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Food consumption and social changes.
An ethnographic case in Italy in the context of the consumer society

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Dissertação apresentada à Universidade de Coimbra para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Antropologia Médica realizada sob a orientação científica da Professora Doutora Cristina Padez (Universidade de Coimbra)

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Abstract

In this text I intend to analyze the food consumption habits in a defined local context, by researching the meanings that social actors attribute to some of these practices and, in particular, to certain foods. This ethnographic analysis, based on an educational project described in detail, will be the starting point to look for the mutual implications between acts of current and local consumption and global issues, in the context of the consumer society (as this has been defined by anthropological literature and sociological reference). For the purpose of this analysis, I begin this text with the presentation of a summary of anthropological theories on consumption, in conjunction with an ecological perspective that can allow to understand the relationship between consumption, production and problems of global society, in particular, for what concern the field of human nutrition. These issues encountered, as direct expression of the dominant model of production and consumption, that follows the logic of capital and the free market, are summarized in: the economic inequality between countries and within countries, as well as the inequality in the distribution of food resources; the global environmental crisis; the impact of the industrial model of food production on health of populations. The overall objective of the work, in addition to understand the connections between consumption, production and global systemic limits of the dominant model of society, is to present some critical alternatives that already exist in practice. These alternatives are going to configure the field of food consumption as a highly problematized area and a fertile ground for social change. Eventually, these possibilities of criticism will be reserthead in the narrations collected through the ethnographic work, especially in the narratioins of the participants at the educational project, starting point of the present work. With this aim, will be analyzed in detail some themes emerged in the fieldwork: it's in these themes that will be searched some possibilities of criticism about the dominant model of production-consumption, or, instead, some elements that tend to endorse it.

Keywords:

- *Food consumption habits;*
- *Consumer society;*
- *Educational project;*
- *Global/local dichotomy;*
- *Social change.*

Resumo

A presente dissertação busca analisar os hábitos de consumo alimentar num contexto local definido, os significados que os atores sociais atribuem a essas práticas de consumo e a certos alimentos em particular. Esta análise etnográfica, baseada num projeto educacional descrito em detalhes, será o ponto de partida para procurar as implicações entre hábitos locais e questões globais no contexto da sociedade do consumo (como definido na literatura antropológica e sociológica de referência). Com este propósito, começo este trabalho com a apresentação de um resumo das teorias antropológicas sobre o consumo, em conjunto com uma perspectiva ecológica, que pode permitir compreender a relação entre o consumo, produção e os problemas da sociedade global, em particular no que diz respeito ao campo da nutrição humana. Estas questões encontradas, expressão direta do modelo dominante de produção e consumo que segue a lógica do capital e do mercado livre, se expressam na desigualdade econômica entre os países e dentro dos países, bem como a desigualdade na distribuição de recursos alimentares; na crise ambiental global; no impacto do padrão de produção de alimentos industrializado na saúde das populações. O objetivo é compreender as conexões entre o consumo, produção e os limites sistêmicos do modelo dominante da sociedade, e apresentar alternativas críticas que já existem na prática e que, hoje em dia, estão a configurar o campo do consumo alimentar como uma área complexa e um terreno fértil para a mudança social. Além disso, esta possibilidade de fornecer uma análise crítica será explorada através dos dados recolhidos no trabalho etnográfico, especialmente nas narrações dos participantes ao projeto educacional mencionado. Para este fim, serão analisados em detalhe alguns temas que surgiram durante a etnografia. Estes temas que foram levantados possibilitam uma análise crítica ao modelo dominante de produção-consumo.

Palavras-chave:

- *Hábitos de consumo alimentar;*
- *Sociedade de consumo;*
- *Projeto educacional;*
- *Dicotomia global / local;*
- *Mudança social.*

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1. Theoretical introduction and general objectives

1.1 Anthropological theories of consumption

In this paper I mean to analyze food consumption habits, in a local context, and its implications within the broader processes of the global society, in order to identify food consumption as a field of action for social change. In this regard, tools of ethnography and anthropology will be used in conjunction with historical analysis of the broader historical context in which these eating habits have been defined. To paraphrase Marcel Mauss (Mauss, 1924), we can understand food and the act of eating as a “*total social fact*”, that, not only responds to a basic human need, but it’s also in relation with society as a whole, at all levels: domestic, local, national, global. It invests various spheres: economic, cultural, political, psychological, spiritual; at the same time, it is in relation with the environment. The analysis of dietary habits in local contexts will therefore be the starting point to discuss the major issues involved in the global system’s production, distribution and consumption. These relations and these wider contexts, however, are not directly accessible in everyday consumer's acts, being constantly obscured by the fundamental characteristic of what has been called "consumer society": the separation between production and consumption processes, a phenomenon which characterizes modernity (Sassatelli, 2004). On the one hand, the production process in capitalist contemporary societies is more and more fragmented and delocalized: it is a process that occurs in discontinuous phases, which can be spread on terms far between in space and time. The raw materials are produced in certain parts of the world; purchased and exported elsewhere to be reworked; moved further to be sold in others places and finally get to be consumed in times and places even more distant. The consumer remains alien to this process and cannot know all the phases, remains unaware of the totality of the production process and has no power over it: it is already difficult just tracing the exact origin of the purchased products. Unless he does not want to take action to bridge this gap (the case of *critical consumption*). On the other hand, the moment of consumption, defined as an autonomous process, is a new form of work in its own right, with the

consumer becoming a crucial social actor in our society. Actor who, through the consumption, obtains the means of subsistence that needs:

"Consumption has become an important form of employment, if we intend working as the regulated production of means of subsistence by the consumer ... This work is not primarily aimed to the production of goods, but is aimed to produce the conditions of consciousness in which purchasing can take place" (Appadurai, 2001, pp. 113, 114).

Contemporary social sciences represent the consumption work as an autonomous process which responds to a different logic than the production's, as well summarized by the Italian sociologist Roberta Sassatelli:

"With the classical works of M. Douglas (Douglas, Isherwood 1979) and Bourdieu (1979) anthropology has focused on the dynamics of social class distinction of which consumption is expression, pointing out that, as part of material culture, even the most standardized goods came into that game of classification by which likes and dislikes, alliances and antagonisms, hierarchies, and analogies are gradually played. These works emphasize the ability of consumers to use good following distinguishing, demonstrative and communicative logics, in order to signal their peculiar place in the world. Despite having to deal with a cultural industry and an advertising system which undoubtedly suggests prepackaged lifestyles, consumption practices are essentially configured as actions oriented to express and strengthen specific social bonds. To assert what is considered good or right in relation to ordinary life, or the expression and recognition of an autonomous image of themselves. Even more standardized goods need to be placed into use contexts which often determine their sense and meaning. In line with the work of M. De Certeau (1984), British anthropologist D. Miller (1987) noted the active role of the consumer and its ability to appropriate the material culture sometimes in subversive ways. Emphasizing the worlds of significance that social actors are able to create through objects of consumption, including mass, the anthropological tradition as a whole is therefore opposed to the idea, brilliantly formulated by the critical tradition (eg., M. Horkheimer Th.W. and Adorno), that consumption is configured as an antithesis to 'culture' understood as the highest expression of the human being". (Sassatelli, 2006)¹

Consumption, for the Italian sociologist, is therefore configured as an ambivalent practice neither totally determined nor entirely free. This practice requires, paradoxically, the consumer to define himself as a *difference* from the goods by using them. There is so a production process from which

1 In "Antropologia del consumo di massa", Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani online.

the consumer is excluded, not knowing all the different stages, and a work of appropriation and use of produced goods. This seems the only field of action in which the individual can operate, expressing its personality and its own vision of the world, sometimes contradicting the same logic of production. These two moments, though separated from each other and corresponding to autonomous logics, are both part of the current phase of development of the global market and of contemporary capitalist societies.

A more critical view of the role of the consumer in this type of society is expressed by the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, with its conception of fetishism of subjectivity, which revises the Marxist concept of commodity fetishism:

"If the fate of commodity fetishism has been to conceal a, too human, human substance of a society of producers, it is now the task of *subjectivity fetishism* to conceal the too commodified reality of a consumers's society... in the case of goods, inside the society of producers, there was the act of buying and selling producer's the working capacity of the producers, giving it a market value, to make a good out work's product - in an invisible or hidden way, in guise of an autonomous goods' interaction. In the case of subjectivity in the society of consumers, it is now the turn of the purchase and sale of signs deployed in the construction of identity to be deleted from the appearance of the final product. " (Bauman, 2007, pp. 20)

For Bauman, therefore, the commodification of the individual subjectivity and the inter-relationships is the hallmark of a consumer society:

"The existential context that has come to be known as the consumer society is distinguished by the fact that redefines human social relationships as the model of relations between consumers and consumer items. This remarkable fact is the result of annexation and colonization, by consumption markets, of the space between individuals: space in which the relationships between individuals and the fences that separate them are built". (Bauman, 2007, pp. 15-16)

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has also reworked the concept of fetishism in his analysis of contemporary consumption, speaking of a *fetishism of the consumer* and a *fetishism of production*:

"By '*fetishism of production*' I mean an illusion, created by contemporary transnational production sites, which masks the translocal capital, transnational earning flows, global leadership, and often remote workers (employed in various types of manufacturing operations at high technology), using the staging of local

control (sometimes even of workers' control), national productivity and territorial sovereignty. To the extent that different areas of the free market have become models for the production in general, especially of high-tech goods, production has itself become a fetish, that obscures, not so much social relations, but relations production, which are increasingly transnational. The location (in the sense of local factory or place of production, or in the broadest sense of the nation-state) becomes a fetish that hides the globally dispersed powers that effectively control the production process. This creates an alienation (in the Marxist sense) twice intensified, because its social meaning is now combined with a complex spatial dynamic that is increasingly global [...]

With regard to the *fetishism of the consumer*, I mean that consumers have been transformed, through the flows of goods, (and especially through the mediascapes, as advertising, that accompany them) in a sign, and in the sense of a simulacrum that only asymptotically approaches the shape of a real social agent, both in the sense that the consumer fetishization masks what is actually the place of action, namely the producer and many powers that constitute the production. Global advertising is the key technology that enables the worldwide spread of the idea, expressed in a creative and specific way to the different cultural contexts, of action of the consumer. These images of action are increasingly clear distortions of an advertising world so refined that the consumer is encouraged to persistently believe to be an actor, when in fact it is at best a chooser” (Appadurai, 2001, pp. 63-64)

Social sciences have historically found themselves to oscillate between visions of condemnation of the condition of the consumer and visions, such as those described by Sassatelli, that focus instead on self-determination and social action. Contemporary anthropology is certainly more in favor of this second perspective, focusing its attention on the consumer's point of view as the privileged social actor of Western societies. Not a passive person subjected to market forces but an active subject who works for de-commodified goods and the social reality (Miller, 1987). Its action is not just limited to the selection of goods and self-expression, albeit with communicative value, but may also invest the same production processes either implicitly or explicitly and directly, as in case of critical consumption. Just as, in Bauman, conviviality is a possible motivation for the de-commodification of relationships between individuals. In the more critical view of Appadurai, the consumer, though seen as a selector set in a deterritorialized flow that move people, capital, ideas, and although limited in its action by power imbalances inherent to the relations of production in the global market, just from that contact between the individual and global flows, he operates continuously to retry re-territorialization. Summing up, we can define the act of consumption as a practical act, in which social actors are called to the task of producing their own subjectivity, as a difference from the goods, but paradoxically using them. In this established social ties and

communicative actions, the consumer work for de-commodify goods and relations between individuals, within global flows and production dynamics which must necessarily negotiate, endorsing, or sometimes coming into conflict with them.

Once I'll define the status of the contemporary consumer and the characteristic of the "consumer society", in this text and on this basis I mean to:

- analyze individual and collective practices of consumption, and the meanings that social actors gave them;
- bridge the gap between consumption process and production process in order to highlight some of the most problematic consequences of the global market, which usually remain in the shade during the acts of daily consumption;
- explore possibilities for criticism of the current system of production-consumption, implicit in the conducts and in the imagination of the subjects presented in the ethnographic work, investigate the possibilities that instead may tend to endorse such a system;
- introduce food consumption as a possible field of action of social change.

1.2 Global implications of acts of consumption according to an ecological perspective

To address these global issues that are usually hidden, by the distance between production and consumption, it is necessary, in my opinion, to adopt an ecological perspective. In this perspective, the capitalist model that has expanded around the globe through the free market, now shows its limits, whether social, political, or environmental. In 1970, anthropologist and biologist Gregory Bateson, one of the founders of a systemic thinking, shifts its focus from the study of cultures in what for him was a wider, comprehensive and urgent issue, that identifies in the *ecological crisis*. With this concept he adopts a critical perspective of modernity as a whole, as explains sociologist Rocco De Biasi in his essay on Bateson's work:

"The erroneous assumptions of Western rationalism are identified as a source of danger to the survival of the human species and the entire planetary ecology. While philosophies which arose with the development of modern civilization were accompanied by an optimism that is often pointed to the binary fixed for the course of the world, the rise of environmental awareness is an element instead of breaking with the tradition of modern thought, with its tones triumphalistic and

his conception of the relationship with nature. " (De Biasi, 2007, pp. 97-98)

Bateson identifies the reasons for the ecological crisis in the combined action of technological progress, population growth, traditional but erroneous ideas of the relationship between mankind and nature. Today, such a crisis would come to a point that exceeds the capabilities of self-correction of natural ecosystems (De Biasi, 2007, pp. 99). From the seventies to present day, ecological thinking is something that apparently has entered the imagination of the mass and began to produce concrete action: environmental movements, more ecologically friendly individual actions, laws and control about environmental protection. Still we continue, as society, on the same development patterns that are destroying ecosystems, as explains Serge Latouche, a scholar renowned for his concept of *degrowth*. In his 2006 book, he explains that:

"The economy of growth as such, (defined as an economic system oriented, objectively and deliberately, toward the maximization of economic growth) arose well after the birth of the market economy of the early nineteenth century and has developed only after the Second World War. In practice, it has established when the West (through the U.S. President Truman) has launched the slogan and the objective of development [...]

It can be said that globalization, which marks the transition from a world with a market, to an economy and a market society without frontiers, represents the absolute triumph of the religion of growth. However, this kind of society is not sustainable because it exceeds the capacity that the planet is can withstand and must deal with the limitations and finiteness of the biosphere. Any argument or artifice to resolve this fact is insufficient or failing." (Latouche, 2006, pp. 25)

Opening his book, Latouche cites the philosopher Cornelius Castoriadis, which explains well what consequences applying an ecological perspective and a systemic analysis toward the contemporary capitalism may have:

"Ecology is subversive because it challenges the dominant capitalist imaginary. It challenges the fundamental assumption that our horizon is a continued increase in production and consumption. Ecology highlights the catastrophic impact of the capitalist logic on the natural environment and on the lives of human beings " (quoted in Latouche, 2006, pp. 7)

It is not only the environment that is threatened, but the threat extends to all the species belonging to the biosphere, including humans. In humans, it becomes a social and political problem. Bauman

defines capitalism as a parasitic system that exploits people and natural resources and creates conditions of social inequality, as never before in history, between northern and southern countries. And, in any given country, creates disparities between unimaginable rich minorities and under poverty line masses. Or, if one is lucky, as a middle class, impoverishing more and more, after the global economic crisis, with the obligation of the consumption and of the precarious life.

1.3 Anthropology of food consumption and ecological perspective

We started from food consumption to arrive at ecological and economic theories critical of the social development model. In this text, in fact, I attempt to combine some of the theoretical principles typical of anthropology of consumption with an ecological perspective, to hopefully allow us to grasp the relationship between the dominant development model, the environment, and social relations woven by consumption habits, in particular, habits of food consumption.

But why focus on these critical perspectives through the theme of food? What I would like to point out through the analysis of food consumption, is the idea of a necessary relationship between global and local level of any phenomenon. The theme of food, in my opinion, can well express this implication, just for the fact that food is a basic fundamental need we cannot do without. The idea, as already stated, is that since we live in a global society, the problems of the world, which appear to be very distant from our own direct experience, are actually implicit in everything we do in our daily lives. Therefore, if eating is an unavoidable biological necessity, at the same time is also a social and cultural fact, based on such global relations. In the global society, where individuals, groups and different cultural meanings, interact at different levels, food as unavoidable fact can show precisely how these interactions are inevitable and are implicit even in the daily act of eating. It is in this daily practical action that we interact with the social, cultural, political and economic factors that operate on much larger scales. In this way that I mean to link theory with practice: placing real consumption practices of a particular group of people within the wider context in which they occur, and relating them to critical theories. Food is a basic need that human communities satisfy in different ways, depending on historical, cultural and environmental factors. If the need for food is absolute, the ways this need is satisfied are relative and we can start from the study of these modes to study the dynamics of the wider society.

Today we know too little of the food we consume: the global market has made available a multitude of products, but often we do not know the origin of these, how they were produced,

where, by whom, if they have been produced in an ethical manner or have caused exploitation or environmental damage. We do not know the real cost to the planet of what we consume and price tags and the labels often hide it, instead of showing it. This ignorance of the origin of products that arrive in our homes is a direct expression, as mentioned, of the consumer society, which is based, as we said, on the separation between the moment of production and that of consumption, and on the concealment of production processes, often located in various parts of the planet. Starting from our tables, from what we find out, and using the tools of social research, we can try to bridge this gap between production and consumption and gain awareness about these issues. If it is true, as claimed by some², that *we are what we eat*, how we can be able to know what we are if we don't even have idea of the provenance of what we eat? On the one hand then, attention to consumption may put emphasis on different meanings people attribute to food and practices connected with these meanings; on communication and social distinctions brought by food; can reveal contradictions between ideas and practices; can underline eating habits and health implications for individuals and populations. On the other hand, to go back to the mechanisms of production and consumption can tell us a lot about, for instance, issues related to industrialization of agricultural or existing alternative models; environmental problems; inequalities in the distribution of food and farm incomes; development models that societies adopt and the limits of these models. This is possible precisely because the habits analyzed in a limited context are part of larger systems, today more and more integrated into global capitalist economy, in different moments of production, distribution and consumption.

1.4 Methodology and purpose of the ethnographic investigation

Starting from these premises, the ethnographic part of this work is based on an experimental educational project: an attempt at applied anthropology in schools, proposing an intervention to promote food education, to fill the gap between production and consumption we've talked about. The purpose of this project was to use the tools of anthropology to propose a participatory discussion about what we eat, eating habits we take and the implications for health, environment and society; All this, in an attempt to foster a greater awareness of the possibilities of social change resulting from our actions of consumption. For the purpose of this ethnographic work I tried to describe the type of diet of the participants in the project, their food consumption habits, the

² L. Feuerbach, 1862.

meanings that they attribute to these practices and to certain foods in the diet. I have also tried to identify and underline some recurring themes in the participants' narrations and place them in a broader context for my anthropological investigation. These are the topics deemed most important and heartfelt by the participants themselves. Topics on which most attention and mutual interest was given in the interaction of ethnographic work, they concern in particular:

- the diet-health relationship and the relationship between food and emotional sphere;
- conviviality and pleasure of food;
- attention to local food production.

In addition, through a series of interviews outside of this project, I tried to broaden the analysis according to a diachronic perspective, thus situating the eating habits in a broader historical context and trying to perceive elements of continuity and discontinuity in the narrations. Subsequently, over the level of ethnographic work, I have attempted to study the changes in the Italian diet since the sixties to the present day, a period corresponding with the opening of national markets to global flows. I tried to define the historical models for these changes, the implications on other areas of the reality and the identification of the aforementioned current global issues. Finally, I tried to identify if, in the collected narrations, there might be a possibility for implicit criticism of the present system of production-consumption, or otherwise, if elements that favor the reproduction of such a system were present. This was done attempting not to limit the critical element to my personal opinion, but by searching it in the social imaginary and practices of the participants in the ethnographic project here presented, or at least, in the interaction, on the field, between the ethnographer and social actors.

2. Ethnographic work, first part (School project)

2.1 The educational intervention in school and participated ethnography

In this chapter, I want to describe the project done in school, on which is based the present work; present the data collected and the methods used; introduce and interpret the meanings expressed by

students about certain topics, which will be put in the following chapters, within a broader context. This project took place in the city where I reside, Alcamo, a city in the north-west of Sicily, about forty-five thousand inhabitants, in the center of the Gulf of Castellammare. Here, in the months of February and April of 2014, I had the opportunity to do the field study, with a fourth year high school class, precisely at a Human Science High School of the city. The project was proposed in this school and it was made entirely by me, with the availability and collaboration of two teachers: Mrs Vincenza Biundo, teacher of biology, and Mrs Vincenza Filippi, teacher of human sciences (psychology, sociology, anthropology and pedagogy). Within the limits of their available time, they allowed me to give lectures in a fully autonomous way, dealing with issues that I considered most suitable. Officially, I was allowed to enter and work in the school, with the consent of the principal, as an outside expert with a degree in anthropological sciences, one of the subjects of study in this school. The project was carried out in 4 sessions of two hours each and most of the preliminary meetings were with the teachers. The goal of this project was twofold: to raise awareness among young people on issues of critical consumption and a healthy diet and at the same time to study the eating habits of pupils in the class in order to relate these habits with the more general issues that have been proposed. This dual purpose was functional even for my ethnographic work for this thesis. The students were aware of it and were explicitly invited to participate this thesis' work was then configured both as an educational intervention toward them, and as a study in participative way. The work in class can therefore be split into two parts:

- a theoretical part in which were proposed issues concerning production and consumption in our society;
- a practical participation concerning the study of the eating habits of the students, to be related to theoretical issues, with a view to greater awareness of what we eat and about the general implications of our consumption choices.

These two aspects of the educational intervention were presented alternately, during class, in a way to involve more students, avoiding long exposures to a theoretical side. The study of the class' eating habits has emerged in a participatory manner and the implications of more general anthropological themes proposed by me have been the subject of discussion. More generally, with this work I tried to use the research tools of cultural anthropology, as a mean for participatory study of a given reality: food and our eating system were presented as a "total social fact", to analyze

various other aspects of the daily life of every individual and the reality in which we live, highlighting the contradictions, limits, and the most urgent problems of the global society. The general aim was to stimulate constructive criticism about certain aspects of our habits that may involve, therefore the idea of a possible change. Regarding the ethnographic part, I proceeded with a detailed study of the eating habits of the students, through questionnaires, open-end written questions, compiling lists of foods consumed in the family, detailed types of foods and quantities. This study was analyzed and discussed by me in the classroom with the students themselves, both to their greater awareness of the issues of food and, the purpose of my study, in the aspects considered most relevant. I have also tried to highlight the most important cultural meanings expressed by the students in regard to most consumed foods, - E.G., pasta, meat, etc.. - and habits of the consumer (e.g. Conviviality, pleasure of the table, etc.), trying to problematize together such meanings.

2.2 Theoretical part of the educational work

The theoretical part of the work with the students, on the other hand, is based on my introduction, through slides and discussions, on the major current issues implicated by our system of power, relative to the issues of health, ecology and social, economic, political and cultural processes. Topics we discussed about were:

- in the first lesson, as requested by one of the teachers, we talked in general of some themes of cultural anthropology, in fact this is, as mentioned, a subject studied in that school. We also presented some typical perspectives of medical anthropology, anthropology of consumption and economic anthropology. After a brief historical analysis on the birth of anthropology as a science in various countries - Italy, France, England, the United States - and some references to visual anthropology, we briefly discuss the concept of culture, fundamentals of ethnographic work, identity-otherness, ethnocentrism and cultural relativism, local-global, limits and possibilities of anthropological discourse, in reference to the concepts of comparison, translation between cultures, and ability to understand anthropology as a science criticizing reality.
- in the second lesson, together with the biology teacher, we discussed the following topics:

fundamentals of human nutrition; bio-cultural model related to power systems; comparison between the contemporary Western diet and the Paleolithic diet with references to the birth of agriculture; changes underlying industrial agriculture and food industry. Major health issues related to contemporary Western food were taken in consideration, such as the phenomenon of obesity according to an evolutionary perspective, food intolerances and diseases of affluence.

- In the third and fourth lessons we finally examined in a more detailed way the environmental and socio-political issues related to our power system: from the concept of the ecological footprint, to the limits of agriculture and livestock industry; from what is meant by consumer society to some global issues relating to agriculture on a large scale such as land grabbing and exploitation of agricultural resources in poor countries. Finally we talked about possible alternatives to this dominant model of power as means of social demands, natural farming, tools, critical consumption and, in general, examples of alternative production-consumption that exist in various contexts, were taken in consideration.

2.3 Practical part of the educational work

The question I asked myself and the students at the beginning of this work was: what are our eating habits and how they relate to other aspects of society and of our living individual?

To answer the first part of the questions, what are our eating habits, I have collected information considered through a series of questionnaires, some carried out directly in the classroom, some by each student at home, analyzing their typical daily routines. Subsequently, we attempted to relate these habits with the proposed global issues, focusing on the limitations found in the dominant development model and the possibility of critique and change. To answer the second part of the habits I have included this analysis in a more limited context, within the global society, that is represented by this habits.

2.4 Methods of data collection

Since the work in class was, as mentioned, an educational work, I didn't have the chance to

interview all participating students individually, for obvious time reasons. So the analysis of dietary habits was carried out in a participatory way, giving close-ended questions on consumption habits of each individual and family and open-ended questions on the same subject and perceptions relating to certain foods and habits. Another method used was a compilation of personal assessments of the amount of weekly food consumption, relative to a detailed list of foods proposals; the compilation of a list of foods eaten in a single day, divided among meals and also notes on the debates proposed at the meeting and brainstorming about some particular issues; were implied; a short final paper on the issues proposed in the project and personal ideas about what was discussed and about the theme of food in general. The data collected through the methods listed, were then cross-checked against each other in order to identify recurring themes and significant contradictions shown to be of special importance for the students.

2.5 Analysis of the data collected in relation to diet and eating habits

I started the analysis by finding out that more than half of the students in the class said to be a little or no careful about their food consumption choices, only the remaining subjects state to put an emphasis on food choices (8 of 22); almost no one declares to follow a special diet. Under these two aspects, within the limits of the members of the class, one may notice more attention to diet and food choices by males rather than females: this may be due to the fact that some of the male students say they play sports regularly and they pay more attention to food for this reason. Nevertheless, almost all declare that they consider important the diet-health relationship, despite the detailed attention to what is consumed is a priority only in a few cases. The average number of daily meals is 4: breakfast, lunch, snack and dinner. Almost always, those meals are eaten at home and rarely eat outside the house, for example, in the weekend. A student notes this is also due to the current economic crisis and consequent reduced availability of money. Also regarding family habits, the parents provide necessary food often cooked at home using almost always fresh products. Students expressed little confidence about the quality of big brand's packaged products and even less about lesser known brands. Some of them claim to buy locally produced food, but in class discussions we noticed that it is not always easy to distinguish between imported food and locally produced one during shopping, we underlined this fact with the necessary attention. In general, fresh food, such as vegetables and fruit, not packaged, is perceived as a local product, even if it's

not always the case. Fresh goods, cooked at home, seems to be favored. Despite this preference and of trust in packaged products, however, the latter are present in the diet, even if in moderate amounts, especially at breakfast and snack. Not everyone consume them and those who don't eat more fruit, dairy or bakery products. Regarding grocery shopping habits, many students claim that their parents buy in supermarkets, without paying particular attention to differentiate between hard-discount shops and well-known chains, yet someone who claims to explicitly avoid hard-discount shops. The organic sector is instead a "niche", only 3 subjects say they usually buy certified organic products and others buy these on rare occasions. There is also the custom to buy some products from fruits and vegetables retailers and butchers' shops. About direct production of food, some students claim to produce in their family part of the food that they consume: some make pasta, bread or pizza at home, from time to time. Someone else produces, in family-owned land, olive oil, fruit, vegetables, and greens. Even tomato sauce to store for the year is often produced within the family. About the amount of food consumed at home, the majority of students (15 of 22) believes that it is disproportionate to the actual need. One interesting contradiction was the perception of answerers about the variety of different foods eaten, often expressing pleasure for tasting different kinds of food on any given occasion. However, the analysis of what is actually present on the students' tables and class discussions on this point, showed little variety of foods, and almost no curiosity about different foods. It seems that sustenance is fundamentally based on a limited group of foods, with some occasional exceptions. Of course, it is a more varied diet than that of sixty years ago, yet consumption habits greatly restrict this potential range. Almost all the students, towards the proposed criteria of taste/flavor, price and availability³, gave taste as what directs their individual consumption choices. Diet in the time of abundance apparently follows the criteria of individual taste: as we shall see later, however, this taste is strongly connected to local tradition and certain ideas about consumed foods. But what exactly are the consumed foods? Regarding what is actually on the tables of families of the interviewed, I tried to identify which foods are consumed more and which ones less, in a list I have proposed: some resulted in a constant presence, while others make only fleeting appearances. About this I also tried to distinguish which of these foods are more widely consumed and which ones differ strongly between those who habitually and who rarely eat them. At first place, most consumed food noted by the students on average there is olive oil: almost all use it daily, as a seasoning and as a base for cooking. Nothing is more typical in a Mediterranean country. Afterwards, we have, again without surprises, bread and pasta, consumed daily by almost everyone (only 3-4 out of 22 say they consume smaller quantities). Regarding bread

³ We mean here availability as what is easier to find, e.g, foods located in the house.

and pasta I have tried to distinguish between whole wheat and not, and almost anyone said to consume whole wheat bread and pasta. Other foods consumed daily on average are greens that I have distinguished in the questionnaires in: vegetables, legumes and tubers. In general they are mostly used to accompany (pasta and meat), but sometimes also as a stand-alone, this is especially true for stews or soups (on average 5 times per week). This average image would seem to attest a substantial vegetable consumption: actually, almost every day. On this point we can see clear distinctions between those who consume vegetables on an everyday base and believe they are a staple food, and those who do not consume this kind of food or at least rarely, as a side dish. Those who consume fewer vegetables tend to consume more meat and consider it a staple food. In general, red meat consumption is not high, one and a half times a week, on average, while white meat about 2 and a half times a week. In total meat seems to be present on tables about 4 times a week. As mentioned, however, in parallel with vegetables, we must distinguish those who eat meat every day from those who rarely eat it. Only 4 out of 22 students reported eating red meat more than twice a week, along with consumption of white meat which is also above average, claiming to consume this food daily or almost. At the other extreme there are also 4 students out of 22 almost never do not consume meat. Between these extremes, to more than half of the class, this food is present on the table about 3 times a week. Another food daily with a daily presence is the fruit, often eaten after meals or as a snack, on average of 5.5 times per week, with rare exceptions (only 3 out of 22 say they consume much less). Another food that fluctuates a lot between those who use it daily and who does not use it at all or rarely is milk, on the tables, on average, 3 ½ times a week. The same goes for dairy products, there are those who eat them daily (few) and those who eat them occasionally, mostly grated to season pasta. Though swinging between who use very little of it and those who use it a lot, yogurt is still a notable presence, appearing on the tables, on average, more than 4 times a week. Fish and eggs are in general less consumed foods, respectively, the first on average 2 times in week and the latter less than once and half per week. Pizza, although a loved and appreciated food, is consumed on average one and a half time in a week and it is, mainly, consumed outside the house on the weekends. Alcoholic beverages, wine and beer, are also usually consumed, on average, 1 time per week outside the house. Pre-packaged snacks, have an average consumption of almost 3 times a week, but oscillating between those who eat them almost every day and those who never do. Amongst foods found little in the diet of the interviewed, we find butter, rarely employed in substitution of olive oil and rice, consumed some time in replacement of the pasta. What appears to be almost entirely absent are cereals different from wheat and rice (one person says to consume a

little more usually other types of cereals, grains), as well as almost absent is the consumption of seeds and nuts. Even honey and chocolate are not highly consumed, while on average once a week consumption of homemade desserts is found. About sweetened carbonated beverages the average consumption is 1 and a half times a week. Here too, relevant disparities in consumption are found between those few who drink them every day and others who say that rarely or never consume them, 2 times a week is the average consumption of fruit juice, even though they are alternatively distributed and only in some cases it is homemade fruit juice or at least fresh.

In general, therefore, on the basis of the analyzed questionnaires, the basic foods in the diet are: olive oil, bread, pasta, fruit, vegetables, meat; where the first four are often found, while vegetables and meat, have different peaks depending on the families. These foods are also those considered most important, in fact pasta and meat, for example, have been pointed by many to be favorite and essential foods, in addition to being the main courses. Some have indicated fruits and vegetables as basic foods for a healthy diet, while someone else instead states that for a balanced diet both plant and animal foods are necessary. Olive oil is instead a case on its own, less explicitly considered perhaps because it is a constant presence so as to be taken for granted. Apparently a diet based on these foods does not seem far from the typical Mediterranean diet as it was typed, apart from a bit excessive consumption of meat. This analysis, however, reflects what students, say on average about their regular consumes. In a more detailed exam, as already mentioned, we have to take into account and distinguish between those who consume less meat and more fruits and vegetables and who do exactly the opposite. In the first case we get closer to the ideal Mediterranean diet, in the second case we deviate significantly from it. Also crossing these data with those related to the list of what is consumed in a single day, we can see some inconsistencies. As noted, a certain amount of pre-industrial products, appears to be present on the table, including: biscuits, sweets and snacks, juices, sodas or sweetened drinks, eaten mostly for breakfast or snack. Only a few declare strongly to avoid precisely all these kinds of products, while others consider them an integration for main meals. Sandwiches with charcutry, french-fries, slices of pizza, typical bar snacks, complete the range of what is consumed mostly outside the house, even if an occasional consumption is declared. All these foods represent a further integration in the diet of flour, fat and additives.

In summary, only some of the students seemed more to avoid industrial products, especially if bought in hard-discount stores, and to rarely consume meat preferring products vegetal products, interpreting fruits and vegetables as a synonym for health. In other cases, there is the distinction, already referred, among families in which less meat is rather consumed and more vegetables and

families where the opposite is true. Although in a reduced quantity, meat appears to be present in all families. In most cases, industrial products supplement the diet, filling empty spaces left by the main meals eaten at lunch or dinner. Pasta and bread, as seen, are always present (with rare exceptions). Pasta is almost always consumed at lunch, and represents for many the main dish. It is generally seasoned with vegetables, homemade sauces or in some cases, industrial sauces. Meat instead is often the main meal in the evening, while in some cases for lunch there are meals with different courses ranging from pasta to meat, to vegetables and desserts. In these cases, at dinner what's left from lunch is served. Pasta, in general, as well as being always present, for many is the favorite and essential food.

Here are some quotes to better understand the perceptions of some of the students about foods to which they give greater importance, for example, answering the question "what food would you never give up?"

"I would never give up fruit and vegetables in general because I know they are good for me and I adapt to what my body needs. For example, if nature produces certain fruit in the winter it means that those fruits have the vitamins that my body needs ... "

"I would never give up the primary foods such as meat and vegetables, because they are fundamental to health. And chocolate, because it is good and I often use it to gain some energy. And pasta, because I like it and is equally indispensable. "

"I would never give up pasta because I really like it and I'd never give up fruit to complete my meal"

"I would never give up pasta because it is the only food that satisfies my hunger and because I like the taste of different types of pasta"

"I would never give up fruit and all kinds of pasta, especially at lunch, because carbohydrates satisfy my physiological need, hunger. I consider fruit essential not only because it is delicious but also for the benefits the body receives. "

"I would never give to pasta because I like it and I think a meal is not complete without pasta, either lunch or dinner."

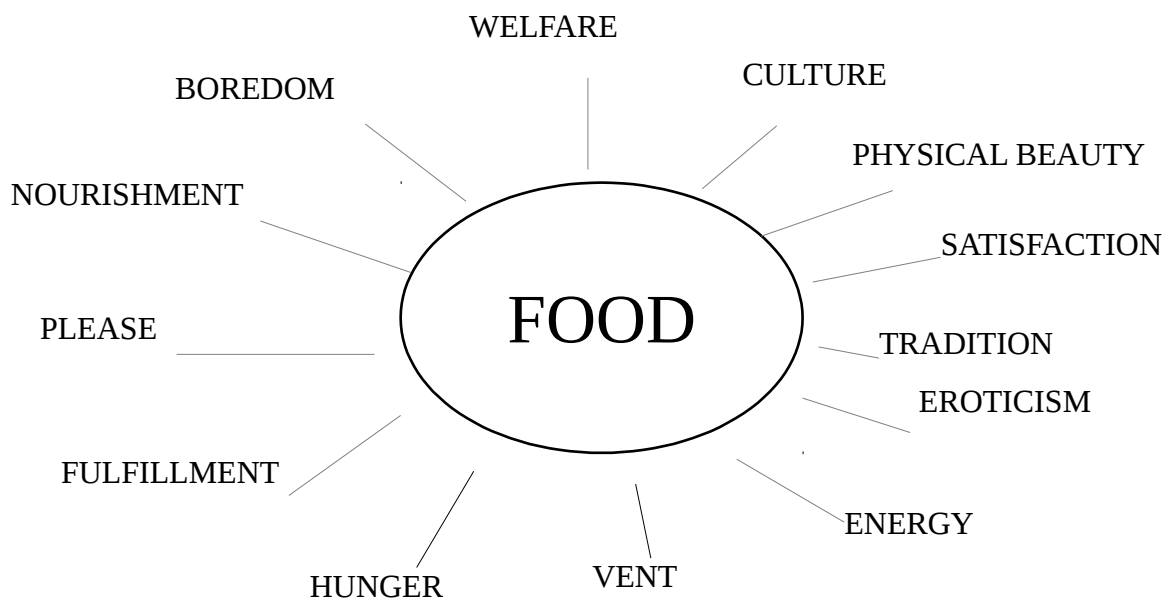
"I would never give up fruit because I eat a lot during the day and pizza because I like it so much that I could

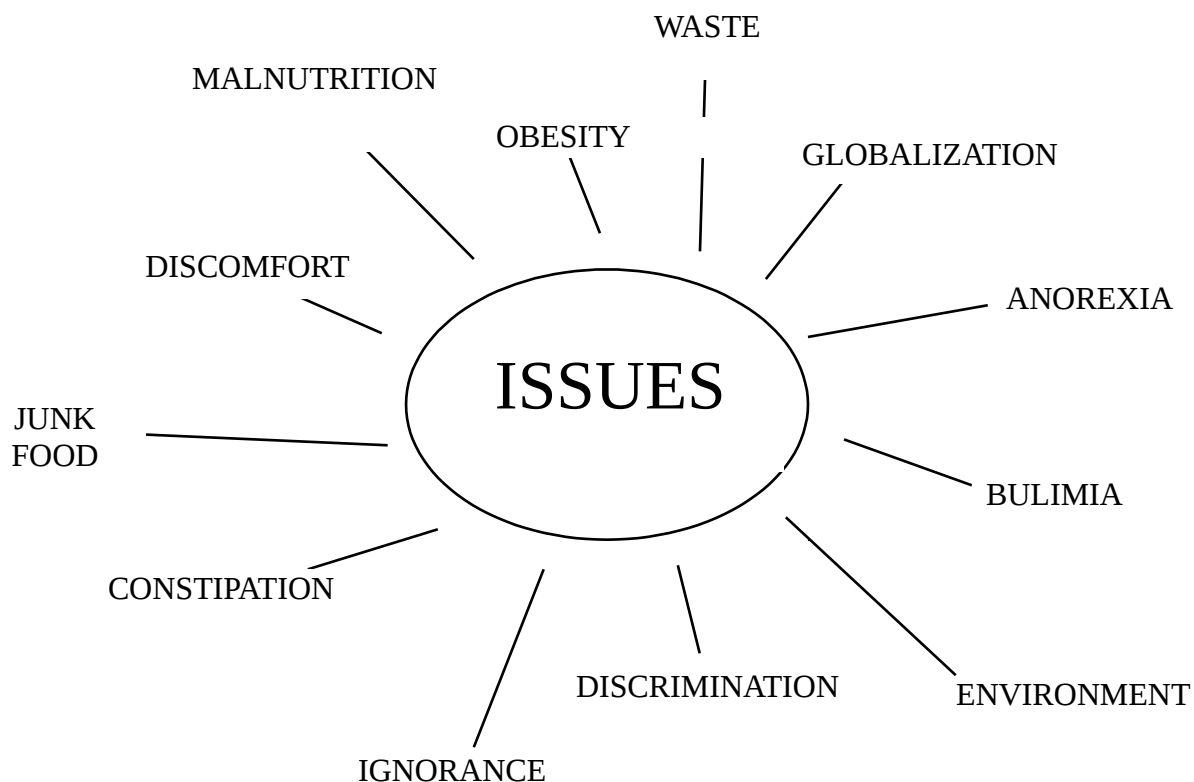
eat it every day.

In a brief summary: the collected data points therefore to the most consumed foods as: olive oil, fruit, bread, pasta, vegetables, meat. Those which compose the main meals are: pasta, meat, vegetables. These meals are mostly prepared and consumed at home, in the family. Pasta and bread being always present. Industrial products integrate the main meals in the spots left by the former, often for breakfast or as a snack. About the styles of nutrition, we can see in these two extremes a difference between those who consume less meat and more vegetables and prevent or restrict industrial products and those who consume more meat, less fruit and vegetables and more industrial products. Between these extremes the majority of students gives equal importance both to vegetable and to meat, which is consumed on average three times a week.

2.6 Analysis of data about meanings related to food

The first useful moment, to investigate the apparent meanings that the students of the class attributed to food and related issues, was that of a collective brainstorming. This work has been helpful to identify, together with the students, some of the issues considered most relevant, to achieve a deeper analysis at the end of a subsequent study. These are the results:





We can group by categories these meanings: a first group of mental associations (food, energy, contentment, pleasure, eroticism, physical beauty, well-being) focuses on food in its relationship with the corporeal, both in its purely biological aspect and in its appearance of representation of the body, that is the image that we have of our body and we want to convey; it also focuses on the pure pleasure of eating and on the idea of eroticism. A second group of meanings, however, (boredom, release), focuses on negative emotions that we bind to food. Finally, there is also a clear idea of food as an expression of a particular culture and tradition. These "surface" meanings were then traced widely in the course of working with the students and I have tried, as we shall see, to emphasize the most frequent ones focusing on them thoroughly. About food related issues, we can also find here some peculiarities: one related to eating disorders; economic issues relating to money and waste; social issues (malnutrition, discrimination, globalization); issues related to the environment. Among these, the students were more attentive and already sensitized to environmental issues and those related to individual health and eating disorders: it seems less the attention and the awareness towards social issues. Even in this case, those general and collective

meanings were then explored deeper through class discussion on the results and, I was able to compare these meanings with the ideas expressed through the questionnaires administered individually to each student. In this way, they were invited to participate actively, not only in the educational project addressed to them, but also to my personal research project. I was able to locate a variety of topics related to food that students consider important, from their point of view and in their daily lives. These themes were then replicated in a subsequent meeting, to be problematized and to get more feedback (within the limits of the possibilities of time allowed by the school). In particular, I was able to identify four general themes that students seem to give particular importance to:

- the diet-health relationship;
- the relationship between food and the psychological and emotional sphere;
- food as conviviality, union, sharing, coupled with pleasures of the table;
- attention to local economy and distrust of the food industry, also related to attention to the environment.

These themes, which I will treat here briefly in reference to the students' statements, will be analyzed more thoroughly in the following chapters, placing them in the context of the consumer society, in order to see if there may be attempts of implicit criticism against the society or elements that, again by implication, endorse it. For now I will try to focus only on the meanings that students gave as they were identified during the various meetings here I report some excerpts:

"I think that there are significant correlations between how and what we eat and our psyche. In general, I know that, for example, the preference for sweets distinguishes depressed people, who perhaps are thus trying to alleviate their melancholy ... it has happened to me a few times to be sad and release these feelings by eating sweet-junk foods like Nutella. However, I am a girl who does not eat much. For me eating, in addition to being an act of biological necessity, is also an act of sharing with friends. "

"I personally am very glutton and I cannot deny the fact that often get away with some chocolate or a few packets of chips, but mainly I eat healthy foods such as meat, fish, although very little, and vegetables. I eat according to appetite but I eat even when I am down, when I'm nervous food is like a "refuge." Except on these occasions I try to eat as well as possible because the "not eating healthy," could cause many health problems especially in the future. "

"For me food is related to survival, but most importantly it is a time of sharing and conviviality, as I believe one of the good times is to share a good healthy and nutritious meal in good company"

"Without doubt food is a biological necessity of which our body can't be deprived, but at the same time it puts ourselves in situations of coexistence and sharing, thanks also to the fun that everyone attributes to it. In addition, food can be compared to a medicine, according to the use made of it. Positive when used in a genuine and rational way, negative in the opposite case. "

"I think food, as well as being essential for the survival, is important in the social life of an individual. It can be a time of comfort, sharing, fun. For instance, on Sundays, lunch becomes for me a time of sharing, unity and fun. "

"I personally am a great gourmand and gourmet. I eat according to appetite and already a bit of time I follow a diet that will allow me to better manage daily life. I always consume healthy foods such as meat, fish and vegetables; sometimes I fall into greed and consume foods like chocolate or potato chips in a bag in company of other people, when I watch a movie or when I'm sad. When you are down, however, food becomes a way to console myself. It is normal to seek refuge in something when you are hurt and I find it in food as someone else can find it crying or just doing sports. On the contrary, it also happens that I refuse to eat out of nervousness because I have no appetite and of course this upsets the body. But, except these moments, I always try to be careful with my diet because I am fully aware that it is worth my health of tomorrow. "

"In my life, food, in addition to being an act of survival, it is a way to let go of myself, I really like to eat, taste new foods, compare my food with those of other cultures. I live in a very little village where most of the inhabitants are farmers and often cook fresh food, freshly picked. Personally I have a pretty healthy diet, but it also happens that I eat in fast-food, obviously not abusing it."

"From a personal point of view, the consumption of food is tied to emotions, is a relief, a refuge where you go when you feel weak, a study partner or a hobby, nothing to do with his real nutritional value. "

"What I eat has implications on the local and global economies as eating more locally sourced produce, which I personally rather because I know exactly where goods come from and their methods of production, I try to strengthen our local economy and then try to bring wealth, in my small, in my territory .. "

"If I eat something that I know in the grocery store that takes the food km 0 in the area where I live, I can meanwhile promote the enrichment of the country and not take my money abroad ..."

Let's explore these deeper meanings and these issues. From the data collected, the diet-health relationship emerges as one of the key issues more "felt" by the students. Something they place particular attention. Yet at some point this attention appears to be partly contradictory: as reported at the beginning of the chapter, in fact, minority of students say they are particularly sensitive to their choices of food consumption and almost no one claims to follow a specific diet. The exception are the guys who play sports and a girl who claims to follow a diet that allows you to "better manage" his daily life, but at the same time define themselves very "greedy". This attention to food and human health opposed to this lack of attention to choices in food consumption can be explained, in part, by the fact that parents do the shopping for the family and to take the task of choosing what is consumed. And this is even truer if we consider the data on eating outside the house and that in many cases all main meals are eaten within the family. Until the family "nest" is not left, the responsibility of food choice falls mostly on the parents. Yet the focus on health seems to be present and this is expressed by each student. But how does it occur? In that way are we careful about our health through food? We tried to answer these questions considering, first of all, what is consumed and what is avoided. There are some foods that are of particular importance, considered healthy and someone defines them as favorites: fruit, vegetables, meat and pasta, to view it more as what brings energy and satiety. These, as we have seen, are also the most consumed foods. On the other hand there are a number of foods deemed unhealthy in themselves or not healthy if you overdo it. Individual attention to health is expressed in consuming these foods considered healthy, and trying to balance them without excess. Attention it is also expressed by limiting foods considered harmful, in the control of junk food consumption and by resisting the temptation that comes with it. We refer here mainly to desserts and industrial products. The latter are not trusted but if trusted they are used in certain circumstances: outside the main meals, for example; outside the house; when you are with friends; when you experience emotional distress. Being generally perceived as unhealthy there are forms of self-control sought after in the way these products are consumed. Same goes for sweet and sugary foods in general: limit your intake, try not to overdo it. "I am fully aware that it is worth my health tomorrow," is one of the reasons for this self-control; being competitive in sports, can be another motivation. Not to mention the association between food and physical beauty. In the face of emotional or psychological difficulty, however, that self-control tends to fade, and it was these products in particular become an relief and a consolation, as evidenced by many of the witnesses

reported. As students, except for a few cases, they say not to worry excessively about their choices of food consumption, the health condition that is pursued, in relationship with food, is not determined so much by the medical and scientific information in this regard, it moves from a more general sense of mental well-being with a focus on the physical body and also on individual beauty. This is accompanied by ideals of slimness and a body care, moved by both aesthetic and functional reasons. On the opposite direction a poor diet is perceived as a way to a poor health condition, hence aesthetical condition also is felt to decline. Because of this self-control is felt as important. Being hurt emotionally and failing to achieve food self-control can therefore lead to eating disorders, not surprisingly a common fact among the youth of industrialized societies. Without getting into pathological conditions, out of the topics of this paper, the relationship between the food and the emotional and psychological individual is, in fact, strongly emphasized by almost all pupils in class. There is a link between food, body and emotions that seem to be characterized by a mutual control: being able to control what you eat is a symptom of emotional well-being; know how to control their emotions is reflected in the physical well-being. Yielding to emotion, despair, sadness, nervousness, boredom, and letting off on "unhealthy" food, in an excessive way, is something bad for the same individual's physical sphere. It also hurts individual self-esteem, because it can be seen as a failure. But it is also something that you grant yourself and you let go, occasionally. Even just for the pleasure of transgressing and give in to such self-control or just for the pleasure of sweet taste.

What is beneficial, what is harmful and the concept itself of 'excess' are obviously culturally determined. In this case, there are, as we have seen, those who consider most important and healthy fruits and vegetables, those who think that meat is essential, and those who think that they are to balance all of these foods. Thanks to the spread of theories of nutrition about health benefits of fruit, this has now become, in general, a synonym for health and this idea seems well established among pupils in the class, according to reports: "I know it's good and I adapt what needs my body", says one student, while another "I consider fruit essential not only because it is delicious but also for the benefits that receive the body". Mostly it is consumed at the end of the main meals and at snack time, and in some cases, as we have seen, is consumed almost daily. Even vegetable is synonymous with health, but in reality, the analysis of dietary habits, for many appears to be a simple pasta sauce or a side dish of meat, and some consume daily as a main dish. As stated by one of the students: "I would never give up the primary foods such as meat and vegetables, because they are essential for health". There are many who believe in fact that meat is a necessary "primary food", particularly

nutrient. Although today any nutritionists will discourage excessive consumption, the desire of meat still seems pretty strong, probably a legacy of the previous decades, when it was still considered a luxury, a highly prized food. The other primary food, even more fundamental, is pasta. On this food, I proposed a brainstorm and a dedicated research in depth. Sicily plays a particularly important role in the history of pasta: it is attested already in the Middle Ages as the first center for production of dry pasta to trade in the Mediterranean. So it's a food whose particular history is inextricably linked to the history of the place where their search is set. The origins of the current consumption, however, are not so old, and only from the unification of Italy pasta takes the role of a main dish it has today. Returning to the considered context, we can explore a range of meanings that this food brings: students saw pasta as a food to "fill" themselves with, and an invaluable contribution to the volume of a meal, it satiates and gives energy. It is also seen as a versatile food, in the sense that it lends itself to be prepared with various seasonings and cooking methods in an infinity of combinations. It can satisfy different needs, for example, those who prefer to consume whole grains. It is a food that pleases even just for the taste, revealing how the taste is in line with the tradition, at least in this respect. "A meal is not complete without pasta", as we have seen from the statements of the students that I have previously reported, as well as another student, and it is not the only one, says that "It is the only food that satisfies my hunger". This, as we shall see, it is in perfect continuity with the previous generation, where pasta was the staple food on which was organized the entire family meal.

The third general topic considered particularly important by students is related to conviviality. In this sense, all the students pointed out that the moments of the day dedicated to food, as well as an obvious biological necessity, are moments of sociability, pleasure of the table, in conjunction with the family and with friends, to share. There is a pleasure with food and act of eating itself, and a pleasure to be together and share these delights with others. "Sharing a good, healthy and nutritious meal in good company", as a student says, is exactly the ideal of the table. Just as clear is the function of continuously strengthening relationships, both among friends within the family, as stated by another student of the class: "Sunday lunch becomes for me a time of sharing, unity and fun". In addition, although the culinary traditions are rather rooted, the interest and curiosity about otherness and diversity is expressed in the interest demonstrated by many, to new foods, such as for example a girl says: "...I like to eat a lot, trying new foods, compare my food with those of other cultures...". The food can be so much a vehicle of traditional habits as a possibility of openness and curiosity about the habits of others.

A final theme that emerged, in part already analyzed, is the declared distrust towards the food of industry, the packaged products and the multinational food industries ("I don't like them much..." said one of the boys). This attitude is accompanied by the preference for fresh, home-cooked, preferably local. It goes also to a general attention to environmental issues, for which the food industry seems to be perceived by a girl to be distant from nature. Also on this point, we can highlight an economic interest, since, as reported by some, the choice to buy local foods is linked to motivation "to promote the enrichment of the country", "do not take my money abroad", "fortify the local economy". Again, as far as can be detected in a class, there seems to be more attention to these economic issues from the male. So the male gender is more attentive to his choices of food consumption, as well as for reasons related to physical sports, but also for economic reasons. The girls in contrast, emphasize the relationship of food-emotional sphere. Although certainly such a relationship may also be important among boys, as well as girls can play sports and adapt their diet to such a requirement, as stated by the students in this class, in particular, the different importance shown towards one or the other of these arguments, would seem to trace the attitudes of traditional gender, with women which are more attentive to the emotional inner sphere and men to the physical and economic sphere.

In summary we can highlight an idea of well-being linked to "eating well" following two directives: a preference for what is usually considered healthy, nutritional and self-control in relation to what is considered harmful, but that under certain conditions it consumes (probably even more than what is stated and acknowledged). Diet seems to follow family traditions (eating pasta every day) and generic health claims. This is accompanied by pleasure for food for the table and for conviviality

3. Ethnographic work, second part (Interviews)

3.1 Historical contextualization of Interviews

To better understand the eating habits of students participating in the project, as these have been described, it is useful to begin to expand the social background in which they appear, even according to a diachronic perspective. Alcamo, as almost the entire southern Italy, was once a small town whose inhabitants were engaged in agriculture in droves. As a result of the changes that have occurred since World War II onwards, this situation is somewhat changed, and the community, like

the rest of Italy, opened to "modernity" and "progress." Today, despite the epochal changes, some of the city's economy is still based on agriculture. In fact Alcamo is one of the largest centers for the production of Sicilian wine, the white of Alcamo, as well as important is the production of olive oil and the production of a particular local variety of melon. Apart from these important agricultural production, the majority of the population is still active in the service sector. I would like to investigate here the phase shift between the peasant existing until after the Second World War and the emerging consumer society, starting from the analysis of the eating habits of who was a teenager in the 60s and 70s, the first generation born after the war, which has grown over the years of the so-called Italian "economic boom".

3.2 Interviews

Interview # 1

- Name?

Vincenza

- What year were you born?

1946

- What are the years we're talking about?

The time when I was a kid, late 50s, 60s

- I am studying the eating habits of a class of kids today, and at the same time I am interested in a comparison with the habits of 60 years ago. Can you talk about your memories of what you ate at that time? For example, there were already packaged products?

No, we prepared everything in the house, for example, today you go to the supermarket to buy sauce, tomatoes, and many other things ... at that time everything was homemade.

- Do you remember in what years you started to go to the supermarket?

When my children were young (late 70s) you could buy already a lot of pre-packaged things, canned meat, canned fruit ... they were already pre-packaged ... many things not only food but all everything, for example when my children were small, there were already those disposable diapers, whereas before there were those who were washed and re-used.

- So, can we say that the passage of time in which you have begun to buy packaged products was, in your memory, between the 60s and 70s?

Yes, actually even before there were some already pre-packaged ... but we didn't buy them in our house, I can tell you what we did at our house.

- Tell me about your home. What did you use to eat? What was a typical day, food wise.
So, at our house only my father worked every morning and he was in the countryside, in the evening when he'd come back, he took with him 'cavuliceddi' (local veggies), broccoli ... He took them from the country and pasta was seasoned with it, or he carried back beans and we prepared, cooked them, with pasta, or ate the beans with olive oil and onion cooked together with artichokes.
- Try to describe a typical day, from morning to night
In the morning we didn't have breakfast, we didn't all sit down together for breakfast, everyone got up on the basis of what he had to do and went out or helped into the house, we made bread in the house ... I got up early to go to school, my father would get up even earlier to go to the countryside, with his mule, 5 am or even earlier if he had to go in the fields far in the countryside.
- And then your father ate in the country?
At noon he ate in the country and then in the evening ate at home, in the morning he took the bread with ... what was there? I don't remember what he used ...
- Then, at lunch you were not all together?
No, in the evening we all ate together ...in the morning we didn't have lunch ... everyone ate lunch where he was ... when I came home from school, for example, I ate a little bit of bread, there were tomatoes, anchovies, french fries, so we ate these things at noon. In the evening, when my father returned from the fields, pasta was cooked and we ate together at the table, the main meal was in the evening.
- What time did you usually have dinner?
When my father returned from the country, according to season, in winter it gets dark earlier and he returned as soon as possible so we eat earlier, while in summer it was later and we ate together what he brought from the countryside. For example there were tomatoes, broccoli, green beans ... and we cooked what he brought with pasta.
- Was pasta homemade or did you bought it?
Pasta was bought, we made it just few times or we bought homemade pasta, it seemed a better thing when there was the homemade one.
- Did you eat pasta every day?
Yes, we ate pasta every day, in the evening, with what my father brought from the country, according to the seasons.
- Which other main dishes did you use? For example, soups, vegetables, other grains ...
No, not soups, my mother didn't cook soups, legumes, yes, but always with some pasta cooked to be put with them ... or even vegetables, always as an accompaniment ...
- Did you have first and second course?
No, not every day one ate first and second course, we ate pasta and baked bread in the morning ...

the bread was eaten during the day and in the evening, accompanying with the other things that there were ... baked beans, beans, tomatoes ...

- And meat, was it often eaten? How many times a week?

In my house, meat was often eaten, there was my sister who as a child was too skinny and my mother always bought meat ...

- What did your mother think about meat? Why did she buy it?

My mother thought that meat was better, that eating meat was better ... there was also a friend of my father who often slaughtered meat ... we ate meat often thanks to this friend, we bought it from him, he even gave us some little priced cuts that he couldn't sell in the store but that we ate at home, for example, we ate whatever flesh the head of animals had to offer, viscera, "sanguinazzu" (pig interior conducts filled with coagulated pig blood)...

- Did you eat meat everyday?

We ate meat on Sunday, or holiday for a few days but sometimes during the week, it was not rare in my family, they bought it often, but not every day ... almost always on Sunday, we ate pasta and then meat... sometimes even during the week.

- Why did your mother buy it so often?

Because my sister was too skinny and my mom would give her meat, eggs, every morning and she'd always bought the milk.

- And what about drinks?

Water and wine ... milk in the morning ...

- Coca Cola did not exist yet? Beer?

No, coke did not exist ... beer came after, it was something more of young people ... I remember we drank mostly water and wine

- Did you all drink wine? Was it drunk a lot?

No, only my father for the most part and not so often ..

- Finally, compared to when you were little, what are the biggest differences you notice with today's food?

In our house, we ate mostly things farmed directly by my father, bread was made at home, even if after the 70s we stopped making it at home and we also removed the oven from home. .. the sauce was home made, and we still make it, albeit with a different method ... in general, we ate well, we did not lack anything, ate more fruits and vegetables than now because my father brought them from the countryside , we ate more homegrown and in season products, we did not want anything more, I would not say that we were exceeding like nowadays in eating ... but almost, we ate natural things though, at least in my family.

Interview #2

- Name?

Vincenzo

- In what year were you born?

1956.

- What kind of work did your parents do?

My mother was a housewife and my father animal trader.

- Do you remember time in your youth within your birth family. What did you usually eat?

Bread and pasta. Pasta with tomato sauce, or with cauliflower. Bread with cheese (rarely), with sugar, with oil or with onions. Rarely with a very thin slice of ham or mortadella. When I was a child we took two pieces of bread and pretended that one was cheese.

- Can you describe what foods were consumed in a typical day from breakfast to dinner, with reference to the main meals?

Milk with bread at breakfast when I was little and I was in elementary school we used to take a sandwich with a slice of ham or mortadella. Pasta at lunch there wasn't a second course ... Sometimes there were some eggs or French-fries or a sardine, a bit of tomato accompanied with bread. Bread was always there, never missing. When I was little, 7-8 years, we made dough at home and then we would take it to the public oven to be baked into bread. Everyone had a sign on her bread basket, a letter or a piece of wood. Bread was baked into the oven, then we went to get bread with a wicker basket and we paid the batch for each loaf of bread. It cost about 50 - 100 Lira maximum. We ate it the whole week and once it was finished we went to the oven again. When these ovens closed down, bakeries opened at their place and bread was bought there. At dinner, we didn't even set the table and we ate a piece of bread with whatever was available in the house. Sugar and oil were not lacking. We didn't buy fruit, sometimes we ate the fruit from the fields. When it was the season for it we ate melons.

- What years are we talking about, exactly?

60s and 70s.

- How was food procured?

Food was bought in shops close to home. To buy meat we went to the butcher. My father during the carnival period killed a pig and we ate it or for instance on Easter's Monday he killed a sheep. To buy vegetables at times went into a shop near our house, sometimes a seller man would pass by our street. We bought onions, potatoes.

- Which foods were produced at home and which ones you bought? (Eg. Pasta, bread, sauce, meat, oil,

etc..)

We bought almost everything except oil. We always bought meat except during Carnival and Easter Monday. When I was little we even had chickens. We bought the chicks usually in the spring months of March-April, they were reared and finished growing before the summer, by September, they were slain.

- What was the main meal of the family, sitting all together at the table?

Lunch. When I was little and my father was busy with work, he did not return for lunch and dinner was the main meal. The main dish cooked was pasta. The reference was the father of the family and in accordance with his needs we decided to eat the main course; pasta.

- What were the main dishes eaten more often?

Pasta and bread.

- What were the differences with the Sunday or other holidays?

The difference was that on Sundays and public holidays we ate meat, because during working days we hardly ever did. Or meat was eaten when someone died and there was the "consolation" in which all the relatives of the deceased's family went to console the family bringing things to eat because the family itself could not cook because of mourning. People prepared various dishes and all family members ate together. These dishes were prepared to both return the previously received favor, and to make a good impression with the relatives themselves.

- How many times a week you eat pasta?

Every day.

- How many times a week you ate meat? Fish?

Meat once a week, fish when the fishmonger was passing through the streets. Fish was eaten during the week, never on a Sunday, because the fishmongers weren't passing by our streets. We bought sardines, mackerel, poor people's fish.

- Were there packaged products?

Yes, pasta. After there were canned meat, hot dogs; these when I was older.

- Were they used in your household?

It was rarely used.

- From what years did you start to buy more?

We bought a few of this kind of food, but around the 70s-80s.

- What drinks were at the table?

Water. Sometimes they used bags that you put in the water to give an orange-soda flavor, but it was always water plus this bag. Sometimes wine, during holidays and Gazosa. In years 75-80 there was the orange-soda itself, coca cola and sometimes beer. The latter, however, were brought at home by me when I was doing a job that was to unload beverage trucks for supermarkets. I didn't buy them,

they gave them to me for free.

- In short, what were the major differences noted between what you ate in your family in those years and what you habitually consume today?

Today you eat more calories, you have full lunches and dinners. Whereas before we only were full only for the holidays, now we are satisfied every day. Before we ate little and worked long and then you used so much energy, now is the opposite, so we get fat. Before that was big, was so because of an illness, not because he ate so much. Now there is more variety. Before we ate pork with all its fat because we ate it sometimes and we needed to take calories, but now the fat is thrown because it makes you fat. Nowadays foods are more appreciated, but I don't know if they are less good for health. Undoubtedly foods are liked more now, but that does not mean they are less harmful than before. Before we ate little but what we ate it was ate in confidence that it was genuine.

Interview # 3

- Name?

Vincenza

- In what year were you born?

1956

- What kind of work did your parents do?

My mother was a housewife and my father a farmer.

- Remember a time in your youth in your family of birth. What did you usually eat?

Things that the field gave us in that particular season, the meat of chicken, pork, lamb that we and our relatives farmed.

- Can you describe what foods were consumed in a typical day from breakfast to dinner, with reference to the main meals?

In the morning at breakfast we ate bread with milk and who was going out to work bread with cheese. For lunch we ate pasta and sometimes bread with cheese, tomato, sausage and few other things, then fruit. This was the second meal. For dinner we ate meat, not very often, or cooked vegetables, sometimes with tomato sauce or soup of chickpeas, grass peas or beans. Other times we ate only bread and cooked the pasta in the evening, when males came from work.

- What years are we talking about, exactly?

60s and 70s.

- How was food procured?

By farming of the land and breeding of animals. There were eggs.

- Which foods produced at home and which one you bought? (Eg. Pasta, bread, sauce, meat, oil, etc..)

We bought sugar, salt, and sometimes fish. Meat, vegetables and bread were always produced within the family

- What was the main meal of the family, all together at the table?

Usually the evening meal, because during the day the boys were at work in the fields, too far sometimes.

- What were the main dishes eaten more often?

As mentioned bread, pasta, vegetables and cheese.

- What were the differences with the Sunday or other holidays?

The main difference was that on Sunday meat was eaten, for the rest there were not many differences.

- How many times a week you eat pasta?

Every day!

- How many times a week you eat meat? Fish?

Two, three times a week meat. Fish once in a while, once or twice a month.

- There were packaged products?

Yes, sugar, pasta, salt.

- Was it used in your household?

Sure.

- From what age did you start to buy more?

Years between the 75 and the 80.

- What drinks were at the table?

Water and wine.

- In short, what major differences you noticed between what you ate with your family in those years and what habitually consume today?

Before you ate natural foods, now you eat a lot of junk food and packed things. Before there wasn't the freezer and the fridge, to get things cool for a short time you put them into the well and then the food was fresh. There are also quantitative differences, but I do not notice that much difference on that.

Interview # 4

- Name?

Lorenzo

- In what year were you born?

1955

- What kind of work did your parents do?

My mother was a housewife and my father a mason.

- Remember a time in your youth in your birth family. What did you usually eat? Can you describe what foods were consumed in a typical day from breakfast to dinner, with reference to the main meals?

Breakfast was always made of milk and bread soaked with coffee and sometimes the beaten yolk of an egg with sugar. At lunch there was always pasta, often topped with tomato sauce or vegetable soup or vegetables. We also ate a frugal second meal of potato fries or eggs or cheese or other fresh vegetables, boiled or fried. Lunch was always concluded with seasonal fruit. The snack consisted of a few slices of bread soaked in water or oil with sugar on it. We had rarely bread and jam or bread with chocolate or bread with tomato, salt, olive oil and oregano and sometimes bread and mortadella. We bought jam, but many produced it at home. Fig jam was often produced. Dinner was made by cooked vegetables or fresh vegetables, always in season.

- What years are we talking about, exactly?

60s.

- How was food procured? What foods produced at home and what you bought?

Much of the vegetables were cultivated in his spare time by my father in a small piece of land in the countryside. Other things you could buy. At certain times we did tomato sauce or other canned jam, we rarely did sun-dried tomatoes in salt. Bread, meat, oil, wine, fish, cheeses, sweets and sausages were bought at grocery stores or outdoor markets.

- What was the main meal of the family, which was all together at the table?

Both lunch and dinner.

- What were the main dishes eaten more often?

Pasta and bread.

- What were the differences with the Sunday or other holidays?

On Sundays and other holidays there was an event for all purposes. We ate meat cooked in tomato sauce or fried in a pan like schnitzel or braised or roasted on the grill or in the oven at the end of the 60s. At the end of meal there was the dessert that was bought in the bar/patisserie near the house, or sometimes it was crafted by my mother.

- How many times a week you eat pasta?

Every day!

- How many times a week you eat meat? Seafood?

Meat once a week same goes for fish.

- There were packaged products? Did they Exist, Were they used in your household?

Not much, you could buy in the supermarkets for convenience, for social reasons.

What drinks there were on the table?

Water and wine. From the 70s onwards, we drank water to which was added a powder to make it sparkle.

- In short, what are the major differences noted between what you ate in your family in those years and what habitually is consumed today?

Few differences because in my family we have now adopted a diet that is based on the consumption of fresh, seasonal and lately also in km 0 and biological. Unfortunately, it does cost more than usual. We have reduced the consumption of meat, from once a week you eat it once every 15 days, but consumption of fish has remained rather constant. Salt intake has decreased for health reasons and proper nutrition. We have maintained a healthy diet altogether, which is based on the principles of the Mediterranean diet.

Interview #5

- Name?

Vita

- In what year were you born?

1956

- What kind of work did your parents do?

My father was a farmer, my mother a housewife.

- What do you usually eat? Can you describe what foods were consumed in a typical day from breakfast to dinner, with reference to the main meals?

Fresh milk in the morning, that went directly from the bottle and the bottles were thick and with a wide neck, had a cap of lightweight aluminum. Breakfast was bread and milk, no coffee. At lunch definitely pasta with sauce or something else depending on the season...with cauliflower, beans, with fresh vegetables because we had a vegetable garden. In the afternoon, bread soaked with water and sugar or bread, oil and sugar or bread and dried figs and almonds that we had in the fields. Bread with fruit only according to season. Dinner mainly based on vegetables, accompanied occasionally by mortadella or fresh cheese. Cheese we had from the shepherds to repay us for allowing grazing on our fields. Kindness was reciprocal.

- What year are we talking about, exactly?

60s.

- How was food procured?

Through the fields.

- What foods produced at home and what you bought?

We also had corn fields, so we took the wheat to the mill and the miller gave us vouchers to buy flour and pasta and bread. Or he gave us coupons for bread and pasta or flour, because my mother was accustomed to make dough for the whole family. Pasta was rarely made at home. Bread lasted a long time. All those times we made bread in the house and then we baked in the ovens of the neighborhood. We wrote the initials of the family on it and it lasted several days. We had the coupons, so we didn't always make homemade bread. Oil also came from our fields.

- What was the main meal of the family, which was all together at the table?

Both lunch and dinner.

- What were the main dishes eaten more often?

Pasta with tomato sauce. This was the basis.

- What were the differences with the Sunday or other holidays?

On Sunday we ate meat. My mother cooked the chicken broth in the early morning, Then there was a wood stove for breakfast and I ate eggs that were found in the ovaries of the hen, very small, with bread. Also meat from the butcher was bought. Cutlets, sausage, black pudding, cooked in the blood that is stuffed in the guts of animals. The diameter could be 4-5 cm.

- How many times a week you eat pasta?

Every day.

- How many times a week you eat meat? Fish?

Meat once a week, rarely fish because just my mother liked it.

- There were packaged products?

There were mortadella, processed cheese, chocolate triangles, fruit juices in bottles, canned meat, dried broth, canned tuna.

- From what age did you start to buy more?

Since the late 60s.

- What drinks were at the table?

Water and wine of our production. The wine was never missing because we had the barrels. Since the late 60s we drank orange juice. It was a bag to be put in water.

- In short, what the major differences noted between what you ate in your family in those years and what habitually consumed today?

The fact we had fresh products, the fact that the water for irrigation was clean and came from a well, the fact that there were not pesticides and poisons, also because they were not commercially available. Those were definitely genuine food. Now I look for those foods that I miss so much, like the crispy fennel, lettuce tasty, things that are now hard to find. When I go to the grocery store I am

looking for just that. Of course now I buy everything instead the food came directly from the fields back then. I can find something nowadays, but with great difficulty.

Interview #6

- What's your name?

Franca

- In what year were you born?

1964

- What kind of work did your parents do?

My mother was a housewife and my father a mason.

- What do you usually eat?

We ate pasta with vegetables and sauce.

- Can you describe what foods were consumed in a typical day from breakfast to dinner, with reference to the main meals?

At breakfast we ate bread and milk. Usually we used hard bread of the day before. Milk was bought on the street because the seller passed over there. Initially they sold it in the bottle, then in half-liter bags. For lunch we ate pasta with vegetables, but for example, the outer leaves of cauliflower or lettuce were cooked with pasta, then the interior was done as the second meal in the evening. In the evening as second meal beside the vegetables we ate bread to accompany. In addition to the vegetables in the evening we ate omelettes or even bean salad with potatoes and onions. Fruit was not abundant but there was some.

- What year are we talking about, exactly?

70s-80s.

- How did you procure the food? What foods were produced at home and what did you buy?

We bought everything because we didn't own land and we could not grow anything. We bought oil and tomato sauce at the supermarket even though they are local products.

- What was the main meal of the family, in which you were all together at the table?

Both lunch and dinner. We waited for my father and then we ate.

- What were the main dishes eaten more often?

Aside from pasta, vegetables and bread was cooked baked bread. The bread was cut into pieces, lightly wetted and put in the pot with garlic, olive oil, salt and tomato and it was cooked. The bread had to be good, because with today's bread it is not the same thing.

- What were the differences with the Sunday or other holidays?

On Sunday, there was always pasta with sauce, but especially meat. Cutlet, sausage, meat in gravy ... You ate a second meal both for lunch and dinner. On holidays sometimes there was the “biancomanciari” (traditional white pudding), the pudding with cookies, milk cream and chocolates.

- How many times in a week did you eat pasta?

Every day.

- How many times in a week did you eat meat? *Once a week.* Fish?

Never, we occasionally seasoned some dishes with a few anchovies. Especially pasta with mashed broccoli and melted sardines.

- There were packaged products?

Yes, there were. There were skinned tomatoes, the canned beef, tuna.

- Were they consumed in your household?

Yes.

- From what years did you start to buy more of them?

In the '70s and '80s we bought them in small quantities and there wasn't a time in which we bought more. Even now I don't use much canned food, just in case of need.

- What drinks there were at the table?

Water and then there were bags with the essence of orange soda and cola to be put in the water. Sometimes wine.

- In short, what are the major differences noted between what you ate in your family in those years and what you habitually consume today?

Now food is more abundant and more varied, however, is not appreciated as it was once. Before there were fewer things, the variety was also less but food was more appreciated and you threw nothing away. With regard to the genuineness I think there were best things in the past because now chemical things are put in the food and not before, but I cannot say for sure because I bought food before and I buy it also now.

3.3 Commentary on the interviews

As anticipated, all these interviews clearly show the transition from a society based on agriculture and on a local market, also built by forms of exchange of goods (eg. Between relatives and

acquaintances), to a society that starts to open to major retailers and food market, first nationally and later, internationally. The first consumption of packaged products, not products autonomously, or at least at the local level, are located in fact in all the interviews in the late sixties and late seventies, according to the different families. This corresponds to a time of transition and gradual abandonment of the rural civilization of that time, delayed by a decade compared to the "peak" of the Italian economic boom, as it has been historically northern Italy to undergo the first major industrialization processes and change. There are also clear continuities and differences with the diet of today's students previously analyzed. A strong element of continuity is in fact given by the daily consumption of pasta and bread: these represented the main meal of the working classes in Sicily at that time, and this importance has remained intact even today, despite the great general changes. These foods were the staple diet, and vegetables were always self-produced or produced locally and supplemented by a measured consumption of cheese, milk, eggs, together with an occasional consumption of meat. From the alimentary standpoint farming families appear more advantaged than those who, still in a poor context, had to buy almost all the needed food. In peasant families, in fact, goods were self-produced and the amount of food that must be purchased or exchanged was a small part. In that context, therefore, who did not have the opportunity to cultivate the land, even if only in small part, was forced to make a much less varied diet of the peasant one. Pasta and bread, as mentioned, were the staple diet for everyone, and represented what must never miss, not to be considered in a situation of extreme poverty. Bread was consumed throughout the day, could have been for breakfast, lunch, dinner or as a snack, served with vegetables, oil, sugar, and sometimes cheese. These last two foods represent a novelty compared to growth in the early postwar years. Pasta, as mentioned, was the main course of the main meal of the day, accompanied by sauce and vegetables home grown in the countryside. The meat represented an integration, even in families where it was consumed a little 'more often. For many it was still a luxury to be reserved for Sundays and public holidays (as well as sweets). But in some cases, as seen in the first interview, if there was a possibility, meat was sought as it was considered a more nutritious food, a "better one", a "healthy one." Coming back to the main meal, we can see that this was in relation to the work of the "householder", in farming families the main meal was dinner, which coincides with the homecoming of man from the countryside. In other families it was either lunch or dinner, again depending on the job and the working needs of the father from his role in the local production circuit. This context begins to change, from the seventies: bread and pasta home production stopped, and the first packaged products began to appear on the tables (some are typical of this

transition, such as canned meat); availability of meat and dairy products grows, the variety and especially the abundance of food also increases. Nevertheless, from all interviews, transpires the idea that the food was once more genuine, grown without the aid of chemicals, and mostly self-produced. Widespread is also the idea that the abundance of food has now come to an excess. In some cases, however, as in the interview n. 4, it is claimed to consciously maintain a diet more "sober", close to the Mediterranean "typical" diet. If we compare this diet and these habits with those, previously analyzed relatives to today, we can highlight some continuity and discontinuity. About what is eaten today, it is clear that the impact of large distribution chain, opening first to the domestic market and then to global flows of food, did not alter the centrality of pasta and bread in the current diet. This represents a continuity and a tradition to the different families, and even individual taste seems to be perfectly aligned, given that, pasta, as we have seen, is indicated nowadays by almost everyone as the favorite and the indispensable food. Other things have changed though: the pasta today is produced industrially in part with foreign wheat and wheat varieties that are certainly not those of Sicily fifty years ago. The same goes for the bread, once home produced with local flours and now often produced from refined imported flours. In general, the self-production has evidently ended, although in many Sicilian families some foods, such as olive oil, sauces and preserves are still produced. For everything else, today, people rely on supermarkets and therefore on mass distribution. With regard to the consumption of meat, from the sixties to the present, it has increased exponentially, although today many begin to consume less meat and, in many families, is no longer considered such a nutritious and necessary food. The changes that occurred during these decades, regarding the production and distribution of food, in general, have led to resistance of specific traditions, with a current focus towards local production, and nostalgia of "old times" more genuine foods. These changes also led to a condition of greater variety in choice of foods and greater abundance, in some cases, to inconsiderate excess. Industrial foods were supplemented in the diet and are commonly consumed. Yet there is a general distrust of these today, and in some of the interviewed families, as we have seen, a more sober and healthy diet is advocated. About the consumer habits, an important element of continuity I noticed is the importance of the main meal to be consumed at home with the family, and the function that this moment plays in the constant reaffirmation of family bonds. The family meeting around the table, consumption of self-produced pasta and vegetables, as well as bread home-made by women, was the last stage of a production process that involved, in various roles, all components of the household. According to Bauman (2013), this is characteristic of a society centered on the time of

production, while, in the subsequent society based on consumption, this moment of meeting around the family table is no longer an integrated step in a wider production process. These interviews, therefore, in addition to showing us a world that successive generations just don't know and consider very distant, lead us, as I said, to historically contextualize the analysis of food consumption that we are facing and offer us an opportunity to investigate some of the issues that I will analyze in the next chapter.

4. Historical contextualization of ethnographic work

4.1 The change in consumption in Italy from the sixties onwards

From previous interviews is clear an historical demarcation onto which deep transformation of the Italian society are located. In fact the sphere of production changes as well as social relationships and consumptions of Italians. In the "*First report on the dietary habits of the Italians*", prepared by CENSIS⁴, the historical changes in dietary habits are summarized in a series of stages, starting from the years after World War II. The first period analyzed in the study, until the seventies, is defined as "the end of mass poverty" characterized by an exponential growth in consumption in general and the gradual fulfillment of basic needs. The second period, relative to the seventies, is defined as "the great leap forward" and characterized by a further increase in consumption and savings, and the by the growth of the general income of the families, and a high percentage of expenditure on food consumption. The third period, including the eighties, defined as "the age of full consumption", is characterized by the growth of the patrimonial and financial part of the incomes, by the beginning of the consumptions of new acquisition (second home, second car, holidays) and among these the "eating out", and by signs of excesses and experimentation of new consumption for what regard food. The fourth period, corresponding to the nineties, is defined as "all, more and more," and characterized by a continuous growth of consumption, albeit at a slower pace, by the growth of financial incomes, and the irruption of the big distribution. Finally, the period corresponding to the first decade of the new century, is defined as "more quality than quantity," and, for the first time the

4 CENSIS, Note & Commenti, 2010, N. 7/8 2010 - Le abitudini alimentari degli italiani.

race to higher consumption is blocked; there is a growing attention to quality, safety, social and ecological impact of consumption. Eating outside, according to this study, is as important as the eating in the house and the large-scale distribution becomes the primary sales channel. These in brief, are the stages of the historical evolution of consumption in Italy, from a statistical point of view. Going back to the early stages of these historical changes, in general, we see a significant growth of some food consumption at the expense of others, as well points out the Italian historian Emanuela Scarpellini, in his book "A tavola! Gli Italiani in 7 pasti":

"looking at a graph of the historical food consumption of the twentieth century, one is struck by the sharp break that occurs from the fifties. There is a before and an after. A "before" represented by a relatively low and continuous line, until the Second World War (which for everyday consumers simply meant poor nutrition and little variety); an after represented by a sudden upward surge of this line and its continuous growth throughout the second half of the century (which translates to a new diet, rich, diverse, and highly-proteic). Pasta, milk, cheese, eggs, oil, butter, seasonings, fresh fruit and vegetables, wine, and finally coffee, lots of coffee (three times more than before the war): all consumption rising steeply (the only exceptions are certain "poor" foods such as dry legumes, paddy rice, lard) ... There are two consumption emblematic of this new wealth. The first is meat. With all its symbolic value and the continuous background of experts advising about the healthy properties for children and adults, the amount of meat on the table of Italians doubles, and increases above all the most valuable (bovine) ... the centuries-old line of distinction between the rich lunches and dinners and the poor ones seems to crumble in a few years. The other is the high consumption of sugar ... "(Scarpellini, 2012, pp. 175-176)

These changes in consumption described by the Italian historian seems perfectly in line with what has been shown from the interviews described above. The consumption of sugar (white, refined) in particular, is linked to the production of typical regional sweets, home-made or handcrafted in the traditional way; is also linked to the growth of food industry. In this regard it may be a good example of the industrialization of the alimentary sphere and the introduction of packaged products in the diet of the Italians:

"A more general process, started in fascism, that shows the increasingly importance of the industrial part of production at the expense of the agricultural one... Food expenses, in these years of turning point, in fact, go through a strong diversification, investing fresh products (with the importance of the expense for meat), products originating from agricultural and craft shops (like bread) and industrial products. If we look at the amount, we see that the largest group to grow from 1960 to 1974 is certainly that of industrial products, and

for a reason: it has a much lower average increase of prices. Here is the first reason for the increased weight of the food industry : the low price offer that can give, linked to large scale economies and the same mode of series production. A second motivation of its spread is related to the ability to bring new products that meet social and cultural changes in the rhythms and modes of preparation and consumption of food, due to rapid urbanization, the abandonment of the countryside and the increase in the women's work outside the household. Anthropologist Carole Counihan has studied how home baking was abandoned in Bosa, Oristano province (Sardinia), within a few years, 1960-1967: the Sardinian women stopped almost abruptly to knead and bake bread collectively (a practice repeated from house to house every ten or fifteen days), since the wheat was not cultivated by men anymore, and they began to buy it. In this way, diminished work (to prepare the bread they worked from three in the morning until four in the afternoon); the consumed product became more various; there was a change in social relations, with an increase of individual freedom, in the sense that had fallen the mutual dependency between women, and diminished the social control, constantly reinforced through this collective ritual. " (Scarpellini 2012, pp. 178-180)

Also these observations regarding the period of abandonment of family based baking, the introduction of industrial products, the consumption of sugar and sweets, looks perfectly in agreement with those reported through the interviews. We can see the growth of food industry; social relationships change, with women that increasingly worked outside the household; production relations change, with the 'abandonment' of the direct production of food. This is the turning point towards what can be defined "consumer society". Men and women change their role within the society, not more being included in a process of direct production, which generates on site what they need and constructs the local economy as a direct expression of the work of each. Instead it begins to take shape the current model that sees the separation between the moment of production, increasingly fragmented and de-territorialized, and that of consumption as a direct expression of the income generated by work. Industries are able to provide food at low prices as a result of mass production. And as we have seen, low prices are one of the determinants reasons in the purchase of food from industrial sources. Another reason is related to changes in social organization in the new type of society, the abandonment of direct production, the phenomena of urbanization and rural depopulation, the growth of the tertiary sector and non-family labor of women, all of which, in turn, lead to further social changes, such as, for instance, the decrease in traditional social control, highlighted by Scarpellini. But industrial products were not introduced without resistance on the part of consumers, in particular by women consumers, in charge of grocery shopping for the family: according Scarpellini, in fact, "the approach of consumers to the

novelties was active, dynamic and selective." For example, it is possible to detect a difference in the reception of different types of industrial products: industrial food products were embraced with a certain mistrust and used as ready-made meals to be served only when there was no time to prepare some else. "Half-packaged" products were embraced with little more favor, such as bouillon cube, sauces, dried pasta, that facilitated the work in the kitchen. With regard to industrial products that helped prepare and store food, home appliances, were embraced with much more enthusiasm. Refrigerators, mixer, pressure cookers, all of this improved, simplified and accelerated the work of preparing meals, while not affecting the recipes and experience of the tradition. Concluding, in agreement with the Italian historian, we can notice that the innovation of process was accepted faster than the innovation of product. Even today, as we have pointed out, remains a generalized distrust about food industry: although these are used, there is a tendency to use them as less as possible in the preparation of meals eaten at home.

It is not only the consumption of sugar and meat to increase considerably. According to the analysis of the INRAN ("Istituto Nazionale Italiano di Ricerca per gli Alimenti e la Nutrizione", Italian National Institute for Research on Food and Nutrition), in particular from the sixties and seventies, the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables also significantly increase, in conjunction with the rediscovery and propaganda of the benefits of the Mediterranean diet. However, what suffers opposite trends are the consumption of other cereals than wheat, such as rice, rye, barley, maize; consumption of sheep and goat meat; consumption of legumes and dried fruit; wine consumption (partly replaced by beer). The process that led to the achievement of the abundance and variety of food (in comparison with the typical diet of up to sixty), was a selective one, negotiated between the needs of national and global market and industry, and the reasons of taste and regional traditions. Today, although poverty, in alimentary terms, is just a memory, in Italy and in other wealthy industrialized countries, and it is indeed reached the opposite extreme, food remains a topic that brings a multitude of issues relating, for example, to food security, income inequality, environmental issues:

"The benefits of new productions are obvious. However there are many side effects. Firstly, the high rate of industrialization and commercialization of food production has created a deep gap between producers and consumers, perceived as increasing distance between nature and culture. In addition, the level of manipulation (of food) reached, sparked worried reactions, for its consequences in terms of environmental impact (reduction of biodiversity, depletion of non-renewable resources, waste, pollution, alteration of natural ecosystems), for its ethical implications (disparities between nations, exploitation of workers in poor

countries in favor of the rich countries, disregard for animal wellness, etc..). The ecological footprint, which is the measure of human consumption in relation to the bio-reproductive capacity of the Earth, shows that in the seventies and eighties we have passed the threshold of optimal and we are actually depleting the planet (even the Italian territory is overexploited respect to its biological capacities of regeneration, as almost all rich countries)". (Scarpellini, 2012, pp. 273)

In the next chapter, therefore, the processes of industrialization about food production and the problems generated by these processes will be examined more in detail. Here it is useful to finish the analysis about the changes in food consumptions, focusing on the last part of the statistical study of Censis, which emphasizes the role of globalization and the related issues, particularly in relation to food, as crucial issues that consumers begin to worry about:

"In the first nine years of the new millennium, globalization and a certain insecurity that is installed in the heart of the social sphere became of crucial importance. Both of which phenomena have significant repercussions on the relationship between people and the power. There was an epochal change in the relationship with food consumption and more generally with consumption, because in practice the former are essentially stationary, with an average annual growth rate of 0.1%, in contrast to an average annual increase of the total expenditure amounting to 0.6%. What counts here are not the most incremental dynamic, those induced by the growth rate of quantity, by the 'logic of more' which signed, albeit with decreasing intensity, the relationship with the expenditure and food consumption of our country. In the markets, the large-scale distribution accounts for over 70% of food expenditure, while spending for outside home represents half of the total spending on food. Trends started as an expression of highly motivated niches also made their way into mass-consumption alimentary: from products of protected origin, to organic products, to fair trade ones. Security and authenticity become essential objectives, and an aging population also decides to use a proper power to counteract the effects on health and the body of the passing of time. In fact, the actual diet doesn't often coincide with the optimal one, but this does not reduce the burden of health consciousness as a value and practical reference on diet, to the point of generating, if you are unable to put the precepts into practice, a widespread mass sense of guilt. That's why the persistent growth dynamic of extra-domestic nutrition becomes more and more an occasion to eat what we fancy, beside answering schedule and social needs, thus getting away with breaking free of controlled or regimented diets. " (Censis, 2010)

Comparing this statistical analysis with the narrations of students and with some of the points the interviews brought forth, we can highlight continuity issues regarding: the insecurity generated by certain products, and an increased widespread attention to the quality rather than the quantity of

food (although excesses are still frequent); the importance of shopping at large retailers; the reference values to health consciousness are also noted. Diverging with my research are the narrations collected in relation to eating out, since, as we have seen, the students interviewed in my work, claim to be eating out only rarely, partly because of the reduced availability of money caused by the economic crisis of the recent years. This brief overview of the changes in food consumption habits over time, was used, in general, to contextualize the ethnographic work done in a broader historical context, while remaining on the consumption side. And we have shown that, through the processes of industrialization, in this case in Italy, this consumption is no longer a direct expression of the local economic fabric of which social actors are an integral part, but represents a discontinuous phase in a series of discontinuous stages: the typical de-territorialized production of the global market. To grasp the wider issues inherent in such a system is necessary, therefore, enter the historical analysis of consumption in an even wider context which gives an account of some of the dynamics of global production.

4.2 Industrialization of food production in Italy and in the world: history, problems and alternatives

In this chapter, based on the objectives proposed in the introduction, I mean to go back from consumption to the production processes which they are an expression of the former, in order to highlight some of the contemporary issues related to the dominant model of production and consumption. The changes that have occurred in consumption from the Italian post-war really go hand in hand with the process of industrialization of the country. If industrialization and adherence to a model of development characterized by economic liberalism and openness to the global market, has led Italy, to be one of the richest countries in the world, today this model has dramatically reached its economic, social, ecological limits. Returning to the general changes in Italian society, we can see that the changes in food consumption analyzed, fit within the larger processes of industrialization of the country, urbanization, internal migration and changes in alimentary production. Regarding the latter point, to understand the current issues relating to agricultural production, we have to go back to the period in which this product was born and developed in the form that is still dominant: we must go back to the changes that occurred after the war on Italian agriculture and changes in agriculture globally. Post-war Italy was the country of so-called

economic boom, whose peak occurred between the '58 '63 of the last century and has enabled the country to become in a few years one of the most industrialized nations in the world. This happened thanks to the shift from an economy linked to agricultural production to an economy tied to the dynamics of the European and world markets where exports became prevalent, with the resulting shift of labor from agriculture to industry;

"The Italian industry, at this juncture of development, became indisputably the leading sector, while agriculture was falling back sharply. In fact, if in 1951, agriculture contributed to the GDP of the private sector with 23.5% in 1963 and 15.7%, the industry, in the same year, was increased from 33.7% to 43.5 %, the service sector from 42.8% to 40.5%. The number of employed by sector shows the shift to the new sector which became the driving one: in 1961 the industry had occupied 38% of the total population while those in the service sector accounted for 32%. The workers in the agricultural sector had instead gone from 42% 1951 to 30% of the workforce in 1961".⁵

While today it represents less than 7% of the population. We assist to a progressive reduction of the economic and social importance of agriculture, from World War II onwards. This was accompanied by the great migration flows between northern and southern Italy, where workers in excess from the south who remained unemployed in the countryside have gone to provide the necessary manpower to the industries of the northern cities. In addition to this migratory movement between north and south, there was also a very strong emigration to other countries, for example, South America. These migration flows have put an end to the problem of unemployment in the countryside and allowed Italy to move towards industrialization and the consumer society. In fact there was more than a geographical coincidence between agricultural production and consumption, because if millions of people move from the countryside to the cities, a clear separation between the time of production and that of consumption is created; new markets are generated, also the need to move goods and to produce for the market arises. Furthermore, the newborn mechanical and chemical industry began creating a series of technical means of production for agriculture in those years. Hence agriculture starts to open itself to markets within a few years, both in terms of the production factors and in terms of the generated goods. The development of transport infrastructure accompanies this process, because the technical means and goods can move across the country. This opening greatly increases crop yields overall, thanks to the acquisition of technical means from outside Italy which introduce technical progress making agriculture more productive because of

⁵ in www.storiaxisecolo.it, see bibliography

mechanization, massive use of chemical inputs and genetically modified and selected seeds, and better agronomic rotations. In general, the industrial revolution of a country may involve, with regard to the agricultural sector, the following consequences:

- diffusion of machines and technical means;
- improvement of cultivated varieties;
- use of chemical products;
- expulsion of labor, urbanization and reduction of farm;
- reduction in employment caused by the phenomena of industrialization;
- growth of the service sectors and public administration;
- the emergence of new types of farms, part-time or “pluriactive”, where the family or the same conductors are engaged in non-farming activities;
- an increase in productivity, a reduction of working time, remuneration and wage growth.

In brief these are some of the processes that have affected agriculture and the Italian economic boom. All of these epochal changes were directed from favoring a particular notion of progress as the result of liberal ideologies. It was not by chance that one of the most important exponents of Italian liberalism, the politician and the second President of the Italian Republic, Luigi Einaudi, laid the foundations of the Italian "economic boom". These historical changes of the ways of food production processes are not limited to Italy but are part of a wider context of industrialization of the worldwide food industry. In the agricultural sector, for example, the reference model was the industrialized agriculture of the United States, subsequently exported to various parts of the world through what has been called "*green revolution*". This, strictly speaking, was promoted especially in the southern countries of the world to cope with population growth and the consequent growth of food demand and to try to solve the problems of malnutrition in the world. The origins of this revolution, dating back to the Mexican research project implemented since the forties with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation under the guidance of the American geneticist Norman Borlaug (Nobel Prize for Peace in 1970) to increase the yields of wheat and corn, introducing varieties capable of increasing yields per hectare and easier to harvest mechanically.

"The success achieved by crossing several high-yielding varieties (such as wheat Norin 10 dwarf of Japanese origin and the rice IR8) and associated with the use of new agricultural technologies, pesticides and fertilizers, was then exported to other countries, starting India and Pakistan in the

sixties of the last century. In the following two decades, thanks to a great deal of research and international institutional collaboration, cereal production has more than doubled worldwide, greatly increasing food security especially in Southeast Asia, while in Sub-Saharan Africa the growth was lower. ("Rivoluzione verde", in Enciclopedia Treccani online, 2008)

In summary, from the point of view of agriculture, the Green Revolution was characterized by the introduction of high yielding varieties of cereals, more suitable to mechanized farming and ready to better respond to chemical inputs represented by chemical fertilizers and pesticides and to greater irrigation. If in the face of these processes greatly increased agricultural yields, did not however succeed, to eliminate the problem of world hunger, one of the motivations is present in the speeches of the advocates of such a "revolution". An example, has been the director of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), William S. Gaud, the first to use the term 'Green Revolution', in 1968, claiming to his own country that innovation will enable humanity to usher in "the era of abundance" (quoted in Bocci, 2002). In a 2002 article, the Italian agronomist Riccardo Bocci recounts some of the stages of the green revolution and give an interesting reinterpretation based on the assumptions of political ecology. From the point of view of production yields the new type of agriculture proved to be a success, at least in some parts of the world:

"Mexico reached self-sufficiency in wheat in 1956 and became a net exporter of half a million tonnes in 1964. India will follow the same way, exporting wheat from the mid-80s. After Mexico, is in fact India which experience to export U.S. agricultural model, followed by almost all countries of the Third World. To legitimize this success Norman Borlaug received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1970 "for giving bread to a hungry world", and officially became the "father" of the Green Revolution". (Bocci, 2002)

According to Bocci, actually, this philanthropic and humanitarian rhetoric conceals a series of economic and political interests:

"That technological revolution, the bearer of the values of the capitalist mode of production, was used in the Second World War to meet the social revolutions which agitated Europe and many countries in the southern hemisphere, providing food for all. Not surprisingly, green was chosen as opposed to red". (Bocci, 2002)

In the Mexico example such changes in the agricultural field, allowed the country to respond to

social problems arising from food shortages and demands for agrarian reforms of socialists in the 40s, without changing the existing social structures, and turning to the figure of the agrarian entrepreneur rather than the traditional farmer. The green revolution is configured in fact, all over the world, as an activity to lower labor intensity and increase intensity of capital and that is why over the years the role of the farmer changed skin in each country and became an agrarian entrepreneur. Even in Italy, for example, that legal name still exists today. This model of agriculture has been then exported to the world as the model of capitalist production applied to the production of food. With the promise of abundance and of the elimination of hunger in the world, it was imposed on other social and political models, such as the socialist or the communist ones. But the promises of abundance and end of hunger have not been met in many places, but persist and disparities worsen: in rich countries, as we have seen in the case of Italy, but especially agricultural industrialization, openness to international markets, led to overrating. In the poorest countries of the world, on the contrary, the abandonment of subsistence agriculture in favor of an agriculture designed to sell on global markets (often imposed by local governments under pressure from industrialized countries, under the slogan of modernization and development), with the lack of an adequate income to purchase food, led to aggravate the food gap between different areas of the world. According to FAO⁶ data relating to 2011-2013 are 842 million - or about one in eight - people in the world suffering from chronic hunger and who do not have access to enough food to lead an active and healthy life. This problem can no longer be traced back today to the shortage in food production, but it is clear that it is distributive inequalities within the global food market, as concluded in his article the Italian agronomist Bocci:

"Despite the conditions, in fact, the gap between rich farmers and poor peasants has increased with the introduction of high yielding varieties, while the condition of small-medium businesses have worsened, both for the reduction in purchasing power due to the decrease in agricultural prices and the increase of the high dependence on industry for the provision of chemical inputs and seeds. In this regard, the International Labour Organization (ILO) said in 1976 in a study on the topic - Hunger and malnutrition increase very quickly just in areas where the Green Revolution has arrived - ... Retracing this experience is an useful key to understand the present, because the temptation to address social problems through technology is not surpassed. It is now the turn of bio-technology, tool pointed by many authoritative voices as the new road along the path of progress, in order to liberate mankind from the specter of famine, facing a growing population. To emphasize this step biotechnology are identified as a New or Second Green Revolution, with the hope that they will follow their fate, made of a long series of successes officially legitimized in the

⁶ www.fao.org

international arena. The same Norman Borlaug has sealed this bond on several occasions in his frequent government intervention and has recently confirmed that at the First Conference on Globalization of Agricultural Research, held in Costa Rica 25 to 27 February 2002. "Biotechnology is a continuation of the Green Revolution" the scientist said, emphasizing the validity of GMOs as a strategy to fight hunger in the world. We therefore would like to reopen the debate on the dilemma resources / population, one of the themes around the contradiction between economy and ecology. The experience of the Green Revolution suggests that the food problem - fear of hunger in the South and fear of food in the North - is related to a wrong model of development, and therefore can't be solved by technology alone. There are now many voices, including Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, who denounce that the food shortage is not due to the lack of "absolute" food, but to the socially marginalized and reduced budget of the malnourished population, particularly women. Being excluded from the food market and not having own resources to feed themselves, has only resulted in hunger. " (Bocci, 2002)

Therefore the capitalist industrial agriculture model shows its inherent limitations unable to cope with distributive inequalities on the food level, which instead tends to aggravate. But it also shows its limits in relationships with the environment. The high productivity of new varieties of plants introduced with the industrialization of agriculture, as mentioned, are based on the massive use of chemicals, pesticides and fertilizers, irrigation and worse. It is also based on the model of the monoculture of extremely vast areas of territory. This has serious implications from the environmental point of view; in fact this type of agriculture is responsible for a large part of the pollution of soil and groundwater pollution (caused by chemicals) and the impoverishment of soil, erosion, biodiversity loss and waste of huge amounts of water. Also, it is responsible for most of the processes of deforestation (to make way for monoculture) and desertification (when land is left with no organic material on it). The general abandonment of the countryside caused by industrialization is also responsible for hydrogeological territories disarray, once kept in check consistently by farmers working on a small scale and now widespread. All these factors are referred to as negative externalities in economics, not included in the economic calculations of those who produce these externalities, but well inflicted on the communities that have to deal with such disarray. In addition, industrial agriculture as I described remains entirely dependent on external sources in order to exist: the oil that produces chemicals and fuels that drive the machinery, also mentioned, is an activity that requires capital investment, which disadvantage small producers. All these factors lead to the conclusion that from an ecological point of view, understood as a set of relationships, both with regard to the environment and to the sphere of the human economy, industrial agriculture is not a

sustainable practice. Yet, as highlighted in Bocci's article, it is continued to persist on this model and the last stage of the alleged industrial hegemony on the world of agriculture seems to be the development of bio-technologies.

But it is not only in agriculture that the industrial model has emerged as the dominant model in global food production. As seen above, in fact, there is a whole industry of processing of those foods considered "raw materials", which produces foods that come in series to consumers through large distribution channels. As well as in the field of production of food of animal origin has developed the same pattern of series production. And also in this case, with regard, to intensive industrialized livestock, we have a series of problems involving the community and not only the owners of the companies. Scandals ranging from food to social and environmental problems. Famous is the case of 'mad cow' disease, *bovine spongiform encephalopathy* more properly⁷, the first identified case dates back to 1986 in the region of Hampshire in the UK. The disease, which reached epidemic proportions in the UK and snapped a general alarm throughout Europe, was caused by humans, following administration of animal meal to cows, herbivore animals by nature. Such foods were contaminated by a prion, a pathogenic protein. So it's a disease entirely linked to industrial farming. The disease affects animals aged among 22 months and 18 years, with a peak around 4-5 years and an average time of incubation between 4 and 6 years. From the clinical point of view we observe changes in behavior, such as aggression, hyperesthesia to auditory and tactile stimuli, incoordination of the hindquarters, muscle tremors and teeth grinding. It can be transmitted to humans, and in Britain there have been numerous reported cases. In Italy the cases of infected animals and transmission to humans were much less numerous but one case in particular is to remember given the geographical relevance to the present ethnographic work. In Castellammare del Golfo, a town bordering Alcamo, was in fact recorded the first Italian case of this disease in cattle still alive. We are talking about 1994⁸. These stocks had been purchased in England, from a breeder than a year after was arrested as a member of a mafia clan in the area.⁹ Eight years later, in 2002, a 24 year old girl in the same province died of this disease.¹⁰ Although we cannot prove that this girl has eaten infected meat illegally slaughtered at the time, this hypothesis does not appear to be inconceivable. However, even without these borderline and infamous cases we see significant problems that affect society even in the best farms in the industrialized world.

In an article in German, signed S. Aman, M. Fröhlingsdorf and U. Ludwig, appeared in Der

7 "Encefalopatia spongiforme bovina", Dizionario di Medicina, 2010, Enciclopedia Treccani online

8 Repubblica.it, 6 febbraio 2002, (Italian newspaper, on line version)

9 Unita.it, 8 agosto 2003, (Italian newspaper, on line version)

10 Corriere.it, 7 agosto 2003, (Italian newspaper, on line version)

Spiegel magazine and reported by “Internazionale” on the eight of November 2013, it is analyzed the system of factory farming of Lower Saxony, presented as an example of efficiency and considered among the best in the world. According to reporters, representatives of the meat industry, farmers, slaughterers feel misunderstood and unfairly put at the stake. However, even those who criticize them have valid arguments against the plan to battle global livestock industry, a system that causes harm to humans, animals and the environment. In this regard, pigs are fattened beyond all limits and live only to be slaughtered, often after being abused; imports of fodder contribute to the killing of rain forests in South America; the aquifers and the fields are severely polluted by sewage produced by animals; antibiotics produced massively produce resistance to pathogens in humans; the wages of migrant workers who work in these farms are poor. Every year at least 39 pounds of pork for every German is produced, in addition to the 22 pounds of veal, chicken, turkey and other animals. This hunger for meat increases continuously all over the world, both in developing countries of Asia and South America and in Germany, where 85% of Germans eat meat and sausages every day, or nearly so. Especially in Germany the consumption of pork has almost tripled since 1950 and this trend can be seen clearly by looking at the shelves of supermarkets, where there are yards and yards of packages of meat, well packed and cheap. Unfortunately, this apparent and pleasant abundance has a cost that does not reveal the price of the label. This cost, as mentioned, is paid by the pigs, the environment and underpaid workers, as well as the health of consumers. In intensive farming, in fact, is administered an amount of antibiotic 40 times higher than that used in German hospitals. The use of this huge amount of antibiotics, as said, is dangerous, as it allows the development of resistant strains and can therefore make it a less effective tool to combat infectious diseases. The success of meat industry is also based on the reduction of wages, as long as companies have stopped hiring skilled German workers to outsource the work to companies in Eastern Europe. Today, according to estimations, among seven thousand Romanians, Poles and Hungarians dissect pigs, debone them and grind meat in industrial German plants just for a wage of about 5 euros per hour. A very important research of union of food workers on a commercial level, revealed that the salary increase to 12-14 euros per hour would correspond to an increase of about 25 cents in the final price of the product at the supermarket, however, neither the producers nor consumers seem to be very interested in such calculations. With regard to the problem of groundwaters, there is an area in the rural districts of Vechta and Cloppenburg, between Bremen and Osnabruck, where there are more than two million pigs for fattening. This area has been called the "sewage belt", as each pig produced in his short life of breeding about 1.5 cubic

meters of urine and excrement which are then largely paid out in the fields, probably also in contravention of the directives on . Such slurry reach shallow groundwater and endanger the health of the water. According to the geologist Egon Harms, who works at the "sewage belt", the level of nitrates in the groundwater of the most superficial zone has increased alarmingly. To produce so much meat is also wasteful in terms of resources, in fact, for the production of one kilogram of pork serve 5,998 liters of water, while for a pound of potatoes are enough 287. 40 percent of the global harvest of wheat, rye, oats, and corn is used to feed the animals and in Germany this share rises to 50 percent. So, unfortunately, we talk about a waste of land, plant food and water, everything to satisfy this huge demand for meat and fatten the pockets of big industrial owners. The same industrial model, applied equally to agriculture and livestock, thus shows the same limits, creating environmental and social problems, inherent in the exploitation of nature, animals and human beings.

4.3 Food and social changes

The development of bio-technology, particularly the development of private-owned and patented ones, represents the current stage of the process of industrialization of food production, based on the capitalist model. The theme of GMOs is extremely debated today in Italy, as well as in various other parts of the world, in particular regarding the issue of genetically modified organisms in agriculture and food. The positions within the society are among the most different and opposing radical change such as a widespread concern among consumers, the explicit condemnation of various movements and associations that advocate a completely different type agriculture, the fierce criticism of this disapproval by those who see in the GMOs just a tool of development and scientific progress. Due to this heterogeneity of positions on the subject, which reflect various interests involved, the issue of GMOs can be useful to show how the field of nutrition today is invested by specific social meanings that contrast, at least in part, the dominant model. It also shows the conflicting economic interests and the different national policies on food production. It shows the concerns of consumers against potentially hazardous foods.

"Consider the application of genetic engineering in food production, ie the case of transgenic food. If some food scandals, and especially the so-called <<mad cow >>, have prepared the ground for a blatant political problematization of food consumption, the application of genetic engineering in this production sector has

been increasingly presented as a threat to the consumer, even in countries like Italy where scandals have been absorbed relatively quickly and painlessly. Across Europe, the rest of the critical voices have been many and energetic. Already in Seattle, during the famous meeting of the WTO at the end of 1999, European countries opposed to developing countries to the request of the United States to liberalize biotechnology in the food industry. The difference between Europe and the United States respond to other various economic frameworks (the states are the main producers of GM food and in fact control this technology), cultural (the greater weight of food safety and culinary traditions, and the increased use of environmentalism in Europe) and political (the centralized agricultural policies of the European Union and subsidies that have safeguarded, at least in part, the national agricultural traditions). "(Sassatelli, 2004, pp. 214)

In addition to these political and cultural economic factors, and the concerns of consumers in respect of such technology, the issue of GMOs is an example of a clash between different visions of the world. On the one hand those who insists on the model of industrialization of food production on the other those who propose alternative models of production. As seen in Bocci's article, today the GMOs are being proposed as the answer to food problems of the world, using the same methodology of propaganda that accompanied the spread of the green revolution. If this has failed in its assumptions, although the actual yield substantial food produced, the cause of this failure is to be found in the same logics of production and distribution of capitalism based on private profit and the progressive subordination of the political sphere in such market logic. The system we have outlined exacerbates economic disparities, enriching and benefiting few. In addition, as we have seen in agriculture, but also in other fields, such dominant industrial model today creates a series of negative externalities of social and environmental kind, which are to be bore by the community. Those who insist today to pursue this model, do so either for private economic interest, or for uncritical faith in a model that every day is proving to be failing. GMOs, from this point of view, would be the last attempt to solve problems that are social, political and ecological through means of an instrument exclusively technological, trying to fix a system which seems to cause more problems than it solves, characterized as it is more and more by its ability to trigger crisis. Economic crises, food crises, ecological crises. Already Bateson, in 1970, had identified the characteristics of contemporary ecological crisis in the increasing world population, uncritical application of new technologies and the relationship of exploitation between man and nature. And he already noted in its systemic perspective, that any erroneous attempt of correction, within a system that does not work, can amplify rather than correct the problems it seeks to solve. Because of that a systemic problem cannot be dealt with a sectorial remedy, in this case, with the application

of a single technology. On the contrary, this food technology, especially, as I said, if developed privately and exclusively for business purposes, may have the effect of making agriculture and food production even more dependent on the world market, on the needs of large multinational manufacturers and on external sources that include both the existence of highly technologized laboratories and low resources such as oil. Today, awareness of the limits and the unsustainability of the capitalist industrial model of food production is growing steadily and is the very same process of globalization that gives room for a critique of this dominant model:

“Globalization has made more blatant the effects of the market, highlighting issues essentially ethical and political as inequalities among consumers and the need for redistributive policies or consequences of long-term environmental impact of the current economic procedures. Introducing innovations that alter the routines of consumption, encouraging economic concentration, expanding human communities of reference, promoting a detachment between the economic process and socio-cultural process, globalization opens therefore also a space for questioning the boundaries of naturalized and crystallized market. The market itself appears less natural and neutral, less open and well-functioning, less able to ensure alternatives which are beneficial to all. Just because it becomes more apparent that there is no other place to go outside of the market, it is on its shape, its boundaries and its rules that must be interfered, are developed forms of consumption more clearly political”. (Sassatelli, 2004, pp. 221)

Globalization is a process that creates a de-territorialized and commodified reality and in which it is more difficult to find directions and a common identity. But it is also a continuous process of re-territorialization made by social actors in the reconstruction of non-commodified social ties and it is also a process that gradually leads to the awareness of living in a large system which includes the whole world. This new awareness, together with attention to authentic, healthy and ethical food, produced without exploitation, is what leads to the emergence of a more conscious consumer and critic. It also leads to the emergence of the phenomenon of boycott and buycott,¹¹ from the bottom of associations of consumers, from the emergence of alternative economic circuits given by the alliance between critical consumers and producers. In Italy there are several examples of this type of farmer markets, where small local producers can offer natural farming, knowing how to find a market of consumers who are looking for foods considered genuine products, with systems that do not cause damage to the environment. An important pioneer of industrial agriculture criticism was,

11 With the term “boycott” we mean the act voluntarily abstaining from using, buying, or dealing with a person, organization, or country as an expression of protest, usually for ethical, social or political reasons; with the term “buycott” we mean the act of buying particular products or brands to incentivate a certain productive system.

since the sixties of the last century, the Japanese Masanobu Fukuoka, who invented the method defined by himself "natural farming". Trained as a scientist, microbiologist, already a twenty-five years young man he worked as an custom's officer of Yokohama plantation and as a researcher specializing in diseases of plants. He later became very critical towards the new models of agriculture to which Japanese farmers were moving abandoning the traditional methods and argued that industrial agriculture is a myth to dispel. It would not increase the overall productivity in the agricultural sector but on the contrary would diminish it. Machinery, fertilizers, chemicals which do nothing more than turning food into oil; the materials and the labor required from external sources to agriculture and are controlled by them. In addition, this type of agriculture based on synthetic chemicals damages the soil and reduces fertility. The more you use these products the more the soil will deteriorate and need more other. It is a vicious cycle of addiction and if you do the math, this cycle needs resources vastly superior to those which needed by natural farming. In the same way, Fukuoka, with his life's work, has shown that this type of farming may have made quite comparable or even superior yields to those obtained by industrial agriculture, with a significantly less waste of resources, as mentioned, and providing nourishment to the soil from year to year increasing its fertility and consequently the productivity. Its natural farming techniques have spread throughout the world, even if chosen by a niche, and have been adapted to specific local contexts, giving rise, for example, to synergistic agriculture in Europe. Inspiring organic farming in general, as much as *Permaculture*, a larger system designing sustainable habitats modeled from natural ecosystems. In the field of associations from the bottom, however, an important example is the association *Slow Food*, founded in Italy in 1986 as opposed to the fast food culture, with the purpose of defending and disseminating agricultural and gastronomic traditions of each region of the world, together with the invitation to experience the pleasure tied to the table and to good food. Today, the association has over one hundred thousand members in 150 countries and it is committed to the protection of biodiversity, ethics in the production and food sovereignty. The latter expression, "food sovereignty" refers in particular to *the right of peoples to democratically define their own food and agricultural systems without harming other people or the environment*. For the most part this issue has been addressed in the past, in relation to the countries of the "Global South" and now it must be defined as an important and urgent topic at a global level even in so-called developed countries:

“The concept of food sovereignty was launched for the first time from La Via Campesina in 1996, during the World Summit on Food of FAO, which took place in Rome. A concept developed as a reaction to the

inclusion of food and agriculture in the process of liberalization of the newborn WTO and since then has taken on an increasingly important role in the debate on food and agriculture and reflections on policy alternatives to neoliberalism. Food Sovereignty, in fact, puts farmers, producers and citizens at the center of the debate and supports the right of each and all peoples to produce local and culturally appropriate food, regardless of the conditions of the international market”.¹²

Is from the critique of neoliberal policies in the field of agriculture and food that comes this concept and it is in this way that also groups like CampiAperti move. Since 1996, an entire global movement has gathered around this theme, flows into the first international forum for food sovereignty in 2007, held in Mali and called Nyéléni, named after the goddess of Malay fertility. In Italy the Italian Committee for Food Sovereignty, is the network that brings together more than 270 trade associations, formed, in 2006, it has actively participated in the forum. A second international forum was held in 2011 in Krems in Austria, the place chosen on purpose to bring this issue directly in the center of Europe, at a time when the financial crisis and the cuts imposed by the European states populations are questioning the foundations of the united Europe.

“Right now, citizens throughout Europe are experiencing the first structural adjustment policies which governments are imposing on their populations, those policies until now prescribed to people in other regions, particularly in the southern hemisphere. All of this happens with the only interest of saving capitalism and those who benefit from it (private banks, investment groups and corporations). There are many signs to indicate that in the near future these antisocial policies will become more severe and more extensive. At the same time also started the first general mobilizations to denounce the economic and governance systems that have brought us to this point. We provide - creatively and energetically - the response of social movements and opposition to the European model of global agriculture which is the exact reflection of the capitalist system that created it” (European Forum for Food Sovereignty, 2011)

These are the opening words of the document presented at the conclusion of the European forum that brought together concrete proposals to change the way in which food is produced, distributed and consumed, for improved conditions and social work in the agricultural and food systems, the right of everyone to ‘Common Goods’ and suggests the need to change public policies and structures of governance that regulate agricultural and food systems. Even in the largest global institution, the UN, today you begin to discuss explicitly different models of agricultural production. In 2011, the UN rapporteur for food security, Olivier De Schutter, presented a report

¹² cisaonline.org, Comitato Italiano Sovranità Alimentare, 2011

entitled "Agro-ecology and the right to food"¹³, in which he expresses the need to change the pattern of industrial agricultural production in favor of disseminated farming systems, small-scale, eco-friendly, able to fight rural poverty, hunger and environmental problems. All of these examples lead us to a new world in constant evolution and in open opposition to the dominant capitalist model of production. The issue of GMOs, as has been discussed above, is just one of the varied terrain of clash of these two opposing visions of reality and shows us, along with other examples, how power in the global society, is not a peaceful fact but it is an area of strong interests and opposing views and can be a field of action for social change. And this is what, to a certain extent, is happening. The size of what has been called "*risk society*" (Beck, 1992) has contributed to the awareness of belonging to a global world-system. The food scandals, such as the aforementioned "mad cow", insecurity and mistrust aroused by the food industry, perceived as distant from nature, are all factors that have contributed to the spread of food consumption more conscious to mode of production. In turn, this attention can generate new alliances between consumers and new identities. In an article by anthropologist Alison Leitch (2003), the Italian association Slow Food is analyzed from this point of view, as an example of such a response to the risk society and the ethical and environmental implications of the dominant production model. The focus on local production and gastronomic dimension is a way of putting food in a production process of shared identity, reorganizing the historical memory and proposing itself, through these identities, as active subjects. This would be done in the context of a general decline of the forms of traditional political and social participation, ie in the context of the decline of political parties, trade unions, churches. In this perspective, the consumer, in this case food consumption, as well as being a field of action for social change, proves to be a powerful medium for the formation of identity and can create new forms of transnational alliances among consumers. Globalization, therefore, appears as a unique process that creates, however, contrasting phenomena: on the one hand it is an approval process based on the capitalist model of production and the reduction of subjects to buyers of goods, even commodifying the very substance of social relations. On the other hand, consumption as autonomous practice detached from this process, along with the growing awareness of belonging to a system that now covers the whole world, opens wider and wider room to a critical problematization of the same manufacturing processes and dominant economic models. In the last chapters of this paper, I examine whether in the narrations of the participants of the ethnographic work, there may be implied possibilities of criticism against the dominant model of production-

13 "Agroecology and the Right to Food", Report presented at the 16th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council [A/HRC/16/49], 8 March 2011

consumption or, conversely, there are elements that can endorse it and reproduce it.

5. Theoretical study on the main themes of the ethnographic work and possibilities of constructive criticism

5.1 Diet, Health and visions of the body in the consumer society.

In the chapter on the ethnographic work we have identified what are the eating habits of the group under consideration we also identified the typical themes, deemed important by the students themselves in their daily lives and on which attention was focused on in the ethnographic interaction. It is in these themes and practices which I intend to explore possibilities more or less critical towards the model of the dominant society. The first of these themes analyzed is the diet-health relationship and the relationship between food and emotional. All the students interviewed consider nutrition very important in relation to the psycho-physical state of health of the individual. Yet, as we have seen, almost no one says to follow a special diet or inquire in depth on the issues of human nutrition. Therefore, in one of the meetings held with the class, with the biology teacher, we thought useful to explore the theme of nutrients, analyzing what the human being, from the point of view of food, needs to survive. Based on the data collected on the diet of the students, we have explored some of the points deemed problematic in dietary habits. I also mean to propose here a comparison with the Mediterranean diet scientifically typed and with the diet of the sixties analyzed through interviews. I propose a brief summary of the fundamentals of nutrition.

5.2 Fundamentals of human nutrition

A nutrient is a substance needed by the body for the maintenance of life, growth and renewal of its facilities. We can distinguish the family of nutrients into two main groups:

1. Macronutrients;
2. Micronutrients.

The first are those nutrients provided to the body in greater quantities, while the latter are placed in

smaller quantities but equally necessary. Our body needs necessarily all of these substances, although in different quantities and proportions. Macronutrients differ in carbohydrate, protein, fat, fiber and water. Micronutrients are distinguished in vitamins and minerals.

Carbohydrates, literally hydrates of carbon, also called saccharides or sugars, are organic compounds that are divided into:

- monosaccharides;
- disaccharides;
- oligosaccharides;
- polysaccharides.

The monosaccharides are characterized by a single sugar unit and among these elementary we distinguish glucose, fructose and galactose. Disaccharides consist of two simple sugar units and among these there are sucrose, formed by a molecule of glucose and fructose; lactose, formed by one molecule of glucose and one of galactose; maltose, formed by two molecules of glucose. These first two groups of carbohydrates, being characterized by a few units of sugar elementary, are called simple sugars; oligosaccharides and polysaccharides, however, being made up of several units of simple sugars, are called complex carbohydrates or starches. In particular, the oligosaccharides contain from 3 to 10 units of simple sugars and between these are starches. Polysaccharides are compounds formed from several thousand of these simple sugars and an expression of these are starches of cereals, potatoes and other vegetables. Both simple sugars and starches are capable of providing energy to the body but are assimilated in a different manner. Simple sugars create sudden and short-term fluctuations in the level of blood glucose (glycemia). Complex carbohydrates, to be absorbed, are demolished in smaller units during the digestive process. These provide energy more slowly, but for more prolonged periods of time.

Proteins are compounds formed by the combination of 20 different amino acids and are divided into non-essential and essential. The non-essential proteins are synthesized by the body; the 9 essential proteins, instead, can not be synthesized by the body and are taken through nutrition. Proteins perform various functions, including:

1. Regulator role;
2. Structural role;
3. Energetic role.

These can be found both in animal foods (meat, fish, eggs and dairy) and in plant foods (legumes, whole grains and seeds).

Lipids, or fats, are organic compounds insoluble in water, have a caloric content of 9 kcal per gram and are distinguished in:

- lipids of animal origin and solids;
- lipids of vegetable origin and liquid.

These play a variety of functions, including: conveying the fat soluble vitamins (A, D, E, K, F); facilitate the adjustment of several hormones; provide thermal insulation and protection of various internal organs, tendons, and joints; synthesize certain hormones; play an important role in the metabolic and immune systems; play an anti-allergic and anti-inflammatory function. Lipids are distinguished in:

1. Simple lipids;
2. Complex lipids;
3. Derivative lipids.

The simple lipids or triglycerides are formed by a molecule of glycerol and three fatty acid molecules. The essential fatty acids are omega 3, which is found in fish and omega 6, which is found in vegetable fats. The latter have a key role in the production and operation of eicosanoids, hormones that control the balance and the activity of many other hormones. The complex lipids are phospholipids, glycolipids and oligoproteins. Among the derivative lipids, however, there are cholesterol, which belongs to the family of steroid, that is synthesized by the body. The fatty acids are divided into saturated and unsaturated. Saturated fats are usually solid and are found in the yolk of eggs, dairy products, animal fats, margarine or palm oil. Unsaturated fats are liquid and are divided into monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. The first can be found in the oleic acid and in olive oil, the second can be found in the linoleic acid and in the seeds oil. There is another category of fats, hydrogenated fats or trans. These are artificial fats derived, through a chemical process, by unsaturated fats to whom hydrogen is added. They are the most harmful to health and are found in margarine, some corn oils, sunflower oil and soybean oil.

The fibers are made up of complex molecules that the body is able to assimilate and are found in fruits, vegetables, cereals, legumes and seeds. These perform a variety of functions, including the speed of intestinal transit by reducing the absorption of sugar, fat and cholesterol. They have therefore a detoxifying action for the body.

Vitamins can be synthesized by the body in small amounts and are divided into:

- water-soluble;
- fat-soluble.

The water-soluble vitamins are B, C and H and enter into the body through the diet. Fat-soluble vitamins are A, D, E, K, F and are absorbed along with dietary fats and are accumulated in the liver. Another type of very important nutrient are minerals. These play catalyst action in certain metabolic processes and structural role in some tissues (bones, teeth, hair). They are divided into:

1. Macroconstituens, namely calcium, phosphorus, sodium, potassium, chlorine, magnesium and sulfur;
2. Microconstituens, namely iron, zinc, copper, iodine, selenium, cobalt.

As I said, the human body to survive and stay healthy, needs all of these nutrients, and apart from some compounds and molecules that the body synthesizes from itself, they must be consumed in the diet. With the biology teacher we analyzed each of these elements trying to highlight the extent to which they were present in the average diet followed by the students in the class and if there might be involved issues. Therefore, there have been highlighted possible risks associated with such dietary habits summarized as follows:

- Excess of starches and simple sugars;
- Excess of saturated fats and mono-unsaturated fats;
- Lack of fiber;
- Protein mostly animal;
- Possible problems arising from chemical food additives;
- Little variety;

The excess of starches and simple sugars is given by the excess of bread and pasta made from refined flour. Discussing the habits in the family with students, in a context that I personally know very well, the amount of pasta and bread recommended by scientific institutions (note) is certainly exceeded: 80 grams of pasta per day, for example, is definitely a lower value than a plate of pasta consumed in normal family, which can go from 100 to 150 grams, sometimes even more. Moreover, as seen, none consumes whole wheat pasta, so a part of protein and fiber is lost and the consumption of pasta is equivalent to the result of consumption of refined starches. The use of white flour is due to an alimentary fashion, a preference expressed by the privileged classes of the past towards the consumption of white bread and pasta, as a mode of social distinction. This

preference was later also adopted by these classes when they had the chance and was maintained over time until today. In the contemporary world, instead, the new vehicle of social distinction seems to be the consumption of whole wheat flour. The amount of refined sugar consumed increases further if we consider the industrial products in the diet, although not in high quantities. Among those who consume few vegetables and more meat, the consumption of fiber becomes extremely poor with all the consequences that this entails. Proteins, which are essential in the diet, are taken mostly through meat: this food is often consumed just as synonymous with proteins. This thing can lead to excessive consumption, resulting in excessive intake of saturated fats, while plant proteins are mostly neglected. In addition to pasta and bread, consumption of starches also increases because of what is consumed outside the home use: snack, baked goods, sandwiches, pizza, chips. And in all these cases it is always refined flours. The consumption of potatoes is also often associated with frying in olive oil or seeds at home, "vegetable oils" outside the home. For vegetable oils is meant mostly palm oil, because is a cheaper oil and is therefore used both by the fast food in the city and by food industry, which often doesn't mention it on the label but rank it just below the generic wording of vegetable oils. Among the vegetable fats, palm oil is the most harmful to the health of the individual, as well as to the health of the natural environment: vast forests, especially in Southeast Asia are now being torn down to make way for oil palm monocultures precisely because it is massively used in the food industry. Once again, therefore, an apparent economic advantage masks a danger to the health and high costs to the environment, to the benefit of businesses. Another problem arising from the food industry is one of the chemicals they contain. Food additives are substances used in food during preparation, storage and marketing of foodstuffs. They are defined by law at the European level as "any substance not normally consumed as a food in itself and not normally used as a characteristic ingredient of food, regardless of if it has nutritive value, which, intentionally added to food for a technological purpose in the production, processing, preparation, treatment, packaging, transport or storage of resultant food, may reasonably be expected to become, in it or its derivatives, a component of such foods, directly or indirectly." Additives are classified according to their function and for them there is a fixed acceptable daily intake (ADI), which represents the amount that can be ingested daily over a lifetime through diet without side effects appear.

Despite the controls of EFSA, some food additives that are harmful to the human body continue to be employed in preparation of industrial food, often also in crafted products. This creates a lot of concern because in their interaction become responsible for the increase of 5% of food allergies and

more. Among the side effects of food additives there are nitrates and nitrites of sodium and potassium, which, contained in prepared meats (salami, ham, etc.) interfere with the presence of vitamin A and B1 and can change the functioning of the thyroid. In particular, the nitrite can be transformed into nitrosamines, carcinogenic compounds. Sulfites, content, shellfish, wine, nuts dried fruit and dried mushrooms, may give rise to allergic reactions such as bronchial asthma and the rashes. Phosphates contained in puddings, ice cream, condensed milk and ham, may result in insufficient bone calcification. The additives, in general, have a fundamental function in the trial of industrial processing of aliments but are of no utility from nutritional point of view, in fact, as seen, can be dangerous. Therefore represent an advantage for the industry but a disadvantage for the health of consumers.

Finally, although students claim to have a sufficiently varied diet, this is actually formed by a few staple foods and the alternatives are not many. Of course, if we compare it with the existing diet until the sixties of the last century, the variety is certainly much higher. Yet this real and potential diversity and of the contemporary food abundance world is limited by cultural and traditional preferences. For example, as we have seen from the analysis of consumption, is eaten only one type of cereal (refined) at the expense of others; few types of vegetables and fruit; are taken few vegetable proteins and few fiber. For example, some consumption is poor, such as fish, dried vegetables (once more abundant), dried fruit and seeds. Compared to the diet of the sixties, the greater variety is given by an increased consumption of fresh fruits, meat, eggs, milk and dairy products and a diverse range of industrial products.

5.3 Mediterranean diet between theory and practice and health problems

Now I'll try to compare the behavior described and analyzed with the Mediterranean diet which has been typed and I'll try to see how this diet is really part of the daily life of the interviewed subjects. The typical Mediterranean diet is defined as:

“Practiced regime food, with significant variations in countries bordering the Mediterranean basin. It involves a significant consumption of cereal products (bread, pasta) and vegetables, accompanied by a moderate consumption of legumes, fish and red wine; the base sauce is olive oil. To this feeding practice, since it is based on the balanced consumption of foods rich in fiber, antioxidants, unsaturated fats, reducing dietary fat and cholesterol, have been assigned a role in the prevention of chronic diseases and in determining the health of individuals throughout life”. (Enciclopedia Treccani online)

Are also recognized are "the traditional cultural values the mediterranean diet conveys also in the social practices related to food" and for all these reasons, on a proposal presented from Italy, the Mediterranean diet, in 2010, is recognized as intangible heritage of humanity by part of UNESCO, shared by Croatia, Cyprus, Spain, Greece, Italy, Morocco and Portugal. The first to take an interest in a scientific manner in the Mediterranean diet was the Italian nutritionist Lorenzo Piroddi, since 1939, considered the "father of the Mediterranean diet." Subsequently, a great scientific interest towards this subject was by the American scientist Ancel Keys, who studied the eating habits of the inhabitants of Nicotera, in Calabria, and the island of Crete, finding out that these people had a very low incidence of coronary heart disease. From here began his famous study "*Seven Countries*", based on a comparison of the diets of 12,000 people, aged between 40 and 59 years, spread across seven countries in the world, namely Finland, Japan, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, United States and Yugoslavia. The study began in 1958 and the first results came in the period 1958-1964; later the study continued for 50 years. This study, although there controversial for the used methodologies, showed a significantly lower incidence of coronary heart disease and mortality from ischemic heart disease in Mediterranean countries than in countries north of Europe and the United States. This fact would be due to the strong preference in this diet for fatty acids, basically olive oil, at the expense of saturated fat, more consumed in the northern countries. Moreover, it would be significant also the antioxidant action of many of the foods typical of the Mediterranean diet, contributing in general to combat degenerative diseases. Beyond the medical and scientific controversies, which are not the subject of this work, the action of such a healthy diet, combined with adequate exercise, it's generally recognized and affirmed, so much to gain, as mentioned, the title of patrimony of humanity. But does this diet, as it was typed in the studies cited, still exist? If we compare it with the results of the study on the eating habits of students in the class and with interviews we note that, despite some of the basic foods of this diet still exist (olive oil, cereals, fruits, vegetables), there are also significant distances from the typical Mediterranean diet, especially with regard to a greater consumption of meat, the introduction into the diet of various industrial food products, a reduction in the variety of plant and an excessive intake of cereals which is based almost exclusively on bread and pasta, produced from refined flour. Although in some families, as seen, there is a tendency to maintain habits closer to those typical of the Mediterranean diet, in many other cases, this exists only as a theory. The paradigm shift has occurred from the 60s-70s onwards, and continues today, although there are nowadays reverse trends which come back to

feeding regimes perceived as more complete and traditional. In fact, from the interviews it's clear that this typical diet was not adequate and varied enough in all families. It seems to be closer to the diet of rural households, but in other families, where there was the possibility of self-production of food and where there was an adequate income for an adequate spending on food, diet was much poorer than that described at the time by Ancel Keys. Professor Antonino De Lorenzo, one of the most important scholars of the Mediterranean diet and nutrition, and continuer of the studies of Keys, in an interview for "Il Fatto Quotidiano", on the 16 of March 2012, explains in detail what is meant in these studies when we talk about the Mediterranean diet and issues related to the abandonment of this diet (although not specifying that this diet could be deficient in absolute poorest families):

"We need to clarify the concept of the Mediterranean diet, which is abused for years. The Italian reference Mediterranean Diet is the moderate diet commonly followed by the working classes of the Mediterranean territories around the middle of the last century: this is based on cereals, legumes, vegetables, fresh and dried fruits, fishery products and virgin olive oil as prevalent food. Moreover, there are alcoholic beverages, like wine. Everything associated with a satisfactory physical activity ... (from the 50s to now) ... there has been a gradual abandonment of the Mediterranean diet in favor of less healthy eating habits. And this, in spite of the results of the studies indicate that the style of food to strive for a healthy and long life is that of the Mediterranean Diet. This, for the majority of Italian, is no longer the reference diet, apart from the fact that they take more calories and they consume less of them. We are approximately 400 kcal per day in more than is recommended. The consumption of fats, meats and desserts has decreased, also decreased is the consumption of coarse grains, rice, dried legumes and some vegetables. It is in constantly growth the consumption of citrus fruits and fruit, especially imported. So there is a strong and steady growth in the consumption of beer, spirits and sugar-sweetened beverages ...

(this means) ... for example, an increase in chronic diseases linked to diet, especially in the most vulnerable and less well-of populations: as in Southern Italy. The transition from agricultural-familial society to an industrial one has changed our way of life, with a strong impact on the nutritional behavior and energy expense. The existence of a relationship between diet, health status and chronic degenerative diseases is now recognized since a long time. In the various geographical worldwide macro-regions, chronic degenerative diseases are in constant and progressive increase, a phenomenon explained both by the aging of the population and with the profound changes in eating patterns and behavior that have characterized our country over the past 10 years. Among chronic degenerative diseases, cardiovascular diseases continue to weigh in mortality statistics representing the leading causes of death. In Italy they cause about 40% of deaths (60% in the world). Among the modifiable risk factors, often not mentioned, diet and physical activity have a crucial

role, which together represent the major modifiable determinant of chronic diseases, able to influence the state of health at any age and the major known risk factors”.

As noted among students in the reference class and in the interviews seems perfectly in line with the statement made by professor De Lorenzo. In the economic boom's Italy, with a rapid industrialization, there was a radical change in the consumption and in the general diet, a phenomenon that continues today and has strong repercussions on the health of populations. The Mediterranean diet, so celebrated today, was set aside in a short time, from the nascent Italian consumer society, the opening to global markets and the abandonment of the countryside. We instead approached the so-called "Western diet", typical of highly industrialized countries, first and foremost, the United States, characterized by a high consumption of red meat in general, saturated fats, refined grains and sugars and products of food industry, also refined.

What does this mean for health? As stated by Professor De Lorenzo, we are assisting today, even among populations of southern Europe, to an increase in chronic diseases, with cardiovascular disease as the leading cause of death in many countries, including Italy.

The model of industrial food production, within the context created by the global market, fails, therefore, both from the point of view of the distribution of food, with huge imbalances between different nations, and from the point of view of health promotion, even in countries where it has reached the abundance and excess food. There is no doubt that the amount of food in the world, thanks to this model, have increased dramatically, and is one of the determinants of the huge growth of the global human population. This, as we have seen, has not eliminated the problem of hunger, perhaps, on the contrary, has increased it. This mass process of production of food has focused on the amount, to the detriment of food quality, with health consequences that we have highlighted. It creates in certain regions of the world on the one hand diseases which are defined diseases of affluence, from a food point of view linked to excess and poor quality of diets, and on the other hand, those that have been defined diseases of poverty, among which there are those related to malnutrition. It also creates inequalities, as we shall see, even within rich countries, where there is an imbalance between those who can afford to pay more for healthier foods and those who base their purchases on lower priced food, provided by industry and from the global market. Often these products have a lower nutritional value and pose risks for health. One of the most important and emblematic, even at a symbolic level, of these imbalances is precisely the phenomenon of obesity. The phenomenon of obesity, has been defined a "*global epidemic*", with alarming data in the United States and trends in strong growth in Europe. As for Italy there have been several statistics studies

subdivided by age groups. I report some recent years data published on the website of the National Center of Epidemiology, Surveillance and Italian Health Promotion, starting from childhood obesity to the advanced age data¹⁴

"In particular, "OKkio alla Salute" (a monitoring program on childhood obesity) provides data measured weight status of children of the third primary (8-9 years), the styles of nutritional custom and exercise. Started for the first time in 2008, OKkio alla Salute has a two-years periodicity of data collection and is also part of the WHO European project "Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI)." The data from 2010 of OKkio alla Salute, which was attended by over 42 thousand students of the third grade primary and 44 000 parents, confirm worrying levels of bad eating habits, sedentary lifestyles and excess weight: 22.9% of measured children result overweight and 11, 1% in conditions of obesity. Is also obvious the regional variability, with the lower rates generally in the north and the higher ones in the South. From the study is also shown that parents do not always have an accurate picture of their child's weight status: among mothers of children overweight or obese, 36% do not believe that their child is overweight and only 29% think that the amount of food he had taken is excessive.

As to the youth, instead, the reference study is HBSC-Italy (Health Behaviour in School-aged Children-health- behaviors related in children of school age):

"Is an international multicenter study in which Italy joined in 2001-2002, which aims to increase the knowledge on the health of young people (11, 13 and 15 years), with particular attention to eating habits, body image, physical activity and recreation, risk behaviors, health and perceived well-being, family background, peer group and school environment. The survey, which has a four-year periodicity of data collection in 2010 was co-ordinated by the University of Turin, Siena and Padua in collaboration with the ISS and is part of the "system of surveys on behavioral risks for age 6-17 years ". For the first time it has been realized on a sample of 4000 children (age ranges of 11, 13 and 15 years) in each region. The management of the data collection involved the use of two questionnaires (one addressed to children and the other to the head teacher) administered within schools, sampled in each region, examining a total of 77 000 children. The data of HBSC, presented at the meeting of 12 October 2010 showed that: the weight excess decreases with age and is higher in males. The frequency of overweight and obese children is higher in 11 years olds (29.3% in males and 19.5% in females) and in 15 year olds (25.6% in males and 12.3% in females); the 15 year olds (47.5% of males and 26.6% females) do less physical activity than boys of 13 (50.9% of males and 33.7% of females); among the 15 years olds, 40% of males and 24% of females stated to consume alcohol at least once a week; declared smoking at least once a week, 19% of 15 year olds (both

¹⁴ Obesità, aspetti epidemiologici, in "Epicentro", Il portale per l'epidemiologia e la sanità pubblica, 12 maggio 2011

male and female); there is a lower daily intake of vegetables in the regions of the South and among males. "

The last data related to adulthood and old age:

"From the interviews of Multipurpose ISTAT survey" Aspects of daily life. Year 2009 " emerges that, with regard to the prevalence of overweight and obesity in Italy in the period 2001-2009, has increased both the percentage of those who are overweight (from 33.9% in 2001 to 36.1% in 2009) and that of the obese (8, 5% in 2001 to 10.3% in 2009). The share of the population in a condition of excess of weight increases with age, from 19% between 18 and 24 years to over 60% between 55 and 74, and then decreased slightly in older age groups (55.9 % among people with more than 75 years). The conditions of overweight and obesity are more prevalent among men than among women: 45.2% of men are overweight and 11, 3% are obese compared to 27.7% and 9.3% of women. At a regional level it is observed that the condition of overweight and obesity is more prevalent in the South (50.9%), particularly in Molise (51.6%), Campania (51.8%) and Calabria (51.4%). According to data collected in 2010, 32% of the adults is overweight, while 11% are obese: Overall, so, more than four out of ten adults (42%) are overweight. Moreover, from the comparison with the estimates of the previous three years, considering only the local health authorities who participated in the surveillance for the entire period, in the period 2007-2010 can be seen that the value of overweight people has remained stable: 43% in 2007 and in 2008, 42% in 2009 and 2010. (As for the elderly population ...) ... the experiment, carried out in 7 Italian regions, indicates an increase in population in excess of weight up to 75 years of age : in this age group, in fact, overweight and obesity amounted to 60%. Then, between 75 and 84 years begins a decrease (53%) and even more in ultra-85 years olds (42%)."

The article of the portal "Epicentro" concludes noting that "excess of weight is more common in people with low education and with many economic difficulties." The epidemic of overweight and obesity as well as other diseases typical of rich countries, called "diseases of affluence", such as heart disease and chronic degenerative diseases, are related historically with the analyzed phenomena of industrialization of food production, urbanization, sedentary population and abandonment of self-production. In the example of obesity then, we can see clearly how this is related to certain economic and socio-cultural variables. Are the poorest and less educated classes of the rich countries to suffer most of these dietary imbalances resulting from overeating and in particular the excess of certain foods. How can we explain this situation? In part, there is an economic rationale: the industrially produced food, as we have seen, have the lower prices but also have, in general, lower nutritional properties: it is characterized by use of refined flours and sugars, saturated fats and chemical additives. Who is moving towards more health-conscious diets must

also spend more money since, biological food, for example, has an average price higher than conventional products. That's why among the more educated middle class with a higher income but not rich, especially in times of crisis, we are seeing more consumption based on the pursuit of quality rather than quantity. Thus, there is an economic reason which must limit the spending in relation to the higher cost of food considered more genuine. But there are also several reasons for cultural and gender differences, as noted by Scarpellini:

"And in Italy? The results can be surprising, but the scheme proves to be remarkably stable over time. Italian men experience an increase in weight among the lowest in high-income countries...; women then have decreased ... In absolute terms the Italian is second only to Switzerland for thinness in Europe (in the world, instead, the leanest women are East Asian). Therefore, even in the presence of 9% of the obese population (even if this is a data in growth), the majority of Italians are of normal weight, with a remaining percentage of people a little overweight, especially among men (underweight is just the 3-4%). So a first consideration is that there is a substantial continuity in the patterns of supply, despite a greater tendency to sedentary, which has allowed men to follow the general trend towards a significant weight gain, and women to be in contrast to the global movement...

The tendency to weight gain is noted particularly among socio-economically lower ranges and between people with a low educational level, with a more pronounced trend among women...

ISTAT researches of the 90s show more or less the same picture. The obesity, compared to BMI index, increases with age and is highest in the South (11%) and lowest in the Northwest (7-8%); this is high among owners of elementary school license (15%) and lowest among those who have a diploma or degree (4-5%); eventually underweights are concentrated in the age group between 18-24 people of medium-high and everything is much more pronounced in the female population. How do you explain these trends? We have already mentioned the theories of Bourdieu on the fact that we could be facing a different relationship with the world: the upper classes agree to give up the pleasures and immediate gratification (such as those of food and partly of eros) to invest in the future, for example, getting a socially appreciated lean body and the planned control of the family, to conform to a sober lifestyle recognized as typical of the bourgeois. The lower classes, instead, don't give up immediate gratification, to the pleasure of food, to everything at once, if possible. And why should they do that? There are few opportunities for them that the sacrifices of today are rewarded tomorrow. From here we have two different ways of behaving towards life, which are literally embodied in the various body forms. Forms that include values of class but also gender: so here there is the delicacy and thinness of female beauty in front of the virility of the male body, and so on. To this we can add the constant attention to the value of cooking and food, so present in the Italian culture, which has maintained a strong interest in these issues (particularly in the upper classes) favoring the continuity of a healthy and relatively light diet that goes perfectly with the canons of the media". (Scarpellini, 2012, 228-

5.4 Body, identity and social criticism

In Italy, therefore, obesity, and, on the contrary, the control of the weight and shape of the body, are in relation to certain socio-economic, cultural and gender variables. Italian women are among the leanest of Europe, as well as the richest and most educated classes give much importance to the maintenance of a healthy and slim body:

“Anyway to get back to the 80s, the food-body relationship was consistently present in the minds of consumers, no longer worried about food scarcity or absence of meat or even about diets followed in the Neolithic period, but from one thought: to be beautiful, to be thin. We have seen how in the public discourse of the 60s was imposed the combination diet-health due to the spread of the nutritionists theories; now we go a step further, adding to the aesthetic aspect. Food is the key to health, but also of beauty; the ideal is a young, healthy, beautiful and thin body (so diet-health-beauty). But why aesthetic canons insist on thinness, why is it beautiful a slender body?” (Scarpellini, 2012, pp. 224)

To answer to this question, the author takes into account the new models of beauty touted in the period of the seventies and especially eighties onwards, from cinema, fashion and advertising. She also continues stressing the historical importance of this body shape:

"If it is true that, in a not too distant past, widespread poverty and food shortages meant that fat was synonymous rich and powerful too, and then fat was the same beautiful, in elites a slim figure was a canon appreciated, especially in young women. Moreover for men the efficiency-fold linked to thinness was always present for the performance of military duties and work. Nor we can forget the religious aspect related to the sin of gluttony, which had to push to fast or at least moderation in taking food ...

Today an almost dry shape, socially valued, is achieved through diet and exercise, which in a sense represent a continuity with the past, because it shows that the surveillance and discipline on our body are not only accepted but also self-imposed ...” (Scarpellini, 2012, pp. 226)

The author also quotes Foucault's theory of "docile bodies" (Foucault, 1975), who describes this self-control of the bodies as disciplining designed to meet the needs of the mass institutions. However, in Bauman's perspective, who emphasizes that the differences between the society of producers and the consumer society, this control turned to self-discipline is transformed and

becomes self-construction of a unique subjectivity, in what apparently is a process of emancipation. Actually, according to Bauman, this is part of the fetishism of subjectivity, so this process of self-subjectivation would be only one mode of the commodification of individuals and bodies, in order to create socially accepted identity within the context of dominant production, so that this subjectivity becomes economically exploitable and expendable. These observations on the body in the consumer society and on self-construction of a socially winning subjectivity that manifests itself in such a body, can be related to the ethnographic survey presented in this text. The characteristics identified in the narrations of the students, who linger on the attention for the body and on the general idea of health that moderates and controls the pleasure for the food, can be an expression of this dominant physical canon, on the acceptance of this model and the construction of an identity that adapts itself. About the body, this identity is equivalent to the ideals of thinness, physical beauty and youth. In cases in which this control is lost there is a sense of guilt because you have not known how to control yourself and you have not measured up to the model to which it is aimed. All this may explain why, by statistics, it is clear that the weight of women (mostly, but also for men) increases especially in relation to age and social class, when the idea of a possible adjustment to the fees described dominant jumps and there is less possibility of a further expendable subjectivity. But if we put more emphasis on the autonomy of the consumer and on its ability to take possession of the goods and use them independently, in the construction of an individual detached from the production process itself (as consumption and production are two independent processes), we can come to different conclusions: in the context of the consumer society, the consumer uses the means to build his own identity, even food goods; in this case, the control in consumption or the rejection of industrial products in favor of products considered more genuine and natural can be an implicit criticism against this type of food and this type of production. The possibility of such criticism, however, according to statistics, it is economically, culturally and socially determined, and as a result, is not uniformly distributed within the society.

5.5 Conviviality

Another of the themes identified in the narrations of the students participating in the project is conviviality, pleasure of good eating, of food itself and of eating together. Eating food is a time for sharing and socializing, and of pleasure itself of this sharing opportunity. This happens both with

friends and family, where, in the presented narrations, we have seen strong persistence of the habit of eating at home, with the family, the main meals of the day. Yet this function that food presents as a constant reaffirmation of social ties, in or out of family, though constant, has undergone some changes related to the context in which it occurs. If we compare the family meal today with that of the sixties, we can see how it changes meaning itself of family ties: the main meal of each day, for example, as highlighted in the interviews, it was in relation to the needs of the working adult man of the family: in farming families, the main meal was dinner, consumed at home with the return of the man from the countryside. In the non-farming families could be lunch or dinner, but always in function of male labor. The other members of the family, meanwhile, held other important productive roles: baking, pasta production at home, economic management and maintenance of the house, for example. All these moments were an integral part of the overall production process in which every member of the family, depending on their role, contributed. According to Bauman:

“Thanks to the benefit of hindsight, we can imagine that what members of a family kept gathered around the dinner table, making it an instrument of integration and reaffirmation of the family as a group bound in a durable manner, was primarily the productive element in the consumption . Food was at home and nowhere else: gathering at the table for dinner was the last phase (distribution) of a long production process that began in the kitchen and even before, in the field and in the family workshop. What tied in a group those diners was collaboration, paid or pending, to the previous process of productive work, and from that came the shared consumption of what had been produced”. (Bauman, 2007, pp. 98)

If today the production element is blown, it would be interesting to ask what binds today, the family around a table. From the ethnographic work done in school with the students, it became clear, in fact, as the main meal of the day is still an important and indispensable moment of sociality for the family as a whole. Despite major changes in the general society that we have described, some things remain unchanged: for example pasta, the consumption of as a main course in what is the main meal of the gathered family. There is no more a productive element to glue them, but there is a convivial and traditional element, along with the pleasure of staying together at the table and the pleasure of conviviality, in a context where family ties are perceived as fundamental. It is possible the persistence of a convivial element separated from a collective production process-consumption's process? Bauman writes in this regard:

"The human existence and co-existence, which combines to form the social life, constitutes the common

good for all of us, from whom and through whom all cultural and social goods are derived. The pursuit of happiness should therefore focus on the promotion of experience, institutions, and other cultural and natural realities of life in common, rather than focusing on indexes of wealth, thus tending to replace the human community as a site of individual competitiveness and rivalry. In his review of the Flahault's book, Serge Audiere points out that the model of conviviality proposed by Serge Latouche or Patrick Viveret, though approaching the idea supported by Flahault as an alternative to individualism, is dated a long time back, although mostly remained in the periphery, rarely visited, of the public debate. Already in his psychology of taste, published in 1825, Brillat-Savarin insisted that the "gourmandise", the pleasures of eating at the same table, the joy of sitting next to each other around a laden table, the pleasures of sharing food, drinks, jokes and gaiety, were some of the essential bonds of society. The actual meaning of the idea of conviviality, as a community of life emancipated and not mutilated by the joint forces of bureaucracy and technology was analyzed in depth by the works of Ivan Illich. I would add here that the business opportunities hidden in the appealing aspects of those models of conviviality have already been discovered and eagerly embraced by the consumer markets; like many other social and ethical impulses, they were marketed and regularly boxed and labeled. They are also entered in the statistics of gross domestic product: their share in money that is constantly changing hands, so, it is almost in an irresistible rise ... the point, then - and this is a point on which we do not have a compelling and empirically founded answer, at the moment - is if the joys of conviviality are able to replace the pursuit of wealth, enjoyment of consumer goods offered by the market and the art of always doing better than others, combined with the idea of infinite economic growth, in their role of recipes almost universally accepted for a happy life. In other words, could we realize our desire for the pleasures of conviviality, as "natural", "endemic" and spontaneous could be, within the currently prevalent type of society, without falling into the trap of utilitarianism and bypassing the mediation of the market?" (Bauman, 2013, pp. 67-69)

Bauman himself, in this regard, cites the example of the association Slow Food, as an attempt to revive the practice of conviviality and the joy tied to it, as well as the sense of cooperation and the pursuit of shared aims, as an alternative to the competition and the individualism generated by the capitalist model of society. If the pleasure of food and eating together have always been the basic means of construction and reaffirmation of social ties, today, in the commodified consumer society, this kind of conviviality can be a means to de-commodify the same social relations and extend the principle of cooperation and sharing to the whole society. Not only within the family and circle of loved ones, but also to the victims and excluded from the apparent abundance of the consumer society. Therefore, the attention paid by individuals to this theme and this need of life in sharing, may be, if expounded, a possibility of practical criticism against the dominant model.

5.6 Localism

The last issue I want to give particular attention to is related to local production and the distrust of the industrial products of the global market. This localism, as mentioned earlier, is partly generated by the process of globalization, if it is true that, as in the vision of Appadurai, the individual, in the consumer society is immersed in de-territorialized flows of goods, people and ideas. So, he has to constantly work to re-territorialise these streams according to his social imaginary. A typical example of this attempt to re-territorialisation is given precisely by the attention, steadily growing, towards local foods and traditions, not only in the case of associations that we have mentioned, but also in the case of individual consumers apparently less politicized. This is actually in contrast with the data that highlights the importance of large retail chains. On the one hand it is used, then, going to the supermarkets and buying standardized goods produced in distant places. On the other hand, it is precisely this process of uniformity that leads to consider the importance of a food linked to the territory and tradition. So what are the selection criteria in relation to this dynamic?

To paraphrase Marvin Harris, in his famous book *"Good to eat"* (1985), in recent decades, what is good to eat grossly equals what is good to sell. This fact follows precisely the birth of industrial agriculture, food industry and consumer society. More and more the taste would be directed by the needs of market and sales strategies, along with the lowest prices made available by industrial production. If this is indeed true it is also true that in recent decades we are witnessing, as I said, an exactly opposite trend, in response to this alimentary "colonization" that leads to talk more and more about local food and local culinary traditions. In fact, if we look at history, only a few foods have a very ancient tradition, and after thousands of years they are still on our tables. The most important example, in this respect, are the so-called "plants of civilization" (Braudel, 1979) : wheat in the Mediterranean for thousands of years is the basis of sustenance and remains the same today. But modes of consumption have changed: Romans, certainly did not eat pasta with tomato sauce! The production methods also changed, so most of the pasta produced in Italy is made with wheat imported from abroad. In a 2006 article the Italian anthropologist Alessandra Guigoni expresses this concept well:

"So, talking about local food, if you look at the history of nutrition, has a relative value, because most of the products were brought from other places, introduced as a result of major socio-cultural events and political phenomena similar, in some ways, to today's globalization...

...Looking well, most of the plants we eat are original of the Middle Eastern, or Asian or American; also

foods symbol of “italianity”, pasta with tomato sauce and pizza, basically have a history of little more than two centuries, and without American tomato, the so-called Mediterranean cuisine would be very different...

...If nutrition has often deep roots in our history, regional kitchens were formed only in the modern era, and are generally from the seventh-nineteenth centuries...

...Today what is global is avoided, and what is local is researched, because it's an equally rare and valuable good, produced by artists and craftsmen of the food, not produced in series. Of course there is a distinction between local food "in" and local food "out", pass me the crude distinction. Some foods characteristic of certain areas, such as Italian cheeses DOP (protected origin), have risen to a status symbol, and the production and consumption have soared; others are disappearing, as many varieties of local fruits and vegetables, but also local breeds of sheep, goat and some dishes such as tripe, vegetable soups and legumes: here what counts is the regional and national agricultural policies, but also the role of media is not small in such marketing transactions of food and wine, as well as mere promotion of a certain gastronomic heritage. Centuries ago, the nobility and the bourgeoisie of Europe sought in the East rare and precious products, avoiding spices and flavors, such as oregano, basil, fennel, considered good only for the vulgar folk. Today, anyone who owns a vegetable garden, a terrace and has time and opportunity to grow their own thyme, marjoram, bay leaf, basil is, in a certain sense, rich, since these plants are the heritage of our Mediterranean identity. Even more, (are considered rich) those who have the opportunity to use homemade oil or wine: in times of “mad cow” disease, food adulteration and fraud, in times, in a word, of food insecurity, ancient styles and ways of life, are having a comeback, especially those perhaps abandoned in recent decades, because considered an obstacle to be overcome, rather than a resource for future generations...” (Guigoni, 2006)

Talking about local cuisines is therefore quite a relative fact, because every kind of cuisine was formed through exchange with the acquisition from other cuisines and products once considered exotic. Anthropology and history teach that apparently immutable traditions may actually be formed within a few decades, as just they can disappear as quickly, or change shape and become functional in market strategies, distinctions between classes or social demands. Local cuisines and local foods are returning desirable as opposed to global production dynamics. A little of nostalgia for the “happy past”, a bit as a model of distinction, in the sense indicated by Bourdieu, so the wealthy social classes distinguish themselves from others by consumption, in this case, as described by Guigoni, as consumption of local products heirs of a particular culinary tradition to protect and enhance. A little, as mentioned, as a marketing strategy, so the enhancement of local products, presented as the most genuine and “expression of a territory” becomes a promotional method that responds to the same logic of marketing for those, these products, previously have been abandoned,

and according to the same business logic. In this last sense, Marvin Harris can be right, tying the good to eat and the good to sell, with the difference that, now, the good to eat, and then to think, and then to sell, is represented by some local products aimed to a portion of market, and destined to a specific part of consumers who are distinguishing by a presumed greater attention to health and a presumed greater attention to the wellness of territories. Presumed because, in reality, local is not synonymous of healthier, nor with respect to individual health, or with regard to the environment. These factors depend, in fact, on the production process, the type of agriculture, the impact of the production on the environment, the use or not of chemicals, and the presence of residues of these. All of this, is true both for homemade foods as for food from across the world. Moreover, this promotion of local products, although it may be in some cases only a marketing strategy, it contributes to the development of local economy, at least in the form of small to medium companies operating in a given territory. It can promote, for example, food and wine tourism and can help to generate jobs, a mirage in these times of economical crisis. It is also true that it can actually contribute to the preservation of certain foods and local products of territories that would otherwise be swept away by the global market. Those wishing to do business in this sector are therefore welcomed. But, as I said, always about business that we are talking, and always about model of agriculture voted still to profit and industrial farming; a model that was exactly the cause of recent process of abandonment of the countryside and that brings in itself the series of problems and contradictions, as the environmental ones, we just wrote about; or the social ones, for example, like illegal work in the country sides; or, more generally, commercial exploitation of local food traditions, new ground for capitalism and niche market. In addition to this, in this protection of local products, the focus is only on some particular products and only these are entitled to protection and media coverage. The others, perhaps traditionally present on the tables for centuries, are simply forgotten. But not only companies and market are speaking, with economic interests, about the safeguard of local products. Many people are experiencing, increasingly, alternative ways of life, linked to a return to the land, as opposed to the logic of the market and the commodification of territories and life itself. In Italy there is now a multitude of examples in this respect, and we have already reported some of them. I wish here to distinguish, in brief, different meanings, developed today, of the use of "local" as opposed to the global, at least for what regards agriculture and food:

- Local as an instrument of class distinction and status through consumption;
- local as marketing strategy for commercial purposes;
- local as an experimentation of alternative lifestyles and production of economic systems from

below.

The last point is the one that interests us for the purposes of the present work. It represents the moment in which can become a critical moment of the dominant model of society, creating, in practice, real alternative systems. An example may be local producer's markets or the so-called "community-supported agriculture," in which producers and consumers join forces to give the opportunity to the former to produce food according to the methods of natural agriculture, responding, at the same time, to the needs of the latter about genuine, healthy and ethical foods. The focus on the local food production, expressed in the students narrations, can thus be a source of general criticism and construction of alternatives only if explored deeply in a conscious manner, in order to get out of business and commercial reasons, that may also appropriate, in their way, of the issue.

6. Conclusions

In this work, issues related to food consumption in a local context have been dealt, through the ethnographic work presented, based on an educational experiment. This analysis of local consumption was then enlarged in a diachronic perspective through the interviews reported and included within the development of the industrial model of food production within the context of contemporary consumer society. From these analyses, consumption, seen as the defining characteristic of contemporary Western societies, it is an ambivalent practice. On this ambivalence were formed and are continue to be formed strong oppositions of economic interests and social imaginary. If the dominant model in Western societies, today, remains that of capitalism, consumerism and the global market directly from above, it is also true that, just by consuming as an autonomous process, a series of practices that call into question this model, have begun to emerge, focusing, explicitly or implicitly, on the contradictions and problems that this brings on itself. These practices can be captured in a conscious way through an ecological perspective, taking into account the overall relations in what increasingly looks like a world-system. In this context, the field of food consumption is emerging as a socially problematized field, able to generate processes of social change and create new possibilities outside the domain of the market society. In addition, the field of food consumption can also be the context for the formation of new social identities, as seen through the article by Leitch, based on the one hand on the recovery of a local and territorial

dimension (ie based on the emphasis given to the peculiarities of the territory), but on the other hand, these new identities, are also well aware of belonging to a larger system that includes the whole world, and appears ready to negotiate with this apparent paradox. Globalization is configured as a phenomenon, at the same time, of global uniformity and creation or reaffirmation of local peculiarities. The ecological perspective applied to anthropology of food consumption may contribute to the problematization of some of the most controversial phenomena and compelling issues typical of the global society, as it allows us to understand the systemic nature of the interactions between global and local processes in the context of the consumer society, of capitalism, and in the context of industrial food production. It can also act as a bridge between critical theories of consumption and theories focused on the consumer's social actions, as presented in the introduction, since it includes such actions in a broader context by showing the mutual implications and issues. Just as it is useful to trace the distance between production and consumption we have spoken about, normally obscured by the same ways of production. It is precisely in order to bridge this gap that I think it is necessary, now, to propose educational interventions, aimed at increasing the knowledge and awareness of the relationship between our daily consumption actions and some urgent and important global issues. And it is in this regard that the ethnographic work presented here, was intended as an educational experiment to trace the acts of daily consumption to the wider implications we have spoken about, thanks to the tools of anthropology. This may contribute to the development of more informed choices, about daily consumption, and on an autonomous vision of society in general. And it is in this sense that food and food consumption were intended as a total social fact and a starting point to analyze the various spheres of society, till the identification of global issues on which, through consumption, it is possible, at least in part, to intervene.

With regard to the proposed ethnographic work, having identified and analyzed the typical diet of the students participating in the project, their eating habits and the most important and recurring meanings they attributed to such practices and, to the sphere of food, I have tried to identify, within the narrations collected, some important themes which focused on the mutual interest. In these themes I attempted to investigate the possibility of implicit criticism against the dominant model of production and in relation to the identified issues that this model brings on itself. The diet-health relationship is one of the analyzed issues: on the importance attributed by students to a healthy diet based on genuine foods, and by the refusal, or otherwise the control in eating industrial foods, we can detect a possibility of criticism of the industrial model of food production. Another topic

analyzed is the importance attributed to conviviality and the pleasure of good food and eating together. About this theme, we have deepened in class the possibility of not relegate the pleasure of conviviality to the circle of family and friends but to extend it to the whole society, as a social value of reference. I have also analyzed here the potential that this concept presents to de-commodify social relations in the context of the consumer society. Finally, one last issue discussed is related to the preference expressed by the students towards fresh food locally produced, considered the most genuine, as well as the more general preference towards local production. This attention to the territory may present critical possibilities only if it is expressed outside of the dominant logic of the market, to build and supply alternative economic circuits in opposition to the industrial mass production. Yet all of these points analyzed, present contradictory possibilities: industrial products, although seen with distrust, are still consumed and, as seen, are set in certain moments of daily sociality, relative, for example, to eating out with friends or at home consumption of meals out of the traditional main meals (main meals are eaten as seen in the family, preferably with fresh products). The same attention to the territory and local production can be, and is in fact, commercially exploitable according to capitalist logic. Conviviality, instead, may be exhausted in the circle of loved ones, leaving space, out of this circles, to individualism and competitiveness propagated by the dominant models. The capitalist industrial production, thanks to marketing, can also attempt to respond in its way to some social needs, potentially critical of this production mode. But, in fact, as I have attempted to analyze in this work it, is exactly this dominant model as a whole, to creates more problems than it solves, and that's why I intended to insist on the critical possibilities implied in the process of consumption. And it is here that the ecological approach can be useful, together with the proposal of a nutrition education that takes into consideration the problems of global society. From this perspective, we have seen how the current dominant model of production-distribution-consumption appears ruinous and, more and more, characterized by its ability to produce systemic crises: ecological crises, economic crises, food crises. A nutrition education of this kind can be useful both to provide guidance on issues related to food and relating to public health, and to make consumers more aware of the relationship between their daily consumption and urgent problems of the present. In this sense, with the educational project on which this ethnographic study is based, I tried to introduce students to this broader view of the implications of food consumption, trying to provide tools to explore, with more awareness, the contradictions and the possibility of social change implicit in our ways of life, in reference to food.

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