

MAPPING STAKEHOLDERS NETWORKS OF SHORT AGRIFOOD SUPPLY CHAINS FROM FARM TO SCHOOL: A NETWORK ANALYSIS

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Abstract

In recent decades, school food policy has been framed as a health intervention designed to combat rising rates of overweight and obesity (Oostindjer 2017, Ickovics et al., 2019). In this way, school meal systems can be seen as levers to enable large-scale food sustainability transitions. In Portugal, the transposition of Decree-Law n.º 111-B / 2017 of August into the Public Procurement Code (CCP) (Decree-Law n.º 18/2008, de 29 de janeiro) has created opportunities for different local, municipal and national institutions to transform their 'purchasing power' into an institutional practice of a strategic nature (Estorninho, 2016). Thus, the portuguese governance model of public canteens includes the possibility to decentralize the management to other public or social economy entities (i.e., municipalities, parishes, Direção-Geral dos Estabelecimentos Escolares - DGEstE). Since to 2016, Portugal has the National Green Public Procurement Strategy, which resulted in the publication of several manuals with guidelines and recommendations, divided by the different goods and services that can be purchased. This policy tool assumes a critical role in the case of food, namely in the case of school canteens (Bizarro and Ferreira, 2021).

The manual concerning the criteria for purchasing food products and catering services (ENCPE, 2020) makes some recommendations, for example: i) purchasing products with integrated or organic production certification, ii) introducing specific native breeds, iii) purchasing seasonal products, iv) purchasing products with origin-specific certifications (DOP, IGP, ETG). In light of existing policies and legal frameworks, it is possible to determine: i) what type of food will be purchased (e.g. local, nutritious, healthy, culturally acceptable), ii) what type of production will be purchased (e.g. agricultural production that ensures environmental sustainability and biodiversity conservation), and iii) from whom this food will be purchased (e.g. from local farmers or smallholders, small and medium food enterprises, or women, youth or other vulnerable producer groups). Procurement schemes should promote food and nutrition appropriate to the specificities of each territorial context, considering proximity schemes (i.e. family farms, local and seasonal production, short supply chains, and

various types of certified quality schemes, e.g. organic production - Law no. 34/2019, Official Gazette no. 98/, 2019) (Schebesta, 2018). In this process, municipalities have been identified as strategic stakeholders (Sonnino et al., 2019). The main goal of this paper is mapping stakeholders networks of short agrifood supply chains to schools from the 10 municipalities of Alto Minho and identify the barriers and facilitators for their implementation.

Network analysis measurement methods will be applied to studying the relationships between entities in the Alto Minho network, from farm to school. We will analyze the connections, or links, between the entities, as well as the characteristics of the entities themselves. Several stakeholders were identified. We conclude that short agrifood supply chains present a set of social, cultural, economic benefits (Mamaot, 2013), with enormous potential for the development of the territory and preservation of the environment (Cristóvão & Tibério, 2009). Also, we found and identified economic, social, environmental and legal barriers. Although the municipalities recognize the need to value small-scale agriculture and promote the local economy, there is an urgent need for a legal framework favorable to the development of a locally based agri-food strategy for the development of the short agri-food supply chain, and with the active role of the regional administration and associative organizations for its creation and promotion.

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