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STUDIES IN FOOD GEOGRAPHY IN FRANCE

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Abstract The author outlines his work on the geography of food habits: such research has never been carried out before in France. Although limited to the North-East part of France (that is the Lorraine and Alsace regions), this work has met with numerous difficulties, both from a conceptual point of view and from documentary and cartographic points of view.

The method of analysis used in this project is based both on historical data which are necessary to understand the present trends and on statistical data which are indispensable to situate them geographically.

The author distinguishes between two types of food consumptions: on the one hand those that are episodic, ephemeral, usually recent and on the other hand those that are more stable, lasting and with stronger historical bases. He has been able to draw maps showing the present importance of some of these habits in spite of the fact that they belong to a world in constant evolution.

INTRODUCTION

Considering that, in the field of food, we were faced as far as France is concerned, both with an economic and a psycho-sociological problem, the latter being loaded with all the weight of the food heritage of the French people, we have been trying since 1967 to study the evolution of food habits and of the consumption of certain foods and particular dishes in the North-East of France, i.e. the Lorraine and Alsace regions [1]. This 30,000 km² area, inhabited by more than 4 million people, has proved rather a vast field of observation because of our limited material resources, but it has also proved a highly privileged one because the presence of an age-old linguistic frontier with clear cut outlines separates the "Romans" from the "Germans" in between Belgium and Switzerland. This linguistic frontier still remains nowadays a barrier between two different civilisations and modes of economic development. On each side of it,

behaviour and lifestyles are still very dissimilar (Fig. 1).

It has been our ambition to try and recreate an essential aspect of the way of life of the populations, those of the poorest in particular, and to bring in human geography to contribute to the training of specialists in Alimentation and Nutrition. Even now their training is above all "technical": for instance, that of doctors of nutritive medicine is mainly based on a knowledge of constant evolution, food physiology, biology, biochemistry, technology, pathology, etc. Apart from a very few exceptions, dieticians are, for the great majority, the living vectors of a fundamental but insufficient equation: calories + glucosides + proteins + lipids + eventually the age, weight and activities of a particular individual.

Strangely enough, no study of the food human environment seems to be envisaged by those who daily tackle problems supposed to be of some help to men

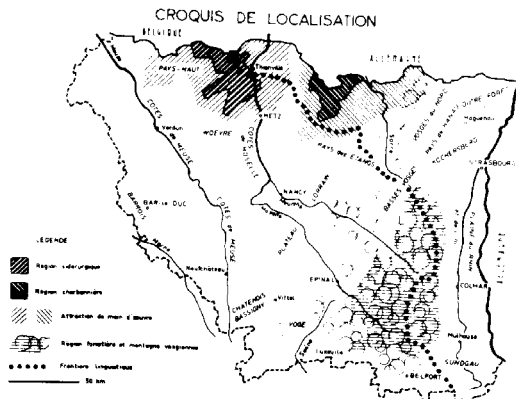


Fig. 1. Sketch map of the area covered by research.

and women. Human data on the food milieu remain totally ignored or superficially known because of the lack of any global study on foods and food habits and on their historical and geographical evolution for different societies or individuals.

In 1950, M. Mead, a member of the Committee of Food Habits of the National Research Council, regretted that there should be no such study in the United States and she reproached the "Nutrition Sciences" with trying for too long to modify food habits thought to be harmful without even knowing their nature, why and how they settle and evolve. She also reproached them with trying to cure human groups in matters of food from their unscientific bad habits in order to impose on them the values they considered as being scientifically right, even though this implies that groups or individuals who prefer to keep their old food habits rather than comply with the more advantageous medically recommended forms of nutrition, are considered obstinate and backward minded [2]. This failure to recognize human factors analysed geographically and historically, explains and justifies the difficulties encountered from both documentary and conceptual points of view.

OBSTACLES

Difficulties encountered were numerous resulting from the scarcity of previous studies and consequently from the definitions of the subject to be dealt with, and also from the inexistence of any statistics essential to complete any valid cartographic survey.

From a documentary point of view: at the beginning of our research on foods and food habits in industrialised countries, the only previous studies consisted of Chapter V on the geography of food habits and diets of the first volume of Max Sorre's *Human Geography* [3], as well as a few articles that the latter had written on various occasions [4].

Many sciences are in a position to tackle the problem of food habits, but very few, particularly among Human Sciences, have done any research on these habits in the way we conceived them. Economists seem only interested in the consumption of certain basic products on a national level, or in a very few cases on the level of INSEE's Institut National de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques extended regions [5]. The few geographers who were interested in food habits have generally used the data provided by the economists [6-8]. Ethnographers and folklorists provide a lot of information on more or less traditional questions, yet it remains very difficult or even impossible to situate in time. Most historians ignore the problems of food and more especially that which is commonplace and daily, except for the members of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, who tried as early as 1960 to encourage research on this theme [9]. Paradoxically, it was the nutritive biologist Jean Tremolieres and his team from the Institut National de la Santé et de la Recherche Médicale who provided the fundamental elements for our project: i.e. their advice, conference scripts, general accounts of food behaviour and consumption, and questionnaires and results of surveys on food consumption in France since the end of World War II, in collaboration with INSEE [10].

As a matter of fact, although the research methods of the medical doctors and nutritive biologists did seduce us, our major concern was very different. They were essentially trying to establish stereotyped food rations to be recommended to the French people. Their aim was to determine average groups consumption and their nutritive contribution in calories, glucosides, lipids, proteins and vitamins. Our goals were certainly far less technical. Far more than the quantities of food consumed by different socio-professional groups, it was the nature and the relative regularity in the consumption of certain foods and dishes which interested us along with the circumstances of their appearance, the evolution of their importance in time - mainly since the beginning of the 19th century - and also in an area as vast as possible. In this way, we thought that we would be able to give a historical and geographical dimension to the first attempts of the French bionutritionists.

From a conceptual point of view, we have met with a difficult problem of definition. Our first guides, the biologists of nutrition used to identify food habits with customs. As they were collective, they were tending to disappear as a result of industrial civilisation and because people had greater and greater opportunities to eat what they wanted during the year. The geographer P. George conceived them in the same way as he asserted that "alimentation in towns had become uniform" and that "regional traditions and local food habits were only surviving in rural areas" [6].

A priori, we had defined food habits as more or less conscious behaviour, collective in most cases and always repetitive, which led people to consume such and such a food or such and such a dish with a frequency varying in certain cases according to the time of year, socio-economic environments, incomes and standards of living, the regions, ethnic groups and areas. In fact the notion of food habits has evolved with time. During the pre-industrial period, the possibilities of food consumption being limited for the most part to the use of local resources, food habits became identified with them. Most people used to eat all they could produce and they generally used to produce the same things over the years. The food group consisted in relatively few people and the food universe in restricted numbers of foods except in certain highly privileged geographical areas or above all, for a minority of well-off people. Food habits were constraining, not very numerous, but well stereotyped, collective and very often even local for ethnic rather than natural reasons. Although the binome foods-food habits became dissociated because of deep modifications following industrialisation and urbanisation, food habits have not disappeared but they have radically changed in nature. In the present times, recent foods have appeared but without yet becoming food habits as we define them, and which will perhaps never become habits at all.

On the other hand, other older foods with a great historical past, are still having lasting effects on the eating habits of the populations in the North East of France. Still, we may wonder whether the former will not become, as time goes by, and following a different development from the latter, habitual foods, as did in the past the "soupe au lard" (bacon soup)

or the consumption of potatoes with "fromage blanc" (cottage cheese) for instance?

Present foods consumed are numerous and may greatly vary according to the individuals and also, within very short periods of time, they may change very rapidly. This may be as a result of some more or less aggressive commercial activity but they also vary according to the ages, incomes and whims of the consumers, to their place of residence, their activities, or even due to fashions, snobism or the evolution of cooking techniques: a great variety of factors which have their roots in the deep transformations which took place in the last 50 years.

In spite of the fact that food habits are a direct consequence of the foods consumed, their evolution is very different, they are much more stable and have longer lasting geographical roots. They have a history, whether they find their origin due to particular local production conditions or due to general commercialisation conditions. They tend to die out or maintain themselves in a restricted way, but they always have consequences in the forms of food consumption adopted. Unlike episodic, fugitive and short-lived consumptions, they are still present in memories and fact. Thus old peasants still remember, and for very good reasons, the eternal "soupe au lard" of their youth even though they stopped eating it long ago. On the other hand, they hardly remember, except if the question is explicitly put to them, eating the Japanese "croquette" that certain people tried to launch at the end of the 19th century and again during the two World Wars. These latter cataclysms have not destroyed the habit of consuming certain cakes, meat, bread, wine or beer, even though the consumption of these foods was drastically diminished or even momentarily halted altogether for certain people. Even if the demands of certain members of the population were to restore the "consommation aux quatre saisons" (consumption of the products of the season only) to which many are no longer accustomed, this might deprive them of asparagus for Christmas, grapes for Candlemas, tomatoes for Easter or daily potato salads, but would certainly not destroy the habit or non-habit of consuming asparagus, grapes, tomatoes or salad.

Can recently introduced foods become such habits? This is possible but they would follow a process very different from that of the past and in a far less tyrannical and collective way because ancient constraints have disappeared even though they are the factors of still durable present habits. The time of the old, immutable habits and foods recurring with the seasons and natural or human geographical environments, has gone; they now mix themselves within a restricted food circle. Rather than having to conform to the conditions of the environment, free choice, at least theoretically, is now the rule as a result of new criteria which appear more individual than collective, as well as the new factors of tastes, distaste, preferences, opinions; favourite cooking techniques, etc. Therefore one may assume that, thanks to the power of choice, each will be looking for what will suit him best and that habits will change and become more individual. Nothing will prevent anyone from adopting the habit, if he feels like it, of drawing from the vast range put at his disposal and from consuming

more or less frequently pizzas, couscous, or, as his ancestors used to do ritually on Sundays, a "pot au feu" (boiled beef with vegetables out of the pot), a "lapin à la sauce" (rabbit stew) or a roast veal. Thus, it is the characterised frequency or non-frequency of the consumption of such and such a food which has been and will still be the proof of the existence or non-existence of a certain food habit.

This historical evolution towards an individualisation of habits has fundamental methodological consequences. AS it is already a delicate task to classify food habits according to age groups, it is even more difficult to do so according to socio-economic categories or according to certain rural or urban styles of living.

It cannot be denied that the young and the old may consume differently, the latter being a priori more traditionalist than their children. In fact we soon found out that in the field of habit, the past and the present were closely interwoven in individuals whatever their age.

In 1938, H. Delpech [11] tried to distinguish the food habits according to social classes, i.e. the "lower" class of the workers and employees and the "higher" one of the "bourgeois". This way of proceeding which may have been valid in the 19th century when the consumption of different foods was aristocratically divided and when they identified with the habits, at least as far as the poorest were concerned, became questionable as early as before the First World War, since the food hierarchy had already sufficiently started to break down, thus dissociating food habits from social classes; a fortiori, that way of proceeding is nowadays totally inadequate. In the same way as variations in ways of life due to a certain democratisation do not always strictly follow the evolution of incomes, food habits do not die out instantaneously and automatically just because a certain individual moves from one social class to another or rather, since 1946, from one socio-economic category to another. This is all the more true since people do not add new consumptions to their alimentary range just for show, as used to do the "newly rich" to keep up with their rank when they became "rich" after being "poor". Although it might seem interesting and useful to analyse the consumption of various socio-professional categories in order to assess their average "ration" and their needs according to their activities for economic or physiological reasons for instance, it seems nevertheless dangerous to proceed in this way in order to classify food habits. Indeed this might lead us to create artificial differences of similarities, and so socio-professional categorisations scarcely seem valid in this field.

Even though it is evident that there have been and still are some foods which are specific to urban areas, it seems to us that it is dangerous to study the food habits of townsmen with the hypothesis that certain specifically urban food habits are a priori more or less different from specifically rural ones. The consumptions of the people living in the country might have followed those of townsmen and they might still do so, but we refuse to take for granted the usual formula: "the country follows the habits of cities". In certain definite cases, it has appeared, during our research, that there are a number of similar trends

as far as certain dishes are concerned, between urban and rural areas. For instance, in the case of an apparently essentially rural consumption habit such as that of "*fromage blanc*" associated with potatoes, we have noticed a surprising similarity between the proportions of families concerned in towns and in rural areas mainly devoted to agriculture. The regular consumption of soup, "*cancoillotte*"* and red cabbage, either cooked or in salad is identical in towns and in the country, if we take into account the privileged (or not) zone of consumption. In the case of "*cancoillotte*" the inhabitants of towns in Alsace are just as reluctant to adopt the consumption of this "strong tasting" cheese as are the inhabitants of the surrounding rural areas. On the other hand, the inhabitants of towns in Franche Comté (Vesoul, Luxeuil) and surrounding areas including Belfort, are just as fond of the same product as the people in the neighbouring countryside. Although cities have allowed the consumption of certain foods to expand either by popularising or favouring them, the consumption of these foods had not given birth to specific habits. It is certainly true that it is in towns and among well-off people that the habits of having white coffee in the morning, of consuming grilled meat rather than stews, or of making "*pot au feu*" on Sundays and then during the week, have developed, and yet towns, which tend to take up such an important part of the geographical space, do not play such an important role in the field of food habits, especially nowadays. The main reason for this is that townspeople form a heterogeneous and rather mixed population as far as the field of food is concerned. All the inhabitants of the towns in the North East of France—and this is in no way specific to this region—are, apart from a few exceptions, strangers or migrants from rural areas that they left more or less long ago. Only a very few do not have, or have not had parents or grandparents from the country. Anyway, people do not so easily get rid of their daily food habits when they move to a flat in the middle of a town or to a bungalow in the suburbs. Gaxotte wrote about his father who moved to a large town in the Meuse region at the beginning of the century, and remarked on the way he inexorably kept the food habits he had acquired when he was still on the farm [12]. Although times have changed considerably, habits have remained, much more than one would think, especially in the suburbs, even though the "local resources" consisting in the food from the garden or from the home breeding of chicken, rabbits or even pigs has disappeared to a great extent. A study of the foods consumed in blocks of flats, if it were possible to conduct such a survey over a period of time, would undoubtedly prove the large extent to which this degree of rurality has been maintained. Therefore, when we study food habits in French towns and their suburbs, we must keep in mind the importance of this hereditary factor in food consumption

*"Cancoillotte" is a strong tasting liquid, but thick kind of cheese with the same consistency as fresh honey or melted wax. It is made from skimmed milk which is curdled, strained, dried, crumbled, fermented and then cooked with butter. Depending on the regions and the makers, eggs, milk or white wine, some cumin or minced garlic can be added to it.

tion which shows that townsmen are not, in this field at least, totally different from countryside, and which tends to annihilate to a point the traditional opposition between the town and the country.

Finally, rather than try to determine and classify food habits according to milieus which are irrelevant or which have become so complex that it is impossible to distinguish between their characteristics in any satisfactory way, we would do better to try and build up a more direct classification with individuals as a basis, according to their own self, their physiology and all their social or ethnic past, in order to achieve characteristic food types which would be more or less free from the constraints of a sociological and geographical alimentation past without however, being totally independent from it. There is, then, no reason why there should not appear a regional distribution of these types, more complex but also more logical than the old one. This is a task which should be tackled by a pluridisciplinary team in accordance with criteria and a method to be designed in common.

Finally, from a cartographic point of view, the main difficulty was to find the statistical data allowing us to build up a present day cartographic image, as precise as possible of the consumption of foods and of habits or non-habits as we conceived them. Official data on consumption, distribution and production are of no use whatsoever. They are only valid on a regional and departmental level for a small number of basic products and from a purely economic point of view. They take no account of prepared dishes and provide no data on the level of the "canton" which we have precisely chosen as a territorial basis for our research. The problem was to start from scratch and build up sufficiently numerous and precise data to set up a reasonably accurate cartographic image of the consumption of certain foods and even of food habits specific to the populations of the North East of France.

So, starting from generally vague or fragmentary data which were often designed for different ends from those we had envisaged, we have had to invent specific methods of research in order to establish the existence, aspects, factors and the regional distribution of food habits in the North East of France.

METHODOLOGY

Historical research is necessary when we tackle the problem of the consumption of foods and of food habits. In this field, past heritage is of great importance since it has direct consequences on the present. It would be a serious mistake to try to analyse a contemporary food situation without any incursion into the past. Even in 1977, in urbanised and industrial countries, people are still very dependent on their food heredity. If human geographers want to avoid coming to a dead end, they must apprehend reality by tracing its historical evolution and by looking for past factors which may help to explain present trends [13].

To that purpose, we have used all kinds of written documents after carefully checking their authenticity and seriousness: for instance, official statistical data and surveys which were rather numerous in the middle of the 19th century, topographical and statistical

annuals, the reports of the "*préfets*" (chief administrative officers) under the First Empire, those of Prûet Villerme, the national agricultural survey of 1866, the monographs by the followers of La Play and the very numerous "*medical topographies*". Let us add to these historical journals and publications, the works and accounts of historians, travellers, local scholars, articles and books on gastronomy and cookery, the works of regional poets and novelists, and numerous specific documents such as the account books of housewives, farmers, travelling food merchants, millers, oilmen and various food producers, as well as those of various organisations and communities, hospitals, old people's homes, and finally, old menu cards, cookery books, etc.

In fact, as we were trying to orientate our research by going back in time, we noticed that, in the field of the foods consumed and food habits, most of the written documents were heterogeneous, fragmentary and insufficient and that they had to be completed with oral sources as well. Therefore, we decided to conduct surveys collecting information given orally by households and relatively old people. They were asked numerous questions about the conditions in which they prepared their meals (kitchen utensils, means of cooking and preserving food, choice of foods, etc.), and about the composition of these meals throughout the year (first dish according to the day of the week, the circumstances and seasons, usual sweets, composition of ordinary or exceptional meals, etc.). The best documented part, that is the main methods of obtaining supplies and of consumption, has allowed us to amass data on the sources of supply, the more or less great frequency in the consumption of certain dishes according to the days and seasons between 1890 and 1960.

These voluminous basic surveys were conducted with the unpaid help of students from Schools of Education, retired or still working teachers, local archivists and scholars, agricultural unions, and a number of leaders of various rural or urban groupings, all interested by a previous lecture on the aims and aspects of the work to be done.

Statistical survey

Its main purpose was to locate certain family food habits, whether old or new, especially where culinary preparations were concerned, in order to try to determine the existence and the outlines of a food geography in the North East of France.

There were two possible ways of achieving this end. Either we tried to locate food habits in a certain area by analysing what the inhabitants bought in local shops, or by analysing the foods that the families themselves consumed. We decided in favour of the second one, that is the analysis of the foods consumed by families, by following the method that the League of Nations recommended before 1939 on the large food surveys launched in Lorraine by Jacques Parisot

* *Medical topographies* are studies or theses by doctors in medicine from the end of the 18th to the middle of the 19th century. All of them regroup more or less accurately, data on life styles, resources in vegetables, fruit and meat, daily foods consumed, feast meals, the consumption of spirits, etc. The information was drawn from all the various social classes and included facts about the children,

in 1936, and in various regions of France, first by Lucie Randon [16] and then, after 1946, by Jean Tremolières [17].

The questionnaire that we elaborated contained nine questions aimed at identifying the milieu, location, prevailing activities, ethnological data, degree of youth of the families, etc. The remaining 23 questions concerned the foods consumed. Except in two cases, the questionnaire included only one type of information in the form of figures, i.e. the number of families. The two open questions were meant to give the surveyor the opportunity of expressing his opinion and to point out old or new food habits which he considered as typical. Eight questions dealt with the consumption of vegetables and potatoes: penetration of new vegetables (marrows) or of relatively new ones (tomatoes), perpetuation of the consumption of old vegetables or dishes (potatoes in their jackets, or steamed, red cabbage); possible predominance of such and such a vegetable on feast days; existence of certain old dishes made from preserved ingredients (*sauerkraut*, "*mareline*"). Four questions were about old or new soups (frequency of their consumption, *soupe au lard*, stock pot, packet soup), two of them concerned traditional *entrées* or desserts (union tart, rum baba and "*kougelhopf*"—a traditional Alsatian cake) and two more dealt with a more and more common meat dish (*dindonneau*—young turkey) and a traditional preparation which remains prevalent (rabbit with noodles). There was one question on the present penetration of a new fruit (grapefruit), one on a very local cheese (*cancoillotte*) and one on the home making of fruit brandy. Finally, two questions raised the problem of old and new means of food preservation (in bottles or jars and deep freezers).

Many will wonder what rational criteria determined our choice, or why we decided to ask questions on certain particular foods and dishes rather than on others. Some of our surveyors have for instance, regretted the absence of questions on breakfasts, on the consumption of drinks, fats, French fried potatoes, fish and sea foods, etc. We designed our questionnaire bearing in mind our aims and the insufficiency of material and financial resources. Our goal was to show the existence of food areas and to locate regional differences in the consumption of foods. Preliminary surveys, which were very thorough but limited in space and not sufficiently numerous, had revealed nuances between the food consumed in areas with a different language, in the North or the South, the heart or the outskirts of the surveyed regions. It is in accordance with these preliminary and sometimes rather vague pieces of information that we chose the questions. That is why we had discarded *a priori* (and perhaps wrongly) food consumption which might have revealed no regional differences (for instance the consumption of French fried potatoes). It is obvious that this choice was arbitrary and that interesting questions have been omitted. Even though 80% of the questions that were asked allowed us to draw relatively characteristic maps, we may regret a number of omissions, especially when they appear obvious (afterwards). For example, the consumption of beer during meals, the use of "*saindoux*" (lard) or of fresh cream would have certainly been interesting to locate. It is indeed at the level of the elaboration

of the questionnaire that we suffer most from the lack of any qualified team with a constructive sense of criticism.

Furthermore, we needed to interview a sufficient number of families in the 236 "cantons" (administrative group of relatively small villages) of our research area. Since it was materially impossible for us to send the questionnaire directly to the families, we had to contact them through the help of their children and of their primary school teachers (the children concerned belonged to the 10 to 12 age group). This is why we submitted the shortest possible questionnaire with clear instructions, by post, to teachers in the 5500 primary schools of our research area. In the end the survey concerned 30,086 families in 1150 towns or villages, thus we have been able to constitute an "industrial sample" of 5092 families, 3881 of which came from the iron mining area of Lorraine and 1211 from the coal mining district of the Moselle area; another urban sample outside the above industrial zones consisted of 7831 families, 5266 of which came from the French speaking area and 2565 from the German speaking districts; finally a "rural" sample was made up of 2299 families, 1191 from the French zone and 1108 from the German one, 79% of the cantons provided a sample that we considered as representative, equal or superior to one twenty-fifth of the total active households. On the other hand large urban centres, especially in Alsace, have proved far less cooperative than the cantons or even the towns in the Lorraine region.

Several types of criticism may question the validity of such a statistical survey. Is there not a risk that the reality of family food consumption be distorted by the children or by some kind of interpretation by the 1400 surveyors without any prior training even though the questionnaires were accompanied by detailed instructions? Can we be sure that children, even between 10 and 12 years of age, all have an accurate notion of time? Such criticisms are obviously justified. A most delicate problem, especially in the field of culinary preparations, was to provide as accurately as possible the composition of the dishes, their modes of preparation and eventually the variations in their preparation. Do we all think of exactly the same preparation when we speak of "pot au feu" or "potée"? We are very aware of confusions that may have arisen despite all our efforts to minimise them; the problem would be even more complex if working on the level of the whole of France or in a foreign country without being familiar with the various culinary preparations of which we want to know whether they are food habits or not.

RESULTS

In the course of our analyses, we have noticed that there existed some food consumptions already widespread before the period studied and others that had expanded relatively recently. A number of them were specific to the poorest or the most wealthy, whereas others were common to all social categories. All could either involve a great number of families or a small one and sometimes a minute group of people. Certain were frequent, repetitive, or recurring more or less regularly according to the days, weeks or seasons. On

the other hand, others were episodic, occasional, without any real or apparent periodical frequency. Finally, some were located in the whole of the North East of France and others were prevailing and sometimes exclusive in certain very particular districts. Two types of food consumption appeared out of this diversity in time, space and social milieus: the first type did not coincide with our definition of food habits whereas the second type did. Among the food consumptions that were analysed, it was the oldest ones with the greatest historical past that appeared as habits. Moreover, they were neatly located in precise geographical areas.

Episodic and flimsy food consumptions

If we analyse most of the food consumptions newly introduced into the North East of France, we acquire the impression that they are flimsy, ephemeral, superficial and that they are not integrated into the usual pattern of food consumptions. The consumption of "roti de dindonneau" (rolled turkey roast) and of "exotic" dishes provide conclusive examples. As far as we know and without a more detailed documentation, their profiles have no historical dimension, and they are also common to all social categories, although very restricted as to the number of consumers, and finally their consumption is very episodic and irregular in time.

Turkey used to be birds that only a few wealthy families used to breed or consume on rare and specific occasions such as Christmas, weddings or a few other feast days. Industrial rearing which has only started to develop since the 1960s and the intense publicity campaigns by well known firms about turkeys can only prompt us to study the present importance of this bird which formerly had a very restricted impact and which was invariably cooked whole, this latter condition is now no longer the case. It is in rural districts that the consumption of this meat newly presented in the form of a rolled roast is the least widespread, although between 30 and 50% of the families questioned consume it except in the far north of the Alsace region. In urban districts, the consumption of this dish often involves between 50 and 70% of the families from all kinds of towns and also from the industrial areas be they metallurgical or mining. If we consider the whole of North Eastern France, the location of the "roti de dindonneau" does not seem to be the consequence of any particular production or ethnic condition, but it does appear to be the direct result of particular conditions of distribution and commercialisation as well as of the proximity of urban centres. It is mainly consumed on Sundays, especially in rural areas and seems to replace the traditional roast of veal which has become too expensive for a number of people. During the week, the "dindonneau" consumption map seems to show that it is located in certain cantons following a certain line which may remind us of the route of certain travelling merchants (Fig. 2).

In fact, this "roti de dindonneau" consumption map does not reveal a deeply established food habit, but rather a relatively fugitive stage of consumption which depends on specific circumstances which can vary suddenly and extensively (for instance as a result of the temporary or definitive disappearance of the

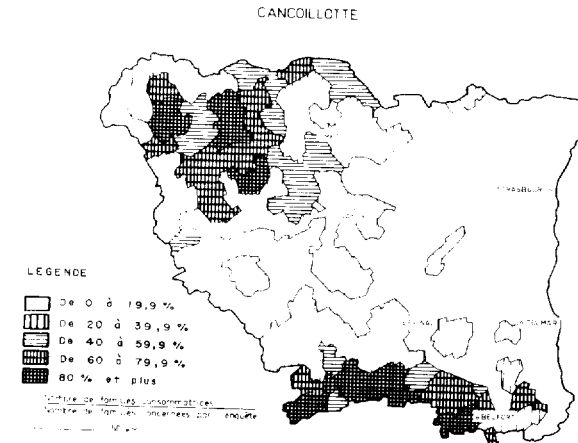


Fig. 2. Family consumption of "cancoillotte": % number of consuming families number of families interviewed.

distribution by shop keepers). This map is probably different today and this type of consumption might disappear altogether sooner or later. However, any reconstitution of the commercial distribution circuits or any new form of presentation (as is the case with turkey fillets and joints) would be sufficient to boost the consumption again following the weekly rounds of the distributors.

"Exotic dishes" seem to be no longer specific to restricted geographical areas such as big cities with a large number of immigrant workers and big industrial centres. They seem to expand everywhere. In the olden days, these types of consumption used to exist, but the necessary ingredients to make them could only be bought in rare specialised shops found only in some big towns, especially in industrial areas. In the present day, any village shop where they still exist will sell pre-cooked, tinned "couscous", paella or pizza.

Food publicity in newspapers, magazines, on the radio and T.V. and in super or hypermarkets, keeps tormenting the consumer and keeps alive, purposefully, the nostalgia of holidays in order to sell exotic dishes in the same way as it keeps alive a nostalgia for the "good old days" so as to impose new products which have nothing in common, apart from the name, with old culinary preparations.

However, except for immigrants in industrial areas, exotic dishes seem— as far as we can judge in accordance with our present superficial knowledge of the problem: to be grafted onto a more stable subjacent food universe rather than being really integrated with it. The frequency of their consumption— if frequency there be— remains often very mediocre. In mainly

* "Exotic dishes" comprise couscous (North African stew), paellas, pizzas, merguez (North African, highly spiced sausage), kebabs, michehoun (lamb barbecue), etc.

rural cantons, the penetration of exotic dishes is generally limited to a few families or to a few experiments according to our surveyors who often said: "the consumption of exotic dishes, merguez, kebabs, couscous, michehoun, etc., is penetrating very slowly", "they are rarely consumed and people mostly but them pre-cooked in tins out of curiosity".

Although exotic dishes are more often mentioned in more urbanised cantons or cities, they do not appear to be served more regularly there either. They are always unusual dishes, or extras generally consumed during friendly gatherings brought about by village fetes, club festivities or when a group of young people meet for a rally, etc. They are never usual types of consumption as they are for the Algerians, the Spanish or the Italians in the industrial areas where they have come to work (steel factories, etc.).

A stable geographical distribution of lasting food habits

Gone is the time when we could spot the food habits of a whole part of a town or of a whole village simply by smelling the air in the streets and yet the populations of North East France have not done away with the relatively deeply settled food habits. We can still distinguish the existence of food habits which are sometimes very old indeed. Some of them, generally those dating back to before the Industrial Revolution, have declined to a great extent. Others, which used to be occasional food consumptions for a few well-off people, are now common to all social categories. And finally, all the food habits have changed even though the oldest ones have remained more or less located in the geographical food space of the North East of France. The superposition of a number of food maps reveals the existence of districts containing cantons in which a much greater proportion of the families state that they consume or make such and such a food or dish. These are

CLAUDE THOUVENOT
 ROTI DE DINDONNEAU
 EN SEMAINE

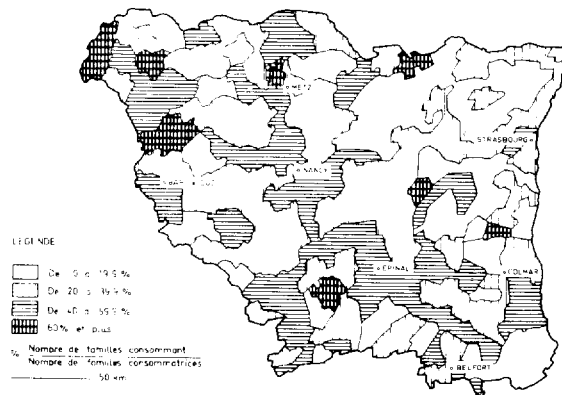


Fig. 3. "Roti de dindonneau" consumption during the week. "%": number of families eating it number of consumer families.

apart from a few exceptions, very old habits (such as the preference for *cancollotte*, the time of day when soup is consumed, the habitual consumption of *naveline*, onion tart and red cabbage for example) which still reveal the regional personality and influences received in the course of history. They also show the zones with a characteristic predominance and the permeability of the linguistic frontier as a delimiting factor for food habits. In this way, the consumption of *cancollotte* reveals extremely old influences, since the dis-

tricts where it is still consumed regularly (Fig. 3) seem to be, as far as the Meuse and Franche Comte regions are concerned at least, a consequence in terms of food of the Spanish occupation, which dates back several centuries. This theory is supported by the fact that these districts expand towards the North from the outskirts of the Haute Marne to the Hirson region, as well as in Belgium.

In the whole of North Eastern France, two zones for the consumption of soup appear clearly: a zone

POTAGES ET SOUPES
 LE SOIR

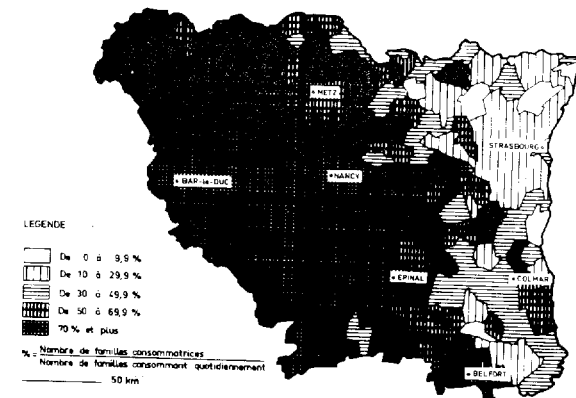


Fig. 5. "Potages et soupes" evening consumption. "%": number of consuming families number of families eating them daily.

for the regular consumption of soup in the evening especially accentuated in the west of Lorraine (Fig. 4) and a zone for the regular consumption of soup at lunch-time, mainly centred around Alsace and including a part of the Vosges mountains (Fig. 5). This proves how a very old rural and germanic habit still prevails in food geography.

The regular consumption of "naveline" (*saure-ruben*—turnips preserved in salt, fermented and prepared in the same way as *sauerkraut*) is limited to

Alsace, neighbouring parts of the Vosges and to Piémont in the southern Vosges and Franche Comté (Fig. 6) It is a very old dish, nowadays occurring very episodically but which was, in the 19th century, the normal Sunday meal all over Alsace; it was accompanied by sausages, bacon and pork which could be either smoked or fresh. The regular consumption of onion tart (*zewelwai* or *zevelewaia*) (Fig. 7) is essentially Alsatian, in the Alsatian departments an average of 50-70% of the families interviewed ate it, whilst

POTAGES ET SOUPES
 A MIDI

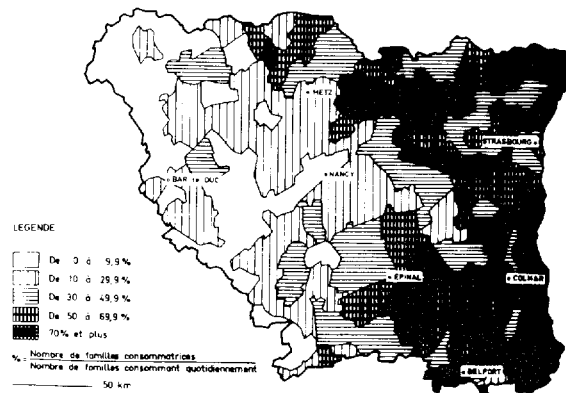


Fig. 4. "Potages et soupes" consumption at midday. "%": number of consumer families-number of families eating them daily

NAVELINE

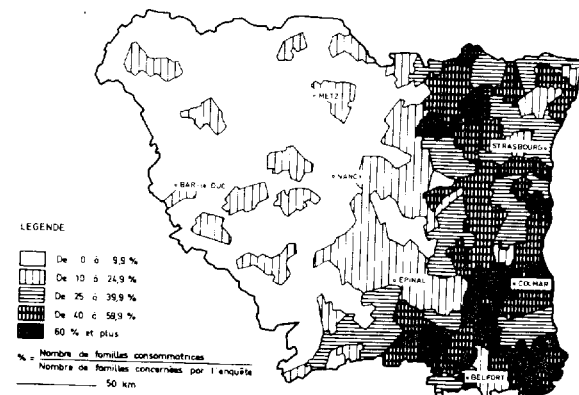
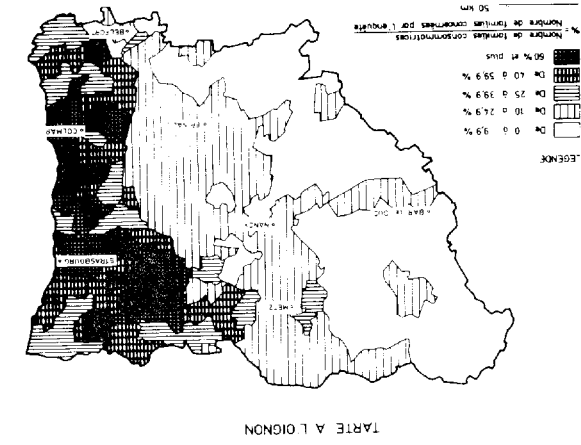


Fig. 6. Family consumption of "naveline". "%": number of consuming families number of families interviewed.

Fig. 7. Family consumption of "tarte à l'oignon" (onion tart)"; number of consuming families number of families interviewed.



elsewhere, especially in western Lorraine less than 10% of the families interviewed ate it regularly. Over the whole of North Eastern France consumption of red cabbage is especially pronounced in the German speaking regions (Fig. 8). There it was prevalent in the diet of 70-90% of the families interviewed. It also, however, remains a considerable food element in the west of the region, in the romantic language regions, since even there 40-50% of the families were involved. It is at the stage of culinary preparation that the contrast is greatest. In the west, the cabbage is normally eaten raw with a vinegar dressing. In the east however, the cabbage is most frequently cooked in lard or butter and accompanied by potatoes or chestnuts, or stuffed with meat and this is as true of the towns as it is of the country districts. Thus, remained confined within its traditional limits. The two additional maps are typical examples of the continuity of the linguistic frontier acting as a limit to

Fig. 8. Family consumption of "chou rouge" (red cabbage)"; number of consuming families number of families interviewed.

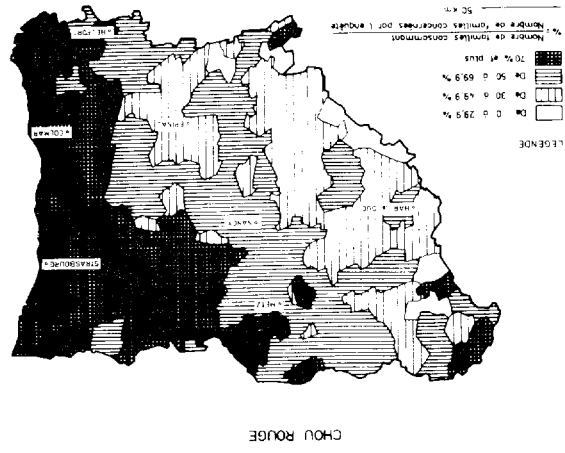
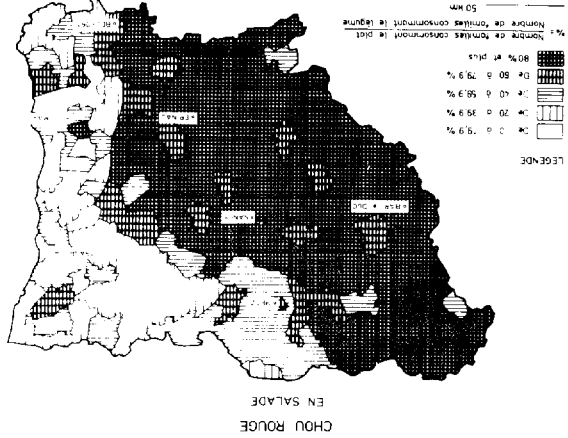


Fig. 9. Family consumption of "chou rouge cru en salade" (red cabbage salad)"; number of families eating this particular dish number of families eating the vegetable.



food customs, even though some of those customs formerly very dominant and extremely regular have now become merely episodic for the majority of consuming families. It would be interesting to research into how the language frontier does or does not delimit food habits in Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, or the Netherlands. Finally we must explore in greater depth this idea of the existence of individual food habits which may be classified according to physiological, psychological, sociological and geographical criteria explored territory, establishing after a fashion, guide-

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of these initial historical, geographical and present-day analyses [18] we are aware of the fact that we have crossed a vast, virtually unexplored territory, establishing after a fashion, guide-

Fig. 10. Family consumption of "chou rouge en plat cuisiné" (cooked red cabbage)"; number of families eating this particular dish number of families eating the vegetable.

