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EDITOR'S NOTE

This English translation has not been published in printed form/Cette traduction anglaise n'a pas été publiée sous forme imprimée.

- 1 Beginning with the pioneering work of Roland Barthes (1961), the universe of food – cooking, food, rituals and practices linked to eating and drinking – has been the subject of many studies in the humanities and social sciences (HSS). Anthropologists (Lévi-Strauss, 1964, 1966, 1968; Douglas, 1985), sociologists (Bourdieu, 1979; Certeau, 1980; Fischler, 1990; Poulain, 2002; Corbeau, Poulain, 2002; Bernard de Raymond, Parasie, 2005; Régnier and *al.*, 2006), cultural historians (Flandrin, Montanari, 1997; Ory, 1998; Stanziani, 2004; Hache-Bissette, Sailliard, 2007; Clafin, Scholliers, 2012; Parasecoli, Scholliers, 2012) and geographers (Fumey, 2008, 2010) have shown that eating does not just mean satisfying hunger and the desire for different tastes and that food does not just carry functional qualities which respond to physiological demands or requirements linked to health or well-being. Food and dietary practices are also part of the economic sphere (food industry production and market), the social space (socialization, social inequalities, the construction of individual and collective identities, the "gender-based" or generational character of food consumption), culture, rites and the world of the imagination.
- 2 In its economic, social and cultural dimensions, food has above all been studied within the defined limits of institutionalized disciplines. However "it asks questions about traditional disciplinary divisions" (Bernard de Raymond, Parasie, 2005: 3) and the complexity of its issues requires plural approaches which are open to dialogue. A wave of disciplinary decompartmentalization of *studies* (Darbellay, 2014) began towards the

end of the 1990s with the result that a new pluri- or inter-disciplinary field of research and training - *food studies* - emerged on the American and European university landscapes. Its aim was to "explore the relationship between food and the human experience based on a broad range of viewpoints from the humanities and social sciences which are often combined with each other." (Deutsch, Miller, 2009: 3; also see Albala, 2013). Anthropology, sociology, history, geography along with political science, psychology and other branches of the HSS combine to help understand food cultures and practices and cast a critical eye over the societal implications of the production and consumption of foodstuffs.

- 3 Within this context of a proliferation of questions concerning food and food practices and of dialogical and unifying work between or beyond disciplines, various researchers in communication sciences in the United States (LeBesco, Naccatato, 2008; Cramer, Greene, Walters, 2011; for an overview, see Lizie, 2014), France (Boutaud, 2005, 2006; Boutaud, Chaumier, 2009; Boutaud, Madelon, 2010; De Iulio, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c; Lardellier, 2013) and elsewhere in Europe (Manetti, Bortetti, Prato, 2006; Russo, Marelli, Angelini, 2011; Farré, 2012; Marrone, 2012) have studied food either as a communication system or as the subject of discourse, narrative accounts and images.
- 4 A first set of studies - which deal with the semiotics of cooking, taste and conviviality - analyzes the way in which food can be approached as a language. From this standpoint, the choice of ingredients, the preparation and presentation of dishes, how menus are organized and how food is consumed are all considered as signs. As such they contribute to the construction of individual and collective identities, highlight hierarchies and allegiances and help foster social norms and links. From this point of view, food is a form of non-verbal communication through which meaning is shared: "Food conveys culture precisely because we use it as a means of communication [...]. Food functions symbolically as a communicative practice by which we create, manage and share meanings with others" (Cramer, Greene, Walters, 2011: xi). With this in mind, gastronomic models use certain forms of expression to convey social significations in the same way as linguistic models. These forms of expression are particularly apparent through "culinary texts" (Marrone, 2012) like recipes, dishes (associations of flavours, smells, thicknesses, temperatures, shapes, colours, etc.), menus (the composition of meals, the combination and order of dishes), forms, places and times for eating. From the angle of nonverbal communication, Fabienne Martin-Juchat (2004: 134) analyzes table rites as "favoured systems concerning the expression of human empathy and sympathy". Through an in-depth analysis of food codes and the definition of a kind of "grammar of the senses" (Boutaud, 2005), the semiotics of culinary and gastronomic practices thus make it possible to question ideas seen as "self-evident" on a daily basis - "natural" food, ideas taken for granted (for example, what is considered eatable and uneatable, the separation of the places food is prepared and eaten, particular dishes being eaten on religious occasions, etc.).
- 5 Thus food is studied as a form of communication which speaks about itself and the world in which it is produced and consumed but also as the subject of discourse and of images which are widely disseminated throughout society. More precisely, this is research into the mediatization of food and particularly how it circulates in the cinema, advertising, documentaries, web sites and blogs as well as in magazines, television shows or series and even on theme-based television channels dedicated to cooking and preparing meals. These research studies had multiple aims - to examine the way in

which communication contributes to transforming foodstuffs into cultural products (Jeanneret, Souchier, 1999; Jeanneret 2004), to explain the success of the mediatization of cookery (Boutaud, Madelon, 2010), to study the modes of portrayal of gastronomy in images and sound (Leleu-Merviel, 2010), to analyze the circulation of norms and knowledge around eating through advertising and other media systems (De Iulio, 2011; De Iulio, Kovacs, 2014) or to explore the historically-constructed mediations between food producers, chefs, restaurant critics, advertising and the different consumers or fans of literature about food (Hache-Bissette, Saillard, 2015).

- 6 The authors whose work features in this issue come from varied disciplinary backgrounds – information and communication sciences, political science, the sociology of food, the sociology of culture, education sciences, sciences and techniques of physical activities and sport – and all focus on the public dimension of food – an aspect which has been the subject of relatively little research although a central question in studies of this theme. More specifically, they shed light on the characteristics of the publicization of food and aim to answer several questions. In which ways are the production, placing on the market, choice, preparation and consumption of food becoming increasingly public matters? In which forms is food put into the public sphere? What role do information and communication systems and tools play in these processes? In the discourse on food which permeates public spaces, which balances of power or alliances are established between publics and private interests, between the State and the markets, between public decisions and the important economic issues linked to how the agri-food industry functions?
- 7 As all human beings share the experience of eating, the theme of food tends to seem a common cause, "without opponents" or a "contradictory discourse" (Juhem, 2001). However, a closer look at the matter shows this apparent consensus to dissolve revealing a complex tangle of strategies and tactics used by the different people involved and often dictated by conflicting public and private obligations and interests. Three problematical aspects of the publicization of food were of particular interest for this issue's authors – the State's political and public communication actions concerning food; the mediatization of food as well as how food standards, knowledge and practices are portrayed and debated in different public arenas; intertwined public interests and market rationales in discursive productions about food which circulate in contemporary societies.

Food in the public and political spheres

- 8 Food plays an essential role in the creation and transformation of an individual's body, identity and memory. *Man ist, was man ißt*. We are what we eat. However in a context of generalized uncertainty (Lagadec, 1988; Beck 2001) and the increasing proliferation of risks of different sorts (Apfelbaum, 1988; Ferrieres, 2002), food and food practices are decreasingly considered as objects and routine actions which only belong to the individual sphere or even a person's private life. The perception of multiple dangers disrupts expectations of persistence and stability, any "goes without saying"-style certainty about habits and familiar practices (Luhmann, 1988) as well as the affective links and sensorial preferences which food practices refer us back to.
- 9 Food is mainly becoming a public matter firstly because it involves sanitary, safety, environmental and economic questions which go beyond the sphere of individuals or

families and concern the community as a whole. Choices regarding food appear to be a source of danger for several aspects of social life and this contributes to increasing their public visibility while creating problems which attract the authorities' attention. Food and food practices concern politicians and demand vigilance and intervention from state institutions. State control and prevention measures are (or seem to be) necessary to control and avert risks linked to food. Thus the actions of the public authorities enter into the private sphere and private domestic life through the information and communication initiatives which are an essential component of any government's work (Ollivier-Yaniv, 2013). Food therefore acquires a public dimension through its involvement in prevention campaigns.

- 10 Food also comes into the public sphere when it is the subject of controversy, "scandal" or debate and in this framework may find itself the subject of deliberative procedures as is the case with genetically modified organisms (GMOs). In this way it illustrates a dual movement: "the regular broadening of questions which are considered in the public space and concurrently [...] increased expectations from citizens concerning it" (Miège, 2010: 197) thus indicating the transformations of citizens' relationship with formal political life and the evolution of political commitment. Food as a public question is very much part of the emergence of a societal public space. In this way, it highlights the characteristics of people's approaches when faced with the emergence of a new social question. Thus, the implementation of public food policies is a logical part of the continuity of State positions - planning, prevention and education, safety and risk management and the territorialization of public action.
- 11 During a "food crisis", all the state systems and bodies involved in food policy have to become involved as Jeremie Nollet's contribution shows, studying as it does the two "mad cow" crises in 1996 and 2000, thus highlighting the ensuing changes of direction in public food policies. Categorizations of public action are thus reorganized to benefit public health safety policy. This movement underlines the conflicts between those involved in the construction of public issues and the way in which administrative structures reconstruct because of the power relationship inherent to the bureaucratic sphere rather than any possible journalistic pressure. The theme of food is thus even more clearly linked to individuals' health and sanitary risk management.
- 12 In this way the progressive politicization of food can be observed in the creation of government tools such as directorates within ministries, agencies (for example "Anses", the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety), regulations or national-level plans (three in France currently). These government tools underline the ability of public action involving food to evolve (Muller, 2005) and highlight the place of public power, thus indicating the politicization of this theme at both national and local levels. The involvement of local authorities suggests that there is a movement towards reterritorialization. Local authorities are involved in the areas of school dinners, "food heritage" and also the promotion of "local distribution systems" aimed at reducing the intermediaries between producers and consumers. Their work is part of local politics and also communication initiatives on major subjects linked to how people live together locally. The communicational dimension is also part of this politicization of activities linked to food and the World Food Day founded by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations needs to be analyzed in this light as does the French National Anti-Food Waste Day (*Journée nationale de lutte contre le gaspillage alimentaire*).

- 13 Food is increasingly becoming a public matter as it involves the State in health regulation work. There is a blurred line between the public space and the private sphere when food and nutrition are concerned. The modalities of public intervention and their consequences for individuals combine normative inculcation or coercion (Demailly, 2014). These points are made by Helene Romeyer in her analysis of three national nutrition and health programmes (PNNS for "*Programme National Nutrition Santé*") run by the French Health Ministry between 2001 and 2015. She studies the type of communication tools used to promote these national food policies. The texts studied examine the way rules are set up to regulate behaviour regarding food and help better govern people's bodies. The author has detected a kind of "*biopower*" because these national nutrition and health programmes incited individuals to adopt and interiorize norms and to modify their behaviour regarding food. She also observes the professionalization of the systems set up to implement the national nutrition and health programmes which have become a permanent long-standing tool for public policies as well as a large-scale inter-ministerial nutrition programme. This programme sets up health norms and approves types of behaviour which tends to lead to a form of public health awareness. The mediatization of the PNNS system presents a very strong correlation between healthy eating and good health and is believed to have considerably influenced French food practices.
- 14 State actions aimed at standardizing social practices through the creation of norms (Fassin and *al.*, 2004) were also analyzed by Philippe Cardon who studied the way the authorities develop their nutritional prevention policy for elderly people considered to be a risk age group. Nutritional policies for these groups are part of how food practices are governed in the private space. The aim of these policies is firstly to comply with the nine priority objectives set out in the PNNS and also to prevent, detect and limit the under-nutrition of elderly people living in their own homes. This normalization system is part of the governmental rationale insofar as it enters and affects the private space of elderly people who are monitored, accompanied, advised and "watched over" in their homes by carers sent by the authorities to avoid them eating badly and then needing to go into an external medical structure. The author highlights the existing porosity between private and public spaces and shows that poor nutrition is prevented through national public policies which modify the lifestyles and eating habits of elderly people. "Nutritional government" – as the author calls it – requires monitoring and prevention work carried out by professional carers in a private space as State representatives who help impose nutritional norms.

Food in the media

- 15 Producing, commercializing, choosing, preparing and consuming food are also public practices insofar as they are made visible, spread, circulate, reproduce and become trivial in and by the media (Jeanneret, 2008). As various authors point out (Poulain, 2002; Corbeau, Poulain, 2002), the processes of mediatization of food are increasingly intensified and follow multiple, sometimes contradictory paths. Cooking and eating meals are viewed as ordinary practices which are the subject of cinematographic and audiovisual narratives and are staged in advertising, the mainstream press and specialist magazines. Social media too have also enhanced the visibility of what we cook and eat and cooking blogs are presented as a kind of photographic diary staging daily

food practices. Currently, 645,000 photos have been posted in the *Flickr* group "*I ate this*" created in 2004 with its 38,346 members and similar phenomena can be found on *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *Foodspotting*, *Food Candy* and so forth.

- 16 As the article by Susan Kovacs and Denise Orange-Ravachol points out, the norms and knowledge linked to food circulate and transform themselves as they move through social spaces via different media. The case of the nutrition pyramid used to classify groups of foodstuffs and give nutritional advice in several countries seems particularly significant in this context. The pyramid was created in 1992 and, despite a great deal of criticism, has managed to attain a certain longevity while allying a descriptive dimension for food with a normative dimension of the right types of food behaviour to adopt. The pyramid is presented by these authors as a tool for pedagogical communication providing advice in schoolbooks to help illustrate lessons about food. They also highlight the fact that the pyramid is often used alongside other illustrations classifying food in the framework of the French PNNS food programme mentioned earlier. There is however a contradiction inherent to teaching about food in schools using didactic material because, while it enables pupils and students to develop critical thought patterns regarding their own health, it also gives behaviourist and positivist guidance about food.
- 17 The media stage acts as a vector for the dissemination of representations of food and people involved with it. Fausto Colombo and Adriano D'Aloia have selected the representation of cooking and chefs in films, television shows and on Italian social media to analyze the way in which restaurant and food professionals actually stage food, dishes and the gestures involved in cooking. This article covers the influence of the announcement of a meal on the ensuing desire to actually eat it. The meal in the public media space has a communicational dimension which refers back to multiple cultural, sociological and symbolic aspects. The article takes as its example the preparation of a meal by a professional or amateur chef. The authors highlight elements of continuity and discontinuity visible in the practices for staging food rituals in the different media - cinema, television and social media. Cinema as a medium suits the narration of stories involving the sociological, economic and cultural changes society is subject to. Cinema's expressive power is not found in the other two media discussed - television and the internet. The staging of meals in television shows is based on a cultural and dialectic dimension. Television uses different formats of shows to present chefs as competitors aiming for high performance levels and victories. Specialist cooking web sites tend to focus on amateur practices with pictures of dishes and their ingredients staged favourably while the work of cooks in action is dissected and the aestheticization of ingredients is pushed to extremes. The authors reveal that all the media have a capacity to encourage the narcissism and self-exhibition of so-called advanced societies. The rituals of preparation and consumption of food which normally take place in the private sphere are now exhibited, rendered sublime and aestheticized in the public media sphere.

Food as a business

- 18 These varied forms of public exposure of food go hand in hand with a movement towards the privatization and commercial exploitation of activities linked to food. Multiple private interests are emerging and becoming stronger in an overall context of

increasing complexity, length and opacification of commercial mediation chains between agricultural producers and consumers. This is happening in the framework of a "tertiary agri-business" characterized by the coexistence of an oligopoly of multinational companies and around a hundred thousand small and medium-sized companies. Agri-supply, transformation of food, distribution, the restaurant sector and institutional catering are all businesses with important economic stakes which have an increasingly massive influence on the modalities of production, commercialization and sale of food at the local, national and international levels.

- 19 Since the second half of the 20th century, the food industry has been commercializing products which have become objects of consumption after perhaps having been transformed or manipulated in ways we often do not know everything about (Fischler, 1990; Poulain, 2002). The agri-food industry also produces marketing discourse which contributes to circulating and remodelling the values, meanings and knowledge around food and food practices. This tendency for business interests to predominate in the sphere of food has recently led to private companies having greater responsibilities for the environment and individuals' health and also for those businesses to need to coexist with politicians and public interventions with varying degrees of conflict.
- 20 Food also publicizes itself since inside "partial" public spaces (Miège, 2010), it has been the subject of contestation or conflicts in which different values, beliefs and interests are confronted with each other: "Behind debates around and about food, there are important issues for society being questioned" (Poulain, 2002: 12). It particularly drives the creation of collectives who are aware and concerned about the ethical, economic, cultural, social, identity-based and health implications linked to choices of food. Thus we can observe the development of forms of "food activism" (Counihan, Siniscalchi, 2013), gatherings and mobilizations of individuals and groups with varying statuses (consumers, producers, distributors) who carry out public actions and support alternative forms of production, distribution and consumption of food. In media arenas, the politicization of discourse about food seems increasingly evident. Since the 1970s, and particularly in the last two decades, social movements throughout the world have publically challenged the agri-food industry and public nutrition policies. These people and groups are concerned by the social ramifications and stakes linked to food and have set up a wide range of initiatives with varied goals - the fight for biodiversity and against the exploitation of natural resources, support for fair trade, the preservation of local agricultural and food traditions or animal rights. Food activism involves individual or collective actions within the framework of critical and committed consumption (Chessel, Cochoy 2004; Dubuisson-Quellier, 2009) and/or the framework of alternative production and distribution systems which are being constructed and made visible via the media.
- 21 Regarding both school food and people's daily lives in general, education in taste is becoming a national priority with the aim of emancipating citizens from the influence the agri-food industry can have on food habits. Marie Berthoud and Simona De Iulio explain this in their article about the links between food, schools and sales pitches. They study the school marketing strategies and systems implemented by the food industries. Schools are recognized by the State as playing a central role in applying nutritional policies. Food industry companies are blamed for promoting the consumption of unhealthy products. Despite these criticisms, the two authors explain that schools have become a target for commercial companies from the agri-food sector

who have implemented so-called "educational" advertising tactics. In this manner, food marketing has attained a legitimate position in schools by hiding its commercial aims behind this educational discourse. In this way, we can observe commercial food brands putting their message across in the public space of schools and a drive to ensure the compliant uniform nature of communication tools (teaching kits) distributed with the guides from the PNNS and the National Food Programme (PNA, *Programme national pour l'alimentation*). The authors highlight a paradox in the agri-food industry's approach but above all in those of the authorities and the parents and teachers involved. The food industry is often criticized for the bad quality of their products and yet often supports public actions linked to nutrition in schools. Public debate deriving from these strategies is driven by anti-advertising movements which try to resist the invasion of the school environment by the food industry. The cohesive nature of the different protagonists of these movements has provided them with a certain level of visibility and coherency in the implementation of their collective public actions. The authors show how these movements denounce both the negative consequences of food advertising on health and the consumer society's own models which are insidiously spread into the public school space.

- 22 The dietary supplements market is analyzed in the article by Sylvie Bardou-Boisnier and Kevin Caillaud who have studied the physiological effects of these products on the health of those who use them. This new form of nutrition has an inherent kind of ambiguity in its status somewhere between food and medicine. The article shows how the government authorities, particularly the French Health Ministry, have set up an information and communication system for health professionals rather than the general public. The rapid evolution of the food supplements market requires the authorities to respond to sometimes opposing expectations. The food and drug industries flood the market with aggressive communication initiatives to increase sales whereas consumers of these products would like to be better informed about their possible effects on health. The authors point out that the great quantity of scientific research into dietary supplements which provides very precise answers to such questions is not given much media coverage and is rarely popularized for the general public. This leads to the question of the limits of the authorities' power over this market and of how they are hesitating between an interventionist or a liberal policy.

Conclusion

- 23 The contributions gathered in this issue show that in a context in which food practices have now gone far beyond the private sphere, the processes used to make food public should occupy a central place in studies of the social stakes of this complex phenomenon which is essential in individual and social life. This issue also confirms the relevance and richness of an approach which fully mobilizes the interdisciplinary tendency of studies in the information and communication sciences to examine the question of the publicization of food. Indeed, it is the public and media dimension of food which has become the important issue rather than the positions adopted by those involved in the field as previously.

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