## Contemporary Food Issues: BSUFN Annual Symposium 2016

**Thursday 16th of June 2016**

9:00 – 17:30

University of Brighton, Falmer campus, Checkland Building rooms E512 and E513

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<td>9:30-10:15</td>
<td><strong>Keynote Speech - Dr Tom Wakeford</strong> – Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University</td>
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<td>“You just don't get it, do you?” Building a food movement that takes social justice seriously. Chair: Ruth Segal</td>
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<td><strong>Brighton &amp; Hove Communities</strong> – Room E513</td>
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<td><strong>Global Commodification and Responses</strong> – Room E513</td>
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<td>13:10-14:10</td>
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<td>14:10-14:55</td>
<td><strong>Alternative Models of Sustainable Food Systems</strong></td>
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<td>Three models of sustainable food systems will be ‘pitched’ as alternative to mainstream food and agriculture systems. This will be followed by an open discussion. Contributions from: Slow Food Sussex – Michael Little Permaculture People – Phil Moore and Lauren Simpson Food Sovereignty Sussex – To be confirmed</td>
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14:55-15:55 | **Food Safety, Quality and Novelty – Room E513**  
Chair: *To be confirmed*  
Professor Erik Millstone  
Naomi Hossain  

15:55-16:20 | Tea/coffee break and Posters  

16:20-17:20 | **Processed Food and its Discontents – Room E513**  
Chair: *To be confirmed*  
Graham Sharp and Judith Watson  
Peter Senker  

17:20-17:30 | Sum up and Close  

Supported by the Doctoral School’s Researcher-Led Initiative (RLI) Fund. The Symposium 2016 is also kindly supported by: SPRU (Science Policy Research Unit) and the School of Global Studies, University of Sussex, and COSTALS (Centre of Sport, Tourism and Leisure Studies), University of Brighton.

**Keynote Speech - Dr Tom Wakeford**
"You just don’t get it, do you?” Building a food movement that takes social justice seriously.

Tom Wakeford is Reader in Public Science at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Coventry University. His work focuses on the addressing inequality and human rights through collaborative generation of democratic knowledge. Tom’s research is often practice-based through the use of participatory action research methods. He has a particular interest in addressing racism within the research system and, more generally, bridging the divide between academics and those whose expertise comes from their experience. His past research on food sovereignty and agroecological initiatives has primarily been in the UK and India.

In recent months Tom has been working with BSUFN on a number of initiatives, including a workshop on the use of arts as a method for engagement to improve research and dialogue around food.

**Brighton & Hove Communities**

**Jenny Hacker and Vic Borrill (Brighton & Hove Food Partnership)**
**Delivering a weight management programme in Brighton and Hove**

Background: Brighton & Hove Food Partnership is a not-for-profit organisation that has worked on food related issues locally since 2003. By supporting local people (to improve cooking skills, grow their own food, or reach a healthy weight), improving local communities (developing community gardens, supporting food banks) and working
strategically (to improve nutrition standards), it makes a major contribution to the wider local food agenda, and straddles the fields of environmental health, nutritional sciences and public health, with an emphasis on addressing social exclusion and health inequalities.

This report concerns the evaluation of the longer term impact of one project, the adult weight management programme. ‘Shape-Up’ is offered free to overweight and obese adults, delivered largely by dieticians and nutritionists, and has a significant focus on food and nutrition.

Methodology: Shape-Up clients attending programmes six or twelve months previously were asked to complete a survey; 130/204 responded (64% response rate.) Weights and demographic factors of respondents and non-respondents were similar in all respects but weight: non-respondents were likely to lose less weight/increase weight over the programme. Additional focus groups were subsequently carried out with those who had dropped out of the programme early.

Results: Satisfaction levels were high, and highest amongst men, those attending group (as opposed to one to one) sessions, and community rather than city centre locations. More than half reported meeting their nutrition goals and reducing their sugar and fat consumption; three quarters reported eating a healthier diet; 75% were still at a lower weight than when then began. The most commonly perceived reason for successful weight loss was learning from the nutrition sessions, particularly around portion sizes. Barriers were commonly life events ‘getting in the way’, poor health and mobility, caring responsibilities, lack of motivation, stress, depression and anxiety. Most wanted no improvements to the service, those that did wanted the programme to be extended with more follow up support, exercise sessions to be adapted, and more tailored sessions. Focus groups reinforced the stigma and embarrassment that exists in relation to weight.

Conclusions: Programmes are being continually adapted in line with evaluation feedback. Further evaluation is planned for the children’s weight management programmes, cooking clubs, and harvest projects.

Serena Verdenicci (University of Sussex)

Smart Food: Crossing the Digital Divide to Reduce Food Poverty

This research provides one of the first insights into the viability of households, in areas classified as experiencing high-level multiple-deprivation, using online grocery shopping to overcome their vulnerabilities to food poverty, specifically relating to physical access. Qualitative research was undertaken with 21 households from an area in Brighton, UK, classified as experiencing high-level multiple-deprivation, to gain an understanding of their grocery shopping and internet habits, attitudes and experiences. Findings demonstrate that unexpectedly high numbers of these households are using online grocery shopping to overcome elements of food poverty relating to physical
access: employing it fundamentally as a coping mechanism in reaction to shifting personal circumstances.

Global Commodification and Responses

Tom Lines
External Inputs vs. Externalities: Should we prefer the farmer’s or the economist’s understanding of the basis of agriculture?

The farmer’s concept of external inputs and the economist’s concept of externalities are almost mirror images of each other. Farmers define things acquired off the farm (and usually bought on the market) as external, while to an economist externalities are those things that markets cannot account for. The presentation explores the implications of this semantic conflict in a world which is dominated by economic conceptions, including in agriculture and food production. It will consider how modern economics developed alongside the manufacturing industries of the 19th and 20th centuries, contrasting it with agriculture’s actual basis in nature: not in labour, fuel, chemicals or other ‘inputs’ bought off the market but in seeds, the soil, the sun, the air and water. From this arise questions about the actual character of modern industrial agriculture and how economics has to change if it is to accommodate agriculture’s needs properly.

Sara Brouwer (University of Edinburgh)
Food security in sub-Saharan Africa: negotiating discourse and practice between Dutch government policy and the country’s food sovereignty movement

My presentation explores in which respects (if any) the Dutch food sovereignty movement influences, and can influence, Dutch government policy directed at food security in sub-Saharan Africa. The concept and social movement of food sovereignty set requirements to the way food security is reached. Its proponents argue that food security should be reached by taking into account the principles of democracy, justice and sustainability. Meanwhile, the conventional discourse surrounding food security is based on the assumption that food security goals can be met through global commodity markets, increased production and the modernisation of the food system.

By means of a critical discourse analysis of Dutch policy documents I first investigate the assumptions and logic underlying the Dutch food security policy. Based on the policy analysis, I show that the Dutch government uses its food security policy to advance economic interests of Dutch private business in emerging markets in Africa. The policy’s proposed market-based development is structured around commercially viable investments in the food system, thus disadvantaging the most food-insecure segments of society that do not fulfil this criterion. While ‘sustainable and inclusive growth’ stands central, this can be seen as empty tokens as the policy only makes passing reference to their practical implementation.
Through interviews with individuals in Dutch food sovereignty organisations, I find that they are not subsumed under the government’s food security discourse. Instead, they aim to structurally influence the entire food security discourse and policy, which makes their quest to influence government policy challenging. One of the three themes from the interview accounts is that ideas of food sovereignty are laughed off or are not even recognised by government. The second theme shows varied tactics by which food security is performed, beyond policy documents. The third relates to a framework that shifts responsibilities away from government: through neoliberal forms of governance it establishes itself not as a regulator, but as a facilitator. While all organisations in the Dutch food sovereignty movement adhere to the same core principles, their strategies to influence the government are different. For promoting transformations in food security policies and discourse, Dutch food sovereignty organisations will have to therefore depend on strategies characterised by La Via Campesina’s motto ‘unity through diversity’.

Jennifer Spicer (University of Sussex)

Securing the Right to Food: India’s National Food Security Act

In this presentation I introduce India’s National Food Security Act 2013 as a relatively rare example of an attempt to realise the human right to food, and link this with the broader politics of access to food as an economic human right. After briefly outlining the provisions of the Act and some aspects of its background in the national context of Indian politics, I will address its wider significance. While the idea of the “right to food” has gained rhetorical importance, especially since the end of the Cold War, attempts to make this right a reality have been fairly uncommon. That India’s government has taken action in this way is therefore encouraging. However, the scope of the legislation is decidedly limited, and these limitations can be linked to the role of food in the current global economic system.

In policy and academic circles, the concept of food security is well established and perhaps even dominant in thinking about access to food. Definitions of food security have changed over the decades since it first appeared in the discourse of international institutions in the 1970s. While the concept has usefully helped to direct attention to the ongoing problems of hunger and malnutrition in the world, the shifts in its definition have tied it to neoliberal ideas about securitisation and individual responsibility within a market system. In globalising capitalist systems, food is a commodity to be bought and sold, the subject of speculative trading in futures markets. This treatment is in considerable tension, if not outright contradiction, with the notion that food is an essential human right. In this presentation I will argue that the current positioning of food in world markets undermines the possibility for the realisation of the right to food, and consider whether and how the Indian law challenges this positioning in such a way as to bring this right closer to fulfilment as a concrete reality.
Consumers, Identity and Culture

Beth Kamunge (University of Sheffield)

Methodological considerations in researching how intersectional oppressions structure Women of Colour’s engagement with food, with Black-feminists in Sheffield

Critical literature on how systems of oppression structure the way marginalized people engage with food has largely ignored black women’s experiences. On the one hand, there is research at the intersections of place, racism and food that speaks to the experiences of People of Colour more broadly. On the other hand there is research at the intersection of place, patriarchy and food that aims to speak to universal Women’s experiences which inevitably centres white women’s experiences. Critical work at the intersections of food and racism and patriarchy amongst other oppressions (able-ism/Islamophobia/anti-Semitism / Queerphobia/class inequalities) is minimal. The key exceptions to this are perhaps: Psyche-Williams (2006) and Zafar’s work (1999). My writings contribute to righting this erasure of black women’s experiences, through dialogues with 12 (other) black-feminists and feminists of colour in Sheffield which explore the core question: How do intersectional oppressions shape black women’s engagement with food? For the purposes of this presentation, I will focus on how I have gone about answering this question. Specifically I will outline how my positioning as a black-feminist, working class, heterosexual, able-bodied, Kenyan woman with a background in community organizing, influenced both the conduct and tentative findings of the research. This will then allow a deeper consideration on the use of preparation and consumption of food with participants as a research method: what has this allowed and prohibited? This presentation will only offer preliminary thoughts, as I am currently in the middle of fieldwork.

Gilly Smith (University of Brighton)

Taste and the TV Chef: How TV Chefs Taught Us to Eat

In a series of interviews with some of the most influential game-changers behind Lifestyle TV on both sides of the Atlantic, Smith, a former TV food producer and now media academic, examines the role of TV on food cultures around the world in identity and consumption. From the make-over in British food by Jamie Oliver, Nigella Lawson, Gordon Ramsay and Heston Blumenthal to the role of the copycat Jamies and Nigellas in reawakening food memories in Eastern Europe after the political ruptures of the 20th century, it explores the impact of this feat of storytelling on global economic, social and cultural frameworks. Offering rare insight into the construction of narratives in some of the most successful food programmes on Lifestyle TV, producers such as Pat Llewellyn (The Naked Chef, The F Word) and Zoe Collins (School Dinners, Jamie’s Kitchen, Jamie Oliver’s Food Revolution) discuss how television has contributed to a growing interest in food and culinary culture. It unpicks with the producers how some of the most
powerful messaging in TV history was achieved, and what we can learn from them to impact on food consumption in the light of climate change and peak oil.

Jonas House (University of Sheffield)

**Why Dutch People Don’t Eat Insect Burgers (And Why It Matters)**

In the light of future threats to global food security, efforts to develop new, more sustainable sources of food are increasingly prominent. One proposed solution is the adoption of insects as animal feed and human food in North America and Western Europe (the ‘West’). Insects, it is argued, can provide a source of protein and nutrition comparable to conventional livestock, but at a significantly reduced environmental cost, and without the ethical complications represented by the intensive rearing of conventional food animals.

Since the publication of an FAO report that made the case for the use of insects as food and feed (van Huis et al. 2013) there has been an explosion of interest in the topic in the West. A number of businesses have begun producing insect-based products, ranging from potato chips, protein bars and burgers to whole freeze-dried beetle larvae, crickets and grasshoppers. Throughout 2015, a major Dutch supermarket chain stocked insect-based convenience foods (including burgers, nuggets and schnitzel) in all of its 550 stores.

This paper is based on interviews conducted during late 2015 with 40 Dutch consumers of insect-based convenience foods. The core of the paper explains why insect-based foods have not so far been successful in the Netherlands. There is a clear distinction between the type of ‘predictors’ or ‘enablers’ identified in previous scholarly attempts to forecast future insect consumption behaviour, and the mundane, socio-cultural, habitual and practical factors that manifestly dictate a great deal of food consumption, such as price, taste and availability.

Two proposals are made for future research into consumer acceptance of novel foods. Firstly, that it is not confined to the typical methods of consumer research, which have some significant drawbacks: for example, surveys cannot tell us about the practical reality of food consumption, and decontextualized taste tests cannot replicate the circumstances in which a novel food is initially received. Secondly, attention can profitably be paid to the historical examples of previously successful novel foods – such as sugar, tea, and sushi – as the social and economic dynamics of these can teach us some important lessons about the likely success of today’s ‘new’ food sources.

**Alternative Models of Sustainable Food Systems**

Three models of sustainable food systems will be ‘pitched’ as alternative to mainstream food and agriculture systems. After each of the models have been pitched there will be an open debate on the similarities, differences, pros and cons of the three models. This debate brings a practitioner and activist perspective to local discourse about sustainability within contemporary food systems.
Contributions from:

**Slow Food Sussex** – Michael Little

**Permaculture People** – Phil Moore and Lauren Simpson

**Food Sovereignty Sussex** – To be confirmed

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**Food Safety, Quality and Novelty**

**Prof. Erik Millstone (University of Sussex)**

**The European Food Safety Authority – a health check**

The European Commission routinely refers to assessments of whether or not its policy regimes are ‘fit for purpose’ as a ‘health check’. This paper will review the EU’s food safety policy regime, comprising EFSA (the European Food Safety Authority) and DG-SANTE (the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety). It will not assess the regime from the Commission’s perspective, but rather from the perspective of food safety and consumer protection. Recent initiatives to increase the ‘transparency’ and ‘reproducibility’ of EFSA’s judgements will be examined in particular.

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**Naomi Hossain, with Alex Kelbert and Patta Scott-Villiers (Institute of Development Studies)**

**Delicious, disgusting, dangerous: diets after the global food crisis**

The diets of people on low and precarious incomes have changed since the global food crisis, according to research from the *Life in a Time of Food Price Volatility* project, a partnership between the Institute of Development Studies and Oxfam GB across 10 low and middle income countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Analysis suggests that there are undeniable benefits from the integration of world food trade: more stable supply, wider choice, and changes in food habits mean people are finding new ways to enjoy food and new foods to enjoy, often with greater convenience and ease. But the loss of control this brings has detrimental impacts on wellbeing. Most people feel they understand little about how new foods affect their health and nutrition; knowledge that they had accrued over generations and longer with respect to their customary cuisines is being lost with the wave of new ways of eating and foods to eat. Women, men and children are being affected by these new choices and pressures in different ways, but across settings the rapid integration into food markets is having similar impacts on the way we eat now. People have real worries about a new culture of fast food and fake food; they worry about additives, nourishment and food hygiene, and they feel that governments do too little to protect them from the risks.
Processed Food and its Discontents

Graham Sharp and Judith Watson (University of Brighton)

Real subsumption of retailed food in the 21st century

Food consumption patterns in the developed world have changed massively in the last sixty or so years, and that change has accelerated since the 1970s. Such changes have included globalisation of recipes, “permanent global summertime”, food that is ready-prepared for immediate consumption, and the tendency to abandon regular mealtimes. All these are related to wider socio-economic changes: international migration, outsourcing to the Global South, scientific research and technological development, women’s entry into the paid workforce, unemployment and overwork, rising inequality, etc. These have led to an increase in consumption of “ultra-processed foods”.

In our presentation we will outline the political economy of oligopolistic food processors and food manufacturers who, with the supermarkets, push sales of ultra-processed foodstuffs that are, by and large, detrimental to the health of consumers and the health of our environment. The concept of ultra-processed food is best understood using concepts in eco-Marxism of metabolic rift and the formal/real subsumption of both labour and nature. Labour process theory enables us to link the experience of workers in each stage of the production and distribution of foodstuffs to “knowledge rift” among consumers. Developments in the UK have ominous implications for other regions of the world.

Peter Senker

A Campaign for Real Food

The food produced by food processing companies and fast food outlets is “sweet, oily, old, flavoured, coloured, watery, tricky and packed”. Consumption of processed food is a significant cause of increases in obesity, chronic disease and food allergies worldwide. We are asked to believe the nonsense that food factories are just home cooking scaled up. But food manufacturers combine sugar, processed fat and salt in quickly digested forms. Such combinations may be addictive. Their foods contain toxic chemicals. The industry defends use of controversial ingredients such as partially hydrogenated oils. (Blythman, 2015). To secure the profitable business that food processing company’s work hard to achieve, they produce billions of packets of processed food at very low cost per unit, and persuade customers to buy them. This is facilitated by the availability of mass media whose profitability depends on them conveying advertising messages to consumers cheaply. The British Government’s policy of reducing the BBC’s activities is related to a strategy of encouraging media to concentrate on stimulating economic growth instead of entertaining and informing the public. Food manufacturers dominate regulatory bodies worldwide. Governments welcome food industry dominance of regulation to prevent their states’ acquisition of reputations for strict regulation. Such a reputation would risk loss of the employment and contribution to economic output.
which food processing companies provide. But it should be a higher priority for
democratic states to ensure that their populations benefit from a healthy diet. The
behaviour of food processing corporations is rational, but against the public interest in
eating wholesome healthy food. For example, the British Government supports food
corporations wholeheartedly. It wants the British food industry to grow fast, to export
and to innovate. More than forty years ago, the Campaign for Real Ale was established,
because major corporations were dominating the market with horrible bubbly beer. It
has been highly successful. We now need to establish a huge, localised, diverse,
Campaign for Real Food.

Posters

- **Peter Hovard** - Introducing the National Diet and Nutrition Survey
- **Silvana Juri** - The proof of the pudding is in the eating
- **Suzanna McGregor** - The rise of Food banks in Contemporary Britain: the
  impact on health, the volunteers who work there and the public perceptions.
- **Dipak Sarker** - Coffee: the chemistry & technology of real & ‘fake’ products & the
  history of its development & use

There will also be a display of posters and artworks reflecting the use of creative
methods for research, dialogue and community engagement on food issues.

- **Carol Williams** – *Title to be confirmed*
- **Rachael Taylor** – Through Farmers’ Eyes
- **Bella Wheeler** – *Title to be confirmed*
- **BSUFN** - Using the Arts to Improve Research and Dialogue on Food: Outputs
  from Food Research Collaboration, BSUFN and Centre for Agroecology, Water
  and Resilience Workshop