

BUILDING MOVEMENT -

ACHIEVING TRANSFORMATION

*XIth AESOP SUSTAINABLE FOOD PLANNING
CONFERENCE*

19-22 JUNE 2024
CALL FOR PAPERS

UNTIL 15 JANUARY 2024

NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE 15/02/24

FULL PAPERS 15/05/24

YOUNG ACADEMICS PHD SEMINAR 19/06/24

CONFERENCE 20-21/06/24

FIELDTRIP 22/06/24

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XIth AESOP SUSTAINABLE FOOD PLANNING CONFERENCE BUILDING MOVEMENT – ACHIEVING TRANSFORMATION

We live in a time of incumbent socio-ecological crises demanding short-term action, but also longer-term and structural transformations. The effects of disruptions such as climate change, environmental degradation, health emergencies, geopolitical conflicts and socio-economic inequities, cannot be ignored. These emergencies have profound effects on urban-regional food movements. On the one hand, they make key food system problems more visible: from emergency food networks escalating across urban areas and reviving food justice concerns, to groups that point to the climate breakdown and call for more ecologically and socially sustainable food production systems. On the other hand, crises are calling for socially innovative initiatives to emerge, envisioning new solutions and advocating for alternative courses of action. As a result, sustainable food planning today needs to actively engage with initiatives on the ground and create socially innovative alliances with the plurality of (food) movements.

In this background, the XI AESOP Sustainable Food Planning Conference asks how sustainable food planning can become more embedded into socially innovative and transformative movements, strategically supporting the multiple communities imagining alternatives and mobilizing around the sustainable transformation of food systems.

When considered from a socially innovative and transformative lens, food becomes a driver for changes in deep structures of societies and economies (Holt-Giménez, 2019).

Which socially innovative food planning practices are capable of devising creative solutions to unmet needs? How to imagine cooperative and responsible action across diverse agents of the food system and at critical scales? How to build cohesiveness and cooperation without losing sight of the multivocality and diversity of food systems that are necessary to build more resilient societies and urbanities (IPES-Food, 2016)? How to effectively advocate for institutional and planning frameworks that respect the autonomy and creativity of socially innovative food initiatives and encourage alternative forms of food production to take root? How to courageously advance goals of socio-ecological justice as triggers and targets for food systems' transformations?

Building on these questions, the Conference proposes five thematic lines to imagine more socially innovative and transformative food planning practices:

- 1_Spatial planning, soil and the land question**
- 2_A food system lens on architecture, urban planning and design**
- 3_Innovative governance and policy frameworks**
- 4_Socio-ecologically just food systems**
- 5_The challenge of movement building**

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1_SPATIAL PLANNING, SOIL AND THE LAND QUESTION

Land is at the core of food systems, societies and livelihoods—and a great deal of bottom-up mobilization takes place around the issue of land and spaces for alternative forms of food production. While urban food movements need to deal with path dependent planning systems conditioning access to land and other spaces (including for instance built infrastructures, or water), opportunities are there to experiment with production and supply systems which foster community development, ecological sustainability, and soil-resource restoration (Tomaghi and Dehaene, 2020).

This thematic area invites contributions highlighting experimentations at place seeking to scale up alternative forms of food production and supply; contributions concerning forms of cooperative land or food retail management and commoning around land; as well as research that illuminates on issue of soil quality and planning approaches to soil restoration and management; ways to foster alternative forms of food production colonizing infrastructures such as buildings or water, are also subject of interest; we also welcome contributions that seek to stretch out the land question, looking at challenges to build relations with hinterlands and wider spatial-institutional scales, in order to promote proximity agriculture and support short food supply chains.

2_A FOOD SYSTEM LENS ON ARCHITECTURE, URBAN PLANNING AND DESIGN

The renewed attention to the urban food question over the past 20 years stirred the imagination of architects and designers towards rethinking urban planning and design to actively retrofit food systems and the materiality of food landscapes in the city. On the one hand, influential design concepts such as Continuous Productive Urban Landscapes (Bohn & Viljoen, 2011) advocate for a food-sensitive approach to space and place. On the other hand, “futuristic” practices such as eco-smart cities and hightech urban farms percolate urban areas, not always with socio-ecologically beneficial outcomes. How can we assess the past two decades of design experimentation? How have these experiments transformed existing urban areas and the way they are planned, managed and used? Moreover, the rising research interest on food environments or foodscapes (Vonthron et al. 2020), pushes us to ask what levers spatial planning can mobilize in order to influence the spatial distribution of food supply and improve access to healthy and sustainable food for all.

This thematic area welcomes contributions shedding light on heterodox approaches to planning, design and urbanism as vehicles of food system re-localization. Examples are public farms, food hubs, food relocalisation clusters, food procurement projects, new land-use typologies, and so on. Moreover, contributions are welcome which scrutinize innovative experiments on zoning, public spaces or transportation management, useful to drive the localization of food outlets and improve the diverse dimensions of accessibility. Both, conceptually-driven contributions (food design/planning concepts and frameworks) as well as practical examples are equally welcome.

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3_INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Nowadays a great deal of food governance and planning is happening in cities. The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact counts over 200 members which indicates how food has been entering the urban agenda of an increasing number of cities. Moreover, the emergence of policy frameworks such as the EU Farm to Fork Strategy indicate opportunities to connect local food governing practices with higher governance levels. Yet, urban food policies and governing structures still hold a rather informal and precarious status within local and multi-level institutional structures, having to deal with issues such as changes in political coalitions, socio-environmental emergencies, and similar shocks. Moreover, subject to debate is the extent to which new food strategy frameworks are able to tackle vested interests and powerful macro-economic structures generating food inequities.

This thematic session invites contributions seeking to unravel constraints and opportunities for a socially innovative territorial food governance. We are open to contributions that highlight limits and potentials of food councils and food strategies in improving democratic governance structures in contemporary times of emergency; as well as the challenge of integrating diverse actors and policy levels in food planning processes with the purpose to tackle dominant food regimes; relatedly, challenges to exercise a systemic approach to food planning—intersecting different competences and policy areas—are also welcome. Finally, we accept contributions that connect urban food governance with urgent questions of socio-ecological justice, participation and representation (thus building bridges with thematic line 4).

4_SOCIO-ECOLOGICALLY JUST FOOD SYSTEMS

The impact of crises such as the Covid-19 and the persistence of endemic forms of inequities in food systems has sparked concerns over food equity and justice. Emergency food networks have escalated, together with the rise of socially innovative initiatives aiming to provide equitable access to food. At the same time, approaches to justice, such as political ecology, environmental justice and “just sustainability” frameworks underline that social inequalities cannot be addressed without laying the basis for a healthy environment (Agyeman, Bullard, & Evans, 2003). This triggers questions about how social as well as ecological dimensions of justice can be better addressed in food planning.

This thematic area welcomes contributions analyzing initiatives organizing around food justice; how justice claims are negotiated by food actors and organizations; contradictions and synergies between social and ecological justice objectives; initiatives such as community food projects and alternative food distribution networks (e.g. community food kitchens), in responding to new demands for social and ecological justice. Theoretically, this thematic area is open to radical perspectives such as race and gender justice, feminist, post-capitalist, anti-patriarchal approaches to food.

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5_THE CHALLENGE OF MOVEMENT BUILDING

Advancing the cause of innovative food system change necessitates a high degree of activism, participation and engagement. Yet, factors such as lack of funding for organizations, volunteer work, labor issues, etc., can also hamper socially innovative food movements. Alongside that, issues of diversity and representation in food movements should be also considered.

This thematic area invites contributions and reflections on topics such as coalition building, engaged activism and participation in food planning movements. Furthermore, reflections on challenges to embrace a diversity of actors—including different types of farmers and farmers' groups—, values and perspectives while maintaining a cohesive food movement are welcome. Furthermore, contributions on the role of academic communities in contributing to movement building through engagement, trans-disciplinarity and action-research, are also welcome.

Agyeman, J., Bullard, R. D., & Evans, B. (2003). *Just sustainabilities: Development in an unequal world*. (1st MIT Press ed.). Urban and industrial environments. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press

Bohn, K., & Vlijoen, A. (2011). The edible city: Envisioning the continuous productive urban landscape (CPUL). *Field Journal*, 4(1), 149-161.

Holt-Giménez, E. (2019). Capitalism, food, and social movements: The political economy of food system transformation. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*, 9(Suppl. 1), 23–35

IPEF-Food. (2016). From uniformity to diversity: a paradigm shift from industrial agriculture to diversified agroecological systems. International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food systems.

Tomaghi, C., & Dehaene, M. (2020). The prefigurative power of urban political agroecology: rethinking the urbanisms of agroecological transitions for food system transformation. *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems*, 44(5), 594-610.

TIMELINE

- Abstracts due by 15 January 2024
- Acceptance notice by 15 February 2024
- Full papers due by 15 May 2024
- Young Academics PhD seminar on 19 June 2024, Brussels (call will follow)
- Conference 20-21 June 2024, Brussels & Ghent
- Fieldtrip 22 June 2024, Brussels & Ghent

SUBMIT YOUR ABSTRACT HERE (<http://bit.ly/Aesopsfp2024>)

Questions? Mail us at Aesopsfp2024@gmail.com



On behalf of the Organising Committee and the AESOP Sustainable Food Planning Steering Team,

Michiel Dehaene, Ghent University

Elke Vanempen, ILVO-Institute for agriculture, fisheries and food & VUB-Cosmopolis Centre for Urban Research

Alessandra Manganeli, HafenCity Universität Hamburg

