

FEEDING THE WORLD SILICON VALLEY-STYLE: PLACE, PROTEIN AND PROMISE



In 2013, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates declared food was “ripe for reinvention”. This call to action coincided with news of Gates’ seed investment in two Californian food technology companies attempting to replace animal eggs and meat with plant-based substitutes. Around the same time, cellular agriculture ventures – those growing animal products *in vitro* via tissue engineering and fermentation – were gaining similar interest from fellow tech billionaires and Silicon Valley-based venture capital. This turn to (protein) food by the region’s high-tech investors and entrepreneurs was splashed across global headlines: the “future of food” had ostensibly arrived. Such developments raise timely questions: what does it mean to *do*, or more specifically, *reinvent* food ‘Silicon Valley-style’? In what ways is this meeting of food with high-tech in the place of Silicon Valley shaping our understanding of what food is, and what it should and can be in an increasingly climate-changed and unstable world? In this talk, Dr Alexandra Sexton will explore these themes drawing on her research of the food tech scene in Silicon Valley over the last decade.

Presentation followed by commentary,
Q&A.

Discussant:

- Professor Mike Goodman

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Dr Alexandra Sexton

Alexandra Sexton is a Leverhulme Early Career Research Fellow, Department of Geography, University of Sheffield. Her research examines the geographies, politics and histories of food innovation, with a focus on high-tech meat and dairy alternatives.

Thursday March 18th, 2021

1-2 pm MS Teams

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