

# Research in Hospitality Management



**Stenden**  
Hotel Management School



Academy of International  
Hospitality Research

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# Research in Hospitality Management

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## Aims and Scope

*Research in Hospitality Management (RHM)* is a peer-reviewed Open Access journal publishing articles that make an original contribution to the understanding of hospitality and to the theory and practice of international hospitality management.

The journal focusses on three main areas: (1) "Hospitality (Management) Studies" includes articles related to the study of and the study for hospitality. The study of hospitality refers to studies about the essence and ethics of hospitality from a social sciences perspective, while the study for hospitality refers to a more disciplinary approach according to the quintessential managerial areas of Finance, Human Resources, Operations, Marketing & Sales, and Technology; (2) "Hospitality Management Education" is devoted to articles about curriculum content and delivery methods for training and educating hospitality managers. Considering the size and scope of the hospitality industry, and the number of staff and students involved, studies on efficient, effective, and innovative ways of developing hospitality competencies are considered indispensable; (3) "Student Research Projects" allows excellent student work to be published. Student work can relate to excellent BA dissertations or MA theses.

*RHM* also accommodates short communications, working papers, book reviews and discussion papers.

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## EDITORIAL

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Food is a reflection of the culture of a place and an expression of a society and its people (Du Rand & Heath, 2006). The offer of food is central to the hospitality experience at home, in commercial outlets and in wider society. After decades of globalisation, local food has been welcomed as a pathway to sustainability for hospitality and tourism. Local food, it is claimed, creates economic value both for restaurants and for destinations by helping them differentiate from competitors and cater for more demanding customers (Williams et al., 2014). Moreover, if local food is preferred above imported produce, local farmers and producers are supported, thus benefitting the local economy beyond tourism and hospitality (Hjalager & Johansen, 2013). Yet, buying local not only benefits the community socio-economically by supporting jobs that otherwise may have been lost, but also culturally by valuing and promoting local (food) traditions (Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Hall & Gössling, 2013). In addition, choosing local food helps in preserving the "natural" look of the surroundings and, as local food needs to travel less to reach the table, reduces transportation and its negative impact on the environment (Pratt, 2013). To sum up: the claim is that local food benefits all three dimensions of sustainability – the economic, the social and the environmental – at once.

However, experience and research show that these benefits cannot be taken for granted: using local food does not by definition translate into less environmental impact and a revitalised socio-economic region. To mention some examples: without proper logistics, food miles may increase instead of decrease when a restaurant uses local food; the purchasing department may not be able to handle more suppliers than it is used to; buyers might in fact not even know what is on offer locally; and guests may desire authentic, local food but may also be puzzled by the offer of a dish that they do not know (Cavagnaro, 2018; Yeoman & McMahon-Beattie, 2016). In fact tourism has been seen as one of the culprits of the "McDonaldisation" of culture, including culinary traditions (Page & Hall, 2003; Ritzer, 1993). From a socio-economic perspective it is unclear what impact the "buy and eat local" trend has on "non-local" growers, both nationally and internationally (Koenigs & Reinders, 2018; Seidel & Cavagnaro, 2018). More generally, it can be questioned whether the "buy local" trend is part of a doubtful turn against the unfamiliar. Indeed, the term "local" itself is subject to debate. How should "local" be defined? Looking at distances, time, regions? And where should the line between "local" and "non-local" be drawn? Should then, for example, a restaurant in the Netherlands stop offering coffee and chocolate because they are not grown "locally"?

The 2019 AIHR Guests on Earth conference, held at Stenden Hotel Management School (Leeuwarden, The Netherlands) on 26 and 27 March 2019, was dedicated to "Local food for vital regions: Facts and myths" in an effort to expand our understanding of the conditions under which "local food" positively impacts the economic, social and environmental dimension of sustainability and thus contributes to more sustainable organisations and more vital communities, a core goal of NHL Stenden University. In this issue several of the papers presented at the conference are bundled together, alongside a conference report by **Conrad Lashley**.

**Sally Everett** has been involved with the development of food tourism research from the beginning and is therefore in a perfect position to reflect on the evolution of this discipline. In her conference keynote address and now in her article, she traces the conceptual, theoretical and empirical twists and turns of food tourism research over the past few decades. Everett suggests that food tourism research still yields enormous potential for a more profound and critical understanding of tourism.

With his keynote and article, **Gabriel Laeis** offers exactly such a critical contribution to the understanding of the phenomenon of "tourism" through a local food lens. During two participatory research projects in Fiji and South Africa, he comes to the understanding that the turn towards locally grown food will not result in a more sustainable development of the Global South if it is aimed at serving Western tourists with a Western (read e.g. meat-based) diet.

**Sarah Seidel**'s contribution brings us back to Europe and specifically to the Emsland/Veenland region, a region that extends over the border between the Netherlands and Germany. Notwithstanding the geographical similarities between Emsland and Veenland, they know different tourism developments, and, as Seidel skilfully shows, they differ also in the way tourists understand and appreciate local products. Seidel's article shows that at least for some tourists "local" is what they see, not what they taste.

**Perrine Leroy** and **Peter Varga**'s article, on the role of milk in Swiss gastronomy, continues the discussion on the symbolic and cultural meaning of food. Throughout history, milk is an inexhaustible source of questioning, reflections and discussions. Milk-derived products are somewhat exempt from such controversy and, as the results suggest, are considered by Swiss chefs as an untouchable product. Leroy and Varga's article was given the best paper award at the 2019 AIHR conference.

**Peter Klosse**, in his article, offers a framework for approaching food system change systematically. After offering a comprehensive overview of the issues connected with food, Klosse reasons that sustainable food, including local food, should be as convenient, accessible and tasty as the food that people are used to buying and cooking. Considering taste, he argues that hospitality professionals have a major role to play.

**Wilhelm Skoglund** explores the growth of the craft beer sector in a northern Swedish rural setting, with a particular focus on how small-scale brewers manage to fund their activities and ventures. Findings suggest that brewers shrug off traditional forms of financing and prefer to rely on alternative funding opportunities, such as crowd funding, and the regional network.

Erwin Losekoot and John Hornby consider the impact that foreign food experiences have on foreign students living in New Zealand. They identify that while food can be a great leveller and integrator of culture, the differences can also be used to define the "other". This article offers a natural bridge to the last section of this issue containing three articles written in co-operation with students and on the basis of their research.

Marcelo de Mansoldo, Elena Cavagnaro and Vanessa de Oliveira Menezes look back over the food chain and explore one of its essential links: farmers who sell directly to customers. Their research is testimony to the profound knowledge of farmer-sellers not only of their product, but also of their client base. It also confirms Skoglund's insight into the value of cooperation, even among former competitors in the local food and beverage chain.

Gerasimos-Panagiotis Angelopoulos, Jan Schulp and Vanessa de Oliveira Menezes explore the use of local food in Greek restaurants. One interesting conclusion from their research is that Greek restaurateurs are willingly to forego some profit for the sake of using more expensive but authentic and local ingredients.

Last but not least, Margo Enthoven and Aleid Brouwer offer some insight into the tension between passion for the profession and passion for sustainability of Dutch restaurateurs. Findings suggest not only that some restaurateurs claim to offer sustainable food while actually not doing so, but also that the choice to serve sustainable food is negatively influenced by entrepreneurial passion and positively by sustainability passion. This result unfortunately confirms that for many professionals commercial hospitality is seen as antagonistic to sustainable choices. Therefore, we wish to conclude this editorial with an appeal particularly to academics involved with hospitality education to find a way to reconcile hospitality passion with sustainability choices in the mind of their students, the future hospitality professionals.

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Elena Cavagnaro & Erwin Losekoot

## Academy of International Hospitality Research Conference, 26–27 March 2019 — Local food for vital regions: facts and myths

Conrad Lashley

The conference was organised round the theme, *Local food for vital regions: facts and myths*. The programme included four keynote speeches, and eighteen abstract presentations arranged under six tracks. The conference was principally organised by Elena Cavagnaro, Professor of Sustainability at Stenden Hotel Management School, and one of three research leaders who work in the Academy of International Hospitality Research.

Sally Everett gave a keynote address entitled *Theoretical turns through tourism taste-scapes: Celebrating the inter-connectiveness of culinary artefacts, identities and practiced place*, drawing linkages between food tourism and sense of place. Gabriel Laeis presented the second keynote address entitled *Local food on a side plate?* Tourists travel to faraway places, curious to eat local foods. There is a myth that providing local food in tourism destinations is a "triple win": income for small-scale farmers, fresh local produce that are a delight for every chef to work with, and local delicacies for tourists. But these myths disguise a reality that many tourists are looking for food that is at the same time local, yet not too strange.

### Track one: Local food between gain and altruistic values

Mackenzie's paper, *Local food on the menu: the intermediary perspective*, explored the ambiguities around the term "local" when describing the source of food on menus. The paper suggests that costs and profit motives also play a role in the actual sourcing choices made by small and medium enterprises (SMEs). *Local food: Creating value for small restaurateurs in Greece* by Angelopoulos and Schulp explored the definition of local in Greece, and pointed out some ambiguities and differences between restaurant managers/chefs and their customers. The notion of authenticity is an important overlap here. Interestingly, for a hotel owner the value of authentic, local food weighs more heavily than financial considerations. Enthoven and Brouwer's paper, *The choice for a sustainable cuisine: Passion and self-transcendence in the restaurant business*, explores restaurateurs aiming to operate in a sustainable way. Restaurateurs' values were an important determinant in the decision to base menus on sustainability. The entrepreneur's values determined the approach to either a sustainable/local menu, or a vegan/vegetarian menu.

### Track two: Food for vital regions

Schulp's paper, entitled *Can local food systems modify the landscape? A case study in the Kromme Rijn region*, explored agriculture in close proximity to urban settings. The competing demands of a functioning farm and the urban/rural vista are an

issue with potential tension. Local food purchasers expressed belief in the superior taste and quality of the food purchased.

The paper *Vital food for a vital region — transparency in sustainability and health values in a regional food market* by Nederhof was a discussion piece relating to the design of a programme that will provide insights into sustainability and a healthy diet. The author proposed a series of measures that might be put in place to investigate healthy food production. Kampaxi's paper explored issues of the link between mental health and diet among students. The paper suggests that dietary well-being has an impact upon academic performance and personal happiness.

A third keynote address, by Francesca Zampollo, outlined food design and the impacts of high animal protein diets upon the environment, and made a bold and persuasive case for a vegan diet to reduce carbon emissions and maximise sustainability.

### Track three: Local food from a critical lens

Klosse's paper, *The managerial implications of local food* explored the need to re-establish diets that are more local, traditional and healthier, and links this to more sustainable and local food production. It points to the dilemmas that restaurants face when customers have developed a taste for a diet that is out of kilter with these more sustainable traditions. It proposes a Foodzone model that aids chefs and managers identify menu localness.

Leroy and Varga's paper, *Symbolic understanding of milk in Swiss gastronomy*, explored milk and dairy products in the context of Switzerland. Dairy is an important strand in the local diet, but has implications for the production of greenhouse gases. A qualitative study involving an interview-based survey of chefs in western Switzerland was used. It raises issue about the degree of change that can be made to diet that have a deep symbolic significance in a particular culture. Smit, Neven, Peperkamo and Melissen's presentation, *Regional food, regional identity and regional hospitality: Brabantic hospitality and the regional food chain*, drew links between Brabantic hospitality that embraces a supposedly unique approach and regional food chains. This is then discussed in relation to sustainable food production.

### Track four: Local beverages

*Microbreweries and finance — case study of funding and bootstrapping in the craft beer sector* by Skoglund explored the initial funding of microbreweries in Sweden. The Swedish brewery sector has experienced the growing popularity

witnessed in other countries. The research suggests that crowd funding and similar non-formal finance sources have been important. Rinaldi's discussion paper, *Consumers' perceptions of local wine*, considered the role that food plays in attracting tourism to a destination. It advocated for food as a marketing tool, as an aid for emerging countries to establish a profile that can be used to establish a tourism marketing presence. Mihailescu explored the role of pricing and quality perceptions of organic wines as tourist attractors in the paper *Can organic wine production create benefits for the tourism industry? An enquiry into South African markets*. Willingness to pay extra is mitigated by perceived lower quality, though this is mitigated by personal taste experience as well as recommendations from respected others.

On day two of the conference, Matt Coler's keynote address, *Eating is more than ingesting ingredients* was delivered. The rituals associated with diet and dining is an important dimension of the culture that differentiates one community from another. The work suggested that there needs to be some investigation of the differing meanings of food, meals and dining.

#### Track five: The future of local food

Revier's discussion paper, *Local food and identity in the Wadden Sea region* dealt with the issues around the notion of "local food" and the implications for food distribution, particularly in the form of re-emerging local markets where farm outputs are available for purchase by private and commercial customers. The emergence of the market segment of tourists seeking these "local" experiences impacts upon the "localness" of the market that ultimately restricts access to local residents. Seidel presented *Zooming out: local food at the border*, comparing two regions adjacent to each other in Germany and the Netherlands. It suggested that there are similar dietary tastes across the border, German tourism organisers were more explicit in promoting local food in the offerings to tourists. Losekoot and Hornby examined the eating practices of travellers who are dwellers in non-home settings in their paper *What is the future of foreign food experiences?*. International students in New Zealand originating from India, China and Europe are the subjects of the study. These visitors bring with them their own cultural traditions, and also see their overseas experience as broadening their experiences. The research explored the impact of their experiences on dining and impacts upon changing menus and/or retaining home traditions.

#### Track six: Taste local! A project for restaurants in Oosterwolde

Lunenborg and Olthaar's presentation was entitled *Logistics of local foods, the case study of Oosterwolde*. It discussed the tensions between local food that might be subject to seasonal availability as well geographical limits and consumer demands. Global food production and distribution are subjects that have created dining and eating patterns that are no longer constrained as they once were. Consumers are used to dining on foods "out of season" and attempts at producing local and seasonally sensitive menus may meet restrictions. Moreover, even when local producers are willing to cater for local restaurants, tensions between the producer's offer and the restaurateur's demand are signalled, both in terms of delivery timing and the product's quantity. Cavagnaro and Van den Bremer's presentation — *The guest gaze on local food, the case of Oosterwolde* — explored demographic profiles of customers choosing unfamiliar local dishes in a restaurant. A survey of restaurant customers as well as responses from local people and tourists was used. Most seemed to be happy to try unfamiliar local dishes, and demographics appeared to have limited influence. A lack of a clear understanding of the term "local" emerges. More particularly, a vast majority of restaurants' guests expect that a local dish should contain between 80% and 100% local ingredients, something which from a restaurant perspective is often impossible to realise. Mansoldo and de Oliveira Menezes presented a setting where local food production is an alternative to global food production and distribution. Their research explored the relationship between local farmers and tourist visitors in Leeuwarden. The presentation, *Zooming out: local food & tourism in Leeuwarden*, highlights some confusion about the nature of local food and local production.

#### Conclusion

The conference raised some fascinating themes in the study of local food. This is clearly a topic in the early stages of development, but one that will be a major field of study in the long term. The concept of local food needs the development of a framework of analysis because the same word is used to mean different things by different academics, tourism planners, food producers, and visitors. Researchers also need to consider the research methods employed. Of the abstracts presented that were not discussion papers, all used survey methods — questionnaires, interviews, or a combination of both. Given the nature of the research topic, researchers need to consider more use of both experimental and ethnographic methodologies.



# Theoretical turns through tourism taste-scapes: the evolution of food tourism research

Sally Everett 

King's Business School, King's College London, United Kingdom  
Email: Sally.everett@kcl.ac.uk

**ABSTRACT:** This article reflects on the evolution of food tourism research by tracing its conceptual, theoretical and empirical twists and turns over the past few decades. Prompted by some recent systematic reviews of food tourism studies, I draw on literature to follow the journey of this multi-dimensional subject area as it has weaved between economic-focused positivistic traditions and more interpretative sociocultural perspectives. I suggest that food tourism research offers an illuminating conceptual vehicle which can be fostered to generate insightful understandings of the complexity and inter-connectedness of diverse culinary artefacts, identities and the experience of practised place. By exploring its roots, its growth and its potential future, I suggest it provides opportunities to pursue more interpretative and critical modes of thinking and furthers our understanding of concepts such as sustainability, performativity, embodiment, liminality and "in-betweenness". In looking forward, I argue that food tourism research is still on a journey and while it continues to offer us a multifaceted cultural phenomenon saturated with meaning and discursive potential to produce new knowledge about tourism, we should embrace it, and travel with it.

**KEYWORDS:** culinary identity, embodiment, food tourism, 'in-between' spaces, taste-scape

## Introduction

Ellis et al.'s (2018) conceptual mapping of food tourism literature offers us an opportune moment to reflect on the evolution of this multi-dimensional research area. By taking the time frame 1994 to 2017 (the period they claim had the highest concentration of food tourism articles), their study provides a fortuitous opportunity to take stock of where we are with this phenomenon and consider three aspects in turn: (1) its origins as a legitimate field of enquiry; (2) how it has developed (and why); and (3) where it might be going as a subject area. Building on Henderson's (2009) literature review, a subsequent analysis by Lee and Scott (2015) and now Ellis et al. (2018), I hope this latest contribution will encourage the academy to celebrate the journey that food tourism research has taken and prompt further interrogation that continues to unlock the rich insights this subject area has to offer.

The explosion of literature around the years 2000 to 2005 on food tourism (Boniface, 2003; Hall et al., 2003; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Long, 2004) accompanied by special journal editions such as one on culinary tourism in *Tourism Review International* (2006) hailed the birth of food tourism as a subject in its own right (Lee & Scott, 2015). These publications marked a realisation that food tourism research could provide insights into interpretative, cultural and critical modes of thinking. If we then skip forward to more recent texts (Croce & Perri, 2017; Dixit, 2019; Everett, 2015; Getz, Robinson, Andersson, & Vujicic, 2014;

Hall & Gössling, 2016; Slocum & Curtis, 2017; Yeoman et al., 2015) and special editions such as the food heritage-themed *Journal of Heritage Tourism* (2013), we begin to appreciate the health of this field of enquiry.

Despite a significant rise in food-motivated travel, it took the academy some time to fully appreciate the social and cultural potential of food tourism research. As a subject, we are now only really acknowledging its complexity and power to unlock understandings about people, place and planet. Consequently, I suggest we need to build on studies published to date and continue to harness food tourism research to challenge the simplistic dichotomies of production and consumption; local and global; and economic and cultural. By further engaging with this wonderfully rich body of literature should allow us to dwell in the "in-between" spaces and explore the liminal zones of our understanding (Duignan et al., 2018). It is a call to continue to embrace the embodied and performative dimensions of food tourism (Everett, 2008), while not losing sight of the more material dimensions that have shaped its development, growth and impact.

## A brief history of food travel

Travelling for basic sustenance can be traced back 300 000 years to the dawn of humankind where hunting and gathering was commonplace until around 800 BC when farming methods were introduced. Over the course of time, food began to represent

more than a bodily requirement, it became culturally embedded, and "holy days" of the agricultural year soon became enjoyed as "holidays" (Boniface, 2003). Food also became associated with magic and ritual (Fernández-Armesto, 2001) and formed statements of identity — becoming a meaningful symbolic and religious artefact (Tannahill, 1988). However, food-related travel as leisure and adventure is perhaps most directly traced back to the explorers of the fifteenth century. Although primarily motivated by wealth and status, the early European explorers that sought valuable commodities and lands to conquer could arguably be regarded as the first food tourists. In response to rising costs of spice after the replacement of the Mongols by the Ottoman Turks, many endeavoured to locate spices directly. From Columbus, who reached the Bahamas in 1492, to Cabot and the discovery of the cod fishing bank in Newfoundland in 1496, to Vasco de Gama and the sixteenth century voyages of Sir Francis Drake, food was a central component of early exploration. Explorers undoubtedly learned a lot about the native people through the food, becoming enthralled with the discovery of sweet potatoes, beans, unusual birds and fruit (Tannahill, 1988).

The subsequent movement of food began introducing the everyday person to new commodities and fuelled interest in other nations, cultures and identities. Access to such items became increasingly commonplace as European colonisation gained momentum. Early explorers had opened the way for a new type of traveller by the seventeenth century, including writers like Defoe who were keen to return with stories of foreign foods and people. However, by the time of the Grand Tour of Europe in the eighteenth century, rich and open-minded travellers embraced the opportunity to experience other places and cultures through food and engage with new "exotic" tastes (Everett, 2015). In the early nineteenth century when restaurants and cookbooks were appearing, travelling to sample new foods remained an expensive pursuit for those individuals with transport options (McNeill, 2004).

By the 1920s, automobiles were making places more accessible and before long the first food and wine trails were developed in Germany as industrialisation increased and supermarkets began appearing. There soon followed a desire to use food as a unique place identifier and challenge increasing levels of homogeneity (Mason & Brown, 1999). By the 1950s, travelling for food not only became a way to escape city chaos and urbanisation, it also became a statement of identity and domestication (Boniface, 2003). Additionally, the rise of the celebrity chef in the 1970s prompted food being used to evoke emotion and a desire to experience something unique, becoming both a symbol of status and of cultural-awareness. As developing nations underwent rapid technological changes, nature-based travel began to emerge in resistance to the treadmill of work. Leisure and holidays increasingly provided ways with which to make personal statements and pursue unique experiences (Rojek & Urry, 1997) and food and drink tourism became synonymous with these desires for escape, cultural engagement, and more latterly, sustainable travel and slow tourism (Everett, 2014; 2015). Given its rising popularity, it is unsurprising that food became a legitimate field of enquiry in its own right and it is useful to reflect on how this field has developed.

## The origins of food tourism as a legitimate field of enquiry

In exploring the foundations of food tourism as an academic field of study, it should be noted that the "parent" discipline of tourism has long been characterised by a legacy of management anchored in epistemological and methodological positivism, before its belated turn towards more cultural and critical discourses and interpretations (Morgan et al., 2018). Tribe's (2006) analysis of tourism research revealed 38% was overtly economic, with only 7% directly drawing on sociology and 6% on geography. It was this strangle-hold of economics that "new" tourism research began challenging; problematising managerially orientated materials to embrace more qualitative and alternative voice perspectives which avoid the "tyrannical" presence of positivism and management-focused economics. Xiao and Smith (2006) also found that tourism scholars occupied a predominantly positivist position through the application of scientific methods, although Liburd's (2012) plea for tourism research 2.0 has since advocated a more dynamic understanding of how tourism research is enacted and performed.

So, in addressing the first theme of the origins of food tourism as an area of academic enquiry, we should note that although scholars such as Poon (1993) were theorising "new" forms of post-Fordist tourism experience in terms of reconfigured consumption patterns and a desire for more individual modes of tourism consumption, the academy failed to focus on the complexities of food as a social, cultural, material and symbolic signifier and resource. There was surprisingly little literature examining this increasingly popular touristic activity, which for some time was "simply ignored or taken for granted" (Quan & Wang, 2004, p. 299). Particularly notable was the relative scarcity of theoretically informed empirical work despite the increasing role of food as a catalyst in enhancing the tourism experience (van Westering, 1999). However, in suggesting that "over the globe there has been an indigenisation of music, art, architecture, film and food" (Beynon & Dunkerley, 2000, p. 26), this desire for "tasting the world" (Franklin, 2003, p. 244) and placing the "world on a plate" (Cook & Crang, 1996, p. 131) began attracting academic interest by the late 1990s.

It was Scarpato (2002, p. 132) who argued that scholars needed to move food tourism out of the "grey zone" of cultural and heritage tourism and acknowledge its conceptual opportunities, although Long (1998) had suggested earlier that there was a need to engage with foodways of the "other", or what Kim and Ellis (2015, p. 154) describe as the "manifestation of defining oneself through tasting food (culture and identity) of the other". Around 2003, there was a gradual widening of academic appreciation of this subject with some vernacular emerging, including "culinary tourism", "gastronomic tourism", and "foodways tourism". This emerging interest was primarily fuelled by four food-focused tourism books (Boniface, 2003; Hall et al., 2003; Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Long, 2004) in combination with several journal articles across several disciplines (e.g. Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Everett & Aitchison, 2008; Hall & Mitchell, 2000; Hwang, van Westering, & Chen, 2004; Quan & Wang, 2004; Tikkanen, 2007). From languishing as a topic "in a relatively isolated position at the edge of established disciplines" (Hjalager & Richards, 2002, p. 233) and only superficially understood, food tourism research began gathering momentum, although perhaps not in proportion to other work on multisensory experiences (Haukeland & Jacobsen, 2001). It was

Cohen and Avieli's (2004, p. 756) argument that "the interface between tourism and food was neglected by scholars of both tourism and food" that prompted Kivela and Crotts (2006, p. 233) to suggest "gastronomy is a body of knowledge with its roots in all major classical civilizations; despite this, however, in the hospitality and tourism contexts gastronomy is a new area of study".

Kim and Ellis (2015) suggest food tourism literature can be categorised into two disciplinary approaches: business management and marketing on one side, and cultural and sociological perspectives on the other. Despite this seemingly well-balanced offering, there is little doubt that food tourism was primarily recognised as a legitimate sphere of research in the context of economic development and destination marketing before it became an expression of culture and identity. This is perhaps not surprising, given the nature of the global economic "business" of tourism and the academy's slow adoption of more critical tourism research agendas and approaches (Tribe, 2006). Although research on economic food linkages (Telfer & Wall, 2000), destination marketing strategies (Fox, 2007; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2006; Kneafsey & Ilbery, 2001; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Okumus et al., 2007) and quantitative consumer analysis (du Rand & Heath, 2006; Ignatov & Smith, 2006) was deemed valuable for progressing knowledge of tourism business development, it meant that work of a sociological orientation or cultural perspective did not progress at the same rate. Critics of the dominance of tourism management perspectives that neglected the cultural sphere included scholars such as Boniface (2003) and Long (2004), and emerged in studies such as those by Everett and Aitchison (2008), Sims (2009) and Stringfellow et al. (2013).

Considering the economic dimension of food tourism research, it is not surprising that the majority of methodological approaches employed reflected a bias towards large scale quantitative surveys and documentary analysis. All too often these studies were also focused on Western, developed countries, with limited focus on more developing nations and with few studies appearing from an Asian context until more recently (e.g. Henderson, 2004; Kim & Ellis, 2015; Oakes, 1999), and more latterly, an African perspective (e.g. Mkono, 2011; Mkono et al., 2013). With an overarching desire to quantify and provide statistical evidence to underpin economic development and business strategies, qualitative research was employed infrequently. Studies claiming to understand the phenomenon tended to build theories with survey data (Carmichael, 2005; Haukeland & Jacobsen, 2001; Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Kivela & Crotts, 2006; Reynolds, 1993; Smith & Hall, 2003), content documentary analysis (Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Hjalager & Corigliano, 2000; Okumus et al., 2007), and structural modelling (du Rand & Heath, 2006; Quan & Wang, 2004). Although there was value in such research, its limitations were increasingly called into question if there was any potential that food tourism could be used as a way of exploring the "rich complexities

of human actions and experience which cluster around the production and consumption of that food" (Beardsworth & Keil, 1997, p. 139).

As studies began to employ more qualitative approaches, they disrupted the status quo and provided a depth of data befitting a topic immersed in complexities of identity development, cultural interaction and personal experience. It is in studies such as Hwang et al. (2004) and Oakes (1999) where issues of nostalgic resurrection began to be discussed alongside issues of identity, sustainability and cultural revitalisation. At a time when the tourism academy was seeking to embrace at least the "fifth" moment of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 13) and acknowledge non-representable geographies and psycho-sensorial processes, it was appropriate to examine a multifaceted topic with more ethnographic and personalised approaches. Through a process of cognitive mapping, Ellis et al.'s (2018, p. 250) paper explicitly states that "the field experienced a shift, that is, a 'cultural turn' from those early management-focused studies to more wholesome and exploratory discussions of food and culture". By categorising food tourism work into five broad themes, i.e. motivation, culture, authenticity, management and marketing, and destination orientation, they effectively illustrate the "unprecedented growth" of publications from 2008 to 2015. It was perhaps the shift to consumption and the cultural turn that fuelled the development of food tourism as a research area, so in the second section, we now turn attention to its evolution and growth as a field of enquiry.

### How and why has food tourism research developed?

In turning to the second theme of how food tourism research developed, I suggest it has mirrored its tourism "parent". It also bears a similarity to early food studies research which conceptualised food and society within structural epistemological and economic frameworks (Murcott, 1995). As discussed above, the shift from economic analyses to geographic perspectives to work that acknowledged the cultural and critical turn has characterised the history of this research area. A simple visualisation of the evolution of these phases is shown in Figure 1.

In its early form, food tourism research was originally studied as a part of the tourism experience rather than the reason for travel, and scholarship was slow to develop beyond economic appraisals, producer-focused analyses, and quantitative business-focused research. In 1998, Tregear et al. (1998, p. 386) suggested a "greater understanding was needed of the feelings and attitudes of consumers towards regionally identified foods". This was undeniably true as much work separated growers from consumers as disconnected entities rather than approaching the categories of "producer" and "consumer" as an interconnected and fluid nexus. A growing emphasis on understanding and analysing the consumer, particularly in regard to their experience, motivations and impact on the host destination became increasingly evident (Kim et al., 2009), despite some



FIGURE 1: The evolution of food tourism research

recent studies still insisting that this remains under-theorised (Robinson et al., 2018). However, the consumer focus in food tourism primarily sought to inform businesses about consumer patterns rather than providing a focus on anything that could be described as a critical analysis of consumption. Such studies placed tourist attitudes and motivations in a framework that could be incorporated into policy decision-making or used as supporting evidence for regional marketing strategies or frameworks (Fields, 2002; Ignatov & Smith, 2006; Kivela & Crofts, 2006) rather seeking to understand food consumption itself.

Lockie (2002) also identified an excessive emphasis on producers in agro-food research which neglected the importance of consumers as active participants with agency. In seeking to emphasise issues of consumption, Goodman and du Puis (2002, p. 10) began to articulate producer and consumer relations in terms of the connective tissues between the two, and lamented that "consumption has been neglected, under-theorised, treated as an exogenous structural category, and granted 'agency' or transformative power only in the economic, abstract terms of demand". Fuelled by a desire to rematerialise geography and place culture within critical and reflexive economic analyses, Cook (2006, p. 661) exclaimed that he has "...found it difficult to find many multi-locale ethnographic food studies which illustrate relations between producers and consumers". Producer and consumer were only skeletally connected in the act of purchase, and the need to overcome the economic/cultural fault-line in agro-food studies has become particularly crucial (Whatmore, 2002). In moving beyond theoretical symmetries and linear frameworks, agro-food research and geographers began to push past an apparent ontological discontinuity between producer and consumer, bypassing classic Marxist approaches where power was unequivocally located in the sphere of production (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1999). The relationship began to be theorised as a relational set of practices, rather than addressed either from a political economy perspective (Whatmore, 1994), or consumption through cultural theory and new cultural geographies (Ashley et al., 2004). It was the cultural turn and recognition of food as a cultural object which then further fuelled interest in the subject.

The role of food tourism as a "source of identity formation in postmodern societies" began to be realised at the turn of the millennium (Richards, 2002, p. 3). The impact of the "cultural turn" (Mitchell, 2000; Jackson & Thrift, 1995) began to influence researchers examining the role of food in the touristic experience, and food was increasingly conceptualised as more than an economic commodity (Caplan, 1997). It was also within the sphere of the "new" cultural geography that food was being established as a communicator of cultural meaning and a material object embedded with sociocultural relationships. Earlier research on food heritage and authenticity published by historians and geographers that had been previously overlooked began to be resurrected to help advance tourism (Oakes, 1999; van Westering, 1999) — an emergence which aligned well with Scarpato's (2002, p. 60) plea that multiple disciplinary approaches can "allow tourism and gastronomy scholars to claim centrality for their work".

Although food research cuts across a wide number of related disciplinary boundaries, Zelinsky (1985) expressed surprise that the topic of food had been generally shunned by cultural studies. Three decades later, this situation has improved with a relative surge in food-focused literature since the cultural

turn (Freidberg, 2003). The shift since the early 1990s to consider food as material culture in geographical research is largely attributable to the work of Bell and Valentine (1997), who explicitly placed food within its geography and cultural context; an approach reflected in their book title, *Consuming Geographies: We are Where We Eat*. Additionally, Cook and Crang's exploration of London restaurants employed food more explicitly than previous empirical studies to investigate the "spatial character of those contexts of material practice" (1996, p. 133). Their work transcended the dichotomies of culture and economy, examining constructed meanings about food and the material embodiment of knowledges where the world's "babel" of national dishes could be encapsulated on one plate.

As a result of the shift in attention to the cultural and spatial character of food by scholars such as Bell and Valentine (1997) and Cook and Crang (1996), food tourism research began to be examined through a cultural lens and became a conceptual vehicle itself with which to contribute knowledge on sociocultural tourism issues in the context of wider global structures and influences. It began to be regarded as a topic that could be used to grasp greater understandings of wider systems of culture and shifting patterns of cultural engagement (Griswold, 2004). After all, "food and eating afford us a remarkable arena in which to watch how the human species invests a basic activity with social meaning" (Mintz, 1996, p. 7). The impact of these shifts towards cultural analyses is perhaps best illustrated by de Jong and Varley's (2017) work which adopts a Bourdieusian approach to critique the privilege of some culinary cultural symbols over more marginalised "working class" foods (i.e. the deep-fried Mars bar). This kind of work has echoes of Grunow's (1997) philosophical and sociological analysis of "taste" which developed Bourdieu's (1984) work beyond a structuralist construction of good taste and distinction generation.

Turning more specifically to foodstuffs and their biographies, sociological studies had given food a central role in the symbolic system, granting it the ability to convey meanings as well as nourish the body. Conceptualised as a set of cultural artefacts which can be harnessed to grasp an understanding of wider systems (Griswold, 2004), food began to be seen not just as an everyday object without meaning, but could represent a symbol and marker of identity. As social anthropological analyses have revealed, food is part of a physiological, psycho-sensorial, social and symbolic environment (Bessière, 1998). Food was increasingly being treated as an allegorical artefact with traces of human intention and action beyond its most obvious context. Such thinking also aligned well with the new concept of "interpellation" adopted in tourism where objects enter life and have a social effect (Franklin, 2003; Rojek & Urry, 1997). Food was fast being recognised as a direct crystallisation of the physical and symbolic landscape (Oakes, 1999), providing a link between place and its identity.

To Bessière (1998, p. 28), local food encapsulated an idealised past and could offer liberation from a "stressed society" by nurturing nostalgic feelings and a sense of time gone by. Bessière also stated that local food was able to provide a "resurrected effect of memory" (ibid.) — an object capable of re-establishing a severed connection to nature and times past. Such work ensured discourses of purity and naturalness became increasingly dominant. These almost mythical characteristics were further emphasised by Boniface (2003), who suggested local food transcended time and space and represented a kind



of uncontaminated world. Bessière (1998) was particularly keen to trace a rising popularity of "natural" products, building on the concept of the fresh in a processed environment and "handmade in a plastic world" (Graburn, 2006, p. 413) in line with much agro-food research (Murdoch & Miele, 1999). The partnership between food and nature began to be most closely nurtured in the countryside, where food objects placed in rural contexts offer urbanites a chance to return to rural roots (Tregear, 2003), and offered a moral anchor in a post-industrial world (Warde, 1997). Reconnection with nature became intrinsically linked with yearning for "yesteryear" (Dann, 1996) where nostalgic resurrection become a particularly potent discourse (Fox, 2007) alongside studies of authenticity, local heritage and tradition (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014; Everett & Slocum, 2013; Hjalager & Johansen, 2013; Mynttinen et al., 2015), and increasingly, embodiment and performativity.

### Towards a tourist "gaze"? Embodiment and performativity

In continuing with the analysis of how food tourism research has developed, it should be noted that a significant theoretical shift in the critical and cultural turns was the adoption of concepts such as cognitive and bodily engagement. Boniface (2003, p. 12) was one of the first to claim that local spaces endeavoured to directly enhance sensual experience, so qualities of place are embraced through "sight, touch...even via hearing" as opposed to the bland and sterilised supermarkets that are only apprehended through "eye appeal". Far too few food tourism texts examined and recognised this before 2008, overlooking the potential of food to provide a marker of identity (regional and individual), capable of providing an embodied experience of place (Sthapit, 2017).

Described as "one of the best general theoretical accounts of tourism in late modernity" (Franklin, 2001, p. 115), Urry's *The Tourist Gaze* (1990) occupies a celebrated place in work that has examined the tourism experience. In focusing on the visual nature of the touristic experience which locates all practices within a distinctive ocular environment, Urry demonstrated the way in which the tourism experience is characterised by being able to offer different visual signs from those present in everyday life to gaze upon and consume. Urry's ocular-centric theorisation conceptualised the way in which tourism experiences are socially organised and systematised through the visual appropriation of place. Although groundbreaking at the time, its central theoretical concept of the "visual" became subject to increasing criticism. Although Urry (1990) had never denied the existence of multiple gazes in his earlier work, he was keen to state a decade later that he thought "...there is a multiplicity, and the way to approach the analysis of these multiplicities of tourist gaze is, among other things, to think about the taste-scapes, smell-scapes, sound-scapes, touch-scapes" (Franklin, 2001, p. 123).

Tourism research was overly dominated by concepts of visualism (MacNaghten & Urry, 2000) and the body was often written out of tourism (Franklin & Crang, 2001). However, food tourism research has helped tourism move beyond "visual repertoires of consumption" (Franklin & Crang, 2001, p. 12) to a place where the object and viewer are involved in more sensual, embodied experiences involving "your own skin" (ibid.), where there is a need to embrace active bodily involvement (physical, intellectual, cognitive, and the gaze). In Everett (2008), I

endeavoured to place the concepts of performativity and embodiment at the heart of food tourism research, recognising a need to consider more active bodily involvement (physical, intellectual, cognitive, and the gaze). I found few studies had taken food as a marker of identity and explored how it might offer an embodied experience of place in a kind of sensuous geography (Rodaway, 1994). I particularly argued that food offers one of the few tourism experiences that involves an immersive physical internalising of a culture as opposed to a distance, passive "gaze". Being "the only product that can be experienced using all the human senses, therefore deepening the tourism experience" (du Rand & Heath, 2006, p. 210), scholars noted that food demanded attention.

One illuminating dimension of work on non-visual engagement with place and multisensory landscapes was offered by Dann and Jacobsen (2003) in their exploration of tourism "smell-scapes". They suggested that "an over-emphasis on the tourist gaze tends to disregard the fact that the unique character of a place can additionally be imparted by its aromas" (2003, p. 3). Olfactory sensations began to be given priority and the extent to which smell plays a central role in experiencing place (past and present) was explored. Although an important step towards conceptualising the tourism experience beyond the visual, it failed to generate data from "real-life" tourists and the research gap has more recently been addressed by studies such as Kim and Iwashita (2016) on noodle tourism and identity, and Agapito et al. (2017) on the link between sensory diversity and memorable destination experiences in Portugal.

Food tourism research began to suggest that embodied practices could inscribe places with identities. This form of performativity as a dimension of active bodily involvement became a powerful discourse, theorised as a way of making sense of self and the world (Edensor, 2001). Moreover, Perkins and Thorns (2001) claimed that pursuing a concept of "performance", as opposed to a gaze, widens the focus to consider the more multifaceted, multisensory experiences that make up tourism, and which I applied to food tourism (Everett, 2008). This argument has been put forward more recently by de Jong and Varley (2017, p. 220), who state that "[a]ttending to performativity would present opportunity for greater insights relating to how bodies are both inscribed by discourse, while also able to spatially perform both normative and transgressive identity practices".

Edensor (2001) also paid particular attention to how tourists play out identities to (re)produce spaces, assigning power to the individual where they are able to redefine their own landscape in a shifting world. As part of a "performance turn", Edensor claims that scholars need no longer be trapped in a representational world, but move from the semiological realisation of space to what tourists actually do. In placing specific emphasis on "things" (such as food) and their importance in tourism performance in the way they enhance the physicality of the body, such research stresses the inescapable hybridity of human and non-human worlds, the material and the non-material. Likewise, Bærenholdt et al's. (2004) and Haldrup and Larsen's (2006) work on tourist performances alluded to the power of the individual to redefine landscape in a shifting world of intersecting spatialisations, socialisations and cultural forms. This body of work provided a useful theoretical basis from which to develop food tourism research. One notable early example was Shelton's (1990) study of restaurants as theatres. In taking



Goffman's (1956) conceptualisations on the presentation of self in everyday life, Shelton develops a framework which presents restaurants as a "repertoire of symbolic stages" and regulated "enclavic" spaces. These spaces are constrained and planned as single-purpose spaces such as restaurants and visitor centres, and the more blurred "heterogeneous" spaces of food festivals are often less openly regulated and constructed alongside other people's everyday (non-tourism) lives.

Experiences began to be presented as socially and spatially managed, where touristic things can be taken and used as active agents in the production of regulated tourism landscapes and social imaginaries (Mansvelt, 2005). Although food tourism sites had been promoted as places offering authentic and embodied, multi-sensual experiences of local food, they have been increasingly become regarded as "themed" spaces undergoing perpetual re-imagining and manipulation (Gottdiener, 1997). Through concepts of performativity and embodiment combined with new empirical data, food tourism studies began to contribute new perspectives in the reconfiguration of relationships and spaces between consumer and producer (de Souza Bispo, 2016). The contribution that food tourism brought ensured the corporeal nature and multidimensional physicality of human beings were not detached from understandings of how cultural objects and spaces are both produced and consumed. Given the multiplicity of dimensions and its twists and turns, it is useful at this point to turn to the third aspect of this paper and consider where the study of food tourism might be going.

### Where might food tourism be going as a subject area? Moving into the "in-between" spaces

The third and final question is where might we take food tourism research from here? I have endeavoured to suggest that it constitutes a vehicle with which to transcend the economic and cultural spheres that have traditionally been separated into distinct dichotomous categories, where the economic sphere is traditionally favoured (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2003). It offers a platform of multidimensional integration; creating a close relationship between the economic (material, production) and the cultural (symbolic, embodied). On reflection, it becomes increasingly clear that food represents significant cultural power and has an unrealised potential to generate powerful social effects (Franklin, 2003). A seemingly innocuous economic commodity can be harnessed in the cultural production of knowledges regarding idealised spaces, nostalgia and identity formation, cultural capital, otherness, symbolism and embodiment.

Food tourism offers an enlightening kaleidoscopic lens for numerous temporal and spatial settings as physicality and symbolism collide. Consequently, I suggest an advancement of critical tourism knowledge may be achieved by overcoming dichotomous categorisations and occupying a "third space" in between the binaries. Much is to be gained if we explore the "in-betweenness" of spaces. As Bhabha (1994, p. 38) suggests, "to that end we should remember that it is the 'inter' — the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space — that carries the burden of the meaning of culture". Things are never a simple "either/or", so we need to think about the "in-between" which promotes a theoretical framework that rebalances conceptualisations of different spheres of analysis. So what is happening in the middle of all these spaces? We might

wish to consider "third space" thinking that makes sense of concepts such as "productive consumption", "performativity" and "liminality" to explain how enhanced engagement might provide a more complete account of food tourism. The term "third space" is generally attributed to Bhabha, who suggests that such spaces are "discursive sites or conditions that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, and rehistoricized anew" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). To Bhabha (1990, p. 211), "hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge".

In seeking this intellectual "in-betweenness" where cultural events and analyses are placed within the wider context of institutional structures and forces, we need to avoid de-socialising food tourism, while retaining both its spatial roots and the positive contribution of the cultural turn. Although advocated some time ago, there is still space beyond dualisms in epistemological geographical frameworks which have been made possible through academic resistance against dominant hegemonic orthodoxies of positivism and quantification. This new geometry of knowledge represents a "third space" in thinking through spatialities. Despite being "continually fragmented, fractured, incomplete and uncertain, and the site of struggles for meaning and representation" (Pile, 1994, p. 273), third-space thinking offers a third kind of knowledge that subverts dualistic categories and locates spaces of negotiation and "in-betweenness" (Shotter, 1993).

In endeavouring to explore the "in-between" spaces of food tourism, I have sought to examine the place-making agency of food tourism with three recent studies. Firstly, this was by investigating the interface between work places and tourism spaces (Everett, 2012). By exploring issues surrounding the global transformation of small food production sites into spaces of novel touristic experience, my study found that tourists are active in place-making as co-producers and co-performers in a process of productive consumption (de Certeau, 1988). Food tourism is approached as "doing tourism" (Crouch, 1999, p. 257), where tourists are not just passive consumers, but are active in sense-making. The identification of hybrid spaces when production sites and consumption spaces merged, the role of tourist agency to create dynamic spaces characterised by the carnivalesque, the creation of new spaces to accommodate tourist expectations, and the performative identity that is developed involving the alteration of work patterns and traditional production techniques all demonstrate the agency of consumers to change places and people.

Secondly, the repositioning of Urry's (1990) seminal "tourist gaze" metaphor (referenced earlier) was pursued in Everett (2008). I found viewing windows act as ironic metaphors for the complex nature of postmodern consumptive activity where "new" post-Fordist (flexible and personal) experiences become intertwined and blurred with more regulated new version of (neo)Fordist (characterised by a return to standardisation and automated production). It is this call to consider the tourist "graze" (rather than gaze) that I advocate. Further engagement with empirical studies that interrogate whether tourists display the characteristics of Urry's (1990) "post tourist" (those desiring more authentic experiences but who accept the inauthentic reality of some sites) remain relatively scarce. This revelling in the artificiality of the site, recognising that they were being

offered a seemingly constructed, rather than fully “authentic” view continues to offer new and intriguing areas of research. Food should be treated as a polysemic artefact that can be harnessed in the cultural examination of place so we can shift the focus away from economic-dominated theorisations.

Finally, a study on food festivals in the historic touristic city of Cambridge in the United Kingdom drawing on producer interviews explored concepts of liminoid spaces (Duignan Everett, S., Walsh, L., & Cade, 2018). In adopting the concept of liminality (“boundary” or “threshold”), we sought to explore how physical and digital liminoid spaces were leveraged — the way physical and digital spaces associated with festivals are being harnessed to create new spaces of consumption. In arguing that food festivals in heritage cities can be understood by pulling together the concepts of “event leveraging”, “liminoid spaces” (physical and digital) and modes of “creative resistance”, we suggested they help the survival of small producers against inner city gentrification and economically enforced peripherality. Inevitably, the impact of social media in creating new spaces of consumption emerged, but the “in-betweenness” of the digital and physical leaves much to be explored in terms of the positive transformation of place. I am certain that interest in food tourism will continue to accelerate as geographical barriers continue to dissolve through social media and digital transformation. Its effective use will lead to successful results for those destinations that understand and utilise it.

## Conclusion

So where does all this leave the study of food tourism research? There is no doubt that the last twenty years of scholarship has moved food tourism from a peripheral location in the social sciences into an academic arena where it is recognised as a valuable tool of knowledge generation. I hope by journeying through its development, food tourism has been presented as a vehicle which can be harnessed to illuminate the creative cultural examination of place, shifting away from the economic-dominated theorisations that have strangled tourism analyses. In parallel with tourism research, food tourism research has been dominated by economic analyses, quantitative analyses and linear determinism. Structural approaches privileging either producer or consumer became the orthodoxy across most of the major disciplines examining food. In touching on a multiplicity of disciplines, this review has highlighted why we must look beyond disciplinary borders and recognise the potential contributions that can be made to this embryonic subject field. Tracing the evolution and impact of the cultural turn in other subject fields may help galvanise food tourism as an area in its own right, while also allowing it to contribute to the wider theoretical development of tourism studies.

The cultural turn manifested itself in food tourism research rather more slowly and belatedly, so much so that there is still much to be gained from it. The gradual turn to culture is evidenced by the blurring of the production/consumption relationship and the increasing attention being paid to identity, nostalgia, power and adoption of qualitative case study methodologies. Being deeply embedded in systems of meaning, food began to be regarded as a poignant reminder of cultural identity and tradition, with a capacity to conjure the sense of a purer place, but also hold time and memory in an era of hyper-mobility (Long, 2004). Food was embedded with these

intangible constellations of signs of the past to evoke a sense of a place temporally and spatially apart (Cook et al., 2000) and promoted as a kind of cherished cultural heirloom (Long, 2004; Oakes, 1999; Zelinsky, 1985).

In combination with the findings of Ellis et al. (2018), this article suggests that there is a growing place for food tourism within a critical tourism research agenda. Food is a polysemic artefact able to characterise place and identity; consequently, it can be utilised to theorise the complex nature of postmodern production and consumption. In furthering concepts of the “taste-scape”, we could fuel recent efforts to broaden tourism discourses beyond the ocular-centrism and build the tourist “graze” concept. Food tourism research is still very much on a journey and has much still to offer, therefore I urge scholars to consider adding new empirical contributions which analyse new aspects of this form of tourism activity. There remains tremendous value in engaging with non-representable forms of culinary tourism such as multi-sensual performative experience and sense of place to offer an additional dimension to the relational forms of power agency and dialogue (Jamal & Kim, 2005).

I encourage scholars to interrogate the connective tissue between concepts as opposed to approaching them as separate entities. Liminal sites of food tourism have been conceptualised as “third spaces” which exist beyond the everyday and are made active through the heightened interaction between key actors engaged in food tourism. By embracing different disciplinary theoretical and empirical “ingredients”, innovative “recipes” for food tourism research can provide different ways with which to revisit dominant discourses and interrogate social relationships and interactions. We see some of this work coming through Yeoman et al. (2015) and studies that grapple with new directions in food tourism (e.g. Broadway, 2017; Kim & Iwashita, 2016). There is space in between all of the new concepts being addressed through food tourism: technology and social media (digital engagement with the physical), artificial intelligence with human agency, spaces of differentiation, policy and planning dimensions (de Jong & Varley, 2016), the luxury with the simple, religion (Henderson, 2016), urbanisation and population density, “glocalisation”, sustainability (Sims, 2009) and climate change. It is this multidisciplinary polysemia of activity and potential that makes food tourism a fascinating and multidimensional conceptual lens through which to understand our social and cultural selves.

To be successful and sustainable, businesses, academia, governments and society will need to work together to achieve a virtuous circle for all. Closer links between production and consumption are necessary, both to maintain destination distinctness and to provide a robust global network that can resist faceless food production and an externally controlled food and drink offering. It is an experience where liminal people in liminal spaces engage intimately with liminal artefacts, therefore this paper encourages the academy to occupy and construct interconnecting spaces made up of co-produced and co-performed processes of the economic, but also the spatial, social and cultural and technological. Through an examination of tourism literature, it is clear that there is much that has been left academically “undigested”, and there is a plethora of potentially valuable perspectives for the wider field of tourism to embrace. In recent years, it has been utilised to interrogate and understand the complex nature of postmodern production and consumption activities and presented as a multifaceted

artefact that can literally be "read" to relay the story of a places and people — I encourage you to go and read (and taste) those places.

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# Local food and tourism in the Global South

Gabriel CM Laeis 

Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Event Management, IUBH International University, Bad Honnef, Germany  
Email: g.laeis@iubh.de

**ABSTRACT:** Many countries in the Global South import a significant share of the food served to tourists. For decades, closer linkages of local food producer and the resort industry have been heralded as an antidote to this unsustainable circumstance, further encouraged by the current consumer trend around local food. Reflections on two qualitative research projects in resorts in South Africa and Fiji challenge the notion that tourists move out of their comfort zone to eat local dishes to any greater extent. Large-scale, internationally branded and managed resorts serve predominantly what their tourists from the Global North like to eat: a Western cuisine. If farmers want to benefit from this resort industry, they have to grow food according to the Western palate, which in turn has questionable impacts on biodiversity levels and environmental health in general. The discussion around localising tourism-related food chains in countries of the Global South needs to acknowledge for whose agenda food is being produced. "Corporate resorts" endorse neither a very sustainable nor a locally adaptable culinary agenda.

**KEYWORDS:** agriculture–tourism linkages, cuisine, Fiji, Global South, local food, South Africa, sustainable tourism

## Local food and tourism in the Global South — keep importing?

This opinion piece is a reflection on two participatory research projects in Fiji and South Africa. Both aimed at understanding the issues of hotel-farmer linkages — or rather: the lack of such linkages. The following will highlight some of the issues mentioned by earlier researchers (e.g. Rogerson, 2012; Torres & Momsen, 2004), but also pose a critical question rarely considered: what are the implications for countries of the Global South to produce the kind of food that their international visitors like to eat? Should localising the food chain indeed be a priority?

### March 2012, Western Cape, South Africa

I am cutting up pumpkins for a vegetable side dish in the kitchen of a luxury wilderness lodge. The butternuts were grown next door in an organic farming and training project established by the lodge's owner for unemployed women from local townships. Eight students had the chance to learn organic agricultural practices and apply those skills in their own backyards, hopefully increasing their family's food security. The project was supposed to be financed largely by the lodge's kitchen and its need for fresh produce. The day before, the students had harvested a lot of pumpkins while cheerfully lamenting they would not know what to do with them at home and they liked chicken, rice and mayonnaise much more anyway. Upon delivery, the white South African kitchen chef looked at them piling up in his store room, mumbling: "What must I do with all this stuff?"

What sounded like a palatable tourism-led development project with a socio-entrepreneurial edge, based on the easily marketable idea of "local food", turned out to be a case study of the multi-level and complex issues of tourism-agriculture

linkages in developing countries. Those that were supposed to benefit were not interested, because they opposed agricultural labour due to its role in the country's apartheid history. The kitchen found a challenge in coping with seasonal supply and varying degrees of quality, quantity and consistency. Western tourists paid top dollar and expected their idea of "good food", which mostly involved prime meat cuts. Despite the lodge owner advocating for the project, no one felt in charge of driving it. Finally, no local culinary heritage was at hand to marry local food supply and tourism expectations into dishes that work for discerning travellers and chefs alike (see Laeis, 2016; Laeis & Lemke, 2016).

After the "organic" frenzy of the early 2000s, consumers in the Global North have turned their attention towards the "local". It seems that notions of "local" and "ethnic" foods are all over the Western culinary agenda (Legrand, Hindley, & Laeis, in press) and, arguably, play a key role in the creation of the tourism experience (Bessière, 1998; Hall, Sharples, Mitchell, Macdonis, & Cambourne, 2003). In contrast to what the globalised agri-food machinery produces, local food can arguably be healthier, fresher, environmentally friendlier as well as more supportive of local, small-scale economies. Such properties, according to many researchers, NGOs and governments, are particularly relevant for the sustainable development of tourism in the Global South. The argument commonly goes: people living in rural areas are at a significant risk of facing poverty (World Bank, 2018) and their livelihoods mostly depend on small-holder agriculture (World Bank, 2016). Enter tourists: presumably they bring economic opportunities to those living in poverty, because tourists seek those "remote" environments, which offer seemingly "pristine" and "authentic" experiences, and need to be fed. The marriage of hungry tourists and local small-scale food producers through

the agency of kitchen chefs is consequently heralded as an antidote to poverty levels in rural places, while at the same time satisfying the assumed interest of visitors in local cuisines. Yet, in many destinations this rather obvious and theoretically mutually beneficial linkage between farmers and chefs remains a challenge. Many emerging economies of the Global South suffer from significant economic leakages of tourism income, not least of all due to food importation (e.g. Anderson, 2013; Lacher & Nepal, 2010; Meyer, 2007; Pratt, Suntikul, & Dorji, 2018).

### May 2017, Coral Coast, Fiji

"New order's up: two fish 'n chips, one club sandwich, one burger" shouts the sous chef in charge of the pool bar kitchen of a large-scale luxury beach resort. I get busy loading the two deep fryers in front of me with frozen pre-cut potato fries — imported from the Netherlands. Every dish of this new order comes with fries, as do most other dishes ordered for lunch by the predominantly Australian guests. I, on the other hand, came to Fiji to understand the relationship between large-scale upmarket resorts and local food producers and to potentially find answers to why both parties rarely connect well. I also came hoping to learn about the local Pacific island cuisine. Fijian cuisine has recently received a fair amount of media attention in Fiji, New Zealand and abroad. TV food shows (Zoomslide, 2014), award-winning cookbooks (Oliver, Berno, & Ram, 2010; 2013) and the unfortunately short-lived *Kai Pasifika* restaurant in Auckland translated traditional Pacific island cuisine into dishes that seemed enticing to the contemporary food enthusiast. Yet, here I was, in front of two deep fryers that almost could not handle the amount of fries ordered during lunch service. I certainly did not expect to wind up in a fast-food-like restaurant on the premises of a five-star resort — not on an island that markets itself as the friendly, tropical and paradisiac heart of the South Pacific (Laeis, 2019; Scheyvens & Laeis, in press).

What happened to those South Pacific island staples, such as coconuts, root crops and fresh vegetables? Why was I serving food that could perhaps be served in any other international resort or fast-food restaurant around the world without raising eyebrows? Is every tourists really keen to try foreign foods? Do farmers not grow enough food or not the right produce? Moreover, who has the power over the discourse that shapes the understanding of "local", "authentic" and "desirable" in the globalised and globalising tourism industry?

In pursuit of these questions, it is important to bear in mind that tourism is one of the largest industries in the world and a powerful economic factor in the Global South. In 2012, emerging economies generated about five times as much income through tourism (about US\$ 386 billion) than development assistance funds directed to them (UNWTO, 2013). Yet, it remains questionable whether they indeed benefit from promoting inbound tourism (Cárdenas-García, Sánchez-Rivero, & Pulido-Fernández, 2015; Ekanayake & Long, 2011). Medina-Muñoz, Medina-Muñoz, and Gutiérrez-Pérez (2016) found contradictory evidence about tourism's value for the poor and concluded that tourism development has not been inclusive. A recent study by Oviedo-García, González-Rodríguez, and Vega-Vázquez (2018, p. 1) support this finding in the case of the Dominican Republic, where "sun-and-sea all-inclusive tourism" has neither alleviated poverty, nor reduced inequality. In the discussion around why hotels and local farmers rarely connect well, we need to realise

that tourism in the Global South is mainly driven by visitors from the Global North, namely northern America and Europe, and increasingly Asia, who travel with their very own notions of what constitutes a desirable food experience.

In Fijian large-scale upmarket resorts with international brands and management (or rather "corporate resorts"), Fijian cuisine was mostly compartmentalised to tokenistic "island night shows" once a week — supposedly authentic food served buffet-style and accompanied by a cultural performance of spear-rattling warriors and chanting women. Most local resort staff agreed that little of the food served during these weekly events was what they thought of as authentic. For the rest of the week menus kept to Western standards: steaks, pizzas, pasta, fish and chips, salads, burgers, sandwiches, wraps and continental breakfast buffets. One head chef of a corporate resort summarised: "It's fish and chips all over the show!" and guests seemed to enjoy it. According to a guest feedback review, resorts design their menus according to how their guests like those menus to be. More local food did not seem to be required and therefore resorts had no incentive to put more on their menus. Sometimes there seems to be this notion among tourists, policy makers and critics of the tourism industry that anyone who operates a restaurant should somehow by default have an interest in offering local food. But, even though there may be such cases, corporate resorts, by and large, are predominantly concerned with satisfying their guests' wishes in order to meet financial targets and, eventually, shareholder expectations.

This context leads to the importation of about 65 per cent of food to be served to tourists in corporate resorts on Fiji's Coral Coast (Scheyvens & Laeis, in press). Even items that are locally available, or could easily be substituted by local produce, are imported. A case in point is fruit. Fiji produces a variety of high-quality tropical fruit, such as pineapples, papayas and green-skinned oranges. Yet, kitchen chefs see the need to import fresh apples and *orange* oranges, arguing that guests *want* to have them for breakfast. The list continues with salmon and green-lip mussels from New Zealand, particular cuts of beef from Australia and prawns from India, not to forget frozen potato fries from the Netherlands. Why? Because corporate resorts' prime concern is making guests happy.

Since the 1980s, there has been an ever-increasing body of research that outlines all sorts of valid reasons why tourism operators and small-scale farmers in the Global South struggle to connect (e.g. Bélisle, 1983; Pratt et al., 2018; Rogerson, 2012; Telfer & Wall, 1996; Timms & Neill, 2011; Torres & Momsen, 2004). Predominantly, on the one hand authors point towards the inability of farmers to grow what is needed by the resorts in the right quality, sufficient quantity and in a reliable manner. On the other hand, it is noted that resorts seem to struggle with small-scale, fragmented supply chains, easy payment solutions for farmers, and kitchen chefs who are unaware of local produce. The fact that most of the tourism these scholars observe in their research is dominated by the (food) preferences of Western tourists is rarely acknowledged. I argue, however, that the importation of food is not only a result of unsuitable quantity, quality and reliability of local food production, as so often argued in the research cited above, but a direct result of the type of tourism currently present in Fiji as well as many other destinations in the Global South (Mowforth & Munt, 2016). If most tourists come from Australia (43.4%) and New Zealand (21.9%), as is the case in Fiji (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2018), in other

words, destinations countries with a predominantly Western culture, and seek standardised corporate resorts, then those resorts serve largely Western food, perhaps garnished with the odd localised cultural experience buffet.

Based on this argument, the question arises why Fiji's agricultural sector could not benefit from the tourists' demand for food anyway? Does it matter whether Fijian farmers grow traditional root crops, or strawberries and green asparagus? If we look at the breakdown of food imported by those resorts, it becomes apparent that mostly internationally well-established vegetables are required (e.g. tomatoes, lettuce, capsicum (peppers) and potatoes), whereas locally adapted species, such as taro, coconut, yams and breadfruit, play a rather insignificant role. Secondly, meat and dairy production hold the greatest financial opportunity for Fiji's agricultural development (Scheyvens & Laeis, in press). From an agricultural policy point of view, this situation has a few noteworthy implications for Fiji. Farmers wishing to benefit from tourism income need to produce for the tourists' palate. Currently, this palate asks mostly for a Western diet. However, the steep growth rate of Asian tourists visiting Fiji (Fiji Bureau of Statistics, 2018) might foreshadow a change in the cuisine preferred by tourists. In any case, foreign foods are required and not local produce from Fiji's more traditional and adapted small-scale agriculture. The various leafy greens, coconut products and root crops are the realm of indigenous household cuisine, not that of corporate resorts. This rather lopsided demand in favour of Western cuisine leads to what Crosby (1986) termed "europeanisation" of the natural environment in the Global South. Local agricultural species are being pushed aside through the introduction of plants and animals that are most desired by international visitors. Some authors argue that this constitutes neo-colonisation through tourism (Crick, 1989; Hall & Tucker, 2004; Nash, 1989). It speaks critically to the debate about the importance of biodiversity and agro-ecological approaches in food production and tourism (Legrand et al., in press; Teelucksingh & Watson, 2013; Thaman, 2008). It also challenges a fundamental paradigm of sustainable tourism development: the integrity and self-determination of host communities (UNWTO & UNEP, 2005).

Moreover, increasing production of meat and dairy might have significant environmental ramifications. The creation of land for grazing and fodder production will not only destroy natural habitats and reduce biodiversity, but also result in land erosion and subsequent siltation of waterways and reefs (Pimentel, 2006; Steinfeld, Gerber, Wassenaar, Castel, & De Haan, 2006). Threats to the fragile coastal reefs of the Pacific islands and other coastal tourist destinations need to be of particular concern. They are climate change-endangered habitats and breeding grounds for a large variety of saltwater species as well as sources of food and cultural reference for indigenous communities (see also Hoffmann, 2002). The rearing of ruminants further increases greenhouse gas emissions and would seem a hypocritical path to take for a country such as Fiji that recently presided over the 23rd Conference of Parties to the UN Climate Change Convention.

The domination of Fiji's tourism industry by visitors from Australia and New Zealand epitomises the context many destinations in the Global South find themselves in: attractive nature, pleasant climate, remoteness, and an image of authenticity draw in masses of visitors from the Global North, equipped with their very own ideas of desirable food and cultural

experiences. They may pay lip service to being interested in anything local, some may genuinely be, but observations from Fiji and South Africa suggest that many tourists predominantly prefer the type of food they know and feel comfortable with. The result in terms of a tourism-agriculture linkage is that farmers need to adapt to the tourists' palate, which in turn has questionable impacts on biodiversity levels and environmental health in general. Perhaps it is more "sustainable" for these countries to keep importing food for their tourists and not internalise the externalities of the Western diet? Continuing to import food from international markets will not solve the issue of economic leakages, nor the associated CO<sub>2</sub> impact. To promote stronger linkages of food producers and tourism operators, tourism policy makers need to start considering what kind of tourism they would like to see in their own countries. From my point of view, the large-scale, upmarket "corporate resorts" should not feature to a large extent on this list.

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# Zooming out — Local food at the border: the case of the Emsland and Veenland

Sarah Seidel

*School of Leisure and Tourism Management, NHL-Stenden University, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands*  
Email: sarah.seidel@nhlstenden.com

**ABSTRACT:** Straddling the Dutch-German border, the regions Veenland and Emsland are geographically and partially historically the same, but have undergone a different kind of tourism development. While tourism tends to be small scale on both sides, the German Emsland welcomes significantly more tourists than the Dutch Veenland. In connection with a project to foster Veenland's tourism development respecting the local integrity and particularly the wish to integrate local food into the tourism value chain, this research was carried out for small to medium-sized enterprise (SME) entrepreneurs of the Veenland. The aim was to find out to what extent local products — defined as food from raw materials to dishes — contribute to the tourism motivation and the tourism product of the region in the perception of the tourists. A questionnaire was given to tourists (including day-trippers), which yielded 406 valid responses in the Emsland and 594 in the Veenland.

Outcomes show that regional food and dishes do not play a major role in the decision to travel to the regions and that the recognition of local products is low. In the Emsland, tourists identify local products more easily (despite coming from farther away) and are more likely to consume these. In the Veenland, either typical Dutch or products seen in the landscape were mentioned instead of the actual local products (defined by local experts). Comparing the results, however, it can be stated that local products as a supporting tourism resource are not used particularly much in the Veenland region and there is further potential to integrate them into the local value chain.

**KEYWORDS:** local food, local tourism development, tourist experience, tourism motivation

## Introduction

The tourism product of a destination consists of various components (Freyer, 2005; Jansen-Verbeke, in Page, 1995). Food in the form of local products and dishes is one of these. Indeed, research has shown that tourists spend up to one third of their budget on food (Hall et al. 2003; Telfer & Wall, 2000; Skuras et al., 2006) which leads to the conclusion that if this budget is spent on local products and dishes, it can contribute significantly to the local economy (Bessière, 1998; Hjalager & Johansen, 2013) and in doing so — while the production and transport chain stays rather short (Pratt, 2013) — contribute to sustainable tourism (Medina, 2005; Sims, 2009).

For tourists, local products and dishes can contribute to both place attachment and an authentic experience (Long, 2004; Medina, 2005; Sims, 2009). Yet, the range that local products and dishes play in the tourism product of a region can vary from being the main attraction (in culinary tourism) to simply being a means to satisfy hunger (e.g. McIntosh et al., in Hjalager & Richards, 2002). The range and value of these products is significantly different on this scale. The aim of this research is therefore to analyse the perception of local products by the

tourists of the region and the contribution to their tourism experience.

The special focus in this research is that it concentrates on a border region, hence, a region that is split by a national border but has similar geographical characteristics. The Veenland/Emsland region is located in the west of Lower Saxony in Germany as well as in the southeast of Drenthe in the Netherlands and therefore extends over the Dutch/German border. Geographical characteristics of both parts of the region are similar, and, hence, so are the environmental conditions for flora and fauna and, accordingly, the local food products. However, tourism development has been different; specifically in the Dutch part, tourism tends to be more small-scale than in the Emsland.

The Veenland lies in southeast Drenthe and is mainly a destination for short trips in the form of active holidays, which include biking on the region's 500 km of biking routes and hiking in nature-protected areas with diverse wildlife (Het Drentse Veenland, n.d.). Most common target groups are "empty nesters" and families with children. Tourism development is rather scattered and there are mostly small and medium-sized enterprises. In the area, regional and sustainable developments



have been stimulated in recent years. Specifically concerning locally produced goods (which mainly includes regionally produced food) in the form of the label *DrentsGoed* ("Product of Drenthe"). The label is given to mainly organic products locally produced and is seen as an example of high quality of Drenth origin (DrentsGoed, 2012).

The Emsland was integrated in the research as it is geographically and — to a certain extent — historically the same region. Target groups and the type of tourism are rather similar to the Veenland. Yet, tourism development in the German region of the Emsland has been much more significant. Since 2000, tourism in Emsland has focused increasingly on family and bike tourism, and investments have been made in order to increase tourism in the region (Emsland, 2013). Considering the years 2005 to 2011, overnight stays increased by 40%, which resulted in an overall annual turnover of €360 million in 2011 (Emsland, 2012). Today, the Emsland has the highest bed occupancy rate of Lower Saxony (Germany), with more than two million overnight stays per year, with an increasing tendency (Emsland, 2018).

Both Emsland and Veenland promote their 60 km-long common state border as allowing a multifaceted economic and cultural relationship, benefiting the adjacent Dutch county of Drenthe, as well as the German county of Emsland. Indeed, there are even shared tourism sites, such as the nature park Emsland/Veenland. As stated, the terms Veenland and Emsland stand for the same geographical region, the term originating from the Dutch Veen ("swamp") and the river Ems ("dark river"). However, in this research both terms are mentioned in order to differentiate between the Dutch (Veenland) and German (Emsland) part.

Since the Emsland/Veenland is split up into the German and the Dutch parts, the use of local products and dishes for tourism purposes might differ and, therewith, the tourist perception and the role local foods play in the tourism product might differ as well. The Veenland entrepreneurs involved in this research project owned small-sized businesses related to both tourism and local food (e.g. bed and breakfast owners, farmers with holiday flats, or a small event location) and were striving for a better offer for tourists, like in the Emsland region. Therefore, an aim is to research if there are differences between the Dutch and the German parts of Veenland/Emsland in regard to the traveller's perception of local products.

The main questions this research intended to answer are:

- Which local food products are seen as characteristic of the region of the Emsland/Veenland by tourists?
- What role do local products play in the travel motivation and tourism experience of the tourists in the Veenland/Emsland?
- What are the differences between the Emsland and Veenland tourists concerning the image of the most characteristic food products and the role these play in the tourism product of the region?

To ensure the maximum value of local products for a region, the tourists must first and foremost be able to identify these as a characteristic product of the region. Otherwise the abovementioned connection to the destination, the sense of place and valuation of cultural/social heritage cannot take place. Hence, this article focuses specifically on the image of local products, contrasting two regions with similar conditions. The findings suggest a couple of issues. Despite the fact that the regions show geographical and partially historical similarities, there is a difference in image and knowledge about local food

products among the tourists and, consequently, in travel motivation and integration in the tourism experience of the local food products. As knowledge and recognition of local food products are significantly higher in the Emsland despite a more varied target group, so is the appreciation of these products.

After a literature review analysing the role local food can play in tourist motivation and experience as well as an analysis of what the concept of local food stands for, the methodological choices and the development of the research instrument, a questionnaire, are presented. The research questions are answered in the results section and some recommendations and further thoughts round off this article.

## Literature review

The professional aim of this research is to support the tourism development of the Veenland region using local product and dishes. As stated, local products and dishes can be the main attraction of a region or a simple necessity to satisfy hunger during a trip. They can also express the culture of a region and therefore differentiate tourism regions in the eyes of the tourists. Hence, these and other important concepts of the interrelation of local products and dishes and the tourism product are elaborated in what follows. Firstly, food and tourism is presented, followed by a discussion of the connection of local food and tourist motivation and experience, followed by an analysis of the concept of local food and its economic value for a tourism destination. The former themes were used to analyse the tourist motivation and experience of the tourist in both regions, the latter was used to identify what tourist in the Emsland and Veenland perceive as characteristic and to conclude on all outcomes of the research and their meaning for the Veenland and the entrepreneurs involved.

In recent years, food tourism has grown significantly, becoming one of the most dynamic segments of tourism (United Nations World Tourism Organisation [UNWTO], 2012). Due to the culinary tourism growth, Harrington and Ottenbacher (2011), Mak et al. (2011) and Yeoman (2015) state that an increasing number of people are interested in visiting tourist destinations to taste the unique and authentic culinary products. According to the World Food Travel Association (WFTA, n.d., p. 21), food tourism can be defined as "the pursuit and enjoyment of unique and memorable food and drink experiences, both far and near". However, food is usually a supporting tourism resource in most destinations. This means that in most cases food is not a principle resource, and so not the main reason why people travel, but support the destinations attraction and is an additional motivation (Hjalager & Richards, 2002).

In addition, the definition of food tourism by Long (2004, p. 21) stated that it is about the "intentional participation in the foodways...of a culinary system" which differs from the one of the individual. Hence, it is not only about passive consumption like eating, but also about active engagement in other culinary systems, for example by preparing the dish. Moreover, she mentions that the extent of experience within food tourism is deeper as it involves different human senses (Long, 2004). Hall and Mitchell (2006) supported Long's statements by defining food tourism as travelling to restaurants, food growers, food events and other venues which can be related to gastronomy. According to them, the most important characteristic of food travel is that the individual is motivated by the chance to

experience and taste products typical of a particular destination (Hall & Mitchell, 2006). Hence, the motivation of the tourists to visit both regions is a focus in this research project.

In order to analyse the importance of local products in tourist motivation, McIntosh et al. (in Hjalager & Richards, 2002) developed a conceptual framework on the basis of Maslow's hierarchy of needs which presents the basic needs which have to be satisfied for all people. The framework can be split into four categories. The first category consists of the physical motivators which address our basic need to nourish oneself (Kim & Eves, 2012). Physical motivators not only refer to the need to satisfy hunger, but also to the need for recreation and the opportunity for new tastes (Fields, 2003; Everett, 2008). This also implies that gastronomy at the destination does not have to be of a high standard, only different (Mak et al., 2011; Kim & Eves, 2012). The second category has the cultural motivators, which result from the wish to explore new cultures and destinations and actually learn from them. The tourist here sees food consumption as a way to experience cultural nuances and traditions. If tourists are going on holiday and discover local products, they at the same time experience a new culture as food is an important part of culture (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Mak et al., 2011; McIntosh et al., 1995). The third category is formed by the interpersonal motivators which describe the need for people to build relationships and get to know the host community of a holiday destination (Hjalager & Richards, 2002; Kim & Eves, 2012). Hjalager and Richards (2002; see also Kim, Eves, & Scarles, 2009) argued that gastronomy also plays an important role in this topic as eating together strengthens relationships as well as create a feeling of "community", even with unknown people. Finally, the fourth category has the status and prestige motivators. Through the knowledge of geography and different cultures, people can earn respect and esteem, and the consumption of some foods (e.g. expensive wines) can be a status expression. However, as food in the researched regions is expected to be a supporting resource, the former categories are more likely to be applicable. (Hjalager & Richards, 2002).

Moreover, according to Haven-Tang and Jones (2005), local products and food cannot be underestimated when it comes to developing a sense of place, offering a unique tourist experience and distinguishing a tourism destination. Sims (2009) agrees that local foods can be very famous among tourists as they are regarded as special products which sum up the typical nature of a certain place. Furthermore, the consumer demand for "traditional" and/or "local" products and dishes can also be viewed as a search for authenticity (Sims, 2009). This corresponds with the framework by McIntosh et al. (in Hjalager & Richards, 2002) summarised above.

Defining local food in more detail, we find that local foods, drinks and dishes are related to "the distance between food producers and consumers" (Martinez et al., 2010, p. 3). Simply stated, local products are defined as being produced in the area (Long, 2004). Other components are also often related to local products. One component is sustainability, as well as ethics when producing and distributing local products. Another component is a short supply chain (Martinez et al., 2010; Pratt, 2013). Another viewpoint on local food is given by Bell and Valentine (in Mitchell & Hall, 2003) who mention that a food region always defines itself by the ways of preparing and consuming the dish, not necessarily by the basic product itself. Accordingly, this research considered local food from basic product to specific dishes.

Taking regions and locality into account, Long (2004) stated that a region can be seen as a cultural landscape which is formed by a certain natural environment and the specific cultures living in it. Those areas can also be characterised by special and unique food and beverages that have arisen out of the culture and availability of products and resources. Mitchell and Hall (2003, p. 166), however, argue that it can be difficult to limit the scope of such an area, especially in regard to food, "unique differences within nations are lost".

Perception also plays a role in some definitions. VLAM (*Vlaams Centrum voor Agro- en Visserijmarketing* [the Flemish Association for Agriculture and Fishing], 2012) stated that regional products need to shape a region for at least 25 years before being called a regional product. Regional products are products which are perceived to be typical and traditional for the region by the region itself and other groups of people (VLAM, 2012). All in all, the result for tourism is that the region can be distinguished from other areas, hence, enhancing the brand image (López-Guzmán & Sánchez-Cañizares, 2011). This definition, based on the perception of locals and other groups, seems, however, to be rather abstract but important, as local products might only have a value for the tourists if they are considered local. Therefore, no detailed attention will be given in this study to the location origin of the products, instead products are considered local if they are perceived as characteristic by locals and tourists.

To elaborate on the economic value of food and its value to the regional tourism value creation, let us look at research conducted by Ab Karim (1994) which shows that tourists spend almost 40% of their budget on food, whereas Eves et al. (n.d.) revealed that tourists' spending on food is up to one third of the total tourist expenditure. More recent (though not very recent) studies support the statement that tourists spend up to one third of their total spending on food (Hall & Sharples, 2003; Skuras et al., 2006; Telfer & Wall, 2000).

Consequently, Ab Karim (1994) stated that a greater focus should be placed on food as being the core product of a destination, while Lin et al. (2011) said that food can also be used in branding a destination. Indeed, food is an important element in constructing or supporting a destination's brand because food is entangled with the social, cultural and natural characteristics of a region (Ab Karim, 1994; Long, 2004). Hence, when discussing food consumption, one must not only look at the direct economic impact (tourist spending), but also at indirect and induced effects in indirectly tourism-related industries, such as the economic benefits of prior steps in the value-creation chain (e.g. agriculture), or the value of contributing to the unique place identity (Freyer, 2005; Page & Connell, 2009).

## Method

The method chosen for the research was a quantitative one to reach large sample sizes at different times of the year, and to get a generalisable picture of the tourists visiting the Emsland or the Veenland. The research was conducted in several time frames during the period 2014–2017, from early March until December, in different places in the Emsland and the Veenland. Tourists were those — according to the WTO definition — who stayed at least one night in the region and were over 18 years old. As day-trippers represent an important contribution to the leisure spending in both regions, and indeed, international

day-tripping so close to the Dutch/German border is rather common, day-trippers were also treated as tourists.

Due to the fact that tourism in both regions, specifically in the Veenland, is scattered and small scale, it was a significant point to consider how to sample the tourists. In the end, it was decided to hand out the questionnaire at different tourist spots or tourist facilities during the year. Hence, the questionnaire was displayed at tourist information, hotels, bed and breakfasts, museums and other sites such as the city centres of the biggest cities in the regions and other important tourist spots, such as the Castle Dankern and the Zoo Emmen, or at events in the region. The questionnaire was administered by either Dutch or German native-speaker students so that as far as possible tourists could be addressed in their own languages. In total, 406 questionnaires were filled in in the Emsland, and 594 in the Veenland.

### Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was developed on the basis of the literature, but also from interviews that were first conducted.

To discover which local products are most characteristic for each region, the question about which local products first came to mind was asked. The definition that local products only referred to food from raw crops to specific specialties and dishes was included in the introduction to the questionnaire. Later in the questionnaire, an overview of the most characteristic products of each region was given where respondents marked which ones they associated most with the region. To ensure the validity of particularly this list, but also the other questions, expert interviews with the tourism offices or regional heritage funds were conducted because little information on local products from the Emsland/Veenland could be found or referred to in the bigger area (northern Germany/Drenthe), or the information in secondary sources was partially contradictory. However, even the interviews did not always bring clarity as tourism experts of the region had difficulties in naming local products. For example, the tourism board of the Emsland stated that there are no local products for the Emsland, only typical northern German ones, whereas the chairman of the Local Conservation Society of Lingen ("*Heimatverein Lingen*") was able to name specific local products of the Emsland. The tourism boards in Veenland and Drenthe even denied the existence of local food, which upset the stakeholders of this research who put together the list for Veenland. In addition to the Emmen and Lingen conservation society interviews, a cook of a restaurant for local specialties in Emsland as well as six small-scale entrepreneurs and cooks in the Veenland were also interviewed. Finally, a list for both regions was prepared, taking different interviews into consideration.

In addition to the most characteristic products, the tourists were asked when they got into contact with local products and if they had tried any or planned to consume/buy them. They were also asked if these had played a role in the decision to visit a region in general, to visit the region specifically or to choose a specific site. These questions were based in the literature review to figure out on which side of the spectrum — from culinary or heritage product to simple necessity — local products and dishes are valued.

While product-specific questions were different for the Veenland and the Emsland questionnaire and based on the products named by the experts, the other questions were the same. The questionnaire for both regions was prepared in three different languages (Dutch, German, and English) to ensure

that all local but also international tourists could complete the questionnaire in their own languages. Respondents were informed about the aim and the stakeholders of the research in an introduction to the questionnaire. In relation to ethical considerations, all respondents were over 18 years old and confidentiality and anonymity were respected.

## Results and discussion

### Description of the respondents

Checking the questionnaire respondent's characteristics against the target tourist groups of both regions, it was found that mainly families and elderly people were among the respondents for both regions. However, it seems that the cities, events and tourist spots also attract younger people in their twenties and early thirties. It is remarkable that almost all tourists in the Veenland region live relatively close to the region. Hence, some of them came from Drenthe, but most of them live in one of the surrounding provinces. However, in the Emsland, the tourists come from greater distances, almost none from the same state. More importantly, more than every eighth visitor to the Emsland was an international visitor (almost three in four a Dutch one, others tourists came from Denmark and the UK), only six international visitors (four Germans, one Belgian and one British citizen) were found among the almost six hundred respondents in the Veenland.

### Most characteristic products per region: image and knowledge

In order to obtain an insight into tourists' perception of the major product and/or dish of the Emsland, the respondent were first asked to name a product and/or dish that came to mind when thinking about the Emsland or Veenland. Here, no answer options were given to examine the cognitive associations. This question remained unanswered by more than 60% of Veenland visitors and a bit less than 40% of the Emsland visitors.

Twenty-five per cent of all the respondents in the Veenland indicated that coarse rye bread is a product which they attribute to the region in northern Germany. Furthermore, about 15% of the tourists mentioned *Korn* schnapps and buckwheat pancakes as a typical product of the region, but also potatoes, green cabbage and sweet raisin bread were named.

In the research in the Veenland, that same open question delivered rather non-specific answers such as corn, sausage, honey, cheese, pancakes and only products from the regional sheep, the so-called *Heideschapen*, and the *Hunebed* wine were named as specifically regional specialties. The most mentioned products are corn, *Knipertjes Drenthe* (a sweet waffle), *Heideschapen*, pancakes, *Drentse Koek* (a type of biscuit), *Hunebedden* (which literally refers to a dolmen, but relates to the regional wine of the region), *Krentenwegge* (a kind of sweet bread), cheese and mustard, bread and Drentse milk. Interesting here is that by far the most mentioned product (38% of answers) refers to corn, which is not produced for human consumption but for feeding animals or producing biogas.

Choosing the most typical local products from a given list, *Korn* schnapps, coarse rye bread, buckwheat pancakes, potato meals and also cabbages, and sweet raisin bread were ticked by most participants in the Emsland. However, most of these products were also already mentioned when leaving the question as an open question at the beginning of the questionnaire. Hence, people knew these products straight away. The only product

not named much in the open question but ticked by a quarter of all respondents as being typical for the region is *Korn* (a strong schnapps), which might be due to the fact that they did not think of beverages when being asked about food products in the first questions.

When tourists in the Veenland had to choose local food products from a given list, the *Knipertjes* (waffles) and the local sheep (*heideschapen*) especially stood out. The local *Hunebed* wine is the first common product mentioned by less than 15% of the respondents. However, in opposition to the Emsland, here a difference is recognisable between the respondents living close by or in the same region and to the ones coming from non-neighbouring provinces ( $\chi^2 = 44.65$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ). Such differences could not be detected in the Emsland region, not even between international visitors and national ones ( $\chi^2 = 2.43$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p = 0.84$ ).

An additional question was whether tourists had tried or were planning to try any local products and dishes. The answers were different. In the Emsland, just above 50 per cent of the respondents had tried at least one of the characteristic products of the region. This number was considerably lower in the Veenland, yet, when adding the percentages of the tourists who still plan to try a local dish, the Emsland scores were only about eight per cent higher. However, as the ability to actually name products is relatively low, it is quite likely that tourists consume local products and dishes without being aware of it. This, however, would most likely not have any place attachment or authenticity effect as described in the literature. To use the theory of McIntosh et al. (in Hjalager & Richards, 2002), only physical motivators (and maybe interpersonal ones) are satisfied by this process, whereas cultural (and likely status and prestige) motivators remain rather unimportant.

#### ***Regional food products as travel motivator and their contribution to the experience***

The main motivation factors for tourists visiting the Emsland was mainly for its landscape, cycle paths (15%) and recreational opportunities (21%). Another pull factor was attractions. Only about five per cent named local products as a pull factor to the Emsland, while twice as many considered local products and dishes as a pull factor in general when making a holiday decision. This shows all the more that while local products may play a role as a motivator in general, even for the target groups present, it is not relevant for the Emsland region. The results for the Veenland region were a little different in that the extent. The tourists estimated the importance of local products as a travel motivator on average lower, yet, the importance of local products in their decision-making process to visit the Veenland was higher. Hence, the general importance of local products for the decision for a destination is only about 30% higher than the influence of local products for the decision to travel to the Veenland. In addition, when ranking the importance of local products for their Emsland or Veenland holiday on a scale from unimportant (1) to important (5), the averages stay below 2, however. In general, the importance of local products in Emsland and Veenland for the tourists is low in their decision-making for a holiday in the region, even lower than the general influence of these ( $t = 4.7$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.032$ ). However, for a small sub-group of the sample, local products play a significant role.

Now an interesting discovery happened when asking tourists to state to what extent local food products were relevant for

their experience of the regions Veenland and Emsland (on the same scale from unimportant (1) to important (5)). This was much higher in the Emsland, with more than 73 per cent assigning importance, compared to only 32% in Veenland. Hence, if tourists recognised and consumed the products, this contributed to their experience ( $t = 7.8$ ,  $df = 8$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This mainly happened in the Emsland.

#### ***Differences between Veenland and Emsland***

The outcome of the research shows that local products do not play an important role in choosing a holiday destination. This applies when tourists to the Emsland or Veenland select a holiday destination in general as well as when referring to the Emsland/Veenland as a tourist destination, while the general motivation coming from local products as a tourism attraction is higher than the one specifically for the region. Therefore, local products function neither as push nor as pull factors (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). Nevertheless, the landscape and nature, the cycle paths as well as the recreational opportunities offered in the Emsland/Veenland serve as pull factors and principal resources since these are the main motivators for the respondents to chose this location. Local products and/or dishes are part of supporting resources as they enhance the attractiveness of the destination, but do not represent the primary motivation factor to decide on a specific holiday destination (Hjalager & Richards, 2002). However, it seems that even this is less applicable in the Emsland/Veenland, as discussed above. Thus, participation in food tourism, according to the definitions is not intentional in the Veenland and Emsland, but rather passive, as a form to satisfy the basic needs of the tourists (Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009).

Tourists have knowledge about local products of the region, however, they cannot link them well to the region, in many cases only when given a list with the products. Recognition was significantly less in the Veenland than in the Emsland. This also resulted in enormous differences in the extent to which local food was relevant to their experience, which mainly happened in the Emsland. Hence, the Veenland tourists, in their perception, do not benefit much from the local food products.

Moreover, the participants' cognitive associations of local products and/or dishes match most of the findings revealed in expert interviews. Thus, in the Emsland, coarse rye bread, *Korn* schnapps and buckwheat pancakes are perceived to be the most important products or dishes. Nonetheless, some products such as potatoes or green cabbage were named which have not been identified as typical for only the Emsland region, but is more so for northern Germany.

Surprisingly, the most named products for the Veenland region were neither specifically from Veenland nor regional, but were either landscape integrated (corn) or Dutch (e.g. cheese) in general. However, a significant number of respondents are able to name products mentioned also by the experts. While it seemed to be more difficult for the tourists in the Veenland than in the Emsland to identify local products, when given a list of local products, items were recognised more easily in both regions. In Emsland, where tourists were in generally better at naming the same local products also identified by the experts, these products were recognised more often after the list was offered too. Therefore it can be assumed that participants are more likely to recognise a typical product and/or dish if provided with a list of items.



Only in the Emsland region, the perception of local food has consequences for further benefits of the region such as a regional multiplier effect. Respondents, for example, specifically mentioned visiting restaurants to eat buckwheat pancakes. Visiting restaurants or shops where local food is bought was not overly common in both regions, yet, in the Emsland (19.8%) almost three times higher than in the Veenland (7.4%). However, to draw further conclusions on this, more research is needed. In general, half of the respondents indicated that they had already experienced products and/or dishes of the Emsland (buckwheat pancake, *Korn* schnapps and coarse rye bread). However, it can be assumed that several who answered in the negative with this question might have experienced the products unwittingly. Most likely this is all the more applicable for the Veenland, where the identification of local products was more difficult.

An interesting outcome concerning the Veenland occurred where tourists had difficulties naming specific local products, and where not only general Dutch products (e.g. cheese) were named, but that corn was most often. Obviously, the research was conducted during the visits of the tourists and corn fields might stand out as a sight in the landscape. A possible explanation might here be that tourists automatically link the site to a product, hence as the corn fields shape the landscape, corn must be a characteristic local product.

## Conclusion

The research has shown that local products and/or dishes do not play an important role in the decision-making process to visit the Emsland or the Veenland. However, there seems to be potential to be used in both areas, as food plays a more significant role for destinations in general than for the specific destination of Emsland/Veenland. Accordingly, when recognition of local products as local is missing, the chain to contribute to the experience breaks. Hence, particularly in the Veenland, where local food products are barely recognised, they cannot contribute to the experience. A resulting outcome is that tourists do not actively search for or consume local food, which accordingly results in less income due to the missing multiplier in the region.

One remarkable outcome is that despite tourists coming from further away in the Emsland than in the Veenland, tourists are better and more specific at naming local products. The products named by the tourists correspond more with the products given by the experts and were named more specifically (e.g. "buckwheat pancakes" at the Emsland region instead of just "pancakes" in the Veenland region). The products mentioned in the Veenland are also more characteristic for a bigger region or even the Netherlands itself than only for the Veenland region. If tourists were not able to mention any products from the Veenland region, they mentioned products they saw in the surrounding landscape such as corn. To conclude: Tourists had a better picture of the local products of the Emsland and therewith these can be easily integrated into the tourism product of the region as being a characteristic. This also means, that place attachment, authenticity and the heritage function as mentioned in the theoretical functions of local food is less applicable for the Veenland than the Emsland.

Hence, the issue remains: tourists spend on and consume local products, most likely without knowing or appreciating these as local products. Hence, important functions of local products and

food in tourism are not yet used. Relating this outcome to the motivators of tourists stated in the literature, it implies that while local products might not become a principal resource for the region, the potential as supporting resource has not been fully realised either. Considering trends and buzzwords in tourism such as sustainability, authenticity and sense of place, there seems to be more potential in using the local products of the Emsland and the Veenland for tourism purposes, especially as more tourists have indicated being generally interested in local products than the ones where the local food of the Emsland/Veenland actually played a motivator role in visiting the region.

## Recommendations for further research

The research specifically focused on the most characteristic products of the Emsland/Veenland and to what extent these played a role in the decision-making process or the tourism experience. However, as stated in the literature, integrating the tourists into the production processes and background might be a significant tourism experience, increasing place attachment and a feeling of authenticity, with the tourist even more as a participant. To include the relationship between the production or the integration of the product and its backgrounds into the tourism product and the place attachment and experience of the product plus resulting economic effects seems an interesting option for further research and, indeed, an interesting possibility to integrate a production chain stage of a single local product or dish into the tourism product of a region. All the more since literature stated that — in an increasingly international world — products are getting more similar, while the production process stays more characteristic for a region.

A remarkable outcome of the research was that tourists — when they are not able to name characteristic products of the region — do not only name products and dishes which are typical for the bigger region or country they visit, but start to link regional characteristics of the landscape like the corn fields shaping the land and therewith leaving corn as a local product in the opinion of the tourist. It seems that this point might need further attention to see to what extent this statement is generalisable and if or how this can be used in the integration of (the production process of) local products into the tourism product and the promotion of these for tourism purposes.

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# The symbolic understanding of milk in Swiss gastronomy

Perrine Leroy\* & Peter Varga

Ecole Hoteliere de Lausanne, Hes-So University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland, Lausanne, Switzerland

\*Corresponding author email: perrine.leroy@bluewin.ch

**ABSTRACT:** In the 21st century, in a context where milk and dairy products are at the centre of many debates, this article wonders how doubts about these products are perceived in a gastronomic context where they are particularly appreciated and used. This article focuses on a Swiss context, since milk and dairy products are an integral part of Swiss culture. The article explores the history of milk in the Western world and highlights the fact that milk has had an ambiguous position throughout the centuries. Some studies make it possible to question the consumption of such products, while in Switzerland there is no doubt that they are products strongly rooted in the country's heritage. Eighteen interviews with gastronomic chefs were conducted to develop answers to the questions raised by the potential questioning of milk and dairy products in Swiss gastronomy. The results show that the reflections about dairy do not impact the gastronomic field, and that chefs are inclined to keep these products, as long as moderate use is made of them. In a Swiss context, the results show that milk and dairy products are untouchable and that it is important to defend the cultural heritage of the country.

**KEYWORDS:** dairy products, Switzerland, symbolism

## Introduction

Since the end of the 20th century, food has been the subject of more or less intense debates in the media and among the public. While industrialisation has allowed economically developed countries to move beyond all kinds of food fears, such as famine, it has also brought about new challenges, such as obesity. In turn, this poses new questions. These challenges are often perceived as health crises, which concern consumers, who increasingly care about their diet (Denizeau et al., 2008). In this context, milk has also become subject to scrutiny and reconsiderations.

Milk is a major market. Indeed, in his documentary *La planète lait* (The milk planet), Pichler (2017) speaks of a market of 100 billion euros for Europe alone, and approximately 200 million tons of milk are produced and sold every year. The evolution of milk production has had a strong impact on society and the environment (Pichler, 2017). There are many books and documentaries that question the production and consumption of dairy, such as *Lait de vache: Blancher trompeuse* ("Cow's milk: Deceptive whiteness") by Anne Laroche de Rosa, published in 1998, *Lait, mensonges, et propagande* ("Milk, lies and propaganda") by Thierry Souccar, published in 2008, and as already mentioned, *La planète lait* by Andreas Pichler, published in 2017. But how can such changes — the questioning and criticism of milk production and consumption — be managed in a gastronomic environment where milk and dairy products are fundamental? And the question is even more delicate in a Swiss context where milk is a historical and economic pillar

of the country. Milk is the best ambassador of Swiss culture and symbols, as illustrated by the double cream of Gruyère, Emmental, and milk chocolate (Bewes, 2012; Breiting, 2014). The aim of this research is therefore to provide answers and attempt to explain how the reconsideration of milk can affect the world of gastronomy and in particular Swiss gastronomy (Goldstein & Merkle, 2006; Hache-Bissette & Saillard, 2011).

It is important to note that this study evokes milk in a general way, i.e. milk is understood as a whole with its derivatives, such as butter, cream, milk chocolate and cheese. When the distinction is necessary, this is specified. When the term "milk" is used, it refers to animal milk, specifically cow's milk. Again, when precision is particularly necessary, this is specified. Finally, it is important to note that this article focuses on the history and culture of milk in the western hemisphere and especially in Europe.

At first, this work presents various research on milk in order to evaluate how milk is perceived through history and Swiss history, and how its production and consumption are questioned, especially in recent decades. This research on milk and milk in Switzerland poses research questions that are studied through the interviews. Finally, the results of the interviews are presented and discussed in order to reveal and develop answers to the research questions.

## Literature review

The history of milk consumption goes back about 10 000 years before our era, but it is only from antiquity (ca 8th century BC) that this beverage became a source of questioning and ambiguities. Indeed, from that time, milk has been balanced between positive and negative representations. Outside the mythological world that praised it by associating it with purity and immortality (Auberger, 2001; Morel, 1994; Thoueille, 2007), milk was also represented as a barbaric, savage and primitive symbol (Auberger, 2001; Fournier, 2013). Milk reflected unfinishedness, a lower and unworthy state of the evolved humans, unlike processed foods such as bread or wine that represented the ennoblement of primitive beings and civilisation (Auberger, 2001; Denizeau et al., 2008; Laurioux, 1994). The ancient Greeks consumed milk more readily in the form of derivative products, such as cheese (Auberger, 2001; Valenze, 2011). Concerning its medicinal properties, Auberger (2001) notes that milk was sometimes perceived both as harmful, in particular because of its indigestible characteristics, and sometimes as healing for human health. Morel (1994) and Thoueille (2007) also observe that milk was often used as a medicine, and Schmid (2009) describes it as a food with strengthening and curative properties for the human body.

During the Middle Ages (ca 6th–15th century), the ambiguous position of milk continued. Laurioux (1994, p. 30) notes that dairy and in particular milk had “poor gastronomic status”. Cheese and milk were considered farmer’s food (Guillaume, 2003; Laurioux, 1994). In contrast, according to Valenze (2011), milk retained a positive symbolism at that time, such as abundance, conviviality and success.

Laurioux (1994) notes that dairy habits have evolved mostly since modern times (ca. 15th–18th century), when processed milk products such as cream and butter became more esteemed and finally found their place in the kitchen. Moreover, a notion of delicacy was often associated with dishes made from milk (Guillaume, 2003). Nevertheless, the consumption of dairy continued to provoke many debates among doctors as to its benefits and troublesome effects on the body. Although certain virtues were recognised, other trends indicated that milk was rather unsuitable for the human body and that people should be wary of it (Guillaume, 2003; Laurioux 1994). According to Laurioux (1994), Guillaume (2003), Fanica (2008) and Souccar (2008), milk became a popular product in the 19th century. It did not escape industrialisation, and became a large-scale market (Guillaume, 2003; Fanica, 2008; Souccar, 2008; Valenze, 2011). It is also at the beginning of the 19th century that medical discourses softened with regard to milk consumption (Guillaume, 2003). However, Valenze (2011) highlights once again the ambiguous position of milk in relation to its effects on health. For example, while the industry encouraged for a time the substitution of breast milk by animal milk, towards the end of the 19th century, milk appeared as unhealthy and contaminated and as a source of certain diseases, such as tuberculosis (Fanica, 2008; Valenze, 2011). Fanica (2008) and Souccar (2008) find that technical progress encouraged and renewed milk consumption, especially pasteurisation in 1865 and domestic refrigeration at the beginning of the 20th century.

This brief retrospective indicates that milk has been perceived in a variety of ways throughout history, from a symbolic, culinary and medical point of view. However, a slight trend against raw

milk is revealed, particularly because of its poor conservation and its association with digestive troubles. In contrast, once the product had been manufactured, it was more readily accepted in the diet of our ancestors. It is only from the 19th century, as a result of industrialisation and technological progress, that milk became a mass market product and found its place in consumer culture.

As Génin (1939) pointed out in his day, propaganda campaigns emerged in the 20th century to encourage the consumption of dairy products throughout the Western world. In particular, the actors of the agribusiness world started to see children as very promising market tools (Fanica, 2008; Souccar, 2008) and thus they became a target for the dairy industry (Campbell & Campbell, 2016; Valenze, 2011). In the middle of the 20th century, advertising campaigns were launched in maternity wards (Souccar, 2008) and milk started being distributed in schools at the beginning of the century (Atkins, 2005; Fanica, 2008; Souccar, 2008). Since that time, the promotion of milk is also carried out through commercial advertisements put in place by the industry. Milk campaigns have given the population the feeling that milk is undoubtedly good for one’s health (Campbell & Campbell, 2016; Souccar, 2008). Many researchers have also positioned themselves in support of milk and dairy as a contributor to good health (Guéguen, 2006; Lecerf, 2010; Lecerf et al., 2016; Rizzoli, 2014; Bourre, 2010; Weinsier & Krumdieck, 2000).

However, large swaths of the world’s population, for example in Asia and South America, do not consume dairy products and live very well without them (Bernot, 1988; Fournier, 2013; Klein et al., 2002). Medical studies also show that cow’s milk is not an essential element for human health (Campbell & Campbell, 2016; Chan & Giovannucci, 2001; Feskanich et al., 2003; Laroche de Rosa, 1998). Finally, the dairy industry is known to finance medical and nutritional research, which may result in conflicts of interest. This causes the objectivity of that research to be questioned (Campbell & Campbell, 2016; Souccar, 2008). In fact, according to Bachelot-Narquin et al. (2009, p. 122), “[t]here are sometimes conflicting interests between public health objectives and those of economic actors, particularly at the level of the agri-industries”.

Questions also arise concerning the natural characteristic of the milk consumption of human beings. Indeed, Bernot (1988), Bourlioux et al. (2011) as well as Fournier (2013) observe that humans have a low capacity to digest lactose and these studies also underline the fact that humans are not genetically designed to consume milk, other than (human) breast milk during infancy. However, milk can be transformed into other products through fermentation, which makes it easier to digest (Schmid, 2009). This technique has been used by our ancestors for a long time (Auberger, 2001; Gerbault & Roffet-Salque, 2017). Nevertheless, conflicting views persist and milk is sometimes perceived as inappropriate (Laroche de Rosa, 1998), and/or sometimes as legitimate (Fanica, 2008) for human consumption.

This retrospective on the history of dairy consumption identifies some facts that encourage serious reflection on whether to consume milk nowadays. Indeed, researchers have looked at this issue from different points of view, such as the industrial, medical and natural aspects. Their research exposes some arguments that call into question the consumption of milk and dairy products. Major efforts — particularly through propaganda campaigns during the 20th century — have been



deployed to give milk the characteristic of an essential food for health (Bachelot-Narquin et al., 2009; Brodbeck & Moser, 2007; Campbell & Campbell, 2016; Guillaume, 2003; Souccar, 2008). However, some authors agree that the real motivations of these campaigns are economic and put the dairy industry's interests above those of consumers (Atkins, 2005; Souccar, 2008).

Many authors agree that food reflects the cultural and historical identity of a given population (Poulain, 1997; Fischler, 2001; Goldstein & Merkle, 2006; Hache-Bissette & Saillard, 2011). Thus, casting doubt on food practices of a certain culture would be analogous to questioning its very identity. As far as Switzerland is concerned, milk is an integral part of the Helvetic identity. Milk chocolate, cream and cheese, all three milk-based products, as well as dairy products as a whole, are symbols of Swiss culture (Bewes, 2012). Milk is also a pillar of Swiss history and a foundation of its economy (Bewes, 2012; Breiding, 2014; Valenze, 2011).

Breiding (2014) says that Swiss milk history begins from the Middle Ages, when the country made the production of milk its main agricultural activity. Swiss people learned how to work with milk in order to turn it into other dairy products, such as butter and cheese. Schmid (2009) highlights the nutritional importance of these products for the Swiss people throughout history. Swiss dairy products, especially cheese, gained in popularity throughout the world from the 19th century onwards. Schmid (2009) notes that the cheese trade greatly contributed to the financial and cultural development of the country. The influence campaign in favour of dairy is also present in Switzerland. In fact, all kinds of advertising in favour of milk and dairy emerged in the country starting in the 20th century (Brodbeck & Moser, 2007). Although not part of this approach, chocolate is nevertheless a vital part of Swiss culture (Bewes, 2012; Breiding, 2014; Valenze, 2011); accordingly, Switzerland has been able to develop valuable know-how in the field of chocolate production.

This retrospective of the history of milk in Switzerland reflects the importance of the place that this product occupies within the cultural heritage and identity of the country. This strongly connects milk to gastronomy, since gastronomy reflects the culture, heritage and way of life of a society and a country (Bonnet & Villavicencio, 2016; Stengel, 2014). While butter is a flagship product of gastronomy because of its strong culinary functionality, chocolate and cheese are gastronomic products in their own right (Bewes, 2012; Lallemand, 1965). Since the Middle Ages, milk seems to have an obvious place in the Swiss culinary heritage (Bewes, 2012; Breiding, 2014; Valenze, 2011), while for a long time it struggled to find its place in Western gastronomy (Laurieux, 1994). It is only from the 19th century — and thanks to the numerous food derivatives that it can generate — that milk became an appreciated food in Western kitchens and that it became a product with high gastronomic potential (Delfosse & Williot, 2016; Laurieux, 1994). Milk thus seems to have found an important place in gourmet cooking, and is even more important in Swiss gastronomy and Swiss food culture.

Changing food practices in a culture is a touchy subject because, according to Fischler (2001), these practices and habits are highly resistant to change. Eating habits appear relatively stable and continuous over time. Speaking of food and gastronomy, Stengel (2016) observes that the population tends to desire traditional and authentic values. Food is a cultural pillar of a country's identity and some foods are so ingrained in a people's culture that it is difficult to change certain consumption

patterns (Bachelot-Narquin et al., 2009). Culinary heritage therefore imposes a kind of limit on the evolution of food (Bonnet & Villavicencio, 2016). However, Fischler (2001) also observes that in parallel with this resistance, culinary practices and food can in fact change and evolve — sometimes even drastically. Finally, he finds that food is always impacted by the laws of change and that this process is accelerating over time.

Thus, although apparently stable and continuous, culinary practices can evolve. Therefore, in a context governed by evolution and change (Fischler, 2001; Proust, 2006), the question of the evolution of food habits and practices is more than legitimate. The question is even more relevant in the Swiss context.

Indeed, since Switzerland is a particularly traditional country (Bewes, 2012) and milk has an undeniable place in its gastronomy and culture, the reconsideration of the country's eating habits and its gastronomic heritage raises a dilemma that is interesting to examine. What is the place of milk today in gastronomy in general? And in Swiss gastronomy? What importance should be given to this reconsideration in a country such as Switzerland? In a gastronomic context where dairy products have gained a fundamental place, what response does the potential reconsideration of milk and dairy products receive? And in a Swiss gastronomic context, what response does the potential reconsideration of milk and dairy products receive, knowing that they are an integral part of the Swiss identity? How could the potential reconsideration of milk likely impact gastronomy and Swiss gastronomy?

Questions also arise about the difference in perception between the reconsideration of milk and the reconsideration of its derivatives, which have been accepted more in food for centuries. Why are dairy products more accepted than milk today? This situation and these questions lead to an intense reflection on milk and its derivatives in the 21st century.

## Methods

The research questions of this work revolve around the ambiguities linked to dairy products and aim to better understand the current situation of these products in gastronomy and Swiss gastronomy. The qualitative method emphasises a comprehensive dimension of research and consists in analysing the thoughts and feelings of the interviewees at the heart of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2004; Dumez, 2016). In this case, the interviewees, also called participants, are chefs working in a gastronomic context in western Switzerland. The purpose of this study is to collect the participants' thoughts and opinions about the place of milk in gastronomy and specifically in Swiss gastronomy; consequently, the research interview seems to be the most relevant method to conduct this study (Crouch & McKenzie, 2006; Gardner et al., 2012; Kvale, 2007). Semi-structured interviews are the most suitable method for this work, because when the expected answers of the interviewees are uncertain, as is the case here, semi-structured interviews are a relevant method (Gardner et al., 2012). Conducting a semi-structured research interview is a complex method that requires some caution in interpreting the data (Anadón & Guillemette, 2006). The interpretation and analysis of the interviews are developed from the collected data's categorisation. According to Alvesson (2011), categorising data is a method for finding a general overview of the material

collected and for helping to design models, as well as to develop results. In addition to classifying data, it is also necessary to interpret and find the links between these categories in order to understand the situation studied and to interpret in depth the implicit content emerging from the interviews with the chefs (Anadón & Guillemette, 2006).

A total of 18 interviews were carried out in spring 2018 in the framework of this research with chefs, some of them Michelin Star chefs and *Meilleurs Ouvriers de France* (MOF) chefs. Some of the interviewees are teachers of the *Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne* (EHL). In order to complete this research, the other interviewees were chefs in gastronomic restaurants in western Switzerland. In order to obtain deeper content and a wide range of viewpoints, it was important to promote the diversity of interviewees (Alvesson, 2011). Thus, while remaining in a gastronomic context, the sample included people with different levels of experience and different working environments.

The interviews took place at EHL with the teachers of the school. As for the interviews with external chefs, they were held in their own restaurants. Before the interviews began, a consent form (Appendix A) was given to each participant to be signed, in particular to validate their consent to participate in this research and to be audio-recorded. All agreed to be recorded. The interviews were conducted following the questions developed in advance to guide the participant (Appendix B). The interviews lasted between 9.28 minutes and 53.42 minutes, with an average of 31 minutes.

## Results and discussion

The interviews showed that milk and dairy products today are very far from the negative considerations that have been observed in their history. Laurioux (1994, p. 30) speaks about "poor gastronomic status", while all participants agree that dairy products bring value to gastronomy. A participant even said that *"butter, milk and cream are amazing ingredients for cooking"*. For participants in the bakery sector, there is no doubt that dairy products provide value and quality that no existing substitute is able to provide. One of the chefs working in that field added that *"these products are unequivocally the best ones"*.

The characteristics given to milk in the 21st century seem therefore rather to follow in the footsteps of what was said of this product in the time of the Renaissance and early modern times. Indeed, Guillaume (2003) and Valenze (2011) speak of pleasure and delicacy, as did the majority of the people interviewed in this study.

Another common element in the thinking of the 21st century and previous centuries is the preference for manufactured products rather than for liquid milk. Indeed, Guillaume (2003) notes that this preference persists over the centuries and almost half of the participants regarded milk as less important than other dairy products. As a Michelin Star chef said about this subject: *"The most interesting products are obviously the processed milk-based products, not the milk itself"*; and a MOF chef said *"If I have to keep only one dairy product, it is butter. If by obligation I have to remove milk, I have no particular concern with it"*.

One of the most noteworthy elements from the interviews is the importance of dairy products in cooking. The majority of participants said that dairy products are highly present in cooking. Some participants even said that these products are

used *"for everything", "everywhere, all the time"* and in *"all recipes"*.

Beyond the quantity used, dairy products seem to be anchored in the culinary education of chefs. Thus, beyond their undeniable culinary value, there is no doubt that dairy products represent more than just ingredients with remarkable properties. They also represent a cultural force in the gastronomic field and their use/consumption is a deeply rooted habit among the participants. One chef added that *"It's mostly emotional because I don't see myself in the kitchen how to make a sauce without finishing it with a piece of butter in it. That is unquestionable"*.

All this highlights the fact that dairy products have an undeniable place in gastronomy. This finding is based in particular on the fact that almost all participants consider dairy products to be deeply imbedded in gourmet cuisine. Thus, in a context where dairy products are seen as indispensable and are highly valued, doubts and reflections on milk production and consumption — particularly those in recent years — (Fournier, 2013; Pichler, 2017) are not particularly relevant. Indeed, the participants did not seem to feel fully concerned and affected by the potential reconsideration of the consumption of milk and its derivatives. Moreover, the majority of participants did not perceive any conflict generated by a potential reconsideration of their favourite ingredients.

The fact that participants are so unequivocal on this subject can be traced to their scepticism of studies concerning this topic. They do not necessarily believe that a change is necessary. The objectivity, reliability and impartiality of studies can be questioned, particularly in the food field (Bachelot-Narquin et al., 2009; Campbell & Campbell, 2016; Combris et al., 2006; Souccar, 2008) and some participants also share this mistrust. One of the chefs even said, *"Any study will be based on who is going to sponsor it, and especially who will fund it"*.

So, as long as the chefs are sceptical, it seems quite coherent that they prefer to follow their own will. Another interviewee added, *"All these kinds of studies are contradicting themselves years after year... You have to make your own reason... Anyway, what you're told about the milk, in three years they will tell you the opposite"*.

For the participants, there does not seem to be sufficient evidence to cast doubt on their consumption of dairy. For some chefs, the debate is therefore quickly closed, since there is no question about the place these products should have in the kitchen. Only a minority of participants wondered whether milk is healthy for human consumption. Thus, arguments against milk (Campbell & Campbell, 2016; Chan & Giovannucci, 2001; Feskanich et al., 2003; Laroche de Rosa, 1998) seem very far from reaching the gastronomic kitchen. This is quite consistent with the fact that the vast majority of participants want to continue to use dairy products and do not plan to stop working with them.

The fact that dairy is so ingrained in a chef's culinary education may possibly explain why interviewees are so sceptical about studies that question these products. In fact, for half the participants, dairy products are a matter of education and culture. So it seems consistent that these persons are not fully prepared to adhere to arguments that go against what they have learned and assimilated throughout their training. To reconsider dairy would be to challenge the education and culinary culture of many chefs. One of the MOF chefs expressed this about the reconsideration of dairy products: *"It is the questioning of the training, it is the questioning of the professionals... Cooking and*

*gastronomy is an empirical environment and changing habits is very complicated".*

It seems obvious that these chefs are not inclined to warmly welcome doubts about the consumption of milk and dairy products. The fact that participants do not feel particularly concerned or affected by the potential reconsideration of milk and dairy products may also be linked to the fact that they have already adapted their way of using these products. Indeed, half of interviewees state that in order to make meals lighter, they have seen a clear decrease in the amount of dairy used, with butter and cream being the most reduced. The interviews reveal that the chefs have already adapted their way of cooking dairy products, notably by reducing or substituting these ingredients. It therefore seems understandable that they do not wish to go even further in this approach, or at least not too far, since the vast majority of participants do not want to give up dairy products entirely. A participant perfectly summarised this principle by saying about the lactose-free diet: *"Currently we have already adapted a little...We will have to continue to adapt, but we will still have this basis of dairy products that will remain anchored"*.

A limit seems to have been reached, beyond which it is not reasonable for the participants to venture. The principle of moderation would therefore reflect the limit to the changes and reconsiderations that are taking place in gastronomy, with regard to dairy products at any rate. Indeed, over three-quarters of the participants agree milk consumption and use should be made more moderate in restaurants and at home. But moderating dairy products does not mean that they are superfluous. Some chefs highlight that *"There is no kitchen without cream or butter...but in moderation"*, and *"Milk, butter and cream are products for me that are imperative but once again that must be fairly dosed"*.

Regarding Switzerland, there is no doubt that milk-based products and dairy products form an integral part of the identity and culture of the country. Except for one chef who did not really express attachment to the cultural notion of milk, the unanimity of participants joins Bewes' (2012) and Breiding's (2014) assertion that milk is a pillar of Swiss history, an element of its heritage and a cash cow. For all the participants, it is therefore clear that the consumption of dairy products should not be challenged in Switzerland. They do not imagine the country without these products and consider that they should keep their place. Some even go so far as to talk about revolution to keep these products in Switzerland. As an example, some chefs said about dairy products in Switzerland: *"gastronomy will defend that"* and *"I'll be there to really put them forward"*. Another participant even expressed the idea that *"there are already a lot of people who would defend dairy before we do"*. To sum up, whether it is for the culture or gastronomy of the country, the place of milk and dairy products is strongly defended and highlighted.

Thus, the questioning and doubts concerning milk and dairy products in the 21st century do not seem to impact gastronomy, least of all Swiss gastronomy. It even seems obvious that these products have a significant place in gourmet kitchens and that it would be unrealistic to think that they will ever be done away with completely. Although the interviews reveal that the interviewees are not particularly receptive to the potential reconsiderations of milk and other dairy products, this does not mean that the world of gastronomy is closed to discussion. Indeed, as the interviews showed, some participants are quite inclined to question themselves, to ask themselves the right

questions and to remain open to any change. As one of the Michelin Star chefs said, *"We are the first to question ourselves each day, in our profession that is how we move forward"*. The food world is evolving (Fischler, 2001; Proust, 2006) and half of the participants perceive it, like another Michelin Star chef said, *"We must follow the world of today"*.

At the same time, the population's food practices appear to have strong resistance to change (Fischler, 2001). This principle is also well entrenched in the gastronomic field since the trend indicates that participants do not feel really concerned about the potential reconsiderations of milk and dairy products and that they do not want to give up these products that they know so well. Resistance to change is even more glaring in a Swiss gastronomic context, where all the interviewees believe that the use of dairy products should not be called into question.

Thus, the gastronomic world seems to be balanced between stability and change. As some chefs explain, food products are not immune to various changes and disturbances. For example, salt, sugar, meat and soybeans are products whose use and consumption, in terms of quantities, have changed in recent years. Any product can be inclined to evolve. But at the moment, as far as milk is concerned, the balance seems to be in favour of stability, especially in a Swiss context.

According to the interviews, with regard to milk and dairy products, moderation seems to be the principle to be followed in order to take advantage of the qualities of these products without going too far. Indeed, the vast majority of participants agree that the use of these products should be moderate, in particular given the trend towards a lighter cuisine. This principle of moderation can also extend to gastronomy in general because moderation seems to be the ally of the gastronomic kitchen, just as extremism seems to be its enemy, like one of the chefs said, *"It makes no sense to forbid somethings. It is always fundamentalism that poses a concern"*. Besides, several chefs talk about the concept of eating less, to eat better. In the gastronomic context in general, while moderation is the limit to changes in culinary practices and ingredients, cultural heritage serves as the limit in the Swiss gastronomic context (Bonnet & Villavicencio, 2016). Some participants concluded about reconsideration of milk in gastronomy: *"Questioning Yes. Applying it in Switzerland, I'm not necessarily for it"*, and speaking about milk-based products in Switzerland, *"products with strong identity like that, regional products, I don't think it will change"*.

### Implications for the foodservice industry

Reconsidering the consumption of milk and dairy products appears irrelevant in a gastronomic context, especially in a Swiss gastronomic context. Chefs are fervent supporters of a cultural and gourmet heritage. They do not feel the need to read studies to know how to do their job. Yet, their openness indicates that they are ready to ask themselves the right questions and that when the time comes, they know how to pass on their knowledge (e.g. cutting back on butter and cream). Therefore it seems reasonable to trust them and to be guided by what they propose. Moreover, the chefs interviewed in this study promote moderation. What could be more reasonable than this principle? And as far as Swiss culinary culture is concerned, it does not seem unreasonable to defend a heritage that is particularly focused on the pleasure of savouring so-called passion products.

Finally, moderation is a principle that can be applied to all kinds of products, whether in gastronomy or in everyday life in general. As far as defending culinary heritage is concerned, from the point of view of a certain culture versus another, defending this principle may not be so simple. Indeed, it is likely that food practices of foreign cultures may disturb some people. However, this is another debate that falls outside of the scope of this study, but it would be interesting to deepen the discussion in order to study the extent to which a culture is willing to protect its culinary heritage.

## Conclusion

After conducting this research, it appears that milk is an inexhaustible source of questioning, reflections and discussions. Throughout history, milk has fluctuated between virtues and vices, between benefits and problems, as well as between beloved and unloved elements. The ambiguous position of milk has not seemed to fade through time. Nowadays, in the 21st century, many authors still position themselves either for or against milk. From all points of view studied in this research, milk is a product that has provoked many debates throughout its history.

Milk-derived products are somewhat exempt from such controversy. Indeed, dairy products have been relatively unaffected by conflicts regarding milk, and they are much more accepted than its liquid form. This trend has lasted to the present day. Beyond the observed difference between the representation of milk and the representation of dairy products, this article also highlights that in the 21st century, dairy may be at the centre of various challenges, but it still holds a fundamental and undeniable place in gastronomy.

In this gastronomic context, and specifically in Switzerland, dairy products are therefore unassailable products. And while reflections about dairy consumption are far from reaching the world of gastronomy as a whole, they are even farther from reaching the world of Swiss gastronomy. Indeed, dairy products are iconic in Switzerland from many points of view: historical, economic and culinary. These products are indeed emblematic of Switzerland's alpine culture. Thus, in Switzerland, it appears that — despite the questioning and upheavals facing milk in the 21st century — milk is poised to ride out any and all negative publicity.

Beyond the results collected and analysed in the framework of this study, other areas to think about have emerged. While this work focuses on the concept of milk, i.e. milk being understood as a whole with its derived products, the difference in perception that exists between milk and its derivatives deserves more attention. Indeed, while all dairy products have the same product of origin as liquid milk, milk-derived products do not suffer the same considerations as basic milk. Why are manufactured products more acceptable than the basic product? Although the literature review and interviews suggest some explanations, such as digestibility, conservation, harmfulness and utility, the subject is amply worth exploring and deepening in order to identify potential outcomes and implications arising from a clear distinction between milk and other dairy products.

Apart from a purely dairy and purely Swiss framework, it would also be interesting to deepen the subject in a broader context. Indeed, as the interviews reveal, gastronomic chefs tend to defend the fact that milk and dairy products seem to

be immune to criticism in Switzerland from a gastronomic and cultural point of view. Therefore, it would be interesting to study to what extent some products are protected and defended on behalf of gastronomy and culture. What are the limits of the defensible? Although the interviews provide some elements of response such as moderation and respect for heritage, it is a subject that deserves to be explored in more depth.

With regard to the way in which this work has been conducted, after reflection, the structure of the interview is not perfectly adequate. Despite some differences of opinion, participants tend to have the same general view on milk and dairy products. As a result, the collected responses are rarely diversified. The structure of the interviews carried out in the context of this work is probably too rigid to allow the participants free access to their knowledge and their opinions on the subject studied. The questions asked were very specific and it would have been necessary to go beyond the elaborate interview model. In order to capture a greater variety of answers, the structure of the interview should have been more flexible, in particular by being less focused on the specific order in which the questions were supposed to be asked.

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## Appendix A: Consent form

### CONSENT FORM

You are invited to participate in a study on milk in Swiss gastronomy. Thank you for your participation. This study is carried out as part of the Bachelor thesis at the *Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne*.

If you agree to participate, I will ask you to take part in a semi-structured interview.

The interview can last between 30 and 60 minutes.

Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to stop your participation at any time without notice.

If you agree to participate, do you agree to be audio-recorded?

YES ☐ NO ☐

If you agree to participate, do you agree that your answers are used as part of this Bachelor thesis at the *Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne* on milk in Swiss gastronomy?

YES ☐ NO ☐

Your interview will be conducted by Perrine Leroy.

If you sign this form, you are aware of the fact that you have read the above information and agree to participate in this study.

Nom, Prénom: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B: Interview questions

### *Interview process*

First of all, I will ask you questions about you, your career and your mission as a chef. Then we will go back to the main subject and I will ask you some questions about your opinion on milk and dairy products. From there, we can deepen the subject and we will talk about questioning of dairy products in gastronomy, and especially in Swiss gastronomy.

### *Introductory questions*

Can you describe your career path?

What training(s) did you follow?

Where did you work (restaurants, palaces, schools)?

In which countries did you work?

### *Mission as a chef*

How do you perceive your profession as a gastronomic chef?

What are you trying to accomplish through your profession?

As a chef, what mission(s) do you consider to have regarding the eating habits of the population?

### *Opinion on dairy products*

As a chef, what difference do you see between milk and other dairy products in gastronomy?

In a professional context, how much do you use dairy products? What about milk?

In a professional context, are these essential products?

What values do these products bring to the cooking? Do they bring something different depending on the type of cooking, daily or gastronomic?

In a personal context (at home), how much do you use dairy products? What about milk?

In a personal context, are these essential products?

### *If there is a paradox:*

How do you explain this paradox between the use of dairy products at home and at work?

### *Opinion on the questioning of dairy products in Switzerland*

Nowadays, some studies question the consumption of dairy products. Some authors such as Atkins (2005), Bachelot-Narquin et al. (2009), Proust (2006) and Souccar (2008) explain that consumption of dairy products comes mostly from industrial motivations and not from medical motivations. Moreover, Bourlioux et al. (2011) as well as Fournier (2013) observe that, beyond breastfeeding, the human being is not genetically designed to consume milk. To support these researches, medical studies conducted by Campbell and Campbell (2016), Chan and Giovannucci (2001), Feskanich et al. (2003) show that milk is not essential to human health.

In a gastronomic context, do you think that questioning of dairy products can generate a conflictual situation? In what way?

### *If the answer is rather negative*

And in a gastronomic context in Switzerland, where dairy products are cultural symbols, do you think that a questioning of these products can generate a conflictual situation? In what way?

### *If the answer is not negative*

And in a gastronomic context in Switzerland, where dairy products are cultural symbols, do you think that a questioning of dairy products generates a different conflictual situation? In what way?

What importance should be given to this questioning, in a country like Switzerland?

How is the reconsideration of milk linked to the reconsideration of all dairy products in Switzerland?

How do they differ?

During your career, did you observe a change in the use of milk in gastronomy? If so, which one?

And a change in the use of dairy products?

Today, what place should dairy products occupy in Swiss gastronomy?

Today what difference do you make between the place of milk and the place of other dairy products in Swiss gastronomy?

In a gastronomic context, how can we understand the potential conflict generated by the questioning of dairy products in gastronomy?

And in a Swiss gastronomic context, how can we understand the potential conflict generated by the questioning of dairy products in a country where milk-based products, such as cheese and chocolate, represent strong cultural symbols?

### *Conclusion*

What future prospects do you see regarding dairy products in Swiss gastronomy?

Do you have to adapt the way you work? In what way?

Do you have anything to add?





# The taste of a healthy and sustainable diet: What is the recipe for the future?

Peter R Klosse

*Gastronomy, Hotel Management School Maastricht, The Netherlands*  
Email: [peter.klosse@zuud.nl](mailto:peter.klosse@zuud.nl)

**ABSTRACT:** The world faces serious challenges and many of those involve current food behaviour. People have been seduced into liking food and drinks that are neither healthy nor good for the environment. Clearly we need a robust food system that is able to feed the growing population of the world. This food system should also be sustainable and good for the planet. What is the recipe for the future? There are no easy answers; everything is connected. According to the World Health Organization, the world needs bold and innovative solutions. This article gives an insight into the reasons the present food system is organised in the way it is and signals the problems. Climate change is a symptom of the malfunctioning of the present system. The food system, from farm to fork, is a major contributor to climate change. We need a systems change to fight climate change. This article presents a systems approach for food systems change and suggests a formula: C.A.T. The foods that are healthy both for the people and planet need to be: Convenient, Affordable and Tasty. These aspects influence food behaviour and are often overlooked. Nobody objects to eating something delicious; cooking, using fresh ingredients to create delicious dishes and to avoid ultra-processed foods, seems to be an important ingredient in the recipe for the future.

**KEYWORDS:** climate change, dietary guidelines, food, food system, gastronomy, system change, tasty, ultra-processed food

## Introduction

Every single cause has an effect and every effect is the cause of something else. This universal law of cause and effect implies that things do not just happen, they are the consequence of something that happened before. Consequently, to comprehend the present, we need to look at what happened in the past. And clearly, the future is shaped by the decisions that we take today. Furthermore, we need to be aware that choices impact each other. This is the essence of an ecosystem — a fragile and dynamic equilibrium.

In retrospect, the decisions that we made in the past have had rather negative effects on the planet and the people, to put it mildly. This is widely recognised in, for example, *Come on!*, the most recent global publication of the Club of Rome (Weizsäcker & Wijkman, 2018), and the World Health Organization. In their news release of 1 March 2018, the WHO announced to look for “bold and innovative solutions to accelerate prevention and control of the leading killers on the planet: the non-communicable or chronic diseases” which are responsible for seven out of ten deaths these days (WHO, 2018). The World Economic Forum (WEF) formulated the “Transformative Twelve” to achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs) to transform our world (WEF, 2018). These SDGs were adopted by the United Nations

in 2015 (i.e. the 2030 agenda) and include goals like climate action, life on land, life below water, good health, zero hunger, responsible consumption and production. At least 12 of the 17 SDGs contain indicators that are highly relevant to nutrition Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN, 2019). To quote the Secretary-General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon, “nutrition is both a maker and a marker of development. Improved nutrition is the platform for progress in health, education, employment, empowerment of women and the reduction of poverty and inequality, and can lay the foundation for peaceful, secure and stable societies” (SUN, 2016). There is no room to deny this. We need to act to stop chronic diseases and degrading the planet. The big question is “how?”. To answer that question we need to look more closely at food consumption and the underlying food system.

## Everything is connected

A good recipe relies on a balance between the individual ingredients. The ingredients together create something new. The sum is bigger than the individual parts. This is called synergy and the essence of the concept of holism. Details matter. Even the smallest element has the power to destroy the balance. This implies that we do need to understand both the details and the “whole”. This has not been the practice in

nutrition science. It has predominantly been focused on the details, the nutrients, not on food, with the objective of solving specific health problems of individuals, or finding benefits (Nestlé, 2019). This bottom-up, reductionist approach and the linear cause-effect relationship between one food compound and one physiological effect have been predominant in research. It gave us the understanding of the fundamental mechanisms in nutrition (Fardet, 2016). Reductionism has its virtues, but we need to be "intelligently holistic". "Hyperspecialised technoscience" is not the only answer for the future. Foods are more than the sum of isolated nutrients and phytochemicals. Compounds within foods interact; their physical structure matters just like other physicochemical food properties. Comparable foods may have a different metabolic effect (Fardet, 2016; Fardet & Rock, 2014).

Marion Nestlé considers undernutrition, overnutrition, and the effects of food production and consumption on climate change to be the three most important problems in public health nutrition these days. These problems require a holistic, food systems approach. A food system is everything that happens to a food item from the time it is produced to the time it is consumed, a process that involves food transportation, storage, retailing, cooking, eating, and, eventually, wasting (Nestlé, 2019). This is confirmed by Fardet and Rock (2014) when they state that agriculture, nutrition and health are closely connected, but often seen and studied separately. The result is that practices in the one sector may have undesired effects in another. The interactions between the three fields are complex and must be based on multi-causal, nonlinear relations. It is important to consider food preparation and eating habits, and just on single food components in these relations, not simply the food components (Dwivedi et al., 2017; Fardet & Rock, 2014).

### The bigger picture

Let us take a closer look at the current food system. To start at the origin, what we eat comes from some kind of agriculture or aquaculture, as broadly defined by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO). Agriculture includes farming both animals (animal husbandry) and plants (agronomy, horticulture, and forestry in part). Similarly, aquaculture covers the farming of both animals (including crustaceans, fish, and molluscs) and plants (including seaweed and freshwater macrophytes). Therefore, what we eat has an impact on all kinds of agriculture, breeds and varieties, biodiversity, agricultural practices, distribution of wealth, cultures and landscapes. Agriculture occupies more than one-third of all potentially cultivable land, uses about 70% of freshwater and is reported to be responsible for up to 30% of greenhouse gas emissions (Aleksandrowicz et al., 2016). In particular, the current system of breeding and consuming bovine meat seems to contribute to environmental changes like global warming. Grain-fed animals, especially cows, have a poor conversion rate of feed to food which severely impacts the overall food supply. Of all the calories in the feed that cattle consume, humans receive just a tiny three per cent through beef (Cassidy et al., 2013). Precious land is dedicated to grow feed, not food. Humans and farm animals together represent a staggering 97% of the body weight of all living land vertebrates on earth. Or, all elephants and whales, bats and rats, birds, frogs, snakes and lizards and all other animals not mentioned together represent

just 3%. This figure has everything to do with our extensive meat consumption (Weizsäcker & Wijkman, 2018).

In agriculture, farmers have generally moved from traditional sources of nitrogen to synthetic sources. The extensive use of industrial, synthetic chemicals has been linked to numerous environmental hazards, including (again) global warming, groundwater contamination, and the loss of biodiversity. Furthermore, especially the production of fertilisers is highly energy intensive, which implies that agriculture has become increasingly dependent on the use of fossil fuels and varieties that fit in this particular food production system (Crews & Peoples, 2004).

Crops have even been engineered to withstand the chemicals that kill all other plants. An extensive review on the safety of GMO (genetically modified organism) crops reported by Marek Cuhra (2015) revealed that research about the safety of these new agricultural practices is planned, performed and reported by people employed by biotech companies that produce these chemicals. This bias is likely to lead to incomplete reports and health hazards. Glyphosate residues in glyphosate-tolerant plants have for instance not been reported. Independent research has investigated this issue and found unexpectedly high levels of glyphosate residues in glyphosate-tolerant plants. These residues are passed on to consumers and pose a potential health hazard (Cuhra, 2015). Likewise, the extensive use of antibiotics in livestock farming threatens human health due to antibiotic-resistant bacteria (Dwivedi et al., 2017).

According to the World Economic Forum, global food systems need to be transformed. Billions of people are poorly nourished; millions of farmers live at subsistence level; enormous amounts of food go to waste; and poor farming practices are taking a toll on the environment. The emission of greenhouse gases like CO<sub>2</sub> and methane needs to be reduced significantly. Achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030 will require food systems that are inclusive, sustainable, efficient, nutritious and healthy (WEF, 2018).

Health councils all over the world basically agree that a regular diet should be more plant-based and less meat-centric; people should eat more fresh, real foods and less (ultra-) processed foods. The recent Brazilian and Canadian dietary guidelines are based on these principles. This would implicitly also reduce the consumption of salt and sugar (Monteiro et al., 2018). Two documents published in *The Lancet* in 2019 describe the vision of the experts of the world that were joined by the EAT Foundation. The *EAT-Lancet* report presented a strategy to prevent malnutrition, reduce non-communicable disease risk, and lessen the impact of food production and consumption on climate change (Swinburn et al., 2019; Willett et al., 2019).

Coincidentally, this same diet would also be good for the planet. This is good news. Shifting the Western diet to a variety of more sustainable dietary patterns could potentially lead to reductions as high as 70–80% of greenhouse gas emissions and land use, and 50% of water use (Aleksandrowicz et al., 2016). Dietary change can improve health and reduce the environmental impact of food production. The way to achieve that is by adopting a less meat-centric diet, and by reducing food waste (Crews & Peoples, 2004). That is good news. Major problems could be solved with one solution: eat food, not too much, mostly plants (Pollan, 2008).

### The systems approach for consumers: the C.A.T. formula

The world needs bold and innovative solutions. We need a robust food system that is able to feed the world in a healthy and sustainable way. And we know the answer: we should take a systemic perspective, and food behaviour should change; people need to change their diets to real foods with a predominance of vegetables, fruits and nuts. Better food choices will improve the vitality of the planet and the people. Governments, academics and gurus point out what people should do. Dietary guidelines and health books make headlines. There are TV shows like "Obese" that challenge people to lose weight. All of these efforts are focused on people, the consumer. And the consumer is interested in eating good, healthy food (Nielsen, 2015).

The consumer is merely at the end of the food system. The question is whether a singular focus on people can yield results if other elements of the system prevent people from making better choices. From a circular, systems point of view, the consumer may be at the end of the system, but by making choices, the consumer has the power to influence the food systems. How do we both motivate and empower people to make better choices? Can the people buy or afford the products that are good for them? And if so, do they know how to prepare these foods and eat healthily? Do we even know what healthy is? People are different, so should the dietary advice on what is good for them not also be different? Are people even willing to make other choices? For example, the *EAT–Lancet* report quantified the advised consumption of meat to less than 28 grams of beef, lamb or pork per day (Willett et al., 2019). That is about one-tenth of the quantity of meat that people eat on average in the USA (GlobalAgriculture, 2018). Considering the importance that people attach to meat on their plates and the sensory pleasure it provides, we need to address these questions.

To start, let us assume that the products people presently buy are found to be convenient, affordable and tasty. They are C.A.T. *Convenient* implies that people know how to use them and have the capacity to do so. *Affordable* means that people are able to buy them, and *tasty* has everything to do with liking what they have bought. If we take this common logic as a start, it follows that the better choices for the future also need to be C.A.T. If the better, healthy and sustainable food choice is either inconvenient, hard to prepare or not available in the desired quantity, or much more expensive, or not as delicious, it will probably not be a great success. So the better food choices need to be C.A.T.

The C.A.T. formula looks at the consumer from a broader perspective: product and people. A grid was developed to identify four segments. We consider product and people from two perspectives: the individual and the general level. This grid approach gives a better insight into how the food system is organised and what factors contribute to the present system (supply) and food behaviour (demand). This approach helps to understand the complexity of influencing the food choices that the regular consumer makes. It addresses aspects of food behaviour that are often overlooked by many health councils, and the EAT–Lancet commission for that matter. The consumer needs to be enabled and motivated to make other choices. There are no easy answers. The grid is shown in Figure 1.

Our ambition is to give an overview to show the relevance of this systems approach. Aspects that are involved on the product level and on the people level are discussed. It is

	PRODUCT (supply)	PEOPLE (demand)
INDIVIDUAL	<b>DELICIOUSNESS</b> <i>product development &amp; innovation</i>  i.e. plant characteristics, nutritional value, new varieties Culinary Success Factors	<b>LIKING &amp; WANTING</b> <i>food choices</i>  i.e. brain & sensory research; neuro-aesthetics, pleasure, extrinsic factors
GENERAL	<b>SYSTEMS THINKING</b> <i>Knowledge development</i>  i.e., plant breeding, regulation (taxation/subsidies), education	<b>FACILITATING</b> <i>healthy food</i>  i.e. accessibility and the role of retail. The C.A.T. Formula: the 'right' foods should be Convenient, Affordable, Tasty

FIGURE 1: Food systems grid

strongly suggested that future research look more closely at the interdependencies between products and people.

### About products from an individual and general perspective

What we eat and drink comes originally from the land or out of the water. It has been harvested in some way or form. Mankind has come a long way from being hunter-gatherers. The modern food system is driven by commercial and economic motives. Factors such as consistency, predictability, low cost, and high yield have grown to be more important than taste and nutritional value (Dwivedi et al., 2017). Varietals have been selected that maximise yield and minimise crop failure. Uniformity promotes efficiency. Today, 95% of the world's calories come from just thirty species. Almost half of the global calorie demand is supplied by only three crops: maize, rice, and wheat, which of course have been carefully selected or engineered and partly modified to perform (Dwivedi et al., 2017). This loss of diversity alone has had significant negative health consequences. Local production and more biodiversity on farms need to find a place in this modern, globalised food system (Dixon, 2015).

Nutrients and taste have not been among the criteria that shaped modern agriculture. Most basic crops have grown to be commodities with as little variation as possible. Taste and varietal character are only sought after by people that love food, including food producers that are quality oriented, but are a nuisance for the food industry that operates on a large scale. To operate successfully, robust varietals are needed that reliably produce numbers, preferably at a low price. It is likely that the persistent pursuit of farming and marketing practices that emphasise cheapness, security and abundance over quality has led to a loss of micronutrients from our foods (Dwivedi et al., 2017; Thomas, 2007). Micronutrient deficiencies may significantly undermine our health. This is confirmed by research from all over the world (Gardner et al., 2019; Monteiro et al., 2018; Thomas, 2007; Valdes et al., 2018). To understand the health condition of an human individual, we should know more about the composition of the daily diet of that individual. Thomas (2007, p. 21) states that "a knowledge of the chemical composition of

foods is the first essential in the dietary treatment of disease or in any quantitative study of human nutrition". We should be able to assess the nutritional quality of our foods beyond calories.

Farming methods and what we grow require attention. The production of synthetic fertilisers is very energy intensive and requires large amounts of fossil fuels and enhances the emission of CO<sub>2</sub>. An important part of the fertiliser is used for growing the most important crops that emit CO<sub>2</sub> as well. Many of these crops are used for feeding animals that emit large quantities of methane, a powerful greenhouse gas with a much larger effect than CO<sub>2</sub>. The impact of methane in the atmosphere is rising more rapidly than expected, and requires action. Knowing the contribution that agriculture makes to the production of methane requires immediate action (Saunio et al., 2016).

There is debate around whether organic farming is a solution and if organic farming could feed the people of the planet. Quality-wise, we should. Results of meta-analyses based on 343 peer-reviewed publications indicate significant differences in composition between organic and non-organic crops/crop-based foods. Especially the concentrations of a range of antioxidants were found to be substantially higher in the organic ones (Barański et al., 2014). This is particularly important as antioxidants have previously been linked to a reduced risk of chronic diseases. Significant differences were also detected in, for example, minerals and vitamins. Furthermore, in conventional crops, pesticide residues were found to be four times higher, and they also contained significantly higher concentrations of cadmium, a toxic metal, and of glyphosate in relevant cases. The differences in antioxidants and cadmium are related to use of synthetic fertilisers (Barański et al., 2014).

### ***Ultra-processed foods***

Food safety and hygiene are also found to be more important than taste and nutritional value by mainstream agriculture. As Valdes et al. (2018) note, many ultra-processed foods are free from unwanted bacteria these days; the ingredients that are used have been refined, bleached, sterilised, and so on. In the process, not only bacteria, but also much of the fibre is removed. The fibre is important for the micro-biota in our gut. Fibre feeds the gut. By eliminating it from our food, the micro-flora in the gut deteriorate, which may explain the "metabolic syndrome", a chronic inflammation, the common denominator of most chronic diseases. The gut bacteria play an immense role in our immune defences, and one may speculate about the relation between diet and the incidence of allergies and other auto-immune responses in Western society (Valdes et al., 2018).

In the modern system, taste is provided by additives, sugar and salt, which are all easy to use and very cheap. The food industry prefers them over natural ingredients for reasons of chemical stability, availability and price. If vitamins, minerals or other health-promoting elements are found to be missing, they can be added, and consequently industry food has become a kind of Lego box which is adjusted to the consumer's need or demand and supposed health effects (Monteiro et al., 2018). It has led to a radical and abrupt change in what is commonly eaten. It is important to note the level of processing that the food has gone through. Food processing in itself is nothing new. Minimal processes such as washing, drying, grinding, pasteurising, chilling, freezing, fermenting, roasting, and packaging are often necessary or beneficial. But these days, all kinds of packaged foods and snacks, carbonated and sweet drinks, energy bars and

many other convenient and cheap foods have taken the place of minimally processed and freshly prepared meals (Monteiro et al., 2018).

The modern, hyper-palatable foods of the food industry should be classified as ultra-processed foods. Their production relies on complex processes in which molecules are fractionated, synthesised, hydrogenated, hydrolysed, bleached, etc. There is intensive use of cosmetic additives (flavours, colours, emulsifiers) and they are brought to the market with sophisticated marketing and packaging often using synthetic materials, including plastic (Monteiro et al., 2018). To conclude, these products are produced by transnational corporations, whose businesses have grown exponentially since the 1980s, and whose often colossal sales and profits come from intrinsically unhealthy products that cannot be made healthy by reformulation or a suggestion on the label (Monteiro & Cannon, 2012). Adding supplements may not be the answer. Vitamin D, for instance, needs magnesium to metabolise. About half of the population in the United States is assumed to be magnesium deficient, which implies that taking Vitamin D supplements is useless for these people. They may be better off to be outside, enjoying the sun when possible and eating magnesium rich foods like nuts, bananas, beans, broccoli, brown rice, egg yolk, fish oil, milk, mushrooms, and whole grains (Uwitonze & Razzaque, 2018). But then we need to be sure that these foods do indeed contain the supposed bioactive ingredients and deliver the supposed health effects. This requires innovative plant breeding programmes and methods to produce food (Dwivedi et al., 2017).

### ***The role of governments and regulation***

Governments are not passive. Some countries have introduced taxation on unhealthy foods or policies like limiting the size of soft drinks, or restricting the advertising of unhealthy foods especially targeting young children. Although such initiatives are in line with what needs to be done, they are reported to have minimal effects (Chan, Kwortnik, & Wansink, 2017). Furthermore, they are only targeted at the consumer and not at the system. The same governments that tax the consumer give subsidies to agriculture. And what is subsidised? The production of a select number of crops that are grown globally on a large scale, resulting in smaller biodiversity and negative health effects (Franck, Grandi, & Eisenberg, 2013). Subsidies go to farm starchy grains like corn, wheat, soybean, rice, and sorghum. Corn is mainly used to produce animal feed, high fructose corn syrup, other food additives and biofuels; soybeans are used to feed animals and furthermore to produce cheap oil to deep-fry snacks; and sorghum is mainly farmed for animal feed. Dairy and meat are also on the receiving end of subsidies. About 56 per cent of all calories consumed in the US come from subsidised foods according to Franck et al. (2013). The choice to subsidise these crops is surprising and does seem not to be in line with what is needed for a better world.

In Europe, the situation is not much different: around 40 per cent of the budget of the European Union is spent on agriculture, down from 70% in 1985 (Bailey, Lang, & Schoen, 2016). Clearly not all is spent on subsidising dubious elements in the food system. Nevertheless the role of the government in this respect should be taken seriously. Siegel et al. (2016) report that chronic diseases are related to the higher consumption of calories from subsidised food commodities, and suggest that agricultural and nutritional policies should be better aligned. Economic



development based on cheap calories overlooks the economic needs of the global rural population (3 billion people), 50 per cent of whom work in agriculture (Altieri, Funes-Monzote, & Petersen, 2012). Agricultural households need to earn a decent income, otherwise it is hard to imagine that they will stay in agriculture or that their children will take over (Dixon, 2015).

### ***The ideal food system***

In systems thinking, governments could (should) take a guiding role in shaping the ideal food system. This is the system that (1) offers adequate nutrition and health, (2) creates biodiversity and avoids negative ecological and environmental impacts, and (3) ensures a livelihood for farmers, diverse landscapes, and equitable access to land, water, seeds and other inputs (Dwivedi et al., 2017). Governments could promote healthy eating by educating the population and informing them about the essence of a healthy lifestyle. They could also promote healthy food choices by giving incentives to consumers, positive rewards like coupons, for healthy food choices. On the other hand, they could introduce a serious tax on the use of synthetic fertilisers and other products or methods that have a negative impact on the environment. After all, "the polluter pays" is a righteous principle. If the societal costs of the current system would be incorporated in food prices, it would quickly lead to innovative solutions, regenerative farming methods and the production and consumption of healthy foods.

Just imagine that there was a system that promoted good practices by giving subsidies in a star system:

- one star: for farms that do not use harmful chemicals, including synthetic fertilisers;
- two stars: for farms that actively promote bio-diversity and short supply chains;
- three stars: for regenerative farming, crop rotation, CO<sub>2</sub> fixing, use of own seeds;
- four stars: for extra efforts to support and revitalise the surrounding environment, promote circularity; and
- five stars: for inspiring farmers that do all of the above and dedicate time for the community, like teaching, educating other farmers, developing new methods and sharing their ideas in the media, etc.

Clearly the introduction of such a system requires a government that is aware of the urgency of a food systems change and dares to act. There will be resistance from actors that are likely to lose their position and power. To succeed, it requires the collective support of all actors involved and investments in education and applied research to support the transition. It becomes powerful when the consumer actively considers the star system in their buying behaviour.

Do we all need to become vegetarians?

We want to conclude our discussion on products with the question of whether there will still be meat on the menu in the future. The answer is a big "yes". It should not even be a question because animals are essential in a regenerative, circular agricultural system. They provide the natural phosphates that we need when synthetic fertilisers are no longer desired. Animals are a part of a well-balanced agricultural system. This implies that we need to consume less, but better meat and animal products.

### **About people from an individual and general perspective**

We have looked at the supply side and seen that there has been a huge change in what people (are able to) buy. The food system has been organised to service the needs of the suppliers, not primarily the consumers. This has had detrimental effects. In affluent societies, food is no longer scarce. There is an abundance of cheap, palatable food that people like (too much). The ubiquity of food constitutes what is called the "obesogenic" environment which requires personal self-control to fight off all these tempting foods (Lakerveld et al., 2018). To be able to curb bad food behaviour, one needs to understand how food choices are made. People do the liking. Products can be delicious; liking is the positive response. When you take a bite into your favourite food, the look, taste, texture, and smell can give pleasure. This goes beyond the sensory properties.

### ***Liking and wanting***

In human evolution, food choice was dominated by the urge to fulfil physiological needs; food is fuel; one eats what is needed to keep the biological system going. We all know how "hunger makes the best spice". This phenomenon is thought to explain the liking for fat and sugar as rich sources of energy (Ventura & Worobey, 2013). However, in a modern society that is dominated more by plenty than scarcity, the motivation to eat and drink is no longer physiological, but driven by the search for pleasure. The world of pleasure is ruled by a different area of the brain than the one that monitors physiological needs. Usually, people want the things that they like and like the things that they want. In the world of pleasure, liking and wanting can become dissociated. This is what happens when the brain gets addicted. The search for reward, "wanting", takes over from liking, even to a level where it does not give pleasure anymore. Many of the modern industry foods have been designed to be hyper-palatable and contain sugar, generally without fibre, which would normally help digestion and prevent spikes in blood sugar. These foods lead to overeating, which is one of the primary causes of obesity (Robinson et al., 2015).

A recent study — the first randomised control trial in this field — shows a peculiar effect of eating ultra-processed foods. In an experiment, participants were first offered ultra-processed foods for two weeks. Then, the same people spent two weeks eating the same diet but composed of unprocessed foods, such as fish and fresh vegetables. When they consumed "junk food", people ate more quickly, ingested an average of 500 more calories per day than when eating unprocessed food, and gained roughly 1 kilogram (Hall et al., 2019). There are other health concerns associated with the consumption of ultra-processed foods. They have been reported to increase the risk of cancer and there are many more reports that point at the health problems that are associated with eating ultra-processed foods (Fiolet et al., 2018). These reports shed a new and different light on the desired shift in food behaviour. We need to rethink eating ultra-processed foods. This may ultimately be more important than cutting down on sugar, fat and red meat. This must be considered a formidable challenge. Ultra-processed foods are designed to be convenient, affordable and tasty. If we want to promote the consumption of vegetables, they need to be just lightly processed and C.A.T.

Health professionals and the consumer in general need to be aware that the proposed shift towards a plant-forward diet, and

a decrease in the consumption of animal-based foods, is well aligned with the promotion of human health. It is widely believed among both health professionals and the general population that certain plant foods are entirely devoid of specific amino acids and, thus, that protein adequacy cannot be supported by plant foods alone. In fact, all plant foods contain all 20 dietary amino acids (Gardner et al., 2019).

### *Learning to like*

Mentioned earlier, food fibre should be an important reason for eating raw or lightly processed foods and especially a variety of vegetables, fruit, pulses and nuts. The mission is to make them just as delicious as the foods that most people have grown used to eating. Supposedly, nobody will object to eating something delicious. Therefore, knowing more about taste and deliciousness would help all kinds of educators and professionals in the world of food and beverages, from farmers to professionals in the food industry, including chefs in the culinary domain, marketers, food designers, and packaging experts would all benefit; just as health councils and dietitians need to find a way to motivate people to make different food choices.

Tasting is learning, so is liking. The brain is involved: we learn to like and to dislike. Some preferences come easily and others are "acquired tastes". The liking for beer, Brussels sprouts, coffee, and dark chocolate takes time to develop. Wine tasting can also serve as an example. People can learn to recognise flavours and build up experiences. In the process, it is likely that preferences and liking are going to shift (Kourouniotis et al., 2016). Unfortunately, this is exactly what has happened in the modern brain that has been fed the Western diet: the unhealthy food choices are liked; "healthy" is negatively correlated with "tasty". This means the word healthy can better be avoided in the description of foods. In general, the description of healthy food is often less attractive than the unhealthy choices. Using more appealing, indulgent descriptions of healthy and nutritious foods should be considered (Turnwald et al., 2017). Words are an important and overlooked ingredient.

When "wanting" food gets out of control, it may be called food addiction, and this could be a serious problem that is hard to cure (Robinson et al., 2015). Abstinence is an effective strategy to cure people from their addictions, but that is hard to do in the case of food. But even without being a food addict, people may develop habits that perpetuate unhealthy behaviour. A study by Cornell shows that such habits can be changed by traditional motivational marketing practices like giving reward points for healthy food choices (Chan et al., 2017). They are reported to be more effective in the long run than discounts. Furthermore, such a healthy-loyalty programme could be a win-win situation for food service providers. It would help to create a better image and stimulate return visits from people that are interested in healthy options (Chan et al., 2017). This example is mentioned in support of the C.A.T. approach. It shows that taxation is not the only tactic; motivating people to make better choices may be more effective than punishing them for making the "wrong" choices. A challenge in all of these cases will be to define what is healthy and what is not.

In regard to "tasty", the culinary success factors developed by Klosse et al. (2004) are useful in flavour design: developing delicious dishes that are likely to be found tasty. In this approach, flavour and tasting are distinguished. Taste and flavour are considered to be a product characteristic. Tasting

is what people do; flavour perception is therefore personal, but taste can be studied from a molecular point of view. Mouthfeel is the basis of the model that enables us to classify taste. Quality perception, liking or disliking, is an interaction between a person and what he or she is eating or drinking. Consequently, the commercial success of a product is a mix of the actual flavour (ingredients, preparation and so forth) and how it is perceived. A host of external influences such as its packaging, advertising, price, hospitality, atmosphere, etc. can influence taste. Likewise, aspects that affect people, such as culture, education, age, knowledge and experience, religion, sense of taste, etc. will have an influence. If we truly want to understand why people enjoy some products more than others, we need to take all of these aspects into account (Klosse, 2013; Klosse et al., 2004).

### *The role of supermarkets*

To conclude our discussion of the grid approach, we focus on facilitation and availability: people need to have access to healthy foods and be able to buy and use them in a way that combines taste and health. Who can help the consumer? Look at the C.A.T. formula again. *Convenient* implies that people know how to use them and have the capacity to do so. *Affordable* means that people are able to buy them and *tasty* has everything to do with liking what they have bought. Looking to the future, we can say the better choices also need to be C.A.T. If the better, healthy and sustainable food choice is either inconvenient, hard to prepare or not available in the desired quantity, or much more expensive, or not as delicious, it will probably not be a great success. So the better food choices need to be C.A.T. The actors that we have described — farmers, producers, governments — can all have an influence.

We have not yet addressed the role of the (big) retail companies in the food system. Foods are predominantly bought in supermarkets. Retail companies are huge conglomerates with enormous buying power. It is suggested that they have unprecedented and disproportionate power in the food system. Nevertheless, Pulker et al. (2018) state that there is very little public health research about the impact of this power. Regardless, it is obvious that supermarkets shape food choices and food preferences by determining what is in the stores and by allocating how much space is made available for every product group. Furthermore, they determine food prices, not only for the consumer, but also in the system. With their buying power, they have an impact on the price farmers get for their products. But their influence goes further. For instance, offering low-priced meat not only stimulates sales, but also enforces meat producers to choose low-cost production methods, which means cheap feed and compromises on animal welfare. In general, low prices in the shops stimulate the relentless search for cheapness in the system, with all the undesired results. Retail organisations have the potential to improve public health, but just a few positive initiatives seem to be reported (Pulker et al., 2018).

It seems that retail organisations could use their supposed power in a positive way. Clearly, supermarkets do not just sell the infamous ultra-processed foods; real foods are on sale as well. There is no apparent reason that a conscious consumer that aspires to make healthy choices should not be able to make his/her choice in a supermarket. After all, supermarkets are commercial institutions and supposedly they can make money selling both the healthy and the unhealthy products. This is an important start, promoting healthy choices in the retail space

should not necessarily impede their commercial capacity. Considering their role in the food system, retail organisations have power and influence over the other actors, like food producers and manufacturers, and government. Consequently, they are in a perfect position to help guide food behaviour in the desired direction. They could be a partner instead of a threat.

### **The role of food service organisations**

There are also other places where better food choices could be facilitated, for example, schools, healthcare institutions and within companies; in general, places where people need to be for a prolonged period of time and are dependent on others for providing a meal. Policies could be implemented in and by food service organisations to provide good foods, especially in places where governments are in charge. It even seems quite logical that young children at school and the elderly in nursing homes should be served the "right foods". Companies may have an interest as well: happy and healthy employees are likely to be productive (Krapivin, 2018). Google is an example of a company that takes responsibility and acts. On sustainability, the company's website states that "climate change is real" and mentions all kinds of measures that are taken to protect the planet. The Google Food Program has been installed to actively promote eating a plant-centric diet, all over the world. Ugly vegetables that would otherwise go to waste are used by restaurants. Food is free and "flavour rules" at Google.

### **Conclusion: roadmap to the future**

Slowly but surely the food system has changed to accommodate the needs of the 21st century consumer. This development has advantages and seems to deliver what it should, but has negative aspects as well. These detrimental effects need to be faced and stopped. A systems approach is needed to achieve that. Food production is highly connected to major challenges like fighting chronic diseases and reducing environmental damages. We urgently need new models that focus on the vitality of the people and the planet, not only on growth, profit and GDP. In general, we need to organise a system that encourages both people and the environment to remain healthy, and prevents problems and diseases. According to Wessels (2006), it is a myth that progress depends on a growing economy. He challenges the belief that new technology is essential and inevitable and shows how systems can be regenerative and allow true progress. If we are on the wrong track, we need to change tracks. The grid approach shows where the tracks are and what is needed to change tracks.

There is reason to be optimistic about the future. There is at least global awareness of the both the problem and the solution. And there is new evidence that food can indeed be a medicine. Chronic diseases can be reversed by changing food habits and lifestyles (Pot et al., 2019). That does not mean that the food behaviour will change easily. Singular solutions and ones that are solely focused on the consumer are not likely to yield big effects. A systems approach will be more effective. The grid that is proposed in this article suggests considering products and people and looking at them on an individual and on a general level. People need to be able to make food choices that are C.A.T.: convenient, affordable and tasty. The recipe for a healthy and sustainable future requires that all actors play their part in the required transition. Farmers, food producers,

governments, retail organisations, chefs and educators should all work together to come up with bold and innovative solutions for a better food system.

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# Microbreweries and finance in the rural north of Sweden — a case study of funding and bootstrapping in the craft beer sector

Wilhelm Skoglund 

Department of Economics, Geography, Law and Tourism, The European Tourism Research Institute, Mid Sweden University, Östersund, Sweden

Email: [wilhelm.skoglund@miun.se](mailto:wilhelm.skoglund@miun.se)

**ABSTRACT:** This paper explores the growth of the craft beer sector in a northern Swedish rural setting, with a particular focus on how small-scale brewers manage to fund their activities and ventures. It connects craft brewing with the concept of bootstrapping, a theoretical foundation into understanding alternative paths of funding business operations. This study has used qualitative measures in order to reach a deeper understanding of the research field. More specifically, a case study has been performed in the peripheral, northern Swedish region of Jämtland. It is a comprehensive case study, including interviews with all of the 14 craft brewers in the region, as well as observations of brewing sites. The study established that most of the brewers have funded their business activities with alternative funding and bootstrapping methods. Also, the brewers try to keep external financing to a minimum, but it is an inevitable necessity for most of them to use some type of external funding in the start-up process. Contributing to the findings is also the frequency whereby the brewers use the regions other brewers as a resource network, thus elevating the social bootstrapping dimension to a highly important survival technique.

**KEYWORDS:** bootstrapping, craft beer, finance, micro- and small business

## Introduction

The brewing industry has experienced major changes in the last decades, moving from strong centralisation characteristics, with rather few but very large breweries, to a situation where a great number of small craft beer producers have taken over parts of the market (Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2018). The starting point of this development is often referred to as the United States in the mid 1960s, where new styles of brewing (Sewell, 2014) and innovative beer festivals increased interest in the sector (Pascua et al., 2016). This development and restructuring of the beer sector has since spread throughout the world, with the number of breweries growing year by year, from North America, to the United Kingdom, Italy, and Sweden (Cabras & Higgins, 2016; Danson et al., 2015; Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2018; Sveriges Bryggerier, 2019). The emergence of this trend can be connected to the increased demand for more flavourful and particular types of beer, leading away from mass-produced, global brands that lack distinctive character (Gatrell et al., 2018; Nilsson, 2007). The rapid growth of the sector in the last decades has provided an opportunity for the creation of new business and employment opportunities, from metropolitan to more rural contexts. Particularly for rural and peripheral contexts, with a recent history of staggering demographic imbalances, outward migration and high unemployment rates, this developments

represents an opportunity, since many of the breweries are rurally located (Skoglund & Sjölander-Lindqvist, 2019).

The growth of this sector has been studied by many, often with a connection to branding (e.g. Eberts, 2014), local identity and place development (e.g. Gatrell et al., 2018; Schnell & Reese, 2014), and the connection to tourism opportunities (e.g. Fletchall, 2016; Murray & Kline, 2015). During a business start-up phase or early years of activity, challenges are many. Poposka et al. (2014) and Winborg (2015) present studies that elevate the lack of financial resources as one the major issues in the development of entrepreneurial activities.

In terms of the continuously growing craft beer sector, studies of resource gathering for micro and small craft brewers have been undertaken by van Dijk et al. (2018), Cabras and Higgins (2016), and Mac an Bhaird et al. (2019). However, studies with a broader approach towards resource acquisition of these small, micro, and even pico craft brewers are needed in order to increase the understanding of early stage survival mechanisms in the sector. This need for further knowledge has laid out the foundation for this study, which aims to contribute with knowledge on funding and financing behaviour in the small-scale and micro-brewing business, and more particularly by connecting it to the bootstrapping methods of acquiring resources and financing.

In the next section of this article, a theoretical summary of this sector is included, with a particular focus on its financial



dimension. The section that follows describes the qualitative case study method applied and after that the data from the craft brewers in the Region of Jämtland is presented. The last two sections include an analysis of the data and the theoretical framework, and the last sections reconnect with the purpose of the article providing conclusions and contributions.

### The rebirth of brewing

The brewing industry has changed dramatically in many countries in the last decades, with the growth of the craft beer sector (Brewers Association, 2019; Sveriges Bryggerier, 2019). The definition of a craft beer business has been defined in the United States as including the following dimensions: It should have an annual production of 6 million barrels of beer or less; the ownership should be less than 25 per cent by a alcohol industry member that is not itself a craft brewer. It should also derive its flavour from traditional ingredients and their fermentation (Brewers Association, 2019; Cappellano & Spisto, 2019).

The emergence of the craft beer sector has its foundation in the United States, where craft breweries started emerging as a response to stale brands and gigantic, large-scale, macro-breweries that had taken over the market completely (Gatrell et al., 2018). Some claim the origin of the craft beer movement was the Anchor Brewing Company in California, started in 1965 by Fritz Maytag who since is seen by many as the spiritual father of craft brewing (Sewell, 2014). Another landmark is the 1982 Great American Beer Festival in Boulder in 1982, which became an annual event, today hosting over 60 000 visitors and 800 breweries (Great American Beer Festival, 2019; Pascua et al., 2016). In the United States, the craft beer sector has exploded and changed the beer market, from hosting only around 100 breweries in total, to over 7 000 in 2018 (Brewers Association, 2019). This explosion has not only occurred in the United States, but also in the Netherlands, Canada, Italy (Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2018), the United Kingdom (Danson et al., 2015) and Sweden (Sveriges Bryggerier, 2019). For example, Italy has gone from 60 microbreweries in 2000 to 670 in 2015, Canada has gone from under 300 in 2010 to over 600 in 2015 (Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2018) and Sweden from only 20 breweries around 1990, to almost 400 microbreweries in 2018 (Sveriges Bryggerier, 2019).

The background of the emergence of the craft beer sector is often connected to the search for more exciting, alternative flavours from what the dominant large-scale brewers provide (Gatrell et al., 2018), as well as the raised interest in pairing food and beer (Bamforth & Cabras, 2016). Flack (1997) has elevated neo-localism, i.e. the search for uniqueness and local distinction, as an important factor for the growth of the sector. The neo-localistic movement is thus counteracting the mass culture and mass production through unique and local craft beer. Schnell and Reese (2003) follow this line of reasoning, highlighting the desire to break away from the homogenous, and away from the globalised economy, to instead reconnect with local cultures, communities, and places through their beer and ale. Garavaglia and Swinnen (2018) point out the importance of increased income in many industrialised countries, enabling more sophisticated consumption, including the generally high-priced craft beers. Cabras and Higgins (2016) and Capellano and Spisto (2019) include changes in policy in support of small entrepreneurs, including craft brewers, as another underlying reason for the rise in craft beer.

The craft beer sector has been studied from a variety of dimensions and angles. Included among the scholars that have studied sector are Danson et al. (2015), as well as Capellano and Spisto (2019), that have explored the innovative dimensions of the sector. The high potential of craft beer tourism and craft beer trails has been established by Duarte and Sakellarios (2017), Murray and Kline (2015) and Fletchall (2016). The implications for branding possibilities of places, regions, and communities have been researched in articles by Gatrell et al. (2018), and Eberts (2014), often referring to the use of the geographical locations in company names and beer labels, thus reconnecting to the studies on neo-localism and craft beer by, for example, Flack (1997) and Schnell and Reese (2003).

The growing number of craft brewers can also be attributed to the improved technical machinery (packaging, canning) available, allowing small-scale production. This has enabled the number of entries to grow (Garavaglia & Swinnen, 2018). At the same time, this equipment needs financing, and so do other aspects of entry and survival in the craft brewing sector. This scholarly field, financing in the craft beer sector, has been discussed in several studies, for example van Dijk et al. (2018), Cabras and Higgins (2016), and Mac an Bhaird et al. (2019).

Some of these studies touch on financing traditional large-scale breweries and their growth, whereas others focus more on findings on craft brewery funding. Within the craft beer sector, alternative sources are often used, of which crowd funding has been elevated as a relevant tool to raise capital, but also for use as a marketing tool (Mac an Bhaird et al., 2019). Crowd funding can be seen as a particular tool within a number of bootstrapping methods of financing (*ibid.*).

Financial bootstrapping can, to a large extent, be seen as a result of information asymmetry between small businesses and external financiers, varying between the two depending on the level of aggregation. External financiers may have more or better information on an aggregate level, whereas the micro or small business at hand possesses superior information regarding the potential of their own ventures (Winborg & Landström, 2000). This can lead businesses to turn to alternative sources to secure the need for resources, at times even without this leading to a financial transaction, since needs may be resolved through non-financial measures. Financial bootstrapping can be regarded as a number of measures to resolve needs without external investments (Bhide, 1992; Winborg, 2015). One way of grouping these measures is to divide them into (1) an internal mode of resource acquisition, (2) a social mode of resource acquisition, (3) and a quasi-market mode of resource acquisition. The internal mode consists of minimising costs, delaying payments, and funding with private means. The social mode is characterised by personal relations as a way to absorb and borrow resources at no financial cost. The quasi-market mode represents bootstrappers using government subsidies and grants to secure resource needs (Winborg & Landström, 2000).

There is a history of studies of bootstrapping in micro and small business, from Bhide (1992) and Tomory (2011), to Winborg (2009; 2015), sampling tech businesses and incubator businesses. In the craft beer sector, there have been studies by Smith et al. (2010), and Mac an Bhaird et al. (2019) on alternative financing, mostly focusing on entrepreneurial marketing and crowd funding. The study at hand provides additional findings to these studies, but from a broader perspective on alternative financing, using the

spectra and grouping of bootstrapping dimensions of Winborg and Landström (2000) to analyse the craft beer sector.

## Methods

This study can be characterised as a case study, focusing on the craft breweries located in the region of Jämtland in the north of Sweden. This region has long been considered one of the leading food and gastronomy regions of Sweden (Bonow & Rytkönen, 2012), and has established itself as having among the highest number of breweries per capita in the country. This development has taken place in a highly rural and peripheral part of Europe, with less than three people per square kilometre (Regionfakta, 2019). Hence, the context provides for a sample which can be related to a critical case dimension, which Flyvbjerg (2001) defines as having a strategic importance in relation to the general problem. In this study, the general problem is concentrated on establishing knowledge about small-scale craft breweries in rural settings, particularly focusing on the financial dimensions of this sector. It is also a comprehensive case study (Merriam, 1988), since the sample encompasses all commercial, up-and-running craft breweries in the region.

The case study includes semi-structured interviews with leading representatives or owners of all of the 14 commercial breweries in the region. Some were interviewed more than once in order to clarify aspects that initially were unclear. In addition, observations were performed at several of the breweries, and the findings have been presented in seminars where several of the interviewed brewers, as well as policy makers, participated. The interviewees were all informed of the purpose of the studies and given the opportunity to participate anonymously, which was not required by anyone throughout the study process, which continued between 2017 and 2018.

## Craft beer in the region of Jämtland

This study has focused on the region of Jämtland, located in the north of Sweden. Jämtland has approximately 130 000 inhabitants and covers an area of 49 000 square kilometres, representing 2.7 inhabitants per square kilometre (Regionfakta, 2019). It is thus a very sparsely populated region, but geographically considerably larger than countries such as Switzerland or the Netherlands. It has one major city, Östersund, located in the centre of the region, consisting of slightly over 63 000 inhabitants. The west of the region is mountainous, whereas the rest is densely covered by forests and lakes. Large parts of the region are characterised by small-scale farming, including the more mountainous parts.

Jämtland has for quite some time been one of the leading regions in Sweden regarding food and gastronomy (Bonow & Rytkönen, 2012). While many regions of Sweden were heavily industrialised during the 20th century, including the production of food, Jämtland remained significantly less industrialised. Rolén (1990) also described the region as carrying a continuous small-scale farming and forestry character. In addition, in the most rural corners of the region, mountainside farms have survived or been resurrected, leading to a mix of traditional and innovative knowledge in the practice of producing small-scale food. This small-scale food production landscape has contributed to the regions strong tourism sector, where ski resorts for long have provided the most important tourism

input, generating employment and income opportunities in this region's periphery (Rolén, 1990).

Beer was for a long time produced in each and every farm across the region, in so-called *Bryggstu*, a brewing cottage where brewing, baking and washing took place (Faxälv & Olofsson, 2007). The beer was often spiced for special purposes; examples include rosemary for melancholy or bayberries for a bad stomach and sweating (Oscarsson, 2007). The beer that was brewed in the region was normally of ale types up to around 1900, when lager types of beer were introduced from Germany. After this introduction, pilsner or lager types of beer have remained the most popular (*ibid.*).

When industrialisation, even though it did not impact Jämtland as much as many other regions, struck the region together with raised taxes for beer, as well as a strongly evolving sobriety movement, the conditions for beer making changed. The many small-scale and family-run breweries were successively replaced by larger ones, and in the early 1990s, only one large brewery remained, TILL Brewery in Östersund. However, TILL was taken over by a larger, Southern Swedish brewery which eventually closed down TILL in 1992, leaving Jämtland without a single brewery (Berglund, 2007; Faxälv & Berglund, 2007).

This was the situation for four years, until a new brewery opened up its doors, Jämtlands Bryggeri, in the small town of Pilgrimstad in central Jämtland. This was the only brewery around until Klövsjö Gårdsbryggeri opened up in the small hillside village of Klövsjö in the southern part of Jämtland. The minor explosion of craft breweries started taking place around 2014, when entrepreneurs all over the region started breweries, and today, there are a total of 14 commercial breweries spread out from north to south, and east to west. The names of the breweries and the towns they are located in are as follows:

- (1) Bakgårdens bryggeri, Revsund;
- (2) Härjebyrygg, Tännäs;
- (3) Jormbryggeriet, Jorm;
- (4) Jämttehed and Brande, Brunflo;
- (5) Jämtlands Bryggeri;
- (6) Klövsjö Gårdsbryggeri;
- (7) Orsholms Brygghus, Lofsdalen;
- (8) Ottsjö Brygghus, Ottsjö;
- (9) Reinklou Ranch, Tullus;
- (10) Revsunds Brewery, Pilgrimstad;
- (11) Svartbergets Fjällbryggeri, Åre,
- (12) Åre Bryggcompagni, Huså and Åre,
- (13) Åre Ölfabrik, Åre; and
- (14) Östersunds Ångbryggeri, Brunflo.

Along with these up-and-running commercial breweries, there are at least four others that have started up and are dormant or that brew occasional batches of beer for sale to mostly local restaurants and bars.

## Results

### *Characteristics of the craft brewers of Jämtland*

The characteristics of the breweries include some of the following attributes. They are all located in rural contexts. None are actually located in the city of Östersund, but rather in small villages spread out across the region. They are all small businesses, and some even call themselves pico-businesses, meaning smaller than a micro-business. None of them have more than ten employees, and several of them need to keep other jobs

in order to sustain their private economies. The volumes vary from year to year, but most of the breweries are experiencing a growing demand and hence growing production volumes. In litres, the largest brewery is Jämtlands Bryggeri which produces 1 000 000 litres per year, whereas the rest are considerably smaller and range from 2 500 litres per year to 40 000 litres per year. Some of the breweries also have cafes, bars or restaurants in conjunction to the brewing facilities, where they sell their products together with food. The breweries are considered to produce high quality beers, with Jämtlands Bryggeri leading the way, being the most awarded brewery in the whole of Sweden.

Moreover, a dimension that really characterises the craft beer sector in Jämtland is the close cooperation and networking among the companies. This networking is depicted by cooperation on logistics, which is particularly important since the region is remote and working together on deliveries to Stockholm, or even Östersund, can be of relevance. Several of the brewers also elevate the generosity of Jämtlands Bryggeri, who, for example, if other brewers run out, offers to sell some of their barley or hops, or has meetings with the other brewers. Other types of cooperation include hosting beer festivals together, running courses for each other, participating together in fairs or festivals in south Sweden, and even sharing recipes. The networking and cooperation also stretches to other actors into the gastronomy sector in the different villages and towns where the breweries are located, including, for example, selling or marketing each other's products.

*The best part of the brewing business is the good atmosphere and helpfulness in the sector! (Brewer 1, 25 years old)*

Local engagement is also something describing the ventures and ambitions of the brewers, with many of them wanting to contribute to their local communities, for example, by donating parts of the beer sale revenues to youth activities, to the saving of the musk ox or the strife to establish better potential for work and employment in their communities.

*We make one beer from which we donate part of the revenues to social projects in town, this type of action is sort of part of our philosophy. (Brewer 2, 40 years old)*

The underlying reasons for starting up breweries vary, but most of the brewers highlight inspiration coming from the global, and most of the time, American craft beer explosion, and the innovative use of hops in creating new and exciting pale ales. Hence, trying to craft better and better ales and beers is a major cause for starting up a business.

*We've been running on this desire to brew better, and better, and more interesting beer all the time, and get some positive responses for our products. (Brewer 3, 42 years old)*

Another start-up reason is to manage to provide something which enables one to remain and create a life in the small places where the breweries are located. The strong local connection theme comes back in most of the brewers' ambitions to also provide for better possibilities to work and live your life in these small places and communities. As noted, these ambitions are manifested through activities that often have social benefits, or the benefits of the community highly prioritised. In that sense, they relate, in many ways, to the concept of community entrepreneurship, as the main visions and objectives of the businesses are often split between making profits for the business and creating better social conditions in their local community

contexts, for example by enabling new local employment possibilities. As for the business goals and visions of the ventures they have started, many of them aim towards being able to be self-sustainable and not having to have other jobs supporting the brewery business. Another characteristic is that almost no one has direct financial goals that are being followed up on, or monitored.

The small focus on the financial dimension is something that goes for almost all of the brewing businesses in Jämtland. The passion for the creation of interesting new pale ales or lagers is big, therefore many are eager to stay in control of their breweries, thereby also keeping out external investors or venture capital, which could lead to a loss of control with a higher focus on higher revenues and better profit margins.

*We haven't really had any financial or economical strategies, maybe we should have, and it would be nice to get to the level where we actually earn some money... (Brewer 3, 43 years old)*

Many of the brewers have started up without having the possibility or even attempting to get loans to start up their businesses, and have instead had to use other sources in order to sustain themselves. In addition, many of the brewers have resisted external capital as far as possible in order to be able to stay in control of the production.

*Our main investment has been our time and savings, and we wanted to have as little external investment as possible to keep control of our production, but we eventually needed and were able to get a bank loan to purchase some of our brewing equipment. (Brewer 4, 34 years old)*

So, most of the brewers can be considered rather new in terms of age, only three of them has been around more than six years. The response from the brewers is that the initial approach has been to firstly avoid external capital, and there has also been a desire to avoid borrowing money from banks. Instead, the start-up processes have been characterised by using other mechanisms to get the business running and acquiring the necessary resources. Besides working hours and savings, a majority of the brewers are not taking out any salary from the brewing business. Except for one producer, which employs up to ten people, only the breweries that also run restaurants are able to extract a livelihood-covering salary. Another common way to survive is to cut costs as much as possible and try to make it on the wife's/husband's/partner's salary.

*We've had other jobs, but last year I worked here full-time and then I had to be subsidised by my wife's salary. (Brewer 5, 49 years old)*

The majority of the brewers have also applied and received different types of governmental or EU grants. This is a possibility which some rural locations in the north open up, since quite a few grants are not possible to apply for in urban places.

*The regional investment grant was needed in order get this business started, down south that would not have been possible. (Brewer 6, 44 years old)*

To reduce the highly expensive delivery costs to the south of Sweden, the breweries cooperate on transportation and logistics. This is something that all express as very important and necessary for survival.

*We share the transportation costs with others and we also buy bottles together, the transportation costs are severe in connection with the low volumes we produce. (Brewer 7, 49 years old)*

None of the breweries spend much on marketing, but instead rely upon social media to reach out to their customers. Together with other regional brewers, another way of reaching out is to go to beer festivals, often arranged mutually with the other craft brewers. The design and logotypes of the bottles are also often produced by themselves, or by friends or acquaintances, leading to lower costs on the marketing expenditures. Moreover, the brewers cooperate on the raw materials in the shape of hops and barley. For example, if one runs out, they call another who is in possession of hops to purchase. Another type of cooperation, which occurs in order for the breweries to stay innovative and develop new and interesting products, is to share recipes, which further deepens the picture of the region's close and intense networking in the sector.

*You can call your brewing colleagues, they are colleagues and competitors at the same time, if you run into trouble, you can order beer barrels together and such... (Brewer 8, 46 years old)*

Most of the brewers elevate how the possibility for growth demands more capital, and in this process, most declare that it is hard, but not impossible to attain bank loans. This possibility increases if they have a government grant or subsidy to support their business. As new machinery is often needed to grow, external funding is often required, even though most brewers declare a desire to resist this.

*We got an EU grant via the regional government, which we were able to present in the budget to the bank...this made it easier to get a loan. (Brewer 7, 49 years old)*

## Discussion

### **The importance of bootstrapping for craft brewers**

When summing up the data, it is clear that the frequency of using alternative measures in order to attain the needed resources is very high. Below, the types of bootstrapping methods and behaviours are outlined according to the type of mode they belong to.

To start out, the internal mode of acquiring resources (Winborg & Landström, 2000), including measures such as using various types of private means, delaying payment methods, and minimising costs, is widely practised among the brewers. For example, through turning to savings, living on a partner's salary, but most of all having other employment that sustain their livelihood, and then working "overtime" hours with the brewery.

Secondly, the quasi-market mode of bootstrapping (Winborg & Landström, 2000), like in acquiring resources through government grants and subsidies, was used by a majority of the brewers, with many of them having received grants from EU applications and/or through subsidies from other regional government authorities. This also turned out to be highly favourable background as the brewers turned to look for bank loans, with banks looking more favourable at the requests if they have already received support from other actors.

Thirdly, the most valuable and most used bootstrapping method turned out to be the socially oriented mode (Winborg & Landström, 2000), which means using personal relations to cover the need for resources with small or strongly reduced financial costs. Under this method, much of the marketing efforts can be categorised, including labelling and design of bottles. Most valuable, however, is the network of brewers in the region and the functions this intense networking provides.

This dimension covers examples such as transportation, sharing ingredients, cooperating at beer festivals, and even sharing recipes on occasions.

Together, these bootstrapping methods have been crucial for the development of the craft beer sector in Jämtland. In line with Mac an Bhaird et al. (2019), these findings are specifically relevant for the newest companies in the sector, the start-ups. This also matches the technology entrepreneurs use of alternative financing, as they are also particularly reliant upon bootstrapping methods in the very earliest stages of the business (Tomory, 2011). The largest and oldest producer, Jämtlands Bryggeri, has reached a level where it runs with a profit and has up to ten employees. The smallest ones are also more inclined to frequently use bootstrapping methods. The largest brewery also tends to function as a highly relevant resource for the newer and smaller breweries, helping these ones out with developmental as well as financial survival dimensions belonging to the socially oriented mode.

The local connection and willingness to contribute to local development in various ways also leads to cooperation with other local community actors, and these in turn create local networks, often in a broader gastronomy dimension, adding to the value of social bootstrapping in the sector. These local community gastronomy networks also add fuel to the discussion on the increased demand for authentic and exciting flavours (Bamforth & Cabras, 2016; Gatrell et al., 2018), particularly recollecting that several of the brewers attempt to resist the influence of external capital which could risk their experimenting with new and unique flavours. This search for new flavours illustrates how the craft brewers of Jämtland also relate to the trend to break away from the homogenous and provide the customers with opportunities for neo-local experiences (Flack, 1997; Schnell & Reese, 2003).

## Conclusion

The purpose of this study and of this article was to add to the knowledge about craft brewers and their ways of solving financial and resource acquisition, particularly connecting this to the theoretical framework of bootstrapping methods. As concluding remarks in this study, it is possible to establish how the growing craft beer sector in Jämtland continues to build on the same type of driving force and characteristics as described in earlier studies of craft beer in other geographical contexts. These include entrepreneurs driven by passion, their strive for authenticity and local distinctiveness in the beers, and also some signs of the developing pairing of food and beer, which connects to tourism possibilities. This study is also a contribution to the previous studies in these fields in terms of geographical context, since not much has been written in this field from the perspective of a Swedish context. The most valuable theoretical contribution, however, is the findings on the alternative financing solutions practised by the relatively new, very small, micro, or even pico, businesses in the craft beer sector. These findings point towards the relevance of bootstrapping methods in the sector, and most interesting perhaps is the weighting towards social bootstrapping, where one of the key factors is the intense networking the brewers maintain, with the oldest and largest of the breweries as the main node. The contributions may also be of value from a practical perspective, where for example government agencies providing grants, or aiming for



growth through gastronomy tourism, or simply making efforts to create more business in rural contexts, may use the findings in order to provide better support mechanisms for the sector's development.

In terms of further research, it would be beneficial to provide a more complete overview of the connection between craft brewers in their early stages and their connection to different bootstrapping modes, possibly in other geographical contexts and with alternative methods. Also, a relevant follow-up study would be to see how growth affects financing methods. This could further establish if and how they continue to use alternative financing methods, or if they tend, like many other small businesses, to turn to more traditional financing as they grow or develop strategic growth development plans.

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# What is the future of foreign food experiences?

Erwin Losekoot\*  & John Hornby

Stenden Hotel Management School, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

\*Corresponding author email: [erwin.losekoot@stenden.com](mailto:erwin.losekoot@stenden.com)

**ABSTRACT:** This article considers the impact foreign food experiences can have on an individual. Food can be transported across the globe and be a catalyst for understanding and integration, but it can also be used to emphasise the "otherness" that sets people apart from those around them. This may lead them to "gaze" on foods they are unfamiliar with distaste, or with a desire to understand and appreciate new culinary experiences. Using groups of international students who are in a "host" country, a live research project was created where they were asked to discuss their experiences of "foreign" food since arriving in New Zealand. Through a series of focus groups held as part of a research methods class, researchers sought to understand how students perceive and respond to "strange food". Five themes were identified: universal foods; great discoveries; things they will never like; benchmarking; and home foods. Apart from the value of involving students as co-creators in a live research project, this study noted the importance of food in hospitableness and feeling "at home", and raised the students' awareness of what it felt like to be confronted by strange experiences. It also discovered that while foreign food experiences can break down barriers in a global village, it can also serve to highlight, emphasise and reinforce a feeling of "otherness".

**KEYWORDS:** food, foreign student, New Zealand, otherness, strange, word cloud

## Introduction

Terms such as "global village" are often used to indicate that the world is shrinking, and that it is increasingly possible to get anything, anywhere, including food (McNeill, 2005a; 2005b). While it could be argued that this is a good thing, with wealth and opportunity being shared, it can also lead to a depressing homogeneity of high streets, airports, hotels and events (Augé, 1995; Fuller & Harley, 2004; Gordon, 2008; Sheller & Urry, 2006). Alternatively it could be that food is a reflection of the culture of a place, and an expression of a society and its people (Du Rand & Heath, 2006). Urry's (1999) tourist gaze argued that people travel to strange places to experience "difference", but then interpret (sometimes mistakenly) what they see through the lens of their own experiences, cultural background, and the dominant discourse of the day. One of the pleasures of foreign travel is trying new food and culinary experiences (Bell, 2010; Germann Molz, 2007; Lepp & Gibson, 2003; Williams et al., 2014). Neill et al. (2016, p. 140) use the term "refractive gaze" to describe people's reactions to "strange food" because "the refractive gaze encapsulates and extends existing gazes through experience, subjectivity, cultural and culinary capital accumulation". This article argues that international students are like tourists in that they travel to somewhere new, but then are also like local people because they stay for a semester, a year, or even a whole degree course. They also bring their own (and differing) values (Cavagnaro & Staffieri, 2015; Cavagnaro

et al., 2018). The "strangeness" of local food therefore slowly transforms into familiarity, if only as a survival strategy, or as a way to gain cultural or culinary capital. This exploratory, qualitative study explores those experiences in a way that takes the students along as co-researchers.

After setting the context for this study with a brief overview of the concept of globalisation and why international students are the subject of this study, this article considers the impact that food can have in creating an identity for a destination. This paper uses the concept of Urry's (1990) "gaze" and Neill et al.'s (2016) "refractive gaze" to consider students' openness to "strange food" experiences. It describes a qualitative study using focus groups to create word clouds around the key themes of food, familiarity and foreign experiences. Five core themes are identified from the data, and limitations and opportunities for further research are proposed.

## Food experiences

This study considers the responses of a group of international students (mainly Indian, European and Chinese) to food choices while studying hospitality and tourism management in Auckland, New Zealand. It identifies universal food, great discoveries, and things they will never like, as well as ways in which they managed to continue to eat food from home despite being in a strange environment. It was both an academic research study

and an opportunity for students to be involved in and learn from a live research study as participants and researchers.

Urry (1990) argues that tourists use what they already know and are familiar with to make sense of what they see when they are in a strange environment. The tourist searches out new experiences, but then uses their past experiences to interpret them. This means (given the dominant flow of tourism from developed to developing countries), that this gaze is often a Eurocentric, Western viewpoint (male, heterosexual, capitalist and white). Neill et al. (2016) proposed the term "refractive gaze" for tourists' attitude to food they come into contact with while on holiday, and suggest that such attitudes can range from "neophobic" (hating) to "neophylic" (loving) in new food experiences. Eating strange food depends on the traveller's attitude to risk, they argue. Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen (2014) suggest that the overall service environment and experience (where served, dining setting, and how it is served) also play a part in food tourists' satisfaction with local food experiences or culinary-gastronomic, experiences as they call them. They also make the point that culinary experiences often form an important part of the stories people tell on their return from their travels, and that they can be mundane but authentic day-to-day café experiences (Italian pizza or English fish and chips) just as much as special meals in Michelin star restaurants. All of them add to the traveller's "experience resume" (Björk & Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014, p. 298) or build culinary cultural capital "back home", a point also made by others (Du Rand & Heath, 2006; Neill et al., 2016). The pervasiveness of social media has arguably increased the desire for unique culinary experiences. Robinson and Getz (2014, p. 690) argue such experiences are "an important place attribute" if only because they are memorable. They suggest food is not merely a fuel and therefore much more than just a "hygiene factor" on a holiday.

International students come to experience foreign food initially in much the same way as the tourists described above (Cavagnaro & Staffieri, 2015; Cavagnaro et al., 2018). What is more interesting though is to consider what happens to those international students as they move from "tourists" to "temporary residents" — do they hang on to their "home" culinary traditions? Do they assimilate the new into the old or the old into the new? Or do they abandon their home culture altogether for a new one? Who is "the other" in this situation? (Coelen & Nairn, 2017; Leigh, 2017). These are very large and complex issues, but this study attempts to start to shed some light on the culinary experiences of this specific group of travellers and thereby fill a research gap in the understanding of food experiences.

### Research approach

This research is exploratory, qualitative and inductive (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It could also be considered to be a case study as "a case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case" (Stake, 1995, p. xi). It is a case study of one institution, but the students come from a wide geographical spread, including China, India, the Pacific Islands and Europe. It reports on an individual's perceptions as they see them, not as they necessarily are, and is therefore an interpretivist study. The research captures these participants' first impressions of a new culture, and then asks them to reflect on how they have changed (or not) over time. This sample had a range of participants who had

been in New Zealand from anything from a few weeks to a year. This is addressed in the limitations section of the article. Two focus groups (a total of 25 students) of postgraduate students were divided into groups of five and asked to discuss a series of questions which were derived from the literature and from informal discussions between researchers. The research sought to understand "what", "why" and "how".

The opportunity to show how research can be done in an ethical manner was used to teach students about concepts such as informed consent, the difference between anonymity and confidentiality, and the responsibility the research has to ensure no harm comes to the participants as a result of the research. As Hochschild (1983, p. xii) puts it in the acknowledgements to her book, "I want to thank those in charge at Delta Airlines, who allowed me into their world in the faith that I meant well". All participants were presented with participant information sheets and consent forms, and invited to ask any questions prior to the focus groups.

They were then invited to discuss the following ten questions in their groups and write down key words or phrases which summarised their discussions around the individual questions.

- What (food) culture are you from?
- What did you know about food in New Zealand before you came?
- What is New Zealand food to you now that you are living here?
- What food experiences have you had since you arrived in New Zealand?
- Have you continued to eat food from "home" and if so how easy was it to do that?
- What new foods that you were not familiar with have you eaten while here in New Zealand?
- Have your food choices changed since you arrived in New Zealand?
- Are there foods you have tried that you still do not eat?
- Are there foods you did not know before you tried them, but now you eat them regularly?
- Is there anything about trying strange foods that you would like to share as a result of this research experience?

It was noted that although that was not an instruction from the researchers, one person in each group seemed to take responsibility for writing on the sheets, usually in the form of a mind-map/spider diagram, but sometimes in the form of a list. After this, each question was discussed with the whole class with the aim of stimulating a discussion and perhaps jogging participants' memories or thoughts, sometimes leading to further notes being made. The relaxed environment where participants knew each other led to quite lengthy and good-natured discussions over a two-hour period. Finally, all the sheets were collected and the students invited to reflect on the experience of being part of a research project before being thanked for their contributions. Participants were advised that the questions would also be emailed to them, and were invited to add further thoughts if any occurred later. No further responses were received.

The researchers then collated all the focus group responses for each question and created word clouds of each contribution. No attempt was made to count the frequency of responses as it was likely a word was used more than once in a discussion, but only noted down once. This is a limitation of the research that is noted later in this article.

## Key findings and discussion

This section presents the word clouds created from the outputs of the focus groups, and they form the basis of the discussion.

### What food culture are you from?

This question (Figure 1) was designed to stimulate discussion and be relatively simple and factual, but the respondents surprised the researchers by going beyond a pure description of a geographical region. The texture, style of eating and social space in which eating takes place were all commented on, showing that the participants understood the social significance of a meal experience.

### What did you know about NZ food?

This question (Figure 2) was designed as a kind of “null measurement” — what existing knowledge or pre-conceptions did they have. The responses reflected many things which New Zealand exports and is justly proud of (wine, Manuka honey, kiwi fruit, craft beers, seafood), but also comments about people's perceptions of the country as a whole (clean, Western, fresh). This ties in with Lepp and Gibson's (2003) view that foreign travel is a pleasure. Respondents' concerns also come through (no rice as staple; no chilli sauce) but this section was largely made up of positive responses and images.

### What is NZ food to you now?

The responses to this question (Figure 3) betray a certain disappointment in the reality of their New Zealand food experiences (full of calories, overpriced, huge portions, not spicy enough, disappointing), but also many positives (healthy food, fresh seafood, a combination of cultures, delicious, healthy and without artificial colouring or chemicals). Du Rand and Heath (2006) stress the important role that local and regional foods can play in promoting a region. The answers to this question show differing levels of acceptance and openness to new food experiences which could be summarised as: “NZ is very multi-cultural so you can get anything you want” versus “It is fancy, overpriced and not spicy enough”.

### What NZ food experiences have you had?

The answers to this question (Figure 4) identified the importance of events and “special meals” with family and friends. In some cases the “discoveries” (such as “boiling rice”) show how simple things can seem very “strange” to people who are not used to them (Urry, 1999). The “BBQ lunch at college” event mentioned above was an activity during induction week and shows the importance of food as a social glue as well as a new dining experience. A number of longer comments were also made which shed light on people's feelings when confronted with things which are different:

*I thought Marmite was Nutella chocolate spread ... As I had not had pork back in India my friends mistakenly served me pork on a pizza — it was tasty ... New Zealanders buy take-away food and go to the beach to eat it ... McDonald's cheeseburgers come with meat ... I notice when people go out as a family they don't just order a meal for themselves but they order food and put it in the middle to share...*

These comments betray a real sense of wonder, confusion and discovery for these people having their first New Zealand food



FIGURE 1: What food culture are you from?



FIGURE 2: What did you know about NZ food?



FIGURE 3: What is NZ food to you now?



FIGURE 4: What NZ food experiences have you had?

experiences and are a good reminder of what it feels like to look through the eyes of the "other".

#### **Food from home**

This question (Figure 5) was asked to see if respondents tried to hold on to their own way of preparation and eating when in a strange environment. Most did not seem to feel they were cut off from their native cuisines, neither the ingredients nor the cooking implements. As one respondent said, *"It was difficult sometimes to find authentic ingredients, but you can still find alternatives"*.

#### **What new foods that you were familiar with have you eaten?**

This question (Figure 6) certainly elicited some well-known New Zealand products such as fruit, wine, sweets (pineapple lumps contain sugar and chocolate, not pineapple) and pies, but also shows that some were using the experience to discover other "foreign" foods (Indian desserts, Indian curry, African foods, sushi). Whether these were "authentic" or a New Zealand variation is not known, but these are certainly examples of "eating the other" (Germann Molz, 2007, p. 77).

#### **Changed food choices**

This question (Figure 7) asked respondents to reflect on how their food habits had changed since their arrival in a strange country and culture. What came through strongly was the cultural aspects of eating (forbidden foods) and concerns around pollution in their home countries. Some longer responses included,

*Some foods are forbidden at home (beef for Buddhists, pork for Muslims) — when we come to New Zealand we get to try these ingredients.*

*I used to eat rice and stew, but now I eat noodles and hamburgers.*

These observations mirror the findings of Cavagnaro et al. (2018), who found that millennials are concerned about their environment and what the right thing to do is. It is perhaps not surprising that this is reflected in their food choices.

#### **Still do not eat?**

This question showed more than just an attitude of "I tried it and did not like it". For the first time, specific food cultures are identified and described in strong words (disgusting, too strong, too sweet). This raises the question of whether food is being used to differentiate themselves from "the other". Other comments included eating habits which they disagreed with (eating food with their fingers, hygiene in the cooking process). This may be a reflection of Björk and Kauppinen-Räsänen's (2014) finding that the overall satisfaction with strange food is not just down to the food, but also to the service, the setting and the environment.

#### **Strange but not now**

Given the rather negative comments that surfaced in the previous question, these contributions (Figure 9) are once again surprisingly positive, and identify New Zealand but also Indian, Chinese/Korean and Central American food discoveries. There certainly seems to be a shift to eating local food as the above are now eaten "regularly" according to the respondents. There were also a number of "surprises" identified by respondents such as *"Fast food restaurants here do not serve rice"*, and *"The fish here does not smell good"*.



FIGURE 5: Food from home

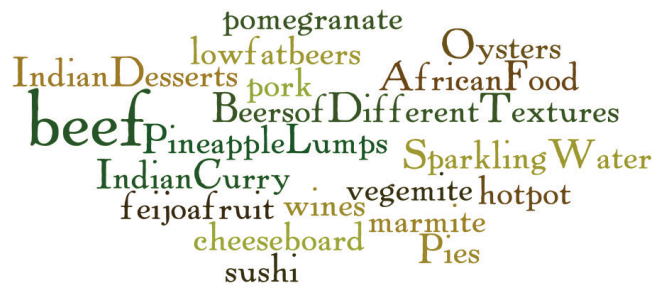


FIGURE 6: What new foods that you were not familiar with have you eaten?



FIGURE 7: Changed food choices



FIGURE 8: Still do not eat





FIGURE 9: Strange but not now?

From these outputs the researchers identified five core themes in the data:

- Universal foods — certain foods appear to be universal and although they are not from their home culture, they are recognisable and perhaps "go-to comfort food".
- Great discoveries — some participants have clearly come to a foreign country with the intention of trying things with an open mind and have been pleasantly surprised. Some have also taken the opportunity to eat things which are forbidden back home.
- Things they will never like — there are things they have tried but will never like. This is useful to know for hospitality professionals.
- Benchmarking — taking the best from other cultures. It is clear that these participants were searching for new food experiences that would become very important to them and would be something that connect them to New Zealand for the rest of their lives.
- Home food — managing the supply chain and seeking behaviour. Many respondents still managed to eat food from home, and returned to the familiar if they were unwell or dieting. Using informal networks to discover food from home is an important coping strategy when in a strange place for an extended period of time.

### Limitations and further research opportunities

As Stake (1995, p. 8) notes "the real business of a case study is particularization, not generalization [...] there is emphasis on uniqueness". This is one research project in one educational establishment with a large number of students from India and China. This is clearly reflected in the responses, although the researchers did attempt to have a mix of nationalities and ethnicities in the groups. However, it is clear from the responses that these two groups dominated and other ethnicities may have had other experiences. A follow-up study using quota sampling should yield further insights.

Some of the respondents had been in New Zealand for some time, whereas others had recently arrived. While this enabled the researchers to capture "first impressions" as well as the views of those who had "acclimatised" more, it would have been interesting to do this research as a longitudinal study to map the changes in perceptions and eating habits over time. This is something that could be done in further research.

Had this been done as an individual exercise, then it would have been possible to identify the frequency and therefore importance of issues. As the focus in this study was on experiencing research and discussing issues, no usable quantitative data was gathered. A questionnaire would provide such data as well as demographic data, allowing further analysis.

This study was carried out in Auckland which is New Zealand's largest city with a wide range of ethnicities and ethnic restaurants. Other cities may not provide such a varied culinary landscape. As this was a group exercise there was some evidence of self-censorship. Perhaps an individual online survey might show more strongly held views.

### Conclusion

The results of this study are important when considering the future of food tourism. Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie (2018, p. 166) point out that considering the future "encourages students to search, define and negotiate their own understanding of the problem". Thinking about the future of local foods may help students who will become future hospitality managers to identify what is valuable (and therefore is worth protecting and researching) about their own or others' culinary capital. However, in Haddouche and Salomone's (2018) study of Generation Z, there is no mention whatsoever of food — so perhaps it is not a priority for this group?

This research also reminds one of the importance of food for place identity and as a valuable marketing and promotional vehicle for countries and cultures. However, it also appears to show that being an international student exposes you to new food experiences which can lead to a greater shared understanding of the "other" (Coelen & Nairn, 2017; Leigh, 2017) — but at the same time it can also reinforce cultural differences and highlight core preconceptions, values and beliefs that they are not willing to give up. As one participant said simply, "If you do not try it, you will never know".

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# Farmers' trade skills: exploring the local food chain in Leeuwarden, the 2018 European Capital of Culture

Marcelo de Mansoldo, Elena Cavagnaro\*  & Vanessa de Oliveira Menezes

*Academy of International Hospitality Research, Stenden Hotel Management School, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands*

*\*Corresponding author email: elena.cavagnaro@stenden.com*

**ABSTRACT:** Local food chains have received increasing attention as an alternative to the mainstream, unsustainable global food model. Farmers who directly sell their products to consumers are an essential link in local food chains. Surprisingly, research on local food chains has mostly focused on the final consumer, leaving the role of farmer-sellers largely unexplored. This study investigates the trade skills of farmers who are selling (their own) products and their knowledge of their consumers' base. It takes a qualitative approach and uses in-depth interviews with both farmer-sellers and their potential clients. Contrary to existing literature, findings suggest that farmer-sellers have an articulated understanding of local food, possess refined trade skills, and know their customer base well. In line with existing literature, the importance of networks and of learning from customers is confirmed. Implications for practice and future research are discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** cultural tourism, direct selling, farmers' knowledge, local food chain

## Introduction

In recent years, increasing attention has been given to promoting short supply chains. This growing interest reflects the consumers' demand for quality and traceability and fuels demand for local food (Aubry & Kebir, 2013). Terms such as "local food", "local food system", and "(re)localisation" are used to refer to food produced near its point of consumption, in opposition to the mainstream food system where products may travel thousands of kilometres before reaching the customer (Peters et al., 2008).

In Europe, a growing number of consumers choose local products and associate them with higher quality, healthy eating and environmentally friendly production methods (European Parliament, 2016). Other aspects commonly associated with local food are small-scale production, craftsmanship and promoting local food traditions (Adams & Adams, 2011; Coley et al., 2009; Feenstra, 1997; Granvik et al., 2017; Lang, Stanton & Qu, 2014). Some of the qualities attributed to local food, however, are debatable. For example, consuming local food results in fewer emissions from transportation, better food quality or improved animal welfare only if the whole chain is properly managed (Garnett, 2011; Morawicki & Gonzalez, 2018; Seidel & Cavagnaro, 2018). Moreover, farmers directly selling to consumers are an essential link in the local food chain. Managing direct selling, however, requires skills that farmers often lack, leading to the failure of many farmers' market initiatives (European

Commission, 2016). Considering the importance of farmer-sellers for the success of shorter food chains, it is surprising that local food literature mainly focuses on the consumers' and tourists' perspectives (see e.g. Autio et al., 2013; Feldmann & Hamm, 2015; Woods, Rossi, Allen & Davis, 2017; Zepeda & Nie, 2011). When authors consider farmers, they mostly explore their production methods. The dearth of research on farmers as sellers of (their own and other farmers') products, justifies the focus of this study on farmers' trade skills. More specifically, this study's objectives are to probe the farmer-sellers' knowledge of local food in general, of the products that they sell in particular, and of their customer base.

This article is organised as follows. A brief literature review touches upon definitions of local food, farmer-sellers, consumers' motivations to buy local, and cultural tourists — a target group particularly interested in local food. Then the research method is explained and findings are presented and discussed. The conclusion ties up the research, acknowledges limitations and offers recommendations to both industry and academia.

## Literature review

Although the concept of "local food" is commonly used in the literature, there is no consensus on its definition (Hein, Ibery, & Kneafsey, 2006; Lang et al., 2014). Existing definitions are usually based on the distance (i.e. miles or kilometres) between production and consumption sites with the understanding that

the distribution chain between producer and consumer should be short (e.g. Hall & Gössling, 2013; Kneafsey et al., 2013). Defining "local" geographically is attractive because of its apparent straightforwardness. However, as several articles in this special issue also show, its application in practice is not only challenging, but also leads to different proposals (Holt & Amilien, 2012). Feldmann and Hamm (2015), for example, considered a range from 10 (~16 km) to 30 miles (40.28 km) up to 100 miles (160 km) as appropriate, while Sims (2009), Kirwan and Maye (2013) and Hall and Gössling (2013) state that a distance of 30 miles (40.28 km) is the only acceptable one. Definitions of local food based on political borders face similar issues, as these come in many forms (municipality, province, region, national and supranational states) and cover areas of varying size (e.g. Hall & Gössling, 2013). To avoid the difficulties of geographical definitions, more holistic approaches have been proposed that include emotional and/or ethical dimensions such as personal relations with or within the region (Feldmann & Hamm, 2015). In this line, Feenstra (2002) states that local food is a collaborative effort to build more locally based, self-reliant food economies, in which sustainable food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the economic, environmental and social health of a particular place. Similarly, other studies have acknowledged local food as a means to enhance the economy of the most closely located country areas, to support local producers and generate job opportunities for locals (Duram, 2011; Martinez et al., 2010; Roseland & Soots, 2007). Similarly, several studies show that local food creates opportunities for direct contact between producers and consumers (Dodds et al., 2014; Feagan & Morris, 2009; Feenstra, 1997; Hunt, 2007) and increases the chance of developing local food systems encompassing urban and rural areas (Berg & Granvik, 2009; Feenstra, 1997). Local food has also been associated (and sometimes identified) with small-scale or organic production, craftsmanship and the promotion of local food traditions. On a critical note, it should be recognised that some of the aspects associated with local food (such as small scale) do not pertain to it necessarily, since local food may also originate from large food industries (Granvik et al., 2017).

Considering the still open debate on the definition of local food, this study connects the geographical to the socio-economic perspective. Therefore, "local food" is understood here as food that which: (1) is farmed and processed in an area with a radius of 40 km from the point where it is sold; and (2) contributes to the local economy by being sold by the farmer or a seller in direct relationship with the farmer (also referred to as the farmer-seller).

Most of the existing academic articles on local food do not focus on the farmer-seller, but investigate the purchase or consumption intensions of customers with special attention to tourists (Autio et al., 2013; Feldmann & Hamm, 2015; Woods, Rossi, Allen, & Davis, 2017; Zepeda & Nie, 2011). When authors consider the farmers' perspectives, they mostly explore (cooperative) farming methods (Lutz et al., 2017; Sumane et al., 2017; Sutherland et al., 2017; Veizaj et al., 2009). Consequently, little is known about farmers as sellers. This lack of research is unexpected because local food systems are characterised by relatively small farms with a commitment to sustainable production, distribution and consumption (Jarosz, 2008), including shorter distances between producers and consumers (Connell, Smithers, & Joseph, 2008).

Shorter food supply chains in which farmers play the role of sellers yield several benefits to the farmers themselves and the local community such as the creation of new jobs, new-found pride and reinforced brand identity that may boost a destinations' attractiveness for food tourists (Du Rand & Heath, 2006; United Nations ECLAC, 2015). Short supply chains offer opportunities for collaboration and create social spaces where friendships and social networking are fostered (Lapping, 2004) and social capital formed (Hinrichs, 2000). Cooperation, particularly in logistics, has been found to be essential for farmers wishing to set up local food supply systems (Anderson et al., 2014; Schermer, 2015). Finally, becoming a seller represents for farmers an attractive opportunity for capturing a higher share of added value and for ensuring a more stable income (Gale, 1997). Local food systems are consequently regarded as a more sustainable alternative to globalised food systems (Hall & Gössling, 2013; Ilbery & Maye, 2005; Morgan, Marsden, & Murdoch, 2006).

Yet, the increasing standardisation of agricultural knowledge can limit farmers' freedom to become sellers. In general, farmers feel that their knowledge about their own environment, their experience-based expertise and practical skills are not appreciated, ultimately undermining the sustainability of their agricultural practices (Darnhofer & Strauss, 2015). This issue is compounded when producers become sellers. In fact, farmer-sellers need to perform simultaneously the role of a marketing agent, a distributor and a consumer relations expert (European Commission, 2016). It is often difficult for farmers to develop the knowledge and skills needed to perform these roles effectively. Moreover, farmers are limited in their ability to approach local consumers by a lack of access to production or post-production technology, limited market information on pricing and alternative market outlets, and lack of skills in negotiating and bargaining (Kahan, 2013). Lack of information on prices and quality standards may also lead to problems regarding inefficient packaging and labelling (Sumane et al., 2017). When seeking new knowledge, farmers tend to rely on self-education, experimentation and the experiences of their peers (Sumane et al., 2017). Traditional farmers' knowledge, such as the one possessed by farmers dealing with special quality foods and small-scale farming, is considered a source of inspiration. Consumers are also an important source of knowledge and innovation for farmers. It has been found that a direct link to consumers stimulates farmers to better explain their concerns and values, to rethink their habits of working, selling, labelling and to design new products and services (Bourdin et al., 2015; Darnhofer & Strauss, 2015). To sum up: while the traditional products' reputation and farmers' knowledge of their environment may become a powerful vehicle in communicating with consumers (De Roest & Ferrari, 2015), the lack of formal education and trade skills may constrain farmers' ability to sell directly to consumers (European Commission, 2016).

As briefly touched upon above, personal interaction is important for consumers to develop trust in farmers and to better value their products (Sage, 2003). Moreover, the interaction may leave unique memories for the buyer (Sinnreich, 2007). Knowing local food products is essential in forming a positive attitude towards them and in stimulating purchase (Zepeda & Deal, 2009; Sirieix, Delanchy, Remaud, Zepeda, & Gerviez, 2013). Conversely, not knowing where and when local food is sold is a major barrier for consumers willingly to purchase it (Starr et al., 2003). Indeed, unlike grocery chain stores, farmers' markets generally open for

limited times and days. Arguably, customers' lack of knowledge about the benefits of local products and where to find them increases the need for farmers to develop marketing skills and reach out to their potential consumers.

To properly market their produce, farmers need to know why people buy local. Although a growing number of studies have increased our knowledge about motivational factors for choosing locally, consensus is far from being reached. Fields (2002), for example, names four motivational factors: physical; cultural; interpersonal; and other motivators. Yet, other researchers propose up to nine (sub-) factors: exciting experience; escape from routine; health concerns; learning about new cultures; authentic experience; togetherness; prestige; sensory appeal; and physical needs (Kim, Eves & Scarles, 2009). Table 1 shows that these factors fall broadly into the two overarching categories of *symbolic* and *obligatory* motivational factors individuated by Mak, Lumbers and Eves (2012) and Sengel et al. (2015). Food consumption bears *symbolic* significance because it is a way to encounter and experience other gastronomic traditions and cultures. Simultaneously, food provides essential nutrients and therefore eating is an *obligatory* activity (Richards, 2002). Adding to symbolic and obligatory factors, Zepeda and Deal (2009) observed that contextual factors (price and availability) greatly impact on the actual purchase behaviour. These are therefore included in Table 1.

Symbolic and obligatory factors are not absolutely separated but are interconnected. In the context of this study, it is important to note that the contact between farmer and consumer allows the latter to ask questions about how the food was produced such as whether pesticides were used — aspects that may fall under *obligatory*.

Previous studies have identified in cultural tourists a group that could be particularly interested in buying local because they are attracted by food's symbolic function (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2015). Cultural tourists are indeed not only attracted by cultural products of the past, but also by contemporary culture including gastronomy and food (Mousavi et al., 2016). According to the European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (2006), cultural tourism comprises all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions outside their normal place of residence. Following this definition, nearly every journey either contains some cultural elements or at least may potentially contain them (Mikos, 2008). Yet, if every tourist could be qualified as a (potential) cultural tourist, the concept loses explanatory power. Consequently, efforts have been done to categorise cultural tourism considering the importance of culture, as a motivator, to the traveller (McKercher & Du Gros, 2002; Stebbins, 1996). The main distinction lies between "specialised" and "general" cultural tourists. General cultural tourists only causally or

incidentally open themselves to the local culture. Specialised cultural tourists are further characterised as purposeful, sightseeing and serendipitous (McKercher & Du Gros, 2002; Stebbins, 1996). While they differ in the depth of the sought experience, general (GCT) and specialised (SCT) cultural tourists may both become interested in local food. For some tourists to know and experience other culture's food becomes the main motive for the trip. These so-called food tourists visit various gastronomic facilities, meet chefs, go sightseeing where food is produced, and buy food items to take home as souvenirs (Sims, 2009). Contact with farmer-sellers yields benefits to (cultural) tourists by opening them up to the opportunity to develop a stronger sense of place and to form new relationships (Brain, 2012; Darolt, 2012; Scarabelot & Schneider, 2012). In a similar line, the literature suggests that food and destinations are mutually beneficial because food adds value to destinations by culturally displaying them (Miele, 2006; Sanchez & Guzman, 2012; Timothy & Ron, 2013), while destinations make food a better tourism product (Fields, 2002). Yet, critics contend that local cultures are profoundly changed when exposed to tourism. For example, "local dishes" are adapted to the palate of foreign guests, so that the local food culture and tradition could be lost instead of strengthened (Vergahen, 2012).

## Research method

Considering the lack of knowledge on farmer-sellers, this study aims to shed some light on the farmers in their role as sellers, particularly on their understanding of "local", trade skills, and knowledge of their customer base. As the study wishes to uncover the farmer-sellers' perspective, it takes a qualitative approach. Interviews were held with farmer-sellers and (potential) customers in Leeuwarden (Friesland, the Netherlands). Friesland was chosen because of its strong traditions. It is the only Dutch province with its own language (Frisian) and its culture is based on social collaboration. Thanks to these unique features, Leeuwarden, the capital city of Friesland, was given the title of 2018 European Capital of Culture.

Data were gathered between May 2017 and July 2017 at four sites: Zaailand, a central square in Leeuwarden where a farmers' market is held on Fridays; the Old Prison food markets; the Friesian Museum; and the Railway Station. The Zaailand and Old Prison markets are a form of short supply chain, i.e. as described above, a supply chain where the distance between producers and consumers is minimised. (Kebir & Torre, 2013). The other two locations are spots where potential local food buyers, i.e. (cultural) tourists, could be found. Twenty-seven respondents were reached; out of which seven were local food producers and sellers (in short: FS), and twenty were tourists visiting the city

TABLE 1: Motivational factors and contextual factors

Symbolic	Obligatory	Contextual factors
Learn local culture	Health concerns	Price
Exciting experience	Physical needs	Availability
Authenticity	Farmers' working conditions	
Prestige	Queries about food production	
Togetherness	Animal welfare	
Support local economy and community		
Environmental friendliness		

Source: Developed by the authors on the basis of Kim, Eves, and Scarles (2009), Mak, Lumbers, Eves and Chan (2012) and Sengel et al. (2015)

of Leeuwarden, later categorised as General Cultural Tourists (in short: GCT) and Specialised Cultural Tourism (in short: SCT).

After general questions about their profession, farmer-sellers were asked about their own definition of local food and about the customers' perception of their local products. Tourists were questioned about their definition of local food, their general interest in it and whether they actually looked for local food while travelling. Following a suggestion from previous research (McKercher & Du Gros, 2002; Stebbins, 1996), both general and specialised cultural tourists were approached for this study. The discriminant question was whether they come to the city of Leeuwarden to visit a museum, attend the theatre, or one of the activities related to Leeuwarden-Friesland being the 2018 European Capital of Culture, or for other reasons.

Interviews were held in English. While, generally speaking, (Dutch) people are supposed to have a fair command of English, the fact that respondents were not approached in their native language may explain why several tourists declined to be interviewed ( $n = 50$  refusals, out of  $N = 70$  approached). On the other hand, all ( $N = 7$ ) seller-producers approached showed high level of enthusiasm and willingness to participate in the interview. Although theoretical saturation was reached for both target groups, one of the research limitations is the small sample size. All interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim and analysed following a content analysis approach (Boeije, 2014; Harding, 2013). The data were presented based on the in-depth interviews and the analysis made by pairing the empirical data with the theory.

On average, interviews lasted 15 minutes with seller-producers and five minutes with tourists. Information that could be used to identify respondents has been eliminated in the transcripts.

## Main findings and discussion

This section presents and discusses the main themes emerging from the analysis. It touches first on the farmer-sellers, and then on the tourists.

### Farmer-sellers

The farmer-sellers approached dealt in dairy products, bread, liquor, sausages and typical local treats. Out of the farmer-sellers, six were male and one female, with an estimated age range of 25 to 55 years old. Almost all of the sellers interviewed ( $n = 5$ ) answered the question about what makes food local by mentioning distance in kilometres, as the following quotes exemplify:

*Local is about 40 to 50 kilometres' radius.* (FS2, 9 June 2017, line 17)

*Here we draw a line; 40 kilometres around Leeuwarden... the farm can be 40 kilometres' radius away from here...* (FS5, 16 June 2017, line 23)

All interviewees both sell their own and other farmers' products. A common theme is that they have created partnerships and networks even with what they consider to be their competitors, as the quotes below exemplify.

*At first, they [farmers] used to see each other as competitors, but afterwards they embraced each other, and they said: "How can we work together?" ... That's the sight of this whole process.* (FS6, 16 June 2017, lines 64–66)

*They [competitors] are partners...working together.* (FS7, 16 June 2017, lines 95–97)

This finding confirms Lapping's (2004) consideration that local food creates a social space where community, friendships and social networking are fostered. It also supports literature suggesting that partnerships positively affect both the farmer and the businesses surrounding the farmer (European Commission, 2016). All sellers interviewed also stressed that establishing partnerships and assuring other farmers' cooperation are preconditions to sell to consumers.

*Other farmers raise vegetables for me, I tell them how to do...we all work together...that's the whole point.* (FS3, 9 June 2017, lines 100–108)

*We use honey [from one farmer], we use meat [from other farmer], everything comes from the region, and we are always looking for some kind of collaboration.* (FS7, 16 June 2017, lines 42–45)

The quotes above not only support the positive role of selling locally on the socio-economic conditions of a community (Connell, Smithers & Joseph, 2008; Jarosz, 2008), but also show how communities self-organise around local food systems. This finding supports the notion that farmers consider their colleagues to be reputable experts, particularly when they are dealing with special quality foods (Sumane et al., 2017; Sutherland et al., 2017). All sellers were indeed fully aware of the high quality of their products and proud that most or all of them are handmade using local ingredients, with great care and respect towards people and the planet. Here are two illustrative quotes:

*Good the way it is [tradition], with less additives... expect no better than local, cause when it's local it's good...we use ingredients from around the city [Leeuwarden] from the farmers...everything comes from the region [Friesland].* (FS7, 16 June 2017, lines 33–44)  
*[It is healthier]...because I don't use any chemicals.* (FS3, 9 June 2017, line 78)

These quotes also align with previous studies stating that small farmers tend to produce without the use of chemicals (Grubinger, 2004; Lyson, 2004).

One of the questions in the interview aimed at uncovering the original motivation of the sellers and producers to start with their business ( $N = 7$ ). Answers centred on family history and family connections, as the following quotes exemplify:

*My parents and I have a farm, always selling to local people...that's what my parents did, that their parents did and...I took over the farm from my elders, 26 years ago...it's a family thing.* (FS2, 9 June 2017, lines 7–13)

*My companion and I started with this company two years ago, we started the business...bringing local food to our family and friends...* (FS5, 16 June 2017, lines 3–6)

This result agrees with Martinez et al. (2010), Jarosz (2008) and Granvik et al. (2017) who found that local food businesses are often small family-owned businesses, sustaining traditional production methods. In fact, interviewees could describe in detail how their products are made. Moreover, interviewees were quite passionate about the creation of innovative, exclusive and more sustainable products, as the quote below shows:

*It's unique. I make special cheeses with less water, usually cheeses have 50 per cent water and that is too much. This cheese doesn't have 50 per cent water so it*



*has more fat, that means more flavour, more taste and they are really good.* (FS4, 10 June 2017, lines 54-57)

When reading the quotes above, the term "craftsmanship" comes to mind. Craftsmanship is the capacity to coherently integrate and co-ordinate a range of practices. It entails detailed knowledge of the most appropriate techniques and the use of dedicated or locally available instruments and labour practices (Baars & de Vries, 1999).

Regarding market knowledge, it was interesting to find that all seller-producers were very knowledgeable about their best-selling local products. Moreover, they show a lot of care and attention towards their customers. For example, several sellers know customers by their first names, and vice versa. Special attention is given to their products in order to please different sorts of palates, with buyers being able to make comments and provide feedback, ask for modifications or even full customisation of the product. While this finding contradicts studies that insist on the lack of knowledge of farmers about their (possible) customer base, it supports the notion that farmers learn from their customers (Bourdin et al., 2015; Darnhofer & Strauss, 2015). The quotes below exemplify the relation with customers and the reasons why customers come back.

*They come back because they want to be part of it, we make a relation...that's very important* (FS1, 9 June 2017, lines 80, 81)

*Tourists come here and they buy lots of cheese, we have a talk, check about the time they are having, building some kind of relationship, its really nice...they come back, we wish them back, it's not about selling cheese, it's about selling a story.* (FS5, 16 June 2017, lines 63-69)

The quotes above support De Roest and Ferrari's intuition (2015) that the products' reputation and history become part of the production system and a powerful vehicle in the communication with consumers. Moreover, they confirm the finding from previous research that buying food directly from producers enables consumers to interact with and quiz them about their product (Dodds et al., 2014; Feagan & Morris, 2009). Along the same lines, Sinnreich (2007) found that the relationship-building between consumer and producer provides a unique experience to the consumer because someone who fully understands the product can explain it to her. Literature also suggests that one of the biggest benefits for consumers in supporting local is a deeper insight into food stories and a stronger sense of place (Martinez et al., 2010). Our findings strengthen this suggestion, as the quotes below show.

*They want to buy food from farmers that they could look in the eyes, that is trustworthy...farmers can have a connection with people...farmers come together and talk with each other.* (FS5, 16 June 2017, lines 145, 148)

*Customers are looking for special products, special things, they come with questions that only the farmer [sellers] knows.* (FS5, 16 June 2017, lines 104-107)

*Sometimes they ask themselves [what they want], we let them [customers] taste our best kinds [of cheese] and then they take it...most of the times I ask about which kind of situation is it...with friends, with a lady... then we know exactly what cheeses to offer.* (FS4, 10 June 2017, lines 76-78, 84, 85)

Summing up the results so far, the major themes mentioned by the seller-producers were:

- Importance of partnerships with other farmers and producers

- Family-business pride
- Proud of their own and others' experience-based knowledge
- Customers' satisfaction at heart: aware of customers' buying motives
- Aware of the importance of building a relationship with the customer

#### **Tourists as local food buyer**

Among all tourists interviewed, 12 were classified as specialised cultural tourists (SCT) and 8 were classified as general cultural tourists (GCT). Of the tourists interviewed ( $N = 20$ ), a majority were female ( $n = 13$ ), with an age range of 21 to 75 years old. All tourists (SCT:  $N = 12$ , and GCT:  $N = 8$ ) were asked about what drives them to purchase local food, especially when travelling to a different city. Tourists from both groups mentioned "taste" as being their main reason for purchasing local food, as the quotes below illustrate.

*If it tastes good...* (GCT1, 8 July 2017, line 23)

*Just for the taste, just to get an idea of what it tastes like.* (SCT5, 8 July 2017, lines 24-25)

*Because the taste is good...the taste is better.* (GCT12, 15 July 2017, lines 18, 20)

The importance of taste is unsurprising and is widely supported by the existing literature (see e.g. Duram, 2011; Martinez et al., 2010; Roseland & Soots, 2007). As the quotes below show, another set of motives, mentioned exclusively by specialised cultural tourists (SCT7; SCT6; SCT11; SCT16; SCT17; SCT19; SCT20), dovetails with the description of local food as being unique and traditional: experimentation, curiosity, and being part of the local community.

*I always look for local food products while travelling, and buy a recipe book, it's about trying new things, you have to do that.* (SCT17, 15 July 2017, lines 21, 23)

*I am curious, the food is part of the country and when you visit a country, you want to visit all of it, so you want to experience, the food, the people, the culture, everything.* (SCT7, 8 July 2017, lines 14-16)

*Just to feel like you are part of the community and to try different tastes, to be part of the culture.* (SCT19, 15 July 2017, lines 14, 15)

Seeking experiences is central to the definition of cultural tourism (Richards, 2007). The quotes above suggest that food is an integral part of this experience. Uniqueness can also be interpreted in terms of exclusivity. Tasting something exclusive is an important motivator for both general and specialised cultural tourists as the quotes below testify.

*Because it's interesting, something that I can't buy in my own city...so that's what inspires me when I am somewhere else.* (GCT10, 8 July 2017, lines 16-21)

*Because local products usually are the best, it's typical from the area, it's unique.* (SCT14, 15 July, lines 24-28)

The quotes above support Sanchez and Guzman's (2012) statement that regardless of whether or not food is tourists' main reason to visit a destination, it provides pleasure and helps to create agreeable memories. It moreover points to a way to interest general cultural tourists in local food, i.e. underlining not only its uniqueness, but also its exclusivity. Specialised cultural tourists mention a last, specific motive for choosing local food and that is supporting the local economy (Du Rand & Heath, 2006).

*...to benefit the local farmers and local economy.* (SCT3, 8 July 2017, lines 21, 25)

Finally, it is relevant to note that three general cultural tourists (GCT4, 8, 9) plainly answered that they were not interested in local food products. As one of them puts it:

*Never purchased a local food product.* (GCT4, 8 July 2017, line 8, 10)

There is, therefore, a defined category of cultural tourists for which food never exceeds the function to provide for biological needs (Fields, 2002; Frochot, 2003). However, our findings generally show that tourists appreciate local food due to its particular taste, authenticity and exclusivity. Summing up, Table 2 contrasts the major themes mentioned by specialised and general cultural tourists related to their willingness to try local food products.

## Conclusions

Local food literature mainly focuses on customers and tourists (e.g., Autio et al., 2013; Feldmann & Hamm, 2015; Woods, Rossi, Allen, & Davis, 2017; Zepeda & Nie, 2011). When authors consider the farmers' perspectives, they mostly explore their farming methods. Yet, in a local food system, farmers are often also sellers of their own and other farmers' products. The literature suggest that becoming a seller is a daunting challenge for farmers because they lack the knowledge and skills needed to directly sell to customers. This study aimed at probing this statement in the context of the Dutch region of Friesland. In contrast with the main opinion of previous studies, it was found that farmers who sell directly to customers have good knowledge of all aspects of their business and of their client base. All farmer-sellers ( $N = 7$ ) in this study have a loyal customer base, and have built strong relationships with their clients. Additionally, tourists receive special attention from the interviewed farmer-sellers. Since tourists are not acquainted with local products, the sellers introduce all their special local products to them, telling stories, giving samples and detailed explanations. Moreover, findings suggest that farmer-sellers not only master traditional methods and recipes, but also develop marketing strategies to have innovative products exclusively for their customers. In line with the literature, it has been found that local food systems are characterised by relatively small farms with a commitment to sustainable production, distribution and consumption (Connell, Smithers & Joseph, 2008; Ilbery & Maye, 2005; Jarosz, 2008). Moreover, it has also been confirmed that farmer-sellers recognise the importance of partnerships with other farmers. This forms a solid basis for further stimulating local agriculture and creating jobs for the local community (Du Rand & Heath, 2006; United Nations ECLAC, 2015). To highlight local food contribution to the socio-economic welfare of Friesland, future impact studies are recommended.

The consumers' data, which in this study was provided by tourists visiting Leeuwarden, shows that local food still catches the interest of a dedicated niche. In line with the literature, dedicated cultural tourists were found to be interested in local

food (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2015; Sengel et al., 2015). However, our study also found that some cultural tourists are not interested. To keep this customer base and enlarge it for other tourist segments, information is key because consumers need to know about the advantages of local food before they develop a positive intention to purchase it (Zepeda & Deal, 2009; Zepeda & Gurviez, 2013). One advantage that speaks to all prospective consumers is the exclusivity of local food. Therefore, it is recommended that a general campaign promoting the uniqueness and exclusivity of local Frisian food be designed and deployed.

This study has some limitations. Firstly, respondents were approached in English which resulted in several refusals to participate from tourists. Further research should contact respondents in their mother tongue. Concerning sellers, an analysis of the farmer-sellers' productivity and profitability was beyond the scope of this paper, so we advise future researchers to investigate these issues. Finally, farmers who are not sellers were not approached. Future research should also include this group.

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TABLE 2: Cultural and non-cultural tourists buyers main themes

Specialised cultural tourists	General cultural tourists
Taste	Taste
Local support	Something unique
Be part of the community	Not interested in local food
Curiosity	

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# Local food and authenticity in Greek restaurants

Gerasimos-Panagiotis Angelopoulos, Jan Arend Schulp & Vanessa de Oliveira Menezes\*

*Academy of International Hospitality Research, Stenden Hotel Management School, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences, Leeuwarden, the Netherlands*

*\*Corresponding author email: vanessamenezes@hotmail.com*

**ABSTRACT:** This article aims to understand the role of local food and authenticity for restaurateurs in Athens and Patras, Greece. Nine restaurant owners were interviewed about their current dishes, menu and ingredients. The results of this qualitative research indicate that, for the majority of the respondents, all the ingredients that are produced inside the country are considered local. They also indicated that sourcing local food is problematic, because, although transport distances are small, the total cost of local food items makes it difficult to compete with imported food. However, to customers, both foreign and indigenous, the local origin of ingredients is crucial for the perception of food as authentic.

**Keywords:** authenticity, current dishes, gastronomy, Greece, ingredients, local food, menu, restaurants

## Introduction

Over time, food has acquired a social and cultural meaning. Refined methods of preparation have been developed, and people used the ingredients that they could cultivate or find in their region. Through them, they expressed their style, from the taste to the presentation of their plates. Many customs were and are still linked with local food traditions. These links confer authenticity on food. Authentic food, in its turn, attracts tourists (Perales, 2016). Contemporary tourists are interested in authentic experiences in general and in particular in relation to food (Otieno Obonyo et al., 2014). Therefore, for an ethnic restaurant to work successfully, it is necessary to understand which factors are important to deliver experiences that are perceived by the guest as being authentic. Those factors are preparation, presentation and consumption (Youn & Kim, 2017).

The aim of this article is to understand the role of local food and authenticity in restaurants in Athens and Patras, in Greece. It investigates whether an ethnic restaurant can provide truly authentic tastes only when it sources its raw materials locally. The research also addresses the importance of the menu not only in presenting the range of food and beverage offered, but also as a means to communicate locality to the customers (Ozdemir & Caliskan, 2015). The results of the current research will provide a better idea of the important features of a menu in the decision-making process.

The article is divided into four sections. Firstly, local food and menu presentation are discussed. Secondly, the research method is described. Thirdly, results are presented and discussed. The fourth and final section brings the study to a close, identifies its limitations and offers suggestions for future research.

## Literature review

An important feature of food's authenticity is the origin of the ingredients that are used in its preparation. Alongside its natural scenery and cultural monuments, a country could promote its local products to strengthen the economy of fragile areas (Bennett et al., 1999, as cited in Thomas-Francois et al., 2017). According to Telfer and Wall (2000), tourists spend one third of their holiday budget on food (Sengel et al., 2015). In addition, tourists' choice for local food supports local farming and small-scale companies (Henderson, 2009, as cited in Mynttinen et al., 2015). Local food shortens the supply chains, making it possible for the producer to keep a higher share of the economic benefit that otherwise would have fallen to the middlemen (Roy et al., 2017). To appreciate this benefit, it should be considered that in globalised markets only 7.5% of the final retail price goes to the farmer (Ilbery et al. 2005, as cited by Sims, 2009). However, for a system to be sustainable, it has to respect not only the social and the economical values, but the environment as well.

One of the results of producing locally is the reduction of food miles. The food mile theory assumes that the environmental impact is connected to the distance that food needs to travel in order to reach the consumers (Hiroki et al., 2016). However, this theory is a topic of great controversy among researchers. Schmitt et al. (2017) support that food miles are an important matter, but claim also that the procedures, the identity and the management in domestic production are probably more important factors than transport. This critique notwithstanding, it is generally accepted that local food products offer social benefit to tourist destinations.

Locality though is not coherently defined by consumers, professionals and governments. Lim and Hu (2015) refer to the definition by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) that allowed producers to label their products as local only if they were produced in the province or territory where they were sold, or across its borders within a 50 km radius (CFIA, 2013). However, the results of their research showed that most consumers would accept a product as local even if it originated from a 160 km radius from the selling point. An extreme case is presented by Autio et al. (2013) where Finnish residents perceive anything that is produced in Finland as local.

In his research, Allan (2016) indicates that a traveller might choose, primarily or secondarily, his destination because of its food. In support of his thesis, he referred to Hegarty and O'Mahoney's (2001) statement that a way for individuals to deeply understand the cultural difference between themselves and their destination is to taste local food. Indeed, an important factor of a destination's attractiveness and its ability to satisfy visitors lies in its culinary traditions, as well as in the variety of dishes that it provides (Sajna, 2009, as cited in Otieno Obonyo et al., 2014). Food and wine tourism preserves and develops local areas, products and dishes, which explains their establishment as a form of cultural tourism (Bencivenga et al., 2016). Authentic local tastes, though, are not just a touristic destination's attribute. According to research in Finland, many local residents felt reconnected with their roots through the consumption of local food (Autio et al., 2013). Some of the respondents were interested in the health benefits of local food, but most respondents were concerned about history, traditional production methods and traditional taste. This implies that consumers place a great value both on the symbolic and the physical value of a local product (Hopkinson & Pujari, 1999, as cited in Otieno Obonyo et al., 2014). However, according to Liou and Jang (2009, in Youn & Kim, 2017), many food providers do not spend the time that is needed to prepare authentic tastes. On the contrary, they concentrate on making tasty food and providing value for money (Schulp & Tirali, 2008).

Chiciudean et al. (2013) claimed that it is necessary to study the consumer's motivations and perceptions in relation to local products. When a consumer decides to acquire a local product, he may (as stated above) think about traditional taste, authenticity, health and similar attributes. Interestingly, consumers generally suppose that local products are organically grown, even if it is not certain whether this is the case (Hiroki et al., 2016). Organic products are produced without synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, genetic engineering, growth hormones, irradiation or antibiotics (Lee et al., 2018). An interesting question that Roininen et al. (2006) ask is whether local goods are preferred by consumers for similar reasons as organic products. Hasselbach and Roosen (2015) offer a partial answer in noticing that German consumer are equally ready to pay a premium price for organic and for local food. They suggest the use of a label that combines both of these attributes (Hasselbach & Roosen, 2015). However, in order to engage the customer, local or organic products should be properly presented. In a restaurant setting, menu presentation could play an important role.

A very common routine among restaurant guests is asking for the menu, even when they know what they want to order. A menu has two purposes: to present the range of food and beverage offered by the restaurant, and to communicate its offerings to the customers (Ozdemir & Caliskan, 2015). Research

over a menu's potential is well established. For example, Magnini and Kim (2016) evaluated how various cues (fancy font, gold paper, heavy physical menu, etc.) drive guests' perceptions. Food naming is also very important as a study (Irmak et al., 2011). Different product names have different imagery impact and can stimulate the imagination to a certain degree (Lutz & Lutz, 1977). The name of the dish not only aims at informing the guest about the food offering, but also creates feelings, images and expectations. Adding photographs next to the name of food, a common practice in ethnic restaurants, is a way to help guests form the right expectations (Hou et al., 2017). In conclusion, consumers do not seek food just for sustenance, and this is particularly true for local food because it is connected to the cultural and social identity of the destination (Sengel et al., 2015). Therefore, food ought to be connected with the region where it is served. Local ingredients and traditional recipes are the means to achieve this connection. As Greece is a country with a strong traditional food culture, this research aims at better understanding the role of local food and authenticity in Greek restaurants. Through the analysis of the answers, we hope to shed light on whether the offer of authentic food is not only good for the local society and the environment, but also for the economic success of an ethnic restaurant.

## Research method

In this qualitative study the units of analysis were restaurants situated in the centre of Athens (seven units) and in Patras (two units). Units were purposively chosen on the basis of their high ratings on TripAdvisor, an open platform whose scores are updated by the customers that visit the restaurants. Arguably, these rates reflect guests' satisfaction.

Data were collected through interviews with the restaurant managers. They received a letter of introduction one week prior to the meeting, which contained an overview of the proposed research and a request for an appointment for the interview. The letter also informed respondents that interviews would be recorded to minimise information loss. Only Restaurant 1 (R1) and Restaurant 7 (R7) disagreed with recording, therefore notes were taken in these interviews. After the email, a follow-up phone call was made to arrange the meeting. The interviews were held at the restaurants' location to be able to observe the space, and lasted between 15 and 35 minutes. All interviewees agreed that restaurants' names could be used in publications. However, as a matter of precaution all the restaurants are presented in this paper anonymously (R1, R2, R3, and so on). To respondents who asked for it, a copy of the final draft version of this article was sent.

An interview outline was developed with questions focussing on the interviewees' opinions on local and organic food, authenticity, menu presentation and ingredients, as can be seen below. Examples of questions asked included: "What made the restaurants choose the dishes that they currently serve?; According to you the restaurateur, does authentic and local food stimulate sales?; How do you, the restaurateur, encourage foreign customers to order something local?; How do the restaurants feel that customers react on local or organic raw materials? What is a restaurant's greatest issue in acquiring local ingredients? In what way is the presentation of a menu important? How does using local ingredients contribute to a more sustainable restaurant operation?".

To facilitate the conversation, interviews were held in Greek. Then, interviews were transcribed in Greek and translated into English. Handwritten notes about the interviews and observations (tone of voice, speed, body language, and so on) were used when needed for the interpretation of the interviews.

The following steps were used in the analysis: (1) familiarisation with the data; (2) generating initial codes; (3) searching for themes among codes; (4) reviewing themes; (5) defining and naming themes; and (6) producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After reading the interviews and the notes a few times (step 1 above), the answers that were connected with the themes of the study were highlighted by the first author using colour coding (step 2). Then the same researcher circled emerging themes (step 3) and discussed them with the second author, also in the light of some separate notes from the transcripts and from the observations held during the interview (step 4). Finally, themes were clustered and named (step 5) as follows: current dishes; menu; and properties of the ingredients.

In the next section, results are presented starting with general information about the restaurants. Then, the three themes emerging from the data analysis are addressed: the dishes that they currently serve; the menu of the restaurant; and the properties of the ingredients. In this last section, the sourcing of local ingredients in the Greek market is addressed alongside the importance of local ingredients for the authenticity of the offered services.

## Results

### Information about the restaurants

The interviews created a rich body of information. Considering the nine restaurants that participated in this research, data suggest that they are very different in character and philosophy, even though they all serve Greek cuisine. To highlight these differences, Figure 1 plots the nine restaurants according to their perceived level of traditionalism and their perceived level of adaptation to the (foreign) guests' taste. Even though R3 and R4 are not the same business, they share the same ideology in the way that they function since one of the owners is a partner in both of the restaurants.

### Current dishes

Plotting restaurants as above is informative, but fails to capture some of their special traits. For that reason, this section focuses on specific differences in the offered dishes. R8 provides Greek traditional recipes, however, the ingredients and the cooking procedures follow the Jewish tradition to cope with the demands of the Jewish guests (kosher). The tastes that are provided by this restaurant are similar to those from other traditional restaurants; the difference between them is their target group. R4 is a restaurant that specialises in breakfast and afternoon snacks. R2 and R9 have a rather different perspective on their guests' wishes. More specifically, the owner of R2 detailed:

*This restaurant is a family business with Greek character. The dishes that it serves must be family food, like that a mother serves at home. This is our concept.*

On the other hand, the owner of R9 stated:

*A customer usually looks for a dish that reminds him of something. He does not come to find a dish that resembles the ones that were made by his mother.*

The owner of R9 mentioned the importance of familiar tastes. Trying something that has similarities with what you have already tried in the past in conjunction with something new, he furthermore states, has a greater chance to be appreciated by the guest. Consequently R9 also offered foreign guests tastes that they could find in their countries of origin. The reason for this approach was to impress the customers, showing the difference in quality and taste in order to win their trust and make them try other dishes. R8 and R2 aim to bring back memories as a way to make the guests enjoy its offerings even more.

When someone reads an online review before entering a restaurant, he is aware of the type of food it provides. As R3 and R4 owners insisted,

*The products that I bring for both of the restaurants are from Mani [Greek region] as well as the recipes. Having Russian recipes, for example, in [R3] would not make any sense.*

A similar response was given by the owner of R2, who stated, *"the building is Greek, totally Greek. The music that plays in the store is also Greek, so everything must have a Greek character"*.

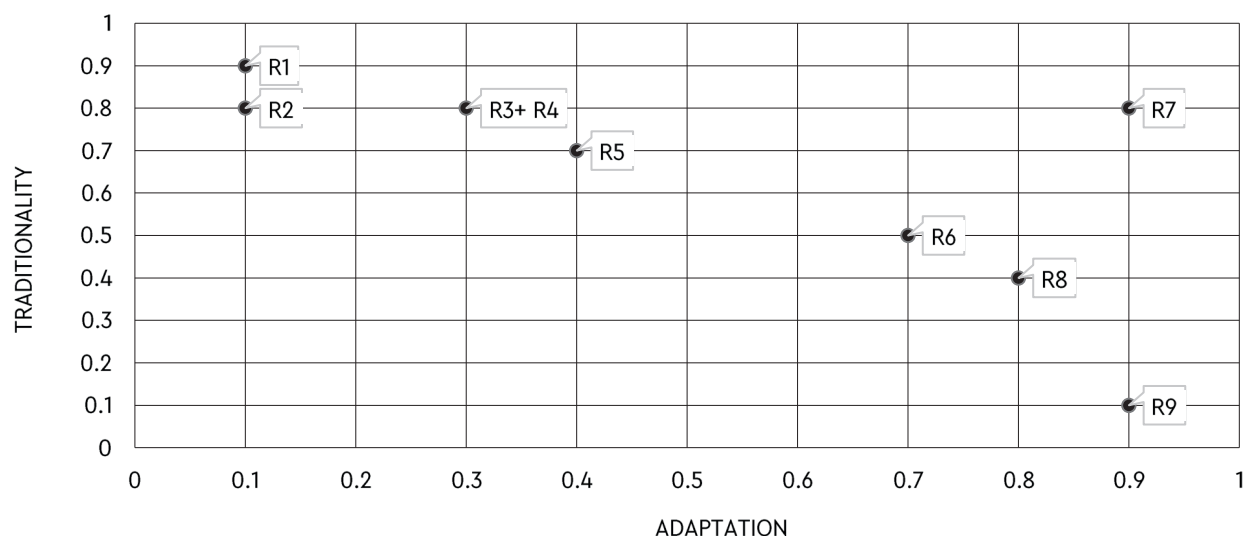


FIGURE 1: Perceived level of traditionalism and taste adaptation of the respondents

R1 is the restaurant with the richest historical background. The restaurant was Fokion Rok's old atelier, the sculptor of the Unknown Soldier's monument in Athens. It was established in 1931, and it has stayed the same since then. Its character is totally Greek and for that reason the food that is served has to be authentic. According to the owner, when he tried to make some changes to the menu, the loyal customers were not happy with his choice. The customers that are interested in places like these want to try original tastes of the country. For that reason, having things that would act as a safe choice are not needed; R9 and R5 also supported this statement. The owner of Restaurant 9 even stated that foreigners are less afraid of unknown Greek tastes than the locals.

Most of the restaurants that participated in the research, owe their success to their loyal customers. R9 supported that loyal customers are getting less over time, which could prove to be a big issue in the future. Owners think that some guests are loyal to the diverse background of the restaurant's offerings, while others are loyal because of its good location or because they have a professional connection with it. Unsurprisingly, the reason most often alleged by the restaurateurs as a reason of their clientele's loyalty was the local and traditional character of the food. The more modern restaurants like R7 and R5 adopted a healthier type of cuisine. According to these establishments, this is a very successful approach. Older restaurants though, disclaimed this statement because as stated above, the loyal customers were against it.

The results suggest that the restaurants that are family-run like R2, old like R1, or profoundly connected to a region such as R3 and R4, tend to be more traditional. Despite this, though, the managers of R3 tried to modernise their recipes in order to make them healthier. It is evident that the owners' personal taste is the driving force behind the type of cuisine that is provided. Another important aspect though are the loyal customers; these guests are a viable income for most of these businesses and for that reason their opinion of the dishes that are currently served is of great importance.

### **Menu of the restaurant**

The importance of the menu as a tool differs for each restaurant. For R1, the menu is a tool that informs possible guests what the restaurant offers before they sit down. The respondents from R8, R7 and R9 supported that a menu is important because it gives information about the price of the dishes. R6, R2 and R5 added to this that alongside a menu, waiters are important in shaping guests' expectations. In their opinion, a menu is a tool that provides information, but that will also create questions. Waiters should be able to answer these questions. A waiter should also make the guest comfortable in case he or she feels uneasy about anything. More specifically, the owner of R5 stated:

*With regard to Greek cuisine, if someone has not eaten Greek food, obviously, it will seem like something special. The importance lies on how we promote it, that is, we usually tell them to which dish it is similar.*

On the other hand, R3 stated that the menu is not what is important, but the waiter is. According to the respondents, the waiter could be the saviour, but also the demise of the restaurant. R7 arranges a tasting of the dishes every time there is a change in the menu, so that the waiters are properly prepared to promote the dishes. Ultimately, R6 and R2 mentioned the

importance of a small and clear menu. According to them, many guests are afraid of big menus because it makes them feel that the restaurant is too expensive.

Most of the restaurants care about the menu, but all of them agree on the importance of the waiter. The waiter is the person that will make suggestions to the guests and answer the questions that cannot always be covered by the menu. Almost all of the restaurants adopted a seasonal menu in order to use the fresh ingredients of the season and to cook the recipes that are common at that time.

### **Properties of the ingredients**

According to the interviewees, finding local products is not an easy task. For example, the owner of R6 sourced a type of ham called "apaki", which is produced only in Crete, from Herakleion. Another example is the wild boar cheeks, sourced by R5 from Katerini. The owner of R6 mentioned that it is a great joy to try to find these hidden tastes. On the other hand, the other interviewees were not that excited. According to them, the difficulties in getting these materials were vast and the limited availability is one of the main difficulties. The small size of the market in conjunction with the number of restaurants creates a big gap between supply and demand. In one of the interviews, it was mentioned that the establishment of guilds is of great importance, since it would be very expensive for "Cash and Carry" chains to provide these products. The volume of many of these ingredients on the market is very limited. Many of the respondents were obliged to acquire the products they needed by driving to the producer. On the other hand, this gave them the opportunity to bypass the middle person and establish good relations with the producers. As a result, many respondents managed to get their ingredients at lower prices. Unfortunately, even by sourcing ingredients directly from the local producer, this was more expensive than the imported ingredients. R9, for example, stated that a good bottle of Greek wine from Santorini is a lot more expensive than a wine of similar quality from elsewhere.

Subsequently, it is clear that acquiring local products is not an easy task. On the contrary, their price, availability, seasonality and transportation are rather challenging. R2 stated that it is hard or even impossible to refund your initial investment in these products. Interestingly enough, all of the respondents insisted that having a Greek restaurant with Greek products is of utmost importance. The owners of R2 and R3 mentioned that they even turned down offers to open the same business, in the middle of the local economic crisis, in another country because they were not able or allowed to use Greek ingredients. One of the reasons that local raw materials are so important to respondents is their high quality. Due to the economic crisis, the locals do not have the ability to dine in restaurants very often. Consequently, they want a restaurant with consistent, high quality, and the way to achieve that is by using fresh ingredients. Travellers seek different experiences and one of the ways to achieve that is through original tastes. The respondents supported that for the recipes to provide original tastes it is important to use ingredients from the country. Many of them stated that they do not even have to convince the travellers to try something purely local. On the contrary, they seek the most authentic tastes they could get. For that reason, the restaurateurs aim to inform them about the originality of these products through the menu.



## Discussion

The present research reveals the importance of local ingredients for Greek restaurants, but also the problems connected to obtaining them. Most of the respondents addressed these issues by shortening the supply chains, as suggested by Roy et al. (2017). According to Henderson (2009, as cited in Mynttinen et al., 2015), this situation works in favour of the small local farms. Unfortunately, many of the respondents support that it is really hard to acquire the needed ingredients from the local farms. Some of them insisted that the solution would be the formation of guilds or small-scale companies that will provide these raw materials to the restaurants in line with Henderson (2009, as cited in Mynttinen et al., 2015).

Another interesting result of the research is that almost all of the respondents referred to all Greek ingredients as local, notwithstanding the distance from their restaurant. The only other country with a similar approach to the origin of raw materials is Finland (Autio et al., 2013).

Ultimately, a traveller seeks to find authentic experiences through the consumption of dishes from the visited area. Several respondents stated that many of their guests ask for the most traditional dishes that they could get. This is in line with the development of food tourism as a new type of cultural tourism (Bencivenga et al., 2016). On the other hand, the importance of local products and recipes is paramount for the locals as well. Local residents favour, among others, the freshness and the taste of Greek products (Autio et al., 2013). It is clear that authentic tastes are appreciated by both the locals and the tourists. While the owner of R3 recognises that using cheaper ingredients would probably mean better profits at the cost of a drop in authenticity and quality, the other interviewees believe that food prepared with authentic ingredients brings better profits than food prepared with cheaper ingredients. This is supported by Schulp and Tirali (2008), who insist that a drop in authenticity would probably result in lower profits in the future.

## Conclusions, limitations and future research

This study aimed to understand the role of local food and authenticity for restaurateurs in Athens and Patras, in Greece. On the one hand, the restaurants that participated have accomplished a rather high level of sustainability. On the other hand, the obstacles that they encountered were hard to cope with. According to the respondents, the greatest problems were the high prices of the local ingredients and the difficulty in obtaining them. In order to solve these issues, they had to search for the producers themselves, and as a result shortened the supply chain.

Results also suggest that in the eyes of the restaurateurs both the locals and the travellers perceive local ingredients as special and a necessary part of authentic Greek recipes. Interestingly, though, the vast majority of the respondents treated everything that was produced in the country as local. While this is at odds with a strict definition of local, it also has a positive spinoff because products that are produced all over the country are promoted to the travellers who may then wish to taste them back home as well.

The present research builds upon interviews taken from a small number of restaurants in only two cities in Greece. As a result, the sample is not diverse. For that reason, the researcher that is

interested in conducting similar research or to build upon this project, it is highly recommended to do so on a bigger scale. The interviews were conducted with restaurant owners and reflect their subjective evaluation. Further research, for example with guests as respondents, is needed to probe this study's result.

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# What fires up my cooking? The choice for a sustainable cuisine: passion and self-transcendence in the restaurant business

Margo PM Enthoven<sup>1\*</sup> & Aleid E Brouwer<sup>2,3</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Centre for Sustainable Entrepreneurship, Campus Fryslân, University of Groningen, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

<sup>2</sup>Academy of International Business Administration, NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands;

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

\*Corresponding author email: [m.p.m.enthoven@rug.nl](mailto:m.p.m.enthoven@rug.nl)

**ABSTRACT:** The restaurant business is highly unsustainable and the sector contributes to a large extent to environmental pollution. However, some restaurateurs have chosen a more sustainable cuisine. As food sustainability is a contested issue, we have considered several descriptions of food sustainability and have assessed how these are influenced by a passion for hospitality. Theoretically, the choice for sustainable food can be based on a passion for the hospitality business and a passion for sustainability. Surveys were used to gather data that were analysed using logistic and linear regression models. Findings suggest that some entrepreneurs claim to serve sustainable food, but do not. Others serve only one type of sustainable food, but not the other types. Interestingly, these groups also differ in their motivations for starting their restaurants. The choice to serve sustainable food is negatively influenced by entrepreneurial passion and positively by sustainability passion. Conventional restaurants have a passion for the hospitality industry, while the restaurants that serve sustainable food do not share that hospitality passion, but rather a passion for sustainability. Our research adds to the academic debate on the tensions that restaurateurs and entrepreneurs in general face in their different motivations.

**Keywords:** food sustainability, emotions, entrepreneurial passion, quantitative, sustainable entrepreneurship, values

## Introduction

The tourism and hospitality industry is one of the least sustainable economic sectors in the world. The negative effect of this sector has become a concern worldwide (Gössling, Hall & Weaver, 2009; Mac Con Iomaire, 2016). Environmentally conscious consumers demand more sustainable products and services, while in the restaurant sector more effort is made to become more environmentally friendly (Mac Con Iomaire, 2016; Xu & Jeong, forthcoming). Raab, Baloglu and Chen (2018) find that especially serving sustainable food as a core product attracts niche customers, whereas other, more ancillary, green practices have no influence on customer segmentation. Social media (such as The Balanced Small Business, 2019; Bender, 2015; and Food Revolution Network, 2017) appeal to customers to eat local. A local diet is claimed to be more sustainable (Clonan & Holdsworth, 2012). This trend might be taken up in the hospitality sector. However, food sustainability is a complex concept that goes beyond serving local food. Therefore, this concept is difficult to implement for chefs and is often understood and executed in varying ways (Sauer & Wood, 2018). Furthermore, many studies assess whether restaurants have adopted green practices and what kind of green practices they implement

(DiPietro et al., 2013; Raab et al., 2018). Previous studies have not been able to capture exactly which practices these restaurants adopt and cannot assess how these green practices relate to green practices in other restaurants. Restaurateurs might adopt some green practices and overlook others (DiPietro, Cao & Partlow, 2013). Therefore, we focus on one type of practice: serving sustainable food. We look at different interpretations of sustainable food (local, seasonal, organic, vegetarian and vegan) and how these compare to the restaurateur's own interpretation of sustainable food.

Entrepreneurs start a business for many reasons. Passion for the sector or the product can be one of those and a passion for sustainability can be another (Cardon et al., 2017). Sustainable entrepreneurs can experience tensions between their economic, social and environmental goals (Blundel & Lyon, 2015). They often have to make trade-offs between these goals, for instance choosing between scaling up economically and not compromising sustainability goals. Possibly, entrepreneurs also experience tensions between a passion for their business and a passion for sustainability. Restaurateurs specifically may experience a tension between serving sustainable food and serving whichever food they want, whether local or not, in season or not, and vegetarian or not. The question that emerges

is: do restaurant owners that serve sustainable cuisine differ from more conventional restaurant owners in their motivation to start their restaurant? Does a choice for a sustainable cuisine come from a passion for restaurants or from a passion for sustainability?

This article is composed as follows: In the literature review, we firstly discuss two types of passion: entrepreneurial passion and passion for sustainability. Then, we discuss sustainable entrepreneurship and the link to sustainable cuisine (local, seasonal, organic, vegetarian and vegan). Each section in the review is closed with the formulation of hypotheses. After the review, the research method and the results of the research are presented. Lastly, we will discuss the outcomes, draw conclusions and give recommendations for future research.

## Literature review

The highly risky, competitive and commercial nature of business ownership makes being an entrepreneur an emotional endeavour; entrepreneurship is a passionate process (Cardon et al., 2012). As such, emotions affect all stages of the entrepreneurial process (Baron, 2008). "Emotions are the general phenomenon of subjective feelings" (Cardon et al., 2012, p. 2) and entrepreneurs have these emotions in response to decisions they have to make in uncertain environments. Emotions are an antecedent and a consequence of entrepreneurial actions (Cardon et al., 2012; Thorgren & Wincent, 2015). For example, entrepreneurs can speak about their business as their "baby", that they have started, cared for, helped mature and identified with at a personal level. These feelings or emotions for a business can have an effect on activities and decisions about the venture (Cardon et al., 2012). Passion is described as an intense positive emotion (Cardon et al., 2009) and an intense motivational and positive force for entrepreneurship (Thorgren & Wincent, 2015). Passion can be the main driver behind entrepreneurship. Passion is related to creative problem-solving, the time spent on entrepreneurial activities and entrepreneurial persistence (Breugst et al., 2012).

The question of what entrepreneurs are passionate about is an important one because the object of one's passion can have important implications for the types of behaviours entrepreneurs engage in, such as persistence of creativity, and the outcomes of such behaviours, such as firm performance. Therefore, understanding a broader set of potential targets of passion might help inform our understanding of entrepreneurs' behaviour and performance outcomes for themselves, their firms and their stakeholders (Cardon et al., 2017, p. 25).

An individual holds a variety of passions. Similarly, when it comes to entrepreneurial passion, there are different types of passion (Cardon et al., 2009; 2012). According to Cardon et al. (2009), entrepreneurial passion can be divided into three categories: first, the individual passion for generating new ideas or inventions; second, the individual passion for creating a new firm and gathering the resources to do that; and third, the individual passion related to market development and growth. This division into three is, however, solely based on entrepreneurial action, while entrepreneurial passion can also extend to products and markets. Therefore, Cardon et al. (2017) divide entrepreneurial passion into six types: passion for growth; passion for people; passion for the product or service; passion for inventing; passion for competition; and passion for a social

cause. The passion that managers in restaurants experience is often a passion for their business and sector (Mooney et al., 2016). However, this passion is not in line with any of the three types discussed above, but does fit better with the six-fold topology given by Cardon et al. (2017). The restaurant business is not a highly innovative business, nor does it have many serial entrepreneurs who start new businesses. Therefore, we do not consider the passion for generating new ideas and inventions and the passion for creating a new firm and gathering the resources to do that as relevant to our research. We focus on the passion for managing a business and watching the restaurant. We assume this is the case for both sustainable and conventional entrepreneurs, since in both cases the sector at large is the hospitality industry.

- Hypothesis 1: Both sustainable and conventional restaurant owners express a clear passion for managing "growth".

## Sustainability passion

One type of passion described by Cardon et al. (2017) is the passion for a good cause. This arguably means that some entrepreneurs start their business because they care for others or because they care for the environment. The passion to care for others and for the environment could influence the choice of a sustainable cuisine for entrepreneurs in the hospitality business. We address the care of others and the environment by including self-transcendence values in this research. Values reflect guiding principles in an individual's life. In particular, values are concepts or beliefs that pertain to desirable end states, such as an ideal society, and to the question of ideal behaviour. They transcend specific situations and guide the selection or evaluation of behaviour and events (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1990). Personal values are relatively stable over time and are significant determinants of an individual's awareness of the consequences of his/her behaviour. Values of self-transcendence reflect a concern for the welfare of others and for nature. Self-transcendence reflects understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection of the welfare of all people and nature (Schwartz, 1992). Values of self-transcendence have been found to positively influence multiple kinds of sustainable behaviour, including willingness to pay for the preservation of wildlife (Ojea & Loureiro, 2007), sustainable consumerism (Nguyen et al., 2016), environmental policy support (Hiratsuka et al., 2018), and environmental activism (Stern et al., 1999). Values such as achievement, hedonism and power have an opposite effect on behaviour to values of self-transcendence. We focus on the self-transcendence values in this research, because, as stated above, self-transcendence has a positive influence on many types of sustainable behaviour (De Groot & Steg, 2008; Hiratsuka et al., 2018; Zasuwa, 2016).

Concerning sustainable entrepreneurship, research finds mixed results for self-transcendence values. Conceptual studies link self-transcendence and sustainable entrepreneurship (Patzelt & Shepherd, 2011; Schaefer et al., 2015), but the evidence is minimal. A positive link has been found between pro-environmental behaviour values and the recognition of new business opportunities (Ploum et al., 2018). Another study, however, finds a negative link between pro-social values and environmental innovation (Bendell, 2017), while yet another study finds a positive link between self-transcendence values and corporate social responsibility practices (González-Rodríguez et al., 2015). Furthermore, entrepreneurs may have values of



self-transcendence, but use disengagement strategies to exploit an unsustainable business (Shepherd et al., 2013). Also, previous research found that chefs were mostly consumer-driven when it comes to sustainable food and that their perceptions differ on what sustainability in restaurants means (Sauer & Wood, 2018). Since environmental psychology research suggests a positive relation between self-transcendence values and sustainable behaviour, whereas sustainable entrepreneurship research reports mixed results, we hypothesise:

- Hypothesis 2: Self-transcendence values of the entrepreneur positively influence the choice for sustainable cuisine.

### **Food sustainability**

Sustainable entrepreneurs experience tensions between the different aspects of sustainability (Doherty et al., 2014; Hahn et al., 2015). Not only do they often experience tensions between economic and sustainability goals, they also experience tensions between social and environmental goals and between long- and short-term goals (Slawinski & Bansal, 2015). Furthermore, sustainable entrepreneurs often get grounded in one discourse. This makes them less likely to explore other discourses. Because there are multiple interpretations of sustainable food, there is a danger of entrepreneurs only using one of these interpretations as their sustainability discourse (Poldner et al., 2015). The sustainable food concepts that we use in this research will be discussed in more detail in the method section. Here, we wish only to state that they have both social and environmental benefits. Local food, for instance, reduces food miles and is therefore an environmental concept. On the other hand, it also promotes food security and enhances communities (Clonan & Holdsworth, 2012). Therefore, there are not just tensions between the social and environmental elements of sustainability at play in this study, but also tensions between the different interpretations of social and environmental sustainability.

- Hypothesis 3: Perceptions of food sustainability differ among restaurateurs serving sustainable food.

## **Research method**

In this section, we first discuss the various discourses of food sustainability, followed by the description of the data collection and the method applied in obtaining the data. Finally, we discuss the choice of analyses.

### **Choice for food sustainability interpretations**

We recognise that there are a multitude of perceptions on sustainable food. Therefore, we assess different approaches to sustainable food in a comparative manner. Following societal trends in sustainability, we have identified five discourses on food sustainability: local; organic; seasonal; vegetarian; and vegan. We rely on scientific studies to validate that seasonal, local, organic, vegetarian and vegan food are more sustainable than food that does not fit these characteristics (Garnett, 2011; 2013; 2014). Moreover, our choice of these five discourses on sustainable food is supported by their popularity in the Netherlands and by the Dutch Centre for Nutrition (Voedingscentrum, 2019). The next paragraph discusses scientific evidence for food sustainability.

Local food is considered sustainable because local food supposedly uses less food miles, less water and less energy for growing in arid countries or greenhouses. It also promotes food

security and supports the local community (Clonan & Holdsworth, 2012; Feagan, 2007). Growing local food is best done conjointly with seasonal food, because local food can otherwise come from heated and lighted greenhouses (Stănescu, 2010). Organic food promotes food security by promoting seed and breed diversity. It is also better for people, because some pesticides, herbicides and fungicides can potentially have a negative impact on human health, as had been illustrated by the number of cases against Monsanto, the producer of a pesticide that allegedly causes cancer (McCausland, 2019). Organic food also has advantages for biodiversity by going against monoculture and allowing for insects or animals to exterminate pests as opposed to pesticides (Hole et al., 2005). Finally, vegan and vegetarian are more sustainable due to a higher efficiency of water, resources and land for plant-based food (Garnett, 2014; Morawicki, 2012). By removing a link from the chain by removing animals, the food system does not lose any calories in animal feed or water to the animal's inefficient digestive system. Furthermore, animal welfare considerations are important to take into account. In this research, we asked respondents to indicate which kind of sustainability fits their cuisine best.

### **Data collection**

We collected data in 2016 via an online survey. We sent emails to restaurants that had their email addresses listed on the website [lens.nl](http://lens.nl). In total, we sent 3 036 surveys. We received 295 partial responses, which is an acceptable response rate for an email survey (Chidlow et al., 2015). After removing erroneous and missing variables, we were left with 169 responses. We developed our questionnaire following the recommendations on survey design, including the use of simple syntax, relevant and clear scales, and a suitable layout (Krosnick & Presser, 2010). We asked the participants about their passion for the hospitality sector, passion for the restaurant business, what types of food they serve, and why and how they view sustainability.

We are familiar with the entrepreneurial passion scale developed by Cardon et al. (2012), but decided not to use this scale. We felt that it does not reflect the passion that many entrepreneurs in the restaurant business have for managing their business, and thus we decided to develop our own measures. Furthermore, Cardon et al. (2017) later came up with more types of passion that do not fit this scale. The same goes for the value scale (Steg et al., 2014). We adapted the concepts in this scale to fit to the restaurant business. We used Likert scale questions, with five answer options.

### **Data analysis**

This paper presents data-driven research that looks for correlations, not causalities. New issues can emerge from the data rather than being in the data intentionally in order to test a hypothesis (Miller & Goodchild, 2015). For the passion and self-transcendence variables, we did an exploratory factor analysis. We used the derived factors as input for our next analyses. We did a number of regressions, which were either logistic or linear, depending on the distribution of the data. We did a linear regression for those variables with a normal distribution of the regression residuals and for those variables with a normal distribution after log-transformation. Some of our variables were so polarised that the distribution was the opposite of normal, with high quantities of cases near the highest and lowest values. Those variables we recoded into

binary variables. We performed logistic regression for these variables and also for our self-reported sustainability measure, which was already binary. For the sustainable food categories, we selected those responses that had indicated that sustainable food is served in the first place and only used these in our analysis. We created a composite sustainability index, for which we calculated the average of the percentages of local, organic, seasonal, vegetarian and vegan food served. See Table 1 for all variable specifications.

## Findings

In our sample, 64% of the respondents were male and the average age was 43. All respondents were between 21 and 70 years of age at the time of the survey. 59% of the restaurateurs had one or more children. 131 out of the 169 respondents indicated that they serve sustainable food, which is 78% of our sample. Out of the restaurateurs who indicated that they serve sustainable food, on average 46% served organic, 43% local, 65% seasonal, 36% vegetarian, and 19% vegan food.

Before testing our hypotheses, we used an exploratory factor analysis on the entrepreneurial passion and self-transcendence survey questions (Table 2). We found a good fit for both the passion and self-transcendence scales. Our factor analyses yielded Cronbach's alphas of 0.7 and 0.79, which is satisfactory. The KMO reliability test scored 0.62, which is considered acceptable. We proceeded to include the passion and self-transcendence factors in the regression analyses.

We analysed four models for the linear regression (Table 3). Self-transcendence values have a positive effect for vegetarian and organic food and for the composite sustainability index (for an explanation of this index, please consult the data analysis section and Table 1). Passion has a negative effect on both the sustainability index and organic food. Thus, this analysis suggests a negative relationship between passion for the restaurant business and serving sustainable food. Being male is negatively related to serving sustainable food and to serving vegetarian food. We find a positive effect of education level for organic food and the sustainability index, which means that the higher the education level, the more organic and sustainable

TABLE 2: Exploratory factor analysis of the passion and self-transcendence variables ( $N = 169$ )

	Passion	Self-transcendence
Passion		
Passion for working in a restaurant	0.64	
Passion for managing a restaurant	0.64	
Cronbach's alpha = 0.70		
Self-transcendence		
Help others to eat differently		0.66
Do something for the environment		0.79
Do something for society		0.77
Do something for others		0.56
Cronbach's alpha = 0.79		

food restaurateurs serve. Finally, we find that the number of employees of a restaurant (size) has a positive effect on serving seasonal food. It should also be noted that the difference in  $R^2$  for the sustainability index, organic and vegetarian food versus local food is large. Whereas our variables provide a good model for sustainability index, organic and vegetarian food, the model for seasonal food is weak. Therefore, there could be entirely different variables at play for seasonal food that we have not managed to include in our data.

After the linear regression, we perform three additional logistic regression models for those dependent variables that were not suitable for linear regression (Table 4). First of all, we found a non-significant and weak fit for local food. As such we can not make any conclusions about local food, except that its use in restaurants is likely to be influenced by different variables. However, we found a good fit for self-reported sustainability and for vegan food. Furthermore, we found that for vegan and self-reported sustainability, self-transcendence was significant and had a positive effect. For self-reported sustainability, passion was significant with a positive effect, whereas passion had a negative effect for serving vegan food.

Comparing the logistic and linear regressions (Table 5), we found that passion had a positive effect on self-reported sustainability, but was negatively associated with vegan and vegetarian food and the composite sustainability index.

TABLE 1: Description of the variables used in the analyses

Variable name	Variable description	Specifications
Self-reported sustainability	Self-reported sustainability of the restaurant food	1 = Yes
Self-transcendence	Altruistic factor	Wants to help society Wants to help environment Wants to help others Wants people to eat differently
Passion	Passion factor	Passion for restaurant business Passion for managing a restaurant
Gender	Gender, binary variable	1 = Male
Children	Whether the respondent has children, binary variable	1 = Yes
Firm size	Number of employees	
Education level	6 levels of education	Categorical variable, from low (1) to high (6)
Organic	% organic ( <i>biologisch</i> ) food	
Local	% local food	Log-transformation: $\log\_local = \log(local/100 - local)$
Seasonal	% seasonal food	Transformed into binary variable, 1 = over 50% seasonal
Vegetarian	% vegetarian food	
Vegan	% vegan food	Transformed into binary variable, 1 = over 50% vegan
Sustainability Index	Average of the % local, organic, seasonal, vegetarian and vegan	

TABLE 3: Linear regression results

	Sustainability index ( $\beta$ )	Sustainability interpretations ( $\beta$ )		
		Organic	Vegetarian	Seasonal (log)
Self-transcendence	0.36***	0.40***	0.23***	0.15
Passion	-0.21***	-0.08	-0.33***	0.13
Gender	-0.14*	-0.11	-0.21***	-0.03
Children	-0.11	-0.03	-0.11	-0.15
Firm size	-0.03	-0.02	-0.09	0.22**
Education level	0.19**	0.19**	0.12	0.14
N	129	129	129	103
F	9.35	6.77	9.97	2.34
R <sup>2</sup>	0.32	0.25	0.33	0.13
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.28	0.21	0.30	0.07

\* $p < 0.1$ , \*\* $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ 

We favoured the sustainability index over the self-reported sustainability, and rejected Hypothesis 1. We found that self-transcendence was generally positively related to sustainable food. Therefore, we accepted Hypothesis 2. Self-transcendence values of the entrepreneur had an effect on the choice for sustainable cuisine, however, it was not always positive. Interesting side findings were that education level was positively related to sustainable food, while being a man was negatively related to serving sustainable food.

Based on the differences in our findings, we accepted Hypothesis 3; perceptions of sustainability do differ among restaurateurs serving sustainable food. The insignificant model for local food and the weak model for seasonal food show that these types of sustainable food are determined by different motivations that we have not included in this study. However, the clearest indication that sustainability perceptions

differed was the conflicting effect of passion on self-reported sustainability versus the sustainability index, vegetarian and vegan food. We think that those individuals with a passion for food and restaurants might be less willing to adopt plant-based cuisines, even though these are often more sustainable.

## Discussion and conclusion

With this research, we aim to uncover the motivations of restaurateurs in different types of sustainability. We find that when it comes to sustainable food, there are two types of people: those who are passionate for the restaurant business and do not serve sustainable food, and those who are driven by a passion for sustainability and use food and restaurants for their sustainability goals. Neither of them specifically cares for local food.

Our study points out that it is relevant to address what sustainability is. Looking at the different interpretations of sustainability and the different motivations of restaurateurs, we argue that it is beneficial for restaurateurs who are interested in sustainability to look beyond what they are already doing, and towards what else they can do to improve sustainability of the business. Vegetarian and vegan restaurants may want to include local and seasonal foods, while organic restaurants could benefit from including more plant-based food in their cuisine. Furthermore, we find that passion for the restaurant business and passion for sustainability have a conflicting effect. It appears that most entrepreneurs are not passionate about both sustainability and the restaurant business, but only about one of these.

Underlying, we expected local food to have an impact as well, since popular media gives a lot of attention to this, such as The Balanced Small Business (2019), Bender (2015) or Food Revolution Network (2017), and appeals to customers to eat local. Of course, there is debate on how it is a challenge in eating only

TABLE 4: Logistic regression results

	Sustainability (self-reported, $\beta$ )	Sustainability interpretation ( $\beta$ )	
		Vegan	Local
Self-transcendence	1.46***	1.77***	0.41
Passion	0.59**	-1.07***	0.22
Gender	-0.29	-0.56	0.05
Children	0.16	-0.32	-0.39
Firm size	-0.02	-0.06	0.01
Education	-0.01	0.08	0.20
Log likelihood	-67.91	-32.60	-81.33
LR $\chi^2$ (f)	30.65	35.35	6.56
Prob > $\chi^2$	0.00	0.00	0.36
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.18	0.35	0.04
N	162	129	129

\*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ 

TABLE 5: Significant scores across sustainability motivations compared

	Self-reported sustainability	Sustainability index	Local	Seasonal	Organic	Vegetarian	Vegan
Self-transcendence	Positive	Positive			Positive	Positive	Positive
Passion	Positive	Negative				Negative	Negative
Gender		Negative				Negative	
Children							
Firm size				Positive			
Education level		Positive			Positive		

locally and seasonally and at the same time make sure you keep a healthy diet (Clonan & Holdsworth, 2012). If we truly ate only local, currently eating local would come down to — due to up scaling of production and agricultural policies — a one-sided, nutritionally deficient and rather boring menu. For a proper local diet, we would have to turn the clock back to before the Second World War (Stănescu, 2010). Furthermore, if we are able to produce a local food supply that is not one sided, we run into the debate of whether producing a wide variety of food locally is the most efficient and hence most environmentally friendly way to be sustainable (Kaplin, 2012). The debate on what is local and how sustainable it really is did not win over the hearts of the restaurateurs in choosing that option for their sustainable cuisine.

The debate on local food can of course be extended into regional dishes and cultural heritage, combined with seasonal products. Debating local food can be a way to fire up sustainable cuisine in the hospitality sector. Research on how hospitality management defines food sustainability and local food and the (im)possibilities of an all-local menu being appealing enough could give insight into this debate. We also recommend future research to consider the differences between all types of green and social practices that sustainable restaurants can adopt. Practitioners and researchers alike could benefit from viewing sustainability in the restaurant sector in a holistic way, as opposed to sticking to a single and narrow interpretation of sustainability. Furthermore, attention should be given to the demand side. The customer is king, and hence, if customer demand is indeed growing more and more sustainable, the restaurants have no option but to follow. How the customer demand is changed and what the preferences and willingness-to-pay for sustainable cuisine are can help managers to make short-term planning for sustainable futures.

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Molz, J. (2007). Cosmopolitans on the couch. In: J. Molz, & S. Gibson (Eds.), *Mobilizing hospitality: The ethics of social relations in a mobile world* (pp. 78-99). Farnham: Ashgate.

United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). (2003). Sustainable development of ecotourism: A compilation of good practices in SMEs. Madrid: UNWTO. Available at <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284406210>

Schwartz, J. (1993, September 30). Obesity affects economic, social status. *The Washington Post*, p. 4.

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# Research in Hospitality Management

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