



MACQUARIE
University



UNSW
AUSTRALIA

Indigenous urban food in the 21st Century: Researching Aboriginal peoples' relationships with food

Never Stand Still

Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences

Social Policy Research Centre

Dr Margaret Raven
Scientia Fellow, Social Policy Research Centre
m.raven@unsw.edu.au

Previous position:

Macquarie University Fellowship for Indigenous Researchers, Department of Geography and Planning, Macquarie University

SPRC
Social Policy Research Centre

Aims

- Explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (Aboriginal) households **experiences of food insecurity**:
 - **coping strategies** that households and families use to create food secure households,
 - Aboriginal **knowledge, culture and protocols** plays in the use of these strategies
 - To empower Aboriginal participants - understand the cost of their own **food basket**, their **relationships to food**, and **factors** which may influence both of these
 - Develop a deep and broad **understanding of the experiences** of Aboriginal households' food insecurity
 - **Extend current knowledge** on Aboriginal health as it relates to food security
-

Why urban Indigenous food?

- one in five (20% cent) Indigenous Australians were living in a household where someone went without food*
- compared to one in twenty (or 3.7 %) people in the non-Indigenous population*
- ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote areas were more likely than those in non-remote areas to be living in a household that had run out of food and couldn’t afford to buy more (31% compared with 20%)’¹

BUT

- The proportion of the Indigenous urban population increased from 44% to 76% between 1971 and 2006[^]

* ABS. Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey: Nutrition Results – Foods and Nutrients 2012-2013. Canberra; 2015.

[^] Taylor J. Postcolonial Transformation of the Australian Indigenous Population. *Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium International (APRCi)* 2011, Paper 351. DOI: 10.1111/j.1745-5871.2011.00698.x

Why coping strategies?

- coping strategies approaches argues that food insecurity is a ‘managed process’ – which is a series of predictable stages that people move through and that indicates increasing food insecurity *^

* Maxwell D., Caldwell R., Langworthy M. Measuring food insecurity: Can an indicator based on localized coping behaviors be used to compare across contexts? *Food Policy* **2008**, 33(6):533-540.DOI: 10.1016/j.foodpol.2008.02.004

^ Hadley C., Crooks D. Coping biosocial consequences of food security in the twenty first century. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* **2012**, 149(s55):72-94.DOI: 10.1002/ajpa.22161

Why coping strategies?

- Hadley and Crooks* argue that this sequence involves:
 - limiting the meal size;
 - reducing the number of meals;
 - consuming less of preferred food;
 - consumption of wild food;
 - borrowing food from others;
 - utilise credit to purchase food;
 - skip food for a whole days'
 - send family members away
 - begging

* Hadley C., Crooks D. Coping biosocial consequences of food security in the twenty first century. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* **2012**, 149(s55):72-94.DOI: 10.1002/ajpa.22161

Why coping strategies?

- understanding the coping strategies that people use can provide insights to the level of food insecurity people experience
- International tools for measuring food insecurity (that is based on understanding coping strategies) that make data collected in Australia comparable to other places
 - *US Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM)*

Why cultural protocols?

- I'm fascinated by protocols as tools or rule for setting social norms
 - They can tell us about Aboriginal food practices and give an insight into food security
-

Why cultural protocols?

‘the colonial impact on indigenous people’s food practices was cataclysmic and its effects still reverberate today’¹


‘Whether households across different cultures or even within the same culture follow any fundamentally similar response pattern when confronted with a food-related constraint remains a debate’²

1. Foley W. Tradition and change in urban indigenous food practices. *Postcolonial Studies* **2005**, 8(1):25-44, p.25

2. Coates J., Frongillo E., Roger B.L., Wilde P.P.P.E., Houser R. Commonalities in the Experience of Household Food Insecurity Across Cultures: What are Measures Missing’ *American Society for Nutrition* **2006**:1438S-1448S, p.1440S

Why cultural protocols?

‘Whether households across different cultures or even within the same culture follow any fundamentally similar response pattern when confronted with a food-related constraint remains a debate’



METHODS
&
ANALYSIS

Methods

- Case study : Geraldton, Western Australia
 - Pilot testing:
 - US Household Food Security Survey Module (with two additional parts: demographic module, cultural protocols module)
 - Photovoice
 - Food basket method
-

Geraldton



Geraldton



HFSSM (plus modules)

- HFSSM (with CFSSM for children)
 - 12 month recall period
 - 30 day recall for CFSSM

Demographic module

Cultural protocols module

Household Stage 1: Questions HH2-HH4 (asked of all households; begin scale items).

[IF SINGLE ADULT IN HOUSEHOLD, USE "I," "MY," AND "YOU" IN PARENTHEICALS; OTHERWISE, USE "WE," "OUR," AND "YOUR HOUSEHOLD."]

HH2. Now I'm going to read you several statements that people have made about their food situation. For these statements, please tell me whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months—that is, since last (name of current month).

The first statement is "(I/We) worried whether (my/our) food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more." Was that often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- Often true
- Sometimes true
- Never true
- DK or Refused

HFSSM (demographic)

Questions on:

- Age
 - Gender
 - No. adults living in the household
 - No. children living in the household
 - Highest level of education main source of income
-

HFSSM

Question	Q No.
Screening Stage 1	
Which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months: —enough of the kinds of food (I/we) want to eat; —enough, but not always the kinds of food (I/we) want; —sometimes not enough to eat; or, — often not enough to eat?	
Household Stage 1	
Worried whether food would run out before I/we got money to buy more	HH2
The food that bought just didn't last , and I/we didn't have money to get more	HH3
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	HH4
Screening Stage 2	
'If affirmative response (i.e., "often true" or "sometimes true") to one or more of Questions HH2-HH4, OR, response [3] or [4] to question HH1 (if administered), then continue to Adult Stage 2 ; otherwise, if children under age 18 are present in the household, skip to Child Stage 1 , otherwise skip to End of Food Security Module	

HFSSM

Adult Stage 2

Ever **cut the size of your meals** or **skip meals** because there wasn't enough money for food'

AD1

Ever **eat less** than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food

AD2

Ever **hungry but didn't eat** because there wasn't enough money for food

AD3

Ever **lose weight** because there wasn't enough money for food

AD4

Adult Stage 3

Ever **not eat for a whole day** because there wasn't enough money for food


AD5

HFSSM

Child Stage 1	
Relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed their child/children because they were running out of money to buy food	CH1
Couldn't feed their child/children a balanced meal , because we couldn't afford that	CH2
Child/children were not eating enough because they just couldn't afford enough money	CH3
Child Stage 2	
Ever cut the size of (your child's/any of the children's) meals because there wasn't enough money for food	CH4
Ever skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food	CH5
Was your child/were the children ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food	CH6
Your child/any of the children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food	CH7

HFSSM (protocols)

- ‘Are there any **cultural factors** that influences how you secure and share food?’
 - ‘Are there any **protocols** that influences how you secure and share food?’
 - ‘Do you use any **other strategies** to secure food?’
-



**ANALYSIS
&
RESULTS**

Demographic

- $n=23$ (15 female adults, 4 male adults, and 4 children and young adults)
 - Adult age range: 20 to 81
 - Household composition: ranged from one adult and no children in the household, to five adults and four children
 - Majority lived in households with children ($n=15$), with a large number ($n=12$) living in a household with 2 or more children
-

HFSSM

- $n=23$ (15 female adults, 4 male adults, and 4 children and young adults)
 - Adult age range: 20 to 81
 - Household composition: ranged from one adult and no children in the household, to five adults and four children
 - Majority lived in households with children ($n=15$), with a large number ($n=12$) living in a household with 2 or more children
-

Food security scale

Number of affirmative responses		1998 Food Security Scale Values	Food security status level	
(Out of 18) Households With Children	(Out of 18) Households Without Children		Code	Category
0	0	0.0	0	Food secure
1		1.0		
2	1	1.2		
	2	1.8		
		2.2		
3		2.4	1	Food Insecure Without Hunger
4		3.0		
	3	3.0		
5		3.4		
	4	3.7		
6		3.9		
7		4.3		
	5	4.4		
8		4.7	2	Food Insecure With Hunger, Moderate
	6	5.0		
9		5.1		
10		5.5		
	7	5.7		
11		5.9		
12		6.3		
	8	6.4		
13		6.6	3	Food Insecure With Hunger, Severe
14		7.0		
	9	7.2		
15		7.4		
	10	7.9		
16		8.0		
17		8.7		
18		9.3		

Food Security Scale Values ¹	Child food security pilot survey (based on CFSSM)	
	Raw score	Food security status
NA ²	0	Secure
0.1	1	
1.7		
1.9	2	Insecure, no hunger
3.1		
3.4	3	
4.2		
4.7	4	
5.2		
5.9	5	
6.2		
7.1		Insecure with hunger
7.2	6	
8		
8.7		
9		
10.1		
10.8	8	
11.1		
12.5	9 ²	

Bickel G., Nord M., Price C., Hamilton W., Cook J. Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000. . In. Alexandria, VA: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service; 2000.

Connell C.C., Nord M., Lofton K.L., Yadrick K. Food Security of Older Children Can Be Assessed Using a Standardized Survey Instrument. The Journal of Nutrition 2004, 134(10):2566-2572.

HFSSM

Food security scale

- Affirmative responses ranged from 0 to 13
- Food security scale values ranged from 0 to 7.2
- ‘food secure’ n=2
- ‘food insecure without hunger’ n=7
- ‘food insecure with hunger, moderate’ n=7
- ‘food insecure with hunger, severe’ n=3

Note: those in the later category included two households with children and a sole occupant household

CFSSM

Food security scale

- Affirmative responses ranged from 6 to 8
 - Food security scale values ranged from 7.2 to 10.3
 - 'insecure with hunger' n=4 (i.e. all child respondents)
-

HFSSM

- Better delivered by the ACCHO
 - Developing training module for ACCHO's
 - (interest in Geraldton and Qld)
-

Cultural protocols

- Families, friends and community
 - Bush foods, wild foods and growing your own
 - Charities, churches and the State
 - Financial strategies
-

- **Children first**

As long as my kids got food, I'll share what if I've got stuff. And if I can't do that I'll just tell them to come and have a feed with the rest of us.

- **Sharing**

When we used to make a feed we used to make a big pot [Yeah] pot of stew and a damper, a couple of dampers. You know what we used to do? [What?]. All the kids that lived around where we were [yeah], they used to know that there was feed in that house. So they used to come and we used to feed the whole lot of them. [Wow]. Yeah. [That's amazing]. And that was their main meal for the day.

- **'Taxi driving'**

It puts fuel in my car. And sometimes they chuck me a couple of bucks, ask me what I might need from the shop, if I need anything at home, and stuff like that.

Families, friends and community

- **Kangaroo**
 - **Road kill**

Used to make dampers and swap for kangaroo meat for us. But my kid can make them better than me [...]. In [town] you pay someone \$20 [...] or pay someone for a kangaroo you know. It come back with no tail. It's still part of the kangaroo you know.

- **Rabbits**

Participant: Lately it's been pretty scarce. They're being nasty. True. Like they.

- **Goats**

Raven: Why are they nasty?

- **Veggie patch**

Participant: They all coming from that way, and they've got all the roos out there, and I'm like can you bring me like, I need a tail from you fullas. Come on. I'm hungry. I want my mullo there look. I need my googah. Give me some feed here you fullas. Been hanging out for kangaroo for that long. Oh true.

Bushfoods, wild food & growing your own

I just thought nup, I'm going to make my food last and I don't care. I'm sick of these people telling me you know, rejecting me you know.

- **Food vouchers**

- **Food boxes** *It's very expensive. With that \$30 you can survive for like two days*

Churches, charities & the state

- **Bulk buy
and cheap
foods**

So a few weeks back um I got one of them loans online, my daughter done it [...]. It ended up taking all of my money, like \$500, and I was literally on \$60 a week [...]. And I got on the phone and told them, you know, I'm in a worse position than I was when I got the loan. It was only a \$200 loan and I ended up paying \$500 [...], and that was disappointing. So we out to \$60 a week you know. [...]. I had to ask some family that I'm talking to for help for food. So that was like a one off, and I don't want to be like that again.

- **Direct
debit/shop
credits**

- **Short-term
loans**

Financial strategies

Food basket

- Mobile phone apps in Indigenous research
 - If they can't afford food, forget about using apps
 - Paper based FACS foods survey
 - Food recall diaries
-

Photo voice

- Camera's get lost
- People pull out





LESSONS

Lessons

- Be guided by the ACCHO, but a locked gate means a dog
 - Mobiles: people won't have credit, or answer your call.
 - You'll have to call (and text people) at least 6 times before you get a response
 - Food App research won't work unless you provide funds for people to use the apps (i.e. an internet card)
 - Take food when you visit people
 - People still eat bush food and fairly regularly
 - You can only make a small amount of money go so far. The social security payments need to be increased.
 - Build participant payments into your budgets
-



MACQUARIE
University



Photovoice

- Choice of methods
- Camera (colour, or b/w)
- Given 3-8 weeks



- Workshop 1: What is photovoice?
- Workshop 2: Discussion of photos

Food basket

- Choice of method
- Based on Food Access Cost Survey (FACS), WA
- Workshop 1: What do you purchase from FACS
 - Used printed copies of FACS food list



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health

Food Access and Cost Survey 2013 Report



health.wa.gov.au

Food basket

- Workshop 2: Apps to support other purchases
 - Apps
 - Website's for Coles and Woolworths



Government of Western Australia
Department of Health

Food Access and Cost Survey 2013 Report



health.wa.gov.au