



Minutes of department defence of Ph.D. Thesis of Bianca Minotti Local food policies as drivers to innovate the Italian public sector

The defence took part on November 9., 2022. The defence was opened by the head of department and chair of Ph.D study programme board prof. Lošťák. He outlined the purpose of the defence and its format. Bianca Minotti presented her thesis which is a text commenting 4 her papers published in academic journals. It means the thesis includes original results published in academic journals. After the presentation prof. Lostak presented short review of the thesis (attached to the minutes). The discussion after the presentation was over the format of presentations. The suggestion was to shorten the time needed for the presentation and to comment the ppt slides (now to re-read what is written in the slides). The presentation should also provide more info about Italian context (e.g. maps, data). The context is outlined in the thesis but it is not delivered to those who listen to the presentation. The issues raised in the review were seconded by participating members of department.

The review for the department defence of the thesis of Bianca Minotti: Local food policies as drivers to innovate the Italian public sector

The thesis is submitted as commented work of 4 papers published by Bianca Minotti. I acknowledge the types of the publications and the position of Bianca among the authors. She is the first author of papers published in *Frontiers in Sustainable Food Systems* (journal is ranked Q1 AIS) and in *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* (ranked Q2 in AIS). She is the second author in paper published in *Journal of Rural Studies* (ranked Q2 in AIS directly in the field of study programme) and the second author in *Sustainability* (ranked Q2 in AIS in chemistry). The paper in the last-mentioned journal was the first paper published by Bianca in time. Reflecting controversial reputation of this journal she did not submitted papers for Ph.D. dissertation in MDPI publishing house anymore. I was also glad to see that two case were completed with the contribution of Erasmus programme.

As for the abstract – I suggest having one or two sentences which will clearly state (present) the main findings of thesis. I appreciate that literature review presented has the purpose to set the ground for a discussion. The review is broader than in any the single paper. However, in the section 3.2 it would be nice to highlight the three paradigms. It is difficult for a reader to detect them quickly in the text. If their names are in bold, it will contribute to better reading. The section 3.2 might also benefit from the links to such concepts as food security (it is several times referred in the text) and food sovereignty (Via Campesina is of Italian origin). As a reviewer I would also

appreciate to explain more the links between section 3.1 and 3.2. They can be traced in the text but one paragraph and the end of section 3.1 might be added as the bridge to section 3.2. The text will be more coherent.

The system of Italian administration is described in details in the text however, also the socio-demographic description of the study areas (in tables for instance) might be beneficial to understand the situation. As a reader, I know where Roma or Milano are located but I do not remember, for instance, the number of their inhabitants etc). It will provide a sort of regional context to the work (data comparable data for all cases describing studied regions, incl. their location on maps) Just brief overview of basic fact will help (and they might be added to the ppt presentation as well).

Maybe literature review might also conceptualize what do you mean by innovations. You operate with this concept, therefore explain in what understanding do you use them (in many aspect it is social innovation you are writing about).

The section Discussion needs to be linked with literature review. You findings are there but they should be juxtaposed to the findings of other authors. Maybe some of the findings are the same as in other studies but some other might challenge (or even deny) the ideas or findings of other authors. For instance, somebody might not work with networks as the actor as you do in your text.

The Conclusion should clearly say what are (not what can be) the results of your research. Simply speaking if in the abstract you have 1-2 sentences, here you should point out the novelty of your findings and findings which are a sort of "business as usual"

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Some formal comments

The text uses too much the word "indeed" (70 times). Limit use of this work as much as possible

Page 6: direct quotation: "how can cities respond to the new relationship that globalisation is creating with food, if they maintain the same governance and political system?" (Haysom, 2015). Page is needed (Haysom, 2015 page XX is missing)

Please check English of the text. For instance, page 10: Yin (2002) attempt to give instructions – should not be attempts to give? Heading of the section 3.4: The italian food system: should not be Italian (capital I), page 61: testimony of italian instead of Italian.

Page 25: the quotation from Bell is moved right, in the other text, the alignment is straight. It repeats in the text several time when longer citation is used (I think page 29 or 36). Maybe it is an intention with long text, but it is not so much the case of text page 38. Consider, how will you handle these citations from academic literature which you moved right. Of similar formal question is the issues of the titles of the tables. The

Czech have titles of tables on the top of tables, yours is under. Is it Italian practice? For instance, Sociologia Ruralis has the titles of tables above the tables.

Page 134: The first sentence in Section 5.2: Starting from the summary of results in section 6.1 – should it be 5.1?, Page 134: last sentence on the page the Administration (why capital A?)

I do not understand the sentence: with the aim to dive the topic of alternative food governance and the role of the administrative local government (page 129). IN what meaning do you use the word “dive” here? What does mean divestment in services (what does divestment means – page 55.)

Some questions (like if it is real review with questions to be answered after your presentation.

What were the reason you did not conducted the interviews with “ordinary citizens” (you have important stakeholders).

The thesis points out that cities are driving force in food policies. How to link such finding with rural development. Can we say are the cities are actors of rural development because of food produced in rural areas? What kind of implication does it have for rural development and especially rural development policies – how can rural development policy be aligned with food policies if the last are of urban origin. Is not this the “missing connection” you refer to on page 130 (“however a connection seems to be missing (Interview 4)”?

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Are there any regional (territorial) differences in your findings?. Are there the differences and similarities among the case studies if utilising the factor of the regional context – where the case are located?

Appreciate that food is the one of rural urban links. It creates functional regions.

Review done and minutes written by Michal Lošťák

9.11.2022



Podpis