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An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research

Volume 18, 2015 - Issue 3

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Local Food, Financial Prosperity and Health in Samoa

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Pages 519-539 | Published online: 07 Oct 2015

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<https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2015.1043113>

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have focused on local production as a way to provide Samoans with financial

prosperity, which in turn would provide opportunities for healthier consumption. This article is based on qualitative interviews with food actors and an ethnography of food, public health and development in Samoa.

Keywords: [local food](#) [health](#) [Samoa](#) [agricultural development](#) [obesity](#)

Acknowledgments

This paper was first presented at the Association for the Social Anthropology of Oceania for a panel on “New Food” organized by Ryan Schram. We would like to thank all the food actors who shared their time with us. We would also like to thank the Samoan Ministry of Health for its support for this research. We also offer a special thanks to Shawn Arita, who provided invaluable insights on this project. Thank you to Penelope Schoeffel, Nancy Pollock and Terence Wesley Smith for their helpful comments. Finally, we thank the journal’s anonymous reviewers as well as Amy Bentley for their helpful feedback that deeply informed this paper.

Disclosure Statement

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2. Across the Pacific, starchy crops are “considered satisfying (like a Western “meal”) only if ... served with one of a number of accompanying dishes” (Pollock [1992](#): 29). These complementary foods are the main meal of the day in the evening, although “leftover” starchy foods are often eaten for lunch. Other food items, while considered edible, including fruits, fruit soups and, today, sandwiches, processed snack foods and instant noodles, can be eaten anytime but are not essential to mealtimes nor are they considered “real” food (Pollock [1985](#)).

3. The food actors also focused on the geopolitical position of Samoa in exacerbating issues of price and supply. Samoa is a small, geographically distant market with a highly price-sensitive economy. The food actors felt at the mercy of the global food system. Shipping and transportation costs, import duties, as well as trade relations of larger industrialized markets were all cited as common challenges for supplying Samoa with affordable healthy foods. Samoa’s participation in the global market was portrayed as constraining the local Samoan market in unhealthy ways by creating trade barriers, while unhealthy foods were dumped on its shores. Representing this global market, they felt, was “a large contingent of Chinese” shop owners, who were seen as intent on “using and abusing society.” Embedded in this view is a much deeper racialized sentiment against the Chinese “Other foreigner” in Samoa, specifically the recent influx of new Chinese migrants who have begun to move into the local business scene. These new entrepreneurs were often portrayed as shrewd capitalists neglecting “the Pacific way” and

to symbolize the market.

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