

Re-localizing ‘legal’ food: a social psychology perspective on community resilience, individual empowerment and citizen adaptations in food consumption in Southern Italy

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Abstract This paper investigates how Food Security (FS) is enacted in a southern region of Italy, characterized by high rates of mafias-related activity, arguing for the inclusion in the research of socio-cultural features and power relationships to explain how Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) can facilitate individual empowerment and community resilience. In fact, while FS entails legality and social justice, AFNs are intended as ‘instrumental value’ to reach the ‘terminal value’ of FS within an urban community in Sicily, as well as the space where citizens can act their individual and collective political food choices. Building on the social psychology literature and on ecologic-psychopolitical models (Christens and Perkins in *J Commun Psychol* 36(2):214–231, 2008), we discuss the case of Addiopizzo, a citizen project promoting the legality of their AFNs through the rejection of the payment of the pizzo (the protection money asked by racket) in the local food chain. The aim is to problematize the extent to which FS is able to re-localize ‘legal’ food in the market. This was done by reconnecting citizens to their space and territory in a socio-cultural context at risk where agro-food producers, retailers and consumers are not free to fully enact their citizenship agency because of a widespread illegal structure. The research findings show that Addiopizzo project enables citizens to act their social power: agro-food producers and retailers by subscribing to formal requirements based on values that reject racket;

consumers by purchasing Addiopizzo labelled products; individuals and groups by participating further open-to-the-public activities that promote everyday politically oriented behaviour. The citizen empowerment and community resilience can be exerted within AFNs as they are interconnected paths of reflexivity and social learning within social adaptation. The paper concludes by advocating the role of urban communities as a pivotal agent to maintain positive social adaptations, where AFNs work as a socio-cultural synthesis of traditional and alternative producer–consumer ways of interaction, which are embodied in the FS value.

Keywords Community resilience · Empowerment · Food security · AFNs · Legality · Italy

Abbreviations

FS	Food security
AFN	Alternative food network
EU	European Union

Introduction

This paper investigates how Food Security (FS) is enacted in a southern region of Italy, Sicily, which is characterized by high rates of mafias-related activity, arguing for the inclusion in the research of socio-cultural features and power relationships to explain how Alternative Food Networks¹

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¹ With Alternative Food Networks it is meant “a perceived trend towards the emergence of food production–consumption relationships which offer an ‘alternative’ set of possibilities to those provided by the ‘conventional’ industrialised agro-food complex” (Maye et al. 2011, p. 1). A good review of AFNs has been offered by Tregear (2011).

(AFNs) can facilitate individual empowerment and community resilience as means to ensure FS and fight mafia.

In this peculiar socio-cultural context we aim at studying the possibility of putting in place a common discourse between legality and social justice. Instead of attempting to understand the Sicilian context using a universal definition of FS, this paper looks at how FS identifies with specific cultural practices and citizen politics. FS “exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO 1996). This definition of FS has developed in the last thirty years to reflect changes in official policy thinking (Clay 2003) and in everyday practices (Ackerman-Leist 2013). As a consequence, a spectrum of theory, policy and praxis exists concerning FS according to both local experiences (Goodman and Watts 1997) and to some global organizations (Schanbacher 2010), whose common focus is “on alleviating poverty through developmental growth, with a specific focus on agricultural reform, trade, and technological progress” and on “how food functions on a cultural and political level” (Schanbacher 2010, pp. 21–22). FS represents not only a perspective to reduce global hungry and poverty, but also to understand local response to local dynamics. Mooney and Hunt (2009) identified some collective action frames pointing at FS as a component of a community’s developmental whole. In detail, FS is considered as a terminal value guiding the community market practices, which are identified in a variable, and not always coherent, set of pragmatic instrumental values: individual and community agency. This research considers both dimensions (individual and collective) in order to investigate how citizen agency can contribute to the achievement of FS, taking into consideration the difficulties that a separate study of the subjects might entail, since they are not two different entities (Christens et al. 2007, p. 230).

We frame FS in its social justice dimension of the Sicilian agro-food systems; this resonates with AFNs at the individual and community level. In fact, as Gottlieb and Fisher (1996, p. 24) stated, FS is a “conceptual framework for action”; the community needs, as defined by the authors, refer to the social dimension of the phenomenon; this framework concerns with culturally acceptable food choices and raises questions of ownership. Multiple studies have been conducted both on social justice and food issues (Rehber 2010). Allen (2008, p. 159) places social justice in the consumption of local products and highlights how, in the case of lack of clear objectives of social justice, local systems can be embedded into the same dynamics of the global systems (standardization and a productivist logic just to name a few), albeit at a different scale. An increasing number of study and field experiences are

emerging based on a local community FS approach (Freedman and Bess 2011); in particular, Hamm and Bellows (2003) suggested a renovate characterization of FS, known as *community food security*, defined as “a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice” (Hamm and Bellows 2003, p. 37). While FS focuses primarily on an increase in food production and availability in a fight against hunger, community food security takes into consideration various qualities of food systems in the attempt of a more holistic approach; we advocate for this concept on the basis of Carolan’s (2013) security *through* food instead of security *of* food (we will discuss this in the third section).

In fact, local agro-food dynamics magnetize more and more attention both for its socio-economical and political value concerning the existence of individuals and entire communities; as Carolan (2006) pointed out, agriculture is a social and organizational being and the presence of agro-food products in the market is considered a social necessity. As a contestation of global changes affecting people daily lives, communities around the world have developed AFNs of production, retail and communication instruments, at the centre of which there are people, and that embody diverse phenomena emerging as social materialization of community members’ opinions, values and motivations (King 2008; Carolan 2013). In the present paper, therefore, we intend alternative in the political discourse of counter-hegemonic citizen activism (Maye et al. 2011, p. 309). Since AFNs can be assumed as a value-based response to global, conventional food provision (Grey 2000), we intend AFNs not as alternatives to traditional channels, but as alternatives to the dominant manner in which these channels are managed; under a social justice paradigm that includes multiple stakeholders, that is producers, retailers and consumers. In particular, we suggest considering the influence that local culture and the community sense of belonging embedded in social processes and economic relations have in the establishment of that social justice overarching element. In other words, the contestation is not on market mechanisms but on the unethical management of markets that embedded local food production, distribution and consumption as illegal practices.

Empowerment and resilience as means to reach FS through AFN

In order to study FS and AFNs in a multidisciplinary way in the Sicilian context, we discuss some concepts that pertain to both the sociological and psychological fields; in

detail, this article looks at empowerment, resilience and citizenship in the attempt to describe the state of the present agro-food situation in Sicily. Focusing on the regional *Addiopizzo* project, we outline the issues that arise in the agro-food arena and that citizens face when mafious mindset and practices determine ways in which resources are managed. A mafious mindset can be fought through democratic participation: “If solutions to problems in the agrofood system depend in a very fundamental way on participation, the emerging concept of food democracy as a constructive model for political practice because participation is a key feature of democracy” (Williams-Forson and Counihan 2012, p. 463). Since citizenship denotes participation and it is intended as the space for individual and collective agency, we use individual empowerment (Francescato et al. 2013) and community resilience (Adger 2000) to describe a possible interpretation that Sicilian citizens give to their agency acting within AFNs in order to ensure FS. In order to employ these concepts, we will briefly illustrate them.

Empowerment: The concept of empowerment is part of the literature of community psychology in the sphere of decision-making (Dean and Bush 2007). The participation and involvement of citizens (Rappaport 1981) to the economic and social life of the community, the concept of *conscientization*² (Freire 1973), that is critical awareness of their actions, and power relations (Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky 2003) are suitable to provide a wider view of the empowerment process. Zimmerman (1995, p. 583) defines empowerment as the access to resources and critical understanding of the socio-political context in which people live, giving them the opportunity to control their destiny and influence the decisions that affect their lives. However, understanding of power and social change (interactional components) differs from personal control and effectiveness (intrapersonal components): this means that a person may feel empowered, but s/he does not know how to act in order to change; but it also mean that, despite knowing and understanding how to make a change, they lack the sense of efficacy to act to reach the objective (Speer 2000). The concept of empowerment therefore includes power, which is primarily intended as social power, which refers to the use of resources within the community that links individual strengths and competencies, systems; and proactive behaviours to social policy and social change (Rappaport 1981). In our perspective, empowerment works as a means to build a resilient system. **Resilience:** The pivotal point of the community resilience concept is the capacity of an organization or community to

find a new equilibrium status after a crisis or a prolonged stress (Norris et al. 2008). According to Magis (2010, pp. 401–402):

Community resilience is the existence, development, and engagement of community resources by community members to thrive in an environment characterized by change, uncertainty, unpredictability, and surprise. Members of resilient communities intentionally develop personal and collective capacity that they use to respond to and influence change, to sustain and renew the community, and to develop new trajectories for the communities' future.

Therefore, the *foci* are on the potential future development based on the current resources. Berkes and Ross (2013) identified some community strengths, which can facilitate resilience; among them there are social network, communication, social support and inclusion, sense of belonging and learning. However, a resilient community has not only resources, but also quality (attitudes, values and beliefs), power dynamics (policy, procedure and routine) and system operations (power and decision-making process; Foster-Fishman and Behrens 2007). Since changes at a macro level can be very difficult to reach, especially in this age, the local level can be seen as the most appropriate way to improve the overall resilience (Walker et al. 2009); in fact, local food purchasing is often seen as a tool to increase community participation and promote resilience (Franklin et al. 2011). The reference to a community, both in terms of spatiality and solidarity, leads us to the third concept, citizenship.

Citizenship: To explain how citizenship as a concept is employed in this paper, we refer to the community psychology³ literature and ecological-psycho-political models (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Christens and Perkins 2008). Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective (1979) puts the environment at the centre of the study of individual behaviour and attitudes; the “ecological” environment is made of concentric levels, which are included in one another: each level is in a relationship of mutual dependence with, and influence, all other levels (Ungar et al. 2013). Several approaches have been developed from the original work of Bronfenbrenner (including Maton 2000; Christens and

² The community psychology concept of “conscientization”, or critical awareness, has its sociological correlative in “reflexivism” (Beck 1994).

³ A community psychology approach has become central in the last century, from the 70 s on (see for instance Anderson et al. 1966); such an approach is characterized by theories, methodologies and tools aimed at research and interventions in social area and not only at individual level. In particular, the European perspective connects the individual to the social sphere investigating the close relationship of mutual influence between individual skills and the role of the social context (Francescato et al. 2013, p. 75). This new wave should be epistemic and transformative: the first refers to the psychological and political elements, the second to the goals of social change and/or structural improvement (Angelique et al. 2013).

Perkins 2008; Brodsky and Cattaneo 2013). In fact, the model of Bronfenbrenner appears useful in the community resilience investigation as it allows for the study of the effects of organizations and entities on influencing directly or indirectly the individual or the community (Boon et al. 2012). The connection between different levels is also favoured by intermediaries, which join individuals with the wider levels of society, and offer them tools to participate in the decision-making process and bring to attention community needs (Zani 2012). This model provides theoretical heuristics to connect the macro processes to those individuals, such as attitudes, perceptions and behaviours.

From a conceptual point of view, to analyse the citizens' ability to respond to local dynamics through the lens of the ecological and psycho-political patterns means identifying power relations and implications for the territory. The ecological perspective seems to give a considerable emphasis to the role played by cultural history and traditions in the life of a community; such a perspective on cultural diversity includes its expressions through multiple levels of the community, from the individual to the social norms and to the traditions (Adger 2000; Trickett 2009). In this way we study the effects of socio-cultural features (Clauss-Ehlers 2008) and the widespread and mutual agency among citizens in supporting the resilience. The political and historical dimensions have been acquiring a growing interest from the scientific community over the years; psychologists propose multidisciplinary theoretical framework and analytical models incorporating psychological and social representations to the understanding of economic and political-institutional aspects (Francescato et al. 2013, p. 89).

The concept of psycho-political validity is introduced by Prilleltensky and Prilleltensky (2003), and focuses on the need to consider the nature of the political and psychological power in studying welfare, oppression and liberation; moreover, it helps understanding the process towards social change (Reich et al. 2008). The critical approach of Prilleltensky (2012) underlines the need of improving the individual but also the community life, so that it identifies the well-being with the social justice (Zani 2012, p. 206).

In this paper, empowerment and resilience are used to explain how AFNs can facilitate individual empowerment on the basis of the role played by the citizen in the market, as well as the community resilience within an environment at risk (Brodsky and Cattaneo 2013) like the Sicilian region. The context of risk identified is represented by some historical influences, as we will discuss later, that inhibit local cultural development, which make it very difficult to change the *status quo*. To ensure empowerment and resilience in a socio-political sphere, Lehrner and Allen (2008) suggest an analysis of social problems within the socio-cultural context, the impact of these systems on

the constitution of the citizen agency and its role in the process of signification. This paper focuses on an urban local community in Palermo, considered as a symbol of both Mafia and Mafia opponents. In detail, we discuss about the case study of Addiopizzo that can be considered the paradigmatic expression of citizen network that share a common objective of social justice in the agro-food arena re-interpreting that Sicilian mindset, as defined by Boissevain (1971), which gives predominance to the relationships. Addiopizzo is a citizen project, born among some young consumers and students, developing among retailers and in a second step among agro-food producers promoting the legality of their AFNs through the rejection of the payment of the *pizzo* (the protection money asked by racket) in the local food chain. As Carolan reported (2006) social relationships are the foundation on which we build social perception and daily assessments of knowledge, therefore the influence of socio-cultural features are also evident in the way we build local food systems (Morris and Buller 2003) and how they responds to changes, "to engage it through intentional change processes similar to [...] what Freire (1970) calls conscientization, or through various types of civic engagement" (Christens et al. 2007, p. 230). Since food is also a way to examine the political and social relations within society (Levkoe 2006), investigation within and across all levels of the food systems is paramount (Freedman and Bess 2011, p. 398). This is especially true taking into consideration that FS can be linked to the community ability of reaching social justice through specific behaviours enacted by citizens in the market assuming that people are active agents in their own environment (Trickett 2009).

Rural Sicily and Mafia

Since the aim of this paper is to problematize the extent to which FS re-localizes food in the Sicilian market, a brief description of the context where the case studies are positioned is necessary.

Sicily is historically a land where policies are primarily aimed at achieving economic interests and accumulation of power, where "Mafia culture is something very common, linked to the denial of social rules and close to private rules and nepotistic. This does not necessarily equate to crime and delinquency, and yet seems to steer many personal and collective behaviour" (Giorgi 2007, p. 273). The central institution of Sicilian society is the family (Boissevain 1971), and belonging to it implies a moral code and responsibilities for the conduct of the whole family. The in-group and out-group dynamics (Sherif 1966) forge a community tied together by bonds of affection, even if these ties of relationship are coercive and the

“cooperation” is inflicted.⁴ The pervasiveness of the mafious mindset involves also ordinary citizens, in such a way that a diffuse moral perception that corruption is a necessary daily practice exists (Schneider and Schneider 1994); despite a general consensus around Mafia, there is also a lot of acquiescence (Forno 2011).

From sociology and anthropological studies (Banfield 1958; Boissevain 1971), we learn that Sicily is a land in which the revolution has always been endemic, where the exploitation of the peasants by a small upper class, nobility and bourgeoisie, passed from one generation to the other, which controlled local governments and acted only on the basis of personal gain. Sicily represents the *locus classicus* that illustrates how the strongest survives at the expense of the weakest. Mafia was born in the countryside, a historical and cultural bond that develops itself and is maintained over time. The report of the Italian Confederation of Farmers (2009) denounced the constant and increasingly pervasive presence of crime in agriculture, among which there are racket and the imposition of suppliers, force labour and sales prices to farmers. Finally, the crime is also in the organised distribution, managing directly the point of sale. The supply chain is totally exposed to Mafia infiltration since many are the sensitive contact points: for instance, infiltration can occur through transport services by road, especially on the vegetable sector, where money is requested for each truck; or through indirect forms of extortion, imposing a specific packaging that must be requested to affiliated firms.

Despite an increasing presence in urban areas recorded since the mid-seventies, Mafia in the rural area continues to flourish; in fact the horticultural sector has always been a natural place for its business (Rapporto SOS Impresa 2009). Most of the agro-food enterprises are micro or small in Sicily, a characteristic that makes them vulnerable and prevents producers to join, partly because of the general lack of confidence and inability to build networks. Santino (2011) makes a parallel with Mafia and the evolution of capitalism, pointing out that in recent capitalism the Mafia-related aspects are bound to the dynamics triggered by globalization and argues that when occurs “[...] the rise of territorial imbalances and social gaps, [...] the illegal accumulation becomes the unique or more convenient resource to many areas of the planet even peripheral; the process of financialization of the economy makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish between legal and

illegal capital that favour the proliferation of Mafia-related activities also in central areas” (Santino 2011, p. 14).

In this context, Mafia maintains strong local roots, which results in some areas in almost total control of the economic activities. One form of control is the extortion racket, a form of cash payment paid in any way by the enterprise, the so called *pizzo*; this is a crucial tool, which represents robust symbolic and communicative values, more than the profit objective, because it remarks the reiteration of its domain (Forno 2011). The *pizzo* is even more pervasive today than in the past (La Spina 2008) and affects not only the agro-food producers but also all other actors in the food chain, including consumers.

The historical overview from Schneider and Schneider (2006) provides a useful interpretative framework of this region’s evolution in the last forty years in its relationship with Mafia and the anti-Mafia sentiment. Becucci (2011) traces the origins of Mafia to the State’s structural inability to ensure social order and a suitable function for economic transactions by playing a mediator role in the relationship between social and economic spheres. Rakopoulos (2014) defines the anti-Mafia sentiment as a major tool that depicts the negotiation of the on-going war between Mafia and peasants. The reaction of this part of society to Mafia is through attempts to create a culture of legality, transparency in governance, participatory democracy and laws (Cayli 2013). The author cites Swidler (1986), which emphasizes the role of culture in shaping actions and structural opportunities to respond effectively to the ideologies, especially in disturbed contexts. Godson (2000) defines a culture of legality as a culture in which social ethos are in line with the law. In a culture supportive of the law, citizens generally think that the legal laws are part of the concept of justice, which increases the quality of life of individuals and society as a whole. Social justice is an eclectic concept concerning a variety of issues, such as a proper allocation of resources, agency, social influence, political power and legal rights (Kagan et al. 2011, p. 37). Communities are taking an increasing role in driving the development of agro-food systems towards social justice (Smithers et al. 2005; Franklin et al. 2011); in particular, Brunori et al. (2013) recognize in this changing context the primary role played by food movement, which bond values to the consumer identity.

Addiopizzo: a citizen project

Addiopizzo is a network of citizens, engaged in a wide range of activities, including education, activism, counselling and local business with the common goal of fighting mafious attitudes and, consequently, Mafia itself. In this paper we mainly refer to the activity of labelling local

⁴ This can be explained as *Familismo amorale* (Banfield 1958): it seems to be a typical South Italy modus operandi, which is based on the achievement of the family well-being (father, mother, brothers and sisters), whose primary consequence was an endemic inability to act for the common good, commonly defined as a lack of civic engagement.

agro-food products, whose production, distribution and selling are carried out without paying the *pizzo*. Addiopizzo promotes the legality of their AFNs through the rejection of the payment of the *pizzo* (the protection money asked by racket) in the local food chain. The rationale behind it was to make opposition to illegal behaviour a real option and to get this idea viral; it stemmed out of the acknowledgment that people who exercise an economic activity choose not to denounce the practice of *pizzo* if the environment in which they operate is indifferent to the extortion. The awareness of some citizens sprang into a public act, a behaviour that manifested a willingness to break the *status quo*. It must be noted that the reaction to mafia was an individual act due to empowered individual, but their awareness translated in the acknowledgement that the survival of the movement requires a collective, cultural reaction (Forno 2011). In other words, it is the encounter between few empowered citizens who desired to change and the fulfilment of a legal market that comes from retailers in the city. The rationale behind Addiopizzo is also about a collective dimension: the fight against Mafia is not an individual matter, but requires the involvement and handling of the whole society; isolation makes individuals more vulnerable while network membership and affiliation protect. Addiopizzo can be defined as the sparkle of the process towards social change: it is founded and managed by citizens unsatisfied with the existing ideology and represents the vanguard of the public opinion within the society's lack of power. The widespread of knowledge to the citizens and their awareness occur through the activities organised in the territory and the website: these communication tools offer the possibility for citizens to inform on the *pizzo* and in general to the mafious mindset, to reflect and then to decide whether or not one should actively participate towards the change. In its process of growth, Addiopizzo provides information, contacts and advice to all farmers and producers who daily fight against Mafia. As we will discuss later, knowledge and practical support in everyday activities build the empowerment of producers.

Relationships between Addiopizzo management and stakeholders are complex and delicate: a direct relationship seems to be the only way to avoid mafious infiltration, as seen in the previous section. In order to become a member of Addiopizzo network, farmers and producers have to sign an agreement stating that they will follow Addiopizzo rules and values, as a way to increase the involvement and identification with the other members. If the aim is to change the mindset and *consequently* the action, then there's the need to reverse civic engagement through symbolic commitment and make it public, reinforcing the mutual civic bonds: in fact the path to inclusion is made of different steps requiring also the presentation of legal document concerning the business; a peculiar tool is then

the signing of a written statement of commitment toward citizens/consumers about the non-payment of *pizzo*, as a condition for entering and staying in the network. Addiopizzo efforts are directed to implement a shift, where the hegemonic mafious mindset should become the counter-hegemonic dimension. In such an environment, where the invisibility and pervasiveness of mafious mindset persist, Addiopizzo represents a collective resilient response based on individual empowerment of each citizen. While citizens/consumers can adhere to the movement by purchasing *pizzo*-free product, they can also sign the manifesto of the movement and financially help it. Addiopizzo was born in the same society it fights and re-interprets the same tools, namely the network, on the basis of social justice and legality values. Thus, it becomes a collective political space for food choice, redistributing resources more equitably, including the use of the land: as a result, Mafia has less social power, which is reallocated to the citizens. The strength of the network lies in the relational dimension, where each node knows the other: the goal of Addiopizzo is to create a network with the same force and sense of belonging that illegal actors have already constructed. In fact, as a manager of Addiopizzo said: "If we can certify all producers, we will be able to create a pool of producers who becomes a positive reinforcement for others, who may not have made the certification because they do not know it and therefore they could not choose".

In the Sicilian context, citizen empowerment occurs within the specific role played in the food market, whose magnitudes reach the community level giving people the power to react. The mafious mindset and illegal activities in the Sicilian agro-food environment seem to represent the two strong barriers to the development of the society well-being. The pioneers of the movement, however, have demonstrated that citizens' engagement has made change; this engagement occurs through different integrating forms.

Firstly, Addiopizzo provides support to farmers and producers through training and the network itself. With reference to the training, Addiopizzo managers periodically visit the farmers and producers, in order to teach and transmit some communication and management skills; with reference to network, it provides strong social support, also for protection. The joint action of the empowered managers with the desire of individual farmers to emancipate from the illegal bond allows the development of interactions, which change the producers' self-efficacy perception and their experience with the power. Secondly, Addiopizzo managed to build a network in which citizens identify themselves, as consumers, producers and retailers. The participation of the members and the wider community is a psycho-social process that occurs through the communication tools to reach the goals of "accessing local community knowledge, enhancing the sense of responsibility

towards the wider community, augmenting resources, and heightening commitment to continue to project over the long-term” (Dean and Bush 2007, p. 149). In particular, the moments of encounter between citizens who are not Addiopizzo members are of major importance for the transmission of knowledge, which reinforces the scale of the response of the anti-mafia developing reflexivity. Addiopizzo is able to build a frame through which re-interprets the knowledge and relational dynamics, which helps building a steady and continuous learning. Relationships in the food market are the place where the power is manifested and determines the actions of the producer. In this sense, the *pizzo* is still experienced today by many producers as a simple operational cost, so that the skills in negotiating the amount of the *pizzo* are considered an indicator of entrepreneurial skills; in the past, some large companies contacted the local Mafia boss before deciding whether to invest in certain territories (Giorgi 2007). In order to break this *modus operandi*, the path of empowerment requires a synergic and prolonged network activity, primarily by the members of Addiopizzo, such as concrete symbols of the ability to respond to and argue with inhibiting habits and cultural well-being. Addiopizzo needs to expand its presence throughout the region using the same strategy: the direct relationship with each member, producer and trader, is fundamental and at the same time very delicate. However, Addiopizzo is not interested in scaling up for the sake of scaling up (that is, since the market dictates so), but the central point is to maintain closer relationship between consumers and producers because it should be an effective way to avoid mafious infiltration; the local character of this initiative seems to be winning to allow for community resilience, for wealth creation and to prevent mafia infiltration.

The need for civil society to fight the Mafia system has increased the moral concern in society and led to the subsequent development of grassroots movements, and it is here where Addiopizzo qualifies as an alternative food movement. In the empty space that exists between the institutional policy directives and the *praxis* of institutional sovereignty, Sicilian citizens have built an alternative network (that is, Addiopizzo) that guarantees FS at local level and engage on a daily basis in political, social and market struggles; however, as we will discuss later, such pragmatism and growing are not enough for the complete transformation of the local system. Local food consumption is negotiated democratically in an open and legal arena, putting in evidence the re-interpretation of social relations and the re-distribution of power. The difficult incorporation of legal behaviour into a hegemonic market interpretation can be seen as a first result of citizen empowerment and *in fieri* process of community resilience. The alternative way of interpretation of the market

proposed by Addiopizzo can be seen as being embedded within both individual and community reflexivity; this peculiar enunciation of AFNs emerge in an ecological environment where the mafious mindset is inescapable and hegemonic. In a socio-cultural context at risk, it raises the pivotal role of AFNs and projects like Addiopizzo; such a citizen project is comprised of dissident voices, which can stimulate a new vision of the wide food dynamics. It's been said that Mafia kills those who are alone, who are not in its network; in this context, Addiopizzo was able to implement and maintain strong relationship among citizens. In a context in which the State does not seem to pursue social policies to promote the preservation and protection of social and human rights (Francescato et al. 2013, p. 83), Addiopizzo seems to partially fulfil this role by being a factor of resilience. In the Sicilian context, the desire to create change is shared among different actors in the food market; local food citizen project working in network forming alliance and compliance with producers, retailers and consumers demonstrate the ability to offer collective action frames based on the individual empowerment, as well as the ability to exist within the hegemonic illegal interpretation of the market. Addiopizzo enables citizens to act their social power: agro-food producers and retailers by subscribing to formal requirements based on values that reject racket; consumers by purchasing Addiopizzo labelled products; individuals and groups by participating further open-to-the-public activities that promote everyday politically oriented behaviour.

Beyond citizen empowerment and community resilience

We believe citizen empowerment⁵ is currently central in the Italian context, given the geo-political changes under way; in fact there has been a governance shift from the national level to the European Union (EU) one, whose consequences can be identified in critical issues at the community level governance. In addition, the neo-liberal policy that seems to be permeating the EU economic paradigm does not allow the State to maintain its historical central pivotal role in the governance. This has translated in a restructuring of the citizen role according to the market dynamics, with the political consequence of leaving the citizen alone before market operators. However, in the Southern Italy context this has a further implication. As we have seen, historically in Sicily Mafia has been preferred to

⁵ The concept of empowerment has been included recently within the agri-food studies especially in relation to Food Security (see for instance Marsden and Morley 2014; Kneafsey et al. 2013). This paper aims at adding an additional perspective alongside those just mentioned.

the State as official governing institution; the shift towards EU political structure can be read as the State's abdication to its role, acknowledging its failure as community operator in favour of the market's role. Of course whether Mafia will be fought more efficiently at the EU level is yet to be proved, especially in terms of the need to restore trust in the community power to build a community resilience in the face of illegal mindset. The role of local, alternative food networks in such a context is currently questioned; while it is not the aim of this paper to discuss such a general issue, we want to highlight that this geopolitical change has implication for FS too: if, as evidenced in the UE Common Agricultural Policy, the aim is food security, the implication is that FS is understood as the outcome of market operations, it has to be reached through market and through consumption. How is this important for our paper? We suggest that Addiopizzo, expression of local food provision and citizen engagement, seems to be echoing Carolan's argument (2013) about Food Security: we should question the paradigm under which FS is constructed, which is ideological and obeying to a quantitative logic. The turning point is moving from security *of* food (responding to the logics just mentioned) towards security *through* food (Carolan 2013), within a theoretical and empirical field, where the issue of consumer power is highly challenging (see Dixon 2002). In this sense, AFNs are the results of empowered citizens suggesting that consumption can be enacted in different ways. To take advantage of market structures doesn't mean abdicating to community; and in the same way, in the Sicilian context food security doesn't imply the abdication to legality, but as we have argued it can be understood as a means to reach social justice.

Our case-study, Addiopizzo, understood as an expression of alternative food networks, not only supports this view but it goes further, highlighting that when consumption is matched with social activism, it can be extremely powerful. In fact, according to Kjærnes (2012), if consumption is understood as an anonymous behaviour, individual consumption can be understood as cause and/or manifestation of the democracy crisis at the global level; such consumption is relevant when there is a weakness in governance and thereby provides a means to increase skills, confidence and awareness among citizens. On the contrary, the rationale behind Addiopizzo is based on non-anonymous consumption, which has community connotation and social objective; it builds the link between food consumption and individual political empowerment in terms of awareness of personal consumption behaviour and possible consequences for the local community. According to Partridge (2012) the low level of political consumption in the countries of Southern Europe can be attributed to two main factors. The first is related to the history and political

culture, and the second to the relevance of the branded products in advertisement and their availability in all supermarkets and shops. According to the author, the reasons why people decide not to subscribe to Addiopizzo are apathy, ignorance, culture, lack of *pizzo*-free shopping and the *sicilianità* (personal pride and feelings of being Sicilian), which is understood as a form of fatalism, closely linked to apathy (Partridge 2012). And still, the number of consumers is growing and Micheletti (2003) explains the phenomenon pointing out that the purchase is largely anonymous and therefore risk-free.

The psychosocial process (Dean and Bush 2007) that Addiopizzo puts in place has involved the implementation of a radical alternative to the predominant cultural understanding of economic relations. In addition, the consumer is the first to feel the effects of the *pizzo* having to pay a higher price and the awareness of this result is a further reinforcement to promote change. This seems to be echoing two positions: firstly, Goodman's (2004) about the presence of the "reflexive consumer", who has greater political awareness and is able to exercise greater agency in terms of consumption choices, information search and evaluation of the consequences. Through empowerment, citizens acquire reflexivism (critical awareness or conscientization) about their role in the market through training, communication, labels, local events, and in general all the activities carry out by Addiopizzo. And secondly Forno and Ceccarini's (2006), in defining political consumers as those who try to influence institutional practices or market using their consumption power.

Addiopizzo offers concrete tools giving citizen the possibility to slowly regaining possession of political responsibility. In particular, Addiopizzo retail channels (markets, fairs, events, shops and flagship stores) make available local agro-food products and play a role as educator and social aggregator restoring the natural and social rhythms. This local endeavour is reverberating on food security and the social justice aspect we highlighted. In fact, the Sicilian agro-food context does not meet some basic criteria related to social justice, such as freedom from oppression and access to equal opportunities. Within these political-institutional and socio-cultural regional constraints, Addiopizzo implements concrete objectives of social justice through market behaviour. To achieve the collective goal of social justice, Addiopizzo is able to solicit and maintain at the same time the individual objectives, but also political and collective goals of well-being mediating the tension between social justice and individual security.

Social is a value, a form of invisible social resilience acting in local agro-food dynamics, whose indirect effects are difficult to assess; it is not a single model defined a priori, but it provides valuable principles of justice and

fairness that take peculiar forms of human, social, cultural and economic features, based in the studied community. Social justice in Sicily, through Addiopizzo, seems to be linked to a concept that emphasizes the re-appropriation of the territory, the personal freedom and the legality, in particular the awareness of sharing legal food. Addiopizzo has sought to build a new cultural meaning of *pizzo*, sliding it from an individual to a political problem shared by the entire society and community underlying that the illegal system is not moral. As acknowledged by one of the managers, Addiopizzo is seen as a popular process of self-education aimed at liberating minds and territory from the mafious mindset and influence.

Resilience is carried out in the market, but it goes beyond it: the economic benefit of the label comes from the non-payment of *pizzo* rather than by rising prices (Superti 2008). Thus, the agreement we talked about in the introduction can be understood as a form of identification, which signals the shift from a state of illegality to the one of legality reinforcing the AFNs. Therefore, the community resilience is promoted by the members themselves and facilitated by producers training, through iterative dynamic and critical approach. Through empowerment, citizens acquire critical consciousness about their role in the market through training, communication, labels, local events, and activities within Addiopizzo; the resilience of this alternative food network is maintained through sharing individual learning in the social agora, where the interaction produces new knowledge and awareness, strengthened also by the critical reflection driven by Addiopizzo. The result is a new form of political action in the market that involves daily food practices and shares its space with the existing forms.

Addiopizzo adopts a strategy based on the market by emphasizing the responsibility of citizens in their daily consumption, where it can be recognized as the materialisation of political consumption (Leonini and Sassatelli 2008). It brings together producers and consumers through local events, where citizen train and develop legal attitude and behaviour; it creates not only physical spaces, but above all mental space and time, allowing the intangible (mentality) to be turned into the tangible (real, visible enactment of ideas). Addiopizzo promotes cooperation between members of the network: producers, retailers and consumers; in this sense, the different resources (skills and knowledge) available to members are combined together by implementing the overcoming of the individual and the achievement of the collective well-being. In a society, like the Sicilian one, that describes itself as immobile and at the mercy of fatalism, the individual becomes perhaps the actor from which to begin a journey of personal and collective development, where the "local" is good not because it is fair, but because *pizzo*-free. Consumer and producer

behaviour *per se* are not enough to guarantee community resilience: in fact, the focus of Addiopizzo is on the overall market: local products are only the mean through which Addiopizzo gives citizen the possibility to reflect and act in a different way. Democratic participation has always been present in the values of the managers; on one hand Addiopizzo was able to synchronize the efforts of consumers, retailers and producers, on the other hand developed an intense calendar of events to develop a supportive and fertile environment through education and information.

Conclusions

The aim of the paper was to problematize the extent to which FS is able to re-localize 'legal' food in the market; using the case-study of Addiopizzo, located in Southern Italy where agro-food producers, retailers and consumers are not free to fully enact their citizenship agency because of a widespread illegal structure, we have shown how AFNs can act as pivot in order to ensure food security and enact FS. This means reconsidering FS as social justice and as a legal way to conduct food market. FS is not a merely individual action and static status, but as a terminal value in terms of legality and social justice. As an urban movement, Addiopizzo is the space where civil society can re-emerge through individual and community learning, since participation and learning are strongly linked. The new interpretation frame and the involvement of individuals in engaging for the collective well-being are the basis for the development of reflexivity, or critical sense (Allen 2008, p. 160). Making available legal food to everybody is the result of an individual empowerment, through which citizen can reach the social resilience by re-building social relationships in a wider project of political and civic participation (Stolle et al. 2005).

The citizen empowerment and community resilience can be exerted within AFNs as they are interconnected paths of reflexivity and social learning within social adaptation. Within this framework, it renders how food production, consumption, and distribution fall within the broader narratives on social justice and citizenship: FS refers to the reconnection of citizens to their space and territory. Moreover, we should consider food dynamics exist within a non-hierarchical network and not in a hierarchical system. In fact, the shift from illegal to legal represents the desirable state of the resilience approach: "the concept of resilience in relation to social-ecological systems incorporates the idea of adaptation, learning and self-organization in addition to the general ability to persist disturbance" (Folke 2006). As highlighted by Francescato et al. (2013) the urban community becomes the place of interpersonal relations, in which the needs of security, belonging and

identity are satisfied. We advocate the role of urban communities as a pivotal agent to maintain positive social adaptations, where AFNs work as a socio-cultural synthesis of traditional and alternative producer–consumer ways of interaction, which are embodied in the FS value.

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