

Understanding the Role of “Rural Connections” and Identity in Local Food Consumption

Rajlakshmi Banerjee
Nottingham Trent University
Barry Quinn
Ulster University

Cite as:

Banerjee Rajlakshmi, Quinn Barry (2024), Understanding the Role of “Rural Connections” and Identity in Local Food Consumption. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 53rd, (119306)

Paper from the 53rd Annual EMAC Conference, Bucharest, Romania, May 28-31, 2024



Understanding the Role of “Rural Connections” and Identity in Local Food Consumption

Abstract

Local food consumption behaviour has tended to focus on location in quite binary rural-urban terms without capturing the individual's sense of rurality, in relation to place and identity. Using identity as a theoretical lens, this paper contributes to existing knowledge by showing how individuals' attitudes towards local food consumption are intertwined with constructions of their rural identity and reveals three key themes linked to rural identity formation. A qualitative methodology was adopted consisting of 25 semi-structured interviews with consumers in Northern Ireland. The semi-structured interviews sought to explore the experiences around local food consumption and individuals' stories around a sense of attachment with local produce. The study finds that rural identity is constructed through various connections to rural areas and farming, which derive from childhood experiences, family traditions, nostalgia, familiarity with place, people, other ethical and sustainability values and act to form social and self-identity. Additional contribution made towards the concept of embeddedness, proposing that such rural connections allow geographically distant consumers to feel socially and culturally embedded with food and place. Key words – Rural Connection, rural identity, place identity, local food consumption Identified Track- Consumer Behaviour

Subject Areas: *Attitude, Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making*

Track: Consumer Behaviour