

Home making through food practices among migrant communities in southern europe and beyond

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Food-Related Well-Being in a Diaspora Situation

Eating practices entail a full spectrum of sensations and a wide range of perceptions through which people seem to experience well-being. When people are forced to migrate, they might change their habits and behaviour to adapt to the new environment. During this process, food gets at the centre of negotiation of meanings, memories and identity, and it plays a role in constructing a place and making a 'home'. The latter is central to regain normalcy in the face of destabilised conditions of life. By drawing upon 34 semi-structured interviews with Syrian refugees in Stuttgart, Germany, this article presents an in-depth investigation of the food-related well-being in a diaspora situation. Interview partners express a strong affinity to their past food-related life and a constant comparison between what they are used to and what is currently available to them in the new food environment. Moreover, food is not only an agentive tool for making sense of place, but it is also important for building new bridges with the host community and expressing social identities. The insights gained from this research are useful to design strategies to promote the well-being of refugees.

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Finding in food opportunities and constraints. Refugees and asylum seekers' everyday concerns and strategies looking for a "taste of home"

This contribution is driven from a research, conducted in Trento (Italy), which explored the housing and working trajectories of a group of male refugees and asylum seekers outside the national reception system. Conducted through ethnography and interviews, the study involved both people who, once outside the camp or while waiting to enter it, found – in a more or less stable manner - a job and a house, and people who found themselves in a homeless condition, thus accessing the low-threshold services delivered by the city. In their everyday routines, food - and the world of choices and practices around its access and consumption -, emerged as a privileged observatory to explore their unequal housing and working conditions, their representations of the local reception and welfare system and their relationships with these services and the broader local community. In particular, what emerged is how participants' food practices were intertwined with the working ones, characterised by everyday concerns that unveiled some limits of the reception and welfare system. At the same time, their narratives on food allowed to identify also the everyday strategies and tactics they undertook in order to overcome them. Together these elements incited a reflection on both the material and symbolic dimensions of their living conditions; these latter expressed for example in the feelings attached to their acquired, resignified or recovered eating practices and habits, which (not) enabled them to feel at home.