

FOODSCAPES IN COLONIAL AND IMPERIAL CONTEXTS: AN OVERVIEW

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Colonial and Imperial contexts are especially dynamic arenas generative of new subsistence environments, cuisines, and foodways. Born of multiple and fragmentary experiences of migration and displacement that remain entangled in broader scale networks and relations, these contexts were particularly active in the production of new and/or expanded “Foodscapes.”

Foodscape, a term derived from Appadurai’s concept of “scapes,” is defined as the physical, social and cultural spaces and processes that mediate the interactions between people, food, technology, values and material culture related to subsistence and eating. This concept highlights how culinary communities, and communities of consumption, including the social and material environments they are embedded in, emerge and are transformed in a dynamic, and fluid manner, albeit in particular places/spaces, variably influenced by their “global” connections, and engagements with other places and their foodscapes. This perspective allows for more complicated readings of food, cooking and food environments in colonial contexts, beyond dominant narratives of culinary practice, and consumption as nostalgic identity expression/self-identification practices or as the product of domination (change)/resistance (continuity).

This paper is an introduction to the session focused on foodscapes in colonial and imperial contexts, from ancient to modern times. Through this concept we want to explore persistence, innovation, transformation and hybridizations of and in food environments, cuisines, and foodways in colonial, imperial and diasporic contexts characterized by their connectivity to other places and the mobility and flows of people, practices, knowledge and material culture between them.

Keywords

Foodscapes
colonialism
imperialism
migration
foodway

Abstract book ISBN

978-80-907270-3-8 (European Association of Archaeologists); 978-84-9168-140-3 (Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, vol. 1); 978-84-9168-143-4 (Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, vol. 2)