

Call for Proposals

Special issue: Food and Sovereignty

Gender & History is an international journal for research and writing on the history of femininity, masculinity and gender relations. This Call for Proposals is aimed at scholars studying any country or region, and any temporal period, including the classical, medieval, early modern, modern and contemporary periods.

This Special Issue will examine the ways that the expansive categories of food, gender and sovereignty have intersected over time, shaped by each other and by specific historical circumstances.

Sovereignty and food are intimately entwined. Food has been an instrument of both power and empowerment, a site of negotiation for control of bodies, spaces, states, institutions, identities and the self. What happens in the places food is bought and sold, produced and consumed, imagined and discussed, shapes outcomes and possibilities for historical actors and systems. Food reveals the complexity of relationships among those who assert, retain, lose, reject or attempt sovereign control, whether colonised or coloniser, bound or free. Sovereignty is an expansive category, incorporating not only the consolidation of formal political entities, but also the non-elite, everyday politics of survival and self-determination. We see sovereignty as encompassing the formal claims of governments over land and peoples, and also the ways that individuals, collectives and communities assert control over resources. Whether directed at bodies or abstract polities, sovereignty and food have historically informed one another.

Food is similarly capacious, including liquids, solids and matter that, like Jell-O, refuses easy binaries. It consists of substances considered nourishing and poisonous, is inextricable from medicine, and is absorbed into the body through many means. Food is tied to many needs: budgetary, cultural, economic, emotional, financial, physiological, political, psychological, sacred, sexual, social. Its multidimensional nature makes it both quotidian and extraordinary.

Historically, questions of food and sovereignty have been worked out through gender, which is itself always co-constructed by race and class. Food has been central to gendered regimes of power and the labour that has maintained or undone them (e.g. early modern European “grain riots”; the use of human milk as both food and medicine in Song Dynasty China; the rise of “domestic science” in the Anglo-American world; racialised accusations of lewdness towards market vendors or customers). Gendered uses of food are also crucial to resisting or overthrowing systems of oppression (e.g. recipes and cookbooks as a way of claiming authority; the figure of the fishwife in the French Revolution; women’s leadership of the food provisioning of enslaved and free communities as well as civil rights marchers; Gandhi’s unique performances of masculinity during the 1930 Salt Satyagraha). To properly understand food and

sovereignty, and the ways these have changed over time, we must sharpen our understanding of gendered systems of labour, identity, care and power.

We proceed from the idea that gender analysis sheds new light on the histories of food and sovereignty, and these histories can, in turn, give us new perspectives on the workings of gender. We invite submissions that center gendered historical analyses of food and sovereignty from scholars in any discipline and part of the world, and studying any region and time period. We are open to contributions of many kinds, including but not limited to traditional research articles, digital humanities products or shorter reflections on primary sources.

Possible topics include:

- food governance (e.g. control of food supplies at state or household level)
- historicity of meanings of food, sustenance, nourishment, hunger, cuisine
- taste, appetite, eating and cooking in colonial contact zones and beyond
- disciplining of consumers in spaces of consumption (stores, markets, restaurants)
- the construction of “modern” consumers in advertising, marketing and rhetoric
- medicine, diet, nutrition science and public health
- politics of microfinance and agricultural development
- informal networks of food exchange, knowledge transfer, mutual aid
- consumption and racialised identities
- food and the sacred: religion, spirituality and food
- illicit, dangerous or narcotic foods: the consumption of supposedly poisonous or non-nutritive foods
- food and Indigenous sovereignty: global food networks and the “translation” of foods across cultures; appropriation of Indigenous foods and foodways through intermarriage, appropriation of Indigenous women’s labour, etc.
- authorship, identity and food-writing
- land expropriation and redistribution
- communal and individual food work and labour
- unpaid or reproductive labour around food, paid wage work, entrepreneurship and the informal economy
- subsistence and resistance
- market cultures: hawkers, peddlers and itinerant vendors
- social protest
- food in public histories
- queer foodways
- childhood, family and food (e.g. milk kinship, food welfare, infant and maternal health)

Interested individuals are asked to submit a 500-word abstract and a brief biography (250 words) by 30 September 2020 at 5pm Pacific Time for consideration.

Abstracts will be reviewed by the editors and successful authors will submit full drafts (6,000-8,000 words) ahead of participation in a symposium at Vancouver Island University in British

Columbia, Canada, in June 2021. The editors acknowledge that ongoing health restrictions due to COVID-19 may prohibit an in-person symposium at that time, and will organise a virtual symposium if necessary to comply with institutional and provincial health guidelines.

After the symposium, contributions will go through the journal's peer review system. As with any submission, there is no guarantee of publication.

The editors have limited funds available to defray the cost of travel to the symposium for new, emerging and unaffiliated scholars. Lack of funds to participate in the symposium will not be considered a barrier to participation in the symposium and special issue.

Please send the required materials by email to genderhistory@viu.ca or by mail to:

The Editors

Gender & History

Vancouver Island University

900 Fifth Street,

Nanaimo, British Columbia V9R 5S5

The Special Issue will be edited by Drs Tracey Deutch, Heidi Gengenbach, Amanda Herbert and Shauna Sweeney.

Special Issue Timeline

Abstracts to SI editors -- 30 September 2020

Draft papers submitted for circulation to symposium participants -- 15 April 2021

Symposium at Vancouver Island University (Nanaimo, British Columbia) – 17-19 June 2021
(tentative)

Full submissions submitted on ScholarOne for peer review -- 31 August 2021

Revised submissions (and any image permissions) to SI editors -- 31 May 2022

Publication -- October 2022