

Thursday – 11.00- 12.30	
Food security in a globalised world: a critical assessment	Geoffrey Lawrence, David Burch and Reidar Almas
The food crisis – systemic risks, regime change and system transformation	Peter H. Feindt and Terry Marsden
Neoliberalising Global Agriculture: The Food Crisis and the 'First' and 'Second' Contradictions of Capitalism	Mark Tilzey
Thursday – 14.00 – 15.00	
Food crises, land grab and farm offshore production: the re-emergence of the land question	Alia GANA
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Food security in a globalised world: a critical assessment

Geoffrey Lawrence, David Burch and Reidar Almas

ABSTRACT

Before the global financial crisis took hold in late 2008, food prices had accelerated throughout the preceding years causing civil unrest and resulting in many low income families in the global South sinking below the poverty line. Between 2006 and 2008 global food prices had risen by 83 per cent and – even in the face of the price-deflating effects of the global recession - were predicted to remain high until at least 2012. In 2007, close to one billion of the world's six billion people were chronically hungry, with this number expected to climb as prices for food staples increase. Alongside this, it is anticipated that food production will need to rise between 50 and 100 per cent over current levels if the world is to feed its people by the year 2030. Given the entrenched nature of global poverty, the arrival of peak oil, and the evidence that climate change is not only 'real' but will also have a major impact upon food provision, there is growing concern that the world food crisis will deepen over the next decade.

This paper will provide a broad overview of the current food crisis, identifying the factors that have contributed to food shortages. It will examine the impact of liberalized trade settings on countries of the South, including the increasing power of corporate capital and the merging of agri-food interests with those of the energy sector. From the perspective of critical political economy, the paper concludes that the contradictory nature of global agri-food accumulation can be expected to exacerbate poverty while entrenching

productivism and contributing to higher levels of environmental degradation. The possible impacts of the current global financial crisis in easing, or exacerbating, the current plight of the South will also be canvassed.

The food crisis – systemic risks, regime change and system transformation

Peter H. Feindt and Terry Marsden

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Paper proposal for the RC40 symposium at the 23rd ESRS Conference, Vasa, 17-21 August

From a sustainability perspective, the food crisis has exposed systemic risks in the global food system which arise from interlinkages and interdependencies across places and scales, but particularly the oil and state dependent socio-technological model of food production that has become globally pervasive. It is part of the nature of a crisis that it creates uncertainty if a system can return to its status quo, is being transformed or even abandoned. The current food crisis which started in 2007 raises these questions for the global food regime. This paper deploys the system transformation approach to discuss the food crisis with a view to sustainable development. It builds on four global food supply scenarios that were recently developed in the context of the Chatham House project “Food Supply in the 21st Century: The New Dynamic”. These scenarios are re-interpreted to benefit from the conceptual rigour of the system transition framework which distinguishes three levels of socio-technological systems: the macro-level or landscape, the meso-level or socio-technical regime, and the micro-level or niches. The driving factor in all four scenarios are different landscape changes that exert pressure on the dominant socio-technological regime: peak oil, growing world population, new global middle classes with changing diets, and climate change. To fully apprehend the systemic risks arising from the scenarios we must understand their impact not only on the dominant regime, but also on the niches in the food system which could help to increase resilience (e.g. local food systems) or serve as a fertile ground for a more sustainable future food system (e.g. organic farming, permaculture, precision farming, low carbon farming, zero emission animal rearing etc.). We discuss how the food crisis has affected the viability, resilience and vulnerability of these niches. We consider if the crisis has changed the propensity that innovation emerging from these niches diffuse may in a way that would alter the constellation of key elements in the global food supply regime, constituting a system transformation. We finally discuss how a strategic niche management for a sustainable global food supply could look like.

Neoliberalising Global Agriculture: The Food Crisis and the ‘First’ and ‘Second’ Contradictions of Capitalism

Author: **Mark Tilzey**

This paper proposes to explore the recent food crisis of 2007/8 as symptomatic of the complex interplay between accumulation strategies of neoliberalising agriculture and the socioeconomic (‘first’) and environmental (‘second’) contradictions of these processes. Drawing on recent developments in radical geography, sociology and international political economy, the paper

seeks to develop an integrated theory of neoliberalisation of the 'socio-natural' by combining a 'strategic-relational' understanding of accumulation strategies in the agri-food sector with a specification of environmental contradiction. It is argued that both analytically and normatively it is essential to integrate this second, environmental contradiction into the political economy of agriculture if we are fully to comprehend its dynamics and propose sustainable alternatives. In this way, the paper examines the recent increase in food and energy prices, together with the promotion of biofuels against a backdrop of climate change, as embodying the inter-related 'first' and 'second' contradictions of neoliberalisation. In brief, the paper will: a) attempt to develop an integrated theory of accumulation dynamics and their contradictions within the agri-food sector; b) deploy this theory to explore the nature and causes of recent and ongoing concerns relating to food security, energy supply and climate change; c) assess the possible responses to these interlinked concerns through, for example, neo-productivism; and d) explore other, more sustainable responses to these concerns that, drawing on strong multifunctionality and ecosystem services perspectives, for example, offer the potential to address simultaneously the imperatives of food security, social equity, renewable energy and biodiversity conservation.

Towards a regime change in global food system?

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The topic of my paper is the Global Food Crises in 2007-08. The main question is, whether the global food crises will have permanent consequences, or not. In order to analyze various consequences, I am using the theory on regime of accumulation, which refers to the complementary pattern of production, consumption and reproduction. A regime change should include qualitative changes in all these three dimensions as well as in the political system. I will suggest a rather preliminary, but positive answer on this question. In addition to changes in the three dimensions, ongoing processes in the global food system also impacts and modifies the old moral economy connected with productionist (fordist) food system.

Food crises, land grab and farm offshore production: the re-emergence of the land question

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In the aftermath of the food and financial crises, we are witnessing the development of what has come to be called the « land grab » phenomenon. On the one side, an increasing number of developed and emerging countries, such as the Gulf countries, Japan, India, South Korea, China, which are dependent on food imports, are acquiring vast areas of agricultural land in various parts of the world (sub-Saharan Africa, Pakistan, Indonesia, South America) for offshore farm production. On the other side, the financial crisis has fostered an important movement of private investments in foreign farmland, as an alternative and less risky source of revenue for large multinational corporations. Driven by rising prices of major food commodities (maize, wheat,

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rice and soybeans), the development of bio fuel crops and the search for more profitable investments, this new trend of outsourcing food production is fostered both by investing and recipient countries, through financial incentives and legal reforms. Several countries are amending their national laws to encourage the purchase or lease of farmland abroad, or to attract foreign land investors. While governments of recipient countries view this growing demand of farmland as a new opportunity to channel capital flows in rural areas, this trend contributes to increasing concentration of farmland, in a context of growing land scarcity and land degradation. Land rights alienation to foreign companies represents a major threat for farm and rural households, whose members will constitute the labour force of the new farm estates. It is also likely to jeopardize the food security of recipient countries, as the most fertile land areas will be devoted to bio fuel or export-oriented crops. In many ways, these processes recall the movement of large scale land acquisition and privatization of formerly customary lands of the colonial era, except that this movement is now accelerated and globalized.

While recent debates within the social science have tended to consider the land and agrarian questions of minor importance in the context of market liberalization and agricultural productivity growth, especially in the north, it is likely that the food crisis and the growing competition for land this crisis generates at a global scale, will increase the actuality and relevance of issues such as land rights, tenure systems, land reforms, land conflicts and struggles.

Based on the analysis of recently published reports on the land grab phenomenon, this paper explores the ways in which the food crises contributes to bringing back the land and agrarian question to the forefront of policy and research agenda.

Security for whom? The restructuring of discourse on food in Europe facing the global food crisis.

Gianluca Brunori and Angela Guarino – University of Pisa

The food crisis of 2008 has changed radically the policy agenda and the public debate on agriculture. Having occupied a central position in the media, the issue has suddenly unified aspects formerly held separate – food security in the world, internal food prices, climate change, biofuels, sustainable agriculture, food quality, GMOs – into one discourse. It has unified the concerns for real income erosion of low and middle class families with the concerns for the hunger in the world. It has put into question the power of supermarket chains and their monopolistic behavior. It has made more acute the dilemmas emerging within the alternative food movements, related to the links and trade-offs between alternative food products price, small farmers' incomes, consumers' incomes, sustainability, consumption styles.

The paper draws upon the findings of an earlier paper in the forthcoming book *Food Security, Nutrition and Sustainability* (Earthscan, 2009) edited by Geoffrey Lawrence, Kristen Lyons and Tabatha Wallington.

After an outline the current situation in the EU in relation to food availability, food provisioning, food security issues, and the policies that are in place to foster food security for Europe, we will

analyze how – in relation to the food crisis debate - discourses about food and agriculture change, have had or may have on policy arrangements at national and at EU level.

The paper uses empirical evidence analyzed in the preceding work to develop a methodological discussion upon the role of ‘discourse coalitions’ in the making of agricultural policies. In particular, the paper discusses the evolution of a ‘mass production’ coalition – mainly driven by the agro-industry – and its strategy of embodying issues such as world hunger, internal food prices, climate change, and the oil crisis to refurbish the image of industrial agriculture and its legitimization.