

Knowledge dynamics in the re-localisation of food

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Objective

- Present the result of the working package on local food of the European funded project *A Cognitive Approach to Rural Sustainable Development. The Dynamics of Expert and Lay Knowledges (Corason) (2004 – 2007)*.
- 12 European country involved: Ireland, Scotland, Sweeden, Norway, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary
- See **WP6 Comparative report on ww.corason.hu**

Objective (2)

- Analysis of the different strategies of food re-localisation across Europe
- Dynamics of different types of knowledge in the different strategies/contexts
- **Organisation of the research**
- Input paper, laying the theoretical basis of the study – discussion
- Case studies in the selected regions of the different countries (12 country reports each with one or more case studies)

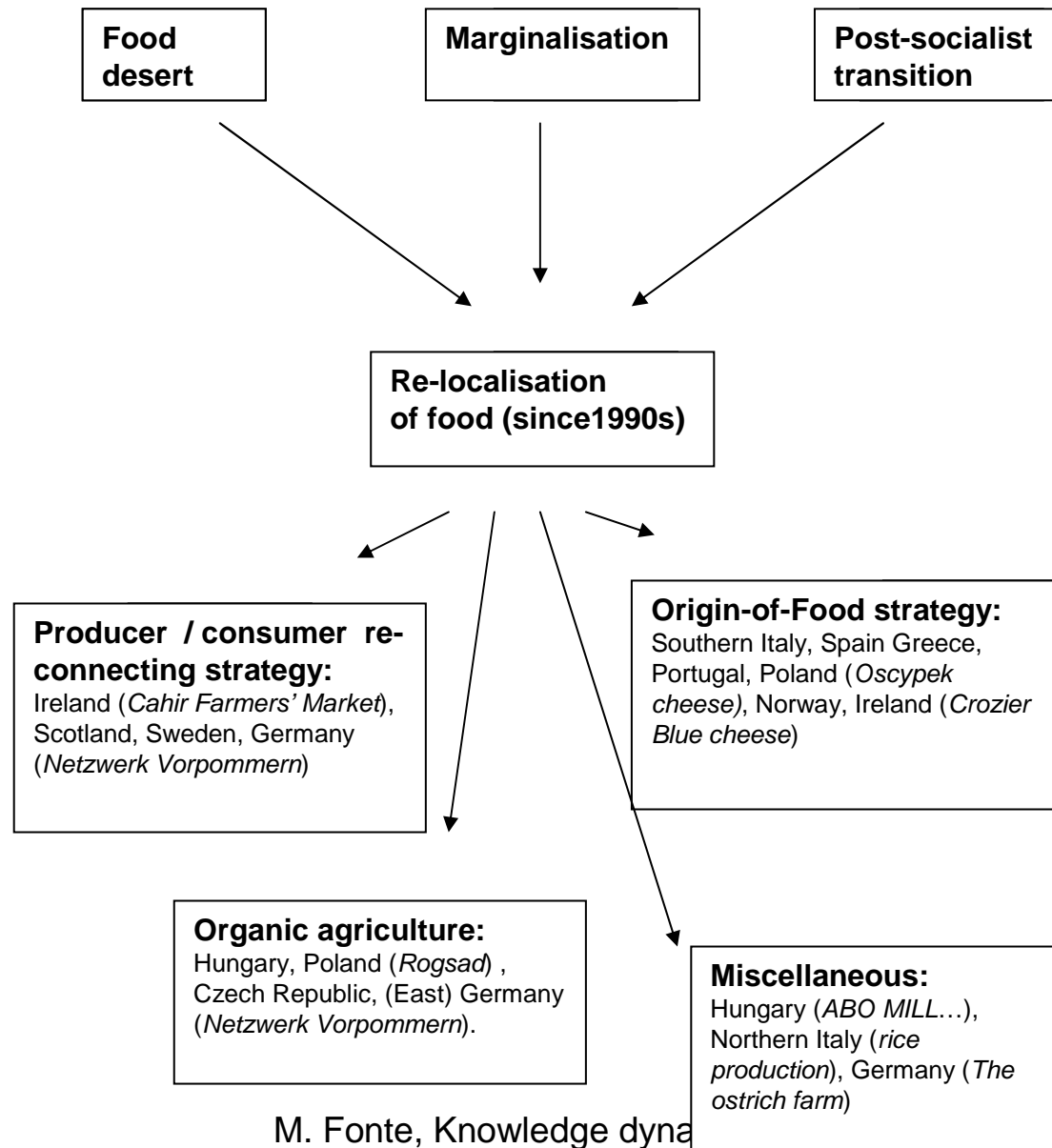
Hypothesis

- A trend of re-localisation of food across European countries is recognised in the RS literature
- Different strategies and models of re-localisation emerged during the discussion of the Input Paper (June 2005)
- The case studies were intended to analyse the characteristics of the different models and to look at the difference in the articulation and dynamics of different forms of knowledge in each model

Results

- There are different models of re-localisation of food across Europe
- Each model is linked to a different 'food context'
- To each model correspond different dynamics of knowledges articulation

Fig. 1 Models to re-localisation of food



M. Fonte, Knowledge dynamics in
the re-localisation of food

1. Re-connecting the producer and the consumer in the same place

(short food supply chains)

- This strategy supports food produced, retailed and consumed in the same area, appealing primarily to social (empowering and re-vitalizing local communities) and environmental arguments (reducing pollution caused by the transportation of goods). It entails a re-construction of the local short food chains, from the demand (Cahir FM, Netzwerk Vorpommern) and the supply side (SLHDA, Eldrimner).
- The analysis of this strategy of rural development is based on evidences recorded in four case-study,

1. Case studies

- Cahir Farmers' Market (Ireland): established by the Cahir development association in 2001 with the aim of attracting people in the village of Cahir during the Saturdays. 11 stalls
- Skye and Lochalsh Horticultural Development Association (SLHDA, Scotland): a network of actors committed to support horticulture on Skye and teaching horticulture skills that have gradually been lost. 1995
- Eldrimner project (Sweden): rural network for small-scale refinement of agricultural products with a centre in Rösta, in the municipality of Ås, in Jämtland. Technical support for the production, processing and marketing of food products (cheese, sausages, marmalades and jams)
- Netzwerk Vorpommern (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, east Germany): voluntary association promoted in 1995 by organic consumers, with the aim of promoting a local market channel for organic products and strengthening the relations between producers and consumers

1. Re-connecting producers and consumers

The context

- Relatively disadvantaged areas in a context of export-oriented agriculture and
- “Food desert”:
 - you live in a food desert if... you live in an area where healthy food is either non-existent or too expensive. This is likely to be the case if your only ‘local’ food shopping option is a supermarket, and you have no good small independent local shops, farmers’ markets or box schemes serving your area ...

1. Re-connecting producers and consumers

Main features of the initiatives

- Promoted by social movements' and civil society's or rather community's organisations, with the involvement of strong local institutions
- Based on self-governance (without or with few formal rules)
- Local markets are socially embedded, not only because trust is at the base of the exchange relationship, but also because "buying food becomes a social occasion, rather than a faceless interaction"
- Quality is intended as "fresher" ...

2. Origin-of-Food model

(Regional speciality products, consumed or not locally)

- Food is not only fuel, not only an occasion for sociability, but a strong element of local identity and culture.
- ‘Place’ here matters not only as ‘space’. There is a *tradition* of local food, that goes behind in *time*, and was never completely extinct → persistence of small marginalised farms and rural communities with a local food culture

2. Origin-of-Food strategy Case studies

Portugal

Barrancos Cured Ham PDO certified

Barrancos Cured Ham Not certified

Spain

Utiel-Requena PDO wine

Requena sausages Protected Geographic Indication

Greece

Mavro Messenikola wine production “Quality Wine Produced in Specific Region” (VQPRD)

Nemea wine production (VQPRD)

Italy – South

The construction of the “*Aspromonte National Park Product*” certification

Fratelli Fazari Olive Oil Firm

Palizzi Wine IGT

Canolo local economy

Poland:

Oscypek cheese

Norway

Valdres rakfisk brand (traditional fermented fish)

Kurv frå Valdres BA (traditional salami)

2. Origin-of-Food

Key features

- Resources (local varieties, techniques, knowledges) are specific to the area
- Role of collective associations and institutions as key actors
- Quality linked to specific geographical and human factors (“not commensurable”)
- *Complex relation to markets*
- *Role of certification in the dynamics of knowledges*

2. Consumers, markets and strategies of rural development in the origin-of-food perspective

Consumers Market	<i>Local</i>	<i>Distant</i>
<i>Local</i>	<p>Territorial development through valorisation of regional food networks and integrated rural development strategies.</p> <p>(Canolo local economy (S. Italy) Palizzi IGT wine (S. Italy) Requena sausages (Spain) Not-certified Barrancos Cured Ham (Portugal) Not certified wine networks in Greece The Hungarian baker Highlanders' Oscypek cheese (Poland) Aspromonte certification (S. Italy)</p>	<p>Rural tourism, as an important component of an integrated strategy of RD</p> <p>Oscypek cheese – 1st and 3rd networks (Poland) Palizzi IGT wine (S. Italy) Aspromonte certification (S. Italy) Requena Fair</p>
<i>Distant</i>	<p>Migrants market as an important component of the strengthening of local markets.</p> <p>Nostalgia Food</p> <p>Mavro Messenikola VQPRD (Greece) Canolo bread (S. Italy) Utiel and Requena (Spain)</p>	<p>Product / Sectoral strategies of RD</p> <p>Aesthetic Consumers</p> <p><i>Certification</i> as an instrument for the access to differentiated markets</p> <p>(Oscypek cheese – 2st / 3rd networks (Poland) Certified Barrancos Cured Ham (Portugal) Utiel-Requena D.O. wine (Spain) Mavro Messenikola VQPRD (Greece) Nemea VQPRD (Greece) Kurv frå Valdres BA (Norway) Valdres rakfisk brand (Norway) Extra-virgin olive oil (S. Italy)</p>

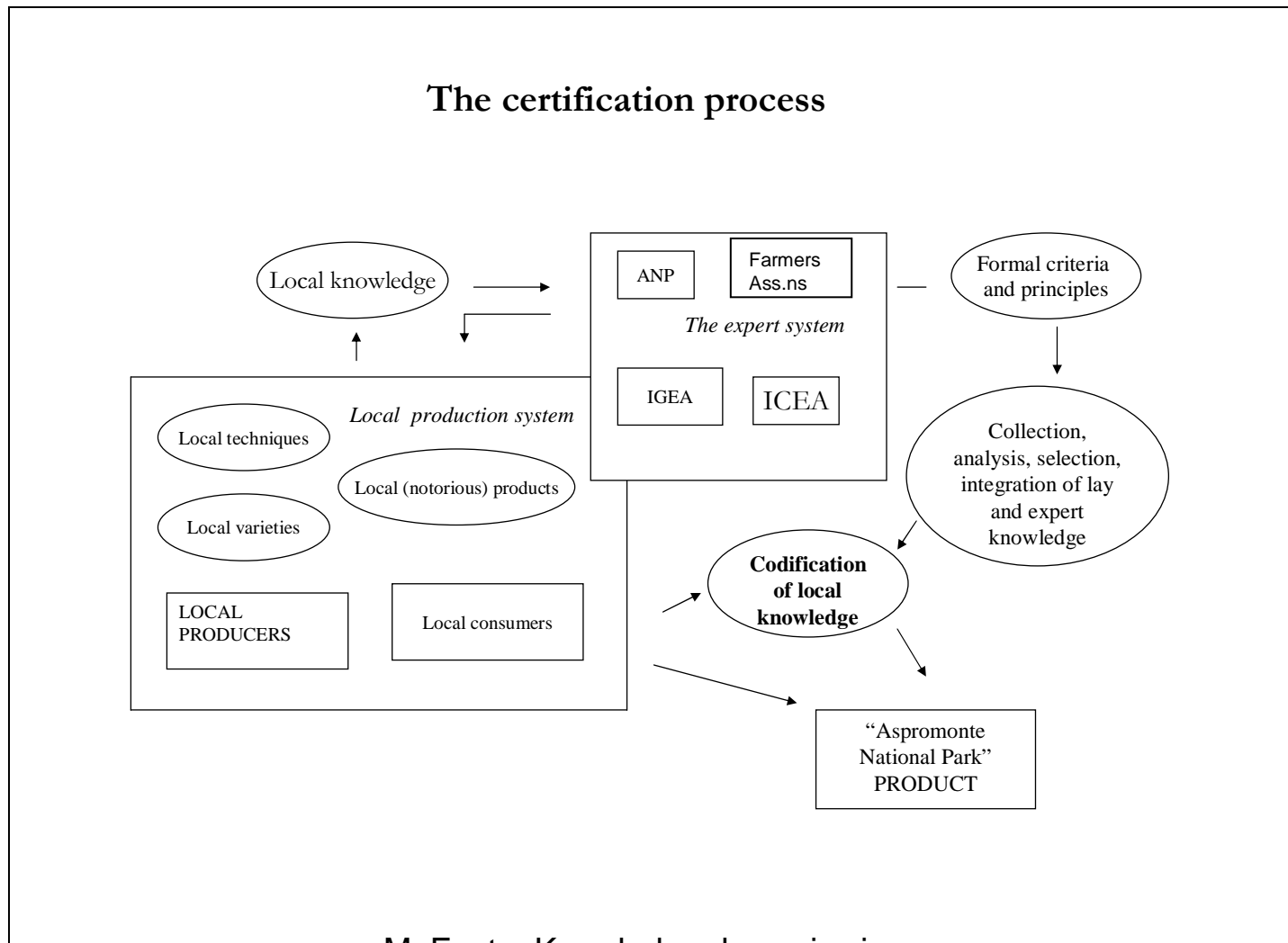
3. The organic strategy

- In the National Reports of the post-communist countries, especially Hungary, the Czech Republic and East Germany, local food issues are discussed mainly or exclusively through case studies relating to the production and retailing of organic food. Organic methods of production is the main characterisation of the *Spojené farmy a.s.* in the Czech republic, the *Hortobagy Co.* in Hungary and the *Rogsad* initiative in Poland.
- While organic agriculture is criticised and contested by the ‘re-connection’ perspective because of its ‘conventionalisation’, in the peculiar agrofood context of the post-communist countries where large supermarkets co-exist with a largely diffused production for self-consumption, organic production is presented as ‘one of the most important direct link between producers ... and consumers’ (Hu NR: 10).

KNOWLEDGES TYPES	1. Consumers/production re-connection	2. Origin-of-food	3. Organic
<i>Production (Lay knowledge as knowledge about the 'place')</i>	Local technical production knowledge is lost: farmers need to learn how to grow...	Local technical knowledge is the traditional knowledge, kept by marginal farmers, lost by the technocratic structure	Local knowledge, also as traditional knwl., is re-elaborated and diffused by the organic movement and integrated with expert organic practices
<i>Managerial/ commercial</i>	Is diffused among farmers (high level of formal education): their trading and selling skills are regarded as part of their larger repertoire of skills in social interaction, not needing to be formally taught	Not diffused among farmers: it is a limit to the valorisation of traditional products. It is crucial for establishing cooperation among producers and accomplishing certification process	Lack of such knowledge among farmers: provided by the expert of the organic movement / certification bodies.
<i>Bureaucratic (hygiene and safety norms)</i>	It belongs to the technocratic structure	It belongs to the technocratic structure	It belongs to the technocratic conventional and organic institutions.

KNOWLEDGES DYNAMICS	Consumers/production re-connection	Origin – of - food	Organic
<i>Local lay knowledge</i>	Local-lay knowledge is rebuilt through experience and exchanges with local knowledges in other (national and international) regions	Local lay knowledge needs to interact with expert-scientific knowledge to overcome its limits, especially for the most elaborated products (wine, oil, fermented fish). Tacit knowl. becomes relevant for the interaction.	Tacit dimension is relevant when there is a deep commitment to organic values (as in the bio-slaughterhouse), less in the other cases. Lay knowl. about local environmental conditions is important
<i>Experts</i>	It is not the scientific expert, but 'somebody who has already done it' (practical hands-on expertise)	Experts are the scientists and technicians (wine, oil) or the experts on regulations and certifications schemes. Interaction with them is important for some products.	Experts from organic advice and control bodies have a role on assessing the actual organic character of the produce and on giving specific technical advice.
<i>Scientific knowledge</i>	Not important. It may a starting point (Skye), but it need to be adapted, integrated.	Interaction with scientific knowledge is important in many cases (wine, oil, ham, fermented fish). Local knowledge may stimulate new research (Oil, SI). Scientific knowledge may appropriates lay / oral knowledge (ham, wine)	It is important (even if underdeveloped) in order to find out the interaction of the agrofood system with the natural environment and to stress the supposed superior quality of organic food.
<i>Transfer</i>	Through shared experiences (Sc, Sw), from conversation and observation (Ir)	Through 'observation' and then compilation of new knowledge. Certification as a "translator" of knowledge.	More easily shared in the organic movement (Ireland)

**Interaction between local and expert knowledge system
in the construction of the ‘Aspromonte National Park Product’ certification**



Knowledges networks and the tacit dimension

- Re- localisation of food strategies demand for the *integration* of different forms of knowledges.
- **Social networks** shape the way in which different types of Knowlgs interact; whether the interaction will lead to integration or a new hierarchy of power.
- The **tacit dimension** of knowledge is at work in the interaction among people (Bruckmeier and Tovey).
- Local control of knowledges dynamics is favoured by:
 - Strong territorial networks (social cohesion, diffused tacit knowlge)
 - The presence of local actors able to mediate among different cultures and knowledges (in possess of tacit knowlge; returned emigrants, ‘organic intellectuals’, formally educated local actors).
 - The presence of social movements (Ireland) and a strong capacity of local governance (Sweden, Scotland).

Strategies of re-localisation and de-localisation of knowledge

- Different strategies stems from different contexts: they need not to be seen in contrast between them. Actually they express the capacity of rural areas to generate different solutions to different problems.
- Each strategy may present opportunities and weakness.

Vulnerabilities

Re-connection perspective:

- Loss and lack of lay knowledge. Lay knowledge (of producers and consumers) about food need to be reconstructed
- Dimension of the phenomenon (small initiatives: which impact may have on the global food system?) and appropriation by large supermarket. Important role of 'food movements'.

Origin-of-food

- Contrast between the informal/variable systems of lay K. (place-dependent) and the codified system of scientific K. (more mobile).
- When powerful (often extra-local) actors have a dominant position in the knowledge network, appropriation and subordination of lay knowledge by the 'expert system' derives. New hierarchical knowledge systems are created → local food becomes globalised

Organic agriculture

Conventionalisation

Food re-localisation and SRD goals

- A rich patrimony of lay knowledge is present in the European rural areas that it may contribute to innovative, diversified solutions to the management of natural resources and more sustainable livelihoods
- This patrimony is enhanced, valorised, created and re-created in the interaction with other forms of knowledge, promoted by the recent strategies of re-localisation of food.
- The new dynamics of knowledge, though, will contribute to improve the livelihoods of rural areas only if lay knowledge and local producers will be recognised the same status and power as 'scientists' and 'experts' do, in setting the rules and the goals of a SRD.