Food governance seminar: who knows? transdisciplinary research and the future of academia in the transition towards sustainable food systems

ABOUT THE SPEAKER
Paula Fernandez-Wulff is a transdisciplinary legal scholar and RCC Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University, where she co-chairs the Future of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights Study Group. Her research focuses on the municipal aspects of critical approaches to social rights and the politics of food and agriculture.

Prior to RCC, she was a Fulbright-Schuman Visiting Scholar at Harvard Law School Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation. She holds a Ph.D. from the Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Human Rights, Université catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain, Belgium), where she worked under the supervision of former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter.

ABSTRACT
In this seminar Dr Paula Fernandez-Wulff will speak about methodologies, challenges, and benefits when collaborating on research with stakeholders outside academia.

Transdisciplinary research has appeared in the last ten years as an approach to solve sustainability challenges, often characterized by complexity and uncertainty, and which cannot be solved within the limited confines of the university. Both academically rigorous and relevant to societal problems, transdisciplinarity seeks to rethink knowledge creation beyond the academe through the collaborative design and implementation of research projects with social actors.

Paula will unpack the main features of transdisciplinary research from a critical theory perspective, including the opportunities and pitfalls of using transdisciplinarity for sustainability transitions, and will discuss how the process of contributing to social learning can be used to inform rights-based policy in the specific context of food systems research.

While the seminar will focus on transdisciplinary research for food systems’ reform, it will also be relevant to those with a broader interest in developing participatory, community-led research projects that cross multiple disciplines and transcend disciplinary understandings of knowledge creation.