

Scheme lecture food and globalisation

-intro

-food and globalisation: 2 ways to talk about it

-empirical level: spread of Mac Donalds, spread of Chinese food

-analytic level: the underpinnings of the food system, rationale behind Mac Donalds, Mac Donaldisation is about dynamics that shape food system and society in general:

efficiency or optimum method: fast food, deleting feeling of hunger

calculability or emphasis on quantitative aspects: big size, output, standard

predictability or similarity: same shops, recipes

control through nonhuman technology: simple dishes, cooked mechanically

irrationality of rationality=irrational consequences. Waste +dehumanisation

-here in this lecture more analytical approach to food and globalisation, since we will think globalisation through food. Indeed, looking through food we see 1)how it has shaped globalisation (e.g. spices and sugar) and 2)how globalisation shaped food (diversification of cuisines, change in body-images across the world, etc.)

-particular focus on scale to continue on last week's theme: intimate, local, and global aspects of food contrasted to tease out specificity of the global scale and scalemaking processes.

- early anthropology studied food in small-scale societies that were imagined as bounded, problematic and criticised with the emergence of globalisation studies. Food system also approached as bounded, but holistic engagement: production and consumption, meanings, human-non-human synergies. Example Miriam Kahn and other studies showing link between agricultural and social reproduction, food and sex.

-example link agricultural and marital bed in my fieldwork: *pooruwa* : wedding ceremony in Sri Lanka, articulating hope for fertility and prosperity, same word for levelling instrument to prepare fields before sowing the seeds, evolution to platform and meaning

-Claude Levi-Strauss also studied symbolism of food, but his theoretical claims were more profound. The raw and the cooked and the various modifications, nature-culture as basic and universal cognitive structures

-holistic approach in early studies of food disappeared:

- globalisation, at first sight more difficult to be

holistic, but ways possible, as Sidney Mintz showed, and as he initiated by connecting consumption and production closely in his account

-flourishing food studies, fragmentation of themes: ethnic foods, gender, development, political economy, migration, etc.

-food and globalisation: danger for less depth in the wider geographical reach, yet if we take focus on items and not places, holistic approach remains possible (items). The tension between wider geographical and quantitative reach and detailed depth lies in the dynamic of scale with which both food and its researchers are entangled, generally division of labour among those studying food, male: higher scale at the public sphere of production and distribution, female: intimate sphere of preparation and consumption at smaller scale. Scales are relative to each other and thus context-specific. Small trader is large scale vis a vis intimate sharing of food between lovers, but small scale vis a vis supermarkets.

-3 traditional approaches to food and globalisation by Lynne Phillips: -focus on food as commodity

-expansion of food-based corporations

-global governance of these corporations

-but there are more aspects to a study of the aspects of food at the global scale, famine, development, industrialisation, technologies, etc.

+ other aspects at other scales

-Scale analysis adds to the holism that can be threatened by focussing on items or food as circulating study. Sidney Mintz started with sugar, connecting already the production and consumption ends of the sugar commodity chain, thereby connecting scales: taste to global industrial production. Holism required since production cannot be understood without consumption (Mintz), consumption not without context (Caldwell).

- schematic overview of the numerous components that co-compose the food assemblage, different actualisations and articulation according to scales and related spheres or fields. So nothing essential about food, but actualises as particular food according to context, domestic food or global food commodity (or food as sustenance or nourishment and food as commodity), can be the same food item, but it becomes different in different context, when certain components of food assemblage become more prominent

-Scheme of different aspects of food

-globalisation and food, lets follow rice and coconut in a somewhat Mintzean fashion (not geographically and historically, but rather across spheres and scales) to show what happens with food, namely its process of articulation and disarticulation with certain components that together enable scale-making in relation to particular spheres or contexts. Notion sphere and Peter Sloterdijk.

- moving from intimate, local to global sphere, nourishing food-commodity- relocalisation (Caldwell), together with coconut and rice, starting from my fieldwork in Sri Lanka

- landscape shaped by two main foods: rice and coconut, central in everyday meals

-combination also ritual food, procedure of preparation, first solid food in feeding ceremony, life transition rites of human and non-human beings. Buddha

-but *kiriutereme* at harvest rite is one example, summon diety=scalemaking action at cosmological level, strong local variations, boiling of milkrice throughout south Asia, negotiating intimate existential concerns of farmer, domestic unit and at village level. milkrice assemblage with physical and meaningful components (eg. Aganna sutta). Also intimate concerns of good transitions in life, acknowledging that things do go wrong, pondering conditions of life, and acting on this by various means, that is regenerating life world and cosmos. Small video of variation

-sometimes these rites acquire a higher scale, generating synchronicity at the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year and generating political power. Small video

-rice and coconut would seem central to culture since so embedded, that is connected to so many other aspects of life for so long time (makes this story a little different from that of Melissa Caldwell).

- rice not always as central in diet, other grains, but high status since postcolonial re-imagination of the ancient past, example of farmer.

-coconut, arrived 3 century BCE, first large collection 6CE, and colonials introduced plantation economy, the start of MacDonaldisation started really then. Planting trees in lines, giving it mathematical forms, efficiency, rationalisation, quantification etc, hence first step of disarticulating or disembedding as we saw last week, from local complex relations, and articulating with new rationalities, new actors, formats, and not the individual coconut but the one in bulks. In fact this is crucial stage in globalisation of Sri Lankan economy, besides spices, since the local elite emerged from the coconut industry, tea was controlled by the colonisers, so that money returned to London. This set the enabling conditions for further processes of globalisation in Sri Lanka, showing importance of a longterm historical perspective in globalisation studies as well. The more as today's events in Sri Lanka, and in many other places, draw upon these historical processes.

-so what happens when the coconut travels from the intimate sphere to that of the globally connected export plantation. Contrast and disarticulation, circulation as in the first of the three common approaches to globalisation?

- coconuts produced in larger quantities, larger populations, already disarticulated and disembedded, but reembedded in new commodity logic and its components. Travel, Colombo-London where coconut-consuming people live, cultural economy.

- travel of coconut is not a flow in an unbound space. Susan Gal, a linguistic anthropologist, prefers to talk of circulation in relation to texts. What she means is texts operate in context. Applied here: coconut also, when moved, disconnected, in populations its individuality disappears, coconuts extracted, abstracted and disembedded- abstract commodities at large scale of the system of which it has become part, where it is articulated with other actors, as such part of scale-making process in which it was inserted. In London redistributed, relocalised (see Goody regarding the Chinese, indeed phenomenon of migration is important)

-so far focus on food as commodity, the first of three traditional approaches, but we touched also on the second, the food based corporations, that trade the coconuts, but these needn't always be

corporations as Monsanto or Nestle, etc that we focus on. we need to expand to smaller groups as well, such as James Watson showed in relation to the one Hong Kong family that is very dominant in the Chinese food business in England. So, the connections between influential families, business elites and so forth is indeed also important in globalisation of food.

-Third approach on policy making operates at the higher scale where power is concentrated in the nexus of politics and economics, explaining the attractiveness of political economy in our globalisation theory as well. In fact this sphere and scale is also the space where NGO's politicians, media bodies and so forth almost form an epistemic community where same texts, and discourse/practices circulate but become contextualised in different ways. The speech of an exorcist does not have place in this community since there would not be a shared basic epistemological basis upon which a conversation is necessarily based.

-So, we now travel in a helicopter to see food at a scale and in figures that are used in the discourse/practices of the actors at this scale, some of whom I will reference here. I will do so by analysing the different explanations that emerged regarding the food price crisis in 2008 that has spurred so much social unrest across the globe, of which we are still witnessing the uncanny aftermath.

-1970-2007 decline prices, explained in higher output by for instance green revolution, what is green revolution(also in South Asian perspective). Sudden price hike, not because of sudden decline in food, but of more systemic reasons, which the different explanations show. Not felt in my area of research, subsistence farmers. During crises, numbers of those suffering from malnutrition rose from 850 million to 1 billion, before rise, 650million in rural areas. High input, debt, sell produce, eroding subsistence basis. World Bank quantifies malnutrition in terms of disability-adjusted life-years, 220 million in developing countries, 1,3 billion obese (caution!).

-several causes, but for some activists, such as those I worked with in Sri Lanka, it lay bare the quandaries of food system, commodity nourishing capital accumulation. Yet different explanations

- bad weather, articulated with climate change. Intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) + World Bank
- Rising oil prices affect exponentially prices in industrial farming. International assessment of agricultural science and technology: oil dependency in peak oil stage (using maximum while reserves are shrinking. Also George Bush acknowledged this.
- Biofuel, Jean Ziegler: moratorium 5 years, WB 240 kg of maize feed 1 person 1 year or fill 100 liters tank of vehicle+clearing of forest cancels co2 savings. International Food Policy Research Institute: biofuels 30% of global price hike, WB president 75%.
- Increased demand for meat and other high value agricultural products. FAO 1kg of beef 7-8,5 kg of grain. India, China, Brazil, Russia
- Financial speculation after pension funds in US
- Monopolisation of food-based corporations, bottleneck corporation in distribution market
- Reduced buffers, food stocks owing to World Bank policy
- Trade policy measures, reduced exports, problem for import dependent countries
- Structural neglect in investment in agriculture, new green revolution report WB 2008

- Amartya Sen, lack of entitlements, democratic capabilities to organise and make demands, could help modify urban consumer bias, even though many peasant organisations themselves are urban based and take the urban market as their focus. Mick Moore wrote an excellent book about this in Sri Lanka case

-These figures and the assumptions and large-scale approach upon which they are based constitute the discourses and texts that circulate widely among various actors that articulate them somewhat differently, but not radically different (that would be the case if we would invite the local spirit medium- e.g. film Bamako)

-global discourse practice of food both among proponents and opponents of the food system, in which food becomes abstracted, generalised, reduced, circulated, scale-made, and sometimes localised and domesticized. So, no opposition between foods essentialised as global or local, rather same food can become local or global according to the sphere with which it gets articulated, no essentialism here.

-Conclude: I hope to have given you some sense of what the study of food and globalisation is about, and have presented some example of the three traditional approaches to the study of food and glob: and added a new twist to this: studying radical contrasts by travelling through spheres. Not focussing only on the superficial and evident images of globalisation fed by food, but contrasting it with embedded phenomena of the *longue duree*. Indeed the domestication story of Mac Donalds in Moscow acquires a whole different feel when contrasted with the coconut in Sri Lanka. Further research that food and globalisation could open up is how new foods feed global body images that circulate. Another is which role food plays in global health issues, such as diabetes as a follow up to Sidney Mintz, obesity, and well-being.

- another conclusion that we can draw is that global food adds to the food diversity available, but not all foods mix, so there is both globalisation, glocalisation, and continuities, for instance, ritual food remains strictly defined (no pizza for local deity), but outside increased diversification. Also Mac Donalds party for birthday, but still not the food that is eaten on daily basis to become who you are.

-To really conclude, I hope that my argument by contrast has also teased out the specificity of current approach to food at global scale, both in its production and discourse. Domestic food at local scale often articulated with intimate relations, existential concerns, regeneration of ways of being (e.g. Vasavi hybrid times hybrid people). Industrial globalised foods, involving the dynamics of Mac Donaldisation in its analytical form, is related to the disembedding, quantification, abstraction, reduction, and circulation of food as commodity, physically ordered in lines and large populations that diminish the individuality of these foods, a dehumanisation of animals in the assembly line, such as we will see now in the documentary, but these abstract foods rearticulate with domestic systems of intimacy again.

-video 'Our Daily Bread'

Added references to those of the compendium:

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Peter Sloterdijk, *Spheres* Vol. 1, 2, 3