

EDWARDS, FERNE, ROOS GERRITSEN AND GRIT WESSER (eds) 2021. *Food, Senses and the City*. Routledge; Routledge Studies in Food, Society and the Environment. 250 p. ISBN: 9780367458232 (Hardcover), ISBN: 9781003025580 (E-book)

Approaches to food through, with, and about the senses have accumulated an array of dense and taste-full scholarship in the last decades, inspired by the profound work by Nadia Seremetakis (1993), David Sutton (2001; 2010), and Lisa Law (2001). This edited volume is in many ways a solid and rich addition to the existing research. The novelty that it brings to the table is its urban contextualisation of the wide range of sensorial food experiences. The volume draws attention to the need for more scholarship in the ‘food, city, and the senses’ nexus. It offers a geographically wide and sensory infused compilation of written and visual ethnographic descriptions and analysis.

The ethnographic material analysed in the volume is wired to the very current and ongoing changes in the relationships between food, the city, and the senses. The overarching theme weaving through the ethnographic descriptions conceptualises the food, city, and senses relationship as a scene for an imagination, possibility, and betterment of the perceived and lived spatiotemporalities. In addition, the volume aims to show that the division between city and country, nature and culture, and city within the city can become fuzzy and messy, just as the everyday sensory experiences of food. Navigating through such fuzziness helps position the volume theoretically between the wider phenomenological and cultural debate referring to ‘the sensory turn’ (Pink and Howes 2010) in the social sciences.

The chapters of the book are organised in three sections: ‘The city and its other’, ‘The past in the present: memory and food’, and ‘Disrupting and re-imagining’. Four sub-themes that are closely tied with the experiences of food and senses weave through the three parts of the book: commensality, conviviality, sociality, and memory. These themes have been employed separately and jointly in food research, as concisely discussed in the introduction chapter (Chapter 1). The book offers unique perspectives by linking the themes with the sensorial experience of food as a dynamic social process in urban settings.

In the first section, authors, except Roos Gerritsen (Chapter 5), turn to the imaginaries of city and countryside in the way these two are merging or have ‘traditionally’ been othered and seen as opposites. Ferne Edwards provides a sensory detailed contribution to the research of human and urban honeybee relations (Chapter 4). Edwards’ research invites the reader to reconsider the much-debated binaries of city/country, human/non-human, and consumption/production. Chapters by Carole Counihan (Chapter 3) and Vincent Walstra (Chapter 2) delve into the implications of embodied experiences, the relationships between body, self, and identity in connecting with soil and the exhausting/rewarding bodily work of urban gardening. The photo essay by Roos Gerritsen (Chapter 5) concludes the section by offering rich depictions of sensorial walks in the streets

of Chennai. While providing a fusion of sensorial experiences of the encompassing city and foody wonderings, Gerritsen contributes to the existing discussion on the implications of photography as a method in the research on food and senses. The four chapters of the first thematic section provide a ‘hands-on’, grounding journey into the methodological and theoretical approaches for threading along and within the food, city, and senses nexus.

The second part of the book engages in the discussion of how notions of home are made in time and space. The chapters in the section show that senses and sensorial experiences of food that are closely tied to memories are crucial in (re) creating a sense of home. Joel Hart and Daniel Monterescu follow the transnational foodways of *amba*—a tangy condiment known in Iraqi, Israeli, Palestinian, and Indian cuisines—and its symbolic role in creating a sense of belonging. The focus of this chapter is the contextualisation of condiments through strong and ambivalent sensorial perceptions and memories in three main fieldsites in Israel, the West Bank, and London. Grit Wesser explores the sensorily induced ways of home and belonging in a Thuringian village in Germany. The sense of *Heimat* (home, native region) is transferred through baking traditional Thuringian cakes. The sense of belonging to a place or home created in the sensorial perception of cakes intersects with notions of gendered foodwork and kin relations in Thuringian sociality. Shuhua Chen’s photography rich chapter (Chapter 8) re-connects the city and the rural areas of Shantou in Southern China through evocative multisensorial walks and immersions in urban markets. Rural migrants connect to home through a combination of sensorial experiences of familial foods and foodways in urban market settings. Diti Bhattacharya (Chapter 9) explores how individual and seemingly very different

(Dhaka and Kolkata) memories of Bengali dishes can be deconstructed to create a new shared sense of home and belonging on the Gold Coast of Australia. Premila van Ommen employs autoethnographic and participatory online research to decipher the placemaking experiences of British Nepalis focusing on food. Ommen explores how technologies facilitate ‘online sensorial circuits of opportunities’ (Ommen 2021:157) in experiencing conviviality, sense of belonging, and extension of place between online and physical worlds.

In the final section, the authors delve into themes and discussions that concern the future-oriented re-imagining of cities as places in which sensorial perceptions and experiences of food are constantly negotiated. In the case of Guadalajara, the second biggest city in Mexico, Melissa Biggs investigates how changes in the city have affected its inhabitants’ tastes and subsequently their experiences of food (Chapter 11). Aitzpea Leizaola follows the changes in the urban tastes and preferences of *pintxo*—a manifestation of commensality practice originating from Donostia, the capital city of Gipuzkoa in the Basque Autonomous Community. Leizaola’s focus is on the historically rooted pintxo preferences against the backdrop of the booming food tourism scene that Donostia has become (Chapter 13). Another take on food explorations is colourfully described in Monica Stroe’s research (Chapter 12). Drawing on the historically multi-layered and globally influenced intersecting foodways Stroe addresses taste-based class boundaries that are contested onsite in Obor Market, Bucharest, Romania. While building new sensorial experiences of food in the urban environments in Vietnam, changes in the sensorial perception of food in cities can also become tools for reconnecting countryside and city, as shown by Catherine Earl (Chapter

14). A different reconnection between city and country is made possible through what Saavedra, Gómez-Urrego, and Gómez-Urrego (Chapter 15) call 'politics of care' in the Andean canton of Cayambe, Ecuador. The food prepared by rural inhabitants manifests care through different stages of foodwork (preparation, transporting, and selling). Such foodwork, as everyday political manifestation, works towards shared food sovereignty for both rural and urban inhabitants by creating and sustaining care induced food practices.

The volume is a valuable contribution to the studies of food and senses in what is defined and currently redefined (also shown explicitly in the book) as urban contexts. The chosen thematic division of the book provides a consistent and fresh take on the current discussions and concepts within the food, senses, and city nexus. The chapters cover such important themes/concepts as conviviality, home, identity, mobility, gender, and many others that have been and continue to be discussed in food research. Methodologically one of the book's contributions is the geographical diversity of the urban contexts described in the chapters, moving the analysis beyond the axis of the biggest Euro-American cities. Thus, the volume significantly broadens the existing research and offers a multitude of layered approaches to combinations of food, senses, and city. Another diversifying and intersectional take of the volume is provided by the authors' approaches that challenge conceptual binaries, expand the spatiotemporal experiences of the urban environments, and empower the often invisible

and marginal actors/contexts in the interplay of food, senses, and city. As noted by the editors of the book, this diversifying approach can be seen as a much-needed step towards accepting scholarship and practices that have not been included in the hegemonic mainstream research. Thus, this volume can serve as a rich groundwork for more detailed and in-depth scholarship to follow.

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