



ESA RN5 – Midterm Meeting of the Research Network of Sociology of Consumption

Consumption, justice and futures: Where do we go from here?

Oslo Metropolitan University | 31 August - 3 September 2022

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Conference Time: 18th Nov 2022, 04:19:47pm CET

Conference Agenda

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Authors	<input type="text"/>
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Session Overview

Session

Parallel 6.1 Food

Time: Friday, 02/Sept/2022: 9:00am - 10:30am

Session Chair: Mary Greene

Location: Room: PA 311

KK-senteret, Pilestredet 46, 3th floor, room for 25-30

Presentations

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Goodness Groceries: a mobile sustainable food shopping App advocating for food literacy and ethical choices. Entailments for suppliers, consumers and researchers.

Rachel Reckinger, Diane Kapgen, Helena Korjonen, Anna Pax

Within the currently rising concerns around sustainability of food systems, in the related economic areas of regenerative production modes, responsible supply chains and informed consumption, there often remains a *practice gap* between what people know they should do and what they actually do. This is preceded by a *knowledge gap*: the knowledge of what a sustainable product specifically is tends not to be entirely consensual, blurred with potentially contradicting injunctions between different claims of sustainability. Instead of trying to solve this puzzle with metrics, we propose an App that makes various components of sustainability transparent, thus *qualifying sustainability complexity*. Our aim is not to hierarchically determine 'the best' sustainable choice, but rather to relationally empower consumers to choose the product with the sustainability criteria that most fit their values and priorities.

Goodness Groceries is a University of Luxembourg consumer study piloting a mobile sustainable food shopping app in partnership with a supermarket chain. The App acts as a virtual shopping companion providing eco-responsible and ethical product information of selected staple food products, each time for up to four types: local organic, local conventional, imported organic and imported conventional. The information provided is based on self-assessments made by product suppliers. Each food item is granted criteria in the four main areas of Environment, Social Well-being, Economic Well-being and Good Governance, subdivided into relevant indicators (cf. SAFA guidelines, FAO 2014) – marked with easy-to-recognise icons. The user-friendly App is designed to scan alternatives of the same product via a QR code whilst shopping, to analyse if this helps consumers make an informed choice – or not, and why.

Starting in Spring 2022, entailments of the (ongoing) study and App in terms of structural obstacles for researchers, necessary supply chain adaptations for suppliers and analysis of consumers' shopping habits and App usage feedback will be discussed.

Towards dignified food aid? Preliminary results of a food aid app in the Netherlands

Thirza Andriessen, Hilje Van der Horst

Against the backdrop of concerns about the adequacy and reliability of charitable, volunteer-based food aid, entrepreneurs designed an alternative way to provide food aid in the Netherlands, called '*Beter Eten*'. The initiators provide a credit card for food insecure households with a weekly charitable budget to do their groceries at regular shops. They aim to provide a reliable, non-stigmatizing way of food assistance, by avoiding harmful interactions of charitable giving and enabling recipients to participate in common ways of grocery shopping. Another aim the initiators strive for is to support users to eat healthy by only repaying the budget when being used to buy 'healthy products'. The card comes with an accessory mobile application, for users to see the remaining budget, and for the initiators to check purchases by requesting pictures of receipts.

We understand '*Beter Eten*' within a broader search for dignified food assistance in high-income countries. At many food aid initiatives, organizers create a shop setting to improve recipients' ability to uphold standards of consumer society, e.g. product choice and acts of paying. However, it has been noticed that such markets in the context of charity can still violate the dignity of recipients through moral judgements about shopping behaviour, unreliable food supplies, and confusing operational processes. The initiators of '*Beter Eten*' take a new turn in this by enabling food aid receivers to shop at general supermarkets, and add an approach to stimulate 'healthy' consumption. Investigation is needed in how common practices of grocery shopping and approaches to 'healthy' consumption impact the dignity of recipients. Participant observation, walk-along interviews and focus groups will be used to study the impact on the dignity of users of '*Beter Eten*' during a pilot from January 2022 to May 2022 with 120 households. This case contributes to discussions about future ways to improve food security.

Community kitchens in France and Germany: a new form of alternative consumption between the private household and the market sector

Carmen Dreyse

Community kitchens can be broadly defined as spaces where people cook collectively and then share a meal. The people who participate are usually non-professional cooks and are not paid to do so. It is therefore a form of volunteering.

The history of community kitchens shows the variety of ideologies behind them. In Germany, they emerged in the mid-19th century as a counter-form to charitable organisations. In contrast to this Christian-based food aid, the "Volksküche" (people's kitchens) rejected the principle of "almsgiving" and supported class solidarity among workers.

At the end of the 19th century, American feminists advocated community kitchens with the aim of socialising household tasks. They linked women's emancipation to economic independence. Their aim was to enable women to meet and cook together, in order to break the solitude of the home and to gain recognition for the work done by proposing that the tasks performed be paid for by the husband.

Today, collective kitchens in France and Germany tend to respond to three issues: food insecurity, the creation of social links and the transmission of food standards and values (local and/or organic food, vegetarianism or veganism).

In this short presentation, I would like to present the history of community kitchens and their current forms in order to understand what kind of consumer they encourage. Consumers who engage in these spaces contribute to producing the meals they will consume. The boundary between producers and consumers thus becomes blurred in a space that belongs

neither to the household nor to the market sector. Initial observations and interviews conducted as part of my doctoral research show that they see their participation - their volunteering - as a contribution to a broader project that aims to develop social relations in a neighbourhood.

“Chefs are like rock stars, they decide what others will eat tomorrow”: Understanding the role of chefs in transitioning towards more plant-based consumption through a lens of craftsmanship

Yolie J.E. Michielsen, Hilje M. van der Horst, Rosan van de Nobelen, Hester C. Dibbitts

Whereas restaurant chefs potentially are important agents in the global transition towards more plant-based consumption, it is currently not well understood how they are engaged with transitioning away from (over)consumption of animal-based foods. Looking through a lens of Richard Sennett's 'craftsmanship', we aim to understand how chefs can be either a fuelling or inhibiting force in the protein transition. Craftsmanship means doing something well for its own sake. The combination of ingrained routines and critical reflection – hand and head – leads to solving problems and discovering new ones. We use a mixed-method approach, employing techniques of interviewing, photo-elicitation, and participant observation. Respondents are a diverse mix of head chefs in terms of menu (i.e., plant/animal ratio), type of restaurant (i.e., fine dining vs eatery), age, and geographical location (i.e., city/rural). Our preliminary findings reveal that, while chefs generally endorse transitioning to plant-based consumption in a broader sense, this attitude is not necessarily reflected in their own practices. While all respondents perceive plant-based cooking as difficult, chefs that are *practically* involved in the craft – mostly young and fine dining chefs – approach it as an experiential and creative challenge worth pursuing. Moreover, they treat their craft as a way of 'raising' their guests. On the other hand, chefs that engage less with plant-based cooking do so due to its perceived difficulty, economic reasons, and accommodating the guest's wishes, which is more an *instrumental* involvement in the craft. The paper contributes to literature by exploring chefs' perspectives and practices in the context of the protein transition and applying the concept of craftsmanship. The study identifies the younger generation chefs at the forefront of crafting a plant-based cuisine and therefore highlights the need for thorough implementation of plant-based cooking in culinary education.

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