Smallholder New Entrants: Italy’s Organic Sector and the Changing face of Agriculture

Melanie Rideout
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MELANIE RIDEOUT

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Abstract: The paper studies 7 new entrant smallholders on the Italian agricultural sector to begin to understand how such a grassroots movement may challenge the status-quo vis-à-vis the Italian Food-system. Additionally, the study conducts a public questionnaire survey in an attempt to gauge attitudes toward a changing food-system in Italy. Using the Critical Theory to highlight the trend of critical-consumer to critical-producer, and transition movement theory to assess the real regime-change ability of such movements, this paper finds new entrant smallholders in Italy are playing a potentially significant role in moving the sector into more sustainable territory. Current certified organic agriculture is increasingly dominated by larger farms, and excludes new entrant smallholders, this is to the detriment of sustainable agriculture goals, by identifying the barriers to such stakeholders, in addition to recognising their strengths, namely the commitment to triple bottom line sustainability, new entrant smallholders have a significant role to play in making organic agriculture truly a mechanism by which truly sustainable agriculture can be achieved.

Key Words
Sustainable Agriculture, Organic Agricultural Food Policy, Small-scale Agriculture, Social-Ecological Resilience, Transition, Sustainability

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Summary: This paper looks at the contribution of Smallholder New entrants within Civic Agriculture and Alternative-food Networks in regard to the Italian Food Movement. Using different methods, the study explores how smallholder new entrants are contributing toward the change in status-quo regarding Italy’s food system, in addition to highlighting the questionable true sustainability of certified organic agriculture. The paper highlights the changing attitude in regard to food consumption and production, and focuses on the ability for the consumer to become a producer, and in effect reunite the food, farm and community.

The study offers an entry point into understanding food movements in Italy, Europe and around the globe; in addition to analysing the true ability of these movements to contribute toward current paradigm transition to greater sustainability

Key Words
Sustainable Agriculture, Organic Agricultural Food Policy, Small-scale Agriculture, Social-Ecological Resilience, Sustainable Development, Transition, Sustainability

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<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Agricultural Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>GAS</td>
<td>Gruppo Acquisto Solidaridad</td>
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<td>NE</td>
<td>New Entrant</td>
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<td>PAR</td>
<td>Participatory Action Research</td>
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<td>QS</td>
<td>Questionnaire survey</td>
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1. Introduction

Sustainable development refers to the “triple bottom line” (Elkington 1994), addressing economic, social and environmental issues, with equal importance. Given the current state of environmental destruction observed globally, sustainable development is an increasingly paramount necessity for the continuation and development of human society. As global indicators stipulate, it is no longer possible to continue our current trajectory (Foley et al. 2011; Rockström et al., 2009). Food production is arguably the biggest sustainability challenge we currently face; its multifaceted approach presents a plethora of opportunities for investigation. The food system presents a paradox: we cannot do without food, yet, given the manner in which we currently produce it, we are significantly lowering our ability to maintain a sustained and liveable planet for all.

As the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy stated back in 2009 “Sustainable farming systems can reduce agriculture’s GHG emissions and be a primary vehicle in stabilising and reversing climate change, whilst continuing to provide food, feed, fibre and energy in a changing climate” (J. K. 2009, December; p. 1). However, to achieve this, systemic and systematic change is needed to shift away from a heavily fossil-fuel dependent and intensive agricultural sector, toward one which requires a low-input of resources whilst maintaining resilience (ibid.) The food production sector contributes hugely to annual greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), believed to be around 13.5% of global emissions (IAASTD 2009), mostly due to the production of nitrous oxides from fertilisers, but also from methane production, transportation, amongst other factors (J. K. 2009). Agriculture is one of the biggest drivers of deforestation, it is hugely culpable for the eutrophication and nitrification of water bodies; it is responsible for widespread soil erosion, land degradation; localised drought, and most worryingly of all, perhaps, it currently largely depends on vastly diminishing finite resources (Foley et al., 2011; Rockström et al., 2009). It seems that if we are to achieve sustainable development, and allow for the creation of a liveable planet, we must seriously reconsider our relationship to food production, consumption and disposal, and seek a strong sustainability solution (UNDP 2011).

This paper agrees with the view of Goodman and DuPuis (2002) and Brunori et al. (2011). Goodman and DuPuis (2002, p. 18) assert that “the political possibilities of consumption (are) less than the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism but more than merely a niche marketing opportunity” meaning that despite acknowledging the limitations for ‘green consumerism’ or ‘critical-consumerism’ to create real systemic change, in addition to the limitations of such approaches going beyond their neo-liberal framing and being used as another marketing technique, the significance of the part they can play cannot be merely dismissed. There currently exists a space in which critical consumers can influence and direct policy, to a certain extent through purchasing power, lobbying and so forth. But the real interest lies in the critical-consumers’ ability to go beyond ‘green consumerist’ boundaries, to a place where they are able to become critical-consumer-producers, or co-producers, by partaking in civically engaged activities which act as instigating drivers of system change. Capacity for consumers to become critical, and then become actively engaged in new forms of civic society, may see new boundaries set between consumption and production, citizenship and consumption, goods and services, the private and public sectors; and, eventually, man and environment (Brunori et al. 2011; p 3).
The most fundamental debate within the literature of Sustainable Development concerns the discussion between adopting weak or strong sustainability; this regards policymaking (Pelenc et al. 2015; Neumayer, E. 2003.) As Pelenc et al. 2015 assert, “weak sustainability postulates the full substitutability of natural capital, whereas the strong conception demonstrates that this substitutability should be severely limited due to the existence of critical elements that natural capital provides for human existence and well-being” (p.1). In other words, strong sustainability recognises the restrictions and boundaries to natural limits, resources and critical zones, and their direct impact on human wellbeing. On the other hand, weak sustainability looks toward substituting natural capital instead of curbing or curtailing certain resource consuming activities, which may or may not be supportable in the long-term. Neumayer (2003) elucidates further, explaining that such a perspective posits an ideology, which aims to maximise monetary compensation for environmental degradations. Where advocates of strong sustainability demonstrate that most natural capital is irreversibly depletable and therefore cannot be viewed as a mere resource stock (p.1), its worth is beyond monetary quantification: Essentially, strong sustainability posits that the monetary or economic pillar should not dominate the other two pillars, Environment and Societal wellbeing¹, which comprise the triad, or ‘triple bottom line’ of sustainable development (Elkington 1994). Organic agriculture is not excluded from the weak-strong sustainability debate; and it is even possible to say that it finds itself in a polarised position. It is an approach advocated by both weak and strong sustainability supporters and policymakers, and it is a position that will be briefly explored within this study to conclude that in order to benefit from organic agriculture as a viable mechanism to achieve sustainable agricultural practice, strong sustainability must dominate policy. It must be noted that the weak-strong sustainability debate is vocabulary used within the field of economics, in this study it is used purely as semantic differentiation between the two forms, whose difference is found in their opposing economic approaches i.e. weak-organic agriculture seeks a green-consumerist, market-based method to achieving sustainable agriculture; whereas strong-organic agriculture is more genuine to the ‘triple bottom line’ objective of sustainable development.

Organic agriculture alone is not in a position to generate radical change; it does however offer a model that brings with it a way to rethink, reassess and re-establish society’s relationship to the food system. Fundamentally, Organic Agriculture goes beyond agricultural production technique, to incorporate a heavily philosophical belief regarding economic, social and environmental wellbeing, which finds itself more suitably placed within the school of strong sustainability. According to many, organic agriculture, and more sustainable practice, is about reconnecting “food, farm and community” in a way which does not deplete our natural, social and human capital. There are many forms of civic engagement practicing this form of organic agriculture and the first part of this study will consider this claim further². On the other hand, when looking at the widespread, market-driven growth of the organic sector it is possible to infer that its promotion is a form of weak or conventional sustainability (see Allen and Kovach, 2000). As the emphasis lays more with economic objectives, and looks at substituting ‘mainstream’ for ‘organic’ agriculture, without addressing the inequality issues within the food system that are socially unsustainable or acknowledging the finiteness of

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¹ This study will not be focusing on the debate or discussion between adopting strong or weak sustainability, it is used instead to allow for a semantic differentiation toward the two approaches of organic agriculture: one which places it within the certified-market, and the other which sees organic agriculture and sustainable agriculture at the heart of civic engagement and grassroots participation aiming at localising and democratising the food system in Italy.

² When referring to this form of organic agriculture, the prefix ‘strong’ will be added in order to reduce any form of semantic confusion, similarly ‘weak’ will be the prefix used when discussing the opposite form of organic agriculture.
natural capital. It can be said that Weak-Organic agriculture is being promoted through specific policy instruments, financial incentives and so forth, as they have a greater focus promoting the economic incentives of organic agriculture. The fact that much of the “in-practice” policies regarding organic agriculture are more focused on reducing certain types of pesticides and fertilisers (as opposed to all), in addition to not having necessarily stringent social or rural economic benefits outlined as a requirement, shows its lack of commitment toward strong sustainability, and lack of equal weighting to the three pillars of sustainable development. The following sections of the study will elucidate further on this assertion.

This paper will study and analyse the phenomenon of new [smallholder] entrants into the Italian agriculture sector, whilst also acknowledging the simultaneous rise of large agribusiness participating in the organic sector. This form of transformational change exhibited by the new entrant and related civic agriculture - from consumer, to critical consumer, to producer - serves as a critical point in investigating the attempts to recreate the food-system in Italy. Although this is not necessarily widespread, it is gaining traction and this study aims to look at how the ‘insurgency’ of critical consumers, and, effectively, critical producers, are reimagining a new form of civic engagement and society formation based on grassroots and public-led change. This paper will look at the extent such a movement has on giving rising to a stronger form of agricultural sustainability, despite certain policies aimed at expanding market-based solutions for more sustainable agriculture, e.g. certified organic agriculture. Specifically, this paper will look at smallholder farmers in Italy - whether formally certified organic or not - and through the prism of semi-structured interviews, their motivations, contributions and perspectives regarding barriers and issues with the organic sector in Italy will be explored. It is hoped that the relationship of smallholders to a sector and movement, which requires increased momentum to achieve more sustainable agriculture, will be better understood. Looking at the market for organic agriculture in Italy, despite some new entrants and smallholder farmers increasingly seeking certification, it is largely dominated by larger farms and agribusiness. These are believed to have less of a commitment to strong sustainability practice, with particular emphasis on the lack of vigorous policies pertaining to environmental protection or the promotion of social wellbeing.

The polarised situation - smallholders on one side and larger farming businesses the other - presents an interesting conflict and challenge for Italian agricultural policy [AP]. On one side, AP must try to understand, adapt to better support, integrate and cater for this new farmer within the formal organic sector- whose internal demographic and motivations are varied. On the other side of the spectrum, AP must be sufficiently robust to regulate larger agribusiness and producers, to maintain the integrity of Strong-Organic Agriculture, and ensure the overall goal of sustainable agriculture is purported and continuously improved with ever more ambitious objectives. Understanding the motivations, and therefore the adequate policies and operational/support mechanisms needed is vital to ensure a synergy between the two sectors, a synergy which is required to achieve a more sustainable agricultural sector. Whilst this paper will touch upon large agribusiness, and relatable AP, the main focus is on understanding and analysing the phenomenon of the new entrant smallholder, their motivations and impact on the Italian food system.

In order to better understand new entrants and their contributions toward the Italian food-system, 7 semi-structured interviews were conducted, providing seven varied case studies, shedding some light on the new entrant, the perceived barriers and issues with the certified organic sector to gain an understanding as to the extent of the impact these farms have on
wider society. Some argue that the organic sector, as it stands, requires reformation so as to be more accessible to smallholders, whilst others argue that formal organic agriculture is pseudo-sustainability at its worst. The hope of this paper is two-fold, short and long term i) [short term] to suggest how the organic sector could become more supportive of smallholders within the formal organic sector, ii) [long term] to suggest how it can become more robust and reflective of stronger sustainability ambitions, through the advancement of civic engagement and grassroots-led community-initiatives aimed at reimagining the entire food-system: from production to consumption. This paper departs from the arguments questioning the difference between organic and nonorganic, big and small farms; and instead, uses as a premise and foundation for further discussion, the belief that smallscale agriculture is better than big; green practice is better than not green; and the proposition that within the formalised organic market the participation of smallholders should be encouraged and supported, and in doing so the formalised organic market can move from its current ‘weak’ state of sustainability to ‘stronger’ or more robust sustainability.

This paper hopes to contribute to an understanding of the changing food system in Italy - one that is mirrored across much of the world with international movements such as MFS, Los Campesinos, Los Indignados, amongst others. Whilst the prism of observation and focus in this study is on the ‘new entrant phenomenon into the smallholding sector of Italy’ - within the organic and sustainable agriculture sector - a questionnaire survey [QS] and poll are used to frame and better understand the wider context of such a paradigm shift. The wider public sentiment regarding their relationship to food, the food system, and so forth is used to garner evidence of a changing environment and attitude, of an albeit small sample, regarding changing demands of what an equitable food system should be.
1.1 Research Aims
This study has two research aims, based around the following study hypothesis:

“There is a growing trend of smallholder new entrants into the Italian agricultural sector. Smallholders, disenfranchised for many reasons regarding the formalised organic (certified) sector, are not necessarily pursuing avenues of formal organic certification. This may be for a variety of reasons and barriers – perceived and otherwise - in addition to difficulties faced accessing the market. Currently, larger farms and agribusiness largely dominate the certified organic sector, it is argued that these do not necessarily embody and uphold the dimensions of organic agriculture philosophy, and in doing so do not fully commit to the ethos of triple bottom line sustainability. There is a growing, grassroots movement in Italy calling for - and actively participating in - a systemic change to the way in which food is produced and consumed. Many are reimaging Italy’s food-system through engagement in Alternative Food Networks and Civic Agriculture”

1. To prove and critically analyse the research hypothesis
2. To understand who these new entrant smallholders are, and the extent of their contribution toward creating more sustainable communities and agriculture.

1.2 Research Questions
The following research questions were proposed to guide the research:

Who are these new entrants, what motivates them? What are the new entrants’ perceived barriers/ issues with the current organic sector?

To what extent do new entrants contribute toward Civic Agriculture or transformational change in the Italian Food System? How can this more civic-focused agriculture facilitate a path to more robust organic agriculture?

1.3 Contribution of the Thesis
This study contributes to several debates. Specifically, this study looks at the relationship between civic engagement and reimaging the food system, this will be assessed in terms of i) understanding the motivation and impact of new entrants on reimaging the food system ii) gauging a public sample regarding attitudes toward the food sector iii) Assessing the suitability of current policy in making advances to support such ventures.

The second debate refers to how smallholders can be better integrated into the formalised organic sector in order to improve the sectors integrity toward more robust (stronger) sustainability; this will be assessed in terms of i) semi structured interviews to gain an insight into perceived barriers and smallholder perspective ii) understanding the new entrant contribution toward ‘triple bottom line’ sustainability ethos

These debates both contribute and feed into the larger global debate regarding the food system, and more specifically what sustainable agriculture and sustainability is and what it should be aiming to become, not only in terms of productive sustainability, but also in terms of reintegrating food, farm, the community and wider economy. The study will use the concept of triangulation so as to build a rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed understanding of the position of organic agriculture within the larger frame of creating more sustainable communities and development. In particular, it will look at the relation between
smaller-farms, their communities and the organic sector, at times using the organic agriculture framework of policy to determine how these relations can be strengthened and to identify how in doing so this would contribute toward the goal of achieving sustainable agriculture, and sustainable development.

The discussion will be viewed through the lenses of two distinct conceptual frameworks, which are found within the Critical Theorist school: Civic Agriculture, Responsible (social) Innovation and Transition Movement theory.

1.4 Delimitation of the Scope of the Study

Despite the interesting questions, debates, and contradictions, which arise from the matter regarding sustainable agriculture, it must be noted that they are not the main focus of this study. Alternatively, this paper turns its attention on the current state of affairs, in which smallholder farmers are increasingly excluded from the organic sector. This is a global trend, however the focus will be on a handful of smallholders in Italy, with the aim of understanding their potential contribution toward more sustainable agriculture, civic agriculture and stronger communities, and in acknowledging their exclusion from the formal organic sector, how this may damage the goal of true, strong sustainability. The handful of those interviewed does not represent the full picture of smallholders in Italy; neither does it fully give a representative depiction of the organic sector in Italy and its smallholders, yet it will provide enough insight to allow for analysis and various conclusions to be drawn.

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2. Understanding the Context

Italy presents an interesting case study, and demonstrates a polarised political and social environment. Italy is both an EU leader in the Formal-Organic market, whilst also being one of the pioneering countries regarding innovative civic, grassroots movements vis-à-vis food production, consumption and alternate economic organization. As Grassini (2014) asserts, the socioeconomic conditions in Italy are ideal for such a circumstance to arise. Across European countries, driven by a mixture of ideology, and necessity resulting from the financial crisis, much focus has been laid on new civic economies – such as social and solidarity economies, community currencies; The Degrowth and Transition movements have also gained traction as alternative socioeconomic models for communities, through their encouragement of active citizen participation reimagining the status-quo toward more equitable living (Seyfang 2009; p 5).

These decentralized movements and ideas have even been endorsed by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) in 'social and solidarity economies' (UNRISD 2012); it has been found that, rather than collaborating with national or regional governments, these movements approach local authorities (Brunori, 2012; p.2) as the focus is more on everyday concrete governance issues, which often have far-reaching impact. For instance, research carried out by Gill Seyfang and Noel Longhurst, studied twelve community currency initiatives in Europe and found that such schemes can 'promote sustainable development by localising it, building social capital, and valuing work that is marginalised in conventional labour markets, challenging the growth-based monetary system' (Seyfang and Longhurst 2013: 1). Alternative currencies are just one of the many examples of this spreading phenomenon, termed Alternative provisioning networks. Communities within these alternative provisioning networks, are exchanging globalized provisioning systems - believed to be environmentally, socially and financially unsustainable - for an alternative currency, with stronger moral fibre (Sage 2011). Allen and Kovach (2000) believe that market mechanisms alone cannot generate fundamental change, therefore it is necessary to look not solely at strengthening the organic market, but understand and envisage how the organics market could contribute to a broader movement leading to collective action on the food system’s unsustainable aspects. The organic market may strengthen civil society through the provision of space and resources for social movement activity, and bring together community under joint rural, community-economic and social activities.

The Case of Italy

Italy has taken advantage of its favourable geographic positioning (climate and access to markets), boasting an organic market valued at 1.45 billion Euros, with over a million hectares dedicated to organic cultivation (ENOAS & EU, 2005, EUROSTAT, 2013). By accounting for over 12% of the total organic cultivation in the EU, Italy may be considered one of the leading countries in the EU’s organic farming sector (see Table 1 FAO Economic and Social Development Department, 2001; ENOAS & EU, 2005). Domestic production varies widely across Italy, but it mainly consists of: grains, olive tree, fruits (including shell fruit), vineyards, citrus fruit, and vegetables (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 2016; p.2). Whilst the production side is well established, the organic processing sector is not so developed, there exists an opportunity for exploration, according to many sources (Ibid.; p. 2).
Although organic farming still only constitutes an incredibly small percentage of total Italian agricultural output (EU Agricultural Market Brief 2014) it is growing quickly. Based on data collated by SINAB (SINAB, 2013) from 2013, there were over 52,000 organic operators in Italy (p.1); 40,000+ producers, 6000 *circa* processors, with around 5000 engaged in both production and processing (ibid). Comparing this with previous years’ data, there appears to be an increase of 5.4% of all certified operators. This renders the organic sector the fastest growing agricultural sector in Italy, and in fact when looking at international growth statistics, the organic sector is one of the fastest growing agricultural sectors globally (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 2016; p. 1)

Overall Italy has 1.3 million hectares of fully converted, or under conversion organic agricultural land, this is an increase of 12.8% compared to 2012 (SINAB 2013), the highest concentration of this is within the regions of Calabria and Sicily.

Organic sector policy support in Italy is based on all three regional (EU) national, and local policy instruments. The EU Rural development plan, gave rise to the NSP (National Strategy Plan) (in Italian: Piano strategico nazionale per lo sviluppo rurale) for rural development. In fact, the majority of organic farms are found in the marginal and rural areas of Italy (Cardone, & Pugliese, 2014). The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Policies created the MiPAAE in 2005 [Piano d’Azione Nazionale per l’agricoltura Biologica e i prodotti biologici] with the objective of developing the organic produce sector (Cardone, & Pugliese, 2014). The NSP targets global marketing, support and development of organic production and related supply chains, enhanced consumer information, and improved sustainable farming practices and services. In addition to this, special financing for research on organic agriculture has been created to further aid development and to meet the national and international growing demand for organic products (Programmi per la ricerca in agricoltura biologica)(Cardone, & Pugliese, 2014) i
Interestingly, Italy does not have any legal requirements regarding sustainability. Incentives, in the form of financing, are offered to encourage businesses and farmers to adhere to environmental standards and engage in sustainable farming practices, these are mostly done in the form of direct payments (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 2013). Relatively high financial support for organic producers has played an important role in the sector’s rapid development and although not all certified land has received support according to EC Reg. 2078/92, the support paid maintains to be one of the major reasons behind the extensive and developed organic sector in Italy (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 2013; Cardone, & Pugliese, 2014). During the past ten years Italy, has shown a heightened awareness in rural development issues; in many cases, however, agricultural biodiversity and sustainability is still seen as a side issue of agricultural and production policies. There are only a few Italian retailers, COOP being the leader in this field, that have started focusing on sustainability, although consumer awareness of organic agriculture is still low and their understanding, reportedly, limited. As the market gains value, competition increases, inevitably the number of smallholdings decreases whilst the number of organic farms increases. The latest general agriculture census by UAA, found that the average size of an organic farm is 18 hectares, compared with 7.9 hectares of the average UAA of all farms surveyed (EU and Italian Agricultural Ministry, 2012).

2.1 Organic consumption: An Italian Consumer

According to a public consultation conducted by the European Commission in 2013, Italian and European consumers have faith in organic products (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 2016; p. 1) although, this is not quantified. Further, the report found that consumers desire more stringent EU production and certification rules. Interestingly, the consultation found that 83% of consumers buying organic produce, did so out of environmental concern, (ibid). Of those already purchasing organically, 78% signposted willingness to pay a premium for these organic products, the most popular being: fresh fruit, jams, honey, eggs, olive oil, vegetables, and yogurt.

In Italy, the domestic demand for organic produce grows year on year; data from USDA shows these growth figures at +6.52%, with imports being increasingly used, as the domestic produce sold to supermarkets does not currently satisfy the demand. The products whose domestic demand is not met includes: onions, carrots, potatoes, peppers, cucumbers, aubergines, lettuce; kiwis, apples, pears and melon), in addition to tropical fruits.
Currently, most of the organic food sold in Italy is purchased in supermarkets, followed by specialised shops, and at local farms (USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 2016; p. 3) It is this increase of availability of organic products in supermarkets that has been attributed for driving forward recent market growth. Whilst this may be a factor, distribution channels outside of supermarkets are being explored as it was found that Italian consumers maintain preference of traditional shops or the direct sale from a local farmer over a supermarket, as these forms of food-purchasing are perceived to be a more natural and safe production system.

Figure 2. Map Showing Land Use in Italy, 2015

(USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, 2016; p. 5)
The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land." (Leopold, A., 1970.)

The organic food sector is no longer confined to the echelons of the very privileged, neither is it predominantly considered a strange and ‘unconventional’ way of food production. Rather, organic food constitutes part of the rudimental building blocks which aim to recreate our social, environmental and economic (rural) systems. At least this is the essential belief of the organic food movement, termed for the sake of this paper as strong or robust organic agriculture. The Organic pioneers and their works: Masanobu Fukuoka’s ‘One-Straw revolution’ (1975 originally); Louis Bromfield’s ‘The Green Bay tree’; Sir Albert Howard’s ‘An Agricultural Testament’ (1943) and Lady Eve Balfour’s ‘The Living Soil’ give an insight into a movement whose history and roots span almost 100 years. These pioneers established organic principles, and today their ideas continue to frame strong organic agriculture and its ideology. Strong-Organic Agriculture is not solely about production with the sole aim of maintaining healthy and fertile soils, as Masanobu Fukuoka (1992; p. 119) puts it:

“The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings. The ultimate goal is a healthy and connected humanity, with equitable and sustainable food” [Italics added]

Reverting to a point introduced earlier, apropos weak and strong organic agriculture, despite many assimilating organic agriculture with sustainable agriculture, much can be said for the lack of social and economic sustainability in the formalised-mainstream organic sector. Conversely, weak (or conventional) organic agriculture refers to, in part, as Allen & Kovach (2000) point out, the lack of accountability and assurance that such a practice has a positive benefit on local and rural economies. This - the authors argue - partnered with the lack of foresight and accountability regarding positive impact on societal health, communitarian values, reducing inequality and improving access to nutritious alimentation - has led many to criticise organic agriculture as not necessarily constituting sustainable agriculture. However, the fundamental principles and philosophy of strong organic agriculture stands in opposition to this view, as demonstrated by the organic pioneers, who heavily influence IFOAM, and other agencies whose mandate is to spread and monitor organic agriculture.

Strong-organic agriculture is an ecological production management system that promotes and enhances biodiversity, biological cycles, and soil biological activity; it is based on the minimal use of off-farm inputs and on the management practices that restore, maintain or enhance ecological harmony. Further, IFOAM (the UNFAO branch promoting and researching Organic Agriculture) defines Organic Agriculture according to the following four principles (IFOAM Organics International, (n.d.) p 1-3):

1. **Principles of Health**: Organic Agriculture should sustain and enhance the health of soil, plant, animal, human and planet as one and indivisible. More specifically, organic agriculture, in every aspect, from farming, processing, distribution, or consumption, must focus on the sustenance and enhancement of the health of ecosystems and organisms throughout the chain: from soil to humans.

2. **Principles of Ecology**: Organic Agriculture should be based on living ecological systems and cycles, work with them, emulate them and help sustain them.
3. **Principles of Fairness**: Organic Agriculture should build on relationships that ensure fairness with regard to the common environment and life opportunities. The principle stresses that the relationships formed at all levels of the organic agriculture chain, from farmers, workers, processors, distributors, traders and consumers must be conducted with fairness at all levels and to all parties. Organic agriculture should provide everyone involved with a good quality of life, and contribute to food sovereignty and reduction of poverty.

4. **Principles of Care**: Organic Agriculture should be managed in a precautionary and responsible manner to protect the health and well-being of current and future generations and the environment.

(IFOAM Organics International, (n.d.) p 1-3)

### 2.1.1 Organic Agriculture in Large Scale Practice: Italy and the EU

Organic agriculture as a formalised practice is growing rapidly in the EU. Over the past 5 years, growth of land converted to organic agriculture has increased on average 500,000 hectares per year (DG Agriculture and Rural Development, 2013). Despite having a significant yearly increase, the whole organic area represents only 5.4% of total EU agricultural land (EU European Union Markets in Brief, July 2014). Alongside growing consumer demand for better quality food, and a growing governmental and public consciousness seeking more sustainable agriculture, organic agriculture has been identified as a tool for addressing many of the pressing issues. Statistics on organic farming show that aside from gaining more holdings, the organic sector seems to be attracting an increasing number of working units and producers, a positive economic element. However, organic agriculture hasn't necessarily been shown to make an overall larger contribution toward achieving more sustainable agricultural practice. It is clear that support and growth in organic agriculture is increasingly more supported by government (national and regional) policy, in addition to a growing enlightenment by consumers demanding more autonomous and less damaging food produce. The extent of the commitment to true sustainability is however, questionable. The proceeding section titled ‘what is sustainable agriculture?’ clarifies the conceptual meaning of this term used for this study.

**The CAP: Macro policy**

Created in 1956, The Common Agricultural Policy [CAP] is the EU regional policy regarding agricultural practice; it is also the largest EU policy, taking between 60-70% of the EU budget. It is considered by authors such as Segrè, A and M. Vittuari, (2009), to be the policy that ‘made’ Europe, it was part of the ‘triple helix’ post WWII plan: Marshall (economic), Monnet (social) and Monsholt Plan (agricultural). Incentives were given to larger farms, which encouraged a move away from small-scale farming, and increased financing and support to landowners with the purpose of extending agricultural capacity. The policy dictates and implements the agricultural subsidy and financial programmes EU wide, in addition to providing guidance and best practice principals. According to Cardone & Pugliese, (2014) it is also largely attributed for the recent growth in the organic sector given the large financial subsidies and incentives.

The CAP is divided in two pillars of functionality and purpose: Production Support (sectorial approach, and market based) and Rural Development (territorial approach). This covers everything from food safety standards, market mechanisms, labour, productivity, to the expectation of farmers to go beyond just processing food and fibre. Recent strengthening of CAP modulation has seen a shift in priorities, with more money moving toward the Rural
Development pillar (Segrè, A and M. Vittuari, 2009). The CAP, under the Rural Development pillar, amongst many other functions, guides practice and guidelines for farmers to generate services i.e. Biodiversity protection, energy production, tourism services and so forth with subsidies provided and permitted at this level due to their positive ‘social’ externalities. The rural development pillar of the CAP obliges EU farmers to diversify and extend the positive externalities of their activity, and increasingly so invests in greening the CAP. The CAP operates in a rather complicated way, however its main role is to support production and to ensure continued ability to produce. While the single payment supports production, it is strewn with cross compliance mechanisms linked to the respect of environment: food safety, animal and plant health and animal welfare. Despite the positives of such a system, the CAP often comes under heavy criticism for its overcomplicated and heavily bureaucratic nature.

Since 2007, the EU strategic approach toward rural development and the CAP implementation has been increasingly decentralised, in the hope of improving management, implementation and adoption of policies in each of the EU member states. According to Segrè, A and M. Vittuari, (2009) decisions were initially made with a top down approach, initiating in Brussels, with states later having to adopt and take on these choices. This ‘bottom-up’ approach, is demonstrated by the 2007 – 2013 CAP reform, principally through i) Community strategic guidelines defining EU priorities of each of the axes ii) National strategy plans translating EU priorities into strategies in light of national specificities iii) National or regional programmes of measures on the basis of needs assessments and the national strategies iv) Implementation of programmes: monitoring and on-going evaluation. The reforms reflect the increasing pressure to ensure more sustainable agricultural practice. The changes were conducted in order to move from product to producer support, and with the aim to pursue a more land based approach (European Union Agricultural Policy Perspectives Brief, 2013, p. 3). The three main challenges observed prior to the reform and are now included in the policy, were: Economic, which included food security, globalization, production cost increases, declining productivity rate (European Union Agricultural Policy Perspectives Brief, 2013, p. 3); Environmental, regarding resource efficiency, soil and water quality, biodiversity loss etc.; and finally, Territorial challenges, specifically referring to the demographic shift and depopulation of rural areas and the consequential economic and social developments.

Resulting were three long-term CAP objectives:
1. Viable food production
2. Sustainable management of natural resources and climate action

Simply put, it was agreed by the EU that new policy instruments were to be mobilised in order to achieve the vision of: ‘attain[ing] higher levels of production of safe and quality food, while preserving the natural resources that agricultural productivity depends upon” (European Union Agricultural Policy Perspectives Brief, 2013, p. 3) The current EU strategy for fulfilling this is to create a competitive and viable agricultural sector “that operates within a properly functioning supply chain and which contributes to the maintenance of a thriving rural economy” (Ibid). Major changes to the framework include the ‘greening’ element, which has been added to the first pillar – it serves as financial remuneration for environmental protection measures adopted by farmers despite their absent market value. (European Commission -
Aside from the greening payments, many other changes have been made to CAP. Those of interest for this study regards the small farm payment scheme, young farmer grants and top-ups [to decrease the demographic age average], and compulsory greening. Each holding will now receive a payment per hectare for adhering to the following agricultural practices: maintain permanent grasslands, crop diversification (at least two crop varieties must be cultivated in arable land exceeding 10 hectares and at least 3 crops in land 30 hectares. The main crop may cover at most 75% of arable land, and the two main crops at most 95% of the arable area) (European Commission - PRESS RELEASES, 2013). Finally, farms larger than 15ha must have an ‘ecological focus area’ covering at least 5% of arable land. Under the recent CAP reform, 30% of direct payments will be linked to European farmers’ compliance with sustainable agricultural practices which are beneficial to soil quality, biodiversity and the environment in general, such as crop diversification, the maintenance of permanent grassland or the preservation of ecological areas on farms. These CAP reforms have further propelled organic agriculture, and sustainable practice, to the forefront of the agriculture agenda; however, Sustainable agricultural practice within the EU is still poor, organic agriculture still only makes up 5.91% of UAA in the EU (EUROSTAT 2015) and levels of emissions from nitrogen oxides and ammonia are still extreme high (see Appendix 10.4) despite seeing reductions since 1990.

CAP and Organic Agriculture

EEC regulation no. 2092/91 in conjunction with the CAP can be pinpointed as the policy that instigated the trend toward more favourable organic agricultural policy. It was also the first quality certification scheme outlined by the EU, in addition to being the world’s first regulated form of organic agriculture. However, it is only under compliance with Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 that farming will be considered organic; the detailed rules for the implementation of this Regulation are laid down in Commission Regulation (EC) No 889/2008. This regulation is used to define: production methods, rules for product labelling and certification to guarantee for the whole system. In real time, this regulation enables the identification of new supply chains, in addition to production processing and preparation; trade and labour laws, all regarding organic agriculture. Certification agencies have come under heavy criticism, in particular from agencies such as IFOAM as the formalised-market sector of organic agriculture expands, they are said to not be strict, stringent or sufficiently robust to ensure the highest level of quality. For example in Italy, as Favilli (2015) declares the certification and verification bodies, at current capacity, would take several decades to visit each organically certified farm in Italy and thoroughly inspect it to assure standards are being met, this in addition to the fact that Italy has the highest number of certified Eco-labels within the EU (See Appendix 10.4).

EC 834/2007 was adopted back in 2009, it defines the implementation norms on production, labelling, inspections and imports. Under this regulation, the EU organic logo became

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compulsory for all EU Organic producers and processors; IFOAM and others have commented on the lack of flexibility such a requirement involves. In response to the recent CAP reforms, IFOAM stated that it hoped the CAP to be ‘a greener, more equal and more competitive’ policy (IFOAM 2010)

The Organic market within the EU is thought to have quadrupled over the last 10 years. The financial framework programming of the CAP (2014 – 2020) greatly reflects this market shift. In fact, much greater emphasis and visibility has been placed on organic farming through the creation of a separate measure for rural development funding. Additionally, newly adopted legislative policies and proposals by The European Commission further reflect this shift.

New organic payment schemes
Under the 2014 – 2020 CAP reforms, organic farming is now a stand-alone measure and is directly financially supported. Article 29(4) of the proposed Direct Payments regulation clearly states that farmers who adhere to Article 29(1) of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 organic farming requirements, shall be entitled a further ‘Greening’ payment. There are also payments for the conversion and maintenance of organic farming, similar to the direct farming payments, Article 30 of the proposed Rural Development Regulation, outlines that organic farming will support will be paid per hectare of UAA, to farmers or groups of farmers who undertake, on a voluntary basis to convert to or maintain organic farming practices and methods as defined in Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007).

The new CAP policies toward organic farming have the intention to enhance the status of organic farming, however there are issues with the changes to regulation and financial support to such measures voiced by IFOAM and others which has the potential for some member states to in fact reduce the amount of financial support offered in this sector (Further information on positions taken by the European organic movement can be found at www.ifoam-eu.org/workareas/policy/php/CAP.php).)

Section Summary
The CAP is an interesting form of macro policy regarding agriculture, and specifically, of course, organic agriculture in Italy. Although it is not the focus of this study, such an influential form of policy must be noted and acknowledged, whilst also recognising its drawbacks and limits in achieving contextually sensitive and locally specific forms of sustainable agriculture. Constant change in policy, new introductions and changes in regulations, certification schemes, bureaucratic requirements and other prerequisites create many barriers for smallholders, and it seems that the although the current CAP reforms have the objective of promoting greener practice, it may in fact create greater confusion contributing to yet more barriers for smallholders with the intention to enter the organic sector.

It seems that despite the extensive nature of the financial-resource rich CAP, and the EU administering body, there are significant downfalls regarding this regional policy mechanism in achieving sustainable agriculture. Whilst it is not within the remit of this paper to divulge further on the debate regarding the efficiency of the CAP, the previous section hopes to have briefly demonstrated how a top-down regional policy mechanism may not be the most effective or efficient way to administer widespread strong sustainable agriculture. The CAP makes payments in accordance with farm size, which immediately places smallholders at a disadvantage; additionally, it gives further payments and subsidies for practice, which is considered ‘green’ or environmentally enhancing. These stipulated requirements do not
necessarily go far enough when the levels of soil degradation, ammonia emissions, biodiversity loss and so forth within the EU are fully considered.
3. Conceptualising Framework

This section offers definitions of the key concepts and terms used in this study, and provides a review of the relevant literature. Additionally, this section hopes to conceptualise and in part begin justifying the hypothesis stated at the beginning of this paper, whilst providing the reader opportunity for further reading or investigation into the concepts and ideas mentioned. By the end of this section, it is hoped that a clear and structured picture has been painted, which leads logically to the new phenomenon of new entrants smallholders onto the Italian agriculture scene, and to further explore their motivations and analyse their needs whilst understanding the potential contribution such a movement can have toward achieving more sustainable agriculture.

3.1 Good Things come in Small Packages

Productivity

Small farms (less than 20ha) and family farms, generally speaking, are seen as being better custodians of the countryside. Institute for Food and Development Policy, recently reviewed international data comparing the productivity [total output of agricultural products per unit area] of small farms (20ha) vs. larger farms (60ha and above), and found that smaller farms were between 200 – 1000% more productive per unit area ((Rosset, 2000, p. 9). This view is resonated across the academic field, although there are certainly examples of smallscale farming failing, in particular in the Global South, however it seems that the potential to improve local economy, food security, increase rural development, mitigate against some climate change factors is a plethora of benefits awarded by smallscale farming, over its larger-scale counterpart (de Schutte, 2011)

Environment

The OECD (OECD Directorate for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, 2005) conducted an extensive literature review regarding the correlation between farm size and environmental sensitivity. It seems that international studies vary greatly in their conclusions regarding if in fact smaller farms practice sustainability and conservation to a greater extent – and benefit – than their larger counterparts. It is apparent from the studies presented, however, that smaller farms tend to be more aware of environmental and sustainability issues (Tavernier, & Tolomeo, 2004, p. 2). The challenge however exists in executing and implementing this knowledge in practice. Often the opportunity costs of undertaking such practices far outweigh the economic [short term] benefits and payback for the small farmer.

Interestingly, several studies which span across different geographic areas (carried out by (Dupraz et al. 2002; Potter and Lobley 1993; McInerney et al. 2000; IFOAM EU Group, 2011) observed that larger farms were significantly more likely to take up environmental schemes – although it must be denoted that this is not synonymous with reducing negative environmental externalities associated with farming. As the grant schemes would often be made as a direct payments, the greater the arable land, the greater the potential payment. Small farmers do not have the luxury of undertaking complex, heavily bureaucratic and time consuming paperwork to qualify for such schemes, and therefore such schemes remain accessible only by the larger, more sophisticated farms able to manoeuvre within a system that is, arguably, designed for their continued dominance, success and control of market value. Additionally, it was found that the per-hectare costs of large farms were significantly
lower, and therefore better suited to absorb the transaction costs of any environmental programme participation (Dupraz et al. 2002, Dupraz and Rainelli, 2004). OECD research, field trials and experiments found that generally speaking organic practice was more environmentally friendly than conventional agriculture. However, due to the lower yields and potential labour inefficiencies in organic agricultural production, the productivity of organic agriculture was significantly lower (OECD Directorate for Food, Agriculture and Fisheries., 2005).

Parra Lopez et al. (2004) found that although organic production, protects the quality, diversity or resilience of the food supply chain, the yield per-hectare is significantly lower than conventional methods, thereby negatively impacting short-term food security. The benefits of organic farming however are often misconstrued; for the consumer, “organic”, often implies a complete absence of chemicals/pesticides, as Kouba (2003) found however, this is not always the case, with some studies showing that organic food only had slightly lower levels of chemical residues compared to conventional produce, and with almost the same levels of pesticides this may be a question of stricter enforcement regarding organic farming rules, with more stringent requirements necessary to attain organic status.

Economy
Flaten (2002), following a study on dairy sector farming in Norway, found that large farms have a substantial downward-negative effect on local employment (Ibid. p. 3). The rural areas were worst affected by this loss of employment, in large due to their lack of economic activity diversity. Most small farmers located in rural areas found themselves unable to compete with the industrial-sized and mechanized dairy production of the larger farms. In addition to his own findings, Flaten (2002) finds extensive support for the hypothesis that smaller farms are better for the rural and national economy. Flaten combines the findings to conclude that smallscale farming stimulates more rural community activities than large-scale farming (p.15). Additionally, these same studies found that activity from larger farming systems have a higher probability of resulting in habitat loss and a decline in biodiversity (Flaten 2002 p.4). Heady and Sonka (1974) show that despite the higher incomes, and therefore lower prices to consumers, a larger farms may result in a lowered total income for rural communities.

Section Summary
In Italy, the contribution smallholder producers have at a local level includes everything from improving food security and the rural economy to rural preservation, and protecting cultural heritage. Agricultural sustainability has been shown to aid in soil replenishment, improve soil fertility, better humus quality, increase the nutritional quality of food and reduce agricultural runoff, in addition to aiding in rural economy stabilisation and creating stronger communities. Hence, it is clear that mobilising investment to encourage smallscale organic agriculture in rural areas holds many benefits, not solely for the farmer but for the rural economy, environment and community.

3.2 What is Sustainable Agriculture?
Sustainable Agriculture is defined by the ability to not deplete human, social and natural capital - a sustainable agricultural system is mutually symbiotic with these assets, whereas an unsustainable system is a net-asset deplete
Sustainable agriculture is indefinable linearly; it comprises multiple dimensions, including economic, environmental and social aspects. A shared commonality between all the ontological definitions is the idea that Sustainable Agriculture should encompass continued economic prosperity and environmental preservation, with elements of safeguarding social wellbeing and enhance community cohesion, family quality of life, human health, relationships with community, outreach programmes, social integration programmes etc. (Den Big-gelaar and Suvedi, 2000). Whilst fairly easy to define and find consensus on the broad terms of the expression ‘Sustainable Agriculture’, in practice it is challenging and highly complex to implement. Gafsi et al. (2006) argue that despite being the goal and objective for almost every local and national government across the globe, fully sustainable agriculture in practice – one that is fully committed to each of its tenets - is yet to be fully operational (p. 239). The multitude of facets that comprise the demands of ‘Sustainable Agriculture’ generally instigates not only debate but also contradictions and ensuing concessions, which may bring the venture’s integrity to question. Enabling sustained and continued economic growth, parallel to both environmental wellbeing and contributing to a flourishing, inclusive and healthy society is not, by any means, an easy ambition.

3.2.1 Sustainable Agriculture: Two-tiered Approach

UNEP Agenda 21 (UNEP 2012) provides a detailed understanding of what Sustainable Agriculture should be, regarding technological inputs, agro-ecological limits, impacts and so forth. The document provides a framework for monitoring, evaluating and guiding sustainable agriculture and rural development. The drawback is that the document is aimed at developing countries and aims to address poverty, growing population and food insecurity issues. Nevertheless, important issues and considerations into the practicability and applicability of a sustainable system of agriculture are brought up, and practical governance and policy matters covered, all relevant to more developed nations. Similarly, the USDA 1990 Farm Bill defines sustainable agriculture as:
“An integrated system of plant and animal production practices having a site-specific application that will, over the long term: Satisfy human food and fibre needs; Enhance environmental quality and the natural resource base upon which the agricultural economy depends; Make the most efficient use of non-renewable resources and on-farm resources and integrate, where appropriate, natural biological cycles and controls; Sustain the economic viability of farm operations; Enhance the quality of life for farmers and society as a whole.” (FACTA 1990)

Correspondingly, the NGO Sustainable Agriculture Treaty, Global Forum at Rio de Janeiro, June 1-15, 1992 outlines a holistic picture of what Sustainable Agriculture should be; see Appendix 4 for further details. All of these ‘macro’ definitions see Sustainable Agriculture as a form of agricultural practice which benefits growers, farms, their community and the environment, however it is the nuanced definitions of what this actually means, and the on-the-ground implementation of such policies, which creates many points of contention and contradiction. In practice, it is not possible to satisfy all requirements as stated in the definitions, predominately as it is not possible to create a ‘one-size-fits-all’ model and approach regarding sustainable agriculture.
3.2.2 Sustainable Agriculture: It's a Social Thing

For many scholars, Sustainable Agriculture lies at the heart of a new social contract between agriculture and society (Spillare & Palentenieri 2016). As Marzieh and Keshavarz (2009) argue in their study “Sociology of Sustainability”, despite Sustainable Agriculture featuring as a core goal for many organisations and governments for several decades, widespread and maintainable achievements are, so far, far from satisfactory (p.19). Marzieh and Keshavarz (2009) illustrate that despite the effort and campaigning regarding sustainable practice, conventional agriculture remains the dominant paradigm; with the widespread negative effects of conventional agriculture persisting: Pollution of water, soil, and air, degradation of environmental resources, loss of biodiversity and so forth (Ibid p 20). In order to overcome this barrier, the authors argue that the fight for Sustainable Agriculture requires a different approach. One that would see a shift from policy-making and technocratic practice, to one which recreates a ‘social negotiation process’ (Ibid. 19), reflecting the demands, needs and wants related to social circumstances; this new relationship would be sensitive and aware of local and national power conditions (ibid. p. 20).

The authors go on to argue that as agriculture is a human activity, it is no longer possible for policies and practice aimed at sustainable agriculture to ignore social dynamics and human vested interest. In fact, they believe this dimension should be considered a core element to understanding and developing sustainable agriculture; everything from understanding the relationship between farmers’ attitudes and their farming practices, relating farming practice and impact on gender, to understanding the cultural and contextual differences of each area. Were these to be considered and incorporated, amongst other indicators, it would be possible to create unique and assorted sustainability paradigms and solutions; ones moulded to their appropriate environment and needs (ibid. p. 22). The authors suggest an element of monitoring and evaluation to allow the project to adapt and change in accordance with the society, informing decision makers of the social impacts of the sustainability decisions (ibid. p. 22).

Sustainable agriculture is not synonymous with devolution, a belief some policymakers have been heard to voice (Hill, 1999). Dr Hill from the Union of Concerned Scientists [UCS] states, "Sustainability builds on current agricultural achievements, adopting a sophisticated approach that can maintain high yields and farm profits without undermining the resources on which agriculture depends." He goes on to argue that there are two forms of sustainability: weak (shallow) or strong (deep). The latter being long-term and fundamental, whilst the former focuses on efficiency and substitution strategies, elongating the time before the problem must be truly addressed. “Deep sustainability” as Dr. Hill puts it, “re-evaluates goals in relation to higher values and redesigns the systems involved in achieving these goals to that this can be done within ecological limits." (Hill, 1999; By the same token, Gafsi et al. (2006) assert to the dangers of policymakers assigning too much emphasis toward the economic pillar of Sustainable Agriculture (whereby the other two pillars are environmental and social), pandering instead to an ideology that places economic success as paramount. A study conducted on the France’s Farming Orientation Law of July 1999: contrat territorial d’exploitation – or territorial farm contract (TFC) by Gafsi et al. 2006 analyses the true sustainability of this governmental policy. Through the analysis of statistical data and extensive qualitative surveys, it was found and concluded that the most valuable effects of the
policy have been mainly economic, with limited social and environmental positive effects (Ibid. p. 227). The authors explain their findings two-fold: on the one hand, it was concluded that farmers’ motivations are mainly guided by economic objectives, and on the other that the TFC procedure is dominated by professional farming organisations, which, being larger farms and run as ‘businesses’, are by nature guided by an economic motif. They argued, that were the TFC improved, and made to be more inclusive with a focus on rural stakeholder participation, not solely readily providing financial incentive, it is possible the results might have been different, showing greater social and environmental benefits (ibid. 241).

3.2.3 Sustainable Agriculture: Moving Forward
Building on this foundation, Sustainable Agriculture has come to be defined by its indefinability, as the term and practice becomes increasingly decentralised. The meaning of this regards that more and more Sustainable Agriculture is defined not by governmental policy - or better said, not driven by top-down policymaking – yet, increasing, it is defined by a new form of pervasive critical consumer, leading [grassroots] change. This form of critical consumer power has brought to the fore and scrutinised the inequality and inequity prevalent within the food system (Patel 2010. Los Campesinos ref Bucchman ref). Despite a homogenous ‘one-size’, ‘one-model’, answer to explain what sustainable agriculture is, this form of grassroots and consumer-led action gives clarity to the fact that Sustainable Agriculture is contingent to human culture, interaction and context. Reimaging the [human] food-system is something that must be created with contextual sensitivity.

Chen (2012), ascribes this new definition and practice of sustainable agriculture to the movement surrounding the creation of: Community supported agriculture (CSA), kitchen gardens, farmer’s market, and so on. These new local food networks bring the community, the producer and produce closer together, bringing about new forms of active engagement with new sustainable ways of living. With the overall impact of such interaction being shown by XYZ to promote and increase overall community wellbeing, generate local economic benefit in addition to significantly lessening negative environmental impacts (food waste, LOOK FOR MORE EXAMPLES). The study conducted by Chen (2012) found that by incorporating civic engagement within the food-system, civic welfare improved in addition to socioeconomic well-being. In several studies LIST HERE Local and regional ecosystem services saw vast improvements in addition to the reduction of the community carbon footprint, accumulating into the promotion of long-term sustainability “by reconnecting farm, food, and community” (Lyson, 2004 p. 1). In reaction to the negative impacts of a globalised food regime (Lyson 2005, Patel 2009), local food production and civic engagement are increasingly seen as a potential solution and promoted strategy by practitioners and academics (Chen 2012, p. 170; Lyson 2004; Lyson 2005).

GAS: Italy and Sustainable Agriculture
G.A.S Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale, translated from Italian to mean: Ethical purchasing groups, of Solidarity Purchasing Groups, are a recent system of purchasing goods collectively in Italy. The GAS system in Italy is a decentralized, grassroots ‘spontaneous’ structure, which epitomises the social, grassroots, and ‘critical consumer’ movement the food system is garnering. It is also culturally sensitive, with families forming these groups said to assimilate previous Catholic structures of family-led groups known to contribute toward achieving communitarian values, and to ensure access and equality within their communities (Grasseni
These groups are usually set up by a number of consumers who cooperate in order to buy food and other commonly used goods directly from producers or from big retailers at a price that is fair to both parties.

There exists a wealth of literature researching and analysing this movement with the aim of understanding how it came about, and how it may contribute to sustainable agriculture and sustainable development. Grasseni (2014) identifies: Trust, informality and direct democracy as being distinctive values underpinning G.A.S practice. Grasseni goes on to explain the issues this creates when positing this solidarity economy vis-à-vis policymaking. The multifunctional approach to agriculture has a strong political dimension because it implies that governments have the main responsibility to ensure sustainable agriculture, this is currently challenged by certain grassroots movements, principally critical consumer movements, of which Italy based GAS (Gruppi de Aquisto Solide) falls.

Section Summary

Whilst acknowledging that, to a certain extent, in order to achieve widespread sustainable agriculture, a tangible and internationally agreed upon definition must be delineated. The focus of this study, and taken definition of sustainable agriculture which will be adopted following on from the literature reviewed, is to be more focused on the localised, decentralised and grassroots led practice and understanding of the term. Sustainable Agriculture in this study is defined through the process of civic engagement and public accountability regarding the community values placed upon the needs and necessities of a food-system. It is accepted and recognised that an internationally assigned agreement, and joint effort in achieving Sustainable Agriculture with strict procedures and guidelines in place to curb malpractice and promote better strategies is needed. It is key to note, however, that despite the distinction made in this study between the micro and macro definitions of sustainable agriculture, the two are not mutually exclusive, and in reality they co-exist and function in parallel. It does not seem necessary then, to treat them as mutually exclusive from a study and research perspective. Instead, whilst acknowledging the difference in approaches, the way in which both micro and macro level solutions (on-the-ground practice, and policy) can work together to forge new symbiotic partnerships will be looked upon in this study.

3.3 Civic agriculture, Critical Theory and Social Innovation

Civic agriculture is an interesting concept, and it builds on the former definition of sustainable agriculture. It is included as it adds a further dimension and offers clarity to the overall argument which urges for the organic sector to not become yet another sole ‘market based’ solution for providing overall greater sustainability regarding agriculture and the food system, but encourages the evolution of dimensions focused on creating more sustainable communities, and economies built on other values other than resource efficiency and growth.

“Civic Agriculture – stemming from civic economy – is the creation of shared value responsibility [...] it is the pursuit of happiness [...] sustainability” (Spillare and Paltrinieri 2016; p. 14)

Civic agriculture as a study, concept and vision is seen as the natural evolution of organic agriculture (Spillare and Paltrinieri 2016; p. 15). Civic Agriculture creates the capacity for
relationships to be formed based on shared values regarding: agriculture methods, a more holistic economic system and a local sense of common wellbeing (Spillare & Paltrinieri, 2015; p. 30). It consists of a multitude of diverse agricultural holdings and food businesses, which are all strongly integrated within their communities and local agro-ecological systems. In doing so, it forms a micro economic model, which fuses “productive, environmental, social and welfare-related functions” (Spillare and Paltrinieri 2016; p. 5) thus meeting the demands of ethical and environmental responsibility on the part of citizen-consumers. At the heart of this idea lies the notion of “common good”, in addition to attempting to recreate the manner in which resources are managed, determining a new model shaped by collective management of the available resources – including agricultural ones – “so as to ensure people the access to their constitutional rights” (Di Iacovo, Fonte, Galasso 2014, p. 10).

Food production and consumption are extremely political (Patel, 2010), the political and economic accessibility of the food system are telling by consumption patterns in regard to demographics (age, ethnicity, geographic location etc) (Patel, 2007; Holt-Gimenez & Patel 2009). Growing market demand is driving the expansion of organic agriculture, which consistently shows growth figures larger than any other agro-food sector. Despite its low overall market share, the organic market can be seen to represent an example of how a critical consumers movement is able to promote more sustainable (environmentally and socially) alternate models of development (Paltrinieri, Spillare, 2015; p. 22.). Uniquely, the Organic Agriculture system has the ability and capacity to mobilise different social stakeholders: from consumers, to producers and public administrations, moving them towards a Shared Social Responsibility paradigm [SSR]. It is no longer solely about food security, argues Grassini (2014), it is about global sustainable citizenship which focuses on food sovereignty; this food sovereignty transcends national and international borders to ensure that no community is degraded (economically, environmentally or social) for the benefit of another community. Shared social responsibility in regard to food provisioning looks at the whole supply chain, and ensures equitability at every stage for every community (Grassini & Hankins 2014; p. 2). Further, it is the assumption that social actors orient their actions to common and shared values, values which combined have the aim of reimagining the entire civic structure, and reasserts persons, grassroots movements and local communities as the key decision makers (Paltrinieri & Spillare, 2015; Paltrinieri & Spillare 2016).

Civic agriculture finds itself under the same conceptual umbrella as “food democracy”, “food citizenship” and “ecological citizenship”; collectively these “feed [into] the practices of deliberative democracy based on co-production, horizontal subsidiarity and a wider participation of civil society to governance processes” (Di Iacovo, Fonte, Galasso 2014, p. 17). This combination allows for the construction of alternative civic networks, and “Alternative Food Networks” (AFNs) or Alternative agri-food networks (AAFNs) seen through the advancement of Farmer’s markets, ethical purchasing groups in Italy i.e. G.A.S., the creation of civil society groups such as The Sustainable Food Trust based in Bristol and so forth. Put simply, these initiatives, whose variations can be seen repeated globally, despite being often localised initiatives are an amalgamation of social organisations managed by the vision of creating alternative economies, guided by the pursuit of an ethical and ecological approach to agriculture and a change to our currently isolating, consumer driven societal structure which often finds its roots in the food system, as argued by Holt-Gimenez & Patel (2009). Food justice plays heavily into this rhetoric, with authors, such as Anderson (2008 & 2013) advocating for a ‘rights based food system’, in which the government is held accountable for any failings in the food system leading to social inequality. Advocates of this
movement demand greater control and equity in the regulation of food production, through deciding who participates and how (Patel 2010). Studies have shown that involvement in local food justice movements leads to an increase in democratic and civic engagement, the empowerment of the individual in this case is contingent to the transformative learning that occurs as part of their involvement in the food justice movement (Levkoe 2006). As food justice incorporates a multitude of different approaches, it is possible to see how it is able to bring together otherwise distinct theories, in turn allowing sustainable agriculture to better incorporate issues of environmental justice, equity and connect them all to broader institutionalised inequality (Alkon and Noorgaar 2009).

One of the goals of Civic Agriculture, aside from the creation of greater environmental and social sustainability, is the pursuit of happiness. Discounting the idealistic sentiment behind such an objective, were it to be given a different name – one which is found within economic rhetoric say, prosperity – swiftly renders the objective less idealistic in terms of feasibility, and instead becomes a legitimate and noble goal. As Tim Jackson writes in ‘Prosperity Without Growth’ (2010) Prosperity is defined not in accordance with material accumulation but with health, freedom and happiness of a society, much as Noble Prize Winner, Amartya Sen does in the (first published 1984) seminal essay on ‘the living standard’. Happiness and prosperity – which is distinguished separately from opulence and defined more with utility, recognises this “rather than focusing on the sheer volume of commodities available to us, this second version relates prosperity to the satisfactions which commodities provide” (Jackson, 2010: p. 39). Although the relationship has been found to be highly non-linear, it is apparent that more isn’t always better. It’s more about quality rather than quantity. Building on this concept, Putnam writes, “The result of more than half a century of research on the elements related to satisfaction in life, in the United Stated as well as worldwide is that the best indicator of the happiness of individuals is the extension and intensity of their social relations” (2004, p. 405). The pursuit of happiness, and the creation of prosperity are so deeply interlinked with sustainable agriculture, and the wider food system, that the combination of the aforementioned writers and concepts, allow for the conclusion to be drawn that civic (or organic) agriculture based on the principles which go beyond production technique, may in fact naturally lead to an increase in social relations. This is through the creation of more localised, decentralised food systems (production, marketing and consumption) in addition to re-establishing rural, or in fact local economies, providing labour, a market, a demand-pool of customers and a deep connection to place, land and community. Moreover, research has in fact shown an almost opposite reaction to the NIMBY “Not-in-my-backyard” effect, if members of the public are given greater responsibility and ownership over their locality, or have closer affiliation to their community, environmental standards in fact improve, and continue bettering. In some cases the reversal of the ‘bystander effect’ has been observed which sees a reduction in the diffusion of responsibility, in regard to action on environmental degradation (Hudson, & Bruckman, 2004).

**Section Summary**

In a time of soaring levels of inequality - leading to higher crime rates, lowered life expectancy, an increase in non-communicative diseases (Read Spirit level by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett 2010) – with the additional factor of environmental degradation, it is not abstruse to conclude that our social systems are facing tensions and problems never before experienced. It seems the evidence is pointing toward the need for a new system to be reimagined, one which sees equity, equality and sustainability at its core, and one which questions the current status quo. Civic Agriculture, and its social innovative drive is one of the
paradigms use in this study to gain some understanding of the new entrant phenomenon into Italian agriculture. The critical theory is used to see the extent of critical-consumer led, transformative change through the reconnection of ‘food, farm and communities’. This theory challenges the notion of the necessity of growth to generate prosperity.

### 3.3.1 Responsible Social Innovation and Transition

The second framework to be used in this study is the Responsible (social) Innovation theory combined with the Transition movement theory and framework. The combined focus is more concretised on the capacity of humans to direct and better their own development, instigate social change and demand greater justice within community, societies and for individualistic wellbeing. Both of these theories are viewed within the parameters of Critical Theory, with roots in social justice; Critical theory understands the possibility of regime change through a critical stance, and personal civic engagement and action. It is necessary to postulate these theories within the framework of the Italian food-system, sustainable agriculture, and development.

Responsible (social) innovation [RI], pioneered by the Bassetti Foundation (Hankins 2012) is characterised by its pursuit of socially desirable, ethically justifiable and transparent innovative developments (Grassini 2014; p.3). Piero Bassetti (Lunghi, 2016) goes beyond the techno-scientific definition of RI to propose a new form of “poiesis-intensive” innovation. This form of innovation reconsiders the organisation of supply chains and processes, instead of substituting them with capital-intensive technological fixes (Stilgoe, Owen & MacNaghten, 2012: p 3). Alternative food provisioning is one example of this; specifically these innovations, through setting up alternative food networks, rethink the economy by ‘re-engineering specific aspects of segments of the supply chain’ (Grassini & Hankins 2014; p. 4). Jack Stilgoe, Richard Owen and Phil Macnaghten (2012) offer a definition that adapts to this ‘grassroots’ innovation:

“Responsible research and innovation means taking collective care for the future, through stewardship of innovation in the present” (Stilgoe, Owen & MacNaghten, 2012: p. 3).

Not only is there a need to recognise these Responsible Innovations, but also it is necessary to see how the building of capability leads to a transition movement, or regime-change, driven by Alternative Food Networks, its critical-consumers, and critical-producers. This tenet of civic action and transition has started gaining attention across academic fields, with a growing understanding that AFNs go ‘beyond the narrow boundaries of a corporate-driven consumer-citizenship’ (Brunori et al. 2012; p. 10). They are understood to be hybrid networks which include the consumer - exclude others - and in doing so challenge the status quo on the norms of production, consumption and retailing (Goodman and DuPuis 2002; Renting et al. 2003). This, Brunori et. Al (2012) argue, leads to the re-embedding of production and consumption into new social relations and by ‘dis-embedding them from dependence on big players in the agri-food system … the risk of appropriation and conventionalization [can be avoided]’ (p. 9).

Consumers within AFNs are viewed as having an active role in the new systems of food provision through choices ranging from joining community supported agriculture (Sharp et al. 2002) or shopping at farmers' markets (Lyson et al. 1995), this was covered in the previous section civic agriculture. An implied relationship between consumer-producer is built, and in doing so farm, food and community are connected, creating an alternative, innovative form of food provisioning, often accompanied by new forms of economic organization (see local
Brunori et al (2012; p. 14) conducted an analysis of Alternative Food Networks, giving empirical evidence of the manners in which consumers can politically engage in system-reformation:

- They exert their freedom of choice in a radical way, as they change not only one or several items, but the whole shopping environment.
- They participate in food movements aimed at changing rules affecting the food system.
- They co-produce – together with producers and with a variety of other actors – new systems of food provision.
- They reconfigure the way that food is embodied into socio-technical practices”

Brunori et al (2012; p. 14);

Brunori et al (2012); Randelli (2015); Grasseni (2014; 2013) have all considered the extent of which these networks act as drivers of regime innovation, and change. Concluding to find that addressing consumption habits alone is arbitrary, given the huge sustainability issues the food system is faced with (environmental, social, economic). Primarily, this points toward the failure of market-based solutions to address these challenges, such as ‘green consumerism’ under whose bracket fragile-certified Organic agriculture arguably falls (Grasseni 2014). Instead, behavioural change and adopting new patterns, as Sanne (2002) states, requires an understanding of the social, legal and physical constraints faced by the individuals; “Sustainable consumption paths start from the social, symbolic and material contexts where consumers live” (Brunori et al. 2012; p 9). Yet, as Favilli (2015) asserts, organic agriculture is not beyond reparation and given its adaptive capacity, it has potential to act as a ‘boundary object’ in which it can unify farmers and non-farmers in reimaging the a more equitable food system (p.236).

Sustainable consumption, as proposed by Seyfang & Smith (2006), can be applied in this case to the theory of transition management. Transition management theory posits that there are two types of innovation i) incremental (step-by-step) which occurs learning-by-doing, and is supported predominately through techno-scientific innovation ii) radical innovation which is based on new paradigms, new knowledge and new resource bases (Brunori et al. 2012; p. 10; Seyfang & Smith 2006). Responsible (social) innovation, regarding AFNs and civic agriculture, falls somewhere between these two recognised forms of Transition management theory and therefore requires a more detailed framework to better understand this perspective and use it for analysis.

3.3.1.1 Building a Transition Framework
Brunori et al. 2008 built a framework, which draws on the transition theories, to analyse innovation in agriculture and in the food systems. The process of innovation, shown in the figure below (Brunori et al. 2012 p. 15) focuses on the emergence of novelties (a new manner of thinking and of doing things), which leads onto niche consolidation, which may eventually lead to regime change (Ibid.)
Within the figure, the authors explicate, are the dynamic and increasingly complex levels and relations of an entire system regarding transition or change. Like any ‘management’ system, it must be regulated by a set of rules, constraining those within it (ibid). However, within any given system it is possible for ‘novel’ practices to emerge, if these in turn become successful, it is possible to see such practices consolidated and later become ‘established patterns of relations between actors, rules and artefacts, which are called niches’ (ibid). Dependent on their extent, uptake and direction, certain niches can be drivers for regime-system change, or indeed regime collapse. It is necessary for these niches to provide real alternatives for regime-change to have wider-scale adoption. Brunori et al. 2012 reason that the combined climate change and energy crises, found in the landscape level (figure above), prove a sufficient crisis to provide the opportunity for regime change within the contemporary food-system in Italy driven by niche, responsible innovation, demonstrated by civic agriculture (and AFNs).

Using the transition framework, depicted in the previous section, it is possible to ascertain that the current grassroots food movement in Italy, driven by social action, responsible innovation, and critical civic engagement is at a point that real regime alternatives are being offered. This study will analyse the contribution of new entrants into this ‘niche’ sector of alternative-food-networks and assess the extent of their contribution toward civic agriculture and therefore transition to a more sustainable regime. Without ignoring the already existent organic sector, the study will look at how other previously ‘novel’ and then ‘niche’ organic sector which has since become part of the greater ‘food-regime’ without necessarily challenging the status-quo, can be reformed and become more inclusive of ‘triple bottom line’ sustainability. This study hopes to, by understanding the new entrants interviewed and their associated AFNs, shed some perspective on pertinent questions such as: Can organic agriculture return to its roots? Can it adapt and learn from these civic engagements and alternative food networks to be more inclusive and therefore more representative of true sustainable agriculture?
3.4 New entrants

Italy is now, once again arguably - through its historic relationship with food consumption and production – leading the way forward in the promotion of better, more sustainable agricultural practice in Europe. Interestingly, the food movement in Italy is not confined solely to agricultural production, but also the greater system into which food production and consumption fall. Many institutions and organisations in Italy are leading the way - through research and initiatives - on pertinent global food issues, such as: food waste; the destructive nature of ‘fast food’ through the establishment of ‘Slow Food’, Solidarity purchasing groups, and so forth. All accumulating under the umbrella aimed at reconnecting the “farm, food and community”, and the resulting “civic agriculture.” (Spillare and Paltrinieri 2015).

Italy is dominated by traditional, family owned farming, however there is an emerging ‘new’ agriculture, dominated by a differing set of more ‘sustainable’ agricultural practice and guided by a particular set of principles. New entrants, mostly young, from varying cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, and with little to no experience are moving into the Italian agricultural sector by setting up their own smallholdings, almost all guided by sustainable practice. Italy’s agricultural sector faces an ‘aging’ dilemma, and the entrance of these new entrants should be welcomed relief to this predicament. However, as not much is known about this group, local government and policy are not geared toward ensuring a smooth transition into the agricultural sector. A study conducted by EPI-Agri, and funded by the European Commission into studying these ‘new entrants’ defines them as:

“A natural person, group of people or legal entity who have within the past five years established a new agricultural holding or farming business in their own name(s). The natural person, group of people or legal entity should be actively farming (i.e. producing agricultural products for sale) and be either establishing a new agricultural holding or returning to a family-held holding after a minimum of 10 years of off-farm employment” (EPI-Agri, 2015; p. 5)

This definition is incredibly broad and included is everything from an individual (no age restrictions) to corporation, with varying motivations. The study concluded that motivations included: economic, financial, lifestyle, social ambitions, work ambitions and beyond (EPI-Agri 2015; p. 6). Although the definition of new entrant is broad, a pattern has been observed in Italy which Sutherland (2015.) has noted, finding certain trends amongst new entrants.

**Demographic characteristics:** They tend to be younger, operate smaller farms, and are more likely to be female than other farmers, despite the majority of new entrants being male (Sutherland et al. 2015)

**Educational achievement:** In the study by EPI-Agri (2015) it was found that new entrants to small-scale farming studied tended to have considerably higher educational achievement compared to that of an average amongst farmers in the same study regions. They often were educated to University level (p. 8)

**Commodity types:** The organic sector has seen the highest number of new entrants, it was also found that these new farmers are more likely to be involved in livestock production (EPI-Agri 2015; p. 8). Horticulture in smaller plots was also found to be common amongst new entrants who are also more likely to be involved in this form of production for self-provisioning and local marketing (Ibid).
The study further quantifies new entrants into the following 6 categories: Alternative agriculture (including organic farming), Smallholding, Back-to-the-land movements, Lifestyle and hobby farming, New estates and mainstream commercial farms (EPI-Agri 2015; p.10)

This study looks at the first 5 categories; each new entrant interviewed falls within one or two of these categories.
4. Design, Methodology and Methods

This section presents the research design, methodology and methods employed to collect and analyse the information gathered during the study. The frame of reference for the research is determined by the methodology, which is influenced by the "paradigm in which our theoretical perspective is placed or developed" (Walter 2006, p.35). Methodology is the overall approach to research, linked to the paradigm or theoretical framework, while the method refers to manner, systematic modes, procedures or tools used during the period of data collection and its subsequent analysis (Walter 2006).

It is acknowledged that given any hermeneutic study, there exists a possibility that the researcher will interpret the data per his or her subjective perspective, bias and/or motivation (Kalof et al. 2008). A lot of care has been taken in the research design, in particular during the primary data collection stages, to attempt to keep out ontological biases, although this presents obvious limitations.

4.1 Methodology

As Evans and Marvin argue, it is necessary to use interdisciplinary research when aiming to move from unsustainable to sustainable systems (2006, p.1009). An inquiry into sustainable agriculture, specifically the expansion of the organic sector and the participation of smallholders, requires an interdisciplinary approach. As an understanding can be drawn from several scientific fields, such as agricultural policy – national and regional, community development, economics, business & marketing and psychology. Moreover, the overall topic involves a diverse group of local, regional and even international stakeholders, each with their own interests and motivations. It is paramount that sustainable development posits itself within the interdisciplinary field due to the nature of the expansive and complex issues it covers, which cannot be addressed using one sole academic discipline (Qin et al., 1997); by employing such an approach it is assumed better solutions will emerge (ibid). This approach aims to be reflected in the design of this study.

The main study is based on a Transformative Methodology, whilst certain elements of interpretive/constructivist methodology are used, it was concluded that these methodologies pose too many limits to be used expansively. As Mertens argues, the interpretive/constructivist paradigm has "been developed from the white, able-bodied male perspective and was based on the study of male subjects" (2005 p.17); thus, as Creswell and other critical theorists state (2003, p.9) this approach to research does not sufficiently address the issues of social injustice which a subject such as sustainable agriculture, and the need to recreate the food system pertains. On the subject of a methodology needing to address social change and injustice, Creswell goes further still, "inquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda" (Creswell, 2003, p.9) and contain an action agenda for reform "that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life" (Creswell, 2003, pp.9-10).

Whilst data collection in this study utilises qualitative and quantitative methods that are similar to interpretivist/constructivist methods, the transformative paradigm is sufficiently flexible to allow for a mixed methods approach. It provides the structure and opportunity for a "more complete and full portrait of our social world through the use of multiple perspectives and lenses" (Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p.275), which in turn will allow for a more robust and
The interpretive approach is found in the initial stages of the second part of the study in the form of qualitative, primary data collection of the semi-structured interviews [SSI], which are context-bound, an inductive process and require a reactionary approach toward developing patterns and theories in order to best understand and analyse the results. The study seeks to interpret the understanding among the involved smallholders toward organic agriculture, and sustainable agriculture, within the context in which the reality or phenomenon being studied is situated and from the subjective perspectives of the stakeholders. However, using a transformative paradigm – linked predominately to a Critical framework - the outcome of the SSI’s are analysed and understood through a prism aimed at transformational change regarding the food system, whilst positing the individual smallholders and their realities as a force contributing to change, and making note of the current political and economic structures which may be impeding this change in the agricultural sector.

4.1.1 Approach

This research is exploratory and uses an inductive approach, and, as previously stated, whilst there is a strong emphasis on stakeholder perspectives, rendering the study within a constructivist inquiry, accepting some tenants from both constructivist and a critical/reflective approach, scientific methods will likely be improved and the conclusions richer. Using the constructivist/interpretive approach allows an understanding of the reality of the smallholder in regard to the organic or agricultural sector. Their motivations, desires, perceived barriers and relationship to the wider system are entirely subjective and from individual experience. In order to better understand the overall system, it is important to understand the contribution and interactions of the smaller components. As Bevir and Kedar (2008) discuss, interpretive methodologies encompass an experience-near orientation that sees human action as meaningful and historically contingent. A transformative approach goes further still to allow for a richer picture to be built including the social, political and economic factors outside of the individual which may influence the realities, motivations and interactions of which the individual may not be aware. From a social science perspective it allows for the study subjects to be located within particular linguistic, historical, and values standpoints. This contrasts strongly with the drive to identify generalisable laws independent of cultural-historical specificity, such as a positivist or post-structuralist approach may advocate.

Some aspects of organic agriculture are relatively easy to ontologically define from a positivist perspective however, for instance the data regarding the growth in the sector, the spread of farm ownership, market demand etc. These aspects can be appropriately assessed using quantitative data. However, the understanding of other factors, such as agricultural approach, motivations, environmental education, will vary depending on who you are, and so a constructivist approach using qualitative data is more adequate. Social science methods are more prominent in this study due to the focus on stakeholder perspectives.

The interviews were conducted in order to build case studies around the smallholders, and new entrants, as Baxter and Jack (2008, p. 544) state a “qualitative case study is an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources […] a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood.” In conducting this study, respondents from different actors, documents and data were used in order to build a richer and diverse picture.

This research endeavours to be valid and reliable, despite the researchers own biases and interest, which influenced the choice of study topic. As Chambers (1997) states, “validity
refers to the closeness of a finding to a physical reality, and reliability refers to the constancy of the findings”; therefore, this research will be deemed valid if the findings accurately reflect the situation in the Italian Organic sector, and the trend of new entrants. Validity was enhanced through the selection of respondents, who collectively encompass a broad spectrum of smallholders in the organic/organic but not-certified sector, although there are obvious limitations to this as there are many ontological differences within this dynamic, and far-from homogenous, stakeholder group.

Confidence in the reliability of the results was increased through triangulation in two ways; i) by gathering comparable data from different respondents, and ii) by using different methods to obtain similar data.

There were elements of Participatory Action Research (PAR) carried out in the interview process, I went to Italy for several months and participated in many food-related projects and programmes, studied at the main agricultural research centre and spent time on Organic smallholding farms. Whilst it is fair to say that I did not fully participate in an engaged PAR process, due to short length of time spent on each farm, it can be concluded that I used the approach of conducting research with people rather than on them, and this was used to guide and develop a wider understanding of the organic sector and the larger part it plays in the wider food-system ‘transformation’ in Italy.

4.2 Methods

This section describes the methods used in collecting the data. The reasons behind each method are briefly explained and defended. There is also a brief reflection on the weaknesses or difficulties with such a method.

This study employs three principle methods; the first is an extensive literature review that looks at creating a robust framework and highlighting particular trends so as to highlight relevant theories to better understand the research aim and questions, whilst providing a solid entry point for the empirical part of the study, the first part of this study covers this. The empirical part of the study, to collect qualitative data uses various practices, from surveys or interviews, to observations is two fold, firstly it will look at a broad set of smallholders in Italy – which are obviously not representative of the whole picture – but allow for certain hypotheses and prior beliefs to be established, and the second part of the empirical, study, in the form of

4.2.1 Analysis of Primary Literature

An extensive literature review was conducted, in addition to a pre-study regarding Italian and EU agricultural policy and the affect on smallholders. Background information for the study was conducted, in addition to widespread investigation whilst in Italy (informal interviews and conservations) to gain a better insight and information of the Italian food movement, this is in order to identify any key issues and stakeholders. EU studies on New entrants was used, in addition to peer-reviewed literature

4.2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-Structured Interviews (SSI), are used as a foundation of this study, preceding the use of observation and more informal interviewing. In accordance with Kvale (1996), the interview
is a way in which the subject being studied is able to present their point of view, later aiding in unfolding an understanding of the topic necessary to develop relevant meaning for the researcher (Cohen & Crabtree 2006). Open ended questions are added into the process, that may at times stray from the focus of the research, however this is necessary to provide and identify new ways of seeing and understanding the topic (Ibid.) The overall belief is that SSI can provide reliable and comparable qualitative data (Ibid).

SSI are not conducted with the objective of creating generalised results, instead their purpose is to shed light on the complexities of the topic and the subjects interviewed; their subjectivities and perspectives. Eventually, the results are analysed in order to identify certain trends – which may or may not be linear – with the purpose of better understanding the research topic (Cohen & Crabtree 2006). There are certain drawbacks however to this form of qualitative data collection, principally in ensuring that the researcher doesn't ask leading questions, and ensuring responses aren't interpreted according to the researcher’s own values or pre-conceived notions (Kvale, 1996; Harrison, 2006).

In conducting an interview, the researcher must be aware of their position (gender, social class etc.), as this will affect how the respondent answers the question. The relation between two people changes in accordance with many interactive nuances; this is termed ‘Interviewer and Respondent Effect’ and it holds the potential to compromise the reliability, quality and validity of the data. In order to minimise this effect, the researcher must always aware and give due consideration to when this effect may occur and how in an interview, and secondly how this may affect the quality of the data.

In this study, the SSIs were conducted to understand i) the motivations of new entrants, young farmers and smallholders in the Italian Organic sector, ii) to understand their perceived and lived barriers with obtaining or maintaining organic certification iii) to understand stakeholder perspectives regarding agricultural policy, in particular regarding sustainable and organic practice iv) to gain a better understanding of the smallholders’ social and communitarian contributions with particular emphasis on understanding if in fact they play any role in re-imaging the current food system.

Purpose sampling strategy was employed in selecting the respondents; those chosen have a deliberate set of expertise or knowledge in a particular area (Neergaard, 2007). This is in addition to snowball sampling, as often the respondents initially chosen will often indicate and point to further cases or individuals relevant to the researcher and topic (ibid). In this study all of the respondents have a direct involvement in food production, and either organic or ‘sustainable’ agricultural production. These stakeholders also have involvement in agricultural research, marketing, policy and advising. 10 people were interviewed, only 6 were interview in person, the rest was conducted via Skype and recorded using MAC computer recording software.

The respondents can be divided into four stakeholder groups:
- New Entrants
- Young Farmers
- Converting to organic/ sustainable practice farmers

A complete list of the SSI respondents can be found in Appendix 10.1, and an example of the SSI template in Appendix 10.2.
There are countless numbers of food-related initiatives in Italy, aiming to re-create or change the food system in Italy, by reducing food waste, bettering the production of food, its consumption and so forth. Assessing all of these initiatives was beyond the scope of this study, and so farmers who are members of the organisations or networks mentioned below were interviewed. A thorough assessment of each network was not conducted, but through informal conversations with Professors at the University of Bologna these networks were identified as being the most established and therefore they were selected. These initiatives differ from each other in terms of their objectives and how they function, they also contribute in different ways to the local and national food system.

The interviews were conducted on new entrant smallholders, many of them were also members of associations/ movements:

**Il Pelegrino farm organic certified (Interview 1)** – Organic certified, small organic farm and agritouristic business set up five years ago in La Spezia, Liguria Italy. The owner (Austrian decent) has not previously owned a farm, however grew up surrounded by farms and the respondent’s family were very passionate about growing organic for their own consumption. The respondent is part of the Slow Food Movement and member of local organic networks. The farm is 10ha, cultivates crops in addition to breeding donkeys used for educational learning purposes in addition to using them in the agritourism business.

**Bio-Factoria not certified (Interview 2)** – 15ha farm and social project, it houses 8 Ghanaian migrants, in addition to a community centre and plans for a didactic learning garden. Not organic certified yet, but is in the process of this, they cultivate only crop with plans to have a small chicken run. Set up by three recent graduates (Italian) with no prior history of agriculture, or a significant background in it. One of the team has a degree in farming and economics. The project is part of the *Villago Globale* (Global Village Network)

**Saja not certified (Interview 3)** – part of the “social promotion” association in Italy, in addition to a community centre and plans for a didactic learning garden, and has some contact with GAS, as suppliers - GAS, Gruppi di Consumo Critico, as defined by the project respondent, which means GAS Group of critical consumers. This farm is not certified organic, it was set up around 5 years ago with the ideologies of degrowth and transition at its heart. The group combines several families (Italian) in addition to individuals/ couples from Germany and Portugal. The main purpose of this project to create a type of Ecovillage, to be self sufficient and to promote a new way of consumption more aligned to nature, in addition to creating a new form of cooperation and conviviality. The founders of the project are: agrarian, anthropology, linguistics, computer-science students in addition to being artistics, dancers and actors. The farm is 15ha, producing only crop using permaculture, and sustainable techniques, they also have a forest farm.

**Indaco Foods partially-organic certified (interview 4)** – Is part of Suolo e Salute and the Organic Food Network. It is 98% organic certified, and it is currently in the process of expanding to include processing produce to make organic foods (jams, oils etc). The farm is 12ha, cultivating crop and animals; the main part of the business comes from the BiBIOteca, the biological restaurant that is part of the main house. The farm is situated in Le Marche, slightly inland on the East Northern coast of Italy.

**Azienda agricola : La Tenuta organic certified (Interview 5)** – This converted 15ha farm is based in Sicily, originally a conventional lemon farm, it converted to organic after being taken over by Andrea who is a new entrant. He took over the farm from his Aunt who was no longer
able to keep up with the demands of agriculture. He does not have prior experience in farming, aside from having visited the farm throughout his childhood. Andrea has received training and self-studies many different agricultural techniques. They only sell lemons commercially, but also have horses and grow fruit/ veg for personal consumption.

**Progetto Colle Morto not certified (Interview 6)** – A very small project in the initial stages (less than 1 year), member of the informal ‘workaway’ network. Set in the mountains of Valnerina, by an Italian-Spanish couple who inherited some land now want to make it a small organic farm/ agritourism business. The farm is 7 hectares, so very small, and it set in a community that has experienced a lot of people moving away from the area in the recent years.

**Grefti Cultural Project not certified (interview 7)**- This small farm, based in Umbertide, Umbria, has been in the same family for over 500 years, but since mid-20th Century is has not been used for cultivation. In the last 3 years a young member of the family decided to take the land and start cultivating crop, and rearing livestock (smallscale). The land is 10 ha, but currently only 4 ha are being used. The main purpose of this smallholding is to provide food and board for artists staying at the residence. The Grefti Project consists of an art gallery and smallscale farm, it provides a calming environment in which people from all over the world are welcomed to stay and create art, or explore creativity. It is an attempt to bring cultural and community back together.

**Assessment of the weakness of this method**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>What was done to minimise this weakness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documenting Data</td>
<td>Documenting and later presenting or interpreting the data can cause biases, the choice of documentation of data (i.e. table, excel) can at times obscure or not necessarily present all the answers of the respondent. It is selective.</td>
<td>The interviews were recorded, and also a questionnaire was given to the participants to collect factual data, which in the results and analysis section are easily collated. A lot of care was taken to ensure open questions were asked, and certain questions pertaining to the research questions, aim or the topic at hand were repeated to permit for anything that could have been previously overlooked to be repeated by the respondent and later included by the researcher. Repetition lowers the chances of information being overlooked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewer, respondent effect</td>
<td>The respondent may not feel free to choose to answer in their most natural way, and is instead influenced by the interviewer because of gender,</td>
<td>This was minimised through trying to be as honest and unbiased as possible regarding the research topic, and explaining the purpose of the study. Rapport is a big part of the process to</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
social class and so forth. This may change the response, as the respondent may be trying to fit within a certain social norm or give the ‘answer’ the researcher is looking for, or their interpretation of that. Language was a big barrier, and this may definitely perpetuate the effect (interviewer-respondent) as the respondent has to alter their form of expression or use of language to be understood. Due to a slight language barrier, interpretation is always an issue.

4.2.3 Direct Observation

Two of SSIs took place on location in Italy, the interviews were combined with Direct Observation. These two cases were very special in terms of their initiative, goals and objectives. It is acknowledged that the observations made are not to be used as generalisations; instead they are to add to the richness and complexity of the phenomenon that are this group of ‘new entrants’. The pattern that can be drawn from such an experience is to affirm that diversity and non-linearity are commonplace in the group of ‘new entrants’ in the organic/ sustainable agriculture sector of Italy.

Photographs were taken showing features of the site which the respondent pointed out to me or that I considered important, and these were used to triangulate the findings from the SSIs.

The Refugee/ migrant organic farm (Biofactoria) – Based in Tombello, close to Padua, in Northern Italy, this initiative was set up at the end of 2015 by three young men and two women (all below the age of 30), with the aim of creating a community centre, organic farm and comfortable housing to 8 migrant males from Ghana.

Indaco Foods – The organic farm and biological restaurant is found in Le Marche, 3km away from the beach in a town called Monetsampietro. It is run by a young Dutch-Portuguese couple, under the age of 35, both are chefs and have some previous experience in agriculture through having taken part in work-exchange programmes on farms in South America. The farm/ restaurant has been running for 4 years, during this time it has undergone a lot of expansion and now the restaurant operates three days a week.

4.2.4 Questionnaire Survey

Questionnaire Surveys [QS] allow for an understanding of certain quantifiable data present in a given group, QS arguably add greater breadth to social research than other methods such as
interviews or case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2004). The larger sample population produces results that are easier to draw conclusions, or generalisations within a wider context or phenomenon. Despite many believing that QS are somehow more infallible than their counterparts, due to being perceived as more objective as they produce numerical data that can be used for statistical analysis, Flyvbjerg (2004) argues against this common misconception. The way in which questionnaires are categorised, worded, formatted and presented – in addition to whom they are sent – entails a plethora of subjectivities. In order to overcome this subjectivity, the results collated from the surveys should not have undue emphasis, weight or implied infallibility.

The objective of the QS was to gather demographic data, and basic opinions on the local food system and organic agriculture from a broader base of smallholders. The questions were based on key themes elucidated in the SSIs, and so the data could be used to triangulate the SSI results.

The QS is comprised of four sections of closed and multiple choice questions. The first section asked questions regarding the respondent’s demography and later their involvement in the food sector. The remaining sections intend to answer the research questions; respondents were asked to state how important they consider various aspects.

The QS template can be found in Appendix 10.3.

The QS was distributed through the contact network of a Professor at the University of Bologna, in addition to a network of users of the WWOOFing website and Workaway.info. The QS was also sent to several of the organisations and networks identified in the former section via their website contact details.

The QS was distributed using Kwik Survey, a website dedicated to sending out polls and surveys, there were 25 respondents.

**Assessment of the weakness of this method**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>What was done to minimise this weakness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sample bias</td>
<td>As a researcher, you are only aware of certain distribution channels which are arguably biased, and will reach a particular sub-group. This regards demographics and also who decides to respond i.e. particular age groups will be aware of how to use surveys, internet and so forth</td>
<td>This bias is recognised in the analysis and discussion section, and it is clear that the data collected from the surveys should not be used to make generalisations representative of the entire group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation of questions due to wording</td>
<td>It is inevitable that certain questions or wording on the researcher behalf will be occasionally understood differently to the original intention.</td>
<td>There was an option for the respondent to email or call me if there was confusion, there was also a space at the end of the QS to add extra comments, which urged the respondent to elaborate on their choices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.5 National and Regional Data

Quantitative data was obtained from EUROSTAT, the Italian Agricultural Research Centre and other governmental and official datasets. This was used to give triangulation to the results collected through the SSIs, direct observations and the questionnaire surveys. This data includes landuse-population growth data sets, which allowed GIS maps to be drawn, in addition to other census, labour and economic data. This data gives an overall understanding of the research topic, and gives further credibility to the research questions and aims, these are presented in the results and analysis section along side primary

4.3 Analysis

The analysis was conducted using an inductive approach as it allows the incipient of concepts through themes generated from the data. From the SSI conducted, the data was organised thematically, as this process recognizes and identifies concepts hidden inside textual data (Baxter, P., & Jack, S. 2008)

The questionnaire survey results were analysed in a similar way.

4.4 Research Ethics

This study was conducted using principles of ethics as elucidated by research ethic guidelines, the ethical features include respecting the needs and interests of the respondents, regarding their privacy, right to anonymity in addition to clearly explaining the purpose and motivation for the study disclosing how their information and participation in the study would be presented and used. I explained who I was, the study programme, the University and other information the respondent may have requested in order to feel comfortable. Each interview was preceded and followed by asking if the respondent was happy that their information they divulged to be used for the study purpose. The names divulged and used in the study gave their express permission to do so.

4.4.1 Assumptions and limitations

The following assumptions were made while conducting the research; i) the actors an subjects interviewed for the SSI qualitative data collection were the most appropriate individuals to respond to the interview questions ii) the respondents provided the best and most comprehensive answers, whilst being representative of the subjects’ views.

Time constraints, resource constraints and some lack of corporation were elements that affected the research. Most of the interviews were conducted via Skype, which poses several limitations such as difficulty building rapport with the respondent, in addition to missing out on observing body language and other non-verbal forms of communication. Skype also does not allow for direct observation of the area, there are times when hearing and technical problems arise which can lead to data loss and the misinterpretation of questions or answers. In addition to the Skype interview, the respondents were given my email address and for any questions or clarification needed written correspondence was utilised. Additionally, many of the farms/ projects have some sort of online presence; therefore this was used to give some further background to understanding the smallholder.
5. Results and Analysis

This section presents the main findings of the study, with each method presented individually. Primary data found was very reliable and from credible sources, it provided much understanding and context in regard to farmer demographics, farm ownership and change over time, although some of the figures presented are dated as far as 2006, these were the most up to date statistics publicly available at the time of data collecting for this study. The response rate from the questionnaire was rather low, from over 200 that were sent out a total of 25 were completed, this is a return rate of 12.5%, which is quite low, the limits to this are discussed in the section 4.2 and the discussion, however despite this low return rate, the responses add much richness to the discussion and shedding light on the topic and issue at hand, and whilst not providing a truly robust and complete picture of the movement, it provides an interesting entry point to explore the phenomenon and changing paradigm of food movements in Italy.

5.1 Primary Data from Secondary Sources

From 2000 – 2010, there has been a trend of the larger agricultural holdings getting larger, whilst the number of farms holding less than 20 hectares of agricultural land, decreasing (-34.6 %). The other classes of farms grew, with the highest growth recorded among the biggest class of farms, those with 100 hectares or more of UAA (+23 %) (EUROSTAT 2015; Ec.europa.eu. 2016). Agricultural holdings with 50 to 99.9 ha of agricultural land scored the second highest increase (+22 %), while farms with 30 to 49.9 hectares grew by 11.5 %. As a result, more than half of the Italian UAA currently belongs to a very small number of farms; contrastingly the largest number of agricultural holdings belongs to smallest class of farms, the majority (51 %) of agricultural holdings proved to belong to the smallest class of farms with UAA; 819 360 farms were recorded as having between 0.1 ha and 1.9 ha of agricultural land (EUROSTAT 2015; Ec.europa.eu, 2016).

The table below shows how the number of organic holdings has increased from 2003 – 2010, alongside the hectare of UAA used for organic farming. The average Organic farming size has grown since 2003 -where it was 9.58ha (according to EUROSTAT data below) – to 18ha in 2010. This is an increase of 53%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference year</th>
<th>Number of holdings with organic farming</th>
<th>UAA with organic farming (ha)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>38 470</td>
<td>368 510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>41 000</td>
<td>609 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>39 140</td>
<td>698 490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>41 920</td>
<td>754 530</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Number of Holdings with Organic Farming compared to UAA with Organic Farming (ha)

Source: EUROSTAT 2013

The southern regions showed the highest number of persons working in the farms in 2010; coincidently the South is also from where the majority of organic produce comes
(EUROSTAT 2013; Ec.europa.eu, 2016). With about 560,000 persons employed in agriculture, the south eastern territory of Puglia records the highest figure followed by Sicily whose share is 12.7%, corresponding to about 430,000 units (EUROSTAT 2015).

Ownership
A huge part of agricultural land in Italy is family-owned, or sole-owned, and back in 2010, agriculture in Italy accounted for nearly 14% of labour (of Italian economically active persons). In 2010 this accounted for 3.4 million persons employed in agricultural holdings, with 77% of sole holders proving to be male:

### Table 2: Number of Holders by Gender and Age, by NUTS Regions, Italy 2000 and 2010

Source: EUROSTAT 2015

A survey on farm ownership in Italy conducted by RICA-FADN in 2006, found that the majority of commercial farms are sole-owned (Johnson et al. 2009; p.28). Further, the share of farms with multiple owners is higher in corporations, there are even farms owned by 2 or 3 people despite there being only one principal operator household (Ibid; p.15). In different households, there may be different owners as the owner may not be part of the operator’s household or indeed extended family (Ibid.; p. 3)

![Figure 4 Farms by legal Status and Number of Owners. Italy, 2006](source: Italian FADN, 2006)

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5 Farms are defined as commercial when they have an economic dimension above 4 European Size Units, i.e., around $4,800 euros.
5.2 Questionnaire Survey

In total, 25 complete QS responses were received from over 200 sent out to different consumer group websites, forums and databases in Italy, this is a return rate of 12.5%, which is quite low, the limits to this are discussed in the proceeding section. Considering the demographics, slightly more men (55%) replied than women. The age groups of the respondents were varied, those aged between 20 – 29 represented the largest group of respondents (36.0%); ages between 30 – 39 years represented 32%; 40-49 only 5%, and those aged 50 or over represented 27%; standard deviation was 3.26 demonstrating the good spread of age demographics from those responding, despite the low QS return rate. 50% of the respondents are self-employed; 27% Unemployed; 18% are students and 9% are employed.

The majority of respondents represented in the QS had received higher education, many completing master level. The highest education level received by the respondents: 41% have a Master degree; 27% have high school level education; 18% have a Bachelor degree; 9% have an apprenticeship and 5% have higher than Master level education. Standard deviation for this category stands at 3.09, again demonstrating a wide spread of deviance from the mean.

Regarding respondents’ involvement in the food sector:

![Figure 5 Chart Demonstrating The Respondent’s (Activity) Civic Engagement And Involvement In The Local Food-Sector](source)

Source: Author (See Appendix 9.0 for full set of results)

(Translation: Coltivo il mio cibo: Cultivate own food 64%; Avere una fattoria: Own own farm)
Of those who cultivated their own food, 45% had their own private garden (non-commercial); with 18% renting an allotment; 9% taking part in a community garden, another 9% involved in teaching about agriculture and finally 27% were involved in some other form of growing, despite having a text box in which respondents could divulge further information, none did. 67% of those who cultivated their own food, did so using organic techniques, of the 33% who did not use organic techniques, 60% practiced other forms of sustainable agriculture.

Question 9 (section 2) was used to gauge the motivations behind the respondent’s involvement in the food-sector. The radar diagram below shows the most common answers among respondents to be: involvement in the food sector, as a civic actor, for reasons of own/family consumption, and for other reasons not presented as options, in the emails received from participants this included: convenience, personal ties to associations or friends who were part of food-system related civic activities.
In this instance it is clear to see that personal motivation is the biggest driver for the respondents’ involvement in the food-sector, this includes: for their own consumption wellbeing, habitual practice (which may be linked to socioeconomic position, education, background etc). The lowest ranking motivations are those more ‘ultristic’ in value: to be part of the community, to contribute to a different food system and environmental reasons. The vast majority of respondents (78%) had less than 8 years active experience and involvement in the food-system.

Section 3 of the QS contains 10 questions, the respondents were asked to decide how important the role of organic/ sustainable agriculture played on certain aspects of their communities. This was in relation to civic agriculture and transformational change. It is not deemed necessary to give detailed results from all 10 questions, so results have been summarised below. The majority of respondents (70% +) considered the following either ‘important’ or ‘very important’:

- Providing locally produced food (71%)
- Encouraging more ecological living (smaller carbon footprint) (83%)
- Promoting more environmentally aware consumption habits (100%)

Figure 6 Chart Demonstrating Respondents’ Motivations For Their Civic Engagement And Involvement In The Local Food-Sector
Source: Author (See Appendix 9.0 for full set of results)
Building community spirit (84%)

It must be noted that 69% and 66%, respectively, considered the contribution organic and sustainable agriculture has toward i) building a stronger community and ii) creating more resilient communities as important/very important.

The lowest ranking were:
- Reducing the cost of shopping (43%)
- Providing alternative sources of food in deprived areas of the city (39%)
- Providing opportunities for social inclusion, and encouraging local/rural economy (55%)

When running a comparison analysis of the results, it was found that overwhelmingly (83%) of the respondents who considered organic/sustainable agriculture’s role in contributing to building a stronger and more resilient community (Q.15 and 16) as very important were female, all between the ages of 20-49, with 80% of this group having a University education. 66% of all respondents who agreed that the role of organic and sustainable agriculture in contributing to stronger and more resilient communities as very important, cultivate their own food with 66% of those cultivating food using sustainable/organic techniques. (Results were found through doing cross analysis using raw total data, see Appendix 10.6)

Those who considered the role of organic/sustainable agriculture very important/important in providing opportunities for social inclusion and encouraging local/rural economy (Q20.), in addition to providing alternative food sources in deprived areas (Q.19) 60% were female, 80% of respondents were over the age of 30, mostly self-employed (60%) and 80% of the respondents have an education of higher than Bachelor level. 80% of respondents non-commercially cultivate their own food using sustainable techniques. All of these respondents had less than 8 years active involvement in the food-system sector.

Section 4 of the QS, with 5 questions looks at understanding people’s perceptions of the role of the municipality in the local food system. Respondents were asked to state to what extent they agree or disagree with statements regarding the municipalities actions or responsibilities relating to their local food system.

The first statement (Q.21) in this section asked respondents to what extent they agreed with the statement that the municipality policy supports food initiatives/agricultural projects. 72% either agreed, or strongly agreed with this statement. Of those who agreed or strongly, 45% cultivated their own food, with 40% of those owning their own commercial farm.
The second statement (Q.22) asked to what extent they agreed with the statement that the municipality grants land/property for food initiatives and related projects. 25% were in strong/disagreement with this statement, these respondents are all male and all cultivate their own food, with 66% also involved with food waste initiatives. All respondents have more than 4 years active experience in the sector. Interestingly, 100% of these respondents believe that organic/sustainable agriculture should play a very important/important role in providing opportunities for social inclusion, and encouraging local-rural economy.

The third statement, (Q.23), “The municipality has a responsibility to ensure the availability of food in my city” has a high level of divergence of answers regarding the extent of agreement to this statement, however 58% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, with 35% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. Those disagreeing with the statement were all male, over the age of 30, and a mixture between farm owners and those who finance food initiative schemes (a community garden).

For the fourth statement (Q.24) “The municipality has a responsibility to ensure a diversity of food retailers” 36% of respondents strongly agreed, with 27% remaining neutral. Of the respondents who strongly agreed, their demographic spread is quite diverse, from 20 – 60+ years of age, all from different educational backgrounds, however they are all food cultivators.
Figure 8 Chart Demonstrating Respondents’ Level of Agreement With The Statement “The Municipality Has A Responsibility To Ensure A Diversity Of Food Retailers”.

Source: Author (See Appendix 9.0 for full set of results)

The fifth and final statement (Q.25) “The municipality has a responsibility to protect not only our food production, but they way in which it affects the wider community” received overwhelming agreement/ strong agreement (91%).
The municipality has a responsibility to protect not only our food production, but their way in which it affects the wider community.

![Chart Demonstrating The Extent To Which Respondents Agree With The Statement In Q. 25 “The Municipality Has A Responsibility To Protect Not Only Our Food Production, But Their Way In Which It Affects The Wider Community”](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>N/A</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Weighted Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (9%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
<td>5 (45%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.09 / 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9 Chart Demonstrating The Extent To Which Respondents Agree With The Statement In Q. 25 “The Municipality Has A Responsibility To Protect Not Only Our Food Production, But Their Way In Which It Affects The Wider Community”

Source: Author (See Appendix 9.0 for full set of results)
5.3 Poll
A poll was conducted to gauge the general public opinion on the statement: The current main forms of agriculture (production and consumption) are damaging for society? There were four answers: Agree, Disagree, Do not know and Other. There was also an option to write a comment following the poll. 81.08% Agreed with this statement (30/37).

![Poll Results]

**Figure 10**  **Poll Conducted Showing Public Opinion**

Source: Author (See Appendix 9.0 for full set of results)
5.4 Direct Observation

During the research stay in Italy, several farms were visited; noting the relevant features, which demonstrate how civic engagement in organic/ sustainable agricultural practice contributes toward social justice and transformational change in the local Italian food systems, in addition to their wider socioeconomic implications. These were documented using photographs, some of these are utilised in the proceeding section, where deemed relevant and enhancing of the conclusions.

5.5 Semi-Structured Interviews

In total 7 interviews were conducted. All of the respondents are smallholder farmers, (below 15ha) from all over Italy. They are members of different associations, unions and farming groups, they are all new entrants however with varying levels of experience and ages. Although all are based in Italy, some are not Italian (interview 1, 4). The results below describe their perspectives regarding four topics: their motivations/ values; their perceived or lived barriers regarding organic certification; their perspectives regarding agricultural policy; with the final section collating results which demonstrate the societal contribution of new entrant smallholders.

5.5.1 New entrant smallholder motivations

“I am green in my heart” (Interview 1: 17th March 2016)

These results collate the new entrant smallholder motivations and values gathered during the interview process pertaining to their involvement in the Italian agricultural sector. New entrants seem to be driven mostly by their own ideological belief, in addition to wanting to pursue a different way of living for personal, environmental and social wellbeing (interview 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 6, 7). Although the choice isn’t purely ultristic, there are many other driving factors, which have contributed toward the decision of becoming smallholders. The projects of Interview 2 and 3 are probably the most socially driven, one actively pursuing a different form of communitarian organisation, and the other calling itself a social-farming project, with the objective of improving migrant-community integration. The three key instigators of this project (interview 2a, b, c) were driven by a personal desire to work with the land and seek a more holistic and less environmentally obtrusive way of living:

“I have been searching for an opportunity to get involved with working with the land, cultivating food, but then also contributing to my community … especially now with the migrant crisis… I am now at the end of my studies, and I am looking for a job and something to really get involved in, this project is something concrete which I can use my studies and skills in as well as aligned to my passions” (Interview 2a, Filipo: 23rd March 2016)

“I feel it necessary to do something I am passionate about, and will contribute to something better” (Interview 2b Fabio; 23rd March 2016)

“Good humus, good crop; good community cohesion, lead to good society with happy people” (Interview 2c. Paolo: 23rd March 2016))
Figure 11 Pictures Showing The Land And Manual Labour Put Into The Cultivamo, Biofactoria

(Photos by Author: March 2016, Tombello, Italy)“My drive is to have my own space but then also to contribute toward my community with art… I love working on the land, it inspires my art and the people who come here feel this connection between art, the land, community and happiness” (Interview 7: 30th February 2016)

Figure 12 Picture Showing The Artist Residence, Interview 7.

Photo by Author: April 2016, Umbertide, Italy)
The Residence Is Open To All and also Comprises a Small Gallery and Studio Open For The Community and For Cultural Exchange. Similarly, interview 1 and 4 are personally driven and were looking to escape busy lives and jobs in larger cities, seeking a different way of living.

“I didn’t move from Milan, a big busy city, to have a more stressful life... I didn’t want to have a stressful life” (interview 1: 17th March 2016)

“We are both passionate about cooking, and cooking good and wholesome food… it just seemed natural for us to set up Indaco Foods and BiBIOteca… it's a combination of our passions and this way we don't have to spend 50 or 60 hour weeks slaving in a busy inner city kitchen, we can enjoy a slower pace of life… cook and produce our own produce … makes us happy” (Interview 4: 12th March 2016)

None of the respondents seemed particularly motivated vis-à-vis the potential profitability organic agriculture offered. Although it seems that those who were organic certified (1, 4, 5) were aware of the increased access to market, potential for generating more income and certainly favoured certification over not being certified due to these economic factors. Interview 5 was potentially the most profit driven, as they did not diversify on products or services outside of lemon cultivation, and therefore relied on the farm and organic subsidy payments entirely for their survival. Organic and more sustainable agriculture was done in part through ideology, but mostly for sustainable business reasons:

“The soil was degraded, chemicals only help the roots and plant grow, but it does not help the soil. It's not a long-term solution to use chemicals… soil degradation will eventually cost more, and dependency on inputs (inorganic) are expensive, I want to reduce reliance” (Interview 5: 10th March 2016)

“We took a pay cut really, coming here from Amsterdam, we had a top restaurant and were,
honestly, making so much money... we came here to enjoy our lives, [life] it’s not just work, work, work, all the time... it has to be more” (Interview 4: 8th March 2016)

Interview 6, similar to interview 1 and 3, were driven by the want to pursue a different life as a result of their critical consumer stance:

“We were just fed up, looking at everything around us... just taking and not giving back... environmental degradation... communities feeling more lonely than ever... we took early retirement and went in search of something better for everyone”(Interview 6: 11th April 2016)

“We are not alone in this... so many young people are coming back to the abandoned fields, practicing old techniques and ways of living that have been lost ... the people here, the old people of this land are not interested, the young are... and this is good” (Interview 1: 17th March 2016)

Interview 1, 3 and 4 in particular made a point of their motivation that regarded reviving the rural economy, preserving the rural landscape in addition to providing rural employment; although on the latter point, neither farms were sufficiently profitable to provide real rural employment and most rely on either unpaid volunteer work (temporary persons who work in exchange for food and board). Environmental protection, in particular protecting soil (humus), and crop varieties was another motivation, in particular interview 1, 3 and 4. Interview 3 was the most holistic and ideologically driven

“The association’s objective is to promote, through its activities and its very existence, the possibility for modern man to regain the ability to produce and build what it needs... the Earth can give nourishment, warmth and teaching to anyone who takes the time to listen... we work on cooperating with other organizations and associations, events, courses and meetings to bring young and old to the various aspects of production in natural farming systems... to raise awareness to the environment, to the care of places and the relationship between people... to raise awareness of alternative culture and economy... Saja's people, plants, animals and thoughts are all together, but each in its place coexist and cooperate.” (Interview 3: 18th March 2016)

5.5.2 Socio-Economic Factors

All of those interviewed were below the age of 37, with strong education backgrounds, with respondents from interview 1, 2a, 2b 3 having a master degree, and the other respondents (interview 3, 5 and 6) had been to University, with respondents from interview 4 having been to a high-standard cooking school in the Netherlands. Degrees studied varied from political science, to development, agrarian sciences and vocational studies. Some of the respondents (interview 1, 3, 4, 6) were from abroad, with some Italian heritage, but mostly were drawn to Italy from other lands:

“It's the style of life, the way of the people, the history ... the land is not as scarce or as expensive as back home” (Interview 1: 17th March 2016)

“The opportunities here are better than in Portugal... more clients and possibility for
growth… and better than in Holland where the land is just so expensive” (Interview 4: 13th March 2016)

Interview 5 took over the farm from a relative who was no longer to keep up the land; the respondent had been working in business and IT beforehand, through a government-training scheme. In addition, the respondent was previously heavily involved with organic networks and online training programmes.

It must be pointed out that many of the farms relied on seasonal and volunteer workers, this is at least in the initial stages, as the farms were not generating sufficient income. It is not possible for these smallholders to pay employees. Generally, it is after the first four/five years, and after receiving greater subsidies (for those who are organic certified) that the farms are able to pay their employees:

“We just can’t afford to pay… we do rely very heavily on volunteers from the WOOFing or Workaway networks… They come, and in exchange for food and a place to stay, they work for us” (Interview 4: 13th March 2016)

“At least until we get more established we will have to rely mostly on volunteers… maybe we will employ local people in the future… or maybe someone who is specialized… [for now] this works for us… we just don't have the money” (Interview 6: 11th April 2016)

“Our community is not built on paying incomes… it’s about working together and those who work here are investing in something beyond monetary payment” (Interview 3)

“We do rely on volunteers quite a lot… but the farm also is beginning to generate more money so we employ 3-5 people during the summer harvest time” (Interview 5: 18th March 2016)

It seems that respondent from Interview 7 is aimed at those of a more affluent background. Only accredited artists, or those seriously seeking creative outlet are welcomed as part of the programme to demonstrate art in the gallery; others are either made to pay, or work on the land/house reconstruction to compensate their stay. Art is also questionably accessible, although the gallery is open for all from direct observations and talking with neighbours many felt uncomfortable and left out of this rather alien concept:

“It’s never been done here… we are simple, country people… galleries make me, I don’t know… I just don't feel right” (Neighbour of Interview 7: 5th March 2016)
5.3.3 New Entrant perceived and lived barriers or issues with Certified Organic farming and Agricultural Policy

“When you know every single one of your cows, you know their name and their habits, then you can be organic. As soon as you don’t, you cannot be considered organic” (Interview 4: 13th March 2016)

The main barriers to enter the organic sector were identified as: financial, bureaucratic and keeping up with the constant changing information and laws (interview 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). All of the farms apart from 1, had to diversify their services, either providing social services (interview 2); community schemes such as a didactic learning centre (interview 2, 3); agritourism (interview 1, 7); or a restaurant and specialised organic food processing (interview 4). The one farm (interview 6) that did not diversify, produces lemons, they received a grant from the European community, as did interview 1 and 4, directly for organic conversion:

“I felt very supported during and after [conversion] organic farm support is better in Sicily that non-organic. The lemon farm (organic) doesn’t produce as much as the non-organic, therefore more support is needed and given… they [local government] helped to source inputs, but no help with finding buyers…[to find buyers] I went to Milan - it's up to you to find your networks and channels.” (Interview 5: 10th March 2016)

Respondent from interview 1 had a very different experience:

“They did not care… they just tell you that it’s better to do organic farming because you get more subsidies, that’s all the information you get” (Interview 1: 17th March 2016)

“Certification is so expensive, and complicated… even the subsidies aren’t paid on time, we’ve had to rely on family and friends to stop us going under… it’s really tough sometimes… I still hope that being certified will pay off” (Interview 4: 14th March 2016)

“It’s complicated to find the rules and regulations… we’ve had little support from the local
There were also issues related to bureaucracy, payment and policy raised by several of the respondents:

“We tried to find some [grants], but I was one day over the threshold to qualify for young farmer grants… so there was not this option” (Interview 1: 17th March 2016)

“People who make laws, and just sit there, have NO idea what they are talking about most of the time… If you asked them questions about agriculture, more niche for example about animal feed, or breeding, or production, they have no idea… these are the people who are deciding our future and they don’t have a clue” (Interview 4: 11th March 2016)

“The municipality has delayed us so many times with allocating the migrants… it really feels sometimes like they are working against us” (Interview 2a, Filipo: 25th March 2016)

Interview 1 (despite being certified), 3 and 6 were quite passionate about the negative aspects of certified organic agriculture

“It’s all about money… certified organic agriculture is just another way to make money without addressing the real (sustainability) problems… we don’t want that… we want to grow food and grow new communities… cooperation with each other and the earth” (Interview 3: 18th March 2016)

“All of people I know, who work already organic are not willing to pay for the certification… it’s not right to have to pay for certification… that’s the most frequent complaint I hear from other farmers” (Interview 1: 17th March 2016)

However, the respondent goes on to say:

“I see benefits to certification in these last years, because you have more access to markets and having selling opportunities… in small farmer counties people don’t care, because if it’s local and small and you say it’s organic they will just believe you… its mostly in big towns or big centers or cities where people live, they need proof of organic, in small towns not… they look into your face and know if you are a liar or not” (Interview 1: 17th March 2016)

Considering this same theme regarding closer communities, trust and the role of agriculture in creating stronger communities, respondents had much to say:

“I’ve heard of G.A.S and similar schemes, they are the best hope for smaller farms practicing ethical and sustainable but not organic (certified) farming” (Interview 6: 11th April 2016)

The following results focuses on the new entrant smallholder perspective regarding agricultural policy, pertaining to sustainable and organic practice. There seems to be a lot of distrust on the side of new entrant smallholders regarding organic agriculture and formalised certification (Interview 1, 3, 4, 6, 7). There is a strong distrust of the Italian bureaucratic government” (Interview 3: 18th March 2016)
system (Interview 1, 3, 7), which at times seems to not be aligned or sensitive to the needs of the new entrant small holders.

“We are not certified organic because we don’t want to be part of the agribusiness …we don’t accept to pay someone to give us a label, we don’t trust the policies used and we don’t accept the agriculture department to decide what and when we can use our own manure or things like that” (Interview 3: 18th March 2016)

“There just isn’t any point in being certified… they never check, and if they do they tell you before they are coming and you can decide which area they check…the whole system can be rigged for the bigger guy and the consumer ends up paying more for a product that might not be what is says” (Interview 7: 1st March 2016)

Interview 5 (and interview 1, 2) asserted to the difficulty of access to information in certain rural parts of Italy when trying to obtain grants for conversion, in addition to not knowing “where to go” in this respect. Additionally, interview 5 emphasised the lack of producer education/ knowledge on the damaging effects of conventional farming.

“It’s difficult to convince people that organic farming isn’t stupid… people make very beautiful farms using chemicals, people think you’re backwards for using non-conventional methods… globalisation has changed the way people farm and view farming” (Interview 5: 10th March 2016)

Interview 1, 4 and 6 mentioned the importance of policymakers not solely creating policies for financially incentivising producers, but also focused on the rural economic, environmental and social benefits

“If you incentivise only through subsidies people get involved for the wrong reasons… organic agriculture must come from the heart” (Interview 1: 17th March 2016)

“If agriculture policy were made by me, I would really ensure that the public and society benefits are placed at the heart… we are Italian, we care so much about our food, yet our food systems don’t always seem to care so much about us… it’s the competition… we’re all just trying to survive” (Interview 7: 5th March 2016)

5.5.4 New entrant smallholder societal contribution

Interview 2 is a combination between an organic commercial farm, and a social project-cum-community centre; set in Tombelle di Vogonovo, a small town just outside of Padua, Northern Italy. The project, titled: Tombello: Bio-Factory Sociale, ColitviAMOci - which in English means: Tombello; Organic Social Farm, Cultivating-Love – was set up by three graduates from nearby Venice almost two years ago. The social-farm not only practices organic and sustainable agricultural principles, it also houses eight Ghanaian migrants, in addition to having a community centre to the side of the main home.

“It’s not just a centre, or organic farm […] its aim is to integrate migrants …migrants aren’t a problem to our society they must be welcomed into our communities … we must also work to bring all other parts of the community together also” (Interview 2a, Filipo: 22nd March
The project works with the association and cooperative Villago Globale; they provide mediation between the project and the Venetian prefecture, in addition to aiding with the migrant allocation. This new form of social farming is an emerging concept.

“We saw the possibility of unifying the two concepts, the world of cultivation with the issue of migrants … we saw how we had the large house and a lot of land and thought that we could offer housing to migrants and if they’d like, they can get involved in the farming aspect of another activity here” (Interview 2b, Fabio: 22nd March 2016)

The group is also working on outreach programmes with the wider community, however due to resource restrictions these activities are thus far limited.

Interview 7, the Gretfi Cultural Project is placing a lot of emphasis on recreating the community of Umbertide, through the medium of culture and art. Although the focus lays in art, and the art gallery of the farm and project, the real goal is to create a more cohesive community, the events always include local source, sustainably made food, the gallery opening I attended revolved around pig production in the area – a point of pride and economic production for the area.

Interview 3, Saja project, is completely focused on recreating a more stable, less consumer driven society. Its goal is to get like-minded individuals to contribute toward this goal through skill sharing, building cultivating, creating income generating (low carbon) activities such as knitted goods, theatre and art workshops and the rest. This project is open to the whole community, however it seems that many in the area, who hold a traditional view, are not too enthusiastic about getting involved in this sort of societal restructuring. The project holds regular outreach events, to which the community is always invited and they try to integrate into the community, in particular they are part of the G.A.S network, which consists of local families in the area who buy their sustainable (not certified) produce and sell it either at farmers’ markets, to local supermarkets, on in local veg-box schemes. This is a recent development, and through the cultivation and selling of food, it seems that the community is becoming increasingly engaged.

Interview 4, the bio-restaurant/ organic farm, is a good example of bringing economic benefit to the area. Although the restaurant is quite small, and only recently started, due to the reputation the two owners as top-chefs back in Amsterdam, many of their cliental are making the visit to Le Marche, bringing tourists to the area. In terms of outreach to the wider community, the farm generally keeps to itself due to the high-demand labour on the land; they have future plans to open up a children’s didactic garden and make the space more open to community.

Interview 1 and 5 (certified) are generally more concerned with their own survival, generating enough income, rather than being part of the wider community. Both however are part of schemes similar to GAS, but more regarding organic producers, techniques, knowledge-exchange networks relating to potentially new markets, high-value products and innovative inputs for the land i.e. microorganism plant antibiotics (mentioned by interview 1). Despite their economic concerns, both these farms employ seasonal staff from the local community,
and say they have good relationships with their neighbours and nearby villages, however the sheer amount of time it takes to catch up on paperwork, bureaucracy, training for new laws, reading up on new organic requirements and so forth, these smallholders are unable to participate in their communities, despite both showing keen interest in wanting to do so.

Finally interview 6, which is only in the beginning stages, is yet to consider its position with the community. Currently they are focused on getting the land and humus to stable and rich condition to cultivate.

**Section Summary**

Primary data collected shows farm ownership change over the past decade, organic farms are growing in size, and decreasing in the number of owners. This means a general trend toward larger organic farms, with less owners (relative and ratio change). The direct observations were varied, showing that some smallholdings (organic or not) hold real, and direct, value to their local communities, and truly fulfil their purpose toward ‘social sustainability’ and contribution to the local economy. Additionally, these smaller farms experience many difficulties when attempting to become organically certified (capital, investment, access to market, certification costs, bureaucratic certification costs).
6. Discussion and Conclusions

This section outlines the main conclusions of the study, in addition to discussing the research questions, the research hypothesis, further research into this topic as well trying to found an understanding of the results, whilst acknowledging the limitations, discrepancies and interesting findings outside of the hypotheses made. This study had ambitious beginnings and whilst facing some initial setbacks, the discussion resulting from the data collected during this research allows for an interesting conversation into the Italian organic sector, and food movements in general. There seems to be an international movement – varying in size and capacity regionally – that is beginning to question the status-quo of conventional cultivation, how far these movements go in creating genuine transitional change e.g. to creating a new form of society and cultivation, is yet to be seen or determined. Certainly, the voices calling for greater equity, quality and sustainable development are beginning to turn words into practical action, offering the solutions and alternatives so desperately sought for.

6.1 Summary of Study Findings

There are three main conclusions from the study:

- The new entrants interviewed contribute, albeit in varying degrees, toward Civic Agriculture and their local communities. They are motivated by an ideology which generally encompasses triple bottom line sustainability, and have shown commitment to goals of greater sustainability regarding the environment, local society and rural economy.
- The Organic sector often excludes smallholders, even more so new entrants, who are often not supported by local policy and are faced with certain barriers yet to be addressed.
- It is possible for the organic sector to be reformed to be more inclusive of these new entrants, and in doing so may contribute to national and international goals of genuine sustainable agriculture.

6.2 Civic Agriculture and Sustainable Development

As stated in the Introduction, our ability to sustain a habitable planet for all and allow future generations to thrive is contingent on our ability to deliver genuine Sustainable Development, with particular emphasis and urgency on delivering this goal to the agricultural sector. The Discussion takes its point of departure in Sir Albert Howard’s question:

“Can mankind regulate its affairs so that its chief possession -- the fertility of the soil -- is preserved? On the answer to this question the future of civilization lies.”

(Howard 1943; p. 4)

6.2.1 Civic Agriculture delivering on Sustainability

Civic Agriculture, and its related alternative food-networks assume that consumers can play a critical role in creating a sustainable food system. This is done not solely through their purchases, which sends a strong message to producers, retailers and so forth regarding what they deem to be important and desirable, but also through their active engagement. For many years it seemed to confound environmental activists, academics and ‘sustainability’ focused policymakers on how to make such a movement more appealing and mainstream to the
public. Yet, in the past few years AFNs and civic agriculture is truly gripping many parts of the world, in a culturally specific and unique way (Patel 2010; Grasseni 2014; SARE 1997) Sustainable agriculture goes beyond prescribing set methods or practices. Instead, it refers to the ability to think about the entire system, and the long-term implications (social, environmental and financial) of the entire agricultural paradigm. Sustainable agriculture implies the involvement of all within the system, from producer to consumer, and in doing so reestablishes previously lost, or obscured relations.

As SARE 1997 states:

“A key goal is to understand agriculture from an ecological perspective—in terms of nutrient and energy dynamics, and interactions among plants, animals, insects and other organisms in agroecosystems—then balance it with profit, community and consumer needs.”

The study, as stated in the introduction has two aims i) To prove and critically analyse the research hypothesis ii) To understand who these new entrant smallholders are, and the extent of their contribution toward creating more sustainable communities and agriculture.

### 6.2.1.1 The Research Hypothesis:

“There is a growing trend of smallholder new entrants into the Italian agricultural sector. Smallholders, disenfranchised for many reasons regarding the formalised organic (certified) sector, are not necessarily pursuing avenues of formal organic certification. This may be for a variety of reasons and barriers – perceived and otherwise - in addition to difficulties faced accessing the market. Currently, larger farms and agribusiness largely dominate the certified organic sector, it is argued that these do not necessarily embody and uphold the dimensions of organic agriculture philosophy, and in doing so do not fully commit to the ethos of triple bottom line sustainability. There is a growing grassroots movement in Italy calling for - and actively participating in - a systemic change to the way in which food is produced and consumed. Many are reimagining Italy’s food-system through engagement in Alternative Food Networks and Civic Agriculture”

The hypothesis is proved and the research aims met using a triangulation of methods i) statistical data from ERI-Agri (2015) EUROSTATs (2013 & 2015) Ec.Europa 2016, Bioreport Organics in Italy 2014 ii) supportive literature from IFOAM, Soil Association, several authors such as Grasseni 2014; Favilli 2015; Brunori et al 2012; Spillare & Palentenieri 2015 and iii) results from the questionnaire surveys and semi-structure interviews.

### Barriers

Turning our attention first to the hypothesis, it is apparent (Sutherland 2015; EPI-Agri 2015) that agriculture is increasingly attracting new entrants, in particular smallholder new entrants to the organic sector, although not necessarily certified organic. What was found in the results, regarding the barriers, challenges and issues faced by smallholders and the organic sector, and indeed agricultural (CAP) policy in general is identified in other studies. New entrants, those either certified organic or with the ambition to get certified, repeatedly mentioned bureaucratic reasons as being one of the biggest barriers to the certified organic sector. At least 2 of the respondents repeatedly pressed the fact that the sheer amount of paperwork required to gain, and then maintain, the organic certificate was having a negative effect on their work on the land, and hindering their ability to pursue more fulfilled lives due
to the sheer volume of paperwork, requirements, trainings and keeping up with constantly changing regulations. Other reasons were financial; not having access or know-how to grants in addition to difficulty securing land and tenure rights have been repeated identified as barriers new entrants must face. This coupled with bureaucratic delays saw one respondent (Interview 1) not receive her organic subsidy payments for almost 2 years, and another (interview 4) having to rely on loans from family, friends and the bank until these bureaucratic and administrative problems were resolved. Smallholders, and in particular new entrants, are not able to absorb these financial setbacks as well as larger farms; further organic produce can take many years to be cultivated from the land, especially if it was previously conventionally farmed (as in the case of interview 5).

It is the ability to adapt, absorb financial set back, produce on-masse and have ease of access to well-established markets that allows larger farms to continuously dominate in this sector. The Soil Association (2012) conducted a smallholder information-gathering research study, to better understand the barriers faced by smallholder organic producers in Scotland, finding much of the same barriers as expressed by the new entrant smallholders involved in this study. The study was much more extensive than the research done for this paper, yet the results, which found bureaucracy, financing, difficulties in sourcing inputs and immense difficulty finding suitable markets or access to markets as the most pressing problems. However, where this study did not delve was into understanding the drawbacks of certification, which have been made apparent through this study, in addition to various other more extensive studies across Europe and America, which have heavily criticised the ‘green-consumerism’ angle the certified organic sector seems to have take. We will come back to the point later in the discussion, when turning out attention to answering the research questions.

**Larger farms and Sustainability**

The results section 5.1 showing primary data from secondary sources (EUROSTAT, Ec.Europa, Italian Agricultural Census) clearly demarcates the dominance of larger farms in the organic sector, further literature Favilli (2015), Spillare & Palteinieri (2015) and Randelli (2015); Marzieh & Keshavarz (2009) illustrate the dangers of larger farms, and in fact their (largely) economic incentives for pursuing organic certification puts the integrity of organic agriculture at risk. Indeed, it risks the entire goal of achieving genuinely sustainable agriculture. For et al. Hill (1999) and Gafsti (2006) sustainable agriculture relates to the formation of a new social contract between consumer and producer, and should have less of an emphasis on the economic benefits of sustainable (organic) agriculture if we are to see real gains in terms of environmental and social benefits.

The results shown in Appendix 10.6 comparing the levels of hazardous waste, NH3 (ammonia), and nitrous oxides from the agricultural sector in the early 2000’s and 2013 shows some progress, but nowhere near the progress that is needed in order to address such pressing environmental issues. It can be concluded therefore that agricultural policy, in respect to strict environmental protection, is compromised so as to not hinder economic development. Civic agriculture and transition movement theory would postulate this inaction as being potential indirect driving force, producing more critical-consumers, as awareness regarding environmental degradation and climate change becomes more known. Additionally, it is not solely the lack of the environmental benefits that these larger farms tend to side step; they are also not necessarily connected to their communities (Shiva and Bedi 2002; Gafsi et al 2006) neither is this aspect of any particular importance or relevance.
Italy’s growing Alternative-Food Networks and Civic Agriculture

Evidently this has strongly come to light; AFNs and Civic Agriculture are dynamic and growing in Italy (Grassini and H2014; Spillare & Palteinieri 2015; Brunori et al. 2012; Favilli 2015). The formation of solidarity purchasing groups, and informal civic engaged activities (connecting food, farm and community) may not be mainstream, but it is certainly not unheard of in Italy. The Slow Food movement is well established (Spillare and Paletenieri 2015), in addition to farmer’s markets, local organic/ sustainable growers movements, GAS (see Brunori et al 2012; Grassini 2013 and Randelli 2015, Chen 2012 for further reading) in addition to the many new entrants joining the agricultural sector. The questionnaire survey and poll demonstrated the engagement of public in Italy regarding the food-system, although the responses were quite low 25, and 37 respectively (the respondents of the QS and poll were different, this was ensured by i) making users register their emails to reduce duplication ii) they were done at different times, and different resources were used to get ensure random selection of respondents).

There are certain weaknesses in having such low numbers of respondents i) the sample is too small to draw strong conclusions ii) it is quite difficult to ensure a representative demographic of respondents (age, sex, socioeconomic factors, opinions, motivations etc) iii) the limitations of a QS must also be acknowledged, the respondent must respond to the questions asked with the answers given (all by the researcher).

These were overcome by: i) comparing the results to similar studies, relevant literature, and sampling wider public debate (newspapers, documentaries, tv etc) to test the validity of the results, and from literature reviewed it seems the trends found in the study’s QS results are inline with more extensive, published studies ii) next time the QS will be created in conjunction with a focus group, representing diverse participant demographics, in addition to putting the QS on the internet, physically going to the street to ask respondents directly would also hugely benefit any future or amended study iii) similar to the previous point, creating the QS with a diverse focus group, in addition to running a tester QS to ascertain any issues beforehand.

6.3 Research Questions

6.3.1 First Research Question

*Who are these new entrants, what motivates them? What are the new entrants’ perceived barriers/ issues with the current organic sector?*

It is clear from both the results of the semi-structure interviews and from literature (Sutherland 2015; EPI-Agri 2015) that the new entrant smallholders are a diverse group, with differing backgrounds, motivations and experience. Those interviewed may not be representative of all new entrant smallholders, but they certainly fall within the 5/6 of categories, which also delineates motivations, ascribed by EPI-Agri (2015 p. 10) and Sutherland (2012) for new entrants:

The farm pertaining to Interview 5, selling organic lemons, falls under the category of *Microbusiness:*

Identified by Madureira et al. (2015) as a smallholding, generally producing one specific fruit,
smallholdings, for national and international markets.

The farm of Interview 6, a retired couple, shows some shared characteristics of the New Estates: Sutherland (2012) conducted a study finding that new semi large-scale rural non-commercial farms tend to be owned by older new entrants. Generally, these new entrants have accumulated wealth and have sought the recreational farm life (EPI-Agri 2015; p. 10).

Interview 1, 2, and 4 fall more heavily under the category Alternative agriculture, yet there are aspects of every farm in the study which falls under this category:
Organic farmers are more likely to be new entrants (Rigby et al., 2001; Padel, 2001; Lobley et al., 2009), in addition to being more likely to pursue value-added farming activities (e.g. alternative agri-food networks, local certification schemes) (Sutherland et al 2015). Many of these new farmers will likely engage in alternative marketing models: short production chains, direct marketing, box schemes, value added processing (EGI-Agri 2015; p. 9) in addition to utilising different technological information and communication resources compared to a mainstream farmer (organic farming events and web-sites, organisations like Worldwide Opportunities on Organic farms (WWOOF) and workaway.info, foodassembly etc) (Ibid).

All the farms of the respondents interviewed would fall under the category Smallholding: Generally under 20ha, with farmers with varying motivations (e.g. to enter farming, to establish a rural residence, or as a second home)(EPI-Agri 2015; p9). The production from the holding is either for personal consumption (or for small businesses) or for local sales. Smallholders frequently emphasise low input production (ibid).

Farms from interview 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7 correspond to the category Back-to-the-land movements: ‘Back-to-the-land’ migrants to rural areas are typically new entrants to farming (EPI-Agri 2015; p. 10) with a preference toward local markets and organic production, rather then industrial farming (Wilbur 2013. Production is typically small-scale, labour intensive and requiring limited capital investment, agricultural advisory services do not tend to serve this group well, as often these services are more geared toward commercial activity and this set of farmers has a totally different information need. Knowledge-exchange, communitarian living, neighbouring-reliance and alternative knowledge systems often characterise this category and its production skills (Wilbur 2013).

Farms from interview 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 correspond to the category Lifestyle and hobby farming:
A study by Pinto-Correia et al. (2015) found that those pursuing a farming lifestyle were often utilising low-impact land management practices, in addition to seeking a calmer lifestyle which often brings with it positive environmental and social benefits to local communities, often revitalising the area and generating local produce.
“We were just fed up, looking at everything around us… just taking and not giving back… environmental degradation… communities feeling more lonely than ever… we took early retirement and went in search of something better for everyone”(interview 6)

Regarding the organic sector, aside from the barriers faced gaining/ maintaining organic status, which were explained in the previous section, the new entrants interviewed gave an insight into the greater ontological problems they saw with the certified organic sector, something which Favilli (2015) also asserts to.
“I am green in my heart...large farms cannot be truly organic...not what it’s meant to be” (Interview 1: 17th March 2016)

“When you know every single one of your cows, you know their name and their habits, then you can be organic. As soon as you don’t, you cannot be considered organic” (Interview 4: 12th March 2016)

Many attributed the growth in the Italian organic sector to be incentivised by the economic benefits; indeed the USDA Agricultural Report (2015) credited the CAP reforms, and greening payments, for the sector’s accelerated growth. Civic agriculture and Critical theory challenges the notion of the necessity of growth to generate prosperity, which is the perspective purported by the formal organic sector (Sen 1987; Jackson 2010). As the new entrant respondents and others (IFOAM; Howard 1947; ) purport, organic certification is a form of green consumerism

“It’s all about money... certified organic agriculture is just another way to make money without addressing the real (sustainability) problems ...we don't want that...we want to grow food and grow new communities... cooperation with eachother and the earth” (Interview 3: 18th March 2016)

“In small farmer counties people don’t care, because if it’s local and small and you say it’s organic they will just believe you... its mostly in big towns or big centers or cities where people live, they need proof of organic, in small towns not...they look into your face and know if you are a liar or not” (Interview 1: 17th March 2016)

Many of the respondents were quite passionate about not getting an organic certificate, derived from what was said, this was due to ideological belief i) certification should not be paid for, with the incentive that in doing so you would get more money ii) that the regulations and expectations of organic agriculture are not sufficiently robust as they still allow for certain organic-based chemicals to be used. which have been show to have similar damaging effects as inorganic iii) organic farming should be done because of other incentives, an affinity to the land and desire to contribute to something more than just producing for food, an ethos all the respondents interviewed felt large farms could not genuinely follow.

Looking at the results from a different perspective, it was seen an interesting side point to discuss the socioeconomic advantage and background of most of the new entrants, and to illustrate the barriers faced by others either i) becoming a new entrant ii) following sustainable cultivation techniques. All the new entrants were University educated or above, with sufficiently affluent backgrounds which have allowed them financial capital to invest in a ‘new entrant’ venture, although many of them had to rely on loans and experienced much hardship, the option to pursue different careers or avenues was always present, and continues to be so. Their educational and age advantage means that all the respondents were able to diversify services, set up online networks, build support, knowledge share, locate (or create) markets (e.g. food assembly, slow food markets), reach out to volunteers to help reduce labour costs, advertise easily for agritourism and most importantly of all exploit their urban networks and connections; this is something Sutherland et al 2015 remark on. Those from traditional rural backgrounds are not typically able to access these avenues, and in particular they are not knowledgeable about the importance of sustainable agricultural practice, as both respondents from interview 1, 5 and 7 pointed out, other farmers in their nearby area (who
were traditional farmers) tended to not understand their techniques and in fact questioned and ridiculed their techniques. In fact, those from interview 2 mentioned the lack of community enthusiasm for their project (organic farm and migrant centre).

This may just be a symptom of a generational gap, but this is where agricultural policy could play a role in not only supporting the new entrants and understanding their more decentralised way of operating, but going further and identifying those traditional producers who may find it difficult to adapt and change in accordance with contemporary pressures. It must be noted however, that despite the socioeconomic advantages of the new entrants and their ability to step away from the farm, they all seemed resolute in their pursuit of spreading their skills and passion for organic and sustainable agriculture, whilst maintaining a deep commitment to a different and more unified community, with the principles of equity and inclusion at its core.

6.3.2 Second Research Question

**To what extent do new entrants contribute toward Civic Agriculture or transformational change in the Italian Food System? How can this more civic-focused agriculture facilitate a path to more robust sustainable agriculture and strong organic agriculture?**

As Allen and Kovach (2000), Brunori et al 2012 and other active consumerism theorists assert, the pressures by the growth of evidence regarding the damaging ecological and social impacts of the modern food system, are creating a ‘new impulse to the defetishisation of commodities’ (Brunori et al. 2012; p. 14). This has given consumers the space and ability to reassert and establish their citizenship values, and reconcile this with their behaviour as consumers. Given that consumers are given the choice, with sufficient information about the product supply chain, each act of ‘enlightened’ product consumption (which is ecologically and socially sustainable) is a political act, and therefore it can be concluded that platform of Food consumption is increasingly considered a significant and new political space.

Studies have shown the failure and contradictions when businesses, through ‘ethical’ marketing, attempt to create sentiment of consumer-citizenship; a study by Johnston (2008) found that the US Whole Food Markets strategy targeted wealthy consumers with ‘ethically’ labelled products and framed the purchasing of said products as an act of citizenship. In fact, what was found is that this strategy had more emphasis on consumerism, rather than citizenship and that therefore such a stance did not challenge the existent development paradigm, and its food regime. According to Johnston (2008) and Brunori et al. 2012 (p. 14) the reason for this is because this particular form of consumer-citizenship does not challenge the status-quo, neither does it attempt to fundamentally change the methods of production or resale. In fact, as Brunori et al (2012) put it ‘[it] tries to reconcile individual self-interest with collective responsibility to a common good’, a rather paradoxical goal and one which has not necessarily had extensive success in achieving this ‘common good’ for all.

Alternatively, what was observed in the study is the demand and action, on the consumer side, to become not only an integral part of the food-production supply chain, but offer critical-
alternatives to the current food regime. Reasserting the consumer-citizen relation and in doing so, it begins to comprise a whole movement, a responsible social innovation, slowly leading toward transition. Additionally, the QS and poll deriving from this study, frames and allows for a better understanding of the wider context that is indeed attempting a grassroots led paradigm shift. It is a multi-approach to change, influenced by landscape shifts (climate change, financial crisis, social inequality).

The new entrants interviewed, whilst not all directly contributing to their immediate communities, all showed signs of what Brunori et al. 2012 and Bassetti (2012) discuss in regard to social responsible innovation and transition movements. The new entrants, in particular interviews 1, 3, 4 and 6 demonstrate new ways of food production, directed by new social contracts, rules and norms that are guided by certain principles. In doing so, whilst they are ‘novel’ in their actions, they in fact are contributing to wider programme ‘niche’ guided by the desire to produce food in a more environmentally respectful, and sustainable way, whilst adhering to an unspoken ‘social’ contract imbedded in each of the new entrants, whose desire is to enhance their rural and local communities. Each respondent showed some desire to share their techniques of organic/ sustainable farming in their communities, in addition to pursuing a more unified community, based on shared values and shared social responsibility. Those more directly involved in their communities, such as interview 2 and, to an extent, interview 7, demonstrate a new form of social-business and responsible innovation. In particular, the project from interview 2 is attempting to forge a new form of more inclusive communities, with a new social contract and currency at its core. Even the title, Bio-Factoria Sociale, ColitiviAMOci - which in English means; Organic Social Farm, Cultivating-Love - clearly shows the ambitions of the project, to not solely grow crop, but foster new social relations regarding food.

“IT’s not just a centre, or organic farm […] its aim is to integrate migrants … migrants aren’t a problem to our society they must be welcomed into our communities … we must also work to bring all other parts of the community together also” (Interview 2c, Paolo: 24th March 2016)

Similarly, the Grefti Project (interview 7) is as much a smallholding organic farm, as it is a cultural outreach programme. Its aim is to spread not only cultural awareness of the area, by also create a space in which members of the community are welcome to join and interact in. The strength, and to an extent the weakness, of these new entrant projects is the diversity. Diversity allows for culturally, and community specific spontaneous projects to emerge. However, the lack of homogeneity means that creating a united front of ‘movements’ to indeed create regime change is rather difficult. Undeniably, change, history has shown us, comes through a united front, however given the situation maybe diversity and community connection, interaction on a micro level with individuals (consumer, producer, food, community) may in fact lead to a fundamental change in attitude. The responsible innovation these new entrant projects have shown is a massive strength and potential accelerating factor, not only are many of the respondents planting new crop varieties, ones which are uniquely chosen as it complements the climate, soil, local-ecosystems, but they are also innovating new techniques. Interview 1 is exploring the use of green-fertiliser in the form of fermented nettles, interview 2 and 3 are looking at microorganism-based plant antibiotics to protect their crop from disease outbreak. Every day these novel, or niche farmers are innovating and creating low-impact, low-resource consuming ways of bettering their practice, in doing so they further advance the argument for the viability of this form of sustainable agriculture.
6.3.2.1 Questionnaire Survey Results

The wider public was asked questions in order to gauge how important the role of organic/sustainable agriculture played on certain aspects of their communities. This was mostly to i) understand a contextual opinion on the food-system in Italy ii) To observe if the trend of critical-consumers and civic engagement was something that was gaining traction.

The results show, that whilst 100% of respondents believed the most important role of organic/sustainable agriculture in their communities is to promote environmentally aware consumption habits, 84% believed that it also plays a role in building community spirit. While only 69% and 66%, respectively, considered the contribution organic and sustainable agriculture has toward i) building a stronger community and ii) creating more resilient communities as important/very important. Those who responded in this way, are mostly female, below the age of 50, with strong educational backgrounds, more than half are involved in cultivating their own food and 80% involved in other ‘AFNs’. It is possible therefore to see how niche these types of movements are, as they are yet to have a wider impact on opinion, while those involved in such activities believe they contribute toward more resilient and strong communities, those who are not directly involved are yet to see this evidence, is one possible explanation.

Further, the lowest ranking were:

- Reducing the cost of shopping (43%)
- Providing alternative sources of food in deprived areas of the city (39%)
- Providing opportunities for social inclusion, and encouraging local/rural economy (55%)

It is possible that due the organic sectors current track record i.e. high cost, lack of accessibility of products in poorer areas, and lack of social and rural economic strict beneficiary that is perceived in such a way. Further, this low ranking could be as a result of the lack of tenable and substantive evidence of organic/sustainable agriculture projects’ involvement in civic engagement activities. Civic agriculture combines social activities with agriculture, however this is still rather small and not so widespread. In fact, FAO (Fao.org, 2014) has recently launched a call for contributions to gather more information and a greater understanding on social farming, care farming and civic agriculture with a greater degree of focus on societal wellbeing and benefit generating. Across Italy, there are potentially hundreds of informal networks, projects, localised schemes, community start-ups and the like which are not known due to their innate decentralised nature. It is possible that those asked to complete the questionnaire are neither aware nor directly involved in these schemes, or if they are there is a chance they underestimate the level of real-wider impact; it is possible that due to the lack of active local authority policy engagement, in encouraging such schemes and ensuring their longevity, is a reason for this. Organic/sustainable agriculture is still relatively costly, a cost comparative study on non-organic vs. organic diet by the Journal of Food Distribution Research (Brown & Sperow, 2005: p.21) found that on average, using data from the US, organic food cost 47 – 49% more compared to non-organic, this is in line with more informal studies conducted by consumer groups and the FAO. These reasons often given for this are: the labour intensive nature of organic agriculture, in addition to the slightly lower yield, the cost of certification, cost of inputs occasionally and other variant factors (FAO 2009; p. 5). It has been shown however, that organic farms can produce higher yields than conventional, they are long-term more sustainable, per-ha production can be higher due to more labour being used in the cultivation (FAO 2009; p.3).
Looking at the study conducted by USDA Agricultural Report (2015), it was found that Italian consumers prefer buying locally, as opposed to from supermarkets; additionally there is a great demand on the side of consumers in Italy for organic produce, with many who currently buy organic willing to pay more the premium product. Given this wider study, in addition to the QS results, it is possible to infer that civic agriculture, and localised sustainable farming could in fact have a real impact on the Italian food sector.

6.3.2.2 Making More Robust Organic Agriculture

New entrant contribution toward regime change, can be assessed through the framework provided by Brunori et al 2012, do these forms of farming fall under the novelty bracket or niche – and are they sufficiently robust to truly instigate regime change? Ironically, organic agriculture has gone from a novel activity, to niche, to somehow moulding to adapt to the status-quo regime. Arguably, the missing principle was the ‘leaving behind’ of civic society, in place of economic incentive that moved organic agriculture from its ‘roots’ and into the realm of status quo green-consumerism (Allen & Kovach 2000). In doing so, certified organic agriculture has isolated not only the smallscale, sustainable producer – who has great difficulty accessing the sector - but it has also isolated the greater goal of organic agriculture. Yet, despite ‘conventional’ organic agriculture now composing part of the old regime, it still finds support in the ‘niche’ sustainable agricultural sector, in the form of civic agriculture. The ideology, driving passion and dogma underlining organic philosophy, and sustainable agriculture has maintained, and continues to inspire local, civic agriculture and AFN movements.

It is possible to say that before now, organic agriculture had not gained much attention due to the ‘novelty’ of the movement, viewed as undesirable and too anti-conventional, in addition to its lack of economic viability. However, after being commercially adopted, this has been largely overcome. Yet, in doing so, certified, ‘conventional” organic agriculture has largely forgotten its raison d’etre, and the commitment such a movement should have toward real triple bottom line sustainability. Civic agriculture, AFNs and similar food-movements are offering a real and viable alternative, using responsible innovation, such movements now incorporate economic, social and environmental principles in addition to creating a consumer-citizen relation: reconnecting food, farm and community.

As the multi-approach food-movement gains momentum, and knowledge of different ‘realities’ spreads, it is not too wild to predict that consumers will start demanding more from their producer, and begin expecting more equity in the food system and its supply chain. It is still early days to see if this niche movement will in fact move into the realm of real-regime change, but it is possible to assume that certified organic agriculture must and will adapt to the growing pressures to be more inclusive of social sustainability, and begin economically benefitting rural economies.

6.3.2.3 Other results

It has previously been mentioned, but it is certainly something that should be reconsidered if we are to attempt to understand the potential for real transition. Many of the new entrant farms, in this study and others (See Grassini 2014; EPI-Agri 2015) found that there is a heavy
reliance on unpaid workers. This brings about two challenges,
i) This is not a sustainable business model, expecting to have an endless supply of essentially free labour is not sustainable practice,
ii) It creates certain barriers to community cohesion.

Demographically speaking, it will only tend to be single, young individuals, with more affluent backgrounds or with no financial commitments, who are able to take the time out to work for free on a farm. This immediately creates a problem with integrating the wider community, as most will not be in such a position, and additionally it is assumed such a venture (smallholding farm) will not economically benefit the community in terms of providing rural employment, or at least not stable and permanent rural employment—- from epi-agri paper, and Brunori et al 2011 It seems from studies conducted that generally The reliance on alternative marketing channels and general ethos of alternative agricultural production suggests stronger reliance on communal labour and exchange than is characteristic of mainstream farming practices.

Alternatively, there exists the argument that the policy is more geared toward fragile-Organic Agriculture, or ‘weak’, and therefore favours competitive prices, which, through the laws of economic scale, means larger farms are more able to compete. There exists, therefore, the option to suggest making ‘organic pay more’ meaning, smaller farms are able to receive labour subsidies in order to employ locally, and in doing so contribute toward the rural economy. There would be certain conditions on the subsidy and ‘small’ organic producer-policy, to ensure it is having real effect, but this is a true way of expanding the benefits of organic agriculture beyond the farm, and its consumers. It would be a step forward in the right direction of seeking more robust-Organic Agriculture, the stronger kind that respects the triple bottom line of sustainable development. This is a line of enquiry for further research.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This study highlights two areas, which would benefit from further research. These are:

1. As mentioned toward the end of the last section, organic agricultural policy research specifically aimed at bettering the inclusion of smallholders, and new entrants, would be highly advisable. This research could then provide a foundation for local and national agricultural policy to encourage and foster more Civic Agriculture.

2. Thorough research into the robustness of ‘certified’ organic agriculture, and a comparative analysis of organic sectors across different countries would be insightful. This research could then be used to address how and where precisely ‘conventional’ certified organic agriculture needs to adapt and change in order to reflect greater commitment to sustainability.

6.5 Conclusion

This study had the hope of shedding some light on how the organic sector could become more supportive of smallholder new entrants within the formal organic sector, in addition to suggesting ways in which the certified organic sector can become more robust and reflective of stronger sustainability ambitions. Principally it was argued that through the advancement of civic engagement and grassroots-led community-initiatives, aimed at re-democratising the
food-system from production to consumption, could realise such an ambition. Whilst making some interesting findings, this study – in order to provide relevant and interesting information for stakeholders (principally new entrants and smallholding organic sector) needs significantly more robust research, and a greater sample size. The implications of the study are mostly as an encouragement toward current concerted effort to reimagine the food sector in Italy, and potentially beyond. There are many collaborations and knock-on effects from Italy’s civic-led food movements to an Italian nation level (Italy recently made food-waste illegal and there is a national policy aiming for supermarkets to stock more local, and organic produce), to wider European-level impacts e.g. France banning food-waste from supermarkets, greater furthering of organic food production, local and smallholder produce gaining greater demand and so forth.

The study reinforces much of the theory explained in chapter 3, it can be concluded that it adds some richness to the theory by offering quantifiable (and real) evidence to the assumptions made by the Civic Agriculture theory. By connecting the theory to lived experience within the Italian context, and finding that much of the theory provided rings true to real experience, it is possible to conclude that such an approach/ methodology to the study of new civic-led food movements provides a good framework for analysis. It should be used with a level of caution and acknowledgement that it is solely a tool, or aid, to understand the movement, however given it is contextually and culturally specific this theory may need to be used in conjunction with other methodologies – triangulation is necessary when examining new phenomena to give a more balanced study from a range of perspectives and theoretical grounding.

Whilst acknowledging that organic agriculture cannot, alone, reach goals of agricultural sustainability, it does sincerely have a part to play. By better supporting and integrating new entrants smallholders, the objective of creating more resilient communities and robust rural economies is achievable. Agricultural policies should support farmers, whilst encouraging and maintaining the fundamental principles aligned with sustainable organic agriculture to keep larger farms in check, promoting policies of strong sustainability. These principles should aim to embody goals of sustainability that go beyond the prerequisites of technical or practical organic agriculture; opting instead for more evolved principles that encompass goals aimed toward the preservation of social, natural and human capital.
Authors closing remarks:

True organic agriculture is not just about food, it’s not just a movement, it’s an active decision to create something different, to cultivate a way of living determined by an individual or group who have markedly chosen a more sustainable path. Those who have chosen to engage in civic agriculture do so with the hope of changing consciousness, it begins with a small step and we can only wait to see if it leads to a greater degree of systemic change.

There is great difficulty in altering paradigms, and greater difficulty yet, in attempting to understand a movement which does not have homogeneity, strict rules or obvious logical similarities, but perhaps this is what is needed – a movement, communities and a world which is not standardised - an unstandardized world which instead responds to and accepts its different contexts, cultures and communities…
Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my family for their never ending support and love, not only during the process of this study but for the whole journey to this point. I would really not be who I was today were it not for their patience and encouragement.

Secondly, I would like to thank my Supervisor, Carin Martiin for her support, kind words, guidance and calm nature, who without I would not have believed it were possible to finish.

And last, but certainly not least, I would like to thank my MSD 2014 class and teachers; thank you for your inquisitive nature, curiosity, passion and dedication to the greater goal of making a positive contribution to this place we call, Earth.

So many friends have given useful input, ideas and guided my own insight, for that I will always be grateful.
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### 9.1 Semi-Structured Interviews conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview 1</td>
<td>Jutta Il Peligrino farm and agriturismo: Part of Workaway network <a href="http://www.workaway.info/154922978934-en.html">http://www.workaway.info/154922978934-en.html</a></td>
<td>17/03/2016</td>
<td>Liguria, Borgo val di Taro Italy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 2</td>
<td>(Also used for direct observation) NOT organic (but considering) 2a. Filipo 2b. Fabio 2c. Paolo Biofactoria: CultiAMOri Tombelle di Vigonovo (Globale Villago)</td>
<td>22/03/2016 - 26/03/2016</td>
<td>Tombello, Italy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 3</td>
<td>Salvatore Giaccone Saja <a href="http://www.saja.it/">http://www.saja.it/</a></td>
<td>18/03/2016</td>
<td>Skype Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 4</td>
<td>(Also used for direct Observation) Sophie Part-certified Organic Indaco Foods (organic farm and restaurant)</td>
<td>07/03/2016 - 14/03/2016</td>
<td>Monsampietro Morico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 5</td>
<td>Andrea Certified Organic Azienda agricola : La Tenuta</td>
<td>10/03/2016</td>
<td>Skype Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 6</td>
<td>NOT certified Daniele Progetto Colle Morto</td>
<td>11/04/2016</td>
<td>Skype Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview 7</td>
<td>Francesco Not certified Grefti Cultural Project</td>
<td>30/02/2016 - 06/03/2016</td>
<td>Umbertide, Umbria, Italy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9.2 Semi Structured Interview example

Initially standard demographic questions were asked (age, educational background, years working in farming, age of farm, size of farm, amount of produce made each years, economic condition of the farm). Generally the interviews would take around 90 minutes.

Please tell me a little about your farm and project?

Are you organic certified? What are your reasons behind this decision?

Why did you get into farming? What were your main motivations?

Environmental? Economic? Social? (discussion would stem from here)

Why small-scale farming? Do you see any benefits?

What were the biggest challenges setting up? If organic certified, what were the biggest challenges there?

Did you feel supported by the local/ national government in this? During? After?
How about with the local community? During? After?

What are your greatest challenges now?

What are your thoughts on organic certification?
What are the greatest challenges here?
How about certification? What are your biggest barriers?
What is required to make organic production (certification) more appealing to producers?

What contribution(s) do you feel your holding makes?

What changes in agricultural policy could benefit you?

This is a general set of questions used to prompt if the conversation did not have a natural flow; however this was often not the case, so using only three or four of these questions led the respondent to talk about a whole array of other things.
9.3 Questionnaire Survey example

Note – Questionnaire was sent out using Kwik Survey, and online platform, the survey was also written in Italian. Below is a different format and language, but apart from that, it is exactly the same.

Questionnaire about Food Production in Italy

My name is Melanie Rideout; I am currently studying Sustainable Development at Uppsala University in Sweden. For my Master thesis, I am researching local food production, and the wider food system in Italy. There are two objectives to this study. The first is to identify what contribution local food production (i.e. farmers markets, organic food, local farmers, ecotourism etc) has toward their community. The second is to learn about potential for such schemes to expand, and to understand the role emerging food organizations and initiatives in the local food system.

Please would you take 10 minutes to complete this questionnaire? The questionnaire is anonymous.

Page 1 – Personal Information

1. Gender:
   Male  Female

2. What is your age?
   under 20
   20 - 29
   30 - 39
   40 - 49
   50 – 59
   60 +

3. Choose your occupation
   Student  Self-employed
   Retired  Employed
   Unemployed  Out of work for health reasons
4. Choose your highest level of education

Secondary school      University - Bachelor degree
College/High school   University - Master degree
Vocational Training/Apprenticeship   University PhD. Or higher

Page 2 – Your involvement in the food sector

5. What is your involvement in the food sector?

Grow own food
   Have a farm
Help out/ run a food initiative: food waste reduction
Help out/ run a food initiative – social food programme i.e. food bank, kitchen
Help out/ run a food initiative: other
Help organise/ participate in a farmers market
Participate in food initiatives (attending, funding)
Involved in policy, lobbying, campaigning or research to do with food production, consumption, agriculture
   Other (please email mel_rideout@hotmail.co.uk to specify)

6. (Only For food growers, non food growers go to question 9) Which type of food growing initiative are you involved in? (you can tick more than one box)

Rented Allotment   Community Garden   Private Garden
Business (farm)      Guerilla Gardening   Education/Training

7. Do you grow organic?

Ys No

8. If no, do you practice other forms of sustainable agriculture?

Yes No

9. What are your reasons for being involved in the food sector?

Personal
Money generating
Be part of the community
To contribute to a different food system
Environmental reasons
   Social reasons
Hobby
   Other

10. How many years have you been involved in the food sector?
    less than 1
    1 - 2 years
    3 – 4 years
    5 – 8 years
    More than 8 years
Page 3 – Civic Agriculture in Italy

Please consider each statement below. **Decide how important the role-played by organic/sustainable agriculture is on certain aspects of your community**

11. Providing locally produced food

   ![Selection Options](image1)

   Very important  important  neutral  not so important  Unimportant

12. Providing a source of nutritious and healthy food

   ![Selection Options](image2)

   Very important  important  neutral  not so important  Unimportant

13. Reducing the money spent on food shopping

   ![Selection Options](image3)

   Very important  important  neutral  not so important  Unimportant

14. Encouraging more ecological living (smaller carbon footprint)

   ![Selection Options](image4)

   Very important  important  neutral  not so important  Unimportant
15. Building a stronger community

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Very important important neutral not so important Unimportant

16. Building a more resilient community

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Very important important neutral not so important Unimportant

17. Promoting more environmentally aware consumption habits

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Very important important neutral not so important Unimportant

18. Building community spirit

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Very important important neutral not so important Unimportant

19. Providing alternative sources of food in deprived areas of the city

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Very important important neutral not so important Unimportant

20. Providing opportunities for social inclusion, and encouraging local/ rural economy

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
Very important important neutral not so important Unimportant
Page 4 – The Role of Food Initiatives

Please consider each statement below, and state to what extent you agree or disagree with it.

21. The municipality policy supports food initiatives / agricultural projects.

□ □ □ □ □

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

22. Food initiatives and related projects are granted land/property to be set up by the municipality

□ □ □ □ □

Strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

23. The municipality has a responsibility to ensure the availability of food in my city.

□ □ □ □ □

Strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

24. The municipality has a responsibility to ensure a diversity of food retailers.

□ □ □ □ □

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

25. The municipality has a responsibility to protect not only our food production, but they way in which it affects the wider community

□ □ □ □ □

strongly agree agree neutral disagree strongly disagree

End of Questionnaire – Thank you!
Un po 'di te

Questo è utilizzato per raccogliere alcune informazioni su di voi

1 Genere
   - maschio
   - femmina
   - Other
   - Prefer not to say

2 Età
   - Minor de 20
   - 20 - 29
   - 30 - 39
   - 40 - 49
   - 50 - 60

3 Occupazione
   - Alunno
   - Lavoratore autonomo
   - Pensionato
   - occupato
   - disoccupato
   - Senza lavoro per motivi di salute

4 Scegli il più alto livello di istruzione
   - Scuole medie
   - College / Liceo
   - Dottorato O più alto
   - Università - Laurea (3 years)
   - Formazione professionale / Apprentistato
   - Università - Laurea (5 years)
Il tuo coinvolgimento nel settore alimentare

Le seguenti domande sono state circa il tuo coinvolgimento nel settore alimentare, sia come produttore, consumatore, osservatore, ricercatore ecc. Qualcuno che mangia è essenzialmente coinvolto nel settore alimentare!

5 Qual è il tuo coinvolgimento nel settore alimentare?
- Coltivo il mio cibo
- Avere una fattoria
- Aiutare / far un’iniziativa alimentare: riduzione dei rifiuti alimentari
- Aiutare / far un’iniziativa alimentare: programma alimentare sociale cioè banca del cibo, cucina
- Aiutare / far un’iniziativa alimentare: altro
- Aiutare ad organizzare / partecipare a un mercato degli agricoltori
- Partecipare a iniziative alimentari (che frequentano, di finanziamento
- Coinvolto nella politica, lobbying, campagne o di ricerca a che fare con la produzione di cibo, il consumo, l’agricoltura
- Altro (si prega di e-mail mel_nidesout@hotmail.co.uk specificare)

6 (Solo per i coltivatori di cibo, i coltivatori non alimentari vai alla domanda 9) Quale tipo di cibo che cresce iniziativa stai coinvolto in? (È possibile selezionare più di una casella)
- Allotment affittato
- Garden Community
- Giardino privato
- Affari (azienda agricola)
- Guerilla Gardening
- Istruzione / Formazione
- Altre

7 Ti cresce cibo biologico?
- Sì
- No

8 Se avesse risposto no, professi altre forme di agricoltura sostenibile?
- Sì
- No

9 Quali sono i motivi per essere coinvolti nel settore alimentare?
- 1 Personale
- 2 generare denaro
- 3 Essere parte della comunità
Agricultura Civica

Questa sezione è quello di raccogliere le vostre opinioni su alcuni aspetti dell'agricoltura alternativa - così quanto sia importante il cibo di produzione locale è a vostra società.

11. Please consider each statement below. **Decide how important these aspects of organic/sustainable agriculture are your community.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Senza importanza</th>
<th>Poco importante</th>
<th>Neutro</th>
<th>Importante</th>
<th>Molto Importante</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assicura alimenti prodotti localmente</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offre un fonte di cibo nutritivo e sano</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riduce i soldi spesi per la spesa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incoraggia più ecologici (più piccola impronta di carbonio)</td>
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<td>Consente di creare una comunità più forte</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costruisce una comunità più resiliente</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promuove abitudini di consumo più consapevoli dell'ambiente</td>
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<tr>
<td>Costruisce spirito comunitario / senso di appartenenza</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accesso a fonti di cibo in aree svantaggiate della città</td>
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</tbody>
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### Il importanza delle iniziative di alimenti

Le iniziative alimentari stanno svolgendo un ruolo sempre più importante nella società, da schemi per ridurre il rifiuti del cibo, ai iniziative / campagne per la redistribuzione del cibo ... vogliamo scoprire come voi e la vostra opinione su come il comune dovrebbe essere reagire influenzano.

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<td>Il comune ha la responsabilità di garantire la disponibilità di cibo nella mia città</td>
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<td>Il comune ha la responsabilità di garantire una diversità di rivenditori di generi alimentari</td>
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<td>Il comune ha la responsabilità di proteggere non solo la nostra produzione alimentare, ma modo in cui colpisce la comunità più ampia</td>
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End of Questionnaire! Grazie Mille
9.4 Raw Data: Secondary Sources

Raw Data from Secondary Sources, graphs made by author using Ec.Europa Software and datasets

Ecolabel licenses

Source of Data: European Commission - Directorate general for environment - Eco-label help desk
Last update: 06.07.2016
Date of extraction: 01 Aug 2016 21:11:50 CEST
Hyperlink to the graph: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/graph.do?pcode=tsdpc420&language=en
Disclaimer: This graph has been created automatically by Eurostat software according to external user specifications for which Eurostat is not responsible. Graphic included.
Short Description: This indicator is defined as the number of Ecolabel or "EU Flower" licences in European countries. The Community Ecolabel is awarded to products and services with reduced environmental impacts. It is administered by the European Commission and receives the support of all EU Member States and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Ecolabel criteria are discussed in the European Union Ecolabelling Board (EUEB) whose membership includes representatives from industry, environmental protection groups, consumer organisations and representatives for SMEs.

Italy has highest level of eco labelling licences of any country in the EU
Emissions of ammonia (NH₃), by source sector
Tonnes
Agriculture (NFR 3B1–4, 3D, 3F, 3G)

Date of extraction: 01 Aug 2016 21:20:07 CEST
Hyperlink to the graph: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/graph.do?pcode=tsdpc290&language=en
Disclaimer: This graph has been created automatically by Eurostat software according to external user specifications for which Eurostat is not responsible. Graphic included
Short Description: This indicator tracks trends in anthropogenic atmospheric emissions of ammonia by source sector.
Code: tsdpc290
Emissions of ammonia (NH3), by source sector

Tonnes - 2013

Agriculture (NFR 3B1-4, 3D, 3F, 3I)

Legend

1000000.0

400000.0

100000.0

Minimum value: 155.0 Maximum value: 1060834.0

Source of Data: European environment agency (EEA)
Copyright of administrative boundaries: ©EuroGeographics, commercial re-distribution is not permitted
Date of extraction: 01 Aug 2016 21:21:38 CEST

Hyperlink to the map: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/mapToolClosed.do?tab=map&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcod=tsdpc290&

Disclaimer: This map has been created automatically by Eurostat software according to external user specified Eurostat is not responsible.

Short Description: This indicator tracks trends in anthropogenic atmospheric emissions of ammonia by source sect Code: tsdpc290
Emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOx) by source sector

Agriculture (NFR 381-4, 3G, 3F, 3I)

Source of Data: European environment agency (EEA)

Date of extraction: 01 Aug 2016 21:34:29 CEST
Hyperlink to the graph: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/graph.do?pcode=tsdpc270&language=en
Disclaimer: This graph has been created automatically by Eurostat software according to external user specifications for which Eurostat is not responsible. Graphic included
Short Description: This indicator tracks trends in anthropogenic atmospheric emissions of nitrogen oxides by source sector.
Code: tsdpc270
**Source of Data:** European environment agency (EEA)

**Emissions of sulphur oxides (SOx) by source sector**

**Total sectors of emissions for the national territory**

Date of extraction: 01 Aug 2016 21:30:11 CEST

Disclaimer: This graph has been created automatically by Eurostat software according to external user specifications for which Eurostat is not responsible. Graphic included


Short Description: This indicator tracks trends in anthropogenic atmospheric emissions of sulphur oxides by source sector.

Code: tsdpc260
9.5 Global Forum: Sustainable Agriculture

1. "Sustainable agriculture is a model of social and economic organization based on an equitable and participatory vision of development which recognizes the environment and natural resources as the foundation of economic activity. Agriculture is sustainable when it is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, culturally appropriate and based on a holistic scientific approach.

2. "Sustainable agriculture preserves biodiversity, maintains soil fertility and water purity, conserves and improves the chemical, physical and biological qualities of the soil, recycles natural resources and conserves energy. Sustainable agriculture produces diverse forms of high quality foods, fibers and medicines.

3. "Sustainable agriculture uses locally available renewable resources, appropriate and affordable technologies and minimizes the use of external and purchased inputs, thereby increasing local independence and self sufficiency and insuring a source of stable income for peasants, family and small farmers and rural communities. This allows more people to stay on the land, strengthens rural communities and integrates humans with their environment.

"Sustainable agriculture respects the ecological principles of diversity and interdependence and uses the insights of modern science to improve rather than displace the traditional wisdom accumulated over centuries by innumerable farmers around the world." [These excerpts are from NGO Sustainable Agriculture Treaty (Global Forum at Rio de Janeiro, June 1-15, 1992). Available at Information Habitat Website: http://habitat.igc.org/treaties/at-20.htm]
### 9.6 All Data From Questionnaire Surveys

Key: Eta (Age) 1 = Below 20; 2 = 20 -29; 3 = 30 -39; 4 = 40 – 49; 5 = 50+
Scelgi il più alto livello di istruzione (highest level of education) 1 = Secondary school; 2= High School diploma; 3= higher than master level; 4= bachelors (3 years); 5= Apprenticeship/ professional training; 6= Master level

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### 5. Qual è il suo coinvolgimento nel settore alimentare?

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<tr>
<th>Coltivo il mio cibo</th>
<th>Avere una fattoria</th>
<th>Aiutare / run un'iniziativa alimentare: riduzione dei rifiuti alimentari</th>
<th>Aiutare / run un'iniziativa alimentare: programma alimentare sociale cioè banca del cibo, cucina</th>
<th>Aiutare / run un'iniziativa alimentare: altro</th>
<th>Aiutare ad organizzare / partecipare a un mercato degli agricoltori</th>
<th>Partecipare a iniziative alimentari (che frequentano, di finanziamento</th>
<th>Coinvolto nella politica, lobbying, campagne o di ricerca a che fare con la produzione di cibo, il consumo, l'agricoltura</th>
<th>Altro (si prega di e-mail mel_rideout@hotma il.co.uk specificare)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

106
Key: For question 9, the numbers refer to the ranking giving (1 – 9)

| Allotment affittato | Garden Community | Giardino privato | Affari agricoli | Guerilla Gardening | Istruzione / Formazione | Altre | Si | No | Si | No | Personale | generare denaro | Essere parte della comunità | Per contribuire a un sistema alimentare diverso | motivi ambientali | ragioni sociali | Passatempi | Altre | Per altre ragioni che si desidera esprimere, scrivermi |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|-----------|----------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| Q10 (time cultivating your own food): 1 = Less than 1 year; 2= 1-2 years; 3= 3-4 years; 4= 5-8 years; 5= 8-15 years; 6= 15 years+ |
### Q.11 – 20; 1= Not at all important; 2= A little important; 3= Neutral; 4= Important; 5= Very important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10. Da quanti anni sei stato coinvolto nel settore alimentare?</th>
<th>11. Please consider each statement below. Decide how important these aspects of organic/ sustainable agriculture are your community.</th>
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21. La Comune sostiene iniziative alimentari / progetti agricoli  
22. le iniziative alimentari e relativi progetti sono concessi terreni / immobili da istituire dal comune  
23. Il comune ha la responsabilità di garantire la disponibilità di cibo nella mia città  
24. Il comune ha la responsabilità di garantire una diversità di rivenditori di generi alimentari  
25. Il comune ha la responsabilità di proteggere non solo la nostra produzione alimentare, ma anche i commercianti nel comune più ampio

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consideri ogni affermazione di seguito, e lo stato di quanto è d'accordo o in disaccordo con essa</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time Taken</th>
<th>Country Code</th>
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<td>2016-07-25 20:55</td>
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<td>2016-08-02 16:34</td>
<td>199 IT</td>
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Italy has both a National and Regional legislation for the implementation and application of the EU legislation concerning organic production. Legislative Decree No 220/1995 and Ministerial Decree No 18354/2009 provide the legal framework for the application of Regulation (EC) No 834/2007. In June 2007 the European Council of Agricultural Ministers agreed on a new Council Regulation on organic production and labelling of organic products. This Council Regulation defines goals, principles and general rules for organic production. The goal of this legal framework was to set a new course for the continued development of organic farming. In this process, even greater emphasis is placed on environmental protection, biodiversity and high standards of animal protection. In addition, the legislation aims at ensuring consumer confidence and protecting consumers' interests. According to the EU Agricultural Department, Organic production must respect natural systems and cycles. Sustainable production should be achieved as far as possible with the help of biological and mechanical production processes, through land-related production and without the use of genetically modified organisms (GMO), although according to ‘Regulation (EC) No 1829/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2003 on genetically modified food and feed OJ L 268, 18.10.2003’ there is a threshold of 0.9% for the presence of unavoidable GMOs in foods to still be operable under the organic label EU and Italian Agricultural Ministry (2012). Foods may only be marked as "organic" if at least 95% of their agricultural ingredients are organic.


2. EUROSTAT 2013 Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Table_10_Number_of_holdings_by_other_gainful_activities_by_NUTS_2_regions_Italy_2010.PNG

3. Eurostat FSS, 2000 and 2010 Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Agricultural_census_in_Italy#cite_note-2) Source data for tables and figures (MS Excel)