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Concluding Remarks: Anxiety as Invariant of Human Relation to Food

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Several sociologists have pointed to risk as a characteristic of modern societies (Giddens 1991; Le Breton 1995; Beck 1995; Martucelli 1999). Ulrich Beck has proposed the concept of "risk society" to describe modern societies. However, this idea has sparked debates. The first concerns modernity. What Europe experienced during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries took place in two generations in some Asian countries. Kyung-Sup Chang (2010) has proposed the concept of "compressed modernity" to account for this phenomenon. The second concerns the concept of risk itself, which, in the field of food, is charged with reducing the problem to its health-related dimensions.

In the last three decades, the West has faced several big food crises, especially that of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). In this context, the question of "risk" in food safety has taken a particularly important place, in both scholarly and secular conceptions. This hegemonic

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framework has led to a hierarchy of risks: "important" risks and "less important" ones. The former lead to mortality or morbidity and the latter are more qualitative and are in part social, political, and cultural choices. The risk paradigm focuses attention on the health and tends to reject the other dimensions, though it has the merit of promoting the institutionalisation of food risk management bodies. But contemporary crises cannot be reduced to the question of food safety; they interact with food security, food fraud and social controversies. Poulain (2018) showed how the approach in terms of concerns and anxiety could be a way to overcome this hierarchisation of risks by giving them an equivalent status.

This book presents a double interest. Vietnam is a very good example of "compressed modernity", and the author's epistemological perspective gives "food anxiety" a central position in the theoretical framework (see Ehlert and Faltmann, this volume). Some food sociologists have pointed to the fact that, whereas the concept of "risk" can be seen as a consequence of modernisation, "food anxiety" could be an anthropological invariant (Beardsworth 1995; Poulain 2017 [2002]). Far from being contradictory, these two perspectives focus on complementary dimensions of the relation of the human being to food. They allow a better understanding of contemporary food crises and create the conditions of a more global analysis.

Food and "Compressed Modernity"

The transformation of the food system organisation and of the social representations and meanings associated with food during the process of modernisation, gives food a crucial place in the social and political arena of modernised societies. In addition to the "classical" food safety and food security concerns, more controversial issues have emerged like the use of "genetically modified products", animal "cruelty", as well as junk food and its supposed connections with obesity development. Nothing seems self-evident anymore. Food industries are targeted; even the farmers, who once had the confidence of city dwellers, are now attacked on various fronts. Lobbying groups are accused of manipulating scientists, the media, politicians, and consumers for their own benefit. The system

is not running as smoothly as it once did. A certain tension is rising within the "food social space"[1] over concerns extending from intergenerational responsibility—"What kind of planet are we leaving for our children?"—to intra-generational issues—"How to divide resources between global North and South, and within societies, between rich and poor?"

We have already explored in previous publications (Poulain 2012b) the trends in modernised societies, such as the medicalisation of food, its judicialisation, development of environmental concerns, culinary and gastronomic heritage, or the transformation of human-animal relationships, which are challenging the hitherto dominant "feeding model" of food. So, it's imperative for the authorities in charge of food policies as well as all agents along the agro-food chain, to listen to and understand the reactions of consumers and citizens.

In most Asian countries that have experienced rapid or compressed modernisation, food anxiety is exacerbated. What Western countries have undergone in one and a half centuries, Asia experienced in less than 50 years. In two generations, Vietnam, similar to some other Asian countries, has faced rapid structural transformations in the domains of economy, housing and urbanisation, transportation, and "food social space". The transition from concern for food security to food safety characterises the evolution of the Western context. This reduced concern for famine and more for the quality of food, did not happen in modernised Vietnam where these two issues of food safety (see Part II, this volume) and food security (see Gorman, this volume) coexist at the same time.

To eat is an act of trust that supposes a certain social consensus all along the food chain, from the farmer or the stockbreeder to the eaters themselves; trust in all the actors that contributed to produce, transform and market the products (Lahlou 1998; Kjærnes et al. 2007). Therefore, we can also interpret the exacerbation of contemporary food anxieties as the result of a breakdown of "consensus" between the different actors interacting in the "food social space".

To describe the fast modernisation of certain Asian countries, Chang has proposed the concept of compressed modernity. It corresponds to a "civilisational context in which economic, political, cultural and social changes occur in an extremely condensed manner both in space and in time" (Chang 2017, 33). Moreover, in compressed modernity, disparate

historical and social elements coexist, contributing to the construction and reconstruction of a complex social system characterised by fluidity (Chang 2017). The compression of time and space was already described by David Harvey (1990) as the result of technological innovations in the sectors of communication (telegraph, telephone, fax, internet, etc.), as well as transport and travel (high speed trains, democratisation of air transport), which both came to reduce spatial and temporal distances.

Beck and Grande (2010) have tried to articulate "compressed modernity" and Beck's "first" and "second" stages of modernity. "First modernity" is defined as a rise in rationality and the "de-traditionalisation" of societies, and the second as a weakening of the legitimacy of the "normative system", leading to an "individualisation of lifestyles". "Second modernity" corresponds to post-traditional societies, in which the normative models have lost a part of their strength and legitimacy. Not only South Korea, Malaysia, and China but also Vietnam, even though at a lower level, fit more or less into this framework. This stage of modernity is accompanied by the coexistence of issues related to food security and food safety, to which is added a certain level of fraud in the international market, creating a specific context (see Figuié et al., this volume).

So, "compressed modernity" corresponds to the telescoping of these two forms of modernity. Chang (2017) describes two sub-phenomena that have an impact on both the time and space dimensions: "condensation" and "compression". The first, condensation, refers to the phenomenon that the physical process required for the movement or change to take place between two time points (eras) or between two locations (places) is abridged or compacted (Chang 2017, 33–34). The second, compression, corresponds to a "phenomenon that diverse components of multiple civilisations that have existed in different areas and/or places coexist in a certain delimited time-space and influence and change each other" (Chang 2017, 34). Reduction of distance in space increases the mobility of food and populations at the national level (between regions and between rural and urban areas) but also at an international level (between countries). Through this mobility, the interlinking or crossover of food cultures is developed and, in certain contexts, the hybridising or creolisation of cultures (Tibère 2016). Reduction of time also pushes the process of designating food cultures as heritage. At the same time, it also

promotes the development of cosmopolitan cultures, with compression superimposing different food cultures in the same social space.

It is possible to add a new source of anxiety to the traditional distinction between "food security" and "food safety", namely "controversial risks". This concept covers the problems generated by the emergence of hazards linked either to technological innovations to food (such as the application of genetic engineering or molecular engineering, nanotechnologies, etc.), or to the evolution of knowledge, which in itself elucidates and makes visible new dimensions of an issue. These risks are not based on the same body of knowledge and their management is not safeguarded by the same scientific, administrative, and political actors. Moreover, the issue of fraud finds favourable conditions in societies that have been rapidly modernised. On the one hand the state agencies in charge of the suppression and prosecution of fraud are weakly developed and on the other hand technological progress offers new possibilities.

So, we can identify four main categories of crises:

- **Food security crisis.** Shortage of food or accessibility issues for a certain segment of a population.
- **Food fraud crisis.** A situation where the normal, legal, and/or traditional characteristics of the products are not respected. This can be falsified products or totally "fake food" produced with technologies that are intended for producing real "artefacts" that simulate food. The food fraud crisis is a legal issue and can also be, in addition, a safety issue.
- **Food safety crisis.** Contamination of either chemical or microbiological origin is likely to have adverse health consequences either in the short term or in the long term. The issue could also come from the presence of foreign object in the food.
- **Controversial crisis.** Impossibility of scientifically adjudicating the problem. This impossibility can be momentary, if scientific progress allows the possibility of elucidating the nature of the risk, or permanent, if the nature of the risk is not scientifically determinable.

One of the characteristics of "compressed food modernity" is the intermingling of these different sources of crises (Poulain 2018).

Compressed Food Modernity in Vietnam

Vietnam is a good example of compressed modernisation. Since the economic reforms of *Đổi Mới*, in 1986, a middle class has emerged, and the traditional ways of life are changing very fast. In a few decades, this country has passed from under-nutrition to over-nutrition, and experiences now what epidemiologists call the "epidemiological transition" and the "double burden" of malnutrition (Gillespie and Haddad 2003). The first burden is the transition from mortality rates based on epidemic diseases, whose severity was reinforced by food scarcity, to a higher incidence of mortality through non-communicable diseases ((NCD), like cardiovascular diseases, cancers, etc.), for which obesity is a significant risk factor. The second burden is the coexistence of under- and over-nutrition problems, at the same time and for the same population. What a contrast between Vietnam of the early 1980s, suffering from 'hunger and poverty' and the present concerns of public health authorities over the increase of obesity and NCDs.

But the history of Vietnam has some particular features—such as wars of decolonisation and migrations—that have undoubtedly contributed to the intensification of certain aspects of "compressed modernity". The fall of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954, marks the end of the First Indochina War and the beginning of the French decolonisation. After the partition of the country, along the 17th Parallel in the following July, the first migrations began, mainly to France and European countries. Twenty years later, the victory of North Vietnam over the South and the "Paris Peace Accords" were accompanied by a second wave of migration. United States, Canada and to a lesser extent Europe are the receiving countries. Finally, the 1980s were marked by a migration of poverty, with the more than two million so-called boat-people who fled by boat to escape starvation and—for some—the communist regime.

These three migratory flows did not affect the same layers of society. The first two concerned mainly social categories in relation with the colonial authorities or with the American and Western supporters of the Republic of Vietnam in the South. The last stream, the "boat-people", was composed mainly of poor and rural people.

From the point of view of food, the break with colonial Vietnam is characterised by a distancing from part of the national food culture; in particular, the gastronomic practices of the elites, including those of the Hue court. These cuisines and gastronomies, once considered part of the lifestyles of a "corrupted elite", were blacklisted for many years. Those are the Vietnamese lifestyles that the two first waves of migrations brought with them to other countries and that they kept alive in the first generation of Vietnamese restaurants overseas. Even the food habits of ethnic minorities of Vietnam, regarded as more or less "primitives", had no place in this Vietnamese food culture.

Since the late 1990s, these issues have become topics of research, with the first conference dedicated to them taking place in Hanoi entitled "Food practices and cultural identities" co-organised by University of Toulouse, and Universities of Hue and Hanoi (Poulain 1997a, b). Gastronomic Vietnamese cultures are today viewed as a much more complex heritage and cross different regional, social, and ethnic levels.

The migratory three waves towards different countries have also contributed to the fame of Vietnamese cuisine and gastronomy all over the world, and have had an influence on the gastronomic culture in the receiving countries themselves (Poulain 1997b). Indeed, tourists who since the 1990s have come to Vietnam in ever greater numbers arrive with certain "knowledge" of Vietnamese cuisine, learnt in restaurant in their own countries. The adaptation by Asian restaurants overseas to the Western organisation of the meal has accelerated the individualisation of dishes. The traditional distinction between *nuoc-nam* (Vietnamese) and soya sauce (non-Vietnamese) have almost disappeared. Both are now found on the tables of restaurants in Vietnam. What was once a simple adaptation to the demands of tourists is increasingly used by young Vietnamese people.

Economic isolation and the sidelining of a part of Vietnam's historical gastronomic inheritance have effected a reduction of the food culture. In that context, the fast opening up of the economy to the global food and tourism markets was a powerful accelerating factor of modernisation. What we now see in the metropolis is a "compacted" food culture, that is, the coexistence of different Vietnamese food cultures plus a lot of foreign restaurants, from fast food to fine dining and international cuisines. The

rapid shift of an impoverished food environment (through economic closure and the sidelining of some national food patterns and cuisines) to a context where food cultures are multiplying, intertwining, and becoming more complex is a potential source of concern and anxiety. The switch from a simplified food environment to a more complex one, in which certain influences coming from the outside are claimed by Vietnamese, has multiple and interacting effects: an increase in food anxiety, the destabilisation of regulatory devices, and a questioning of social identities.

The feeling of anxiety is reinforced by the multiplication of crises and scandals that, as in many Asian countries, make the front pages of Vietnamese newspapers and the headlines of TV news. Here too, the different levels of crisis are entangled: food safety and health risks, food security (exacerbated since the international food security crises of 2008 and the Vietnamese stock building policies), fraud, and other controversies. In the face of the growing number of scandals due to the use of banned products in livestock and/or agriculture and the press reports, the Municipality of Ho Chi Minh City has announced the establishment of a "special committee" in charge of food safety (Hông Nga 2016). Controversies over GMO rice led the Vietnamese Food Association and its Thai counterpart to commit to zero GMO production (Rice Trade Cooperation 2006).

The Contribution of the Food Anxiety Paradigm

To conceptualise their diet, eaters mobilise an intellectual way of functioning that anthropologists call 'magical thinking'. This was thought, at the beginning of the discipline, to be a characteristic of 'primitive' societies. Today we know that 'magical thinking' is used also by modern eaters in their reasoning and coexists with other forms of rationality. An outline of magical thinking is easy to formulate: symbolic qualities of everything that comes into contact with food—whether it is tools, other natural products, packaging, and also individuals producing, handling, cooking, and selling them qualities of all those objects and individuals—are passed

on through 'symbolic contamination' to the food itself. The American psycho-sociologist Paul Rozin demonstrated this phenomenon of symbolic contamination experimentally. For instance, one only has to put a dead and disinfected cockroach—as such bacteriologically safe—into a glass of milk and then remove it in order to make this product "undrinkable", nevertheless perfectly drinkable from a strictly objective point of view. An even more striking experiment, if one suggests to someone to write 'danger cyanide' on an adhesive label and to stick this on a glass, and then to fill this labelled glass with any (potable) liquid, for a great number of people this drink becomes unfit for consumption (Rozin 1976). This can be applied to the contemporary dietary context. All technological interventions (handling, culinary changes, operations that go with commercialisation) and all the professionals who carry them out have symbolical influence on the identity of food; so it is advisable to study in order to try and understand them. Through the act of eating, a food enters us, and takes part in our intimate physical life. It crosses the border between the world and us. That is why food gives us the feeling of control over our everyday life. With this in mind, we can better understand why the uncertainties, the fears concerning food intensify echo uncertainties about the eater's own future.

Anxiety and the Ambivalences of Human Diet

Several authors have developed the idea that the opposition between 'neophilia' and 'neophobia' might result from the contradiction between the biological obligation to consume varied food and the cultural constraint: to eat only known, socially identified, and demonstrated foods (Rozin 1976; Fischler 1988). This double constraint characteristic of human's omnivorous status, which is named *the omnivore's paradox* is the source of a fundamental anxiety in the human diet. Food anxiety is thus not new or linked to the present economic climate; it is permanent and must continually be regulated. This is the role of the 'culinary system', that subset of the cultural system made of a series of rules defining the order of the edible, and the conditions of preparation and consumption.

This allows the acceptance of a new food by 'marking' it gustatively, seasoning it literally 'with the sauce' of a cultural space. Inserted in a culture, the eater has only a few decisions to take. It is the culinary system of its society that dictates the decisions to the eater. The culinary system resolves the 'double bind' or paradoxical injunction, peculiar to omnivorous status.

Dietary modernity and the anxieties that attend it are then interpreted on the mode of a crisis of the regulating function of culinary systems. The weakening of social constraints weigh heavily on the eater, associated on the one hand with the increase of individualism, and on the other hand with the industrialisation of food production, transformation, and marketing that cut the link between humans and their food. These generate a context within which 'dietary anxiety' dominates. It is possible to distinguish different dimensions of the ambivalence of human diet to which particular forms of anxiety correspond (Beardsworth 1995; Poulain 2017 [2002]).

The first ambivalence is between *pleasure and displeasure*. It accounts for the fact that diet can be at the same time a source of sensuality, plenitude, intense sensorial pleasure, but also cause a whole range of disagreeable sensations, going from simply 'unpleasant' to disgust that can cause nausea, if not vomiting. Anxiety then has sensorial and hedonic components.

A further ambivalence is linked to the complexity of the link between diet and *health or illness*. It is rooted in the fact that food is a source of energy, vitality, health, but at the same time a vector of poisoning, a potential cause of illness, of disorders. The effects of these disorders can appear on a very short timescale. But the risks for the health can also be felt over the medium or even the long term, as it is the case for some toxins (e.g. micro-toxins) of deficiency or extra load in some nutriments or new contaminating agents as prions, responsible for BSE. The anxiety that goes with incorporation here is of a sanitary order. It is from this that we find the contradiction between two principles connecting diet with health, the first one formulated by Hippocrates, '*Thou shall do your medicine from food*', and the second by the adage '*man digs his grave with his teeth*'.

The last ambivalence takes root in the *relationship with life and death*. It holds in the fact that the dietary act is an absolute and inescapable

necessity in order to live, but that implies, most of the time, the death of animals that are considered as edible. Some cultures clear up this paradox by putting an interdiction on food that requires the death of an animal by advocating vegetarianism. In most of the cases, dietary murder is surrounded by a series of rituals of protection or social devices the function of which is to legitimise the animal's death. Then anxiety comes from the conflict between the need to eat meat and the fact of having to impose suffering on animals and take their life in order to do so.

To eat, then, is an act that imposes choices, decisions, but also the need to take objective and symbolical risks. Those different paradoxes generate the three forms of specific anxiety that dietary cultures try to manage. Regulation of the ambivalence of *pleasure-displeasure* is maintained by culinary culture, what Levi Strauss named the 'culinary system', that is to say the set of social rules that define forms of preparation, cooking, seasoning, and so on. New food is introduced in a culture by being prepared according to ways of cooking, preparation, or by being associated with strongly identified seasoning, which reassures the eater by giving this product a familiar taste. More generally, a mode of preparation or seasoning already known has a reassuring effect by inserting the new food in the normative dietary system.

The management of the second ambivalence *health-illness* is one of the most interesting questions in the anthropology of food. The capacity of humans to build knowledge simply in order not to poison themselves and maintain their survival is a real cognitive enigma. All cultures have at their disposal a "traditional" dietetic functioning as a science of categories that structures the order of the edible. It can be organised around a binary system like: yin and yang of a macrobiotic diet, the five elements of the Chinese and Vietnamese "order" of nature (Poulain 1997a-I), or categories of 'warm', 'cold', 'humid' or 'dry', used in different cultural universes such as Hippocratic European medicine (Flandrin and Montanari 2013), fishermen of the Malay peninsula (Wilson 1967), natives from Central America (Messer 1984), or some Indian ethnic groups (Mahias 1985). The membership of one of these categories gives to food particular qualities that justify their consumption in some contexts or recommend them to some individuals. Those profane dietetics allow eaters to conceptualise the link between diet and health. This knowledge is often presented as

magic reasoning; these analyses suggest that apparently irrational knowledge could have adaptive qualities.

The ambivalence of *life and death* asks the question of the moral acceptability of killing animals, among others, those having nervous systems, and as such as being able to feel pain and to show it. Killing for food is a source of anxiety and, on this point, different modes of regulations are possible. In societies of hunters, there are several examples of rituals, prayers, or apologies addressed to the soul or the spirit of the animal (Frazer 1911; Kent 1989). Some like Chipewyan, Ameridians from the North of Canada, think that the animal can be killed only with its consent (Sharp, quoted by Beardsworth 1995). Another attitude consists of killing the animals in a sacrificial framework. In numerous societal situations (the Greek world, certain "ethnic proto-Indochinese" societies (Condominas 1954)) the animal is not killed to be consumed, or rather not killed *only* to be consumed, but it is put to death in a ritual setting where there is communication with the 'world beyond'. The explicit objective of putting the animal to death is not so it can be eaten but that its death serves to set up a relationship with the spirits or beings from this world beyond, in order to garner favours or forgiveness by offering the slain animal to the deities. The soul of which escapes the body of the animal at the moment of death is seen as a support for the message sent to the spirits or beings which inhabit the world beyond. The body which remains after death can then become the object of something shared, and consumed without having the act of killing weigh heavily on the conscience of those who undertook this act. The choice of the animals to be sacrificed is inscribed in the proper logic of the ritual and its significations: a chicken in certain cases, a pig in others (Condominas 1954). In Yao society, studied by Annie Hubert, all meat which is consumed must first be sacrificed and offered to the ancestors (Hubert 1985).

In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, after the fall from heaven, the authorisation is explicitly given to men in the opening of the genesis to consume animals: 'All that moves and lives will serve you as food; as well as the verdure of plants, I give you everything, only you will not eat the flesh with its blood' (Genesis 9.3.). Judaism associates with this a whole series of interdicts, as per the association of milk and meat, 'Thou shall not cook a kid in the milk of its mother' (Deuteronomy 14.21) and

specifies the edible animals (pure) and non-edible (impure) by the 'people consecrated to Yahveh'. Blood is also the subject of an interdict because it is the support of the soul of the animal. Animal slaughter is put under religious control, with a rabbi controlling the procedure of killing and giving his seal of approval to 'kosher' food. It is the quite the same in Islam, where meat can be 'halal' only if the slaughter was realised according to a precise ritual and with the presence of an imam. The interest of those rituals is to operate to reassure the eater by making the death of an animal morally acceptable. In the Christian universe, the sacrifice of the 'son of God's made man' makes redundant other forms of sacrifice, and rejects the notion of dietary murder in the profane universe.

This analysis in terms of a triple ambivalence opens the way towards the comprehension of sources of anxiety and of human eaters' reasoning. At the same time this theoretical framework is useful to analyse and monitor food crises.

Anxiety as Erosion of the Modes of Management of Ambivalences in Human Diet

Contemporary food crisis can be read as the result of an erosion of the modes of regulation of dietary anxiety. Globalisation of markets, industrialisation of production, and the appearance in institutional catering of central kitchens are becoming more and more important, tending to reduce the gustative markers peculiar to certain cultures by imposing a homogenisation of tastes. Culinary particularisms and the specific tastes that accompany them do not have the same strength as identification functions. The mutation of daily eating practices and the individualisation of the decisions reactivate the pleasure-displeasure anxiety.

The links between diet and health, but also between diet and illness are put forward by modern epidemiological discourse. Progress in the methods of scientific analysis allows for deeper knowledge of the origins of food poisoning and the chemical and/or bacterial agents responsible for it. The illustration in the media of these 'dietary accidents' presented as entirely novel, reactivates the fears associated with this second type of ambivalence, without us knowing whether an instance of food poisoning

is indeed new, or if it is simply a matter of our ability to detect, which is improving. The diffusion of nutritional knowledge in society intensifies both the positive link between diet and health (e.g. diet as a lever for prevention), and the negative link (i.e. diet as the cause of the disease, especially NCDs). Nutritionalisation plays a role in the exacerbation of the anxiety of health-illness.

Crisis also makes a dent in the ways of managing the issue of killing animals for food. Older works of scholarship have pointed to the particular mode of management adopted by Western laypeople in society, as, for example, the fact that slaughterhouses are kept at a distance from society, relegated to the urban periphery, a Taylorian organisation of slaughter that dilutes the responsibility for killing by dividing the technical process. In a period of about 20 years how the relationship between man and animals is imagined has deeply changed. Pets became anthropomorphised (Digard 2009). Progresses of ethology and sciences of animal behaviour have shown that they had feelings, intelligence, erasing every day a bit more of that border between men and animals (Poulain 1997b, 2007).

The crisis opened by this affair affected the prestige of the medical profession head on and weakened the trust in the relationship between politicians and the scientific experts supposed to advise them. The weakened prestige of science and the symbolical functions of the vet controlling the process of slaughter and giving their approval for the meat to be edible are both affected.

The above analyses allow a new way of reading the processes of management of risk and anxiety in terms of symbolic and social functions, either as quality conventions (process of labelling and certificating) or as devices for including public debate. They invite one to abandon the logic of reassurance that applies implicitly where "we knew a time when things happened without problems".

Risk and Anxiety

Since the 1990s, following various food crises in western countries, the food issue has come to be organised around the concept of "risk" and the theory of strategic "early warning signals" (Ansoff 1975). Food issues (safety and food security) have now gained a place on political and media

agendas. Henceforth, discussion on these topics is delivered by official agencies where experts scientifically evaluate risks and try to understand the more or less rational perceptions of consumers in order to manage and communicate these risks. 'Assessment' (by experts), 'perception' (by the customers or citizens) and 'management' (by the authorities—in economic and political institutions) are the three keywords in risk monitoring.

Within the social sciences, research has been undertaken, which sometimes supports, justifies, or validates these theoretical frameworks and thus has helped to organise and legitimise the vision of administrative risk management (Slovic 1987). Sometimes these research projects also delineate and challenge the rational asymmetry on which they were based—with, on the one hand, the "experts", who are supposedly presenting the "truth", and, on the other, the "laymen", who are more or less "wrong"—by claiming the necessity to articulate the understanding of experts and citizens (Beck 1995). They point out that the diverging understanding of citizens and scientists cannot be reduced to perception bias since the former perceive dimensions that are excluded by the probabilistic calculation of the risk of mortality and morbidity (Beck 1995; Poulain 2002, 2012a, 2017 [2002]).

Some anthropological works show that as all human cultures proceed to an orderly organisation of the world, they all encounter the same problem. This concerns the definition of a remainder, that is, what must remain 'outside the scope' of conceptualising the world.

With the anxiety paradigm focuses are put on the sources of concern, mainly the ambivalence of the omnivorous relation to food: pleasure and displeasure, health or illness, and life and death. Anxiety is seen as a fundamental attitude. But anxiety has to be regulated, which means it must be maintained at an acceptable level. That is the role of food models. A food model is a particular configuration of the food social space. It corresponds to a particular order of the edible, a food system, a culinary system, a system of consumption, a system of temporality, and a set of internal differentiation. We have proposed the following definition:

Food models are socio-technical and symbolic groups that relate a human group to its environment, establish its identity and ensure the establishment of processes of internal social differentiation. They are a body of technological

knowledge accumulated from generation to generation, allowing the selection of resources in natural space, to prepare them for food, then dishes and to consume them. But at the same time they are symbolic code systems that depict the values of a human group involved in the construction of cultural identities and processes of personalisation. (Poulain 2002)

A food model is a body of knowledge that aggregates multiple experiences in the form of trial and error by a human community. It comes in the form of a series of nested categories that are used daily by members of a society, without real awareness, implicitly taken as "self-evident". This "self-evident" character is the main epistemological obstacle to the study of dietary patterns.

The sociology of risk poses risk as a "new" datum on the scale of history in the development of rationality and probabilistic thinking. For the socio-anthropology of food, food anxiety is a "constant" phenomenon. It is the role of dietary patterns to maintain the intensity of anxiety at an acceptable level, and to regulate it. Thus, crises appear as a weakening of the devices of regulation and as a consequence of the erosion of food models.

The paradigmatic rupture is that anxiety is not the problem, but that 'bad' regulation is. This paradigmatic reversal is similar to that made in the sociology of organisations by Michel Crozier and Erhard Friedberg (1980), when they proposed to regard conflict not as the consequence of an organisational failure, but as constitutive of organisations. Whereas the preceding theoretical currents, Taylorism, or the current of human relations, sought to avoid conflict at all costs, the sociology of organisations postulates that the purpose of management is not about avoiding conflicts, but rather about regulating them.

Reading risk in terms of it being a consequence of modernity invites one to seek the conditions of a return to the confidence of a time before crisis. It could also in certain situations support the naïve idea of a nostalgic, lost food paradise. The approach whereby anxiety is posed as an invariant suggests a focus on the 'devices' of regulation of anxiety that are food models. While the theory of risk hierarchises the risks between vital risks, that is, the health risks on one side, and on the other, the secondary, more 'qualitative' risks, the perspective of food anxiety gives importance, not only to the health risks, but also to the questions of pleasure, social identities, ethics, human-animal relationships…

With this book, issues heretofore perceived as secondary emerge from the shadows and come to light. In doing so, it constitutes a reading frame useful for understanding and identifying the challenges of modernisation as well as for taking action, whether in public health policies or of food crises management. This book, with its different empirical examples, makes a contribution in showing that Vietnam is a privileged place to support this idea of interest of the concept of "food anxiety".

Note

1. The concept of "food social space" describes the social dimensions of food. It corresponds to the area of freedom left to human eaters by two sets of physical constraints: biological constraints related to their status as omnivores, which are essential but relatively flexible, and the ecological constraints created by the biotope in which they live, which become economic constraints in the industrialised world and which progressively tend to be reduced due to our technological control of nature (Poulain 2017 [2002]). "Food social space" is in line with the Maussian notion of a "total social fact", that is, which "sets in motion … the totality of the society and its institutions" (Mauss 1950). It is possible to distinguish various dimensions of social food space: the edible order, the food system, the culinary space, the consumption patterns, food temporality and the social differentiation space. Its main interests are to show the variations of the social dimensions of food between two cultures and in the frame of one culture, and to study the interaction between social and biological infrastructure of nutrition as well as the environment (for a systematic presentation see Poulain 2017 [2002]).

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