

Lagoonscapes: Future Views from Venice

Chiara Spadaro

Food archipelago: Towards a food policy proposal for the Venetian Lagoon

At the beginning of the 21st century food has become an urban policy issue, filling the gap that existed previously due to a lack of debate—both in academia and politics—on urban food planning. In Italy, the study of food systems' sustainable transition is an even more recent field of research and action—one that is finally finding space for interdisciplinary debate in the experience of the “Italian Network for Local Food Policies”.

The purpose of this paper is to present preliminary results from my PhD fieldwork, which investigates the possibility of creating a food policy for (and with) the Venetian Lagoon. In this microcosm that shows the urgent need to face global issues, a map of relationships between inhabitants—whether producers, consumers or other intersectional forms—and this hybrid, amphibious landscape takes shape.

Moreover, today Venice is a stage for a lively exchange in the field of Environmental Humanities: the fertile dialogue between the natural and social sciences and humanistic culture helps us to interpret complex human (and more-than-human)-environment relations.

This paper uses a qualitative approach, through oral history and ethnography, to investigate the role of these relations in protecting the future of this foodscape in connecting urban and rural spaces. Listening to the voices of fishermen and farmers, cooks and artisans, a collective perception of “the great derangement” – as Amitav Ghosh calls it – that the lagoon presents in the public eye emerges and invites us to take a stand.

Rita Vianello

Climate change in the Venetian Lagoon: Water warming and new food acculturation

The climate is changing and Venice will have to start taking this into account due to the expected rise in sea levels that will impact the Lagoon. A new system of dams has been built to protect the Venetian Lagoon from floods. The MOSE (*Modulo Sperimentale Elettromeccanico*) is an impressive hydraulic engineering project that aims to shelter the Lagoon from high tide. Scientists and engineers see sea level rise as an effect of global climate change, while local fishers attribute the phenomenon to human interventions in the environment. The local fishers do not associate the rising sea and lagoon water temperatures with the increased intensity of *acqua alta* events. They do see warming as a primary cause of the changing habits of fish and their reproductive cycles, the presence of new species and the disappearance or decrease of native ones. This new climate phenomenon also involves new forms of food acculturation inside local small-scale fishing communities and inside the restaurant and tourism sector in Venice.

It is a specifically contemporary narrative and relates to the consequences on the food dimension and not only to the wider dimension of safeguarding works against global climate change all over the world. As Scaramelli (2019) writes infrastructure and ecology are inseparable, rather than opposed.

My paper is based on an ethnographic approach that reconstructs and analyses the reactions and perceptions of fishers of the Venetian Lagoon regarding ecosystem fragility and the new relationship between fishers and fish and, consequently, the new distribution of food.