

17.5 How local are local foods? Historical approaches to ‘new’ terroir products

Room 203

Conveners: Dulce Freire and Monica Truninger

Chair: TBA

The debate on local food has received wide attention in the field of agro-food studies. Framed within this debate, local food meanings and its contradictions alongside a critique of the ‘local’ for rural and sustainable development have all been scrutinised by the sharp social scientific eye. See, for example, the numerous dedicated articles to this topic in specialised journals (e.g. *Sociologia Ruralis*, *Journal of Rural Studies*). Despite prominent contributions have moved forward the debate onto groundbreaking reflective spaces, the historical links of the territorial connections of product and place received far less attention by agro-food scholars. As to the historians, there has been a long discussion on food quality schemes embedded in the territory, crucially since the Portuguese government took the pioneering resolution in 1756 of defining the first world demarcated region – the Oporto wine region. Thus, origin-linked product schemes that carry a guarantee of quality have caught the eye of many historians and anthropologists, particularly for the cases of wine and cheese – some of the very first products to receive such status. In this vein, this session aims to revisit and engage with these debates by bringing closer the historical approaches to local food. Nevertheless, instead of focusing on processed products such as wine and cheese (what we can call the ‘old’ *terroir* products), the session attempts to give visibility to fresh fruit and vegetables (the ‘new’ *terroir* products). Several reasons justify this focus. Compared to wine and cheese, most fruit and vegetables have received much later territorial designations, either symbolically or statutorily enforced (e.g. PDO, GPI, etc.). However, they also reclaim a strong link to a long distant past. Moreover, freshness is deeply associated with local food meanings, possibly contributing to consolidate further territorial bonds. Lastly, fruit and vegetables are a relatively mundane and ordinary component of peoples’ food diets, deprived from a strong symbolic and cultural feature (unlike meat and dairy products). Yet, they can be part of important identity territorial codes that are reproduced through time and the object of political, economic and cultural battles. Hence, three questions steer this session:

- 1) To what extent and to what point in time can we draw and map the historical local roots of fruit and vegetables?
- 2) To what extent the know-how, techniques and skills employed in cultivation, packaging and storage activities replicate and reproduce older and past systems of knowledge and practice?
- 3) To what extent the ‘new’ *terroir* products overlap and dispute the symbolic, cultural, political and territorial spaces of the old ‘*terroir*’ products? What are the consequences of such overlapping in the bio-material, political, cultural and social design of local foodscapes?

17.51 Atle Wehn Hegnes – Thinking and doing protected designations: a tale from the ‘food specialisation’ of Norway

By the end of the 1980s one can see a new way to produce and to think about food in Norway. Norwegian governmental authorities have since this time worked hard to implement different schemes that focus on different kinds of food quality (the quality turn) to stimulate sales of high quality food. In the Norwegian context it is appropriate to name this evolution ‘The Food Specialisation of Norway’, referring to one of the most prominent terms introduced by the governmental forces trying to name this new way of thinking about food production, sales and consumption in the Norwegian context.

Using the idea of ‘The Food Specialisation of Norway’ as a context, this paper aims to conceptualise aspects of the dynamics in one of the schemes introduced – the Norwegian Scheme for Protected Designations. The study highlights two aspects of the scheme. In first place it is a study of documents to find ideas about how the scheme came about, where shaped and influenced the implementation. The second aspect concerns how this scheme is practised by involving actors and is based on interviews conducted in 2007 and 2008.

Applying this perspective makes it possible to bring a historically oriented narrative of the history of the implementation of the scheme together with contemporary studies of how it is practised today. The questions will not only evolve around ‘what’s going on’, ‘what kind of transformations do such schemes generate’, but also the question of method; how to do the work – empirically as well as theoretically.

Atle Wehn Hegnes holds a Cand. Polit. degree in sociology and is Research fellow at the Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo. Hegnes held a position as research assistant at the National institute for consumer research in the period 2005-2006. His ongoing PhD project has the working title: ‘Modern global rules for traditional local products – A study of implementation, comprehension and practicing of “Regulation on the Protection of Designations of Origin, Geographical Indications and Designations of Specific Traditional Character of Foodstuffs” in Norway’.

17.52 Dulce Freire and Monica Truninger – The qualification process of the Western Rocha Pear: inventing a ‘new’ terroir product?

This paper focuses on the historical process of qualification of the Western Rocha Pear – an autochthonous Portuguese pear variety which was granted PDO status in 2003. According to its PDO territorial boundaries, this pear variety is associated with a territory that is much larger than the boundaries that demarcate its origin – Sintra municipality (an area within the region of Lisbon). In this paper, we describe two processes: on the one hand, the myth-making surrounding the origins of Western Rocha Pear (first appeared in 1836 in the farm of Mr. Rocha), wherein we argue that regional market and administrative interests justify, in part, the extension of the territorial boundaries beyond Sintra; on the other hand we offer an historical account of the know-how and skills involved in the production of traditional Rocha Pear orchards and the gradual shift towards the use of modern technologies (refrigeration systems) and mechanisation (water irrigation), which now feature in the current *filière* of Western Rocha Pear, to respond to pressures for globalisation and quality standards of export markets.

The paper aims to contribute to the debate on the classic and new notions of *terroir* (enshrined in EU regulations on GIs) by arguing that: despite this product and its sector’s infra-structure clearly defy a classic notion of *terroir* – according to Tregear (2003), it should be based on traditional and non-modernised production, small scale, collective *savoir-faire* – the Rocha Pear still delivers and fulfills an important role as a cultural and identity marker of a region, and is representative of the Western region food culture.

Dulce Freire is a researcher at the Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Universidade de Lisboa (Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon). Her areas of research are agrarian policies in Portugal and Europe, the impact of the modernisation of agriculture, technological innovation, social movements and social change. Since 2006, she has chaired, with Anton Schuurman, the Rural History Network for ESSHC.

Monica Truninger is a Research Associate at the School of Social Sciences (University of Wales, Bangor) since February 2005. She has joined the project ‘Comparative assessment of environmental, community and nutritional impacts of consuming fruit and vegetables produced locally and overseas’, which is part of the Rural Economy and Land Use (RELU) programme funded by Research Councils UK. She has recently completed her PhD in Sociology at the University of Manchester under the supervision of Prof. Alan Warde. Her PhD thesis was focused on organic food consumption and its articulation with the food provisioning system in Portugal. Prior to her post-graduate studies she worked as a junior researcher in various social sciences projects related to public opinion, environmental issues and organic food consumption at Observa (Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon and ISCTE – Instituto

Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, Portugal). Her primary research interests are food consumption and environmental issues.

17.53 Stefano Grando – Non-food agricultural production and rural development. A story of success and failure from southern Italy

Bergamot is a citrus fruit that looks like a slightly flattened lemon. It contains an essence that is a very important and widely used in the perfume industry. The essence is nearly a natural monopoly for the Southern Italian region of Calabria, since the large majority of the essence marketed in the world comes from that region. Nevertheless Calabrian bergamot production, after two centuries of high profits, has plunged into a deep crisis in the last few decades, so that the survival of the production is at risk.

This contribution, based on a field research conducted by the Author for the Department of Economics of the University of Naples ‘Federico II’, describes two different initiatives that have been undertaken in recent years in order to overcome the crisis, and discuss them in the light of the current literature on rural networks and rural development. Although these initiatives differ from one another in many respects, both of them move towards the establishment of closer linkages between bergamot production and the territory, in a perspective of multi-faceted rural development and multifunctional use of resources.

A brief history of the production is presented as well as an analysis of the main supply chain, with the aim of discussing the reasons of the crisis and of analysing the strategies at the base of the two initiatives in the context of the literature on vertical and horizontal networks, rural development and culture economy.

Stefano Grando holds a PhD in Agrarian Economics from the University of Basilicata (Potenza, Italy) with a dissertation on organic farming, and a MSc in Regional Development from the Department of City and Regional Planning at the University of Wales (Cardiff, UK). He has been Research Fellow at the Department of Economics of the University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’ and at the department of Economics of the University of Naples ‘Federico II’. He has worked in research project with the Department of Applied Economics of the University of Asturias (Oviedo, Spain) and as a consultant for the IFAD – International Fund for Agricultural Development. Currently he is Research Associate at the SPES Development Studies Research Centre of the University of Rome ‘La Sapienza’. His research interests include rural development, local development, agricultural economics, rural sociology, economic development, rural-urban dynamics in developing countries, ecological economics.