



Diacronie

Studi di Storia Contemporanea

N° 40, 4 | 2019

**Identità, ambiente e regionalismo tra spazi
mediterranei e atlantici**

Healthy and environment-friendly: the rise of sustainable food consumption through the pages of «La Cucina Italiana» (1952-2017)

Elisa Tizzoni



Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/diacronie/12403>

DOI: 10.4000/diacronie.12403

ISSN: 2038-0925

Publisher

Association culturelle Diacronie

Electronic reference

Elisa Tizzoni, "Healthy and environment-friendly: the rise of sustainable food consumption through the pages of «La Cucina Italiana» (1952-2017)", *Diacronie* [Online], N° 40, 4 | 2019, document 4, Online since 29 December 2019, connection on 14 April 2022. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/diacronie/12403> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/diacronie.12403>



Gli articoli di «Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea» sono pubblicati sotto Licenza Creative Commons Attribuzione - Condividi allo stesso modo 4.0 Internazionale.



Diacronie
Studi di Storia Contemporanea

40, 4/2019

Identità, ambiente e regionalismo tra spazi mediterranei e atlantici

Healthy and environment-friendly: the rise of sustainable food consumption through the pages of «La Cucina Italiana» (1952-2017)

Elisa TIZZONI

Per citare questo articolo:

TIZZONI, Elisa, «Healthy and environment-friendly: the rise of sustainable food consumption through the pages of “La Cucina Italiana” (1952-2017)», *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea : Identità, ambiente e regionalismo tra spazi mediterranei e atlantici*, 40, 4/2019, 29/12/2019,

URL: < http://www.studistorici.com/2019/12/29/tizzoni_numero_40/ >

Diacronie Studi di Storia Contemporanea → <http://www.diacronie.it>

Rivista storica online. Uscita trimestrale.

redazione.diacronie@hotmail.it

Comitato di direzione: Naor Ben-Yehoyada – João Fábio Bertonha – Christopher Denis-Delacour – Maximiliano Fuentes Codera – Tiago Luís Gil – Anders Granås Kjølsvædt – Deborah Paci – Mateus Henrique de Faria Pereira – Spyridon Ploumidis – Wilko Graf Von Hardenberg

Comitato di redazione: Jacopo Bassi – Luca Bufarale – Gianluca Canè – Luca G. Manenti – Fausto Pietrancosta – Elisa Tizzoni – Matteo Tomasoni – Luca Zuccolo



Diritti: gli articoli di *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea* sono pubblicati sotto licenza Creative Commons 3.0. Possono essere riprodotti e modificati a patto di indicare eventuali modifiche dei contenuti, di riconoscere la paternità dell'opera e di condividerla allo stesso modo. La citazione di estratti è comunque sempre autorizzata, nei limiti previsti dalla legge.

4/ Healthy and environment-friendly: the rise of sustainable food consumption through the pages of «La Cucina Italiana» (1952-2017)

Elisa TIZZONI

The article investigates the emergence of sustainable practices in household consumption, with a view to analyzing when and how La Cucina Italiana, the best known Italian cooking magazine, promoted either challenged the spread of sustainable eating habits and, broadly speaking, the rise of conscious consumption patterns in post-war Italy (1952-2017).

From a methodological point of view, the research lies at the crossroad between environmental history and consumption history; besides, the article owes to the so-called gender studies as refers to female condition in post-war Italy.

1. Introduction

This contribution deals with the rise of sustainable practices in household food consumption through the pages of «La Cucina Italiana», the best-known Italian cooking magazine.

From a methodological point of view, the research lies at the cross-road between environmental history and consumption history and applies a gender perspective, since the magazine mainly addressed a female audience until recent times.

The first paragraph takes cues from current research in the social sciences to discuss the concept of sustainable consumption, by a focus on food-related practices.

Then a brief overview on the spread of pro-environment food consumption habits in the Western countries throughout the post-war decades is provided (particular attention is paid to the Italian case).

Finally, the article retraces the rise of sustainable food consumption through the pages of «La Cucina Italiana» in the period between 1952 and 2017, with the aim of analysing when and how the best-known Italian cooking magazine promoted either challenged the spread of sustainable eating habits and, broadly speaking, the rise of conscious consumption patterns in post-war Italy.

2. A controversial concept? Sustainable food consumption in mass society between the social sciences and history

The blurry boundaries of the notion of sustainable consumption¹ allow scholars to apply such a definition to a vast array of practices and social behaviours.

Hence, most of the current literature on this topic relies on the working definition of sustainable consumption and production (SCP) which was established at the Symposium Sustainable Consumption (Oslo, 1994) and then adopted by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development:

The use of goods and services that respond to basic needs and bring a better quality of life, while minimizing the use of natural resources, toxic materials and emissions of waste and pollutants over the life cycle, so as not to jeopardize the needs of future generations².

Broadly speaking, sustainable consumption practices have been investigated by sociology and the political sciences from two different perspectives, by reference to the consumer behaviour either to the role played by public powers in the spread of eco-friendly habits.

In the first case, behavioural studies have underpinned that green consumers usually share both pro-environmental and pro-social values³; according to Andrew Gilg et al., given that there is «a wider behavioural dimension to green purchasing than merely those activities which have conventionally been classified as green consumption», the sustainable consumer often features a pro-social ethic and a political commitment with Green or Liberal-Democratic parties⁴.

Hence, pro-environmental attitudes do not always turn into effective practices, showing a significant discrepancy between the consumers beliefs and their purchases⁵.

¹ PEATTIE, Ken, «Green Consumption: Behavior and Norms», in *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, 35, 2010, pp. 195-228.

² UNEP - Division for Technology, Industry and Economics, *Sustainable Consumption and Production Background Paper*, Paris, June 2010, URL: <http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/dialogue/pdf/SCPforDevelopment_BGpap180610_final.pdf> [consulted on 25 July 2019].

³ STERN, Paul C., DIETZ, Thomas, KALOF, Linda, «Value Orientations, Gender and Environmental Concern», in *Environment and Behavior*, 25, 5/1993, pp. 322-348; ROBERTS, James A., «Green Consumers in the 1990s: Profile and Implications for Advertising», in *Journal of Business Research*, 36, 3/1996, pp. 217-232.

⁴ GILG, Andrew, BARR, Stewart, GREEN, Nicholas F., «Consumption or Sustainable Lifestyles? Identifying the Sustainable Consumer», in *Futures*, 37, 6/2005, pp. 481-504. Gilg et al. highlight that green consumption implies the following activities: «Purchasing products, such as detergents, that have a reduced environmental impact; Avoiding products with aerosols; Purchasing recycled paper products (such as toilet tissue and writing paper); Buying organic produce; Buying locally produced foods; Purchasing from a local store; Buying fairly traded goods; Looking for products using less packaging; Using one's own bag, rather than a plastic carrier provided by a shop».

⁵ HORNE, Ralph E., «Limits to labels: the role of eco-labels in the assessment of product sustainability and

As refers to the political realm, research has pointed out that over the last decades the public powers became more and more aware of environmental issues and implemented a broad range of measures to introduce citizens to a green way of life and discourage unsustainable consumption⁶.

Nevertheless, in most cases national governments tend to avoid those eco-friendly policies that may alienate consensus from private entrepreneurs, because of environmental regulations affecting directly and indirectly firms' costs, and from consumers, unwilling to make radical lifestyle changes⁷.

As a consequence, public powers usually propose self-regulation on a voluntary basis, as it is the case with the European Commission's *Communication on the sustainable consumption and production and sustainable industrial policy action plan*, introduced on 16 July, 2008, which does not prescribe mandatory or quantifiable targets and deadlines, thus weakening its supposed effects on «decoupling economic growth from resource use»⁸.

Besides, what shines through recent studies about sustainable household consumption is that food practices can be assumed as a proxy for consumers daily behaviours at home, as they are «clearly embedded in materiality (housing, technology), infrastructure (transport, amenities) and cultural notions of appropriateness (ideas about proper eating, care and convenience)»⁹.

Moreover, the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) suggests that public policy might take into account the whole daily household routine while assessing the determinants and the effects of food consumption, the latter representing a complex blend between different aspects of both private and public life¹⁰.

Currently, the social sciences identify a wide range of environment-friendly behaviours that can be associated to food consumption, consistently with the three dimensions of sustainability (environment, society, economy), among which: choosing eco-labelled or organic food; supporting fair trade; reducing food waste and energy demand¹¹.

routes to sustainable consumption», in *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 33, 2/2009, pp. 175-182; JOSHI, Yatish, RAHMAN, Zillur, «Factors Affecting Green Purchase Behaviour and Future Research Directions», in *International Strategic Management Review*, 3, 1-2/2015, pp. 128-143.

⁶ RYAN, Neal, «Reconstructing Citizens as Consumers: Implications for New Modes of Governance», in *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, 60, 2001, pp. 104-109; TRENTMANN, Frank, «Citizenship and Consumption», in *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 7, 2/2007, pp. 147-158.

⁷ FUCHS, Doris A., LOREK, Sylvia, «Sustainable Consumption Governance. A History of Promises and Failures», in *Journal of Consumer Policy*, 28, 3/2005, pp. 261-288.

⁸ NASH, Hazel Ann, «The European Commission's Sustainable Consumption and Production and Sustainable Industrial Policy Action Plan», in *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 17, 4/2009, pp. 496-498.

⁹ PADDOCK, Jessica, «Household Consumption and Environmental Change: Rethinking the Policy Problem Through Narratives of Food Practice», in *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 17, 1/2015, pp. 122-139.

¹⁰ OECD, *Towards Sustainable Household Consumption? Trends and Policies in OECD Countries*, Paris, OECD, 2002.

¹¹ OECD, *Promoting Sustainable Consumption: Good Practices in OECD Countries*, Paris, OECD, 2008; recently, Reisch et al. identified three ways in which private consumers might reduce the impact of food consumption: decreasing consumption of meat (especially beef), favouring organic fruits and vegetables, avoiding air-transported goods. REISCH, Lucia, EBERLE, Ulrike, LOREK, Sylvia, «Sustainable Food Consumption: an Overview of Contemporary Issues and Policies», in *Sustainability: Science, Practice, & Policy*,

However, compared to the social scientists, until recent years historians devoted limited attention to the rise of eco-friendly consumption patterns in the Twentieth century.

Thus, the environmental history of consumption in the mass society is an emerging field, which is supported by the brand-new interest shown by this historiographical approach in the urbanisation process and its role in boosting consumerism.

According to Matthew W. Klinge, in the first stages¹² environmental history afforded an insight into the material effects of private consumption, whereas, after the cultural turn occurred in the Nineties, scholars questioned how consumption affects the social construction of nature and the private experience of the environment¹³.

Today's environmental history reflection on food consumption seems influenced by this twofold aim: on the one hand, some contributions critically assess its impact on natural habitats¹⁴; on the other hand, the cultural approach provides a deeper understanding of human-environment relations through the prism of food practices.

This latter approach was discussed in 2009 in a special issue of the journal «Environmental history», by putting emphasis on the heuristic potential of the category of *taste* as a social and cultural construct¹⁵.

Nonetheless, this new wave of studies suffers from some limitations: firstly, even after the «integration of materialist and idealist approaches»¹⁶ within the environmental history, production-related issues are still predominant, compared to those pertaining consumption. Moreover, the huge number of studies on collective and public aspects of food consumption tends to overshadow the limited number of works on private food habits.

Finally, and maybe most important, the gender dimension is often missing in current environmental history on food consumption. Hence, even in 1990 Carolyn Merchant called for a gender perspective in environmental history and provided some useful hints for the study of household consumption in the Modern Age: «Under industrial capitalism in the nineteenth century, women's loss of power in outdoor farm production was compensated by a gain of power

9, 2/2013, pp. 7-25.

¹² Consistent with most of current historiography, Klinge retraces the roots of environmental history in the «Annales school», on the one hand, and in the young generation of historians from the United States who dealt with environmental issues since the early Seventies (like Donal Worster), on the other

¹³ KLINGLE, Matthew W., «Spaces of Consumption in Environmental History», in *History and Theory*, 42, 4/2003, pp. 94-110.

¹⁴ GOWERS, Richard J., «Selling the 'Untold Wealth' in the Seas: A Social and Cultural History of the Southeast Australian Shelf Trawling Industry, 1915-1961», in *Environment and History*, 14, 2/2008, pp. 265-287; ARCH, Jakobina, «Whale Meat in Early Postwar Japan: Natural Resources and Food Culture», in *Environmental History*, 21, 3/2016, pp. 467-487.

¹⁵ *Environmental History*, 14, 2/2009 (the most interesting articles for the purposes of this article are: CHESTER, Robert N., «Sensory Deprivation: Taste as a Useful Category of Analysis in Environmental History», pp. 323-330; SHOEMAKER, Nancy, «Food and the Intimate Environment», pp. 339-344).

¹⁶ ISENBERG, Andrew C., *Introduction: A New Environmental History*, in Id. (edited by), *The Oxford Handbook of Environmental History*, Oxford-New York, Oxford University Press, 2014, pp. 1-20, p. 8.

in the reproduction of daily life (domesticity) and in the socialization of children and husbands (the moral mother) in the sphere of reproduction»¹⁷.

Unfortunately, Merchant's research suggestions have not been fully developed to date, since few insights into the gender dimension can be found in current environmental histories.

Finally, a deeper understanding of the environmental consequences of food practices is partly hindered by the scarce dialogue between environmental history and the history of consumption.

Hence, over the last few decades the history of consumption provided us with in-depth descriptions of the technical, economical, social, cultural factors leading to the onset of mass consumerism at global level.

Nonetheless, most of current research in this field, even when it applies a critical approach, seems still influenced by a teleological vision, which situates the emergence of mass consumerism in a progressive path towards modernisation and technological improvement, according to a model established in the wealthy, industrialised countries over the last two centuries.

As a consequence, research on the quest for sustainability in mass consumption society might contradict such a narrative.

Nonetheless, recently Heather Chappells and Frank Trentmann, albeit claiming that «history has been a record of increasingly unsustainable forms of life», outlined some promising research directions through which history can give a contribution to the current debate on sustainability: retracing the rise and changes of «the idea of sustainability»; focusing on «diversity, in terms of groups and regions» to shed light on sustainable lifestyles risen before the spread of environmentalism in the Twentieth Century; investigating «the changing resilience of human communities in the face of shortages, disruption and transitions from one resource to another»¹⁸.

Moreover, these authors point out that the concept of sustainability was already established in the early stages of industrialisation, with a view to providing a solution to crisis (usually a shortage of resources) at different geographical scales¹⁹.

As refers to the gender dimension, the history of consumption adds useful perspectives on the contribution of women to the establishment of market-driven consumer cultures, by putting emphasis on the «political implications» of female consumerism²⁰.

¹⁷ MERCHANT, Carolyn, «Gender and Environmental History», in *The Journal of American History*, 76, 4/1990, pp. 1117-1121, p. 1121.

¹⁸ CHAPPELLS, Heather, TRENTMANN, Frank, *Sustainable consumption in history: ideas, resources and practices*, in REISCH, Lucia A., THØGERSEN, John (edited by), *Handbook of Research on Sustainable Consumption*, Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015, pp. 51-69, pp. 51-52.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 53.

²⁰ De GRAZIA, Victoria, *Introduction*, in De GRAZIA, Victoria, FURLOUGH, Ellen (edited by), *The Sex of Things. Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1996, pp. 275-286; on the topic of female consumerism in post-war Europe see also: ROBERTS, Mary Louise, «Gender,

3. The emergence of sustainable food consumption practices in the post-war decades: a brief overview

Throughout the *Trente glorieuses* of mass consumption (1945-1975) the European material and moral recovery was followed by an unprecedented economic development, featuring higher industrial and agricultural production and increasing private consumption.

Moreover, wages increased while affordable goods became available to popular classes and a vast array of public services were implemented by the welfare state at low cost or without charge, leading to the growth of private expenditures.

The expansion of private consumption in Europe relied as well on broader political considerations in the frame of the Cold War, so long as the achievement of high standards of living and full employment was supposed to bring political stability and strengthen the Atlantic alliance.

Beside economic and political processes, social and cultural factors boosted private consumption: old and new media, such as cinema and television, spread ideas and trends worldwide and supported the “Americanisation” of the European lifestyle²¹; meanwhile, the emergence of “Youth culture” as a consequence of post-war baby-boom resulted in the increase and the diversification of citizens’ purchases, as long as consumption habits fostered the sense of belonging to the same social group²².

Moreover, the European integration process reduced the obstacles to goods transport and selling and the EEC (European Economic Community) adopted the Common agricultural policy (CAP), which was meant to achieve agricultural production growth in the member states and eliminate the risk to return to famine condition after the dramatic experience of the Second World War²³.

Consumption, and Commodity Culture», in *The American Historical Review*, 103, 3/1998, pp. 817-844; PULJU, Rebecca, *Women and Mass Consumer Society in Postwar France*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2012.

²¹ It must be pointed out that over the last years the notion of “Americanisation” has been called into question, under the influence of global and transnational history. TRENTMANN, Frank, «Beyond Consumerism: New Historical Perspectives on Consumption», in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39, 3/2004, pp. 373-401.

²² JUDT, Tony, *Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945*, New York, Penguin Press, 2005, pp. 324 et seq.

²³ COPPOLARO, Lucia, *The making of a world trading power: the European Economic Community (EEC) in the GATT Kennedy round negotiations (1963-67)*, Farnham, Ashgate Publishing, 2013; LASCHI, Giuliana, «La politica agricola comune: gli agricoltori e il processo di integrazione europea», in *Rivista di Storia dell'Agricoltura*, LIII, 1/2013, pp. 179-190; MARTIIN, Carin, PAN-MONTOJO, Juan, BRASSLEY, Paul (edited by), *Agriculture in Capitalist Europe, 1945-1960: From Food Shortages to Food Surpluses*, London, Routledge, 2016.

Thus, from a Marxist point of view the consumerist culture was interpreted as a long-term consequence of the «triumph» of the bourgeoisie in the industrial age, which was marked from the imitation of the upper classes' lifestyle in household consumption²⁴.

More recently, Frank Trentmann called into question the “consumerist paradigm” with a view to focus on collective phenomena affecting Europeans consumption in a more nuanced way, thus pointing out that

People consume many goods and services simply as they go about their daily lives, to express duty and affection to each other, and to accomplish tasks of many different kinds. The family meal is a classical example. It involved the purchase of food, its preparation (using energy and stoves or microwaves), dishes served in a particular sequence, gender roles and rituals of eating and sociability²⁵.

Trentmann's insights thus allow to de-construct the “narrative” of growth and abundance of the *Trente glorieuses*, which affected food habits to a great extent and gave rise to many contradictions, as it was the case with market distortions and the huge investments with limited social benefits of the CAP.

According to Trentmann's suggestions, the ethical and environmental concerns elicited by the unprecedented prosperity can be interpreted from a collective perspective, as the reaction to the accelerated social and cultural transformations of post-war Europe.

As refers to food habits, in the age of economic *boom* Europeans got access to a more varied diet (including meat, refined grains, off-season products) following the transport network recovery, the technological improvements, the re-establishment of the international trade system.

Moreover, throughout the second half of the Twentieth Century consumers became familiar with innovative food products, such as ready meals, canned and frozen food²⁶; moreover, products packaging and advertising played a greater role in purchasing decisions, at the expense of the traditional relationship between customers and shopkeepers²⁷.

²⁴ HOBBSAWM, Eric J., *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987.

²⁵ TRENTMANN, Frank, *Empire of things: how we became a world of consumers, from the fifteenth century to the twenty-first*, London, Allen Lane, 2016, p. XII.

²⁶ ZAMAGNI, Vera, *L'evoluzione dei consumi fra tradizione e innovazione*, in CAPATTI, Alberto, De BERNARDI, Alberto, VARNI, Angelo (edited by), *Storia d'Italia. Annali 13. L'alimentazione*, Torino, Einaudi, 1998, pp. 171-204; SCARPELLINI, Emanuela, *Comprare all'americana: le origini della rivoluzione commerciale in Italia, 1945-1971*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2001; ID., *Americanization and Authenticity: Italian Food Products and Practices in the 1950s and 1960s*, in LUNDIN, Per, KAISERFELD, Thomas (edited by), *The Making of European Consumption, Facing the American Challenge*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015, pp. 111-133.

²⁷ CAPUZZO, Paolo, *Consumi e distribuzione: una storia in cifre. Una geografia storica dei consumi nell'Italia contemporanea*, in SALVATI, Mariuccia, SCIOLLA, Loredana (edited by), *L'Italia e le sue regioni. L'età Repubblicana. Territori*, Roma, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 2015, pp. 513-538.

In this first stage, the concerns about waste and household expenditure seem consistent with long-dating practices of ethical consumption that relied to a large extent on the housewives' familiar duties, as it was the case during the two World conflicts, when war propaganda and popular magazines spurred women to adapt the family lifestyle to food rationing system²⁸, with a view to strengthening the Home Front²⁹.

Actually, since from the Fifties in the Western countries the media encouraged the wise housewife to adopt consumption practices that could reduce costs and waste production, especially in the house cooking³⁰.

A true shift occurred in the Seventies, also known as «the decade of the environment», when the spread of post-materialism and other critical ideologies, on the one hand, and the global economic crisis, on the other, called into question the myth of unlimited growth and environmentalism gained momentum in most of the industrialised countries³¹.

Actually, both the civil society and the public powers became more and more aware of ecological issues and mass-produced food was blamed for jeopardizing the environment and widening social disparities³².

Consistently, the consumers' choice was affected by the ecological turn, leading to the emergence of environment-friendly cooking through farm-to-table products, short distribution chain and other tools.

In the Eighties, despite a broader acknowledgment of the principle of sustainability at international level³³, the new wave of conservatism that moved from USA and UK challenged

²⁸ The best-known example in WWII Italy was the «cucina senza», meant to cope with food shortage, that was promoted by Petronilla (pseudonymous of Amalia Moretti Foggia), the first food editor of the Italian newspaper «Corriere della Sera». MONTANARI, Massimo, *Leggere il cibo: un viaggio nella letteratura gastronomica*, in POLLARINI, Andrea (a cura di), *La cucina bricconcella 1891-1991. Pellegrino Artusi e l'arte di mangiar bene cento anni dopo*, Casalecchio di Reno, Grafis, 1991, pp. 23-40, pp. 37-38.

²⁹ THEIEN, Iselin, «Food rationing during World War two», cit.; HUNT, Karen, «The Politics of Food and Women's Neighborhood Activism in First World War Britain», in *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 77, 2010, pp. 8-26; Id., *A Heroine at Home: The Housewife on the First World War Home Front*, in ANDREWS, Maggie, LOMAS, Janis (edited by), *The Home Front in Britain*, Londra, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp. 73-91. It is worth remembering that during WWI women led protestations against food scarcity all over Europe. BIANCHI, Roberto, *Pace pane terra. Il 1919 in Italia*, Roma, Odradek, 2006.

³⁰ TAROZZI, Fiorenza, *Padrona di casa, buona massaia, cuoca, casalinga, consumatrice. Donne e alimentazione tra pubblico e privato*, in CAPATTI, Alberto, De BERNARDI, Alberto, VARNI, Angelo (a cura di), *Storia d'Italia. Annali 13. L'alimentazione*, cit., pp. 645-679; PULJU, Rebecca, *Women and Mass Consumer Society in Postwar France*, cit.

³¹ SCARPELLINI, Emanuela, *L'Italia dei consumi: dalla Belle époque al nuovo millennio*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2008.

³² HAYDU, Jeffrey, «Cultural Modeling in Two Eras of U.S. Food Protest: Grahamites (1830s) and Organic Advocates (1960s-70s)», in *Social Problems*, 58, 3/2011, pp. 461-487.

³³ The most important milestones are represented by the publication of the *Brundtland Report* (1987) and the United Nations *Conference on Environment & Development* (Rio de Janeiro, 1992), the latter establishing the Agenda 21 platform.

environmental regulation while trying to delegitimize ecological sciences supporting green policies³⁴.

Nonetheless, despite these attempts to undermine the pro-environment commitment, green consumption gained further attention and the political meaning of household food consumption was definitely recognized³⁵.

Between the Nineties and the following decade, the United Nations agencies concerned with the environment launched some successful campaign to foster sustainable consumption³⁶ while major companies geared their production to an ecologist demand, thus supporting the «mainstreaming of environmentalism»³⁷.

More recently, the quest for authenticity in foodstuff from a growing share of consumers stemmed into the restoration of traditional productions and the adoption of short distribution chain³⁸, with a lower impact on the natural and social environment; as refers to social sustainability, an increasing number of farmers and workers got involved with Fairtrade³⁹.

4. «La Cucina Italiana» and the rise of environmental concerns in food consumption (1952-2017)

«La Cucina Italiana», originally conceived as a female magazine, was founded in 1929 by Umberto Notari and soon became the most popular Italian cooking magazine⁴⁰.

³⁴ DUNLAP, Riley E., «The New Environmental Paradigm Scale: From Marginality to Worldwide Use», in *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 40, 1/2008, pp. 3-18.

³⁵ FAUCHER, Florence, «Manger vert. Choix alimentaires et identité politique chez les écologistes français et britanniques», in *Revue française de science politique*, XLVIII, 3-4/1998, pp. 437-457; SASSATELLI, Roberta, *The Political Morality of Food. Discourses, Contestation and Alternative Consumption*, in HARVEY, Mark., McMEECKIN, Andrew, WARDE, Alan (edited by), *Qualities of Food. Alternative Theoretical and Empirical Approaches*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004, pp. 176-191.

³⁶ THIELE, Leslie P., *Environmentalism for a New Millennium: The Challenge of Coevolution*, London - New York, Oxford University Press, 1999.

³⁷ Among others, in the Nineties the first green supermarkets opened in most of the European countries. BROBERG, Oskar, «Labelling the Good: Alternative Visions and Organic Branding in Sweden in the Late Twentieth Century», in *Enterprise & Society*, 11, 4/2010, pp. 813-840.

³⁸ GEYZEN, Anneke, «Food Studies and the Heritage Turn: A Conceptual Repertoire», in *Food & History*, 12, 2/2014, pp. 67-96.

³⁹ TRICARICO, Daniele, «Cucine nazionali a confronto. I percorsi della cucina italiana in Gran Bretagna», in *Storicamente*, 3/2007, URL: < <http://www.storicamente.org/03tricarico/> > [consulted on 25 July 2019]; ROBERT, Isabelle, «La diffusion du concept de développement durable au sein des familles: une étude exploratoire», in *Recherches familiales*, 1, 3/2006, pp. 149-164; RÉMÉSY, Christian, «Bien se nourrir et préserver la planète», in *Esprit*, 6/2016, pp. 121-130.

⁴⁰ ADORNI, Daniela, MAGAGNOLI, Stefano, «La cucina italiana. Modelli di femminilità fascista», in *Italia Contemporanea*, 286, 1/2018, pp. 11-33; further information on Umberto Notari can be found in: PORTINCASA, Agnese, *Scrivere di gusto. Una storia della cucina italiana attraverso i ricettari, 1776-1943*, Bologna, Pendragon, 2016.

After an interruption during the Second World War, it resumed publication in 1952, aiming at «giving a contribution to the well-being and serenity for individuals and family [...], bringing back on every table the convivial pleasure turned off by the contemporary lifestyle».

Broadly speaking, «La Cucina Italiana» celebrated the growth of private consumption and the greater food availability after the material deprivation and hardships that had been the predominant experience of most Italians during the Second World War.

Thus, during the *Trente glorieuses* of mass consumption the magazine featured cover images of “pantagruelic meals” and provided high fat recipes, thus supporting the shared narrative of affluence and growth⁴¹.

Nonetheless, «La Cucina Italiana» offered a wide range of contents far beyond recipes and cooking tips, including columns about health, best restaurants in Italy and abroad, coupledom and household management.

Broadly speaking, practical precepts were offered through an educational, paternalistic approach. Many elements (as the column devoted to the employment relationship between a mistress and her maid, clearly written from the point of view of the first) display that the magazine was addressed to middle-class women, in order to meet somewhat contrasting wishes, for instance suggesting how to save money in cooking and housekeeping and, at the same time, explaining how to make the house look elegant and fashionable. In this first stage, the magazine’s interest in cost-saving did not contemplate environmental concerns and the frequent references to traditional values represented the only instances of ethical issues.

Cheap recipes, including cereals, vegetables, or even brand-new ingredients as stock cube, had a significant place in the magazine, whereas selected experts (dieticians above all) introduced the reader to the basic principles of nutrition, with a view to preparing healthy, inexpensive, but still tasty meals⁴².

Hence, only when Italian consumers faced the energy crisis in 1973 «La Cucina Italiana» adopted an eco-friendly attitude, consistent with the global spread of an unprecedented environmental awareness, by pointing out that the crisis could represent an opportunity to change the wrong habits and achieve a healthier lifestyle.

Along with some brief articles about the impacts of human activities on natural heritage, which seem particularly remarkable as they do not refer at all to cooking and recipes⁴³, the journal claimed for a new balance between human technology and nature, given that happiness

⁴¹ TOMKA, Béla, *A Social History of Twentieth-Century Europe*, London, Routledge, 2013.

⁴² SANTANGELO, A., «Economia alimentare» [«Nutritional economics»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 1/1962, p. 86.

⁴³ S.a., «La distruzione della natura» [«The destruction of nature»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 1/1973, p. 2; VIRIDIANA, «Le sentinelle del paesaggio» [«The sentinels of landscape»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 1/1973, pp. 90-91; S.a., «Lotta agli inquinanti» [«Fight against pollution»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 10/1973, p. 1104.

might consist in «a rapprochement to other people and to nature, and no more in an insensitive technology»⁴⁴.

Hence, the Seventies witnessed increasing debate on the impacts of industrial production and environmental degradation on human health, following natural disasters (the first methods to assess scientifically the environmental risk were introduced at that time⁴⁵) and industrial accidents, such as the Seveso chemical disaster, which elicited a greater awareness of the threats posed by mass production in Italy and abroad⁴⁶ and spurred the European Community to adopt the *Seveso Directive on accident hazards of industrial activities*⁴⁷.

Consistent with the debate on environmental hazard mentioned above, the magazine deemed the natural environment as the best ally against pollution: a brief note reporting the results of research about recycling garbage by bacteria which were supposed to split plastic molecules, underlined that «it's nature herself that, as it has always been, gives us the tools to defend ourselves»⁴⁸.

Moreover, the authors argued that the crisis should be challenged by women first, as they had always been «experts in difficulties» in their daily routines.

Hence, despite the growth of unemployment and the restrictions to international trade and food imports

Housewives, if forced by necessity, would be able to invent a nutrition less monotone than the present one, less wasteful, maybe more agreeable and indeed healthier [...]. Now our civilisation and our economy need to assess what is necessary and what is superfluous and harmful; to distinguish between what will help us to best survive and what will make it difficult to live together worsening the future of our economy and society. That's why, in this moment, we call to our women. And who else but women could rearrange our adaptation⁴⁹?

⁴⁴ IMBONATI, Carlo, «E se cambiassimo vita?» [«What if we changed our lifestyle?»], in *La Cucina italiana*, 1/1974, p. 10.

⁴⁵ PAGLIACCI, Francesco, «L'Italia rurale alla prova dei disastri naturali», in *AgriRegioniEuropa*, XIII, 51, 2017, pp. 7-9.

⁴⁶ CENTEMERI, Laura, *Ritorno a Seveso: il danno ambientale, il suo riconoscimento, la sua riparazione*, Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 2006; ZIGLIOLI, Bruno, *La mina vagante. Il disastro di Seveso e la solidarietà nazionale*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2010. See also: JARRIGE, François, LE ROUX, Thomas, *La contamination du monde. Une histoire des pollutions à l'âge industriel*, Paris, Seuil, 2017.

⁴⁷ Council Directive 82/501/EEC of 24 June 1982 on the major-accident hazards of certain industrial activities.

⁴⁸ «[...] è la natura stessa che, come è sempre stato, ci offre i mezzi per difenderci» [«Nature itself, as it has always been, gives us the tools to defend ourselves»]. S.a., «Come distruggere i rifiuti di plastica» [«How to destroy plastic waste»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 2/1974, p. 116.

⁴⁹ «Le massaie, se pungolate dalla necessità, sapranno inventare un'alimentazione meno monotona dell'attuale, meno da sperperatori più gradevole forse e senz'altro più igienica [...]. Ora è venuta la necessità, per un certo tipo di civiltà e di economia come quella in cui viviamo, di decidere tra ciò che è essenziale e ciò che è superfluo e dannoso, tra ciò che ci aiuterà a sopravvivere meglio e ciò che renderà più difficile la nostra convivenza e più oscuro il nostro avvenire economico e sociale. Ecco perché, a questo punto, facciamo appello alle nostre donne. E chi altri, se non le donne, potrà organizzare il nostro

It must be pointed out that the Keynesian multiplier effect of post-war economic boom to some extent supported the rise of GDP even after the first Oil crisis, thus reducing its consequences on the Italians consumption patterns.

Moreover, the austerity could represent an opportunity, so long as environmental concerns would match human being's needs by taking into consideration social, economical and environmental costs of common behaviours.

At the end of 1974, the magazine afforded further insights into the effects of the economic crisis, which was supposed to bring positive outcomes, such as reducing unnecessary consumption and adopting cheaper, healthier eating habits, as long as it elicited the consumers' creativity in the face of purchasing power reduction and the lack of energy sources.

Consequently, environmental issues were addressed with levity, as it was the case with the Author of the column *The grandchildren speak* ("Parlano i nipotini"), who posed as a young girl, Carlottina, to describe how her grandmother had adapted familiar food consumption to the limitations set by the austerity through a balanced diet (combining carefully carbohydrates and protein and assessing the daily caloric intake of each family member, for instance), thus accomplishing «a duty of all»⁵⁰.

When the worst effects of the oil crisis began to fade, «La Cucina Italiana» paid increasing attention to the cultural and social meanings of food consumption, either supporting or criticising the most successful innovations affecting eating habits.

It is worth remembering that since the mid-Eighties new forms of civic commitment against the emerging trends in food consumption and in favour of traditional foodstuffs gained momentum in Italy, leading to the creation of *Slow Food*, a movement meant to support and celebrate food heritage (1986)⁵¹.

Among others, the fast-food restaurants, which were the main target of the protests unleashed by the founding members of *Slow Food*, were blamed by «La Cucina Italiana» for withdrawing traditional food culture, in the absence of any effective opposition from best-known chefs:

The interest for well-eating is getting stronger, the greatest master-chefs gain stars over stars as a sign of international recognition, but fast-food restaurants are doing a roaring trade. Are we staring at the twilight of well-eating? Are we facing a future of hamburgers⁵²?

riadattamento?». IMBONATI, Carlo, «L'Esperta in difficoltà» [«The expert on adversities»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 2/1974, p. 122.

⁵⁰ CARLOTTINA, «'A' come allegria, 'A' Come austerità!» [«'A' as happiness, 'A' as austerity!»], in *La Cucina italiana*, 12/1974, pp. 1419-1501.

⁵¹ PETRINI, Carlo, McCUAIG, William, *Slow Food: The Case for Taste*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2001.

⁵² PASSADORE, W., «...E le 'Stelle' stanno a guardare » [«...And the stars are watching»], in *La Cucina Italiana*,

According to the article just mentioned, a balanced compromise could consist in offering one-dish meals based on Italian recipes, thus satisfying consumers' taste while supporting «a more civilian habit towards the stomach, health, good cheer and, why not? A good patriotism»⁵³.

Hence, some articles focused on the cultural and behavioural aspects of emerging eating patterns, such as vegetarianism (including some brief hints to vegans)⁵⁴, whereas environmental considerations were surprisingly missing, thus allowing to interpret the rise of the movements committed to food heritage preservation as an independent phenomenon compared to environmentalism, owing to the concept of “sustainability” and yet grounded on different ethical, social and cultural premises:

Vegetarian eating is not a diet in the strict sense, hence is not an imposition. Is rather a philosophy [...]. Being vegetarian means becoming aware of the excesses and, little by little, in a balanced way, alternating meat with vegetables and cereals. Without sacrificing well-eating and aesthetic, but ensuring a proper supply of nutrients with a whole variety of dishes⁵⁵.

At the end of the decade, the attention of «La Cucina Italiana» shifted onto new technologies for food production and cookery, as shown by a new column about microwave cooking.

Most of the articles deemed positively genetically modified food, as it was supposed to bring a solution to most of the nutritional problems in both developed and underdeveloped countries; moreover, the authors reassessed more favourably industrial food products and blamed diet-related diseases on wrong consumers' habits:

In the countries where industrialisation and wellness have spread and life expectancy has increased, industrial food products are widely consumed: it certainly cannot be claimed that health is damaged by a flawed, irrational food technology. Most of the time diet-related diseases of the modern man are the consequence of irrational nutrition and excessive food consumption⁵⁶.

5/1985, pp. 593-595.

⁵³ «più civile comportamento nei confronti dello stomaco, della salute, del buonumore e perché no? Di un sano patriottismo», *ibidem*.

⁵⁴ CAPATTI, Alberto, *Vegetit. Le avanguardie vegetariane in Italia*, Lucca, Cinquesensi, 2016.

⁵⁵ BERTI, E., «La cucina vegetariana» [«The vegetarian eating»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 5/1987, pp. 78-79.

⁵⁶ «Nei paesi dove l'industrializzazione e il benessere hanno raggiunto alti livelli e la vita media si è allungata, i cibi trattati industrialmente sono consumati largamente: non si può certo affermare che in questi paesi la salute sia compromessa da una difettosa e irrazionale tecnologia alimentare. Le malattie dell'uomo moderno che hanno un'origine alimentare derivano quasi sempre da una scelta irrazionale dei cibi e dai consumi esagerati». PELLATI, Renzo, «Il futuro alimentare è già qui», in *La Cucina Italiana*, 3/1989, pp. 104-107.

In the Nineties, the magazine included less topical reports and more regular columns focused on recipes, home furnishing, food tourism, best-known restaurants, ethnic food, health and food safety, trivia, books reviews, horoscopes.

As the positive attitude towards industrial food products and biotechnologies faded away, the magazine turned to bring arguments in favour of genuine food and emerging organic products, «totally free from harmful substances, with a well-defined composition»⁵⁷.

Moreover, «La Cucina Italiana» criticised the gap of Italian regulation in the agri-food sector and unfair farming, since in many cases supposed natural foodstuffs did not meet labelling requirements:

Boosted by the demand, many farmers have opened up to agricultural practices and transformation techniques without chemical products; however, many of them, far from being sensitive to environment-related issues, are just trying to exploit the good time for trading and don't hesitate to pass off their goods as natural products, even if they're not⁵⁸.

Besides, the author admitted that there were some limitations to the spread of organic foodstuff, which remained a niche product due to the high production costs and the scarce consumers' awareness.

In the same year, however, organic agriculture was addressed by a EEC Regulation with a view to regulate and promote this sector⁵⁹.

At the same time, the European institutions committed themselves to preserve food heritage threatened by mass production by introducing geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs through the establishment of an *ad hoc* Regulation⁶⁰.

It must be underlined that the EEC Regulations were also the consequence of some incidents, such as “the methanol scandal”⁶¹, that undermined the consumers' confidence and elicited concerns about the authenticity and the reliability of agricultural products.

⁵⁷ «assolutamente privi di sostanze nocive, dalla composizione certa», DONEGANI, Giorgio, MENAGGIA, Giorgio, «La spesa naturale» [«Green shopping»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 4/1991, p. 133.

⁵⁸ «Sotto lo stimolo di questa domanda sono parecchi i produttori che si indirizzano verso pratiche agricole e tecniche di trasformazione che non contemplino l'uso della chimica; sono, però, molti anche quelli che, lontani dall'aver maturato una vera sensibilità ecologica, vogliono solo sfruttare il favorevole momento commerciale e non esitano a spacciare come naturale ciò che non lo è». *ibidem*.

⁵⁹ Council Regulation (EEC) No 2092/91 of 24 June 1991 on organic production of agricultural products and indications referring thereto on agricultural products and foodstuffs.

⁶⁰ Council Regulation (EEC) No 2081/92 of 14 July 1992 on the protection of geographical indications and designations of origin for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

⁶¹ In 1986 methanol-adulterated wine killed more than 20 persons in Italy, which resulted in a global scandal that caused high losses for Italian wine producers. JENKINS, Loren, «Poisoning Scandal Rocks Italian Wine Export Business», in *The Washington Post*, 9 April 1986, URL:

Consistent with this trend, in the late Nineties the Italian consumer became more and more fond of green products, as it is confirmed by small groceries introducing sustainable products in peripheral villages⁶² and the first eco-friendly supermarkets opened in Italy in 1997⁶³.

Moreover, «La Cucina Italiana» shifted to a negative appraisal of transgenic foodstuff, as it was supposed to jeopardize the environment, in terms of loss of biodiversity and development of pesticide resistance, and to increase inequalities between wealthy and under-developed countries⁶⁴.

Moreover, new media (such as internet) were supposed to boost the purchases of organic food and traditional products, as it was the case with the Italian wine⁶⁵.

Yet, in accordance with «the downward trend in the public's attention toward environmental issues» which has been recognized by John Thøgersen for the early 2000s⁶⁶, in the New Millennium the magazine interest in sustainability issues declined: the focus was on cooking, without any political or ideological commitment.

Otherwise, throughout the second half of the decade «La Cucina Italiana» resumed a pro-environment approach, by highlighting the ethical aspects of consumption more explicitly than before and reporting the most successful sustainable practices, such as the increasing demand for organic products⁶⁷.

Broadly speaking, while green cookery was gathering support from international associations, the emerging *haute cuisine* might overshadow the quest for sustainability.

Taking cues from the eight requirements for sustainable cooking, proposed by the Michelin Guide's Magazine in 2010 pursuant to the *Copenhagen Climate Change Conference* Recommendations (2009)⁶⁸, well-known chefs were criticised for using harmful ingredients in their kitchens and recurring to sensationalism to hide their recipe failures; therefore, the magazine claimed for a stronger commitment to environment preservation and food safety by celebrity chefs:

It seems a utopia, absolutely unworkable, but it's nice that someone is trying to reverse a previous trend which was promoting new toxins, largely unknown in the context of food

<<https://www.nytimes.com/1986/04/09/world/italy-acting-to-end-the-sale-of-methanol-tainted-wine.html>> [consulted on 7 December 2019].

⁶² LAZZARA, M., «Natura amica» [«Friend Nature»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 5/1998, p. 23; the article is about a little shop recently opened in Erba (Como), offering natural foodstuffs and biodegradable detergents.

⁶³ LAZZARA, M., «I nuovi supermercati della natura» [«The new supermarkets of nature»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 4/1997, p. 142; the article reports the opening of the first eco-friendly supermarket in Italy.

⁶⁴ PAESANO, V., «Grande discussione sui prodotti transgenici» [«Great debate on transgenic products»], in *La Cucina Italiana*, 7/1999, p. 127.

⁶⁵ S.a., «Il vino biologico italiano» [«Italian organic wine»], in *La Cucina italiana*, 11/1997, pp. 190-191.

⁶⁶ THØGERSEN, John, «Media Attention and the Market for 'Green' Consumer Products», in *Business Strategy and the Environment*, 15, 3/2006, pp. 145-156.

⁶⁷ NIZZO, Lisa, «Sempre più bio» [«More and more organic»], *La Cucina italiana*, 10/2011, pp. 33-34.

⁶⁸ The recommendations refer to purchasing local and seasonal products free from chemical pollution, adopting a healthier diet, saving energy and water, avoiding food waste and endangered foodstuff.

preservation and transformation. And now “the alchemist chef” and the acrobatic cooking are on trial, as it seems clear that food transformation aims at disguising bad food and make it edible, even exciting⁶⁹.

Following this shift, an increasing number of articles about sustainable food practices have been published in «La Cucina Italiana» over the last years⁷⁰.

5. Conclusions

Research on «La Cucina Italiana» proved rewarding to retrace the rise of environmental concerns in post-war Italy eating habits and assess the manifold social habits and cultural values that nowadays are commonly referred to the concept of “green consumption”, in spite of their different origins and features.

Hence, the different approaches adopted by the magazine were influenced by the onset of three different phenomena: the increasing attention to the mass consumption impacts on the environment since the 1970s; the concerns about industrial incidents and food adulteration causing negative health-effects in the following decade; the interest in traditional food heritage threatened by new trends in food practices since the Nineties onwards.

Yet, the affirmation of this trends was not a linear, cumulative process: in the first phase, until the end of the Sixties, only the social and cultural aspects of sustainability elicited debate in the magazine, by focusing on health, household expenditure and the preservation of traditional consumption patterns.

At this stage «La Cucina Italiana», without denying the established model of the perfect housewife, aimed at «shaping a new woman for a new idea of family and society»⁷¹, not differently from most of the Italian female magazines at that time⁷².

⁶⁹ «Sembra un'utopia, assolutamente non praticabile, ma è bello che si provi ad invertire una tendenza che promuoveva molti veleni nuovi e poco conosciuti nei sistemi di conservazione e trasformazione degli alimenti. E qui ritornano sul banco degli accusati lo chef-alchimista e la cucina acrobatica, perché sembra chiaro che la trasformazione dei prodotti risponde all'esigenza di travestire il pessimo e renderlo mangiabile, anzi entusiasmante». OINEO, Nicola, «La Cucina durevole» [«The long-lasting cooking»], in *La Cucina italiana*, 6/2010, pp. 26-27.

⁷⁰ Some examples from the online edition of *La Cucina Italiana*: «Alimentazione sostenibile, come proteggere ambiente e salute» [«Sustainable nutrition, how to preserve the environment and health»], 16 June 2015; SCHACHTER, Margo, «Che cosa significa sostenibilità? Oltre il km zero e il romanticismo dell'orto» [«What does sustainability mean? Beyond short food supply chain and romantic horticulture»], 18 January 2016; «La rivoluzione della sostenibilità riparte dalle Dolomiti (e dalla cucina)» [«The sustainability revolution restarts from the Dolomites (and from the kitchen)»], 7 September 2016, URL: <<https://www.lacucinaitaliana.it/>> [consulted on 25 July 2019].

⁷¹ «costruire una donna nuova per una nuova idea di famiglia e di società».

⁷² FRANCHINI, Silvia, SOLDANI, Simonetta, *Introduzione*, in IID. (a cura di), *Donne e giornalismo. Percorsi e presenze di una storia di genere*, Milano, Franco Angeli, 2004.

During the Seventies the magazine broadened the perspective from cookery to a broad range of themes; among them, topical issues concerning the impact of the oil crisis on household consumption were widely covered in the main columns.

Actually, the editorial line seemed to lean towards an ecological lifestyle, putting into question the faith in unlimited economic growth.

In the Eighties, the magazine was influenced by the weakening of ecological movements stemming from the conservative turn in the United States and in some European countries, to the extent that, in the second part of the decade, environmental issues were overshadowed by the enthusiasm for new technologies and cooking methods⁷³.

Meanwhile, the magazine paid attention to the changing aspects of eating habits, such as the spread of vegetarianism or the introduction of new products, but the environmental consequences of these brand-new practices were largely underestimated.

Since the early Nineties, the quest for sustainability (and responsibility, for what concerns Fair-trade and, broadly speaking, ethical concerns in purchases) has been back in the spotlight, a rising number of articles dealing with green consumption.

Broadly speaking, even if its overall identity remained quite unchanged throughout the post-war decades, «La Cucina Italiana» displayed a remarkable receptiveness to environmental issues which can be explained from a gender perspective, so long as it is consistent with the development of women's environmental commitment.

Since the late Sixties women, who represented the target audience of food magazines, conveyed new ecological sensibilities from the public sphere to the domestic space and vice-versa, thus fostering the adoption of sustainable consumption patterns.

During the Seventies, «La Cucina Italiana» took side in favour of environmentalism and the readers were called to accomplish a sort of civic duty by introducing sustainable food consumption in everyday habits.

In the following decade, the fading interest in topical, ecological issues from «La Cucina Italiana» can be explained by reference to «the almost total evacuation of notions of politics or cultural influence» in female press, as it has been highlighted by the gender studies dealing with the so-called «postfeminist sensibility»⁷⁴.

By the way, since the Nineties, when a stronger sense of civic duty and a deeper community spirit boosted women's involvement in ecological movements⁷⁵, the magazine elicited debate on green habits⁷⁶.

⁷³ SCARPELLINI, Emanuela, *A tavola!« Gli italiani in 7 pranzi*, Roma-Bari, Laterza, 2012.

⁷⁴ GILL, Rosalind, «Postfeminist Media Culture: Elements of a Sensibility», in *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 10, 2/2007, pp. 147-166.

⁷⁵ ZELEZNY, Lynnette C., CHUA, Poh-Pheng, ALDRICH, Christina, «Elaborating on Gender Differences in

It must be observed, however, that since the Seventies «La Cucina Italiana» addressed a wider audience, which was not limited to female readers.

Moreover, a long-term perspective proves useful to get a deeper understanding of the changing attitude of «La Cucina Italiana» towards environmental issues, in consideration of the many instances of ethical concerns and civic engagement within food literature since its origins.

By the way, the spread of mass consumption called food writers and consumers to an overall reflection on the political and social threats posed by mass production, which can't be reduced to the opposition between tradition and innovation, growth and conservation.

According to the recent works challenging the consumerist paradigm mentioned above, «La Cucina Italiana» portrayed the multifaceted aim of food habits and the mutual influence of eating behaviours and broadest economic, social, political and cultural phenomena, as it is the case with the rise of environmentalism.

The complexity of these issues thus suggests that cooking magazines, which still suffer from a negative bias against their supposed futility, can give a relevant contribution to the improvement of environment-friendly habits.

Environmentalism», in *Journal of Social Issues*, 56, 3/2000, pp. 443-457.

⁷⁶ ANDERSON, Alison, *Media, Culture and the Environment*, London, Routledge, 1997; BROBERG, Oskar, «Labeling the Good: Alternative Visions and Organic Branding in Sweden in the Late Twentieth Century», in *Enterprise & Society*, 11, 4/2010, pp. 811-838.

THE AUTHOR

Elisa TIZZONI, PhD in Contemporary History, has carried out research and teaching assignments at the Universities of Florence, Pisa, Padua, Salzburg and at some well-known cultural institutions. In 2017, she obtained a Postgraduate Vibeke Sørensen Grant at the Historical Archives of the European Union; in 2018 she was a Visiting Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence. She is currently an Adjunct Professor in Modern European History at the University of Pisa.

URL: < <http://www.studistorici.com/progett/autori/#Tizzoni> >