

## “Gender and food”

Call for papers for a special issue of the *Journal des Anthropologues*,  
coordinated by Priscille Touraille (CNRS, MNHN), Tristan Fournier (CNRS, CERTOP),  
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The idea that "men" must eat more than "women", principally meat (animal protein), is an idea championed by common sense, especially in Western societies, and recorded by medical institutions. It has long been a scientific paradigm but has recently been challenged by the nutritional sciences. This critical perspective opens out to a huge field at the intersection of social sciences and biological anthropology. It gives the possibility to exit the paradigm that sees food practices as reflecting the physiological needs of individuals. It designates "the epistemological obstacle" which has long been at work in the social sciences and undertakes to build a truly sociological question on the relationship between food practices and power relations. While researches at the interface of gender studies and food studies have been given special attention in the United States in the 1990's, a thorough review of French work intersecting issues of gender and food reveals a blind spot in the literature within these two fields. Departing from the idea that this joint remains poorly investigated, we are aiming at the existing knowledge on the articulation of these issues to emerge.

This issue calls for contributions that fall at the intersection of gender studies and food studies. It is aimed at researchers specialized in one of those two areas and interested at crossing these themes, but also to persons not belonging to any of these fields but who have, through their research, some data or reflections able to illustrate the issues at stake. We will promote interdisciplinary contributions, including those offering an articulation between biological and sociological data.

### **Theme 1: Gendered food inequalities**

Carole Counihan wrote that food is one of the most powerful existing mean of coercion. It is, in other words, a privileged instrument of social inequality. This proposal calls for a major theorization in the social sciences: it is still to be shown that social inequality regimes produce food inequalities in a way which is structural. Three lines of reflection will be prioritized:

1) *Food inequalities*: here we call for ethnologists to report food inequalities in their respective fields (especially in terms of animal protein), observations that remain often unpublished because outside the prioritized research topics. The effort required is to shed light on these inequalities with the help of both speech justification of the informants and the global inequality context of the society in question (in terms of gender categories, but also age, class, etc.). We invite the authors to avoid "symbolist" interpretations that are not relevant here.

2) *Development and malnutrition*: this theme also calls for contributions coming from researches on development focused on the problems of malnutrition and its effects on women's health. For example, reports on gendered food inequalities in a context of global food shortage would advantageously be provided.

3) *Critical epistemology*: last but not least, we invite, with particular enthusiasm, theoretical contributions or contributions grasping the theme with a critical epistemology eye within social anthropology. Why are there so few studies that have theorized the link between gender inequality and food? How to identify the poles of resistance to a problematization which nevertheless opens out to interdisciplinary programs with high heuristic value and which

promises to be so powerful from the point of view of knowledge produced by the social sciences?

## **Theme 2: Cross perspectives on gender and food**

We are also seeking papers that investigate the following issues: How may the theoretical frameworks developed in gender studies be pertinent for analyzing food practices? Conversely, how may the food sphere contribute to illustrate the analysis of gender relations as power relations? Authors could select, for instance, among these three topics:

1) *The gender of the food practices*: the aim is to investigate the specific or committed food consumptions and practices (eg: vegetarianism, veganism, organic, alternative dietetics); to analyze the incidence of life trajectories and biographical events; to study the relationships between people and their food at the intersection of gender, age, class, or other forms of social categorization.

2) *Body and health*: this focal addresses the ways in which nutritional recommendations are perceived and implemented (compliance, orthorexia, etc.); the prevalence as well as the lived experiences of eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, obesity); the individual, marital and/or family management of food related risks and chronic pathologies; the effects of the corporal aesthetic model of thinness (high protein diet, etc.).

3) *Markets, mass media, and occupations*: eventually, contributions could consider the agri-food marketing and “gender merchandising”; the presentation of gender roles in advertisement; the impacts of the “food reality TV” (men’s participation in everyday cooking, feminization of food processing occupations, etc.) in terms of gendered food practices and representations.

### **Calendar and instructions for authors:**

Proposals for articles (1/2 to 1 page) should be sent by **February 1<sup>st</sup> 2014** to the *Journal des Anthropologues* ([afa@msh-paris.fr](mailto:afa@msh-paris.fr)). If accepted, articles are awaited for **June 1<sup>st</sup> 2014** in Word format. Their length must not exceed 40 000 signs.

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