

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTION

Current trends in food-related practice in the family

A Comparative European Study

From shopping practice to culinary practice

An international symposium 14-15-16 January 2015 at the MISHA-Strasbourg

Laboratoire Dynamiques européennes UMR7367

After two hundred years' of ever-developing industrialized methods of food production, our capacity to provide sufficient food supplies for the global population is still in doubt; significantly, the theme of the universal exhibition to be held in Milan in 2015 is "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life". Scandals in the food industry in Europe over the last twenty years and the health risks linked with foods with a high fat or sugar content have led to the definition of what is now a long list of new norms on hygiene, nutritional regulations and recommendations on consumer practice (Depecker, Lhuissier, Maurice, 2013). Since the 1980s sociologists and anthropologists have been looking into the effects of such rules and regulations on food-related practice in the family integrated social inequalities and cultural values: for example in Great-Britain, the researches of Stephen Mennell, Anne Murcott, Anneke H. van Otterloo (1992) or these of Alan Warde (1997) and In France these of Claude Fischler (1979, 1990) or Jean-Pierre Poulain (2002). Others researches have more particularly focused on how habits are passed on or come to change, as has been demonstrated in the work of Jean-Pierre Corbeau (1992, 2007) and Séverine Gojard (2000, 2006) or, more recently, in studies directed by Nicoletta Diasio, Annie Hubert and Véronique Pardo (2009), and Gilles Brougère and Inès De la Ville (2011). These latter studies examine the way families and children come to reconcile the multitude of current food-related norms with the pleasure aspect of food and how that take place in the construction of social identity; yet others look into forms of hybridization at work in day-to-day eating practice (*cf.* the journal *Anthropology of food*, first published in 2001). Concern about food is not specific to France like the authors of *Trust in food* (Kjærnes, Warde 2002) demonstrate it by an european comparison. Apprehensions over food products have found expression in public health policies in Great Britain, Sweden and Norway; it is against this background that contributors to the publication directed by Alison James, Anne Trine Kjørholt and Vebjorg Tingstad (2010) have examined the significance of food-related practice in the construction of identities, with particular reference to recent changes in practice among families from different social groups.

Food issues in the family also play the role of rampart against risks; they are a means to domesticating products, giving them identity (De Certeau, Girard et Mayol, 1980; Kopytoff, 1986), and so are instrumental in singularizing products, in regulating their use and in encouraging food-related forms of socialization (Diasio, 2010). Family habits are not only conditioned by public health policies and cultural traditions; they are influenced, too, by local and international supply chains (Watson and Caldwell, 2005), the theatre of power games that are played out between political, economic and consumer interest groups...and reflect shifts in patterns of consumption.



Since World War II, patterns of shopping have changed radically the world over. In France, sociologists such as Franck Cochoy, for example, have been working on an archeology of contemporary consumer practice (2011) through a study of the history of patterns of consumption in superstores. But, given what is happening elsewhere in Europe and the world at large (Mermier and Peraldi, 2011), the question today is: what modernity does superstore shopping correspond to (Ascher, 2005, Assaf and Camelin, 2013)? In this way, in France, over the last ten years, on-line shopping, click and collect pick-up points, home deliveries, farmers' retail and markets associations, and consumer cooperatives that cut out the distributors, have developed in parallel with the increasing popularity of smaller retail outlets in town centers and city suburbs. Both shopping for food and food consumption practice have taken on a political dimension (Halkier, B., 2012). We'll be interested to understand the different forms of political dimension of fooding : for example, how does opting for certified organic foods, looking for locally produced goods or shopping at consumer cooperatives equate with demands within the family in terms of variety of menu, different tastes, nutritional requirements and the need to reduce costs.

The aim of this symposium is to examine family food consumption practice and its attendant social norms in the light of macro, mezzo and micro-social approaches to supply chains in order to better understand the logics at work in a family's day to day and special day relationships with food.

Papers with a comparative dimension will be particularly welcome. The term « family » is understood here in the wider sense: it encompasses childless couples, couples whose children have left the family household, and all types and forms of reconstituted/step families.

Here the aim is to see, in practical terms, what the place of the supermarket, the market, organic stores, farm shops, private gardens and municipal allotments is in the purchase of food products. We give importance to analyzing the move away from the mass merchandise stores and supermarkets to multimodal sources of supply (Cohen 1996). Has this shift been stimulated by scandals in the food industry (mad cow disease, contaminated cucumbers, the horse-meat scandal)? Over the last fifteen years, the arrival of mass-market retail stores -mainly French- in central and eastern Europe has led to profound changes in the consumer landscape. How have these stores changed consumer practice within the family, and what effect have they had on other sources of supply, modes of exchange, local production for local consumption?

Consideration will also be given here to examining the extent to which the multiplicity of supply channels promotes sharing -recipes, foodstuffs, fears- with friends, neighbours, colleagues, and the family. How is internet used for shopping (placing orders, on-line deliveries) and recommending recipes (blogs, emails to family and friends) and products (forwarding tips, "today's best buy"...) ? How far is internet both a source of standardization of practice and menus and a means of diversification?

The economic crisis that has hit Europe has changed consumer attitudes towards shopping and the relationship with food: compromise and careful choices are more and more the rule. The financial difficulties experienced can be linked with "responsible", "clever" (Clochard and Desjeux, 2013) or "smart" buying: here, the consumer becomes a reflexive player, and social segmentation rests on criteria that stand over and above the traditional determinants of social class. What is the place of the family in terms of this changed form of consumer behaviour? What kinds of negotiation, types of learning situation and intergenerational information exchange modify the relationship with food and



food preparation: for example, with regard to food conservation, limiting waste and using left-overs, or, as in some countries, to parental involvement in food preparation in the school canteen, etc.

The question of choices and constraints (normative, economic, social) can indeed be usefully addressed through the subject of food but, in terms of shopping behavior, how are the baskets filled? How do shoppers equate notions of balanced diet, health and dieting with economic considerations, the social and political engagement and tastes of the different members of the family? How are these variable elements invoked as motives for decision-taking in a given situation? We are wanting here to link together questions of time and place through the prism of purchases -for example, the influence of time cycles on patterns of food-related practice: with the start of the new school year in September, daily routines are reorganized around the activities of the members of the family, which may influence the types of goods bought and determine whether meals are taken together or not. Seasonal cycles may also govern the choice of meal-type (soups, salads, picnics), which gives opportunities for measuring and examining preferences for seasonal fruit and vegetables (pumpkin, red fruits, for example). Other aspects for consideration include menu cycles and the regularity with which these are reproduced, and the role of daily/weekly outings to the stores in providing for and making up menus: through repetition over the years certain recipes become part of the "family culture". How is this culture constructed? Papers on the question of how knowledge/information is passed on or altered through the appropriation of recipes will be welcome.

This approach to shopping for and preparing meals will focus on the way domestic tasks are shared between the genders and the generations through, for example, the notions of constraint and pleasure. How are daily and special-day food-related tasks divided out in the family when questions of gender and age are not dissociated? Is it pertinent here to analyze the issue using social categorization criteria, and if so, in what way? Age is often a forgotten given in intersectional analytical approaches (Crenshaw and Bonnis, 2005), as Barry Thorne deplored in 2004; age is, even today, still considered as given naturally rather than culturally constructed. And yet, in their analyses of the construction of the ages, both Philippe Ariès (1960) on children and Patrice Bourdelais (1994) on old age showed that age is historically and culturally situated. To what extent then is identity by age and gender constructed through food-related practice and by reference to wider issues? Lastly, can the sharing of recipes and information on products and convenience foods be usefully analysed by crossing socio-cultural criteria of gender and age with those of social categorization? Papers on comparative ethnographic studies will be welcome here.

During this symposium, we will be very interested to understand what can of differences can be observed between regions, countries, continents.

Submission Guidelines: Researchers are invited to submit proposals for papers (maximum 3000 characters including spaces) on one or other of these four aspects by **31st of May 2014**. Proposals will include a statement on aims, the methodology used and principal outcomes. Thank you to mention your name, email and postal address, your research-field and your professional statut.

Submissions should be sent simultaneously to: Marie-Pierre JULIEN (marie-pierre.julien@univ-lorraine.fr) and Marion Vicart (puppy ion@yahoo.fr).



Calendar:

31st of may 2014 : Submission deadline

1st of july 2014 : Notification of acceptance will be sent out.

5th of january 2015 : Reception of the communication by the organization committee.

14th-15th-16th of january 2015 : International symposium at the MISHA-Strasbourg.

Scientific committee

Virginie Amilien, Professor- National Institute for Consumer Research, Norway

Julia Bernstein, Professor of Sociology - University of Khöln

Melissa Caldwell, Professor of Anthropology - University of California

Franck Cochoy, Professor - University Toulouse Le Mirail

Dominique Desjeux, Professor - University of Paris-Descartes

Nicoletta Diasio, Professor - University of Strasbourg

Séverine Gojard, Research Chairman - INRA

Marie-Pierre Julien, Lecturer - University of Lorraine

Marion Vicart, Sociologist, PhD – contractual researcher CNRS

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Organization committee

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