



**BIRMINGHAM CITY**  
University

The Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural  
Research (BCMCR) presents

# **The Politics of Expertise in Media and Cultural Research**

Wednesday 30 November 2016, 1pm-6.15pm

P233 Parkside Building

Birmingham City University

**#ExpertiseBCU**

## Programme

### **1pm Drinks and welcome**

### **1.30pm Session one – Theorising expertise**

Nathan Kerrigan, Coventry University - Theorising farming experts

Alison Harvey, University of Leicester - Expertise, Exclusion and Digital Games

Tim Squirrell,, University of Edinburgh - Expertise as attribution

Sharon Coen et al, University of Salford – Brexperts

### **2.45pm Session two – Expertise and the media part 1**

Catherine Price, University of Warwick - GM food news articles and online comments

Nete Kristensen, University of Copenhagen and Unni From, Aarhus University - Heterogeneous cultural critics in the media

Steven Jones, Nottingham Trent University - Martin Lewis and the construction of a debt celebrity

### **3.45pm – Break**

### **4.00pm - Expertise in Practice**

Jennifer Birks, University of Nottingham - Expertise and journalism

Natalie Squared, BCU/University of Warwick - Jack of all trades, master of none?

Paz Concha, LSE - Expertise in the curation of street food markets

Miguel Gaggiotti, University of Bristol - Non-professional actors and the aesthetics of inexpertise

### **5.15pm – Expertise and the media part 2**

Maarit Jaakkola, University of Tampere, Finland - Online reviewers

Susan Jones, Coventry University - Creating experts in British National Identity

Abigail Wincott, University of Brighton - Reinventing expertise in food and lifestyle media

### **6.15 pm— End and pub (The Woodman)**

## Abstracts

### Theorising expertise

#### **Nathan Kerrigan, Coventry University—Theorising farming ‘experts’ in relation to the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union**

This paper explores the rural construction of ‘farming experts’ in relation to Brexit, an aspect largely ignored by academics and political pundits who have sought almost unwittingly to develop an urban-centric understanding of the construction of expertise in the Brexit debate in relation to perceived loss of British national identity. Despite this, rural areas had amongst the highest number of ‘Leave’ voters. Through a theoretical review of the concepts of social identities, ontological insecurities, social change and agency in rural contexts, the aim of this paper is to reposition the discourse of expertise by considering the construction of ‘farming experts’ leading up to and in response to Brexit. I will argue that farmers felt disenfranchised by EU subsidies, blaming them for taking away their agency as an agricultural supplier by enforcing stringent controls on what farmers can and cannot do. I denote that expertise in this context was created as part of a wider approach to protect and maintain ‘traditional’ rural identities based on an idealised perception of what farming in rural areas should be like in order to protect against wider threats of social change that being in the EU brings. The implications and consequences leaving the EU had upon farming will also be discussed.

*Biography* - Nathan Kerrigan [ab6553@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:ab6553@coventry.ac.uk)

Dr. Nathan Aaron Kerrigan is a Research Assistant in the Centre for Psychology, Behaviour and Achievement at Coventry University and within the research theme: “Identities and Resilience in Communities and Organisations” (IRCO). His work is – by and large – sociological/ criminological with interests in rurality & the countryside, social change & globalisation, race, ethnicity & racism, hate crime, and informal social control. Specifically, Nathan uses ethnography or ethnographic methods to explore a number of issues around identity, community and exclusion in rural settings.

#### **Alison Harvey, University of Leicester - Never Good Enough: Expertise, Exclusion, and Digital Games**

Digital games, a field of cultural production at the intersection of the technology sector and the media industries, is an excellent domain from which to learn object lessons about the conceptualization and rhetoric of

expertise. Talent, ability, and aptitude for getting into game design is often hinged directly on specific, culturally-defined norms about what expertise looks like, through the increasingly-familiar tropes of 'hardcore' and 'casual' gaming (Juul, 2009). These binary distinctions, perpetuated in marketing, production circles, and amongst gamers, are tightly linked to the growing popularization of the form and fears about the growing visibility in particular of women in the field (Vanderhoef, 2013). These frames around what constitutes legitimate cultural capital (what Consalvo (2007) calls gaming capital), has been shown to manifest itself directly in how women working in digital games understand and minimize their own participation (Harvey & Shepherd, 2016).

This talk unpacks these associations between expertise, identity, and participation in digital games and highlights how this can come to resemble to exclusionary elements of the ideology of meritocracy (Littler, 2013). This is particularly timely and significant given the emphasis on initiatives oriented towards getting more marginalized people, especially women, into game design. The presentation draws on five years of research studying these programmes to highlight the pitfalls of 'expertise' as a concept.

*Biography* — Alison Harvey [ah463@leicester.ac.uk](mailto:ah463@leicester.ac.uk)

Alison Harvey is a Lecturer in Media and Communication in the School of Media, Communication, and Sociology at the University of Leicester. Her research interests are centred on the topic of inclusivity in digital culture, from play to production.

### **Tim Squirrell, University of Edinburgh - Challenging the Realist Paradigm: Expertise as Attribution**

Expertise is commonly conceived of as something which an individual possesses, and which a given audience or public must decide whether to recognise or listen to. I argue that this conception is misguided, and that it has contributed to a large number of the perceived issues we have with respect to the role of experts within political and cultural discourse. The replacement model I advocate conceptualises expertise as something attributed by particular audiences to individuals or groups for the purposes of resolving particular classes of problems. The impact of this approach is that it places the burden upon the putative expert to prove their merits to an audience, rather than fetishising the possession of credentials as a necessary and sufficient condition to speak with authority on a subject. This places a greater emphasis upon the need for those who would claim expert status to utilise communicative and rhetorical tools effectively.

This approach allows us to understand and tackle current trends in political and cultural discourse. It acts as a counter to the idea that publics have become 'anti-expert' instead conceptualising this as a shift towards the attribution of expert status to alternative individuals and groups.

*Biography* – Tim Squirrell [s1101599@sms.ed.ac.uk](mailto:s1101599@sms.ed.ac.uk)

Tim Squirrell is a PhD candidate in the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation Studies at the University of Edinburgh. His research focusses on the construction and negotiation of authority and expertise in online environments, specifically exploring communities centred around fitness and nutrition. He holds a BA and MSci in Natural Sciences from the University of Cambridge, where he studied History and Philosophy of Science, as well as an MSc in Science and Technology Studies from the University of Edinburgh.

**Sharon Coen, University of Salford; Aristotelis Nikolaidis, Brunel University; Gavin Sullivan, Coventry University; Ben Short, University of Salford – Brexperts: media representations of experts in the EU referendum news coverage**

Michael Gove's (in)famous quote that the British public has had enough of experts lifted the veil on a growing anti-expert rhetoric characterising much of the debate about political issues in the UK. The current paper explores the way in which experts were presented in news concerning the EU referendum between Jan 22nd and June 22nd 2016. Results show firstly that 'expertise' is often presented as a matter of fact issue, with no qualifiers supporting the status of expert. In several cases, articles quote 'experts' as an impersonal entity. Second, expert opinion is also presented in a decontextualized way, with no background or critical analysis of the expert claim, which is often simply employed to back up the main ideological position of the article. Third, contrasting but strategic representations of experts as academic, elitist, and disconnected from everyday experience or as independent, authoritative and reflective are examined. Fourth, when pro-Remain and Leave 'expert opinions' are presented, these are often juxtaposed and not presented dialogically. We argue that a change in the way in which expert opinion is presented and covered in media might result in a clearer definition of expertise as well as an improvement in public understanding of social issues.

*Biographies*

Sharon Coen, University of Salford [s.coen@salford.ac.uk](mailto:s.coen@salford.ac.uk)

Dr Sharon Coen is a Senior Lecturer in Media Psychology at the University of Salford. Her research interests focus on the psychology of journalism, media communication and public engagement. She is the Honorary Secretary of the Social Psychology Section of the British Psychological Society and an ICA Fellow. She co-coordinates the MSc in Media Psychology at the University of Salford.

Aristotelis Nikolaidis, Brunel University [aris.nik@gmail.com](mailto:aris.nik@gmail.com)

Dr Aristotelis Nikolaidis is an Associate Lecturer in Media and Communication at Brunel University. His research interests focus on political communication and on how the combination of cultural, political, and economic influences on the operation of the media.

Gavin Sullivan, Coventry University [ab7809@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:ab7809@coventry.ac.uk)

Dr Gavin Sullivan is a Reader in Identities and Resilience in Communities and Organisations at Coventry University. His work seeks to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions, develop new innovative theories and generate change through both top-down and bottom-up social and communal processes. In most of my research, affect or emotion and discursive practices are central to understanding complex psychological, social and collective phenomena in a wide range of contexts.

Ben Short, University of Salford [b.short@salford.ac.uk](mailto:b.short@salford.ac.uk)

Dr Ben Short is a Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Salford. His research interests include Creativity, Decision Making, Problem Solving, and higher level Human Computer Interaction

## **Expertise and the media part 1**

### **Catherine Price, University of Warwick - Genetically Modified Food and Crops in the UK: The Value of Scientific Expertise in Online News Articles and the Challenge from Online Comments**

This research focuses on science communication with a specific emphasis on genetically modified (GM) food. It examines how citizens make sense of this aspect of science from the information they obtain from online news articles. However, online news articles can no longer be viewed as a finalised piece of work. For example, the audience can participate in the framing process by posting comments and they can also share the article on Twitter and Facebook.

Part of this research has focused on how the work of scientists studying GM crops and food from Universities, Research Institutions and Agricultural

Biotechnology Companies has been framed by journalists in online news articles. Scientists appear to be viewed by journalists as experts and scientific work is often reported in a positive manner.

In addition, the research has centred on comments associated with the online articles, to ascertain how experts are valued by the audience. By doing so, it has highlighted that in some instances, the audience do not always accept scientific expertise in respect of GM foods. Instead, these people draw upon their own beliefs and values and bring these into the comments they post. Therefore, the authority of scientific expertise is challenged.

*Biography* - Catherine Price [C.J.Price@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:C.J.Price@warwick.ac.uk)

Catherine Price is a PhD Student in the Sociology Department at the University of Warwick. Her broad research interests are science communication and public engagement with science, particularly through the media. She is also interested in how food is represented in the media. Catherine's PhD thesis is examining the framing of online news articles in connection with genetically modified food and how the framing transfers into debates in the comments sections on online news websites as well as Twitter.

### **Nete Kristensen, University of Copenhagen; Unni From, University of Aarhus - Heterogeneous cultural critics in the media**

Today's institutionalized media – newspapers, magazines, radio, and television – allocate the role of cultural expert to a variety of intellectuals, media professionals, and celebrities from the cultural scene (e.g., Jacobs and Townsley 2011). At the same time, ordinary cultural consumers exchange experience-based cultural evaluations through 'likes', tweets, and subjective amateur reviews by means of digital media technologies (e.g., Verboord 2014). Thus media institutional and technological developments have enabled advanced public participation in cultural debate, but also challenged intellectual authority, enlightenment and expertise. In this paper we propose a theoretical typology of four rivalling yet converging ideal types of cultural critics characterised and legitimized by different kinds of authority and expertise (Kristensen & From 2015): 1) the intellectual cultural critic, who is closely connected to an aesthetic tradition, bohemia and/or academia, or institutionalized cultural capital; 2) the professional cultural journalist embedded in a media professional logic or expertise; 3) the media-made arbiter of taste, whose authority and expertise is linked to practical experience with cultural production and charismatic media

performances; and 4) the everyday amateur expert, who represents experience-based cultural taste and bottom-up expertise.

The aim of the typology is to provide an analytical minimum model for future empirical studies by outlining the contours of the multiple, objective and subjective, professional and non-professional cultural 'authorities' or 'experts' of contemporary media culture.

### *Biographies*

Nete Nørgaard Kristensen [netenk@hum.ku.dk](mailto:netenk@hum.ku.dk)

Nete Nørgaard Kristensen, PhD, Associate Professor at Department of Media, Cognition and Communication, University of Copenhagen. Her research areas include arts, cultural and lifestyle journalism; journalism as a profession; journalists' source relations; strategic communication and media management; political communication; media, war and conflict. She is principal investigator (PI) of 1) a research project on cultural critics in contemporary media culture, funded by The Danish Research Council for Independent Research (2015-19) and 2) a Nordic comparative project on cultural journalism's negotiation of the qualities of popular culture, funded by Arts Council Norway (2016-17). She has published numerous articles in international journals such as *Communication, Culture & Critique; Digital Journalism; Journalism - Theory, Practice, Criticism; Journalism Practice; MedieKultur; Media, War and Conflict; Northern Lights; Nordicom Review, Nordicom Information.*

Unni From [imvuf@cc.au.dk](mailto:imvuf@cc.au.dk)

Unni From, PhD, Associate Professor at Department of Communication and Culture, Aarhus University. Her research areas include cultural and lifestyle journalism, journalism as a profession, audience research and television drama. She is director of Centre of University Studies in Journalism which hosts both Danish and international study programmes in journalism. She has published numerous articles in international journals such as *Communication, Culture & Critique; Journalism - Theory, Practice, Criticism; Journalism Practice; MedieKultur; Northern Lights; Nordicom Review, Nordicom Information.*

### **Steven Jones, Nottingham Trent University - Martin Lewis and the construction of a debt celebrity**

While much commentary on the 2016 Referendum focused on the lack of trust placed in experts, one financial intermediary continued to be held in high regard. Martin Lewis, the founder of [moneysavingexpert.com](http://moneysavingexpert.com) and a

regular guest on radio and television programmes has regularly topped polls of 'trusted voices' around both economic and political issues, with some news commentary placing him alongside Jamie Oliver (and just behind the Queen) as Britain's most trusted public figure.

Unlike other key intermediaries, however, there has been little media and cultural studies interest in Lewis. This discussion piece forms part of a larger project thinking through the ways in which finance and debt have been negotiated within popular culture since the financial crisis of 2008. While there has been an explosion of theoretical interest in the financial system (such as Maurizio Lazzarato's *Making of the Indebted Man* and David Graber's *Debt: the First 5,000 Years*), surprisingly little has been written about the popular representation of borrowing and repaying. This stands in marked contrast to earlier (cinematic) depictions of moral anxieties about, for example, hire purchase.

This talk therefore explores the ways in which we can think about Martin Lewis as a significant figure within the cultural politics of both expertise and money. Using a combination of Giddens' work on experts and Bourdieu on new cultural intermediaries I examine how Lewis negotiates the moral aspects of credit and consumption, but also the extent to which he is able to transcend his field though, for example, his controversial '55/45' endorsement of the Remain vote in the Referendum.

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## Expertise in Practice

### **Jennifer Birks, University of Nottingham - Expertise and verification in news journalism: the objectivity of adjudicating between competing truth claims**

The journalistic ethic of objectivity implies both impartiality and verification, but has long favoured the former (Tuchman 1972) - a trend that has only amplified with shrinking resources for fact-checking (Lewis et al 2008). However, in the US there is also a dominant interpretation of objectivity that emphasises stop-watch and valency balance, regardless of the merit of competing truth claims or the seriousness of allegations. This 'false balance' has recently become controversial in relation to the presidential election, in a context where Trump polls as more "honest and trustworthy" than Clinton, despite 53% of his statements being judged false or 'pants on fire' by verification website Politifacts (against 13% for Clinton). The British press is less attached to this form of objectivity and more openly partial (Hampton 2008), and most newspapers declared a position on Brexit. Here, however, commentators struggled to adjudicate on expert predictions of

what would happen if the UK left the European Union and Michael Gove asserted that people have "had enough of experts". This paper will explore the questions raised by these controversies in relation to the 'cognitive authority' (Merton 1976, Turner 2001) of expert news sources, and journalists' resources for and ethics of verification.

*Biography* - Jennifer Birks [jennifer.birks@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:jennifer.birks@nottingham.ac.uk)

Jen Birks is an Assistant Professor in Media and Political Communication at University of Nottingham. She is the author of *News and Civil Society* (Ashgate, 2014), and writes on publics and protest in news media.

### **Natalie Squared, BCU/University of Warwick - Jack of all trades, master of none?**

Does cultural expertise necessarily assume a single area of focus? With an ever-increasing emphasis on interdisciplinarity, does the crossing of disciplinary boundaries ultimately lead to a devaluation of expert knowledge? And how do we (can we?) contend with cultural 'expertise' if different areas of focus are embodied within one individual? This paper will address these questions, taking a platform for provocation from the notion of the 'artist-academic', relevant to our own professional experiences. The relationship between 'cultural intermediary/gatekeeper' and 'cultural worker' can often be bipolarised by cultural institutions, where projects are established and funded on the basis that an 'outsider expert' will exchange knowledge with experts based within the institution. The difficulty remains, however, that in a precarious and competitive work environment there can be a tension between the need for siloed expertise and a desire to work across different disciplinary platforms. As academics and cultural workers (practising artists) can we reconcile this tension without the devaluation of expertise? Such questions are vital in fully researching and conceptualising the notion of 'the expert'.

*Biography* - Natalie Squared [nataliesquared@outlook.com](mailto:nataliesquared@outlook.com)

Natalie Squared is a multimedia, visual arts initiative led by Dr Natalie Shona Hart and Dr Natalie Linda Jones, who are academics and practising artists working in a socially-engaged partner collective. Bringing their specialist fields of visual art, performance and academic research together, their aim is to use the integration of these practices as a dynamic platform to defy disciplinary boundaries and contest hegemonic, normative sociocultural narratives.

## **Paz Concha, LSE - Expertise in the curation of street food markets in London**

This presentation explores the role of market organisers as experts in the curation of pop up street food markets in London. I am interested in revising the performance of expertise by looking at the working practices of market organisers. I am conceptualising these actors as cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu, 1984) or curators (Hracs, 2014) in terms of their use of taste and calculations or qualifications (Callon, 1998; Entwistle, 2009) to assemble knowledge, material forms and spatial elements to create markets.

Drawing on ethnographic research including interviews with market organisers, I examine how market organisers develop their professional expertise as curators and how their taste dispositions were cultivated as embodied knowledge, allowing them to create a new career in a niche business. Then, I will analyse how organisers pick good traders to join their markets through a subjective evaluation of features that includes food quality, branding and a trader's personal character. The search for professionalism is connected with market organisers' preferences of age, class and cultural capital when picking young, educated and entrepreneurial traders to join their markets. As experts, market organisers use economic rationality, an understanding of the street food scene, along with an embodied knowledge to make taste distinctions.

*Biography* — Paz Concha [p.m.concha@lse.ac.uk](mailto:p.m.concha@lse.ac.uk)

Paz Concha is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. In her doctoral research she is studying the relationship between cultural economies and place making, investigating the curation of street food markets in London. Her ethnographic work looks at the work of organisers, food traders and other actors involved in the generation of markets and the transformation of place.

## **Miguel Gaggiotti, University of Bristol - Non-professional actors and the aesthetics of inexpertise**

Non-professional actors have been part of cinema since the films of Lumière (Bazin [1971] 2005). Their presence became associated with Italian Neorealism despite the fact that several films bundled under this category were made with professional actors or stars. Since Neorealism, non-professional actors have been at the core of some of the most important

film currents and have become important contributors to the development of art-films across the globe.

The role of non-professional actors has been predominantly linked to a form of typecasting seeking visible parity between the performer's physical aspect and cultural conceptualizations of class, nationality and social institutionalization (Krakauer 1960, Bordwell 1993, Robertson Wojcik 2005, et al.) My research and this presentation investigate, instead, how the actor's inexpertise may condition the aesthetic qualities of the film and the creative possibilities during the filmmaking process.

Through the close analysis of on-screen performances and the study of the filmmaker's accounts of the creative process, this paper will suggest that certain films trace parallels between characters operating inadequately in fictional situations and actors participating in a labouring activity (filmmaking) in which they are not experts. These parallels grant the films a strong aesthetic quality of inexpertise that conveys narrative significance about characters, and places the films' "non-professional" filmmaking style as an alternative opposing Hollywood's professional mode of production.

*Biography*—Miguel Gaggiotti [mg13864@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:mg13864@bristol.ac.uk)

Miguel Gaggiotti is a PhD candidate at the Department of Film and Television of the University of Bristol and a filmmaker. His research focuses on the role of non-professional actors in the production of art-films (Serra, Sorin, Costa, Reygadas). Miguel completed his degree in Film Studies at the University of Kent and his MA in Film and TV Production at the University of Bristol. He has presented papers on modes of acting in the television show *The Wire* and gestures of professional videogame players in live eSports events (*Starcraft*).

## **Expertise and the media part 2**

**Maarit Jaakkola, University of Tampere, Finland - Online reviewers**

This presentation examines the emerging body of expertise of digital reviewers, taking communities of cultural pundits on YouTube to its object of inquiry. The traditional institutionalized arts criticism has been challenged by an increasing number of new-generation reviewers who produce criticism to larger and younger audiences with a more inclusive idea of culture than the previous generations of criticism. While the traditional arts criticism has been focused on print journalism, high culture and rather an exclusive idea of culture, the digital reviewers such as Jesper Jahns and *The Needle Drop* produce criticism that is more intimate (nearer

to its publics), interactive and multimodal.

The intention of the presentation is to assess how the new digital reviewing distinguishes from the traditional reviewing and what kind of digital expertise is required from the new cultural intermediaries of reviewing to become critical. Adopting Etienne Wenger-Trayner and colleagues' (2015) recent theoretical elaborations on the 'landscapes of practice' to its theoretical framework, it is asked how digital film, popular music and beauty product reviewers are situated in a complex system of communities of practice, developing 'knowledgeability', a concept introduced to describe a person's relations to a multiplicity of practices across the 'landscape'. The presentation is related to a work in progress focused on the new digital forms of reviewing, the objective of which is to widen our understandings of arts and culture criticism in the Internet era.

*Biography* — Maarit Jaakkola [Maarit.Jaakkola@uta.fi](mailto:Maarit.Jaakkola@uta.fi)

Dr. Maarit Jaakkola is a Lecturer in Journalism at the School of Communication, Media and Theatre (CMT) at the University of Tampere, Finland, and a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Nordic Media and Communication Research Centre Nordicom at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. Her research interests include cultural mediation and cultural intermediaries, arts/cultural journalism and criticism, and journalism as a public pedagogy. Jaakkola has written on cultural journalism for international peer-reviewed journals such as International Journal of Cultural Studies, Journalism, Journalism Studies, and Journalism Practice. Her most recent research project examines the new and parallel digital forms of arts criticism and the professional expertise of the new cultural intermediaries.

### **Susan Jones, Coventry University - Creating experts in British National Identity in response to 'threat' of immigration in the UK election 2015.**

Although non-voters are often described as apathetic and apolitical, it is important to examine their views on political matters. Three months after the 2015 United Kingdom (UK) general election 19 non-voting but eligible English citizens were interviewed. Thematic analysis demonstrated the majority of the responses in answer to discussions around politics and non-voting were 'I don't know' or 'I don't understand', evidencing concerns about 'getting it wrong' and, that voting and political participation requires expert political knowledge. Conversely, in relation to the proposed European Union (EU) referendum, the majority presented themselves as "experts" on British identity by adopting stances which included conflating the EU with a

negative perception of immigration and representing migrants as eroding British national identity and threatening the availability of community resources. Expert knowledge here is located within 'in group' British national identity based on an idealised localised perception of Britishness in order to protect against threats of population diversification through immigration by the 'out group' (Dozier, 2002). The data indicates a construction of a British national 'expert' identity that reinforces a concept of 'otherness' and self-segregation against migrants who are seen as a social threat to British identity and available resources.

*Biography*—Susan Jones [Susan Jones ab7864@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:ab7864@coventry.ac.uk)

Susan Jones is a Senior Research Assistant in Identity, Resilience and Community Organisations in the department for Psychology, Behaviour and Achievement at Coventry University. Her research is inspired by seeking to find new ways to engage in bottom up ethnographically led research which challenges theory based assumptions about white working class communities and identity. She is interested in developing ways of generating change in creating dialogues between state agencies and predominantly white working class communities regarding the challenges of social cohesion. Susan is also developing my work on exchange of cultural and social capital and expertise in working class communities, working mainly in pubs my work looks at formation and performance of class and gender identity and the importance of pubs as alternative community spaces.

### **Abigail Wincott, University of Brighton - 'Very much an amateur cook': Reinventing expertise in food and lifestyle media in the age of 'alternative' consumption**

The heritage sector has long been controlled by a class of experts (Smith, 2006). Yet with the rise of so called 'heritage' foods, this expert culture has come up against the cultures of 'alternative' consumption. Here, amateurism and the domestic are valorised, for their innocence, passion and distance from calculation (Johnston and Baumann, 2007). Expert efficiency is meanwhile associated with the negative effects of globalised capitalism. This study of 500 heritage food texts, ranging from TV cookery programmes to anti-capitalist posters, reveals a series of strategies employed by media professionals who rely on 'expert' contributions for lifestyle content, and experts themselves, as they attempt to navigate this new terrain of suspicion about expert efficiency. Strategies include

emphasising personal history, distancing themselves from other professionals, and reinterpreting expertise as an ethically invested form of public service. This latter is of such value in the new 'alternative' food cultures, that new groups are seeking to establish themselves as 'experts', in collaboration with the media, in order to validate their commercial activity. The study can tell us something about the values which underpin popular understandings of expertise and how these enable the concept to survive and even thrive in these apparently expert-hostile times.

*Biography* – Abigail Wincott [a.wincott@brighton.ac.uk](mailto:a.wincott@brighton.ac.uk)

Abigail Wincott spent many years in news and factual programme making at the BBC and now works at the University of Brighton, where she researches the politics of 'alternative' food and heritage in popular culture.

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**A huge thanks to everyone who has helped to organise this symposium.**

To continue the expertise discussion please do not hesitate to contact me, Karen Patel, PhD candidate at the Birmingham Centre for Media and Cultural Research (BCMCR), Birmingham City University [karen.patel@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:karen.patel@bcu.ac.uk). Also see my blog for more about my research: <http://karenpatelresearch.wordpress.com>.

For more information about BCMCR and our weekly research seminar programme please visit [bcmcr.org](http://bcmcr.org) or visit our [Eventbrite page](#).



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