



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Nourishing Futures

Food, Diet, and Health in Times of Crisis



Sixth Annual Symposium of the Australian Food, Society, and Culture Network

15 July 2022, 9:00 – 5:00 AEDT
ABS Seminar Room 3110
Abercrombie Building
The University of Sydney Business School
Darlington NSW 2006
and on **Zoom**

Co-hosted by the Australian Food, Society, and Culture Network, the University of Sydney Business School, the Department of Anthropology, and the Charles Perkins Centre

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To register for the Symposium, visit:

<https://business.sydney.edu.au/events/research/2022/afscn/symposium>

About the Symposium: We live in an era of multiple, overlapping crises. Environmental degradation and climate change, compounded with social inequities amplified within the Covidscape, demand new ways of thinking about the relationship between ecology, food, culture, health, and crisis in an age of self-devouring growth. This symposium explore these intersections through the lens of:

- Climate change and food systems
- Food and its relationship to the senses and affect
- Structural violence and social inequities
- Food sovereignty, security, and justice in the Anthropocene
- More-than-human or multispecies approaches to food and diet

About the Australian Food, Society, and Culture Network: The Australian Food, Society and Culture Network (AFSCN) includes members from around Australia and also links to other related networks both within Australia and in other countries. Members of the network are from a wide range of disciplines, including the humanities and social sciences but also marketing, nutrition, medicine, public health and health policy. Our members are interested in such topics as health, body weight, gender and sexual identity, the family, agriculture and food provisioning, the cross-cultural dimensions of food and eating, the portrayal of food and cooking in the media, the history of food, indigenous foodways and sustainable food systems. The network particularly seeks to explore the ways in which food and eating practices can be examined critically and theorized using relevant socio-cultural theoretical perspectives.

The network's conveners are Teresa Davis (The University of Sydney Business School) and Sophie Chao (Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney).

For more information about the AFSCN, visit:

www.sydney.edu.au/business/our-research/research-groups/australian-food-society-culture-network.html



Program

8:30 – 9:00 **Registration** (tea & coffee)

9:00 – 9:10 **Introduction & welcome**

Chair: Sophie Chao (University of Sydney)

9:10 – 10:15 **Keynote**

Asking different questions: Leveraging ethnography to nourish people, health promotion, and policy

Megan Warin (University of Adelaide)

10:15 – 10:30 **Coffee break**

10:30 – 12:00 **Panel 1: Food and foodways in the Covidscape**

Chair: John Coveney

Making time for plants: Marking the temporalities, rhythms, and durations of vegetal life in times of crisis, *Kelly Donati (William Angliss Institute)*

'Eat like normal humans': The (un)civilizing process of Australia's hotel quarantine, *Christopher Mayes (Deakin University) and Jane Williams (University of Wollongong)*

Articulating im/mobilities: Food systems, dis/connections, and pandemic in Dolpo, Nepal, *Emlet Logan (Yale University)*

Ruderal foodscape: Possibilities to (in)securitize food in urban Chiang Mai, Thailand, *Areeya Tivasuradej (Chiang Mai University)*

12:00 – 1:00 **Lunch**

1:00 – 2:30 **Panel 2: Land, sovereignty, and kin-centered food futures**

Chair: Teresa Davis

Re-imagining food sovereignty among Indigenous communities of Nagaland, Northeast India, *Longshiben N. Kithan (Central University of Karnataka)*

The regenerative turn: Unsettling Australian agriculture, *Madeleine Miller (University of New South Wales)*

Cultivating a taste for the future, *Bethaney Turner (University of Canberra)*

The Indigenous food stories podcast, *Miri (Margaret) Raven (University of New South Wales) and Jennifer Macey (University of Wollongong)*

2:30 – 2:45

Coffee break

2:45 – 4:30

Panel 3: Biopolitical, multisensorial, and multispecies approaches

Chair: Sophie Chao

After eating: Sensing metabolism, metabolism as sensory apparatus, *Lindsay Kelley (University of New South Wales and Australian National University)*

A war of wheat, *Mia Shouha (University of Sydney)*

What is natural? A multispecies lens on changing foodscapes in West Tanzania, *Emelien Devos (Ghent University)*

Making 'white' rice healthy: Eating for type 2 diabetes in urban India, *Pallavi Laxmikanth (University of Adelaide)*

Are these deaths all the same? Towards a death-based approach to food, *Alessandro Guglielmo (University of Milan 'La Statale')*

4:30 – 5:00

Discussion

Chair: Teresa Davis

What came out of this symposium?

What themes might the next symposium focus on?

Where do we want the AFSCN to go?

5:00

Event ends



Speaker bios

Megan Warin (she/her), The University of Adelaide

Megan is a Professor in the School of Social Sciences and has held academic positions in Anthropology (Durham University), Gender Studies, Public Health, and Psychiatry. Her research investigates gender and class differences in obesity, public understandings of obesity science (developmental origins of health and disease and epigenetics), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander views on health, eating and intergenerational transmission, phenomenological approaches to embodiment and the nature of desire in disordered eating.

Kelly Donati (she/her), William Angliss Institute

Kelly Donati is Senior lecturer in Food Systems and Gastronomy at the William Angliss Institute. She developed and lectures in Australia's first Bachelor of Food Studies and Master of Food Systems and Gastronomy at William Angliss Institute and is the founding Chairperson of Sustain: the Australian Food Network, a not-for-profit organization which undertakes food system policy work for local government and beyond. Her teaching and research focus on the multispecies interactions of the food system and urban agriculture.

Christopher Mayes (he/him), Deakin University

Christopher Mayes is Senior Research Fellow in the Alfred Deakin Institute at Deakin University and Senior Lecturer in Philosophy, Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences. His research interests include history and philosophy of healthcare, sociology of health and food, and bioethics. Christopher is author of *The Biopolitics of Lifestyle: Foucault, Ethics, and Healthy Choices* (Routledge, 2016) and *Unsettling Food Politics: agriculture, dispossession, and sovereignty in Australia* (Rowman & Littlefield International, 2018).

Jane Williams (she/her), University of Wollongong

Jane Williams is a research fellow at the Australian Centre for Health Engagement Evidence and Values (ACHEEV) at the University of Wollongong. She is a public health ethicist who works on primary on infectious disease emergency preparedness and response. Previous work has focused on cancer screening and screening disinvestment, and women's health decision making. Jane conducts empirical ethics research using qualitative methodologies.

Emlet Logan (he/him), Yale University

Emlet Logan is a Master of Environmental Science student at Yale University. His research explores food history and politics in western Nepal. Emlet's work seeks to trace the various ways that people navigate scarcity and abundance, history, precarity, and aspiration, in and through diverse forms of agropastoral and culinary labor. Emlet is committed to exploring how material processes, discursive practices, and social relations involved in the production, consumption, and exchange of food shape singular and shared political economic and ecological contests.

Areeya Tivasuradej (she/her), Chiang Mai University

Areeya Tivasuradej is a researcher at the AMOR MUNDI Multispecies Ecological Worldmaking Lab, as well as Lab Manager. She is also a graduate student of geography at Chiang Mai University. Areeya is part of a team working to craft recommendations for the Thai Health Promotion Fund's 10-year food strategy that focuses on food citizenship and food literacy. Prior to returning to academia, Areeya was an NGO worker with experience in organic agribusiness in northeastern Thailand and regional environmental issues.

Longshibeni N. Kithan (she/her), Central University of Karnataka

Longshibeni N. Kithan is Assistant professor of Socio-Cultural Anthropology in the Department of Folkloristics and Tribal Studies, Central University of Karnataka, India. She previously taught at the Department of Anthropology, North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, and participated in a project titled “Agro-Biodiversity, Indigenous Knowledge and Adaptation to Climate Change in Nagaland” with Delhi University and IBSD Manipur. Longshibeni writes on gender and water resource management and traditional knowledge issues, challenges, and coping mechanisms.

Madeleine Miller (she/her), University of New South Wales

Madeleine is a third-year environmental humanities PhD student at the University of New South Wales. Her thesis explores more-than-human relations, knowledge production, and environmental restoration within regenerative agriculture. Madeleine is interested in unsettling Australian agriculture in the context of our changing climate.

Bethaney Turner (she/her), University of Canberra

Bethaney Turner is Associate Professor in environmental humanities at the University of Canberra. Her research explores the multispecies relationships between people, place, and the environment, and how best to build the resilience and capacity of communities to enact more sustainable futures in a time of climate change. Bethaney has expertise in local food systems and the impacts of everyday food interactions on human and planetary health and wellbeing. Conceptions of waste and practices of reuse and repair through community sharing are a growing focus of her work.

Miri (Margaret) Raven (baal/baalup or she/her), University of New South Wales

Miri (Margaret) Raven is a Yamatji-Noongar and non-Indigenous woman from Western Australia. She is a geographer with research interests related to protocols, biodiversity conservation and Indigenous knowledge, organizational forms and practices, food security/justice, and Indigenous and human rights. Miri is currently Senior Scientia Lecturer (Research Only) at the University of New South Wales with the Social Policy Research Centre, and the Environment & Society Group in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

Jennifer Macey (she/her), University of Wollongong

Jennifer Macey is a PhD candidate at UOW’s School of Geography and Sustainable Communities, producing a podcast on the changing industrial landscape of Port Kembla. An award-winning journalist, Jennifer Macey has worked in newsrooms at the ABC and DW radio and produces the weekly podcast *Follow the Money* for the Australia Institute. She has produced many podcasts for kids, on creativity, art, education and the environment and teaches podcasting at UOW and previously at USYD. Jennifer is excited to be working with Dr Miri Raven at UNSW on the *Indigenous Food Stories* Podcast.

Lindsay Kelley (she/her), University of New South Wales and Australian National University

Lindsay Kelley is Senior Lecturer in the School of Art & Design, College of the Arts & Social Sciences, Australian National University. Working in the kitchen, her art practice and scholarship explore how the experience of eating changes when technologies are being eaten. Lindsay’s first book, *Bioart Kitchen: Art, Feminism and Technoscience* (London: IB Tauris, 2016), considers the kitchen as a site of knowledge production for art and science. She is recipient of an Australia Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (2019-2021).

Mia Shouha (she/her), University of Sydney

Mia Shouha is a second-year PhD Candidate in the Departments of Political Economy and Anthropology at the University of Sydney. Her research explores Western hegemony, economic crisis, war economy, and the recent histories of agriculture and industry in Lebanon and Syria through a post-colonial lens.

Emelien Devos (she/her), Ghent University

Emelien Devos is a PhD Student at the African Studies Department in Ghent University, Belgium. She has received funding for her PhD project from the Research Foundation Flanders. Emelien's project is based in the regions of Kigoma and Mpanda in West Tanzania. She focuses on the social significance of beekeeping and hunting, and how these are transforming due to economic evolutions and conservation efforts.

Pallavi Laxmikanth (she/they), University of Adelaide

Pallavi Laxmikanth is a PhD student in Medical Anthropology and Gender Studies at the University of Adelaide. Her research focuses on the food-medicine market for type 2 diabetes in urban India, where she studies household practices, foods and food products, businesses and initiatives geared at mitigating or managing metabolic disease. Her interest in the intersection between food and health, is inspired by her previous work experience in the food industry in India.

Alessandro Guglielmo (he/him), University of Milan 'La Statale'

Alessandro Guglielmo is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at the University of Milan "La Statale." His research project seeks to understand human-animal health through shepherding practices in rural Sardinia. Specifically, the project aims to tackle the issue of multispecies relations through the lens of a traditional cheese called "su casu marzu" ("the rotten cheese") which hosts a lively community of Cheese Skipper maggots in its inside. Alessandro's current interests include food sovereignty, environmental anthropology, and multispecies relations.



Presentation abstracts

Asking different questions – Leveraging ethnography to nourish people, health promotion and policy, Megan Warin (University of Adelaide)

There is strong research evidence that many people are aware of the public health messaging about healthy eating, but do not achieve the recommended daily dietary guidelines. There is also strong evidence that most public health campaigns and programs that address obesity have had little impact. Despite this, investment in lifestyle interventions around dietary intake continue to dominate and are widely endorsed; effectively diverting attention away from structural and environmental crises that underpin health and social inequities. Building on earlier critiques of hegemonic nutrition this paper takes a Science and Technology Studies lens to the history of nutrition, examining how ethnography might interface with the epistemic environment of nutrition, its imperial measurements and gendered biopolitics. Can ethnography move beyond 'ontological anarchy' (Viveiros de Castro 2019) to collaborate with nutrition science? By asking different questions to those that currently underpin nutritional knowledge claims, can ethnography and nutrition create alternatives to nourish (rather than admonish) the people who are so often targeted by health promotion and policy?

Making time for plants: Marking the temporalities, rhythms, and durations of vegetal life in times of crisis, Kelly Donati (William Angliss Institute)

Like many countries globally, panicked shoppers cleared out supermarkets and gardening nurseries when Australia entered its first lockdown in March 2020. Along with toilet paper, pasta and flour, people turned their minds to seeds and seedlings with food gardening taking on a new and more urgent meaning. This paper draws on a national survey of over 9,000 food gardeners across Australia, many of whom reported that they spent much more time in the garden during lockdown. Many of those respondents privileged enough to be temporarily freed from the rush of commuting or to receive government support while their workplaces were closed described how new rhythms contributed to their sense of wellbeing. In becoming lost in the rhythms of the garden, a new temporality – what we call garden time – unfolded according to a different logic, taking on less instrumentalized qualities. The findings offer insights into not only how “clock time”, or capitalist temporalities, erode health and wellbeing but also how ecological, mental and physical health become ontologically connected through multispecies temporalities of the edible vegetation and the practice of caring for plant communities. While the food garden features edible plants, it flourishes when the richness of its multispecies assemblages is cared for and nurtured. This paper explores how gardeners experience the temporalities of the garden as profoundly healing during the lockdown but also in the broader context of post-traumatic stress disorders, mental illness, bereavement and other losses. We attend to the ways in which the “healing” temporalities of the edible garden develop more relational framings of health and wellbeing and productively disrupts biomedical understandings of illness and recovery that privilege anthropocentric temporalities and subjectivities. During this time of intense and ongoing crisis, new ways of imagining health and wellbeing as a relational state of inter-being are critically urgent.

'Eat like normal humans': The (un)civilizing process of Australia's hotel quarantine, Christopher Mayes (Deakin University) & Jane Williams (University of Wollongong)

From late March 2020 until November 2021, new international arrivals into Australia were required to go into 14-day hotel COVID-19 quarantine. A wider study that one of us (JW) was involved in conducted 58 in-depth interviews with participants who had been in hotel quarantine in different parts of Australia in the period March 2020 – January 2021. Participants faced considerable uncertainty while in quarantine and many experienced this as burdensome. A common source of frustration reported by participants was in relation to meals. Often the quality and presentation of the meal itself was mentioned, but interestingly the lack of appropriate eating utensils was emphasized by a number of participants. The absence of appropriate utensils was considered by participants as de-humanizing, being treated like zoo animals or criminals. These responses echo common view of tool-use and cuisine as activities that distinguishes humans from the non-human world. In this paper we critically draw on Norbert Elias's analysis of eating and utensil-use as part of "civilizing" processes to theorize the anger and humiliation of those in Australia's hotel quarantine system. We also reflect on the entanglements and contradictions of civilizing in the context of hotels and long history public health hygiene strategies.

Articulating im/mobilities: Food systems, dis/connections, and pandemic in Dolpo, Nepal, Emlét Logan (Yale University)

The coronavirus pandemic exacerbates food system precarities in northwestern Nepal. Eschewing unilinear concepts like "impact", this paper attends to how pandemic responses act within moral topographies to replicate, contest, and rework food-related uncertainties. Paying special attention to historical resonances in Dolpo, an area in northern Karnali province, I examine the interrelation of the coronavirus pandemic and Dolpopa food systems with an emphasis on degrees and kinds of (inter)dependence. I show how pandemic-related disruptions are prefigured by others – the 1960 border closure, a decade-long civil war, the 2015 earthquake, and political restructuring – and trace how relationships between people and the virus in Dolpo have shaped and been shaped by unique histories of work, exchange, and nourishment. I then outline forms of anticipation that the coronavirus elicits: futures that people seek to enact with the social and economic materials that emerge in its wake. This analytical approach discloses differing ways in which pandemic responses re-instantiate, reject, and reformulate historical im/mobilities, dis/connectivity, and food system dynamics. These questions are timely across the Nepal Himalaya and beyond as the pandemic implicates processes actively reshaping the materiality and the meaningfulness of local agri- and food culture.

Ruderal foodscape: Possibilities to (in)securitize food in urban Chiang Mai, Thailand, Areeya Tivasuradej (Chiang Mai University)

Following "ruderal ecologies" (Stoetzer 2019), I investigate the human-plant relationships at an edible garden in urban Chiang Mai that recently emerged during the COVID19 pandemic. This edible garden sits atop a dumpsite on public land and near a highly polluted waterway where many marginalized migrants and urban poor reside. The human-plant place-making reveals multispecies collaboration (Tsing, 2015) through community supported urban cultivation (Engel-Di Mauro and Martin, 2022) practices that have transformed a garbage dumpsite into a thriving edible garden, securitizing food, and serving certain multispecies needs. My research follows the entangled relationships and endeavors of plants struggling to thrive and rooting against styrofoam, plastics and ants; of human gardeners seeking to nourish particular plants of their

choosing over others, and the attempts of human-nonhuman gardeners to shape and reclaim the public land. These human-plant relationships form the nexus of emergent relational ontologies that transform those beings who live or work at the garden. The uses, meanings, practices and webs of culture—urban, lowland Lanna, “hill tribe” Akha and street market—surrounding types of plants that are introduced, removed, replaced, and retained offers an index of changing patterns of relationality and modes of valuation that comprise the matrix of plant-human relations. Although these collaborations show possibilities of nourishing the urban foodscape, injustice and inequity nevertheless persist. The garden was granted unofficially by the former provincial governor because it aligns with the environmental narratives favored by the Thai elites and middle class. The main garden caretakers remain laborers. Plants remain foodstuffs.

Re-imagining food sovereignty among Indigenous communities of Nagaland, Northeast India, Longshibeni N. Kithan (Central University of Karnataka)

According to the FAO, the world has committed to ending hunger by 2030 (FAO, 2021). However, industrialized agriculture has failed to eliminate global hunger while raising an issue of sustainability of food sovereignty. Further, the ongoing Pandemic has reinvigorated the notion of nutritious and adequate food for Health for well-being, likely to elevate in the Anthropocene marked by uncertainties. As a result, it demands to rethink innovative ways of strengthening food sovereignty. Nagaland, which falls within the agro-biodiversity hot spot region globally, has enormous potential to attain the same in the era of global environmental change. According to the local understanding, the diverse indigenous communities in Nagaland practice unique food crop production, consumption, and distribution. It permeates social relations, religious beliefs, and norms. Needless to say, this knowledge of food crops is integral in attaining food sovereignty. Meanwhile, there are contemporary challenges on market linkages, the local knowledge gap between generations, and climate change coping mechanisms. Therefore, the paper explores the existing practices of five diverse indigenous communities on crop species production, consumption, distribution, and challenges therein. The paper concludes with a few practical suggestions to address the challenges outlined above.

The regenerative turn: Unsettling Australian agriculture, Madeleine Miller (University of New South Wales)

Regenerative agriculture has emerged in recent years as a focal point for thinking about the sustainability and resilience of contemporary agricultural practices. These debates point to the ways in which regenerative agriculture might be understood to be both a transformation of farming practice as well as a social and cultural phenomenon. Contextualised by recent histories of Aboriginal agriculture (Gammage 2012; Pascoe 2014, Sutton and Walshe 2021, Gammage and Pascoe 2021), regenerative advocates seek to restore Australian pastures into a form of ‘originary’ human-nature assemblages. Moving beyond the traditional preservation of pristine wilderness, regenerative initiatives celebrate Australia as a naturally productive agricultural landscape. In this paper I ask; what kinds of claims of restoration are being made by regenerative advocates in NSW? In doing so, my talk examines these emerging more-than-human assemblages of knowledge, practices, discourses, institutions and markets in terms of an interwoven cultural phenomenon; a catalyst for a new Australian land ethic steeped in the ongoing colonial project.

Cultivating a taste for the future, *Bethaney Turner (University of Canberra)*

How will our future taste? Foods many in the minority world are accustomed to eating will not thrive as climate change intensifies and degraded ecological conditions worsen. More frequent extreme weather events – from bushfires to floods – will lead to greater destruction of crops and disrupt the long-distance supply and distribution networks that underpin dominant food systems. As the Covid-19 induced disruptions demonstrate, the affective force – and associated impacts on physical and mental health and wellbeing – of imposed shifts in how we nourish our bodies can cause panic and deepen inequities. However, recent short-term shortages have also increased societal awareness of food system vulnerabilities offering opportunities to remake, rethink and reimagine human-food relations through everyday food encounters. Seizing on these generative possibilities, this paper explores how multisensorial attunement to the materialities of food can be forged, supported and amplified among demographically diverse communities. Drawing on multispecies ethnographic work in community food production and distribution initiatives, this paper pays particular attention to the skills, knowledge, and strategies of adaptation to new ecological settings of refugees and migrants and the enduring care for Country of First Nations' Australians. In so doing, it outlines how a sense of ecological belonging developed through playful experimentation and convivial relational-learning in homes, gardens and along food supply chains could better position communities to mitigate and prepare for the impending intensification of visceral, sensorial, and material shifts in human-food relations.

The Indigenous food stories podcast, *Miri (Margaret) Raven (University of New South Wales) & Jennifer Macey (University of Wollongong)*

This session presents the Indigenous Food Stories Podcast, which will be launched later in 2022. The podcast is based on the concept of: Everyday stories about the foods that Indigenous people eat and cook; hunt, gather and grow; and produce and sell. It presents stories about Indigenous peoples' food experiences related to traditional and modern cuisine, preferences, and tastes. The Indigenous Food Stories podcast includes urban, regional, and remote Indigenous peoples' encounters with food. The podcast is less interested in nutritional or food insecurity approaches to food. Rather, it showcases food encounters and experiences through the approach of geography that favours a focus of how food facilitates and excludes connection to culture, country, and kin. The session will include playing some snippets from some of the episodes and talking about the experiences of developing, recording, and producing the podcast.

After eating: Sensing metabolism, metabolism as sensory apparatus, *Lindsay Kelley (University of New South Wales and Australian National University)*

This paper explores the emerging field of metabolic arts, contemporary practices which engage the materials and methodologies of not only food and ingestion but also digestion and metabolism. I argue that such practices understand metabolism as a sense, giving shape and space to how the world inhabits the body. From public diets to interspecies gestation to crocheted ecosystems, artists use immersive and sensory research-creation methods to push metabolism beyond the cell, promoting metabolism as a method for feeling and responding to the most difficult cultural, philosophical, and political challenges of the contemporary moment. I am interested in how metabolism arises from an era of industrialization that precipitated the loss of what was called the “common sense,” referring to sensations that exceed what can be described by the fractured five-sense framework. Anthropologist David Howes and cultural historian Constance Classen call this the “dissection’ of the sensorium.” The five-sense framework becomes another effort to

mechanize, quantify, and instrumentalize processes that are shared, diffuse, and at times ambiguous. Joining cultural theory's preoccupation with the question, "What come after entanglement?" (see for example Haifa Giraud 2019), contemporary research-creation practices suggest that metabolism comes after entanglement. The arts create opportunities to experience and feel together, proposing metabolic encounter as a return to or renovation of the lost common sense.

A war of wheat, Mia Shouha (University of Sydney)

In the present day, war is an unfortunate feature of some regions' agricultural make-up. This phenomenon has seen a tendency for weaponization of food and agriculture in physical power struggles, which runs counter to essential aims of sustenance and sustainability. In the case of Syria, prior to the country's 11-year conflict, the agricultural sector formed a fundamental pillar of the country's economy, development as well as its history and cultural lore. Present day Syria constitutes a land once considered the "breadbasket of the middle east". Syria was the only Arab state to be completely self-reliant in cultivation of wheat and had an abundance of cotton and olive rearing. For this state, recent challenges of food security have been extremely multifaceted and grievous. Apart from the deep-seated effects of climate change and military violence, foreign occupations, western sanctions, targeting and destruction of local and international assistance programs have resulted in an unravelling of agricultural channels, irrevocable environmental damage and loss of land tending processes. Agricultural yield and government policy are also posited as central themes leading up to the outbreak of conflict. Thus, it is argued that the crisis in Syria has amounted to a weaponization of agriculture and food systems on multiple levels by internal and external actors involved in the conflict. The various forms of weaponization and agricultural degradation will be further extrapolated as well as the practical and human cost of these challenges and the potential for food security and justice in the future.

What is natural? A multispecies lens on changing foodscapes in West Tanzania, Emelien Devos (Ghent University)

In this paper, I investigate the category of 'kiasili' ('natural' or 'original' in Kiswahili) food and healing that has emerged in Tanzania in reaction to the new foodways and the diseases they are felt to cause. New foods, too rich in sugar, imported refined palm oil and agrochemicals are causing a surge in 'new diseases' such as diabetes and sexual impotency, my interlocutors told me. Foods that are considered 'natural', such as honey and 'indigenous' chicken are now commanding higher prices, and Herbal Health clinics and the food conscious 7th Day Adventists churches have gained popularity. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with beekeepers, farmers and herbal healers in West Tanzania, I situate the meaning of 'kiasili' within the context of changing foodscapes and access to forests. I argue that the lived experience of farming, and its contact with non-human subjectivity, informs the widespread understanding of 'kiasili' in terms of allowing animals and plants to be free to eat their diverse diets and treat themselves with medicinal plants. They are often contrasted with their kept counterparts such as broiler chicken, who are forced to eat restricted diets and made 'to grow before their time'. I furthermore argue that class is important in understanding how the poor deploy the language of 'kiasili' to revalue their unprestigious foods and criticize the excessive diets of the rich. I thus aim to show how a concern for healthy food systems, both for humans and non-humans is not solely a concern of Western elites.

Making 'white' rice healthy: Eating for type 2 diabetes in urban India, Pallavi Laxmikanth (University of Adelaide)

In the urban Indian food market, there exists a demand for the taste of white rice, extolled as fluffy, soft yet separate grains like a string of jasmine flowers. The southern Indian state of Telangana, appropriates this taste for whiteness as it profits from the mass-cultivation of hybrid rice — it subsidizes rice for Below Poverty Line (BPL) households thereby gaining electoral favors, and profits from the infrastructure around rice milling that was set up in the 70s. Biomedicine however, holds the consumption of white rice as responsible for the growing crisis of metabolic ill-health in urban India, and my participants who have type 2 diabetes, are asked to replace rice with wheat-based products like bread and semolina instead. Rice is a food of cultural and gustatory significance and diverse heirloom varieties continue to be preserved by the farmers and land custodians as an act of health that is inextricable from land, taste and ecology. Through colonization and the green revolution respectively, rice was demonized as lacking in nutrition, and homogenized into a singular variety grown to mitigate hunger. My participants' love for white rice is riddled with anxiety as it is caught between two opposing messages: the state's pride in taste, biomedicine's 'health', and their own embodied experiences of growing and eating it. Through this paper, I discuss the state government's selective hybridization of a 'new', 'internationally recognized' variety of 'diabetic' white rice with a 'low glycaemic index', to address the concerns of both taste and health as they play into profit. I explore how the polarization induced between the notions of taste and health in the biomedical, anglophonic sense of the terms, is distanced from cultural notions of food, medicine and ecology and serves primarily, the purpose of extraction by state governments, biomedicine and food industries.

Are these deaths all the same? Towards a death-based approach to food, Alessandro Guglielmo (University of Milan 'La Statale')

Killing others lies at the very heart of eating: the reproduction of any species or individual entails the death and incorporation of other beings through their transformation into food. And food, as an assemblage, can narrate the weavings between politics, ecologies, and health regimes, as well as the deaths necessary to let someone else eat. Therefore, inspired by the ecofeminist Val Plumwood's proposal of a "Food-based approach to death", I will try to build a "Death-based approach to food" – analyzing how different ways of killing and dying weave different human/animal thanatopolitics and modes for food production. Such trajectories become even more evident in cheese, considered by Heather Paxson to be a "live food", bursting with diverse and often competing forms of life. Therefore, following Deborah Bird Rose's and Eduardo Kohn's understanding of death and extinction, my intervention will read cheese as an assemblage, with a focus on "individual" and "relational" deaths and their moral imperatives. The cheese I'll try to "speak with" is the Sardinian casu marzu, which entails an alliance between humans and maggots of the fly species *Piophilidae Casei*. When eaten, this alliance is both destroyed and honored, as humans will chew and digest live maggots along with the spicy paste they produced. Chatting with this "rotten cheese", I will try to look at food through a death-based approach, answering the questions "are these deaths all the same?" and "which deaths/extinctions are necessary to reproduce an 'imperial mode' for food production?" to inquire into multispecies relations of accountability.



The Australian Food, Society, and Culture Network

<https://www.sydney.edu.au/business/our-research/research-groups/australian-food-society-culture-network.html>