scale, the farmers' livelihoods have been reported to have changed notably as a result of being part of these SFSCs, as a result of receiving a more "just" price for their products and to have a new selling channel. As well, they gain more visibility and respectability. Producers noted to have gained autonomy and are able to bring an income to the household. In the case of FCNs, a big proportion of producers' only occupation was not in agriculture and they earn money also from other channels, and around half of the farmers are urban-rooted and started pursuing ecological production, as a "way of living" and to "find a way out of the dominant system". Hence, a big proportion of farmers engaged in these networks do not mention "a big change" in their lives financially; however, "being here had significant effects in terms of networks, social ties, being part of a community and obtaining new selling channels". Finally, regarding local outcomes, in the case of Doğa's Shop, as the initiative is located in a village, it is also possible to distinguish village-scale local impacts. It has been noted by the villagers that, before the initiative, the two out of three traditional olive oil factories in the village have been already shut down. It is argued by coordinators and the villagers that the final remaining factory could keep functioning and has been revitalized thanks to the olive oil village brand established and marketed in collaboration with Doğa's Shop and the Association of Orhanlı Village. Foça Earth Market, on the

other hand, has contributed to the reinvention of local cuisine to preserve local tastes in a 40-kilometre radius of rural, semi urban and urban geography through "the Kitchen" established in the commercial center of Foça.

5. Discussion

Our findings reveal that there are differences of governance structures, institutional frameworks, as well as differing levels of shared goals and understanding among different initiatives studied as part of this research, which also lead to numerous governance challenges. In addition, the outcomes and farm-level challenges for farmers also differ, including but not limited to factors such as whether or not farmers are urban or rural-rooted and if their livelihood depends only on these initiatives or not.

To begin with, one significant difference was among the formality of organizational structures and leadership mechanisms, in addition to the level of formality of criteria for inclusion of producers, and the extent to which they are enforced. The initiatives that have been organized and governed by CSOs have adopted stricter criteria and auditing mechanisms, which are implemented with the collaboration of multiple organizations, including other CSOs and local municipalities, which was also in line with other studies in the literature (Skog et al., 2018; Yacamán Ochoa et al., 2019; van der Jagt et al., 2017; Jones, 2018). In the case of FCNs, however, the governance structures were less defined and were implemented by volunteers (Yacamán Ochoa et al., 2019; Manganelli and Moulaert, 2018; Bellante, 2017). Furthermore, aspects of a shared sense of identity and community, were also being perceived differently among actors, which motivated initiatives to organize additional events such as workshops, seminars, or culinary events to bring the participants together. This was also in line with experiences discussed in other studies, where similar efforts were put in place to establish trust and embeddedness, such as farmers sharing their personal information with consumers in organized workshops (Bui et al., 2019; Skog et al., 2018; Petrakou et al., 2011; Papaoikonomou and Ginieis, 2017).

Our study also revealed different governance tensions (Manganelli et al., 2019) arising as a result of different governance mechanisms at play. The tensions experienced by FCNs have been more on the organizational side, including tensions to manage tasks on a voluntary basis and challenges related to keeping up with the scaling up of initiatives. One of the most significant organizational challenges associated with the informal structure of FCNs, has been regarding the insufficient number of volunteers taking responsibility and this in turn, resulting in difficulties to complete tasks in time and creation of fatigue within the volunteers. This finding is also in line with other studies that report governance challenges that are experienced by food communities, which are governed by informal mechanisms, mostly reliant on voluntarism (Yacamán Ochoa et al., 2019; Manganelli et al., 2019b; Mount et al., 2014). These studies also find that challenges are experienced as SFSCs develop and increase the quantity and quality of the food they deliver, when the initiatives lack capacity in terms of efficient logistical delivery (Yacamán Ochoa et al., 2019), or the capacity and time to include more farmers or other actors into the network (Skog et al., 2018); hence propelling them to search for more efficient logistics as well as decision-making structures. In this direction, the operation and upscaling of local food projects require further resources, including funds, a bigger space to conduct activi-

ties in addition to knowledge, skills and human capital. Emerson (2018) in this regard, draws attention to the importance of leadership in collaborative governance arrangements, noting that multiple skills are needed for the sustainment of such organizations, and if leadership is lacking at various scales, there may be need for sustained investment in leadership training, mentoring and awareness building before moving forward. As a response to such challenges, while our findings reveal some suggestions of group members towards switching to a more formal structure (e.g. cooperative), or to professionalize the system by lifting the voluntary aspect of coordination (e.g. providing a salary to those that take responsibility), others argued that this leads to bureaucratization of these initiatives, compromising the autonomy of their structures. Other studies also mentioned the trade-offs that SFSCs had to experience, between governance tensions caused by the informal structures and the risk of losing the "alternative" quality of these networks, as well as dissociating them from its local rootedness and community connectedness (Yacamán Ochoa et al., 2019; Nchanji, 2017; Renting et al., 2012; Manganelli et al., 2019b). Nchanji (2017) further argues that in the case of LFS, neither formal or informal systems are always successful in resolving governance issues, hence underlining the importance of including multiple stakeholders in the processes.

On the side of the initiatives that were governed by CSOs, which had a more formal structure, the organizational tensions were less mentioned, while, the main challenge that was mentioned by all members and coordinators were regarding the lack of consumer demand and interest, or the seasonal aspect of this demand, that is causing mainly resource challenges within the initiatives (Manganelli and Moulaert, 2018). Initiatives in this regard, noted the necessity of public administrations and local municipalities to step in to increase awareness among citizens regarding ecological and ethical food, and the need of a policy framework to support these initiatives to survive and to develop. Other studies in the literature also highlighted lack of consumer demand being experienced by local food networks, and the importance of participatory governance mechanisms, in which multiple actors from different levels and sectors need to work together to achieve these common goals (Yacamán Ochoa et al., 2019; Nchanji, 2017; Reis, 2019; Manganelli and Moulaert, 2018; Dedeurwaerdere et al., 2017; Jones, 2018). Some policy recommendations mentioned in these studies included governments to pursue awareness campaigns, or local municipalities to promote initiatives aimed at public procurement of local products for canteens, or facilitating direct sale by means of public aid through fairs, events and dissemination, and finally, adapting the legislation and regulations to facilitate the process (Yacamán Ochoa et al., 2019).

In terms of individual impacts and challenges on the part of the farmers, our findings showed that the farmers in all groups mentioned having received support one way or another, yet the type of support mentioned was differed among farmers. Rural-rooted and very small-scale farmers, which were mostly attached to more formal networks, mentioned a bigger change in their livelihoods. This was also supported by the fact that these networks were their sole source of income. Skog et al. (2018) also find that small-scale farmers that are part of local food networks experienced better income, also mentioning additional impacts of an increased respect in the community. On the other hand, among FCNs, the majority of these producers have other occupations and do not rely solely on the income from these networks. It was mostly mentioned that SFSCs do not provide

them with profits (and only meet their transportation costs), but rather, social networks, learning and experience sharing opportunities, to establish new channels of marketing through word of mouth and a motivation to carry on in the agricultural sector. Other studies of SFSCs also mentioned low levels of financial gains attained by farmers, while the associated gains were more on the side of sharing experiences, social learning as a result of established networks, or having found a "safe space" to share new ideas and create partnerships (Skog et al., 2018; Yacamán Ochoa et al., 2019; Bellante, 2017).

The study has some limitations. One of the limitations was the relatively small sample size, mainly due to the limited number of producers that are part of these initiatives. Besides, the willingness of consumers to take part in the research has varied significantly, depending on which initiatives they were part of. Those consumers that purchased products from FCNs were more willing to invest time in the interview process, while the ones who are contacted through FMs were less inclined to do so. Another limitation was to conduct a multiple case study with cases that are each particular and peculiar, having different profiles and ways of functioning. Hence, comparing them with respect to some aspects had the risk of providing biased results. For example, FCNs, in line with being "communities", naturally had a higher level of shared understanding and collaboration among participants, in comparison to FMs. Another challenge was to link the motives, governance mechanisms and outcomes of these initiatives to the system context and conditions. Due to limitations of time, we could not explore and discuss the political, legal, socioeconomical, environmental or other influences that may affect the governance dynamics and performance of collaboration within and across our studied cases, which Emerson and Nabatchi (2015) depict as the system context. Local food networks or SFSCs do not exist in isolation and are largely shaped by their surrounding context. Hence, we believe that making this connection could provide important implications for policy making. In addition, while we could only focus on SFSC cases that are currently operational, we also know that there are other cases that have failed in the past. To be able to also reach these initiatives would have provided us with very important information towards understanding not only why these initiatives work but also why they fail.

6. Conclusions

This study aimed to explore the governance mechanisms of SFSCs in the city of Izmir (Turkey), by making use of an adapted version of the collaborative governance framework introduced by the seminal work of numerous scholars, and to identify the governance mechanisms, collaboration dynamics and main challenges associated with this process. One of the most relevant findings was the need of a support mechanism or "decent policy framework" expressed by participants of all initiatives that we explored. In other words, actors that have chosen to "remain outside of the mainstream industrial food system" still felt very strongly, "the need of some kind of support from policy makers or local actors", although the type of support needed differed depending on their specific experience. This aspect is of significant relevance to especially local public authorities, as interest in local food extends beyond consumers and producers, and by decentralizing food production and distribution, local food system has a potential to generate wider public benefits. These benefits include economic and social gains for farmers, and social inclusion on a local

scale, through which citizens and communities in remote or less privileged areas can also be reached. Especially, in cases where local food initiatives can collaborate with other local actors such as local municipalities, public schools, or local organizations or community projects, the variety of citizens and geographies reached can be widened. In addition, local food initiatives can also be spaces where collaboration, exchange of knowledge and experience and social learning can take place. While knowledge creation, social learning and exchange of experiences have strong implications for aspects such as agricultural innovation and adaptation to the impacts of climate change on the side of the small-scale local farmers, they also can create a process through which knowledge regarding traditional food, recipes and cultural heritage can be protected. In this direction, policy interventions may include outreach and public awareness building activities in order to enable knowledge sharing about the mid and long-term social, economic, environmental and cultural impacts of local food production systems, and information about specific initiatives on the ground. Besides, local public authorities can establish links to such initiatives and to implement shared social or culinary projects, or establish partnership to enable local, ethical and healthy food to reach schools or canteens. Moreover, local festivals, cultural events or workshops can be conducted, underlining the importance of local food systems in local and rural development, as well as preservation of local tastes and heritage. Last but not least, reviewing of the regulatory framework to make it easier for small-scale farmers to survive and earn a living on their farms would be of great importance. While in Turkey, the agriculture sector is a neglected one, and small farmers are not supported or protected sufficiently, the specific efforts on the local level will have significant contributions. In this respect, further research can focus on current efforts and implementations by local municipalities in Turkey, regarding mutual projects and collaboration with local food initiatives, in order to reveal the outcomes from the perspective of local communities. While this could provide important insights for policy making, these experiences can also guide other municipalities in their future efforts. Best practices from around the world could also provide a reference and guidance for future projects.

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