

# Tourism, culture and food: pastizzerias as a site for cultural brokerage

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## ARTICLE INFO

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### ***Food and culture: some general assumptions.***

This paper is written from a general anthropological perspective that food can be seen as a key to culture (cfr. Azzopardi & Clark 2005). Food habits differ noticeably between regions and form part of what people consider to be typical of their roots, their collective identities and themselves. Even the diet people claim to be the right one, contains traces of historical influences as well as complex contemporary international relations. Past and present are reflected in what people eat, like and think of as healthy or good food. (Parasecoli, 2007) Food cultural phenomena run through a certain circuit of culture that result in their meaning or 'life story'. This "needs to be understood in relation to five major cultural processes: production, regulation, representation, identity and consumption" (Ashley et al. 2004). In this paper I will focus mainly on the last three processes.

I assume that food plays an important role in the creation and experience of identity of people on their own soil, as well as in the exploration and description of another culture. Food has separated 'us' from 'the other' since the beginnings of civilisation (Flandrin & Montanari, 1999). This may go as far as the creation of homogenising stereotypes that embrace nations as a whole. These stereotypes go well beyond the use of mere ingredients and cooking techniques. Also time and place influence greatly on the tourists' experience and imagery of local and glocal food habits. The aspect time may differ thoroughly between northern and southern European countries, as to at what times of the day food is being served. A variety of places where different types of tourists consume their meals: hotels, restaurants, bars, fast-food take-aways... are set up to evoke different experiences. These assumptions enable us to perceive foodstuffs not only as a catalyst for memorable sensational experiences but even as a possible tourist intermediary or a trigger for "cultural brokery" (Cohen 1985). Food can bring members of different cultures together and facilitate their interaction by offering a conversation topic and a place for encounter.

Because of its strategical position, the archipel of Malta has known different foreign dominations over the centuries. The gastronomical legacies of the past result in an extraordinary eclectic cuisine, famous for a great amount of calories, with elements of Arab, Spanish, Southern Italian and more recent British influences (Gambin, 2007).

### ***A speciality of the Islands...***

In this research I focus on one typical speciality of the Maltese cuisine: Pastizzi. A Pastizz is an almond-shaped, crispy pastry, traditionally filled with a ricotta cheese and eggs mixture or a smooth blend of mushy peas (pizelli). Its origin is traced back to the Turks, one of the many former dominators of the Islands (Azzopardi & Clark 2005; Peternt 2004). These ingredients are not unique in the Mediterranean world, but its name and its place in society is absolutely typical for Malta and Gozo. This calorie-rich snack can be found everywhere on Malta and Gozo and at many places outside the islands where Maltese migrants have settled. Pastizzi on the islands are being sold in small outlets and bars called Pastizzerias. You can buy Pastizzi in almost every bar where you can buy a coffee, but most pastizzerias on Gozo are however situated in the capital, Rabat. As we will see further on, these pastizzerias function as a space for interaction between locals and visitors of all kinds. Pastizzi are considered a typical and traditional Maltese produce and habit, unique to the archipelago. And indeed it is not hard to discover the embeddedness of

Pastizzi in Maltese culture, since the word appears to be a semantic treasure. Apart from being a denotative hyponym enclosing different kinds of pastizzi fillings, the word has a sexual connotation as well as an insulting one. Also the English expression "It sells like hotcakes" has got a Maltese variant, where things seem to "sell like Pastizzi" if they are easily being sold.

### ***... celebrated on the internet***

A swift look on the internet offers an attention-grabbing notion of the importance of Pastizzi for the self-image of Maltese around the globe. Maltese inhabitants and emigrants do not just like to eat this snack, they also present it with a lot of pride as something unique to their roots and seem to be really fond of it. The authenticity of the produce is being emphasised on forums, as well as the fattening characteristics, mostly mentioned in a humorous tone. Malta is a well-known obese country within the EU. (NSO 2003).

Pastizzi is a ricotta or meat pastry that is very yummy, and greasier than you should probably eat. [...] By the way, we now have low cholesterol pastizzi, just seen the advert on Maltese TV on the internet, so enjoy! (Dailymalta)

Pastizzi on the internet seem to function as a stimulant for bonding among the emigrated Maltese and for interaction between the inhabitants of Malta and their emigrants. From the USA to Australia, Canada and the UK, recipes are being exchanged, bars and brands are being evaluated and melancholic memories of youths or holidays spent in the motherland are being shared. Maltese forums can become quite dominated by the topic. The social function of pastizzi and pastizzerias seems already to prove itself in the cosiness and familiarity of these forums's tone.

All this talk about pastizzi is driving me nuts! I lived in Malta for 30 years and moved to Florida over a year ago. I can't think of Malta without thinking of pastizzi! I tried making them, but although they came out good, they were not the same. Can anyone tell me how I can get some? please help!

Redcat, too bad you are not either back in Malta or here in Toronto Canada, where in Little Malta you can buy frozen fresh Pastizzi in any flavour. There is a Grocery Store here called Hyland Farms which also carry them. Look them up on the internet. They might do delivery?? (dailymalta)

Pastizzi are not only a tool in the construction and maintenance of the self-image of those with Maltese roots. Tourists use the pastry in their descriptions of their holiday and

their impression of Malta and the Maltese. Pastizzi are frequently mentioned by tourists on their travelblogs. They seem to bring a strongly sought for 'authenticity' to people's travel experiences. The social aspect is being brought forward on many blogs of people who "shared" pastizzi with a local friend or family.

It is no surprise that tourists find their way to pastizzi, since the pastry is being promoted in travel guides, on forums and even online encyclopaedia as 'the one thing you must have tried' when you visit the islands. Surprisingly a simple engine search of the topic on the internet does not lead you directly to any official Maltese websites concerning tourism or governmental promotion of the island. Pastizzi and more importantly their social function are still being promoted far more by Maltese emigrants, tourists and autochthons on the internet, than by official Maltese organisations concerned with the image of the country. The social value of pastizzerias remains thus far unclaimed by the official discourse of tourism policy and tourism industry.

Pastizzi have a particular place of pride in Maltese culture and are light-heartedly considered one of the nation's unique achievements. Locals consider no visit to Malta to be complete without eating some pastizzi. (Wikipedia)

If you're ever on the Maltese Islands, you will have to savour Pastizzi or as they are known in English 'Cheese Cakes'. (Everywhere travelblogs)

A visit to Malta would not be the same without having a taste of "pastizzi" a Maltese snack (fast food?) consisting of a pastry pocket with a ricotta cheese or pea filling. And nobody makes them better than the people of Rabat. (virtualltourist)

I visited beautiful Malta last year and have eaten tons of pastizzi - its always fresh and unbelievable cheap. -Jozef from Bratislava (dailymalta)

... maar ondertussen worden we al getrakteerd op 'pastizzi' (een pastei van bladerdeeg met vulling van ricotta of erwtenpuree, uit de hand te eten). Dit valt ons prima in de smaak! (blogs.hnl)

Once you come to Malta in either July, August or September and take a trip with one of our buses to Valletta it is a must to have lunch here at one of the many cafeteria's/ restaurants found in the main road.

Most of my relatives that come from abroad always stop here for 'pastizzi' (either filled with peas or rikotta). mmmmmm

and not to forget a long cold drink. Let's face it you will need the drink to make up for the heat and the 'pastizzi'... well... to enjoy. (maltadailyphoto.blogspot)

This may well change fast, since the Maltese Tourist Association (MTA) and the Institute of Tourism Studies (ITS) have stated the end of a period in which 'sun and sea' were a main asset for the islands to attract tourists. The MTA measured that "the advent of low-cost carriers have resulted in 60% of foreign visitors being non-traditional tourists willing to visit the island individually and sample its delights independently" (Pace, 2008). "The natural beauty of a country, its rich cultural background and a desire to relax and be entertained" are now considered keys to a successful tourist industry, upon which the islands' economy depends. Recently, a "relational" factor is being added, "something that should captivate the tourist after a first visit to a country" (Pace, 2008). In an article about relational tourism and the PRISMA Project which he takes part in, David Pace of the ITS explains how relational tourism can be seen as "an alternative form of tourism that profits the locality rather than the large businesses that characterise mass tourism" and, quoting the PRISMA project: as "a tourism that privileges interpersonal and environmental relations stimulating historical and cultural sensibility and sustainability of a development in the dialogue between supplier and user, and also integrates the productive and commercial sectors in the micro and medium dimension." To illustrate the above, he describes the experience of a fictive Sicilian personage visiting Malta: "Salvatore got a real taste of Maltese culture and hospitality. He was shown where to get the best pastizzi at the main square's bar and made some friends there too, as everybody there knew Anna and John, the owners of the bed & breakfast" (Pace, 2008). It seems the academics in Malta are not blind for the social role and consequently the tourist potential of pastizzerias. If Malta manages indeed to make the promised shift in its tourism policy, the important role of informal intermediaries will become more acknowledged in the field. In the present situation these intermediaries seem to play their part mostly on the internet. Their influence on positive tourist experiences is supposedly profounder than has been assumed before in tourist studies (cfr. Jennings & Weiler 2006).

People use the internet to get in touch and share experiences. In doing so, they construct identities and myths. Pastizzi seem to be one of the possible topics used in these constructions if it comes to being Maltese or knowing what being Maltese is about. Let's now explore how this relates to the non-virtual sites.

### ***Whose food, Where and Why?***

During the three-week fieldwork located in Victoria/Rabat, Gozo, a few categories of the type of client to be seen in a Pastizzeria came forward. The here presented categories are neither exhaustive nor all-encompassing, as will probably never be the case since it are human beings that are being studied.

However I consider them methodologically grounded to a level that makes them useful. They may help to understand more about who eats Pastizzi, where one eats pastizzi and why one eats pastizzi in a particular place. They can also help pointing out those interactions that make for the statement that pastizzi function as cultural brokers.

### ***Local men: sociality and display or functional use***

The first category consists of regular local men. Mainly local men who meet up with their friends congregate in the cafés. The places where pastizzi are being sold are functional to the Mediterranean tendency of somewhat older men gathering outside their homes during daytime to keep each other company, chat, laugh, discuss. Each bar seems to have its own 'bunch of regular locals', occupying a slightly separated space in the café or on the terrace. This 'reserved' space is visually recognisable by a typical spatial ordering of the furniture on the terrace. Benches or a row of seats posed against a wall close to the entrance, are unspoken being reserved for habitual costumers. They spend many hours in the pastizzerias, having tea, coffee or Kinnie and now and again enjoying a savoury pastry. The pastizzerias traditionally open early in the morning for those who start working at the crack of dawn, like the fishermen. A few hours later, the regular locals appear. Some of them gather early for good old times' sake, others to avoid moving around during the worst heat of the day. Because of these early hours, these men don't tend to order a lot of alcohol. Off course some 'regular locals' do start drinking in the morning. Their motivation to be in the bar seems to be less socially motivated. These 'drinking locals' are rather an exception on the terraces during daytime. The location of most Pastizzerias on a visible place, like squares or busy streets, may have something to do with this observation, increasing the informal social control of drinking.

The first answer to the question "Why do you come here?" in this category will be answered with an air of obviousness: "Because I meet my friends here". The choice of a

particular place for this category is yet never purely accidental. A professional connection, one's place of origin, familial ties and political and religious preferences all form part of the motivation of why one comes to a certain place and does not go to another. Sometimes such a motivation can be mentioned explicitly, but often while asking one will stumble upon a complicated crisscross of entangled motivations. The confusion that arises when thinking of an answer to the question "Why do you come here" and why going elsewhere would be a problem, reveals the connectedness of various –seemingly independent- areas of Gozitan life. The components that lead to a choice of place, seem to overlap with some important Gozitan identity issues that are felt as "just being", hence not a choice at all. Sitting in a pastizzeria therefore is not just a social gathering for this category of local regulars. The act fulfils a need for public display of who one is and what one stands for. The quality of pastry is hardly ever being mentioned as a motivation to come to a certain place by people in this category. The desire to consume does not seem to be important here.

Another category of regular costumers can be found. People in this category are also mainly men, but they are still active on the labour market and motivate their choice for a particular pastizzerias functionally. It is a place that has a certain use for them, apart from the desire to consume, sociality or social display. Logically, mostly strategically situated bars are attended by such 'functional regulars'. For example, the fishermen who get out early in the morning may quickly grab a pastizzi in the harbour, before starting their day of work, waiting for their companions.

In front of a taxi stand the row of 'seats for regulars' can be entirely taken up by taxi drivers. Elsewhere waiting tour guides are to be found. Often these 'costumers' do not even order anything, but just sit down and wait, which seems to be accepted by the waiting staff. Colleagues who have less time sometimes do join them for a quick chat or a cold drink, mostly drank out of a reclosable bottle.

### ***Women and the pastizzi of men***

Eating Pastizzi in the morning used to be a male activity. After leaving home and before going to work, men used to gather for a quick breakfast at a nearby pastizzeria. Local women are rather rarely to be seen on the terraces in the morning. "They have to shop and cook and like to stay in the house to do their cleaning, you know", is how one man answers the question why there are so few wives to be seen with them. The other men agree, laughing, though some men also tell they started coming for company after be-

coming a widower. Apart from the fishermen and farmers, mostly retired men still seem to keep up the tradition of gathering in pastizzerias early in the morning. Clubbing youngsters may join the early birds during the weekend for a late night/early morning snack (Azzopardi 2005). According to these older men, younger men these days have breakfast at their homes with their families. Also important is that women nowadays go to work. "Where's the fun in coming if the lady comes along? They work, so they might as well come along" laughs one of the men who melancholically remember the old days. Some other men add that you don't have to get up early these days to get pastizzi. "Nowadays, you can buy them frozen and make them at home, or buy them in some take-away, all day long."

The sexual connotation of the word "Pastizz" further symbolises this –of origin male- territory of the pastizzeria. A pastizz is humorously being used to replace the word 'vagina' in Maltese. The likening of an edible, hot, popular, cheesy and diamond-shaped pastry to the female sexual organ is a source of many good laughs on this island among men and some women. During the interviews, most men found it hard to talk about pastizzi without starting to grin or even giggle. It was being mentioned a few times that it was embarrassing to talk about this topic with a woman. This was further being made clear by most of the older men who would simply use the word cheesecake in their interviews because of the "bad", "ugly" or "dirty" meaning of the Maltese word.

Though the pastizzeria definitely is a male site, no social proscriptions were being mentioned that serve to maintain this situation. Off course the supposition of the older men that women don't like to (or can't) come along because they have a household to run, can be seen as a proscriptive expectation. Still, it is not considered inappropriate these days for women to attend pastizzerias. Things do change, but do not appear to have undermined the male reign of public space in Gozo.

Woman who attend a pastizzeria with their family are quite common in the weekend. It is said to be quite usual Maltese behaviour for a holiday or a Sunday: having some pastizzi with friends or family. The few women that do attend pastizzerias without their husband and not just for mere take-away, are mainly Maltese or Gozitan lady friends who are out on a daytrip. It is significant how differently local women and men motivate their choice of place. First of all, women do not meet each other in the bar as an activity like men do. Women come to the bar after meeting elsewhere and to take a rest while being engaged in another activity

like shopping. They do not have the intention to get engaged in the conversations of other people and show rather little interest in what the male regulars talk about. The most important factors to come to a particular bar are first of all the quality of pastry, and secondly the ambient of the bar, made by the friendliness of the staff and the decoration. If one can describe the behaviour of most Gozitan men, whilst public displaying, as a jovial version of 'macho', the behaviour of these women is best captured by the word 'unavailable'. Women in pastizzerias are caught up in other activities and fulfil other needs than men. The behaviour of the local men is oriented far more outwards than the display of the woman in these sites. Women are aware of the male character of pastizzerias. Questions about pastizzi asked to women each time appear to be an easy entrance into the topic of how they feel about the men of their islands. Pastizzi in conversation will lead firstly to what men are about and only secondly to the kitchen and the mainly female know-how of recipes and baking techniques.

### ***Roots tourists and hasty, thirsty travellers***

A category that at first sight is hard to distinguish from the regular locals, is that of the –mostly elder- roots tourists. It consists of people who live elsewhere but visit the island of their origin for a holiday, to visit family or, mostly in the case of retired people, to flee the winter in the country they emigrated to. Most of them know how to speak Maltese, some youngsters are brought here by their parents to stay in touch with the culture and to exercise the language of their grandparents. Some of the roots tourists have a house of their own on Gozo -a remainder from a past on Gozo, newly bought or inherited-, others stay with family or friends. Roots-tourism is big on the islands; a somewhat logical consequence of its migration history. Many Maltese went abroad after WWII in search for a better life. Still today, substantial Maltese communities can be found in the US, Canada, Australia and the UK (cfr. Liauzu, 1996).

When asked what brings them here, older roots tourists will often funnily mention they have longed for "the real pastizzi" for months. Yet their motivation can be as complex as that of the regular locals. Some men really become regular locals for a few months during the summer. They also come to the bars to meet old friends and other roots tourists. Other, younger roots tourists use the pastizzeria as a token for the culture they try to keep alive in their families. Although most roots tourists come from places where pastizzi can be found within the Maltese community they live in, they mention the need to 'show what it is really like' to their younger family members.

A certain openness towards tourists seemed to be a rather common characteristic of people in this category, possibly because they feel more comfortable speaking a second language than the Gozitans who have never lived elsewhere. In addition their migration seems to have made them into evident cultural brokers. The distance from and belonging to this culture haze the emic/epic division. The combination with an urge to tell about their lives-on-the-move and what has changed every time they come back to their roots, makes them grand storytellers. The roots-tourists on the terraces of the pastizzerias I observed, where extremely valuable to this research.

All kinds of other tourists and travellers also find their way to the Pastizzerias. Some are attracted by the locals who stimulate their curiosity; others have read or heard about pastizzi and are willing to try them, again others are attracted by the odour and tasteful looks of the pastry. Yet it is atypical for tourists to stay on a terrace for longer than half an hour. The reason for this seems simply that they lack time to hang around. All travellers who visit Gozo pass through Malta and usually spend most of their holidays on this bigger island. Gozo is still being seen by many Maltese working in the tourist industry as an ideal daytrip-resort, and often considered to small and quiet to spend more time on. Nowadays, efforts are being made to change this image, but it is a slow process, complicated by some other Maltese-Gozitan tensions. A lot of locals in the bars are aware of this and mention spontaneously that they should all contribute to a positive image of Gozo towards tourists. Tourists, who do stay on the terrace without showing their hurry, indeed easily get attention from the Gozitans in the bar. These seem eager to show their hospitality and humour. If being asked why one acts this way, the dependency of the Gozitan economy on tourism industry is very often being pointed out, next to good experiences with tourists and a more general humanism. Though the act of 'helping a tourist' is being seen by some as a duty, the interaction usually passes in a humorous and cheerful ambient. Even without a tourism policy that emphasizes the importance of relational encounters, the Gozitan have understood the importance of their role as the man in the street.

As well as having "functional regulars", some bars attract "functional travellers". This category exists of tourists who, in the same way as the functional regulars, 'use' a bar as a temporary residence on their way to someplace or in anticipation of an activity. Also for this category, particular bars are highly functional because of their strategic position. A nice example of this is the Coffee Break bar situated in front of the bus terminal of Rabat.

From the terrace of this bar, one can keep an eye on one of the big clocks on the street that actually tell what time it is, while watching whether a bus has already arrived or not. Gozo has a centred model for public transport which means that all busses to the suburbs depart from and arrive in the Capital. Many tourists pass by the Coffee Break Bar on their way to and from the village centre. As the consequence the terrace is usually filled with costumers waiting for a bus. The strategic positioning of the Coffee Break bar determines the ambient of the place. Few regular costumers are to be seen in the place and there is a constant coming and going of people who stay for a rather short time. The social motivation of coming here is visibly less important than in other pastizzerias, regarding for example the many people who just come and sit to read their newspaper while waiting. These waiting clients make clear that a Pastizz can be eaten alone as a quick snack on your way. Because of the taxi-stand in front of the Pastizzeria, there is an overlap in clientele. Functional travellers as well as functional regulars wait for the next event; a costumer, a bus ride, ...

As a Pastizzeria with costumers-on-their-way, the Coffee Break Bar has a rather strong concurrent just a few ten meters down the street called "Sphinks". According to the pink and blue sign outside the shop, this exclusive take-away Pastizzeria sells "probably the best Pastizzi in the world". Coming from the main street and heading for the bus terminal or taxi stand, one walks along the small shop with its attractive odours. A young woman with a friendly smile awaits curious potential customers. Right across Sphinks lays a small mall, in which one can find tourist service. As a consequence, a play one will see from the terrace of the Coffee Break bar, consists of people waiting for a bus in the shadow of the trees on the other side of the street, having pastizzi out of a paper bag and often reading brochures from the tourist information office.

The Coffee Break bar also makes a nice example for another category of people that can be found in a Pastizzeria; that of the "refuge costumers". This category mainly consists of tourists, in desperate need for a rest. The stinging Maltese sun seems to rule the pace of all life on the island, something tourists sometimes have to learn the hard way. People of all ages set foot in the bar relieved to have found a place to hide. The Coffee Break bar is the only bar that is immediately in sight when one gets of a bus on the terminal. Though there are other bars close to the bus terminal, for melting tourists who have just arrived to Victoria, the yellow Cisk and green Heineken parasols of the Coffee Break bar are the irresistible promise of a cold drink.

The curiosity aspect of being in the bar and having a pastry may not be absent completely, but surely comes second in this category. The interactions between refuge costumers and locals are limited in this place, because there are few non-‘functional locals’ who come here. In other pastizzerias, the ‘visibility of suffering’ does however create a bond between costumers in the bar. It is easy to observe a link between strolling into a bar, sweating and often slightly red-faced, and ending up in a conversation about the climate with other costumers or staff.

A last category can be mentioned that has a special way of being part of the pastizzerias. It consists of tourists who are present without being in the scene: the gazing passant. They hurry around the Gozitan capital to get a glimpse of its heritage and culture. As said before, most tourists on Gozo are day tourists and do not have the time to sit and take part of the terrace life. Some of them got of a bus tour; others prefer to make the trip on their own. They come to see a lot in a very short time, a camera being a helpful device to shoot and fixate what must be remembered and shown to others. For some the Mediterranean male who hangs around, laughing and joking, with suntanned wrinkles around his dark eyes and expressive hand gestures makes an exotic picture. Without being in the scene, these tourists and their “tourist gaze” in a way appear to ‘make the scene’ (Urry 1990). They bring awareness of the picturesquely composed scenery of ordinary life to the men in it. Some of them pose proudly and interact with the tourist in a humorous, somewhat playful way. However hardly anyone seems to be bothered by this (sometimes rather intrusive) act. The gaze is being considered a compliment and not experienced very threatening or demeaning. Of course it is possible that this attitude forms part of the feeling of having a certain ‘duty’ towards tourists. What does appear to bother the regular locals, are other men who actively look for this kind of attention. One man covered in golden chains and wearing a cowboy outfit must be the most obvious illustration of this.

Even though he is a regular to one bar on Saint Francis Square, he is famous by his nickname “show-off” far beyond ‘his’ square. His vain behaviour is openly being considered a side-effect of the many tourists taking pictures in the streets. This “gaze” is however always a “mutual” one (Maoz 2005; Cheong & Miller 2000). Female tourists who pass by a full terrace of mostly men, especially when dressed for the beach, will surely feel gazed at, as will a tourist who sits down on one of the ‘reserved’ chairs.

### ***‘Authenticity’, too obvious to see...***

‘Regular local man’, a ‘drinking local men’, a ‘functional regular’, an exceptional woman, a roots tourist, a hurried traveller, a ‘functional traveller’, a ‘refuge costumer’ or a ‘gazing passant’: all of these nine categories show different people and diverse motivations to attend a particular pastizzeria. Most bars however attract a surprising varied public. Some places do seem to ‘specialise’ in their own public. On the main square, next to the tourist market, pastizzi are for example slightly more expensive and sometimes even less greasy. Most places keep their pastizzi hot in isolating aluminium containers, often inside the pastizzeria, behind or next to the bar, which keeps the pastry out of sight. Evidently it will be mostly locals who know what delicious secrets are being hidden inside. Other places use isolating containers, with one or more sides made of crystal, that are put outside in front of the bar to make visible their merchandise. Some bar owners put out a sign in front of their place that are meant to stop tourists, but for the majority of the others the fact that they sell pastizzi is simply too obvious to do so.

The ‘obviousness’ of Pastizzi in Gozitan society is not only being reflected in pastizzerias who do not bother to mention their pastizzi on menus or signs, or keep their ‘produce of their national pride’ out of sight for tourists. A well informed tourist could, after having read and heard so much about the pastry, expect to find its image, recipe and even double meaning commoditized. This expectation is being reinforced by the tenor of the other tourist commodities. T-shirts, flags, post cards, key chains and miniatures in all kinds of material show some far less obvious ‘characteristics of Gozo’, for example: busses, street cats, prickly pears and ‘the Italian guy who went to Malta’-joke. If asked why no pastizzi jokes or pictures can be found in the tourist shops, the answer is vague, sometimes puzzled. They don’t know, they have not thought about it, it is too obvious... A question comes to mind: Is eating pastizzi and attending a pastizzeria such an ordinary, common thing for the Gozitans that it is not yet being altered for the sake of tourism? Is it possible that this huge potential for innovative tourism just isn’t being perceived as such because of its obviousness? In other niches of the tourism industry, this alternation is being made. Tourists do not drink the wine Gozitans drink and Gozitans do not like the fish tourists eat... Tourists pay a lot more for their sundried and pickled Maltese delicacies than the Gozitans do, and ladies making lace did not used to do this in front of their houses but inside... But who wants pastizzi, better asks for them like the locals do.

On Gozo the traditional industry has not realised a separation between locals and tourists if it comes to pastizzi, which is at least remarkable compared to other sites where the traditional local cuisine can be tasted. It is possible that pastizzerias on Gozo are not yet being determined by tourism because of their character as 'hanging places' for locals and that where tourists do have the time to take part in this 'hanging culture' the situation is different. Still, it is exactly by what I call the 'hanging character' of these sites, that an ambient is being created for cultural brokerage.

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