

Panel Proposal: EuroSEAS (2021) Olomouc

(1) title

Youth encounters of cuisine, nutrition, and globalization in Southeast Asia

(2) convener

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(3) brief description of panel

**To the committee: In EuroSEAS conferences going back to at least 2015, the topics of food and cuisine have experienced limited and somewhat bifurcated coverage. Typically, food is indirectly engaged in studies of agriculture, is seen through the prism of food security, or addressed in other particularized ways (research on a specific food, street vendors, meat consumption, etc.). In Berlin 2019, a panel on food consumption (“Ambiguous eating...”) broke new ground in this topic and attracted quite an audience. The proposed panel continues with this momentum.*

Youth in developing countries are largely expected to succumb to the global nutrition transition already widespread in industrialized countries, whereby nutritional knowledge anchored in local food systems is inexorably devalued. Trying to get ahead of this curve, the WHO has declared obesity a worldwide epidemic and is attempting to establish preventative initiatives. However, public agencies and academics have struggled to define and characterize the problem in developing countries, often conflating manifestations of dietary problems with more general processes of globalization or urbanization. Various, blame is portioned out to “western cuisine”, convenience food and/or corporate control of the global food trade. In these debates, young people are often deprived of agency, viewed as victims of food marketing, addictive fast food, or the retrograde malignment of traditional cuisines.

These teleological and linear presumptions about the youth experience of cuisine and nutrition are contradicted by the divergent accounts of childhood encounter with global food systems both past and present (in the works of Jack Goody, Carole Counihan, Eriberto Lozada, and others). Social media and other newly accessible global influences allow for simultaneous exposure to industrial food and postmodern trends, such as alternative food networks, foodie culture, and heirloom agriculture. In Southeast Asia, the increasing complexity of the foodways encountered by young people is leading to variegated and surprising outcomes across the region. In this panel, we invite researchers working on the convergence of childhood and youth (understood widely) and the evolution of food systems. This can include topics such as school food, culinary education, lifelong learning, food skills and/or food literacy, practical knowledge and the senses, food marketing, popular food culture, food in (social) media and art, and other food topics that directly or indirectly relate to youth and childhood.

(4) format

Single session.

(5) discussant

Contributors will be matched with others to serve as collegiate discussants. An overall discussion will be led by the convenor.