

55. Nutrition for the Body, Food for the Mind

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The closest physical tie between two human beings is that between a pregnant woman and her child. The cutting of the umbilical cord, through which the embryo has been fed, is, in many societies, interpreted as an act of separating, as a vital step in the newborn's way towards becoming an independent social person. At later stages in life, too, feeding and being fed, in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense, remain constitutive experiences in nurturing processes. Individual and collective food habits, preferences, and prescriptions, being largely shaped by the social environment, are social and cultural signifiers of belonging and, as such, play an important role in constructing images of nationality, culture, and tradition. When we look at actual food-related practices, however, they appear rather dynamic and open to outside influences. Food and drink lend themselves as ideal means of status manifestation and social positioning. Offering generous quantities of consumables may be a sign of power as much as of wealth, and by sharing food/drink real or imagined proximity between individuals, groups, and/or social categories are created and reaffirmed. However, proximity to some is based on distance to others on the grounds of age, gender, religion etc.

We invite interested participants to explore how the production, possession, and consumption of food/drink are intertwined with other aspects of people's lives, how they contribute to individual and collective social identities, and how they construct and shape 'sameness' and 'otherness', proximity and distance in everyday practice, face-to-face encounters, as well as at institutional levels.

What Happens after the Cutting of the Umbilical Cord? Breastfeeding as Central Symbol of Early Mother-Child-Relation in Germany

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In 20th century, phases of medicalization of pregnancy/motherhood have strongly influenced the field in Middle Europe, especially in German-speaking, protestant regions, but have analogies in comparable euroamerican health systems.

In a study focusing on women's ideas, thoughts and acts during the biosocial process of becoming mother/being young mother, all women finally decided to breastfeed and to change some food habits in this phase. The explanations for this decision expressed a broad variety of ideas and for the women, the relevance of this question.

The analysis considered the women's surroundings as well: the tendency to breastfeed was in correspondence with the experts' advices and was supported by the father-to-be and others.

The paper presents the circumstances the women had to cope with to be able to breastfeed in an urban setting in south-west Germany.

The findings are analyzed as re-/negotiated pieces of social identity on different levels: ordering of daily life (e.g. private/public, nature/culture), food habits and gender. The discourse of the optimal nutrition of the suckling infant embodies

powerful metaphors and symbols, because breastfeeding is part of the authoritative knowledge in biomedical sciences and in biomedically dominated health practice. Another reason is the power of the body as a symbol for society because of its continuous presence and its flexibility.

Lunch in an East German Enterprise after the *Wende*: New Social Differences in the Working Place

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During socialism the enterprise was placed at the center of East German society and identity formation. The enterprise provided not only a secure workplace, but also many social security resources. Among other services such as child care, holiday and shopping facilities, large firms also provided meals. These facilities were used uniformly by different occupational groups. After unification these social security components of large enterprises were the first to be sold or closed, because they were seen as alien to a capitalist enterprise. This also happened in the enterprise where the fieldwork for the proposed paper was conducted. Nevertheless, a large part of the workforce meets in the last surviving, now privatized, canteen, especially for lunch. At the same time the canteen has become a place where new social differences are negotiated: who eats with whom and, above all, who never eats there are markers of new social differences and differences between East and West Germans. The paper focuses on these new hierarchies and the discussion around the closure of this last remaining canteen.

Irish Students and their Food. An Essay on Food Symbolic Properties Appropriation and Embodiment

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This current article presents appropriations, uses and embodiment of food symbolic properties regarding a population highly relevant due to its precarious character and also taking place in a country not particularly known for its 'haute-cuisine' but yet presenting in the last decades some unavoidable changes.

In fact, the assumption considers this student time as a key-time in the management of food discourse. Thus, the changes, corollary to the entry at university (management of time, moving from the family house, management of a budget) had to be considered as criteria leading to a change in the posture towards everyday food.

Tangibly, our article will focus on how this period of life is a time of transgression, rejection, essays, everyday DIY but also freedom. In a sense we will try to present this student time as a concrete moment of creation of food subjectivity.

Our point in this essay is to show how student time is important as both a brewer and then a basis of food representation and imaginaries. Representations, symbols, values and properties gathered at the same time from family, media, friends that will lead to almost naturalised behaviours and habits when these students will go out of school to settle and stabilise after different events (birth, marriage, employment).

Sharing Food, Sharing Taste? Consumption Practices, Gender Relations and Individuality in Czech Families

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The importance of food in constituting and developing family relations and intimate relations more generally, has long been recognised within the social and cultural sciences. Serving guests food and drink, preparing food for family members and sharing meals within the family are essential human activities in every culture. The symbolic role that food takes on in family life is nevertheless culturally and historically contingent, varying over time and space. Throughout the modern world there are indications that patterns of food consumption are changing, the sharing of food becoming less essential in daily family life. In the light of both classic anthropological theories on household and domestic consumption and more recent sociological and anthropological theories about the family and its fragility, this paper discusses the preparation and consumption of food in Czech families of different generations, both urban and rural. Firstly, the paper discusses the role the sharing of food actually plays in the everyday life of families and in shaping relations between family members. Secondly, focus is placed on the family as a consumption unit and its development over time. How is the family's diet composed, to what extent does a shared pattern of preferred food develop between family members, and what lines of conflicts emerge over food issues?

The 'True Academy' - Georgian Banquets and the Construction of National Identity
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The Georgian banquet (*supra*) is a highly formalised festive meal structured by toasts and presided over by a toastmaster (*tamada*). It is considered to be an essential part of the Georgian tradition. Historical sources, however, would suggest that the *supra* in its current form is a product of the 19th century, closely related to the rise of the national movement. Consequently, the Georgian banquet is an example of *invented tradition* and fulfills the function of creating and reinforcing national identity.

For much of its history Georgia has been dominated by invaders and bore the brunt of conflicts between Ottoman and Persian armies fighting for control over the Southern Caucasus. In the face of these Muslim invasions, Orthodox Christianity served as a powerful tool for maintaining and strengthening Georgian national identity. Following the annexation of Georgia by the Russian Empire in 1801, the *othering* by religion no longer applied. In this context the *supra* became a way of marking cultural distinction; toasts, the toastmaster, and wine itself came to be seen as intrinsically Georgian.

Speech, Space and Time: Key Elements in the Construction of Identity and Difference in Xhosa Beer Drinking Rituals

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Given that the exchange of food is often closely associated with processes such as the construction of identity, the expression of difference, the manipulation of status, and the meaning of quotidian experience, a key question concerns the means through which this is done in different societies and contexts. In the case of Xhosa beer drinking rituals, there are three crucial symbolic means through which this substance is used to make statements about society and relationships; these are domestic space, speech and the temporal sequence through which the rituals proceed. In this paper these three aspects and the relationships between them are examined, with a view to illustrating how beer drinking is intimately connected with social experience and the nature of community.

Good Throats, Good Thoughts: The Importance of Eating Rice According to the Baga of Guinea

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According to Baga notions of personhood, the throat is an important part of the body, and the word most Baga use to translate the Western notion of 'soul' is *amera*, which also means 'throat'. People who are said of having a 'good throat' are considered intelligent and nice, while those who are said of having a bad throat are considered stupid, selfish and often accused of having evil tendencies and being *wuser* ('witches'). The main difference between nice people and witches is that while the former nourishes their body with rice (the staple food in the region), the latter are supposed to do it with human flesh. These antagonistic notions of consumption interplay with notions of kinship, religion, and moral agency, as shall be discussed in the paper.

'Here Everyone is Invited': The Choice of Food and its Meaning at Wedding Celebrations in Burkina Faso

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Among the Muslim population of Burkina Faso weddings are celebrated in two distinctive ways, the 'traditional' and the 'civil': a traditional celebration accompanies the religious ceremony, while a 'civil' wedding party marks the official marriage which takes place at the town hall.

The two celebrations differ in many ways and the foods served at each occasion are an important marker of the contrasts between the occasions. While what is referred to as 'African' food and drink is served at the traditional ceremony, the civil ceremony is marked by the serving of *tubabu dumuni* or 'white man's food'. And the manner of consumption adds further distinction. At the traditional meal guests eat from shared bowls, using their hands, whereas at the 'civil' celebration the food is served on plates and is meant to be eaten with cutlery.

Drawing on these two ceremonial forms and their marked distinctions, this paper will discuss a constantly present discourse of 'traditional' versus 'modern' in urban Burkina Faso. But it will also ask what might it mean when this dichotomisation is then blurred: when both ceremonial forms serve as indicators of individual wealth and power, as spaces in which traditional hospitality for all-comers is, rhetorically at least, maintained.