

What do New Zealand newspapers say about food tourism?

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Abstract

Food and tourism are the largest industries in New Zealand. While the interfaces between food and tourism have been extensively studied during recent decades, media representations of food tourism still remain as an unexplored issue. This paper studies the coverage that New Zealand daily print media carries out with regard to food tourism. The method design is based on a discourse analysis, and it encompasses the six newspapers with major circulation across New Zealand. The study period runs from 2000 to 2016. Results reveal that media coverage of food tourism in New Zealand newspapers is focused on three topics: food culture, regional development and international practices.

Keywords

Daily newspaper, food culture, food journalism, food tourism, media coverage

Introduction

Tourism and the dairy industry are the two largest economic sectors in New Zealand. Both industries are clearly intertwined throughout food tourism. Foods, local produce and gastronomy have been extensively studied by academics in terms of tourism appeal. In this sense, many recent references discuss New Zealand food tourism from different perspectives (Fusté-Forné and Berno, 2016; Hall, 2004; Joseph et al., 2013; Lawson et al., 2008; Razzaq et al., 2016; Steinmetz, 2010). At the same time, previous research highlighted the potential of food niches or the use of local produce within the industry (Fusté-Forné, 2016; Nummedal and Hall, 2006; Roy, 2016) as relevant approaches to the phenomenon.

Within this context, media representations of food tourism emerge as a crucial unexplored issue. While this is the era of digital journalism and social media influence, legacy media still offers a founded and reliable voice. The purpose of the paper is to study the news representations of food tourism in New Zealand print media and, particularly, to describe what New Zealand newspapers discuss about food tourism in the 21st century. The results of the study reveal how food tourism is approached by print press and to what

extent it focuses on culture, managerial and geographical issues.

In terms of the structure of the article, after the introductory part the paper moves to a contextualisation section that deals with food, media and tourism – with special emphasis on the case of New Zealand. Later, the methodology is described. Finally, the paper delineates the results of the empirical work and draws the discussion and conclusion section. Opportunities for further research and practical implications are outlined.

Contextualisation: An approach to newspapers, food culture and culinary tourism in New Zealand

Food and gastronomy are significant forms of cultural identity. Relationships between gastronomy and culture are well embodied within everyday leisure practices (Ravenscroft and Van Westering, 2001). Choices

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in eating and drinking help defining a particular food culture (Bell and Valentine, 1997) and reflect the lifestyles of a concrete geographical region. Thus, “gastronomy implies a transfer of knowledge and of information about people, culture, traditions and the identity of the place” (Pérez Gálvez et al., 2017: 605). In this sense, local food is a symbol of place and culture (Sims, 2009), and therefore cultural and culinary aspects are increasingly regarded as tourism resources (Kivela and Crotts, 2006).

According to Sims,

local food can be an asset to integrated tourism development as a result of its ability to symbolise place and culture, provide a moral *feel-good* factor associated with its consumption and enable visitors to experience a sense of connection to their destination – both during and after their visit. (2009: 328)

Moreover, Sims reports that

local food products can offer a way to achieve a more authentic sense of self and a more satisfying form of engagement with the people and places around them. This is because *local* products have a story – and a meaning – behind them that can be related to place and culture. [...] Eating and drinking thus [...] enables the visitor to connect with the place and culture of their destination. (2009: 333)

This means that eating and drinking local delicacies drives to the ephemeral incorporation of the tasted culture and its surrounding idiosyncrasies, which is a meaningful attraction factor for visitors and tourists.

In focusing on the New Zealand case, Cloke and Perkins highlight that “although tourism has had an economic presence in New Zealand since the early 19th century it was only in the 1980s that a surge of overseas visitor arrivals transformed tourism into a vital sector of the national economy” (2002: 531). Food attraction also started to get on board, and the food ingredient progressively increased its crucial role within the tourist experience. In 2001, an article showcased that

there’s a new type of tourist on the road in New Zealand. Their interests are of a culinary-nature rather than nature-nature. Say *clean and green* or *sheep* to one of these culinary tourists and it will be lamb rack and sauvignon blanc in the picture rather than gambling animals in lush pastures. This appetite for discovering new and exciting food and wines is part of a worldwide trend. (Fraser, 2001)

It seems clear that this pattern had also headed to New Zealand.

New Zealand food culture heavily relies on wine and food as crucial landmarks that define its landscapes. Within this context, New Zealand tourism is particularly based on the “100% Pure New Zealand” campaign that highlights the role of natural resources and the majesty of their landscapes (Cloke and Perkins, 2002; Fusté-Forné and Berno, 2016; Mackay et al., 2015; Yardley, 2015). This suggests the importance of identity and sense of place – foods are originated in the land itself – and it also links to the wider food culture.

The significance of food consumption in tourism heavily relies on experiencing the host culture (Mak et al., 2012). In particular,

gastronomic tourism is perceived at present as one of the best ways to strengthen and consolidate certain local tourist destinations, due to the increasingly greater importance that the knowledge of everything related to the gastronomic culture of the places that they visit has for the travelers. (Pérez Gálvez et al., 2017: 610)

From their side, other authors point that these tourists like to consume food in places *where only the locals eat*, where to learn the respect for the authentic culinary traditions (Hjalager, 2003; Kivela and Crotts, 2006).

In this sense, the New Zealand tourist experience is heavily based on the land experience. Accordingly, Fusté-Forné and Berno state that

one way in which these attractions and experiences are manifested in tourism is through locally produced food and beverages. This has been reflected over the last decade through a *new wave* of wine and food tourism in New Zealand associated with the production and consumption of regional specialties such as cheeses and wines. (2016: 72)

Therefore, local products provide a powerful basis from which visitors and tourists can explore a destination – New Zealand – through food and gastronomy. While there is widely acknowledged importance of food and tourism in New Zealand, no previous research pointed to the particular case of media representations of food tourism in this country.

Focusing briefly on the case of daily print media in New Zealand, it must be noted that its origin date back to the first half of the 19th century. In 1839 appeared the first New Zealand newspaper, the *New Zealand Gazette* (Derby, 2014). One of the initial references in New Zealand print media that shows the media representation of food tourism is reported by

McCloy (2014). It refers to when a Southland South Island farmer

invited a reporter from *The Southland Times* to take a tour of the factory and poke his nose pretty much wherever he wanted. The reporter responded with enthusiasm, and a detailed report with copious particulars descriptive of the industry appeared in that esteemed newspaper on 18 March 1881. (McCloy, 2014: 117)

This is the first antecedent of what this paper aims to explore.

Methodology

This paper particularly reviews the case of food tourism discourses built in New Zealand newspapers. Departing from a content analysis' quantitative approach (Berelson, 1952; Krippendorff, 1990; Neuendorf, 2002), which is a significant tool for mass communication research (Riffe and Freitag, 1997; Yale and Gilly, 1988), the method used is based on a qualitative discourse analysis (Fusté-Forné and Masip, 2018; Phillips and Hardy, 2002; Richardson, 2007; Soriano, 2007) that aims at building the representations of a particular topic in a specific geographical context (see, for example, Yusuf et al., 2016). Here, it is advocated that "social reality is produced through discourses, and we experience these realities through discourses" (Zhang and Müller, 2017: 6). In particular, "media systems influence media frames, which in turn influence audience frames and ultimately perceptions and behaviour of the public" (McLennan et al., 2017: 976). Moreover, media are also a source of influence on tourists (Månsson, 2011).

Within this context, according to Zhang and Müller, "in the fields of social science studies discourse analysis has been utilized, in which newspaper materials have been one important kind of research subject" (2017: 6). The study of media discourses is a crucial topic for the development of the relationship between the behaviours of media and audiences. Previous methodological research highlighted the importance of quantitative and qualitative content analysis for tourism and hospitality fields (Nunko, 2018; Ritchie et al., 2005; Stepchenkova et al., 2009). Thus, McLennan et al. (2017) point that there is a substantial body of media analyses focused on tourism topics. In particular, media representations of tourism in printed media are studied by authors like the aforementioned Zhang and Müller (2017), who affirm that research on this topic may importantly lead to ulterior tourism development. In this sense,

Table 1. Circulation of New Zealand daily newspapers (2016).

Newspaper	City	Circulation
The New Zealand Herald	Auckland	134,454
The Press	Christchurch	68,011
The Dominion Post	Wellington	59,469
Otago Daily Times	Dunedin	35,690
Waikato Times	Hamilton	30,844
The Southland Times	Invercargill	24,688

in researching the connections between media and tourism, Fornäs (2002) recommends to analyse only a specific arena – in this case, the newspapers.

Berger affirms that this type of content analysis refers to a research method "based on measuring the amount of something in a representative sampling" (1991: 25). As outlined earlier, the goal of this paper is to analyse the newspapers discourse on food tourism, that is, to build the representations of food tourism issues in New Zealand newspapers. The study period includes the 21st century to date – thus, it runs from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2016. Particularly, data collection comprises the six major daily newspapers in New Zealand (Table 1).

The six dailies displayed in Table 1 are located in six different cities. Therefore, three publications are based in the North Island and three in the South Island. This certainly provides a more robust perspective since six different New Zealand regions are included in the sample.

To conduct the study, the exploration of contents in the six sources was carried out by the researcher by using the Dow Jones Factiva database. The search primarily included the term *food tourism*; in addition, the concepts that the literature uses in a similar way (see, for example, Ellis et al., 2018; Horng and Tsai, 2012) also served as keywords, namely cuisine tourism, culinary tourism, gastronomy tourism, gourmet tourism, taste tourism and tasting tourism. The database provided as a result a total of 38 articles. All the articles were codified in a spreadsheet that included the title of each article, the name of the journalist, the newspaper, the date, the page and a classification of the theme developed. Later, the process of analysis consisted of two steps. Firstly, the articles were analysed from a quantitative approach which was focused on the dates of publication and the newspapers where the articles were published. Secondly, departing from the identified topics, the qualitative approach served to particularly draw the discourse of dailies in New Zealand with regard to food tourism narratives.

With regard to the limitations of the method used, it must be considered that discourse analyses do not

provide understandings of the intentions of the journalists nor the interpretations of the audiences (Soriano, 2007). In order to reduce these gaps, Bardin (1986) highlights that the knowledge of the studied context is essential and could give indications that may include deviations in terms of the representations that mass media provides. This would require a further exploration of the relationship between media content and the *real world* (Krippendorff, 1990).

As pointed above, the chosen method drives to an analysis of a limited sample. It is important to note that while the search of the concept *food tourism* provides *only 38 results*, other important topics within gastronomy field bring larger data. For example, the term *wine tourism* comes with 196 results for the same study period – the search for *tourism* itself includes an amount of 48,911 articles. These results exemplify the greater inclusion of wine tourism in print media. This is because of the more solid trajectory of wine tourism in New Zealand, also associated with a larger body of academic literature (see, for example, Howland, 2014). However, this paper only pays attention to the case of *food tourism* and opens an opportunity for further research focused on wider tourism contexts.

Results

Prior to the qualitative description of the results, these initial paragraphs primarily refer to quantitative data. Firstly, it is important to note the evolution of food tourism news articles. The articles were found to follow an increasing pattern over the study period. In this sense, Figure 1 shows that only 29% of the articles correspond to the first half of the period (2000–2008). Thus, 71% are published during the most recent period (2009–2016). When considering only the last years of the sample, news distribution by date shows that 45% of the articles are found in the last four-year period (2013–2016). This provides evidence on the importance of food tourism, which is mentioned more in print press, and increases progressively along the first two decades of the 21st century.

On the other side, it is also significant to mention the distribution of the articles depending on the newspaper where they were published. Results of this analysis are displayed in Figure 2. *The New Zealand Herald*, the largest in terms of circulation, is also the most important concerning the contents that deal with food tourism (37%). Also, *The Press* (18.5%) and *The Dominion Post* (16%) are highlighted. These three newspapers are published in the three major cities in New Zealand: Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington. The three remaining newspapers have a smaller amount of food tourism-based contents:

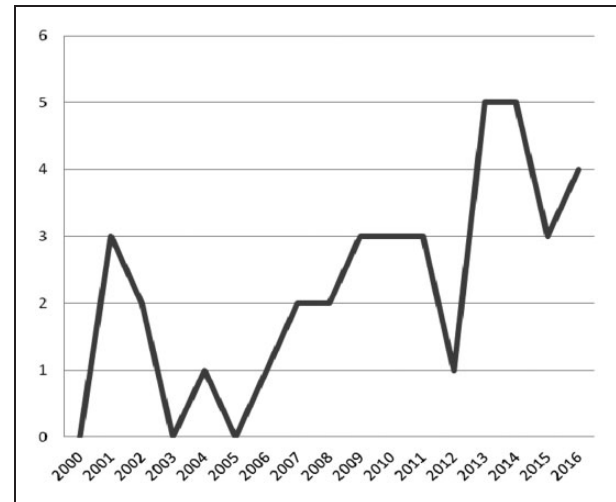


Figure 1. Evolution of food tourism-based articles (2000–2016).

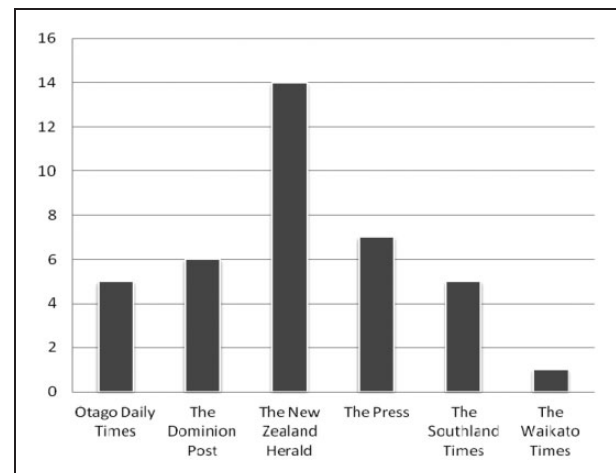


Figure 2. Distribution of food tourism-based articles by newspaper (2000–2016).

Otago Daily Times and *The Southland Times* (13% each), and especially *The Waikato Times*, edited in Hamilton, which showcases an extremely small presence of food tourism narratives (2.5%).

In addition to the aforementioned quantitative results, a qualitative analysis is conducted from the perspective of the topics developed, according to the main objective of the research – to study the representations of food tourism in New Zealand newspapers. As a result of the discourse analysis of the empirical data, this qualitative section is structured in accordance with the three identified themes:

- Firstly, the role of food as a key driver in culture and society.

- Secondly, the importance of food tourism for regional development, which is primarily based on products and events.
- Thirdly, the gaze of New Zealand newspapers with regard to international food tourism practices and overseas markets.

Food defines cultures and societies

Food produce and therefore food tourism have a large influence on societies and cultures. First of all, this is strongly observed when reporting on the *World's 50 Best Restaurant List*. This ranking is seen as “an annual reminder of just how much on the planet there is left to eat” (Mulligan, 2014). The piece shows evidence on the importance of this list, which was released for the first time in 2002. Since then, it completely changed the gastronomy landscape in countries like Spain. Spanish chefs, and particularly Catalan and Basque chefs, are found within the top 10 of the list year after year:

Getting a seat at a world-renowned restaurant takes luck, locality and a lot of money. In other words, getting yourself to Basque Country in Northern Spain is one thing, but if you want to eat at regular Top Tenner Mugaritz you'll need to hope they have a spare table on the day you'll be visiting, and be prepared to pay \$300 a head, plus wine. [...] A far more manageable way to do food tourism is by mixing the fancy places with the commonplace. Mugaritz, for example, is 20 minutes away from the town of San Sebastian, where the greatest tapas (or pintxos) in the world sell for pennies - a dozen varieties to a bar, a dozen bars to a street, a dozen streets to a suburb. Tapas solve the biggest problem you have when you travel for food - that there aren't enough meals in the day. (Mulligan, 2014)

The endless amount of eateries that customers have available when they travel is also discussed in another article. The following example explains how to choose the *good food* place. It also emphasises the crucial helping role of social media. This article serves to illustrate to what extent every region features its own foodscape profile, which is the result of geographical, historical and social inheritances:

Finding the right place to eat requires homework. Seasoned food tourists learn to avoid the “town square restaurant” - the one with the biggest signs and menus printed in English [...]. Thank goodness for food blogs - they're like Trip Advisor, but created by people you can generally trust. Asking the locals isn't always foolproof - “you're a tourist and you want to eat? All the tourists go to Big Tony's on the

town square. The lobster platter seems popular!” The best eating trips inspire you to change the way you eat at home. After two weeks in Provence's Luberon I was using raw garlic and goat's cheese in everything. A tour of Northern California was an introduction to vegan diets and raw living - at home I swapped the goat's cheese for macadamia cheese and hit the green smoothies hard. In Italy's Puglia, the roars of laughter I heard when I asked if I should pour the pasta into the sauce or the sauce into the pasta changed the way I did it for ever (it's the former, by the way). (Mulligan, 2014)

Similarly, an article found in *Otago Daily Times* stated that “New Zealand has a young food culture [...] It's a real melting pot; we're still trying to develop an identity. [...] regions should differentiate from each other and offer their own specialties” (De Reus, 2013). New Zealand newspapers are already building these connections between New Zealand food, national identity and tourism. Consequently, for example:

If Cantabrians can get excited about serving their own local specialties, then international tourists will start holidaying in Canterbury for just this reason. A collection of Waipara wineries organised a wild food expedition where 60 international food writers, tourism representatives and top Kiwi chefs whipped up a banquet out of the food they could find in a day. Starting at 7am, eight groups headed in every direction - to the coast, to the forests, to the mountains - to hunt and gather. “They came back with deer, pigs and goats. All sorts of wild fruit and vegetables from blackberries, mushrooms, wild plums and elderberries, to alfalfa, wild carrot and water cress. We arrived back at 3pm and the tables were covered with all this food. Then the chefs got busy”. The overseas writers were astounded that wild food was so safe and abundant in a farming countryside. “They couldn't believe how you could pick up all this stuff and eat it”. So you can see how tourism and agriculture can go nicely together. (McCrone, 2016)

Thus, this relationship between agriculture and tourism showcase the multiple economic impacts of food entrepreneurship, and their capacity to benefit rural economies. These thoughts are closely related to organic produce - for example raw milk:

with a rule limiting sales to within 160km of production, these products wouldn't threaten our global dairy brand, but instead would develop regional character, promoting food tourism across the country, growing secondary and service industries, and

encouraging tourists to stay and spend more. (Clarke, 2015)

This is similarly discussed in another article found in *The Press* in 2015:

tourists might visit New Zealand for up to 20 days but not visit dairy farms or factories to see the link between milk and cheesemaking [...]. People wanted a sense of local culture and cheese was part of the identity of South [and North] Island landscapes. (Fulton, 2015)

With regard to the influence of food on culture and society, it is also important to highlight the academic and educational role of food tourism, which is a research topic of increasing interest. For example, this is shown in a piece from *The Dominion Post* in 2014. The article deals with the publication of the book *The Future of Food Tourism*, authored by Ian Yeoman, Associate Professor, Victoria University of Wellington (*The Dominion Post*, 2014). The author found another example at the education level that highlights the *permaculture* – a way to help diversifying the food tourism sector that consists of “the design and maintenance of a multi-layered garden focused on producing food in a sustainable way” (Russell, 2013).

Regional food tourism development

This section deals with the interfaces between food tourism practices and regional development. These linkages are highly mediated in New Zealand daily print media. The content is mainly focused on products and events, and examples in both North and South Islands are discussed. To illustrate it, the news article below examines the food tourism potential of Hurunui District:

What about Hurunui instead combining the best of what it does by promoting North Canterbury as an international centre of food tourism? Hanmer Springs is the Hurunui’s prime tourism asset. But Dalley says right on Christchurch’s doorstep is the Waipara wine district which is now one of the country’s top growing regions. [...] Dalley says Waipara ought to be a feature Christchurch tourism is looking to capitalise on like Wellington does with Martinborough or Adelaide with the Barossa Valley. “But I’ve attended events in Christchurch - sports events, business events, celebrating Canterbury’s success - and the wine list has been Hawkes Bay wines, Marlborough wines, wines from everywhere else”. It is the same with the region’s food. “We should be proud in Canterbury about promoting our own products.

Why don’t we see a menu at these functions with lamb from Hurunui, venison from Oxford, cheese from Loburn, potatoes from Sheffield, lettuces from Claverley?”. (McCrone, 2016)

The last question clearly points to the tourism industry and it refers to the key use of local produce in restaurant menus. The soil, the climate and the landscape of New Zealand provide high quality foods whose potential seems to be underused. The promotion of locally grown produce would certainly increase the visibility of farmers and growers, and it would also enhance the visitors’ acknowledgment of authentic and pure tastes. In the following example, which is focused on the wine industry, *The Southland Times* discusses the importance of Central Otago wines:

Among the 28 Central Otago wineries featured in the touring guide to the best wine and food trails this summer, are “must-visit” wineries including Amisfield, Gibbston Valley, Mt Difficulty and Peregrine Wines. The Central Otago Wine and Food Festival, artisan food producers and a list of the region’s top markets are included. Editor Simon Wilson said New Zealand’s wineries continued to grow in popularity. “New Zealand wine and food has boomed over the last few years and international interest in our regional producers continues to grow. Cuisine Wine Country offers international visitors and local tourists an excellent wine and food tourism guide as they tour through the country”. (*The Southland Times*, 2006)

Tours and festivals, then, do not only serve to add value to the products but also to elevate them to a tourist attraction level. This is observed in Dunedin, and it particularly refers to food tours:

we have been very excited by what the city has shown us and there has been plenty of interest in the tours [...]. A key market for the company would be cruise-ship passengers who wanted to be guided to taste local products such as seafood, ice cream, chocolate, beer, wine and whisky. (McNeilly, 2008)

While it is obvious that food is part of the tourism industry as a complementary – and compulsory – need, gastronomy only recently reached a solid status as a key motivation for travellers.

For example, in own Dunedin, Cadbury’s and Speight’s have been offering tours since some time ago. Nonetheless, these articulated tours are far from those organised by small manufacturers for whom the organisation of tours may mean to disrupt the production. Then, it is important to find the ways to get these small producers on board because they are a very

important part of New Zealand food landscape. Logically, this needs an accurate planning among tourism stakeholders, which is already exemplified in some local and regional trails, events or farmers' markets. In this sense, "some more well-known markets had become solid attractions in other parts of the country, for local people and tourists" (Churchouse, 2009b).

Similarly, it happens with regard to the events. Many of them are discussed in media. Examples of events are Food and Wine Classic (F.A.W.C!) (*The New Zealand Herald*, 2014), the 2013 Small Town Conference (De Reus, 2013), the World Food Travel Summit and Expo (Bradley, 2014) or the ConversatioNZ symposium (Heaton, 2016).

Moreover, some examples are reported because of their direct regional impact – this is the case of *Taste of Clutha*, a dinner where to enjoy "local products and produce from coffee roasted in Tapanui to freshwater crayfish from the Puerua Valley". It sounds obvious to affirm here that "the best way to discover a place is through its food" (Smith, 2007a), as mentioned earlier. This is particularly relevant in New Zealand since food tourism is one of the fastest growing types of tourism (Bradley, 2014; De Reus, 2013). Consequently, there is a need to engage visitors and tourists with food and culinary experiences through the exploration of nature and culture, by "offering more opportunities for tourists to play a part of the food process – catching their own fish, picking their own fresh produce – as people had a growing interest in knowing the origin of their food" (De Reus, 2013).

Another example of the crucial role that food plays in regional development is the Katikati Food Trail, which includes a large variety of products. In this sense, Katikati

has neatly hooked into the notion of regional food tourism. It is an industry encouraged to some extent by the increase in farmers' markets, concerns over food miles, and a widespread interest in *eating local*. Hawke's Bay's regional wine and food branding is now known nationwide; closer to home Coromandel has a food trail and an annual *Homegrown* festival, and there are many other formal and informal regional food initiatives. (Irvine, 2011)

Among these initiatives, the article highlights hand-made cheese or artisanal bread.

Finally, the *Wellington on a Plate* is a festival that aims to promote food tourism in low season periods. Firstly, the event allowed Wellington to become "the cuisine capital of the country" (Churchouse, 2009b). Secondly, it is also essential for regional development since "it's not a one-day, single-location event [and] is spread over a period of time and it reflects the maturity

of the city". Importantly, the festival pays a huge attention to regional produce: "it has spread beyond the confines of the city to include the Hutt Valley, Wairarapa and the Kapiti Coast. The rural locations have added new events that take people into vineyards, olive groves and quiet country towns" (Jamieson, 2010).

Looking at overseas markets

International examples of food tourism practices and markets are also a relevant field for New Zealand media coverage of food tourism narratives. Australia is the most mentioned country, and the pieces glossed events like Noosa International Food and Wine Festival (Smith, 2013) or Barossa Vintage Festival (Knill, 2013). Another news article provides evidence on the collaborative opportunities for food tourism industries in Australia and New Zealand:

The Yarra region in Australia wants to establish an *informal friendship arrangement* with Hawke's Bay. The Shire of Yarra Ranges, in Victoria, put the proposal to the Napier and Hastings councils, after a delegation from the shire visited Hawke's Bay in July. The two regions have in common an interest in wine and food tourism; the Yarra Valley is regarded as a premium Australian wine region. Yarra has a friendship arrangement with California's Sonoma County, a top wine area. A report to the Yarra local authority last month said that Hawke's Bay was similar to the Yarra Ranges in that both had populations of about 150,000 and tourism and high-value agriculture were the main economic drivers. (*The Dominion Post*, 2002)

Scotland is also a place that New Zealand media describes. In this sense, "international experts have highlighted the quality of Scotland's natural produce and the growth of its culinary tourism industry". In particular,

the International Culinary Tourism Association declared Scotland as one of the most *unique, memorable and interesting* places for food and drink on the planet. The ICTA report [...] praised Scotland's range of high-quality agricultural and seafood produce, as well as whiskies, soups, jams and cheeses. (*The Press*, 2010)

Local practices in overseas countries may be useful for New Zealand growers, managers and marketers to diversify their own gastronomy offer.

New markets where to sell the New Zealand food appeal were also referenced in the study sample – examples like Indonesia (Gamble, 2004) or China

(*The New Zealand Herald*, 2011a). Thus, “massive opportunities for economic development and growth [are] being presented by Asia [such as] education services, food, tourism and agritechology” (Gardiner, 2012). Similarly, it occurs with regard to Muslim visitors and halal food (Bayer, 2016), which also witnessed an increasing research attention. Food tourism niches then emerge as salient opportunities to reach these markets when promoting authentic and pure New Zealand tastes.

Discussion and conclusion

This article carries out a discourse analysis of 38 news articles from six New Zealand newspapers. While this paper is based on a narrow list of sources, the analysis showed the relevance of the development of food tourism in New Zealand media discourses. But, how is food tourism represented in New Zealand newspapers, and how can this be used to inform the understanding of media representation of food tourism? While the results of this study reflect relevant insights on the characteristics of food tourism narratives in New Zealand newspapers, the method used and the limited study sample are leading to a necessary further research that focuses on the relationships between media representation, tourism, food, culture and national identity. In consequence, future studies may enlarge the sample of years, the types of media or the topics of analysis.

In this paper, three themes were identified as a result of the analysis: the role of food in culture; the significance of food tourism for regional development and the international food tourism practices. To some extent, these results match with previous research on media representations of tourism, which reports three significant themes: “management and marketing approach, social and cultural studies approach, and geography approach” (Ellis et al., 2018). These concepts are shown in the three aforementioned topics. First of all, news content developed the culture and identity of food tourism, linked to the socio-cultural construction of place. Second, in terms of regional development of food tourism practices, the analysis of food tourism discourse revealed the marketing and business implications for local and regional entrepreneurs – with regard to the promotion of local produce or events. Finally, the geographical approach was found to be constantly moving from local to global. Thus, images of food tourism offered by New Zealand newspapers also showcased an international approach. In this sense, according to previous research that studies media reporting on tourism (see, for example, McLennan et al., 2017), media coverage includes both local and international examples.

The linkages between agriculture activities and tourism industry, again heavily studied within the literature (Berno et al., 2014; Bessière, 1998; Bowen et al., 1991; Thompson and Prideaux, 2016), represent a pathway to allow local small producers to participate on the promotion of the country – without modifying their authentic processes. Media coverage of food tourism in New Zealand acknowledged it. Also, when reporting on local food tourism industries, opportunities and challenges primarily come from the active participation of locals, and the subsequent ability to encourage visitors to stay additional nights in the country. New Zealand tourism must aim at

luring visitors off the traditional busy tourism routes so they spend more in the smaller centres will also help increase overall yield. But getting tourists to spend more could be easier to recommend than to achieve. Simon Milne, professor of tourism at AUT and a Tourism Research Institute coordinator, sees a lot of work ahead. (*The New Zealand Herald*, 2001)

Professor Milne (2015), 15 years later in the APacCHRIE’s opening conference that took place in Auckland in 2015 again discussed the tourism strategy in New Zealand – and still mentioned the strong need of getting visitors who have already landed to stay longer and to spend more. In this sense, it is believed that “food and wine visitors [...] spend 26 per cent more and stay 35 per cent longer than other tourists” (Airey, 2001). Food tourists are therefore a crucial target for regional and tourism development. Sims advocates that

this is important for the development of an integrated and sustainable tourism agenda because it shows that there are market opportunities for local products that can satisfy the visitor’s desire for experiences that promote a connection with place, culture and heritage. (2009: 330)

There is a strong need of enhancing local landscapes and their food culture in order that visitors can experience the host culture first-hand (Mak et al., 2012).

Media coverage of food tourism in New Zealand newspapers also showed that the country has a solid framework to grow a top-edge food tourism industry. Nonetheless, the current competitive food tourism context also demonstrates an incessant and continuous need of innovation in terms of products and services. In this sense, an interview made to Greig Buckley in *The New Zealand Herald* (2011b) sheds light on the pathway that food tourism could take along the upcoming years in New Zealand, based on the extraordinary country food value:

The future of New Zealand is going to be our niche in the world producing beautiful, sustainable food, beer and wine – even pure water. Inviting visitors around the world to come and see the land where our food is grown, meeting the artisans who love producing their food will give us jobs, pride and an enviable place in the world [...] The strong trend towards using and enjoying local foods is a reflection of us growing up in a food sense. In the earlier days people conspicuously chose *exotic* international foods and wines to show they were sophisticated, but now they proudly choose New Zealand styles of food and ingredients. (*The New Zealand Herald*, 2011b).

From this study, it is derived that there is a huge potential to narrate the country as an outstanding food destination, with a large offer of produce and events, where to build a robust community of food lovers that includes farmers, chefs, journalists, writers, academics or food bloggers. A place where to experiment with new combinations of products and dishes, and where to offer a variety of souvenirs, “tourists can’t take away much ice cream, but they can take away chocolates” (Smith, 2007b). A gastronomy destination where food tourism ultimately becomes “more than wine trails and pick-your-own orchards” (Churchouse, 2009a) and importantly drives people to experience behind the scenes “the combination of the diversity of the New Zealand landscape, the friendliness of the people, and the food and wine experience make it like nowhere else in the world” (Airey, 2001). This adds to the current literature that already affirms that media discourses around tourism development are characterised by a promotion of local identity projects (McLennan et al., 2017; Schmallegger and Carson, 2010) which in this study case are able to reflect the natural and cultural idiosyncrasies of New Zealand people, land and lifestyles.

Finally, it is important to recall that the topics which are more timely for media are therefore also expected to be a source of inspiration for audiences (Månsson, 2011; McLennan et al., 2017; Scheufele and Tewksbury, 2007). While this study found that food and tourism are together crucial issues in destinations – in terms of social, cultural and economical impact – future research would require the study of practical and managerial implications. This may lead researchers to explore whether or not news content may effectively contribute to the improvement of food tourism in New Zealand, and, for example, to the encouragement of tourists to taste local food, what type, and specifically where. Also, opportunities for future research refer to a comparison between the building of tourism narratives from the print media perspective and the current marketing and promotion

contents of the country. Results of the current analysis are not sufficient to interpret the findings in this direction. Both food production and tourism industries are deeply arrayed in New Zealand identity, culture and economy, and much more work is needed with regard to the influence of media coverage of food tourism on people.

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