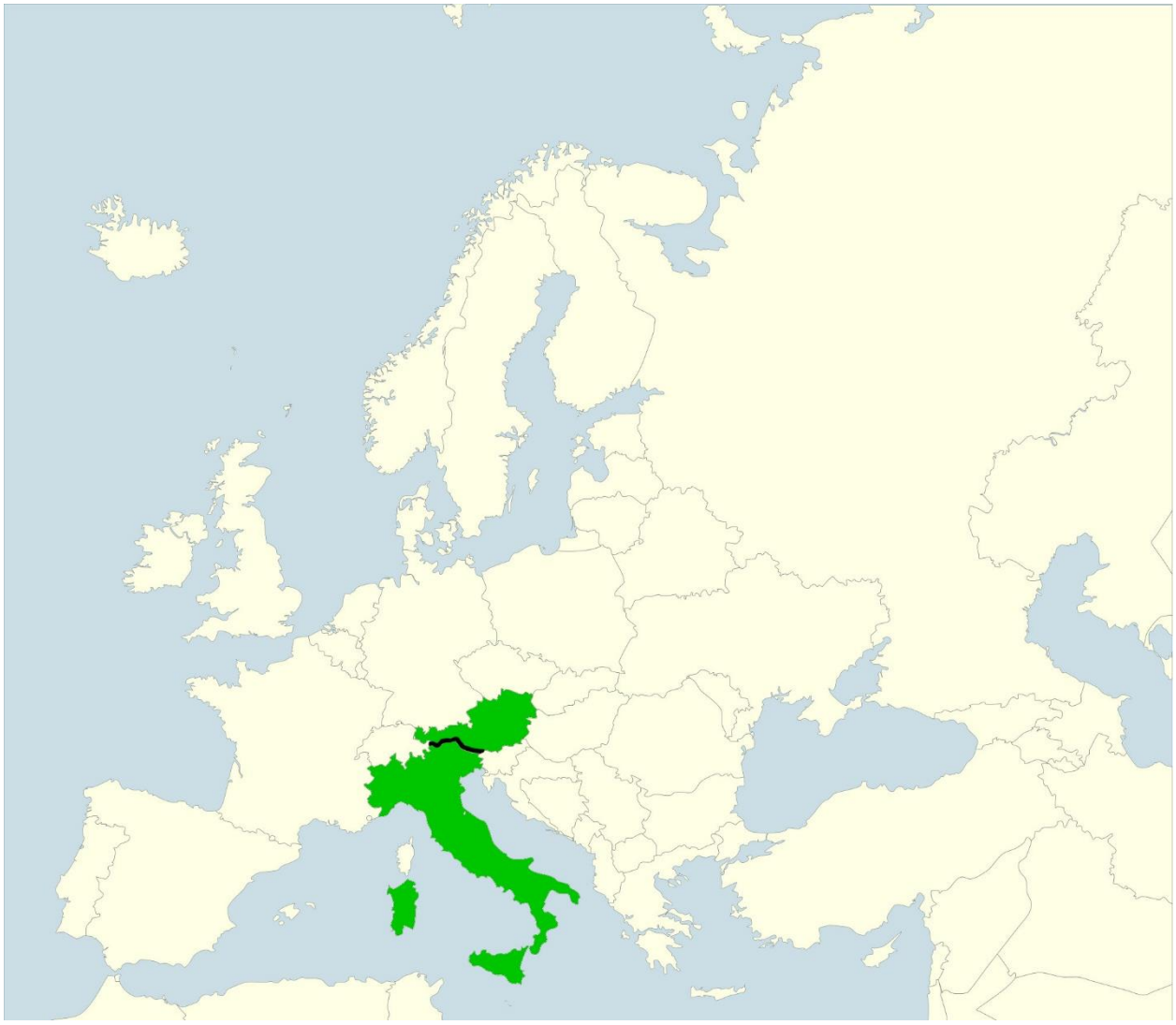
European Countryside | volume 14 | No. 4 | p. 696-720 | DOI: 10.2478/euco-2022-0035

FOOD RELATES: POSITIONINGS IN SPACE, TIME AND SOCIETY IN THE GERMAN LANGUAGE POCKETS OF SAURIS AND TIMAU (ITALY)

Leonie Hasenauer[1]





[1] Mag. Leonie Hasenauer, University of Innsbruck, ORCID: 0000-0002-6170-8526, email: leonie.hasenauer@uibk.ac.at

Received 31 March 2022, Revised 28 June 2022, Accepted 13 July 2022

Abstract: The author analyses positionings in space, time and society that inhabitants of Sauris and Timau, German language pockets in Friuli, construct in qualitative interviews about food. Positionings of the self are immanent when interviewees speak about, represent and relate to times they, their parents or grandparents have experienced, as well as frequented localities and known persons. Relations, which outreach the places, are established through the preparation and consumption of specific foods because it evokes memories, emotions, feelings, and transmits values. Dishes with dialectal German names that are associated with the place and food, which had been consumed daily in the agrarian past became particular. In order to negotiate meanings and to identify with places and people, common food preparation, consumption and reflections are necessary, and individual interpretations need to be accepted.

Keywords: place, minorities, language pockets, positioning theory, identification, food culture, rural research, Italian Alps

Zusammenfassung: Die Autorin analysiert Positionierungen in Raum, Zeit und Gesellschaft, welche Einwohner*innen von Sauris und Timau, deutschen Sprachinseln in Friaul, in qualitativen Interviews über Essen konstruieren. Positionierungen des Selbst sind immanent wenn Interviewte über Zeiten die sie, ihre Eltern oder Großeltern erlebt haben sowie besuchte Orte und bekannte Personen sprechen, sie repräsentieren und Beziehungen zu ihnen herstellen. Relationen, welche über die Orte hinausreichen, werden durch die Zubereitung und den Konsum von speziellem Essen aufgebaut, da dies Erinnerungen, Emotionen, Gefühle und Werte übermittelt. Gerichte mit dialektalen deutschen Bezeichnungen, welche mit dem Ort assoziiert werden, und Essen, das in der agrarischen Vergangenheit täglich konsumiert worden war, wurde zur Besonderheit. Um Bedeutungen auszuhandeln, und sich mit Orten und Personen zu identifizieren, sind die gemeinsame Zubereitung und der Konsum sowie Gespräche über Essen notwendig, außerdem müssen individuelle Interpretationen Akzeptanz finden.

Schlagwörter: Ort, Minderheiten, Sprachinseln, Positionierungstheorie, Identifikation, Esskultur, ländlicher Raum, italienischer Alpenraum

Highlights

- Experienced times and frequented places in connection to familiar people are meaningful.
- Specific foods connect by evoking memories, emotions, feelings, affects and values.
- Collective meanings of foods are dynamic.
- Narratives convey the shared, place-specific trait of simplicity.
- Shared food preparation and consumption in families is central for positionings.

1. Introduction

Comprehensive economic, social and political developments have shaped the German language pockets Sauris[2] and Timau in the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia (northeast Italy), where language variants that do not exist in the surrounding areas have persisted. Furthermore, individual and collective positionings are situated in dynamics that result from flows of ideas, information, (technological) innovations, goods and

[2] The official Italian toponyms are Sauris and Timau. Though inhabitants use Tischlbong e.g., on street signs, the standardized German names are Tischelwang and Zahre.

people. Eating is not only a vital every-day practice, but also reflective of past and present circumstances. Therefore, nutrition is always open to change, but certain elements might persist nevertheless. Ingredients, preparation modes, tastes and dishes in general may have a long history. Uncovering the actual origins, however, is not central to this study. Instead, associations and meanings that inhabitants give to them shall be explored to analyze how people position themselves in relation to different times, places and communities through food.

With an altitude of approximately 1,400m a.s.l., the upper locality called Sauris di sopra is the highest settlement of Friuli. Sauris counted 393 inhabitants in 2021 (ISTAT 2022), and Timau, which is administratively part of the municipality Paluzza, had approximately 350 inhabitants. As it can be seen on the map (Fig. 1), Timau borders Austria; it is separated from it by a mountain pass. There are no definite details about the origins of the language pockets due to a lack of data, but in the High Middle Ages, centuries before the establishment of today's national borders, Germans built settlements in Romanic-speaking Alpine areas. Sauris does not border today's Austria, and apart from the settlement's origins, historical connections with Austria are limited, as are those of Timau, especially when compared to South Tyrol and Valcanale. While Friuli had come under the Habsburg monarchy in the 18th century, it was annexed by Italy in 1866 (except for Valcanale). Therefore, Sauris and Timau sided with Italy in WWI and WWII. Besides Italian and Friulian, old German language variants might have persisted in Sauris and Timau because of their remoteness. However, Italian has become increasingly dominant in the 20th and 21st century. Though, there had been no option demanding the population to choose between staying and assimilating or migrating to Austria in Sauris and Timau as in South Tyrol, Trentino, Valcanale and other German and Ladin language pockets, Italianization affected the inhabitants nevertheless.

The 20th century was also characterized by socio-economic transitions. Taking Alagna, a rural community in the region of Piedmont that borders Switzerland and was established by the Walser, as a starting point, Viazzo (1989) studied upland communities. He found out that they were challenged by lower productivity as well as differing topographic conditions and had been adapting to natural conditions, for example, through appropriate cultivation and migration. Due to the considerable extent of migration, especially seasonal and permanent emigration, Viazzo (1989, p. 12) refuted that upland communities used to be marginal, isolated and backward in the past. With the rise of industry and tourism, agriculture declined. As Steinicke (1991, p. 96) writes, unfavorable conditions led to a quick abandonment of agriculture in Timau. Furthermore, he speculates that the increase in employment opportunities in the 1980s explains the decrease in agriculture in Sauris (ibid. p. 98). Whereas economy is still weak in Timau, a ham factory and tourism provide jobs in Sauris. Figure 2 gives a general impression of Sauris di Sotto, and on Figure 3, the touristic exploitation of old buildings is represented. Not only the newer houses in Timau (Fig. 4) but also the derelict, old stone buildings in the more ancient part of the village stand in contrast to Sauris. The transition from agriculture to other occupations and economically motivated encounters and exchanges that go along with tourism affect people's lives and challenge self-concepts of individuals and communities. Luger (2010, p. 27) discusses that the economic exploitation of local cultural rituals may result in the loss of the previous meanings and functions. Nevertheless, tourism can stabilize the population (Viazzo 1989, p. 77), which would be important for Timau and Sauris because they have suffered from heavy population losses (Steinicke & Piok 2003, Hasenauer & Plautz 2021).

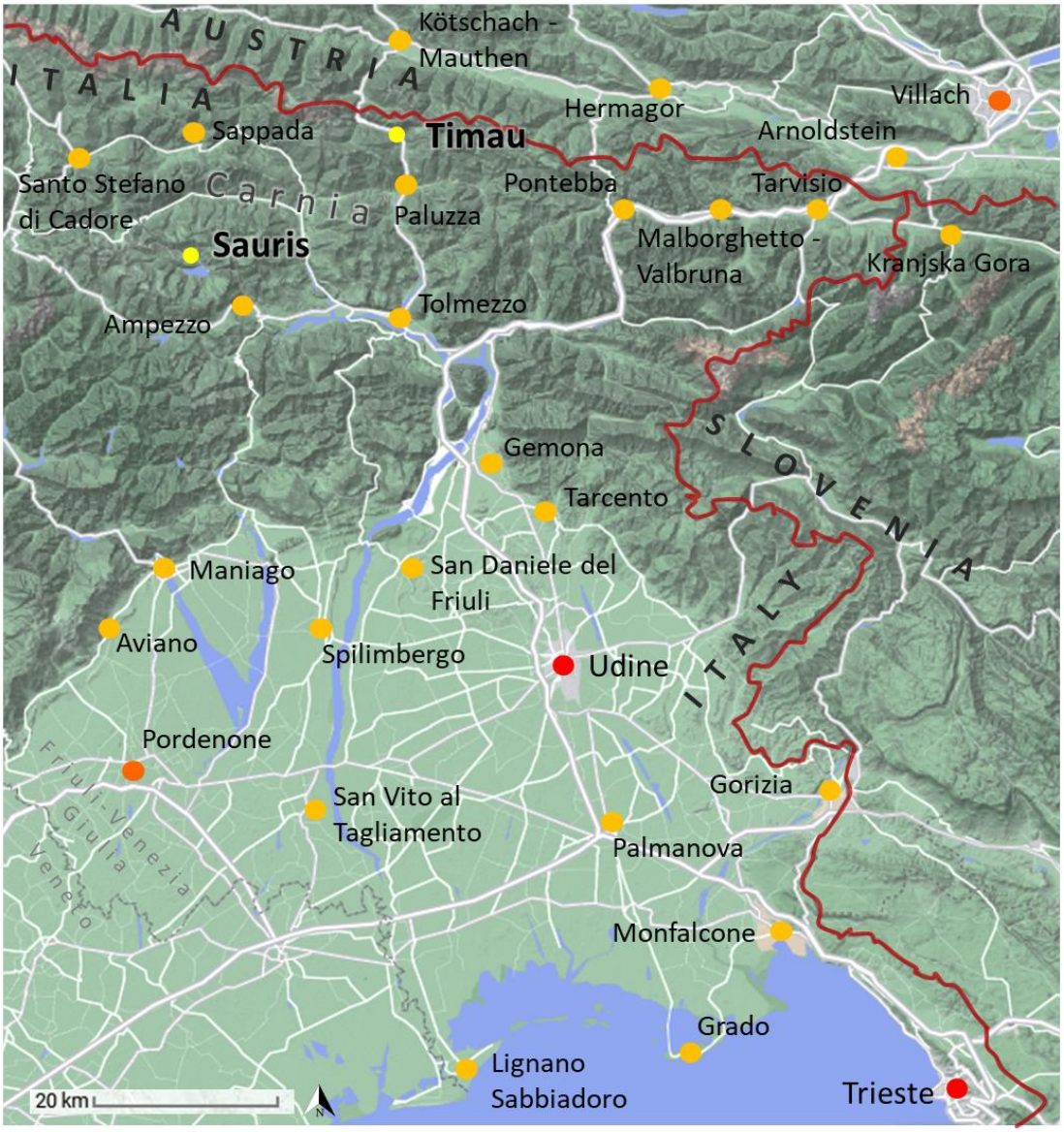


Fig 1. The locations of Timau and Sauris in Carnia, in the mountainous north of Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Source: Google Maps, editing: Leonie Hasenauer, May 2022



Fig 2. The central settlement of Sauris di Sotto. Photograph: Leonie Hasenauer, September 2021



Fig 3. One of the old buildings as could be found in Tyrol, with a dialectal sign. This exemplifies the village's transformation from the domination of agriculture towards that of tourism. Photograph: Leonie Hasenauer, September 2021



Fig 4. The main road in Timau leads through a relatively new part of the village. Photograph: Leonie Hasenauer, September 2021

Measures to protect different dialects, variants and languages seem a prerequisite for and a signal of a general appreciation of concerned communities. People in Sauris and Timau have long urged for rights such as the use of their languages in education or on road signs. Therefore, legal rights to maintain minorities' languages were an achievement (LR 2009 n. 20). The downside of such measures is the pressure to remain "original", which runs counter to a free, diverse and self-determined lifestyle (Toivanen 2005). Accordingly, Waldron (1995, p. 109) argues that people cannot be denied freedom of choice in their lives, and cultures could not be insulated – the preservation of a pure culture should not be the aim. Instead, he contends that "people learn about value from the dynamics of their culture and its interactions with others" (ibid., p. 109). However, this not only applies to groups of people such as inhabitants of Sauris and Timau collectively but especially to individuals. While Waldron speaks of "their" culture, there are no clearly demarcated, unifying cultures, histories and traditions. As Hobsbawm (2000, p. 1) explains, traditions might only appear to be old, but in fact, be invented. It is the repetition of practices that might suggest continuity. He argues that traditions are invented especially when "the transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable" (Hobsbawm 2000, p. 4). The 20th century has been such a time, so that the term tradition needs to be regarded critically and the purpose

of invented traditions be considered. In regard to minorities, the function of (re)constructing "or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups" (Hobsbawm 2000, p. 9) is of particular relevance. In this article, individual narratives will be discussed to identify different representations of and relations to groups and places, which are determined by dynamics and interactions.

As Hobsbawm (2000, p. 2) explains, customary practices differ from traditional ones in so far as, in order to adapt to life, they are flexible. Not least when preparing, consuming and talking about food individuals need to adjust customs if they wish to integrate them into their lives. Since food and drinks are "signifiers of group culture and identity" (Wilson 2006, p. 12), the author is interested in how positions are negotiated through the vital everyday practice of nutrition. Moreover, Lupton (1994, p. 666) adds the spatial dimension, stating that food "acts symbolically to define boundaries between Self and Other and construct a cosmology". Therefore, food is necessary to become familiar with meanings persistent in the environment. An initial reference grid, which determines how, for example, normal, particular or pleasant different modes of preparation and consumption, smells and tastes seem, is constructed in childhood. Experiences in connection to strong emotions are memorized for life and might evolve norms, expectations and myths (e.g., what the perfect birthday is like) that the child was confronted with (Lupton 1994). When positioning the self within networks of meanings, people draw on previous food-related experiences. Consequently, the investigation on nutrition aims at discovering how people in Sauris and Timau position themselves individually but also collectively in place, time and society. In order to answer this, other questions need to be addressed: Which spatial units are mentioned, what meanings are ascribed, and how do interviewees relate to them? Which times are most dominant in the interviews, what meanings are attributed, and how do persons relate to them? Which groups are referred to and how are they positioned in space and time, do people describe some kind of connection?

For the analysis of positionings through food, Cisilino and Del Fabro's (2016) outline of regional basics of past nutrition provides a framework. It seems that the *Carni*, which were of Celtic origin and inhabited Friuli until approximately 200BC, established the basic nourishment for the years to come. Presumably, they relied on grazing animals and the cultivation of cereals and legumes (ibid., p. 171). Moreover, the *Carni* had been pioneers in the way they conserved pork, which remained an essential element of nutrition, with salt. Under the Patriarchs of Aquileia, bread and wine became more popular (ibid., p. 173). Furthermore, cattle raising enabled the production of dairy goods. One result of the Venetian occupation of the Patriarch was the dissemination of spices, which lay the ground for the preparation of *cjarsons* (some kind of ravioli) (ibid., p. 174). Successively, products such as corn and potato made their way from America and became staple foods.

Weichhart (1999) explains the basic role of the environment for people to generally identify elements and patterns, and to identify with it by establishing a sense of belonging and emotional ties. The relevance of the environment is also demonstrated by Tilley's understanding of places as "contexts for human experience, constructed in movement, memory, encounter and association" (1994, p. 15). In line with this, Lupton (1994) demonstrated the significance of childhood food memories that involve family. Consequently, the hypothesis is that in interviews and group discussions, individuals relate to places as well as people perceived as close, and to times they or their relatives have experienced. Therefore, in regard to food, inhabitants of Timau or Sauris and Carnia (i.e., the northwestern, mountainous part of Friuli), (northern) Italians, and neighboring villages may be of relevance, as could be the case with nearby Austria. Presumably, the person her/himself, one or both grandparents, parents or the partner comes from a different town, where food habits are perceived as more or less similar. Entanglements that influence nutrition can be manifold; and besides origins, migration, spatial and social mobility need to be considered. In fact, mobility, interactions and socio-spatial interconnectedness not only outreach Sauris and Timau but also determine the places and the people who live there. Though there might be similarities, experiences are individual, which makes speculations about specific forms of meaningful connections barely possible.

This paper expands positioning theory and applies it to a geographical survey of German language pockets. While rural areas are generally challenged by standardization and homogenization as well as pluralization, the preservation of historical knowledge, skills and practices seems especially urgent in regard to

minorities. The foundation for the discussion of the results will be established by the first chapters on theory and methodology. Because the change in the villages was probably the most dominant narrative, specific representations will be delineated at the beginning of the empirical part. Next, food as a link between places and inhabitants is discussed. Having investigated the temporal dimension and food in connection to place, a debate on the respective positionings of people within groups follows. However, positions are not limited to the surrounding environment but people need to negotiate the role of tradition and the degree of openness. This relies on personal knowledge and abilities as well as conscience, which will be further elaborated in the subsequent chapter. In light of these complexities, people construct continuity and position themselves in relation to different places and spaces, so that a geographical approach seems appropriate.

2. Theoretical background

With a range of foci, researchers have discussed developments alpine communities have undergone in the past, which also affect food. Fontefrancesco and Pieroni (2020) conducted studies in a – in terms of language – particular valley in the region of Piedmont, and detected effects of tourism. Specifically, they examined the renegotiation of situativity in the Upper Sangone Valley, where besides Italian and the Piedmontese dialect Patois, i.e., Franco-Provençal, used to be spoken. The acquisition of situated knowledge and context-related experiences in general might be considered prerequisite to positioning. Regarding situativity, Fontefrancesco and Pieroni identified the shift from agriculture towards tourism as meaningful. With the decline of agriculture, first hand experiences, where local environmental knowledge (LEK) can be gained, decreased (ibid., 2020, p. 15). Instead, cultural and gastronomic heritage is frequently commercialized (Zago 2018; Fontefrancesco & Pieroni 2020, p. 5, p. 17). Whereas the knowledge about and use of certain plants and mushrooms diminished, others increased due to immigration, mass media and popular literature. Though changing, Fontefrancesco and Pieroni (2020, pp. 16) found that LEK remains tangible, present and situated. That knowledge and other abilities connected to food preparation are situated and therefore intertwined with dynamic life circumstances is certainly applicable to this paper. How economic developments shape human-environment relationships, not least when it comes to food, is also highly relevant. It goes without saying that after abandoning agriculture, there is a lack of formerly self-produced products and replacements might be very dissimilar.

Due to the fact that Stacul (2003) thematizes relations inhabitants construct to the places they live, his study on localism in Italian alpine localities is worth considering. While he admits that the population was mobile, he believes that mobility takes a back seat in the formation of self-identity because it cannot contribute to a sense of stability that is connected to "being 'in place'" (Stacul 2003, p. 189). The anthropologist found that actors establish a sense of stability through material symbols such as the bounded field. By means of this image, Stacul argues that the political leaders' representations of local identity and the locals' practices are dialectical (ibid., p. 194). He contends that political messages are reinterpreted locally, and that ideas are at the same time legitimated by drawing upon political discourses. Similar to the concept of invented traditions, the researcher also discusses continuity, adding the spatial dimension (ibid., pp. 187): "Representing the past as repetitive evokes the idea of a social group that reproduces itself over time […]; yet, this is a reference to a group which reproduces itself on the same territory, on a territory which the group controls, that is to say, a private property." Leaving aside the political dimension, it will be analyzed by what means inhabitants construct relations to the localities when speaking about food and what role their mobility, the crossing of boundaries on different scales, plays. However, this study on Sauris and Timau is not limited to "bounded fields" or localities.

In regard to the specific villages, historians (Baum 1980), linguists (Kranzmayer 1968, Geyer & Gasser 2003, Denison & Grassegger 2007) and geographers (Steinicke 1991, Steinicke & Piok 2003) have undoubtedly laid the basis by studying German language pockets in Friuli to find out about the origins and developments of the settlements or languages. For this study on positionings, though, it is more central to investigate ascribed meanings, and how inhabitants relate to "their" history or histories, than to speculate about the *real* origins. In this context, Steinicke's (1998) evaluation of Timau's ethnolinguistic peculiarity and its uncertain future, where he discusses demographic trends in detail, is a cornerstone.

According to the geographer, population loss is a great threat to the preservation of ethnolinguistic particularities, as are the decline in agriculture and the persistence on the singularity of the village that hinders the exploitation of synergy effects that could evolve from cooperation with other speakers of German variants. Examining possible pillars for ethnolinguistic maintenance, a recent study found that in both Timau and Sauris, the language variants are visible in public space and that in the latter, traditional elements of the cultural landscape (e.g., houses, former stables and farming gadgets) are well preserved (Hasenauer & Plautz 2021). Since these linguistic and cultural elements no longer have a practical use (except to attract tourists to Sauris), they are interpreted as signs of symbolic ethnicity.

Food (consumption) is a productive field of research in various disciplines such as cultural studies (Wilk 2010, Ashley et al. 2005, Jackson 2015), which have contact points with geographical food studies (Bell & Valentine 1997). Chan (2010, p. 205) examined "how food memories reveal relationships between the past and the present, reflect epochal transformation, and mark changing identities of various groups of people through new ways of appropriations" in Hong Kong. Therefore, the sociologist observed the development of collective meanings of the dish *pancai.* Though this study on Timau and Sauris focuses on inhabitants' positionings, it is also central how they portray the past, the present, and changes in relation to society through memories in connection to food. Furthermore, Liu et al. (2020) investigated negotiations of identity as well as inclusion and exclusion of a minority in public space in a Chinese city. While the researchers also apply geographies of food to minority issues, the study is different because they base it on geographies of encounters in an urban environment. What remains to be addressed is how inhabitants of upland communities construct groups such as *the* local minority, places and times and position themselves in relation when reflecting on food.

Positioning theory seems to be a fruitful concept for studies of inhabitants of minority regions because "locating social phenomena within the places and times of the natural world, the door is opened for the unnoticed transposing of properties of material things and their relations to the social realm" (Langenhove & Harré 1999, p. 14). Instead of the material world, symbolic exchanges serve as a starting point for research since, according to the concept, the social world and people's positions therein are created within conversations. In this sense, positionings are dynamic negotiation processes of positions. Social forces hereby determine what is sayable through rights, duties and obligations (Langenhove & Harré 1999, p. 29) so that people cannot position themselves freely. This applies especially to minorities since minority rights go along with expectations concerning distinct and supposedly authentic features (Toivanen 2005). Though Butler also characterizes agency as constrained, she stresses the possibility "to exploit the presuppositions of speech to produce a future of language that is nowhere implied by those presuppositions" (Butler 1997, p. 140). Bearing constraints in mind, this study compares how individuals construct their positions.

While positioning theory in the original sense focuses on the social realm (Langenhove & Harré 1999), a geographical perspective sheds light on spatial networks to which people relate and in which they position themselves. Why positioning theory is a fruitful concept for geographic food studies in minority regions, and what such studies need to focus on is demonstrated by Cook and Crang's (1996) understanding of food consumption as local, on which this paper is based. First of all, they conceive local as contextual, whereas contexts "are recognized as being opened up by and constituted through connections into any number of networks" (Cook & Crang 1996, p. 138). In these networks' various flows, and in the imagined and performed representations that surround them, in turn, are consumers positioned and position themselves via entanglements. Therefore, the aim is to learn with which places, times and groups the interviewees describe themselves as entangled. While this may sound abstract, it is very sensual when regarding food because smells, tastes and textures can function as connecting media. Accordingly, as Lupton (1994, p. 668) argues, "food can trigger memories of previous food events and experiences around food, whereas memory can serve to delimit food preferences and choices based on experiences". Generally, memories derive from situations filled with strong emotions such as joy, pleasure or conflict. Not only do emotions lead to memories, but Lupton also illustrates how food may trigger feelings of otherness, of being different in a positive way, of being loved or of family unity, and how food can serve to mark in-group status, the continuation of tradition, or celebration of a special event. Through narratives about food in connection to experiences, feelings and emotions, people de-, re- or construct

their positions, the kinds of relations in which they see themselves to others, and what meanings they give to places and times. On account of perpetual de-, re- or new construction processes, continuity might be rarer and even more meaningful than change.

3. Methodology

Due to the fact that minorities are very dominantly positioned by outsiders, the author paid attention to how inhabitants of Sauris and Timau position themselves through the everyday practice of food consumption in relation to the autochthonous minorities. For that purpose, a qualitative study seemed appropriate. However, by writing texts, the researcher de-, re- or positions anew. Thus, particularly in qualitative approaches, entire research processes, including the selection, presentation and interpretation of examples, depend on the researcher. A transparent explanation of the applied methodology is therefore required.

More significant than the actual preparation and consumption seemed how people describe it, hence the preference of interviews over observations. Most interviews and group discussions were conducted with persons who hold the main responsibility for food preparation because they make most food-related choices. First, people dealing with minority issues in the communities were contacted, and they helped find further interview partners. Consequently, this paper does not claim to be representative of the entire villages. As part of a larger research project, interviews were held in September 2021, in times of the COVID-19 pandemic when field work was possible, with inhabitants who feel some kind of membership or connection to the autochthonous minority. However, due to a great openness during research, other voices could also be heard. As participants preferred, either interviews or discussions in small groups were conducted. Locations were also chosen according to their wishes. Most interviews were held at people's homes (DS[Discussion Sauris]1, IS[Interview Sauris]1, IS2, IS3, IS4, IS5, IT[Interview Timau]3), two in a community center (DT[Discussion Timau]1, DT2), one in a restaurant (DS2), two in a calm room of a museum (IS6, IT1), and one in a small, calm supermarket (IT2). While the private space might have resulted in more intimate interviews, discussions in groups evolved more dynamically. Furthermore, people with various connections to the village joined the interview in the supermarket for up to half an hour. In the restaurant, a man participated for an hour, and a teenage intern of the local museum who claimed to prepare meals further enriched the material.

Aside from one interview mainly held with one person but in which three people joined for ten to thirty minutes (IT2), eight interviews were conducted with only one person at a time. One group discussion (DS2) was executed with two sisters and a man who joined for an hour, i.e., most of the interview. A second group discussion was conducted with two sisters, their mother, a friend and a visitor (who has not been counted because his contribution is not considered) (DS1). Another two group discussions were held, one with three (DT1) and one with five people (DT2) (one person joined both). To sum up, twenty different women and three men participated in the core interviews/discussions. The ages of the participants were 15, 20, 33, two people over 80, and the rest ranged from age 40 to 79. From the interviewees, eleven were retired, and one was a student.

Questions were prepared, giving some guidelines to ensure the coverage of aspects that the researcher deemed central and to enable some comparisons. The questions were adapted according to the situations so that narrative flows were not disturbed and to foster a thematically "natural" or logical structure. Roughly, the questions were prepared as follows: At the beginning, before the researcher could set a direction, interviewees were asked for a short description of their nutrition, and where, with whom and with what frequency they did the shopping, cooking and consumption. The interviewer wanted to find out about the participants' ages, family statuses and mobilities, if that influenced their nutrition, and if changes in their lives had affected it. Interviewees discussed the impact of a broad range of factors on their nutrition. Regarding the family, food preferences and language use were talked about. The researcher was interested in reflections on food consumption habits, the use of different ingredients, the perception of different dishes and dislikes. The interviewees shared memories, comparisons, and associations with different places, people and times. Further on, they explained if certain values or convictions determined their shopping, preparation, and consumption. Another question addressed

the characterization of food consumption, suggesting individual, local, regional, national or international. Towards the end, interviewees were asked whether they felt as part of the minority or the village community, if that community ate specifically, and whether they did so too. Finally, the interviewer aimed at finding out whether people regarded their nutrition as expressive, for example demonstrating proper values and identifications, or meaningless.

The interviews and discussions amount to 15 hours and 30 minutes of recording. One interview, one group discussion, and parts of another group discussion were held and transcribed in German (variants) and the rest in Italian. Quotes for this paper are translated into English, except for specific dishes, which are, in italics, written as in local recipes. The software MAXQDA was used for transcription, coding and analysis, which is based on the structuring qualitative content analysis, as illustrated by Kuckartz (2018). Accordingly, the researcher first derived codes deductively from theories and studies with connecting points, and revised them inductively, finding material-specific solutions. Summaries helped to compare answers and to find similar, dominant or different narratives. In order to detect positionings, attention was given to text passages with specific locations, particular days, dishes, people, and groups in connection with meaningful words or phrases such as:

- Personal and possessive pronouns, e.g.: I, we, one, they, me, us, mine, our
- Adjectives, e.g.: own, other, modern, proper, traditional, typical, (not) good, normal, simple, poor, similar, tasty
- Adverbs, e.g.: past, now, always, often, on Sundays, here, there, together, alone
- Verbs, e.g.: love, like, know, believe

4. Research results

Interviewees did not speak about places, times and groups in isolation, but embedded them in narratives. Perceptions of temporal developments of Timau and Sauris lay the basis for positionings and therefore initiate the empirical section of the paper. Subsequently, the core of the study, relations to place-based groups constructed through specific dishes, follows. This is expanded by discussing how people relate to a range of groups by various means. Confronted with new developments, the degree of openness determines how strong the wish to preserve tradition is. Moreover, knowledge, habits and conscience affect the approach to food. It might not come as a surprise that the majority does not describe the proper diet as traditional or place specific. However, specific dishes on holidays are meaningful all the more. Generally, as the end of the empirical section underlines, experiences, competencies and knowledge shape people's relations to spatial units on different scales.

4.1 Representations of Sauris and Timau as changed

Interview partners portrayed Sauris and Timau as shaped by temporal developments. This chapter deals with changes that concern supply and demand and go hand in hand with the decrease in farming, augmented mobility, diversification of lifestyles and technology that concern both people and the places they live in. As will be elaborated, these affect food-related knowledge, preferences, habits, and connotations.

While references to different times and circumstances in the past were made chaotically, a general trend was that interviewees described an increase in supply and demand during the 20th century (DS1, DS2, IS1, IS2, IS3, IS6, DT1, DT2). The fifty-year-olds experienced that each household had cows and consequently dairy products and some animals such as chickens, pigs, sheep, and goats (DS1, DS2, IS3, IS6, DT1). Yet, meat had been scarce for animals had rarely been slaughtered (DS1, DS2, IS2, IS6, DT1, IT3). Furthermore, families had economized on dairy products because they needed them for trade (DS1). Interviewees referred to women who had walked from Timau "to Friuli" (probably meaning further south) by foot to swap their produce for grain or flour (DT1). In Sauris, the eldest interview partner had experienced long walks in person (DS1). They had only purchased small amounts of goods such as sugar because they had had to carry it, and could not afford more.

Referring to a different time period in the past, the higher-aged women recounted in another discussion that there used to be three groceries, a hairdresser and at least seven taverns in Timau, but that it diminished due to depopulation (DT1). However, they could now get almost everything in the village, or else in Paluzza or Tolmezzo. Generally, one had the opportunity to get anything ready-cooked one could possibly think of. In fact, they had so much, that they did not like anything in particular anymore.

Over time, people got to know new products and dishes, and appropriated some. How change came about was described by means of different narratives, referring to various drivers and effects, places, people and times. To one woman, changes that had manifested within years in Sauris are exemplified by the very material form of breakfast, more explicitly the "modern" breakfast she and her generation had consumed at home (*caffèlatte*) compared to that of her husband's (*sopa*), who is seven years older (IS4).

At a young age, when pupils frequented school in neighboring towns, they were exposed to different foods. One person recalled how she had first tasted lasagne and artichoke, which had become normal to her, when she stayed overnight at a schoolmate's home in Tolmezzo (IT3). A man described his "problem" was that as a child, he had not paid much attention to food preparation, and after leaving the village to go to school, he had eaten what had been offered in the canteen (DS2). Afterward, when he worked at his family's hotel, they had to serve what the clients wished for and what pleased all of them. Frequently mentioned was how the school had also affected language use. Pupils from Sauris had been urged to speak in Italian and had been teased if they refused to (DS2, IS1, IS4). Illustrating the substantial effect on the young individuals, one interviewee said that had "repotted" them (IS4).

Most people had personal narratives about leaving the village to find work. Abroad, interview partners or their parents had got to know new products (e.g., bananas) and dishes and could purchase them (DT1, DT2). Interviewees from Sauris had moved to Udine or other towns in Friuli (DS1, DS2, IS4), neighboring Cadore (IS6), Milan (IS6), Austria (IS2), and even Nigeria (DS2). From Timau, people had relocated to various towns of Friuli too, but especially the now over seventy-year-olds had migrated to Switzerland, and one to Luxemburg, at a young age (DT1, DT2). How they liked the food abroad and how their mobility had impacted them was evaluated differently. The woman who had lived in Nigeria for four years described her struggles to find fresh products and that after her stay, she was lactose intolerant (DS2). Another woman recalled that she had not liked the dumplings or *Gulasch* in Austria very much, but the *Wiener Schnitzel* (IS2). She thought her stay had not changed her food preparation or consumption at all. While the interviewee illustrated her love for the food of her mother, she might generally not remember her stay in Austria positively due to her divorce. Another woman denied that her stay in Cadore, which is close to Sauris and might therefore be similar in terms of nutrition, had had any impact (IS6). She believed that at home, people prepared what they were used to; living abroad, however, one might "steal" ideas from acquaintances. In contrast, others had brought new recipes from Switzerland, for example, *Spätzle* (small, boiled lumps of dough), *Rösti* (fried grated potatoes), liver or fondue, and food habits, such as eating bread with marmalade for dinner (DT1, DT2). Connections are not only material but also personal: One had married a Swiss man, and had stayed there for 46 years until she returned to Timau (DT1). Nevertheless, she joined in the jokes about the Swiss not very refined food preparation, with sausages and French fries. Another woman had met her future husband in Switzerland, who had come from the vicinity of Rome (DT1). They had lived and worked for 35 years in Lignano (IT), where she had learned how to prepare fish. Moreover, one interview partner had lived and learned how to prepare fish in the southern town of Friuli from where her partner came (DT2). The other way around, one had moved from neighboring Ampezzo to her husband in Sauris (IS3).

Several interviewees described how in connection to work and lifestyle, not only singular dishes or habits had changed, but overall food preferences (DS1, DS2, IS3, DT1). People speculated that because work had shifted from physically demanding to mental, one could not eat the caloric dishes of the past on a regular basis without risking health issues. A man also referred to the influence of tourism, for he himself had cooked dishes how they had pleased the guests and believed Sauris seemed traditional to tourists, but that it was only presented as such for profit (DS2).

Clearly, the possibility to drive by car to do the shopping increased the availability of products. More often, however, did interview partners speak about the *spolert*, a wood stove (IS3, DT1, DT2, IT3). Most of

the interview partners still had one and prepared food on it, but while the fire had been necessary to cook in the past, people from Timau and Sauris would now only activate that stove in the winter to also heat the room. An interviewee interpreted how women had put a pot on the wood stove early in the morning, leaving it so that it had been ready at noon, as a marker of their lifestyle (DT2). Whereas the *spolert* stands for slow, simple, natural food of the past, the microwave has no history, no meaning, and heats quickly. In connection to that, women over seventy criticized in a group discussion that some of their children, and younger generations in general, prepared instant meals, heating them in the microwave (DT1). Furthermore, one of the oldest interviewees explained in detail how they had tried to preserve goods such as meat in the past (IS2). Today, interview partners use freezers to conserve vegetables from their gardens for the winter (IS1, IS2, IS4). They also find it useful not having to cook each time but to find, for example, self-made *necklan* (small pasta balls), *ckropfn* (a type of ravioli, see Fig. 5) or zucchini-pea cream in the freezer (IS1, DT1, IT3). Although media was never described as influential, a few interviewees sometimes look up recipes on the Internet (IS3, DT2). Similarly, a number of women watch cooking programs on TV, but hardly ever copies the dishes (DS1, IS5, IS6).



Fig 5. Recipes such as "ckropfn va Tischlbong" in the German variant and Italian, published by local cultural organisations (Bianchet & Plozner 2019).

How exactly it evolved is unclear, but interviewees now had dishes associated with Italy, especially pasta, on a daily basis, and instead of lard and butter, olive oil became popular. Moreover, some suggested that everybody loved pizza (DS1, DT2).

Interview partners recounted changes in agriculture and food supply. It can be summarized that people got to know new dishes already in school and in different residences, also through the partnerships they established there. Both the affordability and range of available products increased, and preparation and conservation modes changed. The older interview partners had experienced change that encompassed entire life styles and went hand in hand with the meanings ascribed to food (IS6):

> 1: Oh yes. Oh yes, *polenta*, however, is a *signoria* [i.e., noble] *polenta*. Because once, *polenta* … its value, yes. Rather, if one eats it, if one prepares *polenta*, there is a feast, yes.
>
> […]
>
> M[moderator]: And before …

1: And before, every day, every day, every day, well, it was a bit … in the evening, always potatoes, soup, yes there was no first, second course and fruits, no. No, absolutely no. No. It has changed a lot, a lot.

While *polenta* (see Fig. 6) and also *ricotta* (i.e., an Italian whey cheese) had changed from mundane to particular (IS6), it was the other way round with *pasta asciutta* (i.e., spaghetti bolognese) because meat had become more affordable (IS2). Referring to the availability of food, one person said that now, every day was carnival (IS3).



Fig 6. Polenta, muas or mues made of wheat flour and corn flour and frico served with a slice of polenta (Bianchet & Plozner 2019, Bianchet & Plozner 2020).

4.2 Identifications with place-based communities through food

Though neither dishes nor meanings attributed to them coincide, some are described as connected to places and the communities. One interviewee showed a high level of reflexivity, which might go along with her engagement in the preservation of local knowledge and practices (IT3). The person explained her understanding of identity and tradition. She argued that the German name was an inherent element of the dish. Believing that traditional dishes were expressive for people and the territory, she connected them to place-based identity (IT3):

Yes. Because the tradition says, it has to do with identity and identity is what I am, what I give, what I can, I know, I am something different than *omologation*. To say, *ckropfn* is tradition, the ravioli, the *ckropfn* with apple are not tradition. The *ckropfn* with apples, apples can I eat in Udine, can I eat in [incomprehensible], can I eat in Trieste, can I eat in Bolzano, everywhere […] but these from here are from here. If I want tradition, I eat them. And these here, these here are identity and these here are from the people here, from the territory, from, that have to do with the people, the custom of the people. And what they have, and what has been transmitted over time. That is tradition.

Whereas interview partners both in Sauris and Timau claimed that certain ingredients and dishes such as elderberries, *polenta*/*muas*, *ckropfn* and *schultar* (“shoulder”, boiled ham, see Fig. 7) were Timavese or Saurano (DS1, DS2, IS5, DT1, IT1, IT2, IT3), this was not always clear on second thought. *Muas,* for example, was mentioned in every interview and discussion in Sauris, and one time as an example of a local or family dish (IS5). *Polenta* in the form of *muas* had been eaten on a daily basis which, however, also applies to Timau (DT1, IT3). Furthermore, an interviewee (IT3) first stated “*ckropfn, ckneidl* [dumplings], elderberries are what we have always eaten in the village”, she later said that no one else in her family liked elderberries and that her husband had not consumed it much as a child. Even more diffuse became the concept of Timavese food in one of the group discussions (DT1). On the one hand, a woman claimed that they would now cook the same everywhere. On the other hand, she said that families and villages had their own recipes, for example, for *ckropfn*. When discussing different preparation methods, a person argued she had tasted *ckropfn* with the same filling as in Timau somewhere in Austria. Later on, an interview partner claimed having eaten a dish just as the Timavese *schultar* in Zagreb. Another responded that in Trieste, they also had something similar and that this was because, as Slovenia, they

had been under the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa (i.e., part of Habsburg monarchy, suggesting that the Croatian capital Zagreb was in Slovenia) (DT1).

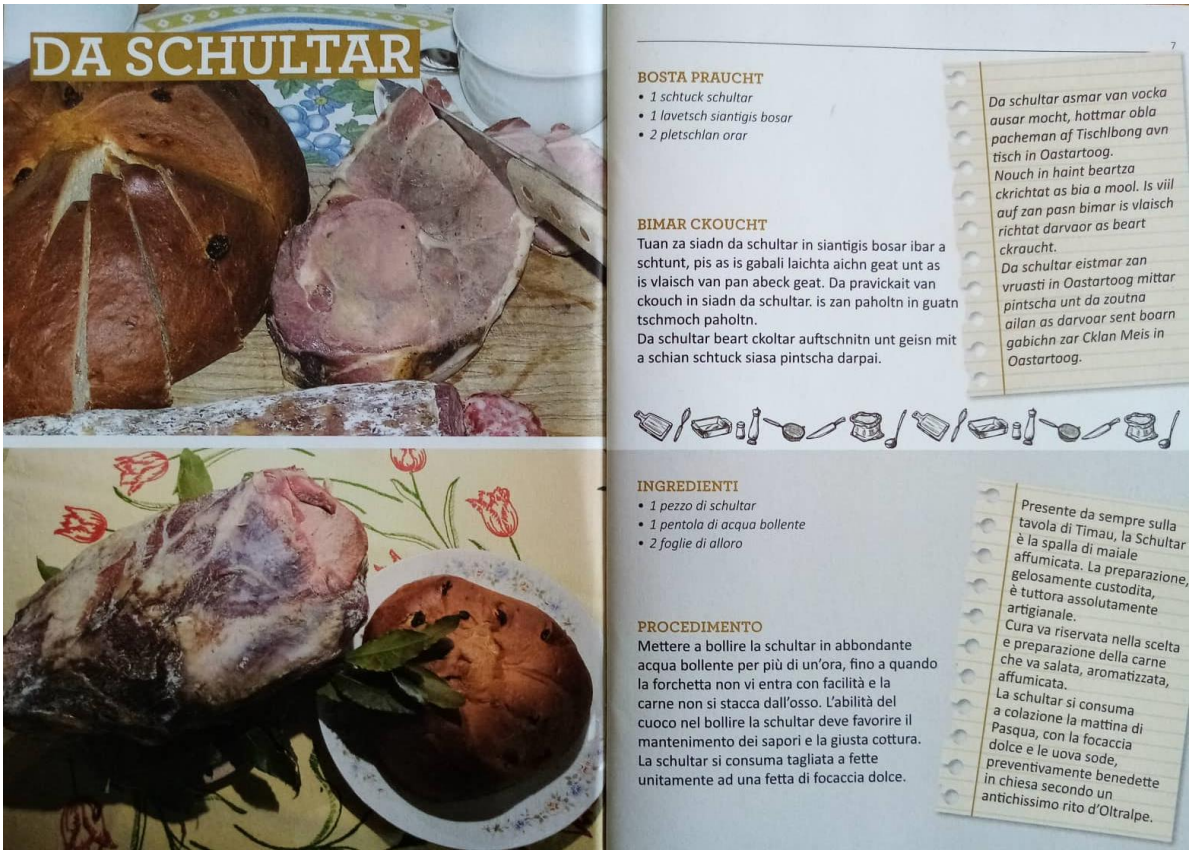


Fig 7. Schultar and pintscha in one of Timau's recipe booklets (Bianchet & Plozner 2021).

When the author asked one person how she would describe her nutrition, she struggled, and started reflecting (IS4). Though she talked about what one could call local dishes, she did not interpret them as such. According to her understanding of local, the product's origin is more central than the preparation method (IS4):

> 1: What … Ah, yes. Yes, all that stuff, mainly simple, dishes that prepared, that prepared my people, maybe my mum and dad, my mum, or my mother-in-law, example sometimes soup … with with cabbage. Barley soup, *polenta*, and then … one uses *ricotta* and sometimes in the evening, I prepare a, we call it *muas*.
>
> M: Mhm.
>
> 1: Which is some kind of *polentina*, but *molla molla [liquid and soft].* And one serves it with, with *dunkhatle*, we say. *Dunkhatle* from meat, […]. That's it, we put that on *muas* and one eats. Sometimes, I prepare *polenta* […]. That's it. What else, what do I prepare. Yes, not all local stuff. What does local mean? *Prosciutto*, we eat few. Few cold cuts and so more than other chicken, turkey, as a main dish. Those things. Stew, but one purchases always in the shop, at the supermarket. Not at the butcher because there is none anymore. […]
>
> Other, other local things, what could be local from here? I don't know what that could be.
>
> M: But.
>
> 1: Our vegetables which we have, which I have in the garden; that I use.

Cook and Crang (1996, p. 139) argue that regional cuisines are invented traditions, exemplifying their argument with the oversea origin of the "essentially" English tea. Furthermore, Ermann et al. (2018, pp. 53) illuminate how different concepts of regional foodstuff can be. Discussed examples also illustrate

that people recognize similarities to other places and regions and that there is no inherently local food or dish, but that it depends, for example, on awareness, perception, experience and representation.

Besides (jumbled) discussions on *their* nutrition, inhabitants of Sauris reflected on how they were associated with food by people from Ampezzo, seemingly marking them as different. In the following passage, the person revealed a neutral, descriptive perspective by not including herself through the absence of pronouns such as "we" or "us" (DS1):

> Yes, yes, so they said in fact Saurani eh *kraut* [cabbage], *krautin* ehh as though saying those who eat *kraut*, because they don't eat, did not eat, yes, didn't have it, no. And therefore, also, especially there, was food really connected to the identity of a village, right.

Difference and otherness played also a role within the village of Sauris, where some people identified with the locality they lived in (DS1). One person who had moved from Ampezzo to Sauris recounted that though it was of no relevance to her, she had immediately recognized that it mattered to inhabitants (IS3). In the interviews, people distinguished concerning food preparation and language (DS1, IS1), and suggested that inhabitants of certain localities were more open than others (DS1). One person also said that there used to be rivalry between the different localities (IS4). Today, however, people dealt with it jokingly: When an interview partner had driven elderly inhabitants to a meeting where they had shared food, three women had brought the same dish, and presented their creations with pride (IS3). People had recognized the dissimilarity, had made jokes about it and had explained it with the style of the specific localities.

The examples illustrate: The larger the scale, the finer the variation. This is furthermore exemplified by *cjarsons,* with the Friulian name already indicating that they are prepared in the region (DS1, IT2, IT3). The Timavese *cjarsons* called *ckropfn* (German dialect) were characterized by the use of cinnamon and tasted slightly different from family to family (IT2, DT1). Furthermore, *sauerkraut* is particular for Sauris, but it also tasted differently within (DS1). Though dishes are only place and group-specific when represented as such, the particularity can be appreciated and help to construct a group and position the self as a member.

4.3 Relating to groups and positioning the self as a member

People find themselves in relation to a multitude of groups. Both the identified groups and the means by which people relate to them vary. In the following, it will be discussed how communities can be constructed by means of words. Regardless of the group, memories of experiences in which foods, tastes, smells and emotions are involved characterize connections. As will be outlined, values and language competencies might determine identifications.

Interviewees created personal relations with different people and groups by means of language. One stated at the beginning of the interview (IS2): "We Saurani still eat a lot like in the past […,], for example, cabbage, *sauerkraut* and cabbage soup, barley soup, […]". By using "we", the interview partner constructed a group and positioned herself within, whereby the group is based on the village of Sauris and adheres to past nutrition.

Findings support Lupton's (1994, p. 668) argument that in regard to memories, childhood experiences are strong with specific tastes, smells, and emotions involved. People recalled the smell of *polenta* (IS3), *sauerkraut* (IS6) or elderberries (DT1) and associated them, for example, with everyday (IS3) or particular and delicious (DT1), with a certain time of the year (DS2, IS6) and commonly with home and family (DS2, IS2, IS3), or the village community (IT3). Certain dishes were characterized as unpleasant because they reminded interviewees of suffering from hunger during the war (IS1, IS2), or disappointing parents with one's dislikes (DS1, IS3). In contrast, the following passage illustrates memories connected to the dear mother and the appreciated food she had prepared, with details that meant a lot to the narrator, possibly transmitting motherly love (IS2):

> 1: Eh there are, there are well, there are well these memories there. […] I remember, hehe, and well that was a thing. We were already in our youth, me and my brother, in the morning we went to mow over there. From here two hours to walk. My mother made us *pasta asciutta* also. Not always *zuf,*

muas, she made *pasta asciutta* and put fine-cut parsley on it. […] And she gave us a glass of wine, in the morning, *pasta asciutta* and we went over there to mow. That always comes to my mind, those things there, my mother, yes. Eh. And *polenta*! Do you know *polenta*?

M: Yes, yes.

1: Well *polenta* one makes, *polenta* one still makes today, there is *polenta, polenta*, with sausage, with […]. Ah, delicious, delicious. With ah, with those tasty flours, that they made. Ah my mum, how delicious it was. Delicious. Delicious those things there, it's useless, delicious.

The narrator's love of the mother's food suggests continuity in her taste. However, the mother could have come from another place, and the whole family could have lived somewhere else. The following passage is about identification, identity, and belongingness in Timau. It deals with the transferability of home and traditions (DT2):

1: We are Friulians, no? We are Carnians, Friulians, we are *Tischlbonga* [Timavese].

3: That is, I think that one is …

1: What one eats?

3: What one feels. And what one eats. However, it is also … that is, I think that a person identifies with a place where he or she likes to be, where the heart is. Home is where the heart is, no? Certainly, my husband has his heart here because he has his family here, but the, he is from another place and has brought with him part of that affection.

1: It is his, no.

3: As a consequence, I followed him for some time. And I appropriated what was that, no. The families' traditional food is also part of people's tradition. There are also family recipes, no, and I remember, my mother-in-law told me my grandmother taught me to prepare this soup. […]

According to the person, learning the preparation of family dishes reflects appreciation of the family; it enables the (re-)positioning of oneself, and being positioned within. By constructing emotional relations, food can facilitate the connection of family members at different places. Correspondingly, the interview partner recounted that her sister lived in Lombardia, and when she visited the village, she purchased local products so that she could celebrate Easter as though being in Timau. Another interviewee described how special it was when her aunt prepared *ckropfn* from Timau in Switzerland (DT2). However, another person contested that the concept of home was connected to specific localities. She identified differences between the place of birth and the later residence (IS3):

And unfortunately, eh, the origins are the origins, there is nothing to do. And you feel belongingness to a community because now I say it's thirty-eight years that I am here and it's normal, I integrated well and to tell the truth, I feel comfortable … but my home is somewhere else. And you have always, you have always references to where you were born, no, you cannot have, at least in my opinion, not being born here, I cannot have references here, no. […]

The woman argued that no place could replace home, which is the place of birth, in offering a basic reference grid. She had a sense of belonging and felt integrated, but that suggests a different position compared to members with seemingly indisputable membership. However, the interviewee believed that apart from local specifics, mountainous regions had traditions in common. Since she did not see big differences between the Sauran and "her Carnian food consumption" (IS3), her identity and food preparation had not changed after her relocation. Generally, she regarded language and tradition, with food as a central component, as opportunities to exercise membership, underlining a function of invented traditions Hobsbawm (2000, p. 9) enlists. The interviewee said she had enjoyed learning some local traditions when her children attended school in Sauris, whereas she never had the possibility to acquire the local variant. In contrast, another interview partner mentioned that his mother who had come from Austria knew the variant better than people born and raised in Sauris (DS2). The relevance of language for membership is stressed by discussions in Timau, where people who had only limited competencies in the local variant rather identified themselves with the local community than the historical, ethnolinguistic

minority (DT2). Still, one of them said she always mentioned Timau's particularity abroad. In connection to her changing language use, an interviewee referred to herself as a "panda". She explained her mother tongue was Timavese, that she had to use Italian in school, and that her neighbor spoke Carnian, a variety of Friulian (DT2). She kept speaking in Timavese to her children and prepared local dishes and ones she had acquired at her husband's original home in Friuli. The woman declared that her children had two traditions, the Carnian from Timau, and the Friulian.

Given examples indicate that positionings either evolve within or need to be appropriated in the family's situated home. Valentine (1999) discusses how by means of eating together, particularly mothers struggle to keep the family united through common values. In the interviews conducted for this study, tastes were regarded as similar, not provoking conflicts. As concerning was only mentioned by older interview partners that younger people tended to cook less and buy more ready-made (DT1, IS2). An interviewee criticized that children would be pickier today (DS2). This might run counter to the interviewees' appreciation of the past. Though not always connoted positively, it was characterized as simple, and the experience of such a lifestyle unites older age groups (DS1, IS1, IS2, IS6, DT1). Furthermore, people frequently described their present nutrition as simple, with two especially stressing it (IS1, IS2). One of them said that she did not have to worry about the price of goods and that she had often been obliged to dine out, but despised luxurious restaurants and hotels (IS1). By emphasizing her love of simple food, she demonstrated her adherence to local values and reinforced the position of herself and her family as community members of a specific social stand.

Besides family, place-based communities and specific generations, people related to different other groups. Two persons saw themselves as soccer players (DT2, IT1), and therefore sportsmen who needed to take care of nutrition. Mostly implicitly, women positioned themselves as housewives, with some calling themselves as such (DS2, IS3). In one case, the husband was characterized as dominant (IS4), in others, women decided what to prepare more independently (DS1, IS1, IS5). However, they explained that they gladly received suggestions because they frequently did not know what to prepare (IS3, IT3).

Examples have demonstrated that people can position themselves in relation to various groups involving knowledge, ability and the application of languages, food preparation and consumption modes. Furthermore, they can feel a sense of belonging connected to personal experiences, memories, tastes and habits. An interview partner thought that part of their local cheese culture was that they had visited the different mountain huts, where specific types of cheese were produced, which might not be the case for people from towns (DS1). Moreover, because they barely had fruits or fish in Sauris, they did not have the habit of eating that much (DS1). Relations and entanglements can therefore be constructed by multiple means, in different forms and qualities.

4.4 Openness towards new developments and tastes

Interviewed persons expressed their wish to preserve varyingly, and rejected or advocated openness towards changes and dynamics that come with time. They suggested that this is due to personal ideals and identifications, which determine whether the news is approached skeptically or with positive curiosity. One interview partner reflected on contemporary developments and how inhabitants of Sauris seemingly dealt with them in the following way (IS1):

> But yes, now, in the democratic society that we are, we also have to be a bit more open, no, here. But, often one identifies with eating. We have also, remained standing still over time. That is because, I say, also how society here, how community, we are a bit diverse to others. And all the people tell us that they are different.

Similarly, another person believed that it was necessary to open up, and advocated globalization (IS4). She did not want any rivalries between countries, as had been the case within Sauris, but wished for peace and equality. Therefore, she thought that aperture was more important than preserving traditions. She could not imagine that food had the potential to unite people, which could partly have to do with her dislike for food preparation. Identifications on smaller scales were demonstrated by an interviewee (DS2), stating "I am Saurano, but I am Italian, I am European, I am on earth", and he would also eat that way.

A specific example of globalization in the kitchen is an interview partner's explanation that she prepared *paella* but that everybody did (IS3). Such dishes can be imported, for example, through media or they might arrive with people. The woman narrated that friends from lower Friuli would bring her eggplants and peppers (IS3). Furthermore, when people from places such as Genova or Firenze who rented houses in Sauris invited her, they prepared "their traditional dishes" (IS3). Other interviewees had relatives in Sardinia and got to know the typical dishes served by them (DS1). Due to people moving to the village and mixed marriages a person (IS3) believed that "Saurano, Saurano did not exist anymore" and that there were only very few "proper Sauran families" left. However, she reckoned people had integrated and enriched the local cuisine and traditions.

Whereas some enjoyed trying new dishes, especially when dining out (DS2, IS5, DT2, IT3), and most at least tried when offered (DS1, DT2), certain restrictions were mentioned (DS1, DS2, IS3, DT2). A number of the interviewees did not like fish very much (IS2, IT1) and did not want to consume it rare (DS1, IS3). In connection to that, few liked Asian food such as sushi (IS3, DT2, IT1). Moreover, people were skeptical regarding packaged food (DS1, IS1, IS2, IS5, DT1). Accordingly, an interview partner characterized vegan products such as tofu as chemical (DS1), and another was worried because her daughter consumed packaged vegan products (DS2), which she considered unnatural. In a discussion, one said that in the past, cattle had not eaten chemicals but "landscape" (DT1). Therefore, a vegan diet is portrayed as contrary to past, natural nutrition. Other interview partners also expressed concerns about offered meat. While one, therefore, purchased it from known producers (IS1), two had animals for self-supply (DS2, IS3). Though a woman claimed she liked trying new dishes, she observed current developments skeptically (DS1). She would reject grasshoppers on spits, insects or seaweed. Furthermore, combinations of certain ingredients were deemed strange, for example pasta with pears, which had been served to a woman in Switzerland (DT1). Though interviewees recalled that when they had tasted unusual dishes, they had sometimes enjoyed those, they would never prepare such themselves (DT2). Regarding *polenta*, interviewees underlined their preference for that from the mountains over the *polenta* typical for the lowland (DS1, IS1, IS4).

In short, the degree of openness and curiosity varies and is connected to the willingness to identify with the global community. In relation to this, certain ingredients, methods of preparation and combinations might seem too strange to be pleasant.

4.5 Different knowledge, habits, and conscience

Food preparation is not least shaped by abilities and knowledge. It has already been mentioned that the approach to food is determined by what people have heard, seen and experienced together with their identifications, and how differences are evaluated also depends on social ideals and expectations.

In a neutral tone, interview partners mentioned minor variations within their families: Some liked mellow flavors (DS1), others preferred spicy dishes with more salt and garlic (DS1, IS5), or did not like rice very much but loved pasta (IS4). Several interview partners did not regard their nutrition as generally meaningful because they usually prepared anything without much reflection (IT2, IT3). In this context, interviewees thought that nutrition was not traditional anymore, but had become individual (DS2). However, dishes they prepared on certain occasions were portrayed as family-specific (IS1, IS3, DT2). The dishes had over time become a family tradition and created unity.

Certain aspects were criticized, for example, relatives' purchases. One interviewee thought it disastrous, how his grandchildren put unnecessary products into his daughter's shopping trolley (DS2). In contrast, their generation had grown up learning frugality. Similarly, another interviewee said she urged her grandchild to prepare more for her children on her own instead of serving pre-packed sweets because that would be healthier (IS1). Even more critically viewed an interviewee (DT1) the attitude of a relative of her husband who lived close to Rome. The woman would work a lot and purchase much, but not cook or clean, and instead discard things improvidently.

Concerning proper habits, some interview partners were not proud of their quick, improvised nutrition, maybe because it runs counter to the maintenance of communal tradition. Wilk (2010, p. 8) argues that

food is no longer designed to demonstrate belongingness, but that it serves purposes such as nourishing optimally and minimizing health risks in a time-efficient way, which suggests uncertainty of the community. Accordingly, one person was speaking of "my Carnian food consumption" and explained that she jointly had her way of food preparation and that from "them here" (IS3). Moreover, the person who argued for opening up revealed bad conscience because she did not consider the maintenance of tradition very important. She wished to stop recording after beginning with "I don't know, sometimes it seems to me that I am a little bit…" (IS4). In another discussion (DS2), people said they would "eat as Italians" though with a heavy heart. On the contrary, a woman described her food preparation as individual and joyful (IS1). She would be spontaneous and enjoyed creating dishes. Margalit and Raz (1995) give a possible explanation why some have a bad conscience and others do not. The philosophers argue that "[a]lthough accomplishments play their role in people's sense of their own identity" (p. 85), "[m]embership is a matter of belonging, not of achievement" (p. 84). They contend that "[s]ecure identification […] is particularly important to one's well-being" (Margalit & Raz 1995, p. 85). Bad conscience might therefore not only result from deficient traditional habits but hint at insecurity in terms of identification and sense of belonging.

4.6 Continuity

All the interview partners, including those who generally did not consider their food as the place specific or meaningful, appreciate certain dishes. In the following, it will be outlined on whom and what the reproduction of specific tastes depends, and why it seems important to pass them on.

One interview partner claimed the dishes of the past were like a dream, their treasure, and tasted like childhood memories (DS1). Though recipes would spread, it was not easy to copy theirs. In Timau, people displayed a clear, seemingly unchangeable understanding of their *ckropfn* (IT2, DT1, DT2), characterizing variations as modern (IT3). It is the mothers and grandmothers, and sometimes other relatives, who pass on preparation methods. Though one interviewee claimed she had no intention to preserve tradition, she still prepared dishes as her mother and mother-in-law used to (IS4). A young interviewee explained that it had always been normal to pick wild plants and prepare food with them (IS5). In the whole village, people did that and she had learned it by accompanying her mother. Also, women studied how to prepare traditional dishes by cooking with female relatives (DS2, IS3, IS5, DT2). An interviewee reasoned that because she had a son, she would not teach him to cook traditionally (IS4). However, he sometimes wished for specific dishes.

Not only did women prepare food for their partners and children, but to varying degrees also for grandchildren (DS2, IS1, IS2, IS4, IS5, IS6, DT2), siblings (DS1), parents (DS1, DS2, DT2), and sometimes friends (IS3, IS6). Hence, they had to mediate several tastes and preferences. Interviewees tried to have dinner together as often as possible, at least on Sundays and feast days; and on special occasions, particular dishes were prepared (DS1, DS2, IS6, DT2, IT3). While traditions of some holidays such as Christmas were described as national (IS3, IS4), people from Sauris and Timau consumed local dishes on other days. In Timau, for example, inhabitants had *schultar* and *pintscha* (bread with dried fruits) before noon to celebrate Easter (DT1, DT2, IT1, IT2, IT3). Furthermore, people prepared *fritelle,* battered mint and melissa, for the carnival in Sauris (DS1, IS3, IS5, IS6). On All Hollow's Day, they made *gnocchi* (potato balls) with wild herbs and traditionally left one plate for the deceased outside the window (IS3, IS5, IS6). When dining, the family remembered those who had left them (IS6). One interviewee explicitly stressed how traditional dishes fostered a sense of continuity (IS3):

> But yes, because it is remembering, no? It is a turning back in time and having the consciousness that certain things never pass, as habits, never come out of fashion, no. And therefore, one continues to prepare for pleasure, exactly, that it was made by our parents, our grandparents and one continues making […], I make them with my nephew who is thirteen years old and therefore I hope that she will say I made them with my grandmother, I made *crostoli* [sweet, fried, rectangular pastry] and that she will also continue preparing them. In short, that is the aim, no. The, also a bit the traditions to pass them on, so that they remain alive also in the young ones, no.

Generally, there are dishes from the past people can barely remember (DS2, IS2), others are less obscure, but the preparation method is unknown (IS5). A thirty-three-year-old interview partner said she wished to learn how to prepare certain dishes (IS5). If relatives cannot teach, it helps that ethnic clubs publish recipes. Furthermore, one family said they would generally prefer traditional restaurants, and that they would sometimes have typical dishes on specific feast days there (DS1).

As an overall lifestyle, nutrition had changed, but certain dishes are (on specific occasions) treasured a fortiori (DS1, IS2, IS5), and associated narratives and values persisted. Interviewees always described the past as simple and poor and respected how their ancestors had managed to sustain a living. People talked about frugality as positive (DS2, IS2, IS4), and particularly the older interview partners suggested that they had always been frugal (IS2, IS4, IS6, DT2).

4.7 Spatial positionings within networks of entanglements

Different scales are relevant when it comes to spatial positioning. First and foremost, places people reside in are central, but also regions and nations to which they relate through food and language. Again, experiences, competencies and knowledge are prerequisites and determine relations within networks of entanglements.

At home and in the close environment, children first experience their positions and networks of entanglements they find themselves in. Over time, networks become increasingly complex, with ever more places to which individuals relate to, for example through other people and food. When relocating, interviewees said that appropriation was also connected to people they knew or got to know (IS1, IS6, DT2). Positions then need to be re-, de- or constructed anew. Besides the house, locality and village where people grew up, interviewees referred to accessible, neighboring places (i.e., Ampezzo from Sauris [DS1, IS1, IS2, IS3], Cleulis [DT1, DT2, IT1, IT2] and Paluzza [DT1, IT1, IT3] from Timau). Moreover, towns in the vicinity such as Tolmezzo (DT2, IT3) or Udine (DT2) played a role, especially for education and job opportunities. Since Timau borders Austria, people frequent Austrian places for short trips (DT2, IT2), and also to remain there (DT1). Single persons and groups of people move to more distant places too. An interviewee said that her children were spread through Lignano, Switzerland and Australia (DT1). From Timau, a major part of the older inhabitants had worked in Switzerland (DT1, DT2).

Since administratively both Timau and Sauris are part of it, Friuli is rather central. In practice, people relate to the region by different means such as language choice. Though Friulian had not been a common language in the villages, inhabitants had got in contact with the language in schools (IS5), through acquaintances (DT1, DT2), relatives (DS1, DT2, IT1) and in neighboring places (DT2), so that the majority acquired the ability to at least understand it. Furthermore, *frico* (cheese mixed with potatoes and fried) and *polenta* are associated with the region (DS1, DT2, IT1). Concerning both language and *polenta*, however, people differentiated: People in the northern, mountainous part of Friuli would prefer yellow *polenta* made of corn, while white *polenta* prevailed in the lowlands, where the sea was nearby (DS1, IS1). Similarly, some referred to the Carnian language instead of Friulian (IS3, DT2). A twenty-year-old interviewee, whose grandmother had come from a village in Carnia, said (DT2): “I [speak] Friulian because my grandmother, I was little, spoke Carnian with me, no. But I see, when I am angry, it is easier for me to speak in Carnian than in Italian”. Interview partners talked about Friuli in different ways, suggesting that they belonged to it, but also presenting it as external, probably meaning the southern part (IS4, DT1).

Although not as a determinant as in the past, physical characteristics of space remain relevant. One reason is that what could be cultivated in the past is connected to associations and considered proper. Furthermore, people still have vegetable gardens (DS1, DS2, IS1, IS2, IS3, IS4, IS5, IS6, DT2, IT1, IT3) that need to be adapted to natural conditions. Which other places seem close, reachable and similar might depend on these conditions, explaining why some interviewees identified with mountainous regions (DS1, IS3, IS5). A thirty-three-year-old said she would describe her food habits as typical for the mountains, Saurano and Carnian (IS5). Another person thought that mountainous regions shared certain traditions (IS3). She preferred the mountains to the sea, and could also imagine living in Austria or Trentino.

Frequently, people differentiated between the North of Italy and the South. For example, fish was thought to be more common in the latter (IS5), and olive oil derived from there (DS1, IS3). An interview partner said that there had not been olive oil, but that she had now for years acquired it from a colleague from Sicily or bought it in southern Italy, and that those products would enrich all dishes. She declared (DS1): "Then, in short, pasta… we have taken gladly, borrowed many things from the southern food, I at least. That is, I like many things from the Italian cuisine, that is … from, no, not only from the South." Besides pasta, pizza is now very popular (DS1): "Something that is not, however, it is not from the tradition, we say, from northern Italy or, but everybody likes pizza". Though identified as foreign, (southern) Italian dishes have become enjoyable and part of everyday life (DS1, IS3). Accordingly, interview partners believed that they would "eat as Italians" (DS2).

It is impossible to speak about something that is unknown. Therefore, similarities and contrasts can only be discussed in reference to places people have visited or about which they have received information as well as areas on different scales to, which they feel some kind of belongingness. Moreover, knowing people from the respective places and areas fosters relations. Languages and food can thereby serve to orient, connect, and position the self within networks of entanglements. Together with people, places and areas, foods dynamically become proper, close, acceptable, strange and unknown. The more entanglements people have in common, the likelier are similar meanings.

5. Conclusion

This contribution aimed at investigating individual and collective meaningful representations of places, times, and groups, and by means of which relations inhabitants of Sauris and Timau position themselves through reflections on food preparation and consumption. The research objective was therefore extensive, so that only a selection of the material could be discussed. However, Cook and Crang's (1996, p. 138) concept of local as contextual, in the sense of determined by entanglements with multiple networks, proved fitting. By illustrating how positionings are constructed in interweaving spatial, temporal and social dimensions, the hypothesis could be confirmed:

Concerning time, interviewees never mentioned dates, and seldom years, but instead referred to periods they or their parents had experienced. Consequently, discussed times also depend on the age of the interviewees. How families supplied themselves with only limited exchanges and a restricted variety of foods is very present for the eldest. Meat had been scarce, and dairy products had not only been consumed, but also bartered. Additionally, inhabitants had always had products from their vegetable gardens in summer. Though most interview partners are aware of this frugal past, they had still been young or not even born when supply and demand expanded. Food that had been mundane such as *polenta* had become particular, and was perceived as caloric, but natural and therefore healthy. Furthermore, in contrast to "modern" dishes, food prepared by relatives in the past is connected to different personal and emotional experiences.

Besides time, the author examined spatial references. With varying foci, interviewees talked about their different homes: Where they grew up, lived temporarily, and currently resided. They referred to the respective localities, villages or towns, and to the spatial "units" they felt they belonged to, i.e., Carnia, Friuli, northern (mountainous) Italy, and Italy. Moreover, places that were perceived as close and reachable were part of narratives, such as Ampezzo, Tolmezzo, Cleulis, Paluzza, and also Austria. Most have frequented school, worked, and lived temporarily in other Friulian towns, but some also in more distant places. From Timau, a considerable part of the population had left to work in Switzerland. Not only their own origin and mobility, but also that of their relatives and partners, and to some extent other friends, played a role. All described what they had been served at home in childhood as meaningful reference, memorized through emotional experiences. Interviewees thought it normal to consume products from their vegetable gardens and use the wood stove for food preparation in winter. Moreover, some preferences and habits, such as eating cabbage, cheese, *polenta*, and few fish were explicitly connected to the locality. However, interview partners often could not identify how temporal stays had affected their food consumption. Some regarded schools' canteens as significant, others had learned recipes and acquired certain food habits in Switzerland, or the ability to prepare fish further south in Italy.

Interviewees recognized that ingredients and dishes with Italian names that are associated with the country had become popular and more common than local ones. On certain feast days, though, preparing local dishes with dialectal German names was deemed important and the consumption pleasant, because it reminded of individual experiences and the local, collective past.

The social aspect complements the three analyzed dimensions of positionings. To find and construct positions, family is central. First, the family people are born into, and later the family they establish. Mostly women, grandmothers and mothers, prepare food and therefore pass on specific preparation methods and tastes. Families are situated in and entangled with specific localities, where they have neighbors, friends, and acquaintances, do at least part of their shopping, cultivate vegetables and so forth. Seldom, however, is the whole family located in the same place. Regardless of their actual location, people use food to position themselves through relations to place-based communities, which do not only encompass localities but also areas. Place-based communities, in turn, have histories, which are transmitted through common narratives. In the research areas, the simple lifestyle of the villagers' ancestors is illustrated through different personal memories. Interviewees assume that older people cook more than in the past, and younger ones also prepare pre-packed instant meals.

Due to multiple reasons, the historical diversity of Europe's countryside is challenged. Besides the socio-political circumstances of the past, the major current challenges are Timau's limited economic possibilities which spur depopulation and the penetration of tourism in Sauris. To foster maintenance, minority rights were addressed legally. Though particular knowledge, practices and values seem worthy of preservation, people cannot be put under pressure to maintain them, and women are left alone with the responsibility to pass on traditions. If the aim is to carry on historical knowledge, and to integrate it into modern lifestyles, it first needs to be understood how individuals make sense of the world and position themselves in it through relations constructed in everyday practices. This study has focused on food, but customs can be involved in every aspect of life. Whereas people have always been entangled in various networks and flows, it has become increasingly complex. Shedding light on local knowledge and practices, situativity is a fruitful concept. However, positioning theory proved fitting to explore positionings in relation to times, people and places that outreach the locality on an individual and at the same time collective level. On the one hand, people specifically connect peculiarities to Timau and Sauris. Reminding of Stacul's (2003) bounded field, dishes become symbols that evolve from and reconstruct groups' territories. Additionally, food preparation and consumption are sensual and the symbol is even embodied. On the other hand, subjective entanglements outreach spatial units and there are distinctions within. In the case of *ckropfn*, individuals position themselves by representing different traits as regional, local, family-specific, individual and modern.

When positioning the self, relations can only be drawn to known people, places and times. Therefore, reachable, close and frequented places are referred to, and relations to inhabitants are constructed. The more distant the time from which the supposedly local traditions to be maintained derive, the more abstract the representations and uncertain the preservation. Consequently, the essence that people wish to preserve needs to be part of contemporary narratives and practices, through which individuals position themselves. By means of common food consumption and reflections on food, a shared basis can be negotiated, become known, acquired, appreciated, familiar and reinforced. Food can thereby serve to connect people with multiple places and raise a sense of continuity, community and stability. More important than specific preparation and consumption methods are feelings, emotions and values that are transmitted by them, such as respect for past generations and appreciation of simplicity. Luger (2010, p. 39) suggests that when integrated into lives, cultural forms, techniques and innovations are honest expressions of the locality. Accordingly, awareness of historical knowledge, skills and customs in the sense of a resource open to individual interpretation should be fostered.

Acknowledgments

The Project No. 32500, *The demise of "Little Europe" Assimilation and Cultural Landscape in North-East Italy,* is funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).

[1] Ashley, B., Hollows, J., Jones, S. & Taylor, B. (2005). *Food and Cultural Studies*. London, New York: Routledge.

[2] Baum, W. (1980). *Deutsche Sprachinseln in Friaul*. Klagenfurt: Carinthia.

[3] Bell, D. & Valentine, G. (1997). *Consuming Geographies. We Are Where We Eat*. London, New York: Routledge.

[4] Butler, J. (1997). *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative*. New York, London: Routledge.

[5] Chan, S. C. (2010). Food, Memories, and Identities in Hong Kong. *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 17(2–3), 204–227. DOI: 10.1080/10702891003733492.

[6] Cisilino, W. & Del Fabro, A. (2016). A. Friuli: storia, cibi e riti di una terra pluriculturale. In Grimaldi, P. & Picciau, M., eds., *Popoli senza frontiere. Cibi e riti delle minoranze linguistiche storiche d'Italia* (pp. 159–182). Bra: Slow Food Editore.

[7] Cook, I. & Crang, P. (1996). The World on a Plate: Culinary Culture, Displacement and Geographical Knowledges. *Journal of Material Culture* 1(2), 131–153. DOI: 10.1177/135918359600100201.

[8] Denison, N. & Grassegger, H. (2007). *Zahrer Wörterbuch. Vocabolario Saurano*. Graz: Karl-Franzens-Universität.

[9] Ermann, U., Langthaler, E., Penker, M. & Schermer, M. (2018). *Agro-Food Studies. Eine Einführung*. Wien: Böhlau.

[10] Fontefrancesco, M. F. & Pieroni, A. (2020). Renegotiating situativity: transformations of local herbal knowledge in a Western Alpine valley during the past 40 years. *Journal of Ethnobiology and Ethnomedicine* 16(1). DOI: 10.1186/s13002020004023.

[11] Geyer, I. & Gasser, A. (2002). *Wörterbuch der deutschen Mundart von Tischelwang/Timau (It.)*. Wien: Praesens.

[12] Hasenauer, L. & Plautz, A.-M. (2021). Neue Dimensionen symbolischer Ethnizität. Eine komparative Analyse am Beispiel ethnolinguistischer Minderheiten im alpinen Friaul. *Österreich Geschichte Literatur Geographie* 65(3), 289–309. ISSN: 0029-8743.

[13] Hobsbawm, E. (2000). I. Introduction: Inventing Traditions. In Hobsbawm, E. & Ranger, T., eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (pp. 1–14). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[14] Jackson, P. (2015). *Food Words. Essays in Culinary Culture*. London, New York: Bloomsbury.

[15] Kranzmayer, E. (1968). *Der alte Gott von Tischelwang am Plöckenpaß. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Studie auf namenkundlicher Grundlage*. Wien: Schendl.

[16] Kuckartz, U. (2018). *Qualitative Inhaltsanalyse. Methoden, Praxis, Computerunterstützung*. Weinheim: Beltz.

[17] Langenhove, L. van & Harré, R. (1999). 2. Introducing Positioning Theory. In Langenhove, L. van & Harré, R., eds., *Positioning Theory: Moral Contexts of International Action* (pp. 14–31). Oxford: Blackwell.

[18] Liu, C., Yang, R. & Xue, D. (2020). Chinese Muslims' daily food practices and their geographies of encounter in urban Guangzhou. *Social & Cultural Geography* 21(9), 1287–1306. DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2018.1550583.

[19] Luger, K. (2010). Tradition, Ritual, Inszenierung. Kulturelles Erbe im Spannungsfeld von bewahrender Pflege und touristischer Vereinnahmung. In Luger, K. & Wöhler, K., eds., *Kulturelles Erbe und Tourismus. Rituale, Traditionen, Inszenierungen* (pp. 15–46). Innsbruck: Studienverlag.

[20] Lupton, D. (1994). Food, memory and meaning: the symbolic and social nature of food events. *The Sociological Review* 42(4), 664–685. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-954X.1994.tb00105.x.

[21] Margalit, A. & Raz, J. (1995). National Self-Determination. In Kymlicka, W., ed., *The Rights of Minority Cultures* (pp. 79–92). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[22] Stacul, J. (2003). *The Bounded Field. Localism and Local Identity in an Italian Alpine Valley*. New York, Oxford: Berhahn Books.

[23] Steinicke, E. (1991). *Friaul Friuli. Bevölkerung und Ethnizität*. Innsbruck: Geographie Innsbruck.

[24] Steinicke, E. (1998). Tischlbong – Timau: Quale futuro? In Unfer, M., ed., *Tischlbongara Piachlan. Quaderni di cultura timavese* (pp. 7–32). Timau – Tischlbong: Istituto di Cultura Timavese.

[25] Steinicke, E. & Piok, E. (2003). Die deutschen Sprachinseln im Süden der Alpen. Problematik und Konsequenzen der besonderen ethnischen Identifikation am Beispiel von Gressoney und Tischelwang (Italien). *Berichte zur deutschen Landeskunde* 77(4), 301–327.

[26] Tilley, C. (1994). *A Phenomenology of Landscape. Places, Paths and Monuments*. Oxford, Providence: Berg.

[27] Toivanen, R. (2005). Das Paradox der Minderheitenrechte in Europa. *SWS-Rundschau* 45(2), 185–207.

[28] Valentine, G. (1999). Eating in: home, consumption and identity. *The Sociological Review* 47(3), 491–524. DOI: 10.1111/1467-954X.00182.

[29] Viazzo, P. P. (1989). *Upland communities. Environment, population and social structure in the Alps since the sixteenth century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[30] Waldron, J. (1995). Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative. In Kymlicka, W., ed., *The Rights of Minority Cultures* (pp. 93–119). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[31] Wilk, N. M. (2010). Einleitung. In Wilk, N. M., ed., *Esswelten. Über den Funktionswandel der täglichen Kost. Welt – Körper – Sprache. Perspektiven kultureller Wahrnehmungs- und Darstellungsformen* (pp. 7–20). Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

[32] Wilson, T. M. (2006). Introduction. Food, Drink and Identity in Europe: Consumption and the Construction of Local, National and Cosmopolitan Culture. In Wilson, T. M., ed., *European Studies* 22 (pp. 11–29). Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi B.V.

[33] Zago, M. (2018). Il ruolo delle comunità locali e dei turisti nella valorizzazione dei saperi tradizionali: l'esperienza degli ecomusei del gusto. *Futuribili-Rivista di studi sul future e di previsione sociale* 23(1/2), 193–209. DOI: 10.13137/1971-0720/27274.

Other sources

[34] Bianchet, E. & Plozner, V. (2019). *Bos ckouchmarden? Unsars Eisn. Tischlbong-Timau*. Paluzza: Cortolezzis.

[35] Bianchet, E. & Plozner, V. (2020). *Bos ckouchmarden? A guats plentl darpai. Tischlbong-Timau*. Paluzza: Cortolezzis.

[36] Bianchet, E. & Plozner, V. (2021). *Bos ckouchmarden? Is Eisn in da Joarzait. Tischlbong-Timau*. Paluzza: Cortolezzis.

[37] ISTAT (2022). Popolazione residente al 1°gennaio: Friuli-Venezia Giulia. Dati.istat.it/Index.aspx?QueryID=18551#.

[38] Legge regionale (LR) 20 novembre 2009, n. 20. Norme di tutela e promozione delle minoranze di lingua tedesca del Friuli Venezia Giulia. https://lexview-int.regione.fvg.it/FontiNormative/xml/xmlLex.aspx?anno=2009&legge=20&fx=lex&db=DBC.

[39] Weichhart, P. (1999). *Raumbezogene Identitäten 3*. Intensivkurs. Nijmegen: Department of Human Geography.