RESOURCING AN AGROECOLOGICAL URBANISM

Chiara Tornaghi (Coventry University)
Michiel Dehaene (Ghent University)

Aesop SFP
29.04.2021 & 6.05.2021

Jean Brusselmans, ‘Zonnig Brabants Landschap’, 1940
Spring series on sustainable food planning
organized by Le Notre institute and AESOP sfp group

AGROECOLOGICAL URBANISM I
challenging the status quo of sustainable food planning
the way in which an agroecological perspective is instructive to push the boundaries of sustainable food planning

Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience (CAWR), Coventry University, UK

Chiara Tornaghi
Associate Professor in Urban Food Sovereignty

Department of Architecture and Urban Planning
Ghent University, Belgium

Michiel Dehaene
Associate Professor in Urbanism

Q&A
Participants who take part in active mode define their food system, map the main elements and processes, define the main challenge that they may address and formulate an approach.
Mission of AESOP’s SFP group

Bringing together academics, policy-makers and practitioners from an international audience

Providing a forum for discussion and development of sustainable food systems.

https://aesopsfp.wordpress.com/
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RESOURCING AN AGROECOLOGICAL URBANISM
Political, Transformational and Territorial Dimensions

Edited by Chiara Tornaghi and Michiel Dehaene
Outline (lecture 1 of 2)

• Introducing ourselves and the journey
• Background on the book: the AESOP conference, UIP project
• The starting point: the food-disabling city
• How encountering agroecology shifted thinking around value, positionality, cities and planning
• Hitting the boundaries of sustainable food planning
• Embracing the challenge of pushing the boundaries: rethinking the history of urbanisation and food as an urban question
• What’s next
Introducing ourselves: Chiara

**Social scientist**, with background in politics, sociology, and planning (PhD 2005, University of Milano-Bicocca)

**Affiliation**: Associate Professor in Urban Food Sovereignty and Resilience, at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University, UK

**Engaged scholar, citizen and food grower**

Since 2016, elected chair of the AESOP sustainable food planning group.

**Main Areas of work**: urban political agroecology, agroecological urbanism, feminist agroecology, medicinal agroecology, community kitchens/social reproduction, political pedagogies, and soil care.
Introducing ourselves: Michiel

Architect - Urban Planner

Affiliation: Associate Professor in Urbanism, department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Ghent University

Main Areas of work: sub-urban renewal, (planning) history of dispersed urban development, sustainable cities and food planning
Introducing ourselves: a journey
8th international conference AESOP SFP

Aims: cross-fertilisation between the SFP and the agroecology communities.

Tracks:
- agroecological urbanism
- political processes
- resourceful land management
- agroecological practices
- post-capitalist economics
- alternative methodologies

Book: a transdisciplinary approach

Launch of the Forum for an agroecological urbanism
Background 2 - UiP project

- JPI SUGI programmer Food Water Energy Nexus
- Agroecological Farmers as Stewards of the Nexus

http://urbanisinginplace.org/
The Food-disabling city

when looking at UA as a food producing practice....we begin to see the food-disabling city
How encountering agroecology shifted thinking around values and planning

• Definitions:
  - the application of ecological principles to the study, design and management of agroecosystems that are both productive and natural resource conserving, culturally sensitive, socially just and economically viable
  - a science, movement and practice
  - political agroecology: socio-ecological practice, indigenous knowledge, equity and justice, built on soils care

• Resisting erasure
• Not an urban movement...
• Bringing agroecology to the urban... transforming our interest for SFP and UA
  • knowledge rift, epistemic rift
  • positionality
  • values shifts
Warning: junk agroecology

https://civileats.com/2021/04/20/is-agroecology-being-co-opted-by-big-ag/

https://www.tni.org/en/junk-agroecology
Hitting the boundaries of SFP

A transformative agenda for thinking urbanism and urbanisation

The global food crisis is to a large extent an urban crisis:
- Governance challenge
- Resource use
- Growing inequality
- Environmental pollution
- Feeding a growing urban population

(Wiskerke, H., ‘Urban food systems’, 2015)
Hitting the boundaries of SFP

More than half of the world population lives in cities...
The city as the solution to a global crisis?
Embracing the challenge

a transformative agenda for thinking urbanism and urbanisation

The food question is predominantly looked upon as a question to be addressed ‘in the city’ rather than, a question that requires a fundamental transformation of the city

Food as an urban question: a question central to the way cities are organized, equally central as the housing question, the mobility question, etc.
Food as an urban question?

The urban question:
- exacerbate or collective interdependence
- collective organization needed to care for the urban community
- contested and subject to disagreement

Urbanism:

‘the (always contested) ensemble of social arrangements, lifestyles, divisions of labour, cultural practices and social solidarities that materialise and shape the urban environment through processes of urbanisation. ... the urban context is more than just a physical space, but always the manifestation of socionatural, sociocultural and socioeconomic processes and ideas that the discipline of urban planning and design ‘serve’.’ (Tornaghi & Dehaene, p. 5)
How have we come to experience food as a **new** matter of concern in urbanism?

Food can be understood within the history of urbanization as a **question of urban political ecology** in the literal sense of the word, that is, as part of the political negotiation of those aspects of life that are (and those that are not) made into a collective matter of concern, worthy of urban political attention.
Embracing the challenge

*a transformative agenda for thinking urbanism and urbanisation*

Thinking the right to the city and the right to the rural together (Mark Tilzey, chapter 10)

Think both food production and urbanization as part of the same equation: i.e. the cultivation of nature

Think farmers as part of the urban constituency
Embracing the challenge

a transformative agenda for thinking urbanism and urbanisation

Urbanisation unbounded: resourcing the rural urban continuum beyond the rural urban divide
THE CITY AS AN EGG

boiled

fried

scrambled

ANCIENT

17-19 CENT.

MODERN

Cedric Price, 1982
R. Park, E. Burgess, The City, 1925

J.H. von Thünen, Der isolirte Staat in Beziehung auf Landwirthschaft un Nationalökonomie, 1826
Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*, 1899
Abridged edition by Colin Ward 1974
B. — LE VILLAGE DE GOHISSART, À L’OUEST DE LODELINSART,
ENTRE FLEURUS ET CHARLEROI.
Multitude de maisons ouvrières avec leurs jardins et leurs petits champs.
Embracing the challenge

a transformative agenda for thinking urbanism and urbanisation

Urbanisation unbounded: resourcing the rural urban continuum beyond the rural urban divide

beyond the selective uptake of urban questions: thinking the right to grow as an integral part of the right to the city
The progressive removal of food from the urban agenda
The progressive removal of food from the urban agenda

Design of the municipal slaughterhouse of Ghent by city architect L. Roelandt ca. 1850.
The progressive removal of food from the urban agenda

Routes for animals into the city before and after the construction of the slaughterhouse

Embracing the challenge

a transformative agenda for thinking urbanism and urbanisation

Urbanisation unbounded: resourcing the rural urban continuum beyond the rural urban divide

beyond the selective uptake of urban questions: thinking the right to grow as an integral part of the right to the city

‘A field formerly called planning’: beyond the ethnocentric, antropocentric, technocentric boundaries of planning
For many years, urban plans have labelled periurban lands around cities as ‘awaiting development’ and hatched them as blank space, disregarding the great diversity of rural infrastructures and landscapes that distinguish one periurban area from the other. Urbanization proceeds regardless of these diversities and thus has had a detrimental impact on many peri urban farms and rural heritage sites, particularly in European urban regions.

Ilieva, R., Urban Food Planning. Seeds for Transition in the Global North, 2016, 80
How agroecology pushes the boundaries

....from technical to value-oriented (resourcefulness, equity, socio-cultural justice etc.)

Introduction. Embracing political agroecology, transforming sustainable food planning
CHIARA TORNAGHI AND MICHELI DEHAENE

1 Food as an urban question, and the foundations of a reproductive, agroecological, urbanism
C.M. DEH-TOR

2. Sharing the harvest: Transformative artful and activist methodologies for urban agroecology
E. VON DER HAIDE, A. M. ORRÚ, B. VAN DYCK, D. SOLOMON, M. D. UJUAJE, D. WOODS, S. HALDER, R. GREY

3 Commons and communing for a just agroecological transition: how to decolonize and decommodify our food systems
TOMASO FERRANDO, PRISCILLA CLAEYS, DAGMAR DIESNER, JOSE-LUIS VIVERO-POL AND DEIREDRE WOODS

4 Urban agrarian alliance building in peri-urban Rome: The pivotal role of land access in food system reconfiguration
LUCA COLOMBO, STEFANO GRANDO AND GIACOMO LEPRI

5 Urban agroforestry as a strategy for aligning agroecology with resilience planning initiatives
SARAH LOVELL AND JOHN TAYLOR

6 Soils, Industrialised Cities, and Contaminants: Challenges for an Agroecological Urbanism
SALVATORE ENGEL DI MAURO

7 The potential of bio-intensive market gardening models for a transformative urban agriculture: Adapting SPIN Farming to Brussels
NOÉMIE MAUGHAN, NATALIE PIPART, BARBARA VAN DYCK AND MARJOLEINE VISSE

8 The transformative potential of agroecological farmers: an analysis of participatory food system strategies in Nicaragua and England
ELISE WACH AND SANTIAGO RIPOLL

9 Conjugating Social and Solidarity Economies in Chiapas, Mexico: Redesigning food systems for economic, social and ecological virtuous circles
EMILIO TRAVIESO

10 Peasant Counter-Hegemony towards post-capitalist food sovereignty: Facing Rural and Urban Precarity
MARK TILZEEY

Conclusions
CHIARA TORNAGHI AND MICHELI DEHAENE