

AgriFood XX, Meetings of the Australasian AgriFood Research Network in Melbourne, 2-6 December 2013.

(D) Performing food security: exploring food sovereignty, foodsheds and food policies in an urban context – Cinzia Piatti and Angga Dwiartama (University of Otago)

Sessions organized by Cinzia and Angga. Included presentations by Prof Michael Carolan and Prof Jane Dixon/Prof Phil McMichael who are internationally recognized experts in agrifood studies.

Potential and challenges of a bottom-up approach towards an urban food strategy: the case of Dunedin's local food network

***Cinzia Piatti and Angga Dwiartama
(University of Otago, New Zealand)***

Studies within the agrifood context have been done to understand how an urban food policy should be formulated and implemented (e.g. Morgan, 2011); many of which reveal a bottom-up approach to be a better step to be taken. In practice however, this approach often comes with challenges that need to be addressed and resolved firsthand in order to formulate an effective local food strategy. In regard to that, this paper offers a case of Dunedin, a small size city in New Zealand in which part of the community struggles to build local food resilience amidst the country's neoliberal and export-oriented agricultural system. We illustrate how an emerging local food network in Dunedin might lead to the formulation of the city's food strategy, along with some of the challenges that may hinder the process and ways in which the actors have done to resolve them. Data were collected from qualitative semi-structured interviews and a participatory action research as we worked with a group of food practitioners and academics to establish a more rigorous local food movement. Through a series of local food fora and discussions, we observed the bottom-up process that has taken place and noticed some of the challenges that emerged. In this paper, we highlight three important issues: (1) reconciling different definitions of 'local'; (2) linking an already-engaging group of local food initiatives to an actual need for a food policy; and (3) being inclusive without losing the integrity of the network. This paper concludes by addressing what the local food network has achieved so far and seeking to open a dialogue with similar movements elsewhere.

Other papers:

Can resilience be linked to food security?: A multi-scalar analysis of resilience in Indonesia's rice agrifood system

***Angga Dwiartama (University of Otago, New Zealand)
Co-Author: Bustanul Arifin***

Resilience, often defined as the ability of a system/society to adapt to shocks and still function as it is expected, has become a new catchphrase in the progress of achieving agrifood sustainability. However, some scholars criticize that the assessment of resilience in agrifood sector often fails to depict the real situation of welfare and, even worst, masks the state of food insecurity the society is in at a particular time. The case of Indonesia exemplifies this condition where 'hidden hunger' can be found amidst a well-functioning agrifood system. This paper thus explores the resonance between food resilience and food security by employing a multi-scalar analysis (panarchy) of rice agrifood sector in Indonesia. This paper starts by looking at the system resilience at the national level in the face of a particular type of shock and comparing it to the state of food security in the country over a

period of time. We then go further to investigate the dynamics at the lower scales, from regional to local, and see some adaptive actions performed at each level that might enhance or exacerbate the resilience process. We use primarily national and regional statistical data on welfare and agricultural production as a baseline for analysis, and support this with empirical evidence from fieldworks and interviews with 31 stakeholders of Indonesia's rice agrifood sector. Our findings suggest that resilience mechanism at multiple scales can compensate for the state of food insecurity. However, there seems to be no direct relationship between the two concepts and this possibly relates to the way in which resilience can be interpreted for many different purposes. This paper concludes with a recommendation on ways to effectively draw on the concept of resilience to improve food security in Indonesia.

The Cultural Visibility of Food Waste: A Re-Examination of 'Waste Transitions' in Food Culture

Hugh Campbell (University of Otago, New Zealand)
Co-Authors: Anne Murcott and David Evans

The subject matter of this paper is the degree to which food waste has made some kind of transition from cultural visibility to invisibility and back to visibility during the 20th Century. Such an inquiry forms the backdrop to current questions as to how to make food waste more visible (and thus more politically relevant) as well as providing some preliminary insights into the scope and scale of a 'waste transition' under modernity. In a recent Sociological Review Monograph dedicated to the sociology of food waste, Evans et al (2013) suggested that one of the most intriguing aspects of the contemporary politics of food waste was not only how novel it is in terms of sociological scholarship, but that this reflects a prior 'invisibility' of food waste in popular culture, politics and social practice. In collecting together different, but linked, elements of this shift in both popular and academic interest in waste, we suggest that they might be collectively understood as a 'waste transition' from invisibility to visibility in the cultural life of food. What lies behind this contemporary waste transition is an equally important set of changes that happened mid-20th Century. In conclusion, we sketch out a framework for engaging with how we might understand the transition of waste from visibility in the early 20th Century, to invisibility under Post-WW2 food culture, and now back to greater visibility in the 21st Century.

What is resilient intensification?

Christopher Rosin, (University of Otago, New Zealand)

Agricultural intensification as a concept is commonly associated with negative environmental impacts. More intensive production generally involves increased pressure on ecosystem function and process with subsequent deterioration in the state of environmental health and resilience. On the other hand, intensification is also represented as the means to achieve production efficiencies, increasing production per area farmed or per measurable amount of impact. The latter logic, for example, leads to claims that milk is a more carbon-efficient (i.e., greater production per kg of carbon dioxide equivalent emitted) form of protein than meat. These potentially incompatible understandings of intensification are very much in evidence in debates concerning the response of the New Zealand meat and dairy sectors to the global imperative to mitigate climate change. In this presentation, I examine farmers' representations of intensification (its desirability, its necessity, its extent on their own farms) as these relate to discussions of climate change. Their responses are influenced by the contestation of the reality of climate change and, especially, the role of ruminant agriculture in contributing to its impacts, reflecting a persistent response to efforts to regulate greenhouse gas emissions through financial mechanisms. Of particular interest to this

analysis is the farmers' evaluation of risk management, eco-intensification (a form of ecological modernisation), habitat enrichment and eco-labelling as policies to encourage greater resilience within intensive production systems. I conclude with an assessment of the relative value of such policies in the New Zealand context.

Neo-productivism, post-productivism or bust: Grappling with farming futures in Glendale Valley

Michael Santhanam-Martin (University of Melbourne, Australia)

Co-authors: Ruth Nettle, Fiona Miller, Margaret Ayre

The predicament of rural communities under productivist agricultural restructuring has been a core concern of rural studies scholars, who have identified important mechanisms whereby agriculture is structurally constrained in its ability to contribute to community sustainability. Nevertheless communities, and the families within them, continue to question how things that are seen as key assets including land, water, climate and agricultural know-how can be deployed towards desired futures. Building on a more recent thread of literature that focuses on agency within structural constraint, in this paper we explore how one community in north-east Victoria is grappling with the interlocked dynamics of agricultural restructuring and community sustainability. Through a grounded theory analysis of interviews with dairy farmers (n=20) and with other community members (n=23) we firstly identify five principal components of what constitutes community for our interviewees: attracting and keeping people, providing livelihoods, sustaining services and activities, living community and maintaining place. Secondly we identify a series of contending local narratives concerning the future of farming: conventional dairy farming is either too hard and doomed to decline, or needs reinventing for an incipient renaissance; and a more diversified farming economy based on niche products, local value adding and tourism is either a romantic distraction, or a necessary escape from the cost-price squeeze. Our interviewees describe the collective process of negotiating between these narratives as one of "muddling through", and this, we conclude, is where analysis of agency can be most instructive.