

**Third International Conference on Food History and Food Cultures (Tours, June 1-2, 2017)**

**Panel: Views on organic farming**

**Organized by Peter F. N. Hörz**

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**Moderator: Natacha Chevalier, University of Sussex**

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**Views on organic farming I**

**Approaches to mentors, practitioners, concepts and ideologies**

Observers of the germanophone countries have long known: When it comes to agriculture Austrians, Germans and the Swiss are obsessed with the idea of the ‘organic’ – an idea that fits national stereotypes of the German speaking populations as hopelessly romantic nature lovers and ecologists. In fact not even a majority of Austrians, Germans or the Swiss is devoted to organic farming and organically produced groceries, but a significant minority that affects both, the public discourse in these countries and their perception from the outside perspective. At a closer look however, it becomes pretty obvious that organic agriculture and produce are topics of interest in many places all over Europe and beyond. And while narratives on the history of organic farming largely refer to German speaking male pioneers further historical investigations indicate that the majority of the mentors and experimenters of organic agriculture were actually women who acted in several different countries!

Based on two papers this session aims to discuss the question: Who are or were the mentors, farmers, consumers, activists, and ideologists devoted to alternative ways of food production and what do or did they have in mind, when promoting, marketing or consuming organic produce or claiming that organic agriculture may redress the crisis of global food production?

## *Paper I*

Peter F. N. Hörz

### **Views on organic farming from the cultural anthropologist's perspective – a bunch of questions and some answers**

In recent years the consumption of organic food has become an important signet of the “critical intelligence” (Latour) of the global north and west that expresses both, a well off middle class lifestyle and a ‘greenish’ political agenda. Sceptical observers of this trend however keep claiming that

- even a growing minority of consumers with a preference of organic food doesn't make any difference for the global ecosystem as long as conventional farming remains predominant in general,
- consumers are largely unaware of the career of organic farming in the context of the Nazi-ideology and
- the demand for organic tropical fruit or coffee implies just a new ‘gentle’ way of colonizing the global ‘peripheries’.

Considering both, the current hype about alternative ways of food production as well as the critique of this hype and the concepts of organic farming there is good reason to ask: Who are (or were) those being devoted to organic food production and organic produce, who are the farmers and the consumers and what do (or did) they have in mind, when buying costly groceries at the Natural Foods Store and last not least, what made the ‘organic’ become a successful idea for certain social groups in late modernity? Based on empirical data collected in different contexts as well as on the study of primary materials and literature this paper aims to take a first step towards an understanding of a phenomenon that hasn't been discussed frequently by cultural anthropology and its neighboring disciplines yet.

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##### **Education:**

2001            PhD, Volkskunde (European Ethnology), Vienna Univeristy  
1995            Magister Artium (Empirische Kulturwissenschaft (European Ethnology)/  
Educational Sciences), Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen

##### **Employment record:**

2006–ongoing    Lecturer (Anthropology and Social Sciences, Gender/Queer Studies), University of Applied Sciences Esslingen  
2010–2013      Research assistant (Cultural Anthropology) Georg-August-Universität Göttingen  
2008–2010      Research assistant (Cultural Anthropology), Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität Bonn  
2004–2006      Research Assistant (Cultural Anthropology), Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg  
2002–2015      Lecturer at Vienna University, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, University of Applied Sciences Wiesbaden, University of Applied Sciences Carinthia

Hoerz is author/co-author of numerous publications on the study of labor and work, Jewish studies, Gender/Queer Studies, and the study of mobility and transport.

## *Paper II*

Ira Spieker

### **The development of Organic Farming as a Passion: A Contribution to the History of Gender and Science**

Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the ‘*back to nature*’ movement attacked the growing reliance of agricultural scientists and farmers on synthetic fertilizer and asked for a sustainable life-style. It was during the initial stages of organic farming, at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that many women had an essential influence on the development through their work and research – above all in Switzerland, Germany, and Great Britain. The large number of these female pioneers can on the one hand be attributed to the specific historic, societal, institutional and epistemic framing of organic farming, and on the other hand to the women's living situation and socially attributed fields of responsibilities. To a certain degree organic agriculture represented a new territory, without clear contours delimiting the research issues and objects, without a precisely defined terminology and principles, or clearly defined methods, institutions and organizations. The acceptance of (experience-based) knowledge systems above and beyond those of the academic canon made it possible even for those women, who did not have a formal academic education, to gain access to the research. The prerequisites of research at the starting point were within the reach of women economy some experiments could be carried out in the garden, in the kitchen, at window sills, during homework or at night. They had a high commitment to health, ecology and caring issues, fundamental principles of organic farming. As a consequence, initially the preconditions of women to participate in establishing organic farming were rather similar to those of men.

In this paper I want to emphasize for what reason these women pioneers turned towards organic agriculture and under which conditions they succeeded in doing so – using the example of chosen biographies. Furthermore, I put the question how they gained and spread their knowledge – and why their work, their contribution to the development of organic farming is mostly forgotten nowadays.

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##### **Education**

2015: Habilitation at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and History, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena; 1998: Dr. phil. at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

1988: M.A. in Cultural Anthropology, Modern and Medieval History, Media Studies, Göttingen

##### **Employment Record**

2014-ongoing Head of the department of Cultural Anthropology (ISGV)

2006-2013 Research assistant (ISGV, Dresden) and lecturer (FSU, Jena)

2005 Lecturer at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and History (FSU Jena)

2002-2005 Research assistant and lecturer at the Institute of Rural Development, Göttingen

1992-2001 Research assistant and lecturer at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology, Göttingen

1989-1990 Trainee at the LWL-Open-Air Museum Detmold

##### **Research Areas**

Migration Studies, Popular Culture Gender, Science History, Rural Areas

## **Views on organic farming II**

### **Approaches to contemporary producers and consumers devoted to alternative ways of farming**

Due to what is frequently addressed the ‘crisis of global agriculture’ on one hand and to a growing awareness of the middle classes in respect of ecological and ethical issues on the other ‘alternative’ ways of food production are experiencing an impressive growth in many countries since several years. Corresponding with the session “Views on organic farming I” this session focuses on practitioners in organic farming and consumers of organic produce from an ethnographic (micro) perspective.

#### *Paper I*

### **Tanja Kocković Zaborski**

### **What 'organic' means to the buyers and farmers at Solidary Organic Farmers Market in Pula/Istria (Croatia)?**

In recent years Croatia is detecting a growing number of health food stores as well as farmers markets on which locally grown and organic produce are offered and one could justifiably argue that due to the increasing wealth in some groups of the Croatian population ‘good food’, that is to say ‘locally’ or organically produced food has become a topic of interest in the context of the middle classes as well as an ever-expanding market. This growing interest of the middle classes in ‘organic’ produce as well as the business that has developed based on the burgeoning demand for these products bring up the question what the label ‘organic’ means to producers and consumers. Are they talking about ‘good’ and ‘healthy’ food when buying organic products? Are they aware of the ‘different’ way of vegetable growing and the concepts and ideologies it is based on? Or to put it differently: Are these consumers aware of the philosophies of organic farming? And what is the perspective of the producers concerning that?

Based on research carried out at the Solidary Organic Farmers Market in Pula, my paper aims to discuss these questions and to highlight the discourses on organic farming and produce with reference to both, producers and consumers.

#### **Tanja Kocković Zaborski**

Tanja Kocković Zaborski, senior curator at Ethnographic Museum of Istria in Pazin and Project Manager of „Chose What You Eat/Pazi što jedeš” Food Festival, Pula.

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#### **Education/Employment record**

Graduated in ethnology and history on University of Zagreb.

Master’s degree in ethnology and cultural anthropology, and she is enrolled in Ph.D. program in ethnology and cultural anthropology, University of Zadar.

Author and co-author of several ethnographic exhibitions and published several works in scientific and popular journals on food topics. Her expertise includes topics like traditional food, tourism and rural tourism. Her growing interest in topic of city/farmers/organic markets has been initiated by research for the ethnographic exhibition „The Marketplace – the Belly of a city“ where she was co-author.

## *Paper II*

**Françoise Auvrey**

### **The evolving story of farm butter in Normandy: Organic and conventional approaches**

Until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, dairy farming and butter making were complementary activities in Normandy and butter was the main source of cash for dairy farmers. Today, despite the revival of farm-made products, butter making on the farm is rare, mostly because it is no longer profitable. Contemporary analysis of this activity is hardly addressed in anthropological literature and the objective of this research is to investigate the status and livelihood of a sample of farmer butter-makers in Normandy to understand their butter making craft, motivations and values.

Based on data collected in 2016 from small to medium-size farms in Normandy, this paper discusses the complexity and variety of approaches to farm butter production, including different interpretations of organic farming. A comparative study of organic and conventional producers' narrative reveals the tensions between ideology, financial reality and food production. It highlights how each approach (whether organic or non-organic) is expressed uniquely, reflecting to some extent the family and education background.

In addition, the paper illustrates how farmers' values are embedded into their marketing narratives displayed on wrapping material. Some focus on traditional aspects of butter production including for example locality, family values, and method of production. Whilst others, particularly the new organic farmers, are changing focus by adopting a more transparent approach highlighting the quality of animal feed, the breed, and the use of ferments in processing cream to make butter.

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##### **Education**

Françoise Auvray studied Anthropology of Food at SOAS University of London and completed her MA in 2016.

##### **Work**

Auvray's research focuses on small farmers that produce dairy products in Normandy. She is also interested in food within communities; she has given cooking courses over the last 5 years at an education center (Concord Institute) in North London. In 2016, she became involved with HENRY, a charity that promotes childhood health and she co-led lifestyle courses for families. She takes part in volunteering activities with Growing Communities, a London based social enterprise that grows vegetables for a vegetable box scheme and with Global Feed Back Ltd, a charity that organises the collection of unwanted harvests to reduce food waste.

### *Paper III*

Rachel Reckinger

## **Good for me and good for my Region: The ambivalences of responsible everyday food literacy between self-referentiality and locavoracity**

This paper is based on two interdisciplinary empirical surveys at the University of Luxembourg (quantitative and qualitative), carried out in the transnational context of Luxembourg and the surrounding Greater Region, allowing for comparative results of consumption dynamics between regions in Luxembourg, Germany, France and Belgium. It aims to analyse everyday appropriations of ‘responsible’ eating habits – seen as a set of *plural ways* of how people put into practice *plural ideas* of sustainability.

To find out by which motivations the motor for ‘responsible’ consumption is driven, the notion of sustainability is characterised by *quantitative indicators* of possible sustainability in the food domain, relating to consumed foods or to individual criteria of food selection. Subsequently, *qualitative* interviews provide insights into the *meanings of, and values behind, those indicators*, uncovering everyday priorities, appropriations and strategies of consumption, as well as its justifications in a perspective of spatial identification.

By contrasting arguments about food consumption *ideals* and *practices*, the results show a marked dialectic between self-referentiality and a general interest in food’s provenance, understood as regionally produced. This ‘locavorous’ form of regionality favours a (new) consciousness of geolocalized context of food production, which may, in turn, have an impact on the overall food literacy, increasingly seen as a political field of citizen action for lowering carbon transport emissions, fostering community identifications and anchoring local socio-economic valorizations. This shows which aspects of the polysemic idea of sustainability are relevant to consumers’ preoccupations, and to what extent consumers are reflexive in their ‘responsible’ food choices.

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### ***Expériences professionnelles***

Depuis 2016	Université du Luxembourg : <i>senior researcher</i> sur les pratiques alimentaires durables.
2012-2016	Université du Luxembourg : post-doc collaboratrice scientifique et coordinatrice du projet de recherche IDENT2 – Processus de régionalisation et constructions identitaires dans des espaces transfrontaliers.
2008-2011	Université du Luxembourg : post-doc collaboratrice scientifique et coordinatrice du projet de recherche IDENT – Identités socio-culturelles et politiques identitaires au Luxembourg.
2006-2007	Manifestation culturelle <i>Meet The Makers</i> (Parc Naturel de l’Our, Parc naturel de la Haute-Sûre, Slow Food, Luxembourg – Capitale Européenne de la Culture 2007) : coordination et communication, conception et animation d’ateliers du goût.
Depuis 2005	Communication sensorielle, conférences-animations autour de la dégustation et éducation au goût pour adultes et enfants (en indépendante).
2001-2003	Musée-Conservatoire Ethnologique de Haute-Provence, Salagon : co-organisatrice de séminaires triannuels, chargée de recherche sur l’actualité en ethnobotanique, secrétaire d’édition des Actes.
Depuis 2001	Pratique de la recherche doctorale et postdoctorale en sciences sociales.
1998	Museo Nazionale Etnografico L. Pigorini, Rome : stage – muséologie et techniques de conservation.

### ***Diplômes et formations***

- Janvier 2008 Thèse de doctorat en Sociologie, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Marseille : « Les pratiques discursives œnophiles entre normativité et appropriation. Contribution à une sociologie des cultures alimentaires » (mention Très Honorable avec Félicitations).
- 2003 Diplôme d'Université (DU) d'Analyse sensorielle en dégustation, Université du Vin, Suze-la-Rousse.
- 2000 Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies (DEA) en Anthropologie, Université de Provence, Aix-en-Provence (mention Très Bien).
- 1999 Maîtrise d'Ethnologie, Université de Provence (mention Très Bien), dont neuf mois de séjour SOCRATES à l'Università degli Studi La Sapienza, Rome.
- 1997 DEUG en Lettres Modernes, Université de Provence.