

A Sampling of Recent Theses and Dissertations on Foodways

Cafeteria, Commissary and Cooking: Foodways and Negotiations of Power and Identity in a Women's Prison

Smoyer, Amy B., Ph.D., CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, 2013, 264 pages; 3561638. Available on PQDT Open.

Abstract (Summary):

This study uses foodways theory to build knowledge about the lived experience of incarceration by analyzing women's narratives about prison food and eating. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 formerly incarcerated women in New Haven, CT. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Findings explain the different ways that inmates collect, prepare, distribute and consume food, and the centrality of these activities to incarcerated life. By shedding light on these daily routines, the world of prison life comes into greater focus.

Thematic analysis of the data further illuminates the prison experience by suggesting the positive and negative ways that food impacts inmate's perceptions of themselves, their social networks and the State. Negative foodways humiliated the women, accentuated their powerlessness, and reinforced their perceptions of the State as nonsensical and apathetic towards their needs. Positive foodways illustrated the inmates' capacity to resist State power, build/maintain relationships and construct positive self-narratives. Racialized foodways narratives began to reveal how food stories may be deployed to reinforce prison's racial character and construct the identities of self and other.

Foodways interventions to support the rehabilitative goals of correctional facilities are proposed. These data suggest that inmates want to build positive relationships and identities and that prison food systems could do more to help women realize these intentions.

Consuming Identities: Contemporary Japanese Foodways in a Global Locale

by *Peters, Micah David James*, Ph.D., UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE, 2012.

<https://digital.library.adelaide.edu.au/dspace/handle/2440/72861>

Abstract:

This thesis is the outcome of 12 months of fieldwork undertaken in a semi-rural community in Osaka, a major city in Western Japan, and examines how food and foodways are central to the articulation and maintenance of Japanese identity. My objective is to show how my informants understand and represent themselves and where they are in the world with food. A predominant theme is how local and regional foodways contribute to a sense of distinctive local identity. At the same time, I also seek

to determine the place of imported and international cuisines in everyday life. In this thesis I propose that 'traditional' cultural identity and contemporary globalised cosmopolitanism are mutually constitutive in that Japanese foodways reflect both a desire to maintain the distinction of local and national identity as well as the incorporation of the transnational. The Japanese appreciate the diversity of foreign influences and ingredients within everyday life but also value what are widely considered to be timeless and authentic representations of Japan. I argue that mundane everyday food habits demonstrate how Japanese identities are shifting products of peoples' experiences of the global and the local world.

Foodways, Families, and Festivities: Ethnobiology and Cultural Conservation in a Rural Missouri Community

by *Smith, Ian Carter*, M.A., UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, 2013, 87 pages; 1536304. Available on ProQuest.

Abstract:

Food customs and traditions bind human groups together in many ways--socially, geographically, temporally, and emotionally. This thesis describes the intricate relationships between food, ritual, and cultural identity in a rural German-Catholic community in Missouri. By drawing on the anthropological, cultural geographical and folkloric literature surrounding rural Missouri, a portrait of foodways emerges, which in turn illuminates valuable, often understated regional cultural traditions. Religion and ritual are understood as crucial to the continuity of regional identity--it is reinforced and made resilient through shared social action. The dispersal of ritual feasts and fasts throughout the calendar year regulates collective behavior, interactions, conversations, and the pace of "everyday life" in this little-studied region. These community behaviors and rhythms are most apparent when studied ethnobiologically, as customary bonds forged between humans and their natural environments and resources. Foodways studies examine carefully the production, preservation, distribution, and consumption patterns of regional foods. These studies have a rich history of ethnographic description that bridges the gulf between eating as a mere mechanism of survival and eating as a culturally constructed event. Specific recipes and knowledge of food preservation are displayed focally during family reunions and meals, highlighting the unspoken, powerful link between region-specific subsistence practices and the social values and identities shared and sustained within this German-Catholic community. Given the recent decline of rural farming communities throughout the United States, this thesis seeks to convey how cultural continuity in a rural community is preserved through eating together, and how food, family, and kin-based rituals collectively reinforce the social fabric in this uniquely Midwestern cultural landscape by addressing questions of how cultural memory is preserved through foodways, the role that community institutions play, and the manner in which these social institution's articulations of shared values, mutual support, and self-sufficiency are made visible. Ultimately, this thesis serves to illustrate, on a broader level, how foodways studies can inform ethnographic understandings, the histories, beliefs, and behaviors that foster continuity in cultural life.

The Foodways of Butte, Montana: Food and culture in an industrial American City

by *Hazlett, Kehli Kankelborg*, M.S., MONTANA TECH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA, 2013, 97 pages; 1540918. Available on ProQuest.

Abstract:

Food is more than a material necessity: it is also a commodity and a sign loaded with cultural meaning. As a commodity, food can be bought at a local market but it can also be "consumed" through mass media such as popular culture magazines, television shows, radio, and books. Americans express and define their identity through consumption. However, before there was McDonald's and other pop culture food commodities, there were foodways. Foodways are a cultural pathway whereby food preparation and consumption patterns can be traced through cultures and time. Food is a sign that communicates cultural habits, rituals, or other meaning. This thesis interrogates the foodways of Butte, Montana and how these foodways preserved ethnicity while adapting to cultural change. This thesis examines the following topics: foodways, cross-cultural communication, food in American pop culture, Butte mining and history, and Butte restaurants. The particular Butte restaurants examined as an example of foodways are: the Pekin Noodle Parlor, Pork Chop John's, Matt's Place Drive-In, Lydia's Supper Club, and Joe's Pasty Shop. These restaurants express Butte's living history and foodways that can be experienced when eating a meal in Butte.

Mexican/Mexican American Foodways as Communication of Cultural Identity

by *Mendoza, Charity J.*, M.S., ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY, 2015, 121 pages; 1589830. Available on ProQuest.

Abstract:

This thesis examines Mexican American foodways to determine if and how cultural identity is formed, performed, maintained, and negotiated through the lens of food. Foodways are a salient marker of cultural identity. While language of origin sharply decreases after the first generation, foodways can last for generations. An ethnographic examination of Mexican/Mexican American women preparing food provides insightful descriptions of family life and interpersonal processes that are useful for understanding and appreciating the culture of Mexican Americans and Mexican American identity. The communication theory of identity is applied to allow for examination of multiple layers of identity and identification of discrepancies or inconsistencies between the layers which can be problematic in interactions as well as cause depressive symptoms, negative emotions, and other adverse psychological outcomes. Personal-enacted-communal, enacted-relational-communal, and personal-enacted-communal identity gaps were found through the observation of foodways with four Mexican/Mexican American participants. In order to negotiate the differences between identity layers, participants

avoided interaction with others, diminished the importance of others' ascriptions, and accepted values that are contradictory to the culture.