

# PIES IN THE TAIWANESE COUNTRYSIDE—EXPLORING THE GLOCALISATION PROCESS OF EXOTIC FOODS THROUGH THE LIFEWORLDS OF PRODUCERS

**Junyi Zeng**

*National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan*

**Athena H.N. Mak**

*National Taiwan Normal University, Taiwan*

## INTRODUCTION

Food is both a basic need and an important tourist attraction. As a result of globalisation, mobility benefits from time-space compressions, such as tourism and migration (Adey, 2017; Willson et al., 2013). Recent years have witnessed some urban migrants moving to rural areas and entering in tourism and hospitality industry in Taiwan (Taitung County Government, 2022). Although previous research points out that rural areas are less affected by globalisation than urban areas (Takahashi et al., 2021), the migrants bring new cuisines to the new places which are different from the local food culture and these cuisines become part of the local symbolic tourism food. Yet, little is known about how exotic food is brought by migrants and it can also represent the local traits of food that attract tourists. The study aims to find out the interaction within glocalisation through the lifeworld of exotic food migrant producers in rural areas. This study attempts to answer the following research questions: (1) What is the process of producing exotic food in rural areas by immigrant producers? (2) What are the factors impacting the glocalisation of exotic foods? (3) How does the migrant producer present their lives through food?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This section will discuss the key concepts of “cultural turn”, “glocalisation” and “mobility and migration” as well as the research gaps that need to be addressed. The so-called “cultural turn” is linked to the concept of place-making, which emphasises cultural identity production and allows tourists to gain authentic experience (Williams & Shaw, 2004;

Ellis et al., 2018; Everett, 2012; Stalmirska, 2020). It also recognises the importance of daily life which is cultural production and reproduction based and intertwined with some aspects of social life (Evans, 2017). However, the previous research informed by “cultural turn” has predominantly focused more on tourists’ experience or local community development but ignored both the production side and the power of individuals. We believe that as the merge of consumption and production in modern tourism destination (Everett, 2012), individuals as the producers in the destination also contributes to the local cultural production and reproduction.

Glocalisation has significantly impacted food tourism by creating a demand for authentic, locally-sourced cuisine that reflects both global and local influences (Robertson, 1992). The lenses of homogenisation, heterogenisation, and glocalisation are a common framework for understanding cultural globalisation (Hopper, 2007; Mak et al., 2012; Ritzer, 2016; Salvatore et al., 2021). More recent arguments against the dichotomy of globalisation and localisation have been indicated by several scholars (Featherstone, 2007; Robertson, 1992). However glocalisation acts as a cultural bridge between the local and the global, facilitating communication between residents and visitors (Stalmirska, 2020; Robertson, 1992). Mak et al. (2012) have developed a conceptual framework to demonstrate the complex interplay of globalisation’s influence on food tourism. The conceptual framework points out that there are three aspects ‘homogenisation’ versus ‘heterogenisation’, ‘global consciousness’ versus ‘local consciousness’, and ‘global culture’ versus ‘local culture’ related to the local food supply. However, more empirical research is needed to improve and perfect the

conceptual model.

Cheng (2004) illustrates that the cultural globalisation of food is influenced by immigration, commercialisation and colonisation in Taiwan. Mobility, migration and tourism are closely related and influenced by glocalisation which is also highly associated with food tourism but is little discussed (Adey, 2017). Under glocalisation and mobility, we are interested in the adaption delving into the daily life routine of an individual as a food producer and how the culture is produced. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how migrants introduce exotic cuisine while simultaneously representing the local food culture that appeals to tourists.

## METHODOLOGY

Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology was adopted in this study. This methodology helps to understand how people make sense of their experiences, offering strong complementarity and guidance for interpretive research aimed toward a deeper "understanding" and "meaning" in the world of tourism (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Kirillova, 2018; Neubauer et al., 2019).

Taitung was selected as the setting of this study. This county is mostly centred around agriculture and tourism, with the symbolic food associated with rice, bean and tofu. Enjoying the rich natural resources, Taitung has attracted approximately 4,500 migrants every year (Taitung County Government, 2021). Pie is more and more commonly offered by cafés and restaurants in Taitung. It is generally accepted as a representative exotic food of Taitung, which is recommended by Taitung Slow Food.

Seven participants (Appendix 1) were recruited through the tourism brochures "Handbook of visiting and eating in Taitung" with a purposive sampling strategy. The selection criteria included: (1) pie producers located in Taitung, and (2) migrated from urban to rural areas. In-depth interviews and participant observation were employed to collect data. Each interview lasted at least 60 minutes. The data were analysed through open and axial coding of key themes and the process was guided by both the phenomenological approach and the hermeneutic circle. To analyse the data, we began by immersing ourselves in the verbatim

transcripts, through reading and constantly reflecting to gain a deep understanding and finally reduced the influence of our preunderstanding. Method triangulation was achieved through a combination of interviews verbatim, field notes, and research reflections, complemented by participant observation, which facilitated prolonged engagement with the research participants.

## FINDINGS

We distinguish the glocalisation process into three main stages: (1) attraction, (2) integration, and (3) taking root locally. Attraction, which means how individuals know and are keen on the pie. Travel and consumption experience are two primary reasons individuals can get in touch with the pie in globalised cities. Pie, which consists of pie crust, vegetables and meat and custards, owns the flexibility and represents a modern symbol to reach differentiation compared with local traditional food.

**Integration**, which means combining exotic images (or globalisation) and local expression (localisation) within a food. The pie compositions of the seven participants varied considerably based on two mainly factors including material accessibility and personal preferences. Cafés and pies are the exotic and modern symbols in rural areas, as Carol and Fione said. Participants used locally sourced ingredients to present the local characteristic, including those from nearby farms, and food retailers, or those grown by themselves. As a result, the pie fillings varied with the changing seasons. Additionally, participants had flexibility in incorporating their personal preferences, expressions, and philosophies into their pie production. Amber insists on adopting the basic vegetable commonly planted in the locals to convey their lifestyle of them and Carol combines the ingredients popular in Taitung tribes and coastal lines.

**Taken root locally**, which means individuals well immerse themselves in new culture and their food become popular and representative. Participants have successfully developed their social networks by operating their cafés and pie production. Overall, Pie compositions express

individuals' understanding of the local place, acting as a bridge between producers and consumers and promoting local identity.

## DISCUSSION

### *Impacting factors glocalisation of on exotic food production side.*

Appendix 2 revealed that the pie composition was influenced by several factors from the globalisation and localisation forces, then reached a glocalised state. Previous research points out tourists are looking for cultural heterogeneity (Mak et al., 2012; Stalmirska, 2020). The pie producers, as once tourists either, enjoy convenient mobility and appear culturally heterogeneous characteristics. These individuals have been exposed to globalisation and cultural collisions in different stages of life, leading to the exploration of local ingredients in the creation of pies and realise the emerging food culture, such as Slow Food (de Souza Bispo, 2016; Gao & Zhou, 2021). As a result, the pies may reflect a combination of familiar exotic cuisine and local tastes, conveying the flavours of the region to tourists.

### *Impact on local tourism development.*

During the glocalisation process, the reinvention of food culture may happen through the creation of new culinary products (Everett, 2012; Kim & Ellis, 2015; Yang et al., 2019). With the development of tourism, Taitung attracts tourists and migrants who become catering business entrepreneurs and prefer to bring the cuisine with more familiarity (Stalmirska, 2020). At the same time, the local cuisine needs to be reinvented to cope with the tourists' expectations. Pies in Taitung act as new products bracketing both local symbols and modern symbols, and tend to be consumed by tourists and a small number of locals because of the cultural differences and higher prices. The reconstruction of local food interpretive processes that respond to social changes (Jackson, 2004; Stalmirska, 2020).

### *Expressing their life.*

Immersing in the participant's daily life can well reflect on their experiences and their interpretation of meaning (Neubauer et al., 2019).

Ingredients play a crucial role in expanding social networks and promoting clean, healthy, and symbolic cuisine to both residents and tourists. They also keep adapting the receipts and using more and more locally-produced agricultural products. Pie producers still have the flexibility to design cuisine that expresses their emotions, cultural understanding, and personal experiences, rather than solely catering to tourists' expectations. Overall, the merging of consumption and production, globalisation and localisation, reflects the role of individual agencies in the evolution of local food (Everett, 2012).

## CONCLUSION

Factors such as local culture, global culture, material accessibility, and personal preferences, lead to variations in the final product which not only can respond to the previous conceptual framework but also gain more detail from an individual perspective. Globalisation, localisation and agency affect the pie presentation in rural tourism. However, it should be noted that glocalisation is a long-term process, and its effects on local tourism development may still be on the tourist's level but not on the local level (Sidali et al., 2015). Future research may use a larger sample size to find another potential factor. It can enlarge the cuisine types like Vietnamese cuisine and Japanese cuisine and make the comparison.

**Keywords:** Glocalisation; food tourism; food producer; migrant; rural area

## REFERENCES

- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: Cultural dimensions of globalization* (Vol. 1). U of Minnesota Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- de Souza Bispo, M. (2016). Tourism as practice. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 61, 170-179.
- Ellis, A., Park, E., Kim, S., & Yeoman, I. (2018). What is food tourism? *Tourism Management*, 68, 250-263.
- Evans, G. (2017). Social class and the cultural turn: Anthropology, sociology and the post-industrial politics of 21st century Britain. *The sociological*

- review, 65(1\_suppl), 88-104.
- Everett, S. (2012). Production places or consumption spaces? The place-making agency of food tourism in Ireland and Scotland. *Tourism Geographies*, 14(4), 535-554.
- Featherstone, M. (2007). *Consumer culture and postmodernism*. Sage.
- Gao, H., & Zhou, S. (2021). Oriental Marco Polo Plaza Encounter: Choreographing Place and Placelessness from a Phenomenological Perspective. *Sustainability*, 13(11), 6159.
- Hopper, P. (2007). *Understanding cultural globalization*. Polity.
- Jackson, P. (2004). Local consumption cultures in a globalizing world. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 29(2), 165-178.
- Kim, S., & Ellis, A. (2015). Noodle production and consumption: From agriculture to food tourism in Japan. *Tourism Geographies*, 17(1), 151-167.
- Kirillova, K. (2018). Phenomenology for hospitality: theoretical premises and practical applications. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 30(11), 3326-3345.
- Mak, A. H., Lumbers, M., & Eves, A. (2012). Globalisation and food consumption in tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 39(1), 171-196.
- Neubauer, B. E., Witkop, C. T., & Varpio, L. (2019). How phenomenology can help us learn from the experiences of others. *Perspectives on medical education*, 8(2), 90-97.
- Ritzer, G. (2016). *The Blackwell companion to globalization*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Robertson, R. (1992). Globalization: Social theory and global culture. *Globalization*, 1-224.
- Williams, A. M., & Shaw, G. (2004). Tourism and tourism spaces. *Tourism and Tourism Spaces*, 1-328.
- Salvatore, R., Cocco, E., & Mines, A. F. (2021). Sustainable Tourism, Young Entrepreneurship, and Social Innovation in Peripheral Rural Areas: Case Studies from Southern Italy. In *The Impact of Tourist Activities on Low-Density Territories* (pp. 95-123). Springer.
- Sidali, K. L., Kastenholz, E., & Bianchi, R. (2015). Food tourism, niche markets and products in rural tourism: Combining the intimacy model and the experience economy as a rural development strategy. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 23(8-9), 1179-1197.
- Stalmirska, A. M. (2020). Cultural globalisation and food in urban destination marketing. *Tourism Geographies*, 1-19.
- Taitung County Government. (2022 ). *Discover Taitung*. <https://tour.taitung.gov.tw/zh-tw/discover/taitung-has-fun>
- Takahashi, Y., Kubota, H., Shigeto, S., Yoshida, T., & Yamagata, Y. (2021). Diverse values of urban-to-rural migration: A case study of Hokuto City, Japan. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 87, 292-299. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.09.013>
- Yang, L., Lai, B., & Xiao, H. (2019). The metaphor of sadness: Hakka's Bean Jelly as culture and consumption through tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 21(1), 102-120.

## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1. Profile of participants

Participant (Pseudonym)	Age (gender)	Type of business	Operation time	Migration time	Migrated from
Amber	30 (Female)	Café	8 years	8 years	Taipei, Taiwan
Blaze	28 (Female)	Café	3 years	6 years	Bordeaux, France
Carol	39 (Female)	Online & farm market	6 years	6 years	Taipei, Taiwan
David	38 (Male)	Café	5 years	10 years	Taipei, Taiwan
Elena	45 (Female)	Home made restaurant	More than 3 years	15years	Taipei, Taiwan
Fione	32 (Female)	Food truck	1 year	1 year	Keelung, Taiwan
Gina	25 (Female)	Café	4 months	1 year	Taipei, Taiwan

Appendix 2. Glocalisation influences factors on rural food production

