

המחלקה לסוציולוגיה ואנתרופולוגיה
הסמינר המחלקתי

יום רביעי 25/03/2020 בין השעות 12:00-13:30 בניין 72, חדר 348

Renata E. Hryciuk

**(Un)healthy culinary
heritage?**

**The case of Mexican
indigenous foodways**



ואנתרופולוגיה לסוציולוגיה המחלקה

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Abstract:

In 2010 Traditional Mexican Cuisine (ancestral, ongoing community culture) was inscribed on UNESCO Intangible Heritage List. In this way indigenous foods and foodways until recently perceived as traditional yet dangerous, immoral and culturally unpalatable were elevated to the status of authentic Mexican food and have been strongly promoted as regional, national and global heritage by the state and other proponents of culinary tourism in Mexico and abroad (mainly Mexican diaspora in US).

Drawing on the results of extensive fieldwork carried out in Southern Mexico (the state of Oaxaca) in 2011 and 2014-17 as well as the analysis of secondary sources (media discourse, cookbooks, culinary media etc.) this paper attempts at scrutinizing the workings of heritage politics and heritage representations in a transnational consumer society. I focus on discursive strategies based on the notions of health, nutrition, taste as well as hygiene employed by different actors engaged in the (re)making of 'authentic Mexican cuisine' for the global market.

Imagining palatable 'true Mexican' for local middle/middle-upper class consumers and North American foodies has been accompanied by the ongoing de-Indianization and gentrification of native culinary culture. I'm particularly interested in mundane reception of the discourse of native cuisine as healthy heritage and grassroots responses to growing efforts to discipline, sanitize and modernize native female cooks whose artisanal labor is still indispensable for experiencing culinary heritage in urban restaurants, food festivals as well as rural fairs.



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Renata E. Hryciuk holds PhD in sociology from Graduate School of Social Research, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. She is an assistant professor in the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw. She has carried out fieldwork in Poland, Lithuania and Mexico (since 1999). Her research interests focus on gender studies, political anthropology (gender and development, social movements), and critical food studies (gender, culinary tourism and heritagization of food and foodways). She is the co-editor of several volumes in Polish; (with Agnieszka Kościańska) *Gender. Anthropological Perspective. Social Organisation* (Warsaw University Press, 2007), *Gender. Anthropological Perspective. Femininity, Masculinity, Sexuality* (Warsaw University Press, 2007) (with Elżbieta Korolczuk) *Farewell to the Polish Mother? Discourses, practices and representations of motherhood in contemporary Poland* (Warsaw University Press 2012) and *Dangerous Liaisons. Motherhood, Fatherhood and Politics*, Warsaw University Press 2015) and (with Joanna Mroczkowska) *Food. Anthropological Perspective. (Post)socialism* (Warsaw, University Press, in press) as well as several articles published in peer-reviewed journals and edited volumes (in Polish, English and Spanish).

Since 2011 she has been studying culinary tourism, gender and heritagization of local food cultures in Oaxaca (Southern Mexico) sponsored by research grants from Polish National Science Centre and Mexican Government (fellowship Genaro Estrada for Mexicanists).

