



From Heritage To Commodity: The Politics Of Authenticity In Makassar's Culinary Tourism

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Abstract: *This study examines the cultural politics of culinary tourism in Makassar City, Indonesia, focusing on how ethnic cuisines function as both cultural representations and economic commodities. Employing a qualitative, interpretive approach grounded in cultural anthropology, the research analyzes secondary data from academic studies, tourism reports, and field observations to explore how authenticity, identity, and power intersect in Makassar's evolving foodscape. The findings reveal that the city government and private stakeholders strategically promote dishes such as Coto Makassar, Pallubasa, Konro, and Pisang Epe as symbols of local heritage, while other traditional foods remain marginalized. This selective representation reflects institutional power in shaping narratives of authenticity and modernity. Culinary tourism in Makassar simultaneously preserves and commodifies cultural heritage, strengthening urban branding yet risking cultural simplification. Globalization, market adaptation, and the influence of food franchises such as Mie Gacoan further contribute to the homogenization of local cuisine. Nonetheless, local initiatives rooted in Bugis-Makassar culinary traditions continue to assert cultural resilience through the use of traditional ingredients and local wisdom. The study concludes that sustainable culinary tourism in Makassar requires inclusive governance and participatory cultural representation, ensuring that local communities maintain agency in defining their food heritage. Food, therefore, emerges as both sustenance and a medium for negotiating identity, power, and heritage in an increasingly globalized tourism economy.*

Keywords: *Culinary, Tourism, Politics, Makassar*

INTRODUCTION

Culinary tourism has developed into a crucial dimension of both global and domestic travel, positioning food not merely as sustenance but as a central cultural and experiential component that motivates travel decisions. As noted by Long (2018), culinary tourism has emerged as a prominent sector wherein food constitutes a primary attraction and travel motivation, representing a highly profitable segment of the tourism industry across international and domestic markets. Gastronomy, in this context, functions as a key instrument for diversifying tourism offerings and constructing regional, national, and cultural brand identities, with local culinary characteristics serving as the



foundation for the development of thematic routes and travel packages (Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2015).

Food is increasingly acknowledged as a reflection of local culture, history, social habits, and traditions, thereby transforming traditional dishes into distinctive tourist products and key motivators for travel (Hernández-Mogollón et al., 2015). The economic significance of this sector is substantial, as culinary tourism enhances destination appeal by offering visitors authentic and unique gastronomic experiences (Nicoletti et al., 2019). Moreover, research has identified varying tourist typologies based on levels of gastronomic interest, with highly engaged culinary tourists demonstrating the strongest appreciation for local cuisine and contributing the most considerable economic benefits (Nicoletti et al., 2019). Nevertheless, as Long (2018) emphasizes, culinary tourism that engages with ethnic cuisines also brings forth complex issues of cultural politics, particularly concerning representation, authority, and authenticity.

Beyond its function as a form of consumption, food operates as a symbolic medium through which identity, belonging, and cultural power are expressed and negotiated. Within this framework, culinary tourism transcends its role as an economic activity to become a cultural system that transforms local cuisines into instruments of storytelling and representation. The processes of selecting, promoting, and displaying particular foods inherently involve dynamics of cultural politics, encompassing questions of whose narratives are amplified, whose culinary traditions are legitimized, and who ultimately benefits from these representations. As Long (2018) observes, culinary tourism embodies intricate cultural politics in which food simultaneously functions as an economic enterprise and a system of cultural representation. The identification, selection, and interpretation of cuisines within tourism contexts thus constitute acts of power, raising critical inquiries about who determines these choices, whose recipes are deemed representative of a culture, and who is regarded as an authoritative voice in defining culinary authenticity (Long, 2018).

These complexities become especially pronounced when ethnic cuisines are featured, as culinary tourism frequently capitalizes on notions of “otherness” as a central point of attraction, emphasizing foods that diverge from dominant cultural norms (Long, 2018). Tourist engagement with food thereby functions as a form of intercultural communication; however, such representations often reinforce hierarchies of privilege and cultural superiority. This dynamic is



evident in contexts such as Chinese cooking classes, where foodways are presented through ambivalent binary frameworks that depict the “Other” as simultaneously desirable and inferior (Gao, 2021). In the case of Taiwan, culinary tourism reflects broader socio-political transformations and processes of identity reconstruction, wherein traditional cuisine has been revalorized as an expression of national identity in response to historical colonial experiences and the pressures of globalization (Chuang, 2009).

In the context of Indonesia, and specifically Makassar City, culinary tourism represents a critical arena for analyzing the intersection of culture, identity, and power. Makassar, the capital of South Sulawesi, is widely recognized for its rich multicultural heritage and dynamic culinary landscape that reflects the interwoven traditions of the Bugis, Makassar, and Toraja ethnic groups. The city’s distinctive culinary identity, embodied in emblematic dishes such as *Coto Makassar*, *Pallubasa*, *Konro*, *Sop Saudara*, *Pisang Epe*, and *Jalangkote*, functions simultaneously as a symbol of cultural identity and a marketable tourism commodity. As the culinary tourism sector continues to expand in the region, these food traditions become entangled with debates surrounding authenticity, representation, and commercialization. Within this process, local entrepreneurs, governmental bodies, and tourists collectively participate in constructing the meaning of “Makassar cuisine,” thereby influencing how it is framed within Indonesia’s broader tourism narrative.

Culinary tourism, wherein food functions as a primary motivation for travel, constitutes a highly profitable sector with significant implications for food-related businesses (Long, 2018). The field is deeply embedded in cultural politics, as the processes of identifying, selecting, and interpreting cuisines involve intricate power relations that dictate which cultural narratives are authorized and whose perspectives are marginalized (Long, 2018). These dynamics are particularly pronounced in the context of ethnic cuisines, which are often defined by their perceived difference from mainstream foodways and carry historical associations with “otherness” (Long, 2018). In Makassar, the success of culinary tourism relies heavily on collaboration between governmental institutions and private stakeholders in providing adequate infrastructure, organizing promotional initiatives, and delivering entrepreneurial training for local food producers (Baharuddin et al., 2024). Sustaining authenticity through the use of traditional ingredients, preparation methods, and service settings while incorporating elements of local wisdom remains vital to maintaining



competitiveness in the tourism market (Baharuddin et al., 2024). Food thus operates as a significant marker of regional and ethnic identity, functioning alongside other cultural expressions in defining the character and distinctiveness of a place (Timothy & Ron, 2013).

This study therefore explores the intersection of cultural politics and culinary tourism through the lens of Makassar's ethnic food culture. It explores how local cuisines are selected, represented, and marketed, and how these practices reveal broader negotiations of cultural authority, identity formation, and economic strategy. Drawing upon a humanities-based cultural analysis, the study examines whether culinary tourism in Makassar can effectively preserve cultural authenticity, promote heritage pride, and foster sustainable economic growth. The discussion emphasizes how power operates within cultural interpretation determining whose voices are amplified, whose meanings are legitimized, and how these discourses shape both producers and consumers' lived experiences within Makassar's tourism industry.

METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative, interpretive approach rooted in the humanities and cultural anthropology. It follows (Long, 2012, 2013), framework of examining food as a site of meaning, identity, and power. The analysis focuses on Makassar City as a case study, exploring how culinary tourism practices involving ethnic foods reflect processes of cultural negotiation and representation.

Data are drawn from secondary sources, including academic literature, tourism reports, and media representations of Makassar's food culture, complemented by interpretive observation of culinary practices in key tourism areas such as Losari Beach, Jalan Somba Opu, and the Panakkukang food district. The study emphasizes interpretive synthesis rather than empirical measurement, analyzing how symbolic meanings attached to food are produced and circulated within the city's tourism ecosystem.

Following the theoretical insights of Jordan (1995) and Watson (2006), this study conceptualizes cultural politics as the interplay of power relations that shape cultural expression. Applying this to Makassar's context, the research investigates who defines "authentic" Makassar cuisine, how these definitions are institutionalized through tourism promotion, and how they affect local entrepreneurs, particularly those from Bugis and Makassar ethnic backgrounds. This



methodology thus highlights how culinary tourism in Makassar operates as a site of negotiation between heritage preservation, market adaptation, and global consumption

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Culinary Tourism and Cultural Representation in Makassar

Makassar's culinary landscape exemplifies how ethnic cuisines play a central role in the formation of tourism-based cultural identity. The city government, in collaboration with private tourism stakeholders, has actively positioned Makassar as the "culinary destination of Eastern Indonesia", promoting traditional dishes as key symbols of local authenticity. However, this branding process inherently involves selective cultural representation. Dishes such as *Coto Makassar*, *Pallubasa*, *Konro*, *Sop Saudara*, *Pisang Epe*, and *Jalangkote* are elevated as emblematic of Makassar's heritage, while other local foods receive limited visibility despite their significance in everyday life. This selectivity reflects the exercise of cultural power in determining which aspects of tradition are commodified and which are marginalized within the tourism narrative (Watson, 2006).

Research on Makassar's culinary tourism reveals complex intersections between cultural representation, authenticity, and economic interests. Baharuddin et al. (2024) emphasize that effective culinary tourism development in Makassar requires strong collaboration between government agencies and private stakeholders. They highlight the importance of maintaining authenticity through traditional ingredients, preparation methods, and the incorporation of local wisdom. Yet, authenticity itself is a contested construct. Amsal et al. (2024) demonstrate this through the case of *Mie Gacoan*, whose rapid expansion represents a form of culinary hegemony. This phenomenon shifts consumer preferences toward more affordable and standardized food options, posing a threat to local culinary diversity and the preservation of traditional foodways.

Theoretically, food serves as a significant marker of regional and ethnic identity (Timothy & Ron, 2013). However, as Long (2018) explains, the processes of selecting, evaluating, and interpreting cuisines within tourism contexts are deeply embedded in power dynamics. These dynamics determine who defines authenticity, whose recipes are legitimized as representative of a culture, and who holds authority in these decisions. When ethnic foods are framed as "other"



within mainstream culinary culture, their otherness becomes commodified as a central tourist attraction (Long, 2018).

Tourist interactions with ethnic cuisines often reproduce asymmetrical cultural relations. Gao (2021) illustrates this in the context of tourist cooking classes, where representations of local foodways oscillate between fascination and denigration portraying the cultural “Other” as both desirable and inferior. Such portrayals reveal how culinary tourism can reinforce tourist privilege and cultural hierarchy, even as it promotes cross-cultural engagement.

The commodification of Makassar’s ethnic cuisines has reshaped how these foods are understood and experienced. Kay Hin Tan (2018) argues that food within tourism often becomes reframed as an aesthetic or commercial object rather than a lived cultural practice. In Makassar, dishes once confined to domestic or communal contexts are now reinterpreted for tourist consumption. Restaurants and food vendors frequently modify traditional recipes adjusting spice intensity, presentation styles, or portion sizes to align with visitor expectations, while still retaining symbolic references to local heritage. This negotiation between authenticity and adaptation illustrates how culinary tourism simultaneously preserves and transforms cultural identity.

The commercialization of ethnic cuisines introduces a tension between cultural preservation and global adaptation. Long (2018) underscores that decisions regarding which dishes represent a culture are inherently political, reflecting struggles over authority and representation, especially when ethnic foods are defined by their otherness. In the South Sulawesi context, Anas et al. (2023) observe that globalization and localization processes have altered traditional dishes’ appearance, aroma, flavor, and dining environments. As modern cuisine gains prominence, traditional culinary terminology and symbolic meanings are increasingly devalued.

Commercial imperatives often prioritize marketability and ingredient accessibility over cultural integrity. Dileep (2019) conceptualizes this process as the creation of “transformative replicas” tourist-oriented reinterpretations of traditional foods that align with visitor expectations while diminishing the cultural depth of regional cuisines. These “touristified versions” of local dishes challenge the authenticity and identity of culinary destinations. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that culinary tourism in Makassar embodies a dual function: it acts as a mechanism for preserving cultural heritage while simultaneously reshaping and commodifying it within global tourism frameworks.



Ethnic Food, Power, and Authenticity

Ethnic foods in Makassar are deeply embedded in the city's historical identity as a port city shaped by sustained interethnic interactions among Bugis, Makassar, and Chinese communities. This culinary hybridity challenges rigid conceptions of "authentic" cuisine, revealing food as a product of continuous cultural exchange rather than static tradition. Within tourism marketing, however, certain dishes are selectively framed as pure representations of Makassar's cultural identity. Consequently, the question of authenticity becomes a site of cultural negotiation determined by who possesses the authority to define and represent tradition.

Culinary tourism centered on ethnic foods involves intricate cultural politics concerning the authority to define and represent culinary traditions (Long, 2018). In the case of Makassar, traditional Bugis-Makassar cuisine faces increasing challenges from globalization as foreign food franchises expand their presence, potentially undermining the recognition and transmission of traditional foods among younger generations (Nahriana & Tawani, 2022). Empirical research has identified 481 traditional dishes from the Bugis and Makassar ethnic groups, many of which share similar ingredients and preparation processes but differ in name due to linguistic variations, urbanization, and patterns of transmigration between communities (Nahriana & Tawani, 2022). These findings underscore how local food practices have evolved through sustained social interaction and adaptation, complicating notions of culinary purity.

Within the hospitality sector, starred hotels have implemented gastronomic branding strategies that integrate local wisdom with international standards. These strategies emphasize the authenticity and originality of Bugis-Makassar cuisine through careful attention to nutrition, presentation, and cultural symbolism (Syahrial & Anjarsari, 2023). Baharuddin et al. (2024) argue that successful marketing of traditional foods grounded in local wisdom requires maintaining authenticity in ingredients, preparation methods, and traditional serving contexts, while simultaneously incorporating local cultural elements to enhance competitiveness.

Local entrepreneurs in Makassar often face the dual pressures of cultural preservation and economic viability. As Long (2018) illustrates in her discussion of Korean restaurateurs adapting kimchi for American consumers, Makassar's food vendors similarly modify their dishes to cater to both domestic and international tourists. For instance, versions of *Coto Makassar* offered in tourist areas may be less spicy or feature more elaborate presentation compared to home-cooked



variants. These adaptations reveal how market forces mediate cultural expression, transforming local foods into commodities shaped by global consumption dynamics.

Research on Makassar's culinary landscape further demonstrates the tension between cultural preservation and market adaptation. Anas et al. (2023) observe that globalization has significantly influenced the appearance, aroma, flavor, and presentation of South Sulawesi dishes, with commercial imperatives often driving modifications to fundamental ingredients and market positioning. As a result, traditional culinary terminology has become devalued, while contemporary cuisine gains prominence. Traditional dishes persist primarily in festival contexts where market pressures are less pronounced.

Despite these efforts toward cultural preservation, external market forces continue to pose significant challenges. Amsal et al. (2024) highlight how franchise operations such as Mie Gacoan establish culinary hegemony through affordable pricing and social media-driven marketing, thereby threatening the diversity of Makassar's traditional foodscape. This phenomenon reflects a broader global trend in which standardized, mass-produced foods overshadow local culinary distinctiveness. Hill (2011) identifies this broader tension as one between the preservation of cultural integrity and the commodification of culture for market consumption. The case of Makassar illustrates this ongoing negotiation, as local actors strive to sustain traditional culinary practices while responding to the realities of globalization, tourism demographics, and market competition.

Culinary Tourism Spaces and Stakeholder Dynamics

Makassar's culinary spaces ranging from traditional warungs to high-end restaurants function as microcosms of cultural politics. Each venue embodies deliberate choices regarding what constitutes "local" culture and how it should be represented to various audiences. The collaboration between local government and business actors in organizing events such as the Festival Kuliner Makassar exemplifies how cultural meanings are institutionalized for economic purposes. Similar to the food festivals described by Shukla (2018), these events merge cultural education with entertainment but simultaneously privilege particular narratives of modernity and progress that align with broader urban branding strategies.

Food tours in Makassar further demonstrate the ongoing negotiation between exoticism and familiarity. Guided tours in areas such as Losari Beach often juxtapose traditional specialties with



fusion dishes, signaling both cultural pride and adaptive flexibility. While these initiatives contribute significantly to the city's tourism economy, they also risk reducing complex cultural diversity into simplified and marketable tourist products. The inclusion or exclusion of minority cuisines within these culinary routes reflects broader social hierarchies and issues of cultural representation.

Research on Makassar's culinary landscape reveals that food spaces operate simultaneously as arenas of cultural expression and instruments of economic strategy. Syahrial and Anjarsari (2023) demonstrate how starred hotels in Makassar employ gastronomic branding strategies centered on Bugis-Makassar traditional treats. These establishments position local cuisine within the framework of international hospitality standards through meticulous attention to presentation, nutritional value, and notions of authenticity. Such practices highlight how institutional actors construct and mediate local culinary identities within globalized commercial contexts.

These gastronomic developments correspond with broader urban transformations in Makassar's spatial landscape. Heryanto et al. (2013) document typomorphological changes in the city's old district, where colonial-era buildings and public spaces have been repurposed into restaurants, bistros, and food stalls serving both local and global cuisines. This spatial reconfiguration underscores how culinary tourism is intertwined with urban redevelopment, cultural commodification, and heritage management.

As Long (2018) notes, the cultural politics of culinary tourism raise critical questions about power: who determines which cuisines are represented, whose recipes are validated, and who holds the authority to define cultural authenticity. In Makassar, these dynamics shape the production and presentation of "local" food narratives, reinforcing certain cultural hierarchies while marginalizing others. The process of selecting and showcasing specific dishes in restaurants, festivals, and tours thus reflects broader struggles over cultural ownership and legitimacy.

The transformation of Makassar's culinary spaces exemplifies the complex intersection of cultural identity, economic development, and tourism promotion. Through the institutionalization of culinary events, the commercialization of traditional dishes, and the reconfiguration of urban spaces, food becomes a central medium for negotiating the meanings of heritage and modernity. Ultimately, Makassar's evolving foodscape reveals how culinary practices operate not merely as cultural expressions but as strategic instruments within broader political and economic agendas.



Negotiating Identity and Heritage Through Food

Culinary tourism in Makassar functions as a form of cultural storytelling through which residents and entrepreneurs articulate identity, heritage, and belonging. For many local actors, the presentation of ethnic foods to visitors represents an act of cultural preservation as well as self-assertion. Yet, this process simultaneously entails the performance of culture within commercialized contexts. As Erlangung et al. (2008) observes, tourism is shaped by the “tourist gaze,” wherein authenticity is mediated through visual and sensory appeal. Within this framework, local dishes such as *Pisang Epe*, a simple grilled banana dessert are transformed into cultural icons through strategic visual marketing campaigns, symbolizing the fusion of tradition and modernity in Makassar’s public image.

Makassar’s diverse ethnic composition, encompassing Bugis, Makassar, and Chinese communities, has cultivated a rich and layered culinary landscape. The coexistence and interaction among these groups make the city an ideal case study for examining how cultural politics operate through food. Culinary tourism in Makassar illustrates that the act of sharing local cuisine can empower communities when the processes of representation are inclusive and participatory. Conversely, when narratives are dominated by commercial imperatives, the cultural complexity embedded in local foodways risks being reduced to mere aesthetic spectacle designed for tourist consumption.

Culinary tourism inherently involves complex cultural politics surrounding the selection, evaluation, and interpretation of ethnic foods. Such processes raise critical questions about authority and legitimacy: specifically, who holds the right to represent cultures through cuisine (Long, 2018). In Makassar, these dynamics are clearly evident in the promotion of iconic dishes such as *Pisang Epe*. The Tourism Office’s social media campaigns have proven particularly effective in developing culinary tourism by elevating this dish as a cultural emblem of the city (Zulqifa Muhara et al., 2022). These promotional strategies demonstrate how cultural identity can be curated and commodified through state-led tourism initiatives.

Makassar possesses substantial potential as a culinary tourism destination due to its vibrant traditional food communities, the use of locally sourced ingredients, distinctive cooking techniques, and active culinary promotion initiatives (Jariyah et al., 2024). These factors collectively position the city as an emerging node within Indonesia’s broader gastronomic tourism



network. However, several structural challenges hinder the sustainable development of this sector. Jariyah et al. (2024) identify persistent obstacles including inadequate human resource management standards, insufficient infrastructure, and an unhealthy business climate. Such limitations constrain the capacity of local entrepreneurs and policymakers to fully leverage Makassar's culinary heritage for long-term tourism and economic growth.

Despite these constraints, culinary tourism has become a key driver of Makassar's creative industry development and post-pandemic economic recovery. As Jariyah et al. (2024) note, food functions simultaneously as a medium of cultural representation and as a commercial attraction. Through the strategic promotion of traditional dishes and the institutionalization of culinary festivals, Makassar positions its cuisine as both an expression of collective identity and a vehicle for urban branding. This dual function underscores the city's broader attempt to balance cultural authenticity with market-oriented development in an increasingly globalized tourism economy.

Discussion

The case of Makassar City illustrates how culinary tourism functions as a site of cultural politics, where issues of authenticity, identity, and power are continuously negotiated. The city's ethnic cuisines rooted in the interethnic exchanges among Bugis, Makassar, and Chinese communities embody both cultural continuity and transformation. As the research findings indicate, these foods serve not only as markers of ethnic identity but also as instruments through which tradition is reinterpreted under the pressures of modernization, globalization, and tourism development.

Makassar's efforts to position itself as the "culinary destination of Eastern Indonesia" demonstrate how local government and private stakeholders utilize food as a means of branding urban identity. Dishes such as *Coto Makassar*, *Pallubasa*, *Konro*, and *Pisang Epe* have been strategically elevated as emblematic representations of local heritage, while many equally significant everyday foods remain marginalized in tourism promotion (Watson, 2006). This selective representation underscores how culinary authenticity is not a neutral category, but one constructed through power relations that privilege particular narratives of modernity and market appeal (Long, 2018).

As the findings from Baharuddin et al. (2024) and Syahrial & Anjarsari (2023) show, collaboration between government agencies and the hospitality sector plays a central role in



shaping the city's culinary image. Starred hotels, for instance, adopt gastronomic branding strategies that merge Bugis-Makassar culinary heritage with international presentation standards. While these initiatives succeed in promoting local foods, they also recontextualize traditional cuisines within the logic of global consumer culture. Such processes exemplify what Long (2018) identifies as the "cultural politics of representation," wherein the power to define what is considered authentic or representative often resides with institutions rather than with local communities themselves.

The findings of Amsal et al. (2024) and Anas et al. (2023) further highlight the transformative impact of globalization on Makassar's foodscape. The expansion of franchises such as Mie Gacoan reveals how standardized, mass-produced foods can establish culinary hegemony through affordability and digital marketing, often at the expense of traditional food diversity. Likewise, urban redevelopment in Makassar's old district, as documented by Heryanto et al. (2014), has turned heritage spaces into commercial food venues that cater to both local and global tastes. These spatial and cultural transformations demonstrate how culinary tourism simultaneously preserves and commodifies heritage, turning food into a cultural and economic resource. Kay Hin Tan (2018) argues that within tourism, food often becomes reframed as an aesthetic or commercial object rather than a lived cultural practice. In Makassar, this phenomenon manifests in the adaptation of traditional recipes for tourist consumption where dishes such as *Coto Makassar* or *Pisang Epe* are modified in spice level, portion size, or presentation. These "touristified versions" (Dileep, 2020) of ethnic foods reflect market-oriented reinterpretations that aim to satisfy visitor expectations while diminishing the cultural depth and context of traditional cuisine.

The reconfiguration of Makassar's culinary spaces from traditional warungs to high-end restaurants and food festivals reveals how food becomes a spatialized expression of cultural politics. Events such as the Festival Kuliner Makassar institutionalize local culture through performative and commercial frameworks, privileging narratives that align with urban modernization (Shukla, 2018). Similarly, food tours in tourist hubs like Losari Beach juxtapose local specialties with fusion dishes, presenting a curated version of diversity that is both exotic and familiar. While these initiatives contribute to economic growth, they risk simplifying complex cultural identities into consumable symbols for external audiences.



The typomorphological changes in Makassar's heritage districts (Heryanto et al., 2014) further indicate that culinary tourism has become a central mechanism in urban identity construction. Restaurants and bistros now occupy colonial buildings and historic spaces, transforming cultural heritage into a commodity that reinforces Makassar's cosmopolitan image. Such transformations highlight the city's negotiation between cultural preservation and economic modernization, mirroring Hill's (2011) observation of the global tension between maintaining cultural integrity and catering to marketable tourism demands.

Culinary tourism in Makassar also operates as a form of cultural storytelling, where residents and entrepreneurs express identity and belonging through food. As (Erlangung et al., 2008) explains, the "tourist gaze" shapes how authenticity is perceived, mediating cultural experiences through visual and sensory appeal. The elevation of *Pisang Epe*, a simple grilled banana dessert, into a citywide culinary icon exemplifies how local traditions are reimagined through marketing discourse to symbolize the fusion of tradition and modernity (Muhara et al., 2022).

However, these representational strategies also reveal asymmetrical cultural relations. As Gao (2021) notes, tourist engagements with local cuisines often oscillate between fascination and denigration, portraying the cultural "Other" as both desirable and inferior. In the context of Makassar, such dynamics highlight the persistence of cultural hierarchies in culinary representation, where ethnic communities risk becoming objects of display rather than agents of cultural definition. As Long (2018) and Hall & Gössling (2013) emphasize, sustainable culinary tourism requires an understanding of food's symbolic, emotional, and political meanings. For Makassar, this entails fostering participatory mechanisms that ensure ethnic communities have an active role in determining how their cuisines are represented and marketed. Policies that integrate cultural authenticity with inclusive tourism governance can transform culinary tourism from a tool of commodification into a medium for cultural empowerment.

The research findings collectively demonstrate that culinary tourism in Makassar embodies a dual function: it acts as a mechanism for heritage preservation while simultaneously reshaping and commodifying culture within global tourism frameworks. This duality reflects broader tensions between localization and globalization, authenticity and adaptation, preservation and profit.



Ultimately, Makassar exemplifies how the study of culinary tourism through the lens of cultural politics enhances understanding of the interconnections among globalization, local identity, and cultural sustainability. Food in this context operates as both sustenance and symbol, an expressive medium through which communities negotiate their place within shifting cultural and economic landscapes. Recognizing the political dimensions of culinary representation thus reinforces food's capacity to bridge communities, foster respect, and reshape how heritage is lived and shared in the modern tourism economy.

CONCLUSION

The case of Makassar City demonstrates how culinary tourism functions as a space where authenticity, identity, and power are negotiated. Rooted in Bugis, Makassar, and Chinese influences, the city's cuisines represent both cultural heritage and adaptation to modernization. Food serves as a medium through which tradition is reinterpreted in response to globalization and tourism development. Makassar's strategy to brand itself as the "culinary destination of Eastern Indonesia" highlights the use of gastronomy for city marketing. Signature dishes such as *Coto Makassar*, *Pallubasa*, *Konro*, and *Pisang Epe* are promoted as cultural icons, revealing how authenticity is selectively constructed to suit tourism appeal. Collaboration between government, hospitality industries, and local entrepreneurs strengthens culinary branding but also redefines tradition through commercial and aesthetic frameworks.

Global and urban transformations further reshape the local foodscape. Traditional eateries evolve into modern venues, and festivals like the Festival Kuliner Makassar transform heritage into performative experiences. While such initiatives promote local identity and stimulate the economy, they risk simplifying complex cultural traditions into consumable symbols. Ultimately, Makassar's experience shows that culinary tourism simultaneously preserves and commodifies heritage. Sustainable development in this sector requires empowering local communities to participate in how their cuisines are represented, ensuring that food remains both a symbol of identity and a means of cultural continuity in an increasingly globalized tourism landscape.



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