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A WINDOW, A MOUNTAIN, A SCAPE

IN THIS ISSUE

This season, we welcome three new editors to our collective. They are L. Sasha Gora, Laurence Godin and Yukari Seko. Titles and affiliations are one, perfunctory, way to know an editor. But perhaps we might prolong the introductions somewhat.

We open this issue with a word from Sasha, whose description of her new office quarters at the University of Augsburg has us thinking about what lies outside our own windows (and how these views can inform our work).

The articles in this issue are, in large part, centered on COVID-19. They lead us through the impact of the pandemic on food security in Black identifying households (Mori and Onyango), on a major node in North America's produce supply chains, the Ontario Food Terminal (Elton et al.), and on the challenges of collaboration within Edmonton's City Table on Household Food Insecurity (Ferdinands et al.).

On a different tack, Ronaldo Tavares de Souza et al. explores how terroir is taken up by agri-food and tourism in Québec, in an effort to promote gastronomic destinations.

And lastly, Michael Robidoux presents the collaborative efforts between Moose Cree First Nation Band Council leadership, community members, and his Indigenous Health Research Group in support of the building and planting of family-centered gardens.

Three book reviews follow on such diverse offerings as chocolate and Spanish literature, migrant work in Canada and Canadian literary fare. We close this issue with a second installment of the Choux Questionnaire with Genevieve Sicotte, professor of literature in the départment d'Études françaises at Concordia University.

Bonne lecture.

Canadian Food Studies

La Revue canadienne des études sur l'alimentation

Editorial

A window, a mountain, a scape

L. Sasha Gora[*]

University of Augsburg; ORCID: 0000-0002-0192-3574

The first week of May, I toured my new office at the University of Augsburg in the south of Germany. I had arrived before my furniture. In the empty room, it was as if the window was stretching as wide as it could, projecting its view beyond the boundaries of its frame. "Apparently you can see the Zugspitze," my colleague told me as she handed me the key. Clouds dusted the sky. Just beyond the rooftops of the neighbouring buildings, my eyes scanned a cluster of trees so dense it could only be a park. Some of the roofs were dressed in green grass, but the Zugspitze—Germany's tallest mountain—was nowhere to be seen.

"It's too rainy," I reasoned in the weeks to come, followed by "it's too humid" in the months that passed. And then I gave up, joking that even though I hadn't found the landscape I was looking for I did find the title for my future memoir about my postdoc years: "I Was Told There Would Be Mountains (And Other Promises)." But I didn't mind. I did not grow up in the company of mountains. The rivers and lakes of my childhood—the lands and waters now called Toronto—crisscrossed landscapes instead of climbing them.

Art history, the first subject I studied, trained me to see landscapes as horizontal. But food studies, the discipline I now call home, changed this, adding the lens of verticality. Food connects what grows above ground to what is below, while also blurring any stable separation between the two, just as it connects land to water, stomachs to soil, appetites to environments. The word *scape* marks up an area according to a particular characteristic, be it how it looks or sounds, smells or feels. We thus frame landscapes, seascapes, foodscapes, and even dreamscapes (and, in our current times, it is impossible to not mention warscapes and hellscapes).

Canada hosts food studies programs and research groups, but here in Germany the field is still nascent and has yet to fully travel from the sciences to the humanities, despite the excellent efforts of some scholars. And so

*Corresponding author: sasha.gora@uni-a.de

having been awarded a grant to establish a research group that bridges food studies and the environmental humanities, it means more than just a project to work on—it is also an opportunity to grow food cultural history in Germany at large.

The first week of October, I replicated my colleague's tour, this time welcoming two doctoral researchers. "Apparently we can see the Zugspitze," I duly repeated. "I'm still waiting," I added.

But a few weeks later they confirmed the rumour was true. "You have to stick your head out the window," they instructed. I rushed to open it, stretching my neck as far I could to the right. I'm not fluent enough in mountains to name which one is which, but there they were, the first row of the Alps in all their might.

For months I had been looking in the wrong direction. Is the metaphor too obvious? Perhaps, but it is a reminder of the importance of community, of context, and how much more you experience when you widen both. This also doubles as a description of why I wanted to join the CFS Editorial Collective, to expand community, to compare contexts, and to share how we inhabit and study landscapes, their peoples and other animals, their plants and microbes, and all that they host that we call food.

Now that I know where to find them, I check on the mountains when I arrive in the morning, taking note if they are hiding behind clouds or bathing in the sun, a practice that recalls what the anthropologist Anna Tsing calls the art of noticing. The direction in which we cast our noticing, as the mountains remind me, matters, as well as that we share our noticing with others.

Canadian Food Studies

La Revue canadienne des études sur l'alimentation

Review Article

Intersections of race, the COVID-19 pandemic, and food security in Black identifying households in Canada: A scoping review

Keji Mori[a] and Elizabeth Onyango[b*]

[a] University of Alberta
[b] University of Alberta; ORCID: 0000-0002-2736-0108

Abstract

Although studies have identified food insecurity as a racialized inequity issue disproportionately affecting Black identifying Canadians, research exploring how anti-Black racism across multiple systems create inequities including increased risk for food insecurity among African Caribbean Black identifying households in Canada, is limited. Using an intersectionality lens, this scoping review addresses this knowledge gap by elucidating the intersectionality of race with multiple social determinants of health that directly and indirectly impedes Black people (both of African and Caribbean descent) from accessing adequate and appropriate food, resulting in disproportionate health and social outcomes. Critical analyses of twelve journal articles identified systematically and the review of government and organizational reports and websites reveal that food security in Black identifying individuals in Canada is a racialized emergent public health issue rooted in structural and systemic racism that intersects with multiple determinants of health to produce grave social and economic inequities. The recent COVID-19 pandemic intensified these inequities by increasing food insecurity in Black identifying households in Canada. Cultural food security, referring to the ability to acquire and access culturally appropriate foods to one's ethnic origins as fulfilment to cultural identity, is an interrelated and foundational pillar to food security yet one that is grossly unacknowledged in current actions. National policies are thus needed that recognize cultural food security, and address root causes through increased social support and sustainable food systems. A reasonable first step to ensure the cultural relevance of policies and initiatives is the active engagement of Black communities.

*Corresponding author: eonyango@ualberta.ca

Keywords: Food (in)security; Black identifying individuals in Canada; Intersection of race; intersectionality; Canada

Résumé

Bien que des études aient reconnu l'insécurité alimentaire comme un problème d'inégalité raciale affectant de manière disproportionnée les personnes canadiennes qui s'identifient comme Noires, la recherche est limitée à propos de la manière dont le racisme anti-Noir dans de multiples systèmes crée des inégalités, y compris un risque accru d'insécurité alimentaire, parmi les ménages canadiens s'identifiant comme Noirs, d'origine africaine et caribéenne. Par une optique intersectionnelle, cette revue exploratoire comble cette lacune : elle met en lumière l'intersection entre la race et de multiples déterminants sociaux de la santé qui empêchent directement ou indirectement les Noirs (d'origine africaine et caribéenne) d'avoir accès à une alimentation adéquate, ce qui a des conséquences disproportionnées sur les plans sanitaire et social. L'analyse critique de douze articles de journaux sélectionnés de manière systématique et l'examen de rapports et de sites Web gouvernementaux et organisationnels révèlent que la sécurité alimentaire des personnes s'identifiant comme Noires au Canada est un problème émergent de santé publique d'ordre racial. Ce problème est enraciné dans le racisme structurel et systémique à la croisée de multiples déterminants de la santé et il produit de graves iniquités sociales et économiques. La récente pandémie de COVID-19 a intensifié ces inégalités en augmentant l'insécurité alimentaire dans les ménages canadiens s'identifiant comme Noirs. La sécurité alimentaire culturelle, qui désigne la capacité d'acquérir des aliments culturellement appropriés à ses origines ethniques de façon à satisfaire son identité culturelle, est un pilier interdépendant et fondamental de la sécurité alimentaire, mais qui n'est absolument pas pris en compte dans les actions actuelles. Il faut donc des politiques nationales qui reconnaissent la sécurité alimentaire culturelle et s'attaquent aux causes profondes en renforçant le soutien social et les systèmes alimentaires durables. L'implication active des communautés noires constitue une première étape raisonnable pour garantir la pertinence culturelle des politiques et des actions.

Introduction

Food security, as defined in 1996 by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) refers to a state whereby *"all individuals, at all times, have access to safe, nutritious, adequate, and appropriate food"* (World Food Summit, 1996). In its comprehensive definition, food security was identified as encompassing the following four fundamental pillars: food accessibility, availability, utilization, and stability (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], 2006). In contrast, Canadian definitions of food insecurity are rooted in understandings of food insecurity being a household-level issue due to financial constraints

(Tarasuk et al., 2022). As a result, the metrics to assess food insecurity in Canada are assessed at the household level and centrally focus on the concept of availability or food supply, with little attention directed towards other FAO parameters (Deaton & Scholz, 2022). In Canada, the specific instrument used to measure food security is the *Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM),* which is a validated tool consisting of eighteen questions designed to measure a household's food security over the past twelve months (Statistics Canada, 2023). Questions in the HFSSM are targeted to the food security status of both adults and children within a household and include questions about the amount of food in the house, ability to afford food, worry in not having enough food, and changes in the quality and/or quantities of foods eaten (Statistics Canada, 2023). While these questions are important, what is missing from the HFSSM are details about what is meant by the changing quality of the foods one eats, including the cultural appropriateness of foods and the ability of one to maintain the practice of cultural food traditions. As such, the FAO parameter of 'accessibility,' which would entail assessments into the cultural relevance of foods, remain unaddressed in current household food security metrics in Canada (Deaton & Scholz, 2022).

Food insecurity is a prevalent issue in Canada that disproportionately affects visible minorities including immigrants of African descent (Tarasuk et al., 2022). Attention here is given to the term people who identity as *Black* (of African and Caribbean descent), in contrast to *Africans*, because race, as socially constructed (Bowleg, 2012) and defined by many traits particularly skin colour (Government of Canada, 2023), has effects on income and corresponding food security risk. Only recently has food security been examined through a sociodemographic lens; up until 2020 national race-based data remained absent (Tarasuk et al., 2023; Tarasuk et al., 2022) and no race-based COVID-19 data

was collected in Canada (Ahmed et al., 2021). Data including health information on immigrants and refugees remains absent from Canadian Community Health Survey data collection cycles, contributing to a misinformed understanding of food insecurity among Black immigrant communities that inhibits effective actions needed to address root causes (Quintanilha et al., 2019). In light of these gaps, recent Canadian reports have found staggering differences in food security risk from a sociodemographic lens, with 39.2 percent of Black households living in food insecurity in contrast to 15.3 percent of White people or non-visible minority households (Tarasuk et al., 2023). Risks among Black Canadians to marginal, moderate, or severe food insecurity relative to White people has also been shown to be higher (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021). Due to the absence of race-based COVID-19 health data, the extent to which food insecurity among Black people in Canada was intensified by the pandemic remains unknown, however it is plausible to suggest effects were major given the pre-existing racial inequities Black people face.

Risk factors to food insecurity in Canada include low income, low education, unstable housing, being a single mother, immigration status, and social assistance reliance (Liu et al., 2023; Tarasuk et al., 2022). Emerging evidence has shown that even after these variables are controlled for, risks of food insecurity remain significantly higher for racialized individuals and households compared to White people of comparable sociodemographic status (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021; Tarraf et al., 2018). These findings reveal the underlying structural and systemic nature of the determining factors (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021). The intersectionality of anti-Black racism with social determinants of health where there are pre-existing Black inequities, further increases the risk of food insecurity (Regnier-Davies et al., 2022). For example, anti-Black racism in hiring intersects with the lack of acknowledgement of previous

educational training, the greater likelihood in correspondingly filling lower paying jobs, living in unstable housing, and facing increased food insecurity risk (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021; Tarraf et al., 2018). A clear example of these intersectionality's at work was gravely illustrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, where there was a staggeringly higher number of racialized groups, specifically, Black identifying individuals infected than the dominant majority; vulnerabilities which are tied to structural discrimination (Mensah & Williams, 2022; Public Health Agency of Canada [PHAC], 2021). This is explained by Black identifying people in Canada living in overcrowded and unstable housing; having limited access to health and social services; working in vulnerable frontline healthcare, sales, and service sector positions; and having high rates of unemployment and lower wages relative to the dominant majority even with equivalent education and training (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021; Tarraf et al., 2018).

Higher rates of COVID-19 transmission are inherently tied to the structural and living conditions of African Canadians, which are more broadly tied to systemic racial inequities (Mensah & Williams, 2022). For instance, Black identifying individuals generally have lower incomes and are often overrepresented in precarious jobs with lower wage pay. Furthermore, such jobs tend to be hands-on and requires the physical presence of an individual in the workplace, making the luxury in adapting work conditions to stay home during the pandemic void (Mensah & Williams, 2022; PHAC, 2021). Overrepresentation of Black identifying and African individuals in Canada in frontline jobs deemed 'essential' during the pandemic further increased risk of infection, which heightened transmission risk to family members due to crowded living spaces (Mensah & Williams, 2022; Public Health Agency of Canada, 2021). For example, due to the long-standing history of racial

power dynamics towards Black identifying individuals in Canada, which has contributed to occupational segregation, a large proportion of healthcare workers in long-term care facilities and in agriculture and food production sectors, are persons of colour, most of whom are racialized women (PHAC, 2021).

Increased COVID-19 exposure risk based on higher risk to inequitable living conditions is poignantly illustrated with joint surveillance data from Toronto and Ottawa where racialized populations were found to experience a 1.5 to 5 times higher COVID-19 infection rate than non-racialized populations (PHAC, 2021). In Toronto (one of the few Canadian cities that collected race-based COVID-19 data), Black people compose 9.3 percent of the city's population yet accounted for 24 percent of COVID-19 infections (Mensah & Williams, 2022). In contrast, 49.6 percent of the Toronto population are White people, where infection rates were 21.7 percent (Mensah & Williams, 2022). Collectively, these inequities in health outcomes and living conditions position racialized communities to be in a lack of control and power over their situation, reinforcing marginalization by increasing the difficulty in meeting basic needs (Regnier-Davies et al., 2022).

Using an intersectionality framework, our scoping review adds to existing literature through examination of the experiences of the disproportionate effects the COVID-19 pandemic had on the food security of Black identifying households in Canada. Specifically, this review provides a critical analysis of existing literature on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Black identifying individuals in Canada and the barriers faced by these communities in meeting their food needs. Research examining food security among Black people in Canada is limited, and there remains knowledge gaps regarding how Black people differentially experience food insecurity across multiple social health determinants as illustrated through an intersectionality

framework. The purpose of this review was therefore to explore how anti-Black racism across multiple systems create inequities leading to disproportionate health and

social outcomes, including increased risk for food insecurity and poor health and wellbeing.

Theoretical framework

Intersectionality is a theoretical framework originally coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw through her work in Black feminism to reveal how the intersections of race and gender among Black women produce inequities (Crenshaw, 1991). Since this time, intersectionality has been applied to understanding the health and social inequities faced among historically marginalized and oppressed people (Bowleg, 2012). As described by Bowleg (2012), intersectionality can help to explain how "multiple social categories intersect at the micro-level to reveal multiple interlocking systems of privilege and oppression at the macro level". Importantly, intersectionality does *not* simply refer to having multiple social identities but also considers the intersection of multiple powerful interlocking systems, and the interactions between intersecting marginalized identities with macro-systems (Bowleg, 2012). In this manner, intersectionality enables understanding into how inequities at the individual level are a manifestation of dominant structures, and how a focus on intersecting structural factors can begin to address and respond to the fundamental causes of these inequities more comprehensively (Bowleg, 2012).

In the context of food security among Black people in Canada, intersectionality lends an insightful framework to provide understanding of synergistic mechanisms at play. For instance, the framework helps to explain how structural and systemic Black racism across multiple areas including education, employment, housing, and immigration create grave inequities that

directly and indirectly impede Black people from acquiring adequate and culturally appropriate food (Regnier-Davies et al., 2022). For example, systemic and structural racism leads to challenges in finding sustainable employment, acquiring higher education, having previous education, and training recognized amongst immigrants, living in secure housing, participating in civil society, and in adapting to Canadian life as an immigrant (Etowa & Hyman, 2021; Ndumbe-Eyoh et al., 2021). Having multiple marginalized identities (e.g., being a Black immigrant with language barriers) on top of bearing the risk factors to food insecurity in Canada (e.g., being a lone mother on government assistance in unstable housing) can therefore drastically compound the challenges in being food secure due to the multiple challenge faced across many systems. The synergy of these intersecting inequities in social determinants of health, particularly income, education, immigration status, racism, and housing, perpetuate the status quo, inhibiting Black people from changing their situation and making it incredibly difficult to do so. One of the results of this is heightened food insecurity risk among Black people and racialized groups. In this scoping review, we adopted an intersectionality framework to critically synthesize academic and non-academic literature on the experiences of Black people in Canada with the COVID-19 pandemic, food insecurity and the associated health and wellbeing effects.

Methods

The five-stage framework for conducting scoping reviews by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) guided this scoping review. This included the first stage of developing a research question; for this study, our question was: *"how does anti-Black-racism across multiple systems create inequities leading to disproportionate health and social outcomes, including increased risk for food insecurity and poor health and wellbeing?"* Elements of our research question deemed most important were those pertaining to the population (i.e., Black identifying people in Canada) and outcome (i.e., poor health and social outcomes related to food insecurity).

Search strategy

In line with stage two of the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework, we began our search by identifying literature from both published and unpublished sources. Our search, done in October to November 2022, began by creating index terms from our review question (See Appendix I. for the detailed search strategy). Current published literature relevant to our review question is limited, as revealed in a recent scoping review by Jefferies et al., (2022). Therefore, to expand our findings of work in this area, both published and unpublished literature were included. Studies published in English in 2005 or later were included; this time range was selected based on the emergence of notable Canadian immigration legislation (i.e., Ontario-Canada Immigration Agreement), which in part led to a large influx of immigrants, particularly Black people coming to Canada post millennium (Government of Canada, 2017). Based on previous findings, it is estimated that Africans accounted for 4 to 5 percent of Canadian immigrants in the early 1980s,

whereas between 2005 and 2007 rates increased to 10 to 12 percent (Statistics Canada, 2009). Published literature was retrieved through searching on the following health databases: Medline, Scopus, CINAHL, Embase, PsychInfo, and PubMed. These research databases were used due to the focus in health and social sciences which was thought to fulfill the purpose of this scoping review. Sources of unpublished grey literature that were searched included: Public Health Agency of Canada, Canadian Public Health Association, Health Canada, PROOF, Dietitians of Canada, Google Scholar, and Canadian provincial and territorial public health professionals and public health organizations' websites (City of Toronto, 2021; Food Bank of Canada, 2022; Food Secure Canada, 2023; Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op, 2022). Potentially qualifying papers were also sought via ancestry searching of the reference lists of published and unpublished studies.

Our research team consisted of two main investigators who led the search by developing search terms, and a librarian who assisted in scoping additional literature relevant to the review question. Both study authors assessed the full text of selected citations in detail against the inclusion criteria. Our search began by reviewing literature from a recent scoping review and identifying any additional studies since this time on food security in Black identifying households (Jefferies et al., 2022). We then scoped grey literature to identify and locate any reports from research, community, and/or health organizations that were centred on or included exploration into food security in Black identifying households in Canada.

Context and eligibility criteria

In stage three of the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework, we developed criterion for study inclusion and exclusion. Eligible studies for inclusion in this scoping review (from both published and unpublished sources) were those with a primary focus on food security in Canada among African or Black people (i.e., people of African or Caribbean descent, and/or who self-identify as Black), that were published in English. Race, including being Black is socially constructed (Bowleg, 2012), meaning it is based in markers that seek to classify people by social difference including nationality, ethnicity, and physical traits including skin colour (Dryden & Nnorom, 2021; Government of Canada, 2023). As Black people have differential access to power and resources originating from a deep-rooted history of inequities (Dryden & Nnorom, 2021), Black identifying individuals were examined as opposed to exclusively Africans. In this manner, our search would better meet the aim of this review to examine the intersectionality between race and food insecurity. A focus on Black populations (i.e., those of African or Caribbean descent) provides a deeper lens to examine the impacts of racial discrimination across various Canadian social systems faced by people of colour.

We acknowledge that there are additional marginalized groups in Canada including Indigenous peoples and people of non-White visible minorities who experience racial discrimination affecting food security status among other health outcomes, however, these groups were not the focus of this review. Additionally, the experiences of food insecurity are differentially experienced among marginalized individuals (e.g., the experience of an Indigenous person living in food insecurity is different to the experience of a person of the Black race). This review aimed to begin to illustrate

this, through the exclusive focus on Black people living in Canada. Papers were included if exclusively conducted in Canada (i.e., papers done in multiple countries such as Canada-U.S. were not included due to the non-exclusive Canadian context that would have impeded analyses in synthesizing implications to Canada specifically). Our search began with studies done in multiple countries that included Canada provided results were reported separately, however this criterion was later excluded as these studies had diverse populations of marginalized peoples with limited Black participants and/or did not assess the ethnicity of participants (Ramsahoi et al. 2022). Lastly, papers were included if published in 2005 or later, due to the emergence of notable Canadian immigration legislation at this time that resulted in a large influx of people immigrating to Canada from Africa (Government of Canada, 2017). Papers were excluded if there was not a primary focus on food security, Black and/or African populations, or were not Canadian-centred.

Types of sources

This scoping review considered for inclusion published peer-reviewed quantitative, , and mixed method studies, as well as unpublished grey literature. Systematic reviews and opinion papers were also considered for inclusion in this review.

Following the search of all published literature, identified citations were uploaded into Covidence; duplicates and articles that did not meet the eligibility criteria were removed.

Data extraction

In stage four of the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) framework, each qualifying paper was analysed in full with key details extracted in a tabulated chart. The two

researchers independently extracted data from the papers included in this scoping review. To identify key aspects and emergent themes from eligible studies, the researchers extracted information about the study population, study design, Canadian region, purpose, methods, results, strengths, limitations, and main conclusions. (See Table 1 for the extracted information from each of the included articles). Data extraction of these fields enabled a comprehensive and objective analysis of studies, while providing the necessary details to answer our review question. For example, details about the study population (e.g., Black immigrants) in connection to the Canadian region (with consideration to relevant social, political, and economic factors) enabled the examination of inequities towards Black people from an intersectionality framework. Study

authors regularly met to ensure consistency with the review question and scoping review purpose, and manually determined major intersectionality is addressed in articles. In the event of disagreements in analyses of articles, study authors both re-read articles and reached consensus after further discussions. Similar procedures were adopted for the extraction of data from grey literature.

Lastly, and as part of the final fifth stage of the Arksey and O'Malley framework (2005), we collated the study results through a narrative and analytical summary. As this paper adopted an intersectionality framework, main results from studies were presented with consideration to the multiple intersecting social identities of Black people that are intensified by anti-Black racism across oppressive systems and structures

Figure 1: Search and selection flow chart.
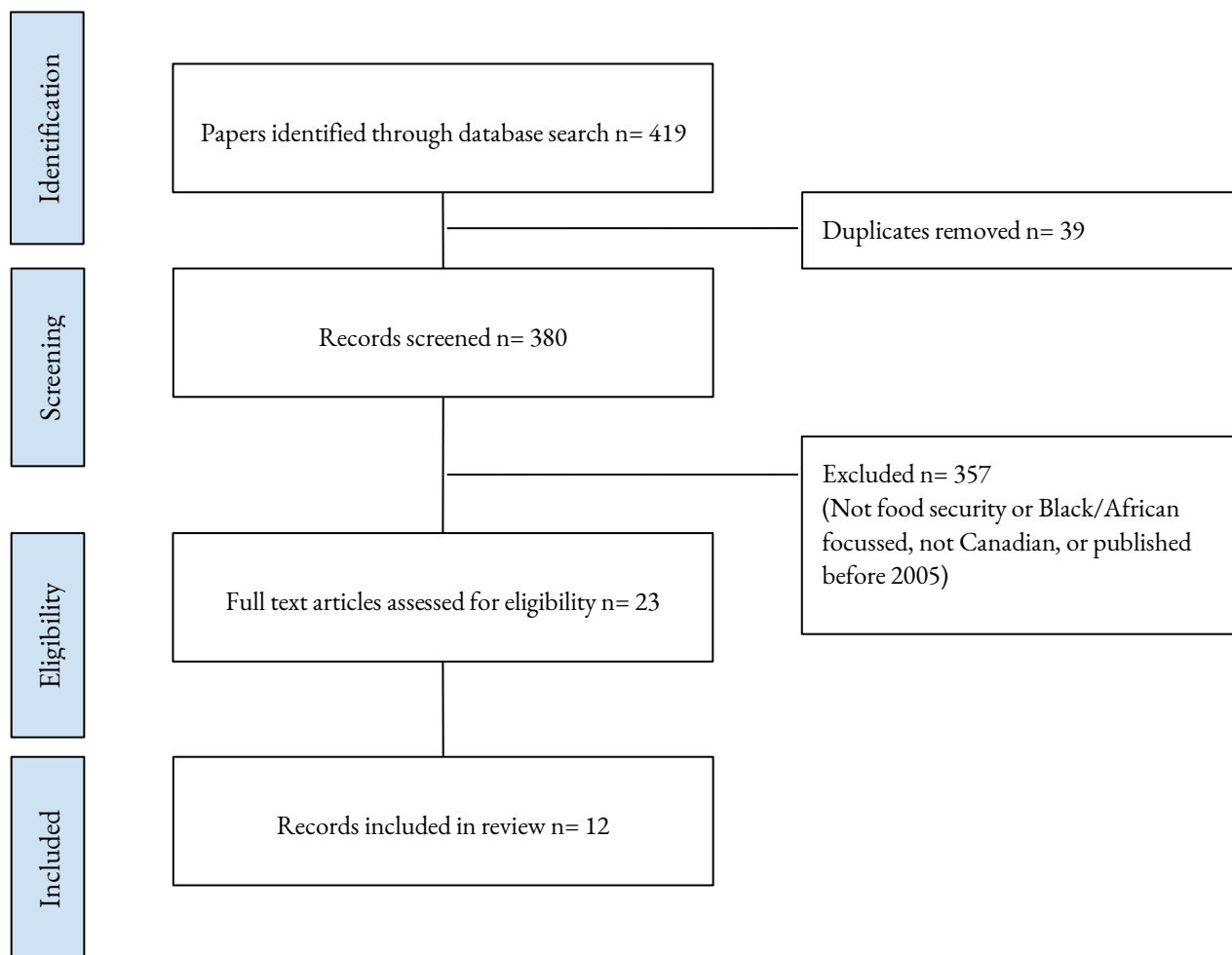
Synthesis of results

Study description

Our search produced 419 published articles; following removal of duplicates, abstract and full text screening, twelve studies met inclusion criteria. Eligible studies are detailed more thoroughly in the PRISMA flow chart diagram (Figure 1). While our inclusion criteria for study publication was 2005 or later, all eligible studies were published between 2017 and 2022. Studies included a combination of qualitative (n=2), quantitative (n=6), and mixed methods (n=2) research designs, including 1 scoping review (Jefferies et al., 2022) and 1 commentary (Regnier-Davies et al., 2022). Five studies (Bhawra et al., 2021; Blanchet et al., 2018;

Kengneson et al., 2021; Moffat et al., 2017; Regnier-Davies et al., 2022; Tarraf et al., 2018) were done in Ontario. Half of the studies (n=6) included data from large metropolitan cities in multiple provinces (Bhawra et al., 2021; Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021; Doan et al., 2022; Jefferies et al., 2022; Logie et al., 2018; Pepetone et al., 2021) and 1 was based in Edmonton (Quintanilha et al., 2019). All studies examined food security explicitly, with the exception of one by Doan and colleague (Doan et al., 2022). This paper (Doan et al., 2022) was still included as it focussed on perceived income adequacy, diet quality, and inequalities in food access for Black identifying individuals; interrelated concepts under the construct of food insecurity.

Our search of grey literature led to the identification and review of 59 articles. Of these, 56 were excluded and 3 were included (Figure 1). These included the following reports: PROOF (Tarasuk et al., 2022), Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Plan (City of Toronto, 2021), and the Alternative Federal Budget Recovery Plan (CCPA, 2020). These reports were included as there was reference or connections to food security in Black indiciduals or households in Canada.

Results

Published studies

Pre-COVID-19 food security in Black identifying individuals in Canada

With the exception of one article (Regnier-Davies et al., 2022), data collection from the remaining eligible studies (n=12) were conducted pre-COVID-19. Recurrent themes identified regarding food security of Black identifying populations included health concerns (i.e., physical, mental, and social), cultural concerns (e.g., difficulty in maintaining cultural eating habits due to financial and geographical constraints), and nutrition concerns (e.g., compromised dietary quality). Multiple studies identified food insecurity to be a racialized issue (Bhawra et al., 2021; Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021). Black identifying households had higher rates of marginal, moderate, and severe food insecurity with 1.88 greater odds of living in food insecurity relative to White households (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021; Tarasuk et al., 2022). Risk remained higher even after controlling for socioeconomic risk factors of food insecurity (e.g., education and immigration status), suggesting the implications of racial discrimination (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021; Tarasuk et al., 2023; Tarasuk et al., 2022; Tarraf et al., 2018). Further analyses identified differences in accessing social assistance between Black and White people living in Quebec. While Quebec has greater social support systems relative to other Canadian regions given a more liberal platform, being a Black person in Quebec was found to not be a protective factor to food insecurity in comparison to the protective effects seen for White people living in Quebec (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021). From a sociodemographic lens, Black Canadian youth were found to be at higher risk of moderate and severe food insecurity compared to White people or non-visible minority youth (Bhawra et al., 2021).

Intersection of race, education, employment, and income

Regarding education status, Tarraf et al. (2018) found language barriers among Black people, particularly Black migrants, inevitably preclude stable employment conditions. Similarly, young Canadian adults that self-identified as a Black or Indigenous person, with self-reported financial difficulty and who had a low (i.e., less than university) education, were found to be at a two or more times increased risk of food security compared to adults who did not identify as Black or Indigenous (Pepetone et al. 2021). These pronounced effects are suggested to be due to powerful interwoven systems that create positive feedback loops of intergenerational poverty, compromising health and food security risk of those marginalized, including racialized people (Pepetone et al. 2021).

Intersection of race, stable housing, and safe neighbourhoods

With respect to housing, it was identified that COVID-19 has had worsened housing financial impacts among Black identifying individuals in Canada, relative to the dominant majority (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021; Etowa & Hyman, 2021; Logie et al., 2018; Tarraf et al., 2018). Living in stable housing was found to exert powerful effects on household food security, due to its close links to poverty (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021). Depending on the severity of food security, this can for instance include changes to the quality and/or quantity of foods purchased and consumed as well as the utilization of emergency food services (Kengneson et al., 2021).

Intersection of race, immigration status, and social inclusion

Although research has demonstrated a reversed interaction between household food security and duration of stay in destination countries and cities, Dhunna et al. (2021) found that higher household food insecurity among African immigrants in Canada persisted even after controlling for immigration status. Beyond accessing food, is the question of whether that food is culturally appropriate (Quintanilha et al., 2019). Ramifications of inadequate finances among Black immigrants included heightened household food insecurity risk due to effects in hastening dietary acculturation (Blanchet et al., 2018; Tarraf et al., 2018). Specifically, limited resources and inflated food prices influenced the type of foods accessed, leading to the acquisition of lower nutrient dense processed foods and fast-food meals due to lower costs (Blanchet et al., 2018; Tarraf et al., 2018).

With consideration to the notable role food plays in Black culture, associated challenges in accessing and eating cultural foods among Black immigrants was found to lead to the disruption of social networks (Blanchet et al., 2018; Quintanilha et al., 2019). These effects were plausibly amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic, when stay at home orders to isolate or quarantine were in full effect worldwide. For example, inabilities to practice food traditions (e.g., sharing meals and eating fresh traditional foods daily) due to low incomes and high food prices, geographical constraints impairing access, and cultural changes in adapting to Canadian life, were found to aggravate the loss of cultural identity and social isolation (Blanchet et al., 2018; Quintanilha et al., 2019).

Effects on health of black identifying individuals in Canada

The cumulative effects of Black inequities affecting food insecurity were found to be far-reaching with adverse outcomes to physical, mental, and social health (Quintanilha et al., 2019). Food insecurity adversely compromised nutrition by impeding the ability to acquire nutrient dense foods, which are paradoxically more expensive. In its severe forms, it impeded the ability to prioritize the nutritional value of food, as detailed among food-insecure Black Canadian young adults (Pepetone et al., 2021). Likewise, racial identity and perceived income adequacy adversely influenced dietary quality of Black people relative to White people (Doan et al., 2022). Similar effects were found among Black immigrant women and their children and youth in food insecure households, where there was additionally higher risk of obesity due to lower socioeconomic status that led to diets with high proportions of highly processed foods (Bhawra et al., 2021; Kengneson et al., 2021). Further, Quintanilha et al. (2019) found that among Somalian immigrant women living in food insecurity, limited income to purchase adequate quantities of food, and the lack of control over the types of foods to offer their families particularly those culturally appropriate due to dependence on community supports and inability to change their situation, was a cause of substantial stress.

Grey literature

Tarasuk et al. (2022) similarly found heightened risks to food insecurity among Black peoples relative to non-racialized peoples in the latest PROOF report. Within this report, Black people were found to be at increased risk for food insecurity, with 22.4 percent of Black households living in food insecurity in contrast to 13.2

percent of White people or non-visible minority households, and that nearly 1 in 5 (17.2 percent) Black households are living in moderate or severe food insecurity (Tarasuk et al., 2022). Likewise, in the [Alternative Federal Budget Recovery Plan](#) (CCPA, 2020), which includes metrics examining the effects of COVID on food security, Black households were found to be 3.5 times more likely to be living in food insecurity relative to White households. Notably, this report explicitly outlined the need for all people in Canada to have access to good, healthy, and *culturally appropriate* food, which is highlighted to be possible through the acknowledgement of health inqueties towards Black people, and the dedicated allocation of funds to support the development of culturally tailored health and well-being supports (CCPA, 2020). Further, it reveals there is a vital urgency to have Black, racialized, and Indigenous voices represented within policy decision making, in order to create more equitable and sustainable food systems for all (CCPA, 2020). At a community level, the Black Food Sovereignty Working Group (2022) found that 63 percent of organizations that support food needs of Black individuals in Canada were found to be at increased risk of running out of funding within six months or shorter. A "systems approach" to address food insecurity in Black identifying households, i.e., addressing the underlying structural roots of anti-Black racism pervasive across powerful systems, are the main goals behind the Black Food Sovereignty Working Group (2022) which runs a community co-leadership model under their mandate to be "Black-led, Black-serving, and Black run." Through their work, five key pillars to address food in security in Black households in Canada that have been identified include to: **1.** Create sustainable funding and community capacity building; **2.** Provide access to growing space; **3.** Create accessible infrastructure; **4.** Strengthen food hubs that support

food needs of Black individuals in Canada and cultural markets; and **5**. Foster culturally rooted community health and nutrition programs.

Discussion

Food security of Black identifying individuals in Canada Post-COVID-19

Increased vulnerabilities among marginalized groups to COVID-19's financial impacts are inherently tied to the high engagement in precarious work that visible minorities occupy (Statistics Canada, 2021). Such work confers less protection from income losses incurred from COVID-19 related work interruptions including job losses and reduced work hours (Statistics Canada, 2020). The intersectionality between race, education, employment, and income elucidates why Black identifying individuals in Canada faced disproportionate COVID-19 economic shortfalls. The protective effects education confers to higher income and stable employment traditionally, are not seen with Black communities, with recent Canadian findings showing 7/10 Black people are highly educated (post-secondary degree or diploma) yet faced unemployment rates nearly double that of White people (9.2 percent, versus 5.3 percent, respectively) (Statistics Canada, 2020). As detailed in pre-COVID research among Black migrant households, this is in part due to 'professional downgrading' in which previous skills and education obtained in one's home country are not recognized (Tarraf et al., 2018). The direct aftermath of this in conjunction with occupational segregation rooted in a longstanding history of racial power dynamics, leads Black people to fill lower-paying jobs, often involving large physical tolls, long laborious shifts, and limited job

security (PHAC, 2021). Anti-Black sentiments rooted in White supremacy are captured in, for example, employer's 'lack of fit' claims (such as accents) as rationale for not hiring or promoting skilled minority candidates (Decent Work and Health Network, 2020). Amid an already scarce labour market that predominated during the COVID-19 pandemic, these inequities among Black people in seeking employment placed additional pressures on financial stability (Mensah & Williams, 2022), which has resultant effects on one's food security status.

Housing and food insecurity in Black identifying households in Canada

Etowa and Hyman (2021) showed that nearly 50 percent of African Canadians struggled to pay mortgage or rent on time and faced increased (45 percent relative to the national average of 36 percent) anxieties about being able to pay rent. As housing is the largest Canadian family expense, during financial constraints food tends to be less prioritized (Tarasuk et al., 2022). Further challenges in seeking stable housing have been attributed to landlord discrimination towards tenants who were Black people; inequities stemming from landlords imposing exclusionary screening, refusal to rent, or financial barriers such as increases to first and last month's rent (PHAC, 2021). Furthermore, evidence also shows that African immigrants tend to be segregated in more

disadvantaged neighbourhoods due to lower housing costs (Afri-Can FoodBasket, 2023). Such neighbourhoods have a characteristic preponderance of convenience and fast-food stores selling an overabundance of highly processed foods, a considerably lower number of stores selling culturally familiar foods and are greater distances away from fresh foods offered at mainstream grocery stores (Engler-Stringer et al., 2014; Luo, 2020; Yang et al., 2020). These differences in the physical spaces Black peoples occupy highlight inequities in the built environment, whereby the duality of food deserts (lack of healthy foods) and food swamps (overabundance of unhealthy foods) among Black peoples heighten risks to food insecurity, cultural food insecurity, and chronic diseases (Kengneson et al., 2021) such as obesity.

Food security and immigration status of Black identifying individuals in Canada

Gaps in meeting cultural food needs are revealed in the prominence of many unfamiliar Western, mostly non-perishable foods offered at conventional food banks (Food Bank of Canada, 2022), which were unable to effectively meet the needs of Black immigrants due to the lack of cultural foods available, particularly those fresh (Moffat et al., 2017). In consideration to food security in Canada being principally addressed through the large focus on short-term food provisions, the lack of representation of cultural foods can be incredibly disheartening, especially in context to food serving purposes beyond sustenance. As detailed by Blanchet et

al. (2018), Moffat et al. (2017), and Quintanilha et al. (2019), the inability to access or receive culturally appropriate foods disrupts cultural practices by disacknowledgeing one's cultural identity. In this manner, cultural food insecuirty can have many cascading negative effects on one's social and mental health.

Food security and health effects of Black identifying individuals in Canada

With consideration to the higher rates of chronic diseases including Type II diabetes, obesity, chronic stress and hypertension afflicting Black communities, the lack of fresh foods offered at traditional community organization food programs and services has the detrimental potential to aggravate worsening health outcomes (Etowa & Hyman, 2021). Pressures to household food insecurity amid the pandemic adversely affecting mental and physical health are revealed in figures indicating Black people experienced an estimated 61 percent decrease in income, and 50 percent higher economic vulnerabilities relative to mainstream society including a nearly doubled risk to financial difficulties in meeting basic necessities than non-visible minorities (Etowa & Hyman, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2021). As revealed in previous research (Tarasuk et al., 2022), income constraints particularly those acute often leads to one's food intake being modified, which comes at the expense of nutrition.

Effects of COVID-19 on food security of Black identifying individuals in Canada

Previous research has revealed the disproportionate effects of COVID-19 on the Black community, described illustratively with the statement *"we're not all in this together"* (Bowleg, 2020; O'Connell & Brannen, 2020). This is explained by the notable intersectionality of social determinants of health including racism, income, employment, unstable housing, and social exclusion. Further, despite the absence of race-based COVID-19 data in Canada, a large portion of marginalized peoples including Black people were plausibly affected given the high prevalence of Black people in low-pay frontline and service sector jobs who faced increased risks of being laid off, having reduced work hours, and being denied paid sick leave (Etowa & Hyman, 2021; Statistics Canada, 2021).

Higher rates of unemployment among the Black community (5.3 percent vs 3.7 percent among non-visible minorities) have been found during COVID-19 (i.e., January 2020 to January 2021). Similarly, between November and December 2021, unemployment among Black Canadians was found to be 13.1 percent, 70 percent higher than rates among non-visible minorities (7.7 percent). Stratified by age, rates of unemployment were also higher among Black identifying Canadians of 25 to 54 years old (9.4 percent versus 6.1 percent), and youth 15 to 24 years old (30.6 percent versus 15.6 percent) as compared to the mainstream Canadian population of similar ages (Statistics Canada, 2021). Given the inextricable links stable employment and subsequent income has on food insecurity status, high unemployment rates among Black peoples during COVID-19 likely exerted pronounced negative effects on one's food security.

For instance, in the face of financial strain to meet basic amenities, marginalized Canadian populations experienced dilemmas of either going to work sick or being unable to put food on the table (Decent Work and Health Network, 2020). This is evidently connected to the large prevailing paid sick leave gap in Canada, which predominates low-income jobs disproportionately composed of racialized workers. In Canada, creation of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (i.e., CERB) provided short-term assistance for people financially impacted by COVID-19 (Government of Canada, 2022), and arguably an additional aid to help those who were food insecure. While beneficial to those eligible, CERB was a temporary (i.e., 4 months) federal support program (Government of Canada, 2022) that has yet to be replaced with any form of long-term permanent support. Currently among Canadian jurisdictions, only Quebec, Prince Edward Island, and federally regulated workers mandate employers to provide employees paid sick leave for short-term illness, situating Canada to fall grossly behind other wealthy developed countries (Decent Work and Health Network, 2020). While all remaining provinces and territories created emergency leaves for COVID-19 related illness, lack of federal mandates to ensure they are paid, in full, results in employee income protection being at the discretion of individual employers (Statistics Canada, 2021). The additional uncertainties from long wait times to receive federal support such as CERB, led racialized workers particularly racialized women to bear already low incomes and the resulting financial pressures (Decent Work and Health Network, 2020), including finding the means to meet basic needs such as those for food.

These social inequities are largely driven by capitalism; whereby African Canadians who are traditionally lower income earners are expected to participate in and stimulate the economy for capital gains at the hands of the few and powerful White

people that comprise the dominant majority. In this manner, capitalism has inarguable ties to racism and upholding White supremacy as it serves to privilege those who are better off through competition and oppressive systems (Mensah & Williams, 2022). These systems create conditions that disadvantage racialized groups; disproportionate economic constraints faced among marginalized groups including African Canadians relative to mainstream society impede the ability to meet basic needs. With the wide range of social and economic inequalities among racialized communities revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic (Mensah & Williams, 2022), and record inflation including escalating food prices (Tarasuk et al., 2022), the pandemic has intensified the state and severity of food insecurity in Black identifying households in Canada.

Strength and limitations

A major strength of this review was the novel contribution to unpacking the specific, interrelated, and complex effects that the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism has on the food insecurity risk of Black people living in Canada, including the effects from the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, our review was guided by the methodological framework for scoping reviews created by Arksey and O'Malley (2005) and included a range of study designs. Despite the original contributions of this work, weaknesses of this research include the inherent limitations of a scoping review in that the robustness and quality of studies was not assessed. Further, while Canadian research in this topic area is quite limited, it is possible that some relevant research were excluded due to the time when the search was conducted.

Conclusion

While there is urgency in policy developments to address food insecurity in Canada, addressing food insecurity in minority households such as those headed by Black identifying individuals will require an intersectoral approach and policies informed by an intersectionality framework to address underlying structural and systemic inequities rooted in anti-Black racism.

This has been explored in this review through examination into the intersectionality of race with multiple social determinants of health across powerful systems facing Black people in Canada.

At the community level, proposed changes in community settings can help individuals connect to appropriate supports while promoting social health through fostered relations (Logie et al., 2018). With respect to migrant health, policies need to account for cultural diversity and fully recognize migration as a social determinant of health to facilitate successful integration into the Canadian economy (Quintanilha et al., 2019).

Similarly, as economic constraints and food availability impose dietary acculturation on immigrants, targeted strategies are needed (Blanchet et al., 2018).

This includes the provision of culturally appropriate food at food banks and the provision of a guaranteed basic income (Blanchet et al., 2018), including greater income support to immigrants (Moffat et al., 2017). National food and social policies need to also account for these inequities (Tarasuk et al., 2022) through policies that are culturally inclusive and representative (Quintanilha et al., 2019; Tarasuk et al., 2023; Tarasuk et al., 2022).

Amongst government and non-government organizations, policies are needed that produce food system changes to provide healthier, sustainable food for all, as integral pillars to one's overall physical, social, and mental health (Moffat et al., 2017). A commitment to collect race-based data disaggregated by race is imperative, as racial disparities can only be fully addressed with acknowledged data that confronts the issue. Furthermore, engagement with the Black community will be a vital first step to affect meaningful systemic change. The CERB payment, while temporary and provisional to few vulnerable populations including racialized peoples engaged in precarious work, needs to be replaced with longer term support to assist individuals in economically bouncing back post-COVID-19 including individuals who experienced job loss or reduced work hours. Likewise, the lack of federally mandated sick leave *paid in full*, needs to be acknowledged as a serious public health threat with immediate steps taken to implement support nationwide. Such measures are critical in applying COVID-19 learnings in planning for a foreseeable pandemic in the future.

Search strategy

Medline	
(Food* and Black* and Canad*).mp. [mp=title, book title, abstract, original title, name of substance word, subject heading word, floating sub-heading word, keyword heading word, organism supplementary concept word, protocol supplementary concept word, rare disease supplementary concept word, unique identifier, synonyms]	120

Scopus	
(food AND secur* AND canad* AND africa*)	49

CINAHL	
Food sec* AND Africa* AND Canad*	19
food sec* AND Black AND Canada	35

Embase	
(black* and food sec* and Canad*)	12

PsychInfo	
(Canada and food and immigrant).mp. [mp=title, abstract, heading word, table of contents, key concepts, original title, tests & measures, mesh word]	27
(Canada and food and black).mp. [mp=title, abstract, heading word, table of contents, key concepts, original title, tests & measures, mesh word]	24
(Canada and food and Africa*).mp. [mp=title, abstract, heading word, table of contents, key concepts, original title, tests & measures, mesh word]	24

| (Canada and food sec* and Africa*).mp. [mp=title, abstract, heading word, table of contents, key concepts, original title, tests & measures, mesh word] | 3 |

PubMed	
food secur* AND Black* AND Canad*	10
food secur* AND Africa* AND Canad*	50

Google Scholar	
Black* AND food security* AND Canada* [Filtered for Year: 2005-2022]	147,000

Table 1. List of Included Studies and Key Findings								
Author, Year	Study Population	Study Design	Canadian Location	Purpose	Methods	Results	Limitations	Key Messages
Jefferies et al, 2022	African Canadians	Scoping Review	Canada. Of n=5 included studies, 1 was national, 1 AB, 3 ON.	Examine the current state of food security in African Canadian communities, to increase understanding and to aid in future research	Scope of food security in Black identifying individuals in Canada, no publishing date restriction. Included if based in Canada, examined African communities (exclusively African population OR a broader population with inclusion of African people), and food security.	All studies were in adults identifying as a migrant, immigrant, or refugee. Factors increasing risk of African Canadians to food insecurity (FI) were: low education, reliance on social assistance, single mother, recent immigrant (< 5yrs), low income. FI was more common for Africans in ON and QB (compared to BC), those with drug dependency, and those facing racial discrimination. Accessing adequate amounts of healthy food was a challenge for families with school children. African mothers felt food from food banks was poor quality, highly processed or unfamiliar. Cultural traditions were believed to increase FI.	Small sample size (n=5), though reflective of the lack of research in this topic, majority in urban settings; many provinces/territories excluded. No examination of African Nova Scotians, who are known to suffer significant social justice and human rights violations.	Food insecurity disproportionately affects African Canadians. A greater focus on diversity of diets and dietary practices in *Canada's Food Guide* is needed. Further research examining the intersectionality of sDOH among African Canadians is needed to understand the effects of food insecurity more comprehensively.
Kengneson et al, 2021	Black immigrant mothers of African or Caribbean descent with at least 1	Cross-sectional, mixed methods	Ottawa, ON	Examine factors associated with feeding practices of Black immigrant	In-person interviews with a RD. Socioeconomic data collected; household food security was assessed using the *Household Food Security*	Black immigrant women and their children are at higher risk of obesity. Children living in household food insecurity (HFI) are more likely to have a higher proportion of less nutrient dense/more	Cross-sectionality study so cannot examine temporality, self-reported data, not generalizable beyond Ottawa, relatively small sample size.	Further research is needed on Black immigrant feeding practices among children. Longitudinal studies could determine broader effects.

	child 6-12yo. n=188				mothers with their kids, in Ottawa.	*Module*. Maternal feeding practices were assessed using the *Child Feeding Questionnaire* 5-point Likert scale.	processed and ultra-processed foods in their diet due to lower SES. Household income (<$50K/yr) and HFI were significantly associated with maternal restrictive feeding practices with their children.		
Logie et al, 2018	Women living with HIV, 16 yo+. n=1403. Women were part of the *Canadian HIV Women's Sexual & Reproductive Health Cohort Study.*	Cross-sectional, quantitative study	B.C., ON, QB	Examine factors associated with separate and concurrent experiences of food insecurity and housing insecurity, among Canadian women living with HIV (WLHIV)	Study employed a community-based research method. Housing insecurity (HI) was assessed as 'insecure' or 'secure' based on questions regarding residence and difficulty in paying housing costs. Household Food insecurity (HFI) was assessed using an adapted form of the *Household Food Security Survey Module*.	Sociodemographic factors were associated with HFI and HI. Being African, Caribbean, or Indigenous was positively associated with HFI, HI, and living with both HFI/HI compared to risk among White people. Living in ON and QB was associated with increased odds of HFI, HI, and combined HFI/HI. Those injecting drugs were more likely to experience combined HFI/HI. Racial discrimination was associated with higher odds of HFI and combined HFI/HI (due to difficulty in finding adequate employment).	Purposive non-random sampling limits generalizability of findings, cross-sectional study design, only examined ON/QB/BC, assessment of HI was not comprehensive.	HFI and HI were associated with visible minorities, social inequities, and substance use. Changes in community settings could help to promote health and connect WLHIV with appropriate support.
Doan et al, 2022	n=2540 adults (18yo+). Participants were part of the 2019 *International*	Cross-sectional, quantitative observational study	National (10 provinces)	Examine the relationship between racial identity and perceived income adequacy on dietary quality	The U.S. HEI-2015 was used to assess diet quality. Racial identity, perceived income and sociodemographics were assessed due to their influence on race and diet.	Perceived income adequacy was independently associated with dietary quality (HEI scores). Racial identity was not. The interaction between perceived income adequacy and racial identity was positively associated with HEI	Self-reported data, measures used to assess dietary quality didn't account for cultural practices, sample size was not nationally representative (there were low populations of individuals identifying as racialized in this study).	Racial identity and perceived income adequacy seem to jointly influence dietary quality. The intersection of race and sociodemographic factors lead to health inequities that can have

Food Policy Study.				(based on the *Healthy Eating Index*; HEI, 2015).		scores. Self-identifying Black people with income inadequacy or adequacy had lower HEI scores, compared to White people reporting income adequacy.		negative effects on dietary quality of racial groups.
Bhawra *et al*, 2021	Canadian young adults 16-30yo. Participants were from the *Canada Food Study,* sample n=2149.	Observational, quantitative study (online survey)	Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, Halifax	Examine the association between sociodemographic factors, self-reported health, and food insecurity in young Canadians.	Assessed data from the 2016 data collection cycle of the *Canada Food Study*. Randomized cluster in-person sampling used to select participants. Dietary intake was assessed with 2 Self-Administered 24hr dietary recalls. Household food security was assessed using the *Household Food Security Survey Module*.	Young adults who were Black or Indigenous were more likely to live in moderate or severe household food insecurity (HFI) compared to Canadian youth identifying as part of another race. Respondents identifying as normal weight or overweight were less likely to report living in HFI, compared to Canadian youth identifying as obese. Severe HFI was associated with poor mental health, dietary quality, and overall health.	Cluster sampling used so may not be representative of the Canadian population; self-reported dietary intake, in-person sampling may have led to response bias, cross-sectional study, did not measure reliance on social assistance programs, didn't assess rural communities.	Food insecurity is a racialized issue, with Black and Indigenous peoples experiencing higher rates and risk of HFI relative to non-visible minorities. Beyond income, other sDoH intersect with racial inequities to compound the negative effects of HFI among marginalized groups. This includes structural racism in education, employment, and housing. HFI affects mental, physical, and social health, with more serious implications on youth.
Pepetone *et al*, 2021	Canadian young adults 16-30yo. Participants were from the *Canada Food Study*. Sample n=2729;	Observational, quantitative study (online survey)	Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Edmonton, Halifax	Examine the association between household food security status, food skills, health literacy, and home meal	Assessed data from the 2016 data collection cycle of the *Canada Food Study*. Household Food Security status assessed using the *Household Food Security Survey Module*. Food skills were	After adjusting for sociodemographic variables, there was no difference in food skills amongst men and women of similar household food security status. Black and Indigenous men and women who reported financial difficulty and had low	Cross-sectional data, self-reported data, did not account for rural communities.	Men and women with lower health literacy were more likely to live in HFI, however this is likely due to the effects of other intersecting sDoH such as unstable housing, lower education, and lower income. Individuals living

	n=1389 men and n=1340 women.				preparation among Canadian young adults.	assessed with a question regarding cooking skills. Health literacy was assessed with an adapted version of the *Newest Vital Sign*. Race was assessed based on racial background and Indigenous identity.	education were 2 or more times more likely to live in household food insecurity (HFI).		in HFI have strong food skills, however accessing food supersedes the ability to consider the nutritional quality of food. HFI can thereby negatively impede food preparation, resulting in adverse health effects.
Dhunna and Tarasuk, 2021	*Canadian Community Health Survey* (CCHS) respondents. Total sample n=491,364.	Observational cross-sectional, quantitative study. Examined 2004-2014 CCHS health data.	Canada	Assess vulnerability of Black Canadians to food insecurity, relative to White Canadians.	This study used data from the 2005-2014 CCHS cycles. Household food security over the past 12 months was measured with the *Household Food Security Survey Module* (HFSSM). Household food insecurity (HFI) was measured in absolute terms (insecure/secure), and by level (marginal, moderate, or severe).	Black households had 1.88 greater odds of HFI than White households. Being a White immigrant was a protective factor against HFI; this was not found for Blacks. Higher HFI risks among Black people remained even after controlling for immigration status and education level. Black renters had almost a 3-fold greater probability of HFI compared to White homeowners. Living in QB was a protective factor against food insecurity for White people; this was not found for Black people in QB.	Data did not account for 2015 onwards due to changes in CCHS survey sample in 2015, cross-sectional data, self-reported data, sample size of Black people was relatively small, lack of data on: household income stability, subgroups of immigrants, nature of employment, and wealth/assets). Did not assess racial discrimination in depth.	HFI is a racialized issue that disproportionately affects Black Canadians. Effective policies addressing HFI are needed using an intersectional lens that accounts for anti-Black racism rooted in structural and systemic inequities.
Tarraf et al, 2018	Mothers (n=182) from Sub-Saharan Africa or the Caribbean, living in Ottawa, who	Cross-sectional, observational study, quantitative	Ottawa, ON	Determine the prevalence and determinants of food insecurity among Sub-Saharan	In-person individual interviews with mothers. Household food insecurity (HFI) was assessed with the *Household Food Security Survey Module*. HFI was	45% of families were living in HFI. Households ranged from 2-13 members. About 75% of mothers had post-secondary education. Household food insecurity (HFI) was more likely if the mother was: not	Convenience sampling, small sample size, only assessed migrants in Ottawa, self-reported data, cross-sectional study, non-English fluency could have impacted comprehension of	Education is not a protective factor against HFI among Black migrants due to prior education not being recognized (i.e., "professional

had a child between 6-12 years old.			African and Caribbean migrants in Ottawa.	assessed by 2 combined scales - the Adult Food Security Scale, and the Child Food Security Scale. Interviews were done by a RD and research assistant and were made culturally appropriate.	English-fluent, not working, lacked vehicle access, lived in subsidized, cooperative, or temporary housing, had lower education, was a lone mother, was a recent (=<5yrs) migrant, or was a refugee. ~1/3 of families were living in moderate or severe HFI. Reliance on social assistance was associated with higher risk for HFI.	questions, did not assess how lack of culturally appropriate food may have contributed to HFI.	downgrading"); this is heavily influenced by racialization. Lack of access/information to obtain culturally appropriate food is a barrier to HFI. Limited English (proxy for both employment and income) can heighten one's risk for HFI due to the effects on employment.
Regnier-Davies et al, 2022	Black Torontonians accessing services from Black Food Toronto	Commentary	Toronto, ON	Provide arguments of the need for charitable food programs, as effective strategies that can collaboratively reduce Canadian household food insecurity (HFI). Arguments based on BlackFood Toronto (a recent Black food sovereignty initiative	N/A - Commentary	Charitable food programs should not be generalized as one overarching entity due to implications in local policies and practices, by failing to recognize the nuances among community-based programs that address food equity. In response to rising HFI among Black people in Toronto during COVID-19 and traditional food banks not serving the cultural needs of the African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) community, *Afri-Can Food Basket* (AFB) created *Black Food Toronto* (BFT) with a focus on food sovereignty, under a 'Black-led, black-mandated, black-serving' mandate. Rooted in	Commentary, exclusive to Toronto (i.e., Toronto-based food program, 'case-study')	Higher rates of FI among Black people are rooted in structural inequities. This is due to social and physical environments that create and perpetuate continuing cycles of oppression and marginalization due to prevailing values of White supremacy, racial capitalism, and patriarchy. These inequities amongst Black people are visible in diverse power systems including education, health, the judicial system, and immigration - which are factors that make access to food more difficult for Black people.

				created in response to rising HFI among Blacks), as an illustrative example.		Black leadership and self-determination, this program exemplifies how community agency creates structures that support the ACB community by dismantling anti-Black racism in the food system and building autonomy by leveraging community resources.		
Quint anilha et al, 2019	n=213 immigrants in Edmonton. Included n=17 Somali immigrant women.	Mixed methods	Edmonton, AB	Determine the prevalence and experiences of household food insecurity (HFI) among immigrant women connected to the Multicultural Health Brokers (MCHB) perinatal program.	HFI was assessed using the *Household Food Security Survey Module*. African and Middle Eastern women experiencing higher rates of HFI were invited to follow-up interviews to understand HFI more comprehensively, in relation to their pregnancies. This included a group of Somali women (n=17).	Key barriers to HFI included not having enough money to buy fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, and having a lack of foods to prepare for their families. A significant proportion of African and Middle Eastern women reported being severely FI (60%, n=118), compared to immigrant women from other countries. Lack of control was frequently noted in connection to the substantially different diet quality of Somalian women back home and was a source of substantial stress.	Small sample size, small sample of individuals identifying as African (n= 17) of which were all Somali (i.e., did not account for other areas in Africa and/or Caribbean)	Given the higher rates of HFI among immigrant women, and the compounded vulnerabilities of HFI among immigrant prenatal/postnatal women, economic policies to provide income protection and greater social assistance are needed. This is integral for immigrants and refugees, in particular. Policies must account for cultural diversity and help migrants integrate into the local economy.
Blanch et et al, 2018	Immigrant mothers from Sub-Saharan Africa or the Caribbean, living in	Qualitative	Ottawa, ON	Examine the dietary acculturation process of first-generation immigrant	Semi-structured interviews were conducted in English or French, depending on mother's preference. Household food	All mothers interviewed reported a bicultural diet (i.e., incorporation of traditional and Western Canadian dietary practices). Accelerating factors included: food access (cost	Small sample size, limited to Ottawa, cross-cultural which can limit generalizability of findings, interviews not done in the participants mother tongue.	Economic constraints and food availability imposed dietary acculturation on immigrants. Strategies to address these impacts include provision of

	Ottawa; n=12 mothers.			families from sub-Saharan Africa or the Caribbean living in Ottawa, to determine how acculturation specifically affects the diets of Black women and children.	insecurity (HFI) was assessed using the *Household Food Security Survey Module*.	and availability, poor access to traditional foods, greater access to Western foods, greater food insecurity and food bank use), convenience and shortcuts, and children's influence. HFI was a large factor to dietary acculturation; most mothers living in HFI reported using food banks which were considered poor quality, eating what was offered to them, with some reporting refusing to eat foods offered because it was unfamiliar.		culturally appropriate food at food banks, provision of a guaranteed basic income, and initiatives that enhance food and nutrition literacy and nutrition-related parenting skills of migrants.
Moffat et al, 2017	n=24 immigrants/r efugees from Hamilton, ON. Service providers who work with immigrants were also interviewed for their perspectives on cultural food security as it pertains to their clients.	Qualitative	Hamilton, ON	Examine cultural food security among a group of immigrants and refugees from Hamilton ON	Participants were recruited via convenience sampling from low-income neighbourhoods. All ethno-cultural groups were included due to the multicultural nature of immigrant services. Interviews were live discussions about food, eating, household food insecurity (HFI), and access to food and community support in the city. Data was analysed based on 3 pillars of cultural food	**Food availability**: All participants reported lower quality of foods in Canada compared to their home countries. **Food access:** Service providers and immigrants reported income and difficulty shopping to be the largest barriers to accessing nutritious, culturally appropriate foods. Key issues identified related to low income included: high food prices, low paying jobs due to lack of recognition of their education back home, and a higher unemployment rate among immigrants. **Food use:**	Small sample size, convenience sampling limiting generalizability of findings, sample bias, disproportionate number of female participants.	Cultural dimensions of HFI are prevalent issues among many Canadian immigrants. When traditional foodways are lost, food security becomes more challenging for immigrants. Low income and higher food prices are key barriers to accessing nutritious and culturally appropriate foods. Loss of foodways can negatively impede one's diet, health, cultural identity, and mental health.

					security: food availability, food access, and food use.	Most immigrants identified challenges in practicing food traditions (e.g., sharing meals), cultural change and disruption of social networks.		

Table 2. Grey Literature Reports/Findings		
Source	**Purpose**	**Key Details/Findings**
City of Toronto, 2021	To address Black chronic food insecurity, anti-Black racism, and structural inequities in Toronto's local food systems, to improve the immediate and long-term health, wellness, and capacity of Black Torontonians.	Black Torontonians are at an increased (3.5 times) risk for food insecurity, relative to White people in Canada. There is a staggering high number (36.6%) of Black children living in food insecure households. Among organizations serving Black identifying individuals/households, 63% were found to be at risk for running out of funds and resources within a period of six months or shorter, increasing their challenges in effectively supporting the community. To effectively address food security in Black individuals in Toronto, it is recognized there needs to be targeted actions to the structural factors tied to anti-Black racism. Through the Toronto Black Food Sovereignty Plan, Black food security and sovereignty are recognized to be achieved through the following five thematic pillars: **1**. sustainable funding and community capacity building, **2.** access to growing space, **3.** accessible infrastructure, **4.** food hubs for Black people in Canada and cultural markets, and **5.** culturally rooted community health and nutrition programs.
Tarasuk et al, 2022	To examine household food insecurity (HFI) in Canada, including its patterns and trends among sociodemographic factors, and to identify evidence-based government policies to effectively respond to and address HFI.	Black households were found to be at increased risk for food insecurity relative to White households, with 22.4% of Black household living in food security relative to 13.2% of White households. Nearly 1 in 5 (i.e., 17.2%) of Black households were found to be living in moderate (11.5%) or severe (5.7%) food insecurity.
CCPA, 2020	To present short-, medium-, and long-term targeted action plans to improve Canada's economy post-COVID-19, through a lens of equity, justice, sustainability, resilience, solidarity, and well-being. (Includes particular action plans to improve the lives of Black Canadians, through the section "Recognition, justice, and development for Black Canadians."	Black households were found to be 3.5 times more likely to be living in food insecurity relative to White households in Canada. There is a critical need for all people in Canada to have access to good, healthy, and culturally appropriate food; this can be achieved through the acknowledgement of health inequities towards racialized peoples including Black people and allocating dedicated funds to support the development of culturally tailored health and well-being supports. The voices of Black, racialized, and Indigenous peoples need to be represented within policy decision making, to create more equitable and sustainable food systems for all.

Keji Mori is a Registered Dietitian, currently pursuing a Master's Degree of Public Health, University of Alberta. She is passionate about food security and nutrition research and community work which has led her to engage in work with immigrants and immigrant experiences of cultural food security.

Dr. Elizabeth Onyango is an assistant professor of Health and Sustainable communities in the School of Public Health, University of Alberta. Dr. Onyango's research work focusses on migration and food security nexus, intersections of gender, gender-based violence, and the associated health outcomes in minority populations. Dr. Onyango's research program explores barriers and facilitators of migrant community engagement in social support services including access to food security initiatives and in building alternative masculinities for gender-equal migrant communities.

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Original Research Article

Le territoire agroalimentaire en tant qu'attrait touristique au Québec – Réflexion à l'égard des représentations d'une destination gourmande à partir du concept de terroir

Ronaldo Tavares de Souza[*a] Pascale Marcotte,[b] and Laurent Bourdeau[c]

[a] Université Laval; ORCID: 0000-0001-9036-5537
[b] Université Laval; ORCID: 0000-0001-6201-1192
[c] Université Laval; ORCID: 0000-0002-3184-3305

Résumé

Les produits du terroir sont caractérisés par la singularité que leur donne le territoire d'où ils sont issus. Cette singularité est utilisée dans leur promotion, mais elle peut également susciter l'intérêt des individus pour ce territoire. Né en Europe et d'abord appliqué au vin, le concept de terroir est depuis lors en expansion. Il est utilisé partout dans le monde, et pour une diversité de produits. Toutefois, son utilisation hors de l'Europe pose la question de la manière dont ce concept s'applique ailleurs, et de son lien avec le tourisme. Cet article vise à comprendre comment les offres agroalimentaire et touristique s'intègrent afin de construire l'image du terroir au Québec. L'analyse de contenu lexical et des images des pages Web des organismes de gestion de la destination, des associations d'agrotourisme et de tourisme gourmand locales et des entreprises agroalimentaires de deux régions québécoises indique que le terroir est surtout un synonyme de « produit local ». Son utilisation n'a pas pour but de souligner la singularité qu'a un produit en fonction de son territoire de production. Un modèle d'orchestration des éléments représentatifs du territoire pour contribuer à la mise en valeur de la destination gourmande est suggéré. Deux voies de développement sont proposées : une production spécifique et une généraliste. Bien que le tourisme gourmand soit déjà important dans les destinations étudiées, il pourrait y être davantage intégré à l'aide d'une communication coordonnée entre les acteurs impliqués.

Abstract

Terroir products are characterized by the uniqueness of the territory where they are produced. This uniqueness is used to promote them, but it may also serve to trigger the interest of individuals in this territory. Starting in Europe and linked to wine, the concept of terroir is expanding all over the world for an increasing number of different products. However, its use outside of Europe raises the question of how this concept applies elsewhere and specifically, how it relates to tourism. This paper aims to understand how agri-food and tourism propositions/offers are integrated in order to build the image of terroir in Quebec. The analysis of lexical content and images of the web pages from destination management organizations, local food tourism associations, and food companies in two Quebec regions indicated that the notion of terroir is mostly used as a synonym for "local product". Its use does not refer to the uniqueness of the product related to its production territory. Rather, we suggest a model of orchestration of the representative elements of the territory in order to contribute to a gastronomic destination. Two paths of development are proposed – one that is product-specific or one that is generalist. Although food tourism is already important for the destinations under study, it could be further integrated with the help of coordinated communication between all the actors involved.

Introduction

Présenter la gastronomie comme un attrait touristique est une stratégie utilisée par plusieurs destinations. La gastronomie « génère de la valeur dans les destinations à travers l'offre de produits locaux et la reconnaissance du travail des producteurs et d'autres membres de la chaîne de valeur[1] » (World Tourism Organization, 2022, p. 4). Le Québec ne fait pas exception : le tourisme gourmand y est devenu un important volet de développement territorial (Association de l'agrotourisme et du tourisme gourmand du Québec, 2023).

Cette tendance s'explique entre autres par l'intérêt continu des consommateurs envers les aliments (Naulin, 2014) et est concomitante à la croissance et à la diversification accélérées de l'offre (Warde, 1997). Si, d'une part, plus d'options sont offertes, d'autre part, les risques sont aussi plus nombreux. La menace d'un mauvais choix pousse donc les consommateurs à connaître davantage ce qu'ils mangent et à mettre en valeur leurs choix alimentaires. La reconnaissance du lieu de production fait partie de ces choix (Turgeon, 2010).

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[1] Traduction par les auteurs. Texte original : « generate value in destinations through the offer of local products and the recognition of the work done by producers and other members of the value chain ».

L'identification du lieu de production peut rassurer et, éventuellement, inciter le consommateur à le visiter.

Ce lien entre la reconnaissance de la production agroalimentaire et le tourisme gourmand est exploré dans cet article. Tous deux sont caractérisés par une implication collective. Faire approuver une appellation réservée pour un produit demande une action coordonnée de ses producteurs et d'autres acteurs (ex. : politiciens, restaurateurs) (Delfosse, 2015). Pour ce qui est du tourisme gourmand, Hjalager (2002) démontre que son développement dépend de l'action coordonnée entre les producteurs et les acteurs touristiques. Cette coordination s'appliquerait également à la communication entre ces acteurs et le public. Au fur et à mesure que les producteurs font la promotion de leurs produits et que les organismes de gestion de destination touristique les utilisent pour représenter la région, la singularité de la destination liée à sa production agroalimentaire se construit. À notre connaissance, aucune étude ne se consacre à la façon dont la promotion agroalimentaire est construite à travers les actions posées par les divers acteurs du tourisme gourmand. Cette étude pourrait donc contribuer à la fois aux domaines de la promotion du tourisme gourmand et du commerce agroalimentaire, et ce, spécifiquement pour les produits dont l'origine géographique est mentionnée.

Dans ce cadre, le concept de « terroir » apparaît approprié pour analyser les représentations des destinations gourmandes. Ces produits mettent en évidence leur origine, et leur singularité peut participer à la construction de la destination gourmande. Le terroir est également une construction humaine qui est influencée par les acteurs du territoire, qu'ils soient producteurs ou liés à l'industrie touristique (Deshaies, 2003). Étant donné que le tourisme gourmand est une activité qui se consolide à partir de la collaboration entre l'industrie touristique et l'industrie agroalimentaire

(Hjalager, 2002), la communication sur cette production agroalimentaire peut participer à la construction de l'espace symbolique qu'est le terroir. Cette construction dépendra notamment des éléments utilisés dans la communication de ces deux types d'acteurs lorsqu'ils s'adressent aux individus.

Cet article vise à comprendre comment les offres agroalimentaire et touristique se combinent afin de positionner la production agroalimentaire en tant qu'attrait touristique au Québec. Ses objectifs spécifiques sont : 1) analyser les représentations de destinations gourmandes québécoises et de leur production agroalimentaire ; 2) identifier les éléments distinctifs qui peuvent influencer la construction de l'image du terroir ; et 3) réfléchir à l'utilisation du concept de terroir pour comprendre la valorisation touristique des destinations gourmandes. L'article débute avec une présentation de la définition du tourisme gourmand et un rapide retour sur la formalisation du concept de terroir, en général et au Québec. Suit la présentation de la collecte de données et de la méthode d'analyse de contenu visuel et lexical des sites Web des organismes de gestion de la destination (OGD), des associations agrotouristiques et de tourisme gourmand locales (AATGL) et des producteurs agroalimentaires locaux (y compris les transformateurs). Les résultats portant sur la représentation des produits locaux comme mode de valorisation et attraits touristiques dans deux régions du Québec sont synthétisés. Finalement, la discussion propose le recours à certaines stratégies d'utilisation du terroir comme élément d'attractivité au Québec selon le niveau de formalisation du terroir, et rappelle la nécessité de développer le tourisme gourmand de façon intégrée.

Le tourisme gourmand

L'Association de l'agrotourisme et du tourisme gourmand du Québec (AATGQ) définit le tourisme gourmand comme la :

> [d]écouverte d'un territoire, par une clientèle touristique ou excursionniste, à travers des activités agrotouristiques, complémentaires à l'agriculture, ou bioalimentaires et des expériences culinaires distinctives, mettant en valeur le savoir-faire des producteurs agricoles et d'artisans permettant de découvrir les produits régionaux et les plats propres au territoire québécois, par l'accueil et l'information que leur réserve leur hôte (AATGQ, 2020, p. 9).

Une multitude de termes gravitent autour du tourisme lié à la nourriture et à la boisson. La nomenclature comprend aussi bien le « tourisme gourmet », réservé à l'élite, que l'« agrotourisme », qui rassemble des visiteurs pas forcément gourmands ni épicuriens (Hall et Sharples, 2003). Les enjeux définitionnels concernant les différentes formes de « tourisme culinaire » n'empêchent pas les touristes, destinations et producteurs, de le mettre en pratique. Par exemple, le restaurant Bras est devenu l'icône du plateau d'Aubrac (Etcheverria, 2016), et le chef Ferran Adrià, avec son restaurant elBulli et son laboratoire voué au développement gastronomique, ont démontré, il y a un bon moment déjà, tout l'attrait que peut représenter la gastronomie d'une nation (Andrews, 2011).

L'offre touristique gourmande englobe tant la visite d'une ferme, trouvée au hasard d'une route, qu'un voyage longuement planifié dans une destination lointaine pour s'assurer d'une place dans un restaurant étoilé. Néanmoins, transformer une production agroalimentaire en attrait touristique n'est pas une tâche simple. D'une part, les visiteurs ont besoin de manger, et l'industrie touristique doit répondre à ce besoin. D'autre part, les producteurs agroalimentaires doivent s'adapter pour offrir leurs produits aux visiteurs de la région. Cette orchestration entre acteurs touristiques et producteurs agroalimentaires est vue comme un facteur essentiel au développement d'une destination gourmande (Hjalager, 2002). Cette intégration peut atteindre différents stades. 1) La destination émergente est caractérisée par la présence de plusieurs producteurs travaillant séparément et ne visant pas nécessairement les visiteurs comme principale clientèle. Pour les acteurs touristiques (ex. : hôtels, attraits), les producteurs sont perçus comme des fournisseurs permettant de combler un besoin de leurs visiteurs. Lorsqu'une destination gourmande se structure davantage, deux cas de figure peuvent se produire. 2a) Les producteurs agroalimentaires peuvent établir des partenariats et bonifier l'expérience gourmande de la destination, par exemple, par la mise sur pied d'une certification locale mettant en valeur la qualité des produits et leurs caractéristiques territoriales. 2b) Une destination peut également associer une offre gourmande à la visite d'autres attraits touristiques, tels les musées, les théâtres. 3) Finalement, la destination gourmande accomplie serait celle où les acteurs touristiques et agroalimentaires ont atteint une intégration telle qu'ils peuvent créer des connaissances et les diffuser de manière structurée et explicite. Les chaires, laboratoires, centres d'expertise et de recherche auxquels participent producteurs et scientifiques permettent alors de générer de nouveaux produits et de nouvelles façons de faire (Hjalager, 2002). Ces destinations attirent alors non seulement les visiteurs, mais aussi les professionnels de l'industrie du tourisme gourmand qui s'y rendent pour s'en inspirer.

Le terroir, une notion en expansion typologique, géographique et conceptuelle

Le mot « terroir » est issu de la langue française. À l'origine, les agronomes l'utilisaient pour préciser les aires agricoles les plus appropriées pour la production du vin, en fonction des cépages et des caractéristiques souhaitées (Bérard, 2011 ; Delfosse et Lefort, 2011). Au fil du temps, un ensemble de pratiques et de savoir-faire traditionnels se sont ajoutés à la définition de « terroir ». L'idée d'un produit distinctif, ancré dans un territoire, et associé au nom de la région, qui ne peut être utilisé que de façon restreinte, s'étend alors hors du domaine du vin et des frontières européennes (Delfosse et Lefort, 2011). En tant que concept, le terroir permet donc de comprendre, construire et communiquer la production agroalimentaire de manière attractive.

Des politiques inspirées par celles des appellations réservées, basées sur le concept européen du terroir, ont été élaborées dans plusieurs pays. Toutefois, leur application et leur capacité à valoriser la production agroalimentaire locale ne sont pas automatiques. Elles dépendent largement du contexte de chaque pays (Cerdan et al., 2011 ; Le Goffic et Zappalaglio, 2017 ; Thévenod-Mottet et al., 2011).

Dans le champ théorique, le terroir apparaît également associé aux études des systèmes agroalimentaires localisés (SYAL) (Prévost et al., 2014). La reconnaissance de l'origine du produit contribuerait ainsi à la préservation de l'environnement, de la culture et de l'économie d'un lieu (Sans et al., 2011). Si le concept de terroir s'appuyait à l'origine sur un produit et des caractéristiques pédoclimatiques spécifiques, au fil du temps, le terroir ne sera plus seulement associé à un produit et à un contenu matériel, mais également à d'autres produits et à un contenu immatériel. Pecqueur (2001) propose le terme « paniers de biens territorialisés », auquel une rente distincte est attribuée

en fonction de la reconnaissance de la région de production, et en comparaison avec des produits similaires disponibles au marché. La relation qui s'établit entre territoire et produit agroalimentaire aboutit à quelque chose de typique qui incite le consommateur à payer plus cher pour ce produit que pour un produit similaire de masse (Pecqueur, 2011).

La typicité (Casabianca et al., 2011), d'abord reconnue dans le domaine vinicole, puis étendue à la production agroalimentaire, peut dorénavant être un facteur de valorisation du territoire, au-delà de cette même production. Pour être « typiques », et être reconnus comme tels, les produits régionaux doivent posséder une certaine homogénéité qui permet de les reconnaître et de les distinguer (Casabianca et al., 2011). La reconnaissance de la typicité passera par la comparaison des produits, une comparaison effectuée notamment hors de la région de production, et contribuant à sa notoriété (Férrière et Meyzie, 2015).

La typicité d'un produit, qui devient notoire, fait partie du phénomène de « terroirisation » (Delfosse, 2011, p. 297) et implique beaucoup plus que la reconnaissance de cet ancrage. Il devient un processus qui permet la création d'une valeur partagée entre producteurs et consommateurs, entre ville et campagne. Outre la caractéristique du produit, le terroir rappelle le nom de la région productrice et contribue à sa promotion. Cette typicité pourrait donc devenir un facteur d'attractivité pour le tourisme gourmand. Le terroir pourrait ainsi fonctionner comme un attrait touristique.

Pour certains, le terroir doit se développer à partir d'un produit principal, comme le vin (Rand et Heath, 2006). Pour d'autres, il a avantage à s'appuyer sur la concertation pour mettre en valeur un panier de

produits locaux (Brunier, 2015), ou pour faciliter la compréhension du territoire pour les visiteurs (Prigent, 2016). Aux États-Unis par exemple, les labels agroalimentaires pour les indications géographiques sont souvent appliqués à l'ensemble des produits d'une région (Le Goffic et Zappalaglio, 2017). Si les deux modèles coexistent dans le monde, une organisation autour de maints produits implique une coordination plus complexe, englobant plus d'acteurs.

Finalement, l'évolution du terroir apparaît aussi dans la reconnaissance des savoir-faire. Le terroir n'est plus seulement issu des méthodes traditionnelles partagées et transmises par un groupe, mais intègre aussi l'innovation générée par une action individuelle (Baumgartinger-Seiringer et al., 2022 ; Le Goffic et Zappalaglio, 2017).

On assiste donc à une expansion typologique (des vins et des caractéristiques pédoclimatiques tangibles à d'autres produits – ou paniers de produits – et savoir-faire), géographique (de la France à l'Europe et aux autres pays, du rural à l'urbain) et conceptuelle (avec une formalisation légale et réglementaire, mais aussi dans le passage de la tradition à l'innovation).

Du local au terroir. Quid de la démarche en cours au Québec?

L'histoire de la gastronomie québécoise s'est construite à partir des influences autochtone, française, anglaise, et de l'intense immigration qui a peuplé le continent depuis le XIXᵉ siècle (Lemasson, 2012). Le concept de terroir y est encore en transformation, et ce, même si le mot y est familier de par son origine linguistique (Audet, 2014 ; Ben Hassen et Tremblay, 2016). En Amérique du Nord, le Québec est le seul territoire où une loi d'appellations réservées portant sur tous les produits agricoles a cours. Il existe des appellations pour certains vins (ex. : le cas d'« American Viticultural Area » – American viticultural areas, 1979) et des produits protégés par des marques enregistrées (Le Goffic et Zappalaglio, 2017), mais le caractère général de la loi québécoise est particulièrement propice à l'analyse d'un processus de « terroirisation ».

Historiquement, la production agricole a été un axe économique important au Québec. L'industrialisation et la concentration foncière de l'agriculture y ont également eu lieu, mais un mouvement de revalorisation agricole a vu le jour au cours des années 1980. Selon Boghossian (2017), cette revalorisation s'inscrit dans un processus plus large de construction identitaire, et s'est cristallisée en deux produits emblématiques : le vin et le fromage.

Deshaies (2003) affirme que le mot terroir au Québec est généralement utilisé pour désigner un produit local, sans dénoter la typicité caractéristique associée au mot « terroir » en France. Ce mot se serait donc popularisé au Québec sans sa connotation de particularité et de comparabilité. La Loi sur les appellations réservées, approuvée en 1996 et élaborée à partir du modèle français, a été un échec et a dû être reformulée en 2006. En effet, aucune appellation réservée liée à l'origine géographique n'avait été approuvée durant les 10 années ayant suivi sa mise en vigueur. En 2023, le Québec ne comptait que huit produits d'appellation (six dénominations d'origine et deux autres avec un terme valorisant (Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants, s. d.).

Bien que la Loi reconnaisse l'innovation et l'action individuelle différemment de l'Europe, elle ne protège pas le terme « terroir » de l'usurpation au Québec (Loi sur les appellations réservées et les termes valorisants,

2021 ; Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation, 2003). Le terme serait ainsi banalisé, galvaudé et discrédité par les contrefaçons (Solidarité rurale du Québec, 2002). Ce manque de protection légale peut justifier l'utilisation fréquente du mot « local » au lieu de « terroir » et nuit à la reconnaissance de la spécificité de la production agricole de certaines régions. L'absence de règles dans l'utilisation du terme a donc causé un manque de connaissance et de reconnaissance de la part des consommateurs (Audet, 2014).

Parmi les six produits reconnus par une appellation réservée, deux font référence à une région québécoise, tandis que les autres utilisent la dénomination générale « Québec » (le vin et le cidre) ou « canadienne », ce qui, considérant la taille du territoire, ne favorise pas la reconnaissance de caractéristiques matérielles typiques (Audet, 2014). Toutefois, la mise en place d'un cahier de charge destiné à faire reconnaître les « vins du Québec » permet de produire une certaine homogénéité entre les produits québécois, et ainsi de faire ressortir les qualités spécifiques du terroir, notamment auprès du marché international (Baumgartinger-Seiringer et al., 2022).

Première indication géographique protégée au Québec en 2009, l'Agneau de Charlevoix a souffert de grandes difficultés économiques et d'usurpation (Suraniti, 2017). Le maïs de Neuville a été reconnu en 2017. Produit frais (il est déclassé après 48 heures) et non transformé, le maïs n'est cependant pas un produit à haute valeur ajoutée dont le coût justifierait une commercialisation lointaine. Sa valorisation hors de son territoire est donc limitée.

Le fromage québécois illustre le cas d'un produit identitaire fort et lié à l'héritage français. Le lien culturel entre le Québec et la France, qui se manifeste notamment par la langue, affecte également la dimension agroalimentaire. Ce lien amène ainsi les

consommateurs à considérer que les fromages seraient également issus d'une tradition transmise depuis la période coloniale française, et ce, bien que la production fromagère se soit redéployée ces 30 dernières années (Boghossian, 2017). La standardisation du fromage pour faire émerger des caractéristiques de typicité est cependant difficile à cause de la multiplicité des techniques de production et des produits en résultant (ex. : consistance de la pâte, température du lait, microorganismes). Regrouper des fromagers autour d'une appellation commune est ainsi plus difficile. Malgré ce défi, le Québec compte une appellation de spécificité (fromage de vache de race canadienne – Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants, 2016) et a approuvé l'utilisation du terme valorisant « fromage fermier » (Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants, 2021). L'appellation et le terme valorisant ne renvoient pas à une région spécifique, mais opèrent une valorisation laitière qui peut contribuer à l'émergence de fromages « du terroir ». En effet, un fromage fermier est exclusivement produit à partir du lait provenant du troupeau du producteur, restreignant ainsi le territoire d'origine du produit.

D'autres produits pourraient intégrer cette liste de produits du terroir même s'ils ne sont pas reconnus par une appellation réservée. C'est le cas de la poule Chantecler, du sirop d'érable, de l'agneau de pré salé. Certains produits agroalimentaires locaux profitent donc déjà d'une reconnaissance informelle et participent aux initiatives de valorisation.

Si le parapluie de la Loi n'est pas attrayant pour plusieurs producteurs, le Québec présente d'autres initiatives d'orchestration locale de valorisation agroalimentaire tels les labels, circuits et routes gastronomiques. Les membres de ces associations (producteurs, transformateurs, restaurateurs) sont incités à s'approvisionner localement et à utiliser des

labels locaux (Créateurs de saveurs Cantons-de-l'Est, s. d. ; La route des saveurs Charlevoix, 2015). Le défi de ces associations repose sur l'établissement d'un réseau d'approvisionnement local dans un contexte de mondialisation du système agroalimentaire et de concentration du réseau de distribution. Ces deux phénomènes semblent moins prégnants en Europe où, jusqu'à récemment, le marché était plus fermé qu'en Amérique, et où les ventes au détail étaient plus fragmentées (Thévenod-Mottet et al., 2011). Les restaurateurs (Dumas et al., 2006) et les chefs vedettes jouent également un rôle essentiel dans la valorisation du terroir, tant pour faire connaître les produits que pour renforcer le système d'approvisionnement local (Frochot, 2015 ; Stengel, 2014).

Le terroir du Québec ne répond donc pas à la conception traditionnelle ou européenne, mais se caractérise par sa modernité et son innovation. Les produits agroalimentaires québécois ne suivent pas une norme permettant de distinguer un produit du terroir d'un produit quelconque. D'un point de vue conceptuel, le Québec est en train de mettre en valeur sa production locale et de renforcer certains mécanismes qui contribueront à construire son ou ses terroirs. Le concept de terroir permet ainsi de réfléchir à la façon dont la production agroalimentaire participe à la mise en valeur et à la distinction de la destination gourmande.

Les représentations touristiques liées au terroir

Typés, reconnaissables, valorisés, les produits du terroir vendus hors de leur lieu de production sont d'importants ambassadeurs de leur région. Ils peuvent inciter les individus à s'y déplacer pour vivre l'expérience gourmande sur place (Alderighi et al., 2016). Pour que cette expérience soit possible, les industries touristique et agroalimentaire doivent travailler et communiquer de concert (Hjalager, 2002).

Les représentations sont l'ensemble des signes utilisés pour transmettre une idée ou un sens entre des interlocuteurs. Ces signes peuvent être, entre autres, des images, des mots écrits ou prononcés, de la musique, qui évoquent ensemble une idée ou un sens pour chaque interlocuteur. L'utilisation des mêmes signes contribue à former une même représentation entre les interlocuteurs (Berger, 2019 ; Berger et Luckmann, 1980). Par exemple, l'association continuelle de l'image d'un fromage à celle d'une montagne créerait, à force, l'idée que le fromage est un aliment de montagne. Ce

cas est une simplification extrême d'un processus beaucoup plus complexe par lequel chaque individu obtient sa propre connaissance du monde. Néanmoins, il illustre que cette connaissance résulte d'un processus interactif, où les membres d'une même société partagent une interprétation similaire de certains signes et de leur association. Ainsi, un message homogène, ou partageant des signes communs, illustrera ce que le terroir signifie à la fois pour les producteurs, les acteurs de l'industrie touristique et les visiteurs. Le sens du lieu, en l'occurrence le terroir, sera façonné par l'interaction entre ces producteurs, acteurs et visiteurs (Elliot et McCready, 2016). A contrario, le manque de cohérence pourrait empêcher la création d'une image claire ou distincte du terroir (Brun, 2017). En tant que construction humaine (Deshaies, 2003), le terroir sera influencé par la communication des divers acteurs du territoire.

Les multiples contextes dans lesquels s'insèrent les émetteurs (producteurs, transformateurs, industrie touristique) les amènent à personnaliser leurs représentations du territoire et de la production agroalimentaire selon leurs intérêts (Parasecoli, 2011). Pour leur part, les récepteurs, c'est-à-dire les visiteurs, sont immergés dans une culture qui façonne leurs représentations à partir de signes particuliers. L'interaction entre émetteurs et récepteurs influence également le choix des signes qui seront utilisés (Berger et Luckmann, 1980 ; Schnell, 2011). Par exemple, dans les nouvelles régions vinicoles, les producteurs mettent de l'avant les particularités du produit (conditions pédoclimatiques et méthodes de production) ainsi que le parcours du producteur. Dans les « vieux pays », les producteurs utilisent plutôt le patrimoine et les appellations réservées (Maguire, 2018).

La stratégie choisie pour mettre en valeur une production agroalimentaire ainsi que les signes utilisés pour représenter la région peuvent aussi être le résultat d'une concurrence entre les associations sectorielles et les syndicats agricoles en général (Brunier, 2015), ou le fait de l'industrie dominante. C'est aussi parfois à partir d'un produit phare qu'un panier de biens émerge (Hirczak et al., 2008). La cohérence entre les produits, telle que le duo vins et fromages, pourrait contribuer à renforcer la perception d'un « goût du lieu » (Trubek, 2008), comme dans le Jura en France (Legrand et al., 2021). Au Québec, l'essor de la production vinicole dans Brome-Missisquoi, région des Cantons-de-l'Est, a fait évoluer l'activité touristique de la région grâce à l'attraction des amateurs de vin. Incidemment, la production vinicole a encouragé la production de cidre et de fromages locaux (Deshaies, 2003). La relation entre les produits agroalimentaires ainsi qu'entre les produits et le territoire génère ainsi des représentations qui peuvent rendre la destination ou ses produits plus attrayants. Dans le Jura, le fromage accompagne

parfaitement le vin. Dans Brome-Missisquoi, le cidre procurerait une expérience inusitée aux amateurs de vins. L'association d'un produit au paysage est également importante, comme le constate Alderighi et al. (2016) à propos de certains fromages associés aux régions montagnardes en Italie.

Les signes associés à la production agroalimentaire locale et le choix des produits spécifiques pour représenter cette production contribuent à la construction de l'image de ce terroir.

Dans l'ensemble de la communication (brochures, sites Web, cartes postales, souvenirs), certains signes sont sélectionnés et repris par les différents acteurs, au point de devenir une icône du lieu. L'établissement de ces icônes touristiques crée alors de la familiarité avec la destination (Pennington et Thomsen, 2010). Les visiteurs connaissent et reconnaissent l'icône, elle contribue à forger son identité particulière. Les icônes peuvent être des monuments (ex. : la statue de la Liberté à New York), des expériences (ex. : l'observation de baleines à Tadoussac), des constructions (ex. : la Cité interdite en Chine) et, dans le cas du tourisme gourmand, ces icônes sont les produits locaux. Par leur singularité, leur notoriété, ou la familiarité développée par les visiteurs, ils participent à la construction du terroir et au développement de la destination touristique. Dans ce processus, d'autres signes peuvent également être associés au produit, tels que les paysages (la montagne), un produit complémentaire (le cidre) ou une condition pédoclimatique (le froid).

Lors de leur séjour, les visiteurs attendent l'icône, ils souhaitent la visiter ou l'expérimenter, car l'icône incarne le lieu, ses représentations et le contexte culturel du visiteur. Les visiteurs considèrent ces icônes comme une preuve de l'authenticité de la destination. En faire la visite signifie avoir accès à l'original, à l'essence de la destination (Culler, 1981). Ainsi, déguster un produit iconique, interagir avec ses producteurs, connaître sa

méthode de fabrication, voir le lieu de production, participent de l'expérience du tourisme gourmand.

La promotion touristique des destinations

Les représentations utilisées dans la promotion touristique d'un lieu sont diverses, selon qu'il s'agit d'une destination rurale ou urbaine, de contenu matériel ou immatériel. L'objectif de cet article étant de comprendre la communication sur la production agroalimentaire dans des destinations, plusieurs écrits scientifiques proposant des catégories de représentations du territoire dans la publicité des destinations ont été étudiés.

Par exemple, à partir d'une analyse des représentations du milieu rural de la côte est du lac Huron (Ontario, Canada), Hopkins (1998) a proposé les catégories suivantes : environnement, idée de communauté idéale, localisation privilégiée, héritage, agriculture et récréation. L'analyse distinguait « slogans » et logos publicitaires, et l'agriculture se retrouvait principalement dans les logos (Hopkins, 1998). Après l'analyse de 19 régions françaises, Frochot (2003) a suggéré les catégories de représentations suivantes : nature, histoire, authenticité, tradition, pureté, rural, activités, arts et artisanat, sauvage, et gastronome. Ces éléments comprennent les aspects tant matériels qu'immatériels de la communication. Hunter (2012) a proposé un modèle plus simple, autour de cinq catégories : les monuments, la nature, la culture, les festivals et les cartes. Appliquée à un milieu urbain, sa catégorisation n'inclut toutefois pas la ruralité et les activités. La campagne étant au cœur de l'étude de Brun (2017), l'auteur y propose les catégories suivantes : cadre de vie, zone productrice et zone de préservation de la nature.

L'élément humain est souvent mis en valeur dans la communication sur les produits agroalimentaires. Les représentations des producteurs dans les communications illustrent l'ancrage des aliments au territoire, la reconnexion de l'humain au système agroalimentaire, et ce, par opposition au système industriel auquel la plupart des visiteurs sont habitués (Précigout et Téchoneyres, 2015 ; Sans et al., 2011 ; Schnell, 2011). Le portrait du producteur assure une certaine légitimité de son rôle par rapport au développement du terroir (Maguire, 2018). L'élément humain se manifeste également dans le contexte de consommation (ex. : festival, repas de famille, célébrations) ou dans la relation à cette consommation (ex. : santé, équité, confiance) (Holtzman, 2006 ; Parasecoli, 2011). La présence humaine peut également rendre un paysage plus rassurant (Pritchard et Morgan, 1995).

Finalement, une étude précédente portant sur la région de Charlevoix a permis d'identifier plusieurs éléments qui caractérisent sa production agroalimentaire (Tavares de Souza et al., 2021). Les caractéristiques de la production (ex. : biologique, artisanale, du terroir), l'origine culturelle du produit (ex. : ethnique, tradition locale, innovation), les mécanismes de jugement de la qualité (ex. : certification, prix) et les types de produits (ex. : vins, fromages, cidres) étaient les principaux éléments retenus.

Collecte et traitement de données

Pour comprendre comment les offres agroalimentaire et touristique se combinent afin de positionner la production agroalimentaire en tant qu'attrait touristique au Québec, deux régions touristiques, Charlevoix et les Cantons-de-l'Est, ont été étudiées. L'analyse se base sur 18 sites Web (leurs OGD, leurs AATGL et un échantillon de 14 entreprises) entre les mois d'août 2020 et de décembre 2021. Les résultats portent sur plus de 27 000 références (association d'une image ou d'un texte à une catégorie), codées à partir de 993 pages Web. Les pages analysées sont les trois premiers niveaux des sites Web des organisations ciblées, et toutes les pages consacrées à l'agroalimentaire. L'inclusion de toutes les pages liées à l'agroalimentaire vise à augmenter la quantité de contenu pertinent et à permettre l'analyse de la communication agroalimentaire surtout par les OGD. Ce biais interdit toutefois de faire certaines comparaisons des contenus des OGD et des AATGL et producteurs, car ces derniers sont évidemment centrés sur l'agroalimentaire.

Les critères d'échantillonnage ayant permis de sélectionner les 14 entreprises retenues sont : le nombre d'entreprises dans les secteurs de production agroalimentaire, la distribution hors du territoire de production, la présence d'un site Web, la communication sur le territoire d'origine, la spécialisation (un produit central), le partenariat. Une note a été attribuée à chaque entreprise selon ces critères. Par exemple, si l'entreprise ne produisait qu'un type de produit, elle recevait la note 3 (ex. : une fromagerie). S'il y avait un produit central, mais que l'entreprise produisait également un autre produit, elle recevait la note 2 (ex. : une cidrerie produisant également des confitures). Si aucun produit central n'était identifié, la note 1 était attribuée à l'entreprise. Les entreprises ont été ordonnées selon leur pointage. Celles retenues ont le plus haut pointage représentant les filières avec les plus grands nombres d'entreprises dans la région. Les entreprises choisies dans la région de Charlevoix ont comme productions principales le fromage (3 entreprises), le pain (2), le cidre et la viande (chacun 1). Dans les Cantons-de-l'Est, les entreprises choisies produisent de la bière (3), du fromage (2) et du vin (2).

Les éléments de représentations ont été identifiés par thèmes primaires, correspondant aux boîtes blanches de la figure 1. Ces thèmes sont issus des écrits scientifiques présentés ci-dessus, auxquels des éléments émergents ont été ajoutés au fur et à mesure du codage. Ensuite, les éléments ont été regroupés en thèmes d'ordre secondaire et tertiaire (respectivement les boîtes gris pâle et gris foncé de la figure 1) (Gioia et al., 2010 ; Hunter, 2012). Cette opération a permis de connaître les détails des représentations agroalimentaires et de les associer aux thèmes des représentations touristiques de la destination. La figure 1 présente la structure finale utilisée, où la représentation de la destination gourmande est la combinaison du contenu touristique et du contenu agroalimentaire.

Figure 1 : Éléments représentant la destination gourmande
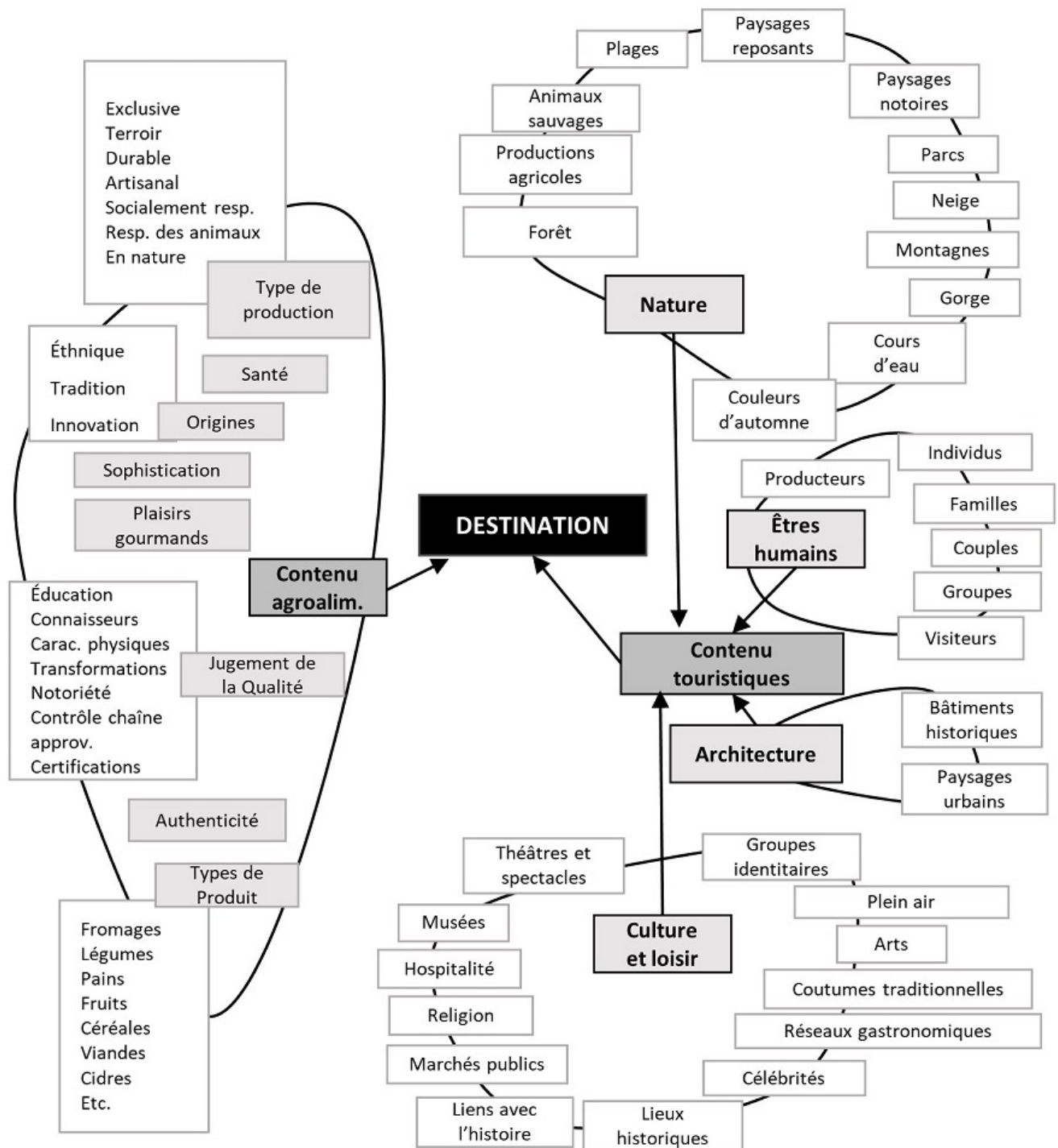
Source : Adaptée de Tavares de Souza et al. (2021).

L'analyse s'est d'abord basée sur l'ensemble des références – tant lexicales que visuelles –, et selon le type d'organisations : OGD, AATGL et entreprises agroalimentaires. Les représentations proposées par chaque type d'organisation ont ensuite été comparées

pour en faire émerger les congruences et les différences. Aucune comparaison d'organismes différents (ex. : une OGD et une entreprise agroalimentaire) n'a été réalisée afin d'éviter le biais relié à leur activité.

Charlevoix et cantons-de-l'est

Les deux régions choisies présentent à la fois une forte industrie touristique et agroalimentaire, et sont parmi les régions pionnières en la matière (AATGQ, 2018 ; Prévost, 2000). Baie-Saint-Paul, une des principales villes de Charlevoix, est située à 94 km à l'est de la ville de Québec. Au sud de la province, les Cantons-de-l'Est

sont une région occupée à l'origine par les anglophones qui ont émigré des États-Unis lors de la guerre d'indépendance. Sa proximité avec le marché de Montréal (environ 90 km de Montréal) en fait une destination touristique importante. La figure 2 montre la localisation des deux régions.

Figure 2 : Localisation des deux régions
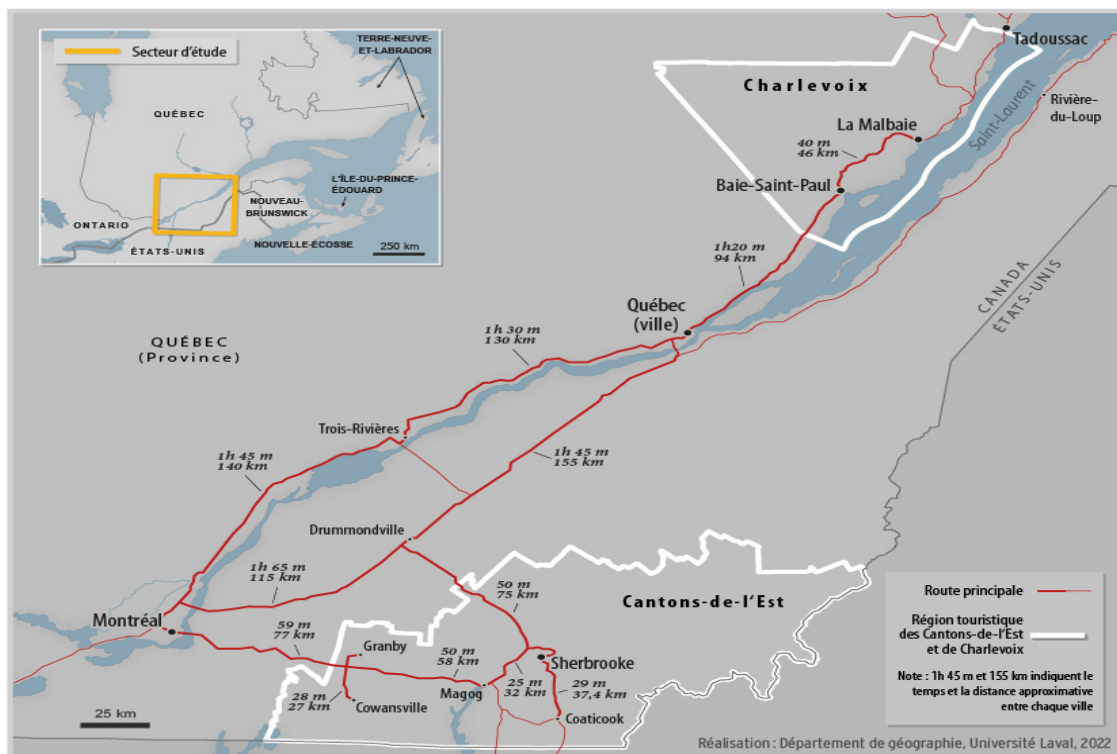
Le Tableau 1 fournit le portrait démographique et le nombre de producteurs associés au tourisme gourmand dans ces régions.

Tableau 1 : Caractéristiques des régions touristiques étudiées

	Cantons-de-l'Est	Charlevoix
Municipalités[1]	119	13
Habitants[2]	46 5624	28 506
Parcs nationaux[3, 4]	4	2
Surface[2] (km²)	12 498	5 998
Températures moyennes (janvier/juillet)[5]	-10/19°C	-12/18°C
Fromageries[3, 4]	14	4
Vignobles[3, 4]	21	0
Cidreries[3, 4]	5	2
Brasseries[3, 4]	22	1

Sources : [1] Gouvernement du Québec (2020), [2] Statistique Canada (2017), [3] Tourisme Charlevoix (2021), [4] Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est (2021), [5] Stations Magog et Baie-Saint-Paul, période de 1981 à 2010 (Ministère de l'Environnement et de la Lutte contre les changements climatiques, 2022).

Le paysage charlevoisien a été façonné par la chute d'une météorite et se caractérise par des montagnes, des forêts et le fleuve (voir figure 3). Son agriculture est adaptée aux montagnes, favorisant les petites productions. Son offre touristique se base sur l'agrotourisme, les activités de plein air et culturelles. Charlevoix compte un OGD régional (Tourisme Charlevoix) et des comités touristiques régionaux. De plus, l'AATGL est liée à la fois à Tourisme Charlevoix et à la table de concertation agrotouristique de la région (Route des Saveurs). La région est reconnue pour mettre en valeur les recettes originales de la région et ses chefs célèbres depuis le début du siècle (Bizier et Nadeau, 2003).

Figure 3 : Relief de la région de Charlevoix
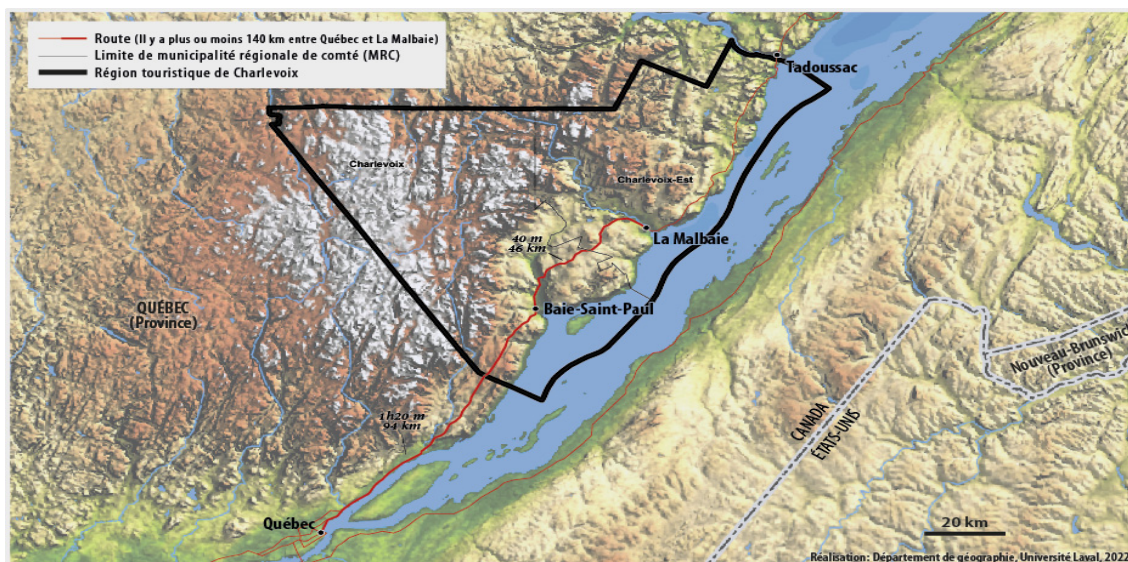
Les Cantons-de-l'Est ont aussi un paysage montagneux, où alternent les aires protégées, les petites productions et l'agriculture industrielle. Les lacs, les rivières et les ruisseaux sont présents sur tout le territoire (voir figure 4). La région compte un OGD régional (Tourisme Canton-de-l'Est) et plusieurs OGD locaux. En matière d'AATGL, les Cantons-de-l'Est comptent sur les Créateurs de Saveurs et certaines associations liées à des produits spécifiques (ex. : Route des vins de Brome-Missisquoi). Aux fins de comparaison entre les régions, Tourisme Charlevoix et la Route des Saveurs ainsi que Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est et les Créateurs de Saveurs ont été retenus.

Figure 4: Relief de la région des Cantons-de-l'Est
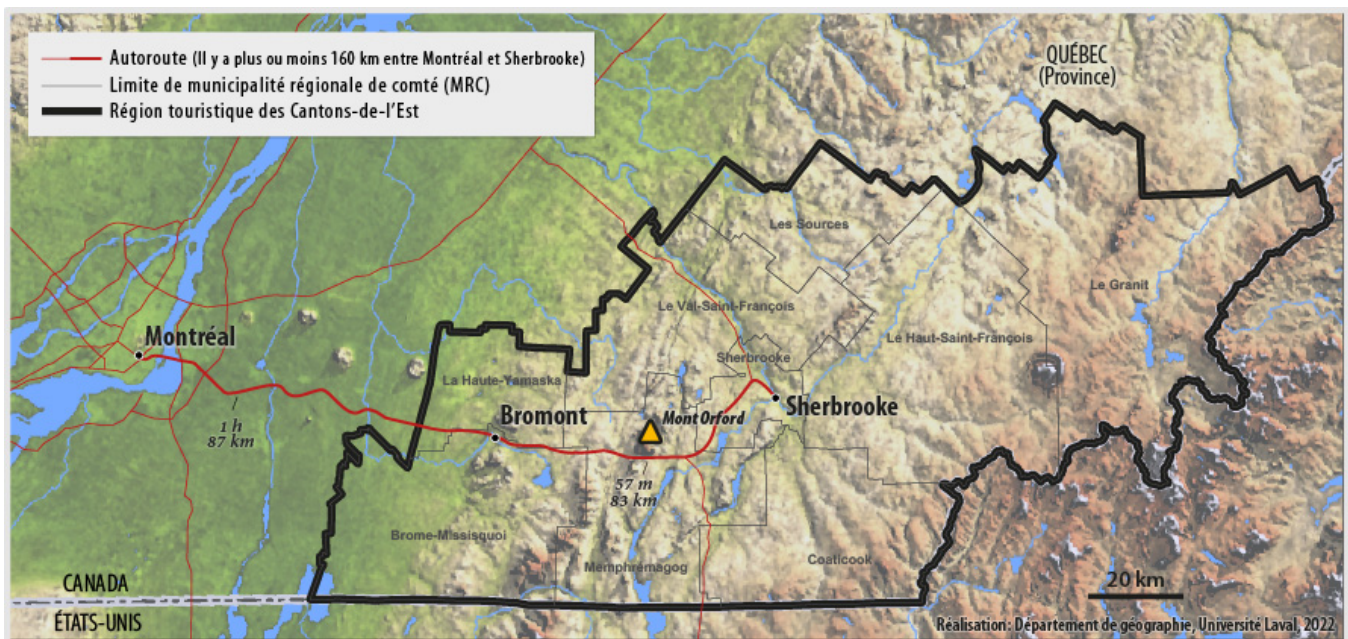
Le tableau 2 présente les filières les plus importantes de la production liée à l'agrotourisme des deux régions selon le nombre d'entreprises et le nombre de références à ces filières comptabilisées dans les documents promotionnels des OGD et des AATGL. Dans le tableau, les pourcentages sont présentés sur le total de références du thème d'ordre secondaire « type de produit ».

Tableau 2 : Principaux produits issus des entreprises agrotouristiques et leur utilisation comme élément de représentation de la destination

Principaux produits de la région selon le nombre d'entreprises agrotouristiques productrices*				Principaux produits utilisés pour représenter le territoire selon le nombre de références							
				Site Web de l'OGD				Site Web de l'AATGL			
Cantons-de-l'Est		*Charlevoix*		*Cantons-de-l'Est*		*Charlevoix*		*Cantons-de-l'Est*		*Charlevoix*	
Produit	%	Produit	%	Produit	% de réf.	Produit	% de réf.	Produit	% de réf.	Produit	% de réf.
Bière˙	15	Viande˙	12	Vin˙	17	Viande˙	13	Fruits	24	Viande˙	34
Vin˙	14	Légumes	9	Bière˙	16	Fromage˙	12	Vin˙	18	Légumes	11
Fromage˙	10	Pain˙	9	Fruits	13	Cidre˙	10	Bière˙	12	Céréales	10
Légumes	10	Fromage˙	8	Fromage˙	12	Légumes	10	Légumes	7	Fromage˙	8
Fruits	10	Céréales	6	Chocolat	6	Pain	8	Viande	7	Fruits	6
Viande	7	Cidre	4	Érable	5	Vin	6	Fromage˙	5	Bière˙	6
Autres	34	Autres	39	Autres	30	Autres	42	Autres	24	Autres	25
Somme des 3 principaux produits transformés˙	39		29		45		35		35		48

* Sources : Tourisme Charlevoix, Route des Saveurs de Charlevoix, Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est, Créateurs des Saveurs des Cantons.
Les cellules grises indiquent les produits dont les entreprises ont été retenues pour les analyses de contenu.

Résultats

L'analyse des nuages de mots issus des documents promotionnels des OGD permet de constater que la communication de Charlevoix à l'égard des produits agroalimentaires de la région est plutôt généraliste, tandis que les fromages, les bières et les vins sont mis en évidence dans les Cantons-de-l'Est. Dans les Cantons-de-l'Est, les mots liés à l'agroalimentaire occupent une place plus grande que ceux associés au paysage (Figure 4). Pour Charlevoix, les mots sont surtout liés au territoire (« Malbaie », Baie-« Saint »-Paul, « Charlevoix »). Les mots « fleuve », « montagnes » et « rivières » rivalisent avec « cuisine », « bistro », « restaurants » et « épicuriens ». Sauf pour ce dernier terme, les mots sont génériques et dans le cas de « cuisine », il est souvent associé à « internationale » ou « canadienne », ce qui ne met pas en évidence la gastronomie locale.

L'utilisation d'un type de produit spécifique (ex. : le vin) est une stratégie usuelle pour promouvoir les destinations gourmandes, car elle facilite l'identification de leur terroir (Garibaldi, 2021). Les Cantons-de-l'Est sont favorisés par cette condition. La promotion de l'agroalimentaire généraliste serait soutenue par la présence de restaurateurs célèbres ou étoilés. C'est le cas dans Charlevoix, qui ne présente pas une singularité gastronomique, mais où la notoriété du terroir repose sur ses restaurateurs. L'utilisation des éléments du paysage pourrait renforcer la singularité de cette production (Sans et al., 2011). Kreziak et al. (2012, p. 832) ont constaté que si un produit est associé à

« des aménités particulièrement bien appréciées des consommateurs », ceux-ci le valorisent davantage.

Figure 5 : Nuages de mots des OGD et des AATGL
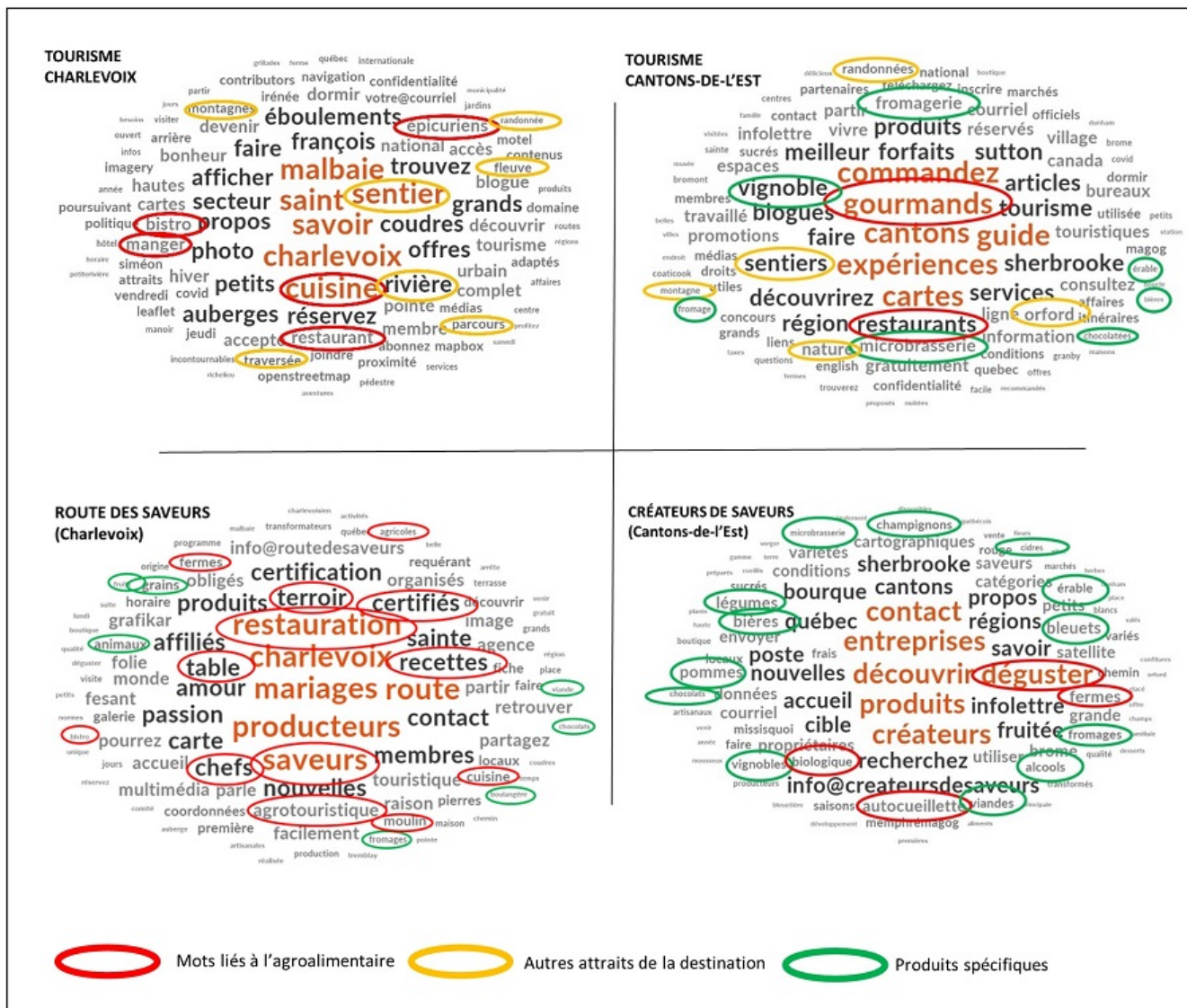
L'analyse de l'ensemble des références visuelles et lexicales des OGD (voir figure 6) indique également que le contenu agroalimentaire est plus fréquent dans les Cantons-de-l'Est, où il constitue 45 % des références et apparaît dans presque toutes les pages (98 %). Dans Charlevoix, ce contenu correspond à 20 % des références et est présent dans 88 % des pages. Ce constat renforce l'idée que le tourisme gourmand est plus important pour l'offre touristique dans les Cantons-de-l'Est qu'en Charlevoix et que cela pourrait être relié à une promotion agroalimentaire plus spécifique, permettant de mieux expliquer la singularité des produits reliés au terroir.

L'ensemble des références, incluant les éléments visuels, est synthétisé dans la Figure 6, d'après les principaux éléments de la structure thématique proposée (Figure 1).

Figure 6 : Éléments représentatifs des régions analysées selon les organismes impliqués dans le tourisme gourmand
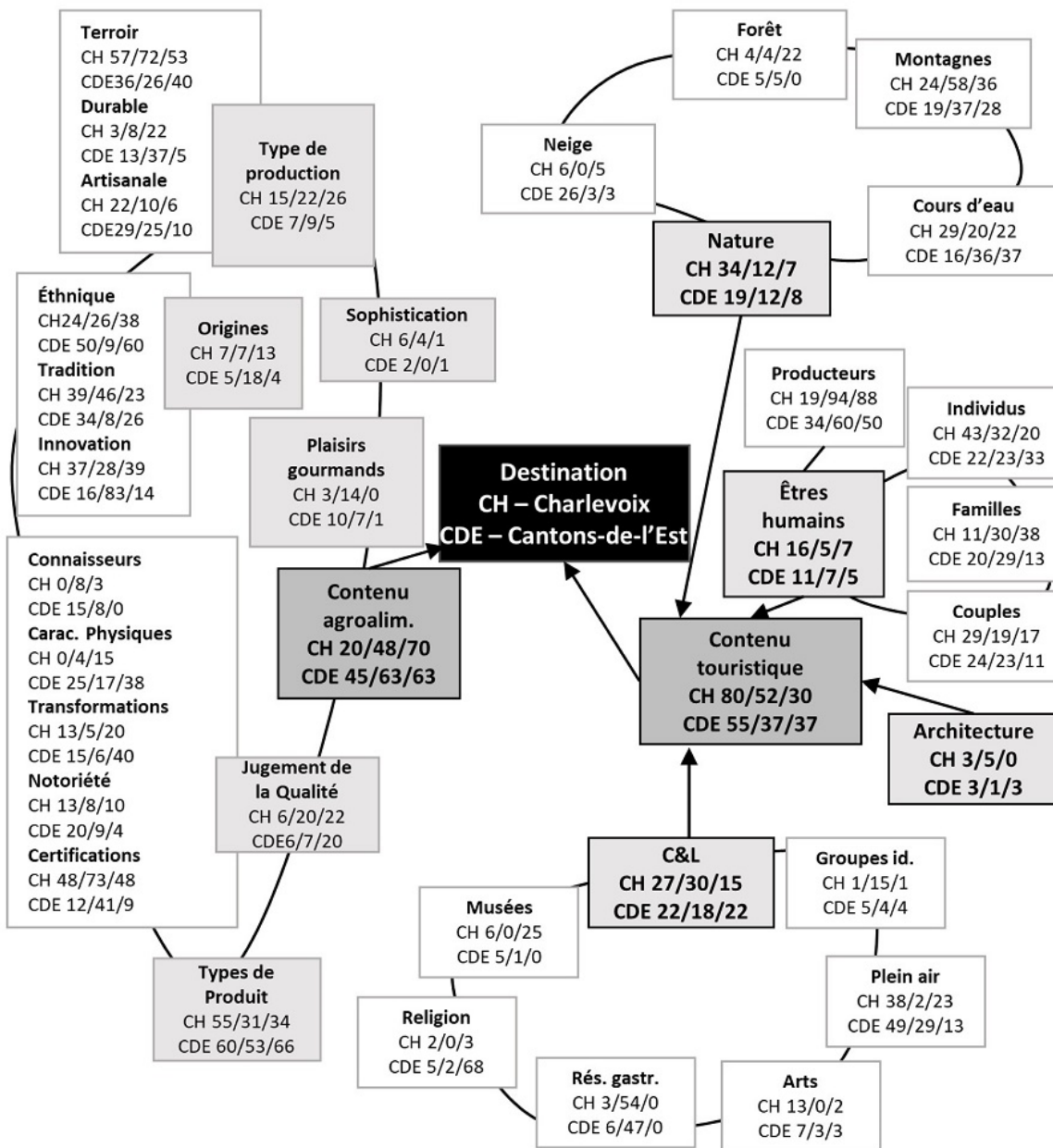
Légende : Les chiffres représentent les pourcentages des références associées au thème sur le total de références associées au thème d'ordre supérieur selon le type d'organisme, 1er chiffre – OGD, 2e chiffre – AATGL et 3e chiffre – échantillon d'entreprises (ex. : dans Charlevoix [CH], les références aux musées sont 6 %, 0 % et 25 % de toutes les références à la culture et aux loisirs dans les sites Web de l'OGD, de l'AATGL et des entreprises, respectivement). Pour alléger la figure, les éléments moins pertinents selon l'importance en pourcentage ne sont pas présentés.

Les AATGL de Charlevoix font davantage référence aux dimensions gastronomiques générales (cercles rouges), les produits agroalimentaires spécifiques (cercles verts) occupant une place secondaire dans la communication. Dans les Cantons-de-l'Est, les mots liés à la gastronomie qui se localisent au centre du nuage sont moins fréquents, néanmoins, plusieurs produits apparaissent de façon périphérique.

Certains produits diffèrent entre les OGD et les AATGL. Les produits transformés (vin, bière, fromage) semblent avoir plus de visibilité dans la communication de l'OGD des Cantons-de-l'Est et seraient les protagonistes de la gastronomie. L'AATGL des Cantons-de-l'Est ajoute à ces trois produits certains produits frais.

L'utilisation du terme « terroir » reste pertinente, notamment par l'AATGL de Charlevoix (au centre du nuage). Cette AATGL est aussi l'initiatrice de la certification locale des producteurs mettant en évidence le « terroir » (figure 7). Dans le cas de l'OGD, aucun produit agroalimentaire n'est identifié. Le terroir n'apparaît pas de manière explicite comme une icône de la destination. Le lien entre l'OGD et l'AATGL de Charlevoix semblent ainsi plus faibles. Malgré l'effort pour construire le terroir charlevoisien de manière explicite de la part de l'AATGL, ce terroir n'est pas intégré de la même façon dans la communication de l'OGD. Son utilisation par l'OGD pourrait renforcer l'association de l'agroalimentaire au paysage naturel de Charlevoix, principal élément de la communication de l'OGD. De manière identique, l'AATGL charlevoisienne pourrait mettre davantage en évidence la richesse du paysage en lien avec le terroir. Les mouvements de part et d'autre permettraient une plus grande congruence à l'égard de la singularité et contribueraient à cette construction du terroir.

Figure 7 : Label de certification des produits du terroir de Charlevoix

Source : La Table Agro-Touristique de Charlevoix (La route des saveurs Charlevoix, 2015)

La Figure 5 illustre la contribution de l'agroalimentaire dans les représentations de chaque destination, mais également les attraits de la destination, dont les activités de plein air (cercles jaunes). Selon l'AATGQ (2018), ces

activités complètent souvent une visite gourmande. Dans Charlevoix, l'offre apparaît équilibrée entre montagne, fleuve et rivière. Dans les Cantons-de-l'Est, les activités de plein air (randonnées et sentiers) sont mises de l'avant, et le mot « Orford », nom d'une des principales montagnes et du parc national, occupe une place importante, iconique (Figure 5).

On note une similarité entre les éléments utilisés par les deux destinations : un individu, un couple ou une famille sont représentés dans une activité de plein air au bord de l'eau ou au sommet d'une montagne (voir la figure 8). Les différences apparaissent davantage entre les organismes d'une même destination. Ainsi, dans les Cantons-de-l'Est, la neige est le principal élément naturel représenté par l'OGD, mais parmi les moins représentés par l'AATGL ou les entreprises. Élément central du climat local, la neige s'avère également importante dans la culture québécoise, notamment pour les activités de plein air hivernales. En revanche, elle pose un défi pour la représentation de la production agricole, qui ne l'intègre pas aisément. Une autre différence est la présence accrue des producteurs dans les outils promotionnels des AATGL et des entreprises. La rencontre avec les producteurs fait d'ailleurs partie des expériences recherchées par les visiteurs au Québec (Association de l'agrotourisme et du tourisme gourmand du Québec, 2018).

Figure 8 : Exemples de représentations du territoire proposées par les OGD

Photo : Parc national des Hautes-Gorges-de-la-Rivière-Malbaie, courtoisie Sépaq

Parmi les activités liées à « Culture et loisir », les activités de plein air sont les plus illustrées par les OGD. Les AATGL, pour leur part, mettent principalement en évidence les réseaux gastronomiques locaux, démontrant ainsi leur implication dans ces réseaux. Dans les Cantons-de-l'Est, plusieurs réseaux gastronomiques (circuits et routes de bières, de fromages, de vins) sont actifs. En tant qu'éléments culturels, ces attraits gastronomiques forment un contrepoids au plein air et occupent une place un peu plus importante dans la communication de l'OGD, en même temps que les activités de plein air sont davantage dépeintes par les AATGL. « Ces routes à thème centrées sur les productions du terroir ont contribué à associer étroitement paysage et plaisirs gourmands » (Beaudet, 2006, p. 5). Cette association peut susciter des valeurs plus saines ou liées à la préservation de ces paysages lors de l'évaluation des produits du terroir. Lenglet et al. (2015, p. 54) suggèrent qu'un « effet de halo peut conduire à reporter l'effet positif des aménités sur d'autres caractéristiques réelles ou idéelles attribuées au produit : nature préservée [...], pureté de l'environnement [...], consommation engagée en faveur des petits producteurs, etc. ». Le paysage célèbre, relié à un produit de manière cohérente pour les consommateurs, crée un accroissement des valeurs économiques et hédoniques attribuées au produit (Kreziak et al., 2012). Dans le cas des Cantons-de-l'Est, cette relation « nature-agroalimentaire » peut ainsi apparaître parce que la nature expliquerait la typicité du terroir, et que les deux sont des attraits touristiques.

Les pourcentages de deux thèmes, patrimoine religieux et muséal, apparaissent particulièrement élevés parmi les indicateurs du facteur « culture » pour les producteurs. Ils s'expliquent par l'analyse des outils promotionnels de deux entreprises, l'Abbaye de Saint-Benoît-du-Lac, qui est une des icônes des Cantons-de-l'Est, et la Laiterie de Charlevoix (lieu de production et économusée), qui est aussi une entreprise charlevoisienne très fréquentée. Toutefois, les pourcentages de références à ces thématiques sont faibles pour les AATGL et les OGD. Bien qu'il s'agisse de producteurs spécifiques, ces derniers pourraient être davantage mobilisés pour valoriser l'ensemble de la production fromagère des régions. La singularité d'un terroir peut émerger d'un savoir-faire traditionnel, et les institutions religieuses et muséales sont fréquemment gardiennes de ces traditions.

Considérée comme un élément distinct, la thématique des arts pourrait aussi être associée à l'agroalimentaire en tant que représentant de la culture locale. Par exemple, Baie-Saint-Paul est reconnue comme un milieu artistique dynamique, mais cette caractéristique n'est pas souvent utilisée par l'AATGL ni par les entreprises analysées. Le Festival Cuisine, Cinéma et Confidences est une exception et illustre bien l'intégration de la gastronomie à un événement touristique relié à la production artistique (Festival Cuisine, Cinéma et Confidences, 2019).

Le dernier élément qui ressort de la figure 6 est la présence de « groupes identitaires ». Selon Warde (1997), les individus utilisent souvent la nourriture comme élément identitaire. *Foodies*, gastronomes, épicuriens sont des dénominations utilisées pour identifier ces personnes intéressées par les expériences gastronomiques (Lemasson, 2012). Ces groupes sont davantage ciblés dans les Cantons-de-l'Est, notamment parce que la présence d'une offre particulière (ex. : route des vins) permet d'en cibler plus aisément les amateurs (ex. : de vins). Dans Charlevoix, le plus faible nombre de producteurs par type de produit ne permet pas de cibler un groupe d'amateurs spécifique. Il faut donc s'adresser aux visiteurs et aux consommateurs en général, comme le fait l'AATGL. Les représentations sont ainsi plus « généralistes » dans Charlevoix (ex. : « les épicuriens ») et plus spécifiques dans les Cantons-de-

l'Est (ex. : « les brasseurs des Cantons »). La diversité des producteurs influence ainsi le choix d'une stratégie plus ou moins généraliste.

La figure 9 donne des exemples de produits qui intègrent le paysage ou une activité de loisir dans leur emballage. À gauche, la bière « Pic de l'ours » est le fruit du partenariat entre le producteur et le parc national du Mont-Orford, où se trouve le sommet du Pic de l'ours. À droite, la bière s'associe au Mont Brome. On voit le mont et ses pistes de ski en arrière-plan.

Figure 9: Intégration d'activités de plein air et d'éléments du paysage dans un emballage de produit agroalimentaire

Source : Image de gauche – Des Cantons Microbrasserie (https://bieresdescantons.com/bieres) ; image de droite – Micro-brasserie le BroueMont (https://createursdesaveurs.com/fr/micro-brasserie-le-brouemont).

Production agroalimentaire généraliste ou spécifique

La concentration de la production autour d'un ou de quelques produits influence les représentations de la destination. On remarque ainsi une cohérence entre les 22 produits identifiés au tableau 2 et leurs représentations dans les outils promotionnels des OGD, des AATGL et des entreprises. Ainsi, on voit que les trois produits principaux concentrent plus de références dans les pages des Cantons-de-l'Est que de Charlevoix. Les viandes dans Charlevoix y sont une exception dans les pages de l'AATGL. Cela peut être expliqué par l'utilisation des viandes en tant qu'accompagnement dans de nombreuses communications. Si les viandes sont exclues de l'analyse, la région montre également une concentration plus petite sur les produits principaux.

Dans le cas de l'AATGL des Cantons-de-l'Est, les représentations des fruits comptent pour 24 % des références identifiées. C'est le seul cas qui représente les

fruits de façon importante. Ces derniers sont mis en valeur dans les activités d'autocueillette (bleuets, cassis, pommes, etc.) offertes dans la région. Le fait que ces productions ne soient pas aussi présentes dans les représentations de l'OGD que dans celles de l'AATGL dénote une différence qui pourrait être liée aux types de publics visés par ces activités. D'après Vollet et Said (2019), la praticité joue un rôle majeur dans la consommation touristique. Dans ce cas, l'autocueillette serait pratiquée davantage par les résidents de la région, qui rentreront à la maison après la journée. Ces visiteurs pourront transformer et ranger proprement leurs fruits. Le rapport de l'AATGQ confirme d'ailleurs que la plupart des clients des entreprises agrotouristiques demeurent à moins de 40 km de distance (Association de l'agrotourisme et du tourisme gourmand du Québec, 2018). L'AATGL viserait donc un public de proximité, tandis que l'OGD ciblerait les touristes. Ces derniers chercheraient des produits transformés, moins fragiles que les petits fruits, et offrant l'avantage d'être plus facilement transportables.

En général, les représentations agroalimentaires sont liées aux types de production. Le terroir (y compris les références au « local ») et l'artisanal sont les deux éléments qui ressortent de cette dimension. Dans les Cantons-de-l'Est, la durabilité de la production occupe aussi une place importante. C'est le cas de la microbrasserie Canton Brasse, qui affirme : « L'environnement est également une de nos préoccupations et c'est en ce sens que plusieurs projets suivront » (Créateurs de saveurs, 2020).

Concernant les mécanismes de jugement de la qualité, les certifications sont souvent utilisées pour assurer la qualité de la production (Karpik, 2007). Les principales certifications retrouvées dans les deux régions sont les labels attribués par les AATGL et les appellations réservées. Leur utilisation associée à un produit est néanmoins encore faible. Par exemple, dans

le contexte des OGD, on note un pourcentage similaire de références à un jugement de qualité qu'aux autres catégories descriptives de la production agroalimentaire. Parmi ces références, à peine la moitié est associée à une certification dans Charlevoix et 12 % dans les Cantons-de-l'Est. Afin de renforcer le jugement de la qualité dans les Cantons-de-l'Est, les producteurs s'appuient davantage sur les descriptions physiques, l'opinion des connaisseurs, la notoriété et les processus de transformation. L'importance de la production vinicole peut expliquer ce recours, cette industrie étant associée à la naissance du concept de terroir et étant peut-être plus outillée pour promouvoir sa production. Étant donné le contexte local d'indépendance entre les producteurs et la compréhension du terroir par les consommateurs, les vignerons ont préféré les stratégies individuelles plutôt que collectives pour mettre en valeur leurs produits. Il faut en revanche souligner que « vins du Québec », une appellation réservée, semble plus employée pour la promotion sur le marché international que pour la promotion touristique (Baumgartinger-Seiringer et al., 2022).

L'origine culturelle des produits, traduite par les références aux traditions, locales ou d'ailleurs, et aux innovations, est également pertinente et révèle le croisement culturel tant par rapport aux traditions qu'à l'intégration des innovations. Les fromages et les vins en font particulièrement mention, notamment pour les Cantons-de-l'Est et l'Abbaye de Saint-Benoît-du-Lac. Par exemple, la production du vin a exigé une adaptation de la production et une sélection des cépages en fonction de conditions climatiques plus froides et plus courtes. L'innovation est intervenue pour s'adapter au nouveau contexte. De même, la concentration de producteurs de vin a certainement joué un rôle catalyseur pour soutenir cette production, qui a été démarrée par des producteurs français ; cette tradition

vinicole française est mentionnée dans leurs communications (De Koninck, 1993).

Le paysage de la production agricole apparaît l'élément principal utilisé par les AATGL et les entreprises associées aux cidres et aux vins. Les vignobles et les vergers sont valorisés comme des paysages d'exception, et ce, contrairement aux paysages céréaliers reliés aux bières qui ne sont pas particulièrement distincts ou reconnus. Les paysages d'une production agroalimentaire généraliste seraient ainsi moins iconiques, tandis que ceux associés à une production spécifique seraient plus propices à la promotion de la destination.

Concernant les caractéristiques de la production agroalimentaire associées aux boissons alcoolisées, certains éléments sont communs aux OGD : le terroir, l'artisanal, le plaisir gourmand. Deux nouveaux éléments distinguent ces produits : la sophistication (par la présence du noir, de l'or, de l'argent, des mets haut de gamme et esthétisés) et les restaurants. Pour les OGD, les boissons s'inscrivent dans une expérience « complète » (avec un repas) et une approche généraliste comportant plusieurs produits. Ces références ne se trouvent pas du côté des AATGL et des entreprises, qui présentent les produits de façon spécifique et sans marques de sophistication. Les entreprises de production vinicole se caractérisent par leur recours aux jugements de qualité (ex. : prix, avis de connaisseurs). Rappelons que le concept de terroir et sa

spécificité ont gagné de la notoriété grâce à leur association aux vins. De plus, les vins profitent de concours, guides, chroniques œnologiques pour justifier leur qualité. Toutefois, l'expertise des producteurs n'est pas relayée par les AATGL ou les OGD. Comme il s'agit d'une industrie encore relativement jeune, la terroirisation n'y serait pas encore développée. L'indication géographique protégée « vin du Québec » constitue une étape importante qui permet d'uniformiser certains aspects de la production, mais n'est pas suffisante pour faire reconnaître la spécificité attendue. L'identification d'une spécificité commune aux vins de la région, et la reconnaissance de celle-ci par voie de comparaison avec des vins produits ailleurs serait manquante. L'AATGL et l'OGD doivent donc s'appuyer sur une vision générale du terroir plutôt que sur celle individuelle, évoquée par les producteurs.

La figure 10 illustre les images et le contenu lexical portant sur les vins des Cantons-de-l'Est. En bas, l'OGD présente un vin à côté d'un arbre enneigé, invitant les lecteurs à découvrir les vins artisanaux et locaux. Les portraits des vignerons et d'un groupe de visiteurs marchant entre les vignes sont dans la même page de l'AATGL. Celle-ci incite à l'achat de produits du terroir (en haut, à droite). La dernière image représente le groupe de producteurs avec, à l'arrière-plan, des vignes. Une description physique justifie et explique la qualité du produit.

Figure 10: Exemple du vin dans les Cantons-de-l'Est

Source : En haut à gauche – vignoble Les Pervenches ; en haut à droite – Vignoble Cep d'Argent ; en bas à droite – Tourisme Cantons-de-l'Est.

L'Orchestration tourisme-production agroalimentaire pour le terroir

Les cas analysés illustrent deux contextes distincts concernant le positionnement de la production agroalimentaire en tant qu'attraction touristique. Ce sont souvent les producteurs qui mettent sur pied les attraits gourmands, intégrés plus tard à l'offre touristique générale (ex. : les circuits gourmands). Les associations entre l'agroalimentaire et les autres attraits touristiques sont moins nombreuses. Le fait que le tourisme gourmand occupe une place plus centrale dans les Cantons-de-l'Est pourrait être un indicateur

que la destination a atteint un niveau de maturité plus élevé. Malgré ce constat, il semble exister encore une occasion de développement du tourisme gourmand. Comment le concept de terroir peut-il contribuer à la réflexion sur la mise en valeur de la production agroalimentaire et à l'image d'une destination gourmande ?

Les terroirs sont des constructions humaines et dans les cas étudiés, ils apparaissent de manière timide. Parfois comme initiative d'un organisme collectif (le cas du label Terroir Charlevoix), d'autres fois comme démarche individuelle (les cas des vins dans les Cantons-de-l'Est). En général, les caractéristiques de la communication des acteurs du tourisme gourmand permettent d'identifier certaines pratiques qui contribuent à la construction d'une singularité ancrée dans le territoire et qui pourrait faire émerger le terroir.

La comparaison entre les types d'acteurs indique que les OGD ont une approche plutôt générique, misant sur une expérience gourmande plaisante. Les AATGL fournissent plus de détails, et les entreprises se spécialisent encore plus. Ainsi, les OGD incitent les visiteurs « en général » à connaître la gastronomie locale, les AATGL organisent et expliquent ce qu'est la gastronomie locale, et les entreprises justifient ce que l'AATGL met en évidence.

L'analyse permet donc de concevoir un modèle, présenté par la figure 11, où les éléments nécessaires pour la compréhension du terroir et sa valorisation peuvent se conjuguer.

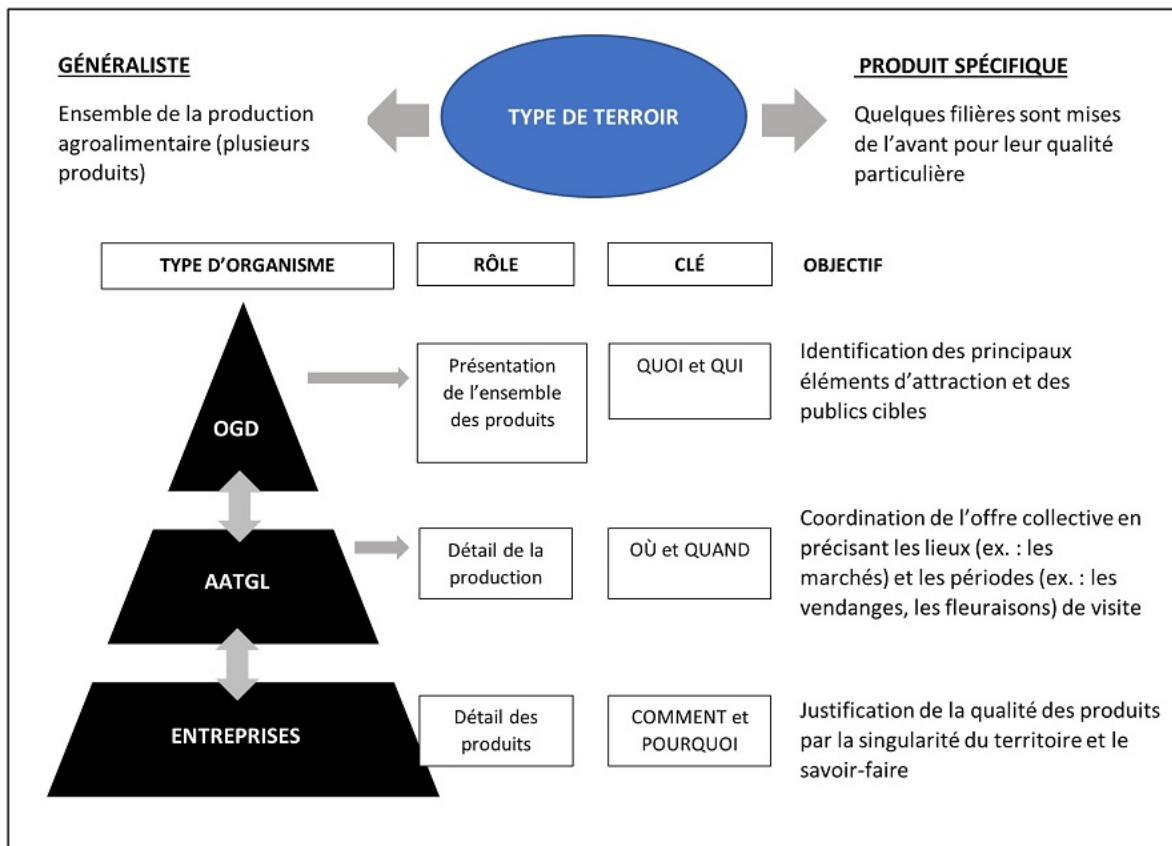Figure 11 : Modèle d'orchestration d'une destination gourmande

Tableau 3 : Résumé du processus de valorisation du terroir dans la communication des destinations analysées

		CHARLEVOIX	CANTONS-DE-L'EST
TYPE DE PROMOTION DE L'AGROALIMENTAIRE	Stratégie de développement du terroir en tant qu'attraction	Généraliste	Produits spécifiques
QUOI	Produit phare	Le bien manger en général, les restaurateurs jouant des rôles clés	Vin, fromage, bière
QUI	Population cible	Couples et individus	Couples et familles
OÙ	Les lieux où la production se regroupe	Ex. : Festival Cuisine, Cinéma et Confidences, marchés locaux	Ex. : Fête des vendanges de Magog
QUAND	Les périodes particulières	Ex. : Les marchés de récolte (début d'automne)	Ex. : La saison du cidre, de la cueillette des pommes ou de la floraison
COMMENT	La typicité liée au mode de production du terroir	Ex. : La certification	Les technologies de production de vin en climat froid
POURQUOI	La typicité liée aux caractéristiques pédoclimatiques, morphologiques, culturelles et à la biodiversité du terroir	Les montagnes de la région, l'influence du fleuve	Les montagnes de la région, l'influence de la neige

Une destination gourmande pourrait ainsi opter pour une stratégie présentant le terroir d'une façon généraliste (ensemble de produits) ou spécifique (en fonction d'un ou de quelques produits reconnus).

Cette stratégie sera notamment influencée par la communication réalisée par chaque type d'acteur. En matière de terroir, la plus petite place revient à l'OGD qui doit composer avec tous les secteurs touristiques et tous les publics, la clientèle gastronomique représentant un segment parmi d'autres. De manière synthétique, l'OGD communique les éléments centraux du terroir qui en font une attraction (quoi) pour certaines personnes (qui).

L'AATGL est censée proposer une représentation plus détaillée et singulière de la production agroalimentaire. Cependant, elle n'a pas le rôle de présenter chacun des produits. Son rôle central devrait être la coordination sur le plan local de l'offre agroalimentaire, mettant en valeur les marchés, les festivals, les saisons plus appropriées pour vivre certaines expériences (par exemple, la floraison des pommiers). Même si la stratégie peut s'appuyer sur un produit spécifique, celui-ci ne sera pas représenté seul, mais accompagné d'autres produits. Le rayonnement d'un produit central sert à l'ensemble des productions locales.

Finalement, les entreprises à l'origine de cette création sont responsables de communiquer et représenter la typicité qui permet de distinguer et faire reconnaître la destination par son terroir. Les producteurs doivent sélectionner les éléments communs et pertinents pour faire émerger les terroirs québécois, soit les éléments pédoclimatiques et culturels responsables des caractéristiques uniques de la production. La collaboration entre les producteurs est essentielle afin que la représentation du terroir soit

claire pour tous les acteurs de la pyramide, mais également pour les consommateurs hors de la région de production, où le terroir est mis en comparaison avec d'autres produits d'autres régions, et pour les visiteurs qui cherchent une expérience unique et authentique

Conclusion

Cette recherche a exploré la communication des entreprises de tourisme gourmand des Cantons-de-l'Est et de Charlevoix au Québec. Les données indiquent que la communication de ces deux destinations est davantage axée sur les attractions de plein air. Le paysage naturel, dont les montagnes et les plans d'eau, offre la possibilité de plusieurs activités hivernales (ex. : ski, raquette) et estivales (ex. : randonnée, kayak). Le tourisme gourmand complète cette offre. Les communications de ces deux destinations reflètent deux modèles distincts de développement touristique gourmand, généraliste et spécifique.

Le terroir, en tant que concept, y est plutôt implicite et parfois même remplacé par les termes « local » et « artisanal ». Les conditions de la production agricole au Québec ne favorisent pas l'utilisation du modèle européen, basé sur la patrimonialisation de l'agroalimentaire. Certains éléments sont en place pour la construction et la distinction d'un terroir (ex. : les certifications). Cependant, la mise en valeur de la production agroalimentaire pour le tourisme gourmand dépend d'une évolution de la coordination entre les acteurs agroalimentaires et touristiques pour souligner les éléments singuliers de chaque production, générique ou spécifique. Deux avenues semblent plus pertinentes pour les régions québécoises : la valorisation du patrimoine naturel et la mise en évidence du réseau social soutenant cette production. L'innovation, une gastronomie en constante transformation, le transfert de savoir-faire apparaissent comme les caractéristiques génératrices d'une spécificité immatérielle.

La comparaison de ces deux destinations suggère un modèle de stratégie de mise en valeur des attractions gourmandes. Une destination comme les Cantons-de-l'Est s'y distingue par ses productions spécifiques (vins et fromages), autour desquelles d'autres produits gravitent. Charlevoix illustre un développement plus généraliste, basé sur une plus grande variété de produits, et où les attractions gourmandes émergent de la rencontre de ces produits, dans les restaurants et les événements gourmands.

Le Québec – du moins certaines de ses régions – participe à la réflexion sur la construction du terroir à partir du tourisme gourmand. Son cas suscite aussi d'autres questionnements. Le paysage naturel est-il suffisant pour faire ressortir la singularité de la production agroalimentaire ? L'effort concentré sur certains axes de la communication pourrait-il accélérer la reconnaissance d'un terroir ? Une utilisation plus explicite du terroir favoriserait-elle la mise en valeur de la production et les retombées pour les producteurs ? Ce modèle peut servir de base pour l'analyse d'autres régions afin d'en vérifier la validité et d'en peaufiner les prémices.

Ronaldo Tavares de Souza est candidat au doctorat en sciences géographiques à l'Université Laval et détenteur d'une maîtrise en sciences de l'environnement à l'Université de Sao Paolo (Brésil). Son projet de thèse vise à comprendre les rôles que jouent les produits locaux pour augmenter l'attractivité de destinations gourmandes. En général, son travail porte sur les systèmes agroalimentaires durables reliés au commerce d'aliments et à la valorisation de la production agroalimentaire localisée. De plus, son parcours présente une large expérience dans la recherche de marketing appliquée à l'industrie de consommation de produit de masse depuis plus de 20 ans.

Pascale Marcotte était, au moment de la rédaction de l'article, professeure titulaire à la Faculté de foresterie, de géographie et de géomatique de l'Université Laval. Détentrice d'un doctorat en sociologie, son travail portait sur le tourisme et les transformations sociales, les pratiques touristiques et culturelles, la mise en valeur des attraits et territoires, et les labels et désignations de territoires.

Laurent Bourdeau est professeur titulaire et directeur du certificat en tourisme durable à l'Université Laval. Titulaire d'un doctorat en administration au programme conjoint HEC Montréal-Concordia-McGill-UQAM, il est également détenteur d'une maîtrise en administration des affaires à l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Ses champs d'expertise intègrent le marketing du tourisme, les labels et désignations du territoire, le développement de produits touristiques et la méthodologie de la recherche. Il représente l'Université Laval au Réseau UNITWIN / UNESCO « Culture, Tourisme, Développement ».

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Original Research Article

Food system resilience tested: The impact of COVID-19 on a major node in North America's produce supply chains

Sarah Elton[a]*, Evan Fraser[b], and Ruth Siew[c]

[a] Toronto Metropolitan University; ORCID: 0000-0002-2196-4170
[b] University of Guelph; ORCID: 0000-0001-5124-488X
[c] Toronto Metropolitan University, University of Toronto; ORCID: 0000-0002-3913-6226

Abstract

At the beginning of the COVID-19 Pandemic, many warned that the resilience of the global, industrial food system would be tested. We conducted regular interviews in 2020 with key actors at the Ontario Food Terminal, North America's third largest produce wholesale market, to better understand urban food system resilience in the first year of the Pandemic. How major wholesale marketplaces, such as the Ontario Food Terminal, fare during emergencies is key to understanding urban food system resilience, as these institutions connect farms to cities. Widescale interruptions to the supply of fresh produce did not take place at the Terminal despite challenges. We present data from the frontlines, documenting the challenges participants faced and their adaptive capacity. We find that food system resilience was rooted in pre-existing relationships, the adaptability of actors in produce supply chains, and worker stress and effort. We caution that, even though the system displayed resiliency, this does not mean that it is inherently resilient. We highlight vulnerabilities in the status quo and raise a red flag around the future ability of the system to withstand shocks. We conclude that, because the system resilience we document depends on people, the well-being of humans in the system is key to resilience of the food system itself.

Keywords: Resilience; supply chains; food system; markets; COVID-19; produce

Résumé

Au début de la pandémie de COVID-19, de nombreuses voix ont annoncé que la résilience du système alimentaire industriel mondial serait mise à l'épreuve. En 2020, nous avons mené des entretiens réguliers avec des acteurs clés de l'Ontario Food Terminal, le troisième plus grand marché de gros de fruits et légumes d'Amérique du Nord, en vue de mieux comprendre la résilience du système alimentaire urbain au cours de cette première année de pandémie. Observer la façon dont les grands marchés de gros, tels que l'Ontario Food Terminal, s'en tirent pendant les urgences est une clé pour comprendre la résilience du système alimentaire urbain, car ces institutions relient les exploitations agricoles aux villes. Malgré les difficultés, aucune interruption à grande échelle de l'approvisionnement en produits frais n'a affecté le Terminal. Nous présentons des données provenant des premières lignes, qui documentent les défis auxquels les acteurs ont été confrontés et la capacité d'adaptation dont ils ont fait preuve. Nous constatons que la résilience du système alimentaire était ancrée dans les relations préexistantes, dans la capacité d'adaptation des acteurs des chaînes d'approvisionnement ainsi que dans la pression et les efforts assumés par les travailleurs. Nous faisons une mise en garde : même si le système a démontré de la résilience, cela ne signifie pas qu'il est intrinsèquement résilient. Nous mettons en évidence les vulnérabilités liées au statu quo et tirons la sonnette d'alarme quant à la capacité future du système à résister aux chocs. Nous concluons que le bien-être des individus qui font partie de ce système que nous décrivons est essentiel dans la mesure où sa résilience dépend d'eux.

Introduction

The Ontario Food Terminal sits at the edge of the Gardiner Expressway, a busy highway that links downtown Toronto to its western suburbs and beyond. As the road curves around the shore of Lake Ontario, the Terminal comes into view. Farmers and regional dealers travel here to sell produce, and wholesalers buy fruits and vegetables from Canadian farms and import internationally. The Terminal operates on the just-in-time model and is part of the global, industrial food system, in which cross-border trade has doubled since the 1980s (Marchand et al., 2016; Qualman, 2017). Trucks carrying produce from points of origin across Ontario, Canada, and the United States, as well as from ports, railyards, and airports, arrive six nights per week to be unloaded before dawn and sold. Buyers come in the early morning hours to "walk the market" before making deals. The actors at the Terminal form a supply-chain network connecting the regional foodshed and Ontario farmers with local and regional buyers, global producers, and international importers.

The Terminal is part of the complex global food system that scholars have long warned is brittle and at risk of failure during stochastic events (Seekell et al., 2017) such as extreme weather, power failures (Medical Officer of Health, 2018; Puma et al., 2015)—and pandemics. Early in the COVID-19 Pandemic, debate about the resilience of the system unfolded within food systems studies and agricultural economics. The concern

among many food systems researchers was that the Pandemic would test the resilience of the globalized, industrial food system that supplies much of the food to major North American cities such as Toronto. Supply chain actors, such as one study participant who trades in fresh produce, worried too. He recalled his fears: "we went from buying fresh and then we realized, 'Oh my god, if this goes a week further are we going to frozen? Are we going to frozen vegetables?" Conversely, the view of the food system as brittle was contested by some in agricultural economics who posited that the shock of COVID-19, while significant, would not lead to major structural changes; they held that the system would display resilience during the Pandemic (Ker & Cardwell, 2020; OECD, 2020). The gulf between these two perspectives underlines a larger gap in understanding the nature of resilience and vulnerability in the global food system. This is a complex network that increasingly connects local foodsheds to international commodity chains (D'Odorico et al., 2014). It faces the rising possibility of disturbances as a result of both the complexity of the globalized world and climate change— as was witnessed in western Canada in November 2021, when flooding and mudslides destroyed farms and killed livestock, berry plants, and other food system infrastructure (Newman & Fraser, 2021). Local and regional food systems are often understood to be loci for transformative food system change away from industrialized, global supply chains, including during the Pandemic (Jones et al., 2022). However, large-scale wholesale marketplaces channel food from farms locally and globally to cities around the world, including Azadpur Mandi in Delhi, Paris' Rungis market, Hunt's Point in New York, and the Ontario Food Terminal in Toronto. How such institutions fare during emergencies is pertinent to understanding urban food system resilience. Furthermore, the complex wholesale supply chains of the Ontario Food Terminal stand in contrast to

the major supermarket chains that comprise almost seventy-four-percent of the Canadian market (United States Agricultural Service). These chains—Loblaws, Sobeys, Metro, Walmart, and Costco— have their own buyers, suppliers, and warehouses. They do not source at the Terminal unless they have "shorts" they need to fill. Wholesalers and dealers at the Terminal are mid-sized businesses. Farm suppliers can range in size from family farms in Ontario to multinational corporations such as Dole plc. For researchers working towards more sustainable food systems, what happened when this part of the food system was tested in a crisis is pertinent to understanding what works and what does not. Insights can inform the building of more resilient and sustainable ways of feeding society.

Thus, we followed key actors who operated out of the Ontario Food Terminal during the first year of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Telephone interviews with participants were conducted, generating qualitative data from the frontlines and contributing to scholarly debates about resilience and vulnerability in the food system (Ericksen, 2008; Pingali et al., 2005; Schipanski et al., 2016; Tendall et al., 2015). We found that, while concerns about interruptions to the supply of fresh produce voiced early in the Pandemic did not come to fruition, problems did emerge. Here, we document the challenges study participants faced, as well as their sources of adaptive capacity.

We begin by outlining the research thus far, exploring the various impacts of COVID-19 on the food system. We situate our work in the context of resilience theory as applied to the global food system. Next, we outline our research methods and context. We argue that the resiliency displayed at the Ontario Food Terminal emerged from adaptability, pre-existing relationships, and personal efforts, including the stress and hard work of workers. In the discussion, we highlight the role of the institution in supporting resiliency. This article

contributes to the literature on food systems resilience through our findings that, firstly, the regional system displayed interconnected vulnerabilities with the global food system, as the two systems at the Terminal are interdependent; the regional system was not spared from uncertainty during a global pandemic that closed national borders and reduced transportation. Secondly, an important contribution to the food system resilience literature is our finding that, because the system's capacity to shift and adapt depends fundamentally on people, it is vulnerable to personal stress and burnout. Food system resilience must therefore consider the humans in food system supply chains.

Resilience and vulnerability of the global food system during COVID-19

At the beginning of the Pandemic, food researchers published articles contemplating the risks and possibilities presented by COVID-19. For example, Clapp and Moseley (2020) identified vulnerabilities created by past food policies that left food systems vulnerable during the crisis, while others warned of shortages in staples like wheat, rice, and corn (Fraser, 2020). Some scholars voiced hope that the Pandemic would lead to something better (Altieri & Nicholls, 2020; Clapp & Moseley, 2020; Friedmann, 2020), arguing that disruption would allow for radical shifts (Blay-Palmer et al 2020). Importantly, many academics pointed out that, while food supply chains largely functioned during the Pandemic, a massive food insecurity crisis was provoked when people lost their jobs, and food banks reported a record-high demand for their services (Men & Tarasuk, 2021).

Since then, some scholars have contended that the food system in fact coped well and that North American supply chains proved remarkably resilient. Deaton and Deaton (2021) observe that, despite the rise in food insecurity, the Canadian food system weathered early pandemic-related disruptions in term of supply. In these positive accounts, authors parse out household food access from the supply chains that link farms to retail outlets. This view of the food system as existing apart from the issue of food insecurity allows for a positive evaluation. In contrast, scholars who considered food supply chains within the context of COVID-19 food insecurity crises found failures (see for example Cox & Beynon-MacKinnon, 2020). These disparate analyses speak to larger ideological debates within the academy between those who believe in the benefits the industrial food system provides to humanity (ample food for sale, economic activity) and those who critique its failures (environment impact, social injustice, continued hunger).

Regardless of whether one concludes that the food system fared well or failed, the fact is that during the first year of the Pandemic in Canada there was no catastrophic collapse in produce supply chains. Deep-seated flaws in the food system have become more visible, and yet the industrial system continued to bring fresh fruits and vegetables from farm to retail. Hence, reflecting on the functioning of the food system during the Pandemic offers an opportunity to explore concepts around food system resilience in the context of an actual shock to the food system. Broadly speaking, resilience theory finds its antecedents in both the engineering and ecology literatures. In engineering, resilience is conceived of as the size of perturbation that is needed before a system stops providing basic

functions, such as the size of earthquake a building is designed to withstand. In the ecological literature, resilience has been more often defined in terms of the time it takes for a system to recover and return to a pre-existing equilibrium, such as how quickly a stream would return to its typical flow after a major rainfall (for a review of these literatures, see Fraser et al., 2009). These two definitions of resilience have been modified by scholars working within the social ecological systems literature to include the ability of a system comprising both humans and nonhumans to learn and positively adapt (Adger, 2000).

In terms of whether markets are resilient, Pingali et al. (2005) observe that markets are "known to be resilient and recover quickly" (p. S18) and invoke an ecological interpretation that sees resilience as the capacity to "bounce back" (Maneyna et al., 2011). The idea that resilience is about bouncing back to a certain state has been challenged by those who argue that a better measure would look at the capacity to "bounce forward" and create something new—what Jones et al. (2022) characterise in terms of food systems as "transformative resilience capacity" (p. 210). The pre-

pandemic "vulnerability" of food systems has been identified in the global industrial food system as arising from the high number of food system actors that are interconnected (Ericksen, 2008; Fraser et al., 2005). In a food systems context, diversity can mean the number of places where food comes from or the range in types of different actors with different capacities to respond to changing circumstances (Hodbod & Eakin, 2015). So, diversity in a food system on one hand can increase resilience because, for example, if one source is knocked out, food can come from elsewhere (Seekell et al., 2017). On the other hand, diversity also means risk from an increased likelihood of a shock having a cascading effect (Folke et al., 2010; Tendall et al., 2015). It is precisely the complexity of the interdependent system that Puma et al. (2015) flag as a vulnerability, speculating that international trade in food offers both some protection against localized shocks but also exposure to cascading events. Meerow et al. (2019) stress that resilience is not only about systems, but that people too need to be considered—especially from a social justice perspective.

Methods

Working with Research Ethics Board approval (2020-147), we conducted regular telephone interviews throughout the first year of the Pandemic with eight key actors at the Terminal, as well as interviews with supplementary key informants. Recruitment involved cold-calling or emailing potential participants with whom we either had no connection or to whom we had been previously introduced. Of the twelve people approached, three declined, saying their workload was too high; one participant stopped communicating with our study after reportedly contracting COVID-19 in

the fall of 2020, and another did not respond to messages in 2021. Participants were selected to represent a diversity of roles at the Terminal. Telephone and Zoom interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded. Document analysis of the grey literature also contributed to data generation. Thematic analysis of interview data identified several themes; the three themes applied in analysis for this paper were discussed in interviews by all participants and overshadowed other topics in their frequent mention. Also, together, the three themes explored in this article offered an

explanation for why supply chains did not falter.[1] Here, participant identities, as well as identifying information about their businesses, have been disguised to satisfy research ethics protocol and to shield participants from unknown effects of revealing details about their business operations to competitors in what they describe to be a highly competitive field. The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

Research context

The Terminal reports that two billion pounds of food pass through the facility annually. Not all produce consumed in Toronto comes through the Terminal, as other produce supply routes include the proprietary supply chains of major supermarket brands and food service suppliers. It is often repeated in food systems circles in the city, including during interviews, that the Terminal allows for small and mid-sized businesses to participate in the urban food system. It provides a wholesale marketplace where any business, regardless of size, can pay $275 for a two-year pass to source wholesale produce. We opted to study the Terminal because of its important role in the Toronto food supply, but also because of what the institution represents in the evolution of the city's food system. The Terminal was created by the provincial government in 1954 as an act of food system modernization (Elton, 2010). A wholesale market downtown, the St. Lawrence Market, was previously the hub for buyers and sellers of all scales; live cattle were sold alongside fresh produce merely a few kilometers from City Hall (Dickau et al., 2021). In the 1950s, wholesale operations were shifted to the suburbs, 'cleansing' the downtown of this agricultural

scene. The new Terminal was envisioned as a modern marketplace (Elton, 2010).

Much has remained constant at the Terminal since then. It remains a public institution. The buildings have the same appearance as in early photos (Figure A). Some of the same companies that purchased the original leases from the province still sell from the building (although some companies have expanded and also run produce warehouses off-site). The Terminal is owned and overseen by the Ontario Food Terminal Board, which operates at arm's length from the provincial government; the Lieutenant Governor in Council appoints board members. It is the Terminal board that oversees the day-to-day operations, and during the Pandemic it was the board that led the response to public health directives. In 2019, when it was leaked that the provincial government was considering overhauling the Terminal, including speculation that they planned to sell it to a private owner, there was furor in the independent grocery sector and among Ontario farmers (Brown, 2019). They lobbied the government, saying that many of their businesses would collapse if the Terminal closed. The government did not make the rumoured changes. This outcry demonstrated that the Terminal not only plays a key role in the city but is valued by those who use it. The Pandemic offers further testimony of this.

Study participants

Participants were selected from the diversity of food businesses that use the Terminal. Interviews were conducted regularly throughout the twenty months of COVID-19 with a group of core participants:

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[1] A secondary analysis drawing on posthumanist theory was conducted by one of the authors and led to a first paper exploring the role of nonhuman nature in keeping supply chains moving during this time (Elton, 2023).

- Luke: a vegetable farmer in Southern Ontario who cultivates more than two dozen varieties of speciality vegetables including asparagus, green onions, and leeks for retail and restaurants.
- Sandy: the head of a mid-sized family-owned supermarket chain that sells A-grade produce to a largely high-income clientele; the company also prepares and sells meals made from Terminal produce.
- Mike: the CEO of a large produce importer and wholesaler.
- Lou: one of three siblings operating a small, neighbourhood grocer selling produce and dry goods to a mixed-income community.

- Richard: a long-time wholesale buyer and employee of one of the companies that holds a 100-year lease.
- Ted: an apple dealer who sources fruit from Ontario and other parts of Canada, as well as from Chile, to sell to retailers.

Interviews with core participants were supplemented by additional interviews with other Terminal actors: restaurant owners, a wholesaler, a jobber, Ontario Food Terminal board members (past and present), employees of food assistance programs that have both purchased and acquired food at the facility, and an employee of the Terminal.

Results

The following description of the impact of COVID-19 at the Terminal provides the context for the themes that we identified in our analysis and that we detail in the following sections.

Global supply chains

In the early days of the Pandemic, many public institutions in Toronto, such as libraries and swimming pools, were shut down in mid-March of 2020. The Terminal, however, never closed. In a March 20th communiqué, the Ontario Food Terminal Board described their new infection control measures, including increased cleaning, social distancing, and contact tracing. Their goal was to protect what they described as "an essential service keeping food flowing," stating that their "top priority is ensuring a continuous

supply of food to the public in a safe way" (Ontario Food Terminal Board, March 20, 2020). In the first year, there were COVID-19 cases at the Terminal, but sources reported that there were no super-spreader events and that the closures did not have an impact on the supply of food (in Ontario, workplace infection data were shielded from the public by the government, so this claim cannot be corroborated). During previous crises, the Terminal has rarely closed. In the August 2003 power outage that stretched across the northeastern United States and Ontario, staff remembered that they lost power for less than twenty-four hours, closed briefly, and kept produce cool with dry ice and by keeping doors shut. During the power outage of the December 2013 ice storm, they strung up temporary lights and continued to operate. And during those uncertain early weeks and months of COVID-19,

fruit and vegetable shipments continued to arrive, despite participants reporting disruptions to global produce supply chains. Mike, the wholesale CEO, described how the spread of the virus in the early days of the Pandemic affected supply chains:

> Generally, we bring a lot of product from Italy. Italy was one of the first areas outside China that really had the Pandemic hit there bad. So, they shut down a lot of the product that they were sending from Italy. The pack houses were shut down. And then shortly after that it went into Spain…. We bring so much product from Spain. So it made importing products from these countries questionable. A lot of them shut down. We even bring product from India. We bring, I don't know, a hundred containers of grapes from India. They shut down fairly quickly and we stopped shipping…. There is product that comes from China as well and that became very difficult because, even if the product was available, the shipping lines weren't moving the same for containers because the factories in China were shut down.

At the same time, produce continued to arrive across the land border from the United States, Mexico, and within Ontario, but prices rose. "It's everything across the board," Mike said. "There's not as much strawberries, for example. They're selling for about forty dollars a case, mid-thirties a case, where they would generally be about eighteen to ten dollars." Richard, who works for a wholesaler, said that he saw no interruption in supply from the United States during this period, and that trucks continued to bring food to the Terminal from different regions of that country. In June 2020, the problems he identified, like

Mike observed, were in the longer-distance supply chains. He said:

> Non-North American products—we're finding that either we won't be able to get them at all, due to COVID and flights being cancelled. Like our Moroccan mint. We couldn't get any of it at all. So there was a complete outage of that…. Anything that's outside of North America does pose a problem of getting it in. Either we don't get it or we have to try and source it from somewhere else.

Having a number of suppliers in different countries allowed the international wholesalers, said Mike, to pivot and buy from another country to secure the supply. While there were interruptions in the global supply chain when produce from certain areas was not available due to a rise in disease (Spain) or a reduction or elimination of air-freight (Morocco), wholesalers were able to source the majority of what they wanted from suppliers that were not facing these problems.

Regional food system

The Terminal actors who operate in the regional food system include: 1) farmers who sell their own produce in the farmers' market section, such as our vegetable-farmer participant Luke; 2) dealers who purchase from Canadian farmers and then sell produce at the Terminal, such as our apple dealer participant, Ted; 3) wholesalers, such as Mike and Richard who purchase produce internationally and locally; and 4) buyers such as supermarkets and small grocers, including grocer participants Lou and Sandy, as well as restaurants, jobbers, and other food system buyers serving a Toronto clientele, some of whom we also interviewed.

Their experiences were each different in the early days of the Pandemic.

The most significant changes for those who frequent the Terminal were new protocols. The public health measures implemented included restricting access, which put a sudden end to produce buyers' early morning visits. This fundamentally transformed the nature of business transactions at the Terminal because produce buyers were not able to see or touch the produce. The tactile inspection of food by buyers has been central to food sales at the Terminal, as it is in many food marketplaces. As one board member described:

> The value out of the Terminal is the freshness and the quality of the product. And a lot of the buyers down there use that as their value-add to their own customers, right? This is fresh, comes directly from the farm. 'It is as fresh as it can get' is their value proposition at the Terminal.

The wholesale buyer's ability to touch and see the product is understood to provide value along the supply chain—right to the consumer. An employee of the Terminal described how the buyer's tactile experiences at the Terminal are seen to shape the consumer's experience at the grocery store. He said:

> When people go to a grocery store, or whatever...you don't mind paying $12.99 for a bag of cherries, because you know the quality is going to be there. So, this [shutting the Terminal to buyers] put our buyers at a disadvantage because they couldn't see the product, they couldn't look at the product.

Buyers had to navigate purchases through a third party. When Lou, who runs a small grocer, lost his

ability to see the produce, he had to count on the people he already knew at the Terminal. He said:

> Because we've been in the business for so long, our salespeople...understand the quality that I want to carry in my store. So they are basically, during this time of COVID-19, they're pretty much my eyes, looking at the product. And they feel that during the years of doing business with us, they *know* the quality that I want. So it hasn't been that bad.

He was able to navigate the sudden change by depending on the relationships he had with his long-term suppliers. Richard, a long-time wholesale buyer and employee of one of the companies, also observed that relationships became the building blocks for transactions that previously would have been conducted in person. Personal connections offered adaptive-capacity—a topic we return to later in the paper when discussing the relationships theme.

Another change to the food supply chain flagged in May 2020 by Sandy of the independent grocery store was that, in addition to a stronger American dollar that had increased prices, freight prices had also risen. She said:

> The trucks, they usually have a full load coming from Canada down to California. But with all the factories and everything being closed, their loads are empty on the way to California. So that makes it more expensive. And the second thing is that the truckers usually would drive [a truck] to one state and then someone takes that truck and then drives it to the next state. So they do more short distances, split up. Whereas now they don't feel comfortable sharing their rigs, so the drivers, they're doing the full length themselves. But then

they need more rest. So it takes longer for the trucks to get here.

These changes, she said, increased the cost of produce arriving from the United States. Still, in August 2020, Lou described easy access to the produce he sells at his greengrocery. He said: "for a small business, it has not really changed that much in terms of getting products. What I see, or what I feel, is that there is a good quantity of supply." Despite the changes, the resilience of the supply in the face of several hurdles—rising American dollar, COVID shutdowns, changes in trucking—is notable.

Amongst participants who farm, sell, or purchase Ontario products, the most significant issue raised was the Pandemic's impact on the functioning of the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program that have been bringing in workers from countries including Mexico and Jamaica for decades. Twenty percent of jobs in Canadian agriculture are filled through these programs (Government of Canada, 2020). Luke, who runs the speciality vegetable farm, brings in twenty-two men primarily from Mexico to work. In January of 2020, the first four employees arrived before Pandemic travel restrictions kept the next group from arriving in April. Only seven made it by that date, and the rest of the employees were delayed and then were required to quarantine for two weeks upon arrival. In June 2020, Luke described how this interrupted the farm's plans to harvest asparagus, a labour-intensive perennial crop:

> We should cut our asparagus today. But because we don't have enough help, we let already 25% go. So that will not be harvested this year anymore. Today we mow everything. We mow everything off. Everything goes to waste because we don't have the help to take it.

Ted, who buys apples from local farmers, also described the impact of the lack of farm labour on orchardists in May of 2020:

> The problem with apples now is that the orchards are sitting ready to go. The farmworkers have not arrived. But that doesn't stop the trees. They all came to life and all my guys say 'don't expect a great crop this fall because I don't have the labour to trim and prune this year.'

There were many more problems reported in the media, specifically relating to farmers' rights, their living conditions during the Pandemic, and their health, and these have since been explored in the scholarly literature (Vosko & Spring, 2021; Weiler & Encalada, 2022). The farmworker perspective is not reflected in our article because they do not work out of the Terminal, though the vegetables they grow do pass through the facility. The reliance in Ontario on farmworkers from other countries renders the system reliant on transnational flows of human labour. The regional system is therefore interdependent with global circulation.

Relationships

The first of the three themes we highlight is the effect of the Pandemic on people's relationships at the Terminal and how the nature of these relationships supported resilience. In particular, the loss of the tactile experience of buying fresh produce due to the implementation of the new public health protocol was replaced during this period by relationships between sellers and buyers—as Lou said, the people he purchased from became his "eyes." Further, one employee of the Terminal explained how relationships were important for the

smooth rollout of the rapidly-implemented pandemic protocols. He said:

> For the most part it's been very well received by our tenants and our buyers.… They're champions when it comes to helping us enforce our policies. It's just another level of working together and making this as best as possible to handle. These are challenging times.

Some participants who spoke of relationships noted that they have always been fundamental to the functioning of the Terminal's supply chains, even before the Pandemic. Ted, the apple dealer, described how sales generally happen between actors who have a business relationship:

> Most of the farmers and wholesalers know who their buyers are. So, it's not as if it's 'Oh! I need to find apples, but I don't know the name of the person I'm buying apples from,' right? Generally speaking, the buyers that come down there have their three or four contacts that they are using to buy apples from.

Sandy, who runs a mid-sized grocery chain, described how relationships enable deals. She said:

> The food Terminal does offer great opportunities to bargain on products and things like that. If you have great relationships with your suppliers and they might have a good thing, you don't pay as much of a premium. You say, if I take, you know, 200 cases of it, you gotta give me a better deal. That kind of thing.

Richard also described the importance of having a variety of relationships with different supply chain actors:

> We'll have more suppliers in our back pocket. We try to stay loyal with the suppliers that we usually use, but if for some reason they can't, then we know that we've created relationships with some other suppliers that we can rely on.

Implied in this statement is the importance of maintaining different kinds of relationships to ensure access to produce supply. Thus, it was these business connections, rooted in longer-term relationships, that helped facilitate the uninterrupted workings of the Terminal during the early period of the Pandemic. Relationships bolstered resilience.

Adaptability

The disruption of the Pandemic prompted all of the participants to pivot and adapt, with the alacrity of their respective shifts attesting to their resilience. Luke, the farmer, quickly adjusted in spring 2020 what he was going to plant in his fields that summer, making the decision based on what was happening in food service and retail. He also said that he considered how many foreign agricultural workers he might have on the farm that year when deciding how much of each crop to plant. Ted, the apple dealer, described how the farmers he buys from in Ontario had to decide how many apples to harvest and how many to leave on the trees based on the number of workers who might arrive in Canada. A restauranteur interviewed for the study said that he changed recipes in order to adapt. Having ordered fresh red peppers, which they were not able to use fast enough in their normal recipes, the restaurant roasted them so as not to waste the food, even though

roasted red peppers, he explained, are not part of Korean cuisine. That these food systems actors made swift decisions to change their operations was not atypical in the industry. Nimble adaptation to a changing situation is, according to Richard, something that people working in produce supply chains have long done: "that dynamic-ness—we've adapted to that within the industry, you know. COVID is another layer to that. But it's just another thing that we have to handle and we just kind of move around it."

It is important to underline that the Ontario Food Terminal supplies food not only to retailers and institutions, but also to restaurants. In April 2020 many restaurants were shuttered in Ontario, with some establishments offering a reduction in service, such as take-out and meal-kits. Patrons were unable to eat inside a restaurant due to public health rules for more than 360 days, with some media arguing that the city's shutdown was the world's longest (Levinson-King, 2021). This meant, according to our participants, a twenty to thirty percent reduction in demand for produce from the food services sector. Richard described the lingering impact: "there's a lasting impression that this has left on the hospitality industry. Which of course left a lasting impression on our business as well—on how we conduct business." Richard described how the wholesale company he works for similarly adapted by catering to retail consumers after food services mostly shut down. He said, "what we did to offset the lack of sales on the food service side, we simply beefed up our retail side and ensured we ordered what local grocers would want." The shrinking of the sector was another cause for a pivot. Interestingly, the disappearance of food service, according to a board member of the Terminal, enabled the roll-out of public health protocol. He said that, because restaurants were not coming to the site to buy, public health protocols were easier to apply. Thus, any

ability of the system to adapt to the disturbance must be seen in the context of this sudden change. At the same time that food service shrank, system resiliency emerged from adaptability and relationships. This ability to adapt took place in the context of a stable public institution that had operated for decades, and the relationships that sellers and buyers depended on had grown and were fostered over years leading up to the Pandemic.

Stress and human toll

Stress and work wear is a third theme in the data. The culture at the Terminal was described in some interviews as being old fashioned: "it's very much a kind of cutthroat world, it's an old school world, it's a zits-and-all world." It does not appear to be the kind of place where people would talk about their emotions. Nevertheless, the stress of the job during the Pandemic became apparent. Many participants described working longer hours than they ever had before. Several people said they had to forego vacation time in the summer, even after the initial uncertainty of the first months of the Pandemic had quieted. One participant stopped returning calls after participating enthusiastically during interviews up until that point. Others chose not to participate in the first place, explaining that they could not take the time. Lou, who runs a small grocery store with his family, was often hard to get in touch with because he was in constant demand at work. When we did speak, he described new challenges, such as dealing with customers who refused to wear a mask and worrying about bringing COVID-19 home to his family. "It's a stressful job. It's a very stressful job," he said. One day, when the first author telephoned Mike in August 2020, they heard a different tone in his voice and asked him about it. He said, "yeah, I guess I'm just distraught with the whole situation. I'm just COVID-

tired. You know, we've been battling this for a long time and I don't see a light at the end of the tunnel at this point." Working to keep produce flowing through supply chains left many people feeling burnt out.

Further, people voiced their awareness of the importance of their jobs in the supply chain, which lent a gravitas to their work. One employee of the Terminal described what he perceived to be the mindset of his colleagues:

> People are taking it seriously. I think *that's* something that can't go unnoticed. I think people are taking this seriously, not only to

ensure that the supply is moved through to feed the people of Ontario, of Canada. It's to ensure the employee's safety is paramount as well.

This sentiment was echoed by one wholesaler, who said: "this business doesn't stop. Pandemic or not, people have to eat." Emotions have been considered in the context of resilience (see Della Bosca et al., 2021). Fundamentally, complex systems rely on people to function. If the people themselves become too burned out to function, then this lack of human capacity may reduce resilience.

Concluding discussion

Why did the supply of produce continue to flow through the Terminal in spite of disruptions caused by the global spread of a novel coronavirus? We conclude that, in this ability to continue to function, the system displayed resiliency. This resiliency emerged from previously-existing relationships, adaptability, and personal efforts, including stress and hard work. These three factors were interdependent, with adaptability being reliant on relationships and also dependent upon the hard work of the people in produce supply chains. We also highlight the role of the public institution in providing the framework within which these factors that contributed to resiliency emerged.

Tendall et al. (2015) assign food system resiliency to four categories: 1) the capacity of the system to initially cope with a disturbance without seeing a rise in food insecurity, such as during the time period of the COVID-19 Pandemic that we focus on; 2) any "redundancy" that is built into the system that provides an element of protection against food insecurity; 3) the

speed with which the food system is able to fix any problems that lead to food insecurity; and 4) the "resourcefulness and adaptability" to build back food security. Adaptability to the disturbance of the Pandemic at the Terminal can be interpreted through this frame. The system exhibited significant resilience in, firstly, never closings its doors. Secondly, it exhibited resilience by ensuring a continuous supply of produce during a time when many people in the city, who were privileged enough to be able to stay home, were fearful of going outside as the virus' mode of transmission was unknown. Food insecurity has been documented in the city during the Pandemic, however, it was a result of lack of income and purchasing power among lower income groups as opposed to a lack of supply (Ayer, 2020). The resilience the system displayed emanated from the swift adaptations that people undertook at the Terminal. This adaptation was dependent upon relationships. The already-established, trusting relationships among food system actors meant that

sudden disruptions to the way business was conducted were overcome by relying on others. In the cut-throat world of produce sales, where look and feel have market value, the fact that the transition to proxy buying happened smoothly, with actors empowering close contacts with critical buying decisions, is testimony to the significance of these pre-existing relationships. This also underlines that this resilience was not available to those who had been excluded from these relationships.

The second element that Tendall et al. (2015) observe provides food security is redundancy. Participant accounts describe redundancy built into the complex networks of the long-distance, just-in-time food system. There was one product that was unavailable to a participant's warehouse—fresh mint from Morocco was no longer arriving at the Terminal due to the decrease in international plane travel. For the most part, however, it was apparent that the diversity of produce on the whole, as well as its supply, were not compromised, as wholesalers had a variety of suppliers to source from. Also, during the Ontario growing season, regional farmers sold food at the Terminal. Despite farmers reporting that they were able to harvest less produce than average—a problem they largely attributed to complications with bringing foreign workers into the country—the supermarket and grocer participants, as well as the international wholesalers, remarked that the market demand for local produce both rose in the growing season and was filled by Ontario farmers. At the same time, demand from food service was down, reducing the draw on the produce supply.

The third and fourth criteria of food system resiliency, as listed by Tendall et al (2015)—speed and resourcefulness—were provided in the case of the Terminal through the work of participants. The speed of adapting to a new situation, such as the Pandemic, is reliant upon the labour of those in the system to make

the necessary changes. Without ever closing its doors, the Terminal implemented its health and safety protocols. Sellers and buyers had to instantly adapt to a new way of doing business, including relying on sellers to choose for them. Resourcefulness is also a characteristic of humans. The workers we spoke to demonstrated resourcefulness in their problem-solving, such as the restauranteur who decided to roast red peppers, a way of preparing this food that was not typically associated with their Korean cuisine. Participants made swift and creative changes to their businesses—which in many cases caused stress and overwork.

We highlight the role of the public institution in providing the context within which speedy and resourceful adaptability emerged, based on pre-existing relationships that had developed there over years. The Terminal board and employees not only took actions that contributed to the functioning of the marketplace during the public health crisis, but the institution itself also played a role—the institution being an aggregate of the staff, the board, and all of the independent businesses including wholesalers, farmers, and the diversity of buyers that have operated at this site since 1954. This research highlights the important role of the public wholesale market.

The resiliency displayed at the Ontario Food Terminal does not, however, mean that the globalized food system is inherently resilient. As Garnett et al. (2020) observe of the perceived resilience of United Kingdom food supply chains to the disturbance of COVID-19, "this resilience has benefited from a large degree of contingent luck" (p.317) In fact, the qualities of the resiliency we document highlight serious vulnerabilities and raise a red flag around the future ability of such a complex system to withstand shock. Firstly, consider the ease with which food shipments crossed international North American land borders that

were closed to most travellers. While there was redundancy in the supply chain because food was sourced from various geographic locations, there would not have been as much flexibility in the system had the United States approached fruit and vegetable exports the same way that they did Protective Personal Equipment. Then-president Donald Trump banned 3M from exporting much-needed PPE to Canada (Walsh, 2020). It is conceivable that such an attitude could have been directed at the food supply, had there been shortages. As Puma (2015) asserts, governments protect their own food supply during crises. Secondly, the notion of a regional food system is often presented as a way of building resilience, as it protects the productive capacity of a region and provides redundancy if the global system fails. However, as we have documented, farmers in Ontario were unable to hire the standard number of farm workers internationally, due to COVID-19, and therefore reported that they were unable to harvest the typical amount of food. The issue of labour shortages on farms due to border closures and travel restrictions during the Pandemic suggests that the idea that a regional system offers redundancy is not entirely correct. If Ontario farmers depend on transnational systems, including global plane travel and the movement of people for labour, then the redundancy offered by the regional farming sector is fragile.

Further, the rapid adaptability, resourcefulness, and uninterrupted flow of produce came at a cost. Our results underscore how issues of stress and burnout should be considered along with food system resilience. The hard work of participants supported their resourcefulness and their adaptability, and enabled the system to function without the consumer having much of an idea of what was going on down the supply chain. It is questionable whether this level of effort on behalf of workers can be sustained and whether it is a

replenishable resource that can be depended upon during future unexpected disturbances. Burnout from stress and other mental health challenges of the Pandemic drive vulnerability in the system. The relationships that have been so fundamental to the functioning of the Terminal are also vulnerable to stress as they are made between humans—they exist between the same people who have been working so hard and experiencing workplace stress for many months. These relationships are vulnerable to interruptions caused by sick leave, people exiting the sector, stress-induced conflict, or any other disruptions.

This raises the question of how long workers can sustain the kind of effort they displayed. Simply because produce flowed unencumbered through the Terminal during the first twenty months of the COVID-19 Pandemic does not mean it will continue to do so during future stochastic shocks. This vulnerability is inherent to complex, border-crossing food supply chains, as opposed to being associated specifically with the Terminal or the actors themselves. In November 2021, North American's fresh produce industry released a joint statement to the governments of the United States and Canada warning that the well-publicized supply chain disruptions of 2021 were threatening not only the "long term economic viability of the North American fresh produce sector" (North America's Frensh Produce Industry, 2021), but also food security. Follow up interviews with some participants during member checking—the methodological process by which we support the rigour of our work by soliciting feedback on our results from participants—found actors at the Terminal anticipating future disruptions to their supply chains. While acknowledging that food trucked in from the United States had fed Torontonians during the Pandemic, they pointed out that the trucking industry was vulnerable to labour shortages and other logistical issues.

On the one hand, the smooth passage of fruits and vegetables through the Ontario Food Terminal in 2020-2021 is evidence of resilience in the system. How institutions such as the Ontario Food Terminal fare during stochastic events like a pandemic is key to understanding urban food system resilience and offers insight to those working toward building more sustainable and just food systems. What we document here provides insight into how resilience in public wholesale marketplaces could be improved, as our findings have resonance in other contexts where similar institutions made up of complex networks manage the flow of food. We also underline the role of the institution itself in providing a stable framework within which people were able to adapt.

Foremostly, what this study draws attention to are the people who work in food systems. It highlights the relevance of their interpersonal relationships to the smooth functioning of supply chains and the importance of paying attention to the stress and work toll they face in an emergency. While international farmworkers were not part of our study, their wellbeing in the regional food system is similarly critical (Weiler & Encalada, 2022). The issue of transnational labour in regional economies requires more research, including in the context of resilience. Other future research questions include comparing the nature and functioning of business relationships in local supply chains with global supply chains. One could also explore how the public institution compares with the vertically integrated corporate supply chains of major chain supermarkets. Certainly, the unfolding of the Pandemic at the Terminal demonstrates that increased consideration of humans in the food system is needed to support resilience. These lessons from the complex produce supply chains of the conventional system can also inform thinking about sustainable food systems futures.

Sarah Elton is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Sociology at Toronto Metropolitan University and the director of the Food Health Ecosystems Lab. Her academic work has been published in numerous peer reviewed journals including Social Science and Medicine, Critical Public Health, Food Culture & Society and the Journal of Rural Studies. In 2021, Dr. Elton won an inaugural Gairdner Foundation Early Career Investigator Award. She is the author of several award-winning books including *Consumed: Food for a Finite Planet.*

Evan Fraser is Director of Arrell Food Institute and professor of Geography at the University of Guelph. He has co-authored more than 150 academic papers and book chapters and is a Fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society, as well as a member of the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars. Dr. Fraser also serves on several boards that advise government, industry and charities, including as co-chair of the Canadian Food Policy Advisory Council and member the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) which is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to world food security and nutrition.

Ruth Siew received a bachelor's degree in psychology from Toronto Metropolitan University and a master's degree in counselling psychology and psychotherapy from the Ontario Institute of Education, at the University of Toronto. Ruth is employed as a clinical counsellor at Woodgreen Community Services, working with seniors with a history of chronic homelessness, mental health issues and substance use issues. Though she is no longer doing food research, she is interested in the intersection of food and social justice and is planning to start a gardening and composting program with her clients.

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Original Research Article

Exploring collaboration within Edmonton's City Table on Household Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 pandemic

Alexa Rae Ferdinands[a*], Oleg Lavriv[b], Mary Beckie[c], and Maria Mayan[d]

[a] University of Alberta; ORCID: 0000-0002-1714-6140
[b] University of Alberta
[c] University of Alberta; ORCID: 0000-0003-0073-5886
[d] University of Alberta; ORCID: 0000-0002-7623-1230

Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been unprecedented attention and funding toward addressing household food insecurity (HFI) in Canada. In Edmonton, a virtual "City Table" was developed to coordinate the myriad of HFI responses and begin to explore and address systemic issues underlying HFI. In this qualitative descriptive study, we asked: what are the opportunities for and challenges to collaboratively addressing HFI within Edmonton's City Table? In 2020, we conducted nine interviews with diverse professionals representing a local funding agency, the municipal food council, the City of Edmonton (community social work), the Edmonton Food Bank, the University of Alberta, ethno-cultural organizations, and other not-for-profit organizations supporting people experiencing poverty. Wenger's three modes of identification in a community of practice (CoP)—engagement, imagination, and alignment—were used to conceptually frame our qualitative analysis. Overall, we found that the HFI response sector reflects the beginnings of a CoP, but that inter-agency competition for funding and donations presents obstacles to the collaborative process. Findings highlight parallels between agencies and their clients, such as the mazes they must navigate to access resources. However, collaboration was facilitated by agencies' ideological cohesion and their shared struggle to address root causes of HFI. Analyses revealed some engagement amongst City Table members, but sparser imagination

*Corresponding author: aferdina@ualberta.ca

and alignment. A CoP does not yet exist because all three modes of identification are deficient in varying ways. Building engagement between agencies, shifting staff's imagination to a collective cause, and aligning practices are monumental tasks in this context.

Keywords: Household food insecurity; community of practice; COVID-19; Alberta; Canada; Emergency food provisioning

Résumé

Durant la pandémie de COVID-19, une attention et un financement sans précédent ont été accordés à la lutte contre l'insécurité alimentaire des ménages au Canada. À Edmonton, une table de concertation municipale virtuelle a été créée pour coordonner la myriade de réponses à l'insécurité alimentaire des ménages, et commencer à explorer les problèmes systémiques sous-jacents et à s'y attaquer. Dans cette étude qualitative descriptive, nous avons posé la question suivante : quels sont les possibilités et les défis liés à la collaboration en matière de lutte contre l'insécurité alimentaire des ménages au sein de la table municipale d'Edmonton ? En 2020, nous avons mené neuf entretiens avec des professionnels représentant une agence de financement locale, le conseil alimentaire municipal, la Ville d'Edmonton (travail social communautaire), la Banque alimentaire d'Edmonton, l'Université de l'Alberta, des organisations ethnoculturelles et d'autres organisations à but non lucratif soutenant les personnes en situation de pauvreté. Les trois modes d'appartenance de Wenger dans une communauté de pratique (CdP) – l'engagement, l'imagination et l'alignement – ont servi de cadre conceptuel à notre analyse qualitative. Dans l'ensemble, nous avons constaté qu'il y a, dans le secteur qui répond à l'insécurité alimentaire des ménages, les prémices d'une CdP, mais que la concurrence entre les organismes pour le financement et les dons érige des obstacles dans le processus de collaboration. Les résultats mettent en évidence des parallèles entre les organismes et leurs clients, tels que les labyrinthes qu'ils doivent traverser pour accéder aux ressources. Cependant, la collaboration a été facilitée par la cohésion idéologique des organismes et leur lutte commune contre les causes profondes de l'insécurité alimentaire des ménages. Les analyses ont révélé un certain engagement parmi les membres de la table de concertation, mais un manque d'imagination et d'alignement. Il n'existe pas encore de CdP parce que les trois modes d'appartenance sont lacunaires sur divers plans. Créer un engagement entre les organismes, orienter l'imagination du personnel vers une cause collective et aligner les pratiques sont des tâches monumentales dans ce contexte.

Introduction

Household food insecurity (HFI) describes the situation when a household has "inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints" (Tarasuk et al., 2022, p. 4). The state of HFI in Canada, and the potential for it to worsen, elicited public concern with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated income shocks (Deaton & Deaton, 2020; Men & Tarasuk, 2021). Because of these shocks, unprecedented amounts of funding and attention were directed towards addressing HFI, with the federal government committing $200 million to food banks and national food rescue organizations (e.g., Food Banks Canada, Breakfast Club of Canada, Second Harvest) in 2020 (Government of Canada, 2020).

In Edmonton, Alberta, Canada—where our research team lives and works—heightened concern for addressing HFI was similarly evident. At the provincial level, the Government of Alberta (2020) provided $5 million in funding to food banks and community organizations involved in emergency food provision. At the municipal level, in 2020, the Edmonton Community Foundation delivered $1.1 million for emergency food funding to various community organizations via the federal government's COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund and Emergency Community Support Fund (Lambert, 2020). COVID-19, and the associated emergency funding, created an extraordinary situation where new organizations rapidly entered the HFI response sector, including those with no prior experience in this domain.

Reacting to this situation, a virtual "City Table" was developed in Edmonton to coordinate the myriad of HFI responses and explore and address systemic issues underlying HFI. In the qualitative descriptive research reported herein, we asked, what are the opportunities for and challenges to collaboration among members of Edmonton's City Table? To answer this question, we interviewed nine City Table members and used Wenger's (1998) community of practice (CoP) model as our analytical framework. CoPs are "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015, para. 3). The CoP model has been cited as a useful tool in generating the social infrastructure required to create comprehensive approaches to HFI (Martin, 2021).

In this article, we first discuss the City Table's development and historical responses to HFI in Canada. We then expand on the CoP framework used to theoretically inform this study. After describing our methods, we present and discuss study findings within the context of a CoP framework. We conclude by proposing next steps for improving the City's collaborative HFI response.

Background

The City Table

In April 2020, the City of Edmonton invited, via email, agencies and groups who were interested and/or involved in addressing HFI. Approximately forty agencies and groups (engaged to varying degrees) began participating in online meetings to share resources and collectively understand the problems and possibilities

facing charitable food programs. This group called themselves the City Table and met virtually monthly until May 2021. City Table members developed and signed a Terms of Reference document to guide their work. This document outlined the group's purposes: 1) to provide strategic direction and leadership to ensure low-income Edmonton residents can access food when and where they need it through coordinated community efforts, and 2) to explore and address issues underlying HFI. There were no exclusion criteria regarding who could participate. This group included representation from a local funding agency, the municipal food council, the City of Edmonton (community social work), the University of Alberta, the Edmonton Food Bank, ethnocultural organizations, and other not-for-profit organizations supporting

people experiencing poverty. Participating organizations contributed to a range of HFI-related initiatives, such as food hampers, food delivery, advocacy, grocery gift cards, systems navigation, mental health counselling, community gardens, and employment supports. Housed within the larger table, sub-tables were also developed to address HFI within specific sub-populations (newcomers, children, and seniors).

After taking a break (from June 2021 to August 2022) to reflect on their learnings and identify next steps, the City Table reconvened in September 2022 in a hybrid format, with a mixture of online and in-person participants. This reconvening was sparked by the release of a City of Edmonton Youth Council (2021) report on food waste and insecurity.

Literature review

HFI in Canada

Since 2004, Statistics Canada has measured HFI using the Household Food Security Survey Module, which includes eighteen questions about experiences of food deprivation, and their severity, over the past twelve months (Government of Canada, 2012). Some population groups are more vulnerable to HFI, including households with children, lone-parent families, renters versus homeowners, people whose primary income is government assistance, and people who identify as Indigenous or Black (Dhunna & Tarasuk, 2021; Liu et al., 2023; McIntyre, Wu, et al., 2016; Tarasuk et al., 2019, 2022). The health consequences of HFI are well-documented, with people in food insecure households being more prone to

various physical and mental health conditions, like heart disease, Type 2 Diabetes, depression, anxiety, chronic pain, and infectious diseases (Hutchinson & Tarasuk, 2022; Jessiman-Perreault & McIntyre, 2017; Liu et al., 2023; Men, Elgar, & Tarasuk, 2021; Ovenell et al., 2022; Tait et al., 2018; Tarasuk et al., 2013).

Early evidence regarding how the COVID-19 pandemic initially affected HFI in Canada indicates little change at a national level (Idzerda et al., 2022; Tarasuk et al., 2022). However, the long-term effects of the pandemic on HFI remain an important focal point of study, particularly in terms of how sub-populations already vulnerable to HFI were and continue to be impacted. Notably, the prevalence of HFI differs across

provinces, ranging from a low of 13.1 percent in Quebec to a high of 20.3 percent in Alberta (Tarasuk et al., 2022). Men, Urquia, and Tarasuk (2021) suggest these geographical differences may be traced to jurisdictional differences in income supports.

Income supports

At the federal level, shortly after the pandemic's onset, the Canadian government rolled out a series of financial relief measures for individuals and households affected by the economic shutdown. These benefits included the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB), available to people who had lost their job or were working reduced hours; the Canada Emergency Student Benefit, to assist students; and supplements to the Canada Child Benefit, to provide additional financial support to families with children. Early research indicates these benefits may have helped mitigate the impact of pandemic-related income shocks for many Canadian households (Polsky & Garriguet, 2022).

Within Alberta, a few income supports are offered through the provincial government. Short term (up to a year) income support exists through Alberta Works. "Barriers to Full-Time Employment" is for Albertans who cannot work for medical reasons and need longer term assistance. Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped is a permanent assistance program for those with lifelong medical barriers to work. All these benefits stop at age sixty-five when the federal pension plan begins. McIntyre, Dutton, et al. (2016) suggest public pensions have a protective effect on HFI because they offer more stable income indexed to inflation, in comparison with other public income supports.

In contrast with federal and provincial governments, municipalities are restricted in their capacity to access policy levers to increase income security—a key strategy

for long-term HFI elimination (Collins et al., 2014). Consequently, municipal food-based initiatives, like food banks (i.e., centralized warehouses registered as non-profit organizations for collecting and distributing food), have become the default approach to addressing HFI across Canada (Collins et al., 2014).

Ideological frictions in responding to HFI

Dominant discourses in Canada have yet to align with the robust evidence pointing to the need to address HFI as an income-based, rather than food-based, problem (McIntyre et al., 2018). The first food bank in Canada was founded in Edmonton in 1981 during an economic downturn and has lasted well beyond its original intent as a temporary measure (Riches, 2002). The charity model shaping Canada's food banks conceives of acting on HFI as an optional, moral act of good. This unsustainable, piecemeal approach to addressing HFI absolves federal and provincial governments of their responsibilities to provide adequate social supports (Beischer & Corbett, 2016; Collins et al., 2016; Lambie-Mumford & Dowler, 2015).

In contrast with the charity model, the rights-based model for addressing HFI conceives of food as a human right, not to be denied (Dees, 2012; Idzerda et al., 2022). Activists and scholars in this camp call for a problem-solving approach to address structural barriers to the right to food, predominantly through poverty reduction (Dees, 2012). Despite decades of advocacy for a rights-based approach to HFI, such an approach has not yet been adopted in Canada outside of prisons and child welfare programs (Dees, 2012).

McIntyre et al. characterize HFI in Canada as an "intractable policy problem"—that is, a problem framed as unsolvable, resulting in inaction (2018, p. 152). Ideological friction between charity and rights-based models is maintained by government inaction

supporting the right to food, leaving charities with no choice but to take centre stage in alleviating HFI (Siperstein, 2019). While food bank employees recognize limitations of the charity model, these are difficult to overcome given the lack of social support funding (Tarasuk & Eakin, 2003).

In Edmonton, a city of 1.1 million people, these ideological frictions were apparent early in the pandemic when the potential for worsened HFI rose as a community-wide concern (Government of Alberta, 2022). Thus, the City of Edmonton formed the City Table, hoping to instigate problem-solving through collaboration. Intrigued by this initiative, our research team considered the possibility for this table to evolve into a CoP.

A CoP approach

In general, CoPs involve mobilizing the knowledge of individual practitioners to a group of people who can replicate those learnings wherever else that knowledge might be useful (Edwards et al., 2021). CoPs have three key characteristics: 1) shared domain of interest, 2) shared practice, and 3) the creation of community (Wenger, 1998). CoPs help groups determine what to discuss, build trust, promote equitable processes for engagement (rather than facilitation), and draw attention to structures promoting learning (Diaz et al., 2021). Members express their belonging to a particular CoP through three modes of identification: engagement (doing things together, talking, producing artifacts), imagination (reflecting, constructing an image of the practice, seeing self as one of them), and alignment (following directions, aligning self with group expectations, coordinating actions towards a shared goal) (Smith et al., 2017; Wenger, 1998). These three modes, which are not mutually exclusive, can be used as parameters within which to conceptualize the

shift required to move from a group of agencies working independently on the same issue, to a group involved in the process of building a CoP. While there is no singular formula for establishing a CoP per se, engagement, imagination, and alignment are required as a "dynamic combination" (Wenger, 1998, p. 228). Importantly, the cultivation of CoPs cannot be forced—it is an organic and spontaneous process (Wenger, 1998).

There are several documented examples of how CoPs have been used to support local food-related initiatives. For instance, Feeding America's (2018) pilot program led a nationwide CoP among networked food banks and pantries, leveraging the group's collective experience to increase the scale and impact of programs trying to "conquer hunger." In the Kolli Hills region of Tamil Nadu, India, nutrition gardening and pond fish farming CoPs formed among small-scale farmers created learning communities for collective knowledge to be shared and mobilized (Hudson et al., 2019). Within Canada, Toronto has become known for its lively "community of food practice" which has grown over the last three decades, involving collaborations across businesses, local government bodies, and non-governmental organizations (Campbell & MacRae, 2013; Friedmann, 2007; Friedmann, 2020). BlackFoodToronto is one initiative which emerged from this setting during the COVID-19 pandemic as a community-based food charity and CoP centring the three Bs: Black-led, Black-mandated, and Black-serving (Regnier-Davies et al., 2023). In Edmonton, the Alberta Flavour Learning Lab was designed as a local food procurement CoP consisting of institutional food buyers, large scale distributors, online retailers, processors, producers, researchers, and municipal and provincial government representatives (Beckie et al., 2019). Inspired by these examples, we hoped to apply

learnings from these CoPs to our study of City Table processes.

Methods

Recruitment and data generation

This project was initially designed to broadly examine organizational HFI responses. But as the pandemic unfolded, our research evolved to focus on the City Table. We used qualitative description (Sandelowski, 2000) in this study, given our desire to stay close to the data and produce a basic summary of participants' experiences with collaboration. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews with professionals involved in organizational responses to HFI in Edmonton. After receiving institutional ethics approval, purposeful sampling was used to recruit participants via email through our team's pre-established relationships with City staff and local community agencies and social services organizations. Participants were selected based on having knowledge and experience in the HFI response sector. Participants also recommended other individuals who they anticipated could share useful information. Recruitment occurred until saturation was achieved; that is, when no new ideas or categories were found through data generation or analysis (Mayan, 2023). In total, twenty-one email invitations were distributed between January to August 2020. One individual declined, eleven did not respond, and nine agreed to participate. We conducted nine virtual interviews, ranging in length from thirty to sixty minutes, between January and September 2020 with professionals in varied roles and degrees of experience in the HFI response sector. Notably, four interviews were conducted before the COVID-19 pandemic was

declared by the World Health Organization. Individuals interviewed before formal City Table creation later became members of this group.

Interviews were conducted by the second author, a graduate student. They did not have prior relationships with City Table participants but did have experience as a local outreach worker and in using food banks with their family while growing up. This information was shared with participants, when appropriate, as a means of building rapport. During interviews, participants were asked to describe their roles and practices in relation to addressing HFI in Edmonton. Sample questions guiding interviews included the following: Can you walk me through your involvement with HFI? What motivates you to participate in HFI initiatives? What obstacles do you face (e.g., operational burden, government/regulatory/company policies, liability)? How do your clients interact with your agency's HFI initiatives? Looking forward, what do you want your partnership(s) with other HFI initiatives to look like? Do you see new opportunities for partnerships or growth in supports? What would facilitate the success of HFI initiatives in Edmonton? Questions varied depending on participants' roles. The interview guide was modified over time as we acquired new knowledge through each conversation. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data analysis

Interviews were contextualized by our participation in four City Table meetings, document review of all City Table meeting agendas and minutes, and informal conversations with the original conveners of the group. Following a qualitative descriptive approach, qualitative content analysis was used (Sandelowski, 2000). Analyses were structured by Wenger's (1998) three modes of CoP identification (engagement, imagination, alignment), employed as a conceptual framework for examining the City Table's collaborative efforts. As interviews were transcribed, they were coded manually using the comment function in Microsoft Word and eventually, categorized. As more data were collected, new codes were identified, and some codes were discarded. Preliminary categories were discussed in later interviews with additional participants for comment. Evolving findings were also presented to the City Table; critical questions regarding how categories were developed were asked and categories were modified based on feedback. This process functioned as a form of member checking (Birt et al., 2016), enabling us to reflect on and check our interpretation of the data.

Rigour

Multiple verification strategies were used to promote rigour (Mayan, 2023). To ensure methodological coherence, we used Mayan's "armchair walkthrough" (2023, p. 48). This process helped align our research question with our methods. We used purposeful sampling to capture a range of experiences in relation to the phenomenon under study, increasing the likelihood of obtaining an appropriate sample. Participants' expertise and awareness of their organization's mission statement and ideology enabled us to think theoretically. Being professionals in their field, participants were well-versed in HFI literature and recommended readings, including publications from their respective organizations, to inform analyses. The validity of findings was grounded in the data collected, and verified with the City Table, agency publications, and follow-up conversations with participants, who we respected as key knowledge holders.

Researcher responsiveness was achieved by maintaining open communication with members of the City Table and being creative, flexible, and sensitive to the community's needs. We recognized the fragility of group dynamics because of power relations between organizations, with some entering the HFI response sector recently due to pandemic-related funding, while others were well-established. An additional verification strategy used, detailed above in *Data Analysis*, included concurrent data generation and analysis (Mayan, 2023).

Results

We interviewed nine professionals with varied roles (see Table 1) and degrees of experience in the HFI response sector. Reported challenges to collaboration fell under two categories: 1) competing for funding and food donations, and 2) navigating the maze of emergency food programs. Opportunities for collaboration were supported by participants' ideological cohesion and shared desire to address root causes of HFI. We elaborate on these findings in the context of Wenger's (1998) modes of identification in a CoP (engagement, imagination, and alignment).

Table 1: Interview participant pseudonyms and their affiliated organizations

Pseudonym	Representation
Mackenzie	Food rescue
Rory	Municipal food council, food rescue
Austin	Social services organization
Jordan	Food Bank
Jackie	Food rescue
Kacey	City social work
Leslie	City social work
Cameron	Funding agency
Quinn	Ethnocultural community agency

Challenges

Competing

Multiple agendas, lack of clarity surrounding agencies' roles and responsibilities in relation to HFI, and general stressors tied to the pandemic set the stage for competition within the City Table. Leslie, a city social worker, said: "people are keen to cooperate, [but] do we always have the necessary structures in place for real collaboration? I think that takes some years to develop." Competition was apparent in two key areas: funding and food donations.

For funding

A key determinant of an agency's capacity to ask for and receive food is the amount and type of funding they hold. Funders, using formal application processes to distribute grants and emergency funding, evaluate agencies based on their ideas, partnerships, and capacities to use the funding to distribute food. In a standard project cycle, agencies apply for and receive funding, procure the food, provide food to the clients, and evaluate and record their activities to be successful when applying, again, for more funding. Larger

agencies like the Food Bank can hire full-time staff to write funding applications, while smaller, volunteer-driven agencies cannot.

The pandemic and multitude of agendas at the table heightened competition. Some long-standing agencies noted frustration regarding new agencies encroaching on funds they historically accessed. Jackie, a food rescue worker, lamented, "A lot of funding opportunities really pit us against each other to be like why are you unique, why are you different? When it would be much more helpful if it talked about how—or even worked collaboratively with other community organizations to expand and ensure the success of this program and how are you going to share resources and share knowledge." Although Cameron, a funder, celebrated some instances of agencies applying for joint funding, such partnerships were not the norm, describing subtle tensions concerning individual agency evaluations. Cameron described assumptions from the "business world" about the "ideal of scalability" which did not necessarily translate in community settings. Cameron explained that even though two services may appear nominally the same, the communities they serve might have different needs and thus need two agencies doing similar work. They used the analogy of an Italian restaurant. If we were to choose eliminating duplicated services in favour of scaling up existing models, we

would only have one big Italian restaurant instead of several smaller ones. It is difficult to judge the need and potential effectiveness of similar yet distinct programs because the local and relationship-based nature of community work is difficult to accurately describe on a grant application.

> However, the reasons for competition extended beyond funding, as Jackie explained, "It's not just financial resources but it's also about space, it's about information...how can we share our knowledge in a way that people don't feel threatened that we're going to be taking away their service users or their funding?"

Quinn, a representative from an ethnocultural community agency, added "There are many organizations that are very territorial about food security, and their food clients. They won't go to the step of working with (other agencies), because they fear...if we lose these clients, we lose the ability to report on them, or we lose a part of our identity."

Leslie echoed Quinn: "everyone is trying to create their legitimate story as an organization, right?.... I'm sure that some organizations fear some risk of loss of identity or uniqueness if they are too deep into a collaborative process." While many participants explicitly discussed the harms of competition, they also struggled to see a way forward, given the social and economic value of having a unique identity, and because of the significant resources required for developing more collaborative processes. Jackie questioned: "how do we bring all these different organizations together to work collectively so that we're not stepping on each other's toes? But that's something that requires so much capacity and human resources to do...we're [already] so stretched."

For food donations

In Edmonton, agencies supporting food insecure clients can either buy food (ideally through bulk purchasing) or receive donated food from retailers, distributors, or producers. Of the food donated by retail outlets, a portion of it is considered "waste food." This food is nutritionally valid but does not meet internal quality standards of the business selling that food. The amount of waste food provided to agencies varies. Mackenzie, a food rescue worker, described how a company's willingness to donate waste food stems from consideration on recouping the cost of waste food by discounting it, the cost of disposing that food (dumpster tipping fees, liability issues), and the business's commitment or willingness to work with community agencies. Food stores can set requirements for integrating the donating process into their operations and prefer working with one recipient instead of five or six. They want organizations that can pick up on a regular schedule, have a single point of contact, do the logistical transport to and from, and guaranteeing that the food is safe, taking ownership of that and handling it after it leaves our premises. Hence, agencies' access to waste food is uneven and based on individual capacity to meet these expectations.

A few participants commented on the politics and lack of transparency regarding which agencies get gleaned food and how they get it. The Edmonton's Food Bank (2021), for example, partners with approximately 300 agencies to distribute food throughout the city. Some of these agencies serve meals, some provide food hampers, some connect other agencies with their donor networks, and some are innovative leaders in getting their food out to the community. Austin, a former chef at a social services

organization, spoke to the authority of the Food Bank, describing its "monopoly over other agencies in terms of where they spend their money and where their donations go. Like you have all these donations that get funneled through the Food Bank, by the time they hit the agencies they are garbage. So, I was trying to hit agencies [donors] that were giving to the Food Bank, before the food bank [got the food]." Conversely, Kacey, a city social worker, said that while the Food Bank may be the "main player" in Edmonton, "they have been very accommodating in getting food out to people. They are not very possessive of their food, but they seem to be the only ones who get the gleaned food." Austin wished there was an app that showed what agencies have, allowing for more streamlined communication between the food bank and agencies, and between agencies themselves: "I think if there was more unity in the agencies who were accessing the Food Bank.... I could see the Food Bank being more useful." This wish speaks to the maze (detailed below) that agencies described in navigating the HFI sector. Mackenzie explained how their food rescue agency *was* successful in getting food donations because they were well-organized, with pick-ups and deliveries coordinated via a newly implemented mobile app and had a large volunteer base.

While agencies in Edmonton can freely access food offered by the Food Bank, Austin indicated that food offered by the Food Bank is not always sufficient to run a not-for-profit kitchen. The limited quality, quantity, and types of food available can pose barriers to providing reliable service. Austin initially relied on the Food Bank but transitioned to canvassing businesses for waste food and donations, reducing their Food Bank visits from several times per week to roughly once a month. They acquired enough waste food and coffee to cancel an expensive coffee supplying contract, which freed up their food budget such that they could more

regularly make gourmet meals, like shrimp alfredo, for clients. This success was built on Austin's existing relationships, their ability to form new relationships with businesses, and their enthusiasm to serve better food. They explained: "I have a lot of ins, I know a lot of people, and that's why I was good at that job.... It's just like, know people, and don't be phoney." Austin also commented that businesses are proud to be able to donate non-waste food.

Participants' stories suggest that acquiring food donations is key to positive agency evaluations by funders and food donors, where success is determined by the amount, quality, and appropriateness of the food agencies can acquire. Food is something agencies must compete for which requires the capacity to pick up and transport food, to mobilize personal staff relationships, to form new relationships with businesses, and to align their agency with the desired ideologies of donating bodies. Most prominently however, these stories describe the food insecurity of agencies themselves as they compete to be evaluated positively by food donors to secure food.

Navigating the maze

Participants illustrated the difficulties of navigating the growing, intricate maze of agencies involved in HFI responses, which posed barriers to collaboration. This maze was evident from both the client and agency perspective. A "food insecurity continuum of needs" was often referenced within City Table discussions, as participants recognized that different clients have different food needs (i.e., some have zero access to food whereas others just need to supplement). Correspondingly, there is a continuum of services in Edmonton that respond to clients' needs. However, because these services are not always listed publicly or well described, it is difficult for clients to match their

food needs to a service agency. Some social service agencies, particularly those that are government-administered, create files on clients to follow them through the services they receive at different organizations. The intent of the City Table was to facilitate increased coordination, leading to a more cohesive system for clients to navigate.

Agencies had trouble navigating this maze as well, both in terms of directing clients appropriately and in acquiring funding and food access. Those who were new to the HFI response sector during the COVID-19 pandemic had to dedicate energy towards learning which agencies provided emergency food, and for which populations, as each had unique criteria. Kacey, a city social worker, elaborated on the funding maze: "there is also a maze that agencies have to go through to get at funding…there are several private funders, grants, and they all have different agendas, and they have to be applied to in separate ways."

According to Kacey, these labyrinthine solutions to addressing HFI were not "really new." They said, "COVID shined a light on a food system that existed before, and it also shined a light on all of those gaps that existed before."

Opportunities

Jointly addressing their "moral quandaries"

A key element that supported, rather than challenged, collaboration was the similar "moral quandaries" interviewees spoke about in terms of their professional roles and capacity in addressing HFI. Ideological cohesion surrounding the importance of addressing the root causes of HFI was apparent across participants' comments, as they all alluded to the disjuncture they experience between what they know as evidence-based long-term solutions to HFI (i.e., implementing income-

based approaches), versus the short-term emergency food solutions they have agency over in their professional roles. Rory, a policy advisor, and food rescue worker, said:

> "It's great that people support the [food-distributing agencies] and that they want to get into these initiatives and improve our food supply, but that conversation makes us forget that there are people living in poverty. Where regardless of how good those programs are, they will still not be meeting their needs as a result of being in poverty."

Rory added that "they [the city] talk about having a strong and abundant food supply which is related more to food resilience and not necessarily access for people who are marginalized." They emphasized that addressing HFI and addressing food waste were unique issues and were sensitive to the "moral quandaries" of trying to marry these two distinct social problems.

Leslie emphasized that "no one is trying to get in the way of people trying to have adequate income, that's for sure," but acknowledged that "when we create all of these food hampers, we can be susceptible to be seen as a community resource that provides a rationale for people's incomes to be dropped even further." Cameron felt it was important for agencies to determine their scope of practice and work as effectively as they can within those bounds. They said:

> [social services organizations] do what they know they can do, and other people need to do other stuff. I think both the literature and 90 percent of people in the sector know that food security is primarily a problem of income security and that's an exceeding difficult problem to deal with, particularly in this province when there is

absolutely no constituency for that in the government, in fact, negative constituency. Therefore, wishing that we could change that, or being upset that the Food Bank hasn't fixed that, doesn't get us anywhere. The people that want to advocate for living wages and better income, that's great. But in the meantime, we should try to get what food there is in the system to the people that need it, even though it's imperfect.

Mackenzie agreed, noting that their organization had refined their mission from initially being about HFI to now focussing on reducing food waste:

> We have decided [agency name] is solely about reducing waste...when we talk about food rescue, it does not address food security, really the biggest impact it has is about redirecting food and while it might temporarily increase access to food at an agency, we are not bringing people out of food insecurity. And it does have a benefit to the agencies in terms of freeing up resources that might be used on food so they can invest in things like services related to housing or employment and those might have a more tangible impact on increasing people's food security.

> Participants acknowledged that providing emergency food was easier to do than implementing income-based solutions and structural change; thus, emergency food provision was more likely to be perceived as achievable within grant application parameters and cycles. Cameron explained, "A lot of the emphasis would be on emergency food provision and not so much on how to build long term food security in a particular community because that's not so

concrete and it's not as clear how to do that and so those would be less appealing to (funders)." Current funding structures do not necessarily encourage the type of innovation that would be required for deeper structural change. Quinn described the lack of movement towards income-based solutions as a "complacency with the status quo":

> There is that saying, 'don't expect someone to understand something if their job depends on them not understanding it.' I think that is true in the non-profit sector, if we are funding people to perpetuate food programing as it is, then they won't step back and try to find other ways of addressing the problem...oftentimes systems perpetuate that [the status quo] in terms of what we ask people to report on...innovation might mean that you have a season where numbers go down, might mean failures...If our funding and reporting is only about reporting success, we are not going to be innovative.

Quinn called for funders to take a leadership role and "challenge organizations to do something that is not replicating existing services." Rory echoed Quinn, stating, "as long as we are not thinking about those long-term [i.e., income-based] ideas, we will always be in this situation. That is why collaboration is so important." In this way, City Table members were united in terms of the value they placed on addressing the root causes of HFI. Notably, the ideologies underpinning the City Table juxtapose those of the conservative provincial policy context, wherein it remains unlikely that policy changes needed to support long-term solutions to HFI will be developed.

Wenger's modes of identification

Below, we analyze our findings using Wenger's modes of CoP identification to deepen our understanding of the City Table's collaborative efforts.

Engagement

Engagement builds trust in CoPs and reduces isolation in the problem-solving process (Patton & Parker, 2017). Engagement is the foundation of CoPs, as doing things, talking, and producing artifacts together justifies the need for a community and indeed forms the relationships from which the community is built (Patton & Parker, 2017; Smith et al., 2017). The City Table succeeded in bringing people together during the pandemic to talk about sharing food among agencies and with clients. But while community building may be easy for people sharing food in a garden, it is more challenging for food service agencies to talk about and enact sharing food, given the competitive climate and the pandemic restrictions. Agencies are evaluated individually by funders in areas of competition, like food donations. This approach of individual agency evaluation appears counterproductive to promoting a collective strategy and engagement. Though joint tasks were alluded to, there are barriers to establishing this foundation of a CoP due to competition for donations and funding and independent methods of data collection described by participants. Additionally, the virtual nature of these meetings may have impeded relationship-building, particularly for those new to the HFI sector, as Leslie elaborated: "Collaborative practices take some years to establish…there were some people new to the table who were just beginning to know each other. There are some differences between meeting virtually and in person because we need to learn to trust each other."

Cameron similarly described how "talking about this stuff on Zoom is not going to be as fruitful as getting everybody in a big room and having this conversation that way. But, if we are going to do it this fall, that is what it has to be."

Another potential barrier to engagement mentioned by some participants is that of leadership at the Table. Leslie said: "When the City is the one calling the table together, there are questions that arise in terms of who has power at the table, do people have equal power at the table?" Quinn stated: "The city or funder who is a convener there, that's a person who is paid to take a leadership role. Don't be just like, 'I brought you here to this meeting and I'll facilitate.' It's insufficient to do that and I think leadership is necessary."

Some participants felt that the not-for-profit sector was already overextended and deserved remuneration for their contributions to the table. For some organizations with ample experience in the HFI sector, it was felt they already had relationships established and that this collective initiative was neither a good use of their time nor conducive to deepening those relationships. Other agencies, however, felt the table provided a unique space for hearing new perspectives; for example, food retail owners were invited as guest speakers to one meeting to share their challenges and interest in being part of the HFI solution.

Imagination

Imagination is indicated by transparency, explanations, reflection, and pushing boundaries (Wenger, 1998). Hopeful group imagination can also have the effect of forming goals and setting norms, which is why imagination is transitional in between engagement and

alignment (Aguirre-Garzón & Castañeda-Peña, 2017). Imagination means constructing an image of the practice and its members and seeing oneself as part of them. There were few examples of collective imagination among participants. With the competition for donations and funding, it was difficult for agencies to imagine themselves in a collective struggle to respond to HFI. Particularly during the HFI crisis triggered by the pandemic, participants' imaginations were focussed primarily on addressing their clients needs and their own food acquisition processes, which restricted development of a collective imagination. Due to deregulation of collecting poverty statistics in Canada, each agency can measure its work individually and then use these data to apply for funding or ask for donations (Riches & Tarasuk, 2014). Agencies can create their own universes to sustain themselves and use their knowledge to advance themselves and excel in the funding system. But these practices do not advance broader collaborative goals to address HFI.

Considering Wenger's (1998) indicators of imagination, explanations of and reflections on problems in HFI responses were present among participants at the Table, but not in the context of collective imagining. The hope for positive and long-term change conveyed by some participants is promising; however, competition and individualistic approaches to responding to HFI dominated the imaginations of the participants. While a CoP approach may be used to overcome this pattern of thinking by building trans-personal knowing, relationships of trust and determining common purpose and goals, the

director of a community agency spoke to the challenges, including "egos," associated with systematic approaches to cooperation. Competition is more than an imaginative tension; it is formative to agencies' self-understanding and creates a barrier to addressing HFI more comprehensively and to forming a CoP. While a CoP approach can be a valuable tool in mitigating the individualism and competitive nature of the HFI response sector, existing funding structures remain major barriers.

Alignment

Alignment, as measured by Wenger's (1998) indicators of common focus, direction, plans, standards, policies, and distribution of authority, currently does not exist in the City Table. This may partially be related to their fear of organizational identity loss, as described earlier in relation to competition. However, participants did speak about the potential benefits of creating alignment (i.e., following directions, aligning with expectations and standards, and coordinating actions towards a common goal [Smith et al., 2017]), in responding to HFI. Agencies do this internally in several ways, whether they are responding to community needs, following the law, or meeting funding requirements. However, external alignment between agencies is not historically common to Edmonton's HFI response. Cameron mentioned that the last time HFI-related agencies in Edmonton came together to coordinate their services was forty years ago, when they formed the first food bank in Canada.

Discussion

In this study, we examined the challenges to and opportunities for HFI collaboration during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic in Edmonton, Alberta using Wenger's (1998) CoP analytical lens. Interviews with nine professionals from the City Table provided insights into this initiative to coordinate HFI responses among food service providing agencies. Overall, our analysis points to members of the Table making some progress towards the development of a collaborative learning community, with engagement being more commonly observed than imagination or alignment. The hope conveyed by some participants for further progress towards more long-term solutions to HFI is promising; however, competition for funding, clients and food donations, and individualistic approaches to responding to HFI dominated the imaginations of the participants and presented obstacles to more collective alignment, characteristic of the CoP process. These circumstances reflect the difficulty of agencies participating while experiencing funding and food access challenges.

Gaps in forming a CoP

For the City Table to fully achieve the characteristics of a CoP learning community, more time is needed to build and strengthen relationships and create a collective vision (imagination), goals (alignment), and strategies for achieving them—all of which are difficult even without the added pandemic-related pressures. Participants showed passion for their work, evaluated it critically, and shared a desire to improve their organization's ability to address HFI. None were content with the charity model of addressing HFI and align more with rights-based, comprehensive, and evidence-based approaches to HFI. But despite

participants' strong networking abilities and general ideological cohesion, they have not yet succeeded in solidifying a CoP. That said, because there is engagement, shared values, and new infrastructure for communication and collaboration (in the form of the City Table), there is now a social space for more collective action.

The City Table created an online platform and gathered participants, but to create a CoP, group trust, safety, and shared understanding must be built to have open dialogue to set intentions, select approaches, flesh out strategies, and proceed with transparent evaluation. Tension can arise among members of CoPs can occur, however, when they are asked to work together but are evaluated separately, sparking competition. According to Li et al., "Some people may perceive these new roles as members of a CoP as risky and uncomfortable, which may subsequently lead to less engagement. A learning community must therefore develop a high level of trust among participants in order to be functional" (2009, p. 3).

The individualism among agencies, which may have emerged in response to a highly competitive environment, erodes trust among agencies. Keenly aware of these issues, the City Table has conducted internal evaluations, including anonymous surveys, of their group processes to inform their next steps.

Moving forward

Interviews with these professionals were all conducted within the first eight months of 2020. But the landscape of HFI has changed in Edmonton, and Canada more broadly since these initial interviews. One benefit of this table is its flexibility: it can examine issues happening on the ground and respond in real time. At a City Table

meeting in November 2022, agencies reported escalating demands for emergency food since pandemic-related benefits, like CERB, had ceased. This situation is similarly reflected in the literature, with a 73 percent increase in total visits to the food bank documented in Alberta between 2019 to 2022 (Food Banks Canada, 2022).

Since the Fall of 2022, meetings have shifted to a hybrid format and include a shared meal for in-person attendees, which may help to build relationships and facilitate collaboration. Additionally, City Table members' roles in relation to HFI has morphed over time. Some have shifted their efforts towards upstream advocacy as opposed to emergency food provision. As a collective, City Table members have indicated interest in similar shifts but remain in discussions about what these efforts will look like. City Table membership and leadership is ever evolving; time will tell if it becomes a lasting City initiative. Kacey acknowledged the challenges ahead for this Table: "it's going to be long tough work with people who haven't traditionally worked together in this way."

The role of community-based partnerships in responding to HFI during COVID-19

The City Table is just one example of new partnerships formed during the pandemic to respond to HFI in Canada (Food Banks Canada, 2020; Lowitt et al., 2022; Regnier-Davies et al., 2022; Slater et al., 2022). In Manitoba, Lowitt et al. (2022) observed charitable food organizations increasingly engaging with advocacy and research groups about HFI policy supports. In Toronto, a "Food Access Table" was convened in the Spring of 2020. The Food Access Table consisted of municipal staff and representatives from charitable food organizations. Like the City Table, the Food Access Table grappled with questions surrounding how

to negotiate the need for emergency food provision while also calling for food justice and measures to support sustainable food systems (Regnier-Davies et al., 2022).

Grounded in their experiences of working with the Food Access Table and BlackFoodToronto, Regnier-Davies et al. (2023) challenge the prevailing academic discourse—reflected in City Table participants' "moral quandaries"—that charitable food organizations necessarily distract from social equity. They argue this critique does not distinguish between large corporate food banks (detached from local contexts) and community-based organizations. Given their intimate knowledge of unique community needs, community-based organizations, including City Table participants, can be "an asset in defining what those [Canada's social equity] goals should be, and how they may be implemented and supported, and by whom" (Regnier-Davies et al., 2023, p. 360). The existence of local, culturally attuned initiatives rooted in community needs does not preclude the ability to advocate for social policy change.

Strengths and limitations

Strengths of this study include our use of Wenger's (1998) CoP framework to analyze findings. This proved a useful framework for understanding and contextualizing the collaborative approach undertaken by the City Table. This research contributes to Canadian HFI discourse and to a limited body of Alberta-specific HFI literature. Limitations include that formal interviews were conducted prior to and early in the Table's formation, and our sample size (n=9) was relatively small. Individuals heavily engaged in the initial COVID-19 response may have been too busy to participate but may have had unique perspectives to contribute. Ongoing engagement with the City Table

will be valuable for longer term study of the Table's potential to contribute to Edmonton's HFI response.

Conclusions

Responding to HFI is a complex task, particularly during a pandemic. This has not stopped City Table members from coming together to share information and discuss ways to collaboratively work towards this goal. To fully develop a CoP approach to addressing HFI, concurrent efforts must be made towards engagement, imagination, and alignment. The HFI response sector in Edmonton has embarked on this process, but all three of these processes are deficient in varying ways. An effective and united CoP has potential to make strides in addressing HFI through long-term programmatic and policy changes. Competition between agencies to secure funding and donations of food, particularly during the current food insecurity crisis, erodes collaborative efforts. Building engagement between agencies, shifting staff's imagination to a collective cause, and aligning practices are monumental tasks in this context.

This research has outlined two parallels between agencies responding to HFI and their clients. First are the similarities between agencies and clients as they both navigate maze-like structures for access to resources. In agencies, this fosters an environment of individualism and competition—significant barriers to collaboration. Second, funding and resource insecurity in agencies parallels the experience of HFI insofar as agencies struggle to acquire the types and amounts of foods they need to run their programs. This

characterizes Edmonton's HFI response system as one requiring growth in its conceptualization and execution if it aims to comprehensively address HFI. Efforts to coordinate and improve Edmonton's HFI response sector require disassembling the competitive structures of operational insecurity for social services to pursue common ground and greater stability.

There are several systemic interventions that could be made to address the root cause of HFI—poverty— through the redistribution of wealth. However, systemic changes will not happen immediately and those experiencing poverty and HFI today cannot wait for the change. City Table members are doing their best to work within the current reality. In engaging with the topic of improving responses to HFI during interviews, participants underlined their own agency's vulnerability, exacerbated by the additional demands and workload created by the pandemic. Agencies can continue to address HFI individually in an environment of competition. Or they can work to coordinate their efforts and build on their strengths of networking to transition to a different and more collaborative HFI response. This has already begun through efforts like the City Table; however, more sustained work is needed to dismantle oppressive systems and generate measurable impacts on HFI in Edmonton.

Alexa Ferdinands is a Registered Dietitian and Assistant Professor in Health and Nutrition at Athabasca University.

Oleg Lavriv is a graduate of the Master of Arts in Community Engagement program at the University of Alberta.

Mary Beckie is a Professor and Director of Community Engagement Studies in the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta.

Maria Mayan is a Professor and Associate Director of the Community-University Partnership in the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta.

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Original Research Article

Generations of gardeners regenerating the soil of sovereignty in Moose Cree First Nation: An account of community and research collaboration

Michael A. Robidoux[a*], Keira A. Loukes[b], Emalee A. Vandermale[c], Tegan J. Keil[d], Janice Cindy Gaudet[e]

[a] University of Ottawa; ORCID: 0000-0002-1106-4603
[b] Lakehead University; ORCID: 0000-0002-7841-3871
[c] Thompson Rivers University
[d] University of Alberta, Campus Saint-Jean; ORCID: 0000-0002-0333-0158

Abstract

The challenges northern remote communities in Canada face acquiring regular access to affordable and healthy food have been well documented. Our Indigenous Health Research Group, made up of an informal network of researchers from universities across Canada, has partnered with northern communities, Tribal Councils, and Political organizations (Assembly of First Nations, Nishnawbe Aski Nation) in Yukon, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, and Ontario since 2004 to document and support local land-based food strategies to increase local food capacity. While much of this work has focused on supporting traditional food harvesting efforts, many community partners are seeking to develop small-scale gardening to increase access to fresh fruit and

vegetables. As part of a five-year project supporting local food initiatives in four communities in northern Canada (Northwest Territories and northern Ontario), we worked with the Moose Cree First Nation in Moose Factory, Ontario and their local Food Developer to support food sustainability planning. The research presented in this article describes collaborative efforts between Moose Cree First Nation Band Council leadership, community members, and our research group in support of local garden development as part of their local food sustainability strategy. With the guidance and engagement of community, we worked with families in Moose Factory to build and plant family-centered gardens. The article focuses on start-up engagement

strategies, garden uptake, garden construction and planting activities, garden yields, and individual feedback from gardeners describing their experiences with the project.

Keywords: Indigenous; First Nation; food security; food sovereignty; gardening; food sustainability; community-based participatory research; resurgence; community-based action research

Résumé

Les défis auxquels sont confrontées les communautés nordiques isolées du Canada pour obtenir un accès régulier à une alimentation abordable et saine ont été bien documentés. Depuis 2004, notre groupe de recherche sur la santé autochtone, composé d'un réseau informel de chercheurs et chercheuses universitaires de tout le Canada, s'est associé à des communautés nordiques, à des conseils tribaux et à des organisations politiques (Assemblée des Premières Nations, Nation Nishnawbe Aski) au Yukon, dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest, en Colombie-Britannique et en Ontario pour documenter et soutenir des stratégies alimentaires locales axées sur le territoire afin d'accroître la capacité de production alimentaire locale. Bien qu'une grande partie de ce travail ait été consacrée au soutien à la récolte d'aliments traditionnels, de nombreux partenaires communautaires cherchent à développer le jardinage à petite échelle afin d'accroître l'accès aux fruits et légumes frais. Dans le cadre d'un projet quinquennal de soutien aux projets alimentaires locaux dans quatre communautés du nord du Canada (Territoires du Nord-Ouest et nord de l'Ontario), nous avons travaillé avec la Première Nation Moose Cree, à Moose Factory (Ontario), et son responsable du développement alimentaire pour soutenir la planification de la sécurité alimentaire. La recherche présentée dans cet article décrit les efforts de collaboration entre le conseil de bande de la Première Nation Moose Cree, les membres de la communauté et notre groupe de recherche pour soutenir le développement de jardins dans le cadre de leur stratégie de sécurité alimentaire locale. Avec les conseils et l'engagement de la communauté, nous avons travaillé avec les familles de Moose Factory pour aménager des jardins familiaux. L'article se concentre sur les stratégies d'engagement de départ, l'adhésion au jardin, les activités d'aménagement et de plantation, les récoltes et les commentaires des jardiniers décrivant leur expérience dans le cadre du projet.

Introduction

The challenges northern remote communities in Canada face acquiring regular access to affordable and healthy food have been well documented (Council of Canadian Academics, 2014; Willows et al., 2009). Research highlighting the impact of European colonialism and its disruption of local food systems, the impact of resource extraction, and the high cost of shipping market food items to the north is important to understand why food security remains so high throughout Indigenous communities in northern Canada (Daschuk, 2013; Kingston, 2015). There is also a growing body of research and activism documenting the resurgent work with and by Indigenous communities, supporting and/or improving their local food security and self-determining sovereignty (Ferreira et al., 2021; Settee & Shukla, 2020; Skinner et al., 2013; Thompson et al., 2011; Thompson et al., 2018). A resurgent research framework builds on Indigenous axiology of connection to land, connection to community and knowledge, and self-determination (Gaudry, 2015; Herman, 2018). This shifts from deficit-centered Indigenous health research towards placing attention on Indigenous peoples' enactment of sovereignty, regenerative engagement, and long-standing resistance and resilience (McGuire-Adams, 2021; Smith, 1999). Our Indigenous Health Research Group (IHRG), made up of an informal network of researchers from universities across Canada, has partnered with northern communities, Tribal Councils, and political organizations (Assembly of First Nations, Nishnawbe Aski Nation) in the Yukon, Northwest Territories, British Columbia, and Ontario since 2004 to document and support local land-based food strategies to increase local food capacity (Robidoux & Mason, 2017). While much of this work has focused on supporting traditional food harvesting efforts, many community

partners are seeking to develop small-scale gardening to increase access to fresh fruit and vegetables.

Many Indigenous communities in Canada are developing strategies to increase traditional food harvesting capacity, while also exploring alternative food programming that involves traditional and alternative food procurement methods that look to increase control over local food systems (Barbeau et al., 2015; Fieldhouse & Thompson, 2012; Lombard et al., 2021; Loring & Gerlach, 2010; Thompson et al., 2018). Sumner et al. (2019) provided detailed reporting of Indigenous food initiatives across Canada, identifying the types of initiatives, those responsible for leading them, and the various funding mechanisms supporting them. The results highlight the importance of Indigenous-led, place-based programs that "build local capacity for exercising and establishing food sovereignty" (Sumner et al., 2019, p. 247). Examples of local capacity building are unsurprisingly diverse as they build on local knowledge, food systems, and resources (environmental, human, financial, etc.). Some examples include community freezer programs (Organ et at., 2014), land-based teaching programs (Ahmed et al., 2023), traditional and contemporary nutrition and cooking workshops (Murdoch-Flowers et al., 2019), restoration of local food species (Blanchet et al., 2021), large- and small-scale agriculture (Skinner et al., 2014), and local food markets drawing from traditional food sources and more economically feasible market food sourced from grocery wholesalers (Ferreira et al., 2021; Searles, 2016). As part of a five-year project supporting local food initiatives in four communities in northern Canada (Northwest Territories and northern Ontario), we worked with the Moose Cree First Nation (MCFN) in Moose Factory, Ontario and their local Food Developer to support food sustainability planning. This work focused on

supporting local food development in relation to their broader community food strategy and strengthening long-standing community initiatives. Community gardening was one of the local food development

strategies determined by the MCFN, and it is the focus of this paper.

Community context

The research for this project took place in the MCFN of Moose Factory, an island community located at the base of James Bay, between 51.264 latitude and −80.597 longitude (Louttit, 2006) (see Figure 1). There are 5,013 registered band members, with 1,843 people living on the reserve (Government of Canada, 2022). When the river is not frozen the community is accessible by boat taxi, and, during the colder winter

months, it can be reached by winter road. Throughout the year helicopter service provides access to the Island, which is particularly important during freeze-up and breakup. MCFN is rich in its generations of knowledge keepers, languages, and a culture that is deeply rooted in traditional knowledge of the land, *pimatisiwin* (life) values, and kinship practices (Gaudet, 2017).

Figure 1: Map identifying the location of the Moose Cree First Nation, Moose Factory Ontario, Canada. Map created by University of Ottawa April 15, 2020.
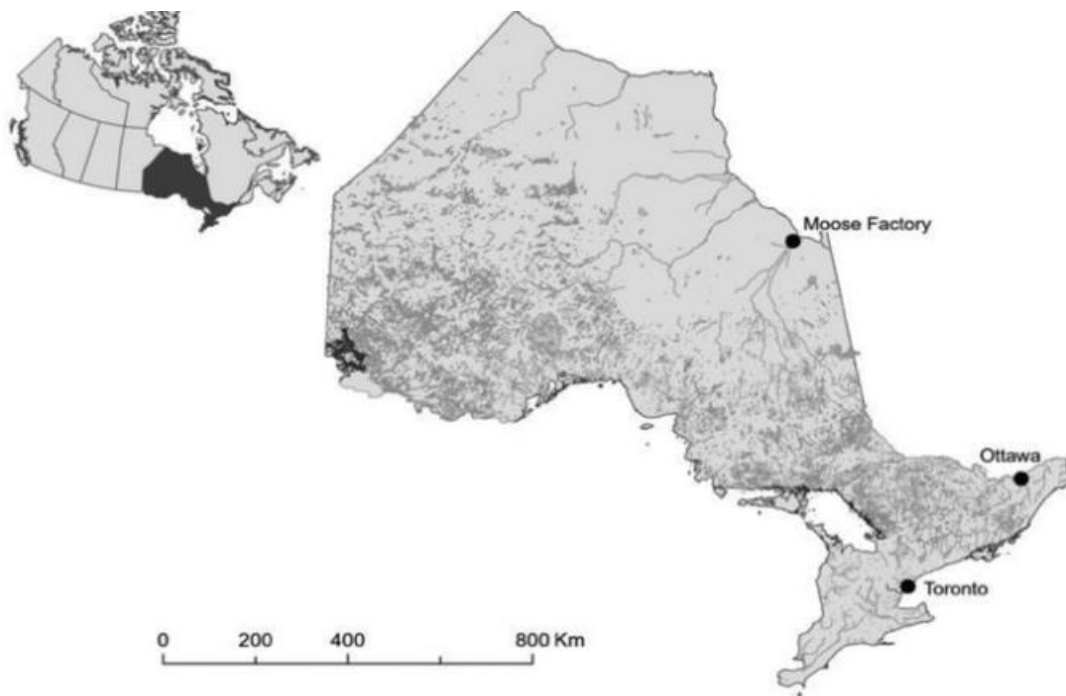
In the spring and fall of 2019, our group assisted in re-establishing two community garden spaces, planting seeds, and harvesting what was grown. The results from this project (Ferreira et al., 2021) identified challenges and opportunities in community gardening, most notably the very universal challenge of sustained volunteer participation (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2013) and the opportunity to support individual family gardens in parallel with community gardens. The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 prevented our research group from travelling to Moose Factory for two years. During this time, the community secured funding to develop family gardens in response to community desires and as part of their commitment to their independent, ongoing food development work. In

the spring of 2022, our research team was able to return to assist with this new phase of family garden engagement and development. The collaborative efforts between MCFN Band Council leadership, community members, and our research group are described in the following section. With the leadership and engagement of community, we worked with families in Moose Factory to build and plant family-centered gardens. The article focuses on start-up engagement strategies, garden uptake, garden construction and planting activities, garden yields, and individual feedback from garden participants describing their experiences with the project. The project generated even greater interest for future garden development the following spring.

Methodology and methods

The research for this project builds off the community-based participatory research (CBPR) approach our group utilized when first working with the MCFN in 2019. To foster a research process that is collaborative in orientation, Indigenous perspectives, methodologies, and ways of knowing shape our guiding principles. Indigenous methodologies (IM) are informed by an Indigenous worldview that includes language, cultural practices, protocols, reciprocal obligations, song, stories, ceremonies, and place-based ways of doing and being (Kovach, 2005, 2009, 2019). It calls for research that is relevant, reciprocal, respectful, and regenerative. With respect to being on Treaty Nine with the intent to work in relation with the MCFN, we recognize that we are visitors on this land and therefore respect the ethics and responsibility of being good guests. While a CBPR approach involves researchers and participants in all aspects of the research process, IM goes further than

this (Absolon, 2011; Gaudet, 2017; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 1999). Given that none of the research team members are Cree and we are therefore limited in accessing a worldview informed by their language, we acknowledge our limitations in fully adopting an IM. We also recognize our relational obligation and responsibility to be critical of our privilege, power, and positions, as well as the systemic inequities we benefit from, and that we have a responsibility to interrupt western hierarchies, to advocate for community-centered priorities, and to privilege Indigenous knowledge systems (Willows, 2013, 2019). We also come to this work: a) knowing, to some degree, the extensive labour of gardening; b) appreciating the benefits of the process and the harvest; and c) willing to learn with and from community.

In learning from our previous research working with northern Indigenous communities, these partners

contribute their expertise and knowledge to address community-defined issues and to contribute to the strengths of existing local food procurement initiatives. Our learnings have shaped the research process and project implementation plans. IM and other participatory community-based methodologies highlight the challenges posed by inequitable power relationships, and leading Indigenous scholars acknowledge the strength of this approach (Alfred & Corntassel, 2005; Bishop, 1998; Kovach, 2009; Smith, 1999). As such, the centering of community interests and leadership asserts an approach that builds on community needs grounded in a place-based context. In conducting CBPR, we share what Israel et al., (2003) put forth as nine guiding principles that "will vary depending on the context, purpose, and participants involved in the process" (p. 55). Given the collaborative approach undertaken for this research, four of these principles were especially pertinent: "CBPR *builds on strengths and resources within the community*"; "CBPR *facilitates collaborative, equitable partnership in all phases of the research*"; CPPR *promotes co-learning and capacity building among all partners*"; and "CBPR *integrates and achieves a balance between research and action for the mutual benefit of all partners*" (Israel et al., 2003, p.56; emphasis in original). Our research approach highlights a collaborative gathering and sharing of knowledge where both community and researchers experience an ongoing participatory exchange, and seeks to develop knowledge with practical applications to community (Kidwai & Iyengar, 2017). As outlined below, project design, implementation, outcomes, and communications were created collaboratively with the MCFN leadership and staff associated with the project.

The project underwent a full ethics review and was approved by the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board. The research for this project involved two stages

of fieldwork conducted in Moose Factory in May and June of 2022 and in September and October that same year. Project plans were developed in the spring of 2022 with project collaborator Stan Kapashesit, who is the MCFN Director of Economic Development, and the MCFN Local Food Developer. Phase one of the fieldwork involved meeting with local residents interested in having a personal garden and helping to construct raised gardens boxes for their families. This phase of fieldwork also involved preparing the soil in the existing community garden across from the Elders' Complex. During this three-week period, community leadership and our accommodation host introduced our research team to community members who had gardening knowledge and experience on the Island. We also had several conversations with local residents (either people we already knew in the community or people we were introduced to) in more social settings, where conversations often gravitated towards gardening as a result of inquiries around what we were doing on the Island. These informal conversations offered opportunities for our team to learn from community members about gardening involvement in the past and present and the types of fruits and vegetables that were typically planted, and to explore what other growing options already existed. To increase knowledge exchange, Stan advised us and assisted us to communicate with community members through the MCFN Facebook page. It is a popular social media platform on the Island that was useful for communicating about project activities and seeking involvement from potential gardeners. This led to a Moose Factory Island Gardeners Facebook page being created, which enabled project participants and members of our group to communicate about project activities—its development is discussed in greater detail below. Information that was shared did inform the content of this paper, but information was not cited

unless written permission was received (for example, see Figure 3.) As both new and returning visitors to the region with varying experience gardening in northern climates, this learning was a vital part of our methods and allowed us to tailor our work to the community.

The second phase of fieldwork was similarly coordinated with the MCFN economic development team prior to arriving in late September. During this phase, the purpose was to visit with all individuals and families who participated in the garden project and had gardens built at their homes. Being mindful of not wanting to appear as though evaluating "success", the intention was to create an informal conversation while working with participants in the garden spaces, or simply while walking through the garden spaces and seeing what people had grown. This informal conversational approach provided a relaxed atmosphere to learn about each gardener's experience growing over the course of the summer, what worked well, what did not, what they would have done differently (e.g., making the garden larger, planting different seeds, starting earlier, etc.,), if they were planning to plant a garden the following year, and how this program could

support their growing efforts if they wanted to continue. Conversations lasted between thirty minutes and two hours. At least two members of the research team were present in each conversational setting. Fieldnotes describing our reflections, learnings, and main themes were written by each team member at the earliest time possible following each conversation. In order to effectively convey the outcomes of this collaborative garden project in Moose Factory, we opted to provide a narrative account describing the various stages of project implementation that can best be described as fluid and evolving. Draft versions of the paper were submitted to project partners Stan Kapashesit, Kim Cheechoo, and Alice Gunner for their review and feedback. All project partners and participants were given the option to be identified or to remain anonymous in the paper. Those who wished to be identified provided written permission to have their name or photographic image used. What follows are detailed descriptions of the two phases of fieldwork that emphasize the process and outcomes of a collaborative approach.

Fieldwork phase 1

When COVID-19 restrictions were gradually lifted in the winter of 2022, our group began making plans to resume fieldwork activities to support partnering communities in northern Ontario with their development of local food initiatives. Part of these plans involved recruiting a horticultural student (TK) from Thompson Rivers University[1] in Kamloops, British Columbia to support garden development, which we had done with three of the four communities prior to

the pandemic. Accompanying this student was EV, who was involved with our previous fieldwork in another partner community in the Northwest Territories, where she worked with community members on ongoing local food initiatives in this region (Ross & Mason, 2020a, 2020b). Our team met with the newly recruited students—who, in addition to being formally trained in horticulture, had extensive commercial vegetable farming experience—to discuss

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[1] Grant Co-Principal Investigator Courtney Mason is a professor at Thompson Rivers University who coordinated the recruitment of horticultural students to work with all partner communities in this project.

the potential activities to be offered in Moose Factory. We then organized a virtual meeting with the MCFN Local Food Developer to discuss what project activities the community wanted implemented and how we could best support the activities they were planning for the spring. The conversation focused on four main activities: 1) provide gardening workshops for families interested in developing personal gardens; 2) assist families in constructing personal gardens; 3) help prepare and plant the community garden; and 4) help assemble a community greenhouse that the MCFN purchased in 2021. There were also discussions around possibly offering food preservation workshops as well as basic soil sampling to learn if different types of soil amendments might optimize growing on the Island. With a mutually agreeable plan in place, which everyone understood to be flexible and adaptive, travel dates were established to align with the planting season that typically occurs from late May to mid-June.

Collaborative planning process

Research team members TK, EV, KL, and MR arrived in Moose Factory the last week of May. Once we arrived and got settled into our guesthouse accommodations, we took the first day to settle in, to get organized, and to set a time to meet with Stan. We had been informed just prior to our arrival that the Local Food Developer took a leave of absence from his position and would not be available to assist during our visit as originally planned. We were able to visit with him and provide updates about the project, but, without a Local Food Developer in place, it was important to work more closely with Stan to go over project activities and determine who would carry them out. Kim Cheechoo, the Tourism Officer for MCFN and administrator of the Cree Cultural Interpretive Centre (CCIC), took on the leadership role of coordinating and guiding the efforts.

Stan also suggested that we meet with Alice Gunner, an experienced gardener on the Island with formal horticultural training. She was hired to work on a large garden complex managed by the MoCreebec (an independent Cree First Nation Association and community located in Moose Factory). She has years of experience growing in this space and is a valuable source of local knowledge for garden timing, crop varieties, and logistics. We were able to walk to the MoCreebec garden complex, and, while discussing the extensive gardening projects she was managing, we helped with some of the weeding and preparing the land for planting. With our hands in the soil, together we talked about the home-garden initiative planned by MCFN, and she was highly supportive of the idea, recalling when MoCreebec planned and executed a similar project in 2019. She stressed that, based on her experience working with new gardeners, it was imperative that people build, plant, and harvest their own gardens in order to encourage uptake, ensure agency, build capacity, and ultimately sustain the initiative. We also talked about our original garden project that began in 2019 and asked her thoughts on the personal garden direction currently being planned. She was appreciative of this approach and explained that the Mocreebec had also supported personal garden development two years earlier. She explained that there was some uptake, but she believed a more hands-on approach would have been more effective, not only for uptake, but also for sustainability.

The next day, our team met with Stan at the Band Office to discuss project plans and create an action plan for our time on the Island and for when we left, to ensure gardeners were supported throughout this on-going project. In learning more about the greenhouse that was currently in storage, it was apparent that it would require professional contractors to assemble it. The focus for this trip would therefore be on the

community garden preparations and initiating the individual family gardens. In the absence of a Local Food Developer Stan became more involved, not only in project planning but also in project implementation. As visitors, it would have been impossible to carry out the project without having strong leadership and guidance from our partnerships. Not only do our partners at MCFN epitomize this, but they also exuded generous warmth and hospitality, something that has long been characteristic of MCFN. Critical to the project was determining a means of informing people of the individual garden opportunity and a process to organize garden construction. We were uncertain how comfortable people would be to come forward and have our group build them a garden in their personal and private yard spaces. Stan believed the best approach would be to host an information session about the garden project with the assistance of Kim at the CCIC. In the beautiful outdoor space at the CCIC, there is a long structure called a *shabatwan* as described and defined in the Cree language. The *shabatwan* has served and upheld the People's kinship governance practices for centuries. For this reason, gatherings are common in this space, given it is an enactment of their sovereignty. With the help of the MCFN graphic design team, Stan asked us to develop an electronic poster to be displayed on the MCFN Facebook page giving notice of a meeting and pizza dinner to be held the following afternoon for any community members interested in starting a garden. He also suggested that we meet with Kim the following morning to discuss project plans and to get her feedback on what she believed would be a good approach moving forward. We concluded the meeting by briefly going over budgets, planning our group's contribution to the information meeting, determining supplies required for garden construction, and organizing arrangements for the use of a truck and trailer the MCFN provided to carry out the work.

After the meeting with Kim, our next task was to locate the gardening tools and rototiller to begin working in the community garden. It had only been partially used over the past two years as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions. We were uncertain if a community garden would be planted this spring, but, in anticipation of the probability and our interest to get to work, we decided to weed and till the soil in preparation for planting. The garden is located directly across from the Elders' complex and overlooks the beautiful Moose River. At one time the community garden was approximately ten metres by 100 metres, but, since gardening activities resumed in 2019, about half of the space has been cleared and fenced off for a more gradual return to community gardening. The space is large enough that it required a considerable amount of time to dig out the deeply rooted brush that had grown over much of the space. We spent the better part of the day removing unwanted plants and roots and organized ourselves to spend a couple more half days in the garden to have the soil ready for planting. By late afternoon, we decided to break and get ready for the community meeting and pizza dinner at the CCIC.

Prospective home gardener engagement

Because this was a new project for both the MCFN and our research group, we were uncertain what to expect in terms of community interest for the project. The announcement for the information session event was advertised less than twenty-four hours prior to its occurrence, and it was taking place the same night as a MCFN membership meeting. Stan had purposely scheduled the information session so it would end prior to the membership meeting. He ordered fifteen pizzas and appeared confident that people would attend the meeting. We purchased bottled water, soft drinks, napkins, and paper plates and met at the *shabatwan* just

before the meeting began. We were surprised and excited to see that within minutes people started arriving and mingling while we helped set up a table for the food and drinks. Shortly after the proposed start time, the space was filled with approximately twenty-five people eating and visiting.

As people settled with their food, Stan welcomed everyone to the information session, introduced our research team, and provided a brief description of the family garden project. He then asked MR to offer a few introductory words and explain how people could sign up for home gardens. This precipitated multiple interactions between those in attendance and our research team, including sharing information about gardening, booking times for the construction to take place, and distributing seeds. It cannot be overstated how important these interactions were, not only to share information about the project, but to introduce ourselves as visitors to the community. These relaxed exchanges were key to building relationships with interested community members and to establishing a comfortable co-learning dynamic as we discussed garden options in their personal spaces. People were keen to share their own gardening experiences with us, describing what they had previously grown and/or telling us about their memories of growing up with a garden. There appeared to be much enthusiasm for home gardening, and thirteen individuals and families immediately signed up for a date and time to meet and construct their raised beds with our team. Each individual and family picked out a variety of vegetable, fruit, and flower seeds that our team members brought to the Island. From our estimation, the event was highly beneficial, not just for learning about people's interest in building personal gardens but also for sharing with the community information about the project. More people reached out to us via Facebook messenger or text message after the information session to request a

personal garden. This might have been in response to the Facebook advertisement Stan had posted on the MCFN Facebook page, or information may have spread through word-of-mouth by people who were at the meeting.

Co-constructing gardens

In total, twenty-two garden boxes were built for seventeen households over a two-week period. Project team members KL, EV, and TK were involved in the process of purchasing lumber with funds provided by the MCFN and constructing the garden boxes. The garden box sizes were ultimately determined by the length and width of lumber available, taking into consideration a practical starting area to work with and an ergonomic design for reaching across the bed. We decided on two rectangular options, a one metre by two metre box and a one metre by three metre box, both with a twenty-five centimetre depth. The boxes rested above ground and were held in place by four corner stakes (see Figure 2). Upon arriving at each house, our team consulted with the gardener about the most appropriate location based on access to sunlight and water and the particular needs of the plants they were hoping to grow. Gardens were built by tilling an area just larger than the wooden garden box, removing the sod, weeds, and rocks, and raking and aerating the soil. Once the ground was prepared, the wooden structure was hammered into place and the soil was deposited evenly throughout the bed. Because of time constraints, it was not possible to remove all the weeds for each location, but the team was able to work with the gardeners to create a space as ready for planting as possible.

This process was important for a variety of reasons: we co-constructed a garden, relationships, and knowledge as we sat with our hands working in the soil, sharing

labour, memories, and stories of food and life in general.

Figure 2: Garden boxes being set up in June 2022. Included in the photo are Summer Butterfly and son Sawyer, Tegan Keil, and Emalee Vandermale. Photo by Keira Loukes.

Despite generally good soil across the Island, some gardeners' boxes required additional fill. Not wanting to dig up more yard than was necessary, we texted Stan for some ideas, and he asked us to pick him up during his lunch break so he could show us the location of a local soil source. When we arrived, with Stan fully dressed in office work clothes, the four of us stood shoulder to shoulder chatting and laughing over updates on the gardens, while shoveling a full truck-bed of soil. This moment was one of many that solidified

the importance of strong partnerships and relationships in community-based research. It works better when we enjoy each other's company—when we can work and laugh beside each other. We share this story to point to the imperative of community-led research partnerships—without Stan and Kim's dedicated involvement and the enthusiasm of community, the project would not have had such a positive start and definitely would not have been able to pivot when necessary. For example, halfway through our time in

Moose Factory, the weather turned to rain, saturating the ground to a point where it became too wet to till. Despite the wet conditions, we were able to continue to prepare garden beds by removing sod and installing box frames. However, there was not enough soil on the Island to set the gardeners up to plant in a timely manner. At this time Stan was away at a Business Development course at Harvard University, yet within a few quick text exchanges we managed to order soil from Cochrane, Ontario to be sent to Moose Factory on the next train. Since it arrived late in the evening the day before our departure, we were not able to distribute it to community members by truck as planned. Kim offered to organize a place to store the soil at the CCIC and helped to coordinate distribution to families who came to pick up this soil. The process of co-constructing gardens at the community level demonstrates the multi-tiered layers of labour required.

Planting seeds

The timing of this fieldwork was intentionally planned to precede the last frost when gardeners begin planting outdoors, allowing time to build gardens and acquire seeds as needed. When meeting with local gardeners during our first week, we learned that most would plant cold-hardy crops outdoors as early as the first week of June, so we quickly worked to acquire the seeds that gardeners requested. While we arrived with a large variety of common vegetable, flower, and fruit seeds, we did not yet have seed potatoes, assuming based on past experience that they would be available at local stores. Potatoes were the most commonly requested crop, but,

unfortunately, seed potatoes were on backorder at both local stores, prompting us to order them online to be delivered by train to Moosonee. Towards the end of the trip, MCFN Health Centre staff that we met with to discuss other gardening projects shared extra seed potatoes with us from their own project, which we later delivered to each gardener. We offered to help planting whenever possible, but for the most part people planted on their own. To support the planting process, we were able to help plan garden spacing and provide each gardener, in writing, with a planting schedule. Knowledge exchanges in a learn-by-doing approach, listening, and responding to each gardener's experience and requirements were of utmost importance.

To avoid overwhelming new gardeners with information during our time co-constructing garden beds, the team developed a "next-steps" document based on common questions and knowledge shared by experienced gardeners on the Island. This document was then shared with each participant via email. In discussions with Kim and Stan, we decided to create a Facebook group open to all gardeners; Facebook is a widely used social media platform that we believed would be a fun and accessible means of sharing information. We invited all the gardeners we worked with, as well as a few widely known experienced gardeners from the Island, to join the Facebook group as a way for everyone to ask and share knowledge with each other. Right from the outset community members began using the page to ask and answer questions, share resources, encourage one another, and post photos of their gardens.

Fieldwork phase II

Throughout the summer months, we stayed virtually connected with individual gardeners through the Facebook page. People would often post images of

plants being grown, either with questions attached or proudly displaying the stages of growth (see Figure 3).

Figure 3: Conrad Rickard's post on Moose Factory Island Gardeners Facebook page of carrots harvested in his garden, October 2022.

Staying virtually connected was useful for us as we began planning for the second stage of fieldwork to take place the last week of September and the first week of October. As was done for previous trips, we reached out to Stan and Kim to discuss potential trip dates, accommodation options, and suggested project activity plans. In discussion with Stan and Kim, we agreed on four primary objectives for this stage of fieldwork: 1) connect with the gardeners who participated in the

MCFN home gardening initiative to learn about their experiences with the gardens, get input about future directions, and assist them with remaining harvesting and preparations for next spring; 2) assist in the community garden harvest and help prepare the gardens for next spring; 3) help organize a feast to celebrate the great work from all the gardeners and acknowledge the collective involvement of collaborative food project initiatives over the past three years; and 4)

participate in any way possible in community events associated with the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation[2] occurring on September 30th.

In making these plans, we were aware from previous fall garden fieldwork in Moose Factory and other northern community partners that the timing of meeting with people in early October was not ideal. End-of-season garden harvesting overlaps with the fall hunt, where many community members go out on the land and to their camps to hunt moose and waterfowl. Going earlier or later, however, would prevent us from seeing gardens at peak harvesting time, which ultimately guided our decision to book during these dates. The high costs of travelling to Moose Factory prevented EV and TK from attending and participating in this phase of the fieldwork in person, but they remained key members of the team who continued to provide their gardening expertise to us and to local gardeners via text message. Prior to this trip, they also provided us with information on how to help prepare gardens for spring. They remained accessible by phone throughout our time in Moose Factory and were repeatedly called upon to provide answers to questions about plant identification and harvesting techniques. Team member CG, who is co-investigator on this research grant, was able to attend this phase of the fieldwork. CG was responsible for our original partnership with the MCFN, having worked many years with the community documenting land-based practices for youth. She continues to have strong relationships with many people in the community, and these relationships were critical both for beginning the broader project in 2019 and for facilitating these second stages of fieldwork.

We arrived during the final week of September and, with the assistance of Kim, got settled into our accommodations on the second floor of the Hudson Bay Staff house, which housed Hudson Bay employees in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The historic site has since been taken over by the MCFN and converted into an accommodation building for visitors—including tourists, business guests, health service providers, and, as we were fortunate to experience, honorary guests. On arrival, we learned of the passing of Stan's uncle, which meant he was off on bereavement leave for the duration of our stay. We were therefore much more dependent on Kim, who generously guided the next steps, community engagement, and organization. Kim's leadership was invaluable to the project from the start, especially during our second trip. To initiate the first objective of meeting garden participants, KL created a post on the Moose Factory Island Gardeners Facebook page as well as individual text messages to each gardener communicating our arrival and the intent of our visit. We asked to meet with anyone interested in speaking with us about their growing experiences and offered support for winterizing their gardens and planning for next spring. While waiting for responses and to make the best use of our limited time in community, we then turned our attention to our second objective, the community garden that had been planted and led by the husband-and-wife team who steered the original community garden prior to our arrival in 2019.

When we arrived at the community garden, at first glance, it appeared as though it had simply grown over and planting had not been possible this year. On closer inspection, it was apparent that potatoes had been planted, but weeds about a meter in height had grown over the plants. Later we learned that the couple who

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planted the potato plants had become seriously ill in the summer, which required them to prioritize their health and step away from taking an active role in the garden. Kim connected us with their son, to whom we spoke about next steps for the garden and offered help to his parents with the harvesting, which they were happy to receive. We began the laborious process of removing the plants that had overgrown the potatoes and started digging up the tubers (see Figure 4). Even with minimal light from a crowded environment, the potatoes had grown better than our team expected, with each plant producing between one and five potatoes ranging in size (from golf ball to softball sized). Within a couple of hours, we harvested enough potatoes to fill the four milk crates the son had provided for us. We estimate that each crate held approximately twenty kilograms of potatoes. We then delivered the filled crates to the couple's home and picked up some additional empty ones. As we were unloading the potatoes, the couple came out to greet us—MR and CG had met the father in 2019 when the community garden was being restored. He explained to us then how the garden started, and how he had been working with the MCFN Health Centre and had distributed garden yields to Health Centre program participants. In discussion with the couple, they explained to us what had transpired over the summer, including how they planted potatoes in two sections, one within the fenced area and another section of rows beyond the fence. They involved their granddaughter and some of her friends to help with the planting. We invited the children to be involved in the harvesting and to continue to support generations of gardeners. In total, we harvested nine crates (approximately 180 kg) of potatoes over a three-day span, which we dropped off at the couple's house, other than a half crate which was donated to individual gardeners at the celebratory feast described below.

Figure 4: Overgrown potato plants being harvested and placed in milk crates. Photo by Michael Robidoux.

Work in the community garden was interspersed with visits to individual gardeners who responded to KL's text messages. Other community members stopped by to visit and to help out in the community space. As mentioned earlier, seventeen households participated in the garden project, and fourteen of these participants responded via text message, ten of whom we met with to see their garden and have a conversation about their experiences. Of the four who responded that we did not meet, one had moved away from the Island, two were unable to plant gardens because of busier than expected schedules, and one was not available. Three individuals did not reply to the post. It is important to note that two of the respondents who were unable to plant gardens this past summer participated in the celebratory feast and indicated that they were keen to garden the following year.

For the ten gardeners we were able to reconnect with, we organized times to meet via text message and travelled to each gardener's home at their convenience. Most people who responded were excited to show off their garden's bounty. Some had questions about how and what to harvest, how to preserve food, and whether we knew of recipes that could incorporate their produce. Some talked about the support they received from family and friends who were long-time gardeners on the Island, and others were learning from the Facebook group and other social media platforms. The gardens on Moose Factory Island produced predominantly potatoes, as well as kale, lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, tomatoes, peas, beans, pumpkins, and sunflowers. We noticed some differences between these ten gardeners—of the ten, three had built infrastructure around the garden, including fencing (to keep out dogs). Of these three, two built greenhouse structures using sheets of polyethylene to add warmth and protection—one in a hoop-house fashion from willows around their

property, and the other with lumber that framed their bed. The gardener with the hoop-house structure also gained some fame for growing massive sunflowers and a sprawling pumpkin patch that produced a whopping thirty-six pumpkins, all of which they gave away as jack-o-lanterns around Halloween. Broccoli, carrots, and potatoes were grown in the other enclosed garden. While the pumpkin patch gardener had previous experience growing plants and added some nutrients to the soil, the broccoli gardener did not, and experimented with new ideas as they heard of them. For example, when we shared that rainwater is better for plants than chlorinated tap water, this gardener obtained a large rain barrel and only watered the plants from this source. This gardener attributed their productive harvest to using rainwater.

While many visits felt more like a tour of what had been grown, others required more support. For example, one gardener whose garden was full of green lettuce, kale, and beans accepted our offer to help in harvesting and preparing for fall. MR, CG, and KL sat and worked in the soil with the gardener and their young child, harvesting what they had nurtured and produced. Given the bounty of the kale harvest, with her permission, we brought some home to share with friends and to enjoy in our meals. While we worked we also visited, sharing stories about the summer, gardening, future plans, and recipes that incorporated vegetables they grew. During this visit, we also noticed and talked about medicinal plants growing nearby and some of their potential uses. For some of this identification, we relied on TK and EV via text message, who would respond to various pictures of plants we could not identify. Kim expressed an interest in learning more about the traditional medicinal plants that were abundant on the Island, such as rose hips, dandelions, and burdock. We made tea with the rose hips and

shared it with those visiting or staying at the Hudson Bay house.

While all the gardens we visited were productive, some places experienced higher yields than others. Yet, regardless of yield, all gardeners expressed that they thoroughly enjoyed their experiences and wanted to continue next year. Gardeners specifically noted how much they enjoyed the routine of tending to the garden in the morning, whether on their own or with a young child or older parent. One person mentioned that it was a way to connect with the land and food without having to travel far or needing a car. Another mentioned how this time acted as a meditative experience. Others referred to gardening as part of community healing and important for mental health. All gardeners mentioned the superior taste of their foods compared to the produce available in the grocery store. For example, gardeners who had harvested and eaten their potatoes claimed that they tasted much better than the "nearly rotted" and expensive potatoes available in the store. As the garden beds were quite small, even the largest yields were relatively modest compared to the average volume of produce consumed in each household, yet all gardeners commented on the economic benefits of growing even a small portion of their own food. After harvesting their broccoli, one gardener posted on the Facebook group: "It doesn't matter that the store is out of broccoli, I have my own." It is clear that agency over food choices and availability was a motivator and positive outcome of the home gardening initiative.

The issue of ownership is an important component of the home gardening initiative and distinguishes it from community garden programs that our research group and others (Seguin et al., 2022; Skinner et al., 2014; Stroink et al., 2009) have documented in Indigenous communities throughout Canada. For example, Skinner et al. (2014) reported on a communal

greenhouse initiative that was developed in the Fort Albany First Nation, a sub-arctic community up the coast from Moose Factory. While there were tremendous outcomes from the project, the authors explain that community members "were not clear about who the greenhouse belonged to" (Skinner et al., 2014, p. 8), which impacted participation in the space. In a scoping review of community garden initiatives by Emmanuel et al. (2023), the authors identify multiple positive impacts of community garden programs, but also identify challenges, including sustained involvement and support for community gardens, that are not unique to Indigenous community gardening efforts (see also Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2013). In our initial garden support work in Moose Factory (Ferreira et al., 2021), community garden participation was one of the biggest challenges identified, which prompted the MCFN to explore a personal garden development program. The considerable uptake of the current program can be attributed to many factors, but ownership and agency over the space appear to have been important. This is not to suggest that community gardening is not worth pursuing, but, instead, that there is an important opportunity for personal garden development as another level of local food capacity building.

There was one gardener we met up with who was not able to grow in their space this year. They had minimal space in their backyard, and, although they had already built a raised garden bed which we helped fill with soil and transplant seedlings into in the spring, the wet summer, minimal drainage in the bed, and shaded location culminated in no harvest. During the fall visit we met up a few times, once at a family birthday party and another time for a walk along the Moose River to scout out suitable places for a garden the following year. Even without a harvest, strong interest in the potential

for yields, perhaps motivated by what others had grown, kept this gardener motivated.

While these meetings were important to maintain connections and collective learning, they were also intended to receive feedback from gardeners to direct future programming for MCFN's food sustainability strategy. Many gardeners suggested that more materials, such as willow or lumber to construct hoop house style green houses, or, alternatively, funding to purchase a pre-made greenhouse, would be helpful to increase vegetable yields and diversity in this northern climate. There was a large interest in growing vegetables that need to be started indoors, such as corn, jalapeño peppers, and tomatoes. Gardeners also urged that seeds, especially potato seeds, should be more readily available in time for planting. There were suggestions for tools to be provided, such as garden forks, gloves, small shovels, and hand rakes, as well as soil and rain barrels. Some suggested creating higher raised garden beds or elevated planters, especially for Elders. One community member (who did not have a garden built this year) was especially interested in having the soil tested. They explained that many years ago they had heard that the soil around the landfill on the Island was contaminated—they were reluctant to start a garden without reassurance that the soil was safe to grow food in. We wondered how widespread this perspective was in the community, as this was the first time someone had brought up soil contamination to us. Other suggestions included having experienced gardeners from MCFN engage as mentors for the newer gardeners.

Participating in community events

Another important part of our stay in Moose Factory was to participate however possible in events commemorating the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. We were informed of a public commemoration that was being held at the Delores D. Echum Composite School on Friday, September 30th, where community leaders and honorary guests offered personal reflections on the significance of the day and, in some cases, spoke about their experiences attending residential schools. There were musical artists from a diverse range of genres from the region who performed for the audience, and meals were provided by the First Nation following the memorial event. This moving event had an even greater impact on us because we were privileged to be staying with two of the honorary guests at the Hudson Bay Staff House. The two men came from the Cree community Kashechewan, which is approximately 130 km north of Moose Factory, located along the west coast of James Bay. These men were asked to take part in the service held on the 30th and to participate in a three-day culture camp that was being offered on a small island beside Moose Factory. The night prior to the event, the two men shared with us stories from their lives that had been dramatically influenced by the residential school system, the struggles they endured, and their ongoing journeys of healing, reclamation, and wellness. When the two men spoke and performed the following day at the school, their words and music touched us deeply as a result of this intimate sharing.

The final stage of the fieldwork involved organizing a community feast to help celebrate the gardening activities and to share our appreciation for welcoming us and making the project possible. When we approached Stan and Kim about the possibility of hosting such an event, we were hesitant to call it a "feast" at risk of disrespecting the cultural connotations and significance of the term. We wanted to offer food and gratitude given our project funding was ending, but as visitors we did not want to overstate the gesture or our capabilities of making such an offer. We made this

clear to Stan and Kim up front and relied on their guidance. As was so often the case, Kim guided us in putting the event together by making the CCIC available for us to host the event in the *shabatwan* and by arranging for traditional food to be shared for the meal. She suggested that we ask each invited guest to bring a dish of their choice to complement the fresh moose meat, geese, and fish offered by the CCIC. We originally posted about the final gathering on the gardeners' Facebook page, but we also extended the invitation in person to each gardener we visited. Kim also made it clear that we were going to be preparing the wild meat that was donated with techniques she would teach us throughout the day.

We met at 9:00 that morning at the *shabatwan,* where Kim laid out the goose that needed to be gutted and prepared to be hung and spun over a fire for several hours. The Cree term for this unique style of cooking geese is *sugabon*, where a goose is suspended by a string from scaffolding above a central fire pit that runs the length of the *shabatwan* (see Figure 5). Kim guided KL as she removed the internal organs from the previously plucked and washed goose. Once the goose was suspended just above the reach of the fire, one person

needed to remain close by to keep the goose spinning to ensure even cooking. She instructed us, as the knowledge keeper she is, with an ethics of learning by doing by tasking us with specific roles. While the goose was spinning over the fire Kim brought out the moose meat, and she once again instructed KL on how the meat should be cut and made ready for cooking. Kim then instructed MR to retrieve nine fish (walleye/*Sander vitreus*) that were donated by Kim's son and clean them so they would be ready to fry in a pan over the fire. The final dish that needed to be prepared was the bannock that was to be cooked by rolling it onto small wooden stakes that are inserted into the ground and slowly cooked at the edge of the fire (see Figure 5). Once again, Kim provided the ingredients of flour, baking powder, salt, and water, guiding us with proportions and how to prepare the dough. While the food was being prepared, we engaged in warm conversations and laughter with Kim, making for a fun morning and afternoon. We were so grateful for the opportunity to be sharing and learning while having the opportunity to contribute in this small way to this celebratory occasion

Figure 5: Sugabon (cooking geese over fire) with bannock on sticks in the shabatwan. Photo by Michael Robidoux.

As the feast was about to begin around 4:00 pm, we brought out the pot of chili we prepared as our contribution and put it on the fire to reheat. People began arriving and placing their dishes on a table that was set up with drinks, paper plates, bowls, utensils, and napkins, along with the assortment of traditional food items that were already set out in serving dishes. Some of the community members brought dishes containing items they had grown in their gardens, such as potato dishes and salads. The event was attended by twenty-four guests, with garden participants accompanied by friends and family who were also invited to attend. Prior to the meal starting, we discussed with Kim how best to welcome everyone since Stan was not able to attend. She suggested that MR say a few words to welcome everyone, thank people for their involvement, and provide a brief summary of project outcomes. After doing so, MR then directed people's attention to a laptop computer that was set up, displaying a slide show of photos KL assembled for people to see the various stages of community and individual garden development that took place over the course of spring and summer. As per community protocols, Elders were first to be asked to come help themselves to the food, and, once they were served, the rest of us began lining up to eat. As people ate, we walked around serving tea for those who wanted it and shared in the many conversations that were taking place—some were garden related, but more were made up of general social banter that made for a fun evening. In our conversations, we talked about how we were often approached by individuals and families telling us they would have signed up for a garden if they had known about the garden program. Many told us that they would definitely sign up for a garden the following year if the program was still running. This clearly demonstrated that there is interest in the MCFN gardening program, and that investing in the program is not only worthwhile but needed. Many people took in the photo presentation that was running on the laptop, commenting on the images that were displayed. One of the biggest focal points was the amazing crop of pumpkins that grew, despite our team's doubts that the growing season was long enough for them to fully mature from seed. In addition to the high number of pumpkins, many were large in size, which prompted more conversations about the growing potential of other plant species on the Island. The evening was joyous, with delicious food and social interactions. Once we helped Kim with all the cleaning, the night concluded with us helping one of the women, who was unable to start a garden that year because of her busy summer schedule, load her truck with leftover bags of enriched soil that was ordered for garden participants earlier in the summer. She said she would be better able to manage a garden the following summer and wanted to make sure she had all of her supplies ready for when we returned the following spring for the next phase of the project.

Conclusion

The objective of this paper was to describe ongoing collaborative efforts between the MCFN and our research group that center generations of gardeners. Local food initiatives, such as garden development, give voice to sovereignty as a vital form of cultural resurgence bound to land, people, and place. Collaborative research then becomes a mutual enactment that strengthens community-centered and -led priorities. This descriptive account of the fieldwork emphasized the layered stages of project conceptualization, development, and implementation. In our concluding reflections, we highlight multiple factors that contributed to the outcomes of the project so as to invite regenerative approaches to community-centered participatory research. First, this was a project developed and led by the community as part of their local food sustainability planning. The high level of engagement and participation in the project would not have been possible without community ownership, which also fosters a greater likelihood of project sustainability. Second, there was a strong collaborative relationship from the outset of the project that had been previously established. Our research group worked with the newly hired Local Food Developer in 2019 to support his role in developing local food sustainability planning; gardening became an important component of this, which we were able to support through physically assisting in garden development and offering gardening expertise that complemented the strong history of local gardening knowledge. As co-learners in the project, it was clear how important project

flexibility was to build on collaborative strengths and adapt to multiple circumstances that presented themselves. Third, the project built on a clear interest in local garden development. The project facilitated garden start up for those who were interested in building gardens, and benefitted from additional support—i.e., construction materials, planting advice, soil amendments, and gardening tools. To build on this support, the MCFN and our group collaboratively wrote a successful application for funding through Indigenous Services Canada's "Climate Change Adapt Program" to provide two more years of support to existing and potential new gardeners. This funding program will also provide funds for greenhouse construction, soil sampling, and staff to support the Local Food Developer with gardening activities and with the Local Farmer's market. The high cost of food and limited availability of fresh fruits and vegetables are well understood challenges in remote northern communities; having the ability to offset these costs and get access to fresh food from the garden, even for a short period, was an important motivating factor and a deeply valued outcome for all participants. Lastly, research in service to the resurgence of Indigenous peoples is regenerative, like the soil itself. The labour of gardening is part of the emergent social, political, and intellectual movement of reclaiming and redefining the strength of connection to land, kinship, and life itself. It is active, embodied, and life affirming within a contemporary context.

Dr. Michael Robidoux is a Full Professor and Director and Associate Dean of the School of Human Kinetics, Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Ottawa. With expertise in the field of ethnology, Dr. Robidoux has led multidisciplinary research programs studying land-based food practices in rural remote Indigenous communities in northern Canada for over twenty years. Dr. Robidoux and his Indigenous Health Research Group have developed longstanding partnerships with Tribal Organizations and Indigenous communities advocating to build local food systems in northern Canada to address high rates of food insecurity and the disproportionately high prevalence of dietary related disease. His research team is particularly interested in studying the impact of local food procurement on local dietary practices and developing economic strategies to help build local food capacity in remote northern communities.

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Canadian Food Studies

La Revue canadienne des
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Book Review

Chocolate: How a New World commodity conquered Spanish literature

By Erin Alice Cowling
University of Toronto Press, 2021: 240 pages

Reviewed by Aqeel Ihsan

Erin Alice Cowling's *Chocolate: How a New World Commodity Conquered Spanish Literature* is a welcome addition to the existing literature on chocolate and its cultural, spiritual, and medicinal significance throughout history. Cowling traces the cacao bean and its derived products, mainly chocolate as a drink, from the pre-Columbian era to the mid-eighteenth century through various chronicles, medical and religious treatises, and literary texts. Though mainly a book on the early modern period, Cowling extends her source material into the eighteenth century to demonstrate how chocolate went from being a ceremonial drink and form of currency in Amerindian society to something that was consumed by Spaniards on a daily basis. According to Cowling, the main purpose of her book is "to look at the ways in which chocolate began to become constructed in literature, and how the literary sources that encapsulate the incorporation of chocolate into Spanish society also reflected the anxieties of the governing bodies of the day" (2021, p. 4). Cowling

uncovers numerous literary texts that mention chocolate but acknowledges that there may be texts that escaped her notice, which she may take up in future works.

Cowling begins her analysis in Chapter 1 by tracing the cultural significance of chocolate to Amerindian societies to see how they transmitted their knowledge of chocolate to European explorers upon contact. Cacao, according to early Mayan texts, was seen as a sacred object and was used for ritualistic purposes in sacrificial and religious ceremonies. These early texts also discussed cacao and chocolate as having medicinal uses and not being considered suitable for daily consumption.

Chapter 2 focusses on some of the texts written by the first Spaniards to encounter chocolate, which would have included soldiers, conquistadors, and missionaries. Early writings discussed the cacao bean as currency, the use of chocolate as a drink in ceremonies and for gift-giving, the cultivation of cacao trees and the

*Corresponding author: aqeel8@my.yorku.ca

processes of creating the drink, and its uses as a health supplement by the Indigenous peoples and its implications for the health of Spaniards. The monetary nature of the cacao bean was instantly attractive to Spanish soldiers, and it was something they placed importance on after gold and silver. Hernán Cortés, an early conquistador, is cited by Cowling as most likely the first to actually try chocolate as a drink. It is also Cortés who writes about the importance of cacao beyond just a drink, maybe of equal importance in terms of its value and necessity as maize and beans. Though Spaniards saw the export potential of cacao, they were not thrilled by the taste or preparation of chocolate, seeing it instead as an acquired taste, something that would change centuries later.

Chapter 3 traces how chocolate came into popularity in the Old World, first as something consumed by the nobility and the wealthy, and later becoming commonplace amongst Spaniards. For Cowling's purposes, she traces how common references to chocolate became in literature and local terminology. Some of the early references she cites are comedies, where chocolate is a symbol of "Otherness," as a bad habit from the New World, and as representing undesirable qualities. These references encapsulated how chocolate outside of the nobility was viewed as an inferior product that one should not indulge in. Despite the early negative accounts in literature, the popularity of chocolate rose quickly, so the negative reactions in literary sources seemed unrelated to the commercial success of cacao. As chocolate became more common, that too was reflected in the literary sources and plays, which began discussing the immense value chocolate had when it came to gift-giving, paying and repaying debt, replacing a women's dowry, and as a symbol of wealth.

Chapters 4 and 5 examine the religious and medical debates surrounding chocolate. Here, Cowling asserts

that though the Catholic Church and medical practitioners were concerned about the health benefits of chocolate as it pertained to fasting and everyday life, for the layperson, the consumption of chocolate was a non-issue. As a product, it was contained and controlled by the Spanish Empire, and for Spaniards, it was something they saw value in and consumed for a variety of purposes. Lastly, Chapter 6 focuses on the dark side of chocolate and the ways in which it was sexualized and demonized in historical and literary sources. Chocolate as a vice appears in the sources as having connections to witchcraft and having a role in inducing people to commit some of the seven deadly sins.

Cowling does well to show the relationship between chocolate and imperial Spanish society through an interdisciplinary lens that incorporates both literary and historical documents written in the Spanish Empire. However, the title of her book does not accurately convey the central theme of the book itself. Chocolate as a new world commodity, as demonstrated by Cowling, did not "conquer" Spanish literature. This is acknowledged by the author in her conclusion, where she states that "some of the literature seems to indicate an early, generalized knowledge of the drink...while other, later sources...seem to indicate that it is still not as well known as we might expect, even in the second half of the seventeenth century" (2021, p. 163). Cowling further goes on to say that "we cannot be fully sure how much, or when, chocolate is being consumed by the various classes," but only that its presence is evident in the literature of the time (2021, p. 163). The title aside, *Chocolate* is a useful read for food historians in that it goes beyond looking at the material links that chocolate had in the New World and how it was assimilated into European society, as previously discussed by scholars like Marcy Norton in *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World*

(2010), and instead contextualizes a commodity in Spanish literature and other sources that food historians may sometimes overlook.

Aqeel Ihsan is a PhD History Candidate at York University, specializing in migration and food history. His research interests focus on the South Asian diaspora currently residing in Canada. His doctoral research seeks to conduct a food history of Toronto by placing 'smelly cuisines' at the centre and chronologically tracing the history of the most prominent site where South Asian immigrants could purchase and consume South Asian foodstuffs, the Gerrard India Bazaar.

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Canadian Food Studies

La Revue canadienne des études sur l'alimentation

Book Review

Harvesting freedom: The life of a migrant worker in Canada
By Gabriel Allahdua
Between the Lines Press, 2023: 224 pages

Reviewed by Noura Nasser

In "Harvesting Freedom," Allahdua shares a captivating memoir uncovering the exploitative nature of the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program (SAWP) he participated in. Through his autoethnographic account, and a keen call to action, he reveals Canada's food production complexities and farmworkers' challenges. Allahdua's assertion that "Difficult roads sometimes lead to beautiful destinations" (p. 45) encapsulates the book's essence, metaphorically highlighting migratory difficulties and the numerous barriers and systemic inequalities within the SAWP.

In the preface, Dunsworth sets the backdrop of the book, exploring intertwined histories of "slavery, indenture, imperialism, capitalism, and international relations," (p. xvii), as he meticulously presents a rich body of literature on migration, labor, and historical studies shedding a strong light on the ongoing legacies of colonialism and racial capitalism in Canada's agricultural worker program. Employing a collaborative writing approach, Dunsworth also incorporates oral history, as Allahdua takes the lead in telling his St.

Lucian and global story. Such thoughtful partnership underscores Dunsworth's engagement with knowledge as a force for societal change in theory, pedagogy, and writing.

Starting with his moving poem "I am many things," (p. ix), Allahdua skillfully weaves a tapestry of his diverse identities. But a revisiting of the same titular poem, (p. 163) compellingly depicts his transformative journey he undertook as a migrant farmworker to an inimitable champion of migrant justice.

The book is structured into three parts unfolding into 25 chapters. Part One describes Allahdua's history in St. Lucia, Part Two explores his entry into the SAWP, and Part Three focuses on his fight back and activism. From his own background as a child of enslaved African and indentured Indian parents to his disillusionment in Canada, the narrative delves into colonial histories, racial capitalism, and agriculture. Allahdua shares memories of education, family, and community, but as he learns more about Canada's

subtle and toxic benevolence, his idealized image of Canada crumbles.

In Part One—Chapter 8 in particular—Allahdua's love for agriculture shines through as he proclaims, "Agriculture has always been my passion. I live it, I see it, I breathe it, I sleep in it, I dream it" (p. 43). Amidst his efforts to build his livelihood centered around agriculture, the destructive hurricane emerged, shattering his stability, and thwarting his entrepreneurial pursuits. In the wake of economic uncertainty and the pressing need to support his family, Allahdua makes the challenging decision to join the farmworker program.

In Part Two, Allahdua critiques the SAWP exposing its contradictions and the enduring state of "permanent temporariness" for migrant farmworkers (Hennebry, 2012). The program's intensification of the production cycle limits workers' choices and support, confining them to rural Ontario's greenhouses. Harsh conditions, including deportation risks and surveillance, foster competition through the variable "piece rate system" (p. 73). Unfortunately, the program also hinders Allahdua's motivation deepen his passion in agriculture, by denying him valuable learning opportunities. However, there is also a dialectic of hope and resistance. Chapter 13 illustrates solidarity, resourcefulness, and Scott's concept of "everyday resistance" (Scott, 1989: 35), which proliferate among bunkhouse-dwelling farmworkers, as they prepare meals together. Allahdua reveals some discreet yet potent solidarity economies via susu or partner systems, rooted in the Black Radical Tradition that foster mutual aid and social support networks amongst the farmworkers (Shenaz, 2023, p. 224-225).

In Part Three, Allahdua uses his signature teaching style to outline twenty injustices linked to Canada's SAWP. He emphasizes achieving equal treatment and status for everyone, echoing the request for equity with earlier white immigrant groups. The book also analyzes the demanding manual work in local food production, triggering a reassessment of migrant labour programs and the dismantling of racial-capitalist systems.

Harvesting Freedom's concluding chapters and epilogue highlight awakening moments like the climate emergency and COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating injustices faced by racialized bodies. Chapter 18 shows white supremacist practices that limit migrant farmworkers' mobility and lead to criminalization, seen in cases like DNA swaps in a rape investigation and anti-loitering bylaw enforcement. Allahdua also acknowledges Indigenous lands the "Harvesting Freedom Caravan" traversed through during its month-long campaign, thus, strengthening coalitional solidarity, and creating solidarity through conversations with Indigenous leaders.

Dunsworth and Allahua urge readers to critically examine the underlying causes of non-white, non-Canadian labour reliance on unsustainable agricultural systems. Dunsworth draws on his earlier research linking this reliance to events of "hyper-consolidation of agriculture," characterized by the dominance of large-scale capitalist farming operations in Canada (Dunsworth, 2022).

Connecting the past and present to reimagine food systems, the authors explore ethical and political dilemmas in the SAWP, exposing gaps in Canadian perceptions of racial capitalism, migration, labour, climate, and food. In Chapter 23, Gina Bahiwal, formerly a migrant vegetable packing worker, joins forces with Allahdua, to deliver a historical testimony against Canada's temporary foreign worker program. Bahiwal notably advocates for reproductive rights and courageously exposes the prevalent violence that women endure in such programs. Other books, such as Deborah Brandt's *Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail*, elevate gendered

migrant voices. Although *Harvesting Freedom* does not center such voices to the same extent, and reasonably so, it does bring to the fore the pursuit of "Status for All" which remains an ongoing struggle in North America, the UK, and Europe.

Overall, this work makes significant contributions to sociology, anthropology, geography, labour, and critical food studies. Allahdua seamlessly integrates

"field" stories, explaining the intricate macro-political economy of food alongside his personal experiences. The book is a compelling and essential read, suitable for both undergraduate and graduate courses. It will undoubtedly stimulate rich classroom debates and serve as a tool for human rights groups advocating for policy changes in labour, migration rights, and sustainable agriculture.

Noura Nasser is a social scientist working on the intersections of food, place, and race. During her MA in an interdisciplinary programme at Concordia University, she worked with racialized individuals in Montreal's Little Burgundy to narrate food stories, racialization, and diverse food practices in the wake of mainstream "food desert" narratives that deny people's food autonomy and dignity. From here, she extends her work to other regions of the world particularly, the Middle East, to explore migrant domestic workers' fight for recognition and placemaking via food placemaking efforts in the city margins. Currently, situated as LSE's sociology department, she is doing her PhD research on migration food stories, power struggles and meaning making in the city.

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Canadian Food Studies

La Revue canadienne des études sur l'alimentation

Book Review

Canadian literary fare

By Nathalie Cooke, Shelley Boyd, with Alexia Moyer
2023 McGill-Queens University Press, 220 pages

Reviewed by Amanda Shankland

Canadian Literary Fare offers an unconventional portrayal of "food voices" in Canadian literature. The book represents a unique and refreshing approach to understanding food culture in the Canadian context. You do not need to have a strong knowledge of Canadian literature to enjoy this book. From the food voices of many well-known Canadian authors, such as Alice Munro, Eden Robinson, Fred Wah, M. NourbeSe Philip, Tomson Highway, Rabindranath Maharaj, and others, it explores food in a way that is persuasive and captivating. The book investigates how literary characters interact with food, challenging assumptions about what constitutes Canadian cuisine and its significance. Voices of Indigenous writers highlight the role of food in efforts towards decolonization, and immigrant writers reveal how food reflects a reshaping of their identities. The "food voices" of Canadian authors offer a compelling way of investigating gender, class, and culture within Canadian society.

This book is co-authored by Nathalie Cooke and Shelley Boyd, with Alexia Moyer. The authors explain that the book is the result of a yearslong collaborative research project. This is evident from the depth of research in the book. The authors begin with a section of shorter vignettes depicting how writers represent iconic Canadian foods in literature and how these interact with place and culture. Chapters one through three examine how iconic Canadian foods like maple syrup, butter tarts, and fry bread offer metaphors for well-known Canadian literary characters' struggles to assert their identities and find their places within the Canadian landscape. These characters often struggle to cope with hunger, isolation, cultural crisis, racism, or oppression, and they try to renegotiate their belief systems through their relationships with food.

The second part of the book is a series of longer chapters exploring Kraft Dinner, food markets, and buffalo, among other topics. Chapter four, on Kraft Dinner (KD), shows how food is used symbolically in

Canadian literature to depict struggles with poverty and attempts to assert independence among young people. In the case of Indigenous people, KD can represent attempts to erase their traditions. KD has also been symbolic of struggles with neglect and abuse. One particularly compelling passage from the book looks at Linda Svendsen's novel, *White Shoulders.* One of the characters, Adele, discovers that her niece, another character named Jill, is being sexually abused by her father. Adele finds Jill locked in the bathroom writing on a pad of yellow paper, with a pot of KD from the night before sitting on the sink. The author writes, "Jill's isolation, unkempt appearance, and stale pot of KD consumed in the bathroom signal a meal of the unpure-- the abject--all suggestive of an abusive family life that have breached standards of morality and parental care" (p.85). The relatively mundane act of eating KD becomes powerful symbolism in many of the passages in the book, like this one. KD is tied to social and economic inequality, abuse and isolation, the trials of young adulthood, and colonization.

Chapter five, on food markets, explores how characters develop a sense of community and belonging through their interactions in those markets. Places like Kensington Market in Toronto and Granville Island in Vancouver offer settings for the reader to get a glimpse of the nuanced interactions between individuals, their languages, and their cultural traditions. Through the food voices of Canadian writers, readers can reflect on how food markets represent the complexity of human interactions in a diverse cultural landscape. For a large number of white Canadians, the food market also represents their first interaction with other cultures.

Chapter six explores the significance of buffalo in Canadian literature. The annihilation of the buffalo is emblematic of the attempts to contain and erase Indigenous ways of life. The reintroduction of foods like pemmican is an attempt to reassert Indigenous traditions central to their identity and to reconnect with the land. As the authors explain:

> Re/turning-point narratives of the bison traverse cross-cultural perspectives that coalesce in a composite space marked by both devastation and renewal. While settler narratives have often worked to naturalize ecological warfare, First Nations and Métis writers recognize the present and future possibilities of the bison's return (p.153).

This book speaks to the paradoxical experiences of Canadian literary voices as they struggle with questions around inclusion and disconnection. The food voices reflect the obstacles of many people in Canada, whether Indigenous, new immigrants, women, or racialized groups, to belong and maintain their unique sense of identity. The book will be of particular interest to students of Canadian literature and food culture. It would also likely appeal to an audience interested in the history of food in Canada and to anyone curious about Canadian culture in general. The food voices in this book reflect the lived experiences of Canadians who have grappled with food insecurity. It highlights how experiences of poverty and hunger are common in Canadian households, and how this is reflected in Canadian literature. Overall, the book is a refreshing departure from more conventional approaches to unpacking food culture in Canada.

Dr. Amanda Shankland earned her Ph.D. from the Department of Political Science at Carleton University. Her dissertation looks at water governance in agricultural communities in rural New South Wales, Australia. She is an adjunct professor at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa. She writes extensively on social ecology, agroecology, food culture, climate change, water management, and rural development.

Canadian Food Studies

La Revue canadienne des études sur l'alimentation

Le Questionnaire Choux : Geneviève Sicotte

Quel est votre aliment idéal?

Un vieux proverbe dit que « l'appétit est le meilleur des cuisiniers ». S'ils sont consommés quand on a vraiment faim, des aliments très simples peuvent être les plus savoureux. Mais c'est tellement contextuel... Composons tout de même un petit repas : des olives, des morceaux de poivron rouge, du fromage, un morceau de pain et du vin.

De quel aliment ou de quel contexte alimentaire avez-vous peur?

Manger pour faire plaisir à quelqu'un, par obligation ou par politesse.

Quel mot ou quel concept décrit un système alimentaire admirable?

Un système alimentaire où tout le monde aurait droit au plaisir.

Quel mot ou quel concept empêche un système alimentaire de devenir admirable?

Un des facteurs majeurs, hélas très répandu : la cupidité.

Quelle personne admirez-vous dans le domaine alimentaire?

J'irais vers une nomination plutôt générale qu'individuelle : reconnaître la contribution essentielle des travailleurs saisonniers qui viennent d'Amérique Centrale et d'Amérique du Sud pour cueillir nos récoltes...

Quelle innovation alimentaire tentez-vous d'ignorer?

Je n'aime pas trop les fausses viandes ultra transformées. À long terme, si la chose se réalise vraiment, je ne serais pas encline à consommer de la viande synthétique de laboratoire. Je ne suis pas végétarienne, mais tant qu'à éviter la viande, je trouve plus sain de manger du tofu ou des légumineuses.

Quelle est votre plus grande extravagance gastronomique?

Extravagance financière ou morale? Ou les deux? Il m'est arrivé une fois d'acheter du caviar d'esturgeon du lac Saint-Pierre au Québec ; c'était cher et délicieux. Mais surtout, je pense au sublime foie gras d'oie produit dans la région de la Côte-de-Beaupré. C'est un

*Corresponding author: genevieve.sicotte@concordia.ca

luxe rare, que nous dégustons une fois par an, pour les Fêtes du Nouvel An.

Quel est, selon vous, l'aliment ou le contexte alimentaire le plus surestimé?

J'ai longtemps aimé manger au restaurant, mais je trouve que l'expérience ne correspond plus à ce que je recherche. La cuisine est souvent très ordinaire et manque d'équilibre, particulièrement de légumes, il est facile de trop manger, et le niveau sonore ne se prête pas à une vraie convivialité.

Quand vous arrive-t-il de feindre la satiété?

Comme beaucoup de femmes, j'ai été longtemps préoccupée par mon poids au point de souffrir de troubles alimentaires. Dans des contextes sociaux, il m'est alors arrivé souvent de faire semblant de ne plus avoir faim pour respecter mon régime. Aujourd'hui, je ne suis heureusement plus dans cette situation. Mais c'est un long apprentissage que d'écouter vraiment son appétit.

Qu'est-ce qui vous déplaît le plus dans une table de salle à manger?

Je n'aime pas les grandes tables de salle à manger qui ne servent jamais. Dans ma maison, je préfère avoir une seule table qu'on utilise pour toutes les occasions.

Quels sont les condiments dont vous abusez?

Je ne me passerais pas de moutarde de Dijon. Mais tous les condiments corsés me plaisent et j'utilise au quotidien l'ail, l'échalote, le gingembre, le piment, le citron. Il y a aussi d'autres produits qui sont toujours

dans mon frigo : sauce soya, sauce de poisson, ketchup, sirop d'érable, câpres, anchois.

Quel type de jardin vous rend le plus heureuse?

J'imagine un jardin qui mêle les comestibles et les fleurs, où une partie des plantes est vivace et où poussent aussi des arbres fruitiers. On entend des insectes, des oiseaux, de l'eau qui coule. C'est un jardin où on peut passer du temps à travailler et à rêver.

Qu'estimez-vous être votre plus grande réussite culinaire?

Cette question, c'est comme demander à un parent de choisir quel est son enfant préféré… J'ai cuisiné il y a presque 20 ans un osso buco gastronomique dont je me souviens encore. Maintenant, je suis peut-être plus satisfaite des confitures que je confectionne tout au long de l'été. Mais le plus important, en fait, c'est que je suis fière d'être capable de cuisiner tous les jours des plats délicieux qui sont variés, très végétaux et sains.

Si vous deviez mourir et revenir sous la forme d'un animal, d'un végétal ou d'un minéral (comestible), que souhaiteriez-vous être?

Je suppose que j'éviterais d'être un esturgeon du lac Saint-Pierre ou une oie de la Côte-de-Beaupré… Mais allons du côté du végétal. Je choisirais un petit fruit acide et tonique, qui porte avec lui des effluves de campagne : une framboise, une argouse, une cerise sauvage…

Quel est votre ustensile de cuisine le plus précieux?

Un objet auquel je tiens particulièrement, c'est une lourde cocotte en fonte de grande contenance, qui servait à faire des fèves au lard. Elle a appartenu à ma belle-mère et je l'utilise encore régulièrement, même si elle pèse une tonne et est donc un peu difficile à manipuler.

Quel est, selon vous, le type d'aliment le plus transformé?

J'hésite entre divers choix : les Singles de Kraft, les Pop-Tarts, les Pringles... Ce sont des produits dont on peut se demander s'ils sont encore de la nourriture. Mais il faut aussi penser à des aliments comme le bœuf, les œufs, le maïs ou le soya qui, même s'ils semblent simples et non transformés, sont souvent issus d'une chaîne industrielle qui est aussi problématique.

Quel est votre arôme favori?

Je ne me lasse pas du zeste de citron. C'est un arôme dynamique, vivifiant, puissant sans être dérangeant, et qui peut rehausser tellement d'aliments différents.

Y a-t-il une épice, un ustensile de cuisine ou un livre de recettes que vous utilisez rarement?

J'ai une noix de muscade dans mon armoire aux épices, mais elle doit dater de quelques années... Je l'utilise très occasionnellement, par exemple si je fais un gratin dauphinois, mais je n'aime pas vraiment cette saveur.

Qu'appréciez-vous le plus chez vos amis?

La capacité à s'ouvrir, à montrer ses vulnérabilités.

Qui sont vos chercheurs préférés dans le domaine des études sur l'alimentation?

Je reste influencée par des chercheurs qui ont été des pionniers dans les domaines de la sémiologie et de l'ethnologie : Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Yvonne Verdier.

Qui est votre héros dans le domaine des médias alimentaires?

Dans les années 1980, l'animateur de télévision Daniel Pinard a contribué de façon décisive à l'évolution de l'alimentation au Québec. Il a rendu la cuisine accessible et a fait découvrir aux Québécois leur patrimoine gastronomique. Bien avant la mode du foodisme, il a incarné un nouveau rapport, pleinement culturel, à l'alimentation.

À quelle cuisine vous identifiez-vous le plus?

La cuisine française reste mon horizon de référence. Même quand je fais mes propres recettes, j'emploie régulièrement les techniques de la cuisine française – par exemple, faire braiser une viande, confectionner une béchamel ou émulsionner une vinaigrette.

Quel est votre sens le plus puissant?

C'est certainement l'odorat! Cette sensibilité me donne beaucoup de plaisir, mais elle peut aussi provoquer de l'inconfort quand des odeurs ambiantes deviennent trop fortes ou désagréables.

Quels sont les mots agricoles, culinaires ou gastronomiques que vous préférez?

J'aime bien les termes techniques : « faire un roux », « singer », « foncer une pâte »... Ça me donne sans doute une impression de compétence!

Que mangeriez-vous pour votre dernier repas?

Pour avoir vécu cela avec des proches, il me semble que cette question (classique) est surestimée. Avant de recevoir l'aide médicale à mourir, ma mère a mangé un petit déjeuner d'hôpital absolument ordinaire et elle était très satisfaite, sauf pour le café. Quant à moi, je pense que j'aimerais mieux ne pas savoir que le repas en question sera le dernier.

Quelle épitaphe alimentaire vous attribueriez-vous?

Elle a été gourmande.

The Choux Questionnaire: Geneviève Sicotte

What is your idea of a perfect food?

There's an old proverb that says, "Hunger is the best cook." If they are eaten when you are really hungry, very simple foods can be the most delicious. But it's so contextual… In any case, let's put together a little meal: olives, some pieces of red pepper, cheese, a chunk of bread, and some wine.

Of what food or food context are you afraid?

Eating to please someone, out of obligation or politeness.

What word or concept describes an admirable food system?

A food system in which everyone has the right to pleasure.

Quelle question ajouteriez-vous à ce questionnaire?

Quelle est la chose que vous avez mangée qui vous a le plus éloigné de votre zone de confort?

What word or concept prevents many food systems from becoming admirable?

A major factor, sadly very widespread: greed.

Which food person do you most admire?

I would propose a general grouping rather than an individual: recognition of the essential contribution that seasonal workers make when they come from Central and South America to pick our crops…

Which food innovation do try to ignore?

I don't really like ultra-processed, fake meats. In the long term, if it indeed becomes a reality, I would not be inclined to consume synthetic, lab-grown meat. I'm not

vegetarian, but when I want to avoid meat, I find it better to eat tofu or legumes.

What is your greatest gastronomic extravagance?

Financial or moral extravagance? Or both? I once bought some sturgeon caviar from Lac St-Pierre in Quebec; it was expensive and delicious. But most of all, I think of the sublime goose foie gras produced in the Côte-de-Beaupré region. It's a rare luxury, which we enjoy once a year, to celebrate New Year's Eve.

What do you consider to be the most overrated food or food context?

I have long enjoyed eating out, but I find that the experience no longer provides what I am looking for. The cooking is often very ordinary and lacks balance, particularly in terms of vegetables. It is easy to overeat, and the noise levels do not lend themselves to real conviviality.

On what occasion do you feign satiety?

Like many women, I have long been concerned about my weight, to the point of having eating disorders. In social contexts, in order to stick to my diet, I often pretended I was not hungry. Today, fortunately, I am no longer in this situation. But it's a long learning process to really listen to your appetite.

What do you most dislike about dinner tables?

I don't like big dining room tables that are never used. In my house, we have a single table that is used for all occasions.

Which condiments do you most overuse?

I couldn't do without Dijon mustard. But I like all strong condiments, and I use garlic, shallots, ginger, chili pepper, and lemon every day. There are other products that are also always in my fridge: soy sauce, fish sauce, ketchup, maple syrup, capers, anchovies.

What kinds of gardens make you happiest?

I imagine a garden that mixes edibles and flowers, where some of the plants are perennial and where there are also fruit trees. You can hear insects, birds, and flowing water. It's a garden where you can spend time working and dreaming.

What do you consider your greatest edible achievement?

This is like asking a parent to choose their favourite child… Almost 20 years ago, I cooked a fabulous osso bucco that I still remember. Now, perhaps, I am more satisfied with the jams I make over the summer. But most important, in fact, is my pride in being able to cook delicious dishes every day that are varied, very plant-based, and healthy.

If you were to die and come back as an (edible) animal, vegetable, or mineral, what would you like it to be?

I suppose I would avoid being a sturgeon from Lac St-Pierre or a goose from Côte-de-Beaupré… So let's think plants. I would be a small, bright-tasting, invigorating fruit, one that carries the scents of the countryside: a raspberry, a sea buckthorn, a wild cherry…

What is your most treasured kitchen implement?

One object that I particularly care about is a heavy, large-capacity, cast iron casserole that was long-used to make baked beans. It belonged to my mother-in-law and I still use it regularly, even though it weighs a ton and is a little difficult to handle.

What do you consider to be the most processed kind of food?

I hesitate among a few options: Kraft Singles, Pop-Tarts, Pringles... These are products that make one wonder if they are even food. But you also have to think about foods like beef, eggs, corn, or soy that, even if they seem simple and unprocessed, often come from an industrial chain that is also problematic.

What is your favourite aroma?

I can't get enough of lemon zest. It is a dynamic, invigorating aroma, powerful without being disturbing, and which can enhance so many different foods.

What spice, kitchen implement, or cookbook do you use most rarely?

I have a nutmeg in my spice cabinet, but it must be a few years old... I use it very occasionally, for example if I make a gratin dauphinois, but I don't really like the flavor.

What do you most value in your friends?

The ability to open up, to show one's vulnerabilities.

Who are your favourite food scholars?

I remain influenced by researchers who were pioneers in the fields of semiology and ethnology: Roland Barthes, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Yvonne Verdier.

Who is your hero of food media?

In the 1980s, the television host Daniel Pinard made a decisive contribution to the evolution of food in Quebec. He made cooking accessible and introduced Quebecers to their gastronomic heritage. Long before the fashion of foodism, he embodied a new, fully cultural relationship with food.

With which cuisine do you most identify?

French cuisine remains my reference foodscape. Even when I make my own recipes, I regularly use French cooking techniques—braising meat, making béchamel, or emulsifying a vinaigrette.

What is your most powerful sense?

It's definitely the sense of smell! It gives me a lot of pleasure, but it can also be discomfiting when ambient smells are too strong or unpleasant.

What are your favourite agricultural, culinary, or gastronomic words?

I like technical terms: "making a roux", "searing", "line the dough into a pie plate"... They probably give me a feeling of competence!

What would you eat as your last meal?

Having experienced this with loved ones, I find this (classic) question to be overrated. Before receiving medical assistance in dying, my mother ate an absolutely ordinary hospital breakfast and was very satisfied, except for the coffee. As for me, I think I would rather not know that the meal in question is to be my last.

What foodish epitaph would you assign to yourself?

She was a *gourmande*.

What question would you add to this questionnaire?

What have you eaten that took you furthest from your comfort zone?