Healthy Mediterranean food in local perspective: the case of the Slovenian coast

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ABSTRACT

Referring mostly to ethnographic examples and tourist materials from the Slovenian coast, the text explores several contextual frameworks within which the notion of 'healthy Mediterranean food' can be recognized. Observing the ethnography of coastal fishing and tourism in Slovenia, the author examines specific excursions taken by tourists with local fishermen in fishing boats. Attention is given to the representations of food in the context of excursions and in the context of tourist materials. Even though the reference point of certain examples can be either prevailingly local, national or transnational, the three reference points work together and find their unique expression in certain situations and ideas.

KEYWORDS: fishing, tourism, mediterranean food, authenticity, Slovenian coast

Introduction

Ethnographies that focus on foreshore regions are often characterized by an acute awareness that such areas are locations where various perceptions, persuasions and interests interact. Tom Selwyn and Jeremy Boissevain wrote: 'As places on the edges of inhabited territories, coasts are readily associated with invasion and defence (2004: 31).' As anthropology reports, the Mediterranean coastline is today somehow tired (ecological crisis - e.g. Kousis 2004), overloaded with historical burdens (political conflicts – e.g. Baskar 2002) and marked with two aspects of place – the material and the ideological (Boissevain and Selwyn 2004). It is also the site of advancing capitalist relations that have influenced coastal development and caused a series of social and cultural changes. Tourism development, as Tom Selwyn wrote, has played a significant role in the extension and deepening of capitalist relations of production on the coast (2004: 35).[1] Apart from introducing capitalist relations of production on the coast, tourism also introduced a 'parallel reality' – a kind of aesthetification of the landscape that is, following Selwyn, increasingly unrelated to the uses to which it is put (ibid: 57). Questions of aesthetification and of a 'parallel reality' that tourism introduced on the coast (and elsewhere) can be further contextualized

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with a broader theoretical debate about authenticity. Urry observed that tourist sites may be a subject of historical research but at the same time they are transformed into a kind of 'spectacle', one that would attract visitors (1990, 2001). Such double uses can lead to a misleading oversimplification of the conflict between authentic historical research and an inauthentic tourist spectacle. Such oversimplification has been discussed and criticized by many authors (e.g. Urry 1990, 2001; Selwyn 1996a; Macdonald 1997 and others). The following article contributes to this debate by pointing out local uses of authenticity, describing how locals themselves perceive, use and transform tourist representations and other external images which impinge upon them.

Apart from ethnography, tourist representations will be of special interest for this article. The analyses of selected tourist materials from the Slovenian foreshore will be discussed apart from the ethnography in a division entitled *Healthy sea food and good old fishermen as a part of Mediterranean tourist landscape.* In the analyses presented I will focus mostly on images of sea food and on images of fishermen. Furthermore, following theoretical accounts about authenticity, heritage and identity, the two parts, ethnography of local tourism and analyses of tourist-oriented representations, will be put in dialog.

Tourist representations have many faces and they reflect national issues, global trends, etc. They are understood through various topics, each contributing to the effect of a specific image. Shedding light on certain representations and their contexts can, in part, answer the question of why specific motifs are popular and what their messages are bound to. Tourist representations reveal a web of social relations, attitudes towards nature, aspirations, expectations, and the formation of new identities. Concrete tourist representations can be, following Urry, understood as the reifications of popular current issues.

> An array of tourist professionals develops attempting to reproduce ever-new objects of the tourist gaze. These objects are located in a complex and changing hierarchy. This depends upon the interplay between competition between interests involved in the prevision of such objects on the one hand, and changing class, gender, generational distinctions of taste within the potential population of visitors, on the other (1990: 3,4; 2001).

Such representations are neither unchangeable nor are they unidirectional. Although they give the illusion of stability and closeness, they are in fact, as far as their external appearance is concerned, very adaptable and readily dynamic. They are formed from the beginning through the processes of gazing on the one hand, and showing on the other. This formation is a living process in which imagery and concrete action are not only intertwined, but also mutually form, shape and react. Thus, it is important to understand tourist representations beyond the categories of real versus unreal, and to refer to them through the prism of their current interpretation. They reveal the value of the tourist experience, which is formed through the constant redefining of good and bad, suitable and unsuitable.

[1]Development has often been achieved through rapid, unplanned building with all the associated social, environmental and political consequences, known as *balearisation*, in reference to the Balearic Islands (Selwyn 2004; 2000).

Food, tourism and consumption are related in several ways. Representations of food in tourism discourse reflect, for example, a globalized economy, the aesthetification of the landscape, and several other issues. In relation to ethnographic material they also highlight some individual or local strategies in the face of those representations. One could say that food is one of the most fundamental yet heavily cultural factors of our existence. It can be a source of nutrition, yet it can also be a source of sociality, a way to define the social group, etc. Within tourism discourse the food is set primarily in the context of promotional and nationalist rhetoric.

Representations of food and representations of fishery in the selected tourist-aimed material from the Slovenian coast will be of special interest. I argue that both representations are attached to the realm of 'natural', 'authentic', and 'healthy'; they both lean on the Mediterranean cultural context and through establishing this connection they both introduce a 'parallel reality'. A healthy fish is the one that swam in the sea only a few hours ago and was caught by the local fishermen. Both local fishing and fresh wild fish are a kind of aesthetification of the landscape, which is increasingly unrelated to the uses to which it is put. For example, consider the representations of fishing in tourist brochures and postcards: small wooden boats and fishing nets are prevalent, even though this kind of technology is disappearing (e.g. Rogelja 2004). On the other hand, as a Slovene biologist said, the future of Mediterranean fishing is surely to be found in fish farms and not in traditional fishing (Zei 1999, private conversation).

Observing the ethnography of coastal fishing and tourism in Slovenia I will examine specific excursions taken by tourists with local fishermen in fishing boats. We will observe such topics as health, relaxation, and the authentic as elements of global cultural concern and will explore how fishermen from Izola take an active part in both the fashioning of these global topics which find their expression in local settings and at the same time in the collective enjoyment of these ideas. The attention will be put on the representations of the food in the context of excursions and in the context of tourist materials.

Geographic and political context of fieldwork area

The region of my fieldwork is the maritime zone of the Upper Adriatic, in the now-Slovenian coastal towns of Piran, Portorož, Izola and Koper. This coastal region is geographically part of the so-called Istrian Peninsula. The Istrian Peninsula is at present politically divided among three countries: Italy, Croatia, and Slovenia.

Before the end of WWII, the predominantly Italian-speaking population prevailed. After WWII, several traditional economic trades from the pre-1954 period started to disappear due to the vast emigration of Italian speaking inhabitants. These were mining, fishing, working at Piran's salt works, and other maritime professions. The reasons for the departure of the Italians varied, but were mostly political. The new government invested considerable effort into reviving some of the traditional trades that had disappeared from these towns together with the Italian language speakers. In 1951, for example, a school for maritime studies and fishing was established in Portorož. Some of today's fishermen learnt about the sea and the fish not from their families, but in this school. The number of fishermen increased again (from 1951 to 1962, 212 persons fin-

ished the program of fishing and maritime studies). In the case of Piran in 1953, the RIBIČ 'Fisherman' Company was established. It went bankrupt in 1959 and its property was transferred to the RIBA 'Fish' Company from the neighbouring town of Izola. On top of this, the program of maritime studies and fishing was cancelled and fishing again plunged into stagnation. In the 1980s, however, the number of fishermen increased.

After 1991, new problems arose for the fishermen. With the establishment of the new state border between Slovenia and Croatia, the situation changed. The principal change for fishermen is the new maritime state border and the transferral of the administrative centre and political power to the new capital city – Ljubljana. Fishermen from Slovenia also lost some resources in the now-Croatian waters, where they had used to fish, and had to adapt their strategies in various ways. One of these, which I am particularly interested in, is the strategy of connecting fishing with tourism.

More recently, in 2002, new problems arose due to the harmonisation with EU legislation, on the one hand, and conflicts between Croatia and Slovenia about the sea border, on the other. The conflict about the sea border complicates problems for fishermen. On one hand, the unsolved political problem between the two states makes it difficult for the fishermen to do their daily work and, on the other hand, the media discourse uses the fishermen in the sense of assigning them the role of 'front men' in the conflict. Headlines such as *'Fishermen - fighters for the Slovenian southern border'* or *'Croatia - Slovenia fishing conflicts'*, appearing in the Slovenian media, actually try to involve the fishermen in the political conflict and use them for purely political interests. To what extent the fishermen alone are becoming involved personally in this conflict is a subject for further research.

Fishermen[2] as tourist workers

According to the data of Občina Koper–sekretariat za finance in gospodarstvo (Municipality of Koper–public sector for finance and economy) dated 23rd April 1997, there were 74 fishermen involved in fishing as their primary occupation and 107 fishermen involved in fishing as their secondary occupation on the coastal strip between Piran and Ankaran. The closure of fishing territory and the prohibition of fishing with dragnets during the late spring and summer period in the beginning of the 1990s meant a dead season for fishermen using this kind of fishing technology. Additionally, during the dead season, the state of Slovenia did not support fishermen by paying their health insurance

[2]Talking about fishermen as a unified field of reference demands certain considerations. To mention just some of them: the field of self-attribution; the analysis of the ethnographic evidence of the area researched; the popular uses of the word fisherman; the lexicographic uses of the word fisherman; the analysis of the use in the media discourse; and the analysis of the use of the word fisherman in Slovene ethnological production. The article presented does not discuss these reflections in details. The word fisherman is used here for the people that are officially involved in fishing as their primary or additional occupation. Detailed references are included in the introductory parts of my doctoral dissertation (see Rogelja 2005).

in that period[3] and, since 1991, laws relating to fishing are in the jurisdiction of the Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry and Food in Ljubljana.

Fig. 1 Map of the area

Fishermen who, mostly in the summer, combine fishing and tourism also engage in passenger transportation. In the area between Ankaran and Piran, there are sixteen boats that combine fishing and tourism[4]. In this combined business, registered and unregistered individual fishermen are involved as well as the company RIBA. In addition to the fishermen already combining fishing with tourism, others were discussing the possibility.

Along with the arguments about the establishment of the new state border which caused the combined activity, other explanations were also cited. These included: 'the demand and interest on behalf of clients; a new service on the market; the lack of territory for the existing number of fishermen along the present Slovenian coast; and the over-fished Slovenian sea'[5]. Consequently, the attractiveness of their offer is described as bringing something new to the existing market by connecting the fishing world with

[3] In the meantime this has changed. Fishing with dragnets during spring and summer is now possible if the fishermen obtain permission.
[4] Numbers refer to author's ethnographic evidence.
[5] From author's ethnographic evidence.

the tourist market, by offering healthy fresh food to visitors and at the same time allowing fishermen the opportunity to maintain their close relationship with the sea.

Although it seems that the only or primary reason for fishermen to be involved in the tourist business was the new political situation after 1991, the fishermen identified other meaningful reasons. They can be related to ecological, political, and tourist discourses. For the purposes of this article, I will divide them into three categories: the fishermen's own interests, visitors' interests, and ecological considerations. In the first case, primary stress is given to higher income, diversified work during the summer and winter periods, livelier work in general and finally the ability to remain connected to the sea. The visitors' interests involve, above all, relaxation, entertainment, healthy food and air, the possibility of fishing with fishermen, education, the sea, and authentic experiences. Finally, in the ecological arena, such a connection is said to benefit the large numbers of fishermen working a small, polluted, and over-fished sea. Although these factors are interconnected, I speculate that the visitors' interests are closely related to the tourist discourse, while the economic and ecological reasons are closely related to political and environmental protection factors. I will focus on the first and second issues–visitors' interests and the role of fishermen–and will discuss both in relation to tourist discourse. By examining ethnographic examples and tourist discourse I will explore several contextual frameworks within which the notion of 'healthy Mediterranean food' can be recognized in the case presented.

Custodians of local or national food culture?

One of the explanations for why this connection comes about in the first place is the aforementioned interest of visitors. In this context we could ask: what societal questions and expectations are the fishermen confronted with; to what degree do the fishermen enter into this 'debate', and finally, what attempts do they make to respond? In connection with panoramic excursions, the most highlighted aspect–meant to be crucial in attracting visitors–was amusement and relaxation. In the opinion of some of my interviewees, the 'amusement on the boat' was different and much better than the 'amusement on the land'. The visitors' reactions described by fishermen are as follows:

> … they become very talkative, they lighten up, they relax, they sing, they take off the tie, sometimes there is a bit of adrenaline because of a wave and afterwards even greater enjoyment, they enjoy the sea and nature….[6]

Apart from the ambience, the other attractive aspects which were emphasized also include: the fact that they are with 'real' fishermen; that a lot of the fishing equipment stays on the boat during the summer and is shown to people; and finally, the fact that very fresh fish, considered a healthy food, is available. Often, fishermen stress that the fish they offer swam in the sea only a few hours ago. It is assumed that visitors could not get hold of such fresh fish as the fishermen can provide them with.

[6] From author's ethnographic evidence.

In the context of excursions, fishermen do not present themselves only in the role of fishing for food. Fishermen are also in charge of cooking and preparing food, thus taking part in a local heritage model concerning the 'authentic' cooking (and preparation) of sea food as well as the 'authentic' mode of consuming the sea food. During the excursions fishermen are showing their visitors proper techniques for eating sardines. The fish must be consumed whole, including the bones. They often make jokes about continental people (referring to the area of Ljubljana) eating only 'the soft' parts. As Bojan Baskar observed, the dichotomy between the soft and the hard is part of a general disregard for people from Ljubljana present nowadays in the Slovenian coastal region (2002:49).

The other technique that fishermen stress is using hands to eat the fish instead of forks. The frame of reference is again to be found in the dichotomy between robustness and fineness, or one could say between hard and soft or even between the healthy and sickly. In Alain Corbin's view, the dichotomy between the healthy fishermen (or rural people in general) and sickly urban people has its own historical roots. According to Corbin, around 1750, cure-takers began rushing towards the sea-shore in order to combat melancholy and spleen. He furthermore observed how, for the 18th century elite, the sea was expected to cure the evils of urban civilization and correct the ill effects of easy living (1994: 54-73). In this context the therapeutic necessity was closely attached to the medical discourse of the 18th century, which in many cases, as Corbin observes, became the reflection of a hymn to the longevity of hard-working fishermen, sailors and Nordic people (ibid:61).

The cultural frame in which the fishermen recognize and promote such 'authentic' techniques of fish eating are attached either to the local region – *Primorje* – or more broadly, to the Mediterranean area. Fishermen, for example, explain to the visitors how we *Primorci (*people from *Primorje*) or we *Mediterranean* people eat. The contrast between the *Primorci* is not made through the comparison between Slovenes and other nations but it is made within the national framework – between (*Slovene) Primorci* and *(Slovene) Kontinentalci*.

In most of the excursions in which I participated, the visitors were rural inhabitants from various parts of Slovenia. Fishermen as well as visitors both locate the 'centre' within the region of the Ljubljana valley (Ljubljana being the capital city of Slovenia). Their class identity is perceived as a similar one and even the work of the fishermen is compared to agro-tourism. Visitors such as peasant women and miners have stressed, for example, the equality between their work and fishermen's work. The topic of difficult, hard physical work that supposedly characterizes both professions has appeared many times in conversations with visitors. Some visitors made connections also between the 'home-made', 'natural' food offered on fishing boats and the food they offer to their visitors on their tourist farms back home.

The interest of visitors is focused around two central points, the first and most important being the mental and physical relaxation afforded by the sea environment and the healthy fresh food. The second is about 'getting to know our culture, people, and land', which can be related to the nationalist discourse, even though it has its own constraints, in this case, that one cannot observe the relationship between urban tourists and

rural landscapes. In the article entitled *Atmospheric Notes from the Fields: Reflections on Myth-collecting Tour*s, Tom Selwyn explores several features of walking tours in the Israeli countryside, and reflects on the National Trust Institution in contemporary Britain. He stresses that for an urban tourist, rural manor houses appear as representative of the authentic and powerful heart of the national heritage and are attractive because the symbolism surrounding them offers answers to fundamental questions about 'where we come from, where we are and where we are going' (Selwyn 1996b: 148). In the case of the periphery - periphery relationship, however, it seems as if the first question about 'where we come from' is left out. Hosts and guests are, from this perspective, somehow more related and equal.

The relation towards healthy domestic food, represented in tourist discourse, shows, in the cases of both fishermen and peasant women, how people can be aware of the external images that exist of them, how they can co-operate with them, enjoy them, transform them and use these representations in a pragmatic way. Fishermen, for example, stressed many times how their occupation is important due to the fact that it contributes to tourism on the coast. They provide local restaurants with fresh wild fish and as one of them said:

> If small scale fishing disappears, there will be nothing left for the tourist to gaze upon. They want to see fishing boats, they want to smell nets, and to eat the fish that I catch. The Italians know exactly the difference between the fresh healthy fish and the one that is filled with antibiotics[7].

It was often stressed by the fishermen that they eat sea food several times a week, while *Continental* people very rarely eat sea food. As a consequence, the latter could not tell the difference between the good and the bad fish. The good fish is, in the fishermen's perspective, the fish that was caught and not raised in a fish farm. In this context the implementation of fishing farms is seen by the fishermen as non-ecological, as an activity that produces unhealthy food and is performed by the people whose only interest is the calculation of profit.

Healthy sea food and good old fishermen as a part of the Mediterranean tourist landscape

A specific form of the relationship between fishing, food and tourism can be noticed in the tourist information (fig.2). The selected material[8] is not directly related to commercial advertising material (such as in the case of travel agency and hotel advertisements) but must be seen either as a wish to present truly 'informative information' or as an independent author's work made for tourist purposes. Following Selwyn, one can identify at least three settings highlighted within the anthropological debate concerning tourist myths and tourist representations. These are the relationship between centers and peripheries; the nature of consumerism and commoditization within tourism; and the notion of the

[7] From author's ethnographic evidence.

authentic (1996a: 31). Several anthropologists have discussed tourist photography and tourist brochures as myths whose ideological function is to transform images of a certain destination into ideological texts for tourists (Uzzell 1984; Dann 1996) and have highlighted the importance of anthropological research upon tourist representations. As Dann wrote, understanding tourism is, above all else, an analysis of images (1996). *Tourism and Photography: Still Images – Changing Lives*, edited by Mike Robinson and David Picard, gives special attention to the relationship between tourism and photography. The authors of this volume highlight the importance of the relationship between photography and tourism by discussing photos taken by tourists themselves as well as photos in tourist brochures. They pose questions such as: Why do tourists take photos of certain things and not of others? Why do they take photos at all? How do photos build places, how do they change places and shape lives? How are photos used to define people and territories? How do locals negotiate photographic images of themselves? (2004). The last question will be, above all, of special importance to our debate.

Representations of fishing and representations of food in the selected tourist brochures and postcards take up approximately 10% - 20 % of all the (visual and textual) information presented[9]. Visualisation of fishing focuses on three main fields: the representation of boats needed for fishing; the representation of fishing equipment, and finally, the representation of people (mostly male) involved in fishing or activities connected with fishing (e.g. cleaning nets). In the set of selected material, we find 13 photographs of fishing boats, of which 10 show older wooden boats equipped for fishing with ordinary nets. Only three show boats equipped with dragnets. Among the fishing equipment shown, there are mostly nets, either shown as the main motifs and set in the foreground, as a decoration, or set in the context of their use (cleaning or fishing). The third type of visual representations of fishing shows male persons who are involved in different ways in the fishing economy. Most of them show the males in the centre of the photograph, their work is placed at the centre of interest and interestingly, more than half of these photographs show elderly males. Smaller wooden boats, fishing nets and elderly persons leave an impression of the times gone by, an impression which, in my opinion, also carries a nostal-

[8]Selected tourist brochures and postcards were available in tourist offices and bookshops on the Slovenian coast in the period 1998-2000:
tourist brochures: ***Izola — fotovodnik*** 1995. Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko. Ljubljana; ***Koper-fotovodnik*** 1995. Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko. Ljubljana; ***Piran-fotovodnik*** 1994. Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko. Ljubljana; Simčič Sime 1996. ***Piran.*** Ljubljana: Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko; Simčič Sime 1996. ***Izola.*** Ljubljana: Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko; Simčič Sime 1996. ***Koper***. Ljubljana: Inštitut za komunikacije in informatiko; ***Mediteran na vašem pragu-Izola*** 1998. Izola: Turistično informativni center; ***Mediteranska Slovenija*** 1999. Ljubljana: Slovenska turistična zveza; ***Izola — Isola*** 1999. Izola: Turistično gospodarsko združenje. ***Mediterranean Slovenia,*** STB 2002.
Postcards: ***Slovenska riviera na 14 razglednicah***. http://www.si21.com/sisart/razglednice.html (May 1, 2001); ***Razglednice slovenske obale*** published by Sidarta and selected postcards of publishing houses Sisart, Confidia, Jugovic&Nevecny.
[9]Numbers are given for general orientation. One must nevertheless bear in mind that the analysis here presented is strictly qualitative.

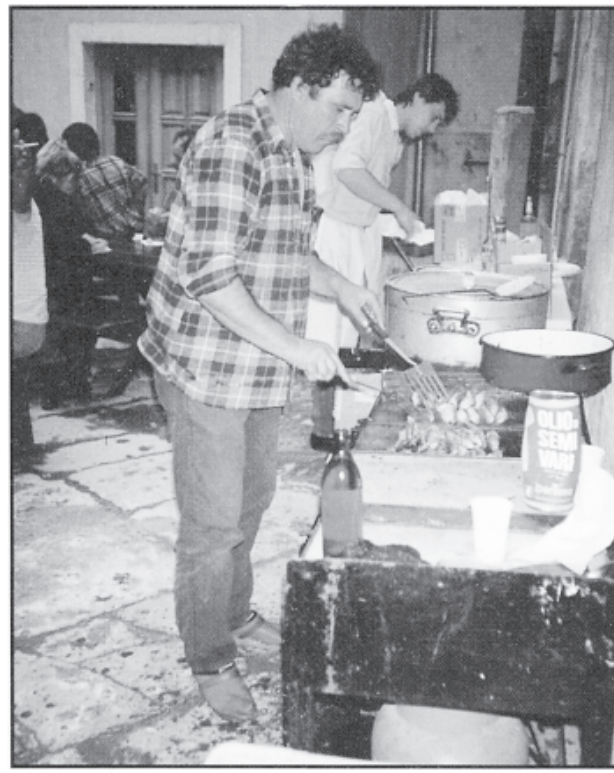
gic flavor (sepia-colored photographs, the silhouette of a fishing boat at sunset…). The common denominator of these images is the concept of good old times, which in its turn contains ideas of rural life, health, honesty, and originality.

Fig. 2: From a Tourist Brochure Izola - Mediteran na vašem pragu (Izola-Mediterranean on yourdoorstep)

Representations of food in the selected material are focused on several main products, among them olives, figs, prosciutto, sea food and wine (Refosco and Malvasier). In the selected material several other products are also frequently mentioned, but the products listed above stand out from the material as they are presented in the photographs as well as the text. Many times sea food is presented on the same page as photographs of fishermen and smaller fishing boats. In other cases both motifs – sea food and fishermen - are presented within the same image (for example fishermen preparing sea food for the Fishermen's Holiday or as assemblage of the photos is given - see fig. 3). There are four ideologically invested promotional mottos that contextualize the representations of food - natural, healthy, Mediterranean and multicultural. As it is written in one of the brochures:

> On the coast itself, one must not overlook the marvelous repertoire of sea and shell fish and the wonderful orchestration which underlies all of the cooking from the region: healthy and natural. And we can even boast that ours is a multicultural cuisine, Alp-Adriatic, Roman-Slavic... (from *Mediterranean Slovenia* STB 2002).

Promotional material provided by fishermen involved in charter boat or related tourist activities shows some parallels with tourist brochures. They both promote fishing and sea food together, the latter being the more important part of the offer. Many times, photos of fishermen preparing sea food (see fig. 4) or photographs of seafood picnics are included in such pamphlets.



Ribiški praznik - Festa dei pescatori
Feiertag der Fischer - Fishermen`s Holiday

Fig. 3: From a Tourist Brochure 'Izola fotovodnik' 1995

Seaside tourists are generally advised by tourist brochures to appreciate the connection with the sea and its 'healing and spiritual powers'. Much more than just a sea in which we can swim and have fun, we are introduced to a sea which we can admire and be healed by, through which we come into contact with nature, wilderness, and even the eternal. One could say that the combined representations of fishermen, sea food and the sea satisfy both physical and emotional senses by linking the ideas of 'nature' 'authenticity' and 'health'[10].

If the context of the sea can be described in words of romanticized wilderness and healing effects, we need to understand the context of the Mediterranean also within a wider political and cultural framework. The titles of the brochures such as *Mediterranean in Slovenia* and *Izola - Mediterranean on your doorstep* tend to display the 'Medi-

[10]The promotional motto of multiculturalism has its own historical and contemporary contexts which will not be discussed in this article.

Fig. 4: From the Promotional Material of the Fishing Boat Zlatoperka (source: http://www.zlatoperka.com)

terranean-ness' of the region. Not only in the titles, the adjective Mediterranean is used over and over again in the text: Mediterranean food, Mediterranean climate … It is possible to understand the emphasis on the 'Mediterranean-ness' of the region from several perspectives: the flirtation with imaginary concept(s) of the Mediterranean; the important cultural-historical area of the Mediterranean; a place where the so-called western civilization originates, and as a previously established tourist region.

Healthy and authentic

As Cohen, Selwyn and others pointed out, the discussion concerning authenticity must be contextualized with the discussion of commodification and consumerism (Selwyn 1996a; Cohen 1988). The opening theme in *Empty Meeting Grounds* by Dean MacCannell is that cultures have been displaced and altered by the movements of people (1992: 3). One of the consequences of this phenomenon has been the process of hybridization of culture.

Cultures have been consumed by 'others' (tourists who were in search of a lost whole) in a context where aggressive attempts strove to universalize the exchange value to the exclusion of all other values (MacCannell 1992: 169). Ethnicity and authenticity are thus stripped of their use-value and have come to have an exchange-value (ibid.).

By examining Sharon Macdonald's ethnography presented in *A People's Story: Heritage, Identity and Authenticity*, I will further explore the 'process of commodification of culture' – one that suggests turning culture into something that can be bought and sold. The ethnography presented by Macdonald is an interesting example because it challenges the so-called process of commodification of culture with local people's awareness of tourist representations of themselves. Macdonald reports on the process of creating a heritage centre in the Scottish Hebrides. In her opinion, a heritage centre is a purpose-built representation and as such, a useful site in which to explore questions about local identity and the performance of culture for tourism (1997: 155). Macdonald argues that the heritage centre in Skye certainly involves some of the processes implicated in the 'inauthenticating' of culture. For example, it represents itself in what has become a standardized and indeed transnational format: the heritage model. At the same time, these transnational symbolic resources have their own local specifics and uses, such as a discussion about the suitability and unsuitability of certain kinds of stories among people in the heritage centre, etc. As Macdonald reports, the makers of Aros were emphatic that the centre is not just intended for tourists. They put much of 'their story' and 'their perspective of their unique history' into Aros. Using heritage to counter alternative heritage accounts is, as Macdonald said, one feature of Aros (1997: 161). She concluded:

> To see local people as merely the passive recipients of an external world which impinges upon them is rather like the conceit of tourists who assign local people only the role of object to the tourist gaze (1997: 175).

Sharon Macdonald's example clearly shows how people can be aware of the external images that exist of them, how they can co-operate with them, transform them and use these representations in a pragmatic way. It also stresses the collapse of boundaries and reopens the question of what or who is authentic.

As Selwyn observed, the collapse of the boundaries between cultural spheres such as high and popular culture, history and heritage, scientific and popular narrative, tourism and education is one of the central characteristics of post-modernism (1996a: passim). Let us observe now one of those slippery boundaries, the one between the history and heritage of food. As Urry observed, tourist sites (as well as the objects of tourist representations such as the food) may be a subject of historical research but at the same time they are transformed in a kind of 'spectacle', one that would attract visitors. Misleading oversimplification of the tension between authentic historical research and an inauthentic tourist spectacle has been discussed and criticized by many authors (e.g. Urry 1990, 2001; Selwyn 1996a; Macdonald 1997 and others). Even though many representations of culture and history in tourist materials involve translating the local into categories with more global semantic reach (see Macdonald 1997), one can observe that there is no such thing as a correct and authentic reconstruction of culture or history. What has been observed and described as 'authentic', 'typical' regional cuisine may be far from the

everyday uses or vice versa – what stands for the 'authentic' local cuisine in tourist brochures may become, due to the collective enjoyment of tourist representations, a 'typical' menu of the local people.

The notion of the healthy Mediterranean diet and of the 'authentic' ingredients that form a 'real' Mediterranean cuisine has its own history. As Bojan Baskar and Meta Krese observed, the expression *Mediterranean diet* was first used in 1975 by the physiologist Ancel Keys. According to Baskar and Krese, Keys observed the relationship between the eating customs and heart disease. He used statistical data on low mortality rates due to heart diseases in the Mediterranean region and he furthermore concluded that the use of olive oil is of great importance (1993: 70). Compared to the statistics from the USA, the use of the olive oil is much more frequent in the Mediterranean than it is in the USA, but there are, however, significant differences between Mediterranean countries as well. The missing part of such a theory is, as Baskar and Krese observed, the contestable homogeneity of the Mediterranean food and changes in historical perspective. They highlighted the example of olive oil. In the 19th and 20th centuries, olive oil became identified with Provançal cuisine, but in the 14th and 15th centuries it was used only rarely – mostly for eggs, fish and beans. As Baskar and Krese reported, other foods were prepared most often with lard (ibid: 71).

Apart from historical examples and the statistical analysis of nutritionists, which has its strong points as well as limitations, there is one further stereotype that has contributed to Mediterranean food being perceived as healthy food. As Baskar and Krese observed, the moral context in which the simple food is perceived as a guarantee for the healthy soul and body is of special importance. The fact is that the celebrated simplicity can be easily recognized in Mediterranean food which has developed in an economically poor soils environment (ibid:76).

Conclusion

The study of food is not only an end in itself. Food can serve as a prism within which to discuss nationalism, social concerns, ethics, environmental problems etc. In the ethnography presented I focused in particular on local expressions of food representations and on the connection between representations of fishing and representations of sea food within tourism discourse.

What matters most for our discussion is the fact that exploring and enjoying the representations of food is done not just by tourists themselves but is also practised by the 'locals', those who are represented (on postcards), and whose 'traditional' food is split into the material and the ideological. Observing the interconnectedness between the symbolic and the material I argue that this relationship is a constantly forming and mutually dependent relationship.

On the level of content, the representations of food and their local expressions and uses reveal several further issues, among them regional conflicts, wars, the births of nation states, transitional and transformational processes in Europe, and the growth of a capitalist relationship between production and consumption in coastal areas. All these events have contributed to the specific discourse that has marked this geographic area. In

the case presented there are several contextual frameworks within which the notion of 'healthy Mediterranean food' can be recognized. Fishermen can use it to distinguish themselves from the *Kontinental* people. Furthermore, representations of food reflect on different uses of the Mediterranean context. While fishermen are using the 'Mediterranean-ness'to distinguish themselves from the *Kontinental* people, it seems that in tourist materials the context of Mediterranean has other political-ideological connotations. One of these could be the tendency to detach Slovenia from the Balkans and move closer towards the Mediterranean and so-called Western Europe.

The other characteristic of the case presented is attached to ecological and economic concerns. Global systems of distribution and the fostering of global fashions and patterns of consumption have all influenced representations of food, the production of food, and the environment. Paradoxically, the representations of food in tourist material promote 'healthy' and 'natural' food while industrial food production moves in the opposite direction. Supporting monocultures (or fish farms), the agricultural industry is forced to use pesticides (or antibiotics) and as a result the food becomes far from 'healthy'. Observing the ethnography of coastal fishing and tourism in Slovenia I explored how fishermen take an active part in both the fashioning of these global topics which found their expression in local settings and at the same time in the collective enjoyment of these ideas. By enjoying the idea of healthy sea food, presented in tourist materials, they took an active part in promoting it and even realizing it. For example they contrasted healthy sea food with the food produced on fish farms and in a way established a local alternative development model, one that prefers quality instead of quantity.

Examining the context of the Mediterranean, authenticity and health in which Mediterranean food was recognized in ethnography and tourist discourse, one can observe that the ethnographic examples presented may partly be read also as a critique or an alternative viewpoint on consumerism (and nationalism). One of the lessons that stems from the ethnographic case presented is that the so-called sustainable development models should incorporate quality of life (instead of being focused on qualitative impacts and giving preference only to economic security), taking into consideration all these 'hidden' criteria that are difficult to measure. Why fishermen persist in fishing and why they criticize fish farms can not be measured (only) in economic terms. As van Ginkel wrote, the relation of fishermen to fishing is both expressive and existential (2001:189).

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POVZETEK

Pričujoči tekst se nanaša na etnografske primere iz Slovenske obale in podaja vpogled v različne kontekste, v okviru katerih je moč prepoznati predstave o ‘zdravi mediteranski prehrani’. Na podlagi etnografije priobalnega ribištva in turizma v Sloveniji bo avtorica analizirala turistične izlete na ribiških barkah. Pozornost bo posvečena reprezentacijam hrane, kot se te kažejo v okviru omenjenih turističnih izletov z ribiči ter reprezentacijam hrane v turističnih brošurah, vezanih na Slovensko obalo. Čeprav so referenčne točke posameznih primerov bodisi prevladujoče lokalne, nacionalne ali transnacionalne narave, pa trije referenčni okvirji skupaj oblikujejo samosvoje izraze, ki se kažejo v konkretnih situacijah in idejah.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: ribištvo, turizem, mediteranska prehrana, avtentičnost, Slovenska obala