

De-commoditisation of Food: How Organic Farmers from the Madrid Region Reconnect Products and Places through Web Marketing

Salvatore Pinna

Abstract—The growth of organic farming practices in the last few decades is continuing to stimulate the international debate about this alternative food market. As a part of a PhD project research about embeddedness in Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), this paper focuses on the promotional aspects of organic farms websites from the Madrid region. As a theoretical tool, some knowledge categories drawn on the geographic studies literature are used to classify the many ideas expressed in the web pages. By analysing texts and pictures of 30 websites, the study aims to question how and to what extent actors from organic world communicate to the potential customers their personal beliefs about farming practices, products qualities, and ecological and social benefits. Moreover, the paper raises the question of whether organic farming laws and regulations lack of completeness about the social and cultural aspects of food.

Keywords—Alternative food networks, de-commoditisation, organic farming, Madrid, reconnection of food.

I. INTRODUCTION

IN the vast research literature about Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), special attention has been paid to the attempt of reconnection between food and place and de-commoditisation of food through its cultural function [1]–[5]. In the globalised and capitalist world, socio-economic phenomena that were unknown before industrialisation have appeared and changed the rural spaces and the social relations existing within food chains and networks [3]. In this paper, food fetishisation and commoditisation are considered. In the former, the exchange for money conceals the real value of an object - deriving, for example, from the externalised labour behind its production [6]. Therefore, the customer perceives the value of a product as if it were an objective characteristic; social interactions in the exchange process are perceived as economic interactions between money and goods. Moreover, a consequence of fetishism is that customers do not pay attention anymore to what producers are interested in [6]. Similarly, commoditisation consists in what [3] call “opacity between the upper and lower parts of the chains”, the cloud of certain pieces of information which produces the conviction that the value is an implicit characteristic of the products, instead of a result from social relations [7]. Fetishisation generates, then, the perception of an implicit value of products which implies a role reversal of social relation and economy

S. Pinna is a 3rd-year PhD Student at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Architecture of the University of Cagliari, Italy (e-mail: pinna.salvatore@unica.it).

[7]; as [8] argues, “instead of economy being embedded in social relations, social relations are embedded in the economic system”. One of the most powerful ways to fight this situation is re-localising the food [9], [10]; re-localising means to reconnect “a food system and its context of production” [4] by making customer aware about the origin [2] and the way of producing [7] the food they buy and eat. This knowledge about origins and quality of food challenges the blurriness of food characteristics and the homogenisation of food.

Movements such as Organic Food production, Fair Trade and Local Food are considered by scholars as examples for the reconnection between food and place and for the food de-commoditisation [3], [11] because of some aspects in their way of working; in fact, even though such movements have quite fuzzy boundaries and very often coincide each other [11] or show some distinctive social traits [12], especially related to the involvement of customers in the negotiation process. Empowerment and delegation are two of the most important ones [13]. Whereas empowerment is the most dynamic, in which consumers are involved in the “construction of collective choices”, in the delegation regime customers can make their decisions thanks to market structures such as labels [13]. Both of these regimes grant the differentiation of food, in so contributing to de-commoditisation [3].

The scope of this study is to find the existence of communicative patterns in the promotion of organic food within the Internet, describing them through a theoretical model. The importance of the Internet for organic food promotion is well recognised in the literature. In fact, according to [14], the Internet is a powerful tool for the information exchange for organic and sustainable food; since customers are becoming more and more critics about the producers’ involvement in green practices of production, it is crucial for farmers to provide accessible information about that [15]. Moreover, the web allows sharing information with ease and with no big expenditures, as contents are published once and they can be read many times [16]. So, by analysing 30 websites of organic and local producers from the Madrid community, the paper wants to answer to the following questions:

1. is there a vast use of the Internet for the promotion of organic/local food in the Madrid region?
2. what web marketing strategies farmers adopt in order to promote their products?
3. which values they use to draw the attention of customers?
4. do differences exist of the previous issues related to the

type of sold products?

The paper is organised as follows: After the introduction, the second part describes the methodology adopted for the study; then, the three categories of web marketing from Madrid producers are presented and discussed. Finally, some conclusions are given.

II. METHODOLOGY

In total, 30 websites regarding organic (both certified or not), local and protected geographic indication (PGI) products have been analysed. They have been selected from the official list of producers enrolled in the Organic Agriculture Committee of Madrid (in Spanish: Comité de Agricultura Ecológica de Madrid, CAEM), and from the list of producers of Madrid (in Spanish: Madrid Productores), the biggest farmer's market space of the Community of Madrid). That provided the majority of the analysed sample. A further research through keywords regarding organic farms, localness, PGI products, and similar ones, allowed finding a few more websites.

Being the analysed materials composed of texts and images working synergically in order to convince customers about the products quality, it was necessary to use a conceptual framework that could help creating a descriptive model for them. The model proposed by [17] was considered a good base to do so; with the purpose of analysing the geographies of mass production, four kinds of *geographic knowledge* (or *geographical lores*) are defined: i) images of places; ii) process of production and distribution; iii) association between products and ideas; and iv) suggestions of how to use a specific product. In [10], the authors modified the model of [17] in order to adjust it to the Naturally Embedded Food Products (NEFPs), meat and cheeses which quality is supposed to be originated from the biodiversity of the land they are produced in. More in detail, in order to enclose better the nature of these types of commodities, in the category i), all types of images or tales about history and geography identifying the product origin as a brand is included, defining the *geo-historical knowledge*. In the second type of knowledge, instead of the simple process of production and distribution, ecological and environmental-related ideas and methods are included, generating the so-called *naturalistic knowledge*.

Although NEFPs and organic products have different characters (the former concern the use of biodiversity in order to get a distinct product, the latter are the complex results of a certification system), the way their market distinctiveness is built through advertising material can be explored with the same theoretical tools explained by [10].

During the analysis, a particular set of ideas used to promote the farms and their products was established to be important for the distinction of organic food marketing from the conventional one; it regards the social function and/or purposes of organic market, as by-products of farming and leisure activities (eco-tourism, workshops, and so on). These aspects could be considered associations between commodities and particular ideas, also recognising that [10]

comprise civic duties of consumers (as motivations to pay more for the commodity) into this category. However, the creation of a new and more specific class of knowledge was considered helpful in order to highlight the peculiarity of these ideas. Therefore, the four kinds of knowledge considered in this study are the following: i) naturalistic knowledge, including information about how the whole process of production contributes to make the difference from conventional products; ii) socio-economic purposes and compromises, often presented as by-products of the farming activity iii) geo-historical knowledge, often including sweeping images of places (both discursive and visual) [17]; and iv) setting for product uses, both visual and discursive.

Websites contents have been analysed in the light of these four categories, enclosing each website into a specific category, according to the dominance of ideas showed in the product promotion.

III. RESULTS

Over the 258 producers enrolled in the CAEM, only 21 have a website. This small percentage of the Internet use by small producers can be found in other realities [18]. This might be because, as [19] argues, when trust with customers is established, a strong relationship develops and there must be a serious reason to interrupt it. At this point, advertising is useless because there is no willing of a further increase the business.

The majority of the websites are written in Spanish only (23 of 30); three websites show also English translation; three English and German, and one English, German, French and Japanese. The majority of the websites that show translations are wine producers (4 of 6), in so demonstrating that wine is a particular product with a marketing area which exceed the national borders. However, only 12 of 30 websites perform home deliver (through shopping online or by e-mail).

Some driving ideas discovered during the interviews realised for the PhD project also appear in the promotional material of the websites: i) a strong ecological belief, which transform organic farming into a mission; ii) a balance between tradition and technology; iii) the cooperative dimension, where social conditions are considered on the same footing as the environmental benefits. The only exception is the strong economic vision, which during the interviews has been expressed by very few producers. This might be because declaring the intention to earn money as the main objective could be counter-productive for the business.

Although it is possible to find elements belonging to categories defined in [10] and [17] in all the websites, each of them uses these elements in a different way, so it has been possible to distinguish three sets, in which some ideas are expressed in a stronger way than others. Moreover, there is a relevant (but not complete) correspondence between these categories and the type of business/type of products; vegetable and fruit producers focus more on ecological values and health advantages, whereas wine producers and cattle farmer show a shift through historical and traditional knowledge. A third set encloses the cooperatives websites, reflecting what came out

during the interviews; here, the importance of social processes of the business structure choice overtakes the environmental and geographical aspects. A set related to setting uses has not been defined, because this category appears very little in the sample.

A. Naturalistic Knowledge

Naturalistic knowledge category is related to which refers to “the naturally-embedded origins” of food, which recognise “the critical place of the environment, nature and biodiversity

within these knowledges” [10]. Within the analysed websites, this is the most shared type of knowledge; references about environmental practices, images of places (both visual and textual) and landscape are present in almost all the websites. However, naturalistic knowledge is the strong suit for vegetable producers, which do not focus (or do it very little) on aspects like history, social compromises or setting use.

Here, the distinctiveness of the food is provided first by the ecological value of the place of production (Figs. 1 and 2).



Fig. 1 Natural landscape of Jarama valley [20]



Fig. 2 Agricultural landscape of the West Sierra [31]

Beautiful landscapes, whether shaped by cultivated field or by forces of nature, are used to boost the customer’s imagination about uncontaminated places and food freshness and healthiness:

“Region of beauty and agricultural richness, shaped as a big valley with irrigated plains, nestled among hills and gypsum sedimentary rocks. The whole region is included within the natural and protected space ‘Regional South-East Park’, characterised by being a shelter and a reproduction place for protected avifauna as well as vegetal species of botanical singularity existing there” [20].

“Anyone accessing the cellar from the entrance located on Malcasado street will find themselves walking through a path bordered with fig trees, pines, roses and

quinces that perfume the air” [21].

The second key factor to distinguish the promoted food is the respect of the environment in the production process. Although the organic label in theory should be sufficient in order to ensure “clean” and “green” practices [13], [15], the belonging to the C AEM has very little importance in the websites, whereas an inclusive explanation of the whole process is preferred. This could be because of the lacks of organic standards, which often does not create a real alternative or do not guarantee localness [12], or because the lack of trust in certification by consumers [22]. Whatever the reason, each website has its own explanation (some of them are quite brief, some other more in-depth) which tries to generate confidence and distinctiveness. In the case of vinerias, the whole process (from harvesting to bottling) is

explained, highlighting the synergy between tradition and technology that allows obtaining goods results even by respecting the environment:

“Our work is realised with a traditional style and a manual grape harvest, selecting the grapes just in the vineyard. We work on the crop from the sunrise to midday in order to avoid the damage of grapes quality due to high temperatures. The wine elaboration follows the quality standards of the most important wines in the world, under the supervision of our oenologist, Luis Saavedra. For the elaboration, we use only indigenous yeasts (the same of the grapes). Harvests and wine-making are separated in parcels and varieties gently destemming and wringing out” [23].

Localness is one of the main ideas expressed for the quality of food, both vegetables and animal products. This choice is made for many reasons: adaptation to the environmental conditions and use of traditional local methods, establishment of an equilibrium among natural resources, animals' needs and technology, necessity of having a total control over the processes (self-confidence about what is used to grow the plants or nourish the animals), recovering local animal races [9], also for improving the biodiversity or avoid species extinction. These reasons could explain why very often the threshold between organic and local food is scanty [11].

In the case of livestock, much attention is paid on animal welfare, highlighting the fact that healthier animals means major quality of meat.

Slogans are utilised at times in the main page, capturing the attention of customers with the farm philosophy:

“Sun, water, land... and nothing else” [24]

“Happy animals mean happy customers” [25]

Traditional work is associated with environmental sustainability, as an adaptation to natural cycles and conditions; commonly, this is achieved by generically stating that the farm does not use chemical pesticides and fertilisers. However, in some cases there are specific and in-depth descriptions regarding aspects as: i) adaptation to the season (both for cultivation activities and growth of different products), ii) respect for the natural elements existing in the farm – like flowers and aromatics, which transmit their properties to the product, or good bugs in order to improve the biodiversity, do pollination and fight diseases – and iii) choice of sustainable cultivation methods, as extensive production and alternation of cultivations.

B. Socio-Economic Purposes and Compromises

Very few websites are focused on aspects related to social aspects (women's rights, workers conditions, food sovereignty and so on), thus combining organic and local farming with fair trade. This argument is boosted by other researches, which have demonstrated the existence of a common vocabulary shared by organic farming, fair trade and local food [11]. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements puts fairness into its principles: “[Fairness] emphasizes that those involved in Organic Agriculture should conduct human relationships in a manner that ensures fairness at all levels and

to all parties - farmers, workers, processors, distributors, traders and consumers. Organic Agriculture should provide everyone involved with a good quality of life, and contribute to food sovereignty and reduction of poverty. It aims to produce a sufficient supply of good quality food and other products” [26].

The businesses promoting these purposes have in common firm structure and type of products; they are cooperatives or foundations that cultivate vegetable and fruit. Close to the environmental benefits, the farm activity aims to a socioeconomic enhancement:

“We have to be aware of the fact that consumption is a way to intervene day to day in the society. We think that organic agriculture is the only possible and sustainable way of farming. It is not a new agrarian technique; it is coming back to farming instead of exploit the soil” [27]

“Our cooperative bets on the respect to the environment in its activity development, making it compatible with job quality. For this reason, we chose the cooperative formula” [28]

These goals are achieved through the collaboration with other firms working in similar fields like sustainable gardening or information and education; in one case, people are invited to join the cooperative, in order to become more responsible about sustainable and healthy consumption. In fact, one of the aims of these businesses, through the involvement of customers -whether direct or indirect- is to educate and make them responsible for a different consumption style, healthier and economically alternative to the mainstream market. All these characteristics aim to reach a collective process of choice and correspond to the empowerment regime defined by [13].

In the empowerment regime, the standard defined by bodies of certification can be a problem for the mechanism just discussed; as argued by [13], the allowed and forbidden measures are established by law, and then unmodifiable. In fact, one of the cooperatives is trying to launch a Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS), which in addition to taking into account some aspects that do not exist in the organic certification, has a more flexible structure, since it is based on mutual trust between producers and consumers [26].

Making people more responsible for sustainability consumption and a better society also consists in organising activities in hospitals, hospices, and schools, to conjugate organic farming and environmental education:

“School gardens ease the development of an educational practice in compliance with environmental education. With school gardens, it is expected to create a link between urban and rural areas. Hospital gardens: with this project, we want to distance patients or elder people from their daily routine and put them close to the nature, although they live in an urban space” [29]

In the foundation case, the skills required for practicing organic agriculture (which, by not using chemical fertiliser and/or pesticides, needs more manual labour) match very well with the attitudes of people with intellectual disabilities, to

whom the foundation is oriented. Moreover, there is the possibility to join the foundation as ambassadors, who are

“People who represent a collective, realising tasks like groups’ orders management, news bulletin, and so on. If you want to be an ambassador, look up to the ‘how to buy’ section” [30].

Hence, in this type of knowledge, farming is seen as a tool for social improvement, from both the points of view of economy and quality of life; putting people closer to rural spaces could help them to recover their sense of nature and create a new, more sustainable and fairer society.

In order to achieve these goals, some websites have the blog formula, where people can interact directly with the producers, then allowing building a personal contact between farmers and final customers [14].

C. Geo-Historical Knowledge

According to [10], “the geo-historical knowledges are evident in the repeated use of references to history and tradition, as well as geographic designation that reinforce the special qualities of the area in which the farm is located”.

In four websites (three wineries and one honey producer), there is a specific section named *history* or *tradition*, but tales about family tradition and historical heritage are presented as a guarantee for the product quality, together with an environmental commitment, also in *about us* sections:

“The Saavedra family has a rich history as owners of the vineyard. They have been cultivating the wine grapes for four generations continually improving their final product since XIX century” [23].

As well as for the transmission of expertise, a long family history can be a channel for the permanence of the cultivation, as in the following example:

“At the beginning of the XX century, our great-grandfather Don Ramiro Ocaña planted again, in the whole region, the vineyards that had been destroyed by the phloxera. Thanks to his deep knowledge of the soil, the same vineyards are still productive today and after

many difficulties, the Ocaña family has recovered part of them.” [31].

In some cases, the historical reference does not show a familiar dimension, but instead travels through the ancient times in order to recuperate knowledge about some product properties or distinctive traits that are lost today. These stories could be geographically embedded, as in the case of a winery that, in a quite in-depth introduction, explains the origin of grapes cultivation in Spain thanks to ancient peoples (Iberians, Romans and Carthaginians) who used to consider wine as a basic element of their diet. After this introduction, the tale continues by passing through the whole history of Spain, and in the conclusion, the Denomination of Origin of Madrid wines acquires prestige, boosted by its glorious history. In one example, the tale starts by describing the relationship between the product and a historic place (a monastery), but in the development of the story the central idea becomes more related to the geo-historical embeddedness than to the product itself, creating an evocative image of a genuine product because of its long tradition (Fig. 3).

Not necessarily, the qualities for which the product was renowned in the past are related to a specific place. They can be intrinsic properties often related to human health or well-being. Even though these benefits are confirmed by contemporary scientific studies, their knowledge in ancient times – sometimes mentioning famous people – seems to be the main importance factor of quality:

“The benefits [of mare milk] were known by Mongolian people, who used to eat cheese, fermented foods and alcoholic drinks elaborated with mare milk (Kefir, Kumis, Airag); all of us know the famous baths in mare and jenny milk enjoyed by Nefertiti, Cleopatra, Pompeia or Empress Sissi. EcoLactis® mare milk 100% lyophilised is a natural and multi-functional dietary complement rich in vitamins, minerals and Omega 3 and 6. These natural characteristics make us stronger and help us to improve our health” [32].

The first reliable news of growing grapes in the present province of Madrid, is related to the Monasterio de San Martín de Valdeiglesias, which ruins remain in the municipality of Pelayos de la Presa, 62 kms from Madrid and 5 kms from San Martín Valdeiglesias.

The origin of the Monastery of San Martín de Valdeiglesias in the XII century was the existence of 12 hermitages or chapels far apart in between. From the parish church of the village of San Martín to the Alberche river, occupying a wide valley, called “Valley Yglesias,” giving the name to the Monastery runned by the Order of St. Benedict and later, to the village of San Martín de Valdeiglesias.



Fig. 3 Creating an evocative image for the product entrenchment [31]

“From ancient times (Egyptian culture), the goat milk is considered one of the most complete foods for the human beings and fundamental during the childhood; for this, it has been traditionally administered to babies and children who could not drink mother’s milk and who were intolerant to cow’s milk. Recently, some studies

have appeared demonstrating that the goat milk is healthier than the cow’s, because of many reasons as its better digestibility, nutrients and properties good for our organism” [33].

In some cases, especially those of cattle farmers’ websites, the idea of a geographical heritage has a strong focus on the

breeding of autochthonous races, surrounded by photos of animals in their natural habitat [9]. Here, the tale is not textual but imaginative, and the geographic embeddedness here has a national instead of local dimension, as Fig. 4 shows. Occasionally, stories related to the place of production but not to the product itself exist. Sometimes the relation lies in the fact that the farm is located in the site of a former famous farm, hence highlighting a sort of justification for the peculiarity of the product, in other cases the image of a beautiful landscape (both textual and visual) works as an association of ideas in order to make the product attractive:

“The farm housed in the nineteenth century one of the oldest farms in Spain, where the famous bulls grazed livestock Plá Hernandez of Santa Coloma, whose cattle is dealt at the wedding of Alfonso XII. These places were also the oldest Roman settlements which surrounding Titulcia being declared of cultural interest by the rich findings discovered recently” [34].

“The ecological warehouse Luis Saavedra is located in the municipality of Cenicientos, Madrid, Spain. The village of Cenicientos is located in the beautiful, extreme South-western part of the Community of Madrid and borders the provinces of Avila and Toledo the vineyard is located in the subfield of San Martin de Valdeiglesias” [23].

Geographical attractiveness is shown very often through images of traditional buildings, cultivated fields, and wild animals. The beauty of typical landscapes is often using as an evocative image of genuineness and uncontaminated nature, rich in fauna and flora biodiversity:

“The flora on this zone is characterised by the abundance of scots pine and the presence of Turkey oaks

forests, and oak woods in the lowest zones. In the picks, meadows and high-mountain shrubs dominate. These varieties share their habitat with foxes, squirrels, hares, rabbits among others like deer, roe deer, and fallow deer in the Segovia side of these extraordinary mountains. There is also a big amount of waterfowl species in the basins, and predatory birds like the imperial eagle or the black vulture, among others” [33].

All of these stories work as a framework for the business activity, which adapts itself to the local conditions. In so doing, potential customers are conscious of the good quality of the products not for the mere fact that it is produced in a particular place, but because of the choice of farmers to farm and breed in synergy with the eco system and historical characteristics. Indeed, it is clear that every place has its own peculiarities and ecological conditions, even those in which conventional cultivation is practiced. The difference raises in this ‘coming back to nature’, which enriches, enhances and emphasises the uniqueness of the place with methods and philosophies that can be very similar but never the same. On the contrary, in conventional farming, standard and intensive methods cause a homogenisation which encumbers the emphasis of local traits [3].

“The winery has been realised as a building integrated into the landscape and the style of the zone, mixing up with the vineyard, the vegetation and the surrounding mountains” [31]

“In the cellar, with over 100 years of history, past and present coexist. Although the incorporation of technology has been a necessary task, traditional methods which play an important role on the quality of wine, are still being used” [21].



Fig. 4 Evocation of geographic distinctiveness through autochthonous races [25]

D. Setting for Products Use

The last category regards the “appropriate settings for product use” [17], which in the case of NEFPs is realised by “images of products ready to be eaten in such a way that gives a sense of celebration” [10] and quotes by chefs. Images are visual presentations of both products and places of consumption. Whatever the means, the goal is to underline the distinctive traits of the promoted products, as a result of the

cultivation practices, which could also give to the customers the reason to pay more [10].

In the research about the web marketing of organic, local and PGI products in the Madrid region, this category is the little emphasized; very few websites show images of food or places of consumption. Notwithstanding, respect to the case of NEFPs, a new kind of setting use has been found. It regards the use as cosmetics and dietary supplements of products like mare and goat milk:

“Some advantages of goat milk are the more efficiency against the iron-deficiency anaemia, or the prevention of bone demineralization (also known as osteomalacia), disease which during the childhood is called rickets and which is caused by vitamin D deficiency” [33]

“With a constant consumption of mare milk, people who suffer from psoriasis could note some enhancements (less itch, burning and reduction of scaly patches) in a very brief time (10-15 days). The skin regenerates from the inside, this give a permanent and long-term enhancement of the parts affected by patches. Moreover in the organism carbohydrates decompose into sugars of slow liberation, generating endorphins and producing a feeling of comfort and a major self-esteem” [32].

It is true that this type of suggestion is very different from these discovered by [10] in the case of NEPFs. However, attention must be paid about what [17] says for geographical lores; it is more important the way they are performed rather imagined. Imagination is not enough to recreate the lore of product, which needs to involve “a careful use of the products and preparation of the environment [of consumption]” [17]. Here, the sense of celebration is replaced by images of health, beauty and even happiness. Moreover, it has to be noted that the medical use of these products is strongly related to the history of famous people who used them with this purpose, as discussed in the *geo-historical knowledge* section.

Regarding the other products, images as those described by [10] have been founded (Fig. 5 (a)). In some cases, there is not a suggestion for a particular use of the product, but its characteristics are highlighted in order to demonstrate its versatility:

“Table olives have the peculiarity of mixing the four basic flavour (sweet, salty, bitter and acid); this endow them with an unbelievable polyvalence for gastronomic use and convert them into an extraordinary ingredient for a multitude of dishes: snacks, tapas, starters combined with drinks, salads, pizzas, roasts, pastas, fish, meat... even desserts” [35].

In the case of meat, some advises preparation before cooking and recipes by famous chefs are presented (Fig. 5 (b)). Here, images of refined and sophisticated dishes give the sensation of very special characteristics, the feeling of celebration and the need to be savoured, rather than used as ‘everyday’ products [10]. Preparation advises have the scope to recuperate and exalt their distinctiveness:

“In order to enjoy the pleasure of our meat with your 5 senses, we recommend: before the meat preparation, it is convenient to let it stand in room-temperature for 30 minutes in order to make it recover its bright red colour, recover its aroma, achieve temperature, when we do it, we reduce the temperature shock during cooking, and keeping the product quality. This is the secret to make a rare meat is not cold inside” [36].



Fig. 5 (a) Presentation of an elaborated dish Fig 5 (b) A recipe by a famous chef [25]

In the case of NEPFs in UK, the differentiation of products is highlighted through references to visit the farms outlets [10]. In the case of Madrid region, some farms have not only selling spaces but also rooms for the consumption of the products, or just free-time activities:

“The dining room is the farm gastronomic space, integrated in its own property where, since it was to be expected, meat is the protagonist. In order to allow you to taste all the cuts and specialities of ‘the happiness meat’, we have elaborated a delightful tasting menu you will able to enjoy surrounded by nature” [25]

“In the Soto de Campogrande farm you will able to enjoy your original leisure activities in a complete natural surrounding that will invite you to take advantage of the real country style” [34]

“The concept of Qubél implies a complete project revolving around nature that permits involving our clients through not only a product or service, but a Iso emotionally. As one-step more within this project, initiated by the family Gosálbez-Orti, the visitor’s center Enoteca Qubél has been created. Here we can share, in an imaginative way, our oenological experience and all of which, related to nature, ecology or gastronomy, that help

us reach a state of pleasure. It is a place of discovery, education and enjoy of the senses which are associated with wine, gastronomy and nature” [37].

These sentences show what [1] calls incorporation: the assumption of re-localised food allow people to appropriate of some characteristic related to identity, culture and environment the food has been produced within. In the case of organic, local and PGI products from Madrid region, some of the four function of food described by [1] appear; especially “food as a sign of communion”, where the social function of meals is emphasized:

“[Olives] are the queens of the *tapeo* [a typical Spanish habit of going round bars and drinking and eating snacks]. Their consumption goes on a par with sociable, sharing consumption. They are associated with relax, celebration, glee, free time and amusement. For this reason, they cannot miss in your table” [35].

Only one vegetable farm shows this type of knowledge, proposing an *organic breakfast*, directly prepared in the garden, in order to mix up knowledge about organic farming and the enjoying of flavours.

IV. CONCLUSION

The intention of this section is to answer the four interrogatives established at the beginning of this paper.

Even though a little percentage of organic and local farms from the Madrid region have a website, all the analysed forms of geographical knowledge attempt to reinforce the idea of a product with its own distinctiveness, and so try to defetishise food, each of them in a different way that seems to adapt itself to the type of product and business. Since re-localising food means re-connecting the two ends of the food chain, this goal is achieved according to both the characteristics of products and potential customers’ expectations. Daily food (like fruit or vegetables) seems to be associated to health and environmental practices, whereas special occasions products (wine, olives or, in general, expensive goods, as the meat) may need more complex tales demonstrating their distinctiveness. Use settings are quite restricted to expensive food, too. Socio-economic purposes, although related to cooperatives and a foundation which cultivate vegetables and fruit, go beyond the relation with the product, instead pointing to the organic production as a driving force for rural development [9].

In some cases, especially these of PGI products (like olives, of which Spain is a traditional producer) or products from *Soto del Grillo* agro-ecological park, food networks seem to work in order to *empower the place* of production; the network identity has its base on a strong relationship between the food and its geographical origin [4].

The way the ideas are expressed shows that every type of business has its own manner of re-localising food, depending on the farm products; this may reflect not only the differences between distinct types of food, but also how this distinctiveness influences the way of promoting it. This confirms that quality is a complex concept, in which very different characteristics are mixed [11], [38]. It must be noted,

however, that the general idea of re-localisation in this study is in accordance with the *origin of food perspective* described by [9]; more than organic standards of production and rediscovery of lost farming practices, re-localisation and de-commodification are realised through the promotion of traditional habits (both about production and consumption) that were marginalised by the green revolution [9]. This is supported by how farms and production characteristics are described in the websites; in fact, the focus is on the process instead of on the product itself [7] and very little attention is paid about the belonging to the body of certification. It could be assumed that, in the *origin of food* perspective, the delegation of customers is not towards a label and production standards because of the major importance of trust in traditional practices, history knowledge, social changes and rediscover of country activities. These facts could be a guideline for a future revision of laws regulating organic production, for the following reasons: i) At present, organic certification is focused on environmental aspects only. This paper has demonstrated that, apart from products labelled as “local” or PGI, also organic products lever on localness. Moreover, social aspects are often considered. Then, recognising that markets are ever-changing rather static phenomena [11], introducing these aspects in organic regulation (maybe at national or regional level, giving more autonomy to EU Member States) could boost the growth of organic market in Europe; ii) One of the goal of organic farming is to improve biodiversity [26], [39], but the seeds regulation, which put in charge few companies for the seeds production, seems going against this aim [40]-[42].

This paper shows a very small photograph of the web marketing for organic and local food network, but in the current literature, very few similar studies have been conducted. Further research could investigate other regions of Europe in order to discover differences and similarities with the Madrid case. The theoretical model developed by [17] and [10], as modified in this paper, could be very useful as it is replicable in other contexts. Moreover, the customers’ point of view should be considered in order to see if and to what extent web marketing strategies are effective for the growth of this type of market, and if telling the story of a product from field to fork is, in the organic and local food case, a useful way to defetishise food or whether, instead, could create a new form of fetishism [10].

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