

Título: Cooking with Bimby in a moment of recruitment: Exploring conventions and practice perspectives

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Resumo: Every two minutes, one Bimby is sold somewhere in the world. This multi-food processor (also known as Thermomix) has gained wide sales success in many southern European countries and promises to revolutionize the way people cook, learn about cooking, coordinate and plan food practices at home. In a period where debates about cooking skills are paradoxical; some voices concerned with deskilling, while others enhance the visibility of cooking education in the media, this domestic technology is heralded as a ‘magic’ gadget that turns dreadful cooks into notable ‘chefs’. This processor cannot be purchased in shops; it is being directly sold by salespersons that make a demonstration in future clients’ houses. These are usually social events where the host invites friends and family for a free meal swiftly produced by Bimby under the demonstrator’s supervision. Demonstrators can be seen as cultural intermediaries both marketing the product and conveying normative and symbolic messages about cooking, and also instructing on technology use. The event mixes economic, social and cultural elements, and offers a good illustration of the cultural economy workings operating in it. Based upon a case study of a demonstration – seen as a moment of recruitment of new cooking practitioners – the article examines issues around cooking competence informed by theories of practice (Shove and Pantzar, 2005; Shove et al., 2007) and conventions theory (Boltanski and Thévenot, 2006 [1991]; Thévenot, 2006). It is suggested that bringing a conventions together with a practice perspective offers up the possibility of developing a distinctly sociological account to analyse cooking competences in particular, and practices more generally.

Palavras-chave: Cooking competence; Convention theory; Domestic technologies; Theories of practice