THE HISTORY OF FOOD WITHIN THE HISTORY OF ITALIAN TELEVISION

Abstract
The observation of the current television programming prompts an investigation on the abundance of food and nutrition topics. In the scientific field, these topics can be placed at the intersection of disciplines and studies which focus on the anthropological and sociological fields.

Our analysis aims at investigating TV cookery programming through the identification of formats, genres and texts following the development of television, from its origins to the latest programmes, together with the relationships with the net, the employment of impersonal international formats and typical Italian programmes and their cultural approach. Our investigation, resulted from a research carried out during the course of History of Radio and Television at Università Cattolica of Brescia, consisted in a diachronic analysis of the history of Italian television and suggests an interpretation of the current trends in cookery programming, which resulted to be deeply rooted inside tradition.

Keywords
Food and television; television history; Italian television; formats; TV genres.

I. THE REPRESENTATION AND COMMUNICATION OF FOOD

The interest in food burst in the last fifteen years especially in the USA and Great Britain in a combination of research usually indicated with the term Food Studies. They deal with in-depth areas of investigation which range from anthropology to sociology, from semiotics to psychology as well as economy. In Italy the multidisciplinary approach to...
wards food owes a lot to the systematization offered by Montanari on a socio-historical basis and which stimulates broad reflections situated above all within the anthropological, sociological and semiotic fields.

However, an aspect that hasn’t been adequately studied yet is the world of food and eating related to symbolic and identity meanings shown on TV. Keeping this in mind, this essay is a journey through televised food programmes, in search of how culture and society are represented through formats, genres and texts, from the origins of television till its more recent productions. They are guarantors and forerunners of a new (maybe) quality TV half way between impersonal international formats and typically Italian ones, which show a language that ranges from news bulletins to fiction.

Food plays a crucial role in the construction of national identity: recipe books for example could be a proof of such achievement in a country marked by territorial, political and cultural differences which, (also) through the variety of food, has managed to find a balance between elite and popular culture, city and countryside, north and south. This process has been promoted and reinforced by various means of communication, but from the 50s it has been carried out by television, which took upon itself the task of enhancing Italian culture. Television encourages the integration of cultural diversities also through food habits, that for a long time kept a strong dialectal approach, deeply rooted in the traditions of the territory, as shown in Viaggio nella valle del Po alla ricerca dei cibi genuini (Journey across the Po Valley in search of genuine food). It is no coincidence that it is one of the first original productions to be broadcast.

The strong connection between television and food though, arises way before than in the analysis of TV programmes, in fact it draws its origins in the broader relationship that bonds food and communication. In recent years, a special interest for this aspect has been displayed especially due to the considerable increase in the number of TV cookery programmes, which range from programmes about the territory to cooking tutorials and cooking shows. Previous studies have mainly labelled this trend as a whimsy or a fad, without considering it as an interpretive framework of the common practices of television together with its history. The challenge of this research is to highlight how the relationship between food and TV finds its roots in the history of TV and expresses not only an external, superficial affinity but even a full communion of objectives.

The history of Italian TV is built around some major milestones which usually correspond to some remarkable legislative measures aimed at reorganising the broadcasting system. A reconstruction of the aforementioned TV history, still according to a chronological framework, but as a journey through the flavours of the cuisine and the perfumes of the territory allows us to look at it in a completely different way. Cook-

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4 For a systematization of the topic from a sociological point of view, we referred to L. Meglio, Sociologia del cibo e dell’alimentazione. Un’introduzione, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2012.


7 Mario Soldati’s programme airs from 3rd December 1957, for 12 episodes.
ery programmes appear to be consistent with the functions that through the years TV has performed coherently with its role within society and its consumptions, reflecting a community able to find its own representation (even) around the food and the culture that it expresses.

The identity, the idea of belonging to a community, the acknowledgement of a common background are then built throughout the course of the history of TV around background programmes and characters that summarise and represent the key moments of a journey, that could be divided into four main phases: the early days of TV till the beginning of the 60s, the economic boom and the twilight of educational TV, the rise of commercial TV and the change in the programme supply, the increase in formats and broadcasting platforms in the current TV programming. In the following part we will try to outline the main characteristics of such a “nosh-up” of programmes and genres.

2. INFORM, EDUCATE AND ...TASTE

The early days of TV are marked by a research of suitable expressive forms for this new medium as well as for its educational task characterized by strong didactic and democratic aims. This is a TV that broadens the local horizons and makes the members of a community well-aware of their cultural identity. The first formats are an opportunity to show popular products which find their best expression in light entertainment. This shouldn’t be considered as an alternative to the guidelines that wanted TV to be an educational vehicle, in fact, education and cultural promotion are already included in these programmes that we may already define as unconsciously “hybrid” ones, since they wisely mix the educational contents (although trivialised into quiz programmes) with light entertainment, sometimes even using food and territory as creative prompts. An example of this trend is Telematch, which clearly takes its inspiration from the French programme hosted by Pierre Bellamare who also happens to be a guest in the first episode. Better yet Campanile Sera which centers on local and community identities, public figures and shared habits, showing off traditional customs and baskets full of local products. The quiz, the country fête and the board games (which can be considered as forerunners of the future game shows) rather than in the studio, where part of the competition takes place, find their fulfillment in live TV, broadcast “in piazza” (from the streets of the town). This represents a big opportunity for the towns that host the programme to promote themselves and at the same time to boost an integration between television and the local area, with its traditions and its culture, in order to encourage the audience to watch tv and get used to it. It’s by following this same path that also in the field of inquiry and divulgation many programmes of the early days of TV deal with problems and aspects of collective life in order to attract vast categories of audience.

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9 With the term “early days of Television” we refer to the first years in which the official programmes were broadcast, approximately from 1954 to 1961 when Ettore Bernabei became General Director. Broadcast from 6th January 1957, hosted by Silvio Noto, Renato Tagliani and Enzo Tortora, the programme is based on the French programme Télé-match (source: A. Grasso, Storia della televisione italiana, Milano: Garzanti 1992, 53).

10 Campanile sera, broadcast from 1959 initially hosted by Mike Bongiorno with Renato Tagliani, who were later replaced by Enzo Tortora and Enza Sampò.

11 S. Pugliese, Dieci anni di televisione in Italia, RAI, Servizio documentazione e studi Roma 1964.
In particular, in this first phase the format of the TV inquiry, which is based on a documentary-film tradition, is the one that introduces what is going to become one of the favourite languages of Italian television. A television which is still looking for its own forms of communication, which aim at offering the viewers who the awareness of belonging to the community shown on their screens. The display of the variety of Italian identities, typical of such highly fractioned country signed by wide areas of illiteracy is added to the description of the territory and the society in the Mario Soldati’s aforementioned Viaggio nella valle del Po alla ricerca di cibi genuini (Journey across the Po Valley in search of genuine foods). The TV inquiry is an expression of the educational television built around a model which, with a strict as well as a curious tone, aims at building the identity of the Italian audience. It is with Mario Soldati that the audience is taken for the first time into the houses, into the restaurants full of lorry drivers, into Turin’s breadstick factories and pasta manufacturing plants: “In food and in the way of cooking you can find everything.” Sly and curious, with the objective of protecting the tradition, Soldati goes into the kitchens of the restaurants wearing a hat and smoking a cigar. He tastes the local delicacies and explains in greater detail the stages of preparation of the typical dishes. Achille Campanile, though praising the writer’s qualities, points out the excess of naivety. However, this is precisely where the extraordinary strength of the programme lies, combining educational objectives of the early days of TV with the need to reach an almost illiterate, but curious, audience that, above all, appears eager to watch “light” entertainment, highly criticized by intellectuals.

Therefore, this is a kind of television that follows two tracks: on one hand, it dictates an educational purpose which highlights a difference between the transmitter and the recipient; on the other hand, it aims at attracting the viewer through the consumption of food, which becomes one of the fundamental codes of dialogue: delicious smells and tastes appear to float of out of the screen to let the audience taste them.

3. THE BOOM OF COOKERY TV PROGRAMMES BETWEEN CULTURE AND HOUSEWIVES

After leaving behind the memory of the Second World War Italy dedicates most of its free time to watching TV. The decade of the wonderful 60s witnesses an Americanization of the consumption and a stronger than ever economic boom that favours a full integration between products (primarily foods but not limited to them) and their TV promotion. In these years, indeed, the typical Italian way of making commercials is shaped in Carosello, which was praised as an expression of brilliant originality and style, appreciated even abroad. The programme is an extraordinary opportunity to feel part

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13 Viaggio nella valle del Po alla ricerca di cibi genuini, aired from 3rd December 1957, for 12 episodes.
14 This quotation is a translation from: Grasso, Storia della televisione italiana, 58
15 It is confirmed by the historical work of sociologist L. De Rita, I contadini e la televisione, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1964.
16 Television is increasingly watched by Italians, in four years, from 1961 to 1965 the number of subscriptions increased by 41%, as reported in Michele Sorice’s book, Lo specchio magico. Linguaggi, formati generi e pubblici della televisione italiana, Roma: Editori Riuniti, 2002.
17 This dates back to 1963 from Ugo Zatterin’s investigation, Viaggio nell’Italia che cambia, which highlights the growth in big distribution, harking back to the US and underlines the new consumption trend derived from the consolidation of supermarkets.
of a community and to bring the country together from a socio-cultural point of view, even though on a less brighter side many look at it as the initial cause of consumerism. Moreover, the advertising power of Carosello is related to the image of the family and its members, whose roles are easily recognised by the audience and whose stability is not yet damaged. The family represents the hearth that needs to be preserved and the home kitchen provides reassurance and certainty, besides, the modern, accomplished woman may compete with the man in the management of home budgets, but exclusively at home, according to the so-called “ethics of the nurse”, which undergoes an often ridiculous characterisation.

The process of making the television part of the house is well described by Milly Buonanno\textsuperscript{19}. She underlines how television, originally seen as a public space, has been gradually integrated into the private space, becoming an obvious electrical device in the house. The display of home-life in fiction programmes affects the way of perceiving the places usually dedicated to the consumption of meals (which represent one of the most important moments of family aggregation and communication). In fact through the years kitchen will be replaced by other rooms\textsuperscript{20} equally charged with strong symbolic and cultural values\textsuperscript{21}. Therefore the kitchen is a physical space which will lose the symbolic meaning related to the woman, who will gradually distance herself from the housework, especially from cooking.

It is in this picture that Ave Ninchi comes to light. She offers the traditional image of the woman, valued and not minimized in her being “the master of the house”, expert housewife that dedicates most of her time to cooking. She is the protagonist, along with Luigi Veronelli\textsuperscript{22}, of Colazione allo Studio 7 (Breakfast at Studio 7), maybe the first real Italian cooking show, broadcast at lunchtime on sundays from 1971\textsuperscript{23}. The schedule too shows a time-change and marks the passage from strictly scheduled TV programmes to a new timing adjusted according to the time of the society and, especially, to mealtimes\textsuperscript{24}.

The format is that of the “cooking game”, as you would call it today, realized by expert chefs and skilled housewives who compete in cookery challenges and food quizzes, initially hosted by Delia Scala. This format strengthens the affection for the light entertainment typical of the radio, here enriched by the culinary arts expressed by the presenters’ “genuine” and “well-educated” characteristics: on one hand, there is the housewife, keen on traditions and eating well; on the other there is “masterchef” Veronelli who instructs the audience making large use of concepts, resuming Mario Soldati’s educational tone and enriching it with a philosophical and cultural stance. The pairing

\textsuperscript{20} M. Buonanno, Leggere la fiction. Narrami o diva rivistata, Napoli: Liguori, 1996.
\textsuperscript{21} During this transition period, the American sit-coms play an important role in replacing the kitchen with the living room. It is clear that nowadays fiction families are not used to sit at the table, in fact even though they have big modern kitchens, they usually don’t use them.
\textsuperscript{22} Luigi Veronelli, has a philosophical education and is specialised on food and wine, he became an expert, both through his publications, and through his work as a journalist. From the early 70s his popularity increases because he takes part to various TV programmes, until 1986. Apart from the programme A tavola alle 7, with Ave Ninchi, he will also work in the programme Viaggio sentimentale nella valle dei vini, 1979, which contributes to the birth of the third Rai channel, and is the first occasion to criticise about Italian viticulture. Let’s not forget also La meridiana and Il bel mangiare, 1986.
\textsuperscript{23} The first season of the programme (10 episodes) is broadcast from April to June 1971 on the National programme, in the studio there are Luigi Veronelli and Umberto Orsini with Delia Scala. The programme was broadcast till 1976; in 1974 it moves to 7 pm and changes its title into A tavola alle 7 featuring Ave Ninchi. To study in depth her figure, cf. M. Ninchi, Ave Ninchi. Una juventina tra teatro e fornelli, Bergamo: Veronelli, 2004.
\textsuperscript{24} The beginning of the afternoon programming dates back to 1968. For a theoretical systematization, refer to P. Aroldi, I tempi della tv. La televisione tra offerta e consumo, Roma: Carocci, 2007.
Veronelli-Ave Ninchi is an example of the contrast between a woman attached to tradition who is still in charge of the housework and the well-read expert.

The kitchen as the symbol of knowledge and tradition is also represented by Vincenzo Buonassisi, journalist and TV critic, as well as refined gastronome, who identifies food with culture. He promotes this concept in his daily programme *Almanacco del giorno dopo (The following day Almanac)*, broadcast from October 1976, which was also the first programme that invited the audience to stay tuned to watch the news after its end. By now we are on the verge of a period that is about to come to an end, in fact TV programming will soon have to come to terms with the new social, economic and cultural requests.

**4. SPECTATORS OR CONSUMERS?**

Towards the end of the 70s, a new era unsettles the calmness of TV cookery programmes. The stages that led to the creation of commercial broadcasting are characterized by programmes the follow the tradition of the so-called “paleotelevisione” (which is to say the years of public broadcasting monopoly). However, the identity purpose, that in the first two decades of Italian TV focused on building a community, in these years aims at creating as many different categories of audiences as possible. It is no coincidence that towards the end of the 70s, in particular in 1977, Carosello is no longer broadcast: this new TV is able to recognize the changes in the society and from an educational medium it becomes a commercial medium as required by the new radio-tv broadcasting system. So, also TV cookery programmes adjust to this new approach and try to combine the new commercial broadcasting with the traditional public one which, in the light of the renewal advanced by the Reform, aims at restyling.

The new cookery programmes star Wilma de Angelis and Carla Urban. In the summer of 1974, the Constitutional Court passes some judgements that undermine the public broadcasting monopoly, in this way Telemontecarlo, as well as on other channels, is able to begin its broadcasting. Telemontecarlo airs a cooking programme that expresses the new way of creating TV programming. Wouldn’t there be any better occasion than that of showing a woman who cooks delicacies and, at the same time, details the products (and their brands) required to succeed in preparing that recipe? The host Wilma de Angelis, prominent singer of the 60s, takes up this new role thanks to commercial broadcasting. It was an immediate success. De Angelis embodies a new kind woman, fond of cooking (even though not as expert Ave Ninchi), but whose main competence is being able to keep up with the numerous commercials. The first, very simple structure of the programme will change over the years, according to the new TV programming (“la gara tra cuochi” – a contest between chefs, the talk show with famous people), even changing the title from the temporary *La mia cucina è a vostra disposizione (My kitchen is at your

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25 Journalist at the *Corriere della Sera*, he initially works as a theatre and cinema critic. He is interested in arts and, especially in cuisine, which is the subject of the majority of his books. We can mention, among others, *La cucina di Falstaff, La grande cucina italiana e le sue salse*, and the seven volumes of *Il cuociniere italiano*, integrated by an eighth volume on international cuisine. He wrote in all more than forty books about cooking. He describes the table as a convivial place where one can exchange human experiences and retrieve his memories and traditions.

disposal) to Telemenu (Telemenù), Sale pepe e fantasia (Salt pepper and fantasy), and A pranzo con Wilma (At lunch with Wilma).

During the transition from the 70s to the 80s, RAI has some troubles caused by the clash between past and innovation, between the strong old values promoted by Bernabei and the new resounding messages introduced by the social changes that mark the passage from an educational TV to an entertaining one. During these years, the public broadcasting is still hostile towards the strongly commercial values, for this reason with regard to cooking it prefers to retrieve the very first programmes.

Looking back at the first programmes broadcast on television it is possible to retrace some products that confirm this interest, for example A tavola non si invecchia (You don’t get old at the table) (1955) or Impariamo a mangiare (Let’s learn how to eat) (1965), which at the beginning aimed aims at convincing the audience of the importance of nutrition, but later gradually shifts its focus towards the risks related to food.

The public broadcasting, according to its original cultural mission (which was to educate and train) creates a series of programmes based on these themes which towards the end of the 70s take up a new role that complies with the communicative strategies introduced in the after-Reform television. The first to integrate these topics with a new way of hosting programmes was Giovanni Minoli, trough a “spin-off” of the programme Agricoltura domani (Agriculture tomorrow), entitled Dimmi come mangi (Tell me how you eat). The host, Carla Urban, manages to combine succesfully information, education and entertainment in perfect accordance with the hybridization of genres typical of the 80s. The programme aims at promoting food culture through games: the nutrition quizzes submitted to the competitors (most of whom are guest stars) are prepared with the help of the National Institute of Nutrition. The format, which in the previous years looked like an investigative report, now takes on the typical features of the talk show which spans from topics like nutrition facts and eating habits to interviews with ordinary as well as famous people caught in their every-day life. The following seasons introduce the pairing Anna Bartolini and Edoardo Raspelli. The former is an expert on consumption, household economics and health foods while the latter is a wine and food expert. Carla Urban resumes those programmes which deal with the relation between food and the consumer.

Even the programmes which want to present the recipes have a traditional characterisation, an example of this is Menù di stagione, broadcast on the second channel from 1979 to 1981 and hosted by Giusy Sacchetti, who does not mention the brands unlike Telemontecarlo, but only suggests the various steps of the recipes, as happens in the most recent tutorials.

It is interesting to observe a reconstruction of the cultural history of food offered by Montanari, where we can identify the objective, also pursued by television. It aims at guiding the population after the second world war towards an awareness about food as an instrument of growth (compatibly with the economic opportunities). Montanari discovers just at the end of the 60s the break between poverty and wealth, identified through food consumption.

We can observe an evolution from the 60s when from the investigations on food adulteration, first by Ugo Zatterin (1964) and then by Emilio Fede (1968), we arrive to symbolical evaluations of the food itself and to the criticism of a world which is inclined to mass consumerism without considering the consumer’s interest. It is no coincidence that among the authors of Impariamo a mangiare there is also Vincenzo Dona, founder of the Italian Consumers Union, who promoted food quality through his collaboration with RAI.

Weekly programme, broadcast on Sunday at 14.15 from 4th January 1970, addresses the categories in the field. It includes some bulletins about technological innovation inside the programme Linea verde, but from 1981 it will become an independent programme.

The first episode is broadcast on 30th January 1978 until 1983, when Urban starts hosting a new programme entitled Mangimania, set in a farm in Torrimepita. This can be considered an example of the infotainment genre. It will be later replaced by Che fai, mangi?, once again created by Giovanni Minoli, which broadcast at midday time band.

Edoardo Raspelli, journalist, presents himself as an expert in food and wine, editing the programme
food and its careful and responsible consumption. It is no coincidence that the 80s witness the growth of the gap between public and commercial broadcasting. The commercial television networks broadcast programmes such as *Ok, il prezzo è giusto* (*The price is right*), an international format which shows below-standard commercials, and *Il pranzo è servito* (*Lunch is served*), a quiz hosted by Corrado, where the competitors need to answer to some questions and do practical tests in order to complete all the courses of a fictitious lunch. The questions are simple and the monetary prize is moderate.

The television system witnesses a formal competition between Rai and Fininvest which leads to an implicit distribution of the work: “On one hand, Rai favoured the public sphere and the audience involvement; on the other, Fininvest encouraged consumerism and aimed at reaching the private sphere of the families and their purchases”.

Sanctioning the Italian broadcasting duopoly, the 90s will retrieve the cooking topic, offering a more homogeneous supply of programmes, this time more focused on the entertaining aspect. During this stage, new strategies of increasing TV consumption are pursued in order to catch new audiences.

On the commercial networks, a series of food programmes debut with Davide Mengacci, such as *La domenica del villaggio* (*Sunday in the village*), on Rete 4 from 1995, which brings the memory back to Mario Soldati’s journey through Italy. However, the premises are very different: the educational tone is combined with a strong focus on customs and habits of Italian villages. The host lacks completely any culinary skill, so he presents the viewers an oversimplified version of the topic and he takes part first-hand to the act of cooking in an improvised, playful and, sometimes, messy way. While Wilma de Angelis was recognised as an expert, Mengacci, on the other side puts himself on the same level of the viewers, giving them the chance to feel part of the show. The reality TV promoted on Angelo Guglielmini’s Raitre gives way to a simplification of the contents and gradually shifts towards an early form of reality show.

The TV landscape has widely change through the years. The new contents, developed around the first pay television with cinema films and sports programmes, mark the passage from mainstream to present-day TV. This new stage introduces new formats, platforms and productive strategies, that address different audiences and give a new productive impetus. Besides they promote a combination of different TV texts that goes beyond this medium leading the way to the phenomenon of convergence.

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33 The programme will be broadcast until the early 90s and signs Corrado’s passage to commercial television, a trend that, towards the end of the 80s, involves other TV hosts such as Pippo Baudo, Raffaella Carrà and Enrica Bonaccorti.


35 The ratification of the duopoly system, with the Mammì Law 1990, is well explained by Menduni who compares this situation to “communicating vessels”, talking about Rainvest, above all after Silvio Berlusconi’s rise to power in 1994: Menduni, *Fine delle trasmissioni*, 26-29.

36 Davide Mengacci has hosted cookery programmes for 16 years. The success of his first programme *La domenica del villaggio*, on from 1996 to 2005, is the same as in the following programmes *Fornelli d’Italia* in the years 1995-1997 in which the host is seen as being “the man who cooks”, and then *Cuochi senza frontiere* which, from 2008, expands its interest in the multiethnic aspect of food with a competition among cultures. We can also remember the more recent programmes *Ricette di famiglia* and *Ricette di sera*, once again on Rete4.

37 Director of Terza Rete from 1987, Guglielmi imposes a precise brand to his channel with a homogeneous programming, overtly militant and clearly obvious. Leaving aside the criticism that detractors, especially politicians, expressed towards the channel ideology, it is interesting to point out the “birth” of the first form of “truth tv” which will then become “reality television” till the present day “factual tv”. It deals with a kind of tv which not only records but also acts live.
As for the segmentation of audiences, Andrea Pezzi hosts a new successful cookery programme: *Kitchen*, which combines culinary traditions with the new style introduced by the newborn channel MTV\(^{38}\). The show is built according with the ideas of “genre dilution” and hybridization of contents, that find their best realisation in talk shows and entertainment. The aim is to depict TV as the hearth around which people talk. The programme has a simple structure, where from Monday to Friday the host invites singers, actors and intellectuals who are supposed to cook a dish and prove their culinary and oratory skills. In this way, the act of cooking becomes an easy way of communicating and in certain occasions even a case of political propaganda\(^{39}\). This dilution of contents finds in cooking programmes a fine form of expression, sometimes focusing on tradition, but always more frequently exploiting the various models introduced in the new century by the new platforms and the new patterns of consumption. In fact these new platforms and new trends find in cookery programmes an excellent testing ground.

5. THE NEW MILLENNIUM COOKING SHOWS: “IN TINS” PROGRAMMES AND ON LINE RECIPES

It is difficult in this picture to draw an in-depth map of recent years, therefore we feel the personal need to begin a new research project, which only focuses on this topic. The analysis of current TV cookery programming highlights a confusing mixture of programmes that requires a broader evaluation. Such evaluation needs to go beyond the mere identification of the distinctive characteristics of each programmes, but should rather focus on current TV consumption, which at the same time cannot be reduced to simple TV consumption only. Therefore, once again cooking programmes offer a key to understanding the different approaches of television itself towards our present day. This research appears far from being complete, for this reason some important points, which need to be deepened in another paper, will only be hinted in this essay. We are referring to the concept of format, in its double connotation of “global and local” and the aspects related to convergence together with the subsequent diffusion of media products on different devices.

The new millennium celebrates the concept of format: on one hand, we witness a growth in taste for certain programmes, such as *Big Brother*\(^{40}\); on the other also cooking programmes take their inspiration from abroad, as with *La prova del cuoco*\(^{41}\) which derives from the British format *Ready, Steady, Cook*. It’s a game of mirrors which connects globalisation with territoriality, involving both TV and food consumption. In fact, the research studies which focus on the TV programming highlight the new

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\(^{38}\) MTV Europe begins its programming in 1987 on the frequencies of Rete A. The Italian MTV channel debuts in 1997 with some independent programmes and above all the launch of national VJs, such as Andrea Pezzi.

\(^{39}\) During the 2000 political campaign, the participation of Francesco Rutelli, the then-mayor of Rome, caused a stir and was perceived as disparagement of par condicio, which led to the non-broadcasting of the episode. Cf. U. Rosso “MTV scatta la par condicio, salta la caprese del sindaco”, *La Repubblica*, 25 ottobre 2000. Actually, the participation of politicians in cookery programmes had begun a few years before with Massimo D’Alema, who, in 1997, was shown while cooking rice in an episode of *Porta a porta*, in line with the “pop politics” suggested by G. Mazzoleni, A. Sfardini, *Politica pop*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009.

\(^{40}\) The first Italian edition is in 2000, broadcast by Canale5.

\(^{41}\) The programme is broadcast from October 2000 hosted by Antonella Clerici, who had already hosted between 1992 and 1993 in the early afternoon of Raidue the cookery programme, *Ristorante Italia*. 
forms of adaptation of international formats\textsuperscript{42}, while the studies that want to analyse in-depth food culture from the late 90s focused more on the local/global relationship, which sometimes has been defined with the pejorative term “macdonaldisation” of the society\textsuperscript{43}. According to Nicolosi\textsuperscript{44}’s reinterpretation of this definition the authenticity and the uniqueness of local products is impoverished in the name of a food homologation which boomed in recent years, in contrast with the concepts of support of territoriality, food identity and “glocal” consumption. The same happens on television with the realization of formats adapted to the taste of national audiences. Once again food and TV focus on the common idea of “identity”, which is not anymore an imposition from “above” as it used to be in the early years of TV. On the contrary, in the latest TV food programmes, identity is a wise mix of cultures, formats and communicative strategies, that find their realization on the thematic channels through more or less inclusive programmes. This is a “fusion” television which tries to give space to different forms of identity. It does not aim at a collective integration, but at the distinction of those trends which identify the foodies\textsuperscript{45}. The audience who watches TV cookery programmes can be ranked according to the needs met by daily TV programming. In particular, in the current TV scheduling we can find programmes which range from a cognitive-instrumental orientation (which teach how to cook and promote responsible consumption in terms of health and consumer protection, as shown in Marco Bianchi\textsuperscript{46}’s programmes Tesoro salviamo i ragazzi! – Honey, let’s save the kids! – or Aiuto, stiamo ingrassando! – Help, we are getting fat!) to a more active and playful orientation which involves specific diets (vegetarian, vegan, ethnic) or to the sharing of a common passion\textsuperscript{47} and finally to a symbolic orientation which focuses on guests and on the visual presentation of foods as happens in Masterchef\textsuperscript{48}.

\textsuperscript{42} With regards to this cf. M. Sorice, Programmi in scatola. Il format nella tv globale, Cantalupa (To): Effata, 2005, which suggests a curious relationship between the concepts related to the format and the vocabulary related to food.

\textsuperscript{43} Reference to G. Ritzer Il mondo alla Mc Donald’s, Bologna: II Mulino, 1997.

\textsuperscript{44} Meglio, Sociologia del cibo e dell’alimentazione, 60-63.

\textsuperscript{45} With this term, we mean that specific audience who is sensitive to the food topic and considers food as a real life style and feels a sense of belonging to a specific community.

\textsuperscript{46} Marco Bianchi is a nutritional consultant of the European Institute of Oncology and of Fondazione Veronesi, moreover he is in charge of the project Smart Food, he loves to define himself as “chef scientist” and he introduces himself as populariser of healthy nutrition, especially focusing on the bad consequences that a poor attention causes in children. Tesoro salviamo i ragazzi! debuts on Fox Life in November 2011 for 10 episodes. It is a docu-reality adapted from the BBC format BBC Honey, we’re killing the kids. The parents’ eating habits on which, inevitably, their kids depend, are treated in Aiuto stiamo ingrassando! Launched in February 2012, on Fox Life, and a totally Italian programme. The ethical dimension related to food is well shown in Gordon Ramsey’s programme Gordon Ramsey, chef dietro le sbarre, which uses food as an occasion of rehabilitation of prisoners in the prison of Brixton, in Italy it is broadcast on Real Time. Real Times is the channel that best shows the recent trend of offering a support to the human experience through the form of the so-called Factual tv, ranging from home furnishing to personal style to cuisine and nutrition. To study in depth these topics, read V. Innocenti, M. Perrotta, eds., Factual, reality, makeover. Lo spettacolo della trasformazione nella televisione contemporanea, Roma: Bulzoni, 2013; D. Cardini, ed., Ogni luogo è narrativo. Il factual nella televisione italiana, Milano: Arcipelago, 2013.

\textsuperscript{47} The display of food as an instrument that allows to define a community or culture is offered by Orreri da gustare, an American format broadcast in Italy on DMax, Discovery Travel and Living, or by Global food, about the history and culture on food, broadcast on Rai5. Food as a chace of sharing is instead shown in programmes such as Le torte di Toni, about cake design or Hollyfood, l’appetito vien guardando which is broadcast on La5 and points out the relationship between cinema and food.

\textsuperscript{48} We are not able to offer here a general overview, but the aim is to show the latest trends of TV programming, so to provide a categorization which is inevitably affected by a larger amount of programmes compared to the past.
Another concept typical of nowadays TV programming is “convergence”\(^{49}\). It deals with a combination of cuisine with TV platforms and formats which, with the integration of TV, social networks, publishing products and the net, leads to a total renewal of consumption. In particular it is in the so-called “secondary extensions” that TV cooking programmes find their completion: the sense of belonging derived from a specific taste or eating habit is provided by the re-mediation of food topics and the practices of socialization on the net\(^{50}\), where consumption is highly fulfilled and becomes appropriation.

The desire to share passions, values and identities confirms the positioning of cookery TV programmes within an hypothesis of convergent culture which goes beyond the concept of television\(^{51}\).

At the end of our “journey” of historical reconstruction of TV programming, we can recognize TV cookery programming as an extraordinary instrument that allows us to highlight some of the key characteristics of the evolution of TV in Italy, from its origins till today. This path offers an opportunity to investigate new forms and linguistic strategies of the latest programming.

This research is not a conclusion but it should be considered as a starting point for a new journey in search of new tastes regarding television trends.


\(^{50}\) Cf. the interesting reconstruction offered by F. Mangiapani, “In rete la cucina è politica. Alcuni modelli di analisi e uno studio di caso”; Marrone, Giannitrapani, eds., *La cucina del senso. Gusto, significazione, testualità*, 121-133.