Food, Family, and Justice

John Cabot University, Rome

June 21-23, 2024

Program and Abstracts

Sponsored by the Society for Applied Philosophy

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Program

Friday, June 21

1.30 p.m. Welcome from the conference organizers and the Dean

2 p.m. *Keynote:* Samantha Brennan (Guelph), "'Eat Me, Drink Me': Philosophical Reflections on Children, Food, and Good Parenting"

3 p.m. Break

3.30 p.m. Jill Dieterle (Eastern Michigan), "Parental Rights and Food Justice"

4 p.m. Megan Dean (Michigan State), "Turning Down Mum's Cooking: The Ethics of Dietary Restriction Within Families" (remote)

4.30 p.m. April On-pui Chan (Northwestern), "Lunchbox Moment: Against Parental Compromise"

5 p.m. Break

5.30 p.m. *Keynote:* Matteo Bonotti (Monash) (with Gideon Calder, Swansea), "Families, Healthy Eating, and Children's Well-being: In Praise of Opportunity Pluralism"

7 p.m. Aperitivo

Saturday, June 22

8.30 a.m. *Keynote:* Anca Gheaus (Central European University), "Beyond the Perfectionism-Versus-Neutrality Debate in Childrearing: The Case of Food"

9.30 a.m. Break

10 a.m. Erik Magnusson (Manitoba), "No Meat for Minors: Children's Autonomy and Dietary Choice"

10.30 a.m. Riccardo Spotorno (Hamburg), "Vegetarianism, Moral Corruption, and Retrospective Reasonable Rejection"

11 a.m. Gulzaar Barn (Amsterdam), "A Revolution is a Dinner Party: Food and Family Abolition"

11.30 a.m. Break

12 p.m. *Keynote:* Clare Chambers (Cambridge), “Feeding Families, Shaping Children: Food and Gender Inequality”

1 p.m. Lunch

2.30 p.m. Tyler Doggett (Vermont), “Consumption, Families, and Symbolism” (remote)

3 p.m. Dennis Arjo (Johnson County), “Meals as Morally Significant: A Confucian Perspective”

3.30 p.m. Rachel Fredericks and Jeremy Fischer, “Unjust Social Structures and Plant-Based Caregiving for Kids” (remote)

4.30 p.m. Break

5 p.m. *Keynote:* Fiona Woollard (Southampton), “Mother Earth: Climate Emergency, Breastfeeding, and Justice”

7 p.m. Conference dinner

Sunday, June 23

8.30 a.m. *Keynote:* Garrath Williams (Lancaster), “The Intractable Injustice of Corporate Food Systems”

9.30 a.m. Break

10 a.m. Matteo Gandolini (Milan) (with Andrea Borghini, Milan, and Jérémie Lafraire, CHArt Lab, Institut Lyfe), “Coordinating Concepts in Food Education”

10.30 a.m. Colin Macleod (Victoria), “Latkes, Curries, and Lasagna: Shaping Children’s Identity Via Dietary Choices”

11 a.m. Gianfranco Pellegrino (LUISS), “Climate Veganism and Children’s Diet: A New Argument in Favor of Vegan Upbringing”

11.30 a.m. Break

12 p.m. *Keynote:* Daniel Weinstock (McGill), “Should Kitchens be Confidential?”

1 p.m. End of conference

Abstracts

Dennis Arjo (Johnson County), “Meals as Morally Significant: A Confucian Perspective”

Gulzaar Barn (Amsterdam), “A Revolution is a Dinner Party: Food and Family Abolition”

Matteo Bonotti (Monash) (with Gideon Calder, Swansea), “Families, Healthy Eating, and Children’s Well-being: In Praise of Opportunity Pluralism”

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Meals as Morally Significant: A Confucian Perspective

Dennis Arjo (Johnson County)

Food and the eating of food in a communal setting are recurring themes in classical Confucianism, serving as a metaphor for harmonious relations, a locus for the moral education and socialization of the young, and a fundamental human good. A unifying concept in these various considerations of what it is that human do and can do in meeting a basic biological need is *li* (禮), or ritual propriety.

A complex notion, *li* includes rules and expectations captured in western ideas of manners and etiquette. In Confucianism these norms are given a heightened moral significance and they are seen as essential to what is distinctive about human beings and what separates them from other animals. As argued by Xunzi in particular, human meals, because they are ordered by *li*, elevate the basic biological acts like eating into aesthetically rich and valuable communal experiences. *Li* is also seen as essential to the organization and functioning of well ordered moral communities because of its ability to temper and refine desires and feelings. In the case of food, *li* teaches us to be satisfied with appropriate amounts of the right kinds of food offered in the right settings. This is essential because unconstrained desires lead to excessive and unmeetable demands and they undermine the cooperation needed to produce adequate supplies. The transmission of *li* to the young is a fundamental obligation of parents and of the community at large.

Drawing on the work of Cheshire Calhoun and especially Amy Olberding I will suggest that Confucian ideas about the moral and aesthetic importance of eating, shared meals, and *li* are generally well motivated and defensible. However, I will also argue that from the perspective of justice, they present something of a paradox. On the one hand, the centrality of shared norms about eating and the sharing of meals in a flourishing life can highlight a perhaps overlooked dimensions of neglect and moral failing in the distribution of a most basic resource. My point here is that when it comes to the distribution of food we should demand more than merely making sure children are fed. On the other hand, the *li* of meals in a Confucian setting both reflected and reinforced a system of social hierarchies and this should concern us. While Confucians would make no apologies for their inegalitarian ways, that meals are a place where children learn to defer to those seen as in positions of authority based on age, gender and social roles is worrisome.

(Dennis Arjo is a professor of philosophy at Johnson County Community College in Kansas. He works in the philosophy of education, comparative

philosophy, and moral psychology, and he is the author of *Paradoxes of Liberalism and Parental Authority*.)

A Revolution is a Dinner Party: Food and Family Abolition

Gulzaar Barn (Amsterdam)

There exists a long philosophical tradition of exploring the role that the family has in upholding injustice. Thinkers as disparate as Plato and Engels had in common the idea that nuclear households are channels through which wealth and property are amassed, leading to intractable inequality. Liberal egalitarians since Rawls have also been concerned with the justification of the family. If the distribution of goods and opportunities can differ so radically between children born into different families, then it would seem that families pose a threat to fair equality of opportunity (Rawls 1971). Second wave feminists pointed to the role of the patriarchal family as an extractive conduit for women's labour. The 'wages for housework' campaign of the 1970s sought to make visible the unpaid care work, mostly undertaken by women, that was fundamental to the reproduction of the labor force (Federici 1974). This care work included gestational labour: "every miscarriage is a work accident" (Federici 1974), as well as domestic duties in general, which were indispensable to capitalist production, yet undervalued in terms of monetary compensation and status. Recently, Sophie Lewis's utopian vision, *Abolish the Family* (Lewis 2022), revisits these questions and asks us to take seriously the poverty of the nuclear family as a unit for delivering care.

These perspectives, coming from such disparate methods and ideological commitments, are rarely engaged. When liberal egalitarians consider the impact of the institution of the family on inequality, the alternative to permitting the family – family abolition – is conceived as state-run orphanages and taking children away from their parents (Munoz-Darde 1999, Gheaus 2018). Under such a comparison, the egalitarian case for the family doesn't seem so hard to make after all. Some justify the family in light of inegalitarian concerns by referring to the distinct familial relationship goods that families provide (Brighouse and Swift 2014). Such goods include an intimate sharing of space, time for common experiences, and the lively communicative exchange of plans and ideas that supports mutual identification. To appropriately analyse familial relationship goods and the extent to which families are indeed successful in providing these under non-ideal conditions, we cannot abstract away material conditions and the empirical reality of women's care work. Thus, the liberal and radical feminist approaches to family justice are worth exploring in confluence and have much more in common than one might suppose.

In this paper I will disentangle the liberal caricature of family abolition from genuine abolitionist demands centring on the collectivisation of care. Egalitarian family values can only be fulfilled if we ameliorate the structural conditions that make delivering care fraught, gendered, and unequally distributed. One concern with family abolition is the lack of a positive thesis. To attend to this, I focus on the idea of food, and in particular, communised kitchens, an oft-cited demand in feminist activism (along with universal free childcare), thus teasing out the practical demands of abolition. Using food and

the idea of collectivised kitchens as a theoretical tool and test case, I seek to shed light on points of convergence between liberal and radical feminist concerns. Dinner table conversations are a key manner in which family values are transmitted, and communised kitchens would be one way of equalising access to such goods. Such kitchens also attend to feminist demands to alleviate domestic strain and characterise domestic work as labour proper. According to Mao Zedong, “a revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery,” due to the inherently insurrectionist nature of revolution. I seek to suggest that revolution does indeed come in the form of a dinner party, and one that invites all to the table.

(Gulzaar Barn is an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Amsterdam. She works on issues regarding embodied labor and exploitation, feminist critiques of reproductive technologies, and genetic engineering. One of her current projects concerns abolitionist and liberal egalitarian critiques of the family.)

Families, Healthy Eating, and Children's Well-being: In Praise of Opportunity Pluralism

Matteo Bonotti (Monash), with Gideon Calder (Swansea)

In this paper we defend a new way of looking at the relationship between families, healthy eating and children's well-being, based on Joseph Fishkin's (2014) theory of "opportunity pluralism." According to Fishkin, given that children's opportunities to achieve well-being are strongly influenced by family background, and given that there is no fair way of equalizing opportunities among those whose developmental opportunities were unequal, we should instead seek to eliminate (or at least loosen) "bottlenecks," i.e. "narrow places in the opportunity structure" (2014, p. 14). In the context of public health and healthy eating policy, we argue, this entails rejecting two problematic assumptions: (a) that children may only truly achieve well-being if they are (physiologically) healthy; and (b) that there is always a positive instrumental relationship between health and other putative aspects of well-being. Fishkin's opportunity pluralism, we argue, can help us pluralize our understanding of children's opportunities *for* well-being (by expanding and pluralizing our understanding of what it means for a child to enjoy well-being, in a way that does not always prioritize health over other goods and values, including values associated with unhealthy eating) and our understanding of children's opportunities *from* well-being (by expanding and pluralizing our understanding of the kinds of opportunities that children may enjoy as a result of enjoying well-being understood in a pluralized sense).

(Matteo Bonotti is a senior lecturer in politics and international relations at Monash University. His research interests include political liberalism, food justice, linguistic justice, free speech, and the normative dimensions of partisanship. One of his recent publications is *Healthy Eating Policy and Political Philosophy: A Public Reason Approach*, co-authored with Anne Barnhill. Gideon Calder is an associate professor of social philosophy and of policy, politics, philosophy and international relations at Swansea University. His research concerns childhood and social justice, among other issues in the application of social and political theory, and his publications include the co-edited *Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Childhood and Children*.)

“Eat Me, Drink Me”: Philosophical Reflections on Children, Food, and Good Parenting

Samantha Brennan (Guelph)

In this talk I want explore three themes related to children, their relationship to food, and the nature of good parenting.

First, I’m intrigued by the dichotomy of our perceptions of children as “natural eaters” and “out-of-control wanton eaters.” We often project our own ideas about childhood and our anxieties about food and appetites onto child-aged eaters. The fear of obesity drives us to control childhood eating, yet there’s a prevalent parenting notion that if we allow children to graze freely, they’ll instinctively make healthy choices and never become overweight. I argue that both these ideas are flawed, mere reflections of our own anxieties about eating and body size projected onto children as eaters.

Second, I examine the societal pressure that weighs on parents’ food choices. The realm of food is a vast one, offering parents a multitude of options. Yet, the decisions about what and when to feed their children can become a consuming task during the child’s early years. This is a domain where parents often find themselves under scrutiny, where their choices are open to critique from others.

Third, we focus on children and eating partly because children are the front line in the “war against obesity.” Why the public policy focus on children? The thought is that we can stop obesity either before it develops or in its early stages, and we can avoid the health problems associated with overweight and obesity. However, the effectiveness of these measures is questionable. While the adage “eat less, move more” seems like common sense, we still lack a comprehensive understanding of the causes of obesity. Moreover, we’re not entirely sure what strategies effectively combat childhood obesity. The anti-obesity measures aimed at children stem from various public policy contexts, each with its own moral complexities. When we factor in elements such as class, race, income, and physical or mental ability, it becomes evident how this approach might be dangerous.

(Samantha Brennan is a professor of philosophy and Dean of the College of Arts at the University of Guelph. She works in contemporary normative ethics, applied ethics, and feminist philosophy, and she has published extensively on childhood, children’s rights, and family justice.)

Feeding Families, Shaping Children: Food and Gender Inequality

Clare Chambers (Cambridge)

One of the burdens of parenthood is the need to provide food to one's children. This task can be a pleasure, of course, but it is also burdensome in many ways, taking time, money, skill, and effort. The provision of meals – from planning, shopping, cooking, and clearing – is a major and unavoidable task of human life and, like many such tasks, the onus is typically on women to complete it. Food provision is thus a key driver of the gendered division of labour.

At the same time, food provision plays an essential role in literally shaping children: in determining the ways their bodies will grow and even their lifelong attitude to food and health. Eating patterns are set in childhood, and can include disordered eating of many kinds (anorexia, bulimia, overeating, malnutrition). Thus the task of providing food brings with it significant obligations as the effects can be significant and lasting. Moreover, many forms of disordered eating are more prevalent among women and girls, meaning that the provision of food is gendered at both ends. This paper will explore the gendered nature of food provision within the family, analysing how food exacerbates gender inequality and what is needed for justice.

(Clare Chambers is a professor of political philosophy at the University of Cambridge. She specializes in feminist theory, contemporary liberal theory, theories of social justice, theories of social construction, and bioethics. She recently published *Intact: A Defence of the Unmodified Body* and a collection of her essays on liberalism and feminism.)

Lunchbox Moment: Against Parental Compromise

April On-pui Chan (Northwestern)

For many children of immigrants, being mocked or bullied in a school cafeteria for one's ethnic lunch is not just a popular literary trope but a painful childhood memory. In this paper, I examine an underexplored aspect of "the lunchbox moment", namely, the packing of the lunchbox. I argue for two conclusions, both in favor of packing ethnic lunches for one's child: First, although immigrant parents in a culturally homogenous school district should realize that packing ethnic lunches can potentially put their child at risk of social exclusion, this realization alone doesn't justify packing non-ethnic lunches solely for the purpose of protecting the child from peer ostracism. Second, even if their child requests non-ethnic lunches as a result of peer harassment, immigrant parents ought not compromise lightly.

To get the phenomenon in view, I first illustrate the common features of "the lunchbox moment" by drawing from first-person testimonies, narrative portrayals, and ethnographic data. Next, I consider the paternalistic view which states that since parents ought to prevent expected harm from befalling their children when the harm is severe and the cost of prevention is low, immigrant parents ought to pack non-ethnic lunches for their child. I reject this view by highlighting the unique normative features of this case: Unlike the blameworthy decision to give one's child a ridiculous haircut on a whim, the choice to pack ethnic lunches for one's child has an irreplaceable role in the cultivation of the child's cultural identity and the preservation of the relational bonds between the child and their elders. In other words, since diasporic food culture is a pivotal site of the construction of ethnic identities and intergenerational relationship goods, the decision to assimilate through packing non-ethnic lunches involves immense ethical costs. Therefore, I argue, preemptively forgoing this form of cultural education is not just a harmless precaution; instead, it does the child a disservice by masking their identity for them, thereby displacing their agency.

Next, I clarify how my view is different from mere temporary non-interference: my thesis not only entails that immigrant parents should wait and see if their child will experience the dreaded lunchroom encounter, but also that even a child's report of peer harassment and request for nonethnic lunches might not constitute sufficient reasons for immigrant parents to oblige. Before I explain my rationale, I analyze alternative approaches, such as a justice-oriented justification asserting that packing ethnic lunches for one's child is a form of morally commendable resistance against unjust racial prejudices. I reject this approach on the grounds that it unfairly imposes ethical and emotional costs onto the child and risks irreparably damaging the parent-child relationship. I end by recommending an

empathy-based strategy that, I argue, best achieves the twin purposes of helping one's child navigate xenophobia as well as strengthening the parent-child relationship: rather than simply making the "easy" compromise, immigrant parents ought to help their child clarify their motives and ensure that their lunch preference is not tainted by internalized shame.

(April On-pui Chan [陳安珮] is a Ph.D. student in philosophy at Northwestern University. She is especially interested in the ethics of parent-child relationships.)

Turning Down Mum's Cooking: The Ethics of Dietary Restriction Within Families

Megan Dean (Michigan State)

When we picture the stereotypical family meal, the image is not just of a happy family eating together around a table, but typically includes everyone sharing the *same* food. Many families report not having the time to eat together on a regular basis, but another barrier to achieving this romanticized ideal is that some families have members who cannot or will not eat the same foods as the rest. This may be due to food preferences, health issues like food allergies or Celiac disease, weight-loss dieting, or ethical convictions about non-human animals or the environment.

Accommodating dietary restrictions can be practically challenging for meal planners and preparers, while those with dietary restrictions may find requesting accommodations or turning down inappropriate or unsafe foods to be a source of stress and interpersonal tension. This can be true in any context. But in this paper, I contend that the family creates distinctive ethical concerns for those managing dietary restrictions, both for those who have restrictions and for those who feed and eat with them. I map out the moral terrain around dietary restrictions within the family to capture the normative complexities of such situations and to provide guidance for those navigating them. In so doing, I also shed light on the moral importance of family meals and the role that shared food can play in those meals.

I draw upon Hilde Lindemann's work in family ethics to identify four moral responsibilities that apply to feeding and eating within families in general, and to managing dietary restrictions more specifically. First, families have a central moral obligation to care for their members. I suggest that caring for family members through food requires providing food that is safe and nutritionally adequate. Many dietary restrictions are based on safety concerns, including food allergies or Celiac disease; therefore, accommodating these restrictions is key to fulfilling this obligation. Second, families have a moral responsibility to hold members in their identities. Some dietary restrictions are expressions of important identities, like ethical vegetarianism. In such cases families should respect the restriction as a way of holding the eater in their identity. However, the default family diet can also be an expression of important identities, or the identities in question may be morally troubling, such as hegemonic masculinity. I discuss Lindemann's concept of "holding well" to clarify how to fulfill this responsibility.

Third, families have a responsibility to be considerate of the care work their family members do. I argue that because accommodating dietary restrictions can require significant labour, failing to be considerate of this

work or requesting laborious accommodation for restrictions that are unnecessary or unimportant violate this responsibility. Finally, families have a responsibility to nurture the family itself, not just its component members. I suggest that family meals can be an important way of doing so. However, the way that families handle food restrictions can compromise the value of these meals in this regard, including by failing to accommodate dietary restrictions or by exploiting those who do food work.

(Megan A. Dean is an assistant professor of philosophy at Michigan State University. She works in feminist bioethics, with a focus on the ethics of eating. She is also the North American coordinator of the research center and network in the philosophy of food, Culinary Mind.)

Parental Rights and Food Justice

Jill Dieterle (Eastern Michigan)

I start with the assumption that competent adults have the right to eat what they want, when they want, and how they want. Their food choices may be mindless, or they may be purposeful. If competent adults so choose, they may eat as much unhealthy food as they want to eat. But complications arise when an individual is choosing for others, especially when those others are not competent to make informed food decisions. My primary focus in the paper is small children. If one is responsible for children, then food choices for the household ought to take the well-being of those children into account.

I use a child-centered account of parental rights as the backdrop of my argument. On a child-centered account, parental rights are grounded in the child's welfare. Parents have rights to make decisions on behalf of their child, on this kind of account, *because* they have responsibilities to them. One of those responsibilities, I argue, is to ensure that the diet of a child in their care does not put constraints on that child's future possibilities. In other words, it is the parent's or guardian's responsibility to guard – or at least not constrain – the child's right to an open future.

Of course, there are external pressures that impact family food choices. Poverty is the leading cause of food insecurity. In the United States, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides some relief, but the program is woefully underfunded and its benefits do not enable families to eat healthy, nutritious food on a regular basis. It is sometimes rational for families to eat (for example) heavily processed food because it is less expensive and will provide more energy per dollar.

Other external pressures include the fact that nutrition information is often not transparent, and this can lead parents astray. Marketing practices exacerbate this problem, especially when children are the targets of marketers.

Nonetheless, the family is often the primary determinant of food practices. Traditional political philosophy regarded the family as private and thus not a proper subject matter for theories of justice. However, in the now classic *Justice, Gender, and the Family,* Susan Moller Okin argued that justice (and injustice) *begins* in the family. As such, public policy can and should encourage and facilitate just relations among family members – including just food relations. In the final section of the paper, I consider public policy remedies for addressing unmet parental obligations regarding food. Ideally, a remedy should not be too intrusive. But it also must apply universally – not just to those who receive government food subsidies.

(Jill Dieterle is a professor of philosophy at Eastern Michigan University, where she is also affiliated with the Environmental Science and Society program and part of the Steering Committee for Critical Disability Studies. Her research work focuses on food justice and food ethics.)

Consumption, Families, and Symbolism

Tyler Doggett (Vermont)

What are the moral connections between it being wrong to produce something and it being wrong to consume that thing? If the tomato is wrongfully produced, when and why is it wrong to buy it or eat it?

This talk very briefly argues against some common answers and spends most of its time defending the initially implausible view that it is wrong to consume wrongfully-produced goods when and because doing so symbolizes support for their production. I argue it is wrong to do so even when this symbolic support is entirely inert. That is, it might be wrong to eat the tomato on symbolic grounds even if you are mindlessly eating it by yourself at home.

I argue that more common answers to our question—it's wrong to produce wrongdoing; it's wrong to benefit from wrongdoing; it's wrong to reward wrongdoing; it's wrong to participate in wrongdoing—either have false moral implications or assume something like the symbolic view in order to avoid those implications.

But the symbolic view is also bizarre. Isn't it overly concerned with personal purity? How could *symbolism* have anything to do with food production? Doesn't it also have false moral consequences, well identified by R.G. Frey, Julia Nefsky, Jason Brennan and Peter Jaworski years ago? A little bit of the talk is about that and why I think these problems are not insurmountable.

Finally, I extend the ideas about food to cover some topics in parenting ethics.

(Tyler Doggett is a professor of philosophy at the University of Vermont. He works on a variety of topics in ethics and in philosophy of mind, early modern philosophy, and metaphysics, and he co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of Food Ethics*.)

Unjust Social Structures and Plant-Based Caregiving for Kids

Rachel Fredericks and Jeremy Fischer

In “Creating Carnists,” (forthcoming in *Philosophers’ Imprint*) we argued that children’s caregivers have a moral duty to the kids in their care to provide them with maximally plant-based diets—even if there is no general duty of veganism. Yet when caregivers struggle to provide plant-based care (or do not even considering trying to), it is no mere individual-level problem. Existing social structures in the United States make it unreasonably difficult or impossible for many caregivers to avoid training and encouraging kids to regularly eat or otherwise consume animal products. As a result, for many caregivers in the U.S. (and elsewhere), fulfilling a duty of plant-based caregiving would significantly increase their already overwhelming workload, at least initially.

In other words, this is largely a structural problem. Here, we argue that, while we think caregivers typically wrong kids by pressuring or requiring them to regularly eat animal products, most caregivers *are themselves unjustly pressured to do so*. Unjust food systems and related social norms, therefore, insidiously threaten to undermine the moral quality of caregiver-child relationships. We take it as uncontroversial that policies and practices are unjust when they make it unreasonably difficult or impossible for caregivers to avoid wronging the kids in their care. So, in this case, justice requires reforming the laws and informal practices that systematically prevent caregivers from providing plant-based caregiving for kids.

In a more just world, the duty of plant-based caregiving would not be an onerous one, because appropriate social supports would be in place to facilitate (or at least not hinder) plant-based caregiving. We catalog numerous ways in which the United States and similar societies are currently falling short, if not abjectly failing, in their duties to kids’ caregivers in both private and institutional settings, and suggest remedies. We conclude by arguing that transitioning to fully plant-based school meals is a crucial step toward just treatment for both kids and their caregivers.

(Rachel Fredericks and Jeremy Fischer are co-authoring a book about the moral duty to provide plant-based caregiving to children. Jeremy has also published on topics in moral psychology and philosophy of race, and Rachel has also published on topics in moral psychology and environmental ethics. After teaching full-time at colleges and universities in North America for nearly a decade, they became independent researchers in 2021.)

Coordinating Concepts in Food Education

Matteo Gandolini (Milan), with Andrea Borghini (Milan) and Jérémie Lafraire (CHArt Lab, Institut Lyfe)

The peculiarities of food as a conceptual domain have been the subject of recent research in both philosophy and cognitive sciences. On one hand, philosophers maintain that common food concepts are liable to a *plurality of understandings* across different agents and groups (see Borghini et al., 2021), whereas on the other, experimental studies show that even preschool children can rely on a *rich repertoire of conceptual knowledge* when asked to (cross)categorize and draw inferences about food (Nguyen & Murphy, 2003; Gandolini et al., under review).

Several scholars advocate for knowledge-based food education to foster preschool children's adoption of varied diets (e.g., Pickard et al., 2023), but extant interventions of this kind mostly focus on conveying nutrition "theories" in school (e.g., Gripshover & Markman, 2013), thus disregarding the important day-to-day training in recognizing food categories that children undergo in family settings.

In this paper, we show how considering the conceptual complexity of the food domain is crucial to devise effective learning programs. Although research suggests that children and their caregivers' food concepts differ substantially, in educational settings children must coordinate their representations with adults': how do the two parties make sense of each other's understanding of food?

We first bring together the pluralist approach endorsed by philosophers of food and Susan Carey's influential work on concept development (2009) to characterize the general notion of *conceptual coordination*, defined as the state that obtains when the content conveyed by a given concept with a conceptual system (CS1) is the same that is conveyed by the concept's counterpart in another system (CS2).

We then proceed to illustrate the most common ways in which conceptual coordination can fail to obtain in food education, thus giving raise to three kinds of conceptual mismatches: when the parties involved in an educational program use the same lexicalised concepts to denotate different food categories, a *semantic mismatch* occurs; when they hold the same concept to convey different types of information, they incur in *epistemic mismatches*; and when the partitions of the world into kinds that underly their conceptual systems do not coincide, they face an *ontological mismatch*.

Finally, we highlight how effective food education programs call for mismatch-specific interventions and discuss some options proposed by developmental psychologists that can be implemented in child-parent interactions.

(Matteo Gandolini is a Ph.D. student in philosophy at the University of Milan, and a member of the Institut Lyfe research center in Lyon and the CHArt Lab in Paris. He is working on a project regarding food knowledge in preschool children and its relation to food neophobia. Andrea Borghini is an associate professor of philosophy at the University of Milan, working in the philosophy of food, and Jérémie Lafraire directs a research group in cognitive science applied to food at the Institut Lyfe.)

Beyond the Perfectionism-Versus-Neutrality Debate in Childrearing: The Case of Food

Anca Gheaus (Central European University)

Philosophical views about the permissible shaping of children's minds and bodies have been divided between perfectionism, which states that childrearing should be guided by the ideal of benefitting children, and antiperfectionism, which says that childrearers should abstain from intentionally bestowing on children benefits – including values – that are contested by reasonable citizens who endorse different conceptions of the good life. On the latter view, childrearing should be aimed strictly at the development of children's autonomy and sense of justice. The first aim of my paper is to propose a third view, which preserves the appeal of each of the above, competitor accounts, while avoiding their theoretical and practical costs. On my view, childrearers may seek to benefit children above and beyond what is needed for the acquisition of autonomy and sense of justice as long as there is no monopoly of influence, and the methods are respectful – that is, free from coercion, deceit, and manipulation. The second aim is to explore the implications of my account for two issues in the philosophy of food: choosing food for children, and expecting girls and boys to be differently involved in the preparation and serving of food.

(Anca Gheaus is an assistant professor in the political science department at the Central European University in Vienna. She is the author of numerous articles on children, reproduction, and families, she co-edited the *Routledge Handbook of the Philosophy of Childhood and Children*. She has just published a book, *Debating Surrogacy*, with Christine Straehle, and she is completing a monograph on child-centered childrearing.)

Latkes, Curries, and Lasagna: Shaping Children's Identity Via Dietary Choices

Colin Macleod (Victoria)

On some views of child rearing, it is impermissible for parents to attempt to shape the identity of children by promoting a conception of the good favoured by parents. On this view, Christian parents should refrain from trying to secure their children's adherence to the Christian faith and atheist parents should not raise children with the aim of their children becoming atheists. The putative constraint on attempts to shape the identity of children is grounded in a concern to avoid treating children as mere ingredients in the life plans of parents. Insofar as possible, children should not be treated as vehicles for the advancement of ideals of the good life favored by parents. Often discussion focuses on attempts by parents to transmit doctrines of one sort or another to children. But children's identities are shaped by many other factors, including the kinds of food their parents typically prepare in their households. This paper examines the degree to which it is permissible for parents to shape children's identities via dietary choices made by parents. Is permissible, for instance, for parents to favour a diet for their children that is rooted in cultural traditions embraced by parents? Is the attempt to cultivate in children a taste for certain foods disrespectful or can it be an acceptable way to shape the identities (both culinary and cultural) of children?

(Colin Macleod is a professor of philosophy and law at the University of Victoria. His research interests include issues regarding children, families, and justice. Among his many publications in these areas are the co-edited volumes, *Perspectives on Moral and Civic Education*, *The Moral and Political Status of Children*, and *The Nature of Children's Well-being: Theory and Practice*.)

No Meat for Minors: Children's Autonomy and Dietary Choice

Erik Magnusson (Manitoba)

Is it morally permissible for parents to feed animal products to their children? At first glance, it might seem like our answer to this question will depend primarily on whether we consider the consumption of animal products to be a form of injustice. If we do, then feeding one's child animal products looks like impermissibly implicating that child in a form of injustice, not unlike encouraging one's child to steal or to adopt discriminatory attitudes; if we do not, then feeding one's child animal products simply looks like a permissible, if possibly contentious, exercise of parental authority, not unlike enrolling one's child into a particular religious or cultural practice that some people find objectionable. There is, however, another set of considerations that bears on this question, one that can support clear normative positions on the permissibility of feeding one's child animal products without having to resolve the issue of whether consuming animal products is ultimately unjust. In the existing literature surrounding the ethics of the family, many philosophers have argued that, in addition to fostering their children's sense of justice, parents also have a duty to respect their children's autonomy, or their ability to formulate, revise, and pursue their own conceptions of the good life. For some philosophers, respecting a child's autonomy primarily involves taking certain measures to ensure they can make their own decisions as adults, including cultivating the intellectual capacities required for autonomous choice and ensuring they have a meaningful range of options from which to choose upon reaching adulthood. It may also require gradual non-interference in their choices while they are still children, as they progressively develop the intellectual capacities for autonomous choice. For others, however, respecting a child's autonomy requires that parents refrain from imparting particular convictions to their children or enrolling them into associations and practices based on comprehensive moral, religious, or philosophical doctrines, at least until they reach an age at which they can freely consent to that enrolment. On this view, autonomy is not only a desirable end-state to be achieved, but also a precondition of being treated in particular ways, and the fact that young children lack this condition entails that certain forms of treatment toward them are morally impermissible.

In this paper, I draw on this latter view of autonomy to defend an autonomy-based argument in favour of plant-based diets for children. My central claim is that respecting a child's autonomy requires feeding them a plant-based diet until they reach at age at which they can formulate their own views about comprehensive matters, including matters concerning the moral status of animals and the permissibility of animal consumption. The paper proceeds in four parts. After outlining three important assumptions of my

argument in Part 1, I turn in Part 2 to consider the nature of children's interest in autonomy and distinguish two ways in which the autonomy claims of children can be understood: the achievement view and the independence view. In Part 3, I draw on the independence view of autonomy and its attendant notion of retrospective consent to develop an autonomy-based argument in favour of plant-based diets for children. Finally, in Part 4, I consider and respond to four possible objections to this argument, namely, the retrospective consent objection, the parental intention objection, the lack of responsibility objection, and the slippery slope objection.

(Erik Magnusson teaches in the departments of political studies and philosophy at the University of Manitoba, where he is also a research facilitator in the faculty of education and affiliated with the Centre for Professional and Applied Ethics. His research focuses on the ethics of procreation and parenthood.)

Climate Veganism and Children's Diet: A New Argument in Favor of Vegan Upbringing

Gianfranco Pellegrino (LUISS)

The main aim of this paper is to put together two strands of argument – i.e., arguments about the moral obligation to raise vegan children (from now on, *Vegan Upbringing*) and climate ethics-based arguments for veganism (from now on, *Climate Veganism*). Vegan Upbringing comes in (at least) two stripes (here, I am not considering Alvaro's [2019] view and Hunt's [2019] criticism of Vegan Upbringing). It may be based on animal rights (Milburn 2021; 2022) or the interests of children (Fredericks and Fischer forthcoming). As recently reconstructed in (Kortetmäki and Oksanen 2021, 735), Climate Veganism includes the following claims:

1. We ought to adopt a low-carbon diet to reduce the climatic impacts of our diet significantly;
2. Most animal-based foods have high climatic impacts, whereas most plant-based foods have low or moderate impacts, even though in exceptional circumstances in non-ideal worlds, eating high-impact foods either makes no difference or may benefit the climate; therefore,
3. We ought to adopt a predominantly vegan diet, with the permitted exceptions possible without crossing significant thresholds.

The argument above raises many issues, and it may not perfectly overlap with animal rights- based arguments for veganism. Here, I do not consider all these topics (even though I tackle some of them). I assume that Climate Veganism is, by and large, valid.

In this paper, I want to consider the following question: What's the impact of Climate Veganism on Vegan Upbringing? It seems that applied to dietary choices for children, Climate Veganism can produce a version of Vegan Upbringing, to be formulated as follows:

1. A predominantly vegan diet can produce a reduction in climatic impacts; if so,
2. We ought to adopt a predominantly vegan diet (we should be *predominantly vegans*); but also,
3. We ought to spread the adoption of a predominantly vegan diet;
4. Creating predominantly vegans is a way to spread the adoption of a predominantly vegan diet;
5. In current real-world circumstances, the best way to create predominantly vegans is by raising our children as such; therefore,
6. In current real-world circumstances, we ought to raise our children as predominantly vegans.

Call the argument above Climatic Vegan Upbringing. This argument has attractive features. It reinforces Vegan Upbringing, making it less dependent

on controversial views about animal rights or specific children's interests. At the same time, it makes vegan upbringing not an indefeasible obligation. There may be circumstances where exceptions to veganism are allowed or even required (for instance, when they are low-impact or when vegan options are high-impact [Budolfson 2015]). Moreover, empirical generalizations about the impact of different eating styles can be used as a principled way of allowing compromises and exceptions.

However, the argument may have unattractive features. To cite one: it is not directly grounded in animal rights or children's interests but in the overall interests affected by dangerous climate change. The paper closes with a discussion of this issue.

(Gianfranco Pellegrino is an associate professor of political philosophy at LUISS. His research interests are in the history of political thought, distributive justice, migration, and environmental ethics.)

Vegetarianism, Moral Corruption, and Retrospective Reasonable Rejection

Riccardo Spotorno (Hamburg)

Daniel Butt has recently argued that parents may not feed their children meat to avoid their children engaging in actions future adults might find morally corrupting. Butt's argument rests on the following premises: i) a vegetarian diet does not pose threats to children's health, ii) there is a chance that children will become ethical vegetarians, even though they were fed meat during their childhood, iii) ethical vegetarianism is a reasonable view, and iv) eating meat as a child makes giving up meat later in life more costly. Since current children might embrace ethical vegetarianism in the future, parents who feed their children meat, pose their children at risk of experiencing a form of moral corruption determined by the fact that future adults cannot easily give up meat, although they believe it is the right thing to do.

Butt's argument does not depend on the truth of ethical vegetarianism; even if it were morally permissible to eat animals, some future adults will believe that eating animals is wrongful and will, then, feel morally corrupt if they cannot give up meat.

In this paper, I reject Butt's argument as unsatisfactory for two kinds of reasons.

On the one hand, if ethical vegetarianism is simply a reasonable view, whose truth we cannot establish, we do not have sufficient grounds to claim that parents have the duty to avoid their children experiencing the kind of moral corruption associated with eating meat. Parents are not required to be concerned about the non-excessive costs that their choices pose on their children's adherence to specific reasonable views in the future. For instance, children might end up supporting reasonable views, like Jainism, that consider eating root vegetables immoral, but this does not entail that parents may not feed their children root vegetables. I consider and reject reformulations of Butt's argument that refer to the likelihood of vegetarianism's truth to the likelihood that one's child will embrace ethical vegetarianism, and to the great importance of ethical vegetarianism for vegetarians' lives.

On the other hand, if vegetarianism is true, children have a valid complaint against being involved in an immoral practice, even if they are not responsible for their involvement, independently of the effects that their involvement has on their future tastes and food choices. Butt, on the contrary, claims that the impact of feeding children meat on their future

food choices is relevant, since the consumption of meat cannot be said to corrupt children *qua* children.

I conclude the paper by presenting an alternative account based on Matthew Clayton's anti- perfectionist upbringing that overcomes the shortcomings of Butt's account. According to Clayton, parents should make choices about their children's lives that cannot be reasonably rejected by future adults. This account concludes that i) if vegetarianism is simply a reasonable view, parents may feed their children meat, but they may not enroll their children into meat- eating and, ii) if vegetarianism is true, parents may not feed their children, independently of the likelihood that one's child will become vegetarian and of the costs of giving up meat.

(Riccardo Spotorno is a researcher at the University of Hamburg. His research focuses on the ethics of parent-child relationships, the moral status of children, family justice, and intergenerational justice.)

Should Kitchens be Confidential?

Daniel Weinstock (McGill)

Parents are granted almost complete discretion as to how they feed their children. As far as I am aware, states will only step in when children are malnourished in a narrow sense of that term. However, many food choices made by parents for their children, while they do not constitute malnourishment in the narrow sense, nonetheless arguably constitute harm. Many debilitating health conditions result from food choices made by families and should therefore at least in principle fall under the purview of public officials. And yet there are strong normative pressures that lead us to believe that if any aspect of family life is to be included within the private sphere, choices made with respect to food fall centrally within that category. My paper will first investigate and clarify the contours of this apparent conflict between these two normative pressures, and second propose some possible policy prescriptions which might, if not eliminate, at least soften the edges thereof. The options that will be investigated include bans on particularly harmful foods, nudges incentivizing the adoption of healthier foods, and educational programmes aimed at both educating parents and increasing child autonomy with respect to food choices.

(Daniel Weinstock holds the Katharine A. Pearson Chair in Civil Society and Public Policy in the Faculties of Law and of Arts at McGill University, where he is also Associate Dean (Research). His work spans a range of areas in moral and political philosophy, including issues of public policy toward children, families, and educational institutions.)

The Intractable Injustice of Corporate Food Systems

Garrath Williams (Lancaster)

In this talk, I step back from the day-to-day challenges and choices facing parents, to examine the broader context of our food systems. Why do so many children consume so many highly processed foods, to the cost of their long-term and sometimes short-term health? Even worse, why do these foods continue to be produced in a way that damages ecosystems and climate, to the point where we can predict that today's children will face much worse challenges in feeding their future families?

I focus on three factors. First, I highlight our basic predicament: tight planetary limits, including the destruction of a stable climate, mean that agriculture demands far greater social inputs, and far fewer chemical and mechanical inputs. Rather than the "industrial intensity" of contemporary commodity agriculture, we need to practice "horticultural intensity" (as Kent Peacock once put it).

The main part of my talk focuses on a second factor: the corporate structure of global food systems. With a short historical detour, I explain the dynamics of corporate shareholding, and how this depends on state-given legal frameworks. These frameworks were originally developed in Europe and the U.S., and then exported worldwide as part of colonialism and imperialism. This export enabled business corporations to take transnational form. The resulting dynamics create (what I term) careless globalism: global actors that cannot afford to care about the global damage they are wreaking.

I also highlight a third factor. States have provided the framework for these corporations, but now find themselves almost powerless against them. No global political authority oversees transnational business; individual states compete for crumbs from their table, and face huge obstacles in imposing even mild constraints on the damage they are causing.

Together, these factors create an intractable set of injustices. Global food systems channel profits to those who are already wealthy – that is, shareholders. They run down finite and already badly degraded resources. They supply highly processed foods, with associated risks of obesity, diabetes and other forms of ill-health. These systems urgently need reform, but it is hard to see how this can happen.

(Garrath Williams is a senior lecturer in the department of politics, philosophy and religion at Lancaster University. He has published in moral philosophy, political theory, and applied ethics, including the co-authored

book, *Childhood Obesity: Ethical and Policy Issues*. He is currently completing a book on Kant and corporations, *Kant Incorporated.*)

Mother Earth: Climate Emergency, Breastfeeding, and Justice

Fiona Woollard (Southampton)

Infant feeding decisions are decisions about how to feed babies, particularly whether to breastfeed or chestfeed them, feed them pumped human milk (from either a parent or a donor), or feed them infant formula. These decisions are deeply emotive and deeply moralised. Until recently, attempts to persuade parents to breastfeed/chestfeed have primarily focused on the benefits of breastfeeding/chestfeeding for the child, with some secondary attention on the benefits for the parents, or on the money saved for public health institutions. There is growing attention on environmental reasons to breastfeed/chestfeed, with recent research emphasising the link between infant feeding decisions and the climate emergency. In this talk, I will explore how we should respond to this research. I will argue our response must balance complex considerations of justice: the need for climate justice and the potential for injustice in the demands placed on parents. We should be very hesitant to conclude that the link between infant feeding decisions and the climate emergency results in a duty for parents to breastfeed/chestfeed. In contrast, we should be confident that it does strengthen the duties of third parties, such as governments, companies and the general public to enable parents to breastfeed, chestfeed or otherwise feed their babies human milk.

(Fiona Woollard is a professor of philosophy at the University of Southampton. Her research interests include issues in the philosophy of pregnancy and motherhood and in the philosophy of sex.)

Other participants

In person

Tom Bailey (John Cabot)
Jenny Brown (Warwick)
Rodrigo Salcedo Du Bois (John Cabot)
Usman Mehboob
Rissa Miller (Universidade Católica Portuguesa)
Elisa Puvia (John Cabot)
Muhammad Umar Sadiq (Quaid-i-Azam)
Liam Shields (Manchester)
Steven Woodworth (John Cabot)

Online

Anne Barnhill (Johns Hopkins)
Kay Malte Bischof (Notre Dame)
Elena Bossini (Sassari)
Annette Bryson (John Cabot)
Ilyas Debbah (Kings College London)
Sebastian Engler (Central European University)
Katie Kissel (Georgia State)
Ke Li
Lena Marinova (Minho)
Francesca Miccoli (Basel and Milan)
Chidi Orji (Umuagwo)
Amaranta Ortega
Sandra Raponi (Merrimack)
Kathaleen “Drea” Restitullo (Rochester)
Friderike Spang (Lausanne)
Adam Swift (University College London)