

International Symposium
“Eating in African, Latin American and Asian Cities”
3rd edition “Gender and Foodways under Urban Lifestyles”
“Genre et alimentation à l’épreuve de la vie urbaine”

Paris, September 2020

Call for Papers

Following the [first edition](#) held in Paris in late 2017 on “Urban food styles in Africa, Latin America and Asia”, which led to the publication of a [book](#) (Soula *et al.*, 2020), and then the [second edition](#) in Porto Alegre (Brazil) in 2018 on “Street food”, CIRAD (MOISA joint research unit) and the UNESCO Chair in World Food Systems, in partnership with OCHA and the Anthropology of Food journal, are organizing the third edition of the Symposium on “Eating in African, Latin American and Asian Cities” that will be held on September 30th and October 1st 2020¹ in a form of a webinar. A call for papers has been launched on the topic “Urbanization, gender and food”.

Gender concerns have received relatively little attention in the human and social science literature on food. When the issue is raised, it is often to stress the sexual division of labour related to food, where women generally bear the greatest physical and mental burden of the work—from farming to cooking. The various forms of exclusion, discrimination and domination embodied in this gender-based division are generally highlighted (Mathieu, 1985; DeVault, 1994; McIntosh & Zey, 1998; Counihan, 1999; Counihan & Kaplan 2013; Brady *et al.*, 2018). Beyond this first interpretation, Fournier *et al.* (2015), in the [introduction-overview](#) of the special thematic issue 140-141 of the French *Journal des anthropologues* on the topic “Food as a gender weapon”, add two more recent thematic domains concerning the relationship between food and gender, whereby they differentiate: 1) the sexual division of labour; 2) discriminatory consumption practices; and 3) the inception of different bodies and consciences. These interpretations are underpinned by a rejection of inequality and domination situations. Moreover, food—particularly household food—is fertile ground for the development of normative models and what transcends them at the interface of class and gender (Cardon, 2015; Parsons, 2016), castes and religions. The links between gender and food hence cannot be construed as the locus of masculine domination alone, they may also be spaces that foster creativity, talent, resistance (Abarca, 2006; Aviakan & Haber, 2005) or even empowerment (Hassoun & Crenn, 2014; Robson, 2006; Schroeder, 2006). The denunciation of patriarchal social relations can in turn be linked to stigma-reversal actions, whereby the kitchen may be viewed as a political space for protest (Verschuur, Guérin & Guétat-Bernard, 2014) and for recognition of new political concerns (Guérin *et al.* 2019) based on what binds us.

Gender issues in the literature on African, Latin American and Asian countries are generally approached from the same critical angle (Riley & Dodson, 2019). For instance, the key role of women in food production, processing, flow and, more broadly, in household and community food security, is often put forward, thereby highlighting their innovation capacities while decrying their social invisibility (Bisilliat, 1996; Guétat-Bernard & Saussey, 2017; Guétat-Bernard, 2017; Lourme-Ruiz, 2017; Gaillard *et al.*, 2019). Yet this criticism tends to silo the gender issue into the women’s issue slot. Moreover, while most of this research carried out in the Global South has targeted rural areas, which are particularly vulnerable from a food standpoint, studies have also investigated many initiatives focused on forms of interaction between producers and food consumers, particularly with

¹ This Symposium is supported by CIRAD, the Montpellier SupAgro UNESCO Chair in World Food Systems, Danone Research and the *Observatoire Cniel des Habitudes Alimentaires* (OCHA).

a view to promoting food governance underpinned by a concern for justice, relocation, as well as healthy diversified food consumption.

In this Symposium, we thus propose to look at the changes—rather than continuities—linked to urban life that affect gender relations within and via the food sector. These changes may be negative, positive or neutral with regard to social justice and equality. Participating researchers should assess and document such changes with empirical data. We do not feel that urban life fundamentally challenges the perpetuation of gender differences and inequalities. We strive to be aware of changes so as to gain insight into the tensions between what changes and what remains more or less the same, or is perpetuated: how and to what extent does urban life reshape what nurtures gender identities and structural relations?

Urbanization is nevertheless a key factor in forging gender relations, particularly in Africa, Latin America and Asia, where urban growth is gathering momentum. Several authors have shown how cities are modifying matrimonial models and patterns—with trajectories that differ from country to country—and how women's unsalaried or salaried work in the city (often in the food industry) is also part of these reconfigurations (Abdoul, 2001; Antoine et al., 1990; Adjamagbo et al., 2009; e.g. for sub-Saharan Africa). Moreover, cities are the pivotal point of new femininity and masculinity models (e.g. in relation to body image and the beauty ideal) that prompt a reexamination of gender relations (Benedicto, 2014). But very few studies have focused on these new models, their relationships and effects on food perceptions and practices.

Urbanization could be defined as a combination of the following processes: residence and activity densification; the mixing of populations of diverse origins and the dissemination of new cultural messages and models; increased anonymity; widespread market access to consumer goods; and labour division and commodification, especially with regard to domestic work in rural areas (storage, product processing, distribution, catering, etc.), alongside the emergence of institutions to support and regulate these economic activities (professional organizations, research, training, regulation, quality control, etc.). These processes generate new foodscapes (physical, social, sensitive and symbolic), which have impacts on gender relations regarding food organization. These reconfigurations can also have impacts on the material and symbolic organization of cities. This Symposium will focus specifically on these different impacts: how does urbanization tangibly shape gender relations regarding food and, conversely, how do gender relations influence urban dwellers' food practices?

Submitted papers should thus analyse these impacts in African, Latin American and Asian cities, not in a descriptive way to showcase differences and inequalities between men and women, but rather in terms of reconfigurations, tensions or renegotiations of gender relations related to urbanization as reflected via food. To what extent can food be perceived as a locus for reinterpreting gender relations specific to the urban social space? We of course expect the issue of gender-based processing inequalities to be critically assessed based on a detailed description and clear interpretation of the dynamic gender interaction processes that underlie these inequalities. This will strengthen the analysis while generating insight into the phenomena of diversion, attenuation, subtraction and even the inversion of gender-based power relations, as well as the attendant role playing. We urge authors not to look solely at the feminine side—the question regarding the construction of (new?) masculinities through food is also particularly interesting. Very few studies carried out in the Global North to date have dealt with this issue (Diasio & Fidolini, 2019; Greenebaum & Dexter, 2018; Irvine, 2015; Julier & Lindenfeld, 2005; Sobal, 2005), and it has been overlooked to an even greater extent in research conducted in the Global South. Papers could, for example, focus on the reshaping of gender relations as follows (but this list is not exhaustive):

- tangible aspects related to food: commercial and non-commercial procurement; forms of alliances along value chains and food governance; the kitchen (spatial organization, social roles and decisions), meal organization and household tasks related to food (stock management, preparation, washing up, waste management)
- symbolic and dreamlike aspects of food: hierarchical relationships, alliances, male or female seduction and domination relationships, the importance of dreams and their interpretation in food practices
- new forms of family social structuring and their impacts on nutrition
- social organization of new food trades (processors, caterers, shopkeepers, entrepreneurs, domestic staff, etc.)
- food support and regulation institutions (professional organizations, policies, research, training, regulation, quality control, consumer/producer alliances between urban and rural areas)
- gendered dimension of social networks, advertising and other media (cookbooks, TV, etc.) in informing and building eating practices, as well as in generating food trust and mistrust
- perception and gendered representation of the body (female and male) in relation to food practices
- gendered food practices oriented towards health and/or aesthetics, associated diets and producers of the normative discourses that frame them (moral entrepreneurs)
- politicisation of cooking and food, particularly with regard to the women's rights issue and recognition of women's work in the domestic sphere, the reshaping of gender roles in daily food management during health crises and their aftermath (SARS, avian flu, Covid-9 and lockdown).

Single page article summaries should outline the method and results as well as the overall purpose of the study and be sent to mangerenville@cirad.fr before 30 June 2020. Papers can be in English or French and span various social science disciplines.

Participants will be informed on the selection of papers by the Scientific Committee before 30 June 2020. The Committee will be attentive to the relevance of the results presented, the scientific quality of the proposals, as well as the gender and geographical balance. Priority will be given to researchers from research laboratories in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Joint papers from researchers from laboratories in the Global North and South are highly encouraged.

Scientific committee:

Livia Barbosa (sociologist, University of Brasilia, Brazil, ANIS: Institute of Bioethics, Human Rights and Gender); Nicolas Bricas (socioeconomist, CIRAD, UMR MOISA); Damien Conaré (Montpellier SupAgro, UNESCO Chair in World Food Systems); Chantal Crenn (anthropologist, Anthropology of Food Journal) (pending); Vulca Fidolini (sociologist, University of Lorraine, 2L2S), Tristan Fournier (CNRS, UMR IRIS); Hélène Guétat-Bernard (ENSFEA, UMR LISST, French Institute of Pondicherry); Shagufa Kapadia (University of Baroda); Estelle Kouokam (University of Yaoundé); Olivier Lepiller (sociologist, CIRAD, UMR MOISA); Véronique Pardo (anthropologist, CNIEL, OCHA); Audrey Soula (anthropologist, CIRAD, UMR MOISA) and Hayat Zirari (anthropologist, University of Hassan II).

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