

# Eating City Proposal Paper



## Food & Religions (in public foodservices)

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(in public foodservices)

Report written by:

Luca Bossi, Mariachiara Giorda, Elena Messina

English translation: Luca Bossi e Elena Messina

Translation into French: Irene Sgambaro

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Edited by:

Consorzio Risteco

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The school canteen plays an important role in educating children to eat healthy nutritious food; also, nowadays, it represents a relevant issue in matter of public policies.

Benvenuti in Italia, in collaboration with Mensa Civica, the main research partners Risteco and the Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le Progrès de l'Homme "FPH" led the European project « À table avec les religions ».

The project focuses on the nutrition of children with references to religious conceptions concerning food, in primary schools and it aims to produce a comparison between European cities, which are represented by Turin, Rome and Zaragoza. The survey is conducted by three junior researchers, Elena Messina, Luca Bossi and Gladys Arbj and supervised and managed by the professor MariaChiara Giorda, who also presides over the Scientific Committee of the foundation Benvenuti in Italia.

Moreover, this initiative is supported by the association Uva - Universolaltro (Rome).

Schools can provide a fundamental opportunity for prevention and promotion of healthy lifestyles, because they are able to encourage the implementation of a coherent set of integrated actions, also by involving both public and private actors. Improved nutrition should be one of the priorities on each school agenda because of the positive effect on child well-being. It's a matter of fact that the links between nourishment, learning ability and school performance are very strong.

The main goal of the study is represented by exploring the differences in the diet and nutritional status among children, living in Italy and Spain and coming from foreign countries and, to define how public institutions, such as primary schools and school canteen service, are able to consider the religious and traditional beliefs regarding nutrition.

According to recovered data, to encourage educational and health institution to coordinate their effort in promoting health throughout nutrition, Turin – but not only - had already taken significant steps toward the development of healthy nutrition policies and programs to improve nutritional practices of children in schools with references to the religious dimension in matter of food.

In Turin, the educational institution establishes a direct relation with the families, in order to be directly aware about families and pupils needs. This is the prevalent model within Italian schools; for each family it is mandatory to complete and fill on line forms with the required information. Throughout those information, each family might evidence its own needs, depending on both pathological or ethical and religious issues by the possibility to exclude some foods and to indicate some alternative options both for ethical or religious reasons.

Projects promoted from the municipality of Turin are significantly part of this research, as it will be showed in the following pages.

Even if the relation between nutrition and culture is directly involved in social inclusion, in the protection of religious minorities and in the contrast of cultural discrimination and even if this dimension represents a specific aspects of food and nutrition issue, it is also an under-represented dimension in matter of European policies.

In order to enhance the functionality of the present-days policies and possibly encouraging new ones which will be able to consider the results of this research, the collected data might be compared with current literature and will support some new research perspectives.

After a first phase of research and collecting data, À table avec les religions, will define a range of some best practices able to maximize the chance of success of the enhancement of the quality of the foodservice in European school canteen.

On. Davide Mattiello

President of the Foundation Benvenuti in Italia

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## An introductory observation

*Why pork was proscribed by Hebraic law is still unclear, and some scholars believe that the Torah merely suggested not eating pork at certain restaurants<sup>1</sup>.*

Woody Allen

This study is conducted with the aim to provide guidelines for improving food selection patterns with references to food beliefs and religion, and through it the health *status* of children.

Food is the final product of many interacting dimensions, operating simultaneously on the individual and within a community.

Every man is firstly a cultural and a social being. Food is culturally and defined, religions had always played a fundamental role in defining what is edible and what is not.

As known and also according to the anthropologist Emiko Ohnuki – Tierney food works as a metaphor of *Self*, requiring two interplaying dimensions<sup>2</sup>. First, food is *embodied*<sup>3</sup> throughout its consumption. It operates a *metonym*<sup>4</sup> for being part of the *self*. Second, it is consumed by individuals which are part of a community, or of a social group who eats food together, with references to a *codex* of shared regulations and prescription.

The importance of food leads to its capacity of acting as a socialization catalyst, as regards to what Emiko Ohnuki – Tierney clearly set *in nuce*.

Fleck and Munves (1962) clearly showed how people may have strong guilt feelings about eating foods considered as *inedible* by their reference culture. This is due to the consideration that *food determines and build what we are*.

According to both Greek and Roman sources, pig played a central role in early Jewish text describing the loss of Jewish autonomy over Jerusalem. Several text from the Second Temple period equate the ingestion of pork with the submission to foreign – Roman domination<sup>5</sup>. Maccabees 6.18 – 7.42 records that, presented by Antiochus IV with the option of eating pork or being tortured and thereafter, killed, both the scribe Eleazar and a family choose death<sup>6</sup>.

Also, Philo reports that, during Alexandria pogrom in 38 C.E. captured Jewish were forced to eat pork<sup>7</sup>.

Food had played a significant role in the way people think of themselves, as clearly demonstrates the showed Jewish historical example. Furthermore, food tells not only how people think of themselves, but also, how people think of themselves in relation to others.

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<sup>1</sup> Woody Allen, *Getting Even*(New York, 1971), 67.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. E. Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self. Japanese Identities through time*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> *Ivi*, 129 – 130.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>5</sup> J. D. Rosemblum, "Why Do You refuse to Eat Pork?" *Jews, Food and Identity in Roman Palestine*, in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, Vol 100, no. 1 (Winter 2010) 95 – 110.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> Flaccum, 95-96.

In this respect, it might be stated that everywhere, people have a strong attachment to their own cuisine, and, on the other hand, an aversion to the foodways of others, including table manner<sup>8</sup>.

In many urban areas of the world today, *ethnic food* is popular, and food had become as globalized as the world itself. Also, food might be refereed as a globalization – catalyst, in reason of its cultural meaning and cultural symbolism.

Considered that the aim of this research is not even represented by covering historical and ethnographical details *in toto*, but analyzing food practices in relation to other people, who writes decides to conclude this introduction with some observations and reflections.

As it will me showed, schools and educational institutions are identified as one of the fundamental settings for Health promotion and establishing healthy eating and lifestyle patterns.

Angela Scriven and Liz Stiddard<sup>9</sup>, with references to a survey conducted within English schools, showed how, even if schools are highly appropriate *arenae* for promoting health, in England they have hierarchical cultures, limited autonomy and a dominant academic function that can inhibit the adoption of empowerment approaches<sup>10</sup>. Their research inspects and examines the implication this may have to schools and children, with references to aspects of personal empowerment, including the development of psychological and personal competencies.

Regardless to the English perspective on which this research is obviously centred, it is possible to conclude how this consideration cannot be pertinent to England only.

Everywhere tackling nutrition issues in childhood requires coherent action in the school setting, as the hierarchical culture may inhibit achievement and empowerment. Improved school health is achieved by the development of food and nutrition policy which should be respectful, *plural* and *pluralist*.

Moving from an idea which regards cultural and religious lines that define how body, health, and above all, nutritional practices are constructed, negotiated, set and regulated by relations observable during historical, social, cultural, economical and political transformations, the ambitious purpose of the present research is concerned with the outcome of a set of recommended practices which individual schools could adopt to encourage a more empowering environment for young people.

This would permit the designation of a culturally shared medical, ethical and legal parameters and constants, throughout the *auxilium* of pertinent cognitive questions.

According to Margaret Mead, nutritional practices might be defined as

«The way in which individuals or group of individuals, in response to social and cultural pressures, select consume and utilize portions of available food supply»<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> E. Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self. Japanese Identities through time*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 2003, pp. 3-12.

<sup>9</sup> A. Scriven, L. Stiddard, *Empowering schools: translating health promotion principles into practices*, Health education, Vol.103, lss 2, pp.110 – 118.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>11</sup> C. E. Guthe, M. Mead, *The Problem of Changing Food Habits*. Bull. No. 198. Washington, DC, National Academy of Sciences, 1943.

What people eat and the variety of nutrients consumed by different segment of population directly depends on food productions, economic and cultural systems, logistics of distribution and food habits of people. Thus, every nutritional practice in turn reflects the cultural, social values of a community and its economic conditions – also in schools. The more various are those practice, the more elevated is the economic status of population.

Food might be considered as an expression of social status of individuals, religious and cultural *identity* while biological hunger is always transformed into cultural determined appetite<sup>12</sup>.

Nutrition is thus closely linked with every aspect of human life, a survey of those factors may be valued as an imperative, in matter of public policy.

The aim of this section of the research is represented by the willingness to demonstrate how education system might contribute in producing healthy eating and healthier children, *in primis*, because, every school supplies food throughout its School Canteen Service.

Furthermore, it is known that good outcomes in matter of healthy and food education are more likely when parents are actively involved in promoting the health of their children. For example, according to previous researches, the active involvement of parents in a healthy-eating initiative in schools demonstrated more impact on the behaviour of young people in relation to food preparation.

This is why who writes, decided to include in the research also parents directly, in order to enhance the achievement of the goals of this survey, as the quantitative part of this research clearly shows.

This part of the research examines European comparative researches in matter of health and nutritional oriented practices promoted in matter of education, Italian comparative researches in the same area and would thereafter concentrates on Turin School Canteen Service promoted social and educational policies.

Conscious of the limitations regarding the notion of *comparative research*, it should be precised that a brief consideration on the methodological debate regarded to the comparative research *via* would be discussed later below<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> D. Usha Rani, M. V. Sudhakara Reddy, M. Sreedevamma, *Nutrition and religion*, Discovery Publishing House, Delhi, 2003, p. 9.

<sup>13</sup> Please see paragraph 2.



## Chapter I

### Food and religion – A theoretical frame

#### 1.1 Food and Religion

Every cultural and religious community acts as a *culture carrier*<sup>14</sup>.

In this respect, every cultural and religious community is actively involved *in* the social inclusion process. Food is a cultural element; thus, it is part of that amalgam of symbols which builds every kind of cultural system.

Nutritional patterns are affected not only by socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds of communities but also by religion. Religion plays a significant role in the lives of people, it imposes several restrictions even in matter of foods consumption.

Every cultural group develop its own preferences for certain kinds of food or way of preparing it. Cultural preferences stem from interplays between food supplies, tradition and necessities imposed by social environments. As *Guthe and Mead*<sup>15</sup> (1943) showed, children use to learn traditional food habits of their families; rules that define those habits are meaningful and supply great importance in matter of nutrition. Also it had evidenced how the whole cultural background of a social group is represented by Beliefs, Superstitions, *Tabu* and Aptitudes about food and nutrition<sup>16</sup>.

According to the renown Mary Douglas' analysis, every cultural system (where Religion is significantly part of those systems) aims to classify the reality: meaning embedded in cultural symbols, such as food, can serve to represent and institutionalize the values and beliefs of a culture<sup>17</sup>.

More precisely, in each cultural system, food might be divided in different categories, referring to hygiene and disorder, purity and danger.

Hygiene is regarded to order, while danger and dirt are related with disorder. Eliminating food is not a negative action, but a positive effort to organize environment. There is no such thing absolute *dirt*: it only exist in the eye of the beholder. Purity and impurity create unity in food experience; they are positive contribution to the atonement<sup>18</sup>. By their means, symbolic patterns are worked out and publicly displayed. Also, within this patterns, different elements are linked together and disparate experiences are given meaning.

Each religious conceptions about food refers to three categories:

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<sup>14</sup> K. Barth, *I gruppi etnici e i loro confini*, in V. Maher (a cura di), *Questioni di eticità*, Rosenberg e Sellier, Torino, 1994, pp. 33 – 73.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. C. E. Guthe, M. Mead, *The Problem of Changing Food Habits*. Bull. No. 198. Washington, DC, National Academy of Sciences, 1943

<sup>16</sup> D. Usha Rani, M. V. Sudhakara Reddy, M. Sreedevamma, *Nutrition and religion*, Discovery Publishing House, Delhi, 2003, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Cfr. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An analysis of conceptions of pollution and taboo*, Routledge, London, 2000.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*.

1. food creation and production, or rather, everything preceding food consumption;
2. food consumption, whose taxonomy is concerned with objective and direct prescriptions, (licit or illicit foods) o temporarily prescription (abstention and fasting) e obligation in specific food consumption (e.g. during recurring events);
3. food distribution, referring to the complex issue of regulation and brand within food industry and marketing (e.g. meat is the most strictly regulated food in the Islam).

Claude Lévi-Strauss described food as a type of language that helps human beings in expressing their basic perceptions of reality. He noted that rules about eating cooked and raw foods in some cultures are dictated by sacred stories (myths) and prohibitions (*tabu*). These rules reflect underlying notions about differences between nature and culture.

To conclude, if we avoid to consider cases in which people choose what to eat because of sustenance, food is nevermore a physiological need but definely a *cultural need*.

Therefore, religious conception about food shaped and actually shape diets of each cultural group; thus, legal orders and civil jurisdictions necessarily embodied food religious conceptions, which are now part of those systems.

Due to migration and globalization, food patterns have changed, everywhere. Religious practitioners who migrated to countries with religious dietary laws were used to adjust their food pattern to the local food pattern or to other religious dietary laws similar to their own dietary laws simply because there was no such food available.

Moreover, new globalized societies are now supposed to compare with issues unforeseen, since now; nourishing issues, clearly, are part of them<sup>19</sup>.

In this respect, each social organization, institution and above all the educational institution is supposed to take note about what has been stated, in order to promote, *in primis*, social inclusion.

Food might be considered both as object and subject of social changing.

In order to build range of compatibility able to define religious needs in matter of nutrition and the real possibilities to please them, it became necessary to analyze each cultural and religious representation with references to traditional rules and *tabu*.

As showed, food is culturally and religiously defined. In fact, to understand differences between biological and cultural behaviour it can be simply observed how different are ways throughout people satisfy a basic drive such hunger.

The research aims to consider food with regards to the multicultural realty of present-day globalized societies – a product of the relatively historically recent globalization process that has changed the world. New globalized societies show a situation in which different cultures and religion dialog and discord together. Those societies might, indeed, build new ways to manage and organize a dynamic, overlapping and constantly evolving situation, which clearly refers to food behaviour and food needs of individuals<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> A. G. Chizzoniti, M. Tallacchini (a cura di), *Cibo e Religione: diritto e diritti*, Quaderni del Dipartimento di scienze giuridiche, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 2010, Libellula Edizioni, Tricase (Le), p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> A. G. Chizzoniti, M. Tallacchini (a cura di), *Cibo e Religione: diritto e diritti*, Quaderni del Dipartimento di scienze giuridiche, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 2010, Libellula Edizioni, Tricase (Le), p. 7.

In spite of the growing number of observation and surveys in matter of food and nutrition, in the opinion of who writes, this topic still need more investigation in order to obtain a unifying perspective.

Before considering and analyzing each new necessity, it is important to analyze traditional necessities, regarding to the concept of food and *commensality*. The notion of commensality reminds the idea of eating together, at the same *mensa* (Sobal and Nelson, 2003). With the intent to discuss religious rules, practices and *tabu* in matter of nutrition, the concept of commensality is fundamental, since it represent one of the most striking manifestation of the human society<sup>21</sup>. In this respect, nutrition might be addressed as a fundamental social issues, religiously and culturally defined. Considering eating as a social activity and considering that action of sharing food together as a ritual action, it is possible to define commensality as a religious communion of the society *at large*. (Richards, 2004 [1932]: 180).

## 1.2 Religion and dietary practices

### Judaism

In matter of food practices and rules, Judaism is distinguished by any other religious traditions because of the effort to define each aspect of nutrition and commensality (with references to production, distribution and consumption); this consideration clearly evidence how for a Jew, eating is a way to actively build a relation with God. *Leviticus* and *Deuteronomy* contain the body of Jewish law dealing with food, called *Khashrut*. *Kashrut* comes from the Hebrew root *Kaf-Shin-Reish*, which means fit, proper, correct, *allowed*. The more commonly known word kosher describes those foods which meet those *standards*.

Although details of *kashrut* are extensive laws address to a few fairly simple rules, which are:

1. there are permitted and prohibited food;
2. certain animals, or part of them may not be eaten at all. This restriction includes flesh, organs, eggs and milk of the forbidden animal;
3. of the animals that may be eaten, they must be killed in accordance to the Jewish law (shechità)<sup>22</sup>.

More precisely, of the beast of the earth (with references to mammals with the exception of swarming rodents), a Jew is allowed to eat those which have cloven hooves and chew their cud. Of the things that lives in water, a Jew is allowed to eat everything with fins and scales. Regarding to birds, *criteria* are less clear; the Torah provides a list of forbidden birds<sup>23</sup>, even if does not specify which are the reasons. All of the birds on the list are birds of prey and scavengers, thus, maybe this might represent the reason of the distinction. Finally, other birds are permitted, such as

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<sup>21</sup> Cfr. C. Fisher, *Commensality, society and culture*, Social science Information, Vol 50, 3-4, 2011, pp.528-548.

<sup>22</sup> Deut 12:21.

<sup>23</sup> See Lev. 11:13-19 and Deut. 14:9.

chicken, geese, ducks and turkeys – even for someone turkeys are not permitted because they were unknown at the time of the giving of the Torah.

On three different occasions, the *Torah* prohibits eating meat with dairy together, it contains the reference not to *boil a young goat in its mother's milk*<sup>24</sup>. Then, rabbis extended the prohibition to include not to eat milk and poultry together. This separation is not just referred to food consumption itself, but it includes also utensils, pots and pans with which milk and poultry might be cooked, the plates and the flatware from which they are eaten, and also, dishwashers and dishpans in which they might be cleaned. Moreover, a Jew might wait for a significant amount of hour before meat after having eaten dairy. Each of these prohibition and rule symbolize the sacredness contained in the act of eating.

*Kosher* dietary laws are observed all year around, not just during ceremonies, even if there are additional dietary limitations and restrictions during some of them. For example, many foods usually considered *kosher* all year around are not *kosher* for Pesach. In fact, during Pesach, leavened food (*chametz*), might not be served; during the night before the whole family is involved in the *Crumb Ceremony*. Every crumb that has ever entered your home must be searched out and zapped. Because then, on the eve of the first night of Pesach when *Bedikat Chametz* ceremony is conducted, there must not be even microscopic evidence of the nasty leavened products. The night before *Pesach*, firstborn sons might fast as a remembrance Egyptian firstborn slaying, moreover, two days before of the ceremony there is the *sèder*, a special family meal, during which unleavened bread is consumed (*Matzah*), filled with ritual to remind the significance of the holiday. The term *sèder* comes from a Hebrew root meaning *order*. It is also the same root from which is derived the word *siddur*, *prayer book*. The text of the Passover *sèder* is written in a book called *Haggad*, about the story telling of the escape.

## Islam

Islam, throughout the Qur'an had not restricted itself in merely mentioning the permissible (*hala*) and the impermissible (*haram*) food but went to extent of giving useful tips regarding a balanced diet. The conception of moderation and of a balanced diet is variously recovered in Qur'an, in which there is written *Eat and drink but waste not in extravagance, certainly He [Allah] likes not those who waste in extravagance* (VII, 31).

As known, the Qur'an prohibits the consumption of certain kind of flesh, first between them is the swine flesh (II, 173). In addition, any Muslim may slaughter his own animal by invoking the name of Allah, the one God; without this ritual no meat, even if allowed, may be consumed<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> Ex. 23:19; Ex. 34:26; Deut 14:21.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.meatami.com/ht/a/GetDocumentAction/i/82883>, 05.12.2013.

It is possible to state that *Halal* dietary laws, found in the *Qur'an*, address three key issues which are:

1. Distinction between allowed and not allowed meat:

the meat of pigs, boars and swine is strictly prohibited, as it is meat of carnivorous animals like lions, tigers, dogs, cats and birds of prey. Meat of domesticated animals with a split hoof, like cattle, sheep, goat, lamb, buffalo and camel, are permitted; birds that do not use their claws to hold down food, like chickens and turkeys, may be consumed. Eggs and milk from permitted animals may be consumed.

2. Prohibition of blood:

blood is always haram, neither from permitted nor from not-permitted animals;

3. Method of slaughter:

Each kind of flesh consumption might not be divorced from the prescribed method of slaughtering<sup>26</sup> (the animal may not be stunned prior to slaughter, which involves cutting the throat in a manner that induces rapid and complete bleeding and the quickest death possible).

## Christianity

Christianity does not envisage binding rules relating to food or drink which they are expected to keep. Christian practices just refer to the consideration that freedom is the consequence of the salvation that Jesus has brought to men and women. The freedom to eat and drink everything that is healthy is part of that. The only rule is represented by the abstinence from food in certain periods, for example, during Lent, the period that precede the holy Easter.

Also, abstinence from fleshe during the Ash Wednesday and the fast of the Holy Friday represent the only effective religious restriction in matter of food and nutrition. In fact, the Bible contains the reference

*«Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.» (In saying this, Yeshua declared all foods clean)<sup>27</sup>».*

In spite of this clarification, and considered that Christianity (as also Judaism and Islam) is composed of different symbolic trends, which are not culturally and religiously unified and unifiable, it might be precised that some of them had promoted a different system of rules in matter of nutrition and commensality. Thus, the Seveth Day Adventist Church supported a different dietary system, rooted in Jewish Law. It promotes an ovo-lacto-vegetarian diet, in which, as in Judaistic tradition, pork is not permitted. Those who are not vegetarian usually consume only meat coming from ruminant animals with cloven hooves. Fleshes permitted are represented by beef and lamb, since considered *clean*. More precisely, for Seveth Day Adventist Church tradition, nutrition directly weigh on the relation health-illness. In this respect, *unclean* food are considered as unhealthy.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>27</sup> (Mt 15, 1-20).

Regarding to the Christianity *in toto*, it might be said that also the architecture of sacred places (for example in monasteries) might evoke the sacred meaning of food. Thus, the dining hall is always near the Church with references to the consideration that Man lives of words of sacred Scripture and bread (which always has a sacred meaning in Christian liturgy). In monasteries, monks pray and eat in predefined moment, this discipline represent a fundamental element for religious aescetism.

With regards to what has been stated since now, it might not seem strange how this parallelism may be referred also to Buddhist aescetism. The famous *dictata* of the San Benedetto order *ora et labora* shows a clear connection with the Doghen Buddhist tradition, in which the chef always perform a sacred role; in both those tradition, the chef is a wise and virtuos man, a master and a guide for the community.

### **Buddhism**

Buddhist tradition supports vegetarianism, in respect for animals, considered before all as living being. In Buddhist traditions and dogma, there appear to be some *sutra* references about the Buddha eating choice foods which could include meat before his enlightenment, while he was living in the palace. This is before he made the great renunciation and left the householder's life and became a recluse (monk). His final meal before enlightenment is reported to be rice cooked in milk. In the *sutras* after his enlightenment it had not be found any reference indicating that he ate meat. At his death in the *paranirvana sutra*, the food that poisoned him and led to his death was at one time translated as pork. The terms have been translated as *pig's truffles* which was originally misunderstood and mistranslated as pork. Modern scholars including, Arthur Waley, K. E. Neumann, and Mrs. Rhys David have corrected this to "the food of pigs" which are mushrooms<sup>28</sup>.

In different instances Buddha stated that no living being should be killed or caused to kill,

«*The eating of meat extinguishes the seed of great compassion*».

[The Buddha, Mahaparinirvana Sutra ]

Also *Theravada Pali* Canon is permeated with *sutras* that are pro-vegetarian, espousing the virtues of not killing or causing to kill.

«*All beings tremble before danger, all fear death. When a man considers this, he does not kill or cause to kill. All beings fear before danger, life is dear to all. When a man considers this, he does not kill or cause to kill*».

[Dhammapada, 129-130]

In Buddhist tradition Self indulgence refers to chasing after pleasures of the senses without regard for consequences. It is an attachment to the senses. If we know that meat eating is not needed for

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<sup>28</sup> D. N. Snyder, *The Complete Book of Buddha's list*, Vipassana Foundation, Las Vegas, 2009. [http://www.shabkar.org/download/pdf/Buddhism\\_and\\_Vegetarianism\\_Fiveteen\\_Questions\\_and\\_Answers.pdf](http://www.shabkar.org/download/pdf/Buddhism_and_Vegetarianism_Fiveteen_Questions_and_Answers.pdf), 05.12.2013.

survival and we choose to eat it because we are attached to the taste, that is a form of self indulgence.

## Hinduism

Different religious traditions which flow into and merge in what is commonly defined as Hinduism, share common conceptions in matter of food, which is considered as vitally important since it is considered to be part of God or *Brahma* (not just as a *Brahma* symbol), as it nourishes the entire physical, mental, and emotional aspects of a human being. It is considered a gift from God and should be treated respectfully.

The importance of food and of its sacred meaning is variously represented in *hindu* rituals. In fact, several ceremonies are associated with food in *Hindu* tradition. A child's first solid food is celebrated as a *samskara* (rite in sanskrit), known as *annaprasana*. Also, funeral rites involve serving food and offering food to the departed soul for his journey to the ancestral world.

As probably known, beef is strictly forbidden; cow is considered Mother in Hinduism, and in this respect, sacred. According to the Hindu religion, violence or pain inflicted on another living thing rebounds on you (*karma*). To avoid causing pain to another living thing, vegetarianism is advocated, even if not mandatory. Veganism, the practice of abstaining from the use of animal products is not supported and prohibited animal products may be different from one area to another; for example, duck or crab may be forbidden in one location and not in another. The adherence of the *ahimsa* doctrine (nonviolence) represent the primary basis for vegetarianism, as it has been central to the Indian religious traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. Religions in India have consistently upheld the sanctity of life, whether human or animal; or, in the case of *Jains*, elemental. But the essence of truth-force is the repudiation of violence and the use of *ahimsa*; *ahimsa* and truth are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate them. Moreover, *satyagraha* (truth-force), *ahimsa*, and vegetarianism are all intrinsically linked to each other.

To conclude, in Hinduism, also onions, garlic, and red-colored foods such as red lentils and tomatoes are prohibited, ((*Bhagavad gita* 9, 27–28; 17, 8–10).

The *Bhagavad gita* divides foods into three classes: those of the quality of goodness, those of the quality of passion, and those of the quality of ignorance. The most healthful are the foods of goodness. Foods of the quality of goodness, represented by milk products, grains, fruits, and vegetables, increase the duration of life and purify one's existence. Such foods are sweet, juicy, fatty, and palatable (*Bhagavad gita* 17, 8-10). Moreover, foods that are too bitter, sour, salty, pungent, dry or hot, are of the quality of passion and cause distress. But foods of the quality of ignorance, such as meat, fish, and fowl, described as *putrid, decomposed, and unclean*<sup>29</sup>, produce only pain, disease, and bad *karma*. In other words, what you eat affects the quality of life.

According to Manu,

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<sup>29</sup> Bhagavad Gita 3, 13.

«Food that is always worshipped, gives strength and manly vigor; but eaten irreverently, it destroys them both».

## Daoism

Daoism is the name given to a variety of philosophical and religious traditions.

The early classics of Daoism – the *Dao De Jing* and the *Zhuangzi* – contain more passages dedicated to agriculture, gardening and dining, where eating and food figure as significant issues able to conduct man on the spiritual path.

Attention paid to food is not due solely for dietary or medical reasons, for the *Daoist*, the mental is not a realm set apart from the physical; rather, it is characterized by a refinement of the very same energy that flows through all existence.

In the later texts of the Daoist religious adepts the focus on such matters becomes much more pronounced. It has been claimed that, for one of the most important of these religious thinkers, Ge Hong (4th Century CE), *ingestion [was] the key soteriological activity*<sup>30</sup>. The thought behind the principle of *salvation by ingestion* was not simply that, by eating sensibly, a person might ensure longevity, even immortality- a main Daoist ambition. The idea, too, in Ge Hong's words, was that by eating what is *pure*, a person can *distance himself from the rottenness* of the world<sup>31</sup>.

Yet, no one food contains a perfect balance of nutrients for ever lasting life. A person needs to listen to the body and provide a mixing of essences to maintain the body. Religious conceptions dealing with food are directly linked to the concept of vegetarianism, since a Taoist will not eat meat raised with inhumane practices. This isn't a statement to be vegetarian but solely an assertion to promote respect for life. Also, a *Daoist* might probably refuse eating cereals, as they are connected with the production of three parasites, worms, which may cause illness. Established that no action is fully independent of another, longevity requires treating food with the same respect given towards your own body. Moreover, considered how Daoism teaches the *post mortem* survival of the whole body and an afterlife of torture and endless suffering in hell, a Daoist might focus on maintaining youth and attending longevity and immortality also and necessarily throughout food and nutrition.

### 1.3 Food and Religion. Food as a symbol

In St. Augustine's Confession, Augustine narrates how his mother Monnica used to go to the funeral monuments bringing together with her bread and wine, with reference to the ritual called *refrigerium* widely known at that time.

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<sup>30</sup> D. E. Cooper, *Food and Spiritual Reflection: the Daoist example*, The shap working party on Education in Religion, Food, Faith and Community, 2009/10, on [http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/journals/articles\\_0910/cooper.pdf](http://www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/journals/articles_0910/cooper.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> Cfr. R. F. Campany, R.F. (2001) 'Ingesting the marvelous', in: N. Girardot, J. Miller and Liu Xiaogan (Eds.) *Daoism and Ecology*, Cambridge, Mass.:Harvard University Press.



To perform the *refrigerium*, the food had to be consumed on the grave, in order to remember the dead and refresh his memory.

The bread, sacred food *par excellence* from ancient world, had the extraordinary power to unite people with others and nurture this connection to the Divine.

It might be recognized as a *christianized* food.

Bread may allow to access the infinite sacred experiences with references to the acts of breaking bread together in the Eucharist, practicing hospitality by offering it and also considering bread as food and tool to reach the Underworld - the bread might be used as a payment for the boatman Charon, ferryman of Hades who carries souls of the newly deceased across the rivers Styx and Acheron that divided the world of the living from the world of the dead.

In Jewish tradition, the iconic images of *matzah* (unleavened bread) in Sephardic *Haggadah* manuscripts is also linked with sacred meanings. In the mystical textual formulations found in the *Sefer ha-Zohar*<sup>32</sup> there are references which may demonstrate how late 13th- and 14th-century Castilian Jews often conceived of the *matzah* as a manifestation of the *Shekhinah*<sup>33</sup>, hence justifying the glorified illuminated renderings of what otherwise might be considered a culturally-significant instrument.

In Hinduism, as showed, it is not allowed to consume specific kind of meat.

In Hinduism, the cow (Sanskrit: *go*) is revered as the source of food and symbol of life and may never be killed, with references to the article 48 of the Indian Constitution, which prohibit the slaughter, of cows and calves and other milk and draught cattle.

Lord Krishna, was born as a Cow-herd boy and is popularly referred to as *Go-paala* which means *protector of Gaus* (cows) and *Govinda one who gives pleasure to the Cows*, while *Nandi*, the bull is Lord Shiva's primary vehicle and also the Principal *Gana* (follower) of Shiva<sup>34</sup>.

Because of its importance, in early Hinduism, the cow was an indispensable member of the family. In this respect, the cow became to be supposed to be the living symbol of Mother Earth. As the mother may produces milk to feed her sons, a cow may produces butter, milk for sustenance and also dung to fertilize.

The sacredness of the cow might produces an insurmountable border as the animal becomes a way of communication able to link the man and the Divine.

Even if cow protection is a central fact in Hinduism, the Qu'ran allows Muslims to slaughter it; this consideration might build an additional border, this time, between *hindus* and muslims (Malamoud 1989).

Marvin Harris (1985) argues that cow's religious sanctity has been mistakenly given to a phenomenon that can best be explained by socio-political factors. The cultural materialist reduces the Hindu ban on cow slaughter as a factor of ecological pressures. He asserted that instead of Hindu theology, taboos, customs, and rituals associated with Indian cattle require a *positive-functioned* explanation resting upon India's adaptive response to ecological degradation. The basic components of his theory include recognition that the animal was formerly sacrificed or eaten, a

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<sup>32</sup> Book of Splendor.

<sup>33</sup> Divine Presence.

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.omprakruthidhama.in/sv\\_cows.html](http://www.omprakruthidhama.in/sv_cows.html), 17.12.2013.

subsequent rise in population density, and a responsive restriction imposed when the animal can no longer be raised in sufficient numbers to meet societal needs<sup>35</sup>.

The consumption of pork is one of the most tabooed, the prohibition of eating pork links Jewish (Lev. XI, 12) and Muslims (Qur'an II, 173), as, also, they are linked by the ritual way of slaughtering, throughout an incision through the jugular veins.

Copious explanation about this religious prohibition had given.

As demonstrated, Mary Douglas symbolic/interpretive perspective, argues that for ancient Hebrews pigs are classificatory abominations because they have cloven hoofs but are not cud-chewers, while Marvin Harris' adaptive and materialist perspective shows that the environment of the Middle East makes pig raising highly inefficient.

Each one of the Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam allows people to eat beef, particularly during the Jewish *Pesach*, the Christian Passover and the Islamic *I'd al-Adha*. The work on Islamic eschatology, the *Kitab al-Miraj* (also known as *Liber Scalae Machometi*), concerning Mohammad's ascension to heaven contains the prohibition of consuming wine (130-131). According to the text, Muhammad refused to drink the wine, because before him, God refused it. Muslims interpret this fact to forbid any intoxicating substance, such as wine or beer, as the Qur'an outlines that it is the intoxication, which makes one forgetful of God and prayer, which is harmful.

Also, the Qur'an narrates:

«They ask thee concerning wine and gambling. Say: "In them is great sin, and some profit, for men; but the sin is greater than the profit." They ask thee how much they are to spend; Say: "What is beyond your needs." Thus doth Allah Make clear to you His Signs: In order that ye may consider 36».

The wine build a border which divides the other Abrahamic religions; in fact, Judaism and Christianity do not prohibit its consumption. In Jewish rituals, the wine is a sacred symbol, *kasher* and pure, allowed in its consumption, while its derivatives, such as vinegar and spirits are never allowed.

In Christianity, wine, together with bread acts as an Eucharistic symbol, it symbolizes Christ's blood which permit the human salvation and redemption.

In Hinduism, the consumption of food is a sacred practice; the food might be prepared with references to the *prasada* (done as an active devotional meditation). Also, when consuming food, God may be pleased and the faithful may eat food after the God's thanksgiving, throughout precise *formulae* called *puja*.

Also in Judaism and Christianity the food consumption may link the faithful with God, as an example, Jesus used to pray before eating; one of the most know Islamic supplication pronounced before having a meal sounds like

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<sup>35</sup> Cfr. M. Harris, *The Sacred Cow. Cultural Anthropology*, Harper Collins College Publishers, New York, 1995.

<sup>36</sup> (Surah 2:219, Yusuf Ali)

«*Bismillahi wa'ala baraka- tillah*<sup>37</sup>»,

which may be translated in:

With Allah's name and on the blessings granted by Allah.

#### **1.4 Abstinence as a link to the Divine**

A copious number of Religious tradition invites their faithful to abstinence. Since each food is a God product, also prohibited food might be considered as a gift of God.

Abstinence from food refers to the voluntary restraint from experiencing or indulging in bodily pleasures but it may be practiced due to several reasons including health, philosophical considerations, social considerations or religious practices.

Abstinence is never oriented against God.

In most faiths there is an ascetic element that guides towards a subjective need for spiritual discipline. Religion means to elevate the believer above normal life of desire to walk on path of complete renunciation. This is a principle that is shared by abstinence, which become one of the ways to meet the Divine.

Hindus fast on several festivals sometimes going without food or water and sometimes living only on fruits and dairy products. Followers of Hinduism also observe certain when they may abstain completely from eating, especially during *Ekadasi* (eleventh day, in Sanskrit) which occurs twice in a lunar month - once each on the 11th days of the bright and dark fortnight respectively, and which is considered an auspicious day to fast.

For Jewish people the principal day of fast is *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement, with references to biblical indication, Torah (Lv 16, 29–31; 23, 27–32; Nm 29, 7).

Catholics and Orthodox Christians abstain from food and drink for an hour prior to taking Holy Communion, and abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday and during Lent. Many Catholics abstain from meat all Fridays in the year.

The Bible often narrates about periods in which Jesus abstained from food, one of the most known example may refer to the forty days he spent in the desert, before the temptations. According to these texts, after being baptized, Jesus fasted for forty days and nights in the Judaeen Desert. During this time, the devil appeared to Jesus and tempted him. Jesus having refused each temptation, the devil departed and angels came and brought nourishment to Jesus.

In Islam the period of fasting lasts during the whole month of Ramadan. Each day of the month of Ramadan, people of the faith, fast without anything to eat or drink from dawn to dusk, Qur'an (*sura* II, 185)

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<sup>37</sup> <http://www.islam.tc/Dua/>, 17.12.2013.

Ramadan is a holy month for the Muslims. It's a month of respect and compassion for those less fortunate; also in this period the faithful may be placed in front of his physical and mental dependences, in order to refresh the harmony which link him to God.

## Chapter II

### *Status quaestionis* in Europe

#### 2.1 A European cases-study geography. The hidden dimension

The relationship between diet and social life is a widely debated topic both in the European public and private contexts, where great attention is paid to different dynamics affecting societies, related to food production and distribution and the ways of consumption.

Nowadays, nutrition represents an important subject in the national and communitarian policies *agenda*, related to different dimensions often interrelated, which are:

- environmental policies;
- policies against poverty;
- health policies;
- cultural policies.

Even if these dimensions represent specific aspects of food and nutrition issue, it is important to notice how European public and private actors pay much more attention to the first three dimension, while the fourth is under-represented in matter of policies, as it will be showed in the following lines.

However, as stated in the previous paragraph, the relation between nutrition and culture is directly involved in social inclusion, thus, in the protection of religious minorities and in the contrast of cultural discrimination.

As Anna Gianfreda in Chizzoniti (2010, p. 186) says about nutrition in school contexts,

«La scuola è, forse, l'ambito in cui più che altrove è possibile sperimentare l'importanza che la cultura dell'accoglienza e dell'inclusione può sortire nella coesione delle società multi religiose. [...] La scuola, quindi, ha l'importante compito di non annullare le differenze esistenti tra gli alunni, accedendo ad una cultura assimilazionista, ma di trasformarle in risorse educative e culturali per l'intera popolazione studentesca».

School represents the context in which more than anywhere else it is possible to experience the importance of a culture of acceptance and inclusion, where promoting the multi-religious societies' cohesion. [...] The school should protect cultural and religious differences between pupils [...] by transforming these differences into cultural and educational sources.

In this respect, a culture of food might actively build a brand new range of priorities able to influence and enhance the social inclusion. This culture of food might refers to religious conception about nutrition representing, as stated, guidelines defining what we are allowed or not to eat.

In *latu sensu*, the major aim of comparative research is to identify similarities and differences between social pre-defined entities. Comparative research seeks to compare nations, cultures, societies, and institutions. To some scholars, comparative research should be strictly limited to comparing two or more nations (also known as cross-national research), while others prefer to widen the scope in order to include comparison of many different types of social and/or cultural entities.

Considered that, some of the liveliest debates about methodology in the social sciences are regarded to comparative method and research, this methodology which had been adopted from the field of the comparative politics and which also bears on sociology and historical method, concerns an active controversy about methodological issues<sup>38</sup>.

Conscious that any comprehensive and detailed discussion around methodological limitations and constraints might necessarily require a treatment that exceeds the scope of this paper by far, there might be evidenced one the most important criticality concerning this survey.

Food and nutrition related health and nutritional practices represent an area of interest which is especially characterized by being extremely multi-disciplinary. In fact, it is concerned with historical, legal, socio-cultural, medical and ethical considerations. Of course, this represents a strength but also a weakness of this research project; this inter-disciplinary nature has a clear purpose of supplying a greater number of elements useful in organizing the research. However, it also highlights the necessity to choose (and to exclude) methodologies not typical or appropriate within each considered discipline. This will consequently restrict the quantity and quality of accessible of *data*.

As various species of entities are picked up to be compared, there is often a tacit assumption about their autonomy and a silent tendency to ignore the complex interplays and mutual influences among the surrounding context<sup>39</sup>.

But, regardless to contemporaneous critical analysis in matter of comparative methodological research, the often-potential used of the method lies in the possibility of elaborating and establishing hierarchical orders in which civilizations, cultures, societies, and nations are nested<sup>40</sup>. This hierarchical disposition might be taken to serve as the *normality*<sup>41</sup> or the point of reference in the comparison.

Considering that nourishment, and nutritional practices represent one of the most important public service priorities, and considering that national health care is a basic social right, who writes

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<sup>38</sup> Cfr. P. A. Hall, *Aligning Ontology and Methodology* in J. Mahoney, D. Rueschemeyer, *Comparative Research, in Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003.

<sup>39</sup> R. Azarian, *Potentials and Limitations of comparative method in Social Sciences*, in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, No. 4, April 2011.

<sup>40</sup> Cfr. J. Kocka, *The use of comparative history*, in *Societies made up of History: essays in the Historiography, Intellectual History, Professionalization, Historical and Social Theory and proto-Industrialization*, Ragnar Bjork and Karl Molim, Stockholm, 1996.

<sup>41</sup> R. Azarian, *Potentials and Limitations of comparative method in Social Sciences*, in *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 1, No. 4, April 2011.

consider surveys such as WHO European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition – as this one – the only method able to evaluate public health services effectiveness of *pre*-defined policies and to promote united and combined actions able to support countries in addressing inequalities and socioeconomic gaps in relation with food practices.

## 2.2 *Status quaestionis* in Europe

Every healthy nutrition interventions needs to occur early in childhood, in order to prevent the development of bad habits in matter of food.

Furthermore, many core eating habits and behavioural patterns are developed that might persist throughout adulthood.

Schools can provide a fundamental opportunity for prevention, because able to promote the implementation of a coherent set of integrated actions, also by involving both public and private actors. Maybe, schools represent the most effective method of reaching the largest number of people, including youth, school staff, families and community members.

Improved nutrition should be one of the priorities on each school *agenda* because of the positive effect on child well-being, also because of the explained existing links between nourishment, learning ability and academic performance.

As showed, each single European school nutrition policy cannot be formulated without any references to the European Government approved policies on nutrition and food safety. In this respect, WHO – World Health Organization –Regional Committee for Europe is the addressed Authorities which is allowed in defining nutritional practices guidelines.

In fact, WHO Regional Committee per Europe

«[...] is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends<sup>42</sup> ».

During 2007, the WHO Regional Committee for Europe approved the resolution named EUR/RC57/R74<sup>43</sup> which allowed the *Action Plan*<sup>44</sup> – lasting five years - and called on each Member States to enhance its own nutrition policies.

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<sup>42</sup> WHO Regional Committee for Europe Website, <http://www.who.int/about/en/> , 25th.Oct.2013.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>44</sup> During September 2000, WHO Regional Committee for Europe promoted the *Action Plan Food and Nutrition Policy for the WHO European Region (2000 – 2005)* - doc. EUR/01/5026013, calling for the implementation of health policies regarding food and nourishment. The aim was represented by the willingness to achieve nutrition and food safety goals. Even if one third of Member States have developed policies on nutrition and, thereafter, government-approved documents and guidelines had been approved and signed, dealing with food safety, nutrition-related disease still represent one of the most relevant public health burden. In addition, often, low-incoming countries in the Region have different quality of life and health status,

WHO European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy 2007 – 2012 aims to achieve goals which are:

- a. Reducing the prevalence of diet-related non-communicable diseases (with particular reference to obesity);
- b. Reversing the obesity trend in children and adolescents;
- c. Reducing prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies;
- d. Reducing incidence of foodborne diseases<sup>45</sup>.

In order to achieve those goals, there had been defined specific target, risk-based in individual Member State, with references to predefined area of research. Each one of those areas involves different actors of public private and nongovernmental sector, and is regulated by a leadership of a government body. Research areas considered are represented by:

- a. Supporting a healthy start
- b. (concerning maternal nutrition, foodborne diseases in pregnant women, schools and pre-schools institutions are involved);
- c. Ensuring a sustainable food supply  
(leading to agricultural policies and industrial processed food – with the aim to improve the nutritional quality of the food safety and supply within public institutions);
- d. Providing comprehensive information and education to consumers  
(as regards to nutrition, food safety, consumer rights, food safety guidelines, with regards to European best practices, based on Codex Alimentarius<sup>46</sup> standards or EU legislation on labelling on health claims);
- e. Taking integrated action to address related determinants  
(concerned with population-level interventions to promote physical activity for health, reduce alcohol-consumption initiatives and enhance safe drinking-water provision);
- f. Enhancing nutrition and food safety in health sector  
(with the purpose to improve standards of service delivery for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of nutrition-related diseases, and boost good-safety quality in hospitals);
- g. Monitoring, evaluation, researching<sup>47</sup>

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poverty affects half of the population and consequences are clearly related with food insecurity – because of their a-safety.

In this respect, second Action Plan had been endorsed, with the purpose to harmonize activities and promote synergies between Members, with references to their different, specific needs, resources, cultural context and policy development.

See WHO European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy 2007 – 2012.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>46</sup> Scientific basis for Codex Alimentarius standards work. It gives an overview of risk analysis and outlines the functions of the three FAO/WHO expert committees: the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA); the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR); and the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA); and on other scientific advice provided by FAO/WHO. Codex also provides information on modalities for countries to request, access and contribute data to this process. Codex texts are considered by WTO as the international reference for food safety standards, in <http://www.codexalimentarius.org/scientific-basis-for-codex/en/>, 25th.Oct.2013.

<sup>47</sup> WHO European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition Policy 2007 – 2012.



(with references to the evaluation of the impact of Member States programs and policies in order to improve both public and private research, to enhance the understanding of the role of nutrition, food safety and lifestyle factors in disease development and prevention).

Finally, other agencies with a potential to contribute within the *Action Plan* had represented by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organization (ILO), the World Bank, the Council of Europe Co-operation and Development (OECD)<sup>48</sup>.

Throughout this initiative, WHO Regional Office for Europe is the only agency able to coordinate international work in matter of nutritional practices, within Member States. The collaboration between European Community Members aims to define a shared international code of practices especially oriented to children.

This is certainly an ambitious purpose, which requires the establishing of partnership either with civil society and policy makers. Either private and public actors should promote a dialogue engaging the *Codex Alimentarius* Commission in discussing regulatory frameworks able to influence the regional *agendae* on food standards topic, but also food quality, food safety and hygiene issues<sup>49</sup>. Thereafter, WHO Regional Committee for Europe might provide an assessment of the outcomes of the action envisaged by the Action Plan, in order to define triennial progress report on the enhancement of this complex issue<sup>50</sup>.

Certainly, WHO European Action Plan for Food and Nutrition is the most complete comparative research pertinent to nutritional health practice and policies, able to define the effectiveness of the social policies promoted by each Member State. As showed, in Europe the guidelines in matter of school nutrition directly deal with health and healthy policies and are less widespread regarded to cultural and religious needs.

It does not happen everywhere, regarding to Richard Étienne, Pascal Tozzi and Hugo Verkest<sup>51</sup>, in France public institutions provide more frequently a choice of different foods, allowing students to respect the religious rules of their traditional background, thus avoiding a form of discrimination. However, in copious countries they school canteen calendar is often marked by the influence of Christian religion, an influence that students belonging to religious minorities may suffer<sup>52</sup>.

*A case study: Barilla. Something to wonder about*

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>51</sup> Richard Étienne and Pascal Tozzi with Hugo Verkest, *Educational Policies that Address Social Inequality. Thematic Report: Religious minorities*, Département de Sciences de l'Éducation, Université Paul Valéry Montpellier 3, France 2009

<sup>52</sup> In Spain, the difficulties raised by school calendars have been resolved beforehand, with agreements signed by the State with main religious groups (Protestants, Jews and Muslims) to ensure that the exemption from participation may be granted. In France, the Council of State (14/04/1995) resolved in favor of granting the exemption from school attendance for religious reasons, *when compatible with the organization of the institution.*

Barilla is a world leader food company, whose most famous adverts and press campaigns conveys a reassuring message about the traditional Italian family, also linked with the concepts of authenticity and health. Often, advertising and publicity are related to a captivating image of the contemporary Italian family, and the famous advertising spot *Dove c'è Barilla, c'è casa*, [*Home is where Barilla is*] clearly refers to an ideal and stereotyped image of family and happiness. Thus, Barilla's health vision is strictly linked to nutrition and more precisely to the Italian traditional food culture.

The Barilla *Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition* (BFNC), founded in 2009, is a corporate *think tank* whose goal is to foster an open dialogue about the well-being of the world's population<sup>53</sup>, and to remain committed to promoting change, within food production, distribution and consumption.

It is involved in:

«developing and making available to all the major opinion and decision makers proposals and recommendations on the world of food and nutrition in order to promote a better life and a sustainable and widespread prosperity for all people»<sup>54</sup>.

The BCFN created the *Double Food – Environmental Pyramid* model, a tool that compares the nutritional aspect of foods with their environmental impact<sup>55</sup>. A unique food model created to protect the wellbeing of people and the environment.

Placing the two pyramids next to each other, the *Double Food - Environmental Pyramid* allows people to see that the foods whose area advised to be eaten more, are also, generally, those that have the lowest environmental impacts. On the other hand, foods that are advised to be eaten less are also those that have a greater environmental impact.

Barilla's vision and mission is finally represented by reducing footprint on the Planet and promoting wholesome and joyful food habits, thus bringing wellbeing and the joy of eating into their everyday lives<sup>56</sup>, with references to the concept of *traditional* Italian family.

This consideration is particularly important, since it underlines how Barilla's vision never refers to the promotion of cultural diversity, minorities and religious pluralism.

This superficial attention paid in matter of nutrition and cultural beliefs seemed to be confirmed when Guido Barilla, whose firm has almost half the Italian *pasta* market and a quarter of that in the US, told Italy's *La Zanzara* Italian radio show:

«I would never do an advert with a homosexual family...if the gays don't like it they can go and eat another brand. [...] For us the concept of the sacred family remains one of the fundamental values of the company»<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>53</sup> [http://foodtank.org/resources/652/Organizations/Barilla\\_Center\\_for\\_Food\\_and\\_Nutrition](http://foodtank.org/resources/652/Organizations/Barilla_Center_for_Food_and_Nutrition), 03.12.2013.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>55</sup> <http://www.barillacfn.com/en/bcfn4you/la-doppia-piramide/>, 03.12.2013.

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.barillagroup.com/corporate/en/home/chisiamo/vision.html>, 03.12.2013.

<sup>57</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/i-would-never-use-homosexual-couples-in-my-adverts-barilla-pasta-bosss-antigay-comments-spark-boycott-call-8841902.html>, 03.12.2013.

As a result of this homophobic statement, it seems evident and obvious how a brand whose advertising campaigns are strictly linked to virtues and qualities such as joy, happiness, the importance of family did not see then any marketing or promotional advantage in promoting the relationships between diet and different identities, nor between food and the cultural otherness.

## 2.2.2 Cases-study geography

### United Kindom - London

In 1944 it was made compulsory for local authorities to provide school dinners, following nutritional parameters established by law. Free school meals were available to students coming from low-income families. Since the Seventies, Thatcher governments have firstly operated deep cuts in funding for free school meals; then in 1980 with the Education Act, they abolished the minimum nutritional standards for school meals and removed the gratuity for thousands of British schoolchildren, forcing local authorities to open the market to private competitors, with the aim of reducing the cost of each meal. As a result, however, it has been registered a significant drop in the quality of food: as reported by Derek Gillard<sup>58</sup>, in order to maximize profits and eliminate waste, several private companies have pushed schools to opt for self-service caterings, thus promoting an obvious orientation towards fast-food foods, such as burgers and fries. Today the canteen service is not compulsory for schools, excepting for those low-income students comprehended within Free School Meal parameters.

In the 2000's, school meal has become an important topic in the public debate thanks to two special testimonials, which brought the issue to public attention by two different point of views.

The first case dates back to 2004, when the famous chef Jamie Oliver led a campaign<sup>59</sup> to improve the quality of school meals, committed to catering companies and often consisting on typical fast-food receipt (such as fries, fried chicken nuggets, pizza and cakes). *Jamie's School Dinners* television programme, broadcasted by Channel 4, showed to the audience the situation of school feeding in British canteens, creating a public campaign to improve funding for school meals. The public pressure generated forced the British government to establish the *Children's Food Trust*, in order to monitor, support and spread a healthy food culture and daily good practices. The topic has become an UK electoral issue in the general election of 2005.

The second case dates back to 2012<sup>60</sup>, when Martha Payne, a nine year old girl, has obtained the reopening of her blog<sup>61</sup> from the local authorities. The blog, created as a school project, hosted photos and evaluation of her school canteen dishes, with the aim of describing her school meals experience; it had been obscured by authorities because over the accuse of misrepresenting the offer of the canteen service. Within a short time a media campaign brought the case to public attention: Jamie Oliver himself has published a message - *Stay strong Martha* - on the social

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<sup>58</sup> Gillard D (2003) *Food for Thought: child nutrition, the school dinner and the food industry* [www.educationengland.org.uk/articles/22food.html](http://www.educationengland.org.uk/articles/22food.html).

<sup>59</sup> For further details on the campaign: [http://www.jamieoliver.com/media/jo\\_sd\\_history.pdf](http://www.jamieoliver.com/media/jo_sd_history.pdf), 15.12.2013 .

<sup>60</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/15/martha-payne-school-lunch-blog\\_n\\_1600363.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/15/martha-payne-school-lunch-blog_n_1600363.html), 17-12-2013 .

<sup>61</sup> <http://neverseconds.blogspot.it/> , 17-12-2013.

network Twitter, supporting the young blogger. Following the outcry, the blog has been so successful to collect evidence on school nutrition from students, parents and teachers around the world, bringing to the global attention both the issues of the right to access to food and of food culture in the world.

If a great attention to the health implications related with nutrition and lifestyles has found a good *echo* in the British public sphere, that is not the same for the topic of cultural and religious aspects of food. Britain represent today a significant example of the gap between law prescriptions and everyday practices in matter of protection of cultural differences and promotion of an intercultural and interreligious encounter through food. Anna Gianfreda's contribute (2010, p. 186-192) introduce to the United Kingdom legal measures on the issue:

«With the emergence of multi-cultural and multi-religious society[...]the guarantee of the right to live according to “conscience” has fully entered into the priorities and objectives endorsed by all the institutions that regulate the “public space” in which there is the social life. [...] Next to the sociological fact of differentiation in the sense of multi-religious society”, she continues, “there is a multiplication of the sources of law that, at different levels, impose an increasing attention to the *respect for diversity*, no longer guaranteed through a mere implementation of formal equality, but by so-called *positive measures*. Those, allowing a number of facilities, remove those unfavorable conditions that affect the right to respect religious dictates of individuals and groups».

Therefore, the canteen is seen by schools institutions as the place responsible for:

- the promotion of respect for minorities
- the religious literacy of students, through the knowledge of different religions.

In fact, these achievements are in line with the standards developed for school canteens by the School Food Trust<sup>62</sup>, which encourages all schools to promote ethnic diversities, especially when students manifest those religious beliefs or cultural practices that influence the dietary.

“The new priority of the so-called Single Equality Schemes”<sup>63</sup>, says Gianfreda in her paper, “is in fact to raise the standards of school canteens” and “to ensure that the food appears inviting [...] for all” and therefore that it is “culturally and religiously appropriate”<sup>64</sup>.

Despite the theme is well covered by the regulatory agencies, the reality of school canteens still seems far away from the above mentioned requirements: the opening to the religious factor is mainly related to the supply of *halal* meat (rarely *kosher*) or the proposal to replace the *non-halal* meat with a vegetarian menu.

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<sup>62</sup> The School Food Trust, renamed in 2012 as Childrens Food Trust, is a UK charity aiming to protect every child's right to eat healthily. <http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/>

<sup>63</sup> Department of Health, *Religion or Belief. A practical guide for the NHS*, January 2009, [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk), Section IV: *Process – how to integrate issues on religion or belief into action. Planning for single equality schemes*.

<sup>64</sup> Anna Gianfreda in Chizzoniti, Tallacchini (edited by), *Cibo e religione: diritto e diritti*, Università cattolica del Sacro Cuore – Sede di Piacenza – Dipartimento di Scienze Giuridiche – Quaderni del dipartimento di scienze giuridiche, 1-2010, pages 186-192

With references to what stated, it is possible to say how in United Kingdom, the nutrition, in school canteen services is not even really related to *otherness* and does not include food between the instruments able to promote and enhance religious pluralism. In the Moseley School canteen<sup>65</sup> in Moseley, a Birmingham suburb with a strong multi-cultural and multi-religious population<sup>66</sup>, the school has a “fantastic new canteen that offers a wide range of products, including halal, vegetarian and healthy options”<sup>67</sup>, even if there is no trace of educational programs linking food to cultural integration.

Approximately 75% of the schools under Waltham Forest Council jurisdiction, a total of 46 schools, is serving only *halal* meat supplied by Waltham Forest Catering. A representative of the Council explained that the choice to serve only *halal* meat logistic consideration, since copious school kitchens are not big enough to allow staff to store and prepare two different types of meat<sup>68</sup>.

The Children's Food Trust website<sup>69</sup> describes Newfield Secondary School and Talbot Secondary School in Sheffield as the only two schools contemplating different nutritional needs based on religion (between those reported as cases of good practice in the canteens management). The Newfield and Talbot share a canteen that “is light and bright, with contemporary décor and a café feel. The layout has been specially designed to make it easier for pupils to get around, and for wheelchair users to sit at the tables [...] There are five servery areas, each with a till point:

- two offer cold sandwiches, *pasta* and snacks;
- one offers a hot main meal;
- one offers a hot main meal with a *Halal* option;
- one (outside) offers cold sandwiches, pasta and snacks.

In the evaluation of the Children's Food Trust, the innovative spirit of the canteens is represented by the children-friendly structure, the pleasure and healthiness of the environment and the speed in service operations and payment (usually using fingerprint recognition). Regarding the the cultural/religious inclusion and social interaction, the only reference is related to the opinions of the students and staff, which clearly indicate how relations between peoples coming from the two schools have enhanced after the implementation of shared canteen.

Hackney neighborhood is a good field for collecting *data* linked with the approach of London educational institutions policies in matter of nutrition and religions. The population of the district, which in 2010 counted 213,573 inhabitants, ethnically diverse, with 41% of residents describing themselves as *white British*, 14 % as *white in other ethnic groups*, 29% as *black* or *black British*,

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<sup>65</sup> <http://www.moseley.bham.sch.uk/>

<sup>66</sup> [http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobheadernam e1=Content- Disposition&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1223401212301&ssbinary=true&blobheadervalu e1=attachment%3B+filename%3D968265Moseley\\_and\\_Kings\\_Heath\\_%28OA%29\\_Ward.pdf](http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/cs/Satellite?blobcol=urldata&blobheader=application%2Fpdf&blobheadernam e1=Content- Disposition&blobkey=id&blobtable=MungoBlobs&blobwhere=1223401212301&ssbinary=true&blobheadervalu e1=attachment%3B+filename%3D968265Moseley_and_Kings_Heath_%28OA%29_Ward.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>68</sup> [http://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/10334813.Halal\\_meat\\_served\\_in\\_three\\_quarters\\_of\\_council\\_supported\\_schools/](http://www.guardian-series.co.uk/news/10334813.Halal_meat_served_in_three_quarters_of_council_supported_schools/)

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.Childrensfoodtrust.org.uk/case-studies/newfield-secondary-and-talbot-secondary>

9% as *asian* or *asian British*, 4% as *mixed* and 3% as *chinese* or *other*<sup>70</sup>. The neighborhood include also a large Turkish and Kurdish community. The 66% of the inhabitants was born in the UK, 5% in other European countries and the remaining 29% in other regions of the world. During the 2001 census, the residents of Hackney described themselves as Christians in 44% of cases, as Muslims in 18%, Jews 4%, other faiths in 3% of cases and a further 19% not referring to any religion, while 12% gave no answer.

In addition to the demographic composition, Hackney is a particularly interesting case also because of its recent educational history. Since 2002 the district has entered into a ten-year contract with the Learning Trust, an independent organization which regulates the education of around 27,000 pupils in more than 70 schools, nurseries and play centers in Hackney. The Trust was set up in response to a critical OFSTED<sup>71</sup> report.

Among the Hackney elementary schools (as quoted by the Learning Trust website)<sup>72</sup>, only two of them declare attention to religious dietary needs, referring exclusively to Islam as the Primary Bentham offers a choice of menu that always includes a vegetarian and a *halal* option and the Baden Powell Primary asked to the parents to fill out a form to provide special requests, specifying lawful and forbidden foods. All other schools offers the vegetarian option, with the possibility for students to bring a packed lunch prepared at home, that in any case may contain sweets or sugar drinks, as indicated by the Children's Food Trust.

None of these schools make explicit reference to religious needs, or to educational programs, or to intercultural inclusion through food<sup>73</sup>.

However, all the schools in Hackney propose:

- a vegetarian choice;
- different meat every day (without specifying if halal, kosher or not);
- fish every Friday (only on Fridays).

The Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School, located in the City of London district, pertaining to the Church of England and settled in the heart of the capital, is also the only one school (between those monitored) reporting into the website an explicit reference to cultural and ethnic diversity. According to the *Race Equality and Cultural Diversity Policy* report<sup>74</sup>, dated April 2012, the institute has among its values and objectives:

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<sup>70</sup> Sources: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/index.html> and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London\\_Borough\\_of\\_Hackney#cite\\_note-29](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Borough_of_Hackney#cite_note-29)

<sup>71</sup> The institution responsible for the supervision of schools in Britain.

<sup>72</sup> The investigation was limited to schools whose websites were online at the time of inquiry; among them: Benthal, Baden Powell, Berger, Daubeney, De Beauvoir, Gayhurst, Grazebrook, Holmleigh, Holy Trinity, Jubilee, Rushmore.

<sup>73</sup> With references to what stated, it might be specified that it is possible that school canteens use to offer *halal* meat without specifying it and that in many cases, menus include intercultural dishes, often presented in relationships with their country of origin, *ibidem*.

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.sirjohncassprimary.org/schoolpolicies.asp?Section=27&Documentpage=3>

«Be Healthy: students can enjoy good physical and mental health and understand what a healthy life style means. We provide access to physical activities and extra-curricular sports clubs. We encourage healthy eating across all cultures, eg. healthy food from around the world is provided in the dining room. Children learn about keeping healthy in science, DARE and PSHE lessons.

Religious Observance: we respect the religious beliefs and practice of all staff, pupils and parents and comply with all reasonable requests relating to religious observance and practice.

Action Plan: we have an on-going action plan for the implementation of this policy, and for monitoring its impact. We recognize the importance of continuing appraisal and development. We ensure that references to race equality and cultural diversity issues are made in the School Development Plan (SDP). We ensure that there are references to race equality and cultural diversity issues in the school's plans for induction and training of teaching and support staff and also for the governing body».

To conclude, a different case is that of Harrow<sup>75</sup>, a suburb of London. In 2010 the Municipality has proposed the replacement of all meat offered in school canteens with the *halal* meat, indicated by nutritionists as the only one able of bringing together the needs of a religious community that is among the most different from an ethnic and religious point of view. The decision met with harsh criticism of animal rights defense organizations; the president of the local *Halal Food Authority* has welcomed the idea of introducing *halal* meat in school canteens only if accompanied by non-halal meat goods, in respect of non-Muslims people. Given and considered the aversion of the residents, the town council decided not to proceed with the initiative.

## France

As in UK, also in France the School Canteen Service is not mandatory for schools; in some cases, the service is provided by municipalities, entrusting the responsibility for the preparation of meals to an in-house catering. In other cases, municipalities may delegate the public service to a catering company and meals are prepared in a central kitchen and delivered to a satellite one.

Considering the *Défenseur des Droits* guidelines<sup>76</sup>:

«The school catering service is a non compulsory public administrative service, subjected to the principle of free administration of local communities. [...] Firstly this signifies that citizens are not entitled to its creation or retention and, secondly, that the entire financial burden of this service is not considered as a municipal responsibility and therefore may justify the demand for a user

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<sup>75</sup> <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1300589/Parents-fury-town-hall-plans-halal-menus-schools.html>, 05.12.2013.

<sup>76</sup> The *Défenseur des Droits* is a French independent authority, whose chairman is nominated by the President of the Republic for a period of six years; it is responsible for protecting the citizen's rights against government and public administration and has special prerogatives in order to promote children's rights, the fight against discrimination, the respect of ethics guidelines in the field of activities of security and intelligence national agencies.

financial contribution. Also, when school canteens are created, the costs they impose to the municipal budget represents an optional and not a compulsory item of expenditure»<sup>77</sup>.

However, as the *Defenseur* says, even if this service is an optional,

«a school canteen must respect the principles of public service which contemplate, among other things, the equality of access, the continuity of the service and its religious neutrality»<sup>78</sup>.

The Chapter III of the cited *Rapport*, dealing with school canteen service in matter of religious or philosophical beliefs, is particularly interesting for the purposes of this research. In fact, considering religious oriented needs, the *Defenseur* admits that:

«These instances do not seem to be a priority between the testimonies received. Most of these expressed a simple wish for free-meals lunches and only in few cases for the creation of *halal* menus. Some claimed an alternative to meat or simply the possibility to know in advance the menu, in order to predict the days of presence of the child in the school canteen.

In fact, the majority of school canteens offer alternatives to pork-based receipt, serving fish on Friday, a practice that has not been challenged by the Court. Till today the Judge has not sanctioned this way of looking at the religious needs. In the lack of specific guidelines, the national Council of State has estimated that the absence of a meal replacement does not correspond to a violation of religious freedom. So, there is no obligation for municipalities to create specific menus able to consider such requirements or religious dietary restrictions»<sup>79</sup>.

As it can be read in the cited *Rapport*, a communication from the Ministry of the Interior, dated August 20, 2011, states that *the neutrality of public services implies that the consideration of special dietary needs based on religious belief can not affect the normal operation of the service.*

According to newspapers and literature, many cases of dispute occurred over the years. In March 17, 2005<sup>80</sup>, in Villefranche-sur-Saone, a group of families noticed that the municipal local institution was not supposed to accept their children anymore, if they would continued to refuse the non-*halal* meat served in the school canteen.

During the election campaign in the 2012 *religious* and *ethnic food* theme rose up in political agenda, the UMP<sup>81</sup> party, engaged a cultural fight against *halal* meat in school canteens. Nicolas

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<sup>77</sup> *L'égal accès des enfants à la cantine de l'école primaire* – Rapport 28 mars 2013, chapitre I. *Les conditions générales d'accès au service de restauration scolaire*, par. A. *Formes et statut juridique des services de restauration scolaire*. [http://droitdesreligions.net/rapports/rapport-cantines\\_ok.pdf](http://droitdesreligions.net/rapports/rapport-cantines_ok.pdf)

<sup>78</sup> [http://droitdesreligions.net/rapports/rapport-cantines\\_ok.pdf](http://droitdesreligions.net/rapports/rapport-cantines_ok.pdf)

<sup>79</sup> [http://droitdesreligions.net/rapports/rapport-cantines\\_ok.pdf](http://droitdesreligions.net/rapports/rapport-cantines_ok.pdf)

<sup>80</sup> Question écrite n° 15623 de M. Jean Louis Masson (Moselle - NI) publiée dans le JO Sénat du 20/01/2005, page 143; Réponse du Ministère de l'éducation nationale, de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche, publiée dans le JO Sénat du 17/03/2005, page 768. <http://www.droitdesreligions.net/rddr/communes.htm>

<sup>81</sup> *Union pour un mouvement populaire*, a centre-right political french party.



Sarkozy's was supported by the French right hand side in the struggle against the so-called *islamization* of the country.

As reported by Le Monde, on February 12, 2012<sup>82</sup> the *Front National* candidate Marine Le Pen announced, during a public speech in Strasbourg, that she wants to prevent the distribution of *halal* in school canteens.

During a public speech in Bordeaux, March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2012 as reported by Le Monde Sarkozy said:

«Public school canteens are bound by the principle of secularism, [...] there are no taboo subjects[...] certain issues should not be considered as a matter of religion but only as matter of civilization»<sup>83</sup>.

The production and distribution of *halal* meat in France is a delicate issue, surely for its *islamophobic* connections, but not only; ethical and philosophical vegetarianism, veganism conceptions are in opposition too.

Also, some *halal*-labeled products are not recognized as *halal* by some members of Muslim communities. As Stéphanie Le Bars reports<sup>84</sup>, The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, regarding the difficulties to quantify and identify on the retail market the meat slaughtered according to religious rituals, reminds that ovine and goats ritually slaughtered represent 48% of the total number of ovine and goats slaughtered in France, while the adult cattle ritually slaughtered represent 11% of the total, 13% in the case of calves.

Regarding *halal*, the anthropologist Dounia Bouzar<sup>85</sup>, former member of the *Conseil français du culte Musulman* (CFCM) and member of the *Observatoire de la laïcité*, underlined how Muslim parents ask above all not to force their children to eat non-*halal* meat in school canteens. The same opinion is expressed by Mohammed Moussaoui, former president of the CFCM, which states that parents are especially asking for an alternative to meat meals, not only for *halal* meat.

A short excursus on the menus of some schools from different regions in France may help in analyzing this subject. As it might emerge from the analysis, the school canteens examined, usually propose an alternative to pork meat, by offering different kind of meats or vegetarian menus.

Strasbourg

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<sup>82</sup> [http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2012/03/10/le-halal-a-la-cantine-un-fantasme-loin-de-la-realite\\_1655942\\_3224.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2012/03/10/le-halal-a-la-cantine-un-fantasme-loin-de-la-realite_1655942_3224.html)

<sup>83</sup> <http://www.todayzaman.com/news-273250-french-leader-sarkozy-nixes-halal-meat-in-schools-for-muslims.html>

<sup>84</sup> [http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2012/03/10/le-halal-a-la-cantine-un-fantasme-loin-de-la-realite\\_1655942\\_3224.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2012/03/10/le-halal-a-la-cantine-un-fantasme-loin-de-la-realite_1655942_3224.html)

<sup>85</sup> [http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2012/03/10/le-halal-a-la-cantine-un-fantasme-loin-de-la-realite\\_1655942\\_3224.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2012/03/10/le-halal-a-la-cantine-un-fantasme-loin-de-la-realite_1655942_3224.html)

Strasbourg is a special case-study also because of the composition of its population. In 2008, immigrants amounted to 51.625 units, the 19% of the population (whereof 6% born in Europe and 13% coming from foreign European countries). Collected *data* placed Strasbourg above the national and regional average, among the cities with more than 200.000 inhabitants, just behind Paris (20%). In 2008, Non-European immigrants, coming from North Africa represented the 28.4% , from Turkey, 12.9% and from sub-Saharan Africa the 12.5%<sup>86</sup>.

In this respect, in Strasbourg, school canteen services consider the option to offer *halal* meat and 15% of the served meat is ritually slaughtered<sup>87</sup>.

The municipality website<sup>88</sup> shows four types of menus offered by school canteens service:

- standard;
- standard without pork (if on the menu);
- halal;
- vegetarian.

Among the canteens purposes, the students can:

- rest and distract;
- develop conviviality;
- refresh, being the lunchtime the occasion for children to develop a taste, to discover new flavors, to understand the nutritional balance and the respect for the environment, to develop individual autonomy skills, as well as social life and personal hygiene.

Lyon

Lyon municipality website<sup>89</sup> present shows three different approaches to school canteen menus:

- Classical menu,

consisting on five components: a starter, a protein dish (meat, fish or eggs), completed with vegetable side dish - a cheese or a dairy - and dessert.

- Full menu without meat,

consisting on the same five components, whereas the meat is replaced by fish, eggs or protein products, usually soy-based.

- Food allergies menu, the menu depends on the allergies.

Because of pedagogical reasons, children are invited to taste all the dishes; the canteen staff itself has the task of promoting - without obligating - taste education between pupils<sup>90</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> <http://www.insee.fr/fr/bases-de-donnees/default.asp?page=recensements.htm>, 05.12.2013.

<sup>87</sup> <http://www.al-kanz.org/2010/05/18/strasbourg-cantine-halal/> , 05.12.2013.

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.strasbourg.eu/vie-quotidienne/enfance-education/enfant-scolaire/peri-scolaires/restauration-scolaire/menus>, 05.12.2013.

<sup>89</sup> <http://www.lyon.fr/page/enfance-et-education/leducation/la-restauration-scolaire.html>, 05.12.2013.

## Grenoble

The school catering services in Grenoble<sup>91</sup> offer four types of menus:

- classical;
- without pork;
- without meat;
- food allergies menu (in which case there is a specific procedure).

As showed, there is no reference to religious needs in matter of food.

## Paris

The section of the municipality website dedicated to school canteen catering services is particularly rich in information about the service organization and the methods of cooking, regarding the health standards, as prescribed by the European and national legislation.

Parisian school catering is organized around 20 *Caisses des écoles*<sup>92</sup>, bringing together 662 public schools (311 kindergartens, 302 elementary schools, 49 comprehensive school), 43 lower secondary schools, 16 high schools.

The school canteen services support around 135.000 students, a total of 22.7 million meals per year. According to provided *data*, 80% of elementary students access the school canteen service. The system consists of 165 indoor kitchens (60.500 meals a day), 30 *hot link* central kitchens (19.500 meals) and 5 *cold tie* central kitchens (41.000 meals).

The abovementioned website, even if completed with specific information, does not show any references regarding religious needs in matter of nutrition and religious or cultural pluralism.

The school canteen services is never able to offer certified *halal* or *kosher* meat and food, menus vary from the absence of pork in specific menus (as in the case of the XV *arrondissement*), to a menu completely without pork (for all; this is the case of the XIV, XVII and XX *arrondissement*).

## Marseille

Unique among those observed, the Marseille case-study<sup>93</sup> is unusual because offers a large selection of intercultural dishes, including *tabbouleh* and *tagine*. Each school organizes cultural theme days to educate students to food diversity, in order to promote cultural and religious pluralism and social inclusion. No pork meat is even offered, in menus.

## Finland

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<sup>90</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>91</sup> Grenoble: <http://www.grenoble.fr/239-restauration-scolaire.htm>

<sup>92</sup> In France, *Caisses des écoles* are municipal institutions which are responsible for overseeing all aspects of school life, including the canteen service, in both public and private institutions.

<sup>93</sup> [http://www.marseille.fr/sitevdm/document?id=2077&id\\_attribute=48](http://www.marseille.fr/sitevdm/document?id=2077&id_attribute=48)

As maybe known, Finland was the first country in the world to serve free school meals service for all pupils; excluding a few previous experiments, dating from the early twentieth century, the service has been officially founded in 1948.

At the time the meal mainly consisted of soups and porridge; the children brought bread and milk from home as integration of the meal. During the sixties the first variations to the menus begin to emerge, with the introduction of processed and frozen foods and of more vegetables. The seventies saw instead the introduction of foreign foods, such as rice and spaghetti, at the time unknown in Finnish family food culture.

In this respect, food distribution in school canteens started ensuring a safe, varied and healthy food supply, also throughout the enhancement of the availability and affordability of fruit and vegetables.

### ***The legislation ruling the matter***

The municipalities are responsible for monitoring and evaluating school meals in Finland. The statutory obligations are based on the following:

- the Basic Education Act (628/1998);
- the General Upper Secondary Schools Act (629/1998);
- the Vocational Education and Training Act (630/1998).

The Finnish National Board of Education website<sup>94</sup> states that the *National Core Curriculum* defines the achievement and evaluation *criteria*, establishing that each municipality and school prepare its own method: they are free to select those they consider as the most appropriate teaching materials.

As part of the teaching curriculum, each municipality is required to develop a student welfare plan. Between other guidelines, the plan provide the basic principles for organizing school meals and sets targets for health, nutrition education, up to good manners education.

To facilitate planning, a National Nutrition Council is appointed to observe and improve school canteens' supply by providing nutritional guidelines for schools.

The role of school meals, as presented by the *National Board* website, is to be an educational tool on teaching right nutrition and healthy eating habits.

### *The Finnish typical menu*

The attention to health and balanced diet is a recurrent concern in the Finnish school canteens' legislation and food culture.

The National Board website writes

«The objective», «is to maintain and improve pupils' health and well-being and to give them energy for their school work. School catering meets these aims by following the dietary guidelines for schools issued by the National Nutrition Council. A school lunch should equate to about one third of a child's daily food intake. It should be tasty, colourful and well-balanced».

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<sup>94</sup> <http://www.oph.fi/english/education>, 17.12.2013

The school menu contains all the components of a well-balanced meal, which are,

- fresh and cooked vegetables covering half of the plate;
- potatoes, rice, or pasta covering one quarter of the plate;
- fish, at least once, preferably twice a week, or meat (or beans and sprouts as part of a vegetarian diet) covering the remaining quarter of the plate;
- skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, fermented milk;
- water to quench the thirst;
- bread with vegetable margarine or butter-margarine blend;
- berries or fruits for dessert.

### *Special diet menus*

Students' allergies, ethics and religion are taken into consideration when planning school activities and meals. The objective is to ensure the basic diet suits as many students as possible as it is or with minor modifications.

Whether a student shows specific health-related, religious or ethical needs in matter of nutrition, practical arrangements might be made with the kitchen staff and the school nurse.

The following special diets are available in schools of Helsinki and in the Helsinki Vocational College<sup>95</sup>; on the menu, each dish is marked with a specific code and dish options are visible in the school canteen:

- Coeliac diet (G)
- Milk-free (M)
- Lactose-free (L)
- Low in lactose (LL)
- No pork (P)
- No Beef (B)

The meals for those with religious beliefs are based on the suitable products on the basic and vegetarian menus.

Prohibited ingredients are not usually replaced with similar, suitable ingredients (for example, replacing pork with beef) and basic and vegetarian menus are designed to provide a varied and diverse selection of suitable main courses and side dishes (meal combination).

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<sup>95</sup> <http://www.hel.fi/hki/Opev/en/Student+benefits/School+catering/Special+diets+in+schools#>

## Denmark

The Danish public canteens represents, as others, a particular case-study because of some deeply discordant facts occurred in the Country and came to the headlines during 2012 and 2013.

### *The Danish school*

In Denmark the school is optional, while education is compulsory up to 16 years old, no matter if provided in public or private institutions, through family education or by a private tutor. The public compulsory school is called *Folkeskole*; it has been established in 1814, it is free for all students and managed by municipalities, following the principle of autonomy but respecting the common objectives determined by the *Folkeskole Act*<sup>96</sup>.

A reference to intercultural education, in the terms of a *global perspective*, can be found on the Ministry webpage dedicated to *lifelong learning*, which states that all young people might complete an education programme with global perspectives; in this respect students may spend some time studying abroad. It is the aim of the Government that education should provide young Danes with strong academic competences and a global outlook<sup>97</sup>.

However, two particular facts related to the topics in discussion captured the attention.

The first, reported on March 9, 2012<sup>98</sup>, saw a Muslim student being forced to taste wine and pork as part of a class work at the Copenhagen Hospitality College in Valby, a suburb of Copenhagen. In fact, in that occasion, as stated by school rules, each student was supposed to try and assess every dish they prepare during cooking exercises. Facing with the firm refusal of the student, the school has organized a meeting between him and a local imam, who was supposed to explain him that from a religious point of view, there is, in fact, nothing wrong in tasting pork and wine. The student enjoyed the transversal support both of the right-wing Dansk Folkeparti and of the left-wing Ehedslisten party.

The second fact, reported on 16 August, 2013<sup>99</sup>, is related to the public scandal arisen when the Hvidovre Hospital's leadership admitted that all meals served by the hospital were entirely composed of *halal* meat. The statement has transformed the local issue in a national *media* topic, in front of which the same public institutions were led to confirm the complete absence of controls (and therefore *data*) about public structures' canteens meat purchase.

The hospital's decision to serve only *halal* meat was justified in economic terms, due to the presence of inmates from different ethnic backgrounds and the impossibility for the hospital canteen to serve two different types of meat.

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<sup>96</sup> [http://host.uniroma3.it/progetti/cedir/cedir/Lex-doc/Dk\\_folke.pdf](http://host.uniroma3.it/progetti/cedir/cedir/Lex-doc/Dk_folke.pdf) e [http://eng.uvm.dk/Fact-Sheets/~media/UVM/Filer/English/Fact%20sheets/080101\\_fact\\_sheet\\_the\\_folkeskole.ashx](http://eng.uvm.dk/Fact-Sheets/~/media/UVM/Filer/English/Fact%20sheets/080101_fact_sheet_the_folkeskole.ashx)

<sup>97</sup> <http://eng.uvm.dk/Fact-Sheets/General/Lifelong-learning>, 05.12.2013.

<sup>98</sup> <http://cphpost.dk/news/local/all%E2%80%99s-halal-ends-halal-muslim-cook>, 05.12.2013.

<sup>99</sup> <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/3936/denmark-bans-meatballs>, 05.12.2013.

The deputy director of the hospital said he did not believe that a method of slaughter as such has something to do with faith, adding that all the chickens in Denmark are slaughtered following *halal* ritual, even if no one has stopped eating chicken.

According to the newspaper, at least 30 nurseries, preschools and daycare centers in Denmark have banned the Danish national dish – pan-fried meatballs known as *frikadeller* – because they include pork and are offensive to Muslim children.

Ishøj Municipality - a town on the island of Zealand in eastern Denmark where most of the population is of African, Arab, Pakistani or Turkish origin - has introduced, to accommodate Muslim children, a blanket policy of not serving pork, including *frikadeller*, sausages or *liver pâté*, at any of its daycares or nurseries.

The newspaper also reports how in parts of Copenhagen, the dietary ban has gone beyond pork. In Nørrebro, for example, a district in Copenhagen where up to 40% of the children are Muslim, schools have banned not only pork but are serving only *halal* meat. According to Danish Sociologist Jon Fuglsang of the Metropolitan University College, banning pork is the wrong way to go:

«Pork is an important part of Danish food culture that brings much national pride. It should be possible to serve differentiated menus for children. We should not banish certain foods in order to show respect. It is not the right way to do it. Children must learn how to think about these issues»<sup>100</sup>.

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<sup>100</sup> Ibidem.

## Chapter III

### A comparative study for the survey: Spain and Italy

#### 3.1 *Status quaestionis* in Spain

Policy developments over past few year indicate how strategically important is Spain. Together with Italy, Spain, is a particular case-study among the European scenery because of the Concordat, signed in August 1953 and which strengthened the Franco regime, was to replace the 1851 document that the republic had abrogated. This new agreement provided full church recognition of Franco's government. Also, it reaffirmed the confessional nature of the Spanish state; the public practice of other religions was not permitted. The agreement was more favorable to the Vatican than to Franco; it included measures that significantly increased the independence of the church within the Spanish system.

The system of *Acuerdos* developed in Spain is not expressly established by the Constitution, which merely states, with the III paragraph of Article 16, the general criterion of collaboration between the State and religious denominations by engaging the public institutions to take into account the religious beliefs of the population.

The ways in which such cooperation must take place are indicated by the *Ley Organica de Libertad Religiosa* (LOLR) promulgated in 1980 which, according to the Article 7, provides that the State should establish *Acuerdos* or *Convenios de cooperación* with churches, denominations and communities subscribed in the Register and which know *arraigo* - rootedness - in Spanish society. The article 9.2 of the Constitution calls on public institutions to promote the conditions for the effective exercise of fundamental freedoms and equality related to religion.

According to Coglievina<sup>101</sup>, the *Acuerdos* include

«general rules [...] as well as *special laws*, which provide specific protection to each religion, including religious dietary needs».

In matter of nutrition and dietary needs, the access to *religiously food* is guaranteed for those who are living in coercive structures (prison facilities, hospitals, military bases) and similar structures (particularly schools and workplaces).

Regarding meats, the Spanish legislation on slaughtering allows ritual slaughter for religious reasons even if public institutions may not offer *halal* or *kosher* meat in their canteens.

In fact, the law 26/1992 merely requires:

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<sup>101</sup> Coglievina S., in Chizzoniti, Tallacchini, *Cibo e religione: diritto e diritti*, Università cattolica del Sacro Cuore – Sede di Piacenza – Dipartimento di Scienze Giuridiche – Quaderni del dipartimento di scienze giuridiche, 1-2010, pp. 193-8



«in public and private schools, the alimentation [...] of Muslim pupils [...] will have to adapt to Islamic religious precepts».

In 2007 the *Perseus Program*, sponsored by the ministries of Health, Consumption, Education and Science, has produced the *Guía para la Elaboración General de Centros para Menús Escolares hábitos de Promoción de vida saludables*, which emphasizes the inclusion of menus related to allergies or religious needs.

In this respect, school canteens, therefore, offer the possibility to choose between different types of menus (e.g. avoiding pork, opting for other types of meat or rejecting any kind of meat).

The region of Aragon publish on its website<sup>102</sup> a *compendium* of laws and recommended guidelines for specific cases of special dietary requirements management. Two courses of action are provided, each one representing different adaptation level of the school menus:

- special menus (without prohibited ingredients or foods, with halal meat);
- normal menus, integrating religious needs by individual refusal of prohibited ingredients or foods.

The Spanish School Canteen service had relished and appreciated by families. However, in October, 2013<sup>103</sup> eleven Muslim families in Zaragoza decided not to confirm the inscription of their children. The refusal followed the denial of the school *comedor* to serve *halal* meat. The event has attracted the attention of both *media* and institutions.

### 3.1.1 *Status quaestionis* in Aragon

The foodservice regulation, signed in 12 June 2000 by *Departamento de Educación y Ciencia* (Education and Science Department), is concerned with food production and service within primary and elementary schools in the autonomous community of Aragon. With references to the *Reales Decretos*, 1982/1998, (18 September), it should be said that the right to education also includes the canteen service in schools. In this respect, for each school it is mandatory to offer the canteen service, for pupils.

Canteens vary in terms of capacity depending on the number of students who eat from there, type of food offered and the type of activities such as preparation, cooking and storage. Canteens should adhere to all the regulations of Aragon Municipality during all stages of production, storage, distribution and sale of food.

Each school canteen might provide a healthy and nutritious menu in line with the current regulations in Aragon.

It is important to precise how each school canteen is not supposed to offer a religious or cultural menu, in fact, the Municipality of Aragon is *a-confessional*.

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<sup>102</sup> <http://aragonparticipa.aragon.es/dmdocuments/Criterios%20ALIMENTACION.pdf>, 17.12.2013.

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.alertadigital.com/2013/10/09/once-familias-musulmanas-renuncian-a-la-beca-de-comedor-en-zaragoza-por-no-disponer-de-menu-halal/#comment-397697>, , 17.12.2013

Changes to the school canteen menu or food service will vary from school to school depending on a variety of factors such as (but not only):

- how many days per week the canteen is open,
- what food preparation facilities are available.

Both the Municipality of Aragon and the school canteen service provider according to the regulation in force, provide a menu, which might be useful for each school complex. From this menu it is possible to exclude some foods and to indicate some alternative options, with references to those cases in which some students may require special meals for medical or religious and ethical reasons and therefore school canteens should provide these meals where possible so that all children enjoy a healthy and suitable meal during school hours.

Cases that need special dietary needs because of pathological reasons may include diabetes, celiac disease and hypersensitive allergy to certain types of foods, while cases that need special dietary needs because of ethical or religious reasons may include belongs to religious communities which may promote specific cultural practice in matter of food and nutrition, and vegetarian or vegan supporter, whose menu might exclude only meat or meat, fish and poultry.

### **3.2 Status quaestionis in Italy**

The development of nutrition policies and food practices are part of the aim of public policies. According to recovered *data*, to encourage educational and health institution to coordinate their effort in promoting health throughout nutrition, the Health Minister promotes a monitoring system, *OKkio alla Salute*<sup>104</sup>, as a result of a collaboration between Italian National Government, Minister of Health, Istituto Superiore di Sanità, CNESPS Centro Nazionale di Epidemiologia, Sorveglianza e Promozione della Salute, all the Italian Regional Authorities in matter of Education and Public Policy, and Italian schools.

This survey, occurred every two years, in 2012 considered a cross-section of 2.622 classes, an amount of 46.483 children (6-10 years) and 48.668 parents, placed in every Italian Region<sup>105</sup>. It highlighted that 10,6% of children is overweight, attitude that is more evident in middle and south Italy. The synthesis document of the report clearly put in evidence some bad attitudes in children and families that might cause obesity, malnutrition and under nutrition. As many researches had demonstrated, those attitudes are the habit of not having breakfast (9%), or having a not healthy breakfast (31%) frequent sugar drinks consumption (44%), the habit of not eating vegetables and fruit (22%)<sup>106</sup>.

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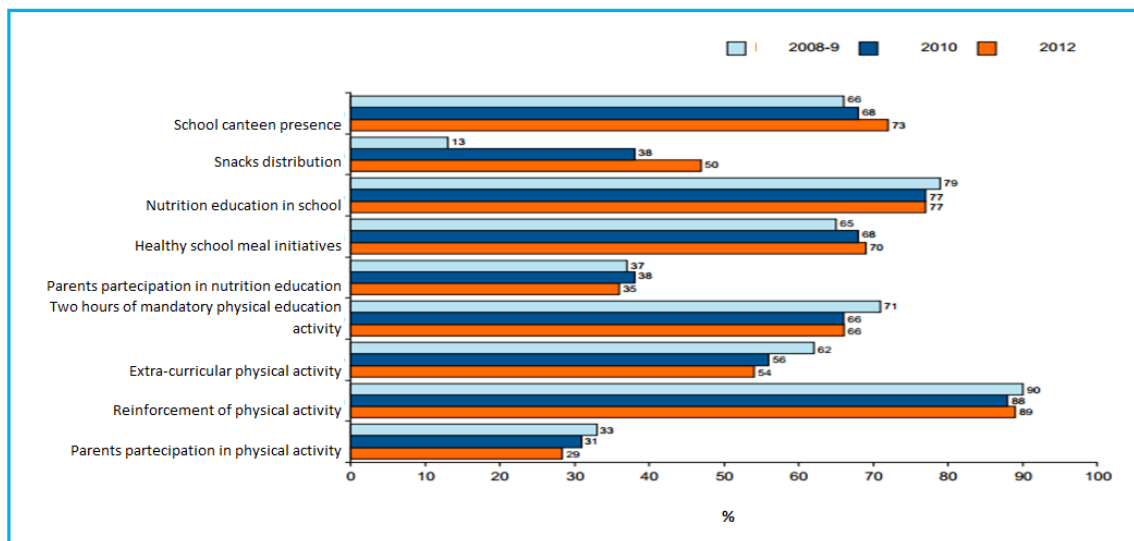
<sup>104</sup> <https://www.okkioallasalute.it/index.php>, 23<sup>rd</sup>.Oct.2013.

<sup>105</sup> Involvement of Italian families has been elevated, only 3,1% of the parents refused to take part in collectioning *data*, for more details, see [http://www.epicentro.iss.it/okkioallasalute/pdf/OKkio%20alla%20SALUTE%20sintesi%202012\\_finale.pdf](http://www.epicentro.iss.it/okkioallasalute/pdf/OKkio%20alla%20SALUTE%20sintesi%202012_finale.pdf) , 23<sup>rd</sup>.Oct.2013.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibidem*.

The survey *OKkio alla Salute* and its results lead to lesser projects, that had been promoted at a Regional level, in order to enhance healthy food strategies and target within school administrations and school staff.

In fact, the same research clearly showed how education and school are fundamental in matter of nutritional practices learning, and in providing evidence-based *data* and policies, as the figure below points out:



As dr. Simona Ropolo, dr. Aurelie Giacometto, and dr. Marcella Beraudi, nutritionists and the dietitian of the municipality of Turin had highlighted during the interviews<sup>107</sup>, the survey *OKkio alla Salute* is not able to consider every single Italian municipality since it defines national average trends.

In this respect, even if collected *data* are fundamental for every single municipality in Italy, every Regional Authorities needs to define a own strategy regarding nutrition and education, in order to enhance its own situation concerning its own municipality.

Turin had already taken significant steps toward the development of healthy nutrition policies and programs to improve nutritional practices of children in schools. Projects promoted from the municipality of Turin are significantly part of this research, as it will be showed in the following lines.

Each Government-approved policy on nutrition and food safety, oriented on both the reduction of the incidence of foodborne disease and the respect of ethical and religious consideration in matter of nutrition, depends directly onto the Italian regional, provincial and local officials.

Even if a survey, conducted by Slow Food and regarding 50 Italian schools showed how the 76% of those schools offers the possibility for each family to choose between menus built with references to pathological or ethical and religious considerations, copious are those cases in which schools refuses to offer this service.

<sup>107</sup> Dr. Simona Ropolo, Aurelie Giacometto and Marcella Beraudi work at *Struttura Semplice Dipartimentale*, ASLTO1, Turin; interview 17th.Sep.2013.

It is possible to describe four different models, analyzed in the following lines, useful for building a menu in School Canteen which are:

- Family-based model,
- Community representation model,
- Ontological rejection model,
- Cultural identity rejection model.

#### *Family-based model*

This model contains those experiences in which the educational institution establishes a direct relation with the families, in order to be directly aware about families and pupils needs.

This is the prevalent model within Italian schools; for each family it is mandatory to complete and fill on line forms with the required information. Throughout those information, each family might evidence its own needs, depending on both pathological or ethical and religious issues.

The application of this model may be considered as a *good practice*, since it also guarantees and protects the right to freedom of religion and freedom of expression, according to canteen logistical considerations.

Combining foodborne needs due to both pathological and religious needs, this model defences religious and ethical pluralism.

Regarding to the menus, possibilities are copious:

- *Fixed formula system.* Canteen menu, from which it is possible to exclude some foods;
- *Fixed formula menu.* Canteen menu, from which it is possible to exclude some foods and to indicate some alternative options, because of ethical or religious reasons;
- *Mixed system.* Canteen menu, from which it is possible to exclude some foods and to indicate some alternatives; both for pathological and ethical or religious reasons.

The case of *Fixed Formula System* is represented by the municipality of Venice where the School Canteen Service offers the possibility to change the predefined menu, because of religious and ethical reasons, by excluding some foods (pork and beef, particularly).

The municipality of Moncalieri (Turin) proposes four different and distinguished menus, which are,

- Normal menu;
- Vegetarian menu;
- Without meat but with fish menu;

- Without pork menu;

Moreover, the possibility to choose alternative foods is always guaranteed, when due to pathological reasons (the request might be submitted and signed by a nutritionist or a doctor)<sup>108</sup>.

The most well-structured offer is represented by the municipality of Milan.

Even if the municipality website never make any reference to food menus and their equivalent alternatives, the appointed society, the Italian Milano Ristorazione website describes the proposal of a varied menu with healthy nutritious alternative options, covering the basic of an healthy diet and good nutrition advices.

More precisely, the menu and the meal plan described in the website might be accompanied with a form containing foodborne needs, in order to meet medical nutrition therapy goals. Also, it is possible to fill a form containing ethical and religious nutrition needs.

Here, it is example:

List of Available Menus		
menus	Description	Excluded food item
20	without <b>pork meat and its by-product</b> menu	food item containing pork meat traces
21	without <b>meat and its by-product</b> menu	food item containing meat traces
22	without <b>pork and beef meat and its by-product</b> menu	food item containing pork and beef meat traces
23	without <b>products of animal origin meat and its by-product</b> menu	food item coming from animal source such as meat, milk, fish and eggs
24	without <b>fish or meat</b> menu	food item containing fish and meat

Note: menus are not modifiable

However, also the municipality of Lavagna (Genova) represents a good example of the mixed system, in which as showed in the previous lines, the school canteen service provides a meal plan, from which it is possible to exclude some foods and to indicate some alternatives both for pathological and ethical or religious reasons.

Families are supposed to complete on line forms in order to require menus reflecting individualized nutrition needs and recommendations because of allergies, intolerances, pathological issues, such as favism or diabetes, and religious and ethical considerations, where it is possible to evidence:

- Belonging religion
- Excluded foods
- Alternative options

<sup>108</sup> <http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/5533>, 05.12.2013..

Inspiring principles of this policy are clearly described in the municipality web site, where it is possible to read:

«La scuola, luogo deputato alla formazione dell'uomo e del cittadino, non può esimersi dal compito di promuovere, attraverso un'attività di educazione alimentare a partire dai servizi educativi della primissima infanzia, un uso corretto dei cibi e l'acquisizione di comportamenti che porteranno i bambini ad essere consumatori consapevoli e coscienti. La mensa scolastica si propone anche come momento di educazione permanente, che favorisce il diritto allo studio e la fusione tra scuola e vita sociale»<sup>109</sup>.

The aim of supporting healthy nutritional practices is directly addressed to schools, with references to a scientific, integrated and holistic way, concerned with the promotion and the enhancement of educational activities able to create and build costumers awareness in matter of food and nutrition.

An example of *Fixed formula system II menu*, in which from the canteen menu, it is possible to exclude some foods and to indicate some alternative options also for ethical or religious reasons, is the municipality of Trieste.

Each family might indicate four type of food able to work as alternative options, in order to replace four type of food considered as un-edible but foreseen in the meal plan.

Moreover, the municipality of Sesto Fiorentino (Florence), offers a special cultural-religious menu for

- Belongers to Islamic traditions (excluding pork and cold but including other meats)
- Vegetarians (excluding meat fish and poultry);
- Other (specify).

The municipality of Sestri Levante (Genova) gives the possibility to ask for a religious menu, because of

- Lent (40 weekdays from Ash Wednesday until Easter);
- Religious reasons (excluding meat).

This case study represents the first case in which a school canteen and a municipality actively promote the defence of religious needs, with references to specific periods of religious practice. In the opinion of who writes, this represent one of the Italian best practice, in matter of nutrition in public institutions.

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<sup>109</sup> <http://www.comune.lavagna.ge.it/mensa-scolastica>, 20.12.2013.

### *The community representation model*

This model focuses on the involvement of religious community leaders, resident and civic associations in the policy decision making and implementation of the services within school canteen services. This new localism clearly represents an enhancement of the civic life and contributes to a more effective neighbourhood renewal and sustainable communities – even if it is not a so widespread model in Italy.

The most representative example of this model is led by the municipality of Milan and the Milan Jewish Community, in the *Accordo tra la Regione Lombardia e la Comunità Ebraica di Milano per il Servizio di Assistenza Religiosa nelle strutture sanitarie di ricovero e cura lombarde*<sup>110</sup> (Program for the enhancement of the religious assistance services in the public institutions and institution of care, between the Municipality of Milan and the Milan Jewish community). In order to improve the incentives for quality representation and participation, the *Program*, signed the eleventh of March 2009, by Roberto Formigoni (Lombardy public administration chief) and Leone Soued (Milan Jewish community representative), says:

#### ART.4

A special Kosher cuisine catering company might operate in public institution and school canteen with references to the hygienic requirements for safety and nutrition, represented by the HACCP norm.

#### ART.5

The opportunity for pupils and costumers to enjoy the kosher canteen services might be proclaimed and promulgated by the public institution.

#### ART. 9

This agreement doesn't entail any financial investment for the Regione and/or the health services of Regione Lombardia. Every possible cost will be at the expense of the Jewish Community.

This solution might work both sides of the equation, simultaneously focusing both on community empowerment and supporting the capacity of local officials and civil servants to understand, and respond to that empowerment.

### *Ontological rejection model*

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<sup>110</sup> <http://www.olir.it/documenti/index.php?argomento=37&documento=5252>

Given the different cultures represented in communities across the Italy, there may be cultural differences as to how these questions are answered as well.

Even if school canteens services are important educational resources and they have an important role in the provision of food to students, even if the school canteen should reflect the educational goals of the school and supports and complements student learning, some municipalities in Italy decide not to differentiate types of menus because of cultural and religious needs. One of these municipalities is Adro (Brescia)<sup>111</sup> which decided to offer a *without pork menu* in school canteen only if this request is accompanied by a medical certificate, demonstrating a pathological disease. This solution embraces a number of *publics* (associations, religious groups etc) which are effectively hidden or excluded from the mainstream of civic life.

Also, it represents a form of cultural discrimination, directed to associations and religious groups, which led into the denial of a basic right - the possibility to actively choose nutritious foods in schools (according to one's own religious or cultural need) - if without a medical certificate, which, of course, cannot be related with a cultural or religious need.

#### *Cultural identity rejection model*

As showed, the school food services and curriculum relating to healthy eating should complement each other. Ideally, positive peer pressure within the education setting will help create a culture in which nutritious foods and a healthy lifestyle are actively chosen and permeate the whole school environment and impact on the family.

Even if the representative of the local administration of the municipality of Albenga proposed to introduce *halal* meat in the school canteen in order to actively promote the social inclusion, Enpa – Ente Nazionale Protezione Animali (Italian Authority for Animal Protection) criticized the proposal, considering *halal* slaughter as a barbaric rite<sup>112</sup>.

The *halal* way of slaughter, made by a deep incision with a sharp knife on the neck cutting the jugular veins - even if stunning the animal before slaughter (as in Western and Italian slaughterhouses) - in the opinion of the Enpa representatives, should be never promoted, above all in public institutions such as schools.

The result of the controversy is not even known, since the website of the Municipality of Albenga School Canteen Service does not show the menu on line.

It is possible to conclude those considerations with an observation.

While religious diversity is necessary for religious pluralism, diversity alone does not guarantee pluralism. As Diana Eck of the Pluralism Project at Harvard states, religious pluralism is not a given but it is a creation. Religious pluralism requires education, reflection, and inter-religious dialogue

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<sup>111</sup> N. Fiorita, *Scuola pubblica e religioni*, Libellula edizioni, Lecce, 2012, p. 152.

<sup>112</sup> [http://www.ilsecoloxix.it/p/savona/2011/09/21/AOIPUS6-scolastiche\\_carne\\_nelle.shtml](http://www.ilsecoloxix.it/p/savona/2011/09/21/AOIPUS6-scolastiche_carne_nelle.shtml), 05.12.2013.



and school canteen service might represent a good *arena* where to dialogue. It might enable pupils to stand together respecting profoundly one's own differences. In Italy, some realities such as *Dream Canteen*<sup>113</sup>, (a Slow Food network) might represent the introjections of those values.

For now, it is not enough.

Social inclusion should be considered the key, while education should be considered the venue, where to enhance inclusion and pluralism, religious and otherwise.

### 3.2.2 *Status quaestionis* in Turin

As stated in the introduction, Italian school nutritional practices are defined by SINU *Società Italiana di Nutrizione Umana* and concerns LARN guidelines, *Livelli di Assunzione di Riferimento di Nutrienti ed energia per la popolazione italiana*.

Before entering in *media res* and defining projects and activities promoted by the Municipality of Turin within schools, it is important to put in evidence how in Turin – and in Italy as in Europe, the aim of supporting healthy nutritional practices is directly addressed to schools, with references to a scientific, integrated and holistic way.

Comprehensive approaches are fundamental, in order to consider the whole child, with references to physical, mental, emotional and cultural dimensions.

Although, collected *data* clearly shows how this holistic way is incomplete, since it never considers religious dimensions of children and their families.

As specified during the exposition of this research, who writes considers the religious dimension as important as others in matter of food and nutrition. Development might be considered as the progress and the advancement in all aspects of human lives. Effort to achieve better and enhanced nourishment, health and living conditions clearly refers to what in Literature is defined as *Socio-Economic Development*. The notion of *socio-economic development* essentially involves a unified approach which thereafter reflects the awareness of theoretical and empirical inter-relatedness of human life<sup>114</sup>, where religion is part of these. Human nutrition is the result of an amount of the influences carried by different factors and activities, those of them which have not direct implications within food and nourishment, are involved in an indirect way; those of them which are not causes, clearly act as *cum-causes*. In this respect, religion dimension in matter of food may deserves further attention, in order to promote the holistic approach concerning nutritional practices within schools.

#### *Foodservice System in Turin*

In each school of Turin, the food production is centralized. In Italy, there are many examples of centralized foodservice systems in schools, and it might be showed how, in Italy, the numbers and have expanded in the past 20 years.

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<sup>113</sup> 18 <http://dreamcanteen.ning.com/>, 05.12.2013.

<sup>114</sup> D. Usha Rani, M. V. Sudhakara Reddy, M. Sreedevamma, *Nutrition and religion*, Discovery Publishing House, Delhi, 2003, p. 9.

Many schools located in Italian urban areas use central production, and Turin is one of these. With a centralized foodservice system, there would be different processes (and critical control points) for the central food production facility and the receiving kitchens (satellites) where it is served to customers and pupils. Food usually is purchased near the none end of the food processing *continuum*, and food preparation is done in the central kitchen, which results in lower food costs<sup>115</sup>.

Labor costs also are lower because of the centralization of food preparation.

One unique characteristic of the centralized foodservice system is that food is transported to external locations (satellites or receiving kitchens) for service<sup>116</sup>.

Regarding to food, it might be transported either hot or cold and also bulk or pre-plated.

According to *Foodservice System: Product flow and microbial quality and safety of foods*, the advantages of the centralized foodservice System might be summarized in:

a. Lowering food and supply costs:

there can be significant cost savings from purchasing food and supplies in the very large quantities needed for one very large operation rather than for several smaller operations;

b. Ingredient control is improved:

with a centralized foodservice system, there is greater control over ingredients, which decreases food costs - this controls the quantities of ingredients used and ensures that standardized recipes are followed<sup>117</sup>;

c. Scheduling of food preparation:

production can be scheduled at any time during the day or any day of the week since it is separated from service;

d. Mechanization of preparation:

central kitchens utilize mechanized equipment to increase the efficiency of food preparation and minimize the lifting and heavy work on the part of employees;

e. Quality control:

central food production provides the opportunity to have more quality control in the food served. There are three aspects of food quality: microbiological quality (central production often lends itself to more control over the microbiological quality of food because of the number of controls that are in place at all points in the flow of food through the system), aesthetic quality (color, texture, and appearance all are aesthetic factors that are important

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<sup>115</sup> Cfr. Unklesbay, N.F., Maxcy, R.B., Knickrehm, M.E., Stevenson, K.E., Cremer, M.L., & Matthews, M.E., *Foodservice systems: Product flow and microbial quality and safety of foods*, North Central Regional Research Publication No. 245, MO: University of Missouri-Columbia College of Agriculture, Agriculture Experiment Station, Columbia, 1977.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>117</sup> Interview to Municipality of Turin Foodservice Director, Dr. Filippo Valfrè, 20.05.2013.

in meals - these factors can be ensured through menu planning, purchasing, and preparation procedures in place in a centralized foodservice system), nutritional quality (centralized menu planning, purchasing, and preparation all can ensure the nutritional quality of the meals in a centralized foodservice system because of the consistency and control that is possible)<sup>118</sup>.

Also, according to *Foodservice System: Product flow and microbial quality and safety of foods*, there are several possible disadvantages to centralized foodservice systems, the most important are:

a. Equipment malfunctions can be significant:

if equipment fails, the impact is far greater for a central production facility than if a piece of equipment failed in a school kitchen;

b. Transportation costs:

in centralized foodservice systems transportation of prepared foods to receiving kitchens can be a significant cost;

c. Perceived loss of quality:

mass production often is perceived by customers to be less desirable than traditional food preparation, this is also due to the fact that individuals preparing the food are not serving the food to customers and cooks never get any feedback from students about the quality of food, and the customer seems less real<sup>119</sup>.

### *Projects enhancing the quality of the service in Turin*

Considering that a well-balanced nutritious food is fundamental at all ages and stages of life and considering that a child eating patterns are established and defined early in life, influenced by education (with references to both school and culture) and family, certainly, childhood coincide with the time to teach enjoyment of variety of nutritious food.

In this respect, the Ministry of Health promotes Health through different initiatives, that are going to be described and analyzed, in the following lines.

The purpose is represented by developing good eating practices and habits and establishing a healthy relationship with food.

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<sup>118</sup> Cfr. Unklesbay, N.F., Maxcy, R.B., Knickrehm, M.E., Stevenson, K.E., Cremer, M.L., & Matthews, M.E., *Foodservice systems: Product flow and microbial quality and safety of foods*, North Central Regional Research Publication No. 245, MO: University of Missouri-Columbia College of Agriculture, Agriculture Experiment Station, Columbia, 1977.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibidem*

- Il Menu l'ho fatto io! (I decided this menu!)<sup>120</sup>

This initiative is promoted by ASL TO 1 – *Dipartimento Integrato di Prevenzione* (Public Health Nutritionists from city of Turin), Assessore alle Politiche Educative della Città di Torino, Laboratorio Chimico della Camera di Commercio di Torino (Chamber of Commerce Chemical Laboratory of the city of Turin), Ufficio Scolastico Regionale del Piemonte (Regional Education Authorities, School Canteen Service Authorities of the City of Turin, Laboratorio Città Sostenibile di Iter (Istituzione Torinese per una Educazione Responsabile), Miur and Regione Piemonte.

The aim is represented by the willingness to provide standards for selecting food.

Previous framework are the training meetings that took place during 2013, promoted by the City of Turin, addressed to families and commissioni mensa.

This is the first edition of this project, (2014-2015), it involves two classes for each school complex considered which are:

- Carlo Casalegno – Via Acciarini 20, 10137, Turin - Circoscrizione 2
- Don Milani – Piazza San marino 107, 10137, Turin – Circoscrizione 2
- G. Perotti, Via Mercadante 68/8, 10124, Turin – Circoscrizione 6
- S. D'Acquisto, Via Tollegno 83, 10124, Turin – Circoscrizione 6
- S. Pellico, Via Madama Cristina 106, 10126, Turin - Circoscrizione 8
- S. Parato, Via Aquileia 8, 10133, Turin – Circoscrizione 8
- Castello di Mirafiori, Strada Castello di Mirafiori 45, 10135, Turin, Circoscrizione 10.

This project is going to last a whole year, it aims to analyze nutrition practices within school children, promote nutritional practices education, provide standards for selecting food (with references to health, periodicity, origins of selected products). The final purpose is represented by a menu that will be done and decided by children, as a result of a one year training education.

During the interviews, the nutritionists of the Municipality of Turin put in evidence that, since choices in matter of food are done by children, this may be considered the only project which tries also to consider religious and cultural parameters in defining a menu<sup>121</sup>.

- Frutta nelle scuole<sup>122</sup> (Fruit at School)

This initiative is promoted by the Ministry of health and concerns the whole Italian nation. In order to enhance healthy food strategies and targets in matter of nourishment and to promote effective practice models, this projects aims to incentivize fruit consumption in schools for multiple reasons:

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.comune.torino.it/pass/php/4/Salute.php?pag=57252> , 24th.Oct.2013

<sup>121</sup> Dr. Simona Ropolo, Aurelie Giacometto and Marcella Beraudi work at *Struttura Semplice Dipartimentale*, ASLTO1, Turin; interview 17th.Sep.2013.

<sup>122</sup> <http://www.fruitanellescuole.gov.it/content/il-programma> and <http://www.fruitanellescuole.gov.it/frutta-nelle-scuole-20132014-invito-presentare-offerte>

- enhance healthy food strategies,
- promote healthy nutritional practices,
- simplify the way from the producer to consumer – regarding fruits and vegetables,
- promote the education of selecting fruits and vegetables with references to their periodicity,
- improve the awareness of health-nutrition link, early in life.

- Obiettivo Spuntino<sup>123</sup> (What about the snack?)

One of the statistical parameters of the survey *OKkio alla Salute* is concerned with snacks and nibbles. During 2008, the survey highlighted that in Italy the 82% of children used to consume snacks with an exaggerated calorie count, in Piedmont the amount showed a 78%, whereof 79% in Turin<sup>124</sup>.

In this respect, the aim of the project was and is still represented by promoting the changing of snacks and nibbles consumption in favour of healthier attitudes.

First outcomes showed the children used to consume healthier snacks had increased in number, moving from a 17% to a 54%.

It should be précised that the initiatives involves directly teachers and pediatricians, assigning them a fundamental role.

- La Pietanza non Avanza ( Don't waste it!)

A complete education in matter of food and eating might not exclude the important topic of the waste of food, the City of Turin decided to promoted a complex project, which involved needy families<sup>125</sup>. The aim is represented by donating them left-over dishes, restricting and confining the quantity of wasted food.

The schools involved in the initiative are:

- Antonelli, Via Vezzolano 20, Turin,
- Aurora, Via Cecchi, 16, Turin,
- Fontana, Via Gassino 13, Turin,
- Spinelli, Via San Sebastiano da Po, Turin.

The initiative represent the testing ground for future projects<sup>126</sup>.

It is possible to conclude underlining the fundamental role conducted by Schools, teachers, paediatricians, nutritionists, and Education Authorities in matter of nutritional practices.

<sup>123</sup> <http://www.dors.it/pag.php?idcm=4289> , 24th.Oct.2013

<sup>124</sup> Gruppo Tecnico provinciale di Torino, *Educazione Alimentare e mensa scolastica: stato dell'arte nella nostra provincia*, Pixart printing Srl, Torino, 2011, p. 86 - 88.

<sup>125</sup> Dr. S. Oltramonti Prelz, interview, 17th.Jun.2013.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibidem*.

As stated in the introductory observations, even if much had done, much is still workable. An innovative approach is needed, leading to nutritional habits, so that *in ultima ratio*, scientific knowledge of cultural food might enhance the success in nutrition education programs.

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