



**From place to plate... and back again: editorial reflections
on the complex entanglements between place and
gastronomic development**

Journal:	<i>Journal of Place Management and Development</i>
Manuscript ID	JPMD-02-2020-0019
Manuscript Type:	Editorial

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

From place to plate... and back again: editorial reflections on the complex entanglements between place and gastronomic development

This flavoursome special issue - *From Place to Plate: Gastronomy and rural entrepreneurship* - features a range of gastronomic experiences, from beer to cheese, as lenses through which to consider a variety of places, food-place interactions, and the politics involved in such interrelations. From Wales to Italy, we consider the multi-layered place entanglements with food, drink, and experiences, and the producers, consumers, and marketers of such gastronomic encounters. Throughout history, local food practices have been major signifiers of how places are; how they might be understood and remembered. Thus identity, food, and place have a long relationship which serve as mental cues to remembered reveries about places. Yorkshire pudding, haggis, Neapolitan pizza, chorizo and even frankfurters and hamburgers are all evocative of powerful place imaginaries. Set within the wider backdrop of global-local tensions (Leitch, 2003), rising concerns around sustainability, growth in vegetarianism and veganism (The Economist, 2019), and a blossoming 'foodie' culture (Richards, 2015), it is arguably now more important than ever to understand how place and gastronomic development interrelate.

The papers in this special issue, therefore, all explore the intimate links between food and place; and they gather around four interrelated themes. The first relates to the immaterial aspects of gastronomy and places; the narratives, traditions, emotions, memories, and multi-sensory experiences intertwined with the trading, growing, harvesting, processing, sharing, and consuming of food in place. As Bennett suggests, food is itself "an actant in an agentic assemblage that includes among its members my metabolism, cognition and moral sensibility" (2010: 51). Thus, the symbolic resonance of place resides partly in the foods and edible products originating there, in the form of sensual characteristics such as aroma, texture, taste, appearance and associated sounds (Pink, 2015). As Rodriguez finds in her paper in this special issue - *Shared landscapes: the impact of residents' visual and sensual perceptions of regional meat production on brand development* - consumers make inferences about the Herdwick lamb brand through sharing the multi-sensory landscape with the sheep on the fells and in the farmyards. Such sensorial 'pre-product' experiences, she contends, can lead to consumer perceptions of a higher quality, better flavoured, and more 'authentic' meat product.

Furthermore, the memories and narratives surrounding food and place help to meld, maintain, and effectively market their interconnections. As Palladino reveals in her paper - *Rediscovering people, places and traditions: a story of stories* - to preserve important gastronomic traditions, development policies should consider the people and stories behind the production of foods. The paper, therefore, offers a reflexive and empathetic methodology for capturing the voices of local people involved in maintaining such gastronomic traditions, to foster bottom-up and sustainable strategies around promoting a place's local food and drink offer, rather than imposing these narratives using a top-down managerial approach.

This alerts us to the second key theme weaving the special issue articles together: that of the importance of people to food-place entanglements. As well as considering the land, via terroir, soils, fields, wild places, and other non-human materialities involved in food production and consumption, food is also a core aspect of our human selves. We assimilate food both physiologically and culturally, and it is associated with our identities viscerally, socially, ethically. For cityscapes and landscapes, the farming, finding, buying, gathering and sharing of food acknowledges the affordances and interactions which inhere in a 'heftedness'

1
2
3 - a learned belonging (Mitchell and Hamilton, 2018) - to the land. What is novel for
4 Sjölander-Lindqvist, Skoglund and Laven in their paper - *Craft beer: building social terroir*
5 *through connecting people, place and business* - is the way in which what they term *social*
6 *terroir* becomes a critical ingredient in the production of craft beer. They illustrate how
7 small-scale food production and gastronomic efforts can (re)connect people, places and
8 businesses in meaningful ways in a globalized societal context. Thus, although some craft
9 beer ingredients come from distant lands, meaning the local is not always ingested into
10 human bodies, these authors find social ties and local communities are integral in the
11 promotion of craft beers, for instance through packaging, naming and other place and food
12 branding strategies. In this sense, food is always a conduit to the outside world, connecting to
13 a larger social, cultural, economic and political context. Instead of globalisation fostering
14 cultural homogenisation and disrupted places, localism, and in this case local food, resolves
15 (Harvey, 1989).
16
17
18

19 Indeed, several of the papers associate with the themes of food-based tourism. People have
20 long travelled to 'taste' places and to remember their experiences from their gastronomic
21 journeys; bringing back accounts of what was eaten. Now, such experiences are made public
22 more instantaneously than ever before as part of consumers' online identity projects; sharing
23 their 'taste' in the widest sense of the word. These gastronomic accounts take both immaterial
24 and material shape; when the food eaten becomes part of the stories told to families,
25 colleagues and acquaintances back home they 'materialise' intangibly; but their experiences
26 may also come in the form of food as souvenirs and gifts. The choice to buy a particular food
27 item and bring back home not only helps to convey particular identity positions; but these
28 consumption activities can also be ethically embedded, as neatly illustrated by Pizzichini,
29 Temperini, and Gregori in their paper - *Place branding and local food souvenirs: the ethical*
30 *attributes of national parks' brands*. Thus, in addition to food souvenirs having an economic
31 value for the destination, these authors demonstrate that they also function as 'containers' of
32 perceptions, ethos and experiences of place.
33
34
35

36 As Fusté-Forné's study - *Savouring Place: cheese as a food tourism destination landmark* -
37 further demonstrates, foods (in this case cheese) from a place is thus *of* the place, where the
38 milk tastes of the grass, the grass is flavoured by the earth and the rain, and so forth. The
39 notion of *terroir* thus clearly emerges in this paper, which reminds us of how the 'earthiness'
40 of food and drink ascribed by territory and origin, affects and effects the sensual character,
41 social resonance, and identity of many foods and drinks, and the places to which they are
42 associated. However, Cafiero, Palladino, Marciano, and Romeo's article - *Traditional agri-*
43 *food products as a leverage to motivate tourists* - reminds us of the often unrecognised
44 potential of such 'placeful' products for fostering and promoting place identity and place-
45 attractiveness. Specifically, they find local gastronomic products are not yet fully leveraged
46 to promote tourism in their case study area of Reggio Calabria in Southern Italy.
47
48
49

50 What must not be lost when considering food-based tourism, however, is the understanding
51 that such places also importantly inculcate pride amongst their residents - pride of place,
52 pride in-place, and pride in food, where identities, traditions and memories are confirmed and
53 solidified over-against the melting-into-air processes of fluid capitalism. To 'eat local' is not
54 just a badge of touristic identity to be savoured and shared; but one of belonging in-place for
55 local residents. Bowen and Bennet in their paper - *Selling places: a community-based model*
56 *for promoting local food* - explore the challenges involved in drawing on local food products
57 and processes in the branding of places which lack a strong sense of identity, or are tarnished
58 with negative perceptions and associations. Their study on local food branding in a formerly
59
60

1
2
3 industrialised, and now economically challenged area of South Wales (Rhondda Cynon Taf),
4 is thus critical of the reifying dreams of a perfectly imagined rurality co-existing with a
5 productive local food economy constitutive of proud regional culture and identity. Instead,
6 this 'metropolitanisation' tactic means that, although there is a high quality range of
7 foodstuffs coming from this place, with some of it closely tied to place-based memories and
8 meanings, the arbitrariness of the label and the place name is a tough sell. This is despite
9 some successful examples of so-called industrial foods gaining tremendous recognition in the
10 21st Century as nostalgic icons. In the UK, we might think of the Kernow tin miners' Cornish
11 Pasties, Northern mill workers' meat and potato pies, Lancashire black puddings, and later
12 'curries' - the everyday food of Southern Asian immigrant factory workers in the post-war
13 years, now co-opted as the pride of Bradford. The UK is not an exception; wherever we go in
14 the world, we find these emblematic foods. In some places these foods seem very 'local', tied
15 to their place but can also be 'glocal' items, which tell of the role of innovation, or the
16 entrepreneurial (re)creation of locality in a globalising world.
17
18
19

20
21 Practices of producing, preparing, trading, sharing, marketing and consuming food and drink
22 can ascribe class positions, and create social, national and ethnic boundaries. The
23 contributions, therefore, also have in common a critical concern with the power dynamics
24 invested in the food politics of place, as well as the branding of places depending upon place
25 stakeholders' divergent interests and worldviews. Tensions around the local-global,
26 authentic-manufactured, and insider-outsider are thus addressed by the papers in the special
27 issue. Fusté-Forné, for example, draws our attention to how European cities today offer food
28 tourists a melting pot of cuisines from local, national, and international origins; whilst,
29 Sjölander-Lindqvist et al. discuss challenges around 'reclaiming the local' through craft
30 produce within an increasingly globalised (gastronomic) environment. Meanwhile, Bowen
31 and Bennet advocate for community involvement in food and place branding strategies;
32 similarly, Palladino calls for the foregrounding of local voices, memories, and narratives in
33 promoting bottom-up and sustainable place development.
34
35

36 To conclude, the above papers reveal the importance of not only attending to the materiality
37 of food and place; but also being aware of the immaterial stories, memories, and multi-
38 sensory elements entwined in their interrelations. Furthermore, the central role people play in
39 not only producing and consuming the foods emerging from places; but also in promoting a
40 place's gastronomic offer should not be underplayed. Finally, the complex tensions between
41 the local and global, and the authentic and the manufactured, should be carefully navigated
42 by producers and consumers of food, drink and places. Hopefully, therefore, this curated
43 collection of studies goes some way to provide a critical consideration of ideas which might
44 assist in conceptualising a so-called 'progressive', 'organic', and 'bottom-up' sense of place
45 from both theoretical and practitioner perspectives.
46
47

48 References

- 49
50 Bennett, J. (2010). *Vibrant matter: A political ecology of things*. North Carolina: Duke University
51 Press.
52
53 Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*.
54 Oxford: Blackwell.
55
56 Leitch, A. (2003). "Slow Food and the Politics of Pork Fat: Italian Food and European Identity".
57 *Ethnos* 68(4): 437-62.
58
59 Mitchell, L, and Hamilton, L. (2018). "Hefted: reconfiguring work, value and mobility in the UK
60 Lake district". *Culture and Organization* 24(4): 303-317.

1
2
3 Pink, S. (2015). *Doing sensory ethnography*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

4 Richards, G. (2015). "Evolving gastronomic experiences: From food to foodies to foodscapes."
5 *Journal of Gastronomy and Tourism* 1(1): 5-17.

6
7 The Economist. (2019). The Year of the Vegan. *The Economist*. Accessed 24th February 2020:
8 <https://worldin2019.economist.com>.