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Poetics

Volume 41, Issue 5, October 2013, Pages 433-455

From meat and potatoes to 'real-deal' rotis: Exploring everyday culinary cosmopolitanism

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2013.06.002>

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Highlights

- â€¢ Engagement with cosmopolitan culture in global cities is varied and complex.
- â€¢ We identify three primary modes of engaging with cosmopolitan food repertoires.
- â€¢ Cosmopolitan food repertoires are not exclusive elite practices.
- â€¢ Cosmopolitan food practices demonstrate privilege and operate as a taste hierarchy.

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to broaden our understanding of the lived experience of cosmopolitanism and to expand the notion of multiple everyday cosmopolitanisms. Drawing from 40 semi-structured interviews with 20 families living in Toronto and Vancouver, we propose examining cosmopolitanism as a type of cultural repertoire that contains a range of cosmopolitan eating practices. Based on an in-depth reading of these interviews, we map out three modes of cosmopolitan consumption: a knowledge-focussed connoisseur mode, a pragmatic mode centred in lived experiences and social connections, and a tentative mode of engagement with cosmopolitan culture and cuisine. This research questions the idea of cosmopolitanism as a homogenous cultural practice or as a purely elite phenomenon. At the same time, we also demonstrate how cultural and economic capital are concentrated in and associated with certain cosmopolitan cultural styles and practices.



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Keywords

Cosmopolitanism; Food; Lived experience; Cultural repertoire; Cultural globalization

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Sarah Cappeliez is a doctoral student at the Department of Sociology of the University of Toronto. Her research interests include food, identity, consumption and cultural processes. In particular, her dissertation work will examine how *terroir* legitimates foods and drinks, and how this process of cultural legitimation functions in different national contexts.

Josée Johnston is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Toronto. Her primary substantive interest is the sociological study of food. She co-authored (with Shyon Baumann) *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape* (2010: Routledge), and she has published articles in venues including *American Journal of Sociology*, *Theory and Society*, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, and *Gender and Society*.

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