



The 4th Conference on Food & Communication

Food for All

Media, Communication and Food Democracy

University of Lille, Infocom Roubaix

10-12 September 2025

Booklet of Abstracts



Food & Communication

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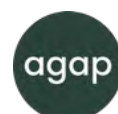
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Food & Communication Conference



The 4th Conference on Food & Communication

Food for All: Media, Communication and Food Democracy

University of Lille, Infocom Roubaix | September 10-12, 2025

The conference critically examines how media and communication shape and support food democracy—ensuring fair access to sustainable, nutritious, and culturally meaningful food, while promoting transparency, public engagement, and individual rights.

From journalism and policy discourse to audiovisual storytelling, branding, and grassroots communication, the conference highlights diverse ways media engage with food systems and democratic control. Scholars, practitioners, and activists examine these intersections and contribute to a growing understanding of food democracy across different formats, platforms, and geographies.

The biennial Conferences on Food & Communication emerge from the FoodKom Research Network established in 2015 at Örebro University (Sweden). Previous conferences have been held in Edinburgh (2018), Ljubljana (2021), and Örebro (2023). This event offers scholars space to share and discuss research at the intersection of communication and food studies, while fostering dialogue between academic scholarship and professionals working in food communication.

Through diverse formats—papers, creative presentations, and discussions—the conference explores food as discourse, symbol, power, and identity across social and media contexts. Covering topics from food media contents to culinary semiotics, it encourages interdisciplinary dialogue and innovative approaches to understanding how communication frames the food landscape.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Processed Food and the Anti-Politics of Communication.....	11
<i>Charlotte Biltekoff</i>	
Heritage and Dissemination of Food during the Enlightenment: the Case of the Encyclopedists	13
<i>Stéphanie Couderc-Morandau</i>	
Capturing Culinary Heritage: Using Technology to Document and Democratize Evolving Food Cultures	14
<i>Karena Wong, Robert Danhi</i>	
Digital Technologies to Gather, Preserve, and Share Food Stories: Culinary Memories and Practices as Narratives of Food Democracy from the Grown-Up	15
<i>Meredith Abarca</i>	
Too Ugly, too Old: Price Discounts as a Retail Action for Reducing Food Waste	17
<i>Nicklas Neuman, Jonas Bååth, Rosa Hellman, Sara Spendrup</i>	
Too Good to Let Go. Anti-waste Platforms: from Too Good to Go to Memo Food Clip	18
<i>Anna Bisogno</i>	
Digital Narratives of Food Waste: A Systematic Review on Social Media's Impact on Sustainable Consumption.....	19
<i>Fitria Avicenna, Stinne Gunder Strøm Krogager</i>	
Processing, Memory, and Intentions: Exploring the Role of Instagram Recipe Videos' Taste and Convenience Cues in Shaping Food Practices Among Young Adults.....	21
<i>Paulien Decorte, Karolien Poels, Tim Smits, Sara Pabian, Paul Bolls, Konrad Rudnicki, Charlotte De Backer</i>	
Social Media, Food, and Youth: Norms, Resistance, and Public Health Challenges	22
<i>Léa Lopes, Ariane Picard, Clémentine Hugol-Gential</i>	
Mediatized Excess: Competitive Eating and Food Challenges Online.....	23
<i>Ryan Fountain</i>	
'Frankenstein Meat' in the 'Witch's Chemistry Kitchen': Media Framing of Green Genetic Engineering in Austria.....	25
<i>Georg Vogt</i>	
Steakholders of Masculinity. An Exploration of the Cultural Scripts of Meat-eating Manhood through Media	26
<i>Elina Vrijssen</i>	
Gastro-constitutionalism	27
<i>Mathilde Cohen</i>	
Educating for Democracy Through Food	29
<i>Afreixo Lígia, Francisco Providência</i>	

TABLE OF CONTENT

Children as Receivers and Messengers for Health Education: Social Dynamics Behind the Circulation of «Food Messages» in School Settings.....	30
<i>Nicolas Mendez Barreto</i>	
Perceived Helpfulness of Online Nutrition Information for Primary School Students: Influence of Media Use, Gender, and Grade Level	31
<i>Urška Kolar, Mitja Vrdelja, Hristo Hristov, Vida Fajdiga Turk, Nataša Delfar</i>	
Libraries and Food Democracy: New Practices on Food Knowledge Mediation.....	32
<i>Laurence Favier, Simona De Iulio</i>	
Making Food Democracy An Educational Framework for Sustainable Consumption Practices in Higher Education	33
<i>Eleonora Noia, Silvia Mazzucotelli Salice</i>	
Reanimating Appalachia: Women Chefs Advancing the Region Through Food.....	35
<i>Wendy Atkins-Sayre, Ashli Stokes</i>	
Official Heritage vs. Edible Memories: Contesting Authenticity in Singapore's Hawker Culture	36
<i>Amy DePierre</i>	
Feasting & Fasting: How Ramadan's Food Rituals Influence Social and Psychological Health.....	37
<i>Charlotte De Backer, Andrea Codina-Fernandez, Sarah Ahannach, Sarah Van den Bosch, Isabel Erreygers, Inas Rahou, Samira El Messaoudi, Yukta Pai, Marit Van der Poel, Sarah Lebeer</i>	
"A Bite of China": From Documentary to Hashtag.....	38
<i>Shan Gao</i>	
The Democratising Dead: Calendrical Complexity, Commemorative Holidays, and Culinary Continuity across Time	39
<i>Anthony F. Buccini</i>	
Ecomodernism, Cultured Meat and the Search for the «Middle Landscape»	41
<i>Andreja Vezovnik</i>	
Shaping Food Democracy: Political Discourse on the Regulation of Cellular Meat in France	42
<i>Melis Aras, Sandrine Barrey</i>	
Politics of the Plate: How Dutch Politicians Communicate about Emerging Food Technologies.....	43
<i>Madhura Rao, Noor Wiersma</i>	
Public Discourses of Alternative Protein Foods: A 2014-2024 Review of Facebook Public Pages' Posts	44
<i>WeiYu Zhang, Bingyan Wang</i>	

TABLE OF CONTENT

Resisting Corporate Power Through Networked Advocacy: Communication Mechanisms in Global Food Policy Diffusion.....	45
<i>Susana Ramírez</i>	
Challenging Food Narratives: A Discourse Analysis of Agro-Food Representations in a Belgian Alternative Media.....	47
<i>Sabri Derinöz</i>	
A Cheese for a More Inclusive Society: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of CSR in Swedish Food Retail	48
<i>Helen Andersson</i>	
The Company, Territory of Food Democracy? Elements of Surveys on Eating Practices at Work in the Prism of the Concept of «Food Democracy».....	49
<i>Thomas Heller, Elodie Sevin, Fabiola Leone</i>	
Food Democracy, Knowledge Circulation and Pathways to Food Literacy	51
<i>Susan Kovacs</i>	
The Farming Futures Cycle Tour: Co-creating Visions of Future Farming	53
<i>Veronica White</i>	
I Farmer: Narratives about Self, Land and the Future of Farming	54
<i>Ana Tominc, David McBey, Marko Stace, Benjamin McCormick</i>	
Mobilizing Communication: Preserving Cooperative Production and Taste Diversity in Comté Cheese (1990-2015)	55
<i>Christy Shields Argeles</i>	
Democratizing Porridge: Personal Narratives in Social Media Branding of Grød	57
<i>Stinne Gunder Strøm Krogager, Jonatan Leer</i>	
New Kid on the Block?! Excessive Cooking Shows in the Cooking Show Ecology	58
<i>Rita Tamara Vallentin, Sofia Rüdiger</i>	
I See Fruit, but They Eat Ultra-Processed Snacks: Content Analysis of Food Incidents in America's Top Popular Shows 2013-2024.....	59
<i>Eulàlia Puig Abril</i>	
Food Democracy in Practice: Institutional and Informal Communication on Vegetarian Policies in French University Canteens	62
<i>Cristina Romanelli</i>	
Chefs Cooking Up Capital	63
<i>Beth Forrest, Deirdre Murphy</i>	
Developing Food Policy Literacy: the Case of the Food Systems Flower Diagram.....	64
<i>Rebecca Wells, Kelly Parsons</i>	

TABLE OF CONTENT

Pots, Pans, and Knife Cuts on Hands: Restaurant Kitchens as Media.....	66
<i>Anson Hunt</i>	
Hipster Hospitality: The Paradox of Accessibility and Exclusivity in Contemporary Food Culture	67
<i>Kajsa Hult</i>	
Communication as a Key Factor in Household Adaptation and Resilience to Crises	68
<i>Emna Ouertani, Maram Ben Hmida</i>	
The Styles of “Healthy Food” in Stock Images.....	70
<i>Iben B. Jessen</i>	
Digital Plates and False Prophets: Social Media’s Double-Edged Impact on Food Democracy	71
<i>Joachim Allgaier</i>	
Food Morals in Online Discourses – Social Network Analysis and Netnography Analysis of German Food Communities on Instagram.....	72
<i>Eva-Maria Endres</i>	
Emancipatory Imaginaries: the Platform Transformation of Denver’s Urban Food System.....	74
<i>Hillary Quarles</i>	
Improving Access to Nutritious Food for Migrants from Disadvantaged Backgrounds: A Rapid Evidence Assessment.....	75
<i>Alexandra Constantinescu, Naz Ali</i>	
“A fistful of rice”: Food health communications and British Bangladeshi Women in Tower Hamlets, London.....	76
<i>Elaine Swan, Hussain Shazna Miah Sajna, Miles Zoe</i>	
Understanding Power in Food Policy: a Pilot Study	78
<i>Naomi Fallon, Christopher Yap, Christina Vogel, Lorna Anguilano</i>	
BIPOC Nutritionists and Competing Visions of Health: the Divide between Justice and Conspiracy in Contemporary Food Discourse.....	79
<i>Julieta Flores Jurado</i>	
The “Pot People” Revolutions: Agroecology, Communication and Radical Food Democracy in Post-COVID Brazil.....	80
<i>Fernanda Favaro</i>	
Bib Gourmand and Food Democracy in Chiang Mai: Culinary Authority, Media Validation, and the Negotiation of Street Food Hierarchies	81
<i>Piyarat Panlee</i>	

TABLE OF CONTENT

(Re-)Framing Ballet Nutrition: Pragmalinguistic and Paratextual Strategies in Instagram's Dietary Discourse	83
<i>Constanze Betz, Tina Bartelmeß</i>	
How "Eat Like an Athlete" Messaging Compromises Food Democracy	84
<i>Emily Contois</i>	
Silencing Cravings: Exploring Food Noise, Media Influence, and the Business of Body Management	85
<i>Kathleen LeBesco, Charlotte De Backer, Isabelle Cuykx, Paulien Decorte, Lauranna Teunissen</i>	
Who Cares about My Gut Microbiota? The Profile of those Shaping Social Representations of Digestive Health on Instagram.....	86
<i>Manon Niquette</i>	
Eating the Real: Food Documentaries and Local Public Spheres as Spaces for Political Engagement	88
<i>Luca Antoniazzi</i>	
The Transcultural and Transgenerational Transmission of Culinary Knowledge in Contemporary Kyoto's Ryōtei Kitchens.....	89
<i>Greg De St. Maurice</i>	
The David and Goliath of Iberian Cuisines: A Comparative Analysis of Portuguese and Spanish Gastronomy in The New York Times.....	90
<i>Ricardo Felner</i>	
Historical Perspectives on Media Participation in the Diffusion of Typical Foods from Belém do Pará.....	91
<i>Taynah De Moraes</i>	
How Nutritional Knowledge is Circulated through Chinese Food Packaging: A Social Semiotic Study of "Healthy» Snacks	93
<i>Göran Eriksson</i>	
Communicating Inclusivity and Sustainability: Packaging Strategies in Food Democracy Initiatives	94
<i>Simona De Iulio</i>	
Simply (Go Shopping and) Cook? Unboxing Commercially Available Meal Kits and Women's Mental Load.....	95
<i>Jessica Horne</i>	
Dish Dash: Unpacking the Role of Convenience in Recipe Decision-Making.....	96
<i>Paulien Decorte, Caroline Goukens, Charlotte De Backer</i>	

TABLE OF CONTENT

How Food Representations are Influenced by Precarity and how they Influence our Food Choices	98
<i>Romane Vandroux, Rodalyn Apple Ariola, Anthony Piermattéo</i>	
Shaping Food Democracy through Media Discourse: Framing of Food Poverty in Germany	99
<i>Tina Bartelmeß</i>	
Taking it to the Streets: How Free Food Fridge Movements are Reframing Food Insecurity	100
<i>Diana Willis</i>	
Let them Speak! A Qualitative Study of the Thoughts and Feelings of Pantry Guests in Northern New Jersey	101
<i>Charles Feldman, Tito Alvarado, Shahla Wunderlich</i>	
Digital Distinction: The Evolution of Foodie Discourse Across Media Platforms.....	103
<i>Josee Johnston</i>	
The Culinary Book in the Age of Social Media: between New Digital Recommendations and Editorial Redefinition.....	104
<i>Amélie Altmayer, Clémentine Hugol-Gential</i>	
Sip and Share: Exploring New Voices in Wine Prescription through Digital Social Network.....	105
<i>Jeanne Peixian Qiao</i>	
Food democracy – the French Paradox	107
<i>Markéta Supkova</i>	

Lecture Hall Keynote

Processed Food and the Anti-Politics of Communication

Charlotte Biltekoff

University of California, Davis

Drawing on [Real Food, Real Facts: Processed Food and the Politics of Knowledge](#) this talk looks at the role communication about technology can play in foreclosing, rather than opening, possibilities for food democracy – including by using tools taken up by advocates of food democracy such as education and transparency - and suggests analytical strategies that can help resist this antipolitics. The research explores how the U.S. food industry communicates with the public about processed food and identifies a framing contest between two different ways of understanding the processed food problem and what should be done about it.

Since the early 21st century, proponents of the Real Food frame have viewed processed food as a troubled product of a troubled food system and encouraged people to both avoid it and reform the food system. Championed by actors within the food industry and its allied sciences, the Real Facts frame emerged as a response to this. From the perspective of the Real Facts frame the problem is not processed food, but the public's misinformed and irrational concerns about it; what is needed is not food system reform but communication (education, information) to correct the public's misperceptions and improve attitudes toward processed food.

While the Real Food frame is a practice of politics that expresses legitimate concerns about the food system and projects an inherently political imaginary of the public, the Real Facts frame enacts antipolitics by reframing these concerns as misinformed and irrational and projecting a purely commercial imaginary of the public. The Real Facts frame and its antipolitical side effects are rooted in food scientism; the intertwined assumptions that science is or should be the primary way of knowing about food and that public concerns about science and technology can only be the result of lack of scientific knowledge / understanding or anti-science sentiment. Analytical strategies for resisting this antipolitics include turning the gaze from public misperceptions of science to expert misperceptions of the public, looking not only at the content of communication but also the assumptions it makes about the public's role in the food system, naming food scientism in all its forms, and looking past conflicts over the facts to get to the questions that really matter; what kind of food system to do we want - and how can we produce a culture and politics of communication that allows us to ask and answer this question democratically?

Panel 1
**Memory, Heritage, and
Food Democracy**

Heritage and Dissemination of Food during the Enlightenment: the Case of the Encyclopedists

Stéphanie Couderc-Morandea

Université de Nantes

The eighteenth century was a period of intense debate in Europe (religious, medical, legal and moral), marked by a determination to impose a strong philosophical rationalism. The question about modes of life and thought led to the development of new ways of disseminating knowledge to improve and develop society. Food was no exception to this reflection, particularly through the Salons, where ideas circulated around a good table; the cafés, which became places of exchange and information, which multiplied in Paris from the 1720s; writings such as the theatre plays, correspondences and philosophical novels, for example. But it was particularly with the Encyclopédie of Diderot, D'Alembert and Jaucourt in 1751 that knowledge about food became accessible to a wider public, creating a rich heritage cultural for future generations. The Encyclopédie, in which knowledge in all fields was methodically presented in a logical or formal order, became the perfect communication tool of the 18th century. The seventeen volumes, written over a period of twenty-five years by people of letters and the sciences, contained a multitude of explanations on the culinary professions, foods, their origins, nutritional properties and tastes, as well as ways of cooking them, sometimes illustrated with explanatory engravings. Many foods, such as meat, vegetables and the new products of colonisation (such as cocoa, coffee, sugar cane and exotic fruits) are described in detail and linked to health. The Encyclopédie's role was twofold: to disseminate human knowledge and to inform the public. The Encyclopaedists' aim was to educate, even if it meant taking risks in the face of religious and political institutions. Through an analytical method of the Encyclopédie's entries on food, we will analyse how medicine and food became associated, and explain why the Encyclopédie continues to be strangely contemporary.

Capturing Culinary Heritage: Using Technology to Document and Democratize Evolving Food Cultures

Karena Wong, Robert Danhi

Chef Danhi & Co, Los Angeles

The world is witnessing a rapid loss of culinary stories, recipes, and practices, underscoring the need for innovative approaches to document food cultures as they evolve. Our work focuses on creating structured systems to capture and curate culinary heritage at scale. These efforts are not merely about preserving traditions but about documenting culinary history as it unfolds, ensuring that future generations can engage with these narratives in dynamic, interactive ways. At the heart of this initiative are structured knowledge templates designed to capture the fundamental components of food culture: environment, ingredients, preparation and cooking techniques, and presentation. By embedding this information in a creative, interactive database, we enable future researchers to ask complex, interdisciplinary questions of the data—queries that are currently impossible with existing tools. Leveraging AI capabilities, multimedia elements such as videos and images, and sensory lexicons that detail the appearance, aroma, texture, and taste of dishes, this work offers a comprehensive approach to capturing culinary heritage. Importantly, the system is designed to democratize knowledge-sharing by reducing linguistic and socioeconomic barriers, empowering communities to contribute their food stories in their native languages and cultural contexts. This presentation will share insights from our work in culinary heritage ontologies and highlight the potential of structured knowledge systems to support a global, collaborative network. By capturing culinary history as it happens and fostering access for all, we aim to transform how food cultures are documented, studied, and shared for generations to come.

Digital Technologies to Gather, Preserve, and Share Food Stories: Culinary Memories and Practices as Narratives of Food Democracy from the Grown-Up

Meredith Abarca

University of Texas at El Paso

Our first aim is to share our collaboration on the vision, creation, and on-going growth and maintenance of El Paso Food Voices (EPFV), an open-source, digital archive. EPFV explores the El Paso, Texas culinary knowledge by engaging with its diverse multicultural, multiethnic, and multinational community members to document the rich and complex culinary culture and history of this region as this has been lived through people's live experiences. Three intentions motivate this public-facing project. First, to gather and engage with our community to record, through audio and video, their food stories. Second, to preserve our community's culinary knowledge for the benefit of current and future generations interested in learning how ordinary people's food practices shape food systems that impact the history, culture, politics, economics, natural environment, and health of a region. Third, to share this knowledge with the general public to food scholars. The stories featured in EPFV, gathered from home cooks, professional chefs, restaurant owners, and educators, are filled with history, culture, and politics that challenge us to re-think our relationships with food. Secondly, we reflect upon our intellectual labor that urges us to listen and witness as narrators define and perform what food means to them. While editing video and audio to create cohesive video narratives complete with music and narrator's personal photograph, we are pressed even more to listen as we strive to represent narrators' food memories as this carry familial and cultural heritage as define by their p(a)late. Balancing our roles as listeners, relationship builders, and stewards of people's stories with our roles as academics illustrate the importance of centering peoples' food memories, practices, and stories which in turn invite us to consider what living histories are carry on our p(a)late, and how our culinary actions influence the kinds of living stories future generations will experience.

Panel 2
**Communication Strategies
Against Food Waste**

Too Ugly, too Old: Price Discounts as a Retail Action for Reducing Food Waste

Nicklas Neuman
Uppsala Universitet

Jonas Bååth, Rosa Hellman, Sara Spendrup
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Strolling through a regular supermarket, the customer is likely to encounter products sold at discounted prices as a means of the retailer to avoid food waste. Examples are meat and dairy close to the expiration date, fruits and vegetables with aesthetic “flaws,” or fresh bread baked on the previous day. Such products are communicated to customers through, among other things, colorful labels, specific baskets, and signs encouraging customers to avoid food waste. New technologies and innovative routines (including food donations for charity) are constantly being developed and tested as well, all to prevent wastage of food products that, for one reason or another, retailers cannot sell at the original price. But how do customers use such discounts and what happens in their homes? Are all products consumed, making the initiatives de facto food-waste reducing, or wasted in the households, meaning that food waste is in fact only re-allocated somewhere else? Most probably, the truth is somewhere in the middle. Yet, knowledge is sparse regarding this matter – despite a great deal of research on both household food waste on the one hand and retailers’ food-waste-reducing activities on the other. This project is one of the very few to follow the food from the point of purchase to the point of consumption, aiming to learn more about what happens to food products communicated by retail actors as waste-reducing. Based on survey data and in-store field studies, preliminary results will be presented and discussed. Funding: The project is funded by “Formas – a Swedish Research Council for Sustainable Development” within the national research program for food (project number: 2023-01912).

Too Good to Let Go. Anti-waste Platforms: from Too Good to Go to Memo Food Clip

Anna Bisogno

Universitas Mercatorum, Rome

In the transition from the analog and alphabetic cultures of the twentieth century to the digital ones (increasingly iconic and audiovisual) of the current century, the quasimonopoly of the media in providing the general public with information, images, and narratives is being profoundly questioned.

The Internet is not just a different, more efficient and modern way of accessing information and data. It is a global arena in which anyone (not just professionals and holders of certified knowledge) can publish on social media their User Generated Contents (Manovich, Jenkins) endowed with sense, meaning, and aesthetics.

The latter have determined on the one hand, new narrative paths that have generated from the so-called foodporn trend (food that is good to look at) to that of social chefs who propose gourmet recipes and on the other platforms dedicated, among other things, to simple and effective advice on how to use the food left in the fridge and/or avoid food waste. In fact, there are many applications that allow you to buy excess food from bakeries, pizzerias, restaurants, supermarkets and in general from all those shops that sell quickly perishable foods by proposing a valuable and advantageous communication: those who offer products, even if at a lower price, still manage to increase sales and avoid waste; those who buy can have quality products at a very advantageous price; the Planet saves resources.

The contribution intends to illustrate, in particular, the digital inspiration of the Danish App "Too Good to Go", born in 2015, and arrived in Italy in 2019 in which bars, restaurants, pizzerias, but also grocery stores and supermarkets put unsold products on the market and users buy them directly from the retailer at a third of the selling price, and the all-Italian platform that through a clip warns of the imminent expiration of food in the fridge or pantry.

Digital Narratives of Food Waste: A Systematic Review on Social Media's Impact on Sustainable Consumption

Fitria Avicenna, Stinne Gunder Strøm Krogager

Aalborg University

Food democracy highlights the importance of inclusive public participation in shaping food systems, where citizens actively contribute to decisions on food production, distribution, and consumption to promote sustainability, equity, and social justice (Hassanein, 2003). Digital platforms enhance these participatory opportunities by enabling citizens to engage in food-related discourse, advocacy, and collaborative action (Carolan, 2016). Among these platforms, social media serves as a participatory space where users co-create narratives, raise awareness, and shape sustainable consumption behaviors, including food waste reduction (Sutinen & Närvänen, 2022; Young et al., 2017).

Although research on social media's role in shaping food waste behaviors is increasing, it remains fragmented across disciplines without a unified framework connecting diverse perspectives. To address this gap, I conducted a systematic review of peer-reviewed articles from Web of Science, Scopus, and EBSCO, focusing on English-language publications, to explore: How does social media influence consumer behavior in reducing food waste?

The findings highlight three key themes: (1) Digital Advocacy and Public Engagement – Social media fosters large-scale discussions, encouraging behavioral change through influencer-driven narratives, consumer campaigns, and interactive content promoting sustainable practices; (2) Knowledge-Sharing and Awareness – Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok act as educational tools where users exchange food storage tips, meal planning strategies, and creative approaches to food waste reduction, leveraging hashtags and visual storytelling to enhance engagement; (3) Challenges and Limitations – While social media amplifies awareness, issues such as misinformation, algorithm-driven visibility, short-lived engagement, and commercial influences may distort or weaken sustainability messaging.

Based on the review findings, this paper enhances understanding of media's role in food democracy by showing how social media fosters transparency, democratizes knowledge, and empowers individuals to adopt sustainable food practices. It also highlights the need for longitudinal and cross-country studies to advance research on digital food advocacy and sustainable consumption

Panel 3

Social Media, Youth

Processing, Memory, and Intentions: Exploring the Role of Instagram Recipe Videos' Taste and Convenience Cues in Shaping Food Practices Among Young Adults

Paulien Decorte, Karolien Poels, Tim Smits, Sara Pabian, Paul Bolls, Konrad Rudnicki, Charlotte De Backer

Instagram's popular recipe videos showcase prominent cues, like taste and convenience, motivating viewers – particularly young adults (18-25) - to make the recipes. While hedonic taste cues trigger automatic appetitive responses, the processing of utilitarian convenience cues remains unclear.

We investigated psychophysiological processing and outcomes of these cues via a withinsubjects repeated-measures experiment including Instagram dessert recipe videos emphasizing taste, convenience, or both cues. We measured cognitive and emotional processing through psychophysiology (heart rate; fEMG & SCR) and self-reports, along with self-reported intentions to engage, save, purchase, and prepare, along with memory retrieval (recall).

Self-report RM-ANOVAs revealed that while taste cues had stronger individual intentional impact, taste and convenience cues jointly elicited highest intentions, most excitement, and least surprise, confusion, and frustration. Physiology RM-ANOVAs show contrasting results: absence of taste and/or convenience cues seems to confuse participants, eliciting greater cognitive and positive emotional processing (lower corrugator, higher zygomaticus/orbicularis), hinting at schema incongruity backed by recall and self-report data.

Summarized, recipe videos not adopting taste and convenience cues initially evoked attention and surprise, but ultimately reduced intentions to engage with or act on these videos in favor of videos emphasizing both cues, elucidating the distinct processing mechanisms of this persuasive media content.

This study makes several key contributions to the conference's core theme of food democracy by highlighting Instagram's role in democratizing food content through cues young adults prefer, such as taste and convenience. These cues can make food knowledge more accessible, encouraging experimentation and self-sufficiency. Additionally, the study confirms how recipe videos widely engage audiences, opening pathways to promote transparency in food sourcing and preparation. Lastly, young adults, the study's focus, are vital to food democracy as future consumers and advocates. Understanding their preferences for taste and convenience helps create content that fosters lasting engagement with food practices.

Social Media, Food, and Youth: Norms, Resistance, and Public Health Challenges

Léa Lopes, Ariane Picard, Clémentine Hugol-Gential

Université Bourgogne Europe

In the era of social media, young people's eating practices are deeply transformed by the influence of images, aesthetic narratives, and performance-driven logic. Digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok impose food and body norms that contribute to the "nutritionization" (Poulain, 2009) of eating practices and the spectacularization of meals, reinforcing contradictory injunctions between pleasure and control (Hugol- Gential, 2022). Influencers, through narratives of physical transformation or sports routines, play a key role in prescribing these norms (Creuzet, 2021). These narratives, often amplified by algorithms, foster the individualization of health responsibility, potentially overshadowing structural inequalities in access to healthy and balanced diets.

At the same time, social media becomes a space of resistance, where counterdiscourses emerge, driven by movements such as Fat Activism (Carof, 2021) and Food Activism. These movements aim to revalorize non-normative bodies and promote more sustainable food practices. Critical narratives challenge dominant aesthetic norms and the commodification of bodies and meals. These spaces allow young people to acquire new forms of capabilities, reclaiming their agency within emerging digital arenas.

This presentation will showcase the results of a field study conducted with middle school students on the interactions between social media, body representations, and eating practices. Through the analysis of the content followed by young people, key influencer figures, and perceptions of body norms, we will highlight the public health challenges related to eating disorders (EDs). We will also examine the role of Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in supporting young people in making critical use of social media (Jehel, 2022). This reflection aligns with the perspective of food democracy, exploring how young people can reclaim their agency in the face of the food and body norms imposed by digital platforms.

Mediatized Excess: Competitive Eating and Food Challenges Online

Ryan Fountain

Freie Universität Berlin

In recent years, the act of eating as a form of entertainment has exploded onto the digital scene¹ and the aesthetics of food-sharing has been expanded to include aspects of food-eating which (Western) society at large perceives as unaesthetic, unhealthy, and uncouth. In this presentation, I focus on two subtypes of eating-as-entertainment, competitive eating and food challenges, approached via corpus-based discourse analysis and digital ethnography. In the videos I examine (100 English-language YouTube videos), performers eat extremely large portions of food (speed-based and quantity-based) while talking to an (imagined) audience.

The remarkable popularity of these sub-genres suggests a growing fascination with the performative aspects of eating to excess. While it is true that many outsiders harshly criticize the practice – as ‘overindulgence,’ ‘waste,’ and general disregard of the norms of ‘health’ and ‘moderation’ – professional eaters, conversely, see themselves as exemplars of healthy living.

They lionize competitive eaters as dedicated athletes in their sport, wherein strict regimes of fitness and self-control are practiced only by the most successful and – perceptually – the healthiest².

Through the language of the performers, I gain an insider perspective on mediatized ‘overconsumption’ with regards to wider social discourses on food consumption, food waste, and food production. The linguistic approach to overconsumption allows for a neat triangulation of food consumption practices: We see what and how one eats, but most importantly how consumers and actors perform and shape the norms of eating and conceptions of foodways.

¹ Rüdiger, Sofia. 2021. “Digital Food Talk: Blurring Immediacy and Distance in YouTube Eating Shows.” *Anglistik* 32(2): 111-130. <https://doi.org/10.33675/ANGL/2021/2/9>

² Abbots, Emma-Jayne and Luci Attala. 2017. “It’s not what you eat but how and that you eat: Social media, counter-discourses and disciplined ingestion among amateur competitive eaters.” *Geoforum* 84: 188-197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2014.11.004>

Panel 4
**Media Representations
and Food Governance**

Frankenstein Meat' in the 'Witch's Chemistry Kitchen': Media Framing of Green Genetic Engineering in Austria

Georg Vogt

St.Poelten University of Applied Sciences

This paper examines the framing of debates on genetic engineering (GE) in food production in Austria, with a particular focus on media coverage as a site of democratic negotiation and public discourse. Drawing on print and visual media representations from the widely read tabloid *Neue Kronenzeitung* (NKZ) and the public broadcaster ORF, this study analyzes dominant frames before and during the 1997 referendum against GE, comparing them with media narratives from 2017/18. By tracing these shifts over two decades, the study explores how media strategies and public perceptions have evolved in response to scientific advancements, political movements, and ethical concerns.

The broader historical context of the debate is examined, from early opposition to biotechnological interventions in agriculture in the 1970s to contemporary discussions shaped by new genetic engineering (NGE) techniques such as CRISPR/Cas9. While proponents emphasize the potential of these technologies to combat food insecurity and climate change, critics warn against deregulation, raising concerns about public health, environmental risks, and socioeconomic inequality. The study highlights how competing claims are legitimized and contested within public discourse, particularly regarding the scientific credibility of NGE promises and their regulatory implications.

By situating media framing within broader democratic processes, this research contributes to understanding how communication influences public opinion and policymaking on contested scientific issues. The findings reveal a notable shift in interpretative frameworks, with evolving narratives around national identity, food sovereignty, health, democracy, and economic interests.

While early debates were dominated by concerns over tradition and national self-determination, contemporary discussions increasingly integrate climate ethics and sustainability, albeit with a delay. This study underscores the role of media in shaping not only public perceptions of food technologies but also the democratic contestation of scientific and political authority.

Steakholders of Masculinity. An Exploration of the Cultural Scripts of Meat-eating Manhood through Media

Elina Vrijssen

University of Antwerp

This dissertation explores how food functions as a communication system within society, specifically examining the persistent cultural association between meat consumption and masculinity. This widely accepted belief, known as the “Meat is Masculine Myth”, links meat consumption – especially red meat – to male strength, dominance, and virility. However, this association is not based on biological necessity but it is instead shaped by cultural influences, such as media representations. Through four interconnected studies, we investigate how (social) media platforms and cultural discourse construct, reinforce, and negotiate the relationship between meat consumption and masculinity.

Our mixed-method approach starts with in-depth interviews on masculine meat identities to provide insight in how men personally interpret and incorporate these cultural associations (1). Secondly, we conducted a content analysis of TV food advertising which shows how commercial messaging perpetuates cultural beliefs about meat and masculinities through the use of different representation techniques (2). Next, a thematic analysis of Instagram *#meat* posts was used to investigate how visual imagery and language perpetuate the meatmasculinity connection through specific mechanisms such as the male body, masculine meat capital, and culinary meat gaze (3). In a fourth study, which is a work in progress, we want to complete this communication circuit by examining reception and negotiation of these media messages through focus group conversations (4).

The results allow us to unpack how meat consumption is not merely a dietary choice but a socially embedded practice that reinforces cultural expectations of masculinity. We conclude that men actively construct connections between meat and masculinities through five meat themes we identified so far (i.e. traditional cuisine, doing meat, fitness, taste, and meat ethics), which forms the baseline for the “Meat is Masculine Myth”. These associations persist in both traditional and social media representations. Therefore, media play a significant role in reinforcing these gendered images of meat consumption.

Gastro-constitutionalism

Mathilde Cohen

University of Connecticut

This essay proposes the concept of “gastro-constitutionalism” to articulate the role of food in shaping constitutional norms and democracy, reciprocally, the role of law in shaping eating practices. The argument builds upon the sociological literature on the related notions of “gastro-politics,” “gastro-nationalism,” “gastro-diplomacy,” and “gastronativism.”

These ideas have been offered to help conceptualize the use of food in politics to advance ideas about what defines a community and who belongs or does not belong to it. Indeed, eating is an essential activity all humans must engage in on a daily basis, but it is also a powerful ideological practice that grounds social interactions, policies, and conflicts. My project centers on the interaction between eating and Constitutions, drawing on examples from various socio-legal contexts, but primarily drawn from France, Mexico, and the United States. I ask what role food and culinary traditions play in the creation and development of constitutional rules and principles.

Conversely, I examine the influence of Constitutions and constitutional decision-making on the food system and people’s access to sustenance. For this conference I will focus on the expressive nature of legal and culinary texts, analogizing Constitutions to cookbooks and cookbooks, to Constitution.

Panel 5
**Education as Food
Democracy in Action**

Educating for Democracy Through Food

Afreixo Lúgia, Francisco Providência

Universidade de Aveiro

The suspicion that equal access to health, creativity, and environmental adaptation depends on primary educational processes led us to conduct this study with children aged 3 to 5 of both genders but from different social classes. We focused on children from schools in the city of Porto: one located in the periphery and publicly funded, and the other a private school in a central area. All 34 children underwent an organoleptic survey, where they were asked to smell (blindfolded) a selection of products from contemporary Portuguese gastronomy to assess their level of organoleptic literacy. The results showed a clear superiority in the organoleptic repertoire of the economically more privileged group, which translated into a more remarkable ability to adapt to different stimuli and, consequently, greater freedom of choice.

We believe that the asymmetry in what we are accustomed to eating profoundly affects human and social development. This leads to adults with varying capacities for environmental adaptation and, consequently, different aptitudes for development and prosperity—not only economically but also in terms of well-being.

Thus, we argue that the state fundamentally promotes democracy through equal access to wealth by fostering an organoleptic culture in schools. This can be achieved through school canteen services, educational programs, and complementary learning activities, which, according to Inês Ferreira (2016)¹, were to the 20th century what creative activities would be to the 21st century.

This study is part of a doctoral research project in food design conducted at the University of Aveiro under the supervision of ID+, Institute for Research in Design, Media, and Culture.

¹ Ferreira, I. (2016). Criatividade nos Museus: Espaços “Entre” e Elementos de Mediação: Vol. 3. Coleção Estudos de Museu. Caleidoscópio.

Children as Receivers and Messengers for Health Education: Social Dynamics Behind the Circulation of «Food Messages» in School Settings

Nicolas Mendez Barreto

Université Paris Saclay

ERMES (Children as Receivers and Messengers for Health Education) is an interdisciplinary research project funded by the French National Research Agency (ANR-23-CE36-0009) for a four-year period (2024–2028). Its primary objective is to better understand the circulation of “food messages” (FMs) in school settings, how students use them in their daily lives, and the impact these messages have on children’s eating practices.

For the 2024/2025 academic year, ERMES will begin its first phase. Ethnographic observations are being conducted in four socio-economically diverse schools located in the Île-de-France region. This work has led to the collection of a large number of “food messages” received and conveyed by children at school. A categorization of the different types of FMs (informative, normative, written, oral, digital, etc.) is currently being developed.

At the same time, we aim to establish a typology of students based on relationships observed within classroom groups (popular, excluded, dominant, indifferent, engaged, outsider students, etc.). This will help us understand how children become active participants in the circulation of FMs in schools. Indeed, identifying the type of message and crossreferencing this information with the profiles of senders and recipients allows us to comprehend how (and why) some children replicate FMs within specific social interactions.

In this presentation, we will provide a description of our ethnographic study, present the categorization of FMs, and expose the typology of profiles illustrated with concrete examples from this research. The goal is to shed light on the uses and meanings of FMs and, consequently, the social dynamics that shape children’s discussions about school food or meals. By identifying forms of organization that allow children to discuss what they eat, express their food preferences, and, potentially, mobilize to voice their demands, we believe ERMES project has the potential to make significant contributions to experiences of food democracy.

Perceived Helpfulness of Online Nutrition Information for Primary School Students: Influence of Media Use, Gender, and Grade Level

Urška Kolar, Mitja Vrdelja, Hristo Hristov, Vida Fajdiga Turk, Nataša Delfar

National Institute of Public Health, Slovenia

From a public health communication perspective, it is important to track informationseeking patterns of different target groups to develop effective targeted public health campaigns.

This study explores how information use frequency, gender, and grade level influence primary school students' perceptions of helpfulness of online nutrition-related information. Using a sample of 16,869 primary school students (49.97% male, 51.03% female; 51.2% 6th grade, 48.8% 8th grade), we applied ordered logistic regression to analyze these relationships across different information sources.

Findings indicate that parents are the most trusted source of nutrition information, significantly more helpful than all other information sources ($p < 0.001$). Instagram, websites, and social media influencers are also rated as helpful.

Gender differences reveal that males engage with media nearly twice as often as females, and generally rate media sources as more helpful ($p < 0.001$). Males find radio particularly helpful (OR: 1.16, $p = 0.05$) but perceive websites and influencers as less helpful than females do. In contrast, females consistently report lower perceived helpfulness across multiple platforms.

Grade-level differences show that 8th graders perceive online nutrition information as significantly less helpful than 6th graders ($p < 0.001$), particularly when using media daily. For instance, 6th graders find Instagram and websites less helpful than other sources, while 8th graders do not differentiate between these platforms. Overall, younger students and males find nutrition information more useful, while older students and females report lower perceived helpfulness across media.

These findings suggest that frequency of use, gender, and grade level strongly influence the perceived helpfulness of nutrition-related information, with males and younger students finding it more helpful overall. Parents remain the most reliable source, while older students and females, compared to their counterparts, report lower perceived helpfulness across multiple media platforms. Our findings underscore the need for age- and gender-specific strategies in nutrition communication.

Libraries and Food Democracy: New Practices on Food Knowledge Mediation

Laurence Favier, Simona De Iulio

Université de Lille

While public libraries' engagement with sustainable development has been clearly established for two decades, their growing involvement in food democracy raises intriguing questions about the evolution of their social role. This presentation examines how French public libraries are developing food-related initiatives and explores their potential contribution to food democracy through knowledge mediation.

This emerging phenomenon challenges conventional understandings of library missions. When libraries host cooking workshops, establish seed exchanges, or participate in community food festivals, they venture beyond traditional information provision toward active community engagement. Yet this expansion raises key questions: How do libraries balance their cultural and educational mandates with these new social functions? What forms of knowledge do they actually mediate in food-related activities?

Drawing on exploratory research of French library practices and a detailed case study of Villeneuve d'Ascq's Till l'Espiègle library, this presentation traces how policy evolution has enabled this transformation. Libraries evolved from complete absence in 2010 food policy guidance to explicit recognition as community partners by 2019, coinciding with the expansion of Territorial Food Projects across France.

The analysis reveals three distinct approaches: informational (specialized collections and seed libraries), event-based (workshops and community meals), and territorial integration (participation in local food strategies). However, the case study reveals a significant tension: while policy frameworks often position libraries as nutrition educators, practitioners explicitly prioritize social connection and cultural sharing over didactic approaches, emphasizing "sharing and joy" rather than formal education.

This tension illuminates broader questions about "knowledge democracy"—the democratization of diverse knowledge forms necessary for effective food democracy. The presentation argues that libraries occupy a unique position to facilitate connections between expert knowledge, popular wisdom, and local experience, but questions remain about how effectively they can bridge these different forms of knowledge and whether their interventions genuinely enhance democratic participation in food systems.

Making Food Democracy An Educational Framework for Sustainable Consumption Practices in Higher Education

Eleonora Noia, Silvia Mazzucotelli Salice

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan

The increasing societal concern for sustainability, particularly among younger generations, reflects a significant shift in values and priorities that extends into food practices and consumption¹. This study explores a university course designed as an educational platform to advance food democracy and sustainability, bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application.

Building on previous research into educational initiatives for sustainability^{2,3}, this course was designed to actively engage students in reflecting on their consumption practices about issues of transparency, quality, justice, social and environmental justice, and democracy.

Using an autoethnographic approach, students maintained a “sustainability diary” throughout the semester. A textual analysis of the 78 diaries provided insights into their behaviors as measured by two validated scales: the Environmental Action Scale, which highlights social and political engagement, and a scale centered on everyday sustainable practices such as conserving water, reducing consumption and waste, and purchasing organic or plant-based foods⁴.

Preliminary findings reveal that students found it easier to adopt small, everyday sustainable actions, such as reducing waste and choosing organic foods, while broader environmental actions requiring social or political engagement were less frequently pursued. Moreover, the act of seeking information emerged as a crucial factor in shaping students’ awareness and actions regarding sustainable food practices. Students identified the course as a vital source of information, suggesting that it transformed into an educational platform that transcended traditional academic frameworks

Our findings support the idea that experiential and reflective practices within educational settings can promote a deeper understanding of sustainability and foster behavioral changes, highlighting the critical role of education in advancing food democracy. This study contributes to ongoing discussions about the intersection of media, education, and sustainability, offering insights into how academic courses can serve as catalysts for broader societal change.

¹ Mazzucotelli Salice, S., & Mora, E. (2023). I consumi dei giovani. *La giovane Italia*, 4(23), 104–112.

² Noia E., Pérez Bou S., Mazzucotelli Salice S., Carini L., Burguera Pérez M.A. (2025) Digital, international, interdisciplinary learning: enhancing competences and changing mindset about sustainability in fashion and food. In “Nuevos aprendizajes tecnologizados con aplicaciones culturales y didácticas”, *Ciencias sociales en abierto*, ISBN 978-3-631-91604-9 – In press

³ Pérez-Bou, S., Burguera, M. Á., Mazzucotelli Salice, S., & Carini, L. (2024). Education for sustainability: The link between food and fashion industries, case-based learning. *Fashion for the Common Good. Proceedings of the Global Fashion Conference*, November 16–18, 2023, 175–190.

⁴ Oinonen, I., Paloniemi, R. (2023) Understanding and measuring young people’s sustainability actions *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 91 (2023) 102-124.

Panel 6
**Memory, Heritage, and
Food Democracy**

Reanimating Appalachia: Women Chefs Advancing the Region Through Food

Wendy Atkins-Sayre

University of Memphis

Ashli Stokes

University of North Carolina

In Appalachia, the legacy of the frontier myth lingers, with the region read as white, male, and hypermasculine,¹ but that image does not account for the diversity of contributions creating Appalachia.² The study of regional food and foodways uncovers these cultural and political influences, where interpreting food reveals “our histories and traditions, our sense of culture, and our connections to one another and larger communities.”³ This essay accounts for the role of Appalachian women in changing the face of Appalachia through its food, revealing the diversity of cultures that have influenced the region. “How place is invoked, by whom, for what reasons matters”⁴ and women chefs have rhetorical impact in using food and food media to tell a different story of the region. Chef Nico Albert Williams highlights Cherokee foodways in creating Appalachian food. Chef Ashleigh Shanti emphasizes the role of African and African

American cultures in the food. Culinary experts Ronni Lundy and Sheri Castle challenge white pioneer mythology. Undertaking a rhetorical analysis of mediated and written texts created by or featuring these activists, we note emerging themes that construct an alternative region, one that democratizes the food of Appalachia. We employ a feminist/intersectional textual lens to better understand how rhetors use their embodied experiences to change the face of Appalachia, showing that “experiential knowledge, knowledge linked to and emerging from our corporeality” can be powerful.⁵ The act of cooking rhetorically/materially invents a diverse Appalachia, highlighting the diverse history that forms the region. The “production and control of space”⁶ plays a large part in inequality where these women’s rhetorical actions help reimagine the region, cooking to create a different “food voice.”

¹ Ashli Quesinberry Stokes and Wendy Atkins-Sayre, 2024, *Hungry Roots: How Food Communicates Appalachia’s Search for Resilience*, Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.

² Stokes & Atkins-Sayre, 2024

³ Anna Marjorie Young & Justin Eckstein, “The Terroir and Topoi of the Lowcountry,” in *Cookery: Food Rhetorics and Social Production*, Donovan Conley & Justin Eckstein, eds., 43, Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2020.

⁴ Dwight B. Billings and Ann E. Kingsolver, “Introduction: Place matters,” in *Appalachia in Regional Context: Place Matters*, Dwight B. Billings and Ann E. Kingsolver, eds., 4, 2020

⁵ Hailey Nicole Otis, 2019, “Intersectional rhetoric: Where intersectionality as analytic sensibility and embodied rhetorical praxis converge,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 105(4), 372.

⁶ Barbara Ellen Smith, “Transforming Places: Toward a Global Politics of Appalachia,” in *Appalachia in Regional Context: Place Matters*, Dwight B. Billings and Ann E. Kingsolver, eds., 52, 2020

Official Heritage vs. Edible Memories: Contesting Authenticity in Singapore's Hawker Culture

Amy DePierre

University of Colorado, Denver

When UNESCO inscribed Singapore's hawker culture as intangible cultural heritage in 2020, it elevated street food vendors into celebrated national icons—but whose vision of authenticity was enshrined in this official recognition? Drawing on historical analysis, theories of heritage-making, and contemporary ethnographic scholarship, this talk investigates how institutional narratives selectively validate particular culinary practices and traditions to reshape the already contested boundaries of authenticity and heritage. Singapore's hawkers—once portrayed as informal, itinerant nuisances—are now curated as symbols of national identity. State institutions determine which dishes and practices are deemed representative and thus valorized. Yet this institutionalization of certain culinary identities risks marginalizing alternative food histories, limiting culinary creativity, and restricting participation in Singapore's evolving foodscape. Official recognition—despite positive intentions—privileges static and sanitized versions over dynamic, lived food experiences and inadvertently constrains the democratic and diverse practices that originally made hawker culture meaningful. By analyzing the tensions between government-sanctioned heritage preservation and sensory-rich food memories cherished by local communities, this work contributes to broader discussions on heritage politics, the social construction of authenticity, and cultural memory in urban foodways. Foregrounding competing narratives and ongoing contestations over Singapore's hawker culture, this exploration prompts essential questions: Whose culinary stories gain legitimacy in the global spotlight? Whose food memories and practices are marginalized or erased? And critically, what spaces remain for diverse, democratic foodways to thrive beyond official narratives?

Feasting & Fasting: How Ramadan's Food Rituals Influence Social and Psychological Health

Charlotte De Backer, Andrea Codina-Fernandez, Sarah Ahannach, Sarah Van den Bosch, Isabel Erreygers, Inas Rahou, Samira El Messaoudi, Yukta Pai, Marit Van der Poel, Sarah Lebeer

Food is more than sustenance—it serves as a social glue that binds people together.

Commensality (eating together) fosters conviviality (pleasant sociability), which in turn may result in health benefits. Anthropologists and sociologists such as Mary Douglas, Roland Barthes, and Claude Lévi-Strauss have argued that food choices, preparation, and dining contexts form a system of communication that reflects a group's social structure.

Some food practices become ritualized, occurring at specific times within cultural or religious frameworks. However, little is known about how such food rituals function as a complete process and their role in shaping group belonging and well-being. This study addresses this gap by exploring Ramadan as a case study, focusing on how commensality influences social and psychological experiences.

In 2024, 48 women completed weekly surveys over 10 weeks surrounding Ramadan. Findings show that eating together with family increased significantly during Ramadan ($p < .01$), accompanied by a rise in perceived closeness ($p < .001$), which slightly declined post-Ramadan. Workplace commensality decreased ($p < .001$), and closeness with colleagues temporarily increased but later declined ($p = .012$). Self-perceived stress levels dropped significantly during Ramadan ($p = .003$), suggesting potential psychosocial benefits of fasting.

We are currently replicating the survey study during Ramadan 2025 and will add qualitative insights from 20 in-depth interviews with Ramadan participants to further explore the meaning and impact of these changes. By integrating survey and interview data, this research aims to deepen our understanding of how food rituals like Ramadan shape social connections, stress regulation, and well-being.

“A Bite of China”: From Documentary to Hashtag

Shan Gao

Université de Lille

“舌尖上的美食” (shé jiān shàng de měi shí , A Bite of China) is a documentary broadcast by CCTV1 in 2012 that explores Chinese culinary traditions through the stories of ordinary people. It was an unprecedented success in China and gave rise to the expression “舌尖上的 XXX,” ranked among the top ten neologisms of 2012 by a renowned educational institution in China.

Since then, 舌尖 (shé jiān, “the tip of the tongue”) has been associated with gastronomy.

On the occasion of the broadcast of the fourth season in February 2025, we propose to analyze the content generated by Internet users as well as the phenomena associated with the hashtag #舌尖上的中国# on Sina Weibo, a Chinese digital social network (Cardon 2011; Ellison and Boyd 2013). Our study is based on a corpus of publications that appeared between 2012 and 2025, focusing in particular on the periods around the documentary’s broadcasts (May 2012, April 2014, February 2018, and February 2025). Through a digital discourse analysis inspired by an ecological approach (Longhi 2020; Paveau 2012, 2017), we aim to examine how internet users develop transmedia practices (Jenkins 2003) around the documentary and how these interactions contribute to the construction of food knowledge, culinary education, and the formation of a collective memory.

We hypothesize that these digital practices reflect a collective appropriation of Chinese culinary heritage by internet users. Through their sharing and storytelling, they contribute to enriching and redefining this cultural heritage.

The Democratising Dead: Calendrical Complexity, Commemorative Holidays, and Culinary Continuity across Time

Anthony F. Buccini

Independent Scholar

This paper shows how the seemingly thoroughly Roman Catholic calendar of holidays in Southern Italy and their associated expressions through food are inextricably intertwined with the region's religious (Sabellic/Greek/Roman) calendar(s) of classical antiquity, which upon further examination is in turn clearly related to a more basic solar calendar and even more closely to an agricultural calendar specific to the region. These elements of time are further connected to a systematic opposition between celebratory and solemn holidays, which are expressed through food in markedly differing ways with markedly different implications for the relationship between continuity and change. These differing culinary expressions of the two kinds of holidays superficially involve contrasts in status according to Roman Catholic rules regarding nonabstinence and (partial or complete) abstinence from terrestrial animal products but beneath the Church-based rules lie older, no less symbolically charged uses of food.

While celebratory holidays, occasions when the non-elite might – as best they can – splurge on foods they normally cannot afford, serve as a conduit for influences from elite circles down the socio-economic scale, Southern Italian solemn holidays not only require abstinence according to Church rules and/or local tradition but are also marked at table for all social classes by the consumption of humble foods that often bear overt or covert symbolic meanings and on these occasions culinary innovation has until recently been strongly eschewed. Examined against the backdrop of the aforementioned calendars, it becomes clear that the solemn holidays are commemorative events connected to local environment, ethnic identity, and a reverence for ancestors: The quasi-ritualised solemn holiday meal is a form of communication between the living and the dead. It follows that solemn repasts not only can but must include foods that remain unchanged through time, across many centuries and even millennia, and bind together all members of the community.

Panel 7

Communicating New Foods

Ecomodernism, Cultured Meat and the Search for the «Middle Landscape»

Andreja Vezovnik

University of Ljubljana

Leo Marx's seminal work, *Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, continues to offer invaluable insights into the evolving relationship between technology and nature, particularly in contemporary debates surrounding food production.

This paper examines the relevance of Marx's concepts to the discourse on cultured meat, a burgeoning biotechnological innovation in the food sector. By drawing on Marx's analysis of the tension between technology and nature, we explore how the cultured meat industry navigates this dichotomy, often echoing Marx's notion of the "middle landscape" as a fusion of nature and technology. Through an analysis of discourses surrounding cultured meat, we elucidate how the industry constructs notions of nature and technology, and how these constructions intersect with the ideals of the "middle landscape". Using examples from audiovisual and written promotional materials, we decode the cultural significance attributed to cultured meat and its implications for contemporary food imaginaries. Additionally, we contextualize the discourse on cultured meat within broader debates on ecomodernism, highlighting the socio-political dimensions of technological innovation in food production.

By revisiting Marx's insights, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex social dynamics shaping contemporary food systems and environmental discourse.

Shaping Food Democracy: Political Discourse on the Regulation of Cellular Meat in France

Melis Aras

Université de Nantes

Sandrine Barrey

Université de Toulouse

Food is a collective issue, involving not only consumers but also legislators, professionals, researchers and, more broadly, society as a whole - a reality that is particularly evident in the context of the development of cellular meat. Although cellular meat represents a significant scientific breakthrough and introduces a complex technicality that is not easily understood by everyone, it has a profound impact on food culture and is becoming everyone's concern, an argument that is often put forward in political discourse. In France, the political debate on cellular meat is currently in full swing, as evidenced by the intensity of parliamentary debates.

To date, three legislative proposals aim to ban the production and marketing of cellular meat, while an article of law prohibits its use in collective catering services. There have also been around ten parliamentary questions mainly concerning France's position on cellular food, as well as various reports and information documents on the challenges of innovation and sustainable food systems, one of which focuses exclusively on cellular meat. The aim of this proposal is to understand, through the study of political discourse and by adopting an analytical approach and a methodology based on data analysis, how is food democracy being shaped in the context of the development of cellular meat: What are the arguments and who defends them?

What is their nature - technical, economic, socio-cultural, etc.? How can the relationships between these arguments be described - as convergent, conflicting, hierarchical? How are policy arguments made available to the public, and how can the public's right to information about them be ensured? This study also aims to understand the role of political discourse in ensuring the transparency of food systems, access to information, the protection of individual rights and freedoms and, more broadly, the promotion of food democracy (Theme 3).

Politics of the Plate: How Dutch Politicians Communicate about Emerging Food Technologies

Madhura Rao, Noor Wiersma

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

The Netherlands, recognised globally for its leadership in agri-food innovation, offers a compelling case for analysing the intersection of political communication and food technology. Within Dutch parliamentary debates, food innovation has emerged as an important theme, with discussions often reflecting the societal, economic, and cultural dimensions of technological advancement. Our study examines the discourse on food innovation within these debates, focusing on how politicians frame emerging food production technologies to shape public perception and influence policy.

Through discourse analysis of 35 parliamentary debates from 2020 to 2024, complemented by expert interviews, we explore the rhetorical strategies used by Dutch politicians to discuss their parties' views on food innovation. The analysis reveals that cultured meat and the protein transition are the most discussed food innovation topics, with debates often concentrating on the economic and social implications of new technologies while avoiding discussion of technical aspects.

Politicians were found to strategically tailor their messages to resonate with various stakeholders, such as consumers and businesses, frequently invoking cultural identity and national pride to strengthen their arguments. The study highlights a notable tension between promoting technological advancements and addressing conservative concerns related to tradition and food safety. Overall, while there is broad support for food innovation across the political spectrum, the framing of these issues is closely tied to the politicians' and their parties' ideological positions. As the Dutch political landscape experiences a drastic ideological shift in the coming years, these dynamics are likely to play an important role in determining the trajectory of food production, with implications for both domestic policy and international relations.

Public Discourses of Alternative Protein Foods: A 2014-2024 Review of Facebook Public Pages' Posts

Weiyu Zhang

National University of Singapore

Bingyan Wang

Tsinghua University

"Alternative protein" (AP) refers to protein sources that are different from conventional animal-based proteins. This category encompasses a variety of sources and production methods, and is primarily driven by factors like sustainability, health, ethical concerns about animal welfare, and the need to feed a growing global population. Types of alternative proteins include plant-based proteins, cultured or cell-based meat, insect protein, mycoprotein derived from fungi, algae and seaweed protein, and fermented proteins. Among the various types, plant-based and cell-based alternative proteins have captured the highest interests from both the scientific community and the public. Despite of the scientific and commercial breakthroughs in developing alternative protein foods, public understanding and acceptance of alternative protein foods have been growing but rather slowly. Most current studies attributed the slow public acceptance of AP foods to consumer perceptions. Our paper takes a broadened approach to go beyond consumers and understand public discourses around AP foods.

This paper compares Facebook public pages' posts on two most prominent types of AP foods, plant-based vs. cell-based foods. Our paper took advantage of CrowdTangle, a data platform provided by Meta (Facebook's parent company), before the platform was closed down in 2024. Through analyzing the topics and sentiments of public pages' English content in the decade of 2014 to 2024, we found that (1) public attention on plant-based foods dropped since 2021, while attention on cell-based foods showed an uneven growth; (2) public sentiments towards plant-based foods were consistently positive, while sentiments towards cell-based foods were clearly more mixed; (3) discussion topics under plant-based foods were more practical and diverse than topics under cell-based foods; (4) the leading actors talking about AP foods were enterprises & industry, media, and organizations, suggesting that scientific discourses might not be impactful on public discourses.

Resisting Corporate Power Through Networked Advocacy: Communication Mechanisms in Global Food Policy Diffusion

Susana Ramírez

University of California, Merces

The global spread of ultra-processed foods represents one of the most significant public health challenges of our time. Yet this crisis has sparked innovative policy responses, particularly from Latin America, where food policy advocates have achieved unprecedented success in regulating corporate marketing practices. Their successes demonstrate how strategic communication can advance food democracy in the face of powerful industry opposition. This study examines the communication mechanisms through which advocacy coalitions facilitate the global diffusion of these policy innovations, challenging conventional assumptions about policy flows from the Global North to South. Integrating frameworks from transnational advocacy networks, frame alignment processes, and policy learning networks, I analyze how coalitions leverage communication strategies to challenge corporate control of food systems.

Drawing on semi-structured interviews with key informants across the policy process (N=32) and critical discourse analysis of policy documents and advocacy materials from five countries (2012-2024), I identify three key mechanisms enabling successful policy translation: (1) strategic frame adaptation, where scientific evidence is repackaged to resonate with local political contexts while maintaining technical legitimacy; (2) coordinated counter-messaging that enables consistent opposition to industry while allowing cultural adaptation; and (3) networked knowledge exchange facilitating rapid learning and policy refinement. This analysis reveals how advocacy coalitions function as dynamic learning networks, simultaneously maintaining message consistency while enabling local adaptation. This process has proven particularly effective in countering corporate communication power, as demonstrated by the rapid diffusion of front-of-package warning label policies from Chile throughout Latin America and beyond. This research advances understanding of how communication processes shape policy diffusion while contributing to food democracy by challenging corporate control over food environments. The success of these advocacy networks in translating policies across diverse cultural and political contests suggests new opportunities for resistance to corporate power and promotes democratic control over food systems.

Panel 8
**Corporate Organizations
and Social Responsibility**

Challenging Food Narratives: A Discourse Analysis of Agro-Food Representations in a Belgian Alternative Media

Sabri Derinöz

Université Catholique de Louvain

Food narratives play a central role in shaping public perceptions of food systems, sustainability, and the agro-food industry. Contesting the general framing of food in the media, mostly focused on lifestyle with little perspectives on sustainability,¹ some “alternative media”^{2,3,4} seek to challenge dominant discourses by offering critical and transformative perspectives on food-related issues.

This communication examines the food-related narratives constructed in an alternative francophone Belgian media outlet specializing in agro-food issues.

Through a mixed-method approach of statistical textual analysis and qualitative discourse analysis⁵, this research identifies the dominant framings of food and the food industry within the outlet’s content. It addresses two key questions: What are the recurring narratives about food systems, sustainability, and the agro-food industry in this media outlet? (2) Do these narratives align with the media’s editorial positioning and its ambition to foster public debate? The corpus is retrieved of 18 months of printed publications (307 637 words), during the years 2023-2024.

Findings reveal three central discursive frames: (1) a systemic critique of industrial agro-food models, highlighting issues of economic power, environmental degradation, and corporate influence; (2) the promotion of alternative, localized, and community-based food systems, emphasizing sustainability, ethical consumption, and agroecology; and (3) the personalization of food-related issues through storytelling and lived experiences, positioning individuals and grassroots initiatives. These narratives seem to contribute to a counter-hegemonic discourse on food, challenging several perspectives on food production and promoting transparency, sustainability, and civic engagement.

By examining how alternative media construct and disseminate food narratives, this research provides insights into the role of independent journalism in shaping public debates about food systems and the challenges of maintaining editorial coherence in the pursuit of social transformation.

¹ Framing Food in the News: Still Keeping the Politics out of the Broccoli ». *Journalism Practice* 18, no 10 (25 novembre 2024): 2712-34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2022.2153074>.

² Atton, Chris. *The Routledge Companion to Alternative and Community Media*. First published in paperback. Routledge Companions. Abingdon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2019.

³ Ihlebæk, Karoline Andrea, et Tine Ustad Figenschou. « Challengers in the journalistic field – A study of alternative media and their relations to incumbents, governance units, the state, and each other ». *Journalism*, 20 décembre 2024, 14648849241309848. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849241309848>.

⁴ Peeters, Maud, et Pieter Maesele. « A Field of Their Own. Examining Alternative Media’s Balancing Act Between Independence, Community and Survival ». *Journalism Practice* 19, no 3 (2023): 488-501. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2023.2197414>.

⁵ Derinöz, Sabri. « La diversité dans la presse belge francophone : enjeux autour de la circulation d’une formule ». *Mots. Les langages du politique*, no 131 (1 mai 2023): 51-70. <https://doi.org/10.4000/mots.30894>.

A Cheese for a More Inclusive Society: Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of CSR in Swedish Food Retail

Helen Andersson

Örebro University

This paper examines the corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability efforts of the Swedish food retailer ICA from a communicative perspective. By focusing on two CSR projects, Folke and Matchkorven, it aims to illustrate how common CSR themes intertwine with national and cultural values in the communicative activities of a food retailer within a welfare society like Sweden.

Scandinavian countries are often recognized as leaders in CSR and sustainability¹. In Sweden, CSR and sustainability have become integral to many companies' strategic considerations, largely due to legislation². Additionally, values related to equity, sustainability and animal welfare are often incorporated into the branding and marketing of domestic food products³. This study examines how two specific food products are produced, branded, and rebranded to position food production and consumption, as well as Swedish food retailing, as means of supporting a vibrant nation and countryside.

The data consists of texts, imagery, and short films available on the ICA website. The analysis draws on principles of Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis⁴ and van Leeuwen's concept of the recontextualization of social practices⁵. By examining various semiotic artifacts and multimodal representations, the analysis reveals how themes such as inclusion, community, health, and a strong civil and Swedish society are emphasized. Through its communicative efforts, ICA constructs itself as a 'corporate citizen', actively contributing to the needs and identity of the nation.

¹ SAGE. Strand, R., Freeman, R. E., & Hockerts, K. (2015). Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability in Scandinavia: An Overview. *Journal of business ethics*, 127(1), 1-15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2224-6>

² Frostenson, M. (2021). Corporate Social Responsibility in Sweden. In S. O. Idowu (Ed.), *Current Global Practices of Corporate Social Responsibility: In the Era of Sustainable Development Goals* (pp. 351-365). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-68386-3_16

³ Andersson, H. (2019). Recontextualizing Swedish nationalism for commercial purposes: a multimodal analysis of a milk marketing event. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 16(5), 583- 603. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17405904.2019.1637761>

⁴ Machin, D., & Mayr, A. (2023). *How to do critical discourse analysis : a multimodal introduction* (Second edition ed.).

⁵ van Leeuwen, T. (2008). *Discourse and practice: new tools for critical discourse analysis*. Oxford University Press. <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/toc/ecip0719/2007023090.html>

The Company, Territory of Food Democracy? Elements of Surveys on Eating Practices at Work in the Prism of the Concept of «Food Democracy»

Thomas Heller, Elodie Sevin, Fabiola Leone

Université de Lille

Is an industrial company a place where food democracy practices can be deployed? Can food be a gateway to introduce democratic type practices into business? To what extent do the concerns of an employee food management, and how these are updated in speeches and practices, are part of such a logic?

We rely on the concept of food democracy developed by Dominique Paturel (Paturel & Ndiaye, 2020) following Lang (1999) and Booth/Coveney (2015), which, in addition to "the claim of citizens to regain control over how to access food in its reconnection to agriculture" (Paturel, 2018), envisages food and therefore (involving production, distribution, consumption), and as a function (sanitary, social, identity and hedonic).

For three years we conducted an investigation into eating practices in an industrial company in the automotive sector with around 150 employees. This research, motivated by health reasons, aims for the formulation of recommendations for the development of an info-communication policy in terms of food at work. There is no question of "food democracy". Nevertheless, by many aspects, the research approach as much as the practices and speeches around food, carried by management, allow to advance that links are possible. However, the demonstration of these links also makes visible the limits of such a democracy, which the working conditions and management mode do not favor. This is why the concept of "food democracy" is useful: it defines a horizon from which it is possible to take a critical look at these concerns, updated in research project and concrete practices.

In this communication, after a return to the concept of "food democracy" and after having briefly presented our research, we will stop on 2 situations which carry the ferments of a logic of food democracy:

- The participatory approach as a survey method and listening device to the test of industrial reality.
- Make the factory the land of a handling of the food question: the orchard and the Postager project.

It appears, through our investigation, that a democratic type approach is problematic and that food does not constitute an entry to see such an approach deploying. But the subject of food, and in particular when it is established from health issues, does not easily lend itself to such an approach, taking into account the knowledge it implies and the potential power it gives to the one who masters them.

Lecture Hall Keynote

Food Democracy, Knowledge Circulation and Pathways to Food Literacy

Susan Kovacs

ENSSIB Lyon

In this talk Susan Kovacs explores the ways in which food democracy principles intersect with the goals of food literacy and food knowledge circulation. She considers how food knowledge construction and sharing form an important foundation for collectively addressing food justice and food inequality while fostering engagement and the participatory exchange of ideas. Yet as shown by recent research on food literacy programs and dispositives in the French secondary school environment, these preoccupations are mostly absent in learning situations due in part to the nutritionist paradigm which holds significant sway over teaching practice despite calls to open food education to holistic approaches addressing the complex political and sociocultural problematics of food systems, food identities and food injustice.

While recent initiatives by young people can be said to adhere in many ways to principles of food democracy through experiential and affective approaches to knowledge sharing in a « literacy pathway » paradigm, a closer look at some of these initiatives reveals underlying tensions involving the relation to information, modes of governance and participant recruitment.

Panel 9
**Farmers and
Producers Narratives**

The Farming Futures Cycle Tour: Co-creating Visions of Future Farming

Veronica White

University of Exeter

We live in a visual world, where images are deeply intertwined in our everyday lives. By influencing the actions we take in the present, images of the future shape the futures we are able to achieve¹. As brown² argues, we are in “an imagination battle” for the future, with images for the future typically created by individuals and organisations that already hold power. For example, current images of the future of farming often provide a narrow techno-optimistic vision of the future, excluding the lived experiences of farmers. To democratise these future images, farmers and the wider farming community must be involved in processes of envisioning alternative and just farming futures.

Taking a sequential, mixed methods approach, my research aims to diversify visions for the future of farming and food production in England. Recognising that women have historically been overlooked in research on farming and futuring, my recruitment focuses on women in farming communities across England. To engage participants across different geographic and farming contexts, my PhD fieldwork will be conducted as I cycle across England. The Farming Futures Cycle Tour is a humanpowered, low-carbon expedition, offering a timely and creative response to the sustainability challenges posed by international geographical expeditions. The multi-sited ethnography, combining interviews with farm women, participant observation in rural spaces, and auto-ethnographic reflections of cycling through farmed landscapes.

As an academic and an artist, my fieldwork will be captured in field journals, as well as through photographs, videos, and audio recordings. In this session, I will share a short video from my fieldwork, highlighting the joys and challenges of undertaking a cycling-based ethnography in rural spaces. I will then reflect on the use of long-distance cycling as a creative approach to engaging underrepresented voices to diversify future farming visions.

¹ Dator, J., 2019. Jim Dator: A No;cer in Time: Selected work, 1967-2018. Cham: Springer InternaConal Publishing.

² brown, a.m., 2017. Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds. Edinburgh: AK Press.

³ Sorvali, J., Varho, V., Rikkonen, P., Kaseva, J., and Peltonen-Sainio, P., 2024. Farmers' futures: an applicaCon of the Delphi method in the context of Finnish agriculture. European Journal of Futures Research, 12 (1), 5.

I Farmer: Narratives about Self, Land and the Future of Farming

Ana Tominc, David McBey, Marko Stace
Queen Margaret University Edinburgh

Benjamin McCormick
Aberdeen University

Farmers primarily produce food, but new subsidy requirements increasingly demand that they also deliver other public goods, which may conflict with their identity as food producers. These shifting expectations can influence how they respond to policy changes, as research suggests that identity plays a crucial role in decision-making¹. Rather than being driven solely by rational economic considerations, farmers' decisions are shaped by a complex interplay of business needs, experience, incomplete information, traditions, and identity—particularly in relation to gender, nationality, and social class.

To understand the role of identity in farmer decision-making, we analyze data from ten semistructured interviews conducted in January–February 2025. Male and female farmers aged 35 to 55 were recruited from a diverse range of Scottish farms—including dairy, soft fruit, upland sheep grazing, mixed cereal and ruminants, and specialist crops—to examine how they construct their identities, communities, and farms through language in different agricultural contexts.

Drawing on this data, the presentation will explore key themes related to identity and farmers' relationships within the Scottish food system and broader society. These include concepts of tradition versus progress, family, the environment, and farming stereotypes, as seen in preliminary findings. Given the significant gap in research on how farmers, as a social group, perceive and define themselves, this study addresses an important area of inquiry with direct implications for shaping food and environmental policy.

¹ van der Gaag, M.A.E., van den Berg, P., Kunnen, E.S. et al. A simulation model shows how individual differences affect major life decisions. *Palgrave Commun* 6, 67 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0446-z>

Mobilizing Communication: Preserving Cooperative Production and Taste Diversity in Comté Cheese (1990-2015)

Christy Shields Argeles

The American University of Paris

This paper examines how strategic communication channels helped preserve cooperative structures and taste diversity in eastern France's Comté cheese industry during a period of intense pressure toward standardization. Through analysis of the jury terroir's cooperative tasting approach, we demonstrate how a unique sensory vocabulary, developed through existing democratic practices, was strategically communicated and reinforced throughout the production chain via three key channels: scientific publications, local media coverage, and production specifications. We argue that this multi-modal communication strategy was essential for defending the cooperative fruitière system and its diverse taste expressions against homogenizing market forces.

Drawing from extensive ethnographic research and archival analysis, we trace how the jury terroir's aromatic descriptors moved from scientific validation through peer-reviewed publications to wider circulation via local press coverage of town hall meetings. These community gatherings served as crucial forums where scientific findings were reframed through cultural narratives of place and practice. Finally, we show how this "logic of terroir" was codified in production specifications through cooperative deliberation, reinforcing existing democratic structures that protect taste diversity.

This case study illuminates how strategic communication can support local food systems by: 1) validating the value of taste diversity through multiple forms of authority (scientific, cultural, legal), 2) strengthening existing cooperative decision-making through transparent public dialogue, and 3) protecting place-based production systems through collective governance structures. Our findings contribute to discussions of how communication practices help resist standardization while preserving cooperative relationships and taste diversity in food systems. The Comté example offers insights for other food communities seeking to maintain their cooperative structures and distinctive characteristics in the face of homogenizing pressures.

Panel 10
Media and Food Culture

Democratizing Porridge: Personal Narratives in Social Media Branding of Grød

Stinne Gunder Strøm Krogager

Aalborg University

Jonatan Leer

Örebro University

In many cultures porridge has been a cost-effective, plant-based and healthy staple for centuries. With the industrialization of meat production, it has increasingly been replaced by meat-based diets. Porridge has thus gained an image of food for children, the poor, and the sick. In 2011, a young Danish man tried to rebrand and democratize porridge. Struggling with obesity and bad habits, Lasse Skjønning Andersen's path to weight loss and higher self-esteem became a daily porridge ritual. Today, he is CEO at the successful brand Grød. It started as one small porridge bar in Copenhagen in 2011 and now counts 10 porridge bars across the two largest cities in Denmark, a web shop and several cookbooks.

In this paper, we explore the branding and aesthetic framing of Lasse Skjønning Andersen's entrepreneurial way to health and success. We do so through qualitative analysis of Grød's

Instagram profile, cookbooks and news articles. We highlight certain tensions within the Grød narrative between on the one hand porridge as a symbol of an aesthetized everyday lifestyle, hip urban community, and entrepreneurial mindset and on the other hand porridge as a symbol of mild discipline and self-control. We discuss this in relation to Reckwitz's (2019) diagnosis of societies of singularities to understand how mundane foods can be elevated into unique cultural products because of the way they are curated through social media aesthetics and influencer economy.

New Kid on the Block?! Excessive Cooking Shows in the Cooking Show Ecology

Rita Tamara Vallentin, Sofia Rüdiger

Freie Universität Berlin

Cooking shows have changed significantly over the past decades, from instructional formats to competitive to entertainment-driven and spoof productions¹. An as of yet understudied phenomenon within this ecology is what can be termed ‘excessive cooking shows’.

They form part of carnivalesque online food videos, adding to excessive online performances of eating², as they push the boundaries of culinary spectacle through amplified aesthetics of excessive food production. This paper examines excessive cooking shows as a distinct sub-genre within the broader cooking show ecology, exploring their thematic, performative and linguistic elements in comparison to other cooking show formats and to other carnivalesque online food videos.

Using a corpus of 100 excessive cooking shows by 10 YouTubers, we show how recurring elements of supersizing, impracticality, unsafe food handling, non-expertise and satire subvert established elements of the cooking show genre. We further discuss excessive cooking shows in relation to excessive language use (swearwords, highly affective language, loudness). Ultimately, this paper argues that excessive cooking shows function as a site of culinary transgression that both critiques and reinforces digitally mediated food discourses. While traditional cooking shows have long shaped culinary norms, these formats rely on spectacle and exaggeration, often bypassing conventional markers of expertise and practicality. Thus, by situating excessive cooking shows within the broader ecology of cooking shows, this paper explores how forms of excess in food production shape the ways in which food is presented, consumed and understood.

¹ Mühleisen, S. (2022). Brutal spoons and cheesy gloves: The formal, the informal and the spoof cooking show on web stage. *Internet Pragmatics*, 5(1), 92–114.

² Rüdiger, S. (2022). Intimate consumptions: YouTube eating shows and the performance of informality. *Internet Pragmatics*, 5(1), 115–142.

I See Fruit, but They Eat Ultra-Processed Snacks: Content Analysis of Food Incidents in America's Top Popular Shows 2013-2024

Eulàlia Puig Abril

University of Illinois

Inadequate food intake—characterized by the overconsumption of unhealthy foods and insufficient intake of nutritious options—is the leading contributor to chronic disease¹ and mortality^{2,3,4}. Among various communicative food environments, the mass media play a significant role in modeling eating behaviors^{5,6} and influencing dietary habits (Walsh-Childers, 2016) through symbolic representation and positionality of food objects⁷.

The present study examines food portrayals in popular television shows from 2012 to 2023 using content analysis. It investigates the presence of Ultra-Processed (UPF) and homemade foods and the macronutritional profile of the foods portrayed on screen, comparing engaged (e.g., eaten) from background foods. The sample includes the top-rated show for each 2013-2023 television season, as identified by Variety rankings, plus the eight longest-running shows still airing during the study (see Table 1). This selection method ensures representation across network, cable, and streaming platforms, capturing a broad spectrum of adult-oriented television. We randomly selected seven episodes per show, yielding a total of 125 episodes (approximately 86 hours of content). A team of six researchers coded the sample using a codebook, defining a food incident as any instance where food appears on screen, is referenced, or both. This approach allowed us to capture not only direct food consumption but also background food imagery often overlooked in past studies⁸. Intercoder reliability was strong (K-alpha=.82). Findings show that the most eaten foods are UPF snacks, while home cooking is rare.

Conversely, spices and fruit bowls are some of the most present items in the background. In terms of nutrients, carbohydrates are overwhelmingly present, with very little protein or fat, which is generally understood as suboptimal⁹.

1 Bays, H. E., Taub, P. R., Epstein, E., Michos, E. D., Ferraro, R. A., Bailey, A. L., Kelli, H. M., Ferdinand, K. C., Echols, M. R., Weintraub, H., Bostrom, J., Johnson, H. M., Hoppe, K. K., Shapiro, M. D., German, C. A., Virani, S. S., Hussain, A., Ballantyne, C. M., Agha, A. M., & Toth, P. P. (2021). Ten things to know about ten cardiovascular disease risk factors. *American Journal of Preventive Cardiology*, 5, 100149. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajpc.2021.100149>

2 Carrera-Bastos, P., Fontes-Villalba, Maelan, O'Keefe, James, Lindeberg, Staffan, & Cordain, Loren. (2011). The western diet and lifestyle and diseases of civilization. *Research Reports in Clinical Cardiology*, 2, 13–25. <https://doi.org/10.2147/RRCC.S16919>

3 Kopp, W. (2019). How Western Diet And Lifestyle Drive The Pandemic Of Obesity And Civilization Diseases. *Diabetes, Metabolic Syndrome and Obesity: Targets and Therapy*, Volume 12, 2221–2236. <https://doi.org/10.2147/DMSO.S216791>

4 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, & National Center for Health Statistics. (2021). *Leading Causes of Death 2010-2019*.

5 Greenberg, B. S., Rosaen, S. F., Worrell, T. R., Salmon, C. T., & Volkman, J. E. (2009). A Portrait of Food and Drink in Commercial TV Series. *Health Communication*, 24(4), 295–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410230902889233>

6 Kaufman, L. (1980). Prime-Time Nutrition. *Journal of Communication*, 30(3), 37–46. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1980.tb01989>

TABLE 1

Show	Source [†]	Season	Episodes
<i>Longest-Running</i>			
The Simpsons	Fox	2016—2017	7
Law & Order	NBC	2021—2022	7
Law & Order: SVU	NBC	2017—2018	7
Family Guy	Fox	2015—2016	7
NCIS	CBS	2018—2019	7
American Dad!	Fox	2013—2014	7
Grey's Anatomy	ABC	2019—2020	7
Criminal Minds	CBS	2022—2023	7
<i>Most Popular 2012-2023</i>			
Young Sheldon	CBS	2022—2023	7
Yellowstone	Paramount+	2021—2022	7
Equalizer	CBS	2020—2021	7
FBI	CBS	2019—2020	7
Game of Thrones	HBO	2018—2019	6
Roseanne	ABC	2017—2018	7
Bull	CBS	2016—2017	7
Empire	Fox	2015—2016	7
The Walking Dead	AMC	2014—2015	7
The Big Bang Theory	CBS	2013—2014	7
TOTAL			125

[†] Source indicates where it originally aired.

⁷ Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and action. A social cognitive theory. Prentice Hall Inc.

⁸ Greenberg, B. S., Rosaen, S. F., Worrell, T. R., Salmon, C. T., & Volkman, J. E. (2009). A Portrait of Food and Drink in Commercial TV Series. Health Communication, 24(4), 295–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10410230902889233>

⁹ Volek, J. S., Fernandez, M. L., Feinman, R. D., & Phinney, S. D. (2008). Dietary carbohydrate restriction induces a unique metabolic state positively affecting atherogenic dyslipidemia, fatty acid partitioning, and metabolic syndrome. Progress in Lipid Research, 47(5), 307–318. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.plipres.2008.02.003>

Panel 11
**Building Food Literacy
in Context**

Food Democracy in Practice: Institutional and Informal Communication on Vegetarian Policies in French University Canteens

Cristina Romanelli

Université de Lille

The concept of food democracy encompasses the protection of individual rights and consumer autonomy, particularly regarding access to information and freedom of food choice¹. The legal requirement for public canteens in France to offer a daily vegetarian meal (Law n. 2021-1104) exemplifies the implementation of these principles.

The CROUS (Centres Régionaux des Œuvres Universitaires et Scolaires), regional public bodies responsible for university catering, serve as intermediaries in implementing and disseminating governmental guidelines. However, students remain largely unaware of their presence on social media and engage minimally with their content^{2,3}.

Collective interviews with 23 students from the University of Lille revealed that most do not follow CROUS online or consider its information relevant⁴. Participants also criticized the on-site communication strategy, citing a lack of practical details – such as dining locations, hours, menus, and ingredients – and uncertainty about where to find such information. While this may suggest ineffective institutional communication, a contextual approach⁵ offers a more nuanced perspective. This paper examines how vegetarian meals are promoted within the CROUS network. It hypothesizes that food communication in university canteens extends beyond formal institutional channels, incorporating informal and less visible forms embedded in daily interactions and shared spaces. Through direct observations in canteens and semi-structured interviews with 25 CROUS agents (chefs, nutritionists, management, and communication staff) from different regions, this study aims to provide novel insights into public food communication and the circulation of food knowledge.

¹ Behringer, J. & Feindt P.H. (2024) Varieties of food democracy: a systematic literature review. *Critical Policy Studies*, 18:1, 25-51, DOI: 10.1080/19460171.2023.2191859

² Martin, J. (2019). Les réseaux sociaux dans les institutions universitaires: Une stratégie inadaptée? *Revue Française de Communication*, 42(3), 112-128.

³ Paganelli, C. (2016). *Approches contextuelles en sociologie de l'information et de la communication*.

⁴ De Iulio, S., et al. (forthcoming). Questionner la vulnérabilité des étudiants au prisme de l'alimentation, in *Vulnérabilité, alimentation et jeunesse*. Presses Universitaires du Septentrion.

⁵ Paganelli, C. & Clavier, M. (2023). Les dynamiques des réseaux sociaux universitaires: Entre institution et désengagement étudiant. *Études en Communication*, 58(2), 45-63.

Chefs Cooking Up Capital

Beth Forrest, Deirdre Murphy

Culinary Institute of America

Every year, 250,000 tourists visit the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York. It gets more tourists than the presidential library of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who had the longest tenure of any leader in US history.

Throughout their visit, tourists at the CIA engage in discourse about “good” food and taste. They hear a version of the school’s alma mater as bells carol it regularly across the campus. The lyrics declare of the Institute:

“You shape public perception, give support and direction And so in our hearts we say Culinary Institute of America Venture forth but still be true to the school we love”

Those lyrics reveal much about how the CIA broadcasts its role– as providing an education for and shaping values and behaviors of students. It does the same for tourists by acting as a welcoming arbiter of taste in crafting public perceptions of food as it should be made, served, consumed, considered, and enjoyed. The assertion is clear: that all of this should be done well– guided by the “support and direction” of expert knowledge.

Looking closer, both the draw of the CIA as a tourist destination and its declaration of itself as the epicenter of education for future chefs speaks to the larger power of capital–economic, cultural, social, human, and symbolic. Through its communications around food and taste, the CIA maintains and grows capital.

This paper considers how chefs have held capital, and also create capital. The CIA is one site where this occurs. Being expert entails a carefully controlled system of messaging enacted through a manipulated set of experiences for students and tourists alike. Both the school, as invoking and knowledgeable performer, and the visitor, as receiving audience, participate in the growth of capital - beneficial to some but exclusionary for others.

Developing Food Policy Literacy: the Case of the Food Systems Flower Diagram

Rebecca Wells

City St George's, University of London

Kelly Parsons

University of Cambridge

Media and communication play a vital role in enabling food democracy for citizens. Good communication of policies and policy proposals can foster informed consent as part of the democratic process: voters should know the impact of their democratic choices on the food system and be able to take part in food policy debates and development. Communication can promote equity and challenge dominant narratives in the food system and contribute to food policy literacy among citizens young and old. This can support citizen navigation of difficult food choices. Communication, however, is complex and messaging is often captured by stakeholders with vested interests to promote one-sided, negative or positive framings of policy problems, policy solutions and policy actors in the food system.

This paper explores food policy communication through the widespread use of an academic food systems diagram to communicate food policy. The Food Systems Flower diagram was published in 2019 as part of a policy brief from the Centre for Food Policy in London, UK.

The diagram aims to support systems thinking about food, thus countering siloed policy making and advancing coherent policies for example those that address both health and climate. In addition the diagram can help to identify both synergies and dissonances as well as unintended consequences of policy actions.

Documenting public uses of the diagram using Google Lens searches, the authors explored how individual citizens, governments, NGOs and food industry actors have used the 'flower' diagram to frame their ideas and arguments. Results show that communication tools can support alternative ways of thinking about sustainability challenges, but that these can be captured by interested stakeholders to advance their own messages.

Panel 12
**Food Culture Communication:
From Restaurants to Households**

Pots, Pans, and Knife Cuts on Hands: Restaurant Kitchens as Media

Anson Hunt

Carleton University

There has been a renewed interest from some media studies scholars (Peters 2015, Young 2020, Kirschenbaum 2023) to define media by focusing on how they fulfill Kittler's (1999) three functions of media; storage, processing, and transmission. This has broadened definitions of media beyond traditional "media devices" such as the radio or television to include both natural elements (Peters 2015) and institutions like universities (Peters 2009), which are understood as media because they fulfill these functions. This has in turn informed an infrastructural turn in the field, with "media infrastructures" (Parks, 2015) emerging to consider the larger, material infrastructures that construct these mediums.

Simultaneously, food studies in Canada has been characterized by a "food systems" approach (Koc et al. 2017), which studies food through a political economic lens, drawing attention to both interconnectedness and power structures. This is useful for understanding how issues of sustainability impact different areas of food production and consumption. However, scholars have neglected to fully consider the role of restaurants, often including them with other "catering" sectors like schools, hospitals and prisons (Lang and Heasman 2015), which ignore the unique labour conditions and relationships with food producers that characterizes the restaurant kitchen.

This paper fills this gap by putting media infrastructures in dialogue with food studies. My own experiences working in restaurants, combined with interviews conducted with chefs in Ottawa, Canada, illustrates the media infrastructure of local sustainable restaurants in order to demonstrate their impact on local food systems in a new way. I argue that restaurant kitchens are media and that they have a significant place in sustainable food systems accounts. Rather than study food as media, or media representations of food, I instead study restaurant kitchens themselves as media because they process, store and transmit data in the form of food, bodies, and cultural norms.

Hipster Hospitality: The Paradox of Accessibility and Exclusivity in Contemporary Food Culture

Kajsa Hult

Örebro University

Elite status in the gastronomic sector has traditionally been associated with fine dining.^{1,2,3} However, in recent years, a new form of elite food discourse has emerged within hipster restaurants^{4,5,6,7,8}. Host-guest interactions in these spaces embody a paradox, simultaneously embracing ideals of accessibility and exclusivity. Research shows that while these venues position themselves as inclusive and community-driven, they subtly maintain elite status through aesthetic values, symbolic meanings, and service practices^{9,10}. This phenomenon reveals how exclusivity operates within seemingly accessible food spaces, catering to individuals who share similar cultural understandings of food.

Drawing on ethnographic research and cultural analysis, this study examines how hipster restaurant venues both challenge and reinforce social hierarchies, offering an ambivalent form of democratization. On one hand, they reject traditional fine dining markers such as rigid service scripts and perfectionist craftsmanship. On the other, they cultivate new forms of distinction based on social taste and aesthetic sensibilities. Despite their casual and welcoming appearance, hipster food spaces, such as artisanal coffee shops, natural wine bars, and neo-bistros, maintain elite status through leisure service and particular taste regimes. Paradoxically, professionals in these settings frame their work as inclusive and democratic, contrasting with broader discourses on food democracy, where inclusivity and accessibility are emphasized.

This study contributes to discussions on hipster hospitality as both a democratic and elite phenomenon. By interrogating the intersection of elite and contemporary food cultures within hospitality, it explores how the amplification of certain voices shapes the legitimacy and desirability of food spaces while marginalizing others. Situating hipster hospitality within broader debates on media and food democracy, this research highlights the tensions between inclusion and exclusion in contemporary food discourse.

¹ Ferguson, P. P. (1998). A cultural field in the making: Gastronomy in 19th-century France. *American Journal of Sociology*, 104(3), 597–641.

² Lane, C. (2013). Taste makers in the “fine-dining” restaurant industry: The attribution of aesthetic and economic value by gastronomic guides. *Poetics*, 41(4), 342–365.

³ Del Moral, R. G. (2020). Gastronomic paradigms in contemporary Western cuisine: From French haute cuisine to mass media gastronomy. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, 6, 192

⁴ Cameron, A. (2018). Affected labour in a cafe culture: The atmospheres and economics of ‘hip’ Melbourne. Routledge.

⁵ Lee, K.-S., & Ruck, K. J. (2022). Barista diary: An autoethnography studying the operational experience of third-wave coffee shop baristas. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 102.

⁶ Leer, J., & Hoff-Jørgensen, C. (2023). Consumers’ attitudes to gourmet burgers: The case of the NOMA cheeseburger. *British Food Journal*, 25(5), 1753–1768.

⁷ Ocejó, R. E. (2012). At your service: The meanings and practices of contemporary bartenders. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 15(5), 642–658

⁸ Pearlman, A. (2015). *Smart casual: The transformation of gourmet restaurant style in America*. University of Chicago Press.

⁹ Hult, K., Scander, H., & Walter, U. (2023). Contemporary dining room professionals: Towards a “hip” style of hospitality identity. *Research in Hospitality Management*, 13(1), 11–21.

¹⁰ Hult, K., & Scander, H. (2024). Hipster hospitality: Blurred boundaries in restaurants. *Gastronomy and Tourism*, 8(2), 65–82

Communication as a Key Factor in Household Adaptation and Resilience to Crises

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University of Carthage

Maram Ben Hmida

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Economic, health and climate crises are forcing consumers to significantly adjust their purchasing behavior. Understanding these adaptations is crucial for different economic actors (farmers, industrialists, decision-makers, distributors, communication agencies, etc.), especially in contexts strongly influenced by external factors such as Tunisia. This study aims to examine the strategies of adaptation of Tunisian consumers in the face of crises, focusing on their food purchasing decisions and food consumption behavior. It explores the main factors influencing their intention to adopt a coping behavior, referring to an extended theory of planned behavior. A survey was conducted on a representative sample of 307 households. Data analysis was completed by SPSS for the descriptive part and structural equation modeling was developed by SMART-PLS. The results show that Tunisian consumers significantly change their buying and consumption behaviors in times of crisis, seeking to maintain a certain quality of life despite economic constraints. The most common coping strategies used by consumers include buying promotional products, reducing consumption of non-essential products, and increasing use of credit to meet daily expenses. The developed extended model of planned behavior revealed that (1) attitudes toward coping strategies, (2) perceived behavioral control, (3) subjective norms, (4) sensitivity to communication and (5) Risk awareness and perception, all have a positive and significant impact on the intent to adopt coping and resilient strategies. Awareness campaigns should therefore be intensified to communicate about the challenges related to climate change and different crises and about possible resilience strategies to mobilize subjective norms, strengthen perceived behavioral control and encourage more responsible consumption behavior.

Panel 13
**Digital Dissemination
of Nutrition Knowledge**

The Styles of “Healthy Food” in Stock Images

Iben B. Jessen

Aalborg University

Databases with stock images are easily accessible resources for content creators within areas of food communication, either as stand-alone online databases or as build-in features of software applications such as Word and PowerPoint. As cultural image repositories, the databases provide access to an abundance of food images to be picked out and used in different communicative contexts, for example images of food items, dishes and social situations related to food consumption and cooking.

At the same time, the stock images seem to be imbued with a particular style or ‘manner’ that makes them recognisable as stock images, just as stereotyped ways of representing specific subjects seem to exist. In this paper I examine the representational and stylistic features of stock photos of “healthy food” in publicly available stock image databases.

Based on the concept of aestheticisation and social semiotic theories of meaningmaking in visual communication, the analysis identifies prototypical ways of representing food and actors in terms of compositional patterns, distance, perspective, light and colour. The paper discusses the cultural values implied in the stock images as ‘ready-made’ semiotic resources for communicating food and discuss how they frame understandings of healthy food.

Digital Plates and False Prophets: Social Media's Double-Edged Impact on Food Democracy

Joachim Allgaier

Fulda University of Applied Sciences

Social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok have the potential to democratise food knowledge, allowing users to learn about healthy eating, sustainable farming practices and ethical food choices. However, these platforms also spread misinformation about nutrition and food safety, promote unrealistic food trends, and give disproportionate visibility to corporate food interests with larger marketing budgets. The algorithmic nature of social media creates echo chambers that reinforce existing beliefs about food and nutrition, while the emphasis on visual appeal privileges aesthetics over substance, undermining meaningful discussions about food quality, accessibility and environmental sustainability.

Our research examines nutrition and food science content in German-language social media, focusing on whether content creators have scientific expertise in nutrition. Through qualitative and quantitative content analysis of German Instagram and TikTok, we examined the representation of nutrition science. The results show that scientific expertise is significantly underrepresented, with many accounts leaving it unclear whether they have legitimate qualifications.

Nutrition-related accounts with scientific backgrounds tend to have smaller followings and receive fewer views than those without credible expertise. Commercial influencers without a clear scientific background reach significantly larger audiences despite lacking qualifications.

These commercially motivated influencers often promote questionable nutritional information alongside idealised body images, potentially encouraging problematic eating behaviours.

This environment threatens food democracy, which requires reliable, science-based knowledge about food and nutrition as its foundation. When unqualified voices dominate the conversation, public understanding of nutrition is distorted, leading to poor dietary choices and potentially harmful relationships with food. The disconnect between scientific expertise and social media influence creates a landscape where commercial interests and visual appeal trump evidence-based advice, undermining the potential for a true food democracy where consumers can make informed choices based on accurate information.

Food Morals in Online Discourses – Social Network Analysis and Netnography Analysis of German Food Communities on Instagram

Eva-Maria Endres

Anhalt University

Ideas about right and wrong eating, the morality of food, have always been constitutive for society. Food is a topic in various discourses on politics, social distinction or ecology.

The media exerts a major influence on public discourses on food. With digitalization, these discourses have become pluralized and individualized, while a democratized food education takes place via social media. However, general trends of digitalization such as the fragmentation of the public sphere and the loss of general orientation can also be observed here. How do discourses about right and wrong food take shape in social media?

Do social media contribute to a democratization of nutritional discourses or do they reinforce existing social structures?

To investigate these questions, the development of food communities based on German food influencers on Instagram was observed over a period of five years using social network analysis. Then, a qualitative analysis of two food communities on Instagram was carried out using Netnography. A total of 404 accounts from the Vegan & Plantbased section and 471 accounts from the BBQ & Meat section were included and their content examined for central narratives of food morals.

Over the observation period, food communities became less diverse, polarized and professionalized. It became apparent that moral narratives are being renegotiated to some extent, but that social media predominantly reflects traditional ideas of good food and right eating. In the Vegan & Plantbased community, for example, narratives of moderation and asceticism, ethical responsibility and restrictive food rules were identified, while in the BBQ & Meat community, narratives of gluttony, power, violence and masculinity were identified. Also, ideas of traditional gender attributes were communicated via food topics.

Panel 14
**Food Systems and
Social Equity**

Emancipatory Imaginaries: the Platform Transformation of Denver's Urban Food System

Hillary Quarles

University of Denver

Understanding the urban food system requires an examination of how people choose what to eat, how food moves through the city and how people incorporate food into their daily life. These choices, movements and practices are fundamentally influenced by platform technology and food imaginaries. This research examines how platform technology produces urban food imaginaries, influencing how we think about and access food in the city. It asks: 1) how does platform technology shape urban food imaginaries; and 2) how do these urban food imaginaries frame food access in the future? Using a media content analysis based on insights from STS, food studies, communications and urban geography, the research focuses on urban food imaginaries promoted by three food-based organizations active in Denver, Colorado: DoorDash,

Fresh Food Connect and Ekar Farm. The findings suggest that DoorDash leverages platform technology to promote a convenience food imaginary that reinforces the impacts of food apartheid and convenience food on low-income communities. In contrast, Fresh Food Connect and Ekar Farm cultivate food collective and food commons imaginaries, offering a counter-capitalist vision of food system transformation through the growing and distribution of fresh produce and community building. These emancipatory imaginaries support a democratic food system that introduce a relational ethic beyond fruits and vegetables to build a just food system for the future.

Improving Access to Nutritious Food for Migrants from Disadvantaged Backgrounds: A Rapid Evidence Assessment

Alexandra Constantinescu, Naz Ali

Buckinghamshire New University

This study – in the form of a Rapid Evidence Assessment – investigates health and societal impacts of limited access to healthy food among two main categories of migrants in the United Kingdom (UK): (1) voluntary migrants living in low-income households and (2) forced migrants – namely asylum seekers. It explores real-world challenges and opportunities, as well as scientific evidence related to the effectiveness of various policy interventions in increasing access to, and consumption of, healthy, nutritious food for disadvantaged migrants.

There is a need to examine migration-related food policy to tackle food (in)security and poverty among migrants in the UK, and to address inequitable food systems that inflict on food as a human right, consequently undermining principles of food democracy. Non-intervention-based studies highlight systemic health and social inequalities amongst various immigrant groups, including low or limited availability and/or access to healthy and nutritious food, leading to negative health outcomes such as high Body Mass Index (BMI), higher obesity rates and higher incidence of diet-related, non-communicable disease such as Type 2 Diabetes and cardiovascular disease^{1,2,3,4}. Research on food access for migrants seeking asylum in London concluded that “food insecurity and malnutrition sit within the wider context of an asylum system that is too often inhumane, denies people dignity, and forces them into poverty” (2024:43). In this context, our research contributes to the critical study of food policy related to voluntary and forced migrants and provides evidence-based policy recommendations aimed at reducing food insecurity, as well as health and social inequalities among these categories of population.

Preliminary findings suggest that place-based policy interventions such as fruit and vegetable vouchers may have a positive impact at a local scale. However, such programmes should include multi-component interventions such as financial assistance, as well as active nutrition education initiatives developed in conjunction with local communities and consider geographical inequalities. Furthermore, to effectively reach diverse disadvantaged migrant communities, diet-related information should be provided in multiple languages and should be adapted to fit various ethnic dietary norms.

1 Alloh, F., Hemingway, A. and Turner-Wilson, A. (2019) ‘Exploring the Experiences of West African Immigrants Living with Type 2 Diabetes in the UK’, *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(19). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph16193516>. (Accessed 21st January 2025)

2 Higgins, V., Nazroo, J. and Brown, M. (2019) ‘Pathways to ethnic differences in obesity: The role of migration, culture and socio-economic position in the UK’, *SSM - Population Health*, 7, p. 100394. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2019.100394>. (Accessed 21st January 2025)

3 Osei-Kwasi, H. et al. (2023) ‘Transitioning food environments and diets of African migrants: implications for non-communicable diseases’, *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society*, 82(1), pp. 69–79. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0029665122002828>.

4 Sustain (2024) *Food Experience of People Seeking Asylum in London: Areas for Local Action*. London: Sustain.

“A fistful of rice”: Food health communications and British Bangladeshi Women in Tower Hamlets, London

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University of Sussex

Hussain Shazna Miah Sajna, Miles Zoe

Women’s Environmental Network (WEN)

In this paper we focus on our research with British Bangladeshi women in Tower Hamlets, London on food health communication. To make our argument, we draw on our empirical data from our 4-year qualitative study called Food Lives, part of a project FoodSEQual funded by the UKRI. We focus on how ‘hegemonic nutrition’ devalues the ethno-cultural food literacy practices of British Muslim Bangladeshi women in Tower Hamlets, a borough in the East End of London. Food scholars of colour insist that food health educators marginalise gendered ethno-racial cultural knowledge and skills, and stigmatise the Other’s ‘food literacy practices’ (Hijazi, 2023, Schell, Winslow and Shrestha, 2023). Such work argues that food literacy choices need to be framed within a context of cultural continuity, community development and cultural, historical, political and biological well-being.

The biggest assumption we have encountered in our research is that Bangladeshi women cook unhealthy food. Hannah Maria Jennings and colleagues argue that too often the ‘healthy’ aspects of Bangladeshi food are overlooked, and that Bangladeshi food is claimed to be inherently ‘unhealthy’ according to standard biomedical advice (2014: 10). In this paper, we show that the women we researched are very concerned with food health, especially regarding their children and hold a variety of views in relation to food health communications. Much of what they encounter is ‘hegemonic nutrition’ literacy (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2016). Derived from white, western, middle-class dietary guidelines, hegemonic nutrition is predicated on biomedical models and replete with racist discourses and practices (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2016; Mayes and Thompson, 2013). Lindy Olive & Michelle Worosz (2024) underline that white mainstream nutritionism ‘pressurise[s] people to replace their own ways of knowing’ and assumes that education in nutrition literacy can correct the consumption of ‘unhealthy foods’ instead of tackling institutionalized racism in marginalized neighbourhoods (Colón-Ramos et al, 2018). Our study shows the harms, erasures, anxieties and burdens that such food health communications cause.

Panel 15
**Communication for
Food Justice**

Understanding Power in Food Policy: a Pilot Study

Naomi Fallon, Christopher Yap, Christina Vogel

City St George's, University of London

Lorna Anguilano

Brunel University London

There is increasing recognition that delivering effective food policies requires acknowledging and accounting for power. However, the specific power dynamics of UK food policy-making processes are not well understood. Furthermore, the multi-dimensional and often hidden nature of power makes it challenging to study. This paper reports the findings of a pilot study to trial the feasibility of a novel methodological approach and identify emerging findings to inform an ongoing PhD project. The PhD project aims to understand how power shapes UK food policies, and how power can be leveraged for future policy development that supports human and planetary health.

The pilot study involved a comparative case study of two food policy issues: free school meals and food-related plastic packaging waste. Transcripts of parliamentary debates were analysed using a layered approach combining critical discourse analysis and argumentation analysis. Findings from the two case studies were compared to identify patterns and trends.

The comparative analysis produced insights into different ways that power manifests in UK food policy processes, including: i) institutional processes and norms that shape policy, ii) power relations across different levels of governance that influence the policy landscape, and iii) the power of certain ideas which function as premises to justify specific policy responses.

The findings from this pilot study indicate that power shapes UK food policy in a variety of ways. Furthermore, an integrated approach to CDA built upon argumentation analysis is a viable method for investigating the complex power dynamics in UK food policy. The emerging findings will be subject to more detailed analysis in the full study. Funding This interdisciplinary project is funded by the Transforming UK Food Systems Strategic Priorities Fund as part of the UK Food System CDT.

BIPOC Nutritionists and Competing Visions of Health: the Divide between Justice and Conspiracy in Contemporary Food Discourse

Julieta Flores Jurado

National Autonomous University of Mexico

This paper fits into a wider project examining how current political tensions in the United States materialize on discourse around food. In my project, I seek to assess the responses from critical food scholars and activists to the current ascent of rightwing ideology. In this presentation, my aim is to discuss two current approaches to the issue of alimentary self-determination, as reflected on digital media. It is known that, in the U.S. and elsewhere, public health discourse and policies have failed to integrate the specific needs and lived experiences of marginalized communities. In response, the work of authors and anti-diet culture nutritionists such as Jessica Wilson and Dalina Soto exposes how systemic racism and misogynoir influence Black and Latina women's relationships with their bodies and health. Their books, podcasts and social media accounts advocate for ending the violent ways in which BIPOC people are estranged from their own foodways and denied entry into the normative category of health. However, alongside these critical interventions, another strain of online discourse has emerged-one that also questions public health's status quo but veers into conspiratorial thinking, an embrace of traditional gender roles, and overtly right-wing politics. This presentation will discuss the ideological rift between these two currents of resistance to institutional authority through alimentary self-determination.

How did their critiques of public health and corporate agrifood power fracture into such divergent ideological pathways? To what extent have structural inequalities and privileges influenced this divide and their opposing social implications? Finally, this talk will consider whether the conflict itself is symptomatic of the broader crisis of disinformation in contemporary democratic societies. By tracing the intersections of public health, racial justice, and digital culture, this paper aims to unpack the epistemic and political stakes of today's polarized food discourse.

The “Pot People” Revolutions: Agroecology, Communication and Radical Food Democracy in Post-COVID Brazil

Fernanda Favaro

Malmö University

In 2022, Brazil returned to the Hunger Map due to former government’s dismantling of the food security system and the disastrous management of the covid-19 pandemic. In response, a wave of citizen-led initiatives emerged, reclaiming food as a common good. Initially aimed at alleviating hunger in poor communities, these initiatives quickly grew into powerful critiques of the hegemonic, colonial-rooted and export-oriented food system—one reliant on monocultures, pesticide overuse, and the degradation of soils and waters.

This research explores the insurgent communication practices of a renewed agrifood movement in Brazil through four key actors: a solidarity kitchen, a community garden, a direct-action collective, and an agroecology congress. Each of these engages with food as a multidimensional common through creative communication strategies, such as garden classes rooted in Indigenous and Afrodiasporic epistemologies, collective cooking, and public outdoor banquets designed to raise awareness about food justice – to name a few. Grounded in agroecology principles, they contest dominant agricultural narratives, bringing critical issues to the forefront, such as food cultural heritage, city and land rights, environmental racism, and the decolonization of food.

This work draws on the author’s PhD project, employing ethnography and creative methodologies—including cooking, garden-walking, and communal eating. Anchored in Muniz Sodré’s ideas of communication as an organizational societal force and the conceptualization of Exú as a communicative category, I argue that agroecology’s communication practices operate through relationality and messiness, resisting linear, Western-centered narratives of development. Through care and dialogue, they dissolve the human-nonhuman binary, positioning natureculture as an active communicator. Thus, they move beyond crisis-driven discourses, instead “composting” despair into a radical food democracy imagination—where food is no longer subject to damaging market forces but reclaimed as a space of collective well-being.

Bib Gourmand and Food Democracy in Chiang Mai: Culinary Authority, Media Validation, and the Negotiation of Street Food Hierarchies

Piyarat Panlee

Kasetsart University

The MICHELIN Guide, traditionally associated with fine dining, expanded into Thailand in 2018 and introduced Chiang Mai in its 2020 edition through the Bib Gourmand category, recognising “good food for good value.” Chiang Mai, a popular tourist destination, hosts a culturally diverse population with varied ethnic influences shaping its rich culinary heritage. Central to this heritage is Thai street food, historically celebrated for its affordability, accessibility, and informality, reflecting everyday urban food culture.

This paper critically examines how MICHELIN’s presence in Chiang Mai reshapes local street food dynamics through its media-driven culinary authority. While MICHELIN recognition undeniably increases vendor visibility and consumer interest, this study argues that its influence is neither unilateral nor uncontested.

Instead, MICHELIN’s culinary authority is mediated and negotiated through media validation—particularly influencer culture and digital review platforms. Influencers actively shape and reinterpret MICHELIN recognition through curated storytelling, amplifying specific vendors and culinary experiences.

Concurrently, consumer-generated content from platforms such as Google Reviews provides a critical grassroots discourse, often questioning MICHELIN’s assessments of authenticity, taste, and overall dining experiences against local standards and expectations (e.g., comments questioning the worthiness of long wait times or price increases due to MICHELIN branding).

Employing a multi-method approach—including analyses of MICHELIN’s Chiang Mai selections, media discourse, influencer content, consumer-generated reviews, vendor interviews, and ethnographic fieldwork—this study critically explores how a global gastronomic guide negotiates its authority in a dynamic local food context. Ultimately, the paper interrogates whether MICHELIN’s media-driven recognition democratises culinary discourse, empowering diverse voices and vendors, or whether it reinforces new, complex hierarchies that reshape the future of Thai street food culture in a digital age.

Panel 16
**Body Politics:
Health and Food**

(Re-)Framing Ballet Nutrition: Pragmalinguistic and Paratextual Strategies in Instagram's Dietary Discourse

Constanze Betz, Tina Bartelmeß

University of Bayreuth

Top level athletes exhibit varying degrees of nutritional knowledge. Especially knowledge specific to health-sustaining and performance enhancing nutrition is scarce, particularly within the highly specialized and physiologically demanding group of ballet dancers.

This study explores the construction, communication, and legitimization of nutrition knowledge for ballet dancers on Instagram, a platform where performance-related dietary discourse is shaped by both scientific and social dynamics. Through a qualitative content analysis of educative posts under the hashtag *#balletnutrition*, this research examines the pragmalinguistic and paratextual strategies employed in posts that address dancers' dietary practices. Linguistic markers, including epistemic markers ("evidence-based", "expert-approved") and imperatives ("fuel your body") play a central role in constructing expertise, while paratextual elements such as profile credentials, infographics, and meal photographs enhance visibility and reinforce credibility.

Findings reveal that Instagram serves as a space where specialized dietary norms are challenged, problematized and reconstructed through a blend of scientific rhetoric and personal branding, reflecting broader tensions between traditional narratives, performance expectations, and factual knowledge. This study contributes to understanding how digital platforms mediate the dissemination and legitimization of nutrition knowledge in high-performance contexts.

How “Eat Like an Athlete” Messaging Compromises Food Democracy

Emily Contois

University of Tulsa

The conference title, “Food for All,” emphasizes food democracy’s collective necessity and impact. It is, after all, a social and political system that aspires to ensure nutritious, sustainable, and safe food for all eaters, not just an elite few. This presentation examines a counter example: the media and marketing message, “Eat like an athlete”—that is, to eat in ways that enhance everyday eaters to the hyper-standards of competitive and professional athletes. The “eat like an athlete” message antagonizes democratic impulses to ensure an equitable food system. Rather, it endorses neoliberal values of personal responsibility, self-control, and ever-increasing optimization, calibrated to capitalism’s voracious appetites. Starting with a historic example—Wheaties cereal, launched in the 1920s as “the breakfast of champions”—this presentation focuses on contemporary products from the United States that endorse “eat like an athlete.” These include protein-enhanced snack bars, plant-based meat products like the aptly named Beyond Meat, sodas enhanced with adaptogens, and the AG1 (“athletic greens”) supplement subscription program. In each case, product concepts and marketing messages facilitate “nutricentric” thinking (Scrinis 2013) that privileges nutrients (like fiber and protein) over social and cultural linkages like heritage, food culture, and commensality. Such framing collides with how these products and messages transform food into “fuel,” morphing human eaters into machines, rather than the citizens that sustain food democracy. “Eat like an athlete” poses a media and marketing message that minimizes social investment in the common good and general welfare, instead fortifying individuals. As such, this presentation seeks to contribute another layer of understanding to the conference’s efforts to critically explore food democracy, focusing on how some food media and marketing may compromise it.

Silencing Cravings: Exploring Food Noise, Media Influence, and the Business of Body Management

Kathleen LeBesco

Marymount Manhattan College

Charlotte De Backer

University of Antwerp

Paulien Decorte

Maastricht University

Lauranna Teunissen

Universiteit van Amsterdam

Isabelle Cuykx

Thomas More University of
Applied Sciences, Antwerp

Food nourishes bodies, identities, and social connections, reminding us we connect via food. In a world dominated by commercial food media—bestselling cookbooks, recipe videos, and branded influencer content— we experience a constant feed of messages about food. Increasingly, people complain about “food noise”—defined as persistent, intrusive thoughts about food—and seek solutions in the form of GLP-1 weight loss drugs.

We aim to study if and how commercial food media relate to food noise and an increased reliance on pharmaceutical solutions. It is known that people use food media for a range of different reasons, including body gazing, social connection and food porn.

We assume that food media encourage food cravings, while also reinforcing unattainable body ideals, and perhaps even unmet social needs, driving people to simple ‘solutions’ for a complex web of underlying problems.

Using a mixed-methods approach, we combine an exploratory survey (N=500) and indepth interviews (n=10). The survey investigates how Food Media Uses and Gratifications relate to Food Noise and Food Cravings, controlling for body satisfaction, loneliness, stress, and demographics including socio-economic status. Interviews explore how individuals experience “food noise” and the beliefs and values they associate with it, including its connections to food media, body ideals, and social nourishment. We also examine how participants perceive commercial forces, identifying who profits from the prevalence and remediation of food noise.

Our results will critically explore the social and cultural dimensions of food noise. By critiquing the feedback loop between food media and commercial weight-loss solutions, this study sheds light on the ethical and social implications of commodifying food-related distress. It contributes to critical discussions about the intersections of media, culture, and the commercialization of food and body management.

Who Cares about My Gut Microbiota? The Profile of those Shaping Social Representations of Digestive Health on Instagram

Manon Niquette

Université de Laval

This presentation outlines the findings of a study examining social representations of healthy eating as disseminated through Instagram posts related to the gut microbiota. The primary focus is on the anchoring of these representations, specifically the social groups involved in their creation and spread within online interactions.

The intestinal microbiota, often referred to in popular culture as the “intestinal flora,” consists of trillions of microorganisms residing in or circulating through the gastrointestinal tract. Viewed as a complex ecosystem, the microbiota maintains a mutually beneficial relationship with its host, interacting not only with the intestines but also with other organs, including the brain. Dietary interventions are at the forefront of promising strategies to maintain health via the gut microbiota. Diets rich in fibre and prebiotics are considered particularly beneficial, although much remains to be understood in this area. Despite the ongoing uncertainties, there is a prevailing belief in the public domain, including on social media, that research into microbiota-related diets offers clear solutions for health. In an era where traditional media are being supplanted by social media, the question arises: which social groups are shaping the discourse around healthy eating in relation to the gut microbiota, and what impact does this have on the construction of social representations?

To address these questions, we analyzed 351 Instagram posts in French that were identified using the keyword “*#microbiote*.” These posts were collected over three 15-day periods across three consecutive years. Using a mixed-method approach, we applied WordStat text analysis software from the Provalis suite. Our analysis covers a range of dimensions, including the geographical and ethno-cultural backgrounds, gender, professional identities of the Instagram influencers, and the dietary movements linked to gut microbiota health.

Panel 17
**Mediating Local
Food Traditions**

Eating the Real: Food Documentaries and Local Public Spheres as Spaces for Political Engagement

Luca Antoniazzi

Università di Scienze Gastronomiche, Pollenzo

This paper contributes to discussions on the role of media in fostering debate within local public spheres to strengthen political participation¹ (see Sparks 2004 for a key discussion). At a time when both social and liberal democracies are being challenged by external and internal forces (e.g., war conflicts, anti-establishment movements), debates on health and the political significance of public spheres are pivotal. This study specifically examines food documentaries produced in northern Italy, focusing on their accessibility and their relationship with local media outlets. In northwestern Italy, documentaries have emerged as a distinctive element of the region's cultural fabric. By engaging with local histories, food systems, environmental concerns, and socio-economic dynamics, food documentaries have the potential to create spaces for critical reflection and collective action.

But is this actually the case? To what extent do these documentaries contribute to a more inclusive and participatory public sphere, where regional food cultures are both preserved and reimagined in response to global transformations? Through an interdisciplinary approach combining food media studies^{2,3} and the political economy of culture⁴, this paper analyzes the extent to which local media outlets have given space and airtime to food documentaries and how they have reshaped narratives of tradition, authenticity, and change. The study draws on two data collection methods: interviews with filmmakers and media coverage analysis. The first method explores creative intent and the relationships between producers and local institutions, while the second assesses the significance of these productions and the extent to which journalists and commentators have engaged with the creativity embedded in these media forms. The paper focuses on two case studies: Barolo Boys (Casalis & Gaia, 2014) and the first episode of the docuseries Food Markets (Tealdi, 2013). These cases provide valuable insights into how food documentaries interact with local public spheres, offering diverse perspectives on media, tradition, and participation.

¹ Sparks, C. (2004). The global, the local and the public sphere. In R. C. Allen & A. Hill (Eds.), *The Television Studies Reader* (pp. 139–150). London: Routledge.

² Dickinson, R. (2013). Food and the media: Production, representation and consumption. In A. Murcott, W. Belasco, & P. Jackson (Eds.), *The Handbook of Food Research* (pp. 439–454). London: Bloomsbury.

³ Lindenfeld, L. (2010). Can documentary food films like Food Inc. achieve their promise? *Environmental Communication*, 4(3), 378–386.

⁴ Garnham, N. (2007). Habermas and the public sphere. *Global Media and Communication* 3(2), 201–214.

The Transcultural and Transgenerational Transmission of Culinary Knowledge in Contemporary Kyoto's Ryōtei Kitchens

Greg De St. Maurice

Keio University

Japanese cuisine; the chef of traditional Japanese cuisine; and the restaurant kitchens in which high-end Japanese food is prepared have undergone multiple significant transformations over the past six decades. Japanese cuisine has acquired elite status and spread around the world and while the kitchens of traditional high-end Japanese cuisine had previously been comparatively closed off, especially to women and foreigners, concerns within the fine dining industry about the spread of “inauthentic” Japanese food spurred a controlled opening up to people, ingredients, and techniques from outside. Japan has also experienced the rise of the celebrity chef.

This paper examines the transgenerational and transcultural transmission of culinary knowledge in Kyoto's ryōtei, restaurants specializing in high-end traditional Japanese cuisine within the context of these changes. Kyoto offers an unparalleled perspective on such training because it is so strongly linked to traditional Japanese culture and because it is the only city in all of Japan with a special visa enabling aspiring chefs from overseas to come to Japan expressly to apprentice in traditional Japanese restaurants in Kyoto. This project, the result of collaboration between Kyoto City, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Japanese Culinary Academy is part of a larger effort to spread more accurate knowledge of “authentic” Japanese cuisine outside of Japan.

My research is based on primarily on interviews with 1) current and former apprentices from different parts of the world who came to Japan on this visa 2) the chefowners of the restaurants that sponsor these visas and 3) Japanese chefs whose own career trajectories differ from what would have been considered standard in the past. My analysis will use the concept of craft—undertheorized in the realm of cuisine—to shed light on the local, national, and transnational factors forming future chefs of highend traditional cuisine in Kyoto's ryōtei.

The David and Goliath of Iberian Cuisines: A Comparative Analysis of Portuguese and Spanish Gastronomy in The New York Times

Ricardo Felner

University Institute of Lisbon

The global ranking of national cuisines is largely shaped by how they are represented in the world's most influential media outlets. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the rise of certain countries that, until 25 years ago, had little international recognition but have since become symbols of innovation and global gastronomic trends. Notable examples include the Nordic cuisine movement, led by Denmark, and Peruvian cuisine—both of which now boast some of the world's most acclaimed chefs and restaurants.

However, this transformation can be traced back to the emergence of Spanish molecular gastronomy. At the turn of the 21st century, Spain transitioned from being perceived primarily as a country of traditional tapas to becoming a global leader in haute cuisine, ultimately dethroning France's centuries-long dominance.

A pivotal moment in this process was Ferran Adrià's appearance on the cover of The New York Times Magazine, marking the mainstream recognition of Spain's leadership in contemporary gastronomy and highlighting the trendsetting influence of the American newspaper in shaping global culinary narratives.

This study examines the representation of Portuguese cuisine in The New York Times, contrasting it with the coverage of Spanish cuisine, Portugal's historical and geographical neighbor. Through a qualitative analysis of articles published over the past three decades, this research explores the narratives, themes, and sources that have shaped media portrayals of both cuisines, revealing significant disparities in journalistic treatment.

At the end, one might expect that the international acclaim of Spanish cuisine would have extended to Portuguese gastronomy, given their shared culinary heritage, ingredients, and techniques, but this has not been the case. Despite these similarities, Portugal has remained in the shadow of its Iberian neighbor's success, raising questions about media representation and the mechanisms that contribute to the global visibility of national cuisines.

Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to the broader discussion on the intersections of lifestyle journalism and gastronomic marketing in shaping the global perception of food cultures. By analyzing the influence of key actors—such as communication agencies, governments, public institutions, journalists, influencers, and chefs—this research sheds light on the power dynamics that govern media representation in the culinary world. Understanding how national cuisines achieve or struggle for international recognition provides valuable insights into the intersection of food, identity, and media influence in an increasingly globalized world.

Historical Perspectives on Media Participation in the Diffusion of Typical Foods from Belém do Pará

Taynah De Moraes

University of Coimbra

This study aims to understand how media and journalism contribute to the popularization of traditional foods from Belém do Pará (Amazon – Brazil) in other Brazilian states and internationally, with a focus on the success of ingredients such as açaí, Brazil nuts, and tucupi. To achieve this, the presence of these foods in local and national newspapers between 1982 and 2005 were analyzed, a period marked by a transformation in journalistic approaches to food.

The research also explores the regionalization of cuisines and the concept of “typicality,” drawing on the theoretical framework of Taste of Typicality. This framework distinguishes between invented, attributed, and real typicality, which are crucial for understanding how Pará’s culinary identity is constructed and communicated.

Belém do Pará’s cuisine is recognized as a mestizo gastronomy, a result of colonization, with its emblematic dishes arising from the blending of African, Indigenous, and Portuguese culinary traditions.

The investigation concentrated on articles published in *Diário do Pará* (Belém, 1982–1986) and *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro, 2005–2015), conducting an extensive survey of publications addressing traditional foods. For a more detailed analysis, agenda-setting theory and news values were used to understand the prominence of news about Pará’s culinary culture, the criteria defining their relevance, and the topics covered. Throughout the data collection, 102 articles from *Diário do Pará* and 59 from *Jornal do Brasil*, including advertisements, were catalogued. The material was organized into two databases and analyzed following the principles of content analysis, a methodology that supported a deeper understanding of the publications. The findings identified changes in the national relevance attributed to traditional foods from Pará and the journalistic treatment of local food culture. Relating communication and journalism theories to the collected material was essential to understand how these practices can be applied to this area of study.

Panel 18
**Food Packaging
and Food Values**

How Nutritional Knowledge is Circulated through Chinese Food Packaging: A Social Semiotic Study of “Healthy» Snacks

Göran Eriksson

Shanghai International Studies University

As part of a major global food trend, China has seen significant growth in the consumption and promotion of healthy foods, a trend that aligns closely with the goals of the Healthy China 2030 initiative. This initiative, launched in 2016, represents a comprehensive national effort to improve public health and foster a culture of wellness by promoting preventive health behaviours, including healthier dietary habits. Recent literature highlights that, following the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a notable shift in health consciousness among Chinese citizens, with increased awareness of nutrition and overall well-being.

As the Chinese population’s purchasing power is increasing, this change provides lucrative opportunities for both local and foreign food producers. Given this background, this paper presents a study focusing on the rapidly expanding Chinese market of what is sold as healthy snacks. It centres on how such products are promoted on food packages and how they make use of nutritional information to promote the products. Such information is based on nutrition science and presented through numbers, but also through other semiotic resources such as images, colours, symbols and texts. We might not always be so attentive of how food packages are designed and what they communicate. They come with ideas and beliefs about nutrition, healthy eating, dieting, and also about social identities and ways of life.

Using a social semiotic approach, this study focuses on products sold in Chinese grocery stores and appealing to a younger generation of Chinese consumers. The analysis shows that packages maintain a reductive understanding of nutrients as the main indicators of what is a healthy product and that the marketing practices of the Global north is influencing the Chinese market. The ideology of nutritionism plays a crucial role in this transformation.

Communicating Inclusivity and Sustainability: Packaging Strategies in Food Democracy Initiatives

Simona De Iulio

Université de Lille

This paper examines the visual communication strategies employed in solidarity-based food initiatives in France through a social semiotic framework. Using the PANIERS project (Pour l'Accès à une Nourriture Inclusive, Écologique, Régionale et Solidaire) as a case study, this research investigates how packaging functions as a mediating device between producers and consumers in alternative food networks (Cochoy, 2002). While previous studies have analyzed commercial food packaging from marketing and semiotic perspectives (Boutaud, 2013; Heilbrunn & Barré, 2012), limited research has addressed visual communication in noncommercial food initiatives.

The methodology employs qualitative multimodal analysis of packaging materials, including brown paper bags, information tags, and supplementary materials. Data collection involved participant observation at distribution points in Lille and structured interviews with project operators. The analysis examines how these visual elements communicate specific values and how they position themselves in relation to conventional food communication systems, drawing on Barrey et al.'s (2000) concept of packaging as a polyphonic space where multiple voices converge.

Results indicate that these materials employ distinct communication codes that differ from commercial packaging strategies. The paper argues that these visual elements constitute a form of "packaging discourse" that operates within specific socio-economic contexts. This research contributes to the field of food communication studies by expanding theoretical frameworks beyond commercial applications and interrogating how visual communication can function in alternative economic models within the food sector (Bergeron et al., 2014).

This submission addresses the conference theme of "Communication Strategies of Affordable and Free Food Initiatives" while contributing to a broader understanding of communication in non-profit contexts.

Simply (Go Shopping and) Cook? Unboxing Commercially Available Meal Kits and Women's Mental Load

Jessica Horne

University of Sussex

Meal kits “rhetorically appeal to middle-class consumers” for their promise of fresh and healthy meals prepared with ease, without needing to meal plan and shop for ingredients¹. In marketing research, scholars outline the benefits of meal kits ranging from convenience, food quality², childfriendliness and food variety³, to reducing women’s “mental load”⁴. Nutritionists assess the suitability of meal kits as interventions for low-income groups⁵, including during pregnancy⁶.

Few studies have co-produced meal kits with low-income communities⁷. This research contributes to food studies literature on meal kits by drawing on data from participatory community-based research with low-income women in Brighton, UK. The project used qualitative research workshops to co-produce a meal kit to help improve the community’s access to healthy, affordable food. This paper explores participants’ scepticism of the benefits of commercially available meal kits, including claims that they ease maternal mental load. We read participants’ assessment of commercial meal kits as being “too expensive”, “not fresh enough” and containing “too much packaging” as a way for them to reclaim their authority as “good” mothers according to cultural and gendered understandings of maternal food work⁸.

We examine how, in pointing out the limitations of meal kits, participants reassert their ability to prepare fresh meals independently of interventions that middle-class consumers rely on¹, re-affirming their resourcefulness when it comes to their gendered food work. Drawing on sociological theories of utopia as a method⁹, we contribute to existing studies by viewing the women’s attempts to distance themselves from the benefits of commercially available meal kits as a strategy to help shape their collective food futures.

1 Khan, S. A., & Sowards, S. K. (2018). It’s not just dinner: Meal delivery kits as food media for food citizens. *Frontiers in Communication*, 3, 39.

2 Shin, H., Jeon, J., & Jeong, E. L. (2024). Investigating consumers’ perceived benefits and risks of meal-kit delivery service. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 119, 103715.

3 Von Laar, M., & Knier, M. (2021). Food for thought: What factors influence the meal kit purchase (Doctoral dissertation, master’s thesis]. Copenhagen: Copenhagen Business School).

4 Fraser, K., Love, P., Campbell, K. J., Ball, K., & Opie, R. S. (2022). Meal kits in the family setting: impacts on family dynamics, nutrition, social and mental health. *Appetite*, 169, 105816.

5 McKay, F. H. (2023). What’s in a commercial meal kit? Structured review of Australian meal kits. *Public Health Nutrition*, 26(6), 1284-1292.

6 McKay, F. H., Zinga, J., & van der Pligt, P. (2024). Could commercial meal kits be part of the solution to food insecurity during pregnancy? An Australian exploratory study. *Nutrition & Dietetics*, 81(2), 228-236.

7 Olive, L., & Worosz, M. R. (2025). Better Than Blue Apron? The Dominant Nutrition Framework Packed in a Community-Based Meal Kit. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 20(1), 101-123.

8 Fielding-Singh, P., & Cooper, M. (2023). The emotional management of motherhood: Foodwork, maternal guilt, and emotion work. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 85(2), 436-457.

9 Levitas, R. (2013). *Utopia as method: The imaginary reconstitution of society*. Springer.

Dish Dash: Unpacking the Role of Convenience in Recipe Decision-Making

Paulien Decorte, Caroline Goukens
Maastricht University

Charlotte De Backer
University of Antwerp

“What’s for dinner?” reflects the challenge of balancing healthy, tasty meals with the demands of busy routines, especially in urban environments. As a result, convenience often takes precedence, though it is typically seen as unhealthy. However, convenience can support a healthy and sustainable diet, a perspective that has received limited research despite its relevance to daily food choices.

To better understand how convenience and nutritional health can coincide in day-to-day food decisions, the aim of this study is to advance research on the role of convenience in making recipe choices by disentangling its different aspects. What makes recipes convenient to consumers (different aspects include time, number of steps or ingredients) and how does convenience lead to consumer decisions to choose, purchase, and prepare the recipe, as well as consider it for future meals?

These are the leading research questions of this study. To answer these questions, we will explore analytics from a popular recipe app with over 10,000 users, examining parameters like time spent, likes, reviews, recipe planning, and grocery lists, alongside recipe attributes such as preparation time, tags, and ingredients. Convenience indicators (e.g., time, number of ingredients) and behavioral proxies (e.g., likes, grocery list additions) will be analyzed. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) will identify which convenience factors most influence recipe preferences and decisions.

Through this observational large-scale dataset we will gain detailed insights regarding day-to-day convenient recipe decision-making among a currently unseen amount of people compared to other studies. This broadly informs food decisionmaking and nutritional health, crucial topics for citizen’s well-being. Findings will demonstrate how recipe apps can empower individuals to make healthier, more sustainable food choices by promoting accessible, health-conscious options that align with consumer preferences, supporting principles of food democracy. Additionally, analyzing real-world food decisions fosters an inclusive understanding of how convenience can improve food practices.

Panel 19
**Communicating Food
Insecurity and Solutions**

How Food Representations are Influenced by Precarity and how they Influence our Food Choices

Romane Vandroux, Rodalyn Apple Ariola, Anthony Piermattéo

Université Catholique de Lille

Precarity is often linked to health inequalities, particularly through eating behaviors. This study explores the impact of precarity on social representations of healthy and unhealthy food, and how these representations influence food choices. Understanding these mechanisms is essential for developing effective interventions to reduce food inequalities.

A total of 120 participants were surveyed. Precarity was measured using the EPICES scale¹. Food literacy and the motivations behind food choices were assessed using standardized scales^{2,3}. Social representations of healthy and unhealthy food were explored through word association, importance ranking, and valence evaluation methods⁴.

Food choices of individuals in precarious situations are influenced by factors such as convenience, accessibility, and the emotional comfort associated with food. However, food literacy does not directly vary with precarity, although it remains an important factor: individuals with higher food literacy tend to make healthier choices, even in precarious

Individuals in precarious situations have social representations of healthy and unhealthy food that differ from those in stable conditions. Moreover, the more precarious the individual, the more positively they evaluate unhealthy foods (higher valence). Finally, the positive evaluation of unhealthy food influences their food choices, leading them to prefer comfort foods.

The findings indicate that social representations of unhealthy food are perceived more positively by individuals in precarious situations, which can influence their food choices. These differences in perceptions highlight the need for targeted communication strategies, adapted to the representations of vulnerable groups, to encourage healthier food choices and reduce food inequalities.

¹ Labbé, É., Moulin, J., Guéguen, R., Sass, C., Chatain, C., & Gerbaud, L. (2007). An indicator for measuring precarity and "social health": The EPICES score. *La Revue de l'Ires*, 53, 3-49.

² Begley, A., Paynter, E., & Dhaliwal, S. S. (2018). Evaluation tool development for food literacy programs. *Nutrients*, 10(11), 1617.

³ Lyster, J. E., & Reeve, C. L. (2015). Development and validation of a measure of food choice values. *Appetite*, 89, 47-55.

⁴ Abric, J. C. (2001). The structural approach to social representations: Recent developments. *Psychologie et société*, 4(2), 81-104.

⁵ Vidgen, H. A., & Gallegos, D. (2014). Defining food literacy and its components. *Appetite*, 76, 50-59.

Shaping Food Democracy through Media Discourse: Framing of Food Poverty in Germany

Tina Bartelmeß

University of Bayreuth

Food poverty and insecurity are escalating challenges in high-income countries, including Germany, where 3.5% of the population faced food poverty in 2022, according to FAO estimates. This study investigates how German media frames food poverty and examines its influence on perceptions of social inclusion and exclusion. Analyzing 406 media articles published between 2018 and 2024, the research identifies dominant media narratives and rhetorical strategies shaping the discourse.

Grounded in Foucault's discourse theory and Entman's framing theory, the study explores two key questions: How does the German media frame food poverty, and how do these frames convey inclusion or exclusion? A mixed-methods approach employing qualitative and quantitative frame analysis via MaxQDA and SPSS revealed three central frames: (1) food poverty as a consequence of material deprivation, (2) food poverty as a political issue, and (3) food poverty as a complex societal challenge. These frames address a spectrum of causes, from economic pressures like inflation and low wages to systemic inequalities and political inaction, proposing diverse solutions.

Linguistic analysis further demonstrates how these frames shape public perceptions of affected individuals. While certain narratives emphasize resilience and societal belonging, others perpetuate stigmatizing stereotypes of helplessness, reinforcing social divides. Directly quoted voices of affected individuals often play a pivotal role in humanizing their experiences, fostering empathy, and reducing stigma.

The findings underscore the critical role of inclusive media representations in shaping both public attitudes and policy approaches to food poverty. By engaging critically with media narratives, this study highlights journalism's potential to promote food democracy, and social cohesion and advocate for equitable policy solutions addressing food insecurity's multifaceted nature in Germany.

Taking it to the Streets: How Free Food Fridge Movements are Reframing Food Insecurity

Diana Willis

State University of New York

Community food programs like food banks and food pantries have historically framed their appeals around white, middle-class communities that they are least likely to serve, while simultaneously stigmatizing the communities that rely on them the most.

The free food fridge movement (FFFM), a community-driven grassroots food program, is emerging as a new form of mutual aid and a response to the neoliberal approach to conventional food banks and food charities (deSouza, 2019). First emerging in the United States in 2020, free food fridge movements are centered around the commonly referred to food deserts, defined as areas where physical and economic barriers restrict access to healthy food (Dieterle, 2015). Free food fridge movements, however, reimagine a future free of those restrictions, moving beyond stereotypes of food insecurity. Using social media as its primary communication channel, these movements are not disparaging of neighborhood resources (bodegas, delis, dollar stores), nor do they frame users as victims.

Rather, these movements offer opportunities for citizens by embracing community partnerships and employing a simple, yet powerful rhetorical shift in their messaging. These movements are feeding the food insecure with healthy, fresh food options while simultaneously addressing the economic, cultural, and physical inequities inherent with food access (McEntee, 2008,2009; Shaw, 2006). This paper explores the question of how free food movements address food inequality and food justice, employing a qualitative content analysis of Instagram accounts of FFFMs within the United States. This interdisciplinary project introduces new research on the community food programs and extends theorizing on transformative food justice programs.

Let them Speak! A Qualitative Study of the Thoughts and Feelings of Pantry Guests in Northern New Jersey

Charles Feldman, Tito Alvarado, Shahla Wunderlich

Montclair State University

Previous research has been conducted to understand the effectiveness of food pantries on food insecurity, with limited evaluation of human impact outcomes. This study contributes new aspects to the current literature by exploring how pantry participants (guests) communicate their attitude, opinions, feelings and perceptions about the food and services they are receiving.

A total of 38 guests participated in six focus groups at three selected Northern New Jersey US food pantries serving a total of 51,950 households. The sessions were conducted utilizing modified qualitative instruments culled from a search of the literature. The facilitators allowed the participants to speak freely about their feelings and experiences surrounding the pantries and food insecurity. Recordings of the sessions were transcribed and thematic analysis served as the primary framework to independently code transcripts, recognize patterns and construct themes. Peer review sessions followed to debrief finding inconsistencies and to refine themes accordingly.

Four major theses were identified. Feelings of disempowerment were expressed by the guests' recounting of pantry experiences. Self-efficacy was highlighted as a dynamic construct influencing guests' feelings of capability, apprehension, and potential humiliation. A sense of community was a central theme to the guests' experiences, with social support or isolation playing significant roles. An emerging construct, the "Overt Turn of Reality," referred to guests' life changes surrounding pantry use. Guests also communicated their pantry perceptions and recommendations, with sundry comments on food waste, transportation and accommodation, freshness, nutrition, the provision of cultural fare and concerns about future access.

The findings underscore the multifaceted nature of food insecurity and the psychosocial, and systemic factors that shape individuals' reliance on food pantries. Further guestcentered research may drive system-based interventions to optimize pantry services and target the root causes of food insecurity. Effective communication strategies help to improve the overall guest experience.

Panel 20
**Emerging Voices
in Food Media**

Digital Distinction: The Evolution of Foodie Discourse Across Media Platforms

Josee Johnston

University of Toronto

Digital platforms have fundamentally transformed cultural production and consumption, including food media. Previous research has examined foodie culture and discourse (e.g., Johnston and Bauman 2007), but less attention has been paid to how digital environments reshape the key dynamics of democratic inclusivity mixed with status-seeking and distinction.

This study investigates the evolution of foodie discourse across digital and traditional media platforms, analyzing how cultural distinction and democratization manifest in contemporary food communication. Drawing on both qualitative and quantitative methods, this research compares foodie discourse across TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and major newspapers (The New York Times, San Francisco Chronicle, and Los Angeles Times). The analysis focuses on three key questions: 1) What characterizes contemporary foodie discourse?; 2) How does digital foodie discourse differ from traditional print media coverage?; and 3) How do digital platform affordances shape this discourse? Building on established frameworks of cultural distinction—particularly strategies of authenticity and exoticism—this study examines how the democratizing potential of digital platforms interacts with traditional mechanisms of cultural authority.

The research contributes to our understanding of cultural evaluation by investigating how the tension between democratic inclusivity and cultural distinction manifests in an increasingly participatory digital landscape, where traditional cultural gatekeepers hold diminished influence. This analysis also aims to advance our theoretical understanding of food democracy and cultural authority in the digital age.

The Culinary Book in the Age of Social Media: between New Digital Recommendations and Editorial Redefinition

Amélie Altmayer, Clémentine Hugol-Gential

Université Bourgogne Europe

Long perceived as a practical manual or a cultural transmission medium, the cookbook is undergoing a profound transformation, influenced by digital practices and new forms of recommendation. Now a hybrid object, it combines recipes, personal narratives, and visual staging to meet the expectations of an audience eager for immersive experiences. This evolution is strongly shaped by the rise of social media, particularly TikTok, which, with its 2 billion users—half of whom are under 24 years old—has become an essential platform. Through its short and viral videos, TikTok is reshaping editorial recommendations, as illustrated by the *#BookTok* phenomenon, a powerful tool for increasing the visibility and promotion of many books, redefining recommendation practices, and transforming editorial strategies.

Firstly, we will analyze how social media is reconfiguring the recommendation process for cookbooks. With its short and dynamic formats, BookTok videos influence reading practices by creating viral enthusiasm around certain works. Additionally, the rise of food influencers, who capitalize on their online communities to become authors of their own cookbooks, is redefining the boundaries of the editorial field. These influencer-authors impose new aesthetic and narrative codes, sometimes challenging the traditional norms of culinary publishing. Secondly, we will examine how publishing houses are adapting to these new forms of recommendation by investing in digital platforms, developing partnerships with food influencers, and integrating transmedia strategies. These collaborations influence not only the promotion of books but also their content, which is often shaped in dialogue with the expectations of online communities.

Finally, we will explore the tensions between popularity and legitimacy in the process of culinary recommendation. We will demonstrate how the virality and algorithms of social media platforms shape recommendations focused on instant trends, potentially overshadowing more traditional publications. The rise of influencer-authors also challenges the prescriptive role of traditional publishing institutions and raises questions about the place of the cookbook as a cultural object in the context of fastpaced social media consumption.

This presentation aims to decode the collaborative and competitive dynamics that are redefining the ecosystem of culinary publishing, highlighting the issues of innovation, legitimacy, and cultural transmission in the era of social media.

Sip and Share: Exploring New Voices in Wine Prescription through Digital Social Network

Jeanne Peixian Qiao

Université de Lille

My propose communication corresponds to axe 5 of the conference, “Organization and Circulation of Food Knowledge,” which examines how media formats—such as social media—contribute to public understanding of food, nutrition, and sustainability. My research highlights the relevance of this theme by exploring how digital social networks (DSN) have influenced actors who previously had little or no voice, such as producers and consumers, making them more visible and reshaping traditional power dynamics in the wine industry.

The rise of DSN has significantly transformed communication practices in the wine industry. My research explores how DSN have disrupted traditional wine prescription dynamics, introducing new influential actors, such as social media influencers (Lanthier, Olivier, 2018), and fostering new forms of wine appreciation and valuation, including prosumers (Dubois, 2023). By investigating the frameworks and practices of wine prescription in the context of DSN, this study examines how communication processes contribute to reconfiguring power relationships among producers, prescribers, and consumers, with broad economic and cultural implications.

Specifically, this research addresses how authority in wine prescription is constructed in the DSN era and identifies continuities and shifts compared to traditional models, such as wine critics (Fernandez, 2004). Drawing on a semiotic-communicational approach, the study investigates how DSN platforms, which share evaluative and critical discourses on wine, influence perceptions of quality and value. It also explores why and how wine prescription has attracted wine lovers’ attention from paper magazines and guides to phone screens, reflecting a broader democratization of wine culture.

This investigation aligns with the conference’s focus on the diverse roles of media and communication in shaping and advancing food democracy, particularly in how social media platforms reshape narratives about wine recommendations and consumption. By situating wine within the broader context of food democracy—acknowledging how wine critics emerged from gastronomic journalists (Naulin, 2016)—the study underscores how digital media facilitate participation and accessibility, challenge authority, and enable a more inclusive and democratic discourse around wine.

Lecture Hall Keynote

Food democracy – the French Paradox

Markéta Supkova

TDA Territoires de Démocratie Alimentaire

The notion of food democracy emerges in response to the increasing complexity of the food system. It reflects a desire for citizens to regain control over the conditions of access to quality food for all. In this perspective, food democracy IS NOT an end in itself.

In France, initiatives promoting citizen participation in projects and decisions concerning food systems are multiplying, through a variety of initiatives with two major trends : Initiatives promoting and strengthening of citizens' access to sustainable and healthy food and Initiatives promoting access to information, citizens' inclusion in design approaches, and their participation in decision-making processes.

Initially conceptualized in Anglo-Saxon countries food democracy is a new issue in France, and has not yet been capitalized on without positive a priori. The implementation of government supported Territorial Food Policies (Projet Alimentaire Territorial PAT)¹ since 2014 amplifies this phenomenon, with more than 400 PAT currently under way.

Three major types of food democracy initiatives can be mentioned : CITIZEN INITIATIVES, PRIVATE COMPANIES WITH SHARED GOVERNANCE and PARTICIPATORY PUBLIC POLICIES/ INCLUSIVE PAT with a Food Policy Council as governance tool.

Within these categories, we can distinguish different concrete applications according to the intensity of 3 aspects : More or less diversity of the population involved; Different levels of issues submitted to collective decision-making process from strategic ones to a more simple and operational ones and More or less financial and human resources dedicated to creating a common culture on sustainability issues.

However, feedback from the field indicates that these projects are still struggling to mobilize beyond the actors already involved and that the institutionalization of participation does not allow a genuine expression of citizen's voices.

It still is difficult to ensure that the participatory process really supports the feeling of being considered as a real partner to the creation of a new food system.

Paradoxically, without demonstrating their ability to TRANSFORM PUBLIC ACTION, participatory mechanisms perpetuate today the FEELING THAT DEMOCRACY IS USELESS. Because "is only democratic an organization what acts as a vehicle for REDISTRIBUTING ACCESS TO PUBLIC DEBATE and to INSTITUTIONAL ATTENTION."²

We need a democratic renewal, placing the citizen at the heart of public decision-making and sharing food democracy as an effective work principle to do it. With this new collective organization, I believe, we will be able to design a new food system, that would be both, sustainable and democratic.

¹ Food Democracy Methodological guide – Pour des territoires de démocratie alimentaire, Co-construire son Projet alimentaire territorial, ANPP-TDA 2024

² Loisel M. Rio N., Pour en finir avec la démocratie alimentaire, Editions Textuel, 2024

