



## **CALL FOR BOOK CHAPTER ABSTRACTS**

### **FOOD SYSTEMS AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES**

#### **Edited by**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

The book aims to offer fresh perspectives on the relationships between food systems and cultural identity in Southern Africa. The volume will bring together diverse scholarly perspectives to explore how food systems shape and are shaped by cultural identities, social practices, social-political responses to climatic and non-climatic shocks and philosophical worldviews in the region. The volume challenges dominant Western paradigms through centring African perspectives and ways of knowing. It will examine how food systems embody forms of knowledge that resist colonial epistemologies while adapting to contemporary realities.

Food availability, accessibility and price crisis have important implications for Africa and the problem of food sustainability. In particular, sub-Saharan Africa happens to be the most food-insecure region in the world. This insecurity is further associated with factors such as poverty, underdeveloped infrastructure and markets, low life expectancy, a high incidence of HIV/AIDS, and a large number of failed states (du Plessis 2016: 5). However, Southern Africa is characterised by a multiplicity of food cultures which could either negatively or positively impact food security. Although this appears negative, it has some prospects. Elena Alonso et al (2018) have argued that food is intimately related to human culture. The magnitude and relative importance of cultural effects on food security are still poorly understood. That is, how and why we obtain, process, prepare, and eat food is influenced by culture in various ways. Hence, our understanding of the cultural dimension of food security should become an essential part of moving towards sustainable healthier diets for all. Without understanding different food cultures and discourses surrounding it, our understanding of food would be limited and efforts to improve food security undermined. It is for this reason that this volume proposes interdisciplinary perspectives on how culture vis-a-vis food and accessibility.

## THEMES

1. **Indigenous food knowledge and its transmission** (e.g. the intersection of traditional and modern food practices, adaptation of traditional food systems to contemporary challenges, oral traditions and food knowledge preservation, innovation within traditional food systems, digital documentation of traditional food practices)
2. **Power, Politics and Food Systems** (e.g. food sovereignty in Southern Africa, colonial legacies in current food systems, land rights and food production, the political economy of traditional foods, food policies and cultural preservation, power dynamics in food distribution networks, and gender politics in food systems)
3. **Spirituality and Sacred Dimensions** (e.g. food in ritual and ceremony, sacred spaces of food production, ancestral connections through food practices, taboos, religion and dietary restrictions, healing practices and food, and sacred plants and traditional agriculture)
4. **Environmental Connections and Sustainability** (e.g. traditional ecological knowledge, climate change adaptation through Indigenous practices, biodiversity and cultural food practices, sustainable traditional agriculture, water management in food systems, and seasonal food practices and the environment)
5. **Identity Formation and Social Bonds** (e.g. African philosophy and food, food and community building, Cultural identity and food, intergenerational relationships through food, urban-rural food identities, food in cultural resistance and preservation, migration and food practices, food markets as social spaces, and the language of food)
6. **Gender, Age, Family Dynamics and Food** (e.g. women's roles in food knowledge systems, family structures and food practice, gendered spaces in food production, changing gender roles in food systems, domestic and public food spaces, age and food systems)
7. **Globalisation and Cultural Resilience** (e.g. Impact of global food systems, fast food and traditional diets, cultural adaptation and resistance, international trade and local food systems, tourism and food authenticity, digital food cultures, queer food systems)
8. **Geography of Food Systems:** rural-urban linkages and food systems, cross-border dynamics and food systems; urbanisation and food systems; transport networks, connectivity and food systems)
9. **Resilience of Food Systems Against Climatic and Non-climatic shocks** (e.g. how climate and non-climate shocks affect agri-food systems in space and time, how agri-food systems respond to climatic and non-climatic shocks, how social capital affects the resilience of agri-food systems)
10. **Food Systems Governance** (e.g. policy and regulation, stakeholder engagement, equity and access, just transition)

## SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Authors are invited to submit a 300-word abstract. Authors should also include the title of the proposed chapter, author(s) name(s), affiliation(s) and corresponding author's email address. All submitted chapters will be double-blind peer-reviewed. Abstracts should be submitted to [foodsystemsbook@unima.ac.mw](mailto:foodsystemsbook@unima.ac.mw).

## IMPORTANT DATES

<b>28th March 2025</b>	Abstract submission deadline
<b>12th April 2025</b>	Authors are notified of the outcome of their abstracts
<b>20th August 2025</b>	Authors submit draft chapters
<b>Sept 2025 - Feb 2026</b>	Review Process
<b>15th March 2026</b>	Authors submit the final version of their manuscripts

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