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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Padrón peppers or peppers from Herbón? Discussing the controversial attainment of a geographical indication in light of food (re)localisation approaches

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Abstract

Globally, Padrón peppers are a widely known vegetable. Unknown to most, its origin lies in a small village, Herbón, located on the outskirts of the town of Padrón (Galicia, North-West Spain). Local farmers have faced serious problems due to competition with producers from elsewhere commercialising peppers as 'Padron'. In response, local farmers sought to protect the specificities of the place of origin, a claim leading to the achievement of a geographical indication (GI) label in 2009. This initiative has been controversial, as the name of the pepper and the town were appropriated by a private company, and the GI boundaries were disputed by producers across Galicia. In the context of recent theoretical discussions on food studies, this article makes use of a territorial/spatial approach that integrates Anglophone and Francophone literature to develop a transversal explanation of the development of the GI designation. The institutional landscape, the negotiation of the GI specificities of the food, the local food culture and the

collective action of farmers are revealed as key issues in its evolution and establishment.

KEYWORDS
alternative food networks, geographical indications, Padrón/Herbón peppers, (re)localisation, systèmes agroalimentaires localisés

INTRODUCTION

Padrón peppers are a very popular gastronomic product in Spain, usually associated with Galicia, an autonomous jurisdiction located in the north-west of the country. However, it is not widely known that its specific origin lies in Herbón, a small village and parish (614 inhabitants in 2020, with a land area of 9.3 km^2) near the town of Padrón (3012 inhabitants in 2020), the toponym associated with the famous peppers. Over the last few decades, Padrón pepper production has expanded across the world, reaching California (US) and Queensland (Australia), where 'Padron chilli or capsicum' is widely marketed and consumed. While the pepper has been gaining momentum on the national and international market as a global commodity, the link between the product and its place of origin has evanesced.

National and international producers and big retailers have taken advantage of this ambiguity. Since the 1980s, Galician markets have received 'Padrón peppers' (sic) produced in Southern Spain, Morocco and further abroad. This scenario has severely impacted traditional producers, compromising their economic sustainability. In response, they began to defend the specificities of the place of origin by claiming a geographical indication (GI). Despite strong resistance to this GI bid and the controversies that arose, they achieved a protected designation of origin (PDO)[1] label in 2009. How farmers from a small village accomplished such a feat is the focus of this article.

This article will specifically analyse the factors and mechanisms that were pivotal for success in obtaining that GI. To do so, we make use of recent food studies considering this type of process from a spatial and/or territorial[2] perspective. In Anglophone literature, the research on the so-called alternative food networks (AFNs) proposes the concept of embeddedness to refer to the reattachment of food to certain localities. Meanwhile, Francophone literature on the matter presents a long, and particular, tradition studying local food systems. Both sets of work have been developed separately, making it pertinent to consider them together, albeit with some linguistic nuances (Bidwell et al., 2018; Bowen & Muterbaugh, 2014; Lamine et al., 2018; Mancini, 2013). We will employ '(re)localisation' to refer to the common idea of place-based food initiatives (consistent with Baritaux et al., 2016).

The remainder of the article is organised as follows. In the next section, a thorough comparison of Anglophone and Francophone theoretical perspectives is outlined. After outlining the methods employed, the results section will analyse the GI development process for 'Padrón peppers' that, as will be explained, have become 'Herbón peppers' since the GI materialised. The article then discusses the pivotal factors for the development of GI and how they relate to the theoretical foundations. The conclusion discusses the usefulness of the employed approach and its potential for future developments.

SPATIAL/TERRITORIAL APPROACHES TO FOOD STUDIES: TWO TRADITIONS

Anglophone perspectives: AFNs and the notion of embeddedness

The literature on AFNs is based on the assumption that industrialisation, standardisation and globalisation have disconnected food production from consumption and vice-versa, a process raising health, environmental and ethical concerns (Winter, 2003; Wiskerke, 2009). The term 'AFN' is employed as an umbrella phrase (Sarmiento, 2017; Wiskerke, 2009) to include a wide range of modalities (GIs, organic farming, fair trade, etc.) that, to a greater or lesser extent, try to counter the prevailing trends (Goodman et al., 2012; Paül & Haslam-Mckenzie, 2013). Generally, these alternative modes of food production–consumption appear mediated by a process of social and spatial 'reconnection' (Forney & Häberli, 2016; Mount, 2012; Paül & Haslam-Mckenzie, 2013), where 'proximity', 'trust' and 'quality' are central concepts (Higgins et al., 2008; Mckitterick et al., 2016; Renting et al., 2003; Tregear, 2011).

Within that context, the notion of embeddedness emerges as a platform to analyse how non-economic values can be agreed between producers and consumers to generate product differentiation (Schneider et al., 2014). Thus, embeddedness helps to understand, for instance, how producers could regain control in food market transactions and increase added value from products (Grivings & Tisenkopfs, 2018; Van der Ploeg et al., 2012). The notion has also been employed to account for the role of local resources/ecologies (Marsden, 2010; Morris & Kirwan, 2011) and even contextual cultural factors (Bowen, 2010; Matacena & Corvo, 2020) in food production–consumption relations. Consequently, most scholars frame embeddedness as the local scale under the notion of 'relocalisation' (Tregear, 2011).

However, DuPuis and Goodman (2005) and Born and Purcell (2006) have warned against considering the local scale as intrinsically positive. They highlight the 'defensive localism' of some AFNs and its potential reactionary and exclusionary backdrop by, for instance, erecting regulatory entry barriers (Goodman 2004; May, 2017; Rangnekar, 2011). Furthermore, Goodman (2004) suggested these kinds of foods are niche-market products, only available for a narrow/elitist consumer sector but nonetheless still integrated into the dominant conventional food market. Kirwan (2004) and Guthman (2004, 2007) highlights the prevalence of conventional, market-oriented and pro-competitive dynamics within some AFNs, such as organic food, and the appropriation of some AFNs by large companies. Consequently, these modes of production should be conceived in terms of hybridity between opposites such as alternative/conventional and local/global (Goodman et al., 2012; Mount, 2012; Sarmiento, 2017). The blurring of these boundaries has analytical potential for exploring the values and strategies of actors within AFNs, who may be guided by both conventional and alternative standards (Goodman et al., 2012; Schneider et al., 2016).

Following this idea, some authors have discussed embeddedness as a process where different actors and resources are interrelated (Bowen, 2010, 2011; Marsden, 2010; Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2012). Sonnino (2007) drew from a constructivist perspective to trace the discourses of locality within an AFN, revealing the tensions and power relations inherent to the negotiation of their features. By questioning the ways these 'alternative' and 'local' productions could deliver sustainable outcomes, it has been shown that the transformative potential of the AFNs is contingent on how they are constructed and governed (Nizam, 2020; Sonnino, 2007; Tregear et al., 2007). Consequently, Rippon (2014) analysed the construction of place and scale for the Stilton GI in the UK. These findings are in line with Born and Purcell (2006, p. 196), who highlighted that '[local

food] scale is not ontologically given but socially constructed'. Moreover, Moragues-Faus and Sonnino (2012, p. 230) stated that the process of quality construction between food and place 'shapes the control of the network', assessing the discursive dimension of embeddedness processes.

Francophone perspectives: GIs, terroir and the *Systèmes Agroalimentaires Localisés* (SYAL) approach

Francophone academics stand out for having developed a long-standing trajectory in the study of the spatial attributes of food production. The establishment of one of the oldest, if not the oldest, legal GI schemes in the world at the beginning of the 20th century (Barham, 2003; Dagne, 2010; Pratt, 2007) impelled a specific line of research on this topic (Bérard & Marchenay, 1996; Teil, 2017). Here, in contrast with the dominant Anglophone perspective, the focus lies in the foods' origins, which is more than a spatial term (Fonte, 2008, 2017; Goodman et al., 2012). This concern is commonplace in Mediterranean countries, including France (Fonte, 2008; Parrot et al., 2002), bearing witness to the ancient notion of *terroir*, referring to productive areas where a particular local environment, farmers' know-how and sociocultural representations confer a distinctive quality to the respective foods (Castelló, 2021; Hinnewinkel, 2005; Moustier & Consales, 2007). The *terroir* concept connects with heritage, history and tradition (Bessière, 2013; Demossier, 2011; Teil, 2017). Thus, *produits de terroir* are linked to a culturally and historically marked territory where local people have a feeling of identity (Bessière, 2013; Fonte, 2008). These qualitative aspects have profound implications for both consumers and producers. Consumers recognise certain foods depending on their cultural framing (Requier-Desjardins, 2010; Sanz & Muchnik, 2016). For producers, identity and heritage considerations can explain producers' long-term commitment to *terroirs* (Hinnewinkel, 2007; Muchnik et al., 2008).

Given this intellectual background, some scholars developed the French SYAL approach, translated into English as 'Localised Agri-food Systems'). Based within the *Centre de Coopération Internationale en Recherche Agronomique pour le Développement* in the 1990s, SYAL highlights the diverse elements linked to an area that 'produce[s] a type of agricultural and food organization in a given spatial scale' (Muchnik, 1996 *apud* Barjolle et al., 2014, p. 7). SYAL sought to understand the links between certain places and the emergence of specific food production (Bowen & Muttersbaugh, 2014). By doing so, the notions of 'anchoring' and 'localisation' manifested to explain the factors and dynamics necessary to produce the distinctiveness of place-based foods (Barjolle et al., 2014; Fournier & Muchnik, 2012; Requier-Desjardins, 2010). Thus, SYAL scholars pose concerns about the construction of food products. However, contrary to embeddedness perspectives, SYAL academics assume that 'localisation' implies the 'activation' of capacities and resources already present in particular regions (Boucher & Reyes-González, 2016; Fournier & Muchnik, 2012), for example, valorising (and protecting) genetic resources to differentiate and avoid misappropriation (Belletti et al., 2017a; Garçon et al., 2017; Sanz & Muchnik, 2016). The idea of activation relates to a model of development based on the enhancement of local resources (Mancini, 2013), where firms' innovation is significant (Belletti et al., 2015; Sanz & Macías, 2005).

GI schemes[3] are privileged objects of study within SYAL, and often these studies have resulted in policy recommendations (Fonte, 2008; Lamine et al., 2018; Mancini, 2013). At the same time, this framework enabled the recognition of the role of governments, regulatory boards and broader political issues regarding the evolution of food systems (Belletti et al., 2017b; Sanz & Macías, 2005). Institutional actors are seen as critical in this respect. From a legal perspective, Biénabe and Marie-Vivien (2017) and Geuze (2017) argue that GI regulations avoid 'delocalisation', work-

ing as a kind of intellectual property that protects the producers of the region that have forged the reputation of the food. However, regulations do not always grant the protection of those producers. Gangjee (2017) and Fernández-Zarza et al. (2019) identified lax GI regulations that work against traditional farmers and favour the most powerful actors exploiting the product's reputation. Meanwhile, stricter national legislation, such as those in France, arguably transferred to the EU as a whole, are more pertinent for protection of local food resources (Mancini, 2013). An important learning from this literature is the influence of powerful merchants' unions on state's regulations for the protection of Champagne (Meloni & Swinnen, 2018) and Rooibos (Biénabe & Marie-Vivien, 2017).

Constrasting and linking both approaches

Table 1 highlights the main differences between Anglophone embeddedness and Francophone SYAL approaches.

After the approval of the 1992 2081/92 Regulation on GIs within the framework of the European Common Agricultural Policy reform, some Anglophone authors began to interrogate the Francophone research perspectives (e.g., Ilbery & Kneafsey, 1999; Tregear et al., 1998). This work lead Sonnino and Marsden (2006), Bowen (2011) and Moragues-Faus and Sonnino (2012) to consider the role of institutions, by establishing two dimensions, (horizontal and vertical), to analyse embeddedness on AFNs. The former offers a flat perspective on social, economic and ecological interrelations that shape and develop the process within a specific context, while the latter pays attention to the broader political, institutional and regulatory frameworks and its implications for the governance of the food network. The latter dimension has also been considered by Van der Ploeg et al. (2012), Marsden (2013) and Schneider et al. (2014). These authors defend a proactive role by the state in ensuring 'reflexive governance' able to provide mechanisms for participation within AFNs, as well as to recognise and defend the specificity of these productions.

At the same time, *terroir* has also been incorporated into Anglophone literature on food cultural studies (Gade, 2004; Singer, 2018; Trubek & Bowen, 2008; Unwin, 1991, 2022). These studies converge with Francophone research on GIs, emphasising the agency of consumers for the creation and support of GI reputation and status, with additional value promoted when reputation is elevated as part of a nation's identity, playing a further role in protecting GIs as a public good (Gangjee, 2017; Dutton, 2019; Ramshaw, 2015). This literature, however, remains marginal in mainstream AFN research (Unwin, 2022).

In the late 2000s, some Francophone authors also began to consider the research on AFNs,[4] with a focus on governance and conflict, to explain the dynamics of place-based food productions. Within a SYAL framework, Pachoud et al. (2019) conducted a network analysis to address the capacity of collective action in a localised agro-food system in South Brazil. Coq et al. (2017) also identified conflicting strategies between conventional, organic and GI production within the Sierra de Segura olive oil production system, similar to Belletti et al. (2017a) who described the clash between producers from two municipalities within the Sorana bean GI. The Anglophone-based relational perspective was also topical for critically studying the construction and validation of *terroirs* within GI application processes. Demossier (2011), Grasseni (2016) and Garçon (2019) showed that stakeholders can make use of an array of evidence such as historic documents or agronomic measurements to reinforce certain GI territorial bonds and, by doing so, exclude other producers. Meanwhile, other GIs present a weaker product–*terroir* link with a bias towards

TABLE 1 Differences between both food spatial/territorial approaches. *Source*: The authors, based on Bowen and Mutersbaugh (2014) and Lamine et al. (2018)

	Anglophone/embeddedness perspective	Francophone/SYAL perspective
Object of study	Focused on modes of production, it can hold different types of foods	Focused on specific foodstuffs (e.g., geographical indication)
Conceptualisation of space	Relational and networked, consisting of components, nodes and flows	Deeper notion of *territoire* (consisting of place identity, *terroir* and institutions), acting at different spatial scales
Underlying ontology	Locality and quality as contingent social constructions	Localised food as the result of specific existing elements, for example, cultural and political-institutional
Research spotlight	Search for the configuration of power relations	Search for the consistency and originality of regions and places
Position in relation to conventional models of food production, distribution and consumption	Mainly oppositional, considering non-economic values	Reformist, engages with policies and mainstream markets
Main mobilized quality dimensions	Locally produced, safety, health, sustainability (eco and fair)	Taste, heritage, certification as institutional guarantee
Theoretical strengths	The process is sustained by stakeholders pursuing certain objectives	Model of development, 'activation' of territorial resources
Disadvantages/critical review	Difficulties in analysing a myriad of factors and actors	Problems at delimitating the food system

Abbreviation: SYAL, *Systèmes Agroalimentaires Localisés*.

tourism development and/or production growth (Alonso & Parga, 2018; Bowen & Zapata, 2009; Brunori & Rossi, 2007).

In the last decade, both Anglophone and Francophone scholars have paid attention to the externalities/multifunctionality of (re)localised foods beyond production. They analyse the contribution of GIs on the branding of regions (Forney & Häberli, 2016; Tregear et al., 2016) and even on economic diversification (Crescenzi et al., 2022). Many of these scholars defend the use of actor-network-theory and conventions theory to epistemologically ground their analyses (Kizos and Vakoufaris, 2011; Coq et al., 2017; Sarmiento, 2017; Letelier et al., 2021). From the reviewed literature in this theoretical section, three main dimensions are identified to articulate the analysis: actor's organisation (including their strategies, institutions and governance dynamics), discourse (attending to actors' narratives) and the geographic space (presenting resources, food cultures and socioeconomic factors spatially embedded). These dimensions are represented in Figure 1.

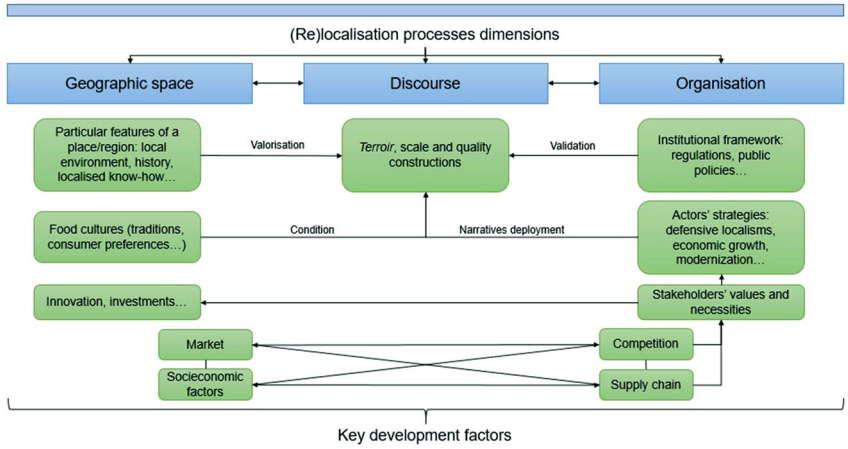

FIGURE 1 Theoretical model cross-fertilising the two considered approaches. *Source*: The authors, based on the reviewed literature of spatial/territorial approaches to food studies: two traditions

METHODS

The role of actors is central to the construction and development of a food (re)localisation initiative, from both Anglophone and Francophone perspectives. Thus, it was appropriate to develop a qualitative methodology capable of exploring their values, strategies and relationships around pepper production. We contacted key informants who had a common feature: They were involved with pepper production in the village of Herbón. As such, we selected 19 participants:

- Five PDO producers (working in three different firms, three of them being members of the PDO Regulatory Board);
- two active pepper-growers who have left the PDO scheme;
- seven others who are residents in the village (including the elderly and retired farmers) and
- five professionals (technical staff, civil servants, governmental authorities, etc.) directly involved in the PDO application process.

We conducted semi-structured interviews. These were favoured due to the flexibility they allow in adapting questions according to the flow of the conversation, thus generating empathy and trust with the informants (Dunn, 2016). In addition, we sought a differential accent for each interview, to highlight the features that each person favoured most (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This technique allowed us to obtain more in-depth and detailed information about each interviewee's perspective.

The interview model had a hybrid structure following Dunn's (2016) conventions. First, we asked participants about their relationship with Padrón/Herbón and the pepper, guiding them towards the core topics. Then, we moved on to informants' personal experiences to reveal potential controversies around pepper production and in the construction of the PDO. As far as possible, we used an open-ended style of questions such as 'tell me about…' (Valentine, 1997), maintaining a neutral position so the informants could articulate their experiences in their own words. Thus, we avoided anticipating terms such as 'PDO' to understand the context of each informant (Cameron, 2016). The interviews were concluded with more abstract questions, such as 'how did they see the future of the crop' and of the village in general.

TABLE 2 Relation of grey literature texts

Title	Pages	Citation in this article
Report on the current situation of the Padrón Pepper ('Pimiento de Padrón') [potential] Designation of Origin (2003)	3	Document 1
Report on the geographical area to be covered by the Galician Padrón Pepper ('Pimiento Padrón de Galicia') [potential] PDO ('Pimiento Padrón de Galicia'; 2004)	8	Document 2
Draft Code of Practice of the [potential] PDO Galician Padrón Pepper (2004)	22	Document 3

Abbreviation: PDO, protected designation of origin.

In the results, we refer to each informant following an alphabetical index (Informant A, B, C…). One of the authors of the article is a resident of Herbón, and his/her family has been directly involved in the GI application process, reflecting a bias (Winchester & Rolfe, 2016). However, this has facilitated easy access to several interviewees.

Interviewing was complemented with textual analysis, including examination of diverse written sources that were useful to complete, clarify or contrast—with a diachronic and comparative perspective—the information collected from the interviews (Roche, 2016; Winchester & Rolfe, 2016). We made use of four kinds of textual materials:

- a set of approximately 75 press articles—ranging from 40 years ago until the present day—related to pepper production in the area;
- the *Herbón Pepper ('Pemento de Herbón') PDO Code of Practice* passed in 2009—current EU Regulation 1151/12 requires the drafting of such a code for each GI registration, including specifications such as the delimitation of the production area;
- grey literature on the process leading to the PDO constitution, including reports by the Galician Government (Table 2) and
- scientific articles related to the biological research on the pepper (in biochemical and botanical terms).

All the gathered data were processed through descriptive and analytic codes (Cope, 2016; Waitt, 2016). The former were employed to group evident topics and to condense frequent ideas repeated through the interviews and texts. The latter are mainly deductive given that they make use of previous literature. These codes served to delve deeper into values, discourses and relationships between people, institutions and material elements that were intertwined in the production of peppers. We organised all the codes in clusters of ideas (Crang, 2005). Three main clusters were established, and they constitute the results section: The disputes over the rights to use the name 'Padrón'; the clash of perspectives about pepper uniqueness and the area for the PDO and the implications of the GI since it was approved. The quotes are our translation.

RESULTS

Disputes over control of the pepper name

Varied horticultural farming has been the dominant occupation of residents in the village of Herbón, mainly for self-consumption. In this context, the elderly interviewees reported that peppers

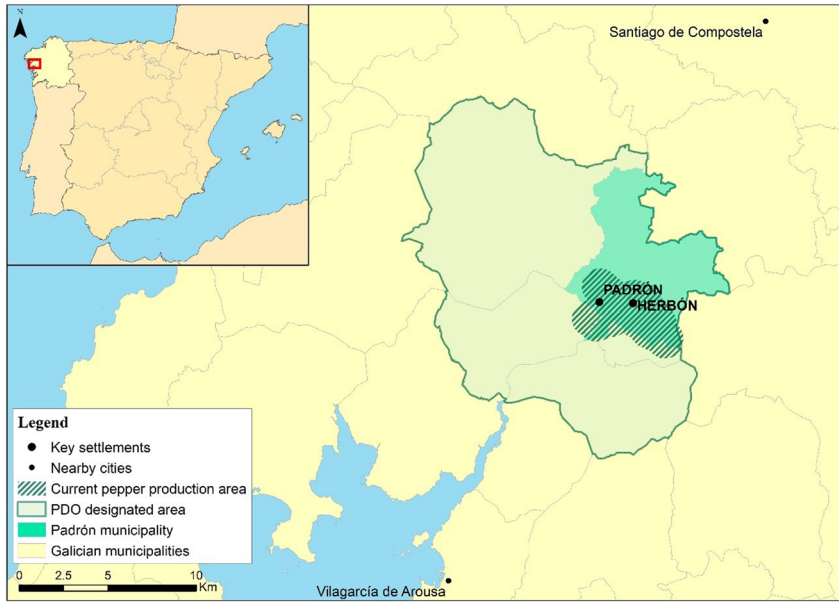

FIGURE 2 Location map of Padrón and Herbón. PDO, protected designation of origin.

occupied a small percentage of farmland and any surplus was sold in nearby markets such as Santiago de Compostela. According to them, this little vegetable already had a premium reputation in their youth (1950s and earlier). Then, the name 'Padrón' was commonly assigned to it, in recognition of this bigger adjacent town (see Figure 2), which was better known than was the case for the tiny village of Herbón. From the 1970s, the farms of the village embraced modernisation and began to specialise in the production of their most profitable crop: the pepper. In this new, emerging market economy, production rapidly increased, reaching distant markets through big retailers and sophisticated logistics networks. The interviewees explained that during the 1970s to 1980s, with the first exports reaching Madrid, the peppers acquired greater popularity throughout Spain.

However, their success prompted the development of plantations in other locations, including Southern Galicia (O Salnés, O Rosal) and other Spanish regions (Murcia, Almería). Interviewees explained that these farms were larger, more capitalised, with lower production costs and able to maintain all-year farming due to warmer climatic conditions, whereas in Herbón, the climate inhibits the plants' growth in winter. In short, Herbón was less competitive.

However, according to the farmer interviewees, the principle problem was wholesalers who commercialised peppers grown elsewhere (50, 100 or 1000 km away), marketing them as if they were from Padrón. Both informants and many press articles suggested that these practices deliberately intended to mislead consumers, taking advantage of the Herbón peppers' fame and reputation and making it difficult to differentiate the authentic peppers from others. Thus, Herbón farmers felt they were no longer in control of their *own* peppers. Indeed, the increasing market growth of vegetables grown elsewhere, even in their own traditional markets, was perceived as a reason for considerable loss of sales. These problems of perceived 'unfair competition' persisted over time with long-lasting legal battles around trademark imitations and copies (e.g., Figure 3). As one informant explained, there was great confusion in the market:

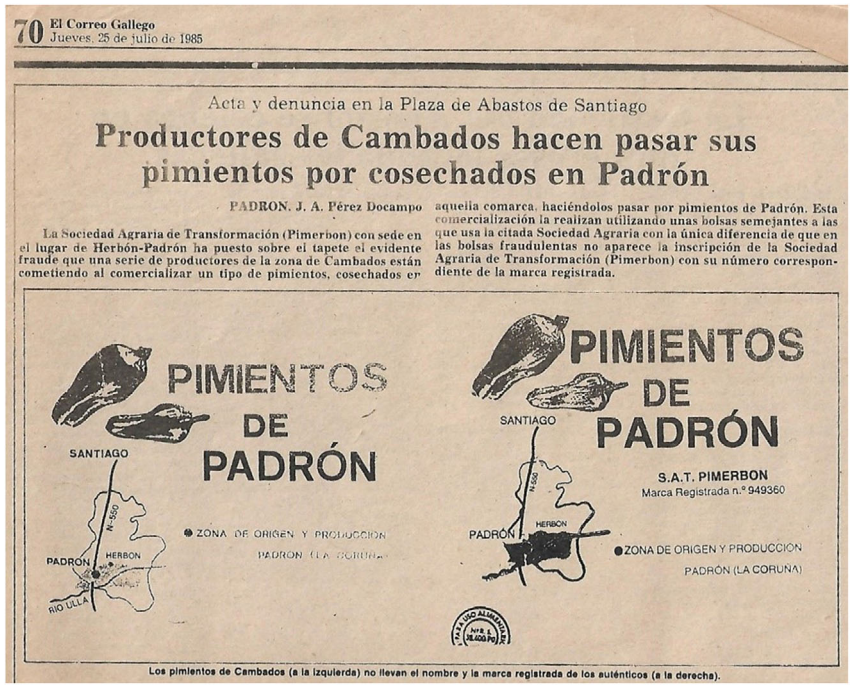

FIGURE 3 Press headline of 1985 echoing the claims of Herbón pepper producers regarding packaging and copies. On the right is the real logo of Pimerbón co-operative (from Herbón), with its registry number. On the left is the fake packaging from another Galician area, audaciously showing a map of the municipality of Padrón. Source: *El Correo Gallego*, 25 July 1985.

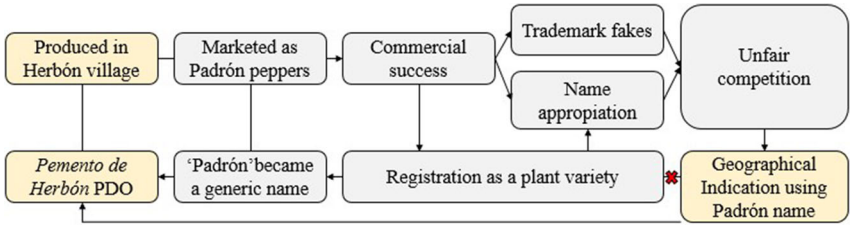

FIGURE 4 Delocalisation process of the peppers from Padrón/Herbón (in grey) and Herbón farmers' response (in yellow). PDO, protected designation of origin.

There were consumers who said: 'these other peppers are cheaper'—but they aren't from Padrón—'why not? On the bag it says Padrón… Maybe yours aren't from Padrón either'. (Informant J)

Consequently, in the late 1970s, the idea of a GI was raised to 'distinguish' and 'protect' the real Padrón peppers (Figure 4). The farmers involved explained that this solution came about through their relationship with public servants working in agricultural extension services. The farmers had no knowledge of this protection but agricultural extension officers thought it was a sensible strategy. This occurred when the existing GI legislation in Spain—Act 25/1970 on the Statute of Vines, Wines and Alcohols—was beginning to be applied—through Royal Decrees—to other items labelled as GIs rather than wines and spirits. Indeed, some interviewees remembered that

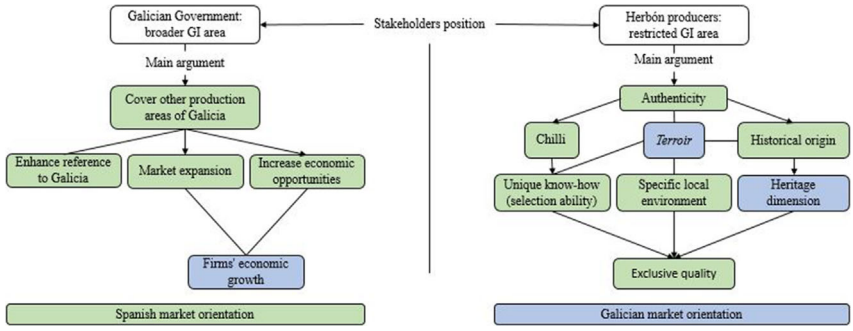

FIGURE 5 Cluster of ideas showing the different positions between the Galician Government and Herbón producers over the definition of the geographical indication (GI). Green represents the descriptive codes, while the analytical codes are in blue.

in the mid-1980s, they had direct knowledge of specific legislation allowing horticultural products to be designated as GIs—probably referring to the Spanish Royal Decree 2671/1985 explicitly mentioning that 'Padrón Peppers' should be considered a GI.

When Herbón producers proceeded to formally request a GI for their pepper, they noticed that 'Padrón' had already been registered as a plant and seed variety name, having been appropriated by a private company. Some interviewees pointed out that at that time, the legislation did not prevent the registration of place names as trademarks. Nonetheless, they questioned how that name could have been accepted for registration when, simultaneously, they were processing a GI for it.

> The people of Herbón were dedicated to producing and working, not to seeing what was published in the Gazette; but no-one in the Local Council [of Padrón], or the Galician Government informed us that the seed had been registered. (Informant H)

The interviewees believe that, with stronger negotiation power, they could have reversed that registration. In any case, local producers lost control of the seed name—which became generic—and the aspiration for a GI for the 'Padrón pepper' was lost (Figure 4). Instead, the route chosen to apply for the GI was to use the toponym of Herbón, bypassing legal issues related to the former name. Although Herbón had the handicap of not being notable or recognised at a commercial level, it facilitated the differentiation of the 'authentic' pepper from the already generic Padrón.

GI Area: The essence of the pepper

The interviewees acknowledged that by the end of the 1990s, the idea of a GI was revisited because of the increasing perception of loss of local sales due to the expanding production of peppers from elsewhere being labelled as 'Padrón'. Importantly, by then the GI regulations were already dependent on European legislation (Spain joined the European Communities in 1986). However, as they recall, the geographical delimitation of the GI caused major controversy at the time. Herbón producers aspired to a restricted GI, while the Galician Government wanted a broader geographical area for the so-called 'Galician Padrón Pepper'. Each of the stakeholders deployed different arguments to defend their position (Figure 5).

Several interviewees, as well as the analysed grey literature (Documents 1, 2, 3), show that the intention of the Galician Government was to define a broad area that would cover all Galician

production of this variety of pepper. An internal report (Document 1: 3) outlined the objective of expanding the production area under the GI scheme to accommodate markets that 'will surely increase their demand'. This strategy made sense, as some informants admitted Padrón peppers are widely associated with Galicia by Spanish customers outside Galicia. Another article (Document 2) expressed that with such a quality scheme, more producers and firms might benefit, thus making a veiled reference to economic growth objectives. In sum, they were presuming a broader area would allow more production and economies of scale. Furthermore, the position of the Herbón producers was criticised:

[As] these producers have historically been the forerunners of the initiative to create the PDO […], they believe they have a series of acquired rights; including the fact that the 'authentic' Padrón peppers only come from their farmlands […]. This solution would considerably limit the expansion of the product in neighbouring municipalities without agronomic or market reasons that would [justify it]. (Document 2: 5)

On the other hand, Herbón producers claimed that there really were 'market' and 'agronomic' reasons to reject a broader territorial extension. From an economic point of view, they presented the other production areas as industrialised and mass production-oriented, in contrast to their own area and more artisanal production. They argued, that if the GI production area had been expanded, competitive relations with large companies would have displaced them. By so doing, some interviewees believed they would face a serious risk of disappearing, despite being 'the origin' of the pepper.

Indeed, the main reason they gave for rejecting the Galician Government's proposal referred to the authenticity of their unique food. Local informants stress that the historical origin of the crop lies only in their village as a right of belonging since, they surmise, Franciscans brought the seed from Mexico in the 16th–17th centuries, and then adapted it to the local environment. Herbón farmers also pointed out that they continue to grow their distinctive crop, guarding and selecting the seeds from one season to another, as opposed to other producers who buy the registered Padrón variety, as well as hybrid versions that have eliminated the spiciness. Nonetheless, the organoleptic qualities of the pepper produced in Herbón—which interviewees link to a superior taste—are highlighted as the most distinctive feature of this food. Different producers cite anecdotes from customers that support this argument:

When people came, if there were different Padrón peppers in the market and they knew Herbón ones, they bought Herbón and not the others. Why? Because the real Padrón peppers are ours, by origin and because they are the ones that taste best. (Informant N)

Many friends say: 'I plant peppers [in other areas of Galicia], but they don't taste like yours'. The place, Herbón, the valley must be the heart of the pepper. (Informant M)

One informant mentioned a doctoral thesis that corroborated the pepper cultivated in Herbón could be distinguished (from similar ones planted elsewhere) by its chemical composition. Local producers also emphasise their know-how when distinguishing and selecting the pepper that is hot from the one that is not. Many informants underline this ability as fundamental to the quality of the product and for consumers' high appreciation of it.

The people from Herbón always knew the pepper, they knew which was spicy and which was not, they selected it […]. That's why they were famous because they recognised the peppers. (Informant J)

We said: how are we going to allow them to put 'Galician Padrón Pepper' when our pepper has nothing to do with what is produced in O Rosal or O Salnés [regions in Southern Galicia], when there are important organoleptic differences… it has nothing to do with the taste or work

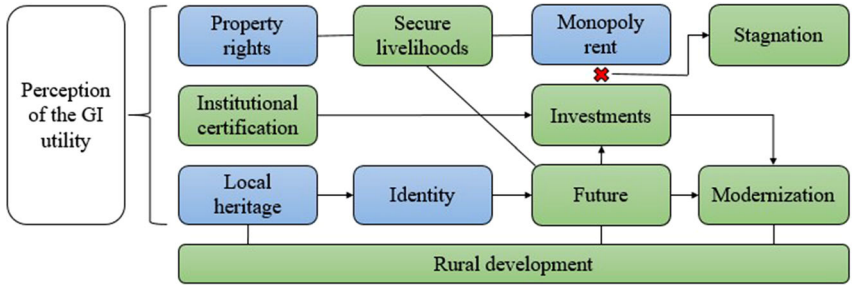

FIGURE 6 Perceptions and values on GI utility found among Herbón farmers. Blue and green represent the same as in Figure 5.

traditions. And in selection, which is another important aspect, the farmers [from O Rosal and O Salnés] don't know how to choose the pepper. (Informant H)

[Producers from other areas] insisted, but they had nothing, they had no justification. They always went after us to see what they could get. (Informant C)

As expressed by several informants—with opposing interests at the time — there was no way to move forward with the GI application if the 'hard core' farmers of pepper production remained on the sidelines, as they were pivotal to sustaining the product–territory link, its historic and natural roots, as well as consumers' appreciation. The process stagnated between 2004 and 2008, but in the face of the local producers' immovable position against a larger area GI, the geographical area was finally agreed, based on the municipality of Padrón. The GI agreement complied with EU rules, showing a demonstrable link between the product and a specific area. While the Herbón farms defended powerful arguments in their favour, the other areas aspiring to achieve the GI status were not able to claim to hold the same seed selection traditions or growing conditions. Nonetheless, the GI also includes some bordering municipalities beyond Padrón (Figure 2) as a concession to the Galician Government and their bid for production growth expansion.

The approval of the 'Herbón Pepper' PDO

Having resolved the conflict over the GI area, a new and definitive code of practice was drawn up, inclusive of all the arguments put forward by Herbón farmers. The PDO name—Herbón Pepper—symbolising the 'return to the origin' of the crop, reinforced authenticity despite the broadening of the traditional production area.

When the GI was finally achieved in 2009—more than 30 years after the initial concept was mooted, not all pepper producers from Herbón registered. During the interviews, the different perceptions of the statutory PDO were articulated (Figure 6). The idea of a protection scheme was broadly attractive because of its profitability. However, the qualification required a set of costs (related to traceability, provenance and health controls), which—according to some informants—not all producers were willing to assume, implying that they detached themselves from the PDO when it was finally implemented. Those farmers who have subsequently excluded themselves from the PDO claim that their peppers are as authentic as those with PDO certification.

Meanwhile, the farmers, mostly women, who trusted the GI as the only option for the future of their quality production, organised themselves to comply with the requisites. They created a new co-operative, *A Pementeira*, and 10 years later, it encompasses more than half of the production

of the PDO. Over time, other producers have individually joined the GI. The interviewees participating in the PDO state that new markets have been reached (e.g., London) and derived products have been developed over the last few years, including different types of PDO-Herbón pepper jam.

DISCUSSION

As noted earlier, this article analyses how a GI has been attained for Padrón/Herbón peppers in light of the spatial/territorial theorisations developed in recent food studies in both the Anglophone and Francophone traditions. At first glance, the emergence of the Herbón Pepper PDO follows the mainstream GI development framework. Hence, an original food consisting of a variety of small green peppers (characterised by the alternation of spicy and non-spicy peppers, sold fresh at the market to be fried for consumption), linked to a specific area, has been recognised, taking into account ecological, cultural, historical and identity elements widely quoted by the interviewees. This aligns with how *terroir* is mobilised to construct a specific GI institutionalisation (Fonte, 2008; Moustier & Consales, 2007). In this sense, the studied process is consistent with the assumption that a GI consists of activating the unique resources present in a given area to capture added value and with the SYAL approach as a whole (Boucher & Reyes-González, 2016; Fournier & Muchnik, 2012; Sanz & Muchnik, 2016). However, despite all the constituents being present for the designation of GI, the case study shows that the Herbón Pepper PDO finally came about after three rounds of interwoven conflicts that are discussed here, evidence that the discursive dimension of *terroir* and scale constructions and the underlying power behind regulations have been key factors in the process.

The first identified conflict was the registration of a pepper seed with the toponym 'Padrón' in the mid-1980s by a private company, when, simultaneously, local producers were seeking to create a GI to address perceived unfair competition. Although local producers tried to revert this registration, they were unsuccessful, and consequently Padrón became a generic, and delocalised, plant variety name. This study underscores the relevance of this finding, showing that even the most basic point of a 'geographical' indication, that is, the place/region name, is not necessarily assured. Despite the GI ultimately being achieved, the place-name Padrón remains detached from the place. This is an important addition to the existing literature in this domain, as most literature on food (re)localisation reviewed in the theoretical section assumes that GIs grant the protection of the foods' place/region names (Dagne, 2010; Gangjee, 2017; Geuze 2017), which is not always true. In our case, the strong commercial interests that may play against these processes led to the appropriation of the toponym 'Padrón'.

The case of Padrón pepper is significant, given that both Champagne at the beginning of the 20th century and Rooibos in the 2010s were able to challenge the misuse of these names by outsiders (Biénabe & Marie-Vivien, 2017; Teil, 2017; Trubek & Bowen, 2008). On the contrary, this was not possible for Padrón because regulations did not impede the registration of place names as trademarks in Spain in the 1980s, but also because both the Galician and the Spanish governments did nothing to stop appropriation of the place name by outside interests. A possible explanation is that French Champagne and South African Rooibos had powerful merchants' unions pressuring their governments for protection (Biénabe & Marie-Vivien, 2017; Meloni & Swinnen, 2018). This finding underpins the necessity for an adequate institutional organisation as a priori requisite for the effective protection of GIs.

The second conflict deals with the geographical scope of the GI. The results of our study indicate that prior to the designation passed in 2009, there were at least three scales at stake:

- the global scale because the pepper is a mere commodity that can be produced anywhere in the world;
- Galicia, particularly as the Galician Government intended to create a designation for Galicia as a whole under the name 'Galician Padrón Pepper' (using two toponyms: Padrón and Galicia) and
- Herbón itself—which is the toponym ultimately adopted in 2009.

While the spatial/territorial literature on food studies has been attentive to the contestation on the geographical scope of a given GI (Brunori & Rossi, 2007; Meloni & Swinnen, 2018; Sonnino, 2007), this research provides valuable insights, showing that the social and political construction of scale applies when the GI development is taking place. This is in line with previous political and social geography research (Häkli, 2018; Marston, 2000) and Born and Purcell (2006) specifically for food studies. In this case, we saw that stakeholders discursively selected the spatial attributes that better suited their strategies and that the definition of the GI scale was adapted according to the interests of each one.

At the Galician wide-scale, the GI can be interpreted as a politically driven construction taken with obvious economic development intentions, in line with other Spanish cases (Alonso & Parga, 2018; Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2012. The scale of Herbón, as manifested by the local stakeholders, bears witness to the notion of authenticity linked to a unique *terroir* identified by Fonte (2008) and Bessière (2013), amongst others, as already argued here. Herbón farmers emphasised these localised resources and qualities to justify the distinctiveness of the production and their rights over it. This construction of *terroir*, given its spatial limitation, served as a discursive framework against the introduction in the GI of other companies (Garçon, 2019). Importantly, some AFN scholars have tended to blame this kind of position as 'defensive localism' based on exclusionary practices (DuPuis & Goodman, 2005; May, 2017). However, the approval of the Galician-wide scope would have represented a risk of conventionalisation as Guthman (2004, 2007) inferred when studying other AFNs and Bowen and Zapata (2009) specifically for the case of Tequila GI.

Hence, the results suggest that, when dealing with territorialised/spatialised foods, the different scales at stake can allow the construction of various discourses where (re)localisation takes place, echoing the differing Anglophone and Francophone approaches that become attached to particular scales. Arguably, we can infer that part of the gap between both theoretical approaches is related to the fact they have been conceived referring to different scales: the former keener to engage with/confront the global scenario and the latter more territorially bound and limited.

The final designation does not match with the territory of the village of Herbón but includes five different municipalities (Padrón and four others; Figure 2). This was an outcome of the negotiation between the Herbón and the Galician scales. Nevertheless, the fact that the local vision has been more successful than the Galician-wide option is consistent with the Francophone experiences in this respect (e.g., Bowen, 2010, 2011). This power has been possible given that the discourse deployed by Herbón farmers—highlighting the specificities of their production—was in line with the EU requirements needed for attaining a GI (Barham, 2003; Bérard & Marchenay, 1996; among others). Thus, in terms of the theoretical distinction between horizontal and vertical embeddedness (Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2012; Sonnino & Marsden, 2006) this case study shows how they have both played a role: the former given that the local conditions have been crucial and the latter in the sense that the EU framework was also pivotal. The local scale might not have been able to counter-balance the economic-wide forces without the EU regulations in force. Accordingly, our research confirms the relevance given to institutions both in SYAL and embeddedness literature on GIs.

The interviews conducted for this research did not engage with consumers. However, the interviewees often mentioned the prestige afforded by Galician consumers on the pepper produced in Herbón as one of the main reasons to justify the GI and the modest geographical coverage. Although not directly investigated, this perceived purchasing behaviour is consistent with the Southern European context, where linking particular tastes to specific places and traditions is recurrent (Fonte, 2008; Muchnik et al., 2008; Parrot et al., 2002), and affirms the agency of consumers' culture as a conditioning factor for a GI development.

Finally, the conflicts have not ended despite the PDO being set in 2009, implying a third set of contestations that is worth discussing. Hence, a new area of conflict has emerged between the producers in Herbón committed to the PDO, who have a role in its management, and those who have decided to remain on the sidelines. Again, this is a practical verification of the embeddedness approach, underscoring the relevance of the involved stakeholders and their values and strategies (Moragues-Faus & Sonnino, 2012). In this sense, SYAL scholars, such as Mancini (2013), enthusiastically argue that traditional farmers in Latin America are favored by GI regulations, but even traditional farmers cannot be monolithically understood as a single set of people. In this case, although Herbón farmers' initial motivations for collective action were about securing rents and retaining local control of the resource, their claims for a GI based on the origin and the heritage of the product also led to the emergence for some of a set of non-economic values around pepper production. These include a collective sense of identity and appreciation of product authenticity as Demossier (2011) and Forney and Häberli (2016) found in other cases. These values, in turn, favoured their commitment to the PDO and led them to innovate, by creating an agrarian cooperative, investing in the modernisation of the process and launching derived products, a trend which is consistent with Sanz and Macías (2005).

CONCLUSION

This article has shown how an almost powerless group of farmers, despite several conflicts, have achieved a GI for the popular 'Padrón' peppers. The GI, by defending the link of pepper production with the area of Herbón, has preserved the identity marker of the village and ensured the economic sustainability of Herbón farmers, maintaining their traditional livelihoods and shielding them from displacement by large-scale productions.

We have made use of the notion of '(re)localisation' to provide a bridge between the Anglophone and Francophone spatial/territorial theoretical approaches to food studies. The inferences from this study allow us to argue that the brackets remain necessary. The GI for peppers comes from a recognition of a botanical resource, technique, local knowledge and traditions fixed in place, and the strategy to assert the local specificities of Herbón is based on the fact that the product is 'localised'. However, this same product has been 'relocalised' because the link between the product and its place of origin had disappeared, and, at least to some degree, it has been re-established. Nonetheless the toponym 'Padrón' remains global and generic, unlinked from the place. Consequently, it is possible to produce 'Padron peppers' across the world, in Queensland and California, with no association with a Galician town, or a GI, at all.

We are not the first to interrogate the interrelationships of Anglophone and Francophone traditions. Previous research making use of both approaches include Bowen and Muterbaugh (2014) and Lamine et al. (2018), to name a few. However, this article confirms that both traditions combined together provide worthwhile investigation on the construction of (re)localisation processes. Indeed, the achievement of the Herbón Pepper PDO can only be explained through the interrela-

tionship of both theoretical sets, validating the model advanced in Figure 1. From this integrated model, we have evidenced the elemental relevance of the spatial/territorial, discursive and organisational dimensions that interplay on these processes. The Herbón Pepper GI has been made possible due to the strong organisation of Herbón producers. It is also due to their mobilisation of a discourse about *terroir* aligned with the specific resources present in their space/territory, with an EU regulatory framework, that recognised such link. The food culture of Galician consumers, conceding prestige to the peppers cultivated in that area, also contributed to the GI.

We have demonstrated that part of the gap between the AFN and SYAL approaches is due to different scales of analysis: the former looks more at the (re)localisation process on the global scenario, and the latter focuses more on the outcomes of (re)localisation at the ground level. Further clarification of this difference could contribute to the discussion of whether GIs are a protectionist mechanism.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest that could be perceived as prejudicing the impartiality of the research reported.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

ETHICS STATEMENT

Participants in the research have been adequately informed about the aims of the investigation and their rights. The research methods comply and have been approved by the ethical commission of the University of Santiago de Compostela.

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ENDNOTES

[1] PDOs, established through the European Union (EU) Regulation 2081/92, are the most exclusive type of food GIs in the EU.

[2] 'Territorial' and 'spatial' are not synonyms but their specific conceptualisation is beyond the remit of this article. Nonetheless, it is important to highlight that 'territorial' and 'spatial' have different meetings in Latin languages (including French) and English, making articles from both traditions somewhat incomparable.

[3] Slow Food Presidia is another way to qualify products from *terroir* commonly referred in this literature.

[4] Paradoxically, most Francophone scholars who have adopted an AFN approach do not consider GIs as alternative productions, being focused on short supply chains (*circuits de proximité*) such as urban foodsheds, farmers' unions like the *Confédération Paysanne* and so forth, where the focus is not on 'distinctive' foods but on ordinary products (Aubry & Kebir, 2013; Garçon et al., 2017).

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