

# Sustainable Food and Food Security

## Session 2 – Concepts and narratives around sustainable food

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# Plenty, healthy, quality?

Some generalised key developments post 1945:

- Marshall Plan, 'Green revolution', self-sufficiency, surplus for trade and aid
- Oil dependency highlighted in oil crisis of early 1970s (*see Jones, A. (2001) Eating Oil. Sustain, London; and AEA (2005) The Validity of Food Miles as an indicator of Sustainability.*)
- CAP production subsidies until 2003  $\Rightarrow$  surpluses, global dumping, falling food prices for consumers. Supermarket dominance and foreign direct investment (FDI) (*see Neil Wrigley*).
- CAP reform in 2003  $\Rightarrow$  decoupling of subsidy from production and link to environmental stewardship

## Plenty, healthy, quality? (2)

- More-or-less falling consumer prices until 2000s
- Environmental degradation (Carson 1966), food safety scares, growth of organic movement from 1990s (see Julie Guthman 2002 and Gill Seyfang 2006...)
- ‘Quality turn’ and shift from public to individualised concerns in 2000s – health, lifestyle, ‘alternative hedonism’ (Soper 2004)
- Obesity/famine paradox, the rise of social food co-ops in the absence of policy (e.g. see work by Elizabeth Dowler and Martin Caraher et al. 2001 onwards)

# Food in the public arena

Public health concerns around dietary intake affected by structural and social changes:

- Fewer people work in agriculture, industrial settings, traditional family structures. Post-modern cities and working arrangements. 'On the hoof' eating, convenience shopping.
- Move in 1980s (in UK) away from institutionalised public catering to consumer choice, lowest price tendering and de-skilling kitchen labour. School cooks  $\Rightarrow$  food assembly (Morgan and Sonnino 2008).
- State abrogates public health to the private domain.

# Food and social exclusion

Increased awareness of spatial health inequalities:

Jubilee line Westminster to Canning Town – a year less of life expectancy as you travel east nine stops. In other words, your average life expectancy in Westminster is 73/6 or 64/67 in Canning Town. DIET IS A CONTRIBUTORY FACTOR.

This led in the early 2000s to the establishment of food distribution co-ops. Opens up debates about physical access, right to a healthy diet, the attractiveness of poor areas to supermarkets and the stigmatisation of food co-ops.

In 2013 new research (Oxfam 2013) links food poverty and the rise of food donation projects (often church-led) to welfare reform. Rise in food banks.

## Is food in crisis?

- Agriculture in the 'global north' depends on fossil fuels and accounts for 40% of CO2 emissions, produces fewer calories than it consumes and depletes biodiversity.
- C. 1bn people are starving while another 1bn suffer from diet-related ill-health (acquired diabetes, CHD...) and obesity.
- Peak oil, gas, phosphorous, water, price volatility and social unrest linked to price increases... (Garnett 2011, Ambler-Edwards et al. 2009)
- Population increases and urbanisation/rural migration.

# Some theories linked to sustainable food - sociology

<b>Anthony Giddens</b>	<b>Reflexivity</b> Speed of change and profundity of consequences is unprecedented. Work out solutions together.
<b>Thomas Lyson</b>	<b>Social structuration</b> Scale and structure of farms affects social structure of settlements.
<b>Manuel Castells</b>	<b>Social movements</b> Typography of civil groups; use of new communications to organise.

# Some theories linked to sustainable food - economics

<p><b>Leyshon et al., Gibson-Graham</b></p>	<p><b>Alternative and feminist economics</b> Change from the margins; experimental models can be expanded; role of women as reproducers of social life.</p>
<p><b>Jackson</b></p>	<p><b>Limits to growth</b> Current model of capitalist growth assumes endless natural resources. ('One planet living' – nef).</p>
<p><b>Beddington, Royal Society, Foresight Report</b></p>	<p><b>Sustainable intensification</b> Mobilisation of technology and resource efficiency to feed growing and urbanising world.</p>



# Some theories linked to sustainable food - geography

<p><b>Van den Ploeg, Marsden et al.</b></p>	<p><b>Local as rural development</b> Articulating values embedded in local foods and releasing value to farmers.</p>
<p><b>Winter; Edward-Jones; Garnett; Born and Purcell</b></p>	<p><b>Critiques of food miles</b> Defensive localism; CO2 fetish; contexts of environmental performance metrics; the 'local trap'.</p>
<p><b>Morgan</b></p>	<p><b>Politics of care</b> Local green and global fair – cosmopolitan, mixed food systems build around city-regions.</p>

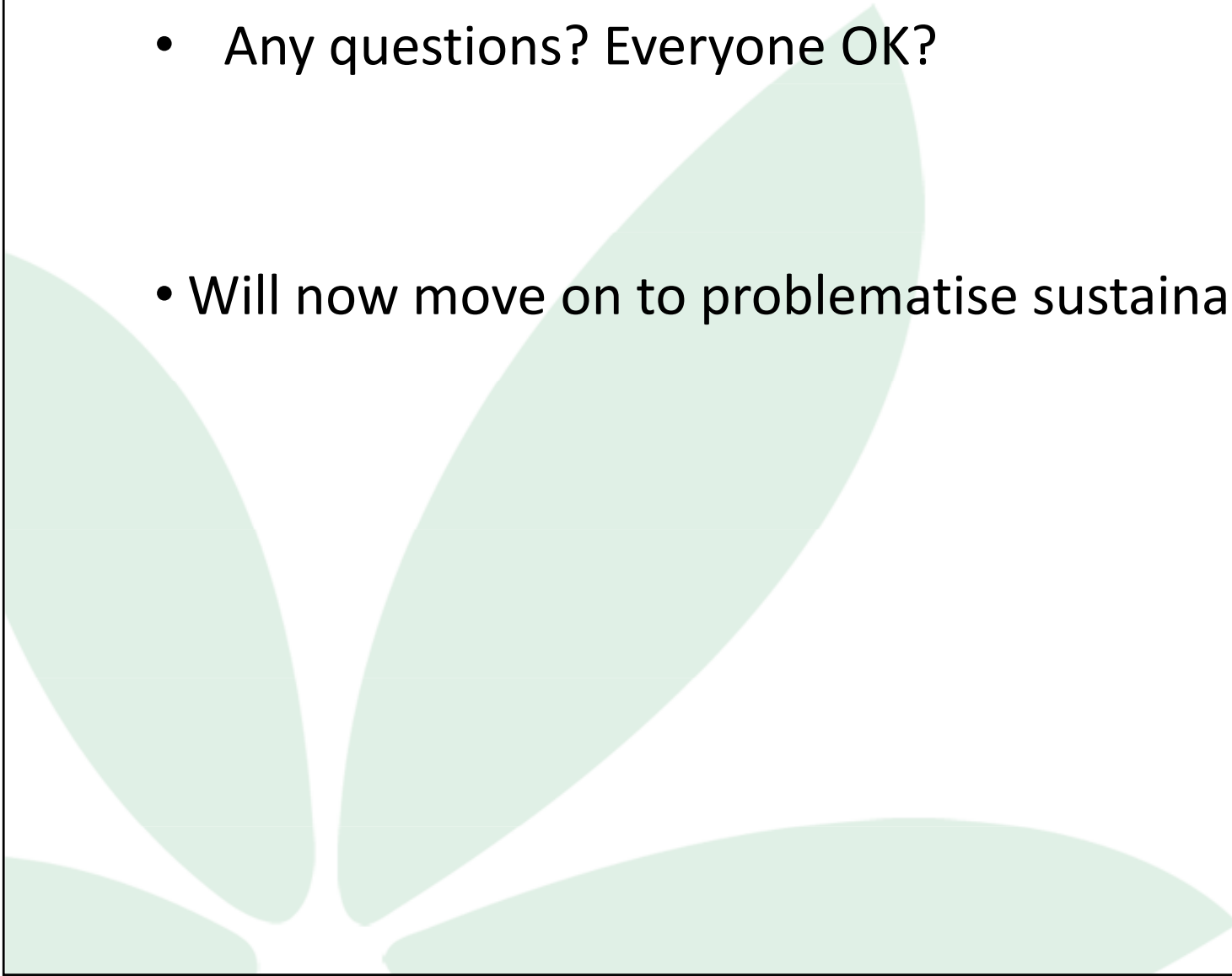
# What do we mean by sustainable food?

- Sustainable food is associated with well-being, environmental sustainability, social justice and resilience. (nef, 2007)\*
- In other words sustainable food is healthy, green, fair (Morgan 2010) and able to withstand shocks.

\*Sumburg, J. (2009) *Reframing the Great Food Debate: the case for sustainable food*. New Economics Foundation, London.

## A quick pause

- Any questions? Everyone OK?
- Will now move on to problematise sustainable food



FREE INSIDE Collectors' Hobbit movie magazine

The Mail

ON SUNDAY SUNDAY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

THE MOST CHILLING CRIMINAL COINCIDENCE EVER?



I was 15-year-old victim of Savile's rapist driver...AND key witness in Hotel Bristol murder

READ THE EXTRAORDINARY INTERVIEW ON PAGES 32-33

# WELBY: STATE MUST BACK FOOD BANKS

Archbishop steps into austerity row with radical report

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# OBESE WILL BANKRUPT NHS

EXCLUSIVE

HEALTHY growing obesity is on the verge of bankrupting the NHS, a shock new report warns.

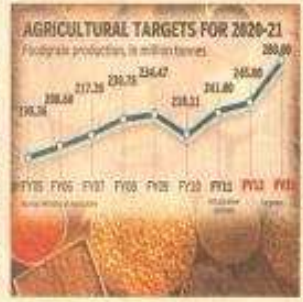


Queen is asked: 'May we dig up Henry VIII?'

# Second green revolution must for food security: PM

■ Demand for foodgrain projected to touch 280 mt by 2020-21

By Bureau New Delhi, July 16



WHILE reading that the food production has been increasing consistently over the last few decades, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday stressed the need for a boost based and sustainable second green revolution to meet rising demand of food and ensure long-term national security.

While calling upon agricultural scientists to help augment the food grain production to 2% per annum, Singh said the security of the nation ahead is indicated by the fact that during the 25-year period from 1987-88 to 2008-09, the country's foodgrain production had grown at an average annualised rate of only 1%.

While foodgrain production has since registered regular increases throughout the period, the annualised rate is not to grow at 1% again during the 10th Plan, he stressed.

He stressed the need for a second green revolution that is more broad-based, more inclusive and more sustainable. "We need to produce more without depleting our natural resources further and we look towards our agricultural research and development. This needs to be enhanced at least by 20 times by 2020, since a substantial portion of our agricultural growth would come through the application of new technologies and new knowledge in production processes. But spending more on research is not enough unless this is merged with the quality of human resources in all areas of agriculture," he observed.

for pulses and edible oils. We continue to face the problem of under-nutrition, particularly among our children and women."

On the CPA-II government's strategic strategies of development, Singh anticipated that it would further increase demand for not only foodgrain but also fruit, vegetables and animal products.

"The total demand for foodgrain is projected to reach 280 million tonnes by year 2020-21," the Prime Minister observed.

Against the backdrop of about 24% of its agricultural GDP on agricultural research and development. "This needs to be enhanced at least by 20 times by 2020, since a substantial portion of our agricultural growth would come through the application of new technologies and new knowledge in production processes. But spending more on research is not enough unless this is merged with the quality of human resources in all areas of agriculture," he observed.

# Ban on wheat exports lifted, says Pawar



New Delhi, July 16: The government has decided to lift the over four-year-old ban on wheat exports, even as a shipment of the grain to a reliable overseas market is expected.

The government has lifted wheat exports since early 2007 to boost domestic supply and curb inflation.

"This is a historic moment. Wheat exports will be a boon for the global market of such low international prices," Pawar said.

Sharan Pawar, agriculture minister

Pawar said: "I don't think there will be any response. The issue is whether we will be able to sell in the global market at such low international prices."

Recently, finance minister Pranab Mukherjee had approved a group of ministers' recommendations, in which Pawar is also a member, had given in principle approval to lift the ban on wheat exports in the wake of plummeting stocks.

"At present, the government has been holding wheat stock of 10.8 million tonnes (in view of a large export).

Exporting such a large quantity of wheat exports, he observed.



DAILY Mirror Wednesday January 16, 2013

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26 November 2012 Last updated at 15:56

## On the breadline: Food banks in Cumbria

A record number of people in the North West turned to food banks in the last six months because they cannot afford to feed themselves, a charity says.



Thousands of people are turning to food banks for

The Trussell Trust said its network of food banks across Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, and Greater Manchester fed more than 13,500 people since April. This compares to just 22 people in same period last year.

# HORSE MEAT FOUND IN TESCO BURGERS

TESCO Everyday Value 8 beef burgers

By DANIEL FLETCHER

TESCO staff were last night clearing beef burgers from stores nationwide after horse meat was found in its own brand range.

Experts discovered some meat at shops in Ireland had been contaminated but withdrew all stock from the UK as a precaution. One sample tested contained 2% horse meat.

Tesco said: "We apologise for any distress." It insisted there was no risk and blamed foreign suppliers. Last 2010 and 2011 had horse meat also hit.

FULL STORY: PAGE 6

Supermarkets clear shelves Inquiry at supply plants

# CO2 vs. social justice

**Special report** The human cost of food

## How 'modern day slavery' on the Costa del Sol puts the salad in your shopping



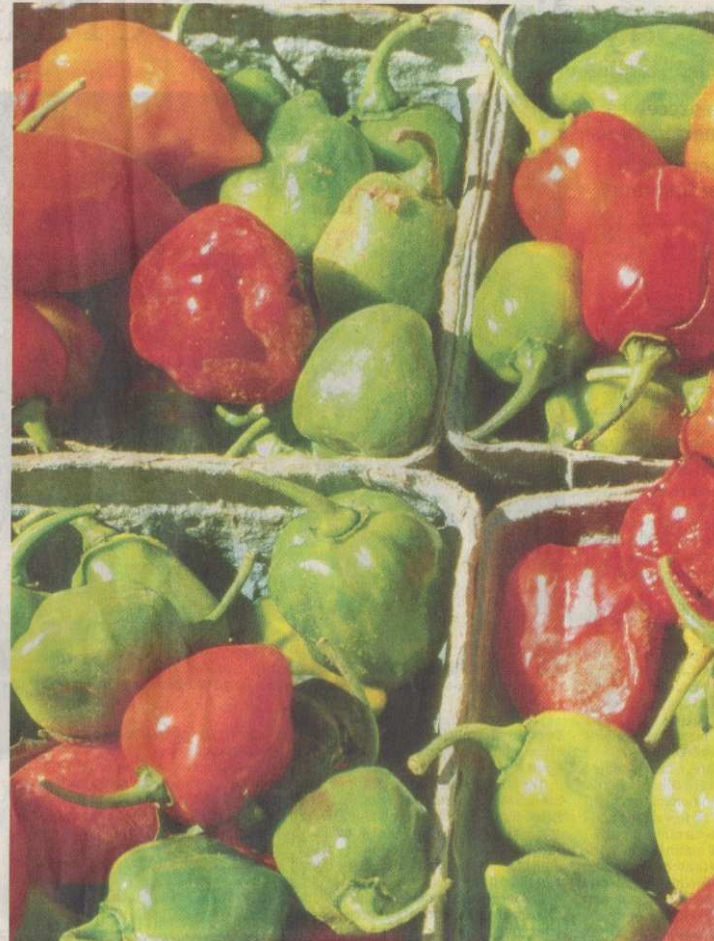
**Felicity Lawrence** reports on the exploited migrant workers, just out of sight of Spain's tourist beaches, who make possible a €2bn hothouse industry feeding Europe's supermarkets

with temperatures reaching 40-45C, is unattractive to the local population. So it has sucked in thousands of illegal workers, first from Morocco, then from eastern Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.

Estimates of the number working in the hothouses vary, but Juan Carlos Checa, researcher in social anthropology at the university, put the number of migrant workers in April 2010 at between 80,000 and 90,000.

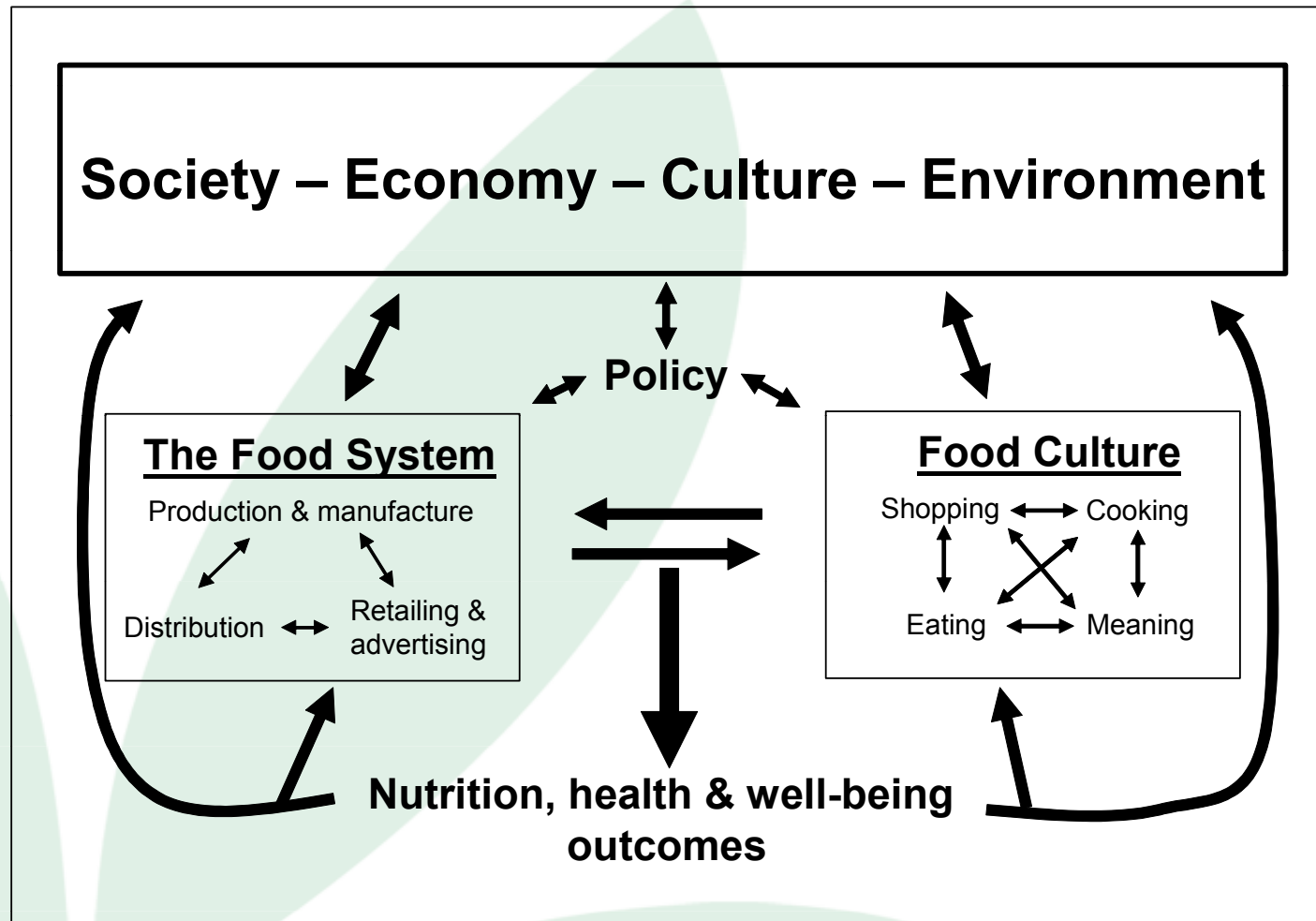
Spitou Mendy, who was an illegal migrant from Senegal until he gained his papers in an amnesty, now helps run Sindicato de Obreros del Campo (SOC), a small union for migrants. He thinks the numbers have swollen to more than 100,000 due to the recession.

The Spanish government allows those who can prove they have worked for more



Source: *The Guardian* 8<sup>th</sup> Feb '11

# The interdependence of food system and food culture



# Food system issues



## Sustainable Food

**Well-being**

**Social justice**

**Environ. Sust.**

**Resilience**

**Production**

Impact of pesticides  
on nearby residents

Poor labour  
conditions  
Dependence on  
gang-masters

Degradation (soil,  
water, over-fishing)  
Habitat destruct'n

Highly energy  
intensive  
Dependence on  
migrant labour

**Processing &  
manufacture**

More processing =  
harder to control salt  
fat sugar  
consumption

Dependence on  
global trade

**Distribution**

Road intensive =  
noise, pollution,  
traffic

Power balance  
against producers

Carbon intensive

Fuel cost

**Advertising &  
marketing**

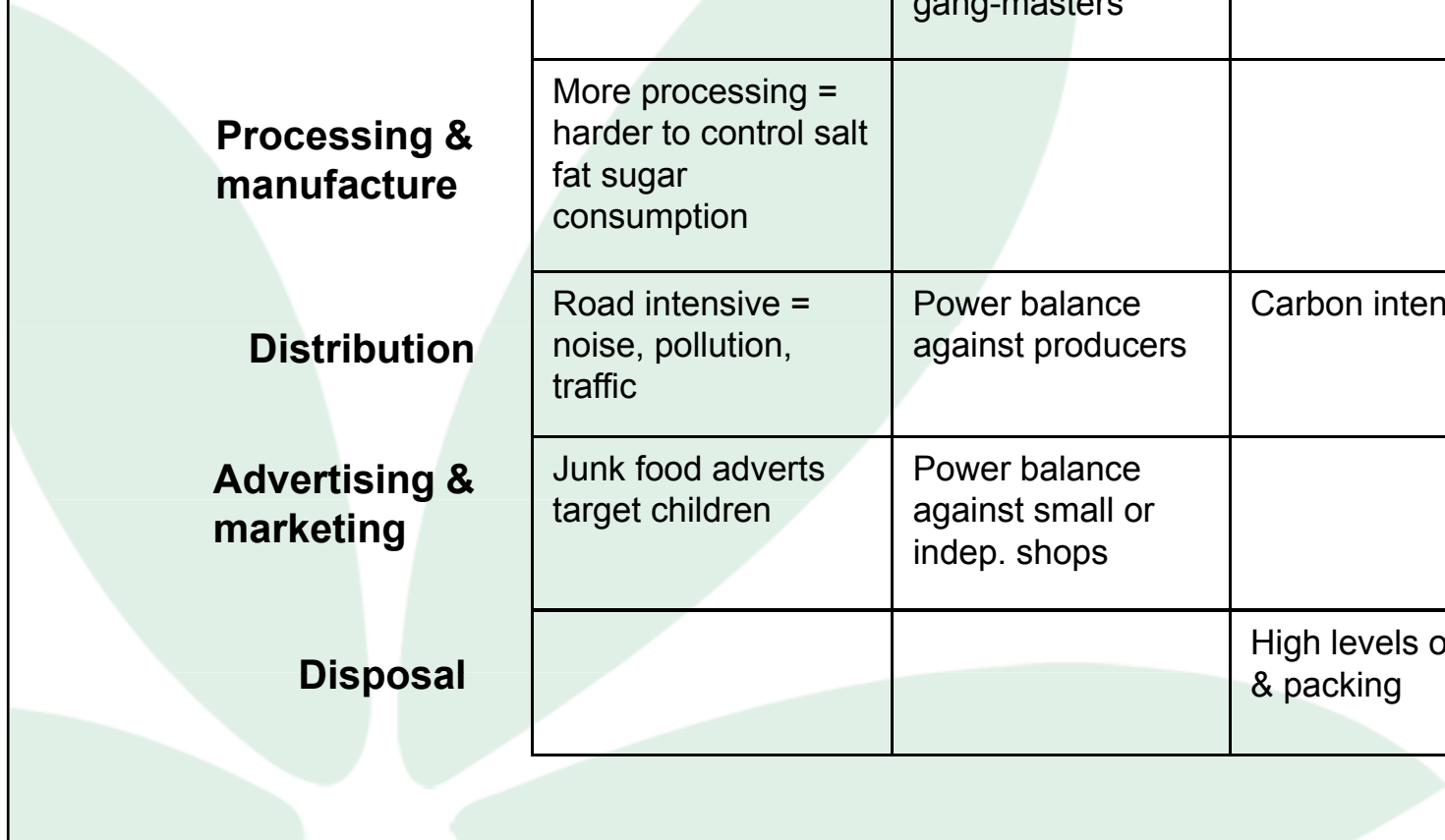
Junk food adverts  
target children

Power balance  
against small or  
indep. shops

Consolidation of  
retail sector

**Disposal**

High levels of waste  
& packing



# Food culture issues



## Sustainable Food

Well-being

Social justice

Environ. Sust.

Resilience

Shopping

Poor avail. of healthy food in disadvantaged areas  
Low income = inadequate for healthy diet

Expectation of year-round avail. of all products

Cooking

Time poverty = more consumption of prepared foods

Falling levels of food 'literacy'

Eating

Loss of eating together

Fuel cost

Meaning

Disconnection to rural and farming issues

Homogenisation of food & places

	Well-being	Social justice	Environ. Sust.	Resilience
Shopping		Poor avail. of healthy food in disadvantaged areas Low income = inadequate for healthy diet	Expectation of year-round avail. of all products	
Cooking	Time poverty = more consumption of prepared foods			Falling levels of food 'literacy'
Eating	Loss of eating together			Fuel cost
Meaning	Disconnection to rural and farming issues			Homogenisation of food & places



# Changing narrative - resilience?

<b>Defra Narrative 2004</b>	<b>Defra Narrative 2010</b>
<p>‘National self-sufficiency is neither necessary nor desirable.’ (Ministerial letter)</p>	<p>‘Our food system needs to be prepared for shocks and to be able to manage risk.’ (Food 2030: How we get there, Defra 2010.)</p>

## Key beliefs in local and sustainable food



- It is better (healthier) to eat a more rather than a less diversified diet
- It is better (healthier) to eat fresh food rather than preserved/prepared food
- It is better (less environ. damaging, & food chain more transparent) to eat food produced closer to rather than further from the point of consumption
- It is better (healthier, and less environmentally damaging) to eat food produced with a minimum of pesticides
- It is better (less environmentally damaging) to eat food produced with a minimum of inorganic fertilisers
- It is better (more socially just) to eat food produced, processed and/or marketed by smaller-local rather than larger-international operations

*(Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming, London.)*

# Readings

- Did you all get a chance to read the two papers I sent?
- What issues of sustainability do they raise?
- Do you agree/disagree with what is suggested? Why is that?
- How do you relate some of the issues raised to what is going on in Brno/Czech Republic/EU today?

# NGO and market innovations in the UK



- Farmers' markets
- Hyperbolic organic sales (mainstreaming) (until 2008)
- Box schemes
- CSA and buying groups (growth since 2008: MLFW/LFF)
- Food Links UK/Alimenterra
- Public food procurement (FFL, SFT, free school meals)
- Food access co-ops

**NGOs as civil society agitators → under-paid market innovators?**

## Possible questions emerging

- How can the ethical motivations of the alternative food movement underpin, the development of a greener, fairer and healthier system/culture? Who decides?
- How can the claims made for local food be substantiated? What implications have they got for a serious move to carbon-reduced and 'cellular economy' (Hardin Tibbs, BRASS 2011)?
- What (infra-)structures are needed to make sustainable food viable? (distribution, finance, governance...)
- Can the demand for ethical food be the basis for global solidarity, rather than nationalism, protectionism and stale local vs. global arguments?

# Changing narratives

- Policy: Self-sufficiency  $\Rightarrow$  surplus  $\Rightarrow$  food security
- Politics: Sufficiency/price  $\Rightarrow$  environmentalism/common concerns  $\Rightarrow$  quality/personal concerns (e.g. health and taste)
- Retail power: Supermarkets as progressive  $\Rightarrow$  oppressive  $\Rightarrow$  appropriators
- Third sector: Oppositional  $\Rightarrow$  entrepreneurial  $\Rightarrow$  technical specialists

# Dominant themes

- Nutritional transition:
  - Rising demand for 'western' diets
  - Obesity
  - Nutritional composition of foods (salt/fat/sugar)
- Food security:
  - Increasingly a national concern; rising inequality
  - Technological innovation
  - Oppositional alternatives
  - Collaborative stakeholder approaches
- Environment/climate change
  - GHG emissions
  - Meat consumption
  - Biodiversity/habitat loss
  - Embedded resource/water use

## In summary...

Food is complex – farming, nutrition, education, consumption, industry, diet, culture, shopping, politics, income, planning, waste, political activism...

*"...the concept of a base-line sustainability standard is non-sense, as sustainability is an aspirational open-ended agenda involving trade-offs and a range of potentially conflicting priorities..."* Smith, B.

(2008) *Developing Sustainable Food Supply Chains*. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society for Biological Sciences. 363, pp. 849-861.

Organic, fresh, seasonal, local, fair-trade, affordable, safe...  
How do we choose?





# Questions?

**Next session:**

**Tues 22<sup>nd</sup> April 9.45 (Aula)**

**Community supported agriculture**