

# Making connections through foodways: contemporary issues in anthropological and sociological studies of food

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## ABSTRACT

This article is an introductory discussion of a special collection of articles on food, all based on research that looks at the world through the food lens, exploring the role of food as a medium for addressing ‘controversies’ that are not necessarily about food. The authors highlight major theoretical concepts from anthropology and the sociology of food and eating which arise out of seven research articles based on ethnographies from Malta, Great Britain, Spain, Indonesia, Central America and Slovenia. The first part of this article discusses the concept of a proper meal and related subjects, such as homemade food, health and the medicalisation of the everyday diet; the second part introduces theoretical accounts of the role of food in the perpetuation of social and ethnic differences, the appropriation of foreign foods into local cultures, and the revival of ‘authentic’ food practices through the process of inventing traditions.

**KEYWORDS:** proper meal, health, social differences, authenticity, tradition, culinary tourism

## Introduction

Senegalese novelist Aminata Sow Fall once wrote that ‘life is not a couscous, but it needs some *laalo*, that is some binding substance’ (2002: 84). In many parts of the world, food is a social jelly, a substance that binds people together and that separates them. It is an indicator of religious affiliation and social stature, of sameness and difference (Debevec 2005: 228; Sutton 2001: 5; Lien 2004). When writing about her own country’s cuisine, Aminata Sow Fall suggests that culinary language is like a universal code which can be used to express everything (2002: *passim*). This is, of course, something that anthropologists have long been aware of, most notably Lévi-Strauss who argued that the language of cuisine is used by the members of a particular society to translate its structure and that that translating is done unconsciously (Levi Strauss 1968).

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It is food's ability to make connections which is important here. Marianne Lien, who, among others, has made this important point, argues that when we study what may initially look like a food controversy, we will soon discover that it is in fact a controversy about some other issue (2004: 8). According to Lien we should 'follow [...] the connections that food allows humans to make' (ibid). In the case of the articles featured in this volume, connections can be made on many levels: that is, there are several common threads running through these articles that point to how food provides a context for exploring 'controversies' that are not necessarily about food. If we begin by simply listing some common issues within these articles, we are faced with many of the issues that have been and still are discussed in food studies today. Thus, this introductory article will highlight some of the theoretical concepts which link the different articles together and consider how the contribution of the authors in this volume fits into the existing discussions of those issues. We have tried to address most of the issues common to the seven articles in this volume, but our list is in no way exhaustive. Since many of the issues are intertwined one with the other, it was impossible to make distinct sections. The order in which we address the different issues was chosen without a particular plan in mind and is thus in no way indicative of their relative importance.

## The importance of a proper meal

The idea of a *proper meal*, one of the basic concepts in the sociology and anthropology of food and eating, is evoked in article by Susan Lewis (this volume). Lewis's informants, involved in a community health development project in Scotland, believe that regular family meals, skillfully prepared using fresh ingredients, are the key to healthy eating and a happy family life. But where does all this goodness come from?

The concept of a proper meal originated in the work of Mary Douglas (1971; Douglas and Nicod 1974) and was further developed by British scholars Anne Murcott (1982, 1983), and Nickie Charles and Marion Kerr (1988). A proper meal is the main meal of the day, prepared and taken according to strict unwritten culinary and behavioural rules, which Warde and Martens (cited in Gronow 1996: 4) put into two groups: a) the structure of the eating event (the items of which it is composed, cooking techniques, the combination of flavours, foodstuffs, the sequence of dishes eaten); and b) its adequate social relationships (with whom food is eaten, who has cooked and prepared it, table manners, etc.). Thus, the **ideal** British proper meal of the eighties, according to Murcott (1982: 682-684) and findings of Charles and Kerr (1988: 18-25), is prepared from fresh ingredients (meat, potatoes, vegetables and gravy), which are cooked from scratch and served hot. It is seen essentially as a family occasion, prepared by the woman-wife-mother for her husband and children and eaten by the whole family. Family members should eat a proper meal together, sitting around a dinner table, enjoying the food and pleasant conversation. Proper meal symbolizes the existence of the 'proper family', which the meal reproduces daily by reinforcing bonds between family members. However, since the husband's taste preferences dictate the contents of the meal, and since the provision of proper meals is viewed as an important aspect of the woman's role in the home and falls directly on women, the proper meal is also an expression and reinforcement of the existing gender and generational divisions and power relations within family and wider patriarchal society.

Since the eighties, various European and non-European studies have reported the existence of the proper meal. Although the ingredients and cooking techniques of a proper meal vary in different cultural environments, it is everywhere considered a symbol of a happy family life although only occasionally or even rarely taken. With the democratisation of power relations within contemporary families, children who previously didn't have a say regarding the content of the family meal are now beginning to play a more active role. As Elizabeth Mei-Li Roberts' research on schoolchildren in Angus, Scotland shows (this volume), they more or less successfully find 'ways to negotiate their own aims, needs and wishes for food choices, suggesting that decisions regarding food choices are part of a negotiated process between parent and child' (p. 63).

It is noteworthy that informants still treat proper meals, homemade food and healthy eating as equivalents, although their contents could be far from current dietary guidelines. What makes proper meals healthy in the eyes of informants is their association with emotional support, care-giving and different kinds of love. This conclusion brings us to the next frequently discussed subject in this collection, the concept of homemade food.

## **'The goodness' of homemade food**

Lewis reports that older women informants, targeted in a community health project in Scotland, hold distinct norms and beliefs concerning homemade cooking: buying fresh food, bargain hunting, thriftiness, cooking from scratch, practising household skills learned from parents, preparing traditional dishes served at regular meals and moral disapproval of takeaway food and fast food. Moisiu, Arnould and Price arrived at similar findings in a qualitative study examining the discourse of homemade food production and consumption and its links with the marketplace in an intergenerational context. For the senior generation (people above age 60),

homemade is reproduced by combining and transmitting domestic cultural values, enacting the roles and responsibilities of parental generations toward their descendants, and defending the domestic unit against the fissiparous pull of competing moral discourses (2004: 380).

This study also shows that the views of the older generations are in direct contrast to the meaning of homemade cooking for the younger generations (informants below age 36): individual accomplishment, self-development and self-expression.

Lewis suggests that health problems in the socio-economically disadvantaged areas of Dundee could, in part, be tackled by transfer of intergenerational knowledge from older women to younger mothers. The older generation could share their experiences, equipping young mothers with shopping and cooking expertise and encouraging them to 'make soup and boycott the take-away' (p. 53). Young housewives living on very limited budgets would provide their family with healthy food by home-based cooking with fresh ingredients.

While Lewis links *homemade* predominantly to 'made by oneself', Weichart (this volume) relates *homemade* to 'made in the home', which is not necessarily the home of the consumer. Analyzing three popular Indonesian alcoholic drinks – *saguer* (palm wine – fermented juice of the palm tree), *cap tikus* (brandy distilled from palm wine) and *anggur* (liqueur made from *cap tikus* with the addition of palm sugar, spices and artificial aromas)

– Weichart emphasizes the importance of the drinks' production processes to their meanings, different drinking modes, and different positions in the hierarchy of drinks in a local society. In contrast to *anggur*, a commercial product, *cap tikus* and *saguer* are preferably homemade products produced in small local factories. Since *saguer* and *cap tikus* are extracted from one of the area's most useful trees, the sugar palm, they are considered natural products. Beside naturalness, *cap tikus* possesses the additional quality of health-preserving and health-restoring powers, thus it is used for minor ailments such as colds and digestive disorders.

Merging the categories of homemade, natural and healthy foods and contrasting them with industrial, artificial and unhealthy foods is a widespread phenomenon in Slovenia also. It is noticeable that the value of homemade food is increasing with gross domestic product growth. Even at the end of the eighties, food marketing was based on stressing the foreign origin of products, while nowadays homemade/local/Slovenian origin sells the products. Before the political and economic transition at the turn of the nineties, imported foods were regarded as symbols of freedom, democracy and well-being. Today, non-Slovenian foods are often rejected predominantly because of xenophobic nationalism which is hidden behind concerns regarding intensive use of pesticides in Western countries, lack of quality control in their food industry, double manufacturing standards for goods sold on domestic markets and on markets of new EU-member states, etc. (Tivadar & Kamin 2002).

## Food and social distinction

The preference for homemade/traditional foods, albeit in a somewhat different context, is a theme of Elise Billiard's article about revival of interest in traditional Maltese food. She analyses the invention of 'traditional' Maltese food recipes by the economic elite, who use food preferences to distinguish themselves from the lower social classes. There seems to exist a certain type of regularity in the tastes of the affluent: on a modern Malta the taste for domestic/homemade/traditional food is a sign of a delicate and refined taste and a high social status, while in a less modernized society, such as the island of Sulawesi, as Weichart shows, the good taste of the elite is manifested through the consumption of expensive imported western food products. There, an Indonesian version of Western bread (*roti*) and imported Australian wine are highly ranked in the local food hierarchy because of their association with development, a modern lifestyle and an easier and better life.

Since Bourdieu's *Distinction* (1996[1984]), empirical research on food and eating in Western culture has repeatedly established the persistence of structural differentiation in determining food tastes. Recent studies (e.g. Lupton 1996; Tivadar and Luthar 2005; Warde 1997; Warde & Martens 2000) have found that social class and its correlates such as income and educational level remain important determinants of food preferences. According to Bourdieu, preference results from *habitus*, which he defines as a collective schemata of experience and perception that establishes a framework for making sense of social experience. It is generated by the internalization of a given set of material conditions in childhood, within the family, and through schooling. As the result of objective social position, *habitus* is practically embodied – inscribed in the individual's body, ways of eating and drinking, gestures, accent, speech patterns, etc. Thus, for example, the working

class *habitus* produces a taste for cheap, heavy and fatty foods, while the middle classes tend to prefer food which is light, delicate, and refined (Bourdieu 1996). Furthermore, a recent study of food tastes in Slovenia shows that significant associations exist between food practices, on the one hand, and the respondent's worldview and cultural consumption, on the other. Food traditionalism in Slovenia, which is articulated through the central place of meat within the diet, traditional attitudes to gendered housework, non-reflexive adaptation of food culture through tradition and habit, abundant meals and a preference for casual traditional country restaurants that offer 'meat and potato' fare, is in correlation with traditional moral fundamentalism, i.e., an inability to accept a diversity of authorities and cultures, prejudices against sexual or ethnic minorities, traditional gender roles, the notion that citizenship is tied to national belonging, and the consumption of low-brow media culture. At the other end, there are post-traditional food tastes manifested in the attractiveness of unknown foods and ethnic cuisines, interest in experimentation in cooking and the importance of the communicative role of food consumption which correlates with attitudinal and practised cosmopolitanism, liberal political views, involvement with alternative forms of spirituality or alternative health practices, use of modern technologies, the acceptance of variability of taste cultures and tolerance towards out-groups (Tivadar and Luthar, 2005).

## Food and health

Several articles in this volume deal, in some way or another, with the issue of health. Although Weichart refers to informants' belief about medicinal properties of *cap tikus* brandy, both Billiard and Rogelja (this volume) describe popular convictions about wholesomeness of Mediterranean food and the articles of Lewis and Roberts are even the results of health oriented research projects, none of them really discusses the topic of health any further. Since this is a common practice in food research articles one might wonder how it is that the link between health and food has become so pervasive in food studies?

Since most articles on food habits are based on empirical data, it is distinctly possible that food researchers, not initially concerned with people's attitudes toward healthy food, eventually must face those issues as they are brought up by the informants. Concerns about healthy food habits are very common, although people do not necessarily act upon them. How come we can no longer think about food outside a health setting?

One of the most influential sociological explanations of the current preoccupation with health, of which healthy eating is only one articulation, is a blend of the theoretical positions of Anthony Giddens (1991) and Ulrich Beck (1992, 1999) and their accounts of the contemporary social world, characterised by high-consequence risks, constant insecurity, and uncertainty: the wider social environment has become fraught with different global risks, such as the collapse of global economic mechanisms and nuclear, chemical, genetic and ecological mega-hazards. Globalisation of risk is paralleled with individualisation, a social process which means that individuals must produce their own biographies themselves, in the absence of fixed rules and norms once dictated by religion, local community and tradition. At the same time, people are faced with the erosion of modern institutions such as the welfare state, patriarchal nuclear family and full employment. In the face of an open future, people must actively construct their lives and are

forced to negotiate a range of options: they must wisely decide on their university degree, their job, their intimate partner – in other words, their lifestyle, or as Anthony Giddens says: '[...] because of the 'openness' of social life today, the pluralisation of contexts of action and the diversity of 'authorities', lifestyle choice is increasingly important in the constitution of self-identity and daily activity' (1991: 5). Individuals are held accountable for decisions they were compelled to make. Lifestyle choice also includes decisions regarding one's body, as 'the body can not be any longer merely 'accepted', fed and adorned according to traditional ritual; it becomes a core part of the reflexive project of self-identity' (ibid: 178). Thus, we might conclude that the cultivation of the body through diet, dress, facial appearance, etc. is an individual's engagement with a wider social environment fraught with interplay between global risks, the erosion of modern institutions, and an individualisation process.

In a complex and overwhelming social world, personal preoccupation with managing health parallels a process of the medicalisation of diet – an increasing encroachment of medicine into daily eating. An increasing emphasis on the prevention of food-related diseases and on healthy eating shifts (bio)medicine, nutritional science, pharmacology and other health professions into the lives of healthy people. Food practices and habits have come to be defined as medical issues. Food is to be feared, because it contains sugar, cholesterol, salt, additives, allergens, bacteria etc. and as Deborah Lupton says: 'achieving good health through diet has become a matter of acquiring expertise in the micro-constituents of foodstuffs' (2003: 45). Furthermore, conceptualizing food and food practices as medical problems makes them the problem of the individual, and solutions are formulated at that level as well. The assumption of personal responsibility for the state of one's body disguises the fact that our eating habits are also the results of politics and of the structural organisation of society outside our control (White 2002: 49, 52).

This brings us to the third powerful force in the preoccupation with diet and health – politics. Western governments, aiming to limit the costs of state health care and to provide themselves with a productive labour force and tax payers, conceptualise diet and nutrition as a matter of individual choice rather than a state or industry responsibility. Health promotion is primarily focused on reducing the average percentage of food energy coming from saturated fatty acids and total fats, reducing the consumption of alcohol, sugars and salt, and reducing the percentages of people who are obese. Following dietary recommendations has become a sign of rationality, self-control, moral duty and even a defining quality of a model citizen (Keane 1997: 175; Lupton 1996: 72-74).

## **Changing food practices**

While we often hear in the popular discourse that over recent years food and eating processes have been greatly influenced by globalisation<sup>1</sup> and the accompanying pro-

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<sup>1</sup>While discussing the globalisation of Chinese food, Jack Goody writes that viewing globalisation as 'an establishment of a world system or modernisation or even capitalism in the broad sense' is in fact 'a Western conceit or prejudice' (1998: 166-67).

cesses as if it were a recent occurrence, anthropological, sociological and historical studies of food have long been providing us with accounts of the fact that food and drink have been ‘traveling’ the world (since the time the first human being traveled to a place outside his/her immediate area and took a food item along to keep hunger away). These movements, which originally included only the various foodstuffs, later on included elements of culinary systems as well: that is, after the ingredients, the recipes followed. Of course, neither the foodstuffs nor the instructions on how these are to be used traveled on their own. They followed people on the move, be it those who explored parts of the world unknown to them and who, upon return, brought ‘gifts’ of strange new produce, or the traveling merchants who dealt in exciting exotic foods, or those who left or fled their own world in search of a better place (and who, while willing to leave behind their country, were not willing to give up their cuisine and thus tried to continue eating in the familiar way even upon arrival in the adoptive homeland). Later on, a third group of people on the move joined in this global exchange of foodstuffs. The tourists who travel to explore the world have also greatly influenced the foodways in the places they visit. Let us, however, leave the debate about food and tourism for a little later and first explore the issues surrounding changing food habits and the subject of appropriation of foreign foods into everyday local diets.

While doing research in Minhasa in Northern Sulawesi, Gabriele Weichart noticed that there were two types of foreign products that were to be found in the local cuisine. On the one hand there are those products brought from different parts of the world a long time ago which have gradually become incorporated into the local foodways until they are sometimes considered ‘traditional’ or ‘typical’ food. ‘Foreign foods’, on the other hand, such as cakes and biscuits, refers to those foods that are still largely imported from overseas, are usually more expensive (not affordable for many people), and thus continue to be considered foreign, albeit present in the local diets, particularly on special occasions, such as feasts. According to Weichart, the success of the integration of a particular item is related to whether or not it was produced locally. In Minhasa society, knowing how and where something is produced adds to the people’s level of identification with that item.

Michael McDonald (this volume) reports that, according to research in Roatán, off the coast of Honduras, foreign foods have been successfully incorporated into local ideas about food, but have reached different levels of acceptance and appropriation, according to the locality and the ethnic, linguistic and social background of the population group discussed. McDonald also points out that changes in food and the related cultural domains in Roatán occurred due to the tourist presence on the island. While certain foods are still predominantly consumed by the expatriate and tourist populations, they have succeeded in at least entering ‘the minds’ of the local population as food items. In an area removed from the tourist parts of the island, people associated lettuce, originally imported for the tourist market and later grown on other parts of the island, with other garden foods, which according to McDonald, suggests that it has been made into ‘a known category and thus accommodated in the cultural domain without ambiguity’ (p. 42). However, as other research has shown, making something into a known category and even using it in certain circumstances, such as festive food occasions, does not mean that it has taken on the meaning of food in the sense that food is something that satisfies one’s

hunger. In many non-Western societies, Western foods, even if they are locally produced, are first and foremost seen as means of displaying wealth and progressive thinking (see Gillette 2004; Debevec, forthcoming). The process of appropriating a foreign food product into every day diets is a long and complex one, and as Carola Lentz has suggested, it follows the pattern whereby

a new food item is first adopted by the highest level of society to set off their wealth and prestige, is then incorporated into highly valued special-occasion meals by the lower classes, and is finally popularized and consumed as part of the daily diet (1999: 19-20).

Once an originally 'foreign' food item has been through this process and become accepted as a 'local' food, the question of its origin is no longer important and its consumption becomes something rather ordinary. Thus, to many British people under the age of 40, pasta is not an Italian dish but a British one (James 1997: 85ff). Similarly Maggi and other stock cubes have become a quintessential African cooking ingredient and, according to many Burkinabé, is the thing that gives food a truly African taste. No talk from an outsider trying to suggest that Maggi is in fact a 'white man's ingredient' can persuade them any differently (Debevec 2003). In this way many originally 'exotic' foods have been adopted throughout history, from the potato in most parts of northern Europe, to the tomato in Spain and Italy in the more distant past and, more recently, paella and couscous in France, and pasta in Britain and many other parts of the world.

## **Authentic meals for tourists and invented tradition for the locals**

As we suggested above, food travels with people and people travel for various reasons, tourism being one of them. Several articles in this journal discuss the role of food in tourism and/or the influence of tourism on local food practices. As scholars in the anthropology of tourism have shown, tourism has both negative effects on the local communities - it is sometimes seen as a new form of colonialism (Nash 1989 in Rapport and Overing 2000: 354) - and positive ones - it may bring new jobs to the area, thus lowering the number of local people emigrating, and invigorate local arts and crafts production (Harrison 1992 in Rapport and Overing 2000: 354-355). The negative effects of tourism are particularly visible in Third World countries, where much of the profit made in the tourism business does not stay in the country but is channeled back to First World investors (Rapport and Overing 2000: 355). In more affluent countries, many local communities have been quite capable of turning the influx of tourists to their favour, have started to make profits, and are rather active in decisions affecting how the tourism game is played out within their territory. It is particularly interesting to see the role that food plays in the way local food practices are presented to the visitors from the outside. From the food perspective, the negative influence would be introduction of western (fast) food chains to even the most remote parts of the world, whereas the positive side would be the renewed interest in local foods, prepared in the 'authentic' and 'traditional' manner. Research has shown that 'authenticity' is one of the key values when it comes to culinary tourism. In tourism studies the concept of authenticity was first evoked by MacCannell who argued that tourists

visiting a particular place do not get to experience the real thing, but instead get to witness what he defined as ‘staged authenticity’ (MacCannell 1989). MacCannell was subsequently criticised for his use of the concept of authenticity as an objective quality, since tourists bring their fair share of ‘baggage’ with them and play an active part in the construction of what is then considered to be an authentic experience (Long 2004, Kirschenblatt-Gimblett 2004, Molz 2004, Bendix 1997). Authenticity is first and foremost ‘negotiable, emergent and socially constructed’ (Molz 2004: 61) and anthropologists, folklorists and other scholars who are interested in authenticity should in fact focus on why people care so much whether something is authentic or not.

We can nevertheless see that some of the situations described in the articles that follow invite the MacCannell type of interpretation about ‘staged authenticity’ which intends to make the experience fit into the visitors’ preconceptions about the places they are visiting. In the Basque example, as in many others, the food offered to tourists, or the type ‘officially’ proclaimed as ‘traditional’, is not necessarily the type that the whole local population identifies with and acknowledges as its own (Leizaola, this volume). On one hand these borderlands, where Aitzpea Leizaola did her fieldwork, are places ‘where national identities meet and perceptions of otherness merge’ (p. 79). Basque identity is constantly challenged by the incoming groups of tourists who have their own preconceived ideas about what is typical Basque food and, to complicate matters, the national origin of tourists influences their stereotypes of the food to be found on the borderland. The French tourists are in fact looking for ‘the Spanish’ experience, and want to eat and drink what they consider to be typically Spanish foods and drinks, e.g. paella and sangria. The Spanish tourists, on the other hand, are looking for modern Basque cuisine as it is represented in the *haute cuisine* restaurants.

Authenticity as a means of justifying a certain practice is also evident in the case of the fishermen on the Slovene coastline, whose attempts to justify their tourist-oriented excursions on their fishing boats and their presentations of ‘authentic’ fish eating techniques are explored in Rogelja’s article. Similarly Billiard’s article brings up the issue of the ‘authentic’ Maltese slow-cooking method, which has become an advertising tool for grabbing tourist attention. However, the changing lifestyles, which no longer allow one to spend hours preparing meals, means that the technique had to be adapted to speed up the process, resulting in a new technique of keeping a half-cooked meal in the freezer, which may in the future be ‘re-discovered’ by some enthusiasts as the ‘traditional Maltese way of cooking’.

While a cynic may find all these claims to ‘tradition’ questionable or even ridiculous, it is clear that some people believe these practices to be their tradition and markers of their individual, regional and even national identity, and they are willing to go to extreme lengths to defend them. It is thus the role of the researcher to study the ways in which these ‘traditions’ are being maintained. In his advice on how to approach field research into issues of food identity when the promoters of that identity claim it is based on ‘traditional food practices’, Jeremy MacClancy writes that people ‘often feel it necessary to supply that identity with a past, even if much of that past was specially created for the purpose’ (2004: 68). This point is made very clear in Billiard’s article on Malta (this issue), which shows how a particular group of people, with a particular agenda, decided to find

‘typical Maltese food’. During her fieldwork, Billiard had the opportunity both to eat with the lower class population and to attend debates on ‘real Maltese food’ by an upper class group of people whom Billiard calls ‘defenders of traditional food’. Billiard’s article shows that the members of this group are being highly selective in terms of what they consider to be ‘traditional’, and that their opinion on the matter differs from that of the lower class people, which brings us back to the debate about social distinction. As we suggested in the beginning, food preferences convey both sameness and difference. In the Maltese case, the lower class population will not accept the elite’s interpretation of traditional food, since it suggests that the Maltese are closely linked to the Arabs, something they have been trying to deny for a long time. The elite, on the other hand, wishes to shake off the British influence and to stress the Mediterranean influence, which is not only ‘healthier’ but is also more appealing to the tourists visiting the island. The tourists are, however, not concerned with a debate that happens behind the scenes; they simply want the meal that they are served to support their preconceived idea about what is authentically Maltese.

## **Conclusion**

At the beginning of this introduction we stressed the binding nature of food, and we are now returning to it. What the articles that follow have in common is the exploration of issues related to food and eating in ways that demonstrate food’s ability to make connections and move across geographical and symbolic boundaries. This is also the fundamental premise of the editorial process for choosing articles for this volume. The editor was interested in research that looks at the world ‘through the food lens’, and which explores the role of food as a ‘universal medium’. In this introduction we have highlighted some of the common threads that link the seven articles, and we discussed several important emergent issues. However, the most important common thread is, of course, that food and eating practices can be a medium for seeing and understanding the world. We believe that the articles following this introduction have succeeded in supporting the argument that, by studying ‘the social life of food’, we are in fact beginning to make sense of many things beyond the limited scope of the kitchen.

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## POVZETEK

Članek je uvodna študija v tematski številki, katere cilj je bil zbrati raziskave, ki opazujejo svet skozi lupo prehrane, in ki raziskujejo vlogo hrane kot medija za preučevanje družbenih protislovij. Avtorici osvetlita glavne teoretične koncepte iz antropologije in sociologije hrane in prehranjevanja, ki izhajajo iz sedmih člankov, nastalih na podlagi terenskih raziskav na Malti, v Veliki Britaniji, Španiji, Indoneziji, Srednji Ameriki ter Sloveniji. Tako avtorici v prvem delu članka obravnavata vprašanja o pravem kosilu in z njim povezanimi temami, kot so domača hrana, zdravje in medikalizacija vsakdanje prehrane, v drugem delu pa podrobneje predstavita dosedanje diskusije o vlogi, ki jo igra hrana pri reproduciranju družbenih in etničnih razlik, o procesih privzemanja tujih živil v lokalno kulturo, o iskanju avtentičnih prehranskih praks ter njihovem oživljanju s pomočjo izmišljenih tradicij.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** pravo kosilo, zdravje, družbene razlike, avtentičnost, tradicija, identiteta, kulinarčni turizem