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A SPOTLIGHT ON FEMINIST FOOD STUDIES

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IN THIS ISSUE

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guest editors: Jennifer Brady, Barbara Parker, Susan Belyea, Elaine Power

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Editorial

Filling our plate: A spotlight on feminist food studies

Jennifer Brady, Barbara Parker, Susan Belyea, and Elaine Power

The idea for this special issue emerged from the enthusiastic response to a day-long series of sessions on feminist food studies that were held during the joint conference of the Canadian Association of Food Studies, the Association for the Study of Food and Society, and the Agriculture, Food, and Human Values Society, in 2016, in Scarborough, Ontario. The sessions brought together feminist food scholars from across Canada and the U.S. to share their work and to collectively claim space within the conference program to address feminist perspectives in food studies. For us, and the many presenters and attendees at the sessions, the opportunity to gather together and savour more than the usual one or two conference sessions devoted to feminist perspectives was a long-awaited pleasure that did not disappoint. The presenters and audience members illuminated many of the issues, complexities, and perspectives that an explicitly feminist lens brings to food studies. The energy and excitement that infused the room as each presenter shared their work filled our plates that day.

Yet there are many more ways that feminist food studies can and should continue to grow. For example, feminist food studies must continue to confront the complexities of oppression and privilege that are embedded in legacies of colonialism, whiteness, racism, patriarchy, and classism. Our aim for this special issue is to highlight a slice of current Canadian feminist food scholarship that addresses and redresses these legacies. As feminist food scholars we are interested in questions such as: How might feminist theory and intersectional analyses of food systems, policy, and practices enhance, enliven, and deepen critical perspectives in food studies? What might feminist food studies offer to the pedagogical, methodological, ontological, and epistemological approaches used to understand the socio-materialities of food? What work has already been accomplished by feminist food scholars? What questions have yet to be addressed? What disciplines, identities, and experiences inform or are missing from this activity? What is the future of feminist food studies? We hope that by highlighting work that sheds light

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on these questions, feminist food studies will continue to grow in presence and impact in the pages of CFS, and at the annual CAFS conference, as well as in the thinking and practice of food studies scholars and activists.

Feminist food scholarship

Feminist scholars have explored the unique relationships women have with food and written about resistance and representations of gender, race and racism, ethnicity, social and economic class, health, nutrition, bodies, fat politics and activism, eating disorders and body image, family and feeding, emotion, meat-eating, caregiving, labour, food security, and embodiment through literature and food scholarship that cuts across disciplinary boundaries.[1] This special issue is indebted to the work of feminist food scholars who have paved the way for us as guest editors, and for the authors who have contributed to this volume.

In their foundational text, *From Betty Crocker to a Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives in Women and Food,* feminist food studies pioneers Arlene Voski Avakian and Barbara Haber (2005) note the dearth of food studies scholarship that addresses gender, especially as it intersects with other social identities, particularly in relation to race, colonialism, and globalization. Avakian and Haber set out to document the history of women's and feminist writing on food, and to "map the terrain of what we may now call feminist food studies" (2005, ix). Since the publication of their book in 2005, food scholarship that focuses on race, class, and gender has steadily grown, some of which has taken the kind of feminist, intersectional approach that Avakian and Haber (2005) explicitly endorse, for instance, work by Harper (2010) and Williams-Forson (2006). However, the uptake of feminist perspectives in addressing the scholarship, concerns, and conversations taking place within Canadian food studies has been limited. We are left wanting more food studies scholarship that attends to intersectional analyses, and other critical perspectives that theorize power and underscore the social construction of race, class, gender and their intersections. Hence, this special issue seeks to recognize the work of past and present feminist food studies scholars, and to call on the Canadian food studies community to infuse its work with the critical, theoretical perspectives that feminist scholarship brings to the table.

This special issue also raises questions that feminist food scholars must grapple with in claiming space for feminist scholarship. How are we to understand and characterize the emerging body of literature that might answer Avakian and Haber's call for a feminist food studies? What is feminist food studies, and why is it important? How might naming and claiming space for

[1] See: Adams, 1999; Barndt, 2003; Bentley, 1998; Bordo, 2004; Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Caplan, 1996; Charles & Kerr, 1988; Counihan, 1999; DeVault, 1991; Harper, 2010; Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy, 2013; Inness, 2005; Julier, A, 2005; Lupton, 1996; Murcott, 1982; Rothblum & Solovay, 2009; Szabo, 2014; Van Esterik, 1999; Voski Akavian & Haber, 2005; Williams-Forson, 2006

feminist food studies work to include or exclude the work of scholars who may or may not identify as feminist food studies scholars? For Julier (2005), a feminist food studies must theorize women's experiences of the interconnections between food consumption and production. That is, feminist food studies must consider how women's experiences of embodiment and identity overlap with their participation and labour in food systems through paid employment and unpaid work in the home and community, as well as through representations of gender and food. Allen and Sachs (2007) echo Julier's vision for feminist food studies, which they characterize as necessarily comprising three "food domains that define women's relationships to food"; 1) the material—women's participation in the paid labour market; 2) the socio-cultural—women's roles as feeders and household food managers are connected in complex ways to their oppression, but also in some cases, access to power as the gatekeepers of others' food; 3) the corporeal—women's emotional and embodied connection to eating, body image, and the everyday struggles in the face of pressures to be thin (p. 1). To this end, feminist post-structural scholars have considered how the material, the socio-cultural and embodied experiences of food overlap and are socially constructed through material practices and shifting discourses about gender, the family, health, sexuality, and ethics (Probyn, 2000; Lupton, 1996).Yet, there is more that feminist theory brings to food studies.

Feminist theory points to the social constructedness of binary sex and gender categories, and invites us to ask how "doing food" is contrapuntally about "doing gender" (Risman, 2004; West & Zimmerman, 1987). In this vein, feminist scholars have considered how women's material and embodied experiences of food are socially constructed through the material practices and language of shifting discourses that are infused with dynamic power relations (Probyn, 2000; Lupton, 1996). In other words, feminist scholars have considered not simply how food is important in the lives of women, but how food and foodways—the everyday practices of feeding, producing, eating, cooking, procuring, and preparing food--are integral to making, or "doing", one's gender (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Szabo, 2014 and 2014b; DeVault, 1991). In this view "doing" gender is seen as a "routine, methodological, and recurring accomplishment" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, pg. 126); it is the outcome of everyday acts that when performed, simultaneously produces the gender of the performer, as well those around them. One earlier example of this approach is DeVault's *Feeding the Family* in which she notes that in the context of heteronormative families, "[b]y feeding the family, a woman conducts herself as recognizable womanly", but also in being served, a man conducts himself as recognizably manly (DeVault, 1991, pg. 118). At the same time, to understand these performances feminist food studies scholars must address the ways that being "acceptable men and women" (DeVault, 1991, pg. 118) is crosscut by race and racism, class and classism, sexuality and homophobia, (dis)ability, and culture. Hence, unearthing the inherently complex power dynamics beyond "doing gender," but rather "doing difference" (West & Fenstermaker, 1995) necessitates that feminist food studies scholars adopt an intersectional (Crenshaw 1989) orientation to their work.

Last, we believe that, much like food studies has much to gain from a feminist lens, so too does feminism and feminist theory have to gain from the focused attention to food offered in

feminist food studies. Feminism and feminist scholarship has not always been welcoming of food scholarship by or about women, albeit for good reason. Doing food scholarship has often meant further marginalizing oneself from academic and/or feminist communities that did not value food as an object of research or theorization. Women writing about food have risked being further relegated to the "pink ghetto" of the academy. Although writing about food has taken on new meaning since the founding of CAFS in 2005 marked the advent of food studies in Canada, writing about food from an explicitly feminist position has remained marginal within Canadian food studies (Power & Koc, 2008). With this special issue, we echo the calls of past scholarship to strengthen, advance, diversify, and proliferate feminist food studies.

In this issue

The papers included in this special issue highlight a range of issues, perspectives, and approaches that add to the small, but growing body of literature in feminist food studies. Andrea Collins hones in on the first component of Allen and Sachs' framework--the material--in considering how sexism shapes agricultural practices. As Collins notes, attention to gender is rarely included in the solutions to improve local resource management by global players such as the World Bank. On a similar note Carly Fraser and Kate Parizeau highlight the materiality of gendered food practices in addressing the ways in which food waste is managed at a household level. Angela Lee uses an intersectional ecofeminist approach to illuminate new food technologies and sustainable food production. Christina Doonan's paper addresses an issue that cuts across these three domains: breastfeeding. Doonan argues that breastfeeding must be taken up within the right to food/food security agenda in a way that underscores the constraints on women's "choice" to breastfeed and considers how their access to other economic, social, and cultural rights prevents or enables them to do so. Natalie Doonan's multi-media piece, "Voir le jour," also takes up breastfeeding to challenge patriarchal notions of public and private spheres as distinct spheres that, she argues, underlie the often vitriolic silencing of women's experiences of breastfeeding. Adding to Christina Doonan's and Natalie's Doonan's pieces on breastfeeding is Lesley Frank's work, *Finding Formula*. Frank outlines the ways in which public policy failings have created wide-reaching barriers to baby formula access for women living in poverty, thus exacerbating the issue of infant food insecurity.

Mary Ann Martin takes an intersectional approach to explore how class informs the construction of what it means to be a "good" mother, as well as a "good" community food program participant. Angela Lee uses an intersectional ecofeminist approach to illuminate new food technologies and sustainable food production. Finally, Dana Hart explores vegan blogs to consider how gender is discursively constructed in ways that reinforce, rather than critique hegemonic masculinity.

Feminist food studies: Looking forward

A key tension for feminist food scholars is the divergent epistemological and methodological approaches that comprise feminist food scholarship, including the work that makes up this special issue. We urge feminist food scholars to wrestle and work with, rather than try to resolve, the tensions between needing to address women's roles and experiences within the food system as eaters, feeders, and (re)producers, and exploring gender as a constructed aspect of identity. The articles in this special issue, like the previously published work discussed above, are situated within these divergent approaches: a modernist approach that seeks to explore women and their roles and experiences, and a postmodern approach that understands masculinity and femininity as performances, a "doing" of identity that is accomplished through everyday practices, including foodways (West & Zimmerman, 1987). This tension provides fruitful ground on which feminist food studies can foster new theoretical and methodological approaches to elaborating critical perspectives of food in relation to gender and other intersecting socio-material categories, such as race, class, ability, sexuality, and so on.

What is the Future of Feminist Food Studies? Undoubtedly, there is much work to be done. Cairns and Johnston remind us that the *personal is political* when it comes to the distinct relationships between women and food, and remind us that "there are many—too many—examples of gendered food injustice, creating multiple opportunities for mobilization at the intersection of food and femininity" (2015, p. 173). Similarly, Sachs and Patel-Campillo (2014) argue that "feminist food justice" is necessary for moving toward the goals and visions of the food and food justice movements (pg. 404). We are pleased with the contributions in this special issue, and feel that the papers included move feminist food studies one step closer to scholarship and action for food justice, which necessarily demands feminist analysis. We look forward to the work that follows and that continues to grow feminist food studies!

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Perspective

Rights for whom? Linking baby's right to eat with economic, social, and cultural rights for women

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Abstract

Breastfeeding women are primary food producers par excellence, delivering a custom-made product to fit the exact needs of a favoured clientele. The importance of breastmilk as a first food has been acknowledged in recent years by many states, which have taken measures to protect and encourage breastfeeding in acknowledgment of the World Health Organization's 2002 Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding. Within both state and grassroots efforts to promote it, breastfeeding is often framed in terms of "rights," though it is not always clear what these entail. This perspective article considers the role of breastmilk as a critical food for children that ensures their "right to the highest attainable standard of health" as articulated in Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and interrogates mothers' (and others') role in providing it. While food studies, and even more so, food security scholarship and activism should incorporate breastfeeding scholarship, it should avoid the mistake of framing breastfeeding as a "choice" made by individual women. This article advocates incorporating breastfeeding into the right to food/food security agenda by explicitly supporting measures that increase women's access to broader economic, social, and cultural (ESC) rights. This, in turn, would put breastfeeding within reach, as an option, for more women. Thus breastfeeding becomes more likely and pressure is diverted from individual mothers and the often false "choice" to breastfeed.

Keywords: breastfeeding; breastmilk; right to food; right to feed

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Introduction

A beautiful promotional poster for International Breastfeeding Week, 2000, pictures a breastfeeding baby enfolded securely in the arms of a mother, while suckling with placidly abstracted gaze (see figure 1). The text on the poster enjoins readers "Don't think of it as a woman's right to breastfeed. Think of it as a baby's right to eat." Indeed, a great deal of attention to breastfeeding promotion has been, justifiably, to secure women's freedom to feed their babies publicly, even if the implement of meal delivery is a breast. But what is "baby's right to eat?" This slogan is helpfully provocative in gesturing toward several possible locutions for a pro-breastfeeding paradigm. Where does the nursing mother fit in to this equation and what is her relationship to baby's rights? What are her rights in breastfeeding? In this article, I argue that breastfeeding should be a central component of activism around the right to food and food security. Because the success of breastfeeding depends on a number of other economic, social and cultural

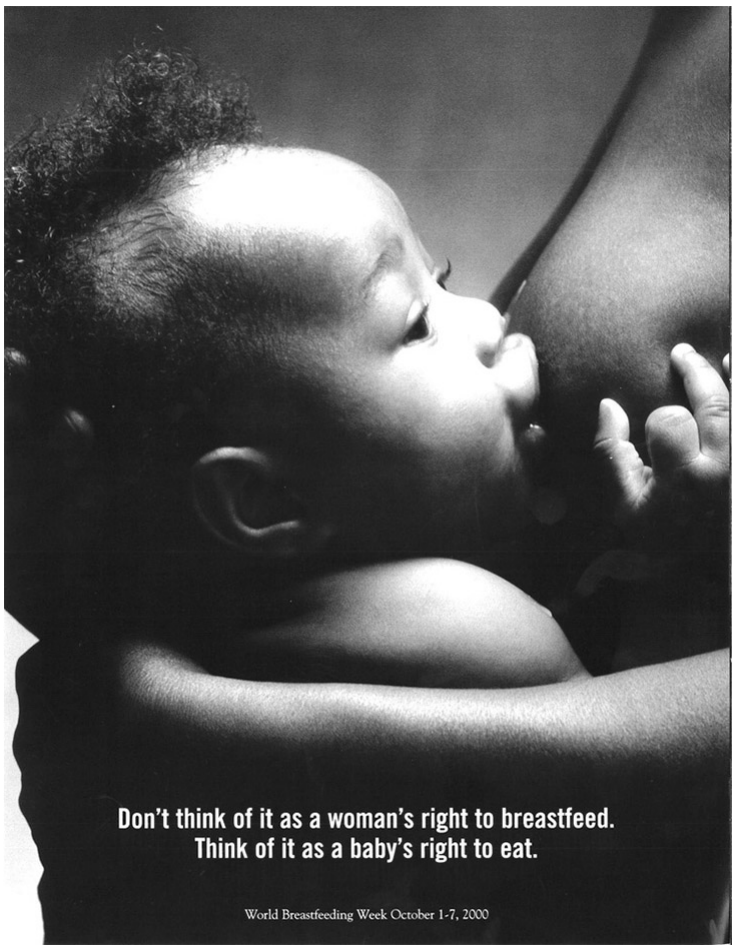

Figure 1:"Breastfeeding: It's Your Right!" World Breastfeeding Week, October 1-7, 2000. From http://www.infactcanada.ca/mall/wbw2000.asp. Used with permission.

(ESC) rights for women, this means that the food security/right to food agenda should encompass the promotion of a wide set of ESC rights that would increase women's access to breastfeeding as an option.

In the first section of this article I explain why, when we talk about breastfeeding in the context of rights, we should talk about *access* to breastfeeding as an option, rather than the right to breastfeed or to be breastfed. Second, I identify three entrypoints for integrating breastfeeding rights within the right to food and food security activism. These are: Van Esterik's "right to feed," De Schutter's "right to food" and children's "right to health" as articulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child . All three of these acknowledge the interdependence of food and health-related rights within broader ESC rights. After identifying the co-constitutive nature of these rights, I provide a brief overview of some of the most significant contemporary barriers to breastfeeding. These move far beyond a narrow focus on food, and yet they are a crucial foundation to food-based rights and food security. As such, they must become part of the food security and food rights agenda

Giving breastmilk: From "choice" to "access"

Because research confirms the benefits that derive from the uniqueness and complexity of human milk (e.g., German, Smilowitz, Lebrilla, Mills & Freeman, 2015), there is a risk that mothers will be held morally responsible for their apparent "choices" around breastfeeding. To hold mothers solely responsible, however, ignores a number of barriers to breastfeeding for which the state and communities, rather than mothers, should be held to account. Often, despite the rhetoric of choice, mothers and parents simply do not have access to the possibility of breastfeeding. There may be physical, social, economic, or cultural barriers that prevent them from realizing the goal of breastfeeding, or even considering it in the first place. Therefore, ensuring ESC rights for women (including, for example, well-remunerated and extended maternity leave and thorough maternal health care) would increase the possibility of breastfeeding. Thus, the right to *access breastfeeding* as an option for the breastfeeding dyad (i.e. not mother *or* child, but the two in relation to each other) needs to be considered within a broader range of ESC rights.

"Access to breastfeeding" is a term that can apply to both mothers and babies equally rather than asserting baby's right against mother. I use the term "access" to suggest that breastfeeding is a good that could be chosen as an option under more equitable socio-economic conditions, although some may not choose it. Breastfeeding scholars have been careful to point out that "choice is a central tenet of the Western concept of the autonomous individual, and yet it's often illusory" (Bartlett, 2005, p.160; see also Kukla, 2006; Murphy, 2003). Structural and economic factors loom large in determining whether a woman will be able to breastfeed (Galtry, 1997, p. 6), and disproportionately impact women from marginalized racial and economic groups (Taylor & Wallace, 2012, p. 79). "Access to breastfeeding" was inspired by the pioneering

thinker on food and feminism Penny Van Esterik's notion of the "right to feed." "Access to breastfeeding" recognizes women's agency while also respectfully assuming that most mothers love their children and want what is best for them, and that sometimes this involves feeding them breastmilk alternatives. Having acknowledged this, let us ask how the right to access breastfeeding intersects with food related rights? I turn to this question below.

The web of co-constitutive rights

The "right to food" is perhaps the most familiar articulation of food-related rights. As conceived by its best-known proponents, such as former UN Special Rapporteur Olivier De Schutter, the right to food typically considers the nutritional needs of older children and adults, and thus focuses heavily on agriculture in both its identification of vulnerable groups and its targeted solutions. For example, De Schutter (2009) identifies small-scale farmers, self-employed food producers, landless agricultural workers, and the urban poor as the most vulnerable groups when it comes to food insecurity (p. 40). He identifies rural development and support of agriculture as primary solutions for confronting this vulnerability (p. 40). Yet breastfeeding rates are below target virtually everywhere. The breastfeeding dyad (mother-infant) and support for access to breastfeeding as an option must be added to these lists if they are to be comprehensive.

Even while giving women due recognition as being particularly affected by food insecurity, De Schutter ignores the special role of lactating women's bodies as producing the only food product generated by the human body. His otherwise excellent thematic report on women and food only mentions lactation and breastfeeding in passing in the introductory paragraph (De Schutter, 2012, p. 3). This is a particularly surprising omission considering his acknowledgment that "between one fifth and one quarter of child deaths can be attributed to low birth weight and childhood underweight." (De Schutter, 2011a, p. 305). Encouragingly, De Schutter has elsewhere noted the likelihood that infant formula predisposes children to obesity and diabetes and, in recognition of the pernicious effects of multinational food companies' marketing of formula, he has called on countries to implement the "full set of WHO recommendations on the marketing of breast-milk substitutes and of foods and non- alcoholic beverages to children, in accordance with WHA resolution 63.14." (De Schutter, 2011b, p. 10). Indeed, breastfeeding may be seen as a cornerstone of food security in that it is a "first food" with tremendous benefits to infants; it does not require packaging and shipping and is therefore not dependent upon food delivery infrastructure, nor is it environmentally harmful.[1] It may be a definitive element that sets the course of individual eating habits. Thus, empowering not only agriculture and agricultural producers, but also the breastfeeding dyad, must be a priority for those concerned with the right to food.

[1] Consider, by contrast, the following statistic, "for every 3 million bottle fed babies, 450 million tins are discarded" (Van Esterik, 2013, p. 520)—to say nothing of the plastic bottles used for liquid formula.

In moving past a "right to food" and towards a "right to feed," Van Esterik (1999b) argues that women across the world have a special relationship with food. While acknowledging that women's association with food is not their natural or essential function (p. 158), she notes that in many places a woman's self-identity is based on her ability to feed her family (p. 226), and this ability is a source of power and identity (p. 157). Undoubtedly, given the feminization of poverty and hunger worldwide, it is often also a source of strain. Thus food security should be a key component of any notion of women's rights. Van Esterik (1999a) thus proposes re-integrating gender into discussions of food security, primarily by moving away from the passive "right to be fed" and the "right to food" (which frames food as a product), to the right to *feed,* which emphasizes active agency—particularly of those whose efforts typically bring about the realization of the right to food: women and especially mothers (p. 228). This is particularly true in the case of breastfeeding mothers. Conversely, the right to feed could also be construed as agential from the baby's perspective—as baby's demand increases supply, "the infant is actively empowered and "controls" its food supply" (Van Esterik, 2013, p. 520).

Both Van Esterik's "right to feed*"* and De Schutter's "right to food" acknowledge that these rights cannot be realized in a vacuum, but are co-constitutive with other rights. De Schutter signals the co-constitutive nature of the right to food with other rights when he discusses poverty and lack of social protections as an impediment to food access:

Social protection plays an important role in improving food security. As such, establishing a comprehensive social protection system is one policy measure to enable the poorest and most disadvantaged to realize their right to adequate food, among other rights. (De Schutter, 2013, n.p.). For her part, Van Esterik (1999a) hits upon the co-constitutive nature of the right to food with other rights when she argues that women cannot care for others without enhancing their own status, including access to equity in wages, education and training, and other social services (p. 229). Both authors thus emphasize the deep interconnections amongst a broad set of economic, social and cultural (ESC) rights, and food-related rights, whether it be the right to food (De Schutter) or the right to feed (Van Esterik). In addition to these interconnected rights, I add children's internationally recognized right to health as one critical strand in the web of co-constitutive rights that must be considered in tandem with gendering food-related rights.

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child asserts that every child has the right to the highest attainable standard of health. Section 2 (c) provides that all states shall take measures "to combat disease and malnutrition, including within the framework of primary health care." Further, the *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding* adopted by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2002 "called for a revitalisation of the global commitment to appropriate infant and young child nutrition, and in particular breastfeeding and complementary feeding" (Eide & Eide, 2006, p. 29). The remarkable powers of breastmilk justify its special standing in that class of goods that enhance child health and combat disease and malnutrition, including its role in reducing the occurrence of serious illness such as necrotizing enterocolitis (Sullivan et al., 2010), increasing immunological resistance (Field, 2005), cultivating a healthy microbiome (Albenberg & Wu, 2014), preventing otitis media

(McNiel, Labbok, & Abrahams, 2010, p. 51-52) and its soporific effects (Engler et al., 2012; Sánchez et al., 2009), sometimes described colloquially as infants being "milk drunk." Given its importance, and its recognition in already-existing international human rights law, it is right to acknowledge that breastmilk should be at the heart of efforts to achieve the highest attainable standard of health for children. However, reasons such as these have led some to claim that mothers have a "moral obligation" to nurse their babies—implying that a baby's right to breastmilk might trump a mother's right to choose (for a careful treatment of this type of argument, see Overall & Bernard, 2014).

While a mother has a moral obligation toward her child, it may be more parsimonious to claim that her duty, like that of all parents, is to do her best, whatever that may look like in a given circumstance. Since the nursing dyad necessarily consists of both child *and mother*, it is necessary to consider both the child and the mother's rights, and the possible implications of positing a right that baby holds against mother. On the basis that this is not achievable, and because society as a whole is responsible for actively undermining breastfeeding in numerous ways, mothers should not be treated as solely responsible for fulfilling a child's health-related right to breastmilk or the highest quality alternative. Society generally, and the state in particular, must put in place standards that make breastfeeding or access to breastmilk a realistic option. Mothers should have access to a variety of supports, falling under ESC rights, which facilitate breastfeeding as an option. In the following section, I consider some ways in which societies currently undermine breastfeeding. Considering alternatives to these barriers allows us to reflect on ways forward.

Social and economic barriers to breastfeeding

There are a number of employment, socio-economic, and community health-related obstacles to meeting the breastfeeding ideal of "two years or beyond," as articulated by the WHO and by the Canadian Paediatric Society. Beginning with socio-economic barriers, extended, paid maternity leave is positively associated with breastfeeding initiation (Ogbuanu, Glover, Probst, Liu, & Hussey, 2011, p. e1422). In Canada, only the most privileged of women who engage in paid work (which does not include self-employment) may be able to both qualify for, and afford, one year of paid maternity leave. Upon returning to paid work, many of the oft-stated advantages of breast-feeding, such as bonding and closeness to baby, convenience of avoiding bottles, and on-demand delivery of mother's milk disappear or reduce drastically. Many workplaces lack both spaces (including dedicated private, comfortable seating and fridges for milk storage) and built-in time (such as additional paid break time) for pumping or breastfeeding (Weber, Janson, Nolan, Wen, & Rissel, 2011). This is linked to a further obstacle to continuing to provide breast milk after the return to work: the prevalence of work place culture that denies parenthood and normalizes single, unattached status.

Hostility in the workplace to parenthood generally, and breastfeeding specifically, is communicated in various subtle and unsubtle ways. For example, the scheduling of meetings during evening hours or the expectation that emails and phone calls can be received and dealt with on evenings and weekends. Discussing the workplace as a space where men's experience is the norm, Caroline Jane Gatrell (2007) notes that among women she interviewed:

> mothers were pressured by employers to return to work prematurely—looking and behaving just as they had before childbirth. Once back at work, mothers indicated that organisational aversion towards breastfeeding obliged them either to breastfeed and express milk in secret, or to disregard health guidance and their own wishes and stop breastfeeding (p. 398).

The demarcation of many workplaces as spaces where babies cannot be present usually leads to the forced separation of mothers from their babies (Hausman, 2004, p. 276). As suggested above, anticipation of this separation is associated with the decision not to initiate breastfeeding in the first place and to wean early (Weber et al, 2011, p. 1; Witters-Green, 2003, p. 418). In Canada, maternity leave is covered by Employment Insurance, which pays a portion of the individual's average weekly earnings. For women who are self-employed, have not worked for 600 insurable hours the previous year, or earn wages that are low to begin with even before subtracting a portion of them, maternity leave is simply out of reach. Women who do not have the opportunity to enjoy a maternity leave, or who have a very short leave, may find the hardest, initial work of initiating breastfeeding (establishing adequate milk supply, correcting latch, monitoring diapers for hydration, and waiting on an inefficient feeder) to be unworthy of the effort when they will have to return to paid work soon after. Extended maternity leave may be the best way around this (Hausman, 2004, p. 276), but in order to be a realistic possibility for most it would have to be well-paid leave.

Another barrier to breastfeeding is that in many jurisdictions women who struggle with breastfeeding must often take it upon themselves to seek out breastfeeding support, for example by attending support groups. This is likely to be difficult for rural women; women who live in communities where breastfeeding is unusual or stigmatized; or for single or low-income mothers who may lack a support person or wider support networks to help facilitate a visit to a support group or provide other forms of encouragement (Witters-Green, 2003, p. 419; also Chin & Dozier, 2012). This is aggravated by wider societal pressure on women not to breastfeed publicly and the feelings of embarrassment and shame that many women experience when feeding their children in public (Taylor & Wallace, 2012). For this reason, *active* outreach for all mothers that may include automatic home visits from lactation consultants and other support persons, on an opt-out basis, is a health-based intervention that could make a significant difference.

Another healthcare-related hindrance to breastfeeding is uneven knowledge of breastfeeding among healthcare professionals. Perhaps most significant here is the need for standardized and very thorough lactation education for physicians and other health care

professionals—including and perhaps especially those who work outside of pediatrics. Women often encounter lack of support and inaccurate guidance related to physical breastfeeding challenges, and may ultimately lack faith in their physicians (Amir & Ingram, 2008; Renfrew, 2006; Witters-Green, 2004, p. 417). Knowledge of breastfeeding and a supportive attitude among health care providers is thus a critical aspect of quality healthcare for women.

Human milk as a health issue also raises the matter of access for those who cannot produce milk and yet wish to nourish their child with it. Non-profit milk banks as a potential source of human milk hold promise, yet their number and accessibility, for potential users and donors alike, are limited. In Canada for instance, there are three milk banks, the easternmost is in Ontario (with a "milk room" at IWK Health Centre in Halifax containing donated milk that is pasteurized in Calgary). This leaves all of eastern Canada without the benefits of a milk bank. Increasing funding and service to existing non-profit milk banks and milk rooms, opening more milk banks, milk rooms and milk exchanges, and making it easier (while retaining safety standards) for donors would likely help communities to meet their ethical obligation to provide the best nutritional options to infants and children. Relatedly, pro-breastfeeding initiatives should acknowledge the potential presence of environmental toxins in water, cow milk, and human milk and create support for initiatives that attempt to curb and reduce toxic contamination of the environment (Boswell-Penc, 2006; Van Esterik, 2013, p. 520).

Harmonizing our message: women's rights are food rights

Given the host of societal barriers encompassing inadequate employment accommodation, maternity leave remuneration, lack of education, and health care deficiencies, positing a child's right to receive breastmilk *from her or his mother* is clearly insensitive to the realities that many mothers face. Alternatively, governments and communities can take measures to increase a child's likelihood of receiving breast milk (either from the child's mother or from donors) or an acceptable (highest quality) alternative should breastmilk not be an option. If, as I have argued above, children have the right to health, including appropriate nutrition encompassing breastfeeding and complementary feeding, this must include state and community-wide efforts to improve *access* to breastfeeding as a realistic option for all women and parents. Properly addressing these challenges, and fulfilling children's health-based rights, involves advocating interventions that increase women's enjoyment of a broad range of economic, social, and cultural rights that enhance their right to feed. This means that activism around food rights and food security must include in its mandate the following (but is not limited to these): transforming the workplace to be more inclusive; increasing economic supports (and social benefits) for pregnant women and mothers of infants; improving breastfeeding education for health professionals (and the community at large); and improving access to donor breastmilk. By targeting the state and communities as responsible for fulfilling these demands, attention is diverted away from mothers

who are otherwise understood as individually responsible for saying "yes" to breastfeeding—which usually amounts to a false choice.

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Original Research Article

Old habits die hard: The need for feminist rethinking in global food and agricultural policies

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Abstract

A number of global initiatives designed in recent years address global food security and aim to reduce the vulnerability of small-scale and peasant farmers in the face of expanded transnational investment in large-scale agriculture and land acquisition. While there have been efforts to consider women within such initiatives, global governance institutions often overlook the complex gendered dimensions of food systems alongside agricultural land and labour markets. Although institutions emphasize the need for "women's empowerment", few policy recommendations have considered its practical application. Indeed, many governance initiatives that address food security or promote land security tend to depoliticize inequalities, which shows the importance of feminist food studies from the perspective of global food and land policy. Integrating a feminist food studies lens to the global governance of food and agriculture allows us to explore the complexities of gendered relations in agricultural practices. A more complete understanding of everyday material, socio-cultural and corporeal experiences within agricultural practices provides a greater understanding of the mechanisms by which gender relations structure food production, land ownership, resource access and governance processes. By using a feminist food studies lens we see a more complete picture of the realities of local resource management and the potential implications for global policymakers such as the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Committee for World Food Security (CFS). Through this framework, I illustrate how feminist analyses

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challenge conventional approaches to gender in global policymaking related to food and agricultural production.

Keywords: gender, food, land, global governance, agricultural investment

Introduction

The operations of global food and agricultural systems have become a key focus of several international institutions, prompting a series of initiatives designed to address global food security concerns while also addressing the vulnerability of small-scale and peasant farmers to expanding transnational investment in large-scale agriculture and land acquisition. Wise (2015) suggests that the institutions and policies enacted in the wake of the 2007/08 food price crises were inadequate for addressing the state of the food system and questions whether policies genuinely put small-scale farmers, particularly women, first. In the context of these concerns, a feminist food studies lens on the challenges of global food security is well-positioned to delve into these questions, highlighting the gendered dimensions of these imbalances of power, both in communities and in families, as well as the everyday experiences of small-scale, subsistence, and peasant farmers. Feminist food studies scholarship is thus vital for providing a more nuanced understanding of the gendered dynamics of food production and consumption, alongside the changes in the global food system that are driving further commercialization and investment in agriculture. However, I also illustrate why changing how global policymakers discuss gender, food, and agriculture remains a significant challenge.

The global scope of women's participation in agriculture is well-documented: though Doss (2014) has dispelled the "stylized fact" that women produce 60-80% of the food in low-income countries, she nonetheless concludes that the agricultural industry is critical for women across the world. Nearly 80% of economically active women in the world's least developed countries work in agriculture; worldwide that figure is estimated to be 48% (Doss, 2014). Yet as governance shifts in favour of large-scale production and new "innovations" in farming technology, a more comprehensive and complex understanding of the everyday experiences of individuals within these systems needs to inform policy-making at the global level. As such, it is crucial to understand the gendered power relations implicit in the governance and practices of food systems—both globally and locally.

Though global governance actors and institutions often recognize the need to address gender inequality within the context of food security, by citing or collaborating with key feminist experts and scholars on matters related to food and agriculture[1], gender often remains a marginal consideration in many global food security and agricultural initiatives, with limited

[1] For example, scholars studying gender and agriculture such as Bina Agarwal, Elisabeth Daley, and Cheryl Doss, have contributed to and/or have been cited within institutional documents produced by the FAO and the World Bank. See FAO 2013, World Bank 2012 and World Bank et al 2015.

implementation at the national level. By adding the terms "women" and "gender" into various phrases and clauses, these initiatives appear to be inclusive. Yet, efforts to include gender in such a superficial way risk reducing gender inequality to a technical fix, and neglect the complex social structures and overlapping oppressions that also must be addressed on the ground (Parpart, 2009). Systems of gender inequality are thus unexamined in the absence of a comprehensive understanding of the gendered dimensions of contemporary food and land systems and the strategy needed to address them. Women and food security advocates at the global level call for more attention to women's formal, informal and care labour; structures of discrimination; and the need to "incorporate women's real life experiences," in the collection of data about food systems (CFS, 2017, p. 2).

Feminist food studies scholarship does precisely this: it highlights how people have gender-differentiated experiences within the global food system and articulates how relationships with food and food production can "reproduce, resist and rebel against gender constructions," (Avakian & Haber, 2006, p. 2). I argue that a feminist food studies approach complements the work of feminist scholars who have identified the need to understand gender structures in the global economy and development policies. Feminist food studies provide a lens to conceptualize the ways in which our everyday relationships with food and food systems are gendered, complementing our understandings of global food systems. When the feminist food studies approach—with its focus on the material, socio-cultural and corporeal dimensions of food politics—is combined with broader critiques of the global food system, it is possible to develop clearer paths forward to address food access and security issues. A nuanced appreciation of the competing demands on women in productive and reproductive labour, as well as socio-culturally determined roles and responsibilities alongside the challenges of inclusion in decision-making, clearly identifies locally specific obstacles to food security issues and the ways in which they may be addressed.

I survey how several global food and agricultural governance initiatives have addressed gender since 2008, and evaluate each based on a close examination of each initiative's documentation and responses from civil society organizations. First, I consider the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security (VGGT), produced by the reformed multilateral United Nations Committee for World Food Security (CFS). Second, I examine two sets of principles for responsible agricultural investment, one produced by the World Bank, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the second by the aforementioned CFS. Finally, I examine the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, a public-private partnership (PPP) designed to coordinate between the G8 (now G7) countries, 10 African countries, and national and international corporations to encourage greater foreign investment in African agriculture. Though distinct, all three modes of governance pledge to consider gender, and specifically small-scale women farmers, but also often promote commercialization and investment in agriculture.

A robust feminist food studies lens—bolstered by considerations of gender dynamics at multiple levels and spaces—enables us to explore how global agricultural policies may push an agenda of commercialization at the expense of a comprehensive gender equality agenda.

Within several mechanisms of global food and agricultural governance, there is a tendency to frame gender equality as the inclusion of women, often with limited attention to the broader structures of gender inequality and gendered practices related to food production and reproductive work. This tendency to "add women" aligns with old habits in global governance and policy-making. At the same time, if we look at how gender is perceived and articulated in these mechanisms, we can also see openings for change and influence, with opportunities to create genuinely empowering spaces (Arora-Jonsson, 2014; Prügl, 2014). As explored below, there is particular cause for optimism as we look more closely at the support for change from within certain institutions and sets of recommendations, specifically the work done within the FAO and the CFS, where civil society organizations can play an active role in shaping policy outcomes. Here we can also see opportunities to bring the findings of feminist food studies scholarship in conversation with global policymaking.

Feminist examinations of food security and production

While food security and food sovereignty are a high priority for a number of global actors, and there have been efforts to acknowledge gender inequalities, there has been a rather limited conceptualization of gender inequality. Though there is a significant shift in the way that institutions such as the World Bank articulate their goals to include the social dimensions of development projects (Bergeron, 2003), there are still shortcomings in the way that institutions anticipate the gendered dimensions of new efforts to address food insecurity. Though global institutions such as the FAO and the World Bank regularly report on the important role of women within agriculture, rarely is the full complexity of gendered experiences within food production and agricultural land politics incorporated into global governance mechanisms around agricultural investment and food security. Though we see engagement with gender-aware scholarship in more comprehensive documents such as the Gender and Agriculture Sourcebook (World Bank, FAO, & IFAD, 2015), at the same time these efforts are not often connected to critiques of global structures of agricultural trade and investment (Collins, 2018).

In contrast, feminist food studies implore us to consider the "daily lives of ordinary people" (Avakian & Haber, 2006, p. 2). Allen and Sachs (2006) note that feminist food studies helps us to examine connections between gender and the material, socio-cultural, and corporeal dimensions of food, and offer strategies for how we can understand the gender dimensions of productive and reproductive labour, the household responsibilities tied to food, and the gendered dimensions of food consumption. Combined with gender and development perspectives as well as feminist political economy perspectives that inform critiques of the global economy of

agriculture, feminist food studies scholarship further highlights the experience of women within these structures.

In the context of global agricultural policymaking, it is essential that scholars, activists and decision-makers consider the contributions of feminist food studies in order to understand the how global pressures driving agricultural change impact the gendered relations of production, reproduction and consumption. To do so requires an understanding of the global economic dimensions of the food system, but also how socio-cultural structures shape divisions of labour, including productive and reproductive or care work. Wichterich (2015) has illustrated how the commitment to "green growth" on the part of states and corporate actors promotes shifts in agricultural production. The renewed focus on privatization and productivity leads to the "devaluation of small-scale agriculture as inefficient and not profitable," which places investors in opposition to local producers and peasants, particularly women, who use common lands for water, energy and food (Wichterich, 2015, p. 80). The phenomenon is also highlighted within the context of large-scale agricultural land deals (Behrman, Meinzen-Dick, & Quisumbing, 2012). As I will show, productive or reproductive agricultural roles may be difficult to disentangle, where what might be viewed as reproductive household labour may also support productive labour (and vice versa). Several scholars have further considered the performance and reproduction of gender as inextricably tied to foodwork as well as the management of environmental resources (Brady, Gingras, & Power, 2012; Nightingale, 2006), which pushes us to think beyond the material inequalities tied to farming and other modes of food production. These insights are particularly important considerations when we consider how foodwork and farming overlap, and the potential disruptions that can be introduced through new crops, new technologies, and new modes of farming.

In the context of global agricultural policies, we can consider how prescribed shifts in agricultural practice have multiple gendered impacts on production, reproduction and consumption. For instance, with the introduction of new agricultural practices or herbicides, women may lose access to "weeds" once used to feed families (Beuchelt & Badstue, 2013). A feminist food studies perspective allows us to consider how shifts in agricultural practice can shift structures around food production, the divisions of reproductive labour, the consumption patterns of individuals, and an understanding of how identities are formed and shaped by our relations to food and foodwork.

The current state of the global trade in food and agriculture requires an analysis that connects material, socio-cultural and corporeal relationships with food. Large-scale land acquisitions, expanded agricultural trade, growth in agricultural technologies, and efforts to alleviate malnutrition all shape our everyday experiences with food. Moreover, each aspect has gender-differentiated dynamics and effects. Where global governance projects recommend the development of land markets, the expansion of agricultural labour markets, and the introduction of new agricultural technologies and farming methods to increase productivity, these projects enter into the complicated social relations that shape our food systems. It is here where a genuine need exists to bridge the insights of feminist food studies scholarship into policy development

and implementation to understand the possible social impacts of such changes and the opportunities for resistance and change. As such, I explore the connections between gender and agricultural labour highlighting the interplay of both productive and reproductive gender roles in shaping agricultural labour practices. I follow with a related consideration of how socio-cultural norms and governance practices shape agricultural land access and control, a fundamental consideration in food security. In these surveys, I focus on the material, socio-cultural and political dimensions of agricultural practices that are shaped by global shifts in agricultural policy and practice.

Gender, labour, and food security

The challenges faced by women in agricultural work—whether on a family farm, communal lands, in agricultural labour markets, or elsewhere—are not new: women have long faced social constraints "that limit their capacity to contribute to agricultural production," (Rao, 2012, p. 84). In particular, women often face discrimination in access to productive resources: women-headed households frequently have reduced access to agricultural inputs and lower productive inputs as agricultural extension programs largely target male farmers (Agarwal, 2014). Further, the divisions of productive and reproductive labour within households mean women are responsible for time- and/or labour-intensive work, such as water collection or hand weeding crops. Deeply ingrained power imbalances within households, gender gaps in access to agricultural inputs, and women's limited access to secure land rights result in lower productivity, and ultimately less food security for women farmers (Agarwal, 2014).

Despite recognition of the above-mentioned social obstacles and opportunities for resolution, for example, through targeted agricultural extension services, global actors also continue to promote economic empowerment for women via expanded opportunities in formal paid agricultural labour. In discussions of agricultural investment, the promise of job creation and women's participation in labour markets is often hailed as boon to gender equality, as well as an important source of productivity (FAO et al., 2010). There are a number of international projects that valorize the inclusion of women in labour markets as a feminist project and use feminist languages towards profitable ends (Roberts, 2014).

Yet, there are doubts about the "empowerment" of women that should accompany expanded industrial agricultural production and shifts to cash cropping in low-income countries (Mbilinyi, 2012). There are persistent barriers to women's equal participation in labour markets. Women "face wage discrimination in rural labour markets; and they are also more likely to be in part-time, seasonal, and /or low-paying jobs when engaged in wage employment," (Rao, 2012, p. 84). The shifts to formal employment are not frequently accompanied by shifts in socio-cultural expectations about household responsibilities, food provision, or women's control of monetary resources. Household disputes and the potential for domestic violence over control of resources if women have stronger economic positions in households may then occur (Daley, 2011). Thus,

there is a need to also consider corporeal experiences with violence where household economies are disrupted because of agricultural shifts.

As a result, arguments in favour of expanding women's access to paid agricultural work are often not followed by an acknowledgement of how deeply held societal gender norms might be, how they manifest in labour markets and individual experiences, and how difficult they are to challenge. While increased women's employment in agricultural industries should not necessarily be dismissed as exploitative, there are a number of social changes that must occur concurrently to prevent such exploitation. As discussed below, such attitudes also inform the expansion of agricultural investment for food security.

Gender and agricultural land access

In addition to the gendered divisions of labour and unequal access to inputs, there are also gendered divisions in agricultural land access across regions targeted for agricultural investment, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Though rural women are estimated to undertake at least half of the agricultural labour in sub-Saharan Africa, they rarely have sole ownership over or control of the land itself (Daley, 2011). Instead, in some places, rural women's claims to land are embedded in social practices and kinship relations, including marriage (Whitehead & Tsikata, 2003). In patrilineal societies in rural East Africa, for example, where communities protect clan land via patrilineal inheritance practices, it can be difficult for poorer rural women to claim land as their own without fear of alienation from their communities (Koda, 2000). As a result, the challenge of recognizing socio-cultural traditions in land governance while also promoting gender equality has proven to be difficult under legal pluralist models (Agarwal, 1994; McAuslan, 2010; Whitehead & Tsikata, 2003). These challenges emphasize the need to understand context-specific gender dynamics related to agricultural production and reproduction, including familial patterns of inheritance and expectations about who performs which tasks.

Recently, shifts toward commercial agricultural investment also focused attention on the gender-differentiated effects of these investments, particularly around the issue of land rights and access. Daley's (2011) review of the gendered impacts of commercial pressures on land shows how women continue to suffer from systemic discrimination related to land access and ownership, discrimination in socio-cultural and political relations, and income inequality. Similarly, women have been excluded from participation in agricultural land deals: the absence of formal or informal land rights, the lack of representation in local decision-making, or the social norms that restrict women from exercising their legal rights, impact women's ability to participate in land markets (Behrman et al., 2012). Thus, there are concerns about the ability of communities to continue to meet their food and resource needs without the active and meaningful participation of women to articulate their modes of land use for reproduction and consumption.

Inclusion, participation and decision-making

The dynamics around decision-making and agricultural land use speak to the broader importance of meaningful political inclusion and participation. Multiple forms of governance and social discipline intervene in land politics and community-based decision-making, which can silence women's voices even in progressive legal frameworks (Verma, 2014). Recommendations to shift to customary forms of land rights need to be negotiated carefully to ensure that patriarchal or patrilineal traditions do not negatively affect women's agricultural land access (Whitehead & Tsikata, 2003). At the same time, recommendations to shift to marketization must be careful not to reduce social protections that might be afforded through customary practices or the state (Fraser, 2013). In both cases, as Fraser (2013) notes, the goal for feminists should be connected to the goal of emancipation.

As discussed below, many global institutions and partnerships for food security focus on inclusion and participation of women as a key mechanism by which gender inequality can be addressed. In some cases, the focus is on enhancing women's roles in decision-making over land and other agricultural resources, and in others, a focus on inclusion in land and labour markets. For feminist scholars, such efforts to improve inclusion ring hollow where they do not also consider the quality of participation of women and other marginalized groups and the social structures that prevent full participation and inclusion (Carella & Ackerly, 2017). Approaches to gender equality need to do more than improve gender parity in representation, and must also challenge social structures of oppression in various arenas (Carella & Ackerly, 2017).

Feminist food studies scholarship further highlights these everyday experiences of women, and how meaningful participation and the enjoyment of rights might be limited by the burdens of care and foodwork, as well as other productive and reproductive roles women and men are expected to fulfill. Importantly, each dimension must be considered within the broader context of food production, household and care work, and meaningful participation in decision-making. The combination of all factors—and others that emerge in locally specific analyses—create a complex picture of agricultural production that merits consideration in broader geopolitical affairs.

Looking at global food and agricultural governance

Despite these highly contested socio-political challenges, global efforts to improve food security describe gender equality and inclusiveness in relatively apolitical terms. Rather than considering the broader structural constraints imposed by gender roles and expectations, many initiatives still attempt to add women to projects designed to improve food security. Such strategies are unlikely to have success in genuinely improving gender relations or fully responding to the food security needs of peasant and small-scale food producers. It is only where institutional experts have recognized the broader societal challenge posed by patriarchal social and political structures do

we see movement towards a more comprehensive strategy to address gender inequality in food security through an appreciation of its socio-political dimensions.

Each of the initiatives discussed below recognize gender equality as an important dimension of reform. This is deserving of praise, especially where gender issues have been omitted from other efforts to govern critical environmental resources (Arora-Jonsson, 2014). However, there are varying levels of success in how accurately these initiatives reflect the challenges of food security and land reform or describe long-term trends. Though the effort to establish best practices for the recognition of land and resource tenure rights is a crucial step, other discussions at the global level suggest room for improvement. When initiatives move away from a contextualized understanding of social and political structures and towards the simplified "adding of women," global governance mechanisms offer few details on how to pursue food security with meaningful attention to gender. In doing so, these mechanisms practice the same old habits of global governance more broadly.

Breaking the habit? The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT)

The recently reformed UN-CFS[2] laudably mainstreamed gender throughout its first major set of food security guidelines, the VGGT. Activists and scholars alike praised the CFS for its passing of the VGGT in 2012 (McKeon, 2015). Responding to the ripple effects of the food and financial crises, the CFS attempted to address concerns over the land and resource rights of peoples who do not have formal titles or legally recognized rights to land, but who nonetheless rely on land and resources. The VGGT encouraged states to recognize customary rights to land, forests, and fisheries in order to protect people and their livelihoods from state expropriation of land or large-scale land deals for commercial agricultural development. At the same time, the VGGT also implored states to recognize, protect and promote the rights of women within land governance and land titling. Mainstreamed throughout the VGGT are calls to pay attention to the gendered impacts of policy decisions, aligned with the goals of the gender mainstreaming project. It also encourages "effective participation" of all people in traditional institutions, "including in the case of collective tenure systems," (FAO, 2012, p. 14).

It is a significant achievement that gender is so thoroughly integrated into the VGGT; most clauses do contain some reference to consider gender. However, the VGGT only briefly acknowledges the potential for tensions between the recognition of traditional customary rights and the promotion of gender equality (Collins, 2014). The VGGT recognize the various ways in which women and girls might be excluded from land and resource rights, but do not fully engage with these challenges, particularly where they might conflict with traditional patriarchal practices. As noted above, this has long been a concern of scholars of agrarian change and land issues, who have noted that a "re-turn to the customary" modes of land governance favoured in

[2] See McKeon (2015) for a discussion on the reformed UN-CFS.

some regions risk undermining pushes for gender equality (Whitehead & Tsikata, 2003, p. 67). Such a gap in the VGGT further highlights the limits of gender mainstreaming that does not describe gender inequality beyond gender gaps in representation. Without a broad view of the obstacles to gender equality in land rights, the VGGT alone offers little advice for those seeking to enact reforms that protect traditional modes of local land governance and advance gender equality in a practical and meaningful way. In the absence of a more systematic view of the constraints and obstacles to gender equality in both formal-legal and customary land systems, including socio-cultural norms that shape gender divisions of labour and patterns of resource access as well as participation in governance, there is little reason to expect lasting, systemic change that improves the security of agricultural land.

Fortunately, the FAO also produced more practicable supplemental documents for implementing the VGGT, providing important insights on strategies for advocacy and implementation. In *Governing Land for Women and Men: A Technical Guide to Support the Achievement of Responsible Gender-Equitable Governance of Land Tenure* (FAO, 2013), the FAO advances recommendations for fulfilling the commitments of the VGGT in a way that integrates traditional and customary practices with the advancement of women's land rights. The Technical Guide recommends strategies that explicitly address socio-cultural norms and builds partnerships with local authorities, including traditional and religious leaders to overcome systemic bias.

For example, the Guide warns that gender quotas for representation, while important, are not sufficient to address gender inequalities. The Technical Guide notes that in addition to quotas, women "may also need training and support for active and constructive engagement" (FAO, 2014, p. 17), while organizers should ensure "that meetings are held at times that are generally convenient for women," (FAO, 2014, p. 36), and broader engagement with and recruitment of customary leaders and the community are necessary to advance gender equity. The Technical Guide further highlights the role of media in raising awareness, and the importance of identifying gender equitable practices that already exist in local customs. These tools and practices, if enacted thoughtfully and with adequate funding from states, international institutions, and donors, could form the basis of a more robust and equal land governance system founded within existing norms and practices.

The VGGT and the FAO Technical Guide together create important global policy space for a more gender equitable food and land security paradigm. These efforts offer genuine opportunities for a progressive gender equality agenda, which need to be identified within circles of global governance. These spaces in which new progressive visions can be built are important, particularly as it supports the activists and legal reformers who must do the grassroots work in each local context (Arial et al., 2012). However, despite this success in the efforts to establish norms and best practices around land governance, other global food security initiatives often do not create similar opportunities. As illustrated below, other global mechanisms to address food security have tended to adhere more closely to an "add women and stir" approach, neglecting attention to—and possible solutions for—broader gendered socio-political dynamics. Instead, we

see an emphasis on further commercialization, with a reliance on global food and agricultural policies that include references to gender equality, but do not consider the everyday experiences of gender relations within agricultural practice.

Establishing principles for responsible agricultural investment

Strategies to promote more responsible agricultural investment practices often make explicit reference to the role of women in agricultural practice, including land and resource management. References to gender or gender-based differences in these initiatives frequently emphasize the efficiency gains from including women in agricultural investments as well as the potential for "empowering" women through participation in land and labour markets (Collins, 2016; Cornwall & Rivas, 2015). Despite some important differences, both the World Bank-led Principles for Responsible Agricultural Investment (PRAI) and the CFS's Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture and Food Systems (RAI) tend to overlook the complexity of gender in the management of agricultural resources and food security. The emphasis is on the inclusion of women in land and labour markets rather than also considering the social, cultural, and political dimensions of gender relations. Feminist food studies scholarship draws attention towards dimensions beyond the material experiences in land and labour markets.

Establishing "responsible agricultural investment" practices became a priority for the World Bank, FAO, IFAD, and UNCTAD following the 2007-2008 food and fuel crises. These institutions created the PRAI in 2010, which faulted poor governance mechanisms for the risks associated with increased commercial interest in agricultural land. While recognizing that investment can result in the displacement of people, the undermining of rights, reduced food security, and the loss of land access among several other risks, the PRAI also emphasizes the desirability of agricultural investment in low-income countries and the potential of benefits for all individuals (FAO et al., 2010). In terms of the benefits to women, the PRAI suggests that women can boost household food security by obtaining jobs created by new agricultural investment projects. The PRAI also recommends that states and investors hold meaningful consultations, paying special attention to women and marginalized populations.

While such measures are reasonable, important dimensions of food and land security that are shaped in part by gender relations are missed. Even if large-scale agricultural projects are successful in creating jobs for local populations, rural women may be less likely to obtain skilled jobs with higher pay, and could be marginalized into precarious, dangerous, and low-paying work, if they are hired at all (Behrman et al., 2012). Evidence suggests that rural women in low-income areas tend to take on precarious plantation work as less skilled labourers; they are often paid less and are underrepresented in permanent, office-based work (Tsikata & Yaro, 2014). In addition, if women do take on employment, this could create additional burdens on productive and reproductive activities, including subsistence agriculture, childcare, and foodwork. These burdens may undermine household food security and nutrition without appropriate support for shifts in labour patterns. And though states, corporations, and local communities may aspire to

inclusive and meaningful consultations, achieving such outcomes is a long-term process, requiring substantial political, financial and time commitments. Relying on local traditional or customary bodies may also exclude traditionally marginalized groups, particularly where women's land claims threaten to upset community land ownership patterns (Tripp, 2004). As noted above, women claiming rights to communal land may contradict long-standing social practices, and transforming governance processes without also considering this is unlikely to produce meaningful inclusion.

Likewise, the CFS RAI Principles, though an improvement upon the PRAI in some respects, also appear to equate women's empowerment to the inclusion of women in existing market practices. Criticism from civil society organizations noted the RAI Principles' limited attention to gender inequality and indeed, the RAI Principles suffer from a limited consideration of what women's empowerment could look like in the context of agricultural investment (Collins, 2016). For instance, La Via Campesina (2014) argues that the RAI Principles make no significant advancement on gender discrimination. Though "empowerment" as a term remains undefined in the RAI Principles, appeals to developing "human resource capacity" and "promoting their access to resources and inputs" appear to tie the concept of "empowerment" to market participation and productive labour. Specifically, Principle 3, "Foster Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment," advises that responsible agriculture investment will: "[ensure] that all people are treated fairly, recognizing their respective situations, needs, constraints, and the vital role played by women," "[eliminate] all measures and practices that discriminate or violate rights on the basis of gender," "[advance] women's equal tenure rights," and "[adopt] innovative and/or proactive approaches… to enhance women's meaningful participation in partnerships, decision-making, leadership roles, and the equitable sharing of benefits," (CFS, 2014, p. 13). Unfortunately, the RAI Principles do not provide additional detail on the types of social and political obstacles that communities face in identifying and overcoming discriminatory practices, pursuing gender equal land ownership, and establishing such meaningful participation. Though the RAI Principles advise improving access to resources, there is not broader recognition of the social dynamics that work in tandem with economic inequalities.

Though we should not be hasty to dismiss these efforts to address gender in these sets of principles, there are limits to incorporating "women" or "gender" into the governance of agricultural investment without more appreciation of systemic gender inequality and the everyday experiences of women in agriculture. Expanded income opportunities may indeed be empowering, or even emancipatory, for some women, though there are still important caveats that must be made surrounding shifting labour roles, household relations and control of resources (Behrman et al., 2012). Likewise, the goal of enhanced political participation for women in the RAI Principles is commendable. Both the PRAI and the RAI Principles recognize the inherent value of addressing gender gaps in inequality.

Yet the over-arching challenge remains that neither of these mechanisms to promote responsible agricultural investment address the socio-political nature of promoting gender

equality in practice. For instance, many countries have already legislated equal land rights for women and several have also mandated gender quotas in national and local decision-making to little effect (McAuslan, 2010). Moreover, gender equality in agricultural investment policies tends to be reduced to inclusion, without recognition of the broader social shifts that could also occur. Increased marketization of land and labour may also introduce new gendered vulnerabilities if social protections are also removed (Fraser, 2013). Further, we increasingly appreciate the links between the performance of gender and agricultural responsibilities and foodwork. Understanding shifts in divisions of labour may unsettle the production of gendered subjectivities, which can have detrimental social effects (Nightingale, 2006). A sustained political commitment matched by the financial resources to advocate for systemic and societal change is necessary, rather than recommendations that only focus on reforms to legal structures.

As a result, the few mentions of women and gender within these sets of principles illustrate that there is still opportunity to actively engage with the role of gender relations in shaping the everyday experiences of production and reproduction, or the likely differentiated socio-economic impacts of broader shifts in patterns of agricultural production. Without taking into consideration the pervasiveness of gender roles in the structuring of land and labour markets, these principles can advance ideas about equality, but are not yet positioned to provide definitive guidance on the means to achieve it.

The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition

Another challenge lies ahead as we consider more than just the multilateral institutions that focus on food, agriculture and development. Efforts to address global food insecurity increasingly include corporate actors in order to fund agricultural projects, often in partnership with states and development agencies. Thus, in addition to global regulatory efforts launched by the global institutions discussed above, we must also consider transnational efforts to influence agricultural practices and policies in partnerships with private actors. Launched by the United States at the G8's (now G7) annual summit in 2012, the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition pledges to "lift 50 million people out of poverty" by 2022, in part by mobilizing private capital investments in agriculture across ten African states in partnership with the G8 countries (White House, 2012). The New Alliance has Cooperation Frameworks in place with each of its 10 African partner countries, which specify goals for both public and private partners, including multinational corporations (MNCs), such as Unilever and Monsanto. The goals of the Cooperation Frameworks are oriented toward higher productivity in export crops and freer agricultural trade, focused on promoting "commercialization, distribution and adoption of key technologies and improved seed varieties," (White House, 2012). The Cooperation Frameworks also highlight some important policy foundations, such as rights to land and water.

Included in the language of these frameworks are references to improving the capacities of and delivering "tangible benefits" to women and smallholder farmers (White House, 2012). Each of the initial Cooperation Frameworks signed with Ethiopia, Ghana, and Tanzania includes

exactly the same preface on the need to "deliver tangible benefits to smallholder farmers, including women," but without elaboration on how projects would benefit women or the particular struggles that women face in agriculture. Critics have noted that the New Alliance's focus on trade and agricultural technologies also masks the important role small-scale farmers play in food security (McKeon, 2014). When we further consider that the majority of small-scale and subsistence farmers are women, there are clearly significant questions remaining about how gender differences will factor into New Alliance plans to revolutionize agriculture.

In 2013, the New Alliance Leadership Council recommended broad voluntary actions to improve "women's economic empowerment" (New Alliance, 2014, p. 29). Under these new measures, New Alliance partners had to undertake more explicit efforts to include and "empower" women in agricultural value chains. The later Cooperation Frameworks also include detailed consideration of women in agricultural practices compared to the original three Frameworks. For example, the Cooperation Framework with Burkina Faso indicates specific goals to provide women smallholders with agricultural inputs and support a women's group producing parboiled rice (New Alliance, 2013). The New Alliance has also since undertaken sex disaggregated reporting and some partnerships have created jobs for women: where data are available, estimates are as high as 40% job creation benefitting women (New Alliance, 2014, p. 29). The New Alliance sees a need to "address the socio-economic and political barriers to women's participation in agriculture" and highlights the "opportunity to further unlock the potential of women's economic empowerment through New Alliance investments," (New Alliance, 2014, p. 30).

Despite these recent efforts to address gender concerns within the New Alliance, the projects still face challenges. Though the New Alliance reports creating jobs for women, only 21% of the smallholder farmers reached by New Alliance projects were women (New Alliance, 2014). And while 14 companies state that women are part of their workforce and/or supply chain, this only represents less than 10% of the 180 companies involved in the New Alliance (New Alliance, 2014). Further, there appears to be limited monitoring of the New Alliance commitments on gender equality. The 2014-2015 Progress Report does not reference previous recommendations to address socio-economic and political barriers to gender equality, nor new efforts to address the challenge (New Alliance, 2015). There is limited data at the country level on implementation, but some reporting that exists suggests that overall results are mixed, with outcomes for women unclear (Gagné, 2017).

There is a clear challenge going forward, but there are limits to the strategy of promoting gender equality solely via including women in agricultural land and labour markets. Across these Frameworks, there is little or no reference to the predominance of patriarchal norms or patrilineal traditions, and their role in limiting how women farmers might benefit from proposed investment in agriculture. For instance, despite the focus on smallholder farmers in the Cooperation Frameworks, this term would be a misnomer for many rural women African farmers. As noted above, though rural women undertake a great deal of agricultural labour, their formal ownership of agricultural land is often not guaranteed, and access may be granted through kinship relations

with men (Verma, 2014). As a result, including women under the category of "smallholder farmer" risks overlooking the larger category of women without formal land ownership. The distinction may seem minor, but where compensation and consultations are built around the legal and/or recognized owners of the land, women without formal or customary control over land are likely to be excluded (Behrman et al., 2012). This has already been a significant gap in efforts to negotiate land for agricultural investment in several sub-Saharan African countries (McAuslan, 2010; Tripp, 2004). And as McKeon (2014) notes, the New Alliance may be further driving the large-scale acquisition of land. Indeed, more independent research is required on the outcomes of the New Alliance and the effects in the 10 African partner countries, as well as on similar projects.

In the absence of comprehensive attention to socio-cultural gendered hierarchies, the consideration of gender inequality in the New Alliance frameworks only addresses the gender gap in commercial agricultural labour and land markets, and even then only in very limited terms. The focus on including women into the existing national plans for agricultural development omits the specific experiences of gender relations that impede efforts to address inequality. Though some Cooperation Frameworks indicate a need to define land rights for local populations, these are complicated long-term projects that require attention to the structural factors that restrict gender equality. The proposed shifts in agricultural production may also affect subsistence agriculture and reproductive labour, leaving less space and fewer inputs for locally consumed crops. Moreover, the reorientation of agricultural labour towards cash cropping may have ripple effects on the availability of water, the use of pesticides and changes to the local environment. Without unpacking the presumptions about how farming operates, and adding women as an afterthought, the New Alliance is poised to expand the scale of agricultural investment without meaningful attention to the role that women play in local food production, household reproduction, or a genuine effort to empower women and/or consider gender.

Conclusion

As illustrated through these cases, global food and land governance mechanisms can take relatively narrow and/or apolitical views of gender inequality and its possible solutions, in contrast to the specificity and detail offered by a feminist food studies approach. Though global governance mechanisms have shifted to include references to gender—a shift that is deserving of recognition—only rarely do global mechanisms consider gender as a broader set of social relations that must be addressed. As noted above, previous efforts to mainstream gender into global policymaking have led many to view gender inequality as a problem requiring a technical fix. In terms of food and land governance, this can take the form of promoting inclusion in land and agricultural labour markets as a solution to gender inequality in productivity, land ownership and income. The efforts to establish responsible agricultural investment, though distinct, each repeat the expectation that the liberalization of land and labour markets and the participation of

women will be empowering. The New Alliance, though incorporating more attention to gender in the later Cooperation Frameworks, encourages the creation of jobs for women and, in some cases, partners with women in agricultural production. Yet, market participation, land ownership and food production are bound in social practices, gender norms and expectations, and gendered divisions of labour. Addressing these challenges requires close attention to local power relations and experiences to advance meaningful change. There is a risk of reifying gender inequality in failing to recognize where and why women are already disadvantaged.

Fortunately, there are strategies to address gender inequality by recognizing these socio-political challenges. Only by adopting more complex views of gender, food and agriculture can we improve the quality of global food and agricultural governance for everyone. As Prügl (2009) argues, in some cases it is not gender mainstreaming that is the problem, but the sidelining of progressive agendas by mechanisms of power. As a result, more critique and engagement is necessary to push for change, and where these institutions recognize the value of gender equality, there are opportunities for greater engagement. In particular, the reformed CFS—supported by the Rome-based UN agencies—has created more space for discussions of gender inequality within the context of food security. The CFS could be well-positioned to advance the agenda of gender equality, provided there is space and support for those who can convey how gender structures food access, agricultural work and nutrition. Feminist food studies scholars and activists have a tremendous opportunity to engage with such global food governance institutions to make the connections between socio-political gender structures and our land and food systems clear to decision-makers and investors. Future research should focus on these opportunities within global governance institutions and agreements. There is a fundamental need for a sustained feminist food studies approach that considers the complex socio-political gender relations in food and agriculture, which might serve as the basis for better food governance at all levels.

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Original Research Article

Waste management as foodwork: A feminist food studies approach to household food waste

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Abstract

Food waste in Canada is estimated to amount to $31 billion per year, with approximately half of this waste occurring in households (Gooch & Felfel, 2014). However, household food waste studies remain underrepresented in the literature, particularly in a Canadian context. This paper calls on feminist food scholars to contribute to this gap by incorporating food waste analyses into their food research. This study uses a photovoice methodology and feminist analytical perspectives to investigate the moment when food became "waste" in 22 households in Guelph, Ontario. Findings suggest that food waste production is representative of forms of foodwork (DeVault, 1991), and that attention to food wasting reveals embodied knowledges of food and interactions with the food system. We contend that scholars and those concerned with household waste reduction should examine and consider how the responsibility for food waste management has been constructed to fall along gendered lines. The intersection of these findings with ongoing research in feminist food scholarship reveals that feminist food scholars are well placed to contribute to food waste studies.

Keywords: food waste, photovoice, household, foodwork

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Introduction

It has been estimated that approximately $31 billion per year in food is wasted across Canada's food value chain, with 47 percent of that waste occurring at the household level (Gooch & Felfel, 2014). Wasted food represents a loss of all of the resources involved in growing that food, as well as the potential emission of greenhouse gases when food decomposes in landfills. The scale of food waste in Canada is particularly egregious given that eight percent of Canadian households are considered food insecure (Roshanafshar & Hawkins, 2015). As food waste gains prominence as an issue of environmental and social relevance, researchers have noted the need for household food waste studies to expand by way of ethnographic research (Evans, 2012; Graham-Rowe, Jessop, & Sparks, 2014).

Falling neither into the category of distinctly food studies nor distinctly waste studies, food waste discussions can be easily divorced from conversations happening in both spheres. Bridging these two areas of research draws attention to the messiness at the nexus of food and waste discourses. In particular, little attention has been paid to the gendered dynamics that exist in the home around food waste. This paper focuses on how conversations in feminist food scholarship can contribute to understandings of food waste, and thus how feminist food scholars can extend their research on food to include its disposal. We draw on the feminist concepts of foodwork and knowledge production through visceral interactions with food waste. By reframing actions such as eating, cooking, and knowing food as waste management moments, this paper aims to enliven conversations about waste in research on food.

This paper was developed by asking: What happens when we look at food waste through a feminist lens? Brady, Gingras, and Power (2012) ask this question with specific attention to the importance of feminist analysis in food studies. They assert that "(s)cholarly analyses of food, foodwork, and bodies must pay attention to gender because of the centrality of women and foodwork and the resulting gender inequalities" (Brady et al., 2012, p.122), and that "by ignoring food as an area of feminist inquiry, scholars overlooked the important ways in which women produce, reproduce, resist, and transform gender ideologies in their everyday work of feeding themselves and others" (p.123). Forms of foodwork include: "budgeting financial, human and material resources; purchasing and transporting food; assessing the quality of food for purchase; seeking out and using knowledge of nutrition; planning and preparing meals; judging the schedules, likes, dislikes, and various health concerns (e.g., diabetes, low-sodium diet) and dietary needs (e.g. allergies, vegetarianism/veganism) of family members and cleaning up" (Brady et al., 2012, p.127).

In the context of the household, the research of Marjorie DeVault (1991) has had particular influence on studies of gendered work with regard to food and family. DeVault's (1991) research illuminates the foodwork that women do as a form of both care work in the family and physical maintenance of the home. Thus, recognizing foodwork as work contributes to understandings of household labour division. Beagan, Chapman, D'Sylva, and Bassett (2008) explore the division of labour in three ethno-cultural groups in Canada and find that, in all three,

women still hold primary responsibility for foodwork. Their final remarks are important to keep in mind, as the division of labour in Canadian households is often justified using subtle gendered cues:

> For decades, scholarship in the area of domestic labour has assumed gender inequities will diminish over time, yet this does not appear to be happening. Rather, traditional gender roles seem to reinvent themselves in new guises. While it is no longer acceptable in many sociocultural groups to assume domestic work is inherently women's work, the same gender expectations persist in more complex forms, couched in terms of individual choices, standards, and preferences. (Beagan et al., 2008, p. 668)

Presumptions of growing gender equality can undermine the impetus behind gender awareness in research; however, scholars continue to reveal the ways that gender impacts Canadian society (see also McPhail, Chapman, & Beagan, 2011).

Lewis (2015) warns that the incorporation of gender into research without intersectional feminist reflection can still create positivist results which seek to "manage" social experience. She reminds us that "[i]nterdisciplinary work on gender and food encourages us to make connections between the materialities of food and discourses around food and eating" (Lewis, 2015, p. 424). Thus, feminist food studies incorporate gendered politics into food studies while also questioning ways of knowing and creating knowledge around food. Pulling from and contributing to the work of feminist geography, Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2008) have used feminist politics to delve into the visceral realm of food through taste. They make connections between power in the food system and the way(s) that power combines with individual experience to produce a politics of food in eating. Using food as their entry point, Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2008) assert that "paying attention to the visceral realm can reveal different kinds of knowledges and sensitivities that may be used to inform and enhance political decision-making and lead to more effective socio-political organizing" (p.469).

In ethnographic food waste research, the gendered aspects of how individual responsibility is encouraged to reduce food waste have been tentatively discussed. For example, Waitt and Phillips (2015) explain that food waste reduction campaigns target the individual skills of consumers, mimicking social ideals of what it means to be a good homemaker and citizen: "A good homemaker" and "good citizen" minimises food waste, connecting the everyday practices of refrigeration and ridding with power geometries that shape and reshape home, food systems and subjectivities" (pp. 11–12). In a footnote, they remind readers that "in the households of heterosexual couples, women tended to be mainly responsible for these practices" (Waitt & Phillips, 2015, p. 19). Similarly, Evans (2012) alludes to the importance of gender by discussing care narratives amongst participants. Terms such as "homemaker" and "care provider" carry a distinctly feminine history which carries forward today. For example, in Canadian households, women spend twice the amount of time cooking and washing up as men (Beagan et al., 2008). It is important to acknowledge that the experiences of women in relation to food waste are likely to

have a large influence on the production of food waste in the home when they are in the primary position of food provisioning.

Feminist food scholars have developed perspectives on food-related issues that food waste scholarship is just beginning to explore. There is an opportunity for feminist food scholars to contribute to waste scholarship by adding nuance to analyses of the moment when food becomes waste. In particular, feminist food studies allow for a discussion of the social production of food waste, which is embedded within gendered foodwork activities such as shopping, cooking, and provisioning. This theoretical approach also allows for greater consideration of the ways that visceral politics are imbricated with embodied experiences of food and waste.

Methods

This study investigated how people understand food waste in their everyday lives. In addition to a series of interviews, Fraser carried out an adapted photovoice method (Wang, 1999), asking study participants to document 12-24 moments when they noticed that their food was going to waste, as well as moments relevant to their household's "food waste story"—or overarching themes—over a two-week period. The aims of this research were to:

1. Document the moments of transition between food and waste in households in Guelph, Ontario;
2. Explore relationships between food and wasting behaviours in the household; and
3. Make connections between household food waste and systemic and institutional forces.

The study was conducted in 22 homes in Guelph, Ontario. Prospective participants were approached following a series of waste measurements, audits, and surveys conducted in eight neighbourhoods in Guelph in cooperation with municipal partners. Further participants were recruited using snowball sampling, including social media posts. The study was directed toward the person in the household most responsible for buying and preparing food. Initial interviews collected demographic data and baseline information about household shopping, eating, and wasting behaviours. Participants were then asked to photograph moments of food waste, and these moments were discussed and elaborated on during a second series of interviews. A final meeting provided an opportunity for members to check the interview transcripts.

During the photovoice process, the majority of participants used their cell phone cameras to take photos. Three participants used digital cameras, and one participant was provided with a disposable camera at their request. This method of data collection allows the participant to curate their own food waste narrative. The photos were a springboard for more in-depth conversations about waste. Fraser led participants through a series of questions which built on photovoice

methodology, and incorporated questions about common findings in other food waste studies. Interviewees were first asked to describe the photos, and were then prompted to elaborate on how the organization of their daily lives contributed to the captured moment of food wasting. These conversations typically led to discussions of shopping, food preparation, meal provisioning, and cleaning up. Participants were asked about the backstory of food preparation or intentions during grocery shopping prior to this moment. They were also asked about who was responsible for different food- and waste-related tasks in the home. Participants were asked about their actions and intentions around disposing of food in various waste receptacles after it was deemed to be waste. These questions were important for bringing together often siloed discussions around food and waste. While at first conversations about food preparation seemed slightly off topic, it quickly became clear that there was no separating discussions of waste from those surrounding all of this preparatory work. While waste production is not commonly perceived as integral to household tasks like shopping and cooking, these interviews highlight the importance of acknowledging waste at each stage of food preparation and procurement.

The data were analyzed using feminist analytical perspectives to understand how understandings of food waste might shift if gendered dynamics of work and visceral knowledge creation were considered. The study was not designed to assess intersectionality as a theoretical framework, and so we did not conduct in-depth interviews to assess participants' identifiers. We believe that the sample is socio-economically homogenous due to the focus on single-family homes within similar neighbourhoods in Guelph. The homogeneity of our sample is a limitation of the study, and suggests that socioeconomic diversity is an important area for future research. All of the participating households consisted of couples, and all households either included small children or were "empty nesters" with grown children who had already left the household. In total, 19 of the 22 of the interview participants were women only, three interviews included both women and men, and one interview was conducted with a male participant. While this was a non-random self-selected sample of participants, the high level of gender imbalance among participants reflects the high level of women's involvement in food procurement, preparation, and waste management in Canadian households.

Results and discussion

The gendered nature of household "food-waste-work"

We learned that the gendered nature of food work is sometimes apparent, but is often coded. At times, gendered differences in food waste experiences were mentioned explicitly:

> Like talking about food waste and inevitably the word guilt comes up. But I feel like if you were interviewing a guy about this they wouldn't even mention the word guilt ever. It just, they, it seems to be a women thing and it seems to be a mom thing. Like that we feel

> guilt about everything you could possibly feel guilt about. (Participant 22, 30-39-year-old woman)

Other times, gendered experiences were referred to more subtly through comparison. Participant 10 (30-39-year-old woman) describes:

> Like if the kids were eating that I would never just throw that out, or in the compost or whatever, I would always hold onto it to maybe snack on it later in the day or tomorrow whereas my husband would just throw it out because he hates having things go bad. If there's only like half a spoonful of jam left in the container he'll just throw it out, he won't put it back in the fridge. Whereas the way I was raised, you know it's like ingrained into your head, like you save that and someone will eat it eventually and then if it goes mouldy then you throw it out.

The participant does not claim that her actions actually prevent the waste from happening, but the experience of wasting something before it goes mouldy is different between the participant and her husband. This is not to suggest that either women or men are more or less likely to waste food. Rather, as highlighted by this example, there are differences in experiences of food wasting within a household. There is also variability among women in terms of their likeliness to waste food (see Evans, 2012; Waitt & Phillip, 2015).

Beyond this difference in experience, interviews revealed how certain people's politics may have more influence on the household's actions. During an interview, Participant 17 (30-39-year-old woman) tried to draw similarities between the thriftiness she saw in her family and her husband's family, and the impact of those similarities on their own household food waste production. While her husband recognized that his family had a mentality of "you don't throw things out, you fix them", he did not feel this history had influenced his actions with regard to wasting food as much as his wife had thought. Finally, the participant conceded: "it sounds like I have more influence on our household's food consumption, waste decision than he does (laughter)" (Participant 17, 30-39-year-old woman). Her implication is that a mother figure has greater socialization influences on domestic consumption than a father figure would. It is important to recognize that these histories of food waste are inscribed with gendered socializations, and with expectations of enacting these socialized histories. As Beagan et al. (2008) note, it is common for people to disregard gender because they perceive divisions of household labour as fair or justifiable. Regardless of how participants feel about the equity of gender division in food waste activities in their households, it is still important to pay attention when a gendered distinction exists in households. The importance of highlighting these differences, however, is less about *who* prepares the food, and rather how knowledge about food and waste has been produced and is continuously being produced in society. There is work that goes into food waste production that is part of traditionally unacknowledged domestic labour. In the following sections, we describe this work through examples of explicit and implicit waste management during the process of domestic food handling.

Waste work as explicit waste management

Explicit waste management includes actions that participants did in response to both the potential and the emergence of waste. Along with the need to dispose of food exhibiting certain characteristics (such as decomposition), there were also times when aesthetic and/or material decomposition signalled the need to manage the food item to facilitate future use and avoid waste.

While the majority of photos were not indicative of waste avoidance, during the interviews some participants explicitly discussed how waste avoidance factored into their household's food waste story. Two participants revealed specific photos of food waste avoidance in relation to their food waste story. One photo was of a smoothie made with leftover oatmeal portions from their young toddler (Figure 1). The other was of peaches being made into compote (Figure 2). The participant responsible for the smoothie took great pride in adapting her family's breakfast in response to food waste:

Figure 1: Leftover smoothie,
Participant 17, 30-39-year-old woman

> We always have tonnes of baby leftovers. Crusts, oatmeal, things that don't get eaten, fruit and what we've started doing is we make a smoothie every morning […] and whatever leftovers we have we collect them in the fridge and then dump them into the family smoothie the next day. So this is just a picture of saving tray randomness and putting it inside the smoothie […] it's a way that we feel really good about preventing food waste. (Participant 17, 30-39 year-old woman)

Notice that, to avoid waste in this case, the participant has developed a specific strategy. This strategy requires extra (and arguably gendered) work beyond the first round of work that went into preparing the initial meal.

The participant responsible for the peach compote revealed that her husband does not always understand the full extent of why she chooses to preserve:

Figure 2: Peach compote,
Participant 7, 20-29-year-old woman

> To him it seems like I'm doing all this extra work or whatever. It's not doing it for fun, it's so that a) we don't get fruit flies in the house and b) so that the peaches don't go bad because if I blanch them and put them in syrup then I can save them for longer. Like I have peaches, I have honey syrup-ed peaches in the fridge and I can feed those to the baby but a lot of the time he doesn't realize that I've preserved things. So I have freezer jam in there and I'm sure that he just won't touch it. So I have to like explain to him this is what this is and how you use it and that kind of thing.
> (Participant 7, 20-29-year old-woman)

Her account challenges the notion of benevolence that often serves to devalue or disregard the actual work that goes into feeding a family and maintaining/managing household resources (the belief that a person enjoying the work detracts from the labour involved, and can lead to an assumption that it will be done regardless of the effort expended to make it happen) (Brady et al., 2012). It also acknowledges the skills and knowledge that are required to preserve and freeze as a waste prevention mechanism.

During the interviews, participants discussed waste management strategies that included using their freezer to store leftovers, preserving items that were going off, and using up food before it could go bad. At times, these management strategies were brought into discussion by

asking about "almost waste moments"—food that might have become waste if it had not been handled at a particular time or in a particular way. Indicators of food going off but still being usable varied from household to household, but generally included things like "squishy" parts, eyes of potatoes, and bits of mould. A couple of participants revealed that they were able to preserve entire fruits that were going soft, or properly blanch and freeze vegetables that were starting to wilt, but not all had or highlighted this skill. Participants often cooked items that were "not as fresh", such as wrinkled bell peppers, and served them as a simple and effective way to make use of aesthetically degraded items that otherwise would be eaten raw, or continue to decompose and become inedible.

Sometimes, waste management strategies were developed to accommodate retail particularities. For example, an older couple cooking for just the two of them describe the storage of breads:

> […] we'll get a loaf of bread, we'll take half of it out, and put half of it in the freezer. And when that one's gone we'll [take] this one out. Same with hamburger buns, we'll put them on a tray and freeze them separately, and fire them in the freezer so that they keep. (Participants 11, 60-69-year-old couple)

This is an explicit waste management strategy in response to incompatible grocery store portion sizing. This action requires knowledge about which items can be saved in the freezer and managing the freezer so that the bread does not get damaged, for example by being freezer burnt. Freezing, preserving, eating leftovers, and making new meals from leftover items are some of the strategies of waste avoidance, as identified by Quested, Marsh, Stunell, and Parry (2013) and Evans (2012). In particular, these strategies are important to Evans (2012) because they show that, despite the ability for households to place their organics in waste receptacles, many still go to great lengths to avoid wasting food. This shows how individuals must do work to accommodate the surpluses inherent in the modern food market.

Food waste management also includes disposal. Cleaning out the fridge, managing the green bin, and diverting waste into appropriate waste streams all comprise "food-waste-work" which enables flow of the household. Participant 6 (50-59-year-old woman) highlights the separation of her coffee grounds for use in her compost (Figure 3), as well as the minimization of liquid coffee waste:

Figure 3: Coffee grounds for compost,
Participant 6, 50-59-year-old woman

> So those coffee grounds, first of all we don't waste any coffee in our household. My husband and I each take a thermos of it to work and if the Bodum has coffee left at the end of the night it goes in the cup and it gets covered and it gets saved; we don't throw coffee out. No coffee gets wasted but the coffee grounds do go out to my composter […] When I've got company and my kids are around […] we may go through three or four of them, but no coffee goes down the drain. It gets used. If it hasn't been finished it gets nuked up later.

These actions contribute to waste minimization as well as to nutrient recovery. Participant 20 (60-69-year-old woman) articulately describes the actions she takes around the green bin:

> Here I'm doing the peach because the peach is wet and juicy you can see the water, the juices dripping down here. So again I've put that on a paper towel, and then I will wrap that up before I put that into my kitchen bin. So I don't have too much wet [green bin material]. And then that is what it looks like when I put it into my kitchen bin. So I've got the newspaper inside the plastic bin, and then the food here so I've got peach skins, whatever else, banana peels that kind of thing? That will go into the wet, which stays in my kitchen until I take it to the garage.

Her actions align with Metcalfe et al.'s (2013) discussion of the ways that consumers respond to the agency of the green bin by managing its location and creating routines. The installation of a garburator—an in-sink waste disposal unit—in Participant 13's (60-69-year-old man) home is an example of a waste management decision that was made despite the availability of the green bin system. Metcalfe et al. (2013) propose that rejecting the bin altogether is a form of agency.

Explicit waste management strategies require particular action regarding food preservation, handling, and rotation, as well as time and energy to execute this knowledge if food waste is to be completely avoided. This has been acknowledged by ethnographic food scholarship (e.g., Evans, 2012; Waitt & Phillips, 2015); feminist food scholars need only look a

little further to link food waste management to their analyses of foodwork. Participants in this study had varying ranges of food knowledge and handling skills that they used to manage or avoid food waste. Furthermore, once food waste is produced, it must be managed in particular ways to accommodate things like fruit flies, odours, and juices. Participants in this study did this by tending to their green bins, composts, and garburators. They also cleaned their fridges and developed strategies of disposal in their household. These explicit waste management strategies are clearly a form of work done in the home, and should be considered foodwork in the home. Furthermore, the interview data suggest that the responsibility to develop and act on such waste management strategies often falls upon women, suggesting that waste management is another gendered form of foodwork in the home.

Foodwork as implicit waste management

Beyond the explicit mention of food waste avoidance strategies, there were also actions that implicitly led to waste management (though not always complete waste avoidance) in participants' households. While we asked participants to include photos of anything that affected their household's food waste story, participants tended to focus more on items of food gone to waste. We had anticipated some photos of trips to the grocery store, cooking practices, and meal times, because these were the activities often studied by researchers in relation to household food waste in ethnographic studies (e.g., Evans, 2012; Graham-Rowe et al., 2014). Nevertheless, there was ample opportunity to discuss these moments of foodwork further during the interviews. The following are examples of instances where food waste generation co-exists with instances of shopping, cooking, feeding, and eating. Since these actions have already been justified as foodwork by food scholars such as DeVault (1991) and Brady et al. (2012)., in this section we pay particular attention to how this foodwork is also an aspect of waste management. In some cases, this is done by contesting the common idea that food waste emerges simply out of 'error' or poorly performed foodwork, and in others by highlighting the skill that is required to avoid waste.

Shopping as implicit waste management

Shopping for food is a form of household work that is often overlooked, but is considered a form of foodwork (that is gendered as feminine) (DeVault, 1991). Participant 17's (30-39-year-old woman) experience of shopping for Thanksgiving dinner suggests how shopping is also waste work. Participant 17 was cooking Thanksgiving turkey to bring to a small Thanksgiving gathering. She says:

> I decided to go to No Frills, but they decided the size I needed. Right? I wouldn't have bought a turkey that big but that's all there was and you've got to make a turkey on Thanksgiving. So I ended

> up buying an 18-pound turkey (laughter). (Participant 17, 30-39-year-old woman)

Under the social conventions that require a turkey be served at Thanksgiving, she had to work within the limits of what was offered at the grocery store. This is an example of the influence of retail outlets on socio-cultural norms. When shopping, participants are working to make decisions based on a variety of factors, and food waste management may or may not be a priority. At the time of the interview, the participant had an overwhelming amount of turkey that she was trying to use up; she was unsure how much would get eaten, and was aware that some might end up going to waste. To avoid such an incident, the participant could have ordered a smaller turkey earlier, gone to a different grocery store, or avoided cooking a turkey altogether. However, all of these decisions require trade-offs around factors such as available planning time, economic means, and social expectations. The degree of one's "success" around shopping depends on which factor is valued most. If food waste avoidance is the ultimate objective, having the perfect-sized turkey is most desirable. If provisioning for a family holiday is the priority, having any amount of turkey is the priority. Indeed, these priorities may co-exist, and may result in extra effort or strategy development to accommodate both feeding the family and food waste avoidance. Shopping is bound to food waste generation through over-purchasing, and it also requires knowledge of many aspects of food quality, price, and edibility both at the grocery store, and in relation to individual family expectations and eating dynamics. Such skills are expected of the person responsible for food provisioning in the household, which is often a gendered responsibility that falls to women.

Cooking as implicit waste management

Participants in the study had a range of cooking skills. Some self-identified as highly skilled cooks and others as very "plain and simple". Some were trained professionally in kitchens, and some were in the processes of learning to cook for their family. Cooking in relation to food waste is particularly noticeable when items are in need of being "used up". Participant 23 (30-39-year old-woman) used to plan out meals for her family, but has since decided to cook based on whatever is in the fridge. Here, she describes her cooking:

> I guess every night when I'm thinking about what I'm going to cook for dinner—because I often don't plan ahead anymore—I look at what's in my fridge and I look at what's most perishable and I try to use that first, right? So if I bought both broccoli and cauliflower at the grocery store because both were a good price that week—it's only really down to price—if I bought both that week and I make an effort to make the broccoli first because it's more perishable. So I will often as I'm getting ready to prepare dinner, I'll take a quick look in my crisper drawers and think, ok what do I

> need to use up? And then try to do something there. (Participant 23, 30-39-year-old woman)

Participant 23's cooking requires knowledge about which items are most perishable and in need of being used. She also notes that she cooks based on food prices when shopping. Cooking in this case also requires knowledge of how to come up with a recipe from available ingredients that are time sensitive, thus highlighting waste avoidance work.

In the following story, the foodwork involved in cooking is highlighted in contrast to the other person in the household:

> My husband doesn't necessarily, he's a good cook but he doesn't necessarily know how to do stuff so like if I've got like a chicken, a seven-pound chicken that's free range and whatever that I've been talking about bringing, he's not going to do that. Because he doesn't know how to do that. And he'll be afraid that he's going to ruin my $50 chicken. But if we cook the chicken, if we had done it last night, or if I get it done tonight and roasted and done, then he'll use it for stir-fries and we'll like use it all week, and then next weekend I'll make a stock and then it's fine. (Participant 9, 30-39-year-old woman)

The above quote highlights assertions made by DeVault (1991) that cooking requires particular sets of knowledge and skills that are valued in a professional setting, yet undervalued in the home (as often happens when tasks become feminized in a domestic environment). In the home, the work that goes into foodwork is noticed most when it is not done properly. With particular attention to food waste, awareness of unskilled cooking could come in the form of food waste generation, or if someone becomes ill from an item gone bad.

Provisioning as implicit waste management

Beyond just shopping, provisioning also refers to the serving and feeding of food. In participants' photos of leftovers and plate scraps, what was missing was an image of the food/meal before it was partially consumed. It was therefore unclear how much of the provided food was consumed prior to the participants' identification of the leftovers or scraps as waste, so questions were asked about the lead up to (or backstory around) the photo. Upon reflection of a picture of their salad bowls (Figure 4), Participants 9 (30-39-year-old couple) discussed the amount of vegetables that were consumed before the picture was taken. They revealed that the bowl was probably full, and so a lot was consumed. They remarked on the amount of salad their family consumes, and the female participant commented that she needs to "get better at [her] estimation skills", noting there is always a bit of salad left at the end of a meal.

Figure 4: Leftover salad,
Participants 9, 30-39-year-old couple

Viewed from a food waste management perspective, the salad has been successful for the most part: the act of provisioning has transferred to almost complete consumption of the salad. This family takes pride in having salads with their meals as they are working to make healthier choices for their daughter. On one hand, to the participant, the leftover salad is a sign of poor estimation; on the other, it is a sign that the family is following through on their commitment to eating healthily.

Provisioning "errors" also emerged when discussing children's plate scraps. Participants often spoke of their parenting style as either contributing to or lessening waste production. Parenting style pertained to how participants with children decided to feed them (which is another aspect of gendered foodwork in the home). Some participants chose to portion small amounts to their children in order to minimize waste. Other times, they felt that it was important to let children learn on their own how much to put on their plates. This could potentially lead to more waste, but it was described as part of a learning process.

Participant 14 (20-29-year-old woman) describes the challenges of balancing the food preferences of her family with her desire for them to eat healthier. Her exasperation around a moment when pizza went to waste emphasizes the gendered burden of food provisioning in a moment of food waste:

> […] the hubby came home with pizza. And I go: we don't eat pizza. And then no sooner did he do that my mom came in: hey I bought pizza for everyone! And I looked at everybody and I was like, do you not realize what I'm trying to do here? I cook you guys healthy meals, we have a full fridge of healthy stuff, we have fruits

> all along here. Am I the only one that eats these really? And then I felt so bad that the pizza was going to waste that I ended up having two slices the one day and two slices the other day and it just sat there. And I, by the time—I just can't [eat] more, I can't, and I know I'm going to blow up like a puffer fish because that's how pizza reacts with me, it's done. And then nobody else was eating the pizza so that was what was left after all the pizza fads. (Participant 14, 20-29-year-old woman)

This participant is describing an unmet ideal for gendered foodwork: the provision of healthy family meals. In this case, the ideal is unrealized because the outside introduction of fast food displaces healthy food from the family meal. Furthermore, this woman also (unsuccessfully) takes on the burden of preventing the pizza from going to waste by eating it herself, even though its ingestion has a negative and embodied effect on her; women's bodies are often a politicized site of food provisioning. In addition to a provisioning conflict between the participant and her husband, implicit in this quote is the intergenerational tension between a mother who is actively working to provide healthy food for her family and prevent food waste, and her own mother, who has a different relationship to the household's foodwork, and so arrives with a treat for her grandchildren.

Parents found it hard to balance variety and exposure to new foods for their children with food waste minimization. Occasionally participants would comment that they could change the way they fed their children, but for the most part food wasting was an expectation of feeding children. Thus, by being structurally tied to children's eating, parents in the role of food provisioners have heightened connections to food waste management (this is also noted by other food waste scholars, such as Evans, 2012).

Eating as implicit waste management

Eating is also a form of food waste management. The preparatory work of shopping, cooking, and provisioning of food only leads to waste avoidance if the food is actually consumed. This idea is captured by Participant 22 (20-29-year-old woman):

> […] usually I make a meal plan and then I go and buy. So I'll usually make a meal plan and plan out our meals and then I'll go buy whatever we need […] and then I'll make the meals […] I don't think that we have a lot of food that we buy that we don't eat. Usually we eat it, or we prepare it in some way and I end up throwing it out. I don't think I'm over-buying, it's just a matter of if it gets eaten or not after it gets prepared.

This sentiment was echoed by many participants in the interviews, particularly around leftovers in the fridge and table scraps. It may seem simple and obvious that food waste is the result of food that does not get eaten, and therefore eating food is food waste management.

However, eating as a form of waste management is quite complex. For example, Evans (2014) discusses the transitions that food undergoes from surplus to excess to waste. In this process, there is a gap in disposal whereby surplus food is viscerally transformed into something inedible, and therefore excess and disposable. This process is a result of both the material properties of food that allow it to rapidly decay, as well as a series of conscious or subconscious decisions that a person makes to prolong the not-eating of surplus food (e.g., allowing leftovers to languish in the fridge), allowing for decay. In a similar vein, Cappellini and Parsons (2012) describe the eating of leftover foods (and therefore the interruption of their decay) as an act of sacrifice that demonstrates family membership and belonging; these acts are usually performed by mothers, thereby allowing other family members to enjoy fresher foods.

Eating as a form of food waste prevention is also made complex by the limitations of the human body. As Guthman (2011) points out, "… markets for food cannot be infinitely expansive because there are limits to how much food any one person can eat, certainly at a sitting and possibly over time" (p. 181). The body thus presents a challenge to attempts to avoid food waste because, for a variety of reasons, it is not possible to eat all food that is available. Examples throughout this study reveal how bodily limitations might produce food waste (for example through plate scraps and children's leftovers), and how the various processes leading to food waste might also limit its consumption (from mould, rot, and smell, to preference, routine change, and time constraints). The gendered foodwork labour performed in households is therefore embodied in family members' affective and physical states, as well as in the materiality of meals provided and food waste generated.

A focus on eating also reveals how food waste management in the home is structurally determined. For example, Participant 16 (30-39-year-old woman) reveals that when she does not eat leftovers, they go to waste:

> […] if it's a leftover that I'm not quite as fond of—because I'm the one that's home during the day and cooking lunches at home—I tend to consume more of the leftovers. So if it's something I don't like quite as much it might not get consumed in its entirety.

This was stated offhandedly by the participant during the interview; she does not necessarily have a desire for help in consuming the unwanted leftovers. However, such instances highlight that relationships to food waste differ between various actors in the household. For example, the above comment reveals that Participant 16 eats the majority of the leftovers in the home because she is at home during the day. In a similar encounter with one of his participants, Evans (2012) reasons that: "One might wish to argue that [this participant] *could* stay at home, eat the leftovers and so prevent them from becoming [waste]. However, arguments such as these—quite aside from lacking humanity and empathy—miss the point that as a "housewife", [this participant] is structurally at risk of boredom and isolation" (p.44). There is responsibility for those closest to food procurement and provisioning to consume (eat) and to foster consumption (eating) in others. Scholars such as Jackson (2015) show how this structural responsibility is also carried in the body through the guilt and anxieties that surround wasting

food. The responsibility of food waste management in the household is unevenly distributed, often along gendered lines.

Visceral politics

The work of food waste production and management is informed by a visceral politics of knowing food, which has a gendered history (Hayes-Conroy & Hayes-Conroy, 2008). While they do not explicitly acknowledge this gendered history, Waitt and Phillips (2015) have explored visceral experiences of food wasting with specific attention to acts of disposal around refrigeration. They describe the visceral response to food waste by a participant in their study as "embodied knowledge involved in judging edibility, the variability of such assessments, and the affective force of food transforming through cellular and bacterial processes" (Waitt & Phillips, 2015, p. 2). This section will show how senses, past histories, and experiences with food and waste come together in a visceral moment of food waste. With particular attention to the development of taste affinities, Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2008) assert that:

> In the visceral realm, representations join and become part of old memories, new intensities, triggers, aches, tempers, commotions, tranquilities. In the visceral realm, representations affect materially. The visceral body feels them as intensities that have an impact on tasting. (p. 468)

In this study, participants noted that taste was used to decide whether a food item was worth eating or not. In some cases, taste acted as a justification for forgetting about a food, with comments indicating that the food item "wasn't that good anyhow." These comments relate to Evans' (2012) discussion of purposeful forgetting, and the power this has to assuage guilt that may arise when wasting food. The taste of food items influenced the amount of the item that would get consumed, which in turn could lead to wasting. For example, corn was wasted because it was "woody" (Participants 11, 60-69-year-old couple), and watermelon was consumed in its entirety when "red, juicy, [and] delicious" (Participant 5, 40-49-year-old man). Thus, the visceral intensities Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy (2008) identified around tasting food also have an effect on the material afterlife of food, particularly as experienced by women during food handling.

Other common visceral intensities around food wasting include overwhelming sensations, such as disgust, that manifest and influence trajectories of wasting. Participants' visceral responses that led to categorizing food as waste (and thereby leading to disposal) were triggered by the sight of fruit flies, mould, or the inhalation of a strong rotting smell in participants' food waste stories. For example, the experience of encountering disgust can be seen and described through the following photo (Figure 5) and story:

Figure 5: "Oh my god, those are done", Participant 22, 20-29-year-old woman

> Ok well this is going to sound gross (laughter), these plums were leaking all over our counter. The bottom ones had actually started turning into juice. They were gross and they were covered in fruit flies. So yeah so they had to go. The top ones had like little specks or chunks out of them which the fruit flies were all over. So it was definitely, it wasn't even on the fence, it wasn't a maybe, it was like an: oh my god those are done. (Participant 22, 20-29-year-old woman)

In this case, the sight of fruit flies produced a reaction that meant there was no way the plums were going to get eaten. Waitt and Phillips (2015) discuss how processes of decay are "reminders of foods' vitalities" (p. 2). The response to such reminders can vary greatly depending on the food item, as well as on the person handling the food, and affect waste production and disposal trajectories. Participant 2 (30-39-year-old woman) was fairly diligent in paring foods when she noticed mould or was not pleased with the appearance of the food item (Figure 6). Nevertheless, the emergence of an unfamiliar encounter with food provoked some uncertain scenarios that led to disposal:

Figure 6: Vegetable parings,
Participant 2, 30-39-year-old woman

> I cut up a little bit more of the red onion because it was a little bit milky. I looked it up afterward and it's fine, it just means it will have a stronger flavour to it. But I didn't like the look of it at the time. So I did cut off a little bit more because it was milky, and I had never ever seen that in an onion before. (Participant 2, 30-39-year-old woman)

Here, the milkiness of the onion prompted the participant to be more liberal in her paring of the onion: a minor adjustment, but a change nonetheless. Visceral responses can also contribute to disposal of waste into a particular conduit (Figure 7), as described here:

Figure 7: Mouldy applesauce,
Participant 18, 30-39-year-old woman

> This was applesauce that had been in the fridge for a very long time. And I looked at it. I was afraid to open it because there was mould on it, so I didn't even look. I just put it right in the garbage. (Participant 18, 30-39-year-old woman)

When asked to follow up on this moment, she went on to say:

> So when I see mould, I gag, like really bad. It's gross. So I couldn't even open it because I knew I'd start that process. So I could have scooped it into the green bin but with that I just can't. It's too gross. So I had really no choice but to put it in the garbage. Plus it was already in a container so it was easy. (Participant 18, 30-39-year-old woman)

This visceral response was so strong that the participant felt she had "no choice" in the matter of where the applesauce would be disposed. Despite her initial ambivalence, in her final estimation, the only place the participant could dispose of the applesauce was in the garbage. This shows how visceralities can override intentions to be rational, or environmental, or sort "properly", thereby affecting the material afterlife of food. Visceral interactions have the power to determine whether an item will be eaten, then whether it will be used for compost, or sent to landfill where improper conditions for decomposition lead to the release of methane gas (Hall, Guo, Dore, & Chow, 2009). Visceralities serve as conduits to disposal that have power even over infrastructural developments that divert waste (such as the green bin used for municipal organics diversion).

In the case of the plums (Figure 5), onion parings (Figure 6) and applesauce (Figure 7), reactions emerged in response to the physical presence of foods' vitality. Food waste was also conjured by visceral *anticipation* of experiences, such as disgust, in participants' stories. For example, Participant 23 (30-39-year-old woman) describes a change in her habit of using smell to decide if an item is still edible or not:

> […] the whipping cream I knew had been opened about the same time so I didn't even bother sniffing it […] I had a few instances in the last three months where I opened up like a sippy cup of milk that had just little bit of milk in the bottom, and then I made this mistake of sniffing it, and I smelled the sour milk and vomited. A lot. So I didn't want to sniff it because I had this feeling it would make me vomit so I didn't sniff it in this case.

Her previous experience with sour milk created a strong immediate reaction at the time (vomiting), but also carried over to future instances. It was not worth it to test through smell if the whipping cream had gone bad when, based on time estimates, she already assumed it had. This shows how experiences conjure anticipation of visceral encounters, which alter the interactions we are willing to have with food to know whether it is still edible or not.

Similarly, Watson and Meah (2013) describe the visceral experience of food waste specifically around the issue of date labels. They state that "for all respondents boundaries exist,

even if they are often defined by the affective experience of disgust more than cognitive reflection on bacterial risks" (Watson & Meah, 2013, p.6). The differences in "boundaries" can be seen when Participant 2 (30-39-year-old woman) describes her husband's willingness to disregard lunch meat best before dates and her own reluctance:

> […] like lunch meat is a big thing, I don't push lunch meat. I think after like 3 days… 4 days is the most that I'll eat it. He'll eat it after the fifth day and I'm like you are going to get sick. But he has this moral…so he'll push it […] so then we eat separate meals. Like a couple days ago we had separate meals because I'm like I'm not eating that. That's over the shelf life.

Recall that Participant 2 (30-39-year-old woman) is fairly comfortable paring bruises from fruits and vegetables, and slicing bits of mould off of cheese. In this case, food safety, time constraints, and risk were provoked through the participant's interpretations of the "best before" date. This instance reveals the power that date labels have in constructing visceral responses to food waste. Although best before dates are not firm lines marking food's transition from edible to inedible, discourses have developed around best before dates such that they are relied upon for judging when food is good and safe (Milne, 2013). Thus, best before dates create more visceral conduits of disposal by changing ways of knowing whether food is still edible or not.

Importantly, date markers can create diverse visceral experiences in different people: some see best before dates as irrelevant to the edibility of food, some see them as one mediating factor in the material status of food, and others see best before dates as constitutive of whether a food is still intact and palatable (see also Evans, 2011). This example demonstrates that viscerality has a cognitive component: factors like guilt, worry, shame, and intellectual justifications for wasting are interrelated with the sensory viscerality of food waste, and are inherent to the processes that determine the moment when food becomes waste.

These visceralities are informed by interventions in the food system that have gendered impacts. For example, date labels have often replaced the feminized knowledge of understanding edible and/or "safe" food acquired through food handling and prep-work (Milne, 2013). When food waste reduction campaigns primarily target individuals, they are ignoring that "wasteful" outcomes of visceral responses are reflexive of cultural shifts that have been implemented over time to, for example, promote food safety, or produce profit (by encouraging household disposal and replacement of certain foods). Particularly when the gendered effort to work through these complex social messages has been historically un(der)valued, it is worth considering the increase in gendered food-waste-work invoked by focusing food waste reduction efforts at the household level.

Conclusions

Through the extension of a feminist framework, this paper has shown that food waste management is a component of foodwork, and that various forms of foodwork also contribute to food waste management. The performance of foodwork carries a distinctly feminine history, and DeVault (1991) asserts that "[t]he work is noticeable when it is not completed (when the milk is all gone, for example, or when the meal is not ready on time), but cannot be seen when it is done well" (p. 56). Food waste becomes representative of poorly performed foodwork when attention is not paid to the supporting work that goes into food's procurement, preparation, and provisioning. Scholars show how "…disregard for unpaid foodwork as real work renders the persons held responsible for it (mainly women) of less consequence than those who are ideologically positioned as family breadwinners (mainly men)" (Brady et al., 2012, p. 127). Moreover, purposeful deskilling campaigns have limited the social access that food provisioners have to knowledge translation around cooking (Jaffe & Gertler, 2006), including visceral knowledges of what is "good" and "edible" food. This deskilling undermines the potential for food-waste-work to be performed expertly in order to reduce food waste in households.

The application of a feminist lens to household food waste reveals that waste management is also foodwork, and that this labour is gendered. The viscerality of waste also influences our knowledges of food in ways that are connected to food consumption, as well as to values of providership and stewardship of household resources. We observed that female participants produced and reproduced gender ideologies in the everyday work of feeding themselves and their families (and in the attendant waste production that is inherent to this foodwork). In some instances, they resisted the transformation of food into waste by applying additional gendered labour, or by eating excess food themselves; such transformations also served to perpetuate gendered expectations of female sacrifice in the domestic sphere. Such tensions between the imperatives to prevent and create waste are often borne by women, and are an often overlooked aspect of the gendered balancing acts involved in managing household resources. Recognizing the role of gender in preventing and managing household food waste contributes to feminist food studies, to waste studies, and to efforts to effectively intervene in the generation of food waste.

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Original Research Article

An ecofeminist perspective on new food technologies

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Abstract

New food technologies are touted by some to be an indispensable part of the toolkit when it comes to feeding a growing population, especially when factoring in the growing appetite for animal products. To this end, technologies like genetically engineered (GE) animals and *in vitro* meat are currently in various stages of research and development, with proponents claiming a myriad of justificatory benefits. However, it is important to consider not only the technical attributes and promissory possibilities of these technologies, but also the worldviews that are being imported in turn, as well as the unanticipated social and environmental consequences that could result. In addition to critiquing dominant paradigms, the inclusive, intersectional ecofeminist perspective presented here offers a different way of thinking about new food technologies, with the aim of exposing inherent biases, rejecting a view of institutions like science and law as being objective, and advancing methods and rationales for a more explicitly ethical form of decision-making. Alternative and marginalized perspectives are especially valuable in this context, because careful reflection on the range of concerns implicated by new food technologies is necessary in order to better evaluate whether or not they can contribute to the building of a more sustainable and just food system for all.

Keywords: ecofeminism, biotechnology, in vitro meat, GE animals, novel foods

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Introduction

In light of intensifying ecological pressures, an increasingly volatile climate system, existing problems of hunger and malnutrition, and a burgeoning appetite for animal products, scientific and technological innovations are touted by some as being valuable tools in developing sustainable strategies for feeding a growing global population.[1] To this end, new food technologies[2] like genetically engineered (GE) animals[3] and *in vitro* meat (IVM)[4] are in various stages of research and development. With the biotechnology industry eager to introduce their wares to the market, the availability of these types of products is only expected to grow in coming years. No longer constrained to the realm of science fiction, food that has effectively been grown in labs is well on its way to becoming a commercial reality.

Proponents claim a variety of justificatory benefits for the food products of animal biotechnology, including that that they could cut hunger, offer public health benefits, mitigate the environmental impacts of conventional flesh food production, and improve animal welfare (Dilworth & McGregor, 2015; Hopkins & Dacey, 2008; Hume, Whitelaw & Archibald, 2011). However, for each benefit raised, others have pointed to corresponding concerns (Dilworth & McGregor, 2015; National Research Council (NRC), 2002, pp. 6-14), including general doubts about whether agricultural technologies can live up to their grand promises (Hakim, 2016; Shiva, 2000). Meanwhile, as existing debates about genetically modified organisms (GMOs) illustrate, there is demonstrable public unease surrounding some of these latest techno-scientific interventions (Frewer et al., 2004). Although there is a substantial body of literature on genetically modified (GM) crops, emerging research reveals that the public perceives modified crops and modified animals differently (Vàzquez-Salat & Houdebine, 2013; Vàzquez-Salat, Salter, Smets, & Houdebine, 2012), indicating that there is something about animal biotechnologies for food production that triggers trepidations beyond those which have already been debated in the context of plants.

In addition to the obvious import of cultural and social factors to food studies, law, science, and technology are also significant because of the ways in which they directly and indirectly mediate the options available and unavailable in deciding what, how, and why to eat the way we do. Accordingly, in the context of food, the tensions between new and emerging technologies, societal perceptions, scientific assessments, and the law and policy-making that occurs at the nexus of these competing concerns provides fertile grounds for study. As a legal

[1] Recent projections estimate that the global population will swell to 8.5 billion by 2030, 9.7 billion by 2050, and 11.2 billion by 2100 (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2015, p. 2).
[2] More precisely, these are food products derived from animal biotechnologies. However, for ease of reference, they are referred to as "new food technologies" here, to capture the novelty of these technological applications when it comes to food.
[3] GE animals are animals whose genomes have been modified through the process of transgenesis. There is a range of applications for which GE animals have been developed, with human consumption being only one of them. For more information, see Jaenisch (1988).
[4] Also referred to as lab-grown meat, cultured meat, test-tube meat, vegetarian meat, and shmeat, among other names.

scholar, I am, of course, interested in the ways in which food technologies are formally defined and regulated, especially since regulatory systems have been identified as being "among the most important influences in determining the course of technological innovation" (Bonny, Gardner, Pethick & Hocquette, 2015, p. 258). However, more broadly, I am also interested in the ways in which food (and flesh food especially (Adams, 1990)) plays a profoundly semiotic and discursive role, and is often deeply tied to political, economic, and social power (Counihan, 1998, pp. 2-5).

Feminist thinkers—who have long been proponents of critical analysis in myriad domains—have not been silent on the gendered dimensions of food production and consumption (Allen & Sachs, 2007; Avakian & Haver, 2005; Kimura, 2013). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), women produce more than half the world's food, and the scope and scale of women's influence on food security at all levels is undeniable (FAO, 1999, 2016a). Feminists have also drawn attention to the ways in which the institutions and practices of science (Harding, 1986), technology (Faulkner, 2001), and law (Smart, 1992) are distinctly gendered. Although these lines of argument are not new, they have not yet been applied specifically to some of the newest and emerging food technologies, a task that I endeavour to undertake here.

Rather than raising solely ecological or social concerns, animal biotechnologies for food production implicate a vast swath of current issues, including "[t]he global crises of climate justice, food security, energy justice, vanishing wildlife, maldevelopment, habitat loss, industrial animal food production, and more" (Gaard, 2011, p. 32). Inevitably, such diverse issues are important to a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including those who have typically been marginalized, such as women, animals, and Nature. Thus, an inclusive perspective like ecofeminism that views "all of the various forms of oppression as central to an understanding of particular institutions" (Gaard & Gruen, 1993, p. 29) can illuminate the impacts of new food technologies as they affect a range of different concerns and groups. Although an ecofeminist interrogation of the political, social, and ethical dimensions of new food technologies may be imperfect, it is arguably a necessary corrective for some of the most damaging facets of a more uncritical approach, including the narrow grounds on which the benefits and impacts of technologies are assessed under a purportedly more "science-based" approach.

To provide some more context, Part 1 introduces two specific new food technologies, and reviews the way they are currently defined and regulated in Canada. Part 2 provides a basic overview of ecofeminism and its relevance to this topic as a perspective that challenges the ontological, epistemological, and ethical underpinnings of currently prevailing paradigms. Part 3 goes on to apply ecofeminist principles to new food technologies across four domains: institutional, environmental, socio-economic, and animal. The ultimate aim of my analysis is not to undermine the real and potential benefits that science and technology have enabled, but rather, to draw attention to the fact that technological artifacts can "embody specific forms of power and authority" (Winner, 1980, p. 121) and consider the implications of this notion when applied to food. Part 4 concludes by emphasizing that my goal is not to condemn, but to widen the

dialogue, challenge embedded assumptions, and seek a deeper understanding of what is signalled by the vast transformations enabled by technology in the social, political, and ethical structures of our world.

Novel foods and their regulation

The application of science and technology to the realm of food production is not in itself new, but by and large, animal biotechnology for food production is a hitherto unchartered area. In recent years, notable advances have been made with both GE animal and IVM technology in terms of their development and their movement through the regulatory process, bringing them closer to market than ever. Indeed, Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) recently approved the sale of the AquAdvantage salmon (AAS) for human consumption (Health Canada, 2016a), as did the Food and Drug Administration in the United States (US) (Food and Drug Administration, 2015), giving it the distinction of being the first GE animal sanctioned for this purpose.

A transgenic fish produced by the Massachusetts-based AquaBounty Technologies Inc. (AquaBounty), the AAS is the product of combining a growth hormone gene from the Chinook salmon and regulatory sequences of an antifreeze protein gene from the ocean pout with the genome of an Atlantic salmon. The result is a fish that is able to grow faster and year-round, thereby reaching market size much sooner than its unmodified counterpart. Despite being granted the formal stamp of approval, there has been vocal opposition to the AAS by numerous environmental and food safety groups, including in the form of legal challenges brought against the regulators (Ecology Action Centre). However, at present, AquaBounty officially has the green light to sell and market the AAS in Canada, and the AAS has already appeared on supermarket shelves (Yarr, 2017). Since Health Canada did not identify any health and safety concerns in the course of its review, there are no special labelling requirements for the AAS (Health Canada, 2016a).

Meanwhile, several scientists and start-ups around the world are currently working on making a large-scale IVM production system a commercial reality. IVM is derived from a tissue engineering process that involves growing muscle tissue using starter stem cells from live animals, which are put into a culture medium where they proliferate with the help of a bioreactor, eventually becoming an edible flesh food.[5] The first burger grown from stem cells was presented at a press conference in London in August 2013, with some commentators noting that this event marked not only a milestone in the development of the scientific and technological capability to produce IVM, but also serving as proof of concept (Mattick & Allenby, 2013, p. 64). Although there remain several major practical barriers to deploying IVM technology as an alternative to conventional industrial meat production systems—and despite sustained and ongoing public

[5] For more detailed discussion of the process, see Sharma, Thind & Kaur (2015).

debates about the associated environmental, health, social, and ethical concerns—scientists and entrepreneurs have showed no signs of slowing down their progress in this area.

The approach to regulating new food technologies is country-specific. In Canadian law, the products of these technologies are currently defined and regulated as "novel foods".[6] The existing regulatory framework governing public health, food safety, and nutrition, broadly speaking, falls under the shared federal mandate of Health Canada and the CFIA. Generally, Health Canada establishes standards and policies governing the safety and nutritional quality of foods and develops labelling policies related to health and nutrition, while the CFIA develops standards related to the packaging, labelling, and advertising of foods, as well as handling inspection and enforcement duties (Health Canada, 2006). Additional departments, such as Environment and Climate Change Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada, may also be involved, depending on the characteristics of the product in question.

Given the newness of animal biotechnologies for food production, the actual rules and processes governing their development, production, selling, and marketing are emerging in something of a piecemeal, ad hoc manner. Prior to sale, manufacturers or importers of novel foods are required to submit information to Health Canada regarding the product in question in order for a determination to be made regarding the product's safety, with the evaluation being broken down into nutritional, toxicological, allergenic, and chemical considerations (Health Canada, 2006). Notably, consideration of environmental impacts or indirect human health aspects of the manufacture or import of novel foods remains a gap in the assessment of novel foods under the *Food and Drugs Act and Regulation*, and is instead dealt with under the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act*, *1999* (CEPA 1999) under the mandate of Environment and Climate Change Canada.

In the context of the AAS, Health Canada (2016b) notes that its assessment was conducted according to the Codex Alimentarius *Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Animals*, concluding that "fillets derived from AAS are as safe and nutritious as fillets from current available farmed Atlantic salmon." Health Canada (2016c) explicitly acknowledges that "[i]n order to protect the scientific integrity of the assessment process, socio-economic factors, such as potential market reaction, are not considered in the decision-making process with respect to novel products." The Codex Alimentarius Guideline (2009) also specifies that it "addresses only food safety and nutritional issues", and does not address concerns about "animal welfare; ethical, moral and socio-economical aspects; [and] environmental risks related to the environmental release of recombinant-DNA animals used in food production" (p. 57). Whether or not these concerns were taken into account by regulators, and if so, to what degree, remains in question. Very little information is provided to the public as to how regulators assess the safety of novel foods and

[6] *Food and Drug Regulations*, CRC, c 870, Division 28, B.28.001. A "novel food" is defined by one of three characteristics: a substance that does not have a history of safe use as a food; a food that has been manufactured, prepared, preserved or packaged by a process that has not been previously applied to that food that causes the food to undergo a major change; or a food that is derived from a plant, animal, or microorganism that has been genetically modified.

what data are used in the evaluation process, apart from brief summaries of product approval decisions posted online after the decision has already been made.

A fulsome assessment of potential environmental and human health impacts of food technologies is crucial to maintaining the safety, resilience, and sustainability of our food systems. Nonetheless, even as this cursory overview goes to show, the existing approach to regulating the products of animal biotechnology demonstrates serious deficiencies both in its breadth and depth. For example, the Science Assessment produced as a result of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' risk assessment of the AAS was based largely on information provided by the company and not verified by an independent third party. Although it was not determinative, this document was foundational to the AAS approval process in that it informed a finding of non-toxicity according to the requirements under the CEPA 1999,[7] and was used in order to make recommendations on any necessary risk management measures to Environment and Climate Change Canada (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2013, p. 1). However, many of the findings contained therein indicate a concerning lack of certainty regarding environmental and indirect human health impacts, especially over the long term. As a case in point, "[w]hile confirmation of sex is not routinely conducted, AquaBounty reports never to have found a 'true' male…and have provided evidence in which all sampled fish were determined to be females" (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2013, p. 5). It is highly problematic that confirmation of sex is not routinely conducted and that the evidence of all sampled fish being female was not independently confirmed by a party other than AquaBounty, but the report states that "it is concluded that the generation of an all-female population through gynogenesis has been successful" (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2013, p. 5).

Further, under the subheading of "Life history, behaviour and reproduction", the document states, *inter alia*, that "[l]imited information about the behaviour of AAS is available. AquaBounty reported normal avoidance, feeding and postural behaviour of juvenile AAS in a hatchery environment… There is no information available about the predatory behaviour of AAS or AAS-relatives in the natural environment" (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2013, p. 7). Additionally, it is explicitly acknowledged that although triploid AAS females are expected to be functionally sterile, "the process of generating triploids at a commercial scale is not always 100% effective. AquaBounty's proposed sampling procedure to select eggs for export ensures a minimum of 95% triploid induction efficacy. There is no information on the reproductive behaviour of female AAS (both diploid and triploid); *a significant knowledge gap* [emphasis added]" (Fisheries and Oceans Canada, 2013, p. 7). This means that up to five percent of AAS salmon may be able to reproduce. If an escape of an AAS were to occur, interbreeding could occur with wild Atlantic salmon and some species of trout, which could lead to genetic contamination and other unpredictable ecological consequences (Oke, Westley, Moreau, &

[7] CEPA 1999, c 33, s 64. A substance is deemed to be toxic if it is entering or may enter the environment in a quantity or concentration that: a) has or may have an immediate or long-term harmful effect on the environment or its biological diversity; b) constitutes or may constitute a danger to the environment on which life depends; or c) constitutes or may constitute a danger in Canada to human life or health.

Fleming, 2013). The fact that such an event has not yet transpired should not be taken glibly as an assurance that it will not occur in the future.

Certainly, attempting to balance competing concerns is never an easy exercise. The goals of supporting the biotechnology industry and protecting public safety and environmental health are challenging to reconcile, especially against a backdrop of mounting public discord and scientific uncertainty about both short- and long-term impacts of new food technologies. Tracing the history of Canadian biotechnology policy, Elisabeth Abergel and Katherine Barrett (2002) contend that Canada's economic interests in the strong uptake of biotechnology have influenced the development of a national biotechnology policy and regulatory system that is overly permissive and favourable to industry. Other scholars have also flagged concerns with the current regulatory process, including that it is opaque, exclusionary, and fragmented (Andrée, 2002; Brunk & Hartley, 2012; Phillipson, 2008). Their call for institutional reforms appears to have gone largely unheeded, evidenced by the ongoing failure to broaden the myopic horizons of policymaking in this area.

Much of the existing political discourse on new food technologies has centred on discussions of risk, which are frequently framed as technical questions best resolved by experts (Kleinman & Kloppenburg Jr., 1991). However, scientifically establishing the existence of a risk does not determine whether the risk so identified is a socially and ethically acceptable one (Rollin, 2006). Moreover, many complex problems are not amenable to this kind of atomistic analysis. Given the social, political, economic, and ethical contexts that food occupies, technical evaluations of new food technologies are conspicuously incomplete, and require a more nuanced consideration of their systemic implications. This is especially the case considering that the self-referential circuit between science and law is perversely reinforced by the feedback loop between state interests in economic development and industry interests in generating profit. The internal logic of these systems makes them especially difficult to challenge; as a result, attempts to express and establish different frames of meaning must target the presumed and imposed terms of the existing discourse.

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is a political and philosophical movement that sees the subordination of women and the domination of nature as closely linked. First emerging in the 1980s as an outgrowth of the environmental and women's movements that were flourishing at the time, ecofeminism has since become a diverse movement encompassing a range of different perspectives. In general, the common thread uniting ecofeminist perspectives is a "recognition that solutions to ecological problems must be tied to social and gender transformations" (Sachs, 1992, p. 6). To this end, ecofeminists are committed to exposing systemic causes of discrimination as an underlying cause of gendered and other forms of oppression, including on the grounds of class, race, and species (McLeod-Kilmurray, 2008, pp. 136-137).

In their efforts to include and value alternative forms of knowledge and knowing, ecofeminists "reject the epistemological strategy that views objective facts as central to the process of justifying moral claims" (Gruen, 1994, p. 121), and instead "recognize that claims to knowledge are always influenced by the values of the culture in which they are generated" (Gruen, 1994, p. 124). The feminist emphasis on the experiential perspective begins with the understanding that lived experiences are legitimate forms of knowledge that can give rise to constructive criticisms of existing distributions of power (Rhode, 1990). Rather than claiming a superior authority or a unitary stance, feminist positionality "acknowledges the existence of empirical truths, values and knowledge, and also their contingency" (Bartlett, 1990, p. 880). This reflexivity makes (eco)feminism an especially illuminating perspective in the context of food, which is in itself laden with social, cultural, and ethical values.

Ecofeminism is also inherently skeptical of science and technology, and the associated "mechanistic, reductionist, and fragmented approaches to understanding the natural world that result in the development of unsafe, harmful technologies that are meant to conquer and subdue nature" (Sachs, 1992, p. 6). The problematic conceptual framework—which Karen Warren (1987) defines as "a set of beliefs, values, attitudes, and assumptions which shape, reflect, and explain our view of ourselves and our world" (p. 6)—underlying patriarchal cultures tends to oversimplify the relationship between humans and Nature, such that a relationship based on domination and control is seen as both possible and defensible. Science and technology are socially constructed practices; consequently, they do not merely deliver certain ends, but also impact, transform, and create material, social, and ethical structures. Accordingly, it is important to consider not only the technical attributes and promissory possibilities of new food technologies, but also the worldviews and power relations that are being imported in turn.

Ecofeminism has only rarely been combined with legal analyses. However, as Linda Malone (2015) argues, "it would be a missed opportunity not to revisit the concept of ecofeminism with today's world structure and the pressing problems of international environmental degradation" (p. 1446). Indeed, ecofeminism can help improve the law by proposing alternative conceptual frameworks as well as practical reforms. As Heather McLeod-Kilmurray (2008) points out, "[e]cofeminist legal analysis can uncover inherent biases within the law that not only fail to solve, but help to create or perpetuate structures, mindsets and institutions that lead to environmental harm" (p. 133). Damaging structures and mindsets constantly inform and maintain one another, making it difficult to uncover inherent biases, especially when they become codified in laws and policies that are justified as being "science-based"—the implication then being that they are objective and neutral.

Yet, the boundaries between the scientific and the social are porous, and the determinations of what counts as relevant knowledge, and the further implications of those distinctions, are closely tied to flows of power that are often rendered invisible by their sustained dominion. No one set of interests is "natural, objective, and inevitable" (Bartlett, 1990, p. 886). Left unchecked, dominant paradigms and their adverse consequences will continue to be perpetuated; corrections need to be built into our systems. Although law is part of the problem, it

also can and must be a part of the solution, by giving expression to a variety of perspectives and furnishing opportunities for dissent (Morrow, 2010, p. 75). Thus, a perspective informed by "post-modern ecofeminism" (Malone, 2015, p. 1446), as outlined in the following sections, can expose inherent biases, reject a view of institutions like science and law as being objective, and advance methods and rationales for a different kind of decision-making, guided by more explicitly ethical frames of reference.

An ecofeminist perspective on new food technologies

Starting from the premise that the impacts of technologies often play out in unpredictable and inequitable ways, an ecofeminist perspective on food products of animal biotechnologies acknowledges the fact that, by themselves, they are not uncomplicated solutions to what are complex, structural, and systemic problems. As such, it is not only important to consider the distributive concerns raised, but also to suggest that demand-side approaches warrant at least as much consideration as supply-side approaches to mitigating the impacts of industrial animal agriculture. In considering the four domains below—institutional, environmental, socio-economic, and animal—in the context of food products of animal biotechnologies, this section aims to add nuance to the contours of the discussion by adopting ecofeminist principles like a skepticism of the promissory potentials of science and technology, an emphasis on intersectional oppression, and an ongoing commitment to reflexivity and relationality in both theory and practice.

Institutions

Institutions play a significant role in cultivating trust in or provoking rejection of technologies. Recent events, including a variety of food safety scares, have spurred increasing distrust of both the private companies that develop new technologies, and the public bodies that regulate them. As animal biotechnologies for food production advance further down the pipeline, questions of how to best balance competing regulatory priorities and uphold the public interest become increasingly urgent.

The significance of this moment is compounded by the relatively slender window of latitude, as choices about technology "tend to become strongly fixed in material equipment, economic investment, and social habit" (Winner, 1980, p. 128). In other words, "the consequences of new technologies can not always be predicted, and by the time it becomes apparent that something is wrong with a technology, both its artifactual form and the social interest surrounding it, have become so entrenched that they represent major barriers to change" (Faulkner, 2001, p. 91). As a result, the deliberate and inadvertent choices we make about technologies and their regulation require serious attention at the earliest possible stages, as do the

different degrees of power and levels of awareness we possess regarding the processes by which these decisions are made.

Presently, science plays a key role in law-making when it comes to new technology, "since it pre-figures and subsequently sets a role in shaping regulatory regimes, grounding standard-setting, and guiding the application of the law in licensing systems. It also plays a key substantive role when regulatory decisions are challenged" (Morrow, 2010, p. 67). Because law is shaped by and reflective of values, the regulatory framework governing animal biotechnology inevitably expresses ethical choices. However, under a purportedly "science-based" approach, these ethical choices are often smuggled in under the guise of neutrality. The narrow scientific remit that currently constrains regulators in Canada "largely prohibits them from considering the full range of concerns held by stakeholders and the public" (Brunk & Hartley, 2012, p. 254), despite their acknowledgment that public opinions of animal biotechnology turn on a much broader array of factors than just scientific ones.

Moreover, the relationship between science, law, and policy is an inherently uneasy one: science is much more comfortable with risk and uncertainty than law, and the context of genetically modified foods starkly illustrates that "a new paradigm for interdisciplinary action is urgently required (Morrow, 2010, p. 57). Science, on its own, does not necessarily provide conclusive answers that can adequately guide the inherently political exercise of decision-making based on calculated costs and benefits. In this way, the science of risk assessment is "falsely definitive, narrowly defining risk as the only relevant element for consideration of a technology's public acceptability and often failing to account for the ambiguity of risk-based research" (Preston & Wickson, 2016, p. 55). Both scientific and political methods of assessing and addressing risk are subject to inherent limitations, and an overly reductive approach can lead to unfavourable consequences.

Rather than categorically rejecting science and technology, philosophical criticisms of technological fixes challenge habitual ways of thinking that continue to reinforce more science as the solution to problems wrought by reductively scientific methodologies, and more technology as the solution to problems wrought by technological fixes. In the case of new food technologies, the push for more research and development "may be more the result of entrenched habits of thought and institutional momentum rather than a rigorous and self-critical science and philosophy" (Scott, 2011, p. 224). Technologies can also serve to deny and delay addressing more deeply rooted issues, thereby working to further preserve the status quo. These processes become particularly insidious when they are uncritically assimilated by the law. As a result, existing structures of domination and oppression are reinforced and perpetuated through various levels of abstraction, including the relevant legal and regulatory frameworks. Using alternative perspectives like ecofeminism to destabilize the underlying tenets of a "science-based" approach to regulating new food technologies is therefore an important first step in inculcating a greater degree of reflexivity within both science and law.

Environmental

Proponents and opponents of animal biotechnologies alike use environmental arguments to bolster their cases. As proponents assert, these technologies can significantly reduce the environmental impacts of conventional meat production. For example, one preliminary study estimates IVM to involve 7-45 percent less energy, 78-96 percent lower emissions of greenhouse gases, 99 percent lower land use, and 82-96 percent lower water use than current industrial meat production practices (Tuomisto & Teixera de Mattos, 2011). Similarly, when it comes to GE animals, AquaBounty boasts that the AAS "is better for the environment and consumers," with their two major sustainability claims pertaining to conserving wild fish populations and reducing carbon emissions ("AquaBounty," n.d.).

However, it is oversimplistic to focus on abstract environmental benefits when it comes to new food technologies. While these early figures and claims are encouraging, they are based on speculative, highly specific use scenarios, and it is uncertain whether these benefits will be borne out to the extent claimed. The full energy, land, and water demands of any food production method, as well as the waste and other by-products created, need to be holistically, as well as comparatively, evaluated in light of rapid population growth and increasingly depleted natural resources.

When considering the effects of shifting towards different production systems, the ancillary advantages and disadvantages of current methods must also be taken into account. For example, livestock provide important ecosystem services (FAO, 2016c), and there are numerous inedible components derived from livestock in addition to the meat they provide, including leather, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals, for which traditional meat production is often an inexpensive source. As Mattick, Landis, and Allenby (2015) observe, "synthetic substitutes could have greater environmental impacts than animal sources, or cost more, or both." Thus, IVM is not automatically an adequate substitute for the ecosystem services and social benefits provided by traditionally raised livestock and the agricultural sector in general, which stand to be levelled by a wide-scale IVM production system. Though the shortcomings of the current system of industrial agriculture are legion, it is important to consider the systemic implications of any alternative, being as there are upsides and downsides to any path pursued.

Meanwhile, aquaculture is among the fastest growing segments of the global food system (FAO, 2016b). Although conventional aquaculture practices are already controversial from an environmental perspective, the role and importance of fish in addressing issues of global food and nutrition security is increasingly a topic of attention. The potential large-scale commercialization of GE fish and seafood, which could dramatically change the aquaculture sector by, *inter alia*, affecting the viability of small to medium-scale enterprises, demanding intensification of production, and increasing dependence on multinational corporations (Le Curieux-Belfond, Vandelac, Caron, & Séralini, 2009, pp. 178-179), is thus highly relevant to any considerations of the future of food production and consumption, on both the domestic and international scale.

Further, the ecological impacts that could result from the introduction of animal biotechnologies into our food systems are potentially catastrophic. Since both ecosystems and social systems rely on complex interrelationships, even a minor change in inputs or outputs can trigger unexpected effects, including disruptions of fragile ecosystems and irreparable losses of biodiversity. Although scientific breeding "clearly has produced breeds of animals that are remarkably productive… The practice has also led to a loss of many breeds of livestock and fowl, and a decline in genetic diversity within the breeds that survive" (NRC, 2002, p. 21). By emphasizing short-term "productivity," as determined by anthropocentric priorities, animal biotechnologies, in terms of both product and process, run counter to many of the ecological principles that ecofeminism draws on, including: "everything is interconnected with everything else; all parts of an ecosystem have equal value; there is no free lunch; "nature knows best"; healthy, balanced ecosystems must maintain diversity; there is unity in diversity" (Warren, 1987, p. 7). Selective breeding is certainly an important part of agricultural history, but any program of human interference and intensification with natural systems invariably generates new sources of risk and vulnerability, especially if motivated by narrow, highly specific goals like increasing size and speed of growth to boost profits.

Aquatic organisms like the AAS present especially grave environmental threats "because their mobility poses serious containment problems, and because unlike domestic farm birds and mammals, they easily can become feral and compete with indigenous populations" (NRC, 2002, p. 4). Many of the concerns flagged in relation to the AAS are more than hypothetical; for example, "[c]ultivated salmon have escaped into the wild from fish farms and these salmon already pose ecologic and genetic risks to native salmon stocks" (NRC, 2002, p. 11). Alarmingly, research has found that, in the case of GE fish, "many traits that appear to confer an advantage in the short-term could have long-term costs that make them overall detrimental" (Le Curieux-Belfond, Vandelac, Caron, & Séralini, 2009, p. 177). It is particularly important to tread with caution given that environmental effects are often difficult to anticipate, latent in emergence, impossible to reverse, as well as unpredictably synergistic and cumulative.

The precautionary principle is an important guideline within environmental law, and is enshrined in both domestic and international laws and policies.[8] The merits and drawbacks of a precautionary approach to environmental protection have been hotly debated in the literature, with some experts considering it to be vital in protecting ecological and human health (Raffensperger & Tickner, 1999), while critics charge that in its strongest form, the principle presents a virtually impossible burden, thereby working to inhibit and even paralyze economic and social development (Sunstein, 2005). Indeed, taken literally, the precautionary principle would prevent, or at least delay, the commercial development and deployment of new food technologies. That being said, a precautionary approach does not void the potential benefits of a

[8] The most notable international acknowledgment of the precautionary principle is contained in the Rio Declaration, at Principle 15 (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, 1992). In Canada, the precautionary principle is found in the preamble and in s. 2(1)(a) of the CEPA 1999.

technology, but simply postpones them until more persuasive evidence has been gathered (Batie & Ervin, 2001, p. 449).

There are no clear rules for when the threshold of taking a precautionary approach has been met. However, in the context of novel foods, due to the high degree of indeterminacy about their ultimate systemic consequences, a strong version of the precautionary principle—which effectively reverses the burden of proof (Sachs, 2011)—is arguably justified. Placing the burden of proof on critics to prove the dangers of novel foods as opposed to on proponents to prove their safety has the unfortunate effect of considerably discounting unknown or uncertain variables. As the aphorism goes, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, but without the onus to prove their case, proponents of novel foods can claim they are benign before any significant consequences have had an opportunity to manifest. This is especially so when the parameters of what counts as evidence, how that is determined, and according to what standard, is established according to considerations made by an insular group. As Karen Morrow (2010) remarks, "[a]cting on even a qualified precautionary basis…represent[s] a challenge to current orthodoxy in legal decision-making, which is based so profoundly on the concept of proof" (p. 63). Subsequently, the task is not simply one of "cobbling new practices to existing frameworks" (Andrée, 2006, p. 387), but one that demands a more fundamental shift in values.

To this end, an ecofeminist ethic of care, as an alternative to a highly individualized and hierarchical rules and rights-based ethical model, emphasizes the interconnections between humans, nonhuman animals, and Nature more broadly, and situates these interconnections relationally to one another, which allows the full scope of the complexity of socio-ecological matrix to emerge. By linking production and consumption with processes of regeneration, "ecological feminism creates the possibility of viewing the world as an active subject, not merely as a resource to be manipulated and appropriated" (Mies & Shiva, 1993, pp. 33-34). Such a view not only expands the scope of moral considerability to include the nonhuman, but also reminds us of the collective responsibilities and duties of reciprocation that come with being a citizen of a shared planet. The powers enabled by science and technology should not be taken as a way of abdicating these responsibilities, but should instead be seen as heightening them.

Socio-economic

Although the environmental problems associated with industrial agriculture are deeply troubling, it is also important to recognize that the dominant sustainability discourse is partial, and fails to adequately consider how to improve food and agricultural systems for all people, regardless of how they are situated. Chaone Mallory (2013) notes that "even while food has the potential to inform our very understanding of our place in society and the world, it also carries the risk of obscuring the social infrastructures that keep us ignorant of how food production contributes to social stratification along lines of class, race, and gender" (p. 179). Despite their utopian promises, food technologies can actually retrench existing inequities, while simultaneously

generating new forms of precariousness. Thus, it is important that the full range of their implications are carefully considered from the outset.

In the context of new food technologies, the current Canadian approach to their development and regulation is not promising. The siloed approach observable at present overlooks entire categories of stakeholders, along with their very salient concerns. The lack of meaningful consultation is deeply concerning, because as Sandra Batie and David Ervin (2001) highlight, when innovations "emerge from private laboratories with little contact with farmers or consumers, there may be less sensitivity to farming and eating as part of ecological and cultural systems" (p. 439). Technologies often function very differently in practice than they do in theory, and a limited focus on technical characteristics alone disregards the broader social, economic, and political realities often underlying the problems that the technologies are intended to solve.

Technology plays a significant role in upholding the dominant productionist paradigm in which large-scale industrial agriculture is considered to be the most (or even only) efficient means by which to feed growing populations, because one of the operative assumptions is that scientific and technological ingenuity will ultimately resolve persistent problems of hunger and scarcity. Yet, on the global scale, the number of overweight people has now surpassed the number of malnourished people (World Health Organization, 2016), indicating that when it comes to global hunger, the problem is not one of absolute scarcity, but one of uneven distribution (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Thus, supply-side solutions like GE animals and IVM are unlikely to address root issues, which are more fundamentally social and political. Broader structural transformations of the food and agricultural system are necessary to make it more just and sustainable.

Although it is clear that the problems wrought by industrial meat production are pressing, it is not as clear that animal biotechnologies are an apposite solution. There appears to be very little public appetite for GE animals produced for food consumption (Vàzquez-Salat & Houdebine, 2013), and similarly, new research has revealed that only one third of participants surveyed in the US were definitely or probably willing to eat IVM regularly, or as a replacement for conventionally produced meat (Wilks & Phillips, 2017). This suggests that these are more technology-push developments than demand-pull ones (Batie & Ervin, 2001, p. 438). This characterization mandates a particular need for public scrutiny and ongoing oversight, as technologies created as responses to the demands of wealth, rather than want, will preferentially and inevitably serve the already advantaged (Sarewitz, 1996, p. 131).

Indeed, the results of consumer surveys indicate that "young, white, male, and college-educated individuals are more likely to react favorably to food biotechnology" (Bennett, D'Souza, Borisova, & Amarasinghe, 2005, p. 334). Research has also established that risk perception, more broadly, is not an objective standard, but "may reflect deep-seated values about technology and its impact on society. White males may perceive less risk than others because they are more involved in creating, managing, controlling and benefiting from technology. Women and non-white men may perceive greater risk because they tend to be more vulnerable,

have less control, and benefit less" (Finucane, Slovic, Mertz, Flynn, & Satterfield, 2000, p. 161). However, the so-called "white male effect" as it has been dubbed in the US, where most of this research has been conducted, does not play out the same across all cultures and economic classes (Olofsson & Rashid, 2011). Rather, regardless of race or gender, it is those who stand to benefit most—and those who feel confident that they will have access to treatment or remedies if things go wrong (i.e., suffer the least harm)—that generally seem to perceive less risk when it comes to technological, health, and environmental hazards (McCright & Dunlap, 2013). These findings have serious implications when it comes to the question of how novel foods should be regulated, and who gets to participate in the conversation.

Many scholars have previously called attention to the fact that the scientific research system that exists today "was designed by and for men, and therefore it is men who have established its operations, priorities, standards, and objectives. Men have overwhelmingly made the decisions that determine which equations are solved and which hypotheses are tested" (Sarewitz, 1996, p. 43). The continuing devaluation and invisibility of women's and other marginalized perspectives is readily apparent when considering how new food technologies are developed and regulated. Science, technology, and business remain dominated by men, and the underrepresentation of women is especially glaring in agricultural sector. As Allen and Sachs (2007) report, "of 11 major U.S. industries, agriculture has historically been the least likely to employ women as managers, executives, or administrators" (p. 8). Despite the importance of food to women's lives, "[d]ecisions related to agriculture and food often rely on science and scientific data about agricultural production and food that contain little input from women" (Allen & Sachs, 2007, p. 8). With the increasing scientization and commoditization signalled by new food technologies, the values, knowledge, and experience of women are persistently sidelined, and existing power structures further reinforced.

Regardless of where the production of animal biotechnologies would be situated, the environmental and social externalities can be shifted, at least to some degree, to the less powerful—according to capitalist market logic, the production of commodities is generally governed by the imperatives of low costs and reduced accountability. Within the existing meat processing industry, immigrants and other marginalized groups comprise a significant percentage of the workforce, both in the US (Kandel & Parrado, 2005) and Canada (Charlebois & Summan, 2014). Although these jobs are often dirty, dangerous, and difficult, it is still important to consider how the existing labour market would be affected by a shift towards a different meat production system, especially given the separation between meat consumption and meat production processes (Gouveia & Juska, 2002). The relationship between agricultural technologies and poverty is highly contextual, and attention to this deeper context, rather than a blind focus on the technologies or their outputs themselves, can illuminate critical dimensions of socio-economic conditions that determine where the benefits or burdens fall (Adato & Meinzen-Dick, 2007, p. 3).

The growing dependence on science, technology, and industry along all stages of the food chain means that within highly centralized and industrial systems, the majority of the profits

will continue to "accrue to major food corporations and reduce the possibility of livelihoods of small farmers" (McLeod-Kilmurray, 2012, p. 79). As Vandana Shiva (2000) argues, "[w]hat we are seeing is the emergence of food totalitarianism, in which a handful of corporations control the entire food chain and destroy alternatives so that people do not have access to diverse, safe foods produced ecologically" (p. 17). Even while they present alternatives to the destructive practices of industrial production, new food technologies could also extinguish more viable options, such as a move towards less-intensive farming, restoring more traditional farming practices, and encouraging reduced meat and seafood consumption. Eliminating the ecological and social infrastructure necessary for alternative agricultural practices—however perverted these may have become by industrial processes—would be an error that may prove irreparable. What is lost in the process of adopting new food technologies may not necessarily be commensurate with what is gained.

Animal

Public concern about animal welfare and animal rights is increasing, even while the global appetite for animal products grows (Hume, Whitelaw & Archibald, 2011, p. 10; Murray & Maga, 2010, pp. 358-360). This paradox is partly attributable to the objectification and commoditization of animals that has occurred under an intensive industrial agricultural system, and the laws that enable these processes (McLeod-Kilmurray, 2012). Against this backdrop, some animal biotechnologies for food production, like IVM, are claimed to be one way of reducing the unconscionable degree of animal suffering and death that occurs under the current industrial meat production system, and some thus assert that we may, in fact, have a moral obligation to pursue them (Hopkins & Dacey, 2008, p. 595).

Yet, it would be fallacious to assume that biotechnology offers a clear way out of animal exploitation. IVM technology, at present, still relies to a large degree on animals and animal products (Stephens, 2015), and it is not readily apparent whether the promissory potentials of new food technologies are worth the difficult road to getting there, especially considering the less than enthusiastic public response. Moreover, in the context of genetic engineering, "even modifications like disease resistance that by their very nature are supposed to enhance the welfare of the animal can de facto compromise welfare" (Pascalev, 2006, p. 214), and noble intentions cannot justify harmful outcomes. Additionally, as Zipporah Weisberg (2015) points out, "[t]o suggest that biotechnology will reduce the numbers of animals needed for experimentation is misleading given how many animals will have to suffer in laboratories in order to accomplish such a feat" (p. 49). Improving interspecies relationships demands more from us than just transforming the material conditions in which problematic attitudes and behaviours towards animals endure without question.

Over and above concerns about animal welfare, challenging and unprecedented questions are raised by the ontological, epistemological, and ethical boundary work necessitated by new food technologies (Stephens, 2013; Weisberg, 2015), to which easy answers cannot readily be

found within dominant discourses. Traditional animal welfare and animal rights approaches—which tend to prefer reason over emotion as a guide to ethical decision-making—are not necessarily adequate to explain why many people feel an intrinsic revulsion at manipulating animals for human benefit, even though a particular practice or technology "does not violate a right and does not cause pain or suffering" (Pascalev, 2006, p. 216). Thus, an ecofeminist perspective, with its more explicitly ethical forms of reference, can offer additional insights and guidance in this respect. As Greta Gaard (2002) suggests, "it is not reason alone, but rather the combination of sympathy and a reasoned analysis of cultural and political contexts that provides a more reliable guide to ethics and action" (p. 123).

A contextual ecofeminist ethic involves a shift from a conception of ethics "as primarily a matter of rights, rules, or principles pre-determined and applied in specific cases" (Warren, 1990, p. 141) to instead make "a central place for values of care, love, friendship, trust, and appropriate reciprocity" (Warren, 1990, p. 143). In the context of food, "[t]o *choose one's diet* in a patriarchal culture is one way of politicizing an ethic of care. It marks a daily, bodily commitment to resist ideological pressures to conform to patriarchal standards, and to establishing contexts in which caring for can be nonabusive" (Curtin, 1991, p. 71). Food choices matter, not only to individuals, but to human and natural systems on a global scale.

Although for some, vegetarianism or veganism is implicitly or explicitly identified as an integral part of ecofeminist praxis (Curtin, 1991, pp. 68-71; Gaard, 2002), the ecofeminist perspective presented here does not necessarily advocate for universal vegetarianism or veganism. Instead, it seeks to "address the fact that our meat-advocating culture has successfully separated the *consequences* of eating animals from the *experience* of eating animals" (Adams, 1991, p. 129). New food technologies arguably do little to rescue animals from becoming "absent referents" (Adams, 1990, p. 20); if anything, they contribute to an even further visual and cognitive disconnect between meat as a food product and the animal from which it came. To this end, the aims and outcomes of new food technologies may actually run counter to the goal of transforming the values and beliefs that underpin exploitation, as opposed to simply mitigating the extent of harm.

As Richard Twine (2014) observes, "[t]he political crux of ecofeminism and kindred accounts of intersectionality is to not only create cultures in which other animals matter, but to move "culture," precisely, away from norms of animal exploitation" (p. 205). Animal biotechnologies for food production present an opportunity to pause and reflect on the ethical implications of our food choices and the ways in which interspecies relationships could conscientiously be improved, especially taking into account the interrelated social and environmental problems associated with meat consumption. Presently, "the vegetarian option is largely soft-pedaled on the assumption that as long as meat-eating options are available, most will prefer to exercise that option" (Pluhar, 2010, p. 461). The tacit affirmation of the cultural centrality of meat signalled by animal biotechnologies leads to the conclusion that "veganism is not a live option for actual human societies as they now stand and the real choice is therefore between cultured meat and slaughtered meat" (Hopkins & Dacey, 2008, p. 593). Thus, by

reaffirming the cultural visibility and inevitability of meat consumption, new food technologies entrench the existing hierarchy of food in Western diets, which places the highest symbolic value on flesh foods and the lowest value on plant foods (Twigg, 1983).

Animal consumption is admittedly an entrenched norm for many groups, and this type of norm is not easily altered. Research into food choices has demonstrated that many motivations, from price to cultural-oriented values, influence consumer decision-making. With respect to meat in particular, factors like "strength, health, masculinity, [and] indulgence, are of special importance" (de Bakker & Dagevos, 2012, p. 881). That being said, the food choices people make have a demonstrable capability to evolve on both a personal and societal level. This is especially the case considering that meat's meaning is deeply embedded in a political-cultural context, albeit one that is seldom acknowledged. As Adams (1990) puts it, "[n]one of us chooses the meanings that constitute the texts of meat, we adhere to them. Because of the personal meaning meat has for those who consume it, we generally fail to see the social meanings that have actually predetermined the personal meaning" (p. 24). Given the prerogative of those in the dominant order to set the boundaries of conversation and critique, the fundamental biases underlying meat eating are rarely challenged (Bailey, 2007).

According to an animal justice or animal liberation perspective, animal biotechnologies appear as less of a solution and more of a symptom of the violent subjection of nonhuman animals within industrial capitalist cultures (Miller, 2012, pp. 44-45). When considered thusly, technologies like IVM can act "as an important site for scrutinizing existing socio-cultural narratives about carnivoracity, human-animal relations and agri-biotechnology applications" (Dilworth & McGregor, 2015, p. 104). Neither animal exploitation nor meat eating should be accepted as uncomplicated givens, so as not to simply accept what is for what will always be. Reframing meat consumption as an ethically and politically relevant choice rather than a culturally determined inevitability allows us to better consider how instruments like law and policy can be used to influence our decision-making in positive ways.

Conclusion

As the possibilities enabled by science and technology expand, so too do the scope and scale of the concerns raised. However, the worldview espoused by technologists tends to elevate the importance of machinery while simultaneously devaluing the ethical or spiritual principles that challenge it (Worth Bailey, 2005, p. 9). Accordingly, proponents of new food technologies often dismiss critics as Luddites or technophobes, who reject technology for reasons irrational or otherwise unfounded. This position implicitly codes technocentrism as the neutral stance, while failing to acknowledge that there is a plethora of reasons to be skeptical of technology, regardless of (or even because of) its purported intent.

A healthy skepticism about science and technology does not necessarily signify an anti-science or anti-technology stance. Rather, it indicates a concern about the differential and often

destructive impacts that dominant perspectives on science and technology have generated. Many critics do not shun technology outright, but rather, call for a less taken-for-granted approach to technoscientific systems that, for example, present new food technologies as a direct, straightforward response to the problems caused by industrial flesh food production. Science and technology have certainly enabled many benefits to human society, and they unquestionably have a continuing role to play in any vision of a sustainable future. However, when embedded within the organizing premises of conventional liberal legalism and tied to the drive for profit and power, science and technology are readily turned into tools for advancing a singular kind of rational efficiency, one that has tended to be damaging and exploitative (Rothschild, 1981, p. 66).

Certainly, different perspectives, which are informed by different value considerations, often lead to different points of emphasis. While enthusiastic proponents of scientific and technological innovation writ large have clamoured to embrace new food technologies as a "win-win" solution to many interconnected social and environmental problems, an ecofeminist perspective challenges the emancipatory potentials of science and technology. A more cautious view does not take it as an uncomplicated given that technological palliatives intrinsically lead to societal good. Although unintended consequences may take the form of surprising benefits, as opposed to unforeseen harms, this also raises the question of who benefits and who is harmed in each respective instance.

To be sure, the harms engendered by the current system of industrial animal agriculture are immense, and continuation of a business-as-usual approach is indefensible. Yet, meat eating is a complicated phenomenon, and novel foods, in and of themselves, will not necessarily shift us towards more ethical modes of producing and consuming food. The creation and maintenance of resilient, just, and sustainable food systems depends in large part on local knowledge and context-sensitivity. A blinkered focus on technological fixes renders them less solutions than symptoms of existing problems, which fail to consider simpler approaches (and the incentives that could be facilitated for these) as live options. Through technological "solutions", unsustainable consumption patterns (especially in the developed world) are not challenged, but tacitly endorsed. Supply-oriented approaches ultimately misapprehend underlying problems related to demand and distribution. Framing the problem as one of either producing abundance through biotechnology or leaving people to starve and animals to suffer is a false dilemma. When science and technology are not seen as a silver bullet, energies may be better redirected to addressing the root causes underlying many of the inequities of the global food system.

Laws and regulatory systems need to be more explicit about the ethical and political choices that underpin them in order to move past a "perpetual state of status quo" (Létourneau, 2000, p. 189). Science, technology, and the laws and policies that regulate them are not disembodied practices, but are intimately located within broader realities and structures of meaning. Food choices are intensely personal ones, and technical data are a poor surrogate for values; as such, the suitability and utility of a technical model for resolving complex and often competing concerns is unconvincing, especially in the case of animal biotechnologies for food

production, which raise a plethora of social, cultural, environmental, and ethical apprehensions. Science, though still of foundational importance, is not adequate in and of itself as the basis for sound decision-making in the context of new food technologies. Non-scientific concerns should rightfully influence the public policy response to scientific and technological developments for which the full range and impact of potential consequences is not yet clear.

The resolution of complex but common problems demands more humility and more humanity, which, within prevailing paradigms of science and law, are currently conceptualized as anathema. In addition to reflecting on and critiquing dominant paradigms, an ecofeminist perspective offers constructive suggestions for change by emphasizing a different way of seeing and acting on the world, informed by a more reflexive and relational ethical framework. Beginning with the premise that we are co-habitants of a shared planet, an ethics of care recognizes the inescapable interconnections between humans, nonhuman animals, and Nature, and thus sees technology not as a tool of domination and control, but as a potent reminder of our ethical responsibilities. While it is difficult to break out of entrenched paradigms and worldviews, exposing the ethical and epistemological presuppositions which have hitherto been taken for granted allows us to envision the reconstructive processes that might better address the multivalent concerns raised by new food technologies.

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Original Research Article

Finding formula: Community-based organizational responses to infant formula needs due to household food insecurity

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Abstract

This paper reports on qualitative research concerning community-based organizational responses to infant formula needs due to household food insecurity. It explores this topic against the backdrop of neo-liberal social welfare approaches that shape gendered food work within food insecure households, as well as current state approaches to infant feeding policy targeted to vulnerable populations. Based on telephone interviews with a random sample of organizations across Canada (N=26) in 2016, this paper details typical responses to infant food insecurity within a sample of family resource projects with funding from the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, as well as typical responses from a sample of food banks. Results demonstrate that neither state nor community organizations adequately respond to infant food insecurity. This leads to serious problems of unequal access, potential food risk, and food injustice that are imposed on mothers and formula-fed infants when mothers are forced into situations of pathologized foraging to find formula. This paper argues that infant food insecurity is the result of a succession of public policy failures that are best addressed with a reflexive, feminist, food justice approach.

Keywords: food studies, feminist studies, sociology, social welfare, infant food insecurity

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Introduction

Infant food insecurity, as a food justice issue, is shaped by intersecting inequality dynamics at the heart of constrained food production labour, food acquisition work, and the feeding work primarily done by mothers. Despite the fact that Food Studies as a field is concerned with questions of food production and consumption, infant food insecurity, which embodies both, is notable in its neglect within the field as a topic of study. I argue that the reason for this neglect is that infant feeding labour is socially constructed as gendered social reproduction work. The assumption is that, under the right circumstances, women can actively produce food via their breasts. However, such food production and feeding labour does not come easily for all mothers, particularly mothers in poverty. Poverty, itself highly gendered, is at the heart of infant food insecurity, for which poor mothers are held responsible.

Infants are food secure when they have access to a sustainable food system—a system that depends on the economic, nutritional, social, and cultural support of mothers as producers of food through breastfeeding. When breastfeeding is not possible for biological and social reasons, there must then be access to reliable, safe, affordable, and personally acceptable alternatives through socially just means. Currently in Canada, poverty and household food insecurity introduce vulnerabilities in both breastfeeding and access to breast milk alternatives when they are highly priced, unaffordable, or difficult to access (Frank, 2015). In Canada, it is mothers and infants together who most suffer the outcomes of this social issue. However, the negative health consequences of nutrition inequity in the early years will ultimately be of considerable cost to society.

This paper details what can occur when the state fails to provide adequate income security for those parenting young children, creating a heavy burden on mothers to maintain family income while being largely responsible for food and care work. Qualitative research in Nova Scotia (Frank, 2015) documented that, in the absence of income security, mothers struggled to maintain an adequate supply of formula and routinely turned to food banks and community organizations for help. Finding formula was fraught with challenges. Mothers were often not successful in securing what they needed, or were forced to use products they knew might not be tolerable for their baby. Some resorted to stealing formula when it could not be found through charity sources. Food insecurity created situations of *pathologized foraging* for formula when this food product was largely inaccessible, when the mother did not know where to go for it, and when charity needed to be relied on.

However, when mothers with infant food insecurity issues turn to community-based organizations across Canada, what does the landscape of organizational responses look like? Drawing from interviews with a sample of family resource programs and food banks, this paper describes typical organizational responses to infant formula needs and distribution practices, and the formal and informal policies and values that shape if, and how, formula is made available to food insecure mothers (and, at times, other caregivers). Based on this research, this paper argues that a succession of public policy failures has created serious problems of unequal access,

potential food risk, and food injustice that are imposed on food insecure formula-feeding mothers and formula-fed infants when the mothers are forced into pathologized foraging situations to find formula. Community-based organizations present divergent responses, politics, and values concerning their responsibility to respond as well as how to respond. In particular, this research sheds light on how a reflexive, feminist, food justice approach at the community organizational level offers a vision for addressing the injustice of infant food insecurity at the state level of maternal income and food security and infant feeding policy.

Background

The gendered nature of infant feeding and infant food insecurity

Infant feeding practice occurs within the social and family relations of feeding and eating that are typical of gendered divisions of labour. Early work by DeVault (1991) and Charles and Kerr (1986) argues that feeding work is socially constructed as part of the expected caring work of mothers, which is primarily invisible and is often experienced as oppressive. More recent research on family food practices in Canada upholds this claim of implicit gender assumptions about women's food work (Beagan, Chapman, D'Sylva, & Bassett, 2008; Cairns & Johnson, 2015). Breastfeeding, as a component of family food work, is impossible to detach from female responsibility due to its biological imperative. Thus, feeding infants, in comparison to feeding others, is arguably more enshrined in ideas about women's natural dispositions for family food work. As an expression of femininity, such work has been experienced both as oppressive and as an important marker of identity through which many women find meaning and power (Allison, 1991; Belasco, 2008; Cairns & Johnson, 2015). This dichotomy of oppression versus power is also central to feminist debates about breastfeeding. While some see breastfeeding as a feminist practice where women should have the right (and support) to exercise their power to breastfeed and produce food (Van Esterik, 1999), others utilize feminist arguments to illuminate breastfeeding as a form of oppressive labour (Bem, 1993; Chodorow, 1978), or breastfeeding promotion as a moral crusade harmful to women (Knaak; 2005; Kukla, 2006; Lee, 2008; Murphy, 2000; Wallace & Chason, 2007). Jung (2015) claims that breastfeeding promotion "crosses the line into lactivism" (p. 7), which is discriminatory in the use of government resources when only mothers who breastfeed receive state support in feeding their babies.

Debates about breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding practice and breast milk substitutes are also central in the limited literature about infant food insecurity. Some argue that breastfeeding ensures food security for infants (Huffman, Rasmusson, Newman, & O'Gara, 1992; Infact Canada, 2004; Lawrence, 2007), and constitutes a sustainable food system (Bertmann & Yaroch, 2016). This argument extends to food insecurity associated with breast milk substitutes in terms of non-affordability (Infact Canada, 1997), negative nutritional outcomes (Jelliffe & Jelliffe, 1978; Palmer, 2009), and problems of food safety due to

contamination and preparation issues (Greiner, 2009; Lakshman, Ogilvie, & Ong, 2009; Weir, 2002). Van Esterik (1999) offers a more nuanced analysis of food insecurity surrounding infant feeding when she positions it as a right-to-food issue, or one that reflects upon intersecting rights of mother and infant: the right to food, the right to feed, and the right to be fed that "occurs within a culturally defined sexual division of labor and set of gender assumptions" (p. 225). I argue that household food insecurity, linked to overlapping systems of oppression, is a social constraint that impinges on such rights, impeding breastfeeding and optimal formula feeding alike.

Intersectionality theory highlights the need to examine phenomena, paying attention to how systems of oppression interact for different groups of people (Crenshaw, 1989). Sociological and anthropological research that has identified the social constraints of infant feeding has illustrated intersectionalities of gender, race, cultural background, and social class that affect mothers' decisions and outcomes concerning infant feeding practice (see Maher, 1992; Smith, Hausman, & Labbok, 2012). Breastfeeding success is linked to the social position of women in society, which sexualizes the breast, impedes public breastfeeding, and poses contradictions between breastfeeding and paid employment (Wallace & Chason, 2007). Additionally, women experience breastfeeding in different ways, and rates of initiation and duration differ by cultural/racial background, education level, Aboriginal status, and marital status (Health Canada, 2010).

There are social gradients in rates of breastfeeding initiation and exclusive breastfeeding duration in Canada. While breastfeeding initiation rates are currently high in Canada overall at 87.3 percent in 2009-2010, fewer mothers (81 percent) in the lowest income quintile initiated breastfeeding, and rates increase in each subsequent quintile (Health Canada 2010). There are significantly lower rates of breastfeeding initiation among Aboriginal women in Canada (77.8 percent) compared to non-Aboriginal mothers (88 percent), yet other cultural/racial groups (93.5 percent of Asian mothers, 86.7 percent of Black mothers, and 89.4 percent of mothers who have immigrated to Canada within the last five years) have higher breastfeeding initiation rates compared to White mothers (86.7 percent). While Canada can boast relatively high breastfeeding initiation rates across all income groups and cultural/racial groups (except for Aboriginal mothers), rates for exclusive breastfeeding to six months are much lower, only ranging from 26.9 percent (in the lowest income quintile) to 33.3 percent (in the highest income quintile). The rates of exclusive breastfeeding by cultural/racial group show a similar pattern to breastfeeding initiation, whereby Asian (30.2 percent) and Black mothers (27 percent) have higher rates than White mothers (25.8 percent), recent immigrants (28.2 percent) have higher rates than non-immigrant mothers (24.7 percent), and Aboriginal mothers (16.6 percent) have the lowest rates.

While there appear to be differences in breastfeeding trends based on socio-economic as well as cultural factors, how income and cultural/racial identities come together to shape infant feeding practice in Canada is not well understood. Breastfeeding statistics limit our understanding, because group aggregates cluster together what might be very different cultural-based infant feeding histories and preferences. As well, nutrition surveillance statistics only

capture a limited reality of infant feeding practices: breastfeeding initiation includes trying to breastfeed even for a short time, exclusive breastfeeding excludes those that almost exclusively breastfed or used mixed feeding strategies, and there are no Canadian statistics that capture formula feeding practices. We do not know the extent to which Canadian mothers, even those that breastfeed, rely on formula to feed their babies. Qualitative research in Canada (Frank, 2015; Partyka, Whiting, Grunerud, Archibald, & Quennell, 2010) reveals the importance of poverty and food insecurity as barriers to breastfeeding continuation, intertwined with other factors (such as cultural and family histories, social environments, and available support) that show how infant feeding, like all food practice, embodies complex social relations beyond, but intertwined with, issues related to poverty.

The Canadian state and feeding the baby

Understanding the complexity of these social relations also requires examining the Canadian state and how public policy might shape the work of feeding the baby, which is one piece of the overall work of socially reproducing Canadian society. Social reproduction involves "a range of activities, behaviors, responsibilities, and relationships that ensure the daily and generational social, emotional, moral, and physical reproduction of people" (Bezanson, 2006, p. 175). Food provisioning is one of the tasks of social reproduction and, like social reproduction more broadly, is highly gendered in most societies. Bezanson (2006), in detailing the relations between gender, household insecurity, and neo-liberalism in the 1990s in Ontario, showed how neo-liberal social welfare reform, away from strong state provisioning for social reproduction, meant weaker state support and greater responsibility for women and the non-profit sector for the provision of these needs. This same pattern of neo-liberal welfare reform occurred across the country, with several notable negative effects on women and mothers, and even more so on poor mothers. Since the mid-1990s, income assistance policy has moved toward a "workfare" policy approach (Evans, 2006) whereby mothers may experience limited maternity protection from the requirement to seek or engage in employment as a condition of income security entitlements (Evans, 2006). The shift to "workfare" is built on problematic gendered assumptions: that women can find and sustain jobs in the labour market, that these jobs will pay well enough to alleviate families' poverty, and that it is possible to manage the dual responsibilities of waged work and family caregiving (Scott, London, & Myers, 2002) with a lack of affordable and accessible childcare. Furthermore, neo-liberal social welfare states assume that care work, including feeding the baby, is a family responsibility, increasingly "excised from the sphere of state responsibility" (Braedley, 2006, p. 216).

Accomplishing the work of social reproduction without adequate income is a challenge, and women, particularly racialized, immigrant, and Aboriginal women in Canada, are more likely to experience poverty (Canada Without Poverty, 2017). Women in Canada as a whole have lower employment participation rates, are less likely to work full time (Statistic Canada, 2017), and still experience a gender pay gap that is the seventh-largest among OECD countries

(Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2014). Women's access to employment insurance and maternity leave, linked to longer breastfeeding duration (Statistics Canada, 2005), has declined over time because women are more likely to have non-standard work arrangements, which makes meeting the eligibility criteria more challenging (Townsend & Hayes, 2007).

Neo-liberal social welfare reform is also typified by a shift from governments delivering public programs directly to *steering*—setting policy and overseeing community non-governmental organizations to provide social reproduction work (Chappell, 2010). While some organizations receive core and project funding to deliver key social welfare programs (e.g., child welfare, early parenting support, and childcare), there is also an increase in voluntary associations and faith-based organizations providing basic social services to the poor (Poppendieck, 1998), illustrated by the rise of food banks in Canada as a response to food insecurity. Such community-level food work is extensive and has become an integral component of the welfare state (Thériault & Yadlowski, 2000). However, research has shown that food banks lack the capacity to adequately respond to the food needs of users (Tarasuk & Eakin, 2003), and the invisibility of unmet needs and the mere existence of food banks are barriers to real solutions to food insecurity as a social problem in need of government intervention (Power, 2011; Riches, 1997; Tarasuk & Eakin, 2003).

There is no governmental infant food security policy in Canada per se. Policy related to infant feeding primarily falls into health policy domains, whereby the protection and support of breastfeeding, and the regulation of infant formula, is a matter of public policy. Health Canada led the establishment of the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada, which, in 1996, became the national authority for the Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) (Breastfeeding Committee for Canada, 2012). The BFI aims to facilitate the implementation of initiatives and resolutions to support breastfeeding, which include the aims and principles of the 1981 World Health Organization (WHO) *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* (referred to as the Code), through "health promotion, education and collaboration, rather than through legislation or regulations" (Breastfeeding Committee for Canada, 2012, p. 5). Canada's BFI was adapted from the WHO/UNICEF Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (World Health Organization, 1991). The term 'baby-friendly' refers to protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding, partly through adherence to The Code. The Code stipulates how to handle the distribution of donated and discounted formula, which is used as a marketing strategy by formula companies and is known to negatively affect breastfeeding duration and exclusivity (Rosenberg, Eastham, Kasehagen, & Sandoval, 2008). The Code stipulates that healthcare organizations should not be used to promote formula or to display information about formula, and that donated or low-price formula provided to institutions or organizations "should only be used or distributed for infants who have to be fed on breast-milk substitutes" (World Health Organization, 1981, p.11). Additionally, the Code stipulates, "where donated supplies of infant formula or other products within the scope of this Code are distributed outside an institution, the institution or organization should take steps to ensure that supplies can be continued as long as the infants concerned need

them" (World Health Organization, 1981, p.12). Despite low numbers of hospital and community health services achieving the Baby-Friendly Accreditation status in Canada, the recommendations of the Code have shaped infant feeding policy throughout the healthcare system and in community practice. In Canada, while an infant may receive formula within a healthcare organization, there is no state financed system for the distribution of infant formula outside of healthcare institutions. This is despite the Code recognizing that there is "a legitimate market for infant formula and for suitable ingredients for which to prepare it: and that these products should accordingly be made accessible to those who need them through commercial or non-commercial distribution system; and that they should not be marketed or distributed in ways that may interfere with the protection and promotion of breastfeeding" (World Health Organization, 1981, p. 10). Additionally, Infact Canada, a national organization committed to protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding, has criticized charity-provided formula at food banks as violating the Code (Infact Canada, 2005) as they consider such free distribution a form of marketing, and therefore not Baby-Friendly, and that charity systems cannot ensure that supplies can be continued for as long as they are needed. Infact Canada has publicly denounced Food Banks Canada for its corporate partnership with the infant formula company Nestlé (Infact Canada, 2014). Foodbanks Canada's response, posted on Infact Canada's website, states that they have never received formula donations from Nestlé for distribution, but rather that they use Nestlé's financial donations for programing.

Formula needs are supported indirectly and minimally by governments through food entitlement cash transfers for children on welfare; however, not all welfare policy includes food entitlements for children. Provincial and territorial welfare programs include some special diet allowances, but infant formula may not be considered a special need unless medically indicated. The Canadian approach to income security broadly, and to maternal/infant programs specifically, differs from other similar high-income countries in its relative lack of targeted food entitlements. In Canada, unlike in the United States and the United Kingdom, there are no state-provided food entitlement programs for infants, either federally or provincially. The *Women, Infants, and Children program* (WIC) in the United States, an income entitlement program that promotes and works to protect breastfeeding within low-income populations, also provides food supplementation for infants and children (United States Department of Agriculture, 2015). The UK Healthy Start Program is a similar income-targeted program that aims to improve the health of pregnant women and families by providing vouchers that can be used to purchase milk, fruits and vegetables, and infant formula (UK Healthy Start, 2017). While the National Child Benefit in Canada is in place to support the costs of raising children, cash transfers are not targeted to food. They may be used for other household needs such as rent and heat, particularly in families receiving income assistance, when shelter allowances are inadequate to cover the real costs of housing. The *Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program* (CPNP) managed by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), like the US WIC program and the UK Healthy Start Program, is a national program with the objective to support vulnerable pregnant and postnatal women (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2007). However, PHAC, in agreement with critics of the WIC

program (see Kent, 2006), is concerned that free formula distribution will negatively affect mothers' choices of feeding methods and lessen breastfeeding initiation rates (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2014).

CPNP programs operate throughout selected communities across the country, offering, but not ensuring, entitlement to prenatal and postnatal support. Programming within projects is influenced through funding agreements with PHAC, whereby there is a *steering* of infant-feeding policy toward a uniform position on promoting and supporting breastfeeding as the sole nutrition strategy for vulnerable populations. These centres do not have a mandate or resources to respond to the infant formula needs of food insecure families. However, because their mandate is to work with vulnerable women concerning early infancy support, including infant feeding, they are well positioned to be aware of needs, and may be the primary source of support for families struggling with such issues. CPNP has as a core value that they are community-based and therefore embrace community development principles of responding to local needs. However, the need for formula due to poverty, although experienced within communities, is strongly advised against and is not addressed within the current funding arrangements and infant feeding policy directives of PHAC. PHAC itself recognizes the dilemmas faced by organizations in this regard, and has responded with a practical guidebook entitled *Protecting, Promoting, and Supporting Breastfeeding: A Practical Workbook for Community Based Programs* (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2014). Within, a suggested response for infant food security is provided:

> Women who come to community based programs are often faced with financial or food insecurity that affects their ability to buy formula. Rather than giving formula directly, a better use of resources could include providing food, food coupons, recipes and ingredients, good food boxes and encouraging collective buying and community gardens.
>
> These approaches put **"Mothers and Babies First"** [emphasis original], help decrease the stress of food shortages, and free up the family's own money to buy formula **if needed** [emphasis original]. Still, in spite of these strategies, staff sometimes see women who are desperately short of resources, and they fear for the adequacy or appropriateness of the baby's diet. In these situations, it is best to work with partners whose work is less directly tied to the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding and develop an emergency response approach for babies at risk. Referral to a family physician, paediatrician, and/or dietitian may be appropriate. Linking the mother with the local health unit and area **food banks** [emphasis added] may also be helpful. (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2014, p. 18)

When it comes to infant food insecurity, it is evident that the government, while somewhat supporting food supplementation for families, is endorsing a culture of food charity

for infants, rather than state entitlement for food. How do CPNP projects experience and navigate this "practical dilemma" of infant food insecurity? Are food banks an appropriate solution, and are they able to meet needs? Further, how might these organizational responses affect infants and mothers who are ultimately held responsible for accomplishing the social reproduction labour of feeding the baby in food insecure conditions in Canada?

The current study: Methods

An exploratory qualitative methodology was used to research the question, "*What is the current state of practice, policy, and opinion regarding free infant formula provisioning in Canada from the perspective of community-based organizations?*" Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with staff from CPNP projects and food bank organizations across Canada to explore this research question. Two interviews, one from each organization type within each province and territory, were conducted with staff (N=26). Organizations were selected using a criterion-based random sampling process, the purpose being to provide a geographically dispersed snapshot. Organizations were selected within each province from two lists compiled by organization type. The sample of CPNP interviews was drawn from a list of all CPNP programs funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the food bank sample was drawn from a list provided by Food Banks Canada. Despite samples being selected randomly within each jurisdiction, they are not necessarily representative of the population of these organizational types due to the small sample size. However, the intent of this qualitative research was not to generalize to the population, rather it was to explore typologies of organizational types based only on the sample. A larger sample size may have revealed additional organizational types.

The interviewees were not recorded. Rather, the interviewer completed a form with standardized questions that probed for information on formal and informal policy concerning infant formula availability and distribution. All interviewees were asked about their perspective on the food insecurity of non-breastfed infants in their area. They were asked if mothers and/or caregivers were ever in need of emergency infant formula, if they came to them for help in finding formula, the extent to which formula affordability was an issue for mothers, and whether their organization responded to this need if presented. Questions also included whether formula was available for free at other local community places, and whether there was a perceived need for emergency or habitual infant formula locally due to food insecurity. Data analysis began by transcribing handwritten responses into a spreadsheet by organizational type. Subsequently, responses were examined by sorting responses for each question, and compiled data were coded for the identification of typical cases of organizational types. Coding was completed using a three-step process. First, open coding was conducted, whereby notes are read line by line to distinguish all potentially relevant information concerning the research question. Second, these open codes were grouped into four broad categories that explain organizational approaches to meeting infant formula needs: practices, policy approach, values orientation, and expressed

symbolic meaning of infant formula. Finally, typical organizational cases were constructed based on the varying responses in these four categories, and two continuums of organizational responses were created. Typical case construction does not imply that all family resource programs or food banks within the sample, or in Canada, fit perfectly into one of these cases. This does mean that there was a tendency for policy, values, practice, and formula symbolism to align in the ways described within this sample.

Results

Family resource programs with CPNP funding

Figure 1: Continuum of CPNP Organizational Responses to the Food Insecurity of the Formula Fed Infant

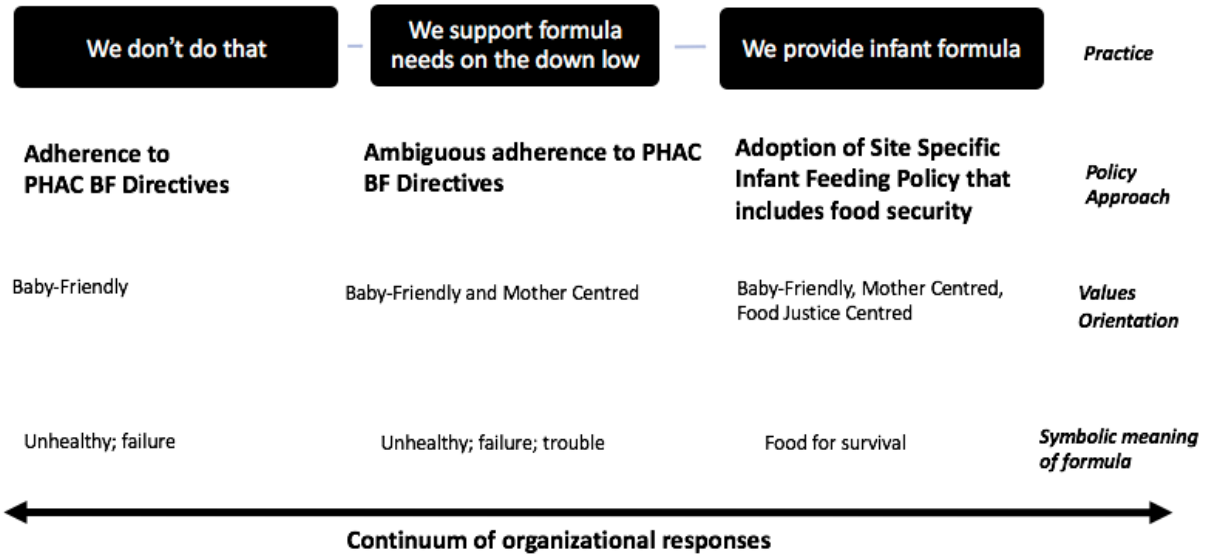

Figure 1 depicts the analysis of family resource interview data, showing a continuum of responses to infant formula needs. It displays three typical organizational cases along a practice continuum justified by organizational policies (steered by policy directives of funders) as well as by expressed values about the role of organizations in supporting mothers and/or caregivers, and feelings about infant formula as a food product.

We don't do that—we promote and support breastfeeding

On one end of the practice continuum were organizations that never responded to formula needs. As one interviewee said, "We are breastfeeding friendly here. People sometimes give us formula they don't need, but we don't keep it. We give it to the food bank." If a mother presented to them with this need, the mother would be referred to another community resource, the most noted being food banks. However, it was common that, when asked about availability of formula at these places, staff did not always know if formula was available there. This practice stance was justified by adherence to baby-friendly policy. This approach is in line with directives from PHAC.

We promote and support breastfeeding—but we support infant food security "on the down low"

The most typical organizational practice in response to the food insecurity of formula-fed infants was to help "on the down low." This meant adherence to baby-friendly policy in that there was no overt formula distribution, no use of CPNP funding for infant food supplementation, and no formula "visibly" on site. However, individual staff helped mothers to "find formula" through either "passed along" formula that was given to them, or occasionally by buying it personally. One interviewee said, "Yes, we respond to this need, but formula is not something we have or keep on hand." Another said, "If people are not using formula, they bring it in, but we don't promote formula. We will take formula, and if people are in an emergency we will give it to them, but we don't put it on display." Because there was no consistent source of formula to be found, when staff were approached for formula, it was common for them to seek formula on mothers' behalf, and/or to refer mothers to other potential resources such as food banks, women's centres, local doctors, social service offices, or, in one instance, a local pharmacy that was known to sell formula at cost when mothers were in need.

Organizations supporting mothers "on the down low" expressed a more ambiguous adherence to baby-friendly policy, justified by being breastfeeding friendly, but having a "women-centred value system." Formal policies that prohibit formula distribution governed their work, yet their ethics of wanting to support *all* mothers led to clandestine support of formula feeding because of concern for mothers' welfare and infant hunger. This was expressed as "*We are breastfeeding friendly but…*" statements. For example, "We are breastfeeding friendly but we are also women-centred," and, "We are a breastfeeding friendly place, but we support all families in what they need. There are mothers that can't breastfeed, so I don't turn formula away." However, the conflict staff felt between baby-friendly policy and being women-centred in wanting to support all mothers drove their work underground to avoid potential conflict with other breastfeeding groups in their area and because of fear of funding implications. As one interviewee said, "We don't tell anyone. Helping mothers access formula is a 'real hot topic' at BFI meetings." She went on to describe how local Indigenous women in the neighbouring

reserve had been able to get coupons for free formula; however, that had stopped due to pressure from the BFI committee. She said, "We don't want to get in trouble so we are very sneaky about helping people with formula. The BFI people don't know what we do here—we are breastfeeding friendly, but we are realistic. I have hidden cans of formula under my desk when I know that certain people might be dropping by."

We promote and support breastfeeding and infant food security

On the other end of the continuum, two centres routinely presented with infant food insecurity matters revealed that they respond overtly and formally via secured external funding (outside of CPNP funding—one from the provincial government, one from a non-profit foundation) in order to be able to address ongoing emergency formula distribution. Additionally, one centre, which primarily served African Canadian participants, routinely received donated formula from a formula company, maintaining a consistent supply which they provided to mothers when needed. These interviewees felt that protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding needed to co-exist with supporting the food insecure infant. This practice was justified by a feminist, women- and baby-friendly, food justice values orientation. One interviewee shared her organization's own infant feeding policy that attempted to reconcile these values, additionally sharing her opinion about class-based and race-based assumptions within breastfeeding policy, by saying,

> Making formula accessible is a debate that has been going on in the area for years. There is resistance to making formula accessible. How do we support those moms? We can't make them ashamed for using formula. Affording formula is a huge challenge for these families if they are on assistance. It is not very often that they can find formula in the food bank. There has been a big increase in rent costs. The housing market is crazy, and people won't rent to families with kids. We have adopted a project-specific infant feeding policy that addresses the need to support the formula-feeding mother and infant, we meet mothers where they are at, and we recognize that babies need to eat and have a right to food. Our policy states: *All women will be encouraged and supported with whichever form of infant feeding she has chosen*. No one should be denied food. We shouldn't leave it up to society to dictate what our needs are. So often breastfeeding policy feels like middle class, white family policy.

Finally, when discussing organizational practices, interviewees displayed feelings about infant formula as a food, revealing how food is enshrined with symbolic meaning. Because a project's breastfeeding rates are tracked as an indicator of project success, organizations that never facilitate formula distribution in many ways tended to demonize formula as a food product, and the formula-feeding mother/formula-fed infant was symbolic of program goal failure. In discussions about the programs provided, breastfeeding promotion was central. In some projects,

postnatal food supplementation was available only to breastfeeding mothers, and celebrations for breastfeeding milestones took place where breastfeeding incentives were given. As one interviewee stated when describing their breastfeeding incentive of a free haircut, "Mom is being good to baby, so we are good to Mom." Non-breastfeeding mothers did not receive the same support, implying that not breastfeeding is not as good as breastfeeding, and is unhealthy for the baby. Breastfeeding incentives were evident despite the fact that PHAC steers projects away from these practices because of inconclusive evidence that such incentives are effective in supporting the continuation of breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding mothers may be led to feel judged for not breastfeeding (PHAC, 2014). Finally, the organizations that subversively passed along formula appeared to display similar symbolic meanings concerning formula, as they too worried about project success measured in terms of breastfeeding rates. They additionally saw formula as "trouble," as one interviewee jokingly spoke about needing to hide it, but also trouble in that it represented value conflicts over supporting and protecting breastfeeding while wanting to be *intersectionally* feminist by addressing *all* mothers' needs. However, organizations that boldly provided formula to *address* infant food insecurity enshrined formula with different meaning. Here, formula was just food—a necessity for survival—and providing it was symbolic of a commitment to food justice.

Food banks

While practice directives from PHAC (2014) state that linking mothers with area food banks may be helpful in addressing infant food insecurity, this research found that food banks themselves are inconsistent in addressing this issue. This sample of food banks reported diverse governance structures and organizational capacities. Food banks exist outside of government funding, providing for a social welfare need not governed by state policy. Therefore, food provisioning within charity organizations falls outside of nutrition policy (including infant feeding policy). Additionally, how food is provided is broadly shaped by the nature of charity, in which meeting needs is contingent on the limits of benevolence of individual donors but also of local resource availability; it is therefore limited by both the economic capacity of individual donors and the availability of food supply, which is in turn shaped by a myriad of social, economic, and political relations that may differ by region. The food items to be found on food bank shelves are shaped by these localized and more distant relations. What will individuals donate? What will organizations publicly ask for both during donation drives and routinely on their websites, should they exist? What will corporate donors donate to food banks, and what is their motivation to do so? If monetary donations are secured, what food items are chosen to be purchased by food bank volunteers/staff, and what are the values shaping these decisions? All of these factors shape whether infant formula is available in food banks.

Figure 2 depicts four typical organizational cases concerning practice responses to infant formula needs from the sample of food bank interviewees. It also presents both formal and

informal policy concerning infant formula distribution, as well as expressed values and feelings about infant formula as a food product.

Figure 2: Continuum of Food Bank Organizational Responses to Food Insecurity of the Formula Fed Infant

We don't do that—it is not a focus of our operation

One end of the practice continuum represents food banks that indicated they never have infant formula available. Reasons provided were varied. One food bank interviewee said, "We never have formula in stock, we refer people to the women's centre." This interviewee explained that donated formula was risky, because it was usually close to its expiration date. Also, formula was less likely to be donated because it was expensive. Another food bank interviewee stated that the food bank never had infant formula because another organization in the local community was better equipped to provide this support, which he felt required special expertise. He said, "We are not set up to do that. Other places have a system – we pass it on." A third food bank interviewee stated that they never had formula because a board member advocated a breastfeeding policy agenda. She said, "The food bank sometimes receives donations of infant formula, but we send them to [a central food bank] for distribution. This is because one of the food bank board members is also a member of the BFI and wants the community to be breastfeeding friendly." These food banks did not respond to the needs of the food insecure infant, even though the first principle of the Ethical Foodbanking Code of Food Banks Canada states that food banks will "Provide food and other assistance to those needing help regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, citizenship, colour, religion, sex, sexual orientation, income source, **age** [emphasis added], or mental or physical ability" (Food Banks Canada, 2017).

If we have it, we give it—and mothers take what they can get

Other food bank interviewees stated that they occasionally had formula passively acquired through donations. Relying on donations presented unique problems concerning the availability of formula in terms of type and supply. One interviewee said, "We occasionally get formula donations from the local grocery store, but stores have a tendency to hold onto the products because they are so pricey. They mark them down rather than donate them."
Purchasing formula was not possible because of the high cost and a lack of resources. One interviewee said, "We do not really advertise that formula is available because we would never be able to provide it to everyone that might need it, and we have been reprimanded before for having it on display by someone that works at the hospital." One interviewee said, "We have had to refuse people formula before because we didn't have the right formula in stock. It would be difficult if you had a child with any type of diet restrictions—they would be out of luck." Another said, "Even though we had formula, there have been times when a mother wasn't able to use it because it wasn't the right type." Thus, the type of formula that was there was unpredictable and random (variable brands, powder or liquid, and of no particular developmental stage). Interviewees explained that, if it is there, mothers must take what is on offer, even if it is not the type their infant needs. One interviewee said, "We get many types of formula donated, and people take different types when they need to." If formula is not there, mothers need to be referred elsewhere, but generally interviewees could not name a specific place that would be a reliable source.

While having no informal or formal policies against formula distribution, organizations did not have policies concerning its distribution, such as how much, how often, and what products are provided. In terms of policy, The Ethical Foodbanking Code that states the need for non-discrimination based on age was not mentioned; the focus was only on policy concerning food safety that specified expiration dates, as formula was perceived as risky.

We always have formula—it is necessary for infant hunger alleviation

Similarly, other food bank organizations experienced limitations to the types of infant formula available, and often received formula close to its expiration date. However, some organizations indicated that they always had some formula available, as they made concerted efforts to maintain their supply either through specific donor requests, food drives, or support from umbrella food bank organizations. Keeping a consistent supply was necessary, as it was common to get referrals from government programs, and these food banks were committed to the value of addressing infant hunger in line with the Ethical Foodbanking Code. They also paid close attention to food safety regulations. One interviewee stated that maintaining a formula supply was easy, as "people like to address child hunger," but another interviewee noted that, while "people are generous in their donations of formula, you have to ask for it. They don't think about

it until they are asked." Another said, "We always have formula in stock, but we never buy it, it is all reclaimed from stores, thus close to expiry date."

These organizations developed a range of distribution policies, whereby some provided a limited amount for a short time frame, while others preferred to forgo setting limits for infants. It was common for only one or two brands or types of formula to be available. Infant formula seemed to take on a variety of meanings in these organizations. For some, it was merely age-appropriate food, necessary for infant survival. However, it also took on a meaning of "high exchange value" that required careful surveillance to avoid fraudulent use. One organization had an informal policy to "scratch out" the barcode on the cans of formula to render the "expensive" product non-exchangeable for another product or for cash. Another food bank adopted the informal policy of refusing powdered infant formula to single men, because it was common in the area for drug dealers to mix it with cocaine. Men asking for formula were told, "Get the mother to come back and ask for it." Still another food bank would not provide formula to caregivers outside of the immediate family, such as grandparents, saying, "We won't supply the food for when kids are coming for a visit."

Specialized infant food banks and infant food programs

On the other end of the continuum, some organizations developed specialized infant food programs, like the emergency infant food programs found in the CPNP sample, that overtly addressed infant food insecurity. As one interviewee said, "We run an infant nutrition program. We recognize that infants are also living in poverty, and nutrition is important in the early years. What we care about is that a baby can eat." One organization referred to itself as running an Infant Food Bank that provided several baby care and food products. Two other organizations operated a special infant food program as part of a larger food bank operation. Both infant food banks and programs operated with adjusted distribution policies tailored to the specific needs of infants. These organizations also routinely received referrals from government (e.g., Public Health) and other community programs because they were known for their work in addressing infant food insecurity.

A range of formalized distribution policies were noted, specifying amounts of food and frequency of allowable use as well as invoking the Ethical Foodbanking Code. Food safety concerning infant foods was a priority, whereby one interviewee said, "We purchase all infant foods because everything related to baby food cannot be expired, compared to food in cans. When it comes to kids, we have to be careful." Another interviewee said, "We would never use reclaimed formula in our program," and another said, "We receive a large supply from donations so as not to be close to expiration." Such organizations expressed a range of values behind their approach. As mentioned, infant hunger alleviation was central, but so was the value of food justice. One interviewee stressed how their program was different from those of other organizations that called themselves infant food banks in the area, which she claimed were not operating with food justice values, but rather were anti-choice pregnancy centres.

Discussion

This research shows that family resource programs funded by CPNP do not have a formal mandate to address infant food insecurity, yet many are routinely approached for such support. Three typical organizational responses to infant food insecurity were found. The current mismatch between practice, policy, and values represented by these data appears to do little to address the needs of the formula-feeding mother, or formula-fed infant, in all but a few cases that sought funding outside of CPNP. Infant feeding policy in Canada is largely aimed at shaping the feeding behaviours of mothers through education, rather than implementing an income-entitlement-based approach that could support feeding labour for successful breastfeeding, or food access for infants when breastfeeding does not occur. CPNP's directive on how to address infant food insecurity is through helping to supplement the mother's and/or family's food, but not the infant's, suggesting that breastfeeding is the sole response to infant food insecurity. Mothers who formula feed must deal with infant food insecurity on their own or be referred to agencies with a different policy stance (e.g., food banks). This research shows that this suggested response was the path most frequently chosen by CPNP projects in this sample. However, in many instances, an underlying feminist value position prevailed and support was provided, albeit in secret. On the one hand, feminist values support breastfeeding. On the other hand, there is a deep commitment to helping all mothers regardless of how they feed their baby, recognizing the challenges the mothers confront: poverty, desperation around their responsibility to feed, and the shame they experience foraging for formula. The women workers are caught between a personal feminist ideology of care and the relations of ruling (Smith, 1996) mediated by agency policies that do not necessarily meet the best interests of their participants. A lack of power causes them to work subversively. On the surface, the organizations meet needs, but this research shows the powerlessness of the women workers and the masking of conflicting values and problematic agency policies.

This research also shows that food banks operate on a continuum of responses supported by diverse value orientations, and were thus unreliable in addressing infant food insecurity. Some food banks do not openly request formula donations; others rarely have formula donated as it is a high cost food commodity, rendering formula availability inconsistent, unpredictable, and random. Both mothers and infants are subjected to pathologized foraging for formula from organizations that present very divergent responses, politics, and values concerning the responsibility to respond to this need.

There are numerous factors at play that work together to create the conditions for infant food insecurity: current neo-liberal approaches to social welfare in the areas of income security and maternity protection (which are particularly harmful to mothers who hold most of the responsibility for food work); the intersecting oppressions of gender, class, and race that affect poverty rates and infant feeding experiences; "lactivist" infant feeding policy; the dominance of food charity as the Canadian response to food needs; and contested social meanings embedded in infant formula. Such conditions are the result of a succession of public policy failures, which

include: 1. Weak income security policy/programs and maternity protection for early parenting that result in high rates of household food insecurity, leading to compromised breastfeeding and the non-affordability of infant formula; 2. Lack of state support for infant food security, as demonstrated by an absence of income-tested food entitlements or income supplementation during maternity and early infancy; and 3. Ineffective food-charity-based community responses to infant food insecurity, which place a heavy burden on mothers as they deal with the challenge of being caught in debates about how they should be feeding their babies, while they navigate the challenges of feeding their babies at all.

There is a history of tension between supporting breastfeeding and making formula more readily available, and feminist arguments are used to support both sides. Breastfeeding policy, in particular the Baby-Friendly Initiative, significantly shaped the CPNP responses to infants' formula needs, but only one food bank organization mentioned this policy as an influence on their practices. In fact, when probed, several food bank interviewees expressed shock that providing formula would be viewed as problematic. A few food bank and CPNP organizations stated clearly that, despite their practices, policies, and values about breastfeeding, failing to provide a consistent, adequate supply of formula was unjust and a violation of the right to food. DuPuis, Harrison, and Goodman (2011) point out that people often operate using very different definitions of justice, and they advocate for a reflexive approach, "one with a clear understanding of the complexities of justice in terms of its various and contradictory meanings" (p. 284). They state that "reflexivity is not a set of values, but a process by which people pursue goals while acknowledging the imperfection of their actions. It is also not a particular, fixed process, but one that responds to changing circumstances, imperfectly, but with an awareness of the contradiction of the moment" (DuPuis et al., 2011, p. 297). I heard this reflexive process at work during the interviews as each interviewee justified, or tried to justify, organizational practice: "I know we are not supposed to be doing this, but…" It is time to bring this often-difficult reflexive, feminist, food justice approach into our public discussions of how to address infant food insecurity. A food justice agenda recognizes the ways in which the intersecting oppressions of gender, race and ethnicity, and social class contribute to the food insecurity of mothers and infants. This research shows that a feminist, food justice approach to infant food insecurity would be a more compassionate and comprehensive way of meeting the food needs of poor mothers and infants. As one interviewee said, "The bottom line is that infants need food and have a right to food, full stop."

A few CPNP projects developed systems to help food insecure mothers feed babies. This work was about feeding hungry babies, and in doing so represented food justice work that was not at odds with the organization's breastfeeding policies. In fact, this food justice work was a clearer interpretation of the International Code of the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, which recognizes the need for formula and stresses that "these products should be made accessible to those who need them through commercial or non-commercial distribution systems," and that those involved with supplying formula should "take steps to ensure that supplies can be continued as long as the infants concerned need them" (World Health Organization, 1981, p. 12).

These organizations were responding to the problem that food insecure mothers experience a non-affordable commercial system, and there is no adequate non-commercial distribution system. Furthermore, they did so despite the fact that creating such a system is likely to face resistance from those that conceptualize any free distribution (even if purchased through "normal procurement channels" in line with the Code) as harmful to the promotion and protection of breastfeeding. However, these CPNP projects provide insight into how being both feminist *and* food justice oriented addresses the value conflicts that surround infant food insecurity. Some food banks shared this food justice position; however, only one food bank justified their work as aligning with feminist values, despite the fact that it was mothers who show up at the food bank door.

On a practical note, are these emergency food systems the best way to address this food justice issue? While community-based services and resources do much to support mothers in the daily struggles of feeding the baby, CPNP projects do not have the mandate or the funding to address infant food insecurity, and piecemeal food charity offerings are inadequate for sound infant feeding. The reality that mothers seek help from food banks and family resource centres for infant food needs is a result of household food insecurity, brought on partly by inadequate state supports for early parenting. Having infant food insecurity addressed through community-based food charity models throughout Canada does not create the economic security and social conditions necessary for successful breastfeeding or formula feeding. While some organizations have developed "better" systems, upstream approaches positioned in federal and provincial jurisdictions are better suited to address the many structural barriers to breastfeeding and optimal formula feeding. Federal considerations, such as adequate maternity leave benefits and maternal-infant food entitlement programs (i.e., UK Healthy Start Program), should be explored. Evaluating the effectiveness of existing provincial income supplement entitlement programs (i.e., Newfoundland and Labrador's Mother and Baby Nutrition Supplement and New Brunswick's Pre/Postnatal Benefit Program) to improve household food insecurity and infant feeding outcomes would be one step toward this. Failing to make upstream shifts in policy will continue to obscure the serious problems of unequal food access, potential food risk, and food injustice that mothers and infants experience when the mothers are forced into pathologized foraging for formula.

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Original Research Article

"Sometimes I feel like I'm counting crackers": The household foodwork of low-income mothers, and how community food initiatives can support them

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Abstract

For women parenting on low incomes, there is a significant disparity between household foodwork standards and the resources with which to meet them. This study centres on the everyday foodwork experiences of low-income mothers and their engagement with community supports such as community food initiatives (CFIs). It helps address a research gap concerning the relationship between CFI participation and maternal household foodwork. The study employs multiple methods including semi-structured interviews, graphic elicitation and tours of local community food programs. By identifying a range of factors, strategies, and challenges in mothers' foodwork, the study elucidates some of the contradictory pressures that low-income mothers experience around foodwork. Some of these pressures are associated with meeting individualizing standards around being "good" mothers, "good" consumers and "good" food program participants. Efforts to meet these standards were seen through mothers' attempts to feed their children healthy and preferred food, exercise agency through market choices, and moderate their demands of community food programs. While more research is required regarding both mothers' actual participation in CFIs and CFI strategies to support them, the findings suggest that CFIs should incorporate low-income mothers' subjectivities into food programming.

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Introduction

In recent decades, a combination of discursive and material influences have positioned household foodwork standards in Canada further out of reach for some people, most notably low-income mothers of dependent children. Foodwork[1] encompasses all the labour performed by household members to ensure their families[2] are adequately fed. It is made possible through various resources, especially material ones such as money and food access. At the same time, foodwork is subjected to standards of health, child-raising, and good taste that are promoted through sources such as public health organizations (Ristovski-Slijepcevic, Chapman, & Beagan, 2010), public education (Ristovski-Slijepcevic et al., 2010), and popular food literature (Julier, 2006). Although foodwork may reveal love, creativity, joy, and resistance, the standards that accompany these rewards are unequally distributed, particularly regarding gender (Allen & Sachs, 2007; Brady, Gingras, & Power, 2012) and more specifically, motherhood (Cairns & Johnston, 2015).

The inaccessibility of foodwork standards suggests a need for greater supports for mothers, especially those living on low-incomes. However, some of the most recognizable sources of social support reveal significant limitations. For example, state-sponsored social assistance programs may be stigmatizing and provide insufficient resources (Power, 2005; Raphael, 2011), similar to the critiques about charitable food programs[3] such as food banks (McIntyre, Tougas, Rondeau, & Mah, 2016). The downloading of public social supports onto the shoulders of families (Armstrong, 2010; Luxton, 2010; Cossman & Fudge, 2002) might strain the ability of family to provide support.

Other potential sources of support are community food initiatives (CFIs), which represent programs that are grounded in local community, provide alternatives to the dominant food system, foster social inclusion, and centre dignity in food access and food literacy. They include programs such as collective kitchens, good food box programs, gleaning programs, food literacy programs, and community gardens. The links between CFIs and mothers' household foodwork have, however, been understudied to date. This qualitative study based in Peterborough, Ontario, is an attempt to address this research gap while validating and elucidating the foodwork experiences of low-income mothers. It explores the everyday foodwork experiences of low-

[1] Although I recognize that work with food occurs in many contexts (e.g. domestic spaces, agriculture, retail), for the purposes of this article, "foodwork" is interchangeable with "household foodwork."
[2] I recognize that family members do not always reside together in a household and that household members are not always family members. However, for this article "household" and "family" are used interchangeably.
[3] By "charitable food programs," I am referring to those programs whose entire or almost entire purpose is to provide people with food free of charge (with little attention to meeting other needs) and whose access to that food comes largely through donations.

income mothers and their engagement with community supports such as CFIs with a view towards helping CFIs better support mothers' foodwork efforts.

Household foodwork

Although household foodwork in general places high demands on those responsible for it (DeVault, 1991; Van Esterik, 1999), the distribution of foodwork responsibility continues to reflect social organizations of power, including gender and class. In fact, despite a general reduction in home-cooked meals (DeVault, 1991; Julier, 2006), an increase in men's involvement in household food labour (Milan, Keown, & Robles, 2011; Szabo, 2012), and a post-feminist discourse contending that gender inequality has largely been resolved (Cairns & Johnston, 2015), a gendered disparity in household food labour still persists (Allen & Sachs, 2007; Beagan, Chapman, D'Sylva, & Bassett, 2008; DeVault, 1991; Parsons, 2016; Statistics Canada, 2009; Szabo, 2011) and is immersed in class relations (Allen & Sachs, 2007; DeVault, 1991; LeBesco, 2001; Parsons, 2016).

The gendering of household foodwork practices is bound up in emotion. Indeed, since the word "caring" at once denotes an emotion (love), a personality trait, and the work of looking after people's needs, caring *for* loved ones becomes equated with caring *about* them (DeVault, 1991; Neysmith, Reitsma-Street, Baker Collins, & Porter, 2004). Conversely, not tending to their needs comes to represent not caring about them and, in fact, is seen as being selfish (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; DeVault, 1991). For women, especially mothers, this logic represents a potent equation. In fact, Cairns and Johnston (2015) argue that mothers' foodwork is propelled by the pursuit of positive emotions, such as pride, but also the avoidance of negative ones, such as guilt. Their emotional work of demonstrating love and devotion through food is, in effect, required by today's dominant standards of maternal foodwork (DeVault, 1991; Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Parsons, 2016).

The pervasiveness and intensity of contemporary Western standards of motherhood have been captured and problematized by various researchers with the concept of the "good mother." For example, Goodwin and Huppatz (2010) see mothers as being assessed by both themselves and others based on their adherence with widely recognized, yet culturally and temporally variable, "good mother" (p. 1-2) standards of responsibility and appropriateness. Other researchers specifically link the good mother to caring through food. For instance, the employed mothers in research by Slater, Sevenhuysen, Edginton, and O'Neil (2011) were caught between aspirations to be "good mothers" (p. 409) who prioritized their family members' health and happiness through nutritious, tasty food, and "independent selves" (p. 410) focused on their own incomes and autonomy. For Cairns and Johnston (2015), the good mother expends significant emotional resources and effort as the "guardian of health and taste" (p. 74). She provides healthy food, socializes her children to make appropriate and healthy food choices, and protects her children from risk in the food system. Parsons (2016) likewise sees the good mother as

prioritizing health and time expenditure (e.g., cooking from scratch) in food practices. Similarly, Ristovski-Slijepcevic et al. (2010) see the good mother as pressured to safeguard her children's health through the adoption of dietary guidelines that represent a narrow cultural interpretation of healthy eating.

Dominant foodwork standards of motherhood reflect a middle-class orientation that furthers their unattainability for mothers living on low incomes (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Parsons, 2016). And yet, despite the high foodwork standards to which all women who parent are held (Parsons, 2016), both gender and parenting status seem to contribute to mothers' risks of poverty[4] and food insecurity,[5] effectively hampering their foodwork, their market engagement, and their independence.

Household foodwork remains a gendered and maternalized activity requiring significant emotional and time expenditures. Women who parent are personally held to standards of good motherhood that demand a preoccupation with ensuring the health of their children through food. For mothers, such as those with few material resources, these standards are particularly inaccessible. What is less than clear in the literature, however, is how the good mother construct is specifically experienced by low income mothers in foodwork.

Community food initiatives

An understanding of the inaccessibility of maternal foodwork standards prompts an exploration of the ways in which low-income mothers envision, seek out, and use systems of support. A potential source of such support comes in the form of community food initiatives, which are grounded in local community, provide alternatives to the dominant food system, foster social inclusion, and centre dignity in food access and food literacy.

Several limits, however, have been identified by researchers regarding the possible benefits of participation in CFIs. The first regards the most fundamental barrier to household foodwork, food insecurity or the "inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints" (Tarasuk, Mitchell, & Dachner, 2016, p. 2). Because food insecurity is rooted in income insecurity, it is not surprising that participation in certain CFIs has been found to have little impact on lowering food insecurity (Collins, Power, & Little, 2014; Engler-Stringer & Berenbaum, 2007; Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2013).

Second, there is a question regarding levels of CFI participation among low-income people. For example, Roncarolo, Adam, Bisset, and Potvin (2014) found that people living with greater vulnerability (as determined by food insecurity, health, civic engagement, education level and income level) were less likely to use "alternative" (p. 200) programs, such as community

[4] Female parents in Ontario are more likely than male parents to raise children on their own and to live in poverty when they do (Campaign 2000, 2016).

[5] The rate of food insecurity in Canada for the households of lone female parents with children under 18 years old is at least twice that of the other household types, including lone male parent households, that were considered by the cross-Canada food insecurity research group, PROOF (Tarasuk, Mitchell, and Dachner, 2016).

gardens and collective kitchens, than "traditional" (p. 200) ones like food banks. Regarding community kitchen and food box programs, Loopstra and Tarasuk (2013) also found that non-participation was linked to a lack of program access (location or knowledge about) and an inability to work with the needs, desires, and schedules of families.

Third, in posing alternatives to dominant food systems, CFIs promote a "re-engagement with food" (Szabo, 2011, p. 548) that increases involvement in producing, accessing, and preparing food. However, calls for greater involvement with food may obscure the existing time demands on those who would do this work (Julier, 2006; Matchar, 2013; Szabo, 2011). Despite the potential for this re-engagement to augment the labour of those most responsible for household foodwork, the existing literature reveals little gender analysis regarding participation in CFIs themselves. Some research has found increased work on the part of women to inhibit engagement with community supported agriculture and farmers' markets (Allen & Sachs, 2007) and in the selection and use of local food (McIntyre & Rondeau, 2011). More research is certainly needed on the role of gender, as CFIs might risk excluding people from participating and elevating labour expectations for those already responsible for foodwork.

Conversely, collective kitchen participants in the study by Engler-Stringer and Berenbaum (2007) described several benefits such as food variety and quality, greater dignity, and less distress. Additionally, Levkoe's (2006) study of a Toronto urban agriculture program that included community gardens suggested that community-based food initiatives might help to recast consumers as citizens, fostering civic engagement, lessons in democracy and a new sense of the collective which can all be applied towards greater social activism and change. Beyond just direct impacts on household foodwork, such benefits might help to foster the conditions for more equity around food access and foodwork.

So far, the literature shows little attention to the specific ways in which CFIs support household foodwork, especially among low-income mothers, although much of the research paints a picture of limited positive impact. It reiterates that CFIs cannot address food insecurity, an income-based problem, on their own. It also indicates some limits for CFIs in addressing issues of program access and fit, such as for low-income mothers who may be inhibited by greater food labour expectations. However, authors have also found some potential in CFIs to provide more indirect support, in the form of dignity and collectivity, which may help to foster more equity in foodwork. The literature described here suggests a need for further exploration into the ways in which low-income mothers actually engage with CFIs of different types, the barriers that prevent them from doing so, and the possible benefits that emerge from such participation.

Methodology

My methodological choices were intended to illuminate the day-to-day experiences of low-income mother participants, contribute to program and policy development, and help CFIs better

support the mothers' foodwork efforts. The data presented in this paper are part of a larger study addressing CFI perspectives and capacity, which included interviews with CFI service providers. While these interviews, along with CFI grey literature and my own involvement in Peterborough food system networks, provided valuable insights about the philosophies and workings of CFIs, the findings from that data set are outside the scope of this article and are given their own attention in my as-yet unpublished dissertational work.

This article draws largely on semi-structured interviews with 21 women who identified as living on low incomes in Peterborough City or County, and were raising at least one child under the age of 16. They were recruited through posters and contact with social services, relevant businesses, and local food networks. Four participants learned of the study from other participants. Because the reasons for non-participation in CFIs have been understudied (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2013), food program participation was deliberately left out as a criterion for joining the study.

In all, the women ranged in age from 19 to 47, with most (13 women) in their thirties. Over half of the participants (13 women) had completed some post-secondary education. All participants had at least one child living with them under the age of 16, but overall, their children at home ranged in age from four and a half months to 26 years old. Most (17) mothers had one or two children living at home although this extended to six children. One participant identified as Métis, one as First Nation, one as part Jewish, and one as mixed race. Two participants did not provide an ethnocultural background. The rest identified as Canadian, Caucasian, White and/or European descent. No participants identified as non-heterosexual/-straight although three did not provide a sexual orientation. Eight participants did not report any other adults in the household, eight lived with their children and a partner (and possibly other adults), and the rest lived with their children and adults who were not their partners.

All of the participants identified during recruitment as meeting the study's general criteria of living on low incomes. When asked in the interview about income level, one women did not respond, eight women disclosed a household monthly income below $2,000 and ten disclosed a range between $2,000 to $2,999. For two participants, household monthly income was $3,000 per month or above. This means that 18 women had household incomes below the Before-Tax Low Income Measure (Statistics Canada, 2016). Although two of the participants relied primarily on their own employment income, two on their partner's employment income, and one on both her partner's income and her own, most of the women relied primarily on some form of government income support.

In the interviews, the mothers were asked about all forms of foodwork for their households and any supports around this work.[6] They were also asked to draw what a week in food looked like in their homes. Visual methods may allow participants to express what is difficult to put into words (Power, 2003) or express complex or emotionally connected thoughts

[6] Some parts of the guide format and questions were adapted from the interview guide of Lynn McIntyre and Krista Rondeau (2011) which has been described in detail in their previous publications (McIntyre, Thille, & Rondeau, 2009). The guide was provided to me by Lynn McIntyre (Dec. 4, 2014).

(Copeland & Agosto, 2012). Participants' words and pictures were used to elaborate on each other, bringing clarity to the participants' perceptions and strength to the study's trustworthiness.

Once all the interviews were completed, the mothers were invited to participate in one of two tours of community food initiatives. In all, seven women participated in tours and six of them stayed after the tours to meet together with me to share their thoughts about ways the program might or might not fit for their families. For both the tours and the interviews with mothers, participants were provided flexibility around scheduling and location, and were offered refreshments and compensation for their time, childcare, and transportation. During the data collection process, I also used a reflection journal to help maintain my own awareness of issues of power and privilege in the study. The recordings from the participant mother interviews were transcribed using Express Scribe software. With the assistance of ATLAS.ti software, codes were applied to quotations and then refined. Memos were used to clarify the meaning of codes and to document thoughts and insights that developed throughout the process. The codes were analyzed to reveal patterns and broader themes. I provided participants the option to receive a copy of their interview transcripts but at this point, only two participants have requested and been sent their transcripts. The two recordings from the CFI tours were also transcribed. I sorted the feedback from the tours into themes and compared these findings with those from the interviews.

The (ongoing) dissemination of results through presentations and meetings with community food system actors is intended to inform service providers and policy makers about mothers' priorities and contribute to supportive policy and program changes. Feedback from these events so far has also informed my own thinking and helped to strengthen this research.

Results

Participants shared a range of factors that influenced their foodwork as well as the strategies and difficult compromises they used to ensure their families were adequately fed. The drawing by one participant, Alicia[7] (Figure 1), provided an indication of the scope of these considerations, some of which related to health, social connections, money, body image, and love.

[7] Pseudonyms have been used for all participants.

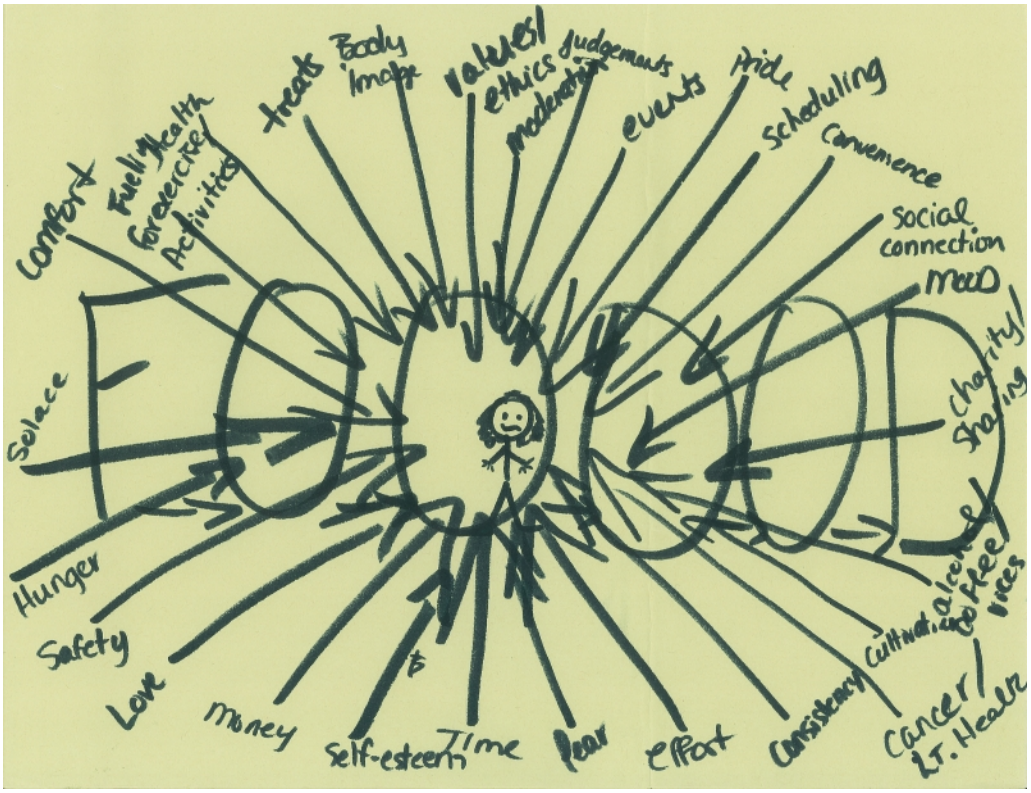

Figure 1: Drawing by Alicia

The women also spoke about their foodwork supports, both personal and programmatic. In an attempt to avoid biasing women's answers around specific programs, the interview guide included questions about what foodwork supports women used but not whether they used specific programs. However, 11 women still spoke of participating in at least one of the CFIs and 15 spoke of participating in a local food bank. Reasons given by multiple women for not participating in a CFI included a lack of knowledge about the programs and difficulty getting to them. A few also expressed discomfort with some aspect of a program while others had tried to access a CFI and were waiting to hear back. Yet, it was both the women's descriptions of their daily foodwork and their thoughts on programs that provided insights about their foodwork needs. Overall, the descriptions of both their foodwork and community supports around food revealed much love, cognitive labour, resourcefulness, and struggle. The following sections organize these findings in terms of the subjectivities that emerged, specifically the efforts to meet the standards of three main ideals, those of the "good mother," "good consumer," and "good food program participant."

The good mother

Participants revealed a universal commitment to ensuring their children's health through food, a finding that was supported by other research that identified the good mother ideal (Cairns &

Johnston, 2015; Parsons, 2016). The women's focus on the health of their children ranged from current physical health to future physical and mental health, social adjustment, and self-sufficiency. They used strategies such as avoiding unhealthy food, mitigating food risks, teaching children about food, raising children to use healthy food habits, making food from scratch, and considering "expert" advice. However, the objective was largely pursued by incorporating healthy[8] food (especially vegetables) into their households' diets.

Frequently, mothers struggled to afford sufficient, healthy food. Some made difficult choices between necessary expenses or compromised their own food intake. Others acquired food in ways that compromised their dignity, integrity, or independence. Una found herself reluctantly monitoring her teenaged son's food intake, just to ensure that there would be enough food for the family in the coming days.

> Una (35): I don't like making him feel like a, a pig or anything but sometimes I'm like, "you just ate an hour ago." (…) So sometimes I feel like, "OK, just eat something." He's a growing boy. You always hear about it so, ya sometimes I feel like I'm counting crackers.

Whereas Una demonstrated the tension that insufficient income can place on ensuring adequate food for her family, Melanie revealed another tension, between providing healthy food and food her child enjoyed.

> Melanie (38): I want to keep him happy and not feeling like he has the worst mom ever because he has to eat an apple, you know? [laughs] (…) When I was a kid, (…) we went to school with sandwiches and apples and that was IT. So, I remember watching kids with all their yummy stuff being like, man! So, I want him to be happy in that sense, you know? So, [pause] But I have to feel like I'm doing it healthily so [laughs] so I try to buy the things that say, [bright advertising tone:] "Real Fruit Juice" and you know what I mean?

While raising healthy children motivated much of the women's foodwork, building connections with them and contributing to their happiness also played a significant role in this work. It was evident that Melanie was not just driven by the allure of positive emotions but also the avoidance of negative ones. She worried about her son viewing her as "the worst mom ever" for providing him healthy food that might risk his ability to fit in among his peers. Like Melanie, Theresa also showed how food provision was tied with her identity as a mother, but this time, through making food from scratch.

[8] Even so, their definitions of healthy food varied widely, from balanced meals to country food (for the two women who identified as having Indigenous backgrounds) to the inclusion/avoidance of specific food items to preferencing certain food origins (e.g. non-processed, local, GMO-free and/or organic food). As Kristen, 46, told me, "I don't want any factory food."

> Theresa (33): I hate to say it, but the food bank gives a lot of crap sometimes. So, I don't like to give them [her children] all that. I'd rather make their food. (…) I would rather make it for them because I make it FOR them so it makes me feel good that I'm making food for them (…) It's made with love.

For Theresa, cooking from scratch enabled her to provide healthier food and to demonstrate caring for her family. Not only was it important to some of the mothers that their children find nutrition and pleasure through food, but it was also important to some women, like Theresa, that they themselves were instrumental in this. This may reflect a pattern of women showing devotion through the investment of time to cook from scratch (Parsons, 2016). It may also be consistent with findings by Buck-McFayden (2015) that low-income women cooked from scratch to save money, something described in the next section.

Themes around sufficient, affordable, healthy food emerged when women spoke about CFIs. Some described the reassurance that predictable access to food from CFIs could offer, for example, from knowing that there would be a grocery gift card or good food box coming. Some participants also saw certain CFIs as offering food quality and a low-investment chance for their families to try new and healthy foods without the risk of wasting money on them. They did not express the same concern about a lack of healthy food options at CFIs that they did with regards to food banks. Sometimes participants, like Norah, found their parenting responsibilities impeded their access to community supports.

> Norah (38): If these programs [CFIs] had childcare available, I'd definitely access all of them. I'd take advantage of every single one of them if they had childcare. Because it's the only obstacle I'm facing.

Some parents also saw CFIs as offering a chance for their children to learn about food or for mothers to connect with their children around food.

The good consumer

Most of the participants' approaches to foodwork reflected an emphasis on affordability and securing enough food for their households. These approaches included: optimizing food shopping practices; accessing food through food banks and other community food programs; receiving or bartering resources from/with people in their lives; ensuring enough food for later by preparing food ahead of time, ensuring leftovers, or preserving; and using equipment such as freezers or slow cookers.

Specific strategies aimed to mitigate food costs through shopping practices constituted a strong thread in our conversations. These included the use of specific grocery stores, coupons, price matching, flyers, grocery lists, generic brands, budgets, bulk shopping, and grocery sale phone apps. Even though market transactions and the exercise of choice were constrained by low

incomes, the women spoke frequently about their efforts to spend wisely, a practice that has been shown in the literature to earn cultural capital.[9] Indeed, Beagan et al. (2015) found that, when purchasing power is constrained, thriftiness can be the simplest way for those who are "closer to necessity" (p. 142) to distinguish themselves as worthy.

Not only does this wide range of shopping practices and other food access strategies begin to illustrate the importance of affordability and the extra foodwork that living on a low income can entail, but it also shows the women's emphasis on individualized and market-based solutions for addressing household food shortages. As an example, here is an exchange with Una about her drawing of a week of food in her household.

> Author: Anything [else] that's important?
>
> Una (35): [pause] Coupons. (…)I'll do the free milk coupon. That's very important to me. (…) They actually give you one coupon per child so it ends up being THREE free bags of milk which is like amazing.

For Una, gift cards provided by community food projects were so important that she highlighted them in her drawing (Figure 2) and discussion. Gift cards represented one way in which the desire to have normalized market engagement presented itself among the women, especially in discussions of community supports. In fact, about a third of participants raised the importance of the gift cards offered by some community programs. The cards provided benefits such as the choice of what and when to buy, as well as being lighter to carry than food donations.

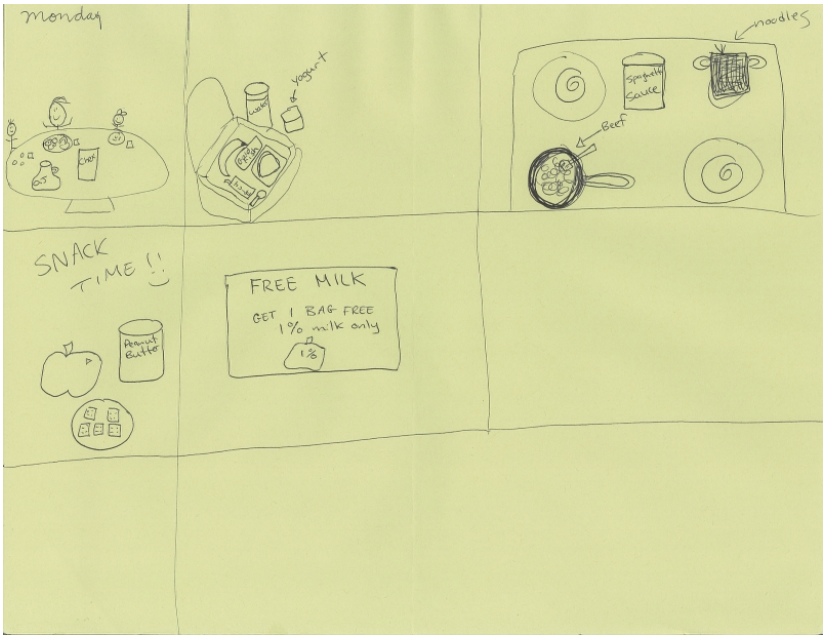

Figure 2:
Drawing by Una

[9] Cultural capital (skills, knowledge, credentials, comfort with certain knowledge/practices) is one of Pierre Bourdieu's forms of capital (including social, cultural and symbolic capital) that Beagan et al. (2015) illustrate as important in distinguishing "good" from "bad" people through their food practices.

Here, Olivia described another facet of programs that appealed to her.

> Olivia (38): The next best food bank at this point is [food bank name] because it's more of a "shopping experience." I get 50 dollars.

Not only did women express the importance of consumer transactions, but Olivia also showed the importance of simply *feeling* like she is shopping. Low-income people, hampered in their ability to fulfill capitalism's dual mandates of earning and spending, can be marked as "flawed consumer[s]" (Power, 2005, p. 651). Women spoke often of the costs that could be incurred or, more often, defrayed by CFI participation A few participants spoke about the opportunity that saving money on food at a CFI could allow for them to purchase food in other ways. For the most part, the women who participated in JustFood, a local twice-monthly food box program that offers a sliding fee range, found it to be economical. Although some women used informal and collective methods of acquiring food, the mothers often showed efforts to be "good consumers" who use market engagement, make their own choices, and spend money wisely.

The good food program participant

In discussing their engagement with community food programs, both CFIs and food banks, participants revealed strong thoughts about personal conduct and values. Notably, despite their focus on health and choice, participants were still careful to temper their demands of food banks.

> Melanie (38): For every complaint people make about the food banks and what they have in there, they do provide you alternatives, you just have to want them.

Melanie's comment here echoed the admonition that "beggars can't be choosers." Her words reflected the way in which some participants felt compelled to act as good food program participants by adjusting their demands around what charitable programs can provide. The following excerpt showed Norah's internal struggle over what she should feel entitled to demand from food banks.

> Norah (38): I find that both food banks have a lot of junk food. (…) And they try to (…) give you more than you'd normally get of something else, right? I don't know, beggars can't be choosers. But I feel that like, I don't know, junk food's obviously not nutritious or really good in any way, except for kids but I mean some people probably LOVE the fact that they get junk food, [laughing] right? (…) I'd rather have something more nutritious. (…) I feel bad saying no when I'm there but I do. I've gotten better. If I don't want something, I will say, "No thank you." I used to just take

> everything because I was too afraid to say no. I didn't want to feel ungrateful or rude.

Here Norah exhibited a tension between the good mother and the good food program participant ideals. On the one hand, she was seeking out sufficient, healthy, and desired food for her family. Yet Norah also illustrated the pressure on food bank participants to temper their demands (in this case by accepting unhealthy food), to not expect to exercise choice, and to not seem ungrateful. While such concerns emerged more with food banks, Alicia showed a similar response when she was not called back by a CFI.

> Alicia (29): I tried to call but nobody ever called me back so rather than keep persistent about it, because that felt really needy and wrong, I just didn't call back 'cause if they didn't call me back, then they're probably full (…) and I don't really want to be a nuisance and I certainly don't want to look a gift horse in the mouth by being demanding, right? [a bit later, after my response] (…) And sometimes I just feel guilty because I know, I know that there are people in way worse situations than me and I don't want to take their spot.

After not receiving a call back, Alicia avoided calling the program again for fear of being "needy," "wrong," ungrateful, and "demanding." This questioning of her own dependence and worthiness illustrated an engagement with the standards of good food program participants who temper their demands, do not take more than they should deserve, and express gratitude for supports offered. Another dimension of this ideal that Alicia, like Norah and other mothers demonstrated, was a concern for others who were in greater need than themselves.[10] Rather than this kind of empathy itself, it is the compulsion that the mothers felt to *situate* (and dismiss) their own family food needs within a hierarchy of others' needs that I find problematic. Certainly, all programs cannot realistically meet the needs of all people. However, such comparisons on the part of participants echo the neoliberal logic of austerity and scarcity, the contention that there is not enough to go around. They show a departure away from guaranteed, universal food access and towards needs-based food provision. In effect, they problematize the perceived selfishness of certain low-income people rather than the inadequacy of charity-based programs or, more importantly, of government enactment of guarantees of food security. As an example, Melanie spoke about her participation in food banks.

> Melanie (38): Like I said, I try to go every OTHER month so that I'm not taking advantage. I have, I have guilt. [laughs] I don't like to take advantage of things if I don't HAVE to so I try to keep the food banks as a necessity not, like I don't want to abuse it. Like I do know some people who would rather go to the food banks so

[10] Power (2005) found that the low-income lone mothers in her study also made distinctions between themselves and those they felt were worse off. She saw these comparisons as a way for the women to justify their hardships and lower their household expectations but also as evidence that the women recognized their hardships as such.

> they can blow their money on stupid things, you know? And I just, I don't agree with that. I can't allow myself to conduct my life that way.

Melanie showed pride in her ability to uphold certain principles. However, despite their personal struggles around perceptions of dependence and worthiness, participants such as Melanie at times used this same moralizing logic regarding other people living on low incomes, particularly those who engaged with food banks. In doing so, the women suggested that these individuals would take too much, spend unwisely, not be grateful for the supports they received, or not make enough of an effort towards healthy feeding practices or productive use of time. In demonstrating a distance from such descriptions, participants also echoed the ideals of the good mother, good consumer, and good food program participant.

Interestingly, participants did not generally speak about food banks' ability to provide more than material goods such as food, and sometimes personal and cleaning supplies or holiday gifts. It was only regarding CFIs that the women spoke about developing friendships, (e.g., the one mother who spoke of having used a community garden had hoped for more community connectedness in that experience), connecting with their children through food activities, learning about growing, preserving, and preparing food, and helping farmers, other people, and the environment through program participation.

Overall, the participants' foodwork narratives were permeated with an engagement with constructions of good mothers, good consumers, and good food program participants. As the women were trying to use food to raise healthy and happy children, they were also trying to belong in a consumer society and, when this was difficult, trying to engage with food programs in ways that might assure both food resources and dignity. These sometimes-competing pressures suggest a need for more exploration into the role that alternative supports, like CFIs, might play.

Discussion and conclusion

This study considered the inaccessibility of maternal foodwork standards for low-income mothers by exploring their daily foodwork practices and their engagement with community supports such as CFIs. It was designed to address a lack of scholarly work on the role that CFIs might play in helping to support this group of mothers in their foodwork. The study found that the women's foodwork represented a complex mix of bare necessity, duty, love, struggle, the desire for connection, and the influence of dominant messages about superior food practices. Their foodwork also involved great effort and resourcefulness.

Participants' range of practical and ideological considerations suggested that they engaged with three connected ideals: the good mother, the good consumer, and the good food program participant. Consistent with previous research, this study found women pursued the ideal of the good mother by assuming primary responsibility for using food to raise healthy and

happy children (Parsons, 2016; Ristovski-Slijepcevic et al., 2010; Slater et al., 2011). It also found mothers responding to the construct of the "flawed consumer" (Power, 2005, p. 651) by attempting to be good consumers and, when this was not possible, to be undemanding food program participants. I found that women tried to be good consumers through market engagement, choice, and spending wisely. Good food program participants were careful to temper their demands, never take advantage of community supports, and demonstrate gratitude for any supports offered.

Participants' foodwork, like that of the mothers in research by Cairns and Johnston (2015), was influenced by positive and negative emotions that were tied to their identities as mothers. In fact, the power of emotion (e.g., pride, love, guilt, shame) to drive the mothers' pursuit of all three ideals (good mother, good consumer, and good food program participant) suggests that the women were not only trying to be *good at* these roles, but were trying to be *good through* their efforts to meet these ideals. This embodiment of maternal morality is recognized by Goodwin and Huppatz (2010) who stated, "This in essence is the power of the good mother: mothers want to be good" (p. 7). These emotions belie the moral regulation of low-income mothers (Little, 1998; Power, 2005). These efforts towards and ways of being good as mothers, consumers, and program participants were necessary for ensuring the well-being (health, happiness, belonging, and food access) of their families. In essence, the women's attempts to be "good" highlight the provisionality of such conditions of well-being.

The findings are aligned with other researchers' perceptions that the good mother, perhaps the most aspirational of the three ideals (Parsons, 2016), has a middle-class orientation that places maternal standards of foodwork further out of reach for low-income mothers (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Parsons, 2016). In its specific exploration of low-income mothers' practices, however, this research revealed that participants also aspired towards a good consumer ideal that helped to cement this unattainability by emphasizing the women's limits as earners and spenders. This good consumer exercises power in the world through market engagement, choice, and spending wisely. Although their spending and choice were constrained, consistent with the understandings of Beagan et al. (2015), the participants demonstrated greater agency here through thriftiness. Constraints around purchasing led participants to seek food access in other ways. In doing so, the women contended with the third, and least aspirational, ideal. This one, the good food program participant, is careful to temper her demands, never take advantage of community supports, and demonstrate gratitude for any supports offered. This ideal is unique to those who are compelled to use food programs because of inadequate incomes- and are therefore deemed "dependent." It de-normalizes non-market means of acquiring food in the community and rests on assumptions of scarcity. However, all three of the ideals valorize self-sufficiency (in the kitchen, marketplace, community), reflecting the construction and denigration of a narrow version of dependence, one that neglects the complexity and interdependence of caring work (Brodie, 1995; Duffy, 2011).

The consideration of the ideals of the good mother, good consumer and good food program participant may prove useful to CFIs for addressing the foodwork challenges of women

who are parenting children while living on low incomes. Beyond addressing logistics, such as childcare and program access, this preliminary research suggests that CFIs should focus on healthy, enjoyable, and often mother-prepared food, as well as affordability, choice, and opportunities for market engagement. Further, it suggests sensitivity around the ways in which mothers may embody dependence and austerity narratives that dictate that they should be grateful for supports and not take advantage of them. It also suggests the importance of belonging, especially in a consumer-based culture. Through providing welcoming atmospheres, building alternative narratives around poverty, and building opportunities for social inclusion, CFIs may help cultivate a sense of belonging. However, through a focus on collective practices and the active inclusion of marginalized people, CFIs may also unsettle prominent assumptions about radical individualism, consumerism, and dependence, in the process perhaps challenging the constraints of good mother, consumer and food program participant ideals. The findings suggest the need to disrupt these ideals as well as disrupting the gendered and classed organizations of power that support them. On a broad scale, they also point to the need to address the income insecurity and related food insecurity that hamper and complicate efforts to ensure families are adequately fed.

The sample for this study may have represented women who were particularly willing to talk about their foodwork stories. The sample also was relatively homogeneous in several ways. In future research, important insights may be gleaned by connecting more deliberately with: mothers who expressly do not like foodwork; young, racialized, new immigrant and/or LGBTQ mothers; as well as a diversity of fathers, to explore their foodwork and the ways in which it engages with CFIs.

While there has been some scholarly attention to CFI engagement, for example around participation levels and impacts on food insecurity, overall, little research has explored the relationship between CFIs and household foodwork. Further study is required regarding the extent to which CFIs may, in fact, assist with closing the gap between foodwork standards and resources, especially for mothers living on low incomes. While more research is necessary, especially regarding the ways CFIs engage with this population, this study suggests some merit in incorporating maternal subjectivities into CFI programming.

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Original Research Article

Faux-meat and masculinity: The gendering of food on three vegan blogs

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between gender and veganism through a critical analysis of food-based discourse on three vegan blogs. As many researchers note, there is a strong association between meat and masculinity in North American society (Nath, 2011; Rothgerber, 2013; Rozin, Hormes, Faith & Wansink, 2012; Ruby & Heine, 2011; Sumpter, 2015). While some researchers argue that the practice of veganism inherently challenges traditional gender norms (Adams, 2015; Potts and Parry, 2010), in these blog posts there is little room for alternative gender performativity. Drawing upon critical feminist and vegan studies literature, and previous discourse analysis of food blogs, this research examines the intersections of gender and food through the practice of veganism. Furthermore, it analyses how the association between meat and masculinity is applied in the gendering of vegan food. I argue that the gendered discourse of vegan food on these blogs reinforces, rather than challenges, traditional gender norms through the use of tropes describing "carnivorous men" and "manly meals" with hopes of satiating male appetites.

Keywords: veganism; gender; meat; masculinity; blogs

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Introduction

"No, no, no. The steak is for her; I ordered the butternut squash quiche" (Coret, 2014).

If North Americans adhered to the gender norms that our pricey television advertisements banked on, men would only consume steak, burgers, ribs and beer, while women would nibble on salads, fruit, and probiotic yogurt; however, this is not the case. Why are certain foods considered appropriate for certain genders, and how are these norms reinforced or challenged? According to Butler (1988), gender is not an inherent, static quality of an individual, so it must be repeatedly constructed through action and language. Likewise, West and Zimmerman (1987) argue that binary gender categories are generally applied through tests in daily interactions to assign the gender category that seems appropriate. Food consumption is one test through which gender identity, norms, and hierarchy can be defined, reinforced, or challenged (Adams, 2015). In this paper, I examine the ways in which gender performance occurs through the discussion of food on vegan blogs.

While some have argued the practice of veganism has the potential to challenge hegemonic meat-eating norms of masculinity (Adams, 2015; Potts & Parry, 2010; Wright, 2015), I will demonstrate that vegan food is masculinized on three North American vegan blogs using discourse identical to normative meat-eating masculinity. Men on the blogs are described as carnivores that need to be convinced or deceived to eat vegan food. Certain foods are also specifically identified on the blogs as appropriate for men, and are described as being "hearty" or "meaty" enough to satisfy male appetites. The blog posts and comments demonstrate a strong effort to convince men to eat vegan food, especially through traditionally meat-based meals, and prevalent emotional and food labour to balance the healthiness of what men eat with the needs of their "carnivorous" appetites.

Literature review

Meat and masculinity

"Gender construction includes instruction about appropriate foods. Being a man in [Western] culture is tied to identities that they either claim or disown—what 'real' mean do and don't do. 'Real' men don't eat quiche. It's not only an issue of privilege, it's an issue of symbolism. Manhood is constructed in [Western] culture, in part, by access to meat eating and control of other bodies" (Adams, 2015, p. xxvii).

There is a strong relationship between meat and masculinity in Western cultures. Many authors argue that the symbolism between meat and masculinity stems from hegemonic ideals of masculinity embodied in the narrative of man as hunter, hunting to provide for their families

while the women and children remain at home to forage (Gelfer, 2013; Nath, 2011; Rozin, Hormes, Faith & Wansink,, 2012; Sobal, 2005; Sumpter, 2015). In archaeological and anthropological studies on early hunter-gatherer societies, an androcentric sexual division of labour between hunting and gathering was the favoured model for understanding pre-historic food acquisition (Geller, 2009). Hunting to procure meat was constructed as a male dominated activity and therefore became strongly associated with masculinity (Rozin et al, 2012). Despite the heterogeneous methods of food acquisition and gendered divisions of labour in past and present gathering and hunting societies, the idea of "man the hunter" is still perpetuated today in Western understandings of masculinity and provision, and can be seen, for example, in the cliché of "bringing home the bacon" (Sobal, 2005).

Eating meat is also considered essential for acquiring the strength needed for "masculine" activities, such as playing football (Brady & Ventresca, 2014). Although there are successful vegan football players, weight lifters, and athletes (Brady & Ventresca, 2014; Greenebaum & Dexter, 2017), traditional values of masculinity foster the notion that meat eating is necessary for strong, male bodies (Roos, Prättälä & Koski, 2001), leading men who have plant-based diets to be perceived as weak and less masculine than their meat-eating counterparts (Ruby & Heine, 2011). Roos et al. (2001) interviewed a sample of Finnish carpenters who were skeptical as to whether vegetables could be considered a proper meal. The carpenters refer to vegetables as "rabbit food" and believe that it is unhealthy to exclude meat from their diet for fear that they would lack the energy required for manual labour (Roos et al., 2001). Overall, the carpenters believe that the energy from meat is required to satisfy their "hearty appetites" (Roos et al., 2001, p. 53).

The portion size, presentation, and healthiness of meals have also been found to influence the gendering of food types. In a pilot study, Cavazza, Guidetti, and Butera (2015) identify hamburgers and Caprese salads as the most archetypal masculine and feminine foods, respectively. In addition to food type, they found that big portions were rated more masculine than small ones, and that food that is roughly presented is considered to be more masculine than elegantly presented food (Cavazza et al., 2015). Furthermore, Stein and Nemeroff (1995) found that individuals who consumed a "healthy" diet high in fruits, vegetables, whole-wheat bread, chicken, and potatoes were seen as less masculine than those who consumed "unhealthy" diets composed of red meat, french fries, donuts, and ice-cream. These large, messy, and unhealthy "masculine" meals are reflected in the large portioned, meat-centered Hungry Man brand dinners whose slogan is "Eat Like a Man" (Lutz, 2015) or the Manwich brand sauce for ground beef sandwiches whose slogan is "A sandwich is a sandwich, but a Manwich is a meal" (Hopkins, 2012).

Critical feminist analysis of food blogs

Since food consumption is a practice by which gender is performed in relation to culturally approved food type, portion, labour, and presentation (Thomas, 2016; Turner, Ferguson, Craig,

Jeffries, & Beaton, 2013), food blogs offer a discursive space where gender norms around food, appetite, and labour can be reproduced, modified, or challenged. Food bloggers share their personal life and food experiences (Boepple & Thompson, 2014) and engage in an interactive community (Lynch, 2010) where readers are encouraged to participate and share their own experiences (Salvio, 2012). The limited studies that focus on gender performativity in food blogs have found that food blogging communities are highly female-dominated (Boepple & Thompson, 2014; Dejmanee, 2016; Lynch, 2010; Salvio, 2012), and that traditional gender norms around food and labour are often reproduced in blogs (Dejmanee, 2016; Salvio, 2012). Salvio (2012) argues that food blogs offer a window into "contemporary domestic culture" (p. 32). However, while bringing domesticity into the public and professional sphere transgresses the traditionally gendered division between spheres of labour, Salvio (2012) found that discourse on the blogs "suggests little critical questioning about women, domestic life, and feminist identities" (p. 38). Dejmanee (2016) agrees, and finds that the potential "empowering entrepreneurialism" offered by professional blogging is undermined by the reproduction of a "conservative, hegemonic femininity" that is required for success in the food blogging community (p. 15).

Salvio (2012), Dejmanee (2016), and Lynch (2010) note that traditional gender norms are further reproduced in the discussions of gender-appropriate food. Salvio (2012) found that solidarity in the food community is based on distinctions between gendered "tastes" that "systematically privilege male power" (p. 34), specifically in regards to red meat. They write: "Rare red meat and food that 'sticks to the ribs' were believed to be a sure route to satisfying the appetites of men. Women, on the other hand, craved dainty, decorative foods such as cucumber tea sandwiches and pink-frosted sugar cookies" (Salvio, 2012, p. 34-35). Dejmanee (2016) notes the significance of "gender reveal cakes," in which the center of a cake is filled with either blue or pink candies to indicate the sex of unborn babies, thus actively reproducing a colour-coded gender binary. Furthermore, in a study of a photography-based food blogging community, Lynch (2010) found that the food bloggers compare the portions and healthiness of their meals with that of their husbands. For example, the bloggers shared photos of their "sliver" of pizza next to their husband's larger piece, or their small portion of bread next to their husband's "mountain" of bread (Lynch, 2010, p. 326). While the studies to date offer some valuable findings, all of the authors stress the potential for further research into online food blogging communities. This explorative case study contributes to this body of feminist food blog analysis, but with a specific focus on the vegan food blogging community.

Gender and veganism

In this section I review some of the studies that have examined gendered practices of veganism, and ask whether practicing veganism provides an opportunity to challenge traditional gender expectations around what food is considered appropriate for men. According to Johnson (2011), a notable feature of vegan demographics in North America is that they are primarily female.

Maurer (2002) suggests that it is likely the perceived femininity of avoiding meat that deters men from adopting the diet (p. 8). This makes sense, as studies have shown that vegetarians are perceived to be weaker and less masculine than omnivores (Minson & Monin, 2012; Rothgerber, 2013; Rozin et al., 2012; Ruby & Heine, 2011). However, this perception may be shifting. A recent study by Thomas (2016) examined the effects that diet has on perceptions of a individual's masculinity and found that omnivorous participants did *not* rate fictional male or female *vegetarian* characters as less masculine than omnivorous ones, but *did* rate *vegan* characters as less masculine than omnivorous ones. Furthermore, vegan characters were rated less masculine if they were vegan for personal beliefs, than if they were vegan for health reasons (Thomas, 2016). This suggests that choosing to be vegan for an external cause is considered to be more in opposition to traditional values of masculinity than adopting a vegan diet out of concern for one's personal health. Furthermore, the finding that vegetarian characters were not considered less masculine but the vegan characters were suggests that vegetarian diets (those without meat that do include other animal products) are becoming less gender defiant for men in North America, while veganism (a diet that contains no animal products, such as meat, fish, dairy, or eggs) remains less well known and further removed from the hegemonic ideal of omnivorous diets for men (Thomas, 2016).

The question remains: does veganism inherently challenge the meat-centred norms of traditional masculinity? Some research suggests that it does, while others find that through hybrid masculinities, veganism can be practiced in such a way as to reproduce hegemonic masculinity. Adams (2015) argues that eliminating the consumption of animal products from one's diet challenges the patriarchal notion that meat is required for strong (male) bodies. Wright (2015) agrees, and suggests that this is because "...men have more to lose by challenging standard dietary options than do women" (p. 108). Potts and Parry (2010) came to a similar conclusion through their examination of violent responses to a study on ethical consumption which stated that vegans may have a stronger sexual preference for people that share similar ethical beliefs. Potts and Parry (2010) argue that the aggressive backlash from omnivorous men who label vegans as "(sexual) losers, cowards, deviants, failures, and bigots" suggests that having sexual preferences based on the absence of meat eating "radically challenges the powerful links between meat-eating, masculinity and virility in western societies" (p. 53). For example, commenters on the American radio talk show website RonFez.net wrote: "I can't date a girl who won't put sausage in her mouth" while another on American opinion site Salon.com described vegans as "bitter, unhappy and morbid people [who] possess a paralyzing inability to give or receive love" (as cited in Potts & Parry, 2010, p. 60). Other men in this study described ways that they would like to sexually consume, rape, or kill vegans, especially those who are female (Potts & Parry, 2010). Potts and Parry (2010) argue that these responses are "entirely consistent with the role meat plays in constructions of masculine sexuality in western culture" (p. 64).

However, other studies argue that vegetarian and vegan practices can also promote the aggression and domination encouraged by traditional masculinity. Irvine (2015) argues that

vegetarian masculinities both reproduce and challenge traditional masculinity in contextually specific ways. They argue that while eating meat is a practice that naturalizes normative masculinity, both omnivorous and vegetarian men engage in similar discourses of traditional masculinity (Irvine, 2015, p. 36). Johnson (2011) came to a similar conclusion by examining masculinity as conveyed in two books that promote veganism for men. Through a feminist content analysis of these two books (*Skinny Bastard: A Kick-in-the-Ass for Real Men Who Want to Stop Being Fat and Start Getting Buff* by Freedman and Barnouin (2009), and *Meat is for Pussies: A How-to-Guide for Dudes Who Want to Get Fit, Kick Ass and Take Names* by Joseph (2010)), Johnson (2011) argues that men often choose to become vegan within traditional constructs of masculinity and that vegan marketing directed towards men still employs traditional masculine ideologies. Johnson (2011) proposes that these two books draw upon ideas of traditional masculinity while advocating for a diet that eliminates meat consumption because they both promote the adoption of a vegan diet for reasons of personal health and fitness. While both books discuss health as the main motivator behind adopting a vegan diet, and also advocate veganism for environmental reasons, Johnson (2011) points out that they make minimal connections to animal rights. Instead, Johnson (2011) argues that a vegan diet motivated by empathy and compassion for other animals is discouraged by most masculinities, as traditional masculinities promote aggression and self-interest. The gendering of motivations for adopting a vegan diet is also supported by Thomas' (2016) findings discussed above, that fictional characters who adopted veganism for personal reasons were rated less masculine than those who became vegan for health reasons.

A recent study by Greenebaum and Dexter (2017) is the most comprehensive study to-date on the gendering of male vegan practices. The authors interviewed twenty vegan men to see how masculinity is negotiated in their practices of veganism. They found that the interviewees displayed a sort of hybrid masculinity by "modifying values associated with veganism and femininity to align with traditional masculine standards" (Greenebaum & Dexter, 2017). Furthermore, they found that this practice served to "actively challenge and reinforce hegemonic ideals of manhood" (Greenebaum & Dexter, 2017). Similarly to "Hegans," the macho, empowered male vegans described by Wright (2015), Greenebaum and Dexter (2017) found that "Veganism… strengthened [the men's] sense of self, and in effect, reinforced their masculinity" (p. 7). Furthermore, the vegan men said that increasing numbers of famous male vegan athletes were reducing the stigma of weakness associated with veganism, and were "living proof that one could retain a traditional sense of masculinity while opting out of meat and dairy" (Greenebaum & Dexter, 2017, p. 7). While this challenges the link between meat and masculinity, it simultaneously reinforces the hegemonic values of strength and power valued by traditional masculinity. In conclusion, Greenebaum and Dexter (2017) argued that while the vegan men challenged the narrow definition of traditional masculinity, they also reproduced gender inequality in their discussion of how men legitimized the practice of veganism.

Methods

For this preliminary research into how vegan food is discussed in gendered ways, I selected three vegan blogging websites with content composed of vegan recipes that also included some personal discussion in the blog posts. Blog websites were identified as an ideal data source to answer these research questions because they are public, easier to access than offline fieldwork methods which may require time and funding for travel and longer time in the field, and offer personal author and commenter narratives that can be analyzed (Snee, 2010). Although there are disadvantages to this method, discussed in the limitations below, the previous studies using food blogs discussed above have shown them to be a useful source of ethnographic data.

This research seeks to answer whether or not vegan foods are being discussed in gendered ways. It considers: whether certain foods are deemed appropriate for certain genders; whether the food is being discussed using gendered or gender non-specific language; if the food is associated with certain gender ideals; and whether there are any specific features of an ingredient or food dish that are being gendered. Based on these questions, I constructed the following criteria for selecting the blogs. First, it was important that the authors have been blogging in the vegan community for five or more years. Five was an arbitrarily chosen length of time, but was considered to be a legitimate amount of time for food practices to change (see food choice trajectories in Devine, Connors, Bisogni, Sobal, 1998), and for community building to occur within online vegan communities (Cherry, 2006). Second, a specific cultural region was chosen to facilitate cross-comparison between the blogs. According to Alexa.com (2016a), a website traffic counter that provides rankings based on data from the previous three months, the most popular vegan blogs appear to be from North America. Third, the website had to contain elements common to a blogging format, including dated entries, ability for readers to comment, and personal "diary" elements (Snee, 2010). A sample size of three blogs was determined to be appropriate to generate a comparative sample for this preliminary research. The final selection of blogs was chosen based on their content, structure and demographics. I chose the two most popular vegan blogs according to Alexa.com, however, since the most popular blogs were exclusively written by self-identified women, I included a male-authored vegan blog for gender diversity

The first website, *Minimalist Baker*, is run by an American "husband-wife team." This blog was the most popular American vegan blog at the time of selection, according to Alexa.com (2016a). However, the wife of the pair, Dana, is the sole author of the selected blog posts. The second website*, Oh She Glows*, is run by Angela, a Canadian self-identified female, mother and wife who works at home running the website. *Oh She Glows,* was the second most popular vegan blog (Alexa.com, 2016b). The third website, *Vegan Dad*, whose name is not provided on the website and will therefore be referred to as Vegan Dad, is run by a Canadian father, husband, and university professor.

Next, I chose the twenty most recent blog posts from each website as of May 7, 2016. Posts included those posted that day to as far back as December 16, 2014. Based on the symbolic

significance of meat to hegemonic masculinity in the standard North American diet, I used the search function of each site and the word "meat" to select five additional vegan "meat" themed posts per blog. These included recipes that would traditionally be animal-based but instead use a plant-based substitute such as lentil taco "meat" or chickpea "meatballs" for further comparison between omnivorous animal-based dishes and the exclusion of animal products in vegan meals.

A total of seventeen blog posts between the websites were excluded on the basis of lacking a recipe or diary type element to the post (for example, posts about giveaways, app releases, or site updates) (n=7), for containing only a recipe and no pretext (n=6), for repetition of the same recipe on a site (n=3), or a post about the "meat" of a coconut when searching for vegan versions of traditionally animal-based recipes (n=1). Data collection continued until a total of twenty-five blog posts were chosen from each website. Therefore, a total of seventy-five blog posts from the three authors and their relevant comments were selected for analysis. The posts were collected and saved as PDF documents on May 7, 2016. They were then hand-coded and grouped into recurring themes based on the research questions outlined above.

Limitations

There are limitations to this study that need to be considered before the results are discussed. This study looks at three blog authors who present as white, middle class, adult, cis-gendered and heterosexual North American blog authors who, for leisure or self-employment, spend their time writing about food, testing recipes, and running a website. This means that there is narrow representation of experiences and perspectives from the authors of these websites. Another important limitation to note is that the data are collected both from the blogs' authors as well as the commenters on the blogs. It is important to remember when reading this discussion of blog posts and comments that, unless otherwise specified, the commenter is of unknown gender, sex, diet, race, ethnicity, geographic location, age, sexual orientation, or any other personal feature. This is because while the genders of the blog authors are mentioned on their websites, the genders of the commenters on the blog are often unknown, as they are solely marked with a self-chosen username and do not discuss themselves in the third person. However, it is also important to note that the commenters on the blogs are composed of overwhelmingly traditionally female names and the comments on the blogs almost exclusively discuss making food for male partners and family members. This finding will be discussed further in the results section. While it is a potential limitation that the identifiers provided may be falsified in an online context, this does not pose a significant threat on the basis that a similar risk is possible in any type of study, whether in person, via survey, or online (Hookway, 2008, p. 97).

About the vegan blogging community and selected blogs

In the search for vegan blogs that would be suitable for this project there were gendered trends within the online vegan community that became apparent. Reading the "about" sections of a variety of vegan websites, the most glaring trend is the lack of male vegan bloggers in the blogging world. Self-identified women write all of the most popular North American vegan blogging sites I found, which was a common finding for other food blog researchers (Boepple & Thompson, 2014; Dejmanee, 2016; Lynch, 2010; Salvio, 2012). Another significant difference is the style of blogs that the few male-run vegan blogs adopt. The majority of female run vegan blogs I found focus on similar themes of caring for family members, daily food work, and healthy living. The few popular male-run vegan blogs that I found, with the exception of *Vegan Dad*, focus solely on athleticism or are highly thematic such as *Thug Kitchen* (2016), *Vegan Stoner* (2016), or video blogs such as *The Vegan Zombie* (2016) or the *Vegan Black Metal Chef* (2016). The theme-based blogs do not discuss food as a daily task of making food for family members, but rather present it as a hobbyist practice. Interestingly, Cairns, Johnston, and Baumann (2010) also found in their study of thirty American "foodies," that the women describe the work of cooking for others "through ideals of care that prioritize the daily nourishment of the family" while the men "framed cooking as a leisure activity, even when they were also engaging in daily food preparation within the home" (p. 605). The male-run vegan websites, including *Vegan Dad*, include very few discussions of personal life, and instead focus on the technique of the recipe. Many of the male-run vegan websites also include few recipe posts. One website, named after and run by the vegan athlete and author Rich Roll (2016), has recipe posts that are all authored by a single individual named Julie Piatt. A Google search revealed that Julie Piatt is Rich Roll's wife. The search into vegan blogs for this study reveals initial findings that men are scarce in the vegan blogging community, and that, aside from *Vegan Dad*, cooking on male-run vegan blogs is often presented as an individualistic hobby or a boost to personal athleticism.

Minimalist Baker

Minimalist Baker has been running since 2012, but Dana, the primary author, has been involved in the blogging world since 2010. The goal of the blog is to share simple and easy recipes. Each of the recipes on the site is either made with less than 10 ingredients, made with only one bowl/pot, *or* takes 30 minutes or less to prepare (Shultz, n.d.). Furthermore, almost all of the recipes on the site are gluten free and vegan (Shultz, n.d.). Dana and her husband John say that they "don't subscribe to any one diet," but that their recipes are plant-based, and recipes that include honey, for example, always include a vegan substitute in parentheses. Their "About" (Shultz, n.d.) page says that Dana is lactose intolerant, and for that and other health reasons, both Dana and John eat mostly plant-based diets.

Oh She Glows

The author of *Oh She Glows*, Angela, alternates between identifying as "vegan" or "plant-based" due to threatening responses from readers who argue that her practice isn't vegan enough (Liddon, 2015a). In the "About" page (Liddon, 2008), Angela lists, in order: health, animal welfare, and environment as her motivations for adopting a vegan diet. The goal of the website, she says, is to share "healthy, unprocessed, and animal-product free recipes that [she creates] to keep [herself] and [her] family inspired about tasty good-for-you food" (Liddon, 2008). She adds that her husband lost twenty pounds and lowered his high cholesterol without dieting or medication due to her "creating healthy plant-based recipes that would win over [her] husband's approval." She adds that since "Eric was a devout fast-food lover... [it] was a difficult task" (Liddon, 2008). Furthermore, she writes that "[her] goal is to inspire [the reader] to embrace more plant-based foods in [their] diet without feeling the least bit deprived" and that her "recipes are great for meat-eaters and picky kids too!" (Liddon, 2008).

Vegan Dad

Vegan Dad has no "About" page, and personal information available on the site is limited. Based on the few personal details shared, it can be determined that "Vegan Dad" is a history professor at an Ontario university (*Vegan Dad*, 2012), who has Crohn's disease (*Vegan Dad*, 2015). According to a post on giving up cheese (*Vegan Dad*, 2008a), "Vegan Dad" began the gradual transition to veganism after watching *Super Size Me* (Spurlock, 2004), and now practices veganism for health, animal rights, and environmental reasons. Most of "Vegan Dad's" posts involve cooking meals for his kids with an occasional mention of "Vegan Mom" (*Vegan Dad*, 2016). According to the blog archive, "Vegan Dad" has been blogging on this site since September 2007. The motto of his website is: "I only make one claim about my food: it's vegan."

Results

In an analysis of the seventy-five blog posts and their comments, several major themes arise. This analysis considers them from three perspectives: gendered appetites, food type, and food labour. Discussions of gender appropriate food types on the blogs reveal that some vegan food items are described using gendered language, particularly meat alternative-based dishes; that men are often described as "carnivores" who are unwilling to eat vegetable-based meals; and that some recipes, especially meat alternative-based dishes, are promoted as suitable and enjoyable for men. This analysis will demonstrate that the needs and preferences of men are the primary focus of discussions in the blog posts, and that while practicing veganism provides an

opportunity to transgress the food norms promoted by traditional masculinity, vegan food is largely discussed on these blogs in support of traditional gender ideologies.

Even though it's vegan, it's still filling!

On the blogs, there is a clear effort to promote vegan recipes as being satisfying in order to counter narratives that consider meatless meals to be lacking. Adjectives such as "hearty," "meaty," "satisfying," "huge," and "messy" are used to masculinize the meal, and to reassure the reader that these meals would satisfy even the "heartiest" appetites. Additionally, the blog authors highlight the recipes' protein-content and ability to satisfy large appetites. These descriptive words are most often used in recipes for vegan meatballs, pulled pork, Sloppy Joes, taco meat, and burgers. For example, Dana describes her "Easy Grillable Veggie Burgers" recipe as "hearty, simple, flavorful, satisfying, crowd-pleasing, [and] tasty" (Shultz, 2016). In the discussion of the recipe, Dana adds: "Did I mention that each burger... has nearly 14 grams of protein?! Trust me, you're going to go home satisfied after eating one of these (especially when paired with a hearty salad, sweet potato wedges, or crispy baked matchstick fries)... Hearty enough to please meat-eaters and vegans alike!" (Shultz, 2016).

The author makes an effort to reassure the reader that even though the burger contains no meat, it still has a lot of protein, which traditional masculinity values for men's strength (Adams, 2015), and will be satisfying enough for meat-eaters, especially if paired with fries or a salad that is also "hearty." A commenter named Ellison (2016) agrees with Dana's claims, and writes: "This is one of the few veggie dishes I have made that did not leave me hungry an hour later." Additionally, a commenter named Debbie (2016) says that they and their husband enjoyed Minimalist Baker's recipe for "Vegan Sloppy Joes," and their husband, the "beanpole," who can "magically pack away lots of food," ate "2 sandwiches on hearty rolls," while Debbie only "ate one." Debbie's (2016) comment not only points out that their husband approves of the meal, but also that he ate twice the amount that she did. Just as Lynch (2010) found on the health food blogs, Debbie (2016) compares their petite serving to their male partner's large serving and appetite.

Dana from *Minimalist Baker* also uses words that describe the large, generous, and potentially excessive features of this meal. As mentioned in the literature review, Cavazza et al. (2015) found that large portion size and rough presentation symbolize the masculinity of a dish in addition to the meaty food type. In Dana's instructions for the vegan pulled pork sandwich, she writes: "Place *generous* portions of slaw on the bottom buns, top with *generous* serving of BBQ jackfruit, and cashews. Serve with *extra* BBQ sauce! [emphasis added]" (Shultz, 2015). Angela uses similar language to describe how readers should eat her "Lentil-Walnut Tacos," writing that they should: "Stuff into face, make HUGE mess, repeat until you can't fit one more bite, craving conquered [emphasis original]" (Liddon, 2014). This type of language describing large portion sizes and aggressive consumption was only found on meat substitute-based recipes,

effectively making them "safe" for men to eat without jeopardizing their sense of masculinity through consuming "feminine" vegetable-based foods.

"Man Food List"

"One thing he says he could not give up is an Italian beef sammich [sic] so I plan to take your recipe and try to Italian beef-it-up to try to get him to the right side of the force" Chigirl86 (2011)

There are specific recipes on the blogs that are recommended as "partner-friendly recipes" and others which have many comments suggesting that they are popular for pleasing male partners. Blog posts that specify whether or not the recipe is appropriate or enjoyed by specific genders identify dishes such as burgers and lunchmeat as particularly satisfying for men. One specific blog post by *Oh She Glows* (Liddon, 2016) is the primary source for discussions on male-appropriate vegan foods. The discussion, titled "omnivore-friendly recipes," arises from a question asked by a reader named Alyce, who writes: "My partner is a big meat eater and carb loader—I was wondering if you could let me know which recipes of yours you would recommend to try on him first to get him into it" (Liddon, 2016). Angela responds by saying that she is "all about" "partner–friendly recipes" and that if her husband Eric doesn't like a recipe that she makes, then "it doesn't get posted on [her] blog" (Liddon, 2016). Here, Angela heteronormatively uses the term "partner-friendly recipes" synonymously with the term "omnivore-friendly recipes" that she uses in the title of the post. Since the vast majority of commenters on *Oh She Glows*, as well as the other blogs, describe their partners to be men, this means that "partner-friendly" recipes are often catered towards men, and assumes that those men are omnivores. One commenter says they would add Angela's recipe for "Speedy Teriyaki Bowls" to the "Man Food List" since their "bf… managed to chomp away an entire bowl, and has requested the recipe AGAIN today [emphasis in original]" (Evelyn, 2016). The "partner-friendly" recipes in this post are only discussed in respect to male partners; therefore the particular recipes that the commenters suggest are ones that they consider to be appropriate not just for cooking for their own partners, but for other people to make for their male partners as well.

Carnivorous men need some convincing

In the seventy-five blog posts, there are many commenters who describe how they are surprised that they convinced their partners to like a vegan dish, or divulge that they had to disguise the vegetables or legumes in a meal to get their male partners to eat it. Many of the readers write that *even* carnivorous men liked the vegan food they had made, and suggest that men's approval

means the recipe was a success. The majority of these comments are made on recipes for Sloppy Joes, tacos, meatballs, burgers, crispy tofu stir-fry, and jackfruit "pulled pork."

On *Oh She Glows*' recipe for "Ultimate Green Taco Wraps with Lentil-Walnut Taco Meat," Erica (2014) writes, "I've been looking for meat-free Mexican dishes that would satisfy my carnivore boyfriend" and a commenter named Rachel (2014) comments, "It's honestly one of the best things I've made… My husband and son tried it and loved the 'meat' and they are both committed carnivores." On *Minimalist Baker*'s recipe for "Sun-dried Tomato and Basil Meatballs," Milla (2015) writes that "even [their] non-vegan husband couldn't stop eating them," Rachael (2015) writes that, "even [their] carnivore boyfriend loved them," and DanDan (2016) says that they "even got the 'carnivore' to enjoy it!" Martha (2015) made *Minimalist Baker*'s "BBQ Jackfruit Sandwiches" and writes: "although he is the carnivore of the family, [their husband] thought it was delicious!" And finally, Maddy (2015), who self-identifies as a vegetarian, made this recipe that "fooled" their "4 heavy meat-eating male" housemates into thinking it was pork. Maddy (2015) adds that one housemate "kept talking about how good his bbq 'pork' was."

There are additional commenters who confess that their husbands were unaware that they were eating vegan food. Rosey (2014) comments on *Minimalist Baker*'s recipe for "Simple Vegan Meatballs" that they have made the recipe twice and that their "carnivore husband likes it too" but "has no idea he is eating tempeh." Ashley (2016) comments on *Minimalist Baker*'s recipe for "Vegan Gluten Free Mac 'N' Cheese" that their husband "didn't even know it was vegan! :)." Jessica (2016) also writes that they made *Minimalist Baker*'s "Refined Sugar Free Turtle Brownies" recipe for their husband and they both "LOVED [emphasis in original]" them, but their husband is "totally in the dark about them being black bean brownies, [and they] have no plans to tell him." In these examples, the commenters choose not to disclose to their husbands that they were eating tempeh, dairy free macaroni and cheese, and legumes in their dessert.

The partners of men on these blogs comment that their boyfriends and husbands don't like vegan food, are surprised if they like vegan food, or disguise the vegan nature of the food they serve to men. Interestingly, the act of sneaking healthy food and vegetables into food is a technique espoused by Jessica Seinfeld (2007) in her cookbook *Deceptively Delicious: Simple Secrets to Get Your Kids Eating Good Food*. On the blogs this technique is used on adult men, rather than children, to get them to eat vegetables and other vegan food. For example, when Angela of *Oh She Glows* writes of how she "converted" Eric to liking Brussel sprouts by cooking them until they had a "meaty texture," to which she adds the disclaimer, "for a veggie, that is" (Liddon, 2015b). In addition to making sure vegan food is "manly" enough and satisfying to their male partners, commenters on the blogs describe the parental, caring labour they undertake to ensure that their husbands are eating healthy.

Cooking healthy food for men

Among the plethora of examples where commenters exclaim that *even* the "meat-loving" men they have cooked for enjoyed the vegan recipe, there were only two examples where a commenter mentions whether or not their wife or girlfriend enjoyed a recipe, and only one example where a commenter mentions that their daughter liked the recipe (Michelle, 2015). Michellebee (2009) writes that their "Veg Life Partner" chose veggie meat over salami for her lunch and a commenter named Starkdoulos (2011) says that the recipe tasted just like ribs and that their wife was amazed. The remaining commenters on these blogs describe cooking for their male partners and the challenges of finding vegetable-based dishes that "carnivore" men like.

One of the main examples of this is in a post by Angela (Liddon, 2010) where she answers readers' questions about Eric's meat and dairy consumption. While Angela follows a vegan diet, Eric is an omnivore (Liddon, 2010). In response to when and how much meat Eric eats and if he is eating dairy, Angela (Liddon, 2010) responds: "He said he eats meat about 3 times a month. We keep frozen organic meat in the freezer when he buys it and when he gets a craving I will cook him some or he will BBQ a burger for himself. He enjoys a juicy beef burger now and then… He slowly cut cheese out of his diet after the doctor told him his LDL cholesterol was high a few years ago."

This paragraph reveals information about gendered food and gender-appropriate food labour. Eric is an omnivore, and Angela says that he only eats meat three to four times per month. The words "cravings" and "juicy," serve to reclaim Eric's masculinity, because while he cares more about what he is eating for his health, he still can't fully resist his desires for juicy meat. Eric's reduction in meat and dairy consumption is motivated primarily by health concerns, and his continued consumption of these products when he "craves it," poses little threat to his masculinity (Johnson, 2011). Finally, Angela mentions that while Eric seldom eats animal products, and she herself runs a vegan blog, when Eric gets a craving for meat she "will cook him some, or he will BBQ a burger for himself." Here we can see that not only will Angela, who is vegan, prepare meat for her husband, who could do so himself, but that if he makes himself meat, it will be over the fire of a grill. Consequently, Angela's (2010) description of her husband's meat eating practices mirror the findings of Nath (2011), who found that barbequing meat is considered to be a socially acceptable form of food labour performed by men, and Sobal (2005) who found that wives who do not eat meat are pressured to cook meat to satisfy their husbands.

The subsequent comments on this post all recount the same tales; partner after partner describing how they make healthy meals for their junk food-loving husbands and boyfriends. A commenter named Megan (2010) writes:

> When I started dating my husband, he was a "junk food vegan." His typical lunch was an order (or two) of french fries and breadsticks from our college cafeteria! After 8 years of his vegan diet, he decided he felt TOO restricted and wanted to add meat

> back into his diet- but he was craving junk food meat, like chicken nuggets and double cheeseburgers. Ugh. I think he's just got to get it out of his system after all the restriction! Fortunately, he will eat healthy, vegetable-centric dinners if I prepare them.

Megan describes the restriction in his diet, not as a lack of fruits, vegetables, or dairy, but a lack of meat. And while Megan's husband now eats meat, his diet still consists of junk food. However, he will eat vegetables if Megan prepares them for him. In this example meat is considered a necessary part of an "unrestricted" diet for Megan's husband, despite the lack of fruits and vegetables. Additionally, Megan is positioned as responsible for making healthy, "vegetable-centric" meals to care for their husband's health.

This type of emotional and care work was also found by Cairns et al. (2010) in their study of American "foodies." Many of the female foodies interviewed mention the importance of choosing and cooking food that is healthy for their children and spouses, while Cairns et al. (2010) note that "the theme of family health was notably absent among men [they] interviewed" (p. 605). In their study of families' rationales for women's unequal responsibility for food labour across three ethno-cultural groups in Canada, Beagan, Chapman, D'Sylva, and Bassett (2008) found that "male partners suggested that because women did most of the shopping and food preparation the healthfulness of the family diet was in their hands" (p. 662). Furthermore, they found that responsibility for family health is a way that women justify their over-involvement in household food work, and their duty as good partners and mothers (Beagan et al., 2008). The women argue that while they don't think food work is women's work, they "[had] to do all the foodwork or their families will eat nothing but 'junk'" (Beagan et al., 2008, p. 662).

Room for alternative masculinities?

The majority of discussion on these blog posts reproduce traditional masculine ideals such as: real men eat meat; men need meat to be strong and satisfy their hearty appetites; and men need to be convinced to eat vegetables. While the genders of the commenters are unknown, what is obvious is that the people participating in discussions on the vegan blogs are almost exclusively performing food labour to satisfy their male partners. Furthermore, there is no mention of a "Woman Food List" or of specific vegan recipes that are appropriate for women, since their vegan status pre-labels them as appropriate for female diets.

Perhaps it is for this reason that many of the studies mentioned in the literature review argue that men are hesitant to adopt a vegan diet, and the masculinity of those that do adopt a vegan diet must be reinforced with other qualities valued by traditional masculine ideals through acts "reclaiming of privilege lost" (Rogers, 2008, p. 296). For example, Coret (2014) describes instances where his gender has been policed by people that he knows for not being masculine because of his vegetarian diet, often being told that he "[eats] like a girl," and that he feels the need to compensate for his vegetarianism to gain the respect of his girlfriend's ex-military,

football-loving father. While the evidence in the blog posts may overwhelmingly appear to support traditional gender ideals of masculine, meat-loving men and commenters performing the labour to care for the health of their male partners, perhaps there is passive subversion of traditional gender norms within these posts as well. While many of the posts have an overwhelming presence of commenters divulging that they perform these food tasks for men, and few commenters describing performing these food tasks for women or trans* partners, there are also many posts on the three blogs that have no gender signification for the food. Many comments have no reference to anyone of known gender, and may be written by a woman, man, or trans* individual making food for themselves.

Vegan Dad's blog stands out as a challenge to traditional gender norms. In some ways, Vegan Dad reproduces traditional ideals of masculinity by limiting the "diary" aspect of his posts, often substituting it for a technical discussion of the recipe, and by featuring few vegetable-based recipes. This is similar to the other male-run vegan food blogs that have few "diary" type discussions, and it reinforces the idea that male cooking focuses on skill and special events, rather than the caring and daily food work described by women who cook (Cairns et al., 2010). However, Vegan Dad does stand in opposition to most of the traditional masculine ideals discussed in this paper. He is the only blog author of the three who is primarily vegan for ethical reasons, which Johnson (2011) argues is a threat to traditional masculinity. He, moreover, describes making meals for his children and wife on the blog, and features posts on making kid-friendly foods and performing domestic tasks such as planning meals and cooking dried beans in bulk and preserving them. Additionally, out of the seventy-five blog posts, there is only one blatant challenge to traditional masculine ideals, and Vegan Dad writes it on his post for "Shaved Seitan BBQ Sandwich." A commenter named Mark (2008) writes regarding the recipe that: "[they] must convince [their] wife to make this for [them] so [they] can take it to work and make a total fool of [themself]." Mark's (2008) comment implies that it is their wife's responsibility to make their lunches and that having a vegan BBQ sandwich at work would affectively "make a fool" of Mark. However, Vegan Dad (2008b) responds to Mark's comment by saying: "Mark, dudes are doing it for themselves in the kitchen these days!" Aside from Vegan Dad's explicit questioning of food labour as feminine work, the remaining discussions lack an awareness of how food type, appetites, and labour are gendered on the blogs.

Conclusion

While this paper presents an analysis of seventy-five vegan blog posts that feature many instances where traditional gender norms are reinforced, perhaps, like in the example of *Vegan Dad*, there are opportunities for vegan men and women to challenge these norms of what food is appropriate for certain genders, and whose responsibility it is to prepare it. However, the examples of motivation for veganism in this study are limited. I would therefore encourage future research in this area to evaluate how the motivations behind adopting a vegan diet

influence how vegan food and its creation is perceived as a gendered, non-gendered, or gender subversive act. Just as Johnson (2011) argues that adopting a vegan diet for health reasons may not challenge, and can even serve to reinforce the ideals of traditional masculinity, a study investigating individuals that are explicitly vegan for ethical reasons may produce different results.

Discussions of gender appropriate food types on the blogs reveal that some vegan food items are described using gendered language, especially meat alternative based dishes; that men are often described as unwilling to eat vegetable-based meals; that some recipes, often meat alternative-based dishes, are promoted as suitable and enjoyable for men; and that "carnivorous" men appear to be the most valued measure of what constitutes a successful vegan recipe. In this cultural context of primarily white, middle-class, heterosexual, cis-gendered North American vegans, the same hegemonic gender norms are being reinforced through narratives of vegan food. However, because these ideals are socially constructed, and not permanent categories of reality, they can also be changed, redefined, ignored, or challenged. In the blog posts analyzed in this study there is evidence of both the reinforcement and challenging of traditional gender norms. Fundamentally, eliminating the consumption of animal products from one's diet challenges the patriarchal notion that meat is required for strong (male) bodies (Adams, 2015) and provides an opportunity for alternative practices. However, a vegan practice that removes animal products from a diet but espouses hyper-masculine motivations, gender appropriate food types, and male-serving food labour ultimately does not challenge traditional gender norms.

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Audio-Visual Work

Voir le jour: Breastfeeding and the commons

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Abstract

This research-creation project focuses on breastfeeding in public as an act of claiming space for the common good. Its audio-visual component, "Voir le jour," is part of a larger work that includes community screenings and locative storytelling. "Voir le jour" consists of recordings of nursing mothers, breastfeeding experts, and activists sharing their stories about the joys and challenges of breastfeeding outside the home. These stories are accompanied by a slideshow of photographs depicting moms nursing in public spaces. "Voir le jour" renders the labour of mothering audible and visible in public spaces, including online. It was created in part for use by the breastfeeding support organization Nourri-Source Montréal. "Voir le jour" contests the notion that "public" and "private" are distinct spatial categories. The fact that breastfeeding is commonly relegated to the sphere of domestic activity is a testament to the tenacious grip of patriarchy in everyday life, and leads to isolation for many new mothers. The discomfort that may be felt in response to seeing intimate experiences between mothers and babies is part of transforming the myth that private and public activities and spaces are discrete and separate spheres.

Keywords: performance and mothering; breastfeeding and public space; intimate citizenship; new maternalisms; mothering and public space; affective labour; common good

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I am a multimedia and performance artist, researcher, writer, educator and mother. My work focuses on making things public, and centers on the connections between taste and place. "Voir le jour" is an audio-visual work that presents breastfeeding as an act of claiming space for the common good. I use the term "common good" to mean that the pursuit of individual happiness is connected to the well-being of all members of society.[1] Bringing breastfeeding into the light of day and accommodating nursing mothers outside the home has the added advantage of making public spaces more inclusive for everyone. While capitalist and patriarchal economies are driven by the goal of individual profit, common goods are those resources that are of benefit to all members of a community.[2]

The audio-visual component of "Voir le jour" is based on recordings from interviews that I conducted with nursing moms, breastfeeding experts, and activists who shared their stories about breastfeeding in public. These stories are accompanied by a slideshow depicting moms nursing in public spaces. Through community screenings and online publication, "Voir le jour" renders the labour of mothering audible and visible in public spaces.[3] It contests the notion that "public" and "private" are distinct spatial categories.[4] The fact that breastfeeding is commonly

[1] The point of the commons from my perspective is to create a shared space in which varied needs and interests can be expressed and served. Like Nancy Fraser, I believe that "a plurality of competing publics better promote the ideal of participatory parity than does a single, comprehensive, overarching public" (Habermas and the Public Sphere 122). Furthermore, participation in the commons can and should be expressed in non-verbal ways too. The video "Voir le jour" communicates affectively the experiences of mothers not only through their words, but also through tone of voice, laughter, hesitations and imagery.

[2] Breastmilk is ideally formulated to provide all of the nutrition that human babies require for their first six months of life. Furthermore, it is usually free — one of the rare foods that do not have to be purchased. As such, breastfeeding is the primary form of food sovereignty because it is produced independently, it is nutritionally and culturally appropriate, and it is ecologically and economically sustainable. Breastfeeding is thus a common good in the sense that it offers the ideal foundational food on which to raise future generations. More than this, creating public spaces that support breastfeeding benefits everyone in society because it promotes gender parity by recognizing maternal labour. Not to mention the fact that making spaces conducive to breastfeeding also makes them accessible to a wider range of people, such as those using wheelchairs or needing extra space to sit and move around.

[3] "Voir le jour" is part of a larger volunteer project that I am working on for the breastfeeding support organization Nourri-Source Montréal to help promote their web and mobile phone application La Route du Lait. This tool displays a map of the city that indicates participating businesses where nursing mothers are welcomed and provided a place to sit and breastfeed without having to make a purchase. Twenty participants have contributed photos and stories to the project, which I have used to create the audio-visual work published here. I have also culled photos from Flickr's Creative Commons archive online. "Voir le jour" is being screened at events, the first of which was the launch of La Route du Lait, where it was projected in the front window of Senthé : Salon de Thé in Montréal (one of the participating businesses in La Route du Lait). The next part of this project will involve uploading the stories that I have recorded as .mp3 files directly onto La Route du Lait.

[4] A rich feminist scholarship theorizes and challenges the hierarchies and binaries that structure society and thought. See for example Pratt and Rosner (2012), who write that: "Intimacy suggests something hidden away from the larger world, apparent only to the one or few on the inside. It refers to that which is walled off from the public sphere, from governance and regulation, from oversight. Intimacy has been traditionally associated with the feminine—and, not coincidentally, has sometimes been sidelined in scholarly inquiries. Feminist approaches to the intimate have sought to redress this exclusion and have distinguished within the sphere of intimacy a number of rubrics, prominently including feeling and affect; attachments to friends, families, and lovers; and the personal. Looking more closely at

relegated to the sphere of domestic activity is a testament to the tenacious grip of patriarchy in everyday life, and leads to isolation for many new mothers. The discomfort that may be instigated by seeing intimate experiences between mothers and babies is part of transforming the myth that private and public activities and spaces are discrete and separate spheres.[5]

Why is this important? Infant formula offers mothers and families an important option and can even save lives. It should thus be supported as a choice. However, in many cases, women who are physically capable of breastfeeding lack the social support to make it equally available as an option. One Canadian study shows that only 13.8% of mothers continue to breastfeed exclusively for the first six months of life, as recommended by the World Health Organization, Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Canadian Paediatric Society and others (Al-Sahab et al, 2010). Its authors write that: "Risk factors for early breastfeeding termination were [also] found to be associated with early hospital discharge, minimal breastfeeding support and receiving advice on formula feeding." Women who decide to breastfeed do so within a dominant culture that favours formula feeding.[6] Common barriers to breastfeeding include low income, belonging to an ethnic minority, youth, and full-time employment (Dennis, 2002). Studies show that these challenges can more likely be overcome with the help of social support networks.[7] It is particularly important to point out that access to education and economic resources significantly increase the likelihood of breastfeeding, meaning that promoting breastfeeding as a choice for mothers is a matter of social justice.[8] What I mean by this is that taking breastfeeding seriously for the common good entails making social benefits such as education, paid maternity leave, and on-site childcare and nursing/pumping rooms in the

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the development of this work can help us to see the diverse ways in which the discourse of intimacy can be connected to that of the global" (4-5).

[5] In the field of visual and performance art, public/private binaries have been contested by artists such as Mierle Ukeles Laderman, who in the 1970s brought feminized domestic activities such as cleaning and childcare into the rarefied public space of museums. Ukeles' practice has evolved to include ongoing work as artist-in-residence at New York City's Department of Sanitation, where she brings devalued and obscured social labour into public view. Furthermore, recent exhibitions such as "New Maternalisms Redux," curated by Natalie S. Loveless (the third in the "New Maternalisms" series) and "The Let Down Reflex," curated by Amber Berson and Juliana Driever have worked to make spaces for parenting within art worlds, posing a further challenge to the segregation of domestic and common spaces.

[6] This article argues that even studies that show negative effects of formula feeding misleadingly imply that breastfeeding poses health risks: "Health Professional Knowledge of Breastfeeding: Are the Health Risks of Infant Formula Feeding Accurately Conveyed by the Titles and Abstracts of Journal Articles?" by Smith, Dunstone, Elliott-Rudder, 2009. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0890334409331506

[7] See "The experience of nursing women with breastfeeding support: a qualitative inquiry" by Chaput, Adair, Nettel-Aguirre, Musto, Tough, 2015. http://cmajopen.ca/content/3/3/E305.abstract

[8] For more on the demographic, physical, social and psychological variables at play in continuance of breastfeeding see "Variables Associated With Breastfeeding Duration" by Diane Thulier and Judith Mercer, 2009. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1552-6909.2009.01021.x/full and "Breast-feeding initiation in low-income women: Role of attitudes, support, and perceived control," by Khoury, Moazzem, Jarjoura, Carothers and Hinton, 2005. http://www.whijournal.com/article/S1049-3867(04)00116-1/abstract?cc=y=

workplace equally available to all parents. This public infrastructure is essential to sustaining breastfeeding throughout the duration that is widely recommended (two years and beyond).

Changing perception of breastfeeding as a private and solitary act is not only a way to endorse it as a choice, but also promotes a more inclusive notion of public space. Social scientist Lisa Smyth (2009) argues that: "Breastfeeding offers a useful example through which to consider the extent sexualized bodies, generally regarded as aspects of 'private' life, can and cannot inhabit and participate in the 'public' world..." (p. 123). It has been argued that breastfeeding in public can be troubling for some because it poses a threat to the fetishization of women's bodies. Khoday and Srinivasan (2013) argue that: "breastfeeding challenges the dominant view of breasts as primarily sexual objects, and by extension the sexualized view of women as well" (p. 156). From this perspective, nursing in public contests the dominant depiction of women as sexual objects. Nursing in public does not de-sexualize mothers, but rather disrupts objectifying views of what constitutes sexuality. To understand breastfeeding as a sexual act and to perform it openly in public is to uproot a deeply held conception of sexuality as shameful and to be hidden away.[9] Breastfeeding is an empowering act because it wrests authority away from binary patriarchal social structures that would place women as either good (modest, prudish, virgin) mothers or as objects for sexual consumption—and both of these roles rest on the dictate that particular acts be performed within their circumscribed spaces.

However, social scientist Rebecca Lane (2014) asks whether nursing a baby in public is really transformative if it merely involves the creation of a private bubble that does not challenge or interrupt the normal functioning of a space. It is worth noting that even the mothers who express liberal attitudes in my interviews also advocate the importance of modesty. Lane argues that women learn how to accommodate breastfeeding to normative strictures of behaviour in public space and injunctions of "good motherhood". This is a form of self-policing that emphasizes the separation of sexuality and nourishing, ultimately reinforcing, rather than challenging dominant constructions of public space.

If patriarchal and capitalist spaces are those in which stereotypes of femininity and masculinity are imposed and participation is reduced to financial exchanges, then feminist notions of public space encourage interdependence and accommodation of all bodies.[10] Social

[9] See "Sex In Public" by Berlant and Warner, who argue that heteronormative sexuality is pervasive in everyday life, structuring socio-economic relations, as well as American dreams and aspirations—constraining the imagination of possible worlds at every turn. The implication for public life is that our sphere of action and indeed of being is defined through the narrow paradigms of citizen and consumer. Both of these rest on a false assumption of discrete, private, individual subjectivity. Berlant and Warner argue for the radical world-building and transforming potential of queer culture in assembling publics that defy belonging on the basis of privacy, patriarchy or capital (1998). Artist Vito Acconci, in his article "Public Space In a Private Time," similarly contaminates pervasive capitalist and patriarchal designs for public space through intimacy. The ideas advocated in this article are made manifest in his 1972 performance "Seedbed," in which he interrupts social propriety and spatial design by masturbating under the floorboards of a gallery while visitors stroll above.

[10] In the film, *The Examined Life* (Taylor, 2008), Judith Butler and Sunaura Taylor converse while walking. Butler suggests that: "Perhaps we have a false idea that the able-bodied person is somehow radically self-sufficient.". A few minutes into her response, Taylor, who uses a wheelchair, says: "In a way it's a political protest for me to go in and order a coffee and demand help, simply because in my opinion help is something that we all need. And it's

theorist Judith Butler (2011) writes that: "Human action depends upon all sorts of supports—it is always supported action. But in the case of public assemblies, we see quite clearly not only that there is a struggle over what will be public space, but a struggle as well over those basic ways in which we are, as bodies, supported in the world—a struggle against disenfranchisement, effacement, and abandonment". When a mother is told that: "this is not the right place to feed your baby," a line is being drawn between a territory of private consumption and the place of free communal exchange. Moments when nursing mothers are told to move along expose the fact that "public space" is not a given, but a zone of struggle. How can we create more spaces in which nursing moms feel welcomed, rather than shamed, disenfranchised, abandoned and effaced?

Brenda Dobson and Maureen Murtaugh (2001) note that: "The decline in breastfeeding 20-30 years ago has resulted in a loss of traditional knowledge and support; today's grandmothers often have no firsthand breastfeeding experience." What can be done to reinstate this intergenerational knowledge? Any gesture that supports breastfeeding in public acts toward building the commons—a space of shared resources in which our interdependence is made manifest. Public support for breastfeeding brings more mothers into public space to feed their babies. As the mothers in my interviews express, this includes everything from making changing tables available in washrooms, to offering a smile of encouragement to a nursing mom, or handing her a glass of water. These gestures count as what Susana Torre (2000) calls "... social action that can make the environment come alive or change its meaning" (p. 145). Breastfeeding outside the home is a public display of intimacy between mother and baby—a moment in which the mother's affective labour, an unremunerated labour that lies outside of or in excess of capitalist culture—is made public. The performance of breastfeeding highlights human interdependence, thus challenging the dominant neoliberal value of self-reliance. Encouraging moms to nurse in public is thus an effort to both empower women and to promote community and equal access to common goods.

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something that is looked down upon and not really taken care of in this society, when we all need help and are all interdependent in all sorts of ways". The commons is a space in which each person can express and receive the help or accommodation that they need. Breastfeeding bodies can also be understood as a "political protest" because they put human interdependence on view through their own vulnerability and intimacy.

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