

The Whaling Issue Will Never End, even if Whaling Collapses

Akamine Jun, Hitotsubashi University

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Room 301, 3F, Building 10, Sophia University
No registration necessary / In Person Only

Abstract:

With an industrialized diet, rates of food-caused diseases, such as obesity, are now skyrocketing around the world. On a personal level, this can lead to a deep suspicion of fats and oils. Yet at a national level, acquiring affordable fats and oils has long been of great strategic importance. Around World War Two, Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan both sent whaling fleets to Antarctica to secure access to whale oil. At this time, most of the world's margarine and dynamite (nitroglycerin) were created using whale oil. Yet, by the 1960s, when debates about the ethics of killing whales led to a collapse of the industry, nations turned to other sources of oil, including the development of large-scale soybean plantations in Brazil and massive oil palm plantations throughout Southeast Asia. In both places, the end of whaling ended up promoting the conversion of rainforests into monocultural landscapes for edible oils. The presentation raises attention to the history of global competition among edible oils including whale oil.



Bio:

Akamine Jun is a professor of global studies at the Graduate School of Social Sciences, Hitotsubashi University. His research interests include Maritime Asian Studies and ethnography of food. One of his current research topics is global whaling history and changes of whale meat foodways in Japan. Currently he is writing a book on the social history of margarine in relation to development in marine and agricultural edible oils. He is an author of *Conserving Biodiversity for Cultural Diversity: A Multi-sited Ethnography of Sea Cucumber Wars* (Tokai University Press, 2013). He also serves as an advisor for the Japanese government delegation at the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora).

This talk is organized by James Farrer (Professor of Sociology, Sophia University, Lead investigator of the ICC Collaborative Research Unit "[Sophia Food Studies](https://www.icc-sophia.com/)").

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