

1st Australian Food, Society and Culture Network Workshop

University of Sydney, 10 December 2012

Presenters at Workshop



From left to right : Network co- convener Deborah Lupton, (University of Sydney),Felicity Newman, (Murdoch University) Smita Shah,(University of Sydney),Michael Gard(Southern Cross University), David Pearson (University of Canberra),Damian Creaser (University of Adelaide),Darlene MacNaughton (Flinders University),Elaine Swan (University of Technology Sydney). Seated left to right, Network co-convenor , Teresa Davis (University of Sydney), Rick Flowers (University of Technology, Sydney) and John Coveney (Flinders University).

This inaugural one day workshop had 9 papers presented by a multi-disciplinary team, from Universities across the country. Speakers from Public Health, Sociology, Business, Anthropology and Medical schools came together in a lively and varied discussion and exchange of food related research. 40 participants in all attended this enthusiastic meeting.

Program and Abstracts

9:30 - 10:00	<p>"I've never been fat, how can I have bloody diabetes": Overweight and obesity as cultural signifiers for type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM) and its consequences. Darlene McNaughton, Flinders University.</p> <p>Although overweight and obesity are increasingly seen as the key risk factors for Type II diabetes mellitus (T2DM) the</p>
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	<p>relationship between them is complex and not well understood. There are in fact many 'risk' factors for T2DM, including age, genetics, previous gestational diabetes, a family history of the disease, etc., and the interplay of these is also not entirely clear. While diabetes is more prevalent among 'obese' people, and can be a symptom of diabetes, individuals from a broad range of weight ranges (including those considered 'healthy') can develop the disease. However, in recent years, the idea that fatness is the risk factor and/or central cause of T2DM has become increasingly prevalent and naturalised in media representations, popular discourse, public health campaigns and academic research. In these framings, the overweight or obese person/body becomes the overweight/obese diabetes person body.</p> <p>In this convergence, diabetes (like overweight and obesity) often emerges as self-inflicted: the result of wholly changeable and highly risky behaviours and lifestyles that are seen to be antithetical to a long, healthy life. At the same time, the complexity of the disease and limitations in current understandings of its causes are blurred or rendered invisible. Yet, the potency of overweight and obesity as cultural signifiers for T2DM and the stigmatising and iatrogenic consequences for those men and women diagnosed with or deemed 'at risk' from diabetes has received little attention to date. This paper sets out to trace and unpack some of the contours of these convergences while recognising their entanglement in earlier, moralising discourses surrounding individual responsibility and health.</p>
10:00 - 10.30	<p>'Savoir fare': have cooking skills become a moral imperative? John Coveney, Flinders University, Andrea Begley, Curtin University, Danielle Gallegos, Queensland University of Technology.</p> <p>There has been a recent surge of interest in cooking skills in a diverse range of fields, such as health, education and public policy. Much of this is based an assumption that cooking skills are in decline and that this is having an adverse impact on individual health and well-being, and family wholesomeness. The problematisation of cooking skills is not new, and can be seen in a number of historical developments that have specified particular pedagogies</p>

about food and eating. The purpose of this paper is to examine pedagogies on cooking skills and the importance accorded them. The paper draws on Foucault's work on governmentality. By using examples from the USA, UK and Australia, the paper demonstrates the ways that authoritative discourses on the *know how* and the *know what* about food and cooking - called here 'savoir fare' - are developed and promulgated. These discourses, and the moral panics in which they are embedded, require individuals to make choices about what to cook and how to cook, and in doing so establish moral pedagogies concerning good and bad cooking. The development of food literacy programmes, which see cooking skills as life skills, further extends the obligations to 'cook properly' to wider populations. The emphasis on cooking skills has ushered in new forms of government, firstly, through a relationship between expertise and politics which is readily visible through the authority that underpins the need to develop skills in food provisioning and preparation; secondly, through a new pluralisation of 'social' technologies which invites a range of private-public interest through, for example, television cooking programmes featuring cooking skills, albeit it set in a particular milieu of entertainment; and lastly, through a new specification of the subject can be seen in the formation of a choosing subject, one which has to problematize food choice in relation to expert advice and guidance. A governmentality focus shows that as discourses about what is the correct level of 'savoir fare' develop, new discursive subject positions are opened up. Armed with the understanding of what is considered expert-endorsed acceptable food knowledge, subjects judge themselves through self-surveillance. The result is a powerful food and family morality that is both disciplined and disciplinary.

10:30 - 11:00

Toxic fat, toxic bodies: the use of disgust in anti-obesity campaigns.

Deborah Lupton, University of Sydney.

Public health campaigns often employ 'shock tactics' in attempts to persuade target audiences to take up what are deemed to be health-promoting behaviours or relinquish behaviours viewed to be detrimental to health. In this paper I discuss the emotional appeal of disgust as it is used in anti-obesity campaigns: what I term a 'pedagogy of disgust'. Drawing on some examples from campaigns developed in Australia and the USA, I present a typology of disgust in

	<p>these materials: 'animal reminder' disgust, 'liminality' disgust and 'matter out of place' disgust, all of which may also incite 'moral' disgust. I contend that disgust responses essentially draw on and reproduce concepts of Self and Other. I end by discussing the ethical and political issues around using disgust as a motivating force in public health campaigns.</p>
11:30 - 12:00	<p>"What did your Grandmother do"? Jewish food, tradition and gender. Felicity Newman, Murdoch University.</p> <p>The rising tide of fundamentalism is felt in many religious communities. This is also the case with the Jewish community and the Perth Orthodox community provides an example of this phenomenon. Catering at community functions was provided from the homes of the members of the Women's International Zionist Organization until the sixties. With the arrival of Rabbi Sholem Coleman this all changed as he insisted on certified kosher food at all functions. This has resulted in increased costs and the loss of an important role performed by the women of the community; indeed it can be seen as an encroachment on women's business.</p> <p>In this paper I will argue that calls for the highest level of kosher observance at community functions are justified by the claim that this makes their functions inclusive, but it is not the case. Nor is it what our grandmothers would do.</p>
12:00 - 12.30	<p>Food matters: engaging consumers in sustainable diets. David Pearson, University of Canberra.</p> <p>A vital contribution to food security requires specification of changes in behaviour that are required for consumers to reduce the food-print of their diets. This paper contributes a review of the literature which identifies nine priority areas for behaviour changes in the context for food purchases, consumption, how it is produced, and the types of food purchased.</p> <p>With the aim of exploring the potential to nudge the priority areas in directions that will improve environmental sustainability of their diet a pilot study on a group of Australian consumers who would be expected to be 'early adopters' of a sustainable diet was undertaken. Results show that only a small portion, around 1 in 10, are actually engaged in activities that are reducing the environmental</p>

	<p>impact of their diet. Hence, there are significant opportunities to engage more consumers. Further the areas where interventions are most likely to have the largest impact, based on cost to the environment and likelihood of buyers changing their behaviour, are reducing the amount of food waste generated in the household and lowering the amount of junk food eaten.</p> <p>The dissemination of these results to Government and other organisations in the private sector and civil society will help to inform and prioritise action that ensures an ongoing nutritious, plentiful and desirable food supply in Australia.</p>
12.30 - 1:00	<p>Pork chops and porcine parts: men's experience of food and drink following open-heart surgery. Damian Creaser, University of Adelaide.</p> <p>This paper explores the embodied and discursive relationships of food and drink among a group of middle and older aged men who have been diagnosed with serious cardiac conditions and undergone open-heart surgery. Drawing on 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork, these men have been interviewed at various stages of their journey from pre-operative assessments with an anesthesiologist advising on fasting before surgery, to post-operative sessions in cardiac rehabilitation with dieticians who aim to educate the men on healthy eating and moderation of alcohol. A number of participants have had their own diseased heart valves replaced with porcine (pig) valves. Of these, many have a different relationship post-surgery to pork chops, other fatty foods and high calorie drinks, in particular alcohol. Theoretically this paper argues that by critically engaging with the ontic and ontological dimensions of post-operative experiences of human/animal embodiment, we can make distinctions about the lived experiences of these men as they negotiate a complex spatial, discursive and cultural milieu.</p>
2:00 - 2:30	<p>Students as lifestyle activists taking action in schools S Shah^{1,2}, C Ma¹, C Colonne¹, H Forbes¹, KS Lim³, A Pesle⁴, A Cvejic², I Wahlert¹ M Dibley,¹ University of Sydney¹, Western Sydney Local Health Network², Mt Druitt Medical Practitioner's Association³, Rooty Hill High School⁴, Sydney.</p> <p>Effective interventions promoting healthy lifestyles during adolescence are very important to prevent chronic disease.</p>

	<p>The SALSA (Students as Lifestyle Activists) program is a peer education program for high schools, based on sound theoretical framework and community consultation, to increase physical activity and improve nutritional intake in students. The purpose of the study was to evaluate the impact of the program on the SALSA Peer Leaders.</p> <p>We trained 2nd Year medical students (n=11) from The University of Sydney as SALSA Educators, who then visited three high schools in Sydney. They coached volunteer students from Year 10 as SALSA Peer Leaders (n=64) to deliver four SALSA lessons to Year 8 students (n=324) in their schools. The Peer Leaders completed a nutritional and physical activity questionnaire on the day of the workshop and four months later. Medical students and Peer Leaders completed process questionnaires following the workshops.</p> <p>Medical students found the experience of community engagement and learning through teaching rewarding. They learnt how to educate and communicate with young people about healthy lifestyles. The Peer Leaders were inspired to adopt a healthier lifestyle and enhanced their communication and leadership skills. They reported increased intake of fruit and vegetables and decreased consumption of soft drinks. However, 87% of students believed that healthier options are not affordable. Two-thirds of students engaged in some form of organized sports and activities and 98% of students engaged in some form of physical activity during the week. While the amount of TV/DVD viewing decreased, the amount of time spent using the computer increased.</p> <p>The SALSA program was well received and valued by the medical and high school students. The program had moderate impact on the eating habits and amount of physical activity in Peer Leaders. Further research needs to be done to see how we can make healthier options more affordable</p>
<p>2.30 - 3:00</p>	<p>From pork barrel to chocolate milk: the past, present and future of school food and public policy in America. Michael Gard, Southern Cross University and University of Queensland. Carolyn Vander Schee, Northern Illinois University.</p> <p>A revolution in the way food is consumed, administered and learned about in American schools is underway. On one level, these developments are a reaction to widespread concern about childhood obesity. Laws have been passed,</p>

	<p>guidelines adopted and the public health role of schools is being re-invented. At the same time, public health's war on obesity has become entangled with the world-wide educational "reform" movement and its rhetoric of standards and accountability. An overlapping but distinct third ingredient is the inexorable commercialisation of physical and pedagogical space within schools. Although still taking shape, the future appears to promise an increasingly blurred demarcation between public education and commerce. And while there are clear historical parallels, we argue that attending to the history of food policy in American schools suggests some conclusions about what it is and is not new about the present.</p>
3:00 - 3.30	<p>Culinary ethnicism in ethnic food tours in Bankstown, Sydney. Rick Flowers and Elaine Swan, University of Technology, Sydney.</p> <p>In this paper we examine the construction of what we call 'culinary ethnicism' in social media sites developed for Taste Food Tours, a social enterprise in Bankstown, an outer suburb in Sydney. By 'culinary ethnicism' we mean the way that race and ethnicity are constituted and performed through the presentation and storying of ingredients, meals, and food in 'culinary tourism' (Long, 2010). This work is part of a wider research project on ethnic food tours as forms of culinary tourism in different cities in Australia, East Asia and the UK (Flowers and Swan, forthcoming). There is little empirical research on racialization and ethnic food tours. Building on studies of the politics of white people eating 'ethnic food' (Hage, 1997; Sheridan, 2002; Duruz, 2010; Probyn, 2000) and what we have called 'food-multiculturalism-pedagogy' (Flowers and Swan, forthcoming), our core questions are: what is the nature of the multicultural encounter through food and what is taught and learned about race, ethnicity and culture? This study is part of a wider research programme that we have been developing since 2011 on 'food pedagogies.' Although our research encompasses ethnographic work in this paper we focus on the representation of race, culture, ethnicity and food through photographic and video images, text, and audio used on the Taste Tours website. In analysing the data, we draw on theorising of scopic regimes of race-making, host-tourist encounters, and representations of race in new social media (Nakamura, 2010). Taste Tours is a social enterprise intent</p>

	<p>on developing 'intercultural connections' and so we interested in how 'the merchandizing of difference' through the 'grammar of race' is constructed through visual images of food and bodies (Back and Quaade, 1993 cited in Lury, 2000: 148).</p>
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