

Lecture: The World on a Plate

Suggested Activity: Engaging your local foodscape

The lecture suggested that **'foodscapes'** – the places and spaces in which we eat or otherwise meaningfully engage with food – are an accessible exemplar of wider place dynamics. In particular, the lecture focused on the public foodscapes of restaurants and takeaways as an illustration of how our places are shaped by external connections. In this regard it emphasised both the activities of transnational food corporations (in the lecture labelled as processes of 'globalisation') and histories of migrations and other cultural flows between places (labelled as 'translocalisations').

For this class activity, engage the foodscape of a place known to you, either through direct experience (e.g. your local neighbourhood, town, or area, dependent on what best suits your school's / college's location) or through your studies. Using the 'restaurant' and 'takeout' filters on Google Maps, as well as Google Maps' 'street view' images function, student groups should:

- 1) **Catalogue the food outlets that seem to be the product of processes of 'globalisation' / the activities of transnational food corporations.** Produce a list of them and note the reason for assigning them to this category. Students might use Wikipedia to get outline information on the transnational corporations involved in these food outlets (e.g. for McDonald's or for KFC, the number of outlets globally and in the UK; the history of their presence in the UK). They could present back to the whole class what they have found out.
- 2) **Catalogue the food outlets that seem to be the product of processes of 'translocalisation' / histories of migration and cultural movements between places.** Produce a list of them and note the reason for assigning them to this category. Students should note the other, more distant places designated in the outlet's name or labelling of its cuisine (e.g. in national culinary identifications like 'Italian', 'Indian', 'Chinese', 'Mexican'; or in regional culinary identifications like 'Goan', 'Szechuan / Sichuan', etc.). Students might use google searches for journalism and information on topics like the 'history of [insert cuisine here; e.g. Indian] food in the UK'. They could present back to the whole class what they have found out.
- 3) **Through discussion, identify any food outlets where the categorisation between 1) and 2) seems complicated** or an outlet could fit both categories. So, for example, a Pizza Hut outlet would fit under category 1, but the presence of pizza and Italianised cuisines outside Italy might also relate to wider histories of Italian migrations and cultural movements.
- 4) **Through discussion, identify any food outlets in your place that don't seem to relate to processes of globalisation or translocalisation.** This might be because food outlets seem to be endogenously local, and not related to wider spatial connections. Students might use internet searches to investigate this (e.g. search 'history of fish and chips in the UK').
- 5) **Reflect as a class on what the foodscapes of local restaurants / takeaways might say about place more generally.** For instance: a) the making of places through exogenous processes and connections; b) the relationships between 'places near and far' and between 'places experienced and mediated' (e.g. might we understand a 'Chinese' restaurant in the UK as bringing a distant place to our local place, but mediated and represented in particular ways?).

This activity focuses on some specific aspects of foodscapes and their relationship to place. With more time, it could be undertaken for case study places both local and distant if such a comparison forms part of your A-level scheme. A placed based foodscape survey could also be extended to other curricular topics, such as food miles and alternative / sustainable food systems.

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