

Call for papers JAR/RGA

'Mountain and Food' special issue

Current dynamics and challenges in Europe's mountain regions

1. Context: rural and mountain areas omitted from analyses of the emerging issue of food

This call for papers arises out of the (re-)emergence of the food issue in North American and European urban contexts during the first two decades of the 21st century (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 2000; Steel, 2009; Morgan, 2009; Perrin & Souldard, 2014; Brand, 2015, etc.). Long neglected as a planning issue, food has returned to the territorial and urban agenda and is being pushed by urban movements and the issues raised by urbanisation (e.g. sustainable development, nature in the city, urban agriculture, alternative food channels etc.). The editorial article by K. Morgan (2009), which tells the first European exchanges on the topic at the first conference of the AESOP network's Sustainable Food Planning group in Almere, uses the term *urban food planning* to designate the emergence of a community of researchers and practitioners. The goal this community is to rethink the place of food systems in the mechanisms of production and organisation of spaces, particularly in the urban context or in connection with urbanisation processes. The challenge is to look at these spaces from a new perspective based on a fundamental structure that is too often taken for granted: the food system (Brand, 2015).

Until recently, the strong initial urban focus of this emerging field of research and action has sidelined rural and mountain areas, at least in the Global North (K. Morgan, 2014; Kevin Morgan & Sonnino, 2010; Rocha & Lessa, 2009).

At the same time, the many publications focused on food issues in mountain areas of the Global South mostly highlight the food insecurity of mountain populations in geographic contexts such as the Andes or the Himalayas (Romeo et al., 2015, see also the special issue of Mountain Research and Development, edited by Mathez-Stiefel et al., 2018). However, food issues are also urgent, multidimensional and problematic in rural and mountain regions of the Global North. This special issue calls for papers focusing on food issues in Europe's mountain regions (e.g. Alps, Apennines, Massif Central and the Pyrenees) and acknowledging: a) the specific forces and vulnerabilities of highly anthropised mountain regions, like most of the European ones, amid global and local challenges, as well as the crucial interconnection between spatial processes and food systems; and b) the many examples of innovative practices, initiatives and policies that are developing place-based solutions based on local resources to deal with contemporary food issues at the local level. A key question driving this call is: How do the broad challenges of food transition take shape in mountain areas?

With regard to food, the rural and mountain regions are mostly represented (both internally and externally) as spaces of production supplying urban areas, which discounts other relevant issues, such as local populations' consumption of and access to food. For example, Alpine valleys that are highly specialised in milk and cheese production often develop a "terroir-led food system planning" (Ilieva, 2012, p. 64) reduced to a strategy of prioritising quality farm products aimed more at the national or global agri-food or tourist market than local populations.

By contrast, debates often approach the mountain populations' eating habits from a historical and folkloric perspective that ignores contemporary challenges to sustainable, healthy and fair food. However, *foodscapes* of the rural and mountain regions (Vonthron et al., 2020) and the representations, expectations and practices of their inhabitants concerning their particular features (Delfosse, 2019, Vandenbroucke & Delfosse, 2019), as well as their vulnerability to the effects of ongoing large-scale processes like climate change and urbanisation, need to be explored. These territories face particular problems, including: the dispersion of housing; constrained mobility; the

rarefaction of the commercial offer and the effects of tourist specialisation on the local foodscape and its consequences in terms of food accessibility (Cholat & Daconto, 2017; Delfosse, 2019; Massal et al., 2019; Pettenati, 2020); the abandonment of agriculture in the most remote areas and the consequent degradation of soil and landscape (Mann, 2013); the management of biodiversity and its consequences on local food chains; the commodification of “typical products” and competition between diversified local consumption and the export of labelled products outside the territory; and the politicised processes of (re-)inventing local identities through food (Delfosse, 2011; Grasseni, 2017).

More broadly, the issues of food transition are also relevant for mountain territories: How are new ways of producing, processing, distributing, sourcing and eating invented? How do these new practices and representations contribute to sustainability, spatial justice, public health and social inclusion amongst others?

Finally, although modern planning processes have contributed to the urban alienating the rural in the sense that the “operational landscapes” of the rural or natural environment have enabled urban growth (Brenner, 2013), how can the mountain regions’ food spatialities help to reinvent rural–urban relationships? The geography of food production and supply networks in mountains is marked by a specific complexity made up of vertical (e.g. seasonal search for favourable conditions for the production of food resources with mountain pastures) and horizontal (e.g. exchanges of products with valleys and more distant territories) flows and relationships. In recent years, scientific and public debates have dealt with urban food systems and the policies that should manage them. Some of the questions that remain unanswered include: Do mountain and valley food systems exist as different from other territorial food systems? Which characteristics do they have? And how do they connect to the food flows, networks and processes shaped by urbanisation and industrialisation on a larger scale? Because of territorial transactions and reciprocity contemporary issues (Brand, 2017, 2018; Talandier, 2019; Vanier, 2005, 2015), we have to consider what is happening in rural and mountain areas.

2. Expected themes

This call for papers takes a dual perspective to deal with the food issues associated with mountain regions.

Firstly, it aims to **show the current dynamics** of food systems in mountain regions through the study of practices, representations, initiatives and policies.

Contributions might focus on:

- 1) Food *practices* dealing with the specific challenges, constraints and opportunities of mountain areas. Contributions focused on different stages of the food chain are encouraged: production and processing methods (including community practices such as gardening, small-scale farming, gleaning, picking etc.), supply (e.g. establishment of hybrid distribution sites, itinerant food businesses, informal supply practices etc.); consumption (e.g. tourism-related new consumption practices). Analysis of the innovative dimension of these practices, with regard to the stakes of food transition and sustainability in the territories will be welcomed. The analyses could also study the way in which the *foodscapes* of these territories mark the practices observed.
- 2) Food *representations* in relation to these practices and expectations and dealing with how the relationships between mountain places and food is represented and sometimes distorted by producers and consumers; the role of geographic origin labels as regulatory frameworks of such representations; the role of food in contributing to the social and cultural construction of mountains as geographic categories.

- 3) Food *initiatives and policies*, reflecting on how mountain local stakeholders take up the food issue as an object of transversal public policies and planning (answering to tourism-related, social and revitalisation issues, among others) or a stake for a renewal of the food democracy. Proposals may focus on public, private or associative/citizen initiatives, or on schemes developing projects that contribute to putting the food issue back into territorial projects. Proposals could also examine the impact of these systems on governance issues and dialogue between elected representatives, farmers, sector players, inhabitants and others in the territories.

Secondly, it wishes to **investigate these dynamics in the light of several specific topics** that we would like this special issue to cover:

- 1) The peculiarities of food culture in mountain regions. What role do the heritage-related aspects of food practices and representations play in food systems issues? Starting from the hypothesis that the mountain is not only a geomorphological condition but also, above all, a social, cultural and political construction (Debarbieux and Rudaz, 2010), what impact does the social construction of the mountain character of food products have through commercial and territorial marketing strategies? How are food practices re-aligned with the arrival of new populations (amenity and economic migrants) in these territories? What are the innovations that may result? Which new expectations are expressed? Which processes of transmission or reinvestment of specific food knowledge can be observed within local communities (seeds, harvests, hunting, recipes etc.)?
- 2) The interactions between sectoral agri-food processes and the local food stakes of mountain regions. For example, how do the CAP's (Common Agricultural Policy) rural development policies address food issues in mountain regions? What role do these regions play in transnational agri-food chains? And how does the specialised local agri-food sector co-exist with emergent demands in terms of having a diverse range of and quality food products?
- 3) The ecological challenges of preserving biodiversity in these territories and developing agroecological practices. The aim is to examine the possible links between the development of agro-ecological practices, biodiversity management or climate change adaptation practices and food issues, expectations and practices. What is the impact of these elements on the development of agro-ecological practices or issues related to biodiversity management? Can any connections be made? Do food-related issues drive the development of agricultural diversification practices or systems based on circularity at the farm or the territorial level?
- 4) Territorial food disparity and vulnerability. Are mountain populations more vulnerable to issues associated with food access and food-related socio-spatial exclusion? How might mountain communities and regions be more resilient in this field? What associative or territorial dynamics can be observed in these territories, and how do they work together to act on these issues?
- 5) New territorialities and territorial reciprocities produced by food systems and food networks. For example, analyses of the inter-territorial dimension of territorial food projects or policy can be developed. The aim is to examine the way in which food practices and representations reinterrogate the urban-rural and mountain-valley links in the dynamics of territorial transition.
- 6) Lastly, the role that rural and mountain regions have played in the recent COVID-19 health crisis could be documented, its impact on mountain regions food systems and the coping strategies developed by institutions and communities at the local level.

Critical perspectives on all these dynamics and topics are welcome and should highlight the possible socio-spatial inequalities that are at play and the possible dynamics of exclusion at work. Do these dynamics promote or participate in socio-environmental justice, poverty reduction, community

participation and food democracy? And do they signal a transition, or do they merely reproduce the dominant mechanisms?

3. References

- Brand, C. (2017). Le retour de l'alimentation à l'agenda des territoires. *Urbanisme*, 26–29.
- Brand, C. (2018). Modalités du retour des villes dans la gouvernance alimentaire. L'exemple de la région urbaine lyonnaise. *Urbanités*, 10, 1–11.
- Brenner, N. (Ed.). (2013). *Implosions/explosions. Towards a study of planetary urbanization*. Jovis.
- Cholat, F., Daconto, L. (2017), *Accès aux ressources alimentaires des aînés dans les Alpes*. In Actes du Colloque "La montagne. Territoire d'innovation", Les Carnets du LabEx Item. <https://labexitem.hypotheses.org/360>
- Delfosse, C. (2019). L'alimentation : un nouvel enjeu pour les espaces ruraux. *Information géographique*, 4 (Vol. 83), 34-54
- Delfosse, C. (2011). Heritage-making and the enhancement of so-called 'terroir' products: when rural meets urban. *Anthropology of food*, 8
- Debarbieux B. et Rudaz G. (2010), *Les faiseurs de montagne*. CNRS.
- Grasseni C. (2017). The Heritage arena. Reinventing cheese in the Italian Alps. Berghahn Books.
- Ilieva, R. T. (2012). Empowering local food connections for resilient city-regions: planning through foodsheds or terroir? *Territorio*, 60, 61–66.
- Mann, S. (Ed.). (2013). *The future of mountain agriculture*. Springer.
- Massal, C., Delfosse, C., Le Gall, J. (2019). Des nouveaux commerces alimentaires itinérants ? Répondre à la crise du commerce rural par le commerce itinérant, *Géocarrefour* [En ligne], 93/3
- Mathez-Stiefel S., Zimmermann A., Wymann von Dach S., Molden D. & Breu T. (2018) Focus Issue: Food security and sustainable development in mountains. *Mountain Research and Development*. 38(4). 277 <https://doi.org/10.1659/mrd.3804>
- Morgan, K. (2014). Nourishing the city: The rise of the urban food question in the Global North. *Urban Studies*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042098014534902>
- Morgan, Kevin, & Sonnino, R. (2010). The urban foodscape: world cities and the new food equation. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 3(2), 209–224.
- Pettenati G. (2020), Food desert di montagna?, *Dislivelli.eu*, 104, pp. 25-28.
- Perrin, C., Soulard, C.-T (2014). Vers une gouvernance alimentaire locale reliant ville et agriculture. Le cas de Perpignan. *Géocarrefour*, 89(1-2), 125–134.
- Rocha, C., & Lessa, I. (2009). Urban Governance for Food Security: The Alternative Food System in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. *International Planning Studies*, 14(4), 389–400. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563471003642787>
- Romeo, R., Vita, A., Testolin, R. & Hofer T. (Eds.). (2015) *Mapping the Vulnerability of Mountain Peoples to Food Insecurity*. FAO.
- Talandier, M. (2019). Métropoles et territoires : et si on parlait "réciprocité"? *Tendances*, 6, 10–12.
- Tornaghi, C. (2014). Critical geography of urban agriculture. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(4), 551–567. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132513512542>
- Vandenbroucke, P., Delfosse, C. (2019). Transitions alimentaires en rural : pratiques et représentations habitantes, *Bulletin de l'association de géographes français*, 96-4, 585-600.
- Vanier, M. (2005). La relation "ville/campagne" excédée par la périurbanisation. *Cahiers Français*, 328, 13–17.
- Vanier, M. (2015). *Demain les territoires : capitalisme réticulaire et espace politique* (Hermann).
- Vonthron, S., Perrin, C., Soulard, C.-T., 2020, Foodscape: A scoping review and a research agenda for food security-related studies, *PLoS ONE* 15(5): e0233218. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0233218>

Deadlines and instructions

The proposed articles must comply with the scientific aims of the journal, the principles of editing and the presentation guidelines. Instructions to the authors are available on the website and should be consulted.

Following the journal's rules, each contribution will be reviewed and evaluated anonymously by two experts.

Article proposals, around 1,000 words in length, should be sent in French (for French-speaking authors) or English (for authors of other languages) by **1 October 2021** to Caroline BRAND, cbrand@isara.fr, Giacomo PETTENATI, giacomo.pettenati@unito.it, and the editorial team: Olivier Vallade, olivier.vallade@msh-alpes.fr and Dominique Baud dominique.baud@univ-grenoble-alpes.fr

Final articles are expected by **15 May 2022**. Publication is scheduled for September 2022.

The article must be submitted in one of the languages of the journal: Alpine languages (i.e. French, Italian or German), Spanish or English. The author must commit to ensuring a translation into a second language after review (June 2022). One of the two versions must be in English. If the article is initially proposed in English, the translation must be in French.

Caroline BRAND, lecturer in geography
ISARA-Laboratoire d'Etudes Rurales (Lyon 2)

Giacomo PETTENATI, Assistant Professor of Economic and Political Geography
Università di Torino
Dipartimento di Culture, Politica e Società / Department of Cultures, Politics and Society