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KNOWING AND GROWING

IN THIS ISSUE

What do we mean by "food studies"? Is it a distinct field or not, and what might it encompass? This issue starts, poignantly, with a commentary that summarizes some intense deliberations on these questions at the 2014 meeting of the Canadian Association for Food Studies. The authors conclude by suggesting that "food studies scholars and practitioners... traverse not just disciplinary boundaries, but epistemological boundaries." This entails more than different methodologies, as they point out, but may open up a broader typological range of research questions, examine how food can serve as a catalyst for exploring new issues, and expand the possibilities of where, or to whom, researchers can turn as a source of learning.

Canadian Food Studies   La Revue canadienne des
                                 études sur l'alimentation

Editorial

"Ways of knowing" in food studies

Ellen Desjardins

What do we mean by *food studies*? Is it a distinct field or not, and what might it encompass? This issue starts, poignantly, with a commentary that summarizes some intense deliberations on these questions at CAFS 2014, the annual meeting of the Canadian Association for Food Studies. The authors conclude by suggesting that "food studies scholars and practitioners…traverse not just disciplinary boundaries, but *epistemological* boundaries" (Brady et al., pp. 5–6; emphasis added). This entails more than different methodologies, as they point out, but may open up a broader typological range of research questions, examine how food can serve as a catalyst for exploring new issues, and expand the possibilities of where, or to whom, researchers can turn as a source of learning. Moreover, when disciplines are projected as "ways of knowing, doing and writing" rather than "static territories of knowledge," such an approach can reveal potential "relationships among the disciplines that are often otherwise obscured" (Carter, 2007, p. 410).

Viewing the articles in this issue through an epistemological lens becomes an intriguing exercise. For example, three original research articles expose injustices in the food system by painstakingly documenting change in national policies and land ownership—thereby demonstrating the resultant deepening hegemonic spheres of influence over food sovereignty. Their multiple ways of knowing draw from raw statistics, language from reports, and voices of residents who are affected by these changes. Desmarais et al. and Smythe reveal different aspects of the fluid, shifting phenomenon of "land grabbing," both rural and urban. As well, the Desmarais group has expanded ways of knowing in this area by creating a new metric they call CLO4 (Concentration of Land Ownership by the four largest owners). Burnett et al. bring in the discourse of provincial "Norths," highlighting the diversity of geographic and demographic circumstances that clearly require tailored approaches to food security rather than the inequitable, ineffective, "one size fits all" approach used by current food subsidy programs.

These articles are able to paint detailed pictures with dimensions and trends that would otherwise remain hidden, and can inform those who want to make change.

Another epistemological approach taps into language expressed by individuals to reveal their perceptions of food or spaces for growing food, and links this language with identity or sense of place. In the qualitative research of Beagan et al., the reasons for personal food choices become symbolic of the processes of class boundary marking. Ridgeway and Matthews, also focusing on narrative as their way of knowing, show how many people connect the concept of forest gardens or permaculture with the perceived benefit of building social sustainability on campus. In this way, they evoke Brynne's analogy of the organic orchard (Brady et al., p. 5), that represents an integrated, balanced ecosystem with the potential to enhance participatory action as well as mental health.

Noticing and carefully chronicling small-scale success stories with far-reaching impact is another epistemological approach. Wayne Roberts, for example, wears his reporter's hat when he approaches rancher Bryan Gilvesy with a genuine spirit of curiosity about farming strategies that appear simultaneously radical and practical. What, in turn, were Gilvesy's ways of knowing? As Roberts discovers, it was his sense about what works best in nature, building new ideas and entrepreneurship upon traditional ecosystems rather than trying to replace them. Josie Steeves took on a similar role, documenting the steps undertaken by residents of a low-income food desert in Saskatoon to create a food venue specific to their own needs. Both authors highlight ways of knowing that developed when people took the plunge to transform situations that were environmentally harmful or socially unjust.

Sumner's article engages a theoretical way of knowing by suggesting a re-conceptualiza-tion of agri-food standards—not as a dichotomy of public or private interests, but as a form of civil commons, or an alternative form of governance that challenges neoliberalism. Reporting on a game-design process, Lee and Fisher also aim to re-conceptualize our understanding. In the case of *Food Quest*, it is the experience and feelings around food insecurity in various contexts. Their way of knowing is both pedagogical and participatory in nature—it developed as their game developed in a collaborative, iterative way, making the game both informative and interesting.

Finally, our review authors make clear how epistemological frames shape the experience for both author and reader. Regnier-Davies and Scott emphasize two key elements of critical food studies writing—accessibility and tone—that allow readers from diverse backgrounds to quickly grasp the problems, while providing solutions that turn those problems into opportunities for positive change. Schumilas shows how reading case studies of alternative food movements for diversity rather than dominance uncovers similarly reflexive processes in the global north and south, and opens new channels for alliance-building and resistance. However, Clark, Clément, and DiVito Wilson remind us that diversity—evident in case studies of food sovereignty—can be a mixed blessing. It can present opportunities for bridging divergence but, at the same time, gloss over the disparate politics and epistemological incompatibility of food sovereignty proponents. Similarly, Weiler points out that, in discussions of farm labour, neat epistemological frames such

as "good" family farms and "bad" industrial agriculture elide an important nuance that would add depth to our understanding of on-the-ground agricultural realities.

We invite you to read articles that are not directly related to your area of study, and to taste the ways in which food, in its many manifestations, can offer different portals into life experience and can become a medium for challenging and re-creating ways of knowing. That is what *Canadian Food Studies/La Revue canadienne des études sur l'alimentation* purports to do.

Editorial Team:

Ellen Desjardins, Editor
University of Waterloo, edesjardins@canadianfoodstudies.ca

David Szanto, Associate Editor
University of Gastronomic Sciences, dszanto@canadianfoodstudies.ca

Phil Mount, Associate Editor
Wilfrid Laurier University, pmount@canadianfoodstudies.ca

Rod MacRae, Associate Editor, Food System Transitions Stream
York University, rmacrae@yorku.ca

Wesley Tourangeau, Managing Editor
University of Waterloo, wtourangeau@canadianfoodstudies.ca

Reference

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Commentary

Borders, boundaries, and becoming food studies: Looking back, pushing forward

Jennifer Brady,[1] Charles Z. Levkoe,[2] and David Szanto[3]

[1] PhD Candidate, Queens University

[2] Postdoctoral Fellow, Wilfrid Laurier University

[3] Master Program Director, University of Gastronomic Sciences

On May 25, 2014, at the ninth annual assembly of the Canadian Association for Food Studies (CAFS), we (the authors) organized a plenary panel that assembled a number of leading food scholars from across North America to reflect on the current state of food studies. This commentary brings together the perspectives from the presentations as well as our own thoughts and ideas. We aim to consider some of the trajectories and intersections of food studies as a field, as well as the spaces and boundaries that it might occupy and transgress.

In 2008, *Food, Culture & Society* published a special issue focusing on food scholarship in Canada. It opened with a commentary written by Elaine Power and Mustafa Koç that addressed the emerging field of food studies and the emergence of CAFS as a national research association of both scholars and practitioners. In the article, they explained that the inaugural idea behind CAFS was "to contribute to interdisciplinary scholarship addressing the complex relationships and interconnections between food related issues" (p. 264). They also celebrated CAFS members who were engaged in both theory-centred research as well as work focused on the practical implications for civil society and policy makers. Power and Koç discussed the way that using food as a framework to interrogate social, economic, and ecological realities could help to understand who we are as Canadians. They wrote: "In particular, Canadians eat doughnuts (not donuts), more doughnuts per capita than any other country in the world…. In the contemporary Canadian imaginary, the doughnut is connected to a specific chain, Tim Hortons, where the standard "double-double" will get you a coffee with two creams and two sugars, in

case your sweet, fatty doughnut treat is not sweet and fatty enough" (p. 265). They rightly argued that food connects us and divides us, creating boundaries and identities.

In the decade since the establishment of CAFS, much has changed. Food studies has matured from a disparate collection of individuals into a vibrant field of study that includes numerous academic and non-academic associations, journals, magazines, blogs, programs of study, and an ever-expanding interdisciplinary literature. As an association, CAFS now comprises hundreds of members from across the country (and around the globe), an increasingly dynamic annual assembly, a board of directors including leading academics and practitioners, and of course this journal, *Canadian Food Studies/La Revue canadienne des études sur l'alimentation*, launched in 2014. Despite, or perhaps because of these accomplishments, a series of new questions arise for CAFS members, as well as for the field of food studies more broadly.

Koç, Sumner, and Winson (2012) have written, "food studies is a relatively new field of research and scholarship that focuses on the web of relations, processes, structures, and institutional arrangements that cover human interaction with nature and other humans involving the production, distribution, preparation, consumption, and disposal of food" (p. xii). However, they go on to note, "defining the boundaries of food studies is a challenging task." A number of years earlier, Warren Belasco (2008) advised, "it may be premature to announce the birth of a new discipline" (p. 5). Taken together, these observations imply that defining or delimiting food studies may be problematic, but they also suggest that constructing a framing structure around food scholarship may be wrong-headed in the first place. Indeed, part of what makes exploring food so exciting is the diversity of perspectives and approaches involved. This diversity is clearly a strength and a rich source of potential futures for food studies, but it also presents those involved in food scholarship with a variety of challenges, both institutional and individual.

As a national interdisciplinary association, CAFS aims to promote a critical and progressive space that welcomes a diversity of people engaged in food-related research. Nonetheless, it still mirrors the ideals of its founders, privileging a focus on social sciences and food systems sustainability. There has been far less participation from those working in the humanities, the various area studies (e.g., gender, media, cultural), art, design, and technology, and the pure and applied sciences. While the annual conference has become a place that fosters greater inclusivity (though the Exploration Gallery, innovative session formats, joint-listed sessions, and special events), there is still much work to do in order to explicitly transgress historic boundaries and actively promote more cross-disciplinary participation.

Six years after Power and Koç riffed on the iconic Canadianness of Tim Hortons, the doughnut chain has been acquired by transnational giant, Burger King Worldwide Inc. (It is actually the second time Tim's has been owned by a non-Canadian company: Wendy's purchased the business in the early 1990s.) While the business deal may ultimately benefit the Canadian economy more than our national identity (Brownell, 2014), it again raises questions about what is Canadian, what defines us as a food culture, and what Canadian food scholars' roles will become in the future.

The plenary panel at the 2014 CAFS conference brought together six panelists from a range of disciplinary perspectives, in order to present a diversity of thinking on the current state of food studies. Taking a cue from the 2014 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences theme, we titled the session "Borders, Boundaries, and Becoming Food Studies: Looking Back, Pushing Forward." The intent was to generate a conversation among panellists and audience members about food studies itself—its edges and limits, but also the past, present, and future identity of the field. Ultimately, we hoped that these ideas would extend throughout the conference and inspire the thinking and work of the food studies community in the years to come. The six panellists included: Jessica Mudry, Ryerson University; Kathleen LeBesco, Marymount Manhattan College; Josée Johnston, University of Toronto; Rachel Engler-Stringer, University of Saskatchewan; Elaine Power, Queen's University; and Abra Brynne, Food Secure Canada. Each presenter was asked to respond to three questions in their opening remarks: (1) *What does the term "food studies" mean to you?* (2) *Is food studies distinct from other fields?* (3) *What should food studies encompass?* We have identified three key themes that emerged from the panellists' remarks and the discussion that followed.

The first of these themes set out an aspirational vision for the field and addressed what food studies should be or, more specifically, what it should strive to be. Elaine Power reminded us that CAFS was founded by an energetic and collegial network of scholars and activists who recognized the inherent nurturing aspects of food, love, and belonging, and who also cared passionately about the role of food in making the world a better place to live. At the same time, because food is inherently social *and* political, even as we theorize about how food makes us collectively, we must also allow ourselves to be drawn out of the ivory tower to participate in those collectives. As Rachel Engler-Stringer declared, "food studies is a call to action," a space in which participation and reflexivity can make food more accessible, equitable, sustainable, environmentally conscientious, and socially just.

A second key theme brought to light the inherent frictions that exist within the field of food studies. The main tension, addressed by several panellists, concerned the interdisciplinary nature of food studies. Questions were raised: Are food studies now, or should they aim to be, either multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary? If so, what challenges and opportunities arise? While some participants cited the benefit of resisting disciplinarity, others raised points about the risk of being perceived as too undefined in an otherwise discipline-structured academy, including for emerging scholars looking for post-doctoral positions, research, and/or faculty positions. A discussion emerged about the need and potential to create alternative academic structures to facilitate the distinctive types of interdisciplinary, and even transdisciplinary work that many in food studies do or aspire to do. What might these alternative structures look like? How do we create a unity of intellectual frameworks and integrated perspectives that deal with the extensive nature of food? Another related tension revealed the potential conflict between food studies' growth and continued recognition—what might be seen as its professionalization—and the field's political commitments. How do we navigate the need, and perhaps desire, to grow and professionalize food studies with the progressive politics that undergird the field?

Finally, a third theme exhorted the food studies community to view the contradictions and tensions within food studies as a space of opportunity, rather than a barrier to future vitality. Abra Brynne urged participants to think in terms of plurality and ecological collaboration— diversity as a source of resilience. This message was perhaps most inspirationally illustrated through her analogy of orchards. In most conventional orchards, dead zones surround the base of each trunk; nothing grows except the fruit trees that are carefully "protected" using a mixture of chemical and human resources. In contrast, under the canopy of an organic orchard lies a vital and lush ecosystem of grasses, native plants, birds, and insects that sustains the life of the trees and the balance within the whole. If we are to encourage food studies to thrive within the academy, Brynne suggested, then we must do so while supporting disciplinary diversity and a collaborative set of relationships with other academic "species."

In her comments, Josée Johnston expressed the need to make connections between political-economic issues, such as globalized commodity chains, sociological issues such as gender inequality, food justice issues like food insecurity, and ecological ones like the need for sustainable food systems. In previous work, Johnston (2008) has asserted that this kind of multidisciplinarity is important to a food studies that "resists ossification and maintains relevance in a university setting" (p. 271). She also notes the serious challenges that sometimes unyielding disciplinary structures present to those wishing to do multidisciplinary work, which raises questions about the capacity for food studies to continue within its somewhat blurry boundaries.

We as authors would also like to point out that bridging disciplinary perspectives asks food studies scholars and practitioners to traverse not just disciplinary boundaries, but epistemological ones. Crossing epistemological boundaries means that we must revisit not only how and what we study, but also the underlying frameworks that structure our understanding of knowledge. This implicates not just interdisciplinary approaches to food scholarship, but *inter-epistemological* ones as well (Brady, Millious & Ventresca, forthcoming). Murphy (2011) notes that a superficial "downstream" approach to multi- or interdisciplinary work is the norm, in which data collection and knowledge dissemination may reflect multiple perspectives, but the research is undergirded by a single dominant epistemic paradigm. An inter-epistemological approach in food studies asks that researchers interrogate the early "upstream" stages of planning—theoretical assumptions, development of research questions and methodologies— those fundamental paradigms that frame the research at its outset. Taking such an approach is key to unlocking potentially revolutionary modes of doing food-related work, as well as bringing about revelations within our existing paradigms. In food studies specifically, an emphasis on inter-epistemological approaches would allow the food studies community to better integrate and learn from the work that scholars in the natural sciences, arts, and humanities do, as well that of the activists, students, and community members who are also important stakeholders in the field. Food studies can thus invite us to reflect on *what* we do and *how* we do things, but also *how we understand* what it is that we are doing, and why. Put simply, how do we know and come to know with, through, and about food?

Ultimately, the challenges and tensions raised here may not be addressed within food studies in our lifetimes, and perhaps this is a good thing. A system that is constantly in a state of inquiry and investigation, navigation and negotiation, is a system that evolves and responds to the state of the world of which it is part. If there is one concluding recommendation that we might propose with this commentary, it is to remain attentive to these movements and actively continue the processes of critical exchange and reflection that many food communities now embrace, both within and outside of academic settings.

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Perspective

Life of Bryan: Working the magic of sustainable food's sweet spot

Part Two

Wayne Roberts[1]

Abstract

Bryan Gilvesy is one of Canada's most recognized farm innovators, as well as one of the country's best-known leaders of the food movement. That combination is unusual in any region or country—one of the ways that Gilvesy exemplifies both the hallmarks of the food movement in Canada, as well as the unique components of agro-ecology as it emerges in a temperate-cold climate. This portrait of a food and farm leader is based on my own reporter's notes taken over seven years of attending meetings where Gilvesy has spoken, and on files of news clippings and academic articles related to the farming methods he has pioneered in Canada. Part One of this article provided an overview of Gilvesy's background and personal evolution prior to his adoption of views and practices for which he is currently renowned. Part Two introduces his measures to secure a wrenching shift in food system redesign—specifically the provision to pay farmers for ecosystem services they produce on the working landscape of their farm. Part Two will also spell out specific trends within Canada's food movement, such as its promotion of concrete, positive and practical reform measures and its service as a Big Tent coalition of various

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[1] *Wayne Roberts is internationally recognized as a leading analyst, advocate, and practitioner in the field of city food policy. From his home base in Toronto, Dr. Roberts has written 12 books, most recently* The No Nonsense Guide to World Food (2nd Edition) *and* Food for City Building. *He is also a longtime associate of Bryan Gilvesy, and has volunteered for two years as an unpaid "director of sustainability education" for Y U Ranch, which Gilvesy owns.*

public interest groups—trends that Gilvesy personifies. Part Three will examine the potential of establishing a fee for environmental services through public policy rather than the marketplace.

Part Two

In Part One of this article in the premier issue of the CAFS journal, readers learned about the early career of Bryan Gilvesy, winner of many awards for his innovative farming methods as well as a prominent leader of and speaker for the food movement, especially in Ontario. He began his career as a tobacco farmer, but left that behind in the 1990s when he turned to breeding and raising Texas Longhorns for beef. When mad cow disease struck the Canadian beef industry in 2003, Gilvesy was in a position where he could sell his beef because he had kept his herd totally free of the feeds that produced mad cow, and from the cattle that carried it. He became a solo entrepreneur, free of the conventional food chain, selling directly to his own customers—a position that brought him to ever-more profound understandings of the strategies and benefits of sustainable production methods, and the need to partner with a varied group of people in what was becoming the food movement. Part Two carries on from this point.

   The next big change in Gilvesy's life came in 2005. His inner business grad told him there had to be a more objective and certifiable way to define where the value of his product came from, over and above the trust he enjoyed from customers who knew him personally. The penny dropped in December 2005 when he heard Brian Abel—a nearby farmer and chair of the Norfolk County Stewardship Council—speaking about a fledgling program called Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS), which had just launched in Manitoba. Gilvesy liked the ALUS message about farmers working to proactively avoid inflicting damage on the environment— rather than simply mitigating the damage after-the-fact, through what was called "risk management." At the meeting, Gilvesy asked Abel for his advice about protecting the stream that went through his property. The next day, Abel arranged an introduction to Dave Reid, a Norfolk Stewardship Coordinator with the Ministry of Natural Resources. Reid toured Gilvesy's farm, praised him for fencing his woods and stream—to keep the cattle from doing damage—and explained that ALUS offered a way for a good steward like him to be paid for his good work. By the spring of 2006, Y U Ranch was a demonstration farm for ALUS. "I got out of the food business, and got into the business of nourishment," Gilvesy says. In his words, he found the "sweet spot"—where what is good for farmer and consumer and environment are the same. As he put it to a group of potential ALUS supporters in Alberta seven years later: "Instead of just harvesting one crop from your farm or property, harvest a whole bunch, let's harvest more environment, better food. Let's harvest health."[2]

   ALUS gave Gilvesy the tools to see his entire farm in a different light. Many people think of forests and marshes as being ecologically fragile and/or valuable, but relatively few think the grasslands in between have much value. Given that grasslands cover 3.5 billion hectares, about a

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[2] Clarkson, M. (2013, June 20). Vermilion River County receives wetland agency recognition. *Lloydminster Source*.

third of the land on the planet, this landscape is worth a second look. Only about two percent of the original wild grasses and tall grass prairie in North America at the time of European conquest still exist today, and few voices are raised to stem the loss. Tall grass is rarely deemed worthy of protection in parks, which means that most of it is on farms, where farmers are liable to see it as taking up space that could go to grain crops that make money. Though tall grass ecosystems lack the charisma of grizzlies and elk, and tall grass is not a cash crop in the way grains are, naturalists who like to watch birds—and hunters who like to eat them—understand that these tall grasses hide grassland birds from predating eagles and hawks, while they nest, give birth, and raise their young. Just as Ducks Unlimited arose to allow duck hunters to pay farmers to protect the forest and marsh habitat of ducks on their land, so ALUS arose to connect hunters and bird watchers to the protection of grassland birds.[3]

ALUS recognized that both the public and private should benefit from preserving grassland. Since Nature doesn't donate money to conscientious farmers, and since no environmental bonus is included in the price of food, marginal land—less productive and more ecologically fragile—only has economic value if converted into farmland for cash crops. ALUS recognized that farmers deserve a thank you if they voluntarily give up the possibility of growing crops on that marginal farmland, and instead conserve it for the benefit of Nature and the general public. ALUS asked members of the public who most benefitted from a farmer's actions to recognize and reward that unpaid contribution by chipping in with a donation.

The common sense of ALUS sounds so obvious that readers might miss the clanging of bells and whistles that usually goes with a revolutionary insight. In the ALUS analysis, Nature and diversity are to be respected and *valued* not only when they provide resources that can be converted directly into inputs for food and sold for money, but also when they provide services to Nature and the general public—both of which benefit from the conservation of diversity in historic grasslands habitat. ALUS asks farmers to give of their time and their privately held resources to restore natural vegetative cover and let their land lie "idle"—from a short-term money-making perspective. In exchange, ALUS asks that direct and identifiable beneficiaries of wild grasslands, such as hunters and bird watchers, donate a modest fee to cover a farmer's expenses and time.

ALUS stepped in to facilitate this transaction because government overseers of the food system have a massive blind spot for Nature's contribution of services that make agriculture viable. The mindset of industrial agriculture is so mechanistic, and so obsessed with overcoming natural limits, that the enabling role of Nature—and the need to sustain that enabling role—comes as a surprise and afterthought at best. ALUS also challenges the power of the food system taboo against paying farmers for anything but the commodity value of food, fiber, fuel or tobacco—all of which are self-evident products of human labor and machines and a tribute to having overcome, not protected, Nature. Such worldviews explain the difficulty experienced by government officials across North America in grasping the basic insight of ALUS: the need to actively support—i.e., pay for—delivery of Nature's services.

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[3] Terborgh, J. (2007, April 26). Hero of Birdland. *New York Review of Books*.

Odd as it seems, most governments can see their way to support or subsidize farmers to grow corn on former grasslands—oftentimes corn that goes to ethically, nutritionally, and ecologically negative purposes, such as feed for livestock in factory farms, cheap substitutes for sugar in soft drinks and other junk foods, and corn ethanol substitutes for petroleum in automobile gas tanks. To make matters worse, corn is also extremely harsh on farmland, especially on fragile land vulnerable to erosion. But no one in government—which ostensibly has a mandate to oversee the public interest in food and farming—can see a way to pay farmers to grow more health-supporting food, let alone manage grasslands, woodlots, or marshes, or otherwise help Nature recover its original resilience and robustness. That would be tantamount, I suppose, to a subsidy for Nature's idleness, and would set a bad precedent for supporting the idleness of the poor with adequate income to buy local, sustainable, and nutritious foods—another taboo. The neurotic fear of food-system change seems to be so powerful that governments will subsidize corn farmers to grow a surplus of badly used product, and thereby produce such a glut of corn that the price is always threatening to collapse, creating a treadmill that leads the industry to find ever more ways to incorporate corn into more junk foods, car fuels, or plastic. Go figure.

Splendor in the grass

Since 2006, Gilvesy has converted his entire farm—save areas covered by woodlands, streams, and marshlands—over to grasslands. At the time he started this, people might have thought his project was for the birds. But emerging research findings show that the environmental productivity of grasslands goes much further than providing habitat for birds. It's about bees, too, and other threatened pollinators that make fruits and vegetables bountiful. It's also about global warming—the 900-pound gorilla that no government can manage, but which grasslands can do something about. In all, the environmental services from grasslands have the potential to become life savers for humans and others. With the evidence now available and easily accessible by government staff, government failure to support farmers who convert fragile farmlands back to historic grasslands constitutes neglect of duties to due diligence and care, which future generations may well judge to be criminally irresponsible. Put me in touch with a lawyer, and let's find out if the charge sticks.

A highly credible set of studies—from Marin County, California—suggests that grasslands provide valuable services to address global warming. Berkeley ecology professor Whendee Silver and her colleagues have been conducting studies on Marin County ranches for five years.[4] They spread half an inch of compost over fields of grass, and proved that this

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[4] Johnson, N. (2014). Just add compost: How to turn your grassland ranch into a carbon sink. *Grist*. Also see www.marincarbonproject.org; Silver, W., DeLonge, M.S. & Owen, J.J. (2013). Climate Change Mitigation Potential of California's Rangeland Ecosystems, a draft report to the California Air Resources Board; DeLonge, M.S., Ryals, R. & Silver, W. (2013). A lifecycle model to evaluate carbon sequestration potential and greenhouse gas dynamics of managed grasslands. *Ecosystems*, 16: 962-979.

treatment led to a fifty percent increase in plant growth, thereby adding an additional metric tonne of carbon to each hectare of soil. If not used on the fields to support carbon storage, the compost would have ended its days in landfill, rotting away without access to oxygen, thereby creating methane—twenty-two times more powerful than carbon dioxide when it comes to global warming impact. Anyone worried that cattle munching on grasslands also produce methane by burping and farting has to take into account that grasslands can make ready use of compost that would otherwise create much more methane than burping and farting by cattle. The additional growth of grass on composted fields also removes the need of ranchers to buy commercial grains from other farms, thereby avoiding the global warming emissions from fertilizers, pesticides, and harvesting equipment used to produce grains.

The cattle on these lands make up for their vulgar farting and burping by delivering a number of ecoservices. Their constant nibbling keeps grasses short, thereby reducing the likelihood of wildfires, which release enormous amounts of carbon into the air. If such an approach to grasslands were applied to half the rangeland in California, according to Silver, it would offset the equivalent of forty-two million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide—equal to the yearly emissions from commercial and residential fossil fuel energy use by all Californians. This kind of potential impact invites public action, and it is up to the food movement to hold government feet to the fire by framing these proposals as part of a package of urgent solutions that need to be taken up for many reasons. Can you spell multifunctional agriculture?

Beyond global warming impacts, the broad ecological importance of properly managed livestock grazing on grasslands is confirmed by several studies and reports, including an Ontario Ministry of Agriculture fact sheet, which credits grasslands with reducing erosion by as much as ninety-three percent.[5] Several scientific studies credit the combination of livestock grazing and grasslands with reducing pesticide use, speeding up the recycling of manure, and increasing biodiversity.[6] Joshua Farley, with a keener sense of public policy advocacy than most scientists linked to agricultural and land use studies, lists the benefits of "management-intensive grazing" (MIG). "Compared to conventional systems, MIG increases pasture growth and cattle production, reduces the use of fertilizers and pesticides, and enhances biodiversity, water quality, nutrient capture, and carbon sequestration."[7] Farley argues that payments for such environmental services "are a promising mechanism through which those who benefit from ecosystem services can compensate those who provide them, for mutual gain."[8] He and his colleagues propose that public beneficiaries of ecosystem services must find ways to transfer resources from beneficiaries to providers at the local, national, and global scales, to support the research, education, training, and easy access to low-cost credit by farmers to get such projects moving.

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[5] Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Environmental Farm Plan Workbook, fact sheet 95-089
[6] Hart, R. (2001). Plant biodiversity on shortgrass steppe after 55 years of zero, light, moderate or heavy cattle grazing. *Plant Ecology*, 155: 111-118; Jackson, R., Banner, J., Jobbágy, E., Pockman, W. & Wall, D. (2002). Ecosystem carbon loss with woody plant invasion of grasslands. *Nature*, 418: 623-626.
[7] Farley, J. Schmitt F., A. Alvez, J. Ribeiro de Freitas Jr., N. (2012). How valuing nature can transform agriculture. *Solutions*, 2(6): 64-73. http://www.thesolutionsjournal.com/node/1014 Citation on p. 64.
[8] ibid. p. 64

The transformative benefits of grassland grazing have been brought to a huge audience of millions through Allan Savory's dramatic presentations on TED.com and YouTube, and through his book, *The Grazing Revolution.* He refers to "holistic planned grazing" as a method of livestock management that can rescue over a billion hectares of grasslands from corn and soy crops intended for livestock in factory farms. That system, Savory charges, erodes fully ten tonnes of soil per person on the planet, an altogether unsavory and unsustainable level of land exploitation.[9] It might be that Savory's international efforts can highlight the local work of individuals such as Gilvesy.

New grassland grazing techniques have much in common with the species of design innovations referred to as "bio-mimicry."[10] The idea behind bio-mimicry is to design systems and products that adapt the elegance of Nature's patterns, time-tested forms of research and development that have taken place during billennia of evolution. In grasslands, natural systems balance the exchange of gases between soil and air to the benefit of soil, plants, animals, and atmosphere. The Marin County technique of composting manure on cattle-grazing land is referred to as "carbon farming," because it engages farmers in adapting that ancient exchange to boost the storage of carbon and growth of plants, drawing down carbon dioxide from the air to serve as soil-based carbon that feeds plants. By mimicking Nature, these ranchers do deliberately what Nature does without thinking: deliver ecoservices that can keep carbon in the soil and out of the atmosphere, where its imbalance threatens havoc in global climate systems.

To bee or not to bee

Anyone who has toured Gilvesy's land over the last four years has enjoyed watching him get overtaken by his enthusiasm for the pollinators making their homes in tree stumps he has prepared just for them. "I'm the king of the wild bees," he sometimes says. I call him the wasp whisperer.

The worrisome decline of bees has attracted considerable public attention over the last several years. Bees are an iconic species, and likely the only insects to enjoy charismatic status ranking with elk, polar bears, and grizzlies, even though their bite is worse than their buzz. Bumble bees are commonly equated with pollination, and anyone assessing the impact of the disappearance of bees quickly understands that this could have staggering economic impact on fruit, vegetable, edible oil, coffee, and cacao crops. I find it mildly amusing that journalistic reports on the economic damage that would be wreaked by loss of pollination services outweighs coverage of the likely impacts leading to malnutrition, famine, and death. But then, who am I to complain when people start to attach economic value to ecosystem services? One careful study from 2008 estimated the economic losses following collapse of natural pollinators at $217 billion

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[9] Nierenberg, D. (2014, January). Healing the land, grazing for solutions. *FoodTank*.
[10] Benyus, J. (2002). *Biomimicry: Innovations inspired by nature.* New York: Harper Collins.

U.S. per year.[11] I don't imagine many private investors would balk at paying a few billion a year to avoid the collapse of essential corporate infrastructure. However, it appears that using public money to pay for the work needed to produce environmental services is considered a more painful loss than $217 billion a year.

But Gilvesy is more innovative than I am when it comes to such matters. He figured out two things that I missed. First, he recognized that wild pollinators are better pollinators than the bees Europeans brought over to North America. He gave most of his attention to supporting indigenous and wild varieties of pollinators on his land. As it turns out, scientific studies confirm that wild pollinators are about twice as effective as domesticated ones, probably because they come in a variety of shapes and sizes, and so can be more effective pollinating the multiple varieties of grassland flowers.[12] Reviewing the evidence on yields in a scientific paper, *The Economist*—no slouch when it comes to valuing filthy lucre—headlined that "variety is the spice of life."[13] That's a nice admission for *The Economist* to make. Free ecosystem services, it seems, can outperform human-made ones. Who knew?

Perhaps illustrating the kind of deeply intuitive and experiential knowledge possessed by peasants and farmers, albeit seldom respected by formally credentialed scientific practitioners,[14] Gilvesy instinctively grasped the business lesson taught by pollinating freeloaders trespassing on his property. He sets aside between four and seven percent of his land for wilderness, precisely for purposes such as maintaining habitat for pollinators. No big deal, some would say: that land is not productive anyway. Productive and unproductive have become fighting words for Gilvesy. "The metrics are wrong. It is productive because it slows hot, drying winds and because it hosts pollinators," he says. He takes the same view to what some might describe as his "unproductive" use of time taking vegetarians and vegans on tours of his ranch. "Whether you love us for our beef, or love us for our bees, we don't care." If vegans pay taxes that go to ecosystem services, they're as much his customer base as carnivores.

The dated, narrowly human-centered and arbitrary division between productive and unproductive reveals the mindset of those who believe progress must be wrested from Nature, and that consequently all subsidies for agriculture should support domestication and subjugation of Nature. In the future, students will learn about how government and university agriculture departments once thought this way, just as centuries before the leading astronomical thinkers thought the world was flat and the earth was the center of the universe. Old ideas die very slowly, it seems.

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[11] Helmholtz Association of German Research Centres. (2008, September 15). Economic value of insect pollination worldwide estimated at U.S. $217 Billion. *ScienceDaily*. Retrieved November 22, 2014 from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/09/080915122725.htm

[12] Garibaldi, L. et al. (2013). Wild pollinators enhance fruit set of crops regardless of honey bee abundance. *Science*, 339: 1608-1611.

[13] Variety is the spice of life. (2013, March 2). *The Economist*.

[14] McIntyre, B., Herren, H., Wakhungu, J., & Watson R. (eds.). (2009). Agriculture at a Crossroads. International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development. Washington: Island Press.

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Original Research Article

Land grabbing and land concentration: Mapping changing patterns of farmland ownership in three rural municipalities in Saskatchewan, Canada

Annette Aurélie Desmarais,[1] Darrin Qualman,[2] André Magnan,[3] and Nettie Wiebe[4]

[1] Canada Research Chair in Human Rights, Social Justice and Food Sovereignty, University of Manitoba (corresponding author: annette.desmarais@umanitoba.ca)
[2] Former researcher and Executive Director, National Farmers Union
[3] Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Studies, University of Regina
[4] Professor, St. Andrews College, University of Saskatchewan

Abstract

Since the 2007–08 global food crisis there is growing interest in changing patterns of farmland ownership. Using a dataset of the names of all farmland titleholders along with GIS data mapping software, this article demonstrates changes in patterns of land ownership in three rural municipalities (RMs) in Saskatchewan, Canada. A diverse mix of new actors have entered the farmland market in the past decade or two, with some now owning more than 100,000 acres each in the province. Our research reveals a list of the investment companies, pension plans, and large farmer/investor hybrids buying land; it also maps investment activity and large land transactions in the three RMs. While 7.8% to 13.1% of the farmland is now owned by "land grabbers," our study also found a significant rise in land concentration in the hands of farmers when compared to twenty years ago. For example, in one RM, the four largest landowners—a mix of farmers and investment companies and farmer/investor hybrids—now own 28% of the land. This article also discusses some initial findings concerning the impact that changing patterns of land ownership

are having on the cohesion and vitality of communities and concludes with a series of questions for further research.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been growing academic, civil-society, and public interest in changing patterns of farmland ownership in agricultural sectors around the world. These changes are part and parcel of the ongoing restructuring of the global food system under the corporate food regime (McMichael, 2012). While this transformation arguably began in the 1980s with the globalization of a variety of important agri-food sectors, it has accelerated since the global food crisis of 2007–08. The dominant trends in the corporate food regime are the increasing concentration of power and resources in the hands of agribusiness firms and financial interests, the marginalization of small farmers, and global market volatility. It is in this context that a range of important transformations has occurred in patterns of farmland ownership. In particular, there is growing attention being paid to large-scale farmland purchases involving sovereign wealth funds, agribusiness corporations, hedge funds, pensions, and other actors, especially since the food crisis. Referred to by critics as the global "land grab" (GRAIN, 2008), these transactions raise many questions about the changing dynamics of farmland ownership and control including: the power dynamics between farmland owners and tenants/workers; the motives and decision-making horizons of investors compared to family-farm landowners; environmental questions related to land use, soil, water, and biodiversity; and the implications for rural communities, control over food production, food security, and food sovereignty.

This article examines changing patterns of farmland ownership in three rural municipalities (RMs)[1] in Saskatchewan, Canada. Since the mid-2000s, a range of new actors—including farmland investment firms, pension funds, and family-based and corporate mega-farms—have acquired large tracts of farmland in the province (Sommerville & Magnan, 2015; Sommerville, 2013; Magnan, 2012; NFU, 2010). While previous studies have identified some of the key players and begun to analyze the implications of these changes in farmland ownership, we provide a more fine-grained analysis of the geographical patterns of changing farmland ownership. Specifically, we use geographical information systems (GIS) and land titles data to identify the largest landowners and to calculate the degree of concentration in land ownership in these three RMs. In addition, we provide a comparison of land ownership in 1994 and 2014, highlighting the extent of the changes that have occurred over the intervening twenty years.

The article is organized as follows. In the next section, we provide some theoretical and empirical context by briefly reviewing the literature on the global land grab, the financialization of farmland, and the restructuring of the prairie agricultural sector. Next, we explain the research methodology and its applicability to understanding patterns of farmland ownership and

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[1] Saskatchewan's agricultural region—roughly the southernmost 40% of the province—is divided into 296 administrative units called Rural Municipalities (RMs).

concentration. This is followed by a discussion of the key empirical findings, including the identity of the largest landowners, rates of ownership concentration, and historical patterns. We then explain some initial findings concerning the impact that changing patterns of land ownership is having on the cohesion and vitality of rural communities. We conclude by raising a number of questions for further research.

Context: Twenty-first century land politics

There is a growing academic and civil-society literature on the twenty-first century global land grab (White, Borras, Hall, Scoones & Woolford, 2012; Cotula, 2012; De Schutter, 2010 and 2011; GRAIN, 2008, 2014; Margulis, McKeon & Borras, 2013; Murmis & Murmis, 2012; Pearce, 2012; La Vía Campesina, 2013; Wolford, 2010; Zoomers, 2010). Well-known journals— such as the *Journal of Peasant Studies* (2011 and 2012), *Globalizations* (2013*), Third World Quarterly (*2013)*, and *Development and Change* (2013)—have all published special editions that examine different elements of land grabbing, primarily in the global South. To date, the literature has focused primarily on conceptualizing land grabbing, understanding the scale and scope of the phenomenon, and explaining its key drivers. While an exhaustive review of the literature is beyond the scope of this paper, we highlight some of the key conceptual, political, methodological, and empirical issues raised by other scholars.

Broadly speaking, "land grabbing" refers to the twenty-first century phenomenon wherein large tracts of farmland are bought up by investment funds, corporations, pension funds, sovereign wealth funds, and other private interests. While many cases involve land purchases, in others some of the same interests gain control over farmland through long-term leases. The term "global land grab" was pioneered by the civil-society organization GRAIN, which has maintained a large web-based repository of news reports on large-scale land deals for several years (farmlandgrab.org). The term deliberately politicizes large-scale land deals as a way of underlining their potential for dispossessing marginalized groups including small-scale farmers, pastoralists, and indigenous peoples.

In the face of civil-society criticism, there have been some international initiatives to regulate large-scale land deals. Some of the largest farmland investors have designed a set of voluntary "principles for responsible investment in farmland" that include commitments for "promoting environmental sustainability, respecting labour and human rights, respecting existing land and resource rights, upholding high business and ethical standards, and reporting on activities and progress towards implementing and promoting the Principles" (PRI, 2014). Meanwhile, UNCTAD, the FAO, IFAD, and the World Bank have developed a similar set of principles, with many of the same provisions, along with commitments to ensure that investments do not compromise, but rather improve food security, and lead to "desirable social and distributional impacts" (UNCTAD, 2014). These voluntary safeguards have been rejected by civil society critics such as GRAIN as a weak set of standards designed to provide a veneer of

social responsibility to land grabbing (GRAIN, 2012), and by scholars for failing to question the underlying assumptions of the land rush as well as its causes (White et al., 2012).

While the processes, politics, and consequences of large-scale land deals vary tremendously across social and geographical contexts, the common thread is a transfer of ownership and control of land and resources away from local communities and actors towards financial capital and corporate interests. Although most of the land grabbing literature has focused on the global South, recent publications have applied the concept to changing patterns of farmland ownership in Western Europe (Franco & Borras, 2013), Québec (L'Italien, 2012), and the U.S (Ross & Mittal, 2014). In the global North, large-scale land deals do not involve the same sort of overt dispossession and human rights abuses, and do not necessarily lead to significant changes in land use or production systems, as has been the case in land grabs occurring in the global South. Indeed, the trends documented in this article involve "willing sellers" and "willing buyers" in a capitalist land market. However, these transactions are made in a highly unequal playing field in which some actors (investors with tens or hundreds of millions of dollars at their disposal) have considerably more resources than others (family farmers). Furthermore, as Sommerville & Magnan (2015) have argued, farmland buy-ups in places such as Canada are intimately connected to the neoliberal restructuring of the agricultural sector, which has concentrated power and resources in fewer hands. Specifically, the entry of new actors changes the political and economic dynamics of access to and control of farmland, with consequences for family farms of different scales, rural communities, and younger farmers, as discussed below. We therefore use "land grabbing" as a conceptual framework for problematizing the increasingly unequal resources and power of different actors in the market.

According to Cotula (2012), there are a number of complex global drivers of the recent spate of large-scale land deals. First, growing demand for agricultural commodities, including grain for biofuels,[2] has contributed to high food prices and made farmland and primary production more attractive to capital. Second, a range of financial actors have invested large sums in the food and agriculture sectors as a means of mitigating risk, diversifying their portfolios and achieving higher returns, a phenomenon referred to as the "financialization" of agriculture. This trend was, at least in part, a reaction to the global financial crisis of 2007–08, which led investors to seek profit-making opportunities from high food prices, food price volatility, and rising land prices. Third, governments have played an important role, as target countries encourage large-scale investment in their agricultural sectors and investor countries launch new projects to improve their food security by off-shoring the production of key commodities.

A number of other scholars have linked growing investor interest in farmland with the financialization of the agri-food and natural resource sectors (Burch & Lawrence, 2009; Fairbairn, 2014; Gunnoe, 2014). Financialization is occurring at many different links along the

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[2] Demand for biofuels has become less important in recent years as new oil production, particularly U.S. shale oil, has contributed to lower energy prices. With higher domestic oil production, biofuels are also becoming less important to the American strategy of energy self-sufficiency.

agri-food chain, including farm inputs, food processing, the global food commodities trade, as well as farmland (Isakson, 2014; Clapp, 2014). Investment firms tout farmland as a high-performing investment, an inflation hedge, a portfolio diversification option, a risk management tool, even "gold with yield"—a phrase used by some farmland investment advocates, including Agcapita Farmland Investment Partnership, one of Canada's largest farmland investment funds (Agcapita, 2009; Fairbairn, 2014). As Fairbairn (2014) has argued, "the current wave of farmland investment combines a renewed interest in productive, real assets with an underlying adherence to the logic of financialization" (p. 779). Although some financial analysts and investors consider farmland investment a return to "real" as opposed to "speculative" investments (like derivatives), there is clearly a speculative dimension to this trend. Investors treat farmland as a financial asset to the extent that they are banking on capital appreciation as a source of profits. The expectation of capital appreciation is in turn a bet on rising food commodity prices, driven by macro trends such as increased global demand for food, fuel, and fibre. The speculative dimension of farmland investment is particularly evident in the "own lease-out" model, described below, where investors assume no exposure to production risks (or rewards), but simply hold the assets in anticipation of rising land prices (ibid., p. 786).

It is in this context that a range of entities has, since the mid-2000s, begun to buy large tracts of Saskatchewan farmland. Sommerville and Magnan (2015) have documented the emergence of a number of farmland investment firms (FIFs), whose core business is to build a portfolio of land on behalf of investors, then rent out the land to independent farm operators. These firms have amassed several hundred thousand acres of land worth hundreds of millions of dollars. In early 2014, one of the key FIFs, Assiniboia Farmland Limited Partnership, sold its entire portfolio to the Canadian Pension Plan Investment Board for $128 million; Assiniboia continues to manage this portfolio on behalf of its new owner (CCPIB, 2013). The FIFs are motivated both by the prospect of capital gains from rising land prices and the steady income provided through leases.

Other large-scale buyers, which we call farmer/investor hybrids, are private individuals such as Cor Van Raay, or corporate farming entities such as Nil-Ray Farms Ltd., part of a conglomerate of agri- and other businesses that, until recently, included one of Canada's largest beef packing plants and may still include several cattle auction marts.[3] Less is known about these private buyers than the FIFs; for instance, it is unclear whether they directly manage agricultural production on their land or rent it out to others. They nonetheless are accumulating large landholdings, may have few or no ties to the local community, and are therefore considered alongside other outside farmland buyers. The Players section of this article provides more information on the farmer/investor hybrid category.

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[3] Nilsson Bros. sold its XL food plant in Brooks, Alberta to the Brazilian JBS in 2012.

Saskatchewan farmland: Policy, economic and demographic changes

There are several reasons why Saskatchewan farmland has become particularly attractive to investors of different stripes. To begin with, Saskatchewan liberalized its farmland ownership laws in 2002 by amending the *Saskatchewan Farm Security Act*. Until that year, ownership of Saskatchewan farmland was restricted to Saskatchewan citizens and Saskatchewan-owned agricultural corporations (Ferguson & Furtan, 2006). Legislation in 2002 expanded ownership provisions to all Canadian citizens and to certain classes of Canadian-owned corporations. In announcing the legislation, the provincial government indicated that the changes were intended to send the message to all Canadians that "Saskatchewan is open to outside investment" (Government of Saskatchewan, 2002). This policy change triggered a great deal of investor interest in Saskatchewan farmland (Hursh, 2010), in part because some believed that the previous restrictions had kept provincial land prices artificially low. Indeed, Saskatchewan farmland values have historically been lower than those of neighbouring provinces and are still much lower than farmland prices in other countries. According to Savills (2012), the average price of Saskatchewan farmland in 2011 was US$650/acre compared to nearly US$3,035/acre in the US and US$9,025/acre in the UK.[4] In recent years, Saskatchewan farmland values have been increasing considerably and are "catching up" to those in the other Prairie provinces. Between 2007 and 2013, average farmland values increased by 109% (FCC, 2013). Investors are also drawn to Saskatchewan for its abundance of high quality farmland, industrialized farming sector, modern infrastructure, and stable legal and political environment (Sommerville & Magnan, 2015).

The large-scale transfer of farmland to new investors is occurring in the context of the ongoing restructuring of the prairie agricultural sector. There has been a significant reorientation of agricultural policy and market structures as successive governments have embraced neoliberalism since the 1980s (Knuttila, 2003). This reorientation has involved the implementation of "free trade" agreements such as NAFTA and the WTO, cuts to or the elimination of key farm programs, the elimination of grain transportation subsidies (the Crow Benefit), repeated overhauls of farm income stabilization programs, the privatization of farmer-owned grain handling cooperatives (the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, and similar cooperatives in neighbouring provinces), and the elimination of single-desk wheat and barley marketing through the Canadian Wheat Board (for the latter, see Magnan, 2014). These changes generally eroded economic conditions for family farms, even as farm productivity, output, and export volumes increased steadily (Wiebe, 2012).

The agricultural sector in Canada has undergone a process of continual consolidation for many decades, as farm families exit the sector and remaining farms get larger, an issue to which we return below. The result is a sector in which a small number of very large farms account for the bulk of production, but which is still subject to a great deal of volatility. Low net farm incomes have plagued farmers in Saskatchewan and Canada for much of the past three decades

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[4] These figures were converted to US$/hectare by the authors.

(Figure 1). Many farm families have had to rely on off-farm income, government assistance, net worth drawdown, and borrowed money in order to supplement their inadequate farming incomes. As a result, farm debt has reached record levels: $78 billion in Canada in 2013; $10.7 billion in Saskatchewan—up 60% over the past 10 years and continuing to rise.[5] While net incomes since 2008 have been much better, weakened financial conditions, overhanging debt loads, rapidly rising land prices, competition from non-farmers, and continued uncertainty make it difficult for many farmers to buy land.
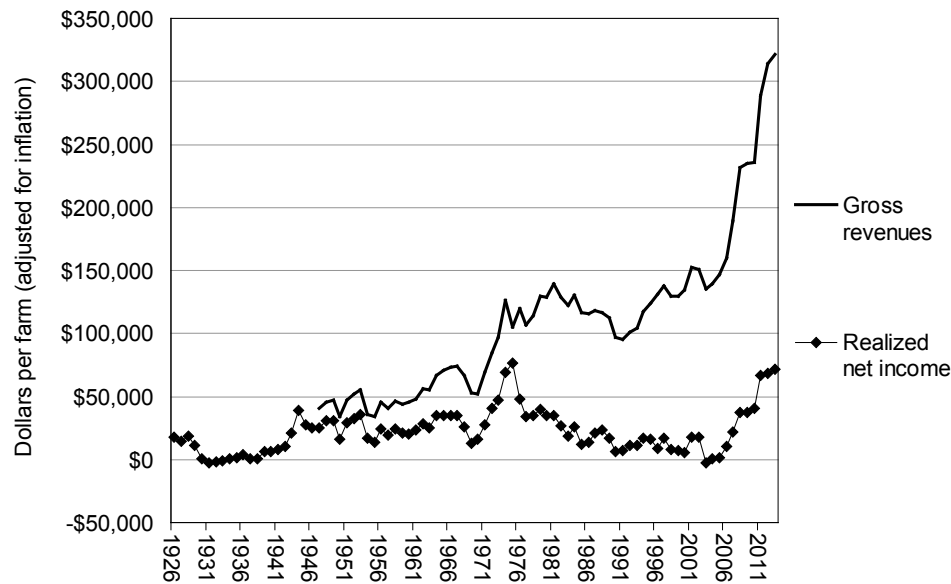

Figure 1. Saskatchewan gross farm revenues and net farm income, 1926–2013, per farm average, adjusted for inflation. Realized net farm income is the money that farms have left over after all bills and expenses are paid, but before any payments are made to farm family members for their labour and management. Sources: 1926–2012: Stats. Can. CANSIM Tables 002-0001 and 002-0009; 2013 (AAFC 2014).

At the same time, demographic and social changes are affecting the process of intergenerational transfer. Farm operators are getting older and many are nearing retirement age. Further, low net farm incomes combined with good off-farm job prospects for young people in Saskatchewan mean that, on many family farms, the generation that would otherwise take over the operation has left to work elsewhere—often in cities. As a result, retiring farmers may sell their land to neighbouring farmers or other buyers, including investors, interrupting the process of intergenerational transfer and contributing to the consolidation of land holdings. With rising land prices in recent years, the prospect of selling land and retiring can be very enticing for older farmers. By contrast, high land prices pose a barrier to entry for anyone wishing to enter farming, especially young farmers and new farmers.

These conditions have played a role in the emergence of new models of farmland ownership and investment (Sommerville & Magnan, 2015). For instance, some of the farmland investment firms partner with farmers who want to expand their land base, but without taking on any additional debt. In these cases, the investment firm will purchase land identified by the farmer and lease it to them, allowing them to optimize the use of their labour and/or machinery.

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[5] Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 002-0008, Farm debt outstanding, classified by lender.

This contributes to the further consolidation of agricultural production under fewer operators. In other cases, investment firms argue that they may be facilitating a different form of farm "succession," as they buy out retiring farmers and lease the land to the farm family's next generation. The idea is that this allows the younger generation, who may not be able to afford to purchase the land, to continue farming and gradually buy back into the farm.[6] In short, the financialization of prairie agriculture is both a response to and an extension of the restructuring of the sector under neoliberalism.

We do not wish to suggest that all instances of farmland concentration constitute "land grabbing." Rather, we posit that there is a complex relationship between the ongoing concentration of ownership and control over agricultural resources and the entry of new actors— the "land grabbers." These trends may reinforce one another as more concentrated landholdings become appealing targets for outside investment, and also as the new actors become large landowners.

Previous research has identified some of the macro trends driving changing patterns of farmland ownership, as well as some of the strategies and motivations of the new farmland owners. However, to our knowledge no study to date has examined in detail the nature and extent of ownership change in a particular geographic location in Canada. We address this gap by providing a fine-grained analysis of farmland ownership change in three Saskatchewan RMs. In the next section, we describe the methodology developed to track these changes.

Methodology

In Canada, governments do not publish data in formats that can be used to identify or quantify shifts in farmland ownership. Instead, published data is highly aggregated and makes little distinction between, for instance, land owned by farm families and that owned by highly-capitalized investment funds. Because of this, there is little information and few reports available to the public or policy makers on farmland ownership concentration or other shifts in ownership patterns in Canada. There do exist, however, comprehensive and fine-grained *raw* data on land ownership: land titles records that list the owners, size, and location of every parcel in a given province. We use this detailed data, coupled with geographic information systems (GIS) mapping software and other analytic programs, to analyze shifts in farmland ownership in three rural municipalities (RMs) in Saskatchewan, Canada.[7]

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[6] To what extent this is a desired form of farm succession can certainly be questioned, but it may help explain the appeal of land sales in some circumstances. Among some of the most important concerns are the following: first, if the younger generation actually succeeds in re-purchasing the land it is not at all guaranteed that ownership would remain in the hands of the family over generations as is more common with a successful farm succession process; second, there is also the question of whether or not the younger generation has simply been forced out of the market due to rapidly rising and high land prices.

[7] Other researchers have used similar methodologies to study changing land ownership patterns in other jurisdictions. An excellent example is Pritchard et al.'s (2012) complex and comprehensive study of rural Australia.

We obtained a dataset of all the land titles in the agricultural region of the province of Saskatchewan (Figure 2) from Information Service Corporation (ISC)—a public-private partnership 31% owned by Saskatchewan's government. That dataset includes the name(s) of the owner(s) of each title. Analysis of this data, and similar data available free to the public at ISC's website, allowed us to begin to assemble a list of investors, investment funds, pension plans, farmer/investor hybrids, large farmers, and other highly capitalized entities that own large areas of Saskatchewan farmland. To expand this list and better understand who was buying up land, we sent inquiries to approximately forty farmers and rural residents across the province.[8] The names and contact information for those people were obtained from a farm organization, the National Farmers Union, and many people contacted are members of that organization. We asked these rural residents to look over recent maps of their RMs and surrounding RMs and send back lists of landowner names they saw on those maps that were, or appeared to be, investment companies, numbered companies, and other owners whose names the local residents did not recognize and who own large areas of farmland. The names provided by these rural residents were further researched through corporate registries and online sources. Finally, we drew on media reports and academic journal articles to ascertain additional names of investment funds and other non-farmers buying farmland.

Utilizing the corporate registries in four provinces, media reports, company websites, and other public sources, we refined our list of the major entities buying farmland. Clearly, no such list can be complete: farmland investment is non-reported and non-transparent and it is not possible to research every landowner. More specifically, it is not possible to identify individuals who may have purchased 1,000 or 2,000 acres as an investment. Nonetheless, the lists we have assembled include most of the large investor entities (holdings over 10,000 acres) and, given the comprehensiveness and detail of our dataset, our list is probably more complete than previous lists, or lists from other jurisdictions. This article demonstrates that, where public land-title datasets can be obtained, it is possible to conduct detailed studies of land grabbing, concentration, and other changes in patterns of land ownership and control.

Next, we analyzed ownership patterns in the province's 296 rural municipalities to find RMs where investment companies and similar entities were active. We selected three RMs as our focus: RM 71, Excel, southwest of Regina; RM 128, Lajord, southeast of Regina; and RM 316, Harris, southwest of Saskatoon (Figure 2). Our selections were based on two criteria: the portion of land in the RM owned by investment companies and similar entities; and the diversity of the investment companies and other large entities represented within the three RMs. Our aim was not to profile average or randomly chosen RMs, but rather to focus on RMs where large shifts are occurring and where a diverse cross-section of buyers are active so that we can best illustrate the changes underway and the large entities driving those changes. Our larger analysis of the landowner database for the entire agriculture region of the province reveals that our three chosen RMs are not exceptional; rather, they are representative of dozens of RMs. Our

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[8] Pritchard et al. (2012) point out that others have successfully used local informants in studies of landownership patterns as a way to triangulate the information provided by land titles.

analysis of the titleholder dataset continues, and will form the basis for a province-wide analysis in an upcoming article.

Table 1 lists the physical and population characteristics of the three RMs. Figure 2 (see page 25) shows the locations of these RMs within the province of Saskatchewan.

	Area of RM (square kms)	Area of RM (acres)	Area of farms (acres)	Pop., 2011 (persons)	Pop., 1991 (persons)	Pop. change, 1991 to 2011 (percent)
RM 71, Excel	1,122	277,258	263,034	427	630	-32%
RM 128, Lajord	944	233,235	205,133	993	1,032	-4%
RM 316, Harris	805	199,024	134,897	224	295	-24%
Average for 3 RMs	957	236,479	201,121	548	652	-16%
All Sask. RMs, total	307,847	76,070,650	61,628,148	147,585	209,923	-30%

Table 1. Characteristics of selected rural municipalities. Data sources: area of RMs: Statistics Canada 2011b; area of farms: Statistics Canada 2011a; population in 2011: Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics 2012; population in 1991: Saskatchewan Bureau of Statistics 2006.

To reveal the shifts in farmland ownership, we compared the current situation to a time in the past: the year 1994. We selected that year for several reasons. The twenty-year span between 1994 and 2014 includes the 2003 deregulation of farmland ownership in Saskatchewan (see Context section, above). The 1994 to 2014 span also encompasses the commodity and real estate booms of the 2000s. Also, 1994 was the year the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was implemented in Canada, the US, and Mexico, accelerating a range of changes in agriculture and all sectors of the economy. Although 1994 is our comparative year, it was not possible in every case to have access to land ownership data for that year. Such data were obtained from archived maps of the three RMs. In cases where the selected RMs did not produce updated maps in 1994, we chose a year that was as close as possible. Comparative data is therefore taken from maps updated in 1996 for RM 71; late 1993 for RM 128; and 1994 for RM 316. Since the land-title data were not available in digital format, we interviewed long-term residents in the area who had direct experience with their rural municipal office, either as a municipal reeve, administrator, or municipal council member, and systematically went over these 1990s maps to identify title holders. We were confident in using the methodology of oral history in these cases since those interviewed were not only long-time members of the community but in their public roles they were also responsible for being informed and/or documenting changes in land tenure in their municipality. There is a long history of growing trust in oral history demonstrated in both historical and anthropological research. Especially when using the practice of "sparking techniques" (i.e., visuals such as maps), memory has often proven to be remarkably informative and accurate. Our experience, then, supports arguments about the reliability of oral testimony and memory that has long been debated.[9]

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[9] See, for example, the journal *Oral History Review*.
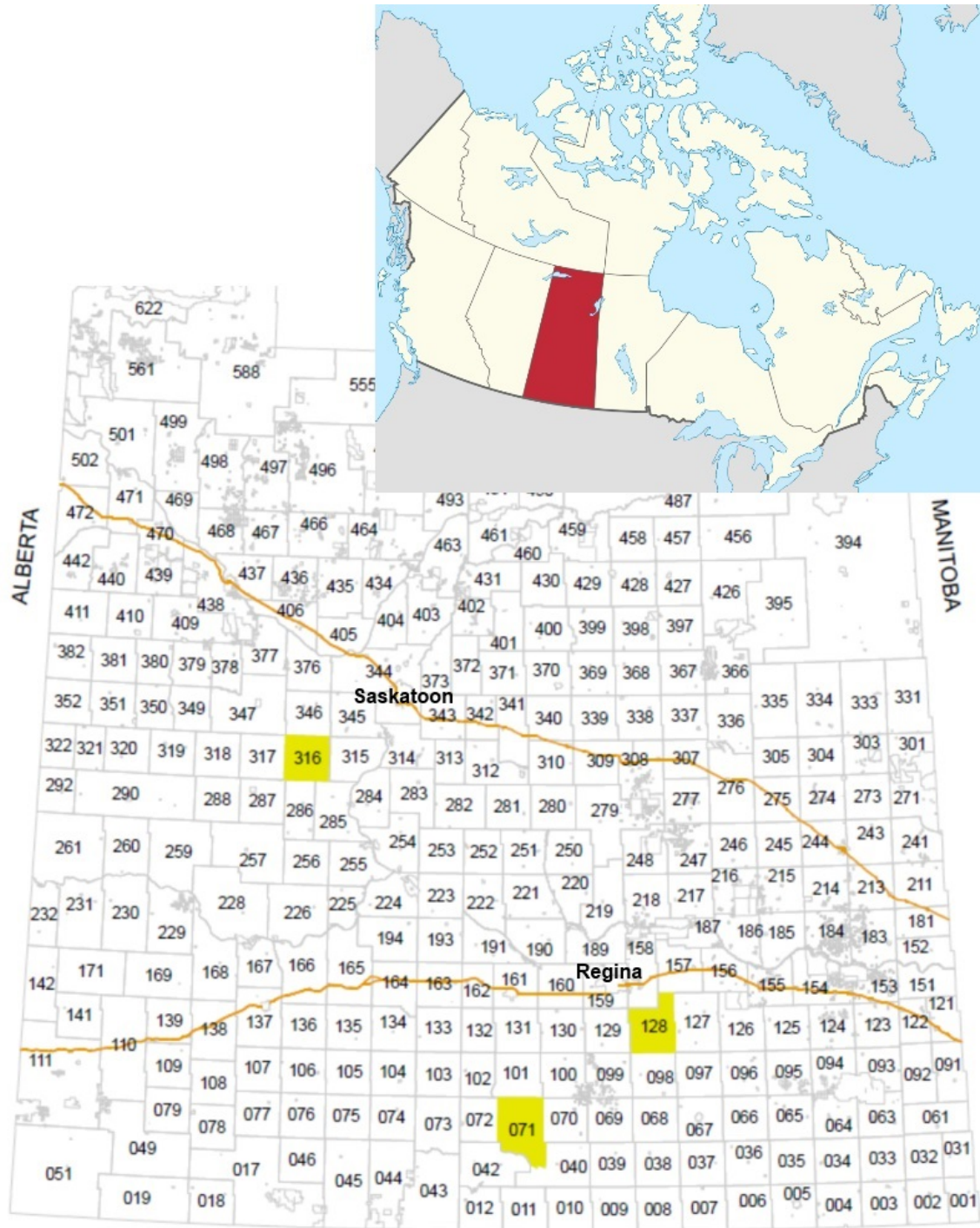
Figure 2. Map of three selected RMs (highlighted in yellow) in the province of Saskatchewan, and the location of the province within Canada. Credits: Map of Saskatchewan RMs prepared by Sarina Gersher using ArcGIS and source map data from Information Services Corporation (Including Sask Grid, Rural Municipalities Boundary Overlay, Sask Surface Cadastral, and Ownership Datasets). Source map data utilized and reproduced with the permission of Information Services Corporation. Additional GIS data from GeoBase; inset map of Canada from Wikipedia (Creative Commons licence).

Further, to quantify changes in land ownership concentration we have introduced a metric we call the CLO4: the Concentration of Land Ownership by the four largest owners.[10] We were inspired by the well-known industrial organization metric, CR4: the Concentration Ratio of the largest four firms (National Resources Committee, 1939; Rosenbluth, 1955). The CR4 measure reflects the cumulative share of the four largest firms in a given market. Similarly, the CLO4 quantifies concentration of ownership and control. CLO4 values are most revealing when compared across time, as we do in this article.

Each CLO4 is essentially a fraction, having a numerator (the area of land owned by the largest four entities in a given region) and a denominator (the total farmland area of the region). For the denominator, we used Statistics Canada's farm area for each RM (Statistics Canada, 2011a). For the numerator, we summed the land owned by the four largest private landowning entities (excluding lands owned by the Crown, the Saskatchewan Land Bank Commission, banks and credit unions, and community pastures). Though they did not occur near the top of lists of the largest landowners in the RMs under consideration, we have also excluded railways, school boards, wildlife preservation agencies, utility and resource companies, and First Nations lands. In doing so, we intend to capture private owners of farmland used for agricultural production. Also, in determining the largest landowners, we aggregated land that appeared under slightly different, but overlapping, title-holder names. This approach, referred to as the literal-legal methodology (used, for example, by Pritchard et al. 2012), involves combining titles when 50% or more of the names on titles are the same. For example, three titles with listed owners John Smith, John and Mary Smith, and Mary Smith would be considered one owner.[11] We acknowledge that this approach can fail to combine entities that are, in fact, closely linked, e.g., where John and Mary Smith hold no land in joint names. Moreover, this methodology can combine entities that are, in fact, separate, e.g. divorced spouses who hold land in joint names. That said, because we are aggregating only among the largest entities in each RM, and because those are often corporations or similar entities, we believe that both miscombinations and missed combinations are limited and have little effect on CR4 values. We also aggregated individual owners with corporations owned by those individuals and we aggregated holdings by multiple corporations that had clear ownership linkages (for corporate inter-ownership examples see the Players section, below). Despite its limitations, this approach has the advantage of aggregating landholdings that are in all likelihood under the effective and legal control of particular individuals, families, or corporate entities.

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[10] To quantify inequality in land distribution some analysts use Gini coefficients. We chose not to use this metric because it requires a determination of the total number of landowners, and thorough knowledge of how the many thousands of land titles should be aggregated.

[11] In adopting this approach, we in no way endorse the assumption that women's property ownership should be subsumed into the family unit simply by the act of marriage.

Limitations and potential error

As noted, given the complexities of a one-million-plus-entry titleholder dataset, it is not possible to locate all investor entities, nor is it possible to determine all interconnections between entities. Also, while this article's analysis for 2014 relies predominantly on datasets and calculations, the analysis for 1994 was accomplished by having local residents examine their RM map for that year (or as close a year as possible). Thus, the methods for analyzing 1994 and 2014 data differ and may introduce some error. That said, we took such differences into consideration and believe that any resulting errors are small and would not alter the main findings of this article.

Findings

Mapping changes in ownership patterns

The three Saskatchewan RMs we studied showed large changes in land ownership patterns in the two decades between 1994 and 2014. Figures 3 to 5 depict one aspect of the shift: the area of land now owned by investment companies and similar entities. In all three RMs, there has been a sharp increase in the amount of land owned by investment funds, pension plans, other highly capitalized entities, and farmer/investor hybrids (Table 2), and there has been a sharp increase in concentration of ownership (Table 3).

Figure 3 (see page 28) highlights the land in RM 71 in 2014 owned by investors, investment companies, and similar entities. Those entities own more than 22,474 acres in the RM—over 8% of the farmland (Table 2). The authors considered including a comparative map for 1994, but that map would have been blank, that is, it would have shown no land owned by investment companies and similar entities. Nearly all of the 22,474 acres in the RM now owned by large, non-farmer investment interests have been bought up in just the past decade. The names and details of the pension funds, investment companies, and investors are given below, in the Players section.

Figure 4 highlights the land owned by pension funds, investment companies, investors, and similar entities in RM 128 in 2014—19,301 acres. Again, had we included a comparative 1994 map it would be largely blank. One caveat, however, is that land ownership in this RM in 1994 was more complex than in the other two. Several parcels appear to have been owned by people living outside Canada, some of whom rented their land to others. The largest holding of this type was 1,920 acres. We were not able to determine if this land should be classified as belonging to an investor. Also, that holding, though large, was much smaller than the 10,000 to 100,000+ acre holdings of the investment companies we detail in the Players section. Thus, as Table 3 shows, there may have been some land in the RM in 1994 that could be classified as belonging to investors, though this is uncertain. That said, the area of such land would be small—not more than 1.5% of the farmland area.

Figure 5 highlights land ownership in RM 316, Harris, in 2014. The situation in this RM is different than that in our other two study RMs. In RM 316, it is not investment companies or pension plans that are rapidly expanding their landholdings, instead, it is entities such as Nil-Ray Farms Ltd. and Cor Van Raay and his Van Raay Land Inc., which we classify as farmer/investor hybrids. These entities have bought 17,506 acres in RM 316, largely in the past decade. Moreover, Cor Van Raay and his company have bought almost 20,000 acres in the adjoining RM: Fertile Valley, number 285. A comparative 1994 map of land owned by investors, investment companies, and farmer/investor hybrids in the RM would show just 160 acres.
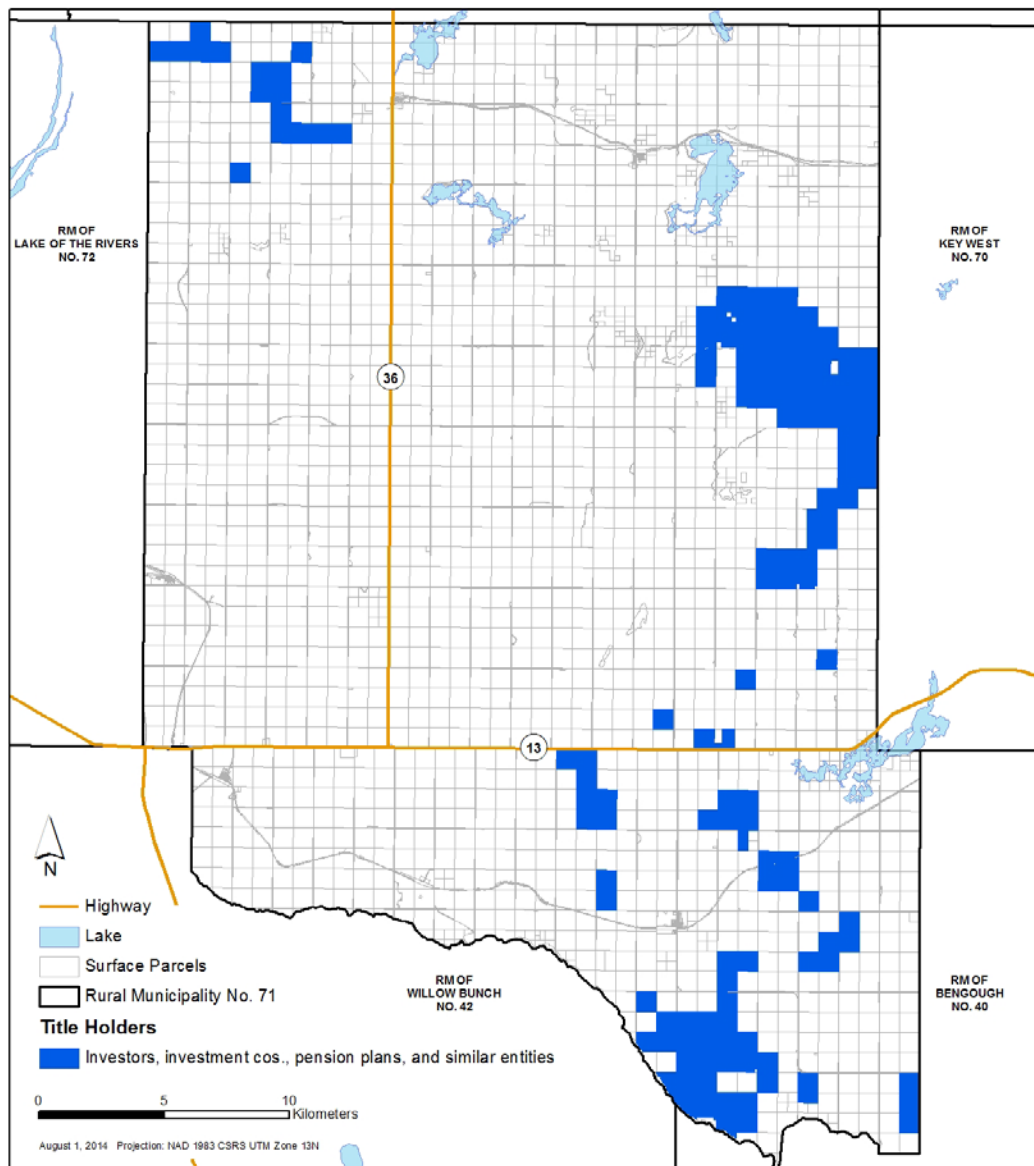
Figure 3. RM 71, Excel, in 2014 showing the area of land owned by investors (blue). Map prepared by Sarina Gersher using source map data from Information Services Corporation (Including Sask Grid, Rural Municipalities Boundary Overlay, Sask Surface Cadastral, and Ownership Datasets). Source map data utilized and reproduced with the permission of Information Services Corporation. Additional GIS data from Natural Resources Canada and GeoBase.
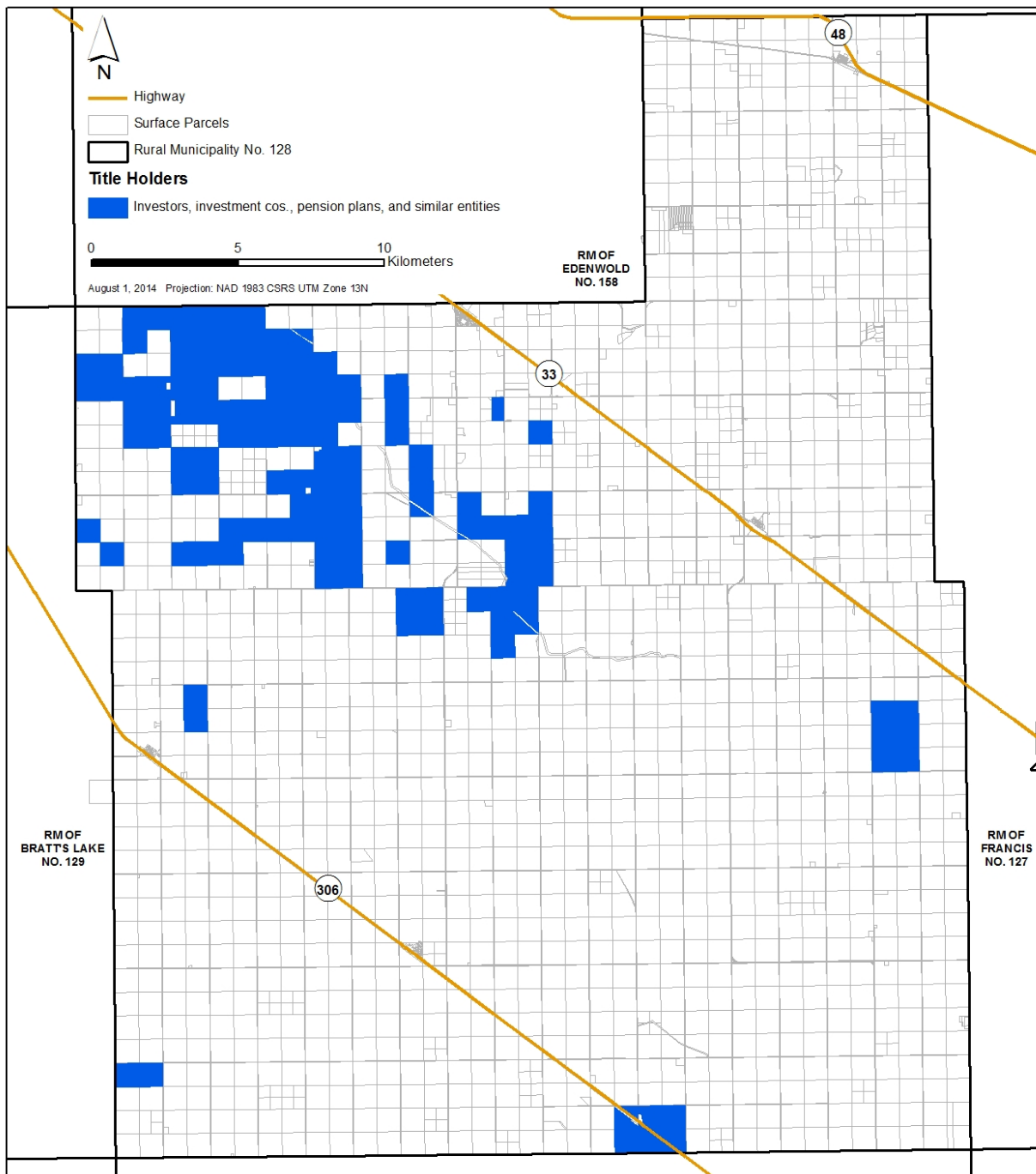
Figure 4. RM 128, Lajord, in 2014 showing the area of land owned by investors (blue). Map prepared by Sarina Gersher using source map data from Information Services Corporation (Including Sask Grid, Rural Municipalities Boundary Overlay, Sask Surface Cadastral, and Ownership Datasets). Source map data utilized and reproduced with the permission of Information Services Corporation. Additional GIS data from Natural Resources Canada and GeoBase.

Figure 5. RM 316, Harris, in 2014 showing the area of land owned by investors (blue) and land owned by farmer/investor hybrids (purple). Map prepared by Sarina Gersher using source map data from Information Services Corporation (Including Sask Grid, Rural Municipalities Boundary Overlay, Sask Surface Cadastral, and Ownership Datasets). Source map data utilized and reproduced with the permission of Information Services Corporation. Additional GIS data from Natural Resources Canada and GeoBase.

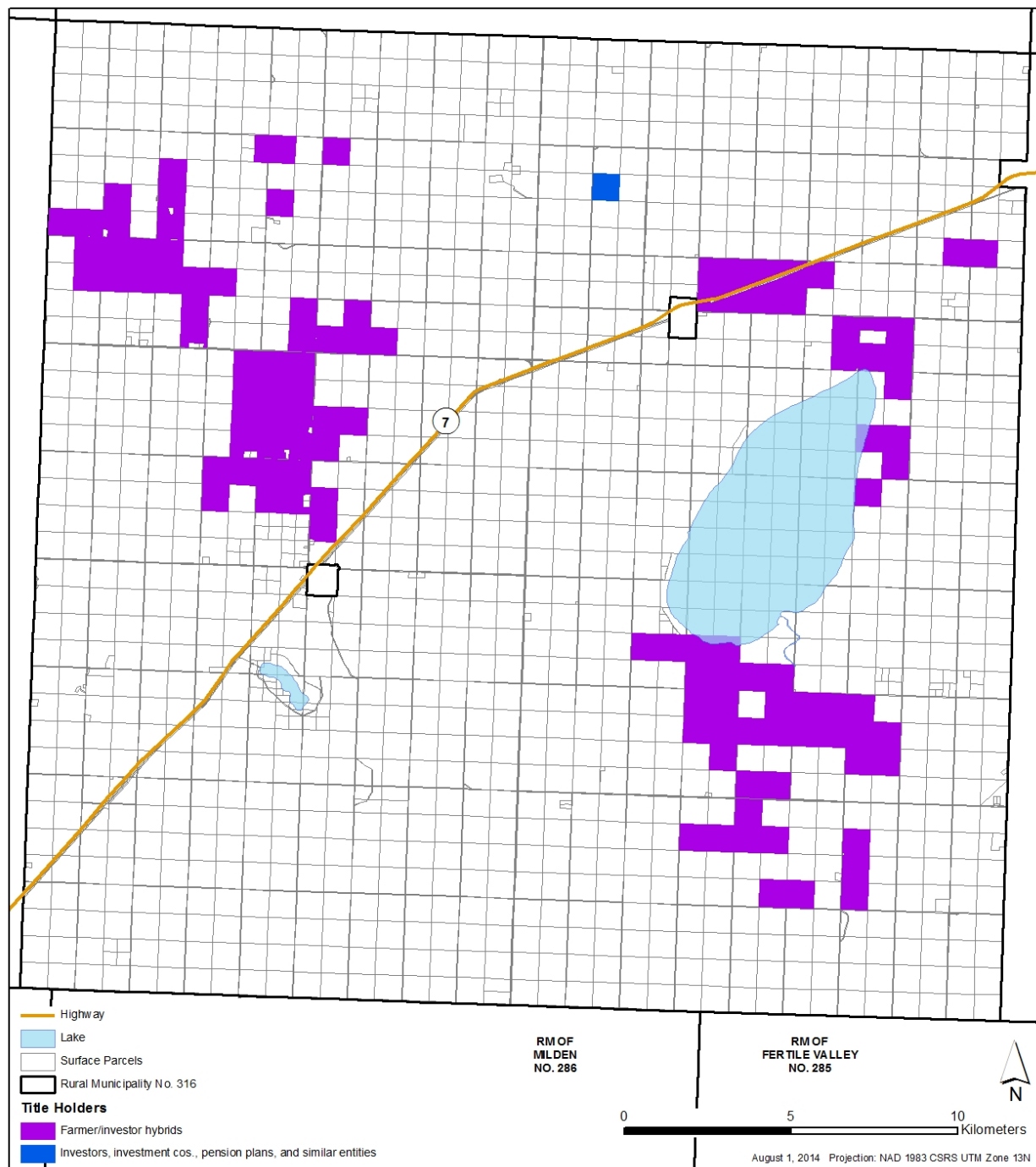|	Area of farmland owned by investment funds, pension plans, and other investors (acres)		Area of farmland owned by farmer/ investor hybrids (acres)		Portion owned by investment funds, etc. and hybrids (percent)	
	1994	2014	1994	2014	1994	2014
RM 71, Excel	~0	22,474	0	0	<<1%	8.5%
RM 128, Lajord	0–3,200	19,301	0	0	<1.5%	9.4%
RM 316, Harris	160	160	0	17,506	<<1%	13.1%
Average for 3 RMs						10.3%

Table 2. Area and portion of land owned by investment funds, pension plans, and other investors or by farmer/investor hybrids, RMs 71, 128, and 316, 1994 and 2014. Data sources: 2014 source map data adapted from Information Services Corporation Ownership Dataset. Source map data reproduced with the permission of Information Services Corporation. 1994 data taken from archived maps of individual RMs.

Table 2 quantifies the significant penetration of investment companies, investors, pension plans, and farmer/investor hybrids into the three study RMs. In little more than a decade, these companies and individuals have purchased 10.3% of the farmland in these RMs.[12]

The players: Who is buying Saskatchewan's farmland?

Our study of land titles data reveals many interesting entities buying farmland. Most are new entrants—initiating their purchases within the past decade. Despite this, some already own huge areas of farmland—in some cases more than 100,000 acres province-wide. The classes of entities buying large areas of farmland include public pension plans, investors and investment companies, farmer/investor hybrids, and large-scale farmers.

Public pension plans

Canada Pension Plan. The Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) owns 545 acres in the three study RMs—113,867 acres in the province as a whole. The owner listed on the land titles is 101138678 Saskatchewan Ltd., which is owned by Assiniboia Farmland Holdings Limited Partnership, the General Partner of which is CPPIB Assiniboia Inc. The CPPIB acquired the land in late 2013 from one of Saskatchewan's largest farmland investment companies: Assiniboia Farmland Limited Partnership (CPPIB, 2013). The CPPIB is an arms-length crown corporation that manages approximately $200 billion in public pension assets. It plans to buy as much as $3 billion worth of additional farmland in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Brazil by the end of the decade (Atkins, 2013).

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[12] Of course, an interesting question here is what share of the land in the area has been placed on the market, and thus what percentage of this share is being purchased by investment companies, investors, pension plans and farmer/investor hybrids. We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for this important question that we will pursue in the province-wide study on land grabbing and land concentration that we are currently conducting.

Investors and investment funds, companies, and partnerships

Agcapita Farmland Investment Partnership. Alberta-based Agcapita GP II Ltd. is the listed owner of 952 acres in the three study RMs. Overall, Agcapita and its investors own a total of 29,661 acres in the province through a number of investment funds (Agcapita GP II Ltd., GP III Ltd., and GP IV Ltd.).

Agco Ag Ventures Limited Partnership. The General Partner in Agco Ag Venture LP is 101168777 Saskatchewan Ltd. That company is the listed titleholder on 318 acres in the three RMs under study, and 15,453 acres in the province. SaskWorks labour-sponsored venture capital fund has a $20 million investment in Agco, which SaskWorks describes as "focused on the acquisition and lease-out of farmland in Saskatchewan" (SaskWorks, 2011) and "a low-risk form of participation in the growing market of agricultural investment" (SaskWorks, 2014).

AGMW Regina Farms Ltd. AGMW is the listed owner of 9,249 acres in the three RMs and 21,205 acres in the province as a whole. Shareholders of AGMW include Vancouver's Aquilini family (via 638769 B.C. Ltd.), who also own the Vancouver Canucks hockey team; Lululemon founder and part owner Dennis (Chip) Wilson (via 0823038 B.C. Ltd.); and Frank Giustra, President of Fiore Capital Corporation.

Andjelic, Robert, and Andjelic Land Inc. Mr. Andjelic and his corporation are the listed owners of 17,429 acres in the three study RMs, and more than 161,000 acres in the province. Mr. Andjelic, who lives in Alberta, appears to be the largest private owner of farmland in Saskatchewan. He owns land in 79 RMs and, according to interviews with local farmers, he rents his land to local farmers. His holdings may be worth $100 to $200 million dollars.[13]

Blueberry & Papaya Farms Ltd. Blueberry & Papaya Farms and affiliated companies—Topsoil Farm Land Management (II) Inc., Kiwi & Mango Farms Ltd., Black Dirt Farm Land Management Inc., PFM Holdings Inc., PFM Capital Inc., and others—are among the largest landowners in the province with 84,311 acres overall, and 319 in the study RMs. Investors in Topsoil Farm Land Management (II) Inc. own approximately 23,440 acres, according to land titles data. Werklund Capital Corporation, based in Calgary, says that it is "the larger owner of Topsoil partnership units" and that "The TopSoil Farm Land Management Fund focuses on the acquisition and lease-out of top quality Saskatchewan farmland to first tier producers" (Werklund, 2014). Figure 6 (see page 33) gives a sense of the complexity of the ownership structures and financial connections of these investment vehicles, especially in contrast with the simpler structures of owner-operator family farms.

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[13] This range is an approximation intended to give some sense of the value of 161,000 acres of farmland. The range is based on a land price range from approximately $600 to $1,200 per acre.
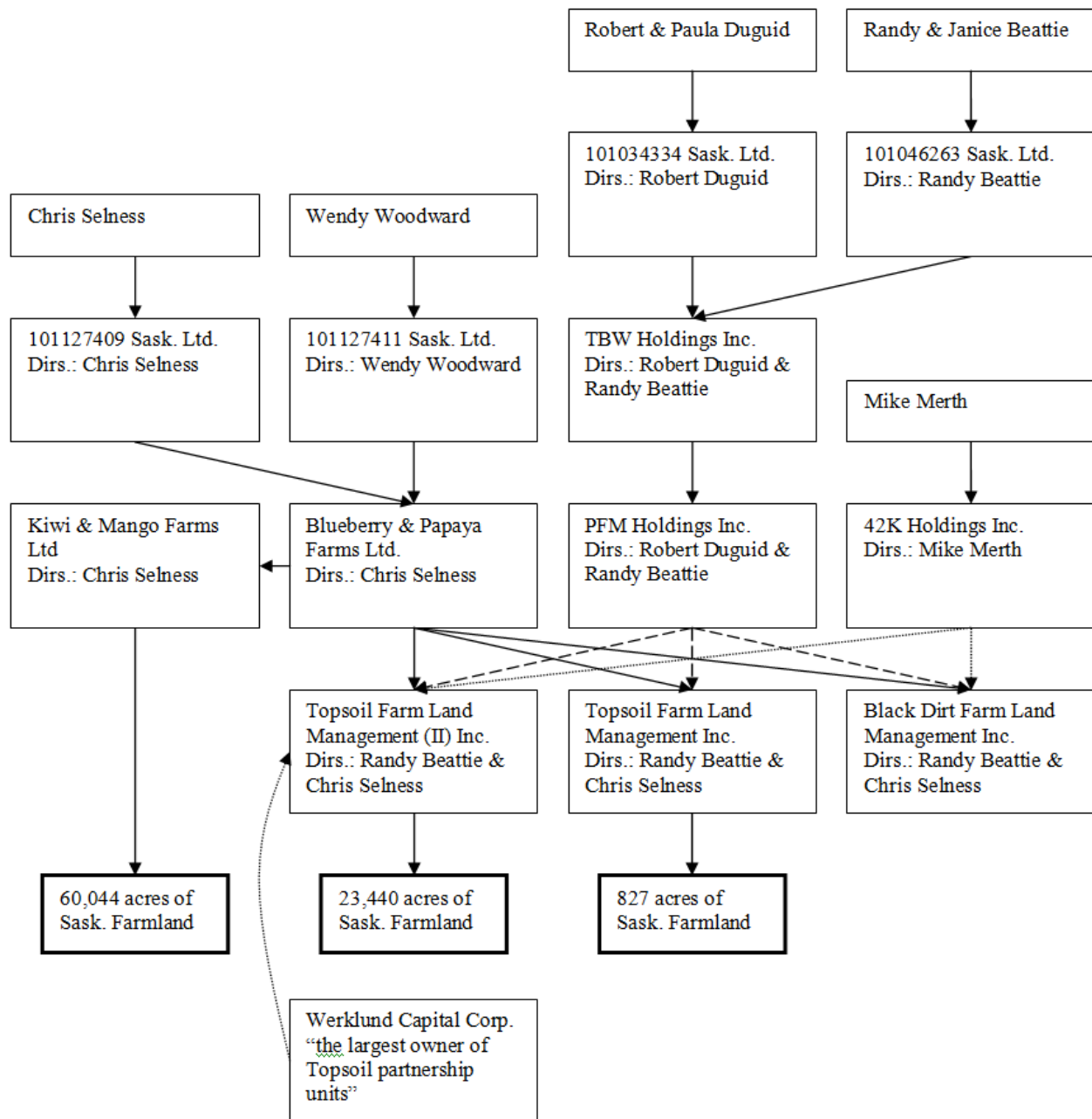
Figure 6. A simplified view of the ownership structure and financial linkages of Blueberry & Papaya Farms Ltd. and affiliated companies. Sources: ISC online Corporate Registry. Note: the actual ownership, investment, and management structure is more complex than shown here, and may differ in details. This graphic is only illustrative of certain connections.

HCI Ventures Inc. HCI is a "land investment company that offers land rental opportunities to Western Canadian farmers" (HCI Venture Ltd., 2014). HCI owns 8,869 in the three study RMs and 113,718 in the province. HCI is owned by the Hokanson family of Alberta (O'Brien & Kirbyson, 2012).

Netherlands Investment Company of Canada Limited. Netherlands Investment Company owns 160 acres in the three study RMs and 12,446 acres in the province. The owner is the United Transatlantic Mortgage Companies, The Hague, Netherlands.

UL Farmlands Ltd. This company has seven shareholders, including four investment or holding companies based in Vancouver. UL Farmlands Ltd. owns 2,071 acres in our target RMs and 9,158 acres in the province as a whole.

Yang's Crop Inc. Yang's Crop Inc. owns 2,001 acres in our three target RMs and 10,031 in the province. Its owner is the British Colombia-based Yang's Magic Crop Limited Partnership.

Farmer/investor hybrids

In studying maps and land titles data we found two entities, Nil-Ray Farms Ltd., and Cor Van Raay and Van Raay Land Inc., that have, in the past decade, bought up tens of thousands of acres of land. These are large, rapidly growing entities that have only recently bought land in the RMs in question, and, as such, they differ from long-established, usually smaller and slower expanding family farms. But Nil-Ray Farms and Cor Van Raay and his company also differ from investment companies in that the former appear to be taking a role in managing the farming operations on their lands (though it is likely that they are also interested in the long-term returns on their sizable land investments). To distinguish these entities from family farms on the one hand, and investment companies on the other, we therefore label them farmer/investor hybrids.

Cor Van Raay and Van Raay Land Inc. Cor Van Raay and his company are the listed owners of 8,596 acres in our three study RMs and 33,730 acres in the province. He acquired much of this land in the past ten years and he manages the farming of the land he purchases.

Nil-Ray Farms Ltd. Nil-Ray is owned by the Nilsson brothers, Brian and Lee (via 400369 Alberta Ltd.) Until recently, the Nilsson brothers owned one of Canada's two largest beef-packing plants. They continue to own cattle auction markets and other assets through a complex corporate structure. Nil-Ray Farms owns 8,923 acres in our study RMs and 14,802 in the province.

Concentration measures

As noted in the methodology section, to quantify changes in land ownership concentration we use the CLO4, the Concentration of Land Ownership among the four largest private owners. Table 3 shows CLO4 values for the three RMs for 1994 and 2014. In each RM, the portion of land owned by the largest four owners has more than doubled, or nearly tripled. On average, in these RMs, the largest four entities own 21% of all the farmland—more than a fifth. This is up from just 8.6% two decades ago. One driver for these rapid increases in concentration is recent purchases by farmland investment funds, investors, pension plans, and farmer/investor hybrids. Four such entities, with holdings ranging from 84,000 to 161,000 acres each, make up the four largest private landowners in the province. But another driver, perhaps equally or more significant, is the expansion of established, locally based family farms. In all three study RMs, one or two of the four largest landowners appear to be family farms. And if we include collectively owned Hutterian Brethren farms in that definition, then in each RM two or three of the four largest landowners are farms, not investors, investment companies, or farmer/investor hybrids. Our study thus reveals a dual phenomenon: rapid farmland acquisition by investment companies and similar entities and, simultaneously, expansion of some existing farms and attendant increases in land ownership concentration.

	CLO4	
	1994	2014
RM 71, Excel	7.3%	15.7%
RM 128, Lajord	6.8%	19.1%
RM 316, Harris	11.8%	28.1%
Average of the 3 RMs	8.6%	21.0%

Table 3. Farmland ownership concentration: CLO4 values for three RMs, 1994 and 2014. Data sources: 2014 source map data adapted from Information Services Corporation Ownership Dataset. Source map data reproduced with the permission of Information Services Corporation. 1994 data taken from archived maps of individual RMs.

Larger farms increase land concentration

Land ownership concentration (the land *owned* by farmers or others) and increasing farm size (a function of land ownership *and* land rental) are linked but distinct phenomena. Because of the importance of rented land in many farm operations, land ownership concentration and farm size measures can move in opposite directions—e.g., farms can get larger but land ownership can become less concentrated—though we would usually expect the two measures to move in tandem. Keeping this distinction between ownership concentration and farm size in mind, it is instructive to examine how the two are related. In addition to land ownership concentration driven by investor purchases, to what extent do purchases by farmers and the expansion of

existing farms contribute to concentration? To answer this question we examined Statistics Canada data and found significant gaps in what these numbers reveal.

There is a long history of increasing farm size in Saskatchewan going back at least to the 1920s (Figure 7). Total land per farm (owned and rented) has increased steadily for many decades. The total area of the average Saskatchewan farm increased from 1,152 acres in 1996 to 1,668 in 2011 (Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture)—a 45% increase in 15 years. Leaving aside rented land for the moment, we see that land owned per farmer grew slowly in the 1980s and early 1990s, but began to increase more rapidly beginning in 1996. From 1996 to 2011, the average area of land owned per farm increased from 697 to 1072 acres, a 54% increase in 15 years. Given the high farmland prices noted above, such rapid expansion is increasingly challenging and costly for farms and requires them to devote more and more resources to farmland acquisition, possibly eroding their long-term viability, economic resilience, and capacity to adapt to challenges and changes. The downside of rapid farm expansion is seen in the 60% increase in farm debt in Saskatchewan in the past decade.
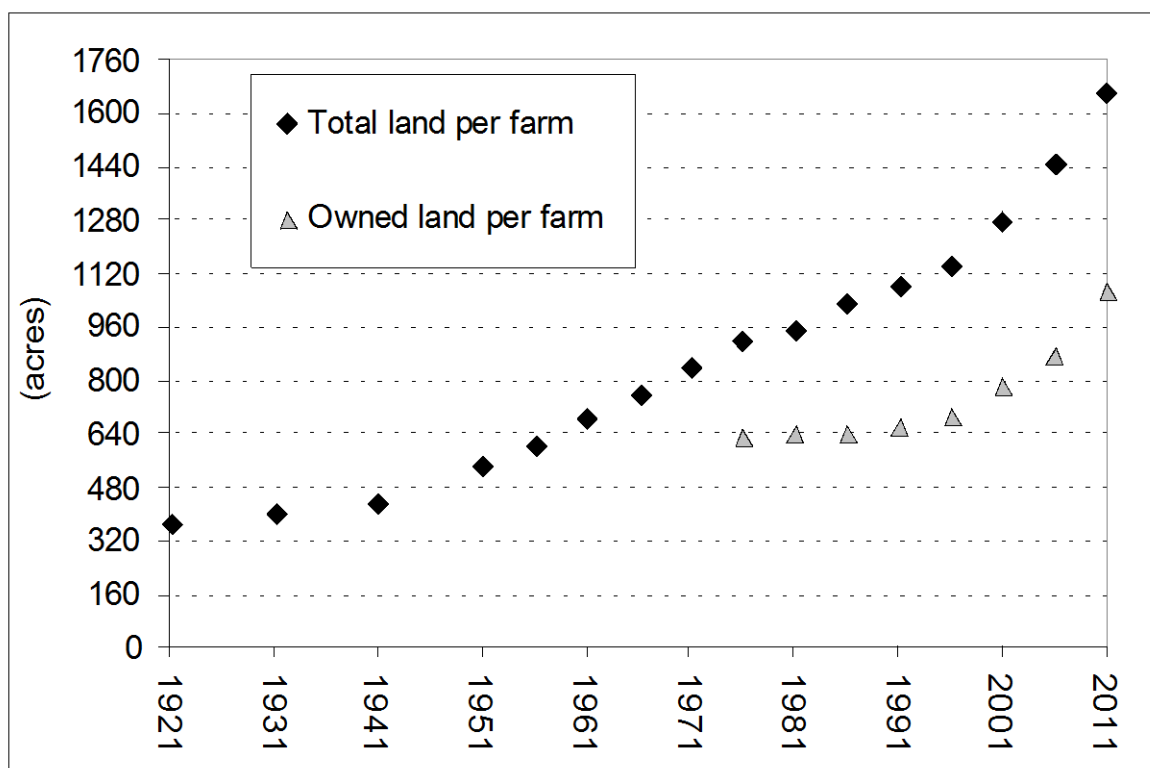
Figure 7: Saskatchewan average farm size (rented and owned land), and average land owned, 1921 to 2011. Sources: Statistics Canada, Selected Historical Data from the Census of Agriculture, Cat. No. 95-632-XWE; and Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, various years.

These changes occurred over the 1996–2011 period, when the number of farms in the province fell from 56,995 to 36,952. In short, there are fewer farmers and each owns more land, as farms

of all sizes continue to get bigger. While additional statistical analysis could shine additional light on the situation, it seems virtually certain that farm expansion is leading to concentration of land ownership among farmers.

Further, Statistics Canada averages may understate farm size and growth rate. According to Statistics Canada, in 2012, the average Saskatchewan farm had revenues of $301,965, an area of 1,668 acres, and therefore revenues averaging $181 per acre (keeping in mind that averages can sometimes paint a distorted picture). Another source, however, tax filer data, shows that farms with revenues over $500,000—just 16% of Saskatchewan farms—produced 64% of revenues in 2012 (Statistics Canada CANSIM 002-0046). These 6,055 large farms accounted for nearly two thirds of Saskatchewan's production and had average revenues of $1.25 million each. If the per-acre revenues of these farms were close to the provincial average of $181 per acre (a good assumption because these farms make up 64% of total revenues and thus dominate the averages), then a farm with $1.25 million in revenues would have a land area of roughly 6,900 acres. Because they produce two thirds of Saskatchewan revenues, these large farms may be more representative of actual farm size than the 1,668 acre farms that Statistics Canada averages imply.

Not only do representative Saskatchewan farms appear to be much larger than averages indicate, the rate of growth may be faster as well. The number of farms with revenues greater than $500,000 tripled between 2005 and 2012, and their share of total revenues nearly doubled from 33% to 64% (Statistics Canada CANSIM 002-0046). While inflation and commodity price changes were a factor in these increases (the $500,000 line has been held constant while inflation eroded the purchasing power of the dollar and some commodity prices increased), given the magnitude of the changes, inflation and commodity price changes can probably explain only a small part of the change. The bulk of the change appears to be a result of Saskatchewan farms rapidly growing in size. This growth is almost certainly contributing to increasing land ownership concentration.

Impact on community cohesion and vitality

Having analyzed and quantified large and rapid changes in concentration, investor ownership, and other land ownership patterns in the three RMs, we now turn to our analysis of the qualitative data collected for this study. This section draws upon existing literature, participant observation, and interviews with residents living in the three municipalities, to explore the subtle but experienced social impact of changing patterns of land ownership in the three municipalities. Most significantly, we focus on the ways in which larger farms are affecting rural life and community cohesion.

Many of the changes and losses that prairie rural communities are currently experiencing have historical roots. The trend towards larger farming units with more concentrated land ownership has meant a continuous decline in the number of farming families. From the peak of farming populations in the 1930s to the present, communities that are primarily reliant on

agriculture have been declining unevenly but steadily over many decades (Carlyle, 1994). As one farmer we interviewed stated, "There is an ongoing emptying of the countryside. Rural communities have been under duress ever since settlement, and what is going on is really part of a long process of de-settlement."

Larger farms and fewer farm families mean that many rural communities are unable to sustain the services and institutions that require a critical mass of users to continue to operate. The steady erosion of schools, hospitals, churches, and post offices, as well as the closing of businesses, banks, and grain elevators creates a downward spiral, making it more difficult to continue to live in these communities. Although this can be partially offset, in some instances, with improved infrastructure and communications systems, the physical decline in many prairie rural communities is visible on town and village main streets. The depopulation of farming communities is even more apparent in the many abandoned farmyards along rural roads. The remnants of working farmyards, where they haven't been entirely erased, are being replaced by more centralized grain and machinery storage yards without human habitations on site.

In the case of local farm families acquiring larger tracts of land, the effects of the consolidation tend to be less visible and dramatic than outside takeovers. However, the shared histories, family, and community ties conspire to mask the underlying changes. As noted above, the patterns of increasing farm size are familiar to rural citizens. Most if not all of the families that are currently farming have themselves undertaken some expansion within their farming lives. So it may be more difficult to see where local consolidation of land holdings and farm expansion become not only a "difference in scale," and usually a difference in speed, but a "difference in kind." When local family farms expand, they displace and remove other farmers from their own and adjacent communities, but they themselves usually remain in their home communities. As they are known to their neighbours and may well continue to participate in their local community life, the expansion of their land holdings may be less likely to signal an unacceptable shift to those around them. As one farmer told us "If the local guy becomes the big farmer, he still has some contact with the community, he still resides somewhere, he still is somewhere near a school, a church, a store, no matter how big he is. If it is corporate, is it Hong Kong money? How is this being done? You see that it is completely out of your control." The differential impact of family farms expanding and consolidating their land base versus new, "outsider" investors buying comparable amounts of land requires further research. For example, among others, a key issue is who ends up working the land that investors buy. If a farm manager with few or no ties to the community is hired, then the effect might differ considerably than if the land is rented to a local farming family.

Given the long-term and ongoing decline in the number of farm families, it is difficult to gauge the specific effects of the recent rapid spate of land purchases by investors, pension funds and outside operators compared to generalized increased concentration of land by local farmers. But interviews and observations in the three municipalities revealed some questions that are

worth noting. While larger farming units, including the Hutterite colonies,[14] are more likely to take advantage of economies of scale available from dealing with larger corporate entities (e.g., for farm inputs, machinery, or farm-related services) rather than patronizing smaller, local businesses, is this business strategy even more pronounced with outside investors? For example, local Municipal Hail contracts have declined in the Harris Municipality, #316, as broadly based land owners spread their risk of losing crops to hail by owning land in disparate parts of the province instead of buying local hail insurance. Therefore, with outside owner/operators, is familiarity with, and loyalty to, local businesses largely absent—making them superfluous?

Furthermore, outside investors lack the connection to the local context that is built over years (and generations) in farming communities. This lack of connection can take the form of expressed lack of trust. For example, when Nil-Ray Farms purchased large tracks of pasture land in the Harris Municipality, they not only upgraded the fences but also put locks on the gates. Locking pasture gates is a highly unusual measure in this community and demonstrates a lack of awareness and/or mistrust of the ethos and traditions of the local communities where they are purchasing land.

Community cohesion is further disrupted when informal information networks are no longer possible. Distant and large-scale buyers are not on "coffee row" to discuss their plans or intentions. The speed, scale, and lack of transparency surrounding the current spate of land acquisitions appears to be creating unease and added concern about the prospects for young and beginning small- to medium-scale farmers. As one farmer put it, "The main feeling here is that the young farmers feel threatened… Investment companies and large farmers are buying up the land. The price of land is so much higher. You don't know how much to offer. You don't know that it's gone until it is sold."

The loss of community cohesion and lack of connections with those who farm nearby land was expressed in many ways. As one farmer lamented, "The neighbourly thing is not here anymore. People don't talk to each other. Now you don't see anyone anymore." Instead of sharing a feeling of solidarity with other farmers working hard to get the crop in during harvest, she noted that "now you don't see anyone at all until a fleet of combines rolls in and takes off the crop and is gone." This loss of community, linked not only to the entry of new players and outside operators but also to a generalized increased concentration of land ownership, was repeatedly mentioned in the interviews. Losing the physical and social presence of erstwhile neighbours entails losing their knowledge, diverse skills, and aid when needed, all of which undermines the cultural diversity and wisdom of place necessary for the resilience and sustainability of rural environments (Wiebe, 2012).

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[14] Hutterites, an ethno-religious group characterized by pacifism and communal farming, migrated to western Canada in the early 20th Century to establish village settlements (colonies) on collectively held land.

Conclusion

Our research examined changing land ownership patterns in rural Saskatchewan. To test a new methodology using land title data and GIS software, we centered our research on three rural municipalities. The research, combined with Statistics Canada data and interviews with local residents, demonstrates some interesting developments and points to a series of questions for further research. Our analysis reveals an ongoing concentration of land ownership driven, in part, by a newer phenomenon of land grabbing by outside investors and farmer/investor hybrids, but also as a result of the ongoing expansion of land ownership by local farmers. The social impact of these changing land ownership patterns is an ongoing but perhaps more acute weakening of community cohesion and vitality.

In many ways, our research raises more questions than answers. We initially thought that this would be a fairly straightforward quantitative process of measuring change using GIS software supplemented by some interviews with residents in the three rural municipalities. Instead, at every turn, we found complex realities characterized by new social and economic arrangements that have yet to be analyzed. For example, as more farmland is being rented out and land ownership is also increasingly concentrated, more hired farm labour is needed. While our research sheds light on the changes in land ownership, the new players involved, and ongoing concentration of land by farmers themselves, little is known about the nature and structure of these new labour relations and farm labourers' links to rural communities. While some of that labour is being provided by the farmers who sold their land, we were also told that farm work is now being done by "transients," "drifters and drunks," and "Mexican Mennonites."[15] More research is needed to shed light on the following: How will the changes in land ownership structures affect the kinds of agriculture work available? How will work relationships, status, and remuneration for food producers and farm labourers be reordered?

As the average age of prairie farm populations continues to rise, the influx of outside capital with the attendant rise in land values represents an even higher barrier for would-be young new entrants into farming. What effects will the investor ownership pattern of land have on young entrants into farming? Will would-be young farmers cede the prospect of owning land and opt to become renters only? While the management arrangements of large family farms may not differ significantly from smaller units, what kinds of land and production management structures are investors instituting?

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[15] Thanks to Jim Handy (a historian at the University of Saskatchewan) for pointing out that in a much earlier time, it was this very type of labourer—"drifters and drunks"—that *The Economist* and others argued would no longer need to be employed with enclosure and the consolidation of land into capitalist agriculture. In 1851, *The Economist* argued that the only people thrown out of work by enclosures were men of "dissolute and unsteady habits…very commonly consum[ing] with utter improvidence the large wages they earned during the summer months, and [gone] into the union workhouse during the winter." The newspaper also mentioned they drank too much and were "half-labourer, half vagabond" (*Economist,* 1851). This is interesting because back then the consolidation of land was meant to force these people from the rural areas (to the cities where their labour could be more easily disciplined), while in today's context a similar process (consolidation of land and having it farmed by tenants) is attracting "drifters and drunks" to the countryside.

The research also points to a number of key questions related to social and environmental sustainability: How do these structural changes in land ownership affect the owners/operators relationship to, and use of, the land? What effects does this have on production sustainability and ecological health? How does the identity of the landowner matter in this process of concentration? That is, how are the environment and community more greatly and negatively affected by the activities of land grabbers than by land concentration by local farmers?

This article examined changes in land ownership patterns in just three rural municipalities in Saskatchewan and revealed that the changing structure of land ownership poses a range of important questions that demand further research. There is an urgent need to document and analyze the scope of the changes currently underway in Saskatchewan and the rest of Canada.

Acknowledgements

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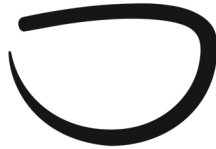
Original Research Article

Local food, farmland, and urban development: A case of land grabbing North American style

Elizabeth Ann Smythe

Concordia University of Edmonton, elizabeth.smythe@concordia.ab.ca

Abstract

This article examines emerging forms of investment and land speculation and their implications for local food movements in urban areas. These investments involve purchases of large tracts of land in growing urban areas with a view to profiting from re-zoning and exiting the market well before development occurs. It uses a case study in northeast Edmonton, Alberta that concerns the struggle for an urban food and agriculture strategy as well as the protection of prime food-producing land from urban development. The article shows how local food activists were able to mobilize citizens in support of local food and preservation of land, and were able to initiate a process linking land-use decisions to a food and agriculture strategy. However, the power of development interests and the planning process itself resulted in a strategy that was weak on preserving land for food, and a land development plan that preserves little land and threatens the future of existing food producers in the area. The article argues that new forms of "land grabbing" in North America pose challenges to movements seeking to preserve local food production.

Keywords: land grabbing, local food, urban development, speculation, investment, North America, Edmonton

Introduction

The term "land grabbing" has been widely used to describe the acquisition of large tracts of land in the global South by foreign interests in the wake of the global food crisis of 2007–08. As Borras and Franco (2012) indicate, enclosures and dispossession were the direct result of "land speculation in recent years mainly, but not solely, around the large-scale production and export of food and biofuels" (p. 35). However the phrase "land grabbing" is equally apt for speculation that drives changes in land use, which have many faces and may be occurring not just in the global South.

Movements have also emerged in the global South and North that focus on food security, food sovereignty, and the development of alternative, more localized food systems. Yet few studies have linked the two processes and examined how new forms of global investment in land affect attempts to build and preserve local food systems via the protection of urban and peri-urban agricultural land. This article uses a case study of a local food movement in a Canadian city to show how speculative investments in land for development—which can be seen as a form of land grabbing—have increased the challenges of building a local food system, despite the growing public concern about food security and access to local food.

Many scholars associate land grabbing with advanced capitalism and greater cross-border flows of capital engaged in financial speculation (Margulis, McKeon & Borras, 2013). This trend to financialization, driven by private equity firms, affects all aspects of the food system, as Burch and Lawrence (2013) point out. Borras and Franco (2012) note that in the global South, land grabbing involves changes in land use from local food production to intensive production for export markets. However, financial speculation can precipitate an array of uses for the land, depending on which is most likely to provide strong returns on investment. In some cases land may be leased back to growers and used for intensive export crop production, betting on stronger future commodity prices. Alternatively, it could be taken out of agricultural production altogether. For peasants in the global South who may lack access to land and face trade rules that sanction commodity food dumping, this is one more threat to food producer livelihoods. Land grabbing may also have goals that go beyond a simple maximization of returns for investors—taking the form of "agro-security mercantilism," where state actors and their agents "commandeer offshore lands for supplies of food, feed and fuel" (McMichael, 2013, p. 47). But as Margulis and Porter (2013) point out, the transnational nature of land grabbing belies traditional core-periphery or North-South dynamics. For example, Indonesia has attempted to buy large tracts of grazing land in Australia to raise beef to supply its home market (ABS News, 2013).

Borras et al. (2012) make a case for questioning some of the prevailing assumptions about how land grabbing is defined and where it is occurring, suggesting that too strict and narrow a definition may lead analysts to miss important trends that have implications for agrarian change and food security. They suggest that there are three key features of this type of investment. First it is "control grabbing," that is, creating the "power to control land" and "deriv(ing) benefit from such control" (Borras et al., 2012, p. 404). A second key feature is the

relatively large scale of such land grabs; and third, they argue that this process takes place "within the dynamics of capital accumulation strategies responding to the convergence of multiple crises: food, energy/fuel, climate change and financial crisis (where finance capital started to look for new and safer investment opportunities)" (Borras et al., 2012, p. 404).

On that basis, we can argue that many large-scale land acquisitions across the globe fit these criteria, as part of large investment companies, pension funds, and sovereign wealth funds. Those concerned about preserving farmland in North America are starting to make these links, and to acknowledge the need to recognize different forms of investment and their implications for food systems—as reflected in "Land for Food: A Focus on Farmland Protection and Land Grabbing" (Vol. 4 Issue 1), a special issue of the *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*. Some claim that the trend toward large-scale land purchases by global firms is happening in North America as well. As the Canadian National Farmers' Union (NFU) points out:

> In many parts of Canada land is being purchased by absentee investors through speculative land investment corporations, and then rented back to farmers or operated with hired labour, including temporary migrant workers. The farmland investors are not interested in food production, but in a revenue stream, and thus make cropping decisions based on profitability rather than land stewardship. (National Farmers' Union, 2010, p. 9)

Large-scale purchases of agricultural land in North America may be undertaken to vertically integrate and control all aspects of the value chain ("control grabbing"). It can also be done, as is the case of many investment funds, as a speculative venture focused on a high rate of return, based on increasing land value or the future value of crops it may produce. Such investment began before the 2008 food crisis, but that crisis increased investors' awareness of North American investment opportunities since much agricultural land is deemed to be relatively undervalued (Sommerville, 2013). Sommerville notes the trend toward this type of investment in Saskatchewan through farmland investment funds (FIFs), where profits are derived from a variety of sources, including leasing the land to farmers, appreciation of farmland values, and other tax benefits. The NFU report notes another way in which investors can speculate: by identifying agricultural land in areas adjacent to major cities where anticipated high rates of population or industrial growth are likely to occur. While property speculation is not new, these investment companies pool large amounts of capital, purchase agricultural land, and hold it until it is converted to use for residential and commercial development. This process, given differences in land values, can be highly lucrative.

Although not driven directly by high food prices, as are some of the investments outlined above, I argue (along the lines of Borras et al., 2012) that the growth, scale, and impact of this type of investment is new, is linked to financialization, and has implications for food production. Like land grabbing in the global South, it increases the scale of the loss of food production— particularly near urban areas—by removing land from production and driving up the price of

remaining farmland beyond what local producers can afford. This has implications for those seeking to preserve or develop local food systems. This article examines the challenges of resisting the conversion of food land within an urban area to residential and commercial uses, in the face of the growth in this type of investment. I contend that if preserving agricultural land for local food production is a key part of developing a local and alternative food system—even where there is strong public support for land preservation—this trend may make such efforts increasingly problematic.

This case study illustrates how growing concerns about the provenance of food mobilized the public and resulted in a commitment of elected officials to develop a food strategy. However, the power of an international investment firm engaged in property speculation on agricultural land within the city limits, and allied with local property developers, was able to partially undermine the Council's commitment to addressing local food issues. Despite citizens' strongly expressed desire to preserve a portion of this prime land for food production, the local food movement was unable to stop a development plan that would preserve little of this land beyond that owned by a small group of farmers. Moreover, these farmers now fear that further encroachment of residential and commercial development will ultimately threaten their operations.

Local food movements have been the subject of much study. Some question whether they are even social movements (Starr, 2010) given that they are largely urban-based and involve everyone from restaurateurs to public health officials, environmental and social justice activists, community gardeners, and farmers. Others criticize movements for ignoring justice issues (Allen, 2010) and focusing on using consumer choice and public procurement to support a local and sustainably produced food supply. They question the transformative capacity of such approaches (DeLind, 2011; Guthman, 2007), asserting that movements must confront the powerful to change the food system—including, I would suggest, at the local level where land-use decisions are made.

Many local food movements have lacked the capacity to take on such issues or, in some cases, faced a situation in which much of the adjacent food-producing land had already been lost to urban development. For North American cities where urban growth and property development have been the basis of much local wealth creation, food movements trying to preserve farmland and challenge city land-use decisions are taking on issues at the very core of local politics. However given the pace of loss of some of the best food-growing farmland in peri-urban areas (Alberta Agriculture, 2002) and the emergence of global investors now focused on using these remaining lands for financial speculation, it is important to examine cases in which food movements have engaged on these issues, and to assess what lessons they provide.

Methodology

This article uses a qualitative case study of the 2008–13 local food campaign to save arable land in the city of Edmonton, Alberta, to examine this type of investment and its impact on building a

local food system. The author participated in the local food movement through membership in a local organization, the Greater Edmonton Alliance (GEA), and was also a participant observer in community meetings and at GEA meetings with city councillors and one developer. The author also attended and spoke at public hearings at Edmonton City Hall. These participant observations were supplemented by retrospective interviews with two co-chairs of GEA's local food team who sat on advisory and stakeholder committees described below. In addition, the author reviewed minutes of all meetings of the GEA local food team and all relevant documents, surveys and studies commissioned by the City of Edmonton as part of the development of a food strategy. Documents provided by the city and the developer leading the planning process for the Area Structure Plan for Northeast Edmonton were reviewed, as well as media articles and blogs from reputable observers of local urban politics. The article begins with a brief discussion of the context in which this issue emerged.

The context: Investment in land on the prairies

While western Canadian agriculture has followed the industrial model of North America in both intensive livestock and crop production, family farms have remained the unit of production—but have grown in size and decreased in number. According to Statistics Canada, since 1991 the average farm size in Canada increased from 598 to 778 acres, while the number of farm operators decreased from 390,875 to 293,925—a 24.8% drop (Beaulieu, 2014). The average age of farmers also continues to increase, with more than half over fifty-five years old.

As Magnan notes, middle-sized farms in western Canada have largely disappeared. Though some small-scale farms remain, many of the operators of the largest farms are best described as farm entrepreneurs (Magnan, 2012). While non-family corporate farms remain rare, investors have begun to pay attention to agricultural land. Sommerville (2013) outlines the demand drivers that are attracting such investors and the factors that lead to a supply of farmland for sale. The latter include the inability to make a living because of declining farm incomes, debt, aging, succession, the need to finance retirement, and urban encroachment—such as roads or services bisecting previously contiguous land.

The NFU has documented the activities of investment companies such as Hancock Agricultural Investment Group (HAIG) in the US, which oversees "approximately $1.2 billion worth of agricultural real estate for institutional investors" (NFU, 2010, p. 12). The largest farmland investment management company in Canada, Assiniboia Capital Corp., manages almost 100,000 acres (NFU, 2010, p. 10). Sommerville (2013) notes two other FIFs that have been investing in Saskatchewan since 2005 (AgCapita Farmland Investment Partnerships and Bonnefield Financial). The NFU report indicates a second type of investment funds, focused on speculating using agricultural land. Such land is often leased back to farmers at low rates, while being held until zoning changes. Commodity crops, which require no long-term investment, are

then grown until the land is re-zoned. One such company that has been rapidly expanding its investor base and buying up land is Walton International.

Founded as a real estate company by Patrick and Maureen Doherty in 1979 in Calgary, Walton rapidly expanded into investment when it began soliciting funds and opening offices outside Canada in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and finally Europe in 2005. The company focuses on its expertise in analysis of the North American land market, noting on its European office website that "the size of Canada and the USA allow their cities to grow horizontally" (Walton International, 2014c). It gathers key data on various areas across North America, identifies growth opportunities for its investors, and then strategically acquires land in those regions.

The company's expansion into land banking investment after 2000, through its Asian offices, marked a turning point in its growth trajectory (Walton International, 2014b). While the company portrays itself to local authorities and the community both as a land banker and developer, investor information previously available on their websites (e.g., Walton International, 2005) indicates that Walton buys and holds land—on average for seven years—in peripheral urban areas, to profit when the land is re-zoned or developed. Describing itself as "one of North America's premier land asset managers" (Walton International, 2014a), it markets products to investors—many in Asia—based on a formula of careful planning, purchasing, developing and exiting projects, and distributing proceeds. A history of the company on its European office website describes how its "strategic conquest of the real estate market in Edmonton began in 2001" (Walton International, 2014b). Very soon the land under Walton management had "quadrupled to 16,000 acres in Alberta alone" (Walton International, 2014b), most of it in new areas slated for future development around Calgary and Edmonton. These areas were experiencing growth pressures, particularly in the 2003–07 period, when oil prices were high and the Alberta economy was booming. Identifying the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the United States as an investment opportunity, the company has been expanding acquisitions in the US as well in recent years.

Walton also identified market opportunities with the creation of the Ontario Greenbelt in 2005 and specifically targeted areas just outside it. Its acquisition of many farms in 2006–07 in Brant County, Ontario, a food-growing area, raised local controversy. The intent of the land purchases, according to media articles in the fall of 2007, was to change "the scope of urban growth beyond already-established boundaries to take in their newly acquired acreage" (Michael, 2007). The key to such influence, as Walton's own promotional material indicates, is to become the dominant land owner in the area (control grabbing). With such distant and dispersed investor owners, as Haley notes, there is little connection between the local community and the purchasers of this land. "These shareholders may have no idea of what they are investing in and how it affects the community where the investment physically exists. One small farm may have hundreds of shareholders" (Haley, 2013).

A similar pattern has emerged in Edmonton. According to its most recent report Walton has more than 88,000 acres of land under administration, with assets valued at over $4.3 billion

CAD, and with over 90,000 investors worldwide. Walton manages approximately 6,000 acres in and around the City of Calgary and approximately 9,000 acres within the City of Edmonton. Walton views the "retail end" of the real estate life cycle—that is, building or redeveloping property—as "competitive and can be subject to volatility, due to fluctuations in costs and interest rates" (Walton International, 2005). The secret to maximizing Walton's return for investors is in timing its exit from the market at the project planning stage, when the land in question has been rezoned.

The context: Edmonton, Alberta

Edmonton has grown by 11.2 percent in the past five years (City of Edmonton, 2012c) and, with adjacent communities, the region's population is over one million. In a province of just under four million people, it is also the seat of Alberta's provincial government. Alberta's history is one of the displacement of the native population, immigration, and the development of agriculture as the main economic focus—until the discovery of oil in the 1940s and the development of a petro-economy, subject to the boom and bust cycles of commodity prices. Alberta accounts for 62.8 percent of Canada's primary energy production, mostly fossil fuels (Natural Resources Canada, 2013). Strong energy-related growth has led to significant in-migration to the province in the past decade. Many of the sites of oil production, especially of the oil/tar sands, and the attendant service industries, are located north of Edmonton. Politically, the Progressive Conservative Party has dominated Alberta for over four decades.

The city of Edmonton is divided into twelve wards, with councillors elected for three-year terms along with a directly elected mayor. Candidates run on a non-partisan basis. Much of the city's post–World War II population growth has been accommodated via annexations of land from neighboring counties in a process governed by provincial legislation. A bitter annexation battle occurred in 1982 when the city annexed 37,000 hectares—much of it agricultural land to the east and north—with a view to eventual development as the city grew (Masson and Lesage 1994). Many of those residents in the northeast who were incorporated into the city faced both poor services—relative to other areas of the city—and major property tax increases, a legacy that relates to our case study.

In the 1990s, a group seeking to counter provincial government policies of retrenchment decided to form a broad-based community organization in Edmonton. It was modeled on the Industrial Areas Foundation in the United States, which had its roots in the work of social activist Saul Alinsky (Lange, 2013). The organization developed out of ten years of meetings, discussions, and relationship building at the local level, culminating in the 2005 founding convention of the Greater Edmonton Alliance (GEA). GEA's vision as described on its website is to create:

> An Edmonton where all citizens: participate effectively in the public decision-making process, engage in informed, thoughtful and relevant dialogue and action

around issues and concerns that shape their lives, have the power to negotiate positive social transformation and hold government and market sector leaders accountable to the citizenry (Greater Edmonton Alliance, 2013, np).

 The method to achieve this vision is one that:

> seeks out and develops leaders, builds power by developing public, accountable relationships with and between individuals, institutions, networks and decision makers, listens across its membership to identify issues of common concern, researches common issues to discover opportunities for action, takes disciplined, organized action to build resilient institutions and communities and a more just and equitable Greater Edmonton Region and engages in ongoing evaluation and reflection (Greater Edmonton Alliance, 2013, np).

GEA is organized around over twenty local institutions that are dues-paying members, including many churches, some unions, and community organizations.

Its first major campaign in 2006 and 2007 addressed the re-development of older rental complexes in two low-income residential neighborhoods that were slated to be turned into high-priced condominiums, reflecting the economic boom and rapidly increasing real estate prices. By mobilizing tenants and the local community, building relationships, and demonstrating its power, GEA was able to get to the table with local developers, the city, and non-profit groups. It then engaged in negotiations with the other parties to increase the number of affordable housing units that would be provided in the project. Since the focus of the campaign was very specific—and the "ask" of developers fairly modest—GEA was able to claim a success for the community. Policy tools such as tax and other incentives provided acceptable trade-offs for developers. That experience perhaps led GEA activists to expect a similar process would unfold in dealing with the city council and developer interests on other issues. In 2008, GEA activists turned their attention to food.

The focus on GEA's role in the food campaign is not meant to suggest that there was no local food activism in Edmonton prior to 2008. In fact many groups were concerned about food-related issues such as community gardens, farmers' markets, environmental sustainability, and urban sprawl. However these did not constitute a focused or politicized food movement.

Waking up to food security and locally produced food

The 2008 year constituted a wake-up call for many, as global food prices soared, resulting in increasing food insecurity, food riots in a number of countries, and growing attention in the national and local media in Canada to food issues. Global food prices fell then rose again in following years, reflecting continuing and increasing volatility in food pricing—likely to worsen with climate change and the growing international financial speculation in food stocks (Food and Agricultural Organization, 2012; Clapp, 2009).

In Edmonton, concerns about food insecurity and the provenance of food were reflected in a number of ways. For example, in 2008, ten community activists gathered at a local Edmonton church (one of GEA's member institutions) to listen to one another's concerns about pressures facing their families, and to ask questions about their food. In April 2008, the group hosted a local food dinner inviting GEA members, other local food activists, and several farmers. For GEA, involvement represented the possibility of taking on another local issue to which they could bring together a number of groups that were "not connected" and provide the organization and "local food advocacy piece that was missing" (Interview 2013).

At subsequent dinners, activists met a group of food-producing farmers, some of whom expressed concerns about the threat to prime agricultural land within the city limits from development. In September 2008, GEA launched its "Shake the Hand that Feeds You" campaign. It was intended to demonstrate public support for local food producers, raise awareness about local food, and show the potential consumer demand for local food, by organizing the purchase of 300 food baskets from local farmers. The "This Land is Our Land" campaign followed shortly thereafter and began addressing land-use questions. GEA's goal was to influence the nature of the city's ten-year land-use plan—called the Municipal Development Plan (City of Edmonton, 2012b)—to ensure that, when making development decisions, Council would be required to take into account any impact their decision might have on food security and the local food system. Of particular concern to GEA were decisions that might lead to the loss of farmland and local food producers. This focus led GEA into the civic arena, where it would be challenging the key interests and actors influencing city land-use decisions. This became clearer as activists began to meet with councillors in the fall of 2008 to talk about the future sources of the city's food. Efforts to engage key decision makers such as the mayor, the city's chief planner, and the CEO of Walton proved difficult. Assuming these actors saw no reason to meet with GEA, GEA activists concluded that they needed to demonstrate power in order to get to the negotiating table.

Operating from the principle that the power of organized money can only be countered by the power of organized and mobilized citizens, and drawing on its disciplined and organized membership structure, GEA was able to bring over 500 citizens in November 2008 to the city council chambers at the first public hearing of the City's Municipal Development Plan (City of Edmonton, 2012b). It got the attention of both the local media and council, which directed its administration to gather information on a food security strategy and on issues around agricultural lands. However, this did not ensure that any subsequent Council decisions and plans would take those concerns into account. Thus, GEA began meeting with, and trying to influence, planners, councillors, and non-farming land owners in areas of potential development. GEA also laid out a vision for a vibrant and sustainable local food system in a report, *The Way We Eat*, which was presented to council in the spring of 2009 (Greater Edmonton Alliance, 2009).

While using a frame of food security, the vision was a holistic one that linked a local food system to improving health, and building community and prosperity for current and future generations. They argued that food should be a central pillar of planning the city's future. They

asked that the city " integrate local food system impact, including productive capacity, carrying capacity, economic linkages and sustainability, into all decisions regarding the conversion of agricultural lands to other uses" (GEA, 2009). However, as Beckie et al. (2013) point out, the responsibility to protect farmland had been shifted from the province to municipalities in the 1990s. Given growth pressures from resource development and the investor-driven land purchases described above, this struggle would be very different from GEA's earlier experience with the city over low-cost housing. The struggle over a local food system would be at the city council level and would have to counter very powerful economic interests within the prevailing frames of growth and individual property rights that underpin the dynamics of land-use decisions.

On November 21, 2009, using its capacity to organize and mobilize, GEA brought another 500 people to the second MDP public hearing. A key motion at the hearing was proposed by a sympathetic councillor and passed. This motion authorized the beginning of planning for the areas slated for urban growth, but required that future development decisions take into account a yet-to-be-developed city-wide food and agriculture strategy. This amendment tied the future development of agricultural lands to the completion of, and compliance with, a food strategy: a "win" from GEA's perspective. However, the councillor in Ward 3 (Northeast Edmonton), Tony Caterina, supported by the mayor, moved a further amendment to delete the food strategy from the list above, which was barely defeated in a seven-to-six vote. This indicated that, on matters of development and land-use council votes, even those initially supporting GEA and the idea of a food strategy could not be taken for granted—likely because opposition to GEA's efforts had begun to mobilize. The final passage of the motion also meant that, while there was now a requirement that any food strategy developed by the city be taken into account in decision making, such a strategy would need to have clear and timely recommendations on a local food system that could inform council's land development decisions. What the food and agriculture strategy said about food-producing lands in the northeast would be crucial in guiding the area's development.

Food, land use and development—no skin in the game

The planning and approval processes for development and land-use decisions in Edmonton reflect assumptions about the role of citizens in the process. The drafting of a proposed development plan for any area of the city is led by key economic and other interests involved in, or affected by the project. If there is a majority landowner in the area, they pay for and lead the development of the draft plan. Other stakeholders, for example property owners—both residential and commercial—who would be directly affected by the proposed development or zoning changes, would be consulted along with relevant city planners. However, the broader public, which might have a longer-term interest in the cumulative impact of the development on the city, do not have a right to be consulted.

In the case of the northeast, the majority landowners were not food producers, but rather developers and land investors, the largest of which was Walton. When the land in the northeast became part of Edmonton in the early 1980s, it was on the assumption that it would stay in agricultural production until required to meet urban growth needs, both residential and commercial. The need for such development was linked to the planned future development of an Edmonton Energy and Technology Park tied to the petroleum sector. Walton is also the primary developer and land owner in the industrial park. Walton's acquisition of land in the northeast, much of it agricultural, put it in a position of leading the draft plan. Once approved, the plan could lead to re-zoning that would yield substantial returns to its investors long before actual development occurred.

The 1982 annexation had led to some increases in land prices in the northeast, which were not sustained as a result of economic downturns. A number of farmers in the region continued to farm and a small number expanded, selling into the growing number of markets in the city and the region. Some became increasingly concerned and voiced fears that further residential and commercial development would encroach on their operations and threaten their future (Stolte, 2011). As a consultant's report prepared as part of the development of a food strategy indicates, the land in their area has some of the most fertile (class one) soil in Alberta and in all of Canada, near the North Saskatchewan River (HB Lanarc Consultants, 2012). The sandy soil allows for an early start on the very short season for growing root crops. However other non-farming landowners in the area felt they had unfairly borne the cost of annexation of the region to the city, and viewed potential development positively—hoping it would bring better services to their neighborhoods or help them to sell their land at a profit to developers.

Those owning land or affected directly by changes to the zoning are by definition those with interests, and therefore, a claim to be consulted in the decision-making process. The notion that the future of lands growing food within the city boundaries might somehow relate to a broader public interest in a resilient and more secure food system was foreign to many councillors.

Round One: Food and agriculture strategy—consultation or cooptation?

These decisions of Council in 2009 set two formal processes in motion. The first called for the development and approval of a citywide food strategy, and the second for a process to develop the draft Area Structure Plan for the northeast (traditionally called the Horse Hill area), as Figure 1 indicates.

Each process involved an advisory committee. GEA representatives participated in both these parallel processes. However the structure and procedures of consultation for each differed. The food strategy involved broad public consultation beyond the advisory committee, involving a food conference in 2012, and a series of public consultations—which included surveys, a citizens' panel, and public feedback on the initial draft of the strategy. These broader consultations and the citizen engagement process are discussed in Beckie et al. (2013), and

described on the City of Edmonton website (http://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/
urban_planning_and_design/food-and-urban-agriculture.aspx). The focus here is on the
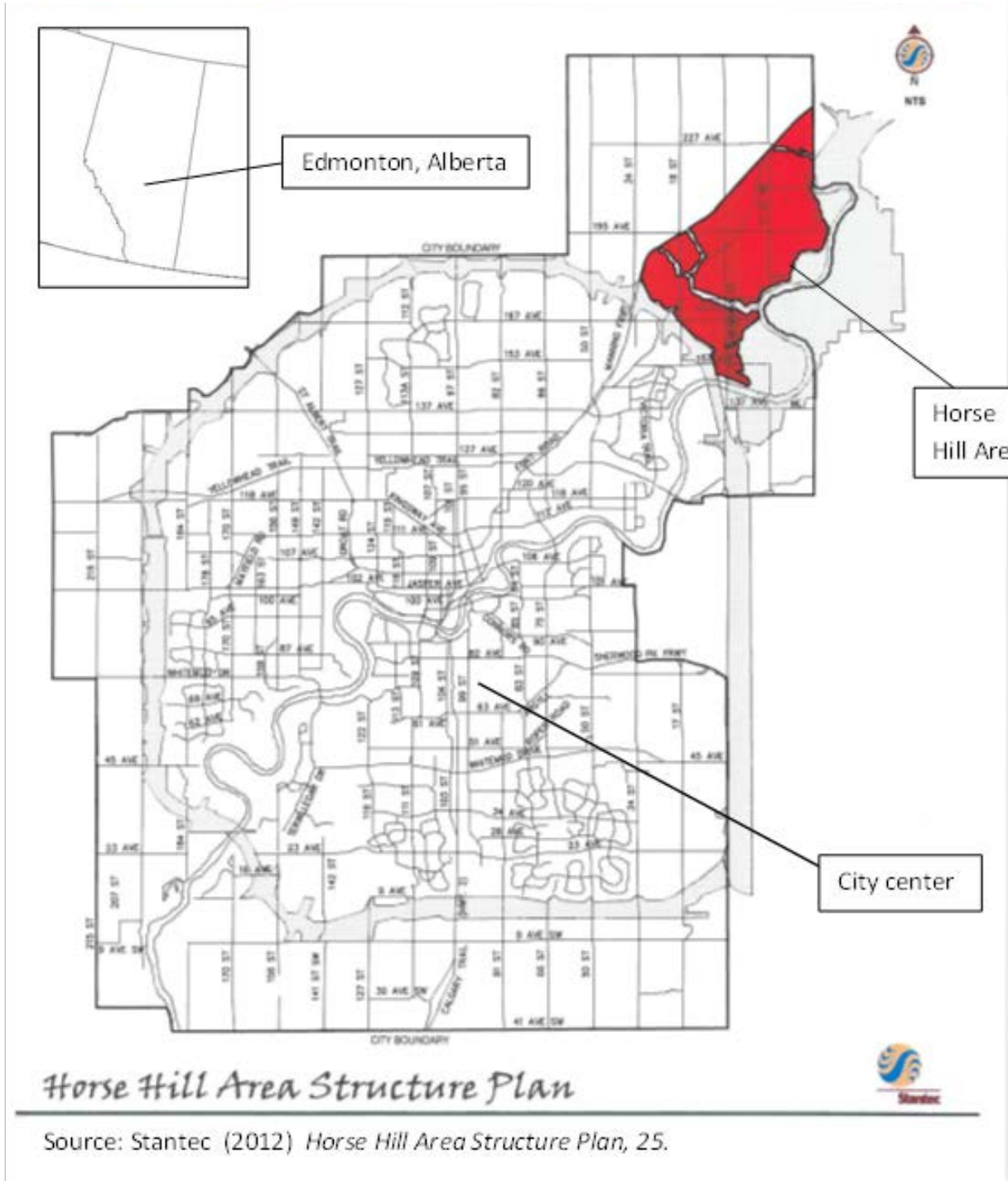committee processes and the broader political struggle to influence Council.

Figure 1: Location plan showing the Horse Hill area (City of Edmonton, 2013)

The fourteen-member advisory committee on the food strategy included a wide array of organizations and individuals active on food issues, but the process of appointment was less than transparent. It included three developers and a Dutch trade office representative, who were there at the invitation of the mayor. The short timelines, both for the work of the committee and for the broader public consultations, seemed rushed (Interview 2013). For example, the release of the first draft of the food strategy on October 1, 2012 had a deadline for public feedback of October 8, inclusive of the Thanksgiving holiday. At the advisory committee, the presence of developers meant that a deadlock developed early over land use, which took those issues off the table—despite public feedback overwhelmingly supportive of preserving land for food. The GEA representative raised the question of whether the process was set up to fail to give clear guidance on land use issues (Interview 2013). For GEA the process was frustrating. It raised the risk that, having agreed to engage in a consultation process to address land use, which was now being controlled by those who did not want it, GEA would end up being forced to criticize or reject the resulting food strategy for which it had lobbied so hard.

In contrast to the food strategy, the parallel development of the Area Structure Plan involved a twenty-one–member advisory committee dominated by developers (nine) and property owners in the northeast (seven). The plan was prepared by consultant Stantec (hired by, and working on behalf of, Walton, the largest property owner) and three other developers. While the committee included a few food growers in the northeast (three), and two GEA representatives, they were very much in the minority. What GEA did not have was a direct interest or stake in the plan. As the councillor representing the northeast, Tony Caterina, said,

> If you own the land and you want to grow berries, go ahead. If you don't own the land, I would say the same thing, get the heck out of the way. You have no interest. We're going to have everybody with no interest, financially or otherwise, coming forward supporting something that they really have no skin in the game about, and those that do, are going to suffer the consequences (Male, 2012).

For Caterina, "no skin in the game" meant no right to have a voice. Despite the high level of citizen support for, and concern about, retaining local food production, the key decision-making processes were driven by development interests and largely out of public sight. The only public processes available were the ones related to the development of the food strategy.

GEA's support of food growers in the northeast led to a formal link when the food producers formed the Northeast Edmonton Agricultural Producers (NEAP), and became a GEA member in October 2010. Recognizing that momentum on Council was with the Area Structure Plan and the developers, and that the food and agriculture strategy was stalemated, GEA took a risk and moved off its initial message—that the city's food and agriculture strategy should mandate or provide good information before decisions were made on the future of food-producing lands in the northeast. Instead, GEA developed a formal "ask" of Council to preserve a portion of land in the northeast for food production. This move brought GEA into a realm that

directly challenged powerful economic actors and threatened to subvert the dominant growth and property rights frames (Claeys, 2012).

Developed after consultations with the food producers and others, GEA saw the ask as modest, given that Edmonton had lost three-quarters of its agricultural land since 2006. GEA asked that 600 hectares of contiguous land in the northeast, an area south and east of the railroad, be preserved for agriculture in perpetuity. The 600 hectares represented ten percent of the agricultural land in the city and less than a third of the area of the Northeast plan, but it has the richest, most productive soil on land near the river. However, as the city administration pointed out in its report to Council on the food strategy, the city had never turned down a development in order to preserve agricultural land**.**

A cost-benefit analysis of preserving this land was missing from the food strategy. Several councillors made it clear that, since a cost-benefit analysis was the only basis on which preservation could be justified, it would drive their decision, and the onus was on GEA to make a "business case." Making a purely economic case for agriculture is a hard task for a volunteer organization and, as one activist commented, one not required of many proponents of major projects.

GEA's ask to preserve farmland put the issue of land rezoning front and center before Council and in the public eye. In hindsight it was deeply polarizing (Interview 2013), and mobilized developers and other opponents—including the non-farming property owners in the northeast who formed themselves into the Northeast Edmonton Alliance (NEEA). Working with the local community association, the Horse Hill Community League, and developers, NEEA made its opposition to GEA's ask loud and clear. They also criticized the food growers in the northeast who had sold off parcels of land in the process.[1] The debate in the media and at Council quickly turned to the land question alone, and the broader vision for a local food system was lost. The struggle over the Food Strategy now focused heavily on what it did or did not say about land use. GEA became increasingly shut out, as councillors refused to meet with GEA until the food strategy was released publicly, even though it was clear a draft Area Structure Plan was already circulating behind the scenes.

The proposal to preserve farmland that GEA and its allies had put forward challenged powerful frames of property rights, growth, and development that dominate land-use issues in the urban political arena. Land grabbing of the kind described above relies on a scale of land acquisition that affords the owners much control of the land-use planning and decision process, putting these investors and their developer allies at the centre of the table. Those advocating preservation of farmland were no longer at the table. The challenge for local food activists was one of framing the land-use issue in terms of a local sustainable food system—which could be seen as a "common good" in opposition to the dominant property rights and urban growth frames. That struggle is discussed below.

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[1] A number of farmers—in an effort to consolidate their holdings, or to split up a family holding—had sold off some of their land to developers, providing NEEA with the opportunity to label them hypocrites who had profited from the prospect of development while denying it to others.

Framing the issue of local food

In the struggle over local food, actors employed a number of frames, countered competing frames and narratives, and sometimes shifted frames. The initial GEA campaign in 2008 used a frame of food security and the need for a resilient local food system that could, in the words of the city's strategic environmental plan, "have the capacity to withstand and bounce back intact from environmental (or other) disturbances" (City of Edmonton, 2011, p. 2). The frame focused on environmental sustainability, rapidly rising and volatile food prices, and public concerns about the provenance and quality of food. Such a frame was never going to be enough to persuade Council to take action, when councillors are driven largely by shorter-term concerns around service delivery, infrastructure, growth, and development. A second GEA frame focused on the benefits to the economy of a local food system, emphasizing the spinoffs for local business and food production. In this case, restaurateurs and others involved in organizations like Live Local played a role in emphasizing the economic benefits from local production. This was picked up in GEA's *The Way We Eat*.

Councillors, developers and others who fought the local food movement's goals employed two very powerful frames. The first is the "growth" frame that speaks of the need for more single-family housing to deal with increased population forecasts and housing demand; development of city lands to avoid leapfrog development outside the city boundaries; and development to accommodate growth connected to, and spinning off from, energy resource development—much of which was forecast to occur in the northeast. A fiscal corollary to the growth frame claims that growth is vital to maintain the urban property tax base and ease the burden on taxpayers. This frame was less persuasive, given that new suburban developments, while seeming to provide initial revenues to the city, cost more in the longer term for maintenance of services and infrastructure. GEA could show that productive agricultural land, while bringing in less tax revenue in the short term, needs little servicing and is of net benefit to city revenues in the long term.

The second frame used by GEA's opponents was the potent property rights frame, and the argument that such rights trump any notion of the public or common good. This frame is behind the "skin in the game" comments of Councillor Caterina and the landowner-led planning process. It suggests that only those who own land ought to have a voice in how it is used, a claim that resonates widely, despite being denied by both common law and the concept of zoning. Opponents of preserving land, such as the NEEA, used this frame effectively. Some councillors, as a result, claimed that the only way to forestall development of food land was to buy the land in question at the highest market value, despite the many policy tools that local food advocates pointed out were available to conserve such land.[2] The mayor, himself a former property developer, championed the property rights frame. The claim was also made that food producers owning agricultural land were free to continue farming it no matter what happens to adjacent

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[2] GEA even went as far as to sponsor a workshop on some of these tools, including easements, land swaps, development transfer credits, and land trusts. Few developers or city officials attended.

property, a claim clearly challenged by many studies of urban encroachment and development (Sokolow et al., 2010).

As the draft food strategy's weak recommendations on land use became clear, despite strong public support for preserving agricultural land, GEA and other commentators—including the local newspaper the *Edmonton Journal*—raised the issue of democracy (Edmonton Journal, 2012). The issue was no longer just about preserving agricultural land, but rather whose voice is heard at city hall, and how democratic and accountable the system really is. That this had struck a note with many was made evident by citizens filling the main chamber of city hall and two overflow rooms to capacity on October 26, 2012, despite these hearings being held in the middle of a workday.

Many local food activists involved in the food strategy consultations, along with other community groups, refused to sign off on the draft strategy, and appeared at the public hearings to criticize it. GEA opposed the strategy's weak and non-committal language that lacked specific and firm commitments to any actions beyond establishing a food council. They argued it provided no clear direction about the information needed to make future decisions on land, and offered a vague framework of little value to Council in guiding future decisions. Developers and NEAA, on the other hand, embraced the strategy for the same reason. In a vote of four-to-one, the five-member executive committee of council approved the strategy (City of Edmonton, 2012a), setting the stage for the struggle over the Area Structure Plan.

Round Two: The battle over the Horse Hill Area Structure Plan

The draft Area Structure Plan for Horse Hill covers 2,700 hectares of land, of which a portion is held by various government institutions, including a hospital and a Department of Defence installation. The proponents of the plan (the developers) own 1,033 hectares of the 1,500 available for development. Of these, Walton holds about 400 hectares (1,000 acres) (Stolte, 2013). As the map in Figure 2 shows, those wishing to continue farming and own their land have their choice of less than 200 hectares. The bulk of the areas shown in beige would be residential development of over 26,000 units for an anticipated population of just under 70,000. The deep red area indicates a town-center retail complex.

The process also included consultations through the advisory committee and city-mandated open houses at which citizens could comment on the draft plan. The last was held in November 2012. Walton and the other plan proponents had been active in advertising through billboards and fliers in the northeast in favor of the plan. The draft Horse Hill Area Structure Plan (City of Edmonton, 2013) reflected the proponents' preference for low-density development, which barely met the city's minimum requirements (Male, 2013). It provided little indication of any preservation of agricultural land beyond that small portion still owned by food producers, and did little to buffer them from encroaching developments. A proposed provincial ring road, smaller arterial roads, and the proposed division of the area into five smaller neighborhood plans appeared to bisect some of the food-producing farms and market gardens.

The plan also provided figures on the net positive revenue benefit to the city based on assumptions that critics found to be questionable (Male, 2013).

GEA continued to organize public meetings, speak out in the media, encourage calls and e-mails to councillors, create an online petition, and circulate fast-fact commentaries to challenge the arguments of the developers. Public hearings on the draft Area Structure Plan took place over two days in February 2013 and involved many of the same groups that had spoken on the food strategy. GEA local food activists already knew after meeting with some councillors that they did not have the votes on Council to stop or amend the Area Structure Plan, and that some councillors resented their tactics. In their presentations at the final hearings GEA used a democracy frame focusing on the process and the public's demand that Council "get full information about the true costs and benefits of this current plan and alternative development scenarios" (Male, 2013), reflected in an online petition signed by over 2,100 people, which they presented at the hearings. Farmers spoke passionately that the "black gold in this province is not the fossil fuels, it is the black dirt beneath our feet" (Staples 2013), while developers focused on growth forecasts and the need for more housing. Although a few councillors were sympathetic to the farmers and critical of the process, most voted for the plan—arguing that the cost of preserving the land was prohibitive, that opportunities to create a food hub were more feasible at the regional level, and that issues, such as the ring road, were under the purview of the province. The Area Structure Plan passed easily by ten to three votes, and by the end of April 2013 had received final approval from the Capital Region Board (the twenty-four–member committee of elected officials from municipalities and counties in the Edmonton Region).
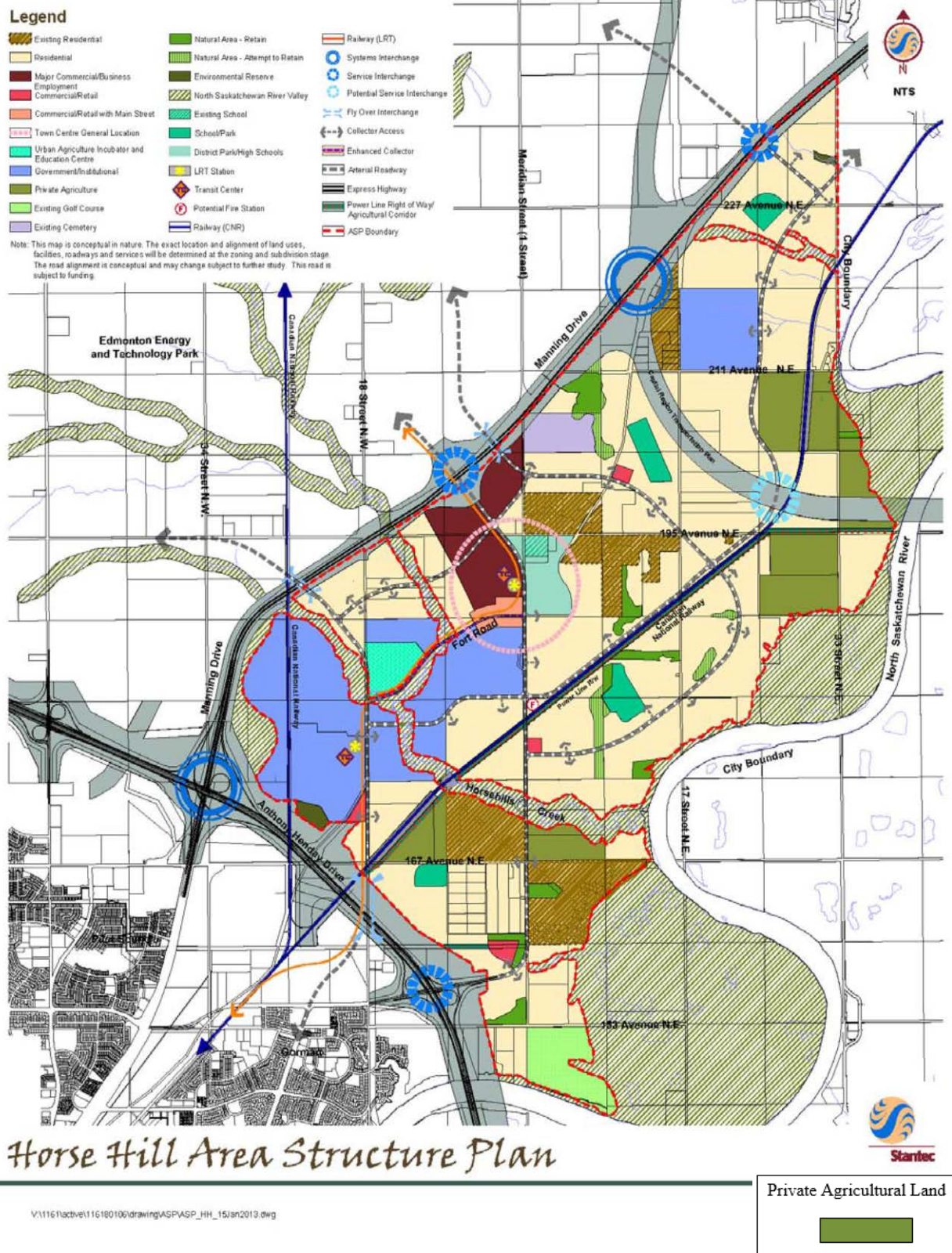
Figure 2: Land use concept, Draft Area Structure Plan (City of Edmonton, 2013)

Conclusion

This article has examined one case of building a local food movement and resisting the loss of agricultural land through financialization and speculative investment. One might argue, given the scale of land acquisition and control it affords the purchaser, that this type of investment constitutes a sort of "land grabbing North-American style." The loss of farmland is not unique to Edmonton, however. As Oberholtzer et al. (2010) indicate, the American Farmland Trust estimates that 1.2 million acres in the United States are converted to residential and commercial uses each year. Increased population growth has put urban-edge farming under pressure. While urban growth may provide local farmers with opportunities for gaining access to a large market, there is also some evidence that it creates conflict between farmers and urban dwellers and raises the cost of land (Nickerson et al., 2012), limiting access for new, younger farmers. Clearly urban expansion has raised issues of farmland protection across North America. However, the development of large-scale land acquisitions around urban areas by investment firms, such as the one described above, may limit the effectiveness of land-use tools to preserve farmland and a local food supply. Yet studies indicate that protecting farmland is a public preference (Mathews, 2012), and one that is closely linked to an interest in, and preference for, locally produced food.

In Edmonton, this was reflected in GEA's ability to elevate and politicize the issue of local food and land to grow it on. However, the case indicates that their efforts were clearly not enough. As one GEA local food activist observed:

> Ten has turned into thousands. Our relationships, which began at the dinner table, got us to the decision table with enough power to negotiate a good deal for future generations. However, powerful players, mainly interested in short-term financial gain, remain at the table as well (Interview 2013).

The reality is that those powerful players more than remained at the table.

The challenge posed by the transnational process of financial property speculation on agricultural land near urban areas, represented by Walton, merits further research. It raises important questions for local food movements as well. Large pools of investment funds allow for strategic acquisitions of large amounts of land, giving the purchasers significant influence over land-use decisions and raising important questions. Will such large-scale purchases around urban regions across North America drive up the costs of protecting farmland? Second, will it undermine or limit the effectiveness of locally based land management tools designed to preserve farmland?

In the Edmonton case, GEA's earlier experience with local developers on affordable housing led it to believe it could be part of a negotiated deal, using similar tools and incentives. Having asked for the preservation of 600 hectares of land for agriculture, GEA expected a negotiation around the location and number of hectares and various policy tools used in other cities, such as development transfer credits. But global property speculators—using Walton's model of market exit after the planning process has increased land values—have no reason nor

incentive to engage in deals to preserve land for growing food, since the tools to do that would be used in later stages of the land development process. Walton's strategy is based on avoiding that riskier stage by selling off and moving on. In the context of this type of investment, which risks an accelerated loss of farmland (because of the scale of land purchases and the control it affords the purchaser), local food activists are faced with a challenge. They must institutionalize processes based on a wider vision of a local food system that would subvert the prevailing property-rights–based planning process.

This individualistic property rights frame resonates widely with decision-makers, and is deeply embedded in many aspects of urban planning. As the largest land owner, Walton had a lead role in developing the plan, and portrayed itself as a developer rather than a speculator. Despite the public engagement process—which reflected very strong support for preserving agricultural land (Beckie et al., 2013)—Council justified support for the Horse Hill Area Structure Plan by following its existing planning process. The risk from a local food movement perspective, however, is public disillusionment and disengagement.

The experience of other Canadian cities seeking to preserve agricultural land suggests that regional and provincial levels of government need to be engaged. Those provinces that have had some success in preserving land for food production (Ontario, British Columbia, and Québec) have stronger legislation at the provincial level than Alberta, and while prone to exemptions and pressures of developers (Pond, 2009), they provide additional tools. As Mathews (2012) notes, all US states have at least one farmland protection program. Further research and other case studies might shed light on the extent to which such programs can be tools for local food movements seeking to preserve farmland in the face of these large-scale acquisitions by investors.

As this case indicates, the frame of food security and the desire to ensure a resilient and sustainable local food system can engage and mobilize the public. However, this frame needs to gain the attention of, be translated for, and be implemented by governments (Morgan & Sonnino, 2010). In order to ensure that public support for a sustainable local food system is translated into policy and action at the city level, democratic reforms are necessary to limit the role of developers and speculators. GEA's research in the 2010 electoral campaign indicated that "46% of all contributions to City Council campaigns are from the development industry or those affiliated with it. The amount of developer contributions to individual councillors range from as low as 26% to as high as 62%" (Janzen, 2012). These figures are in line with other Canadian cities. As political scientist Robert MacDermid (2009) points out, candidates' reliance on development industry funding in municipal elections affects political outcomes, including decisions that result in urban sprawl and the loss of land to grow food.

The Edmonton case indicates that the struggle over local food may have helped build a food movement but was not successful in preserving farmland in the city. Future decisions on the newly created Food Council will be important—including its composition, mandate, and the resources available to it. As well, the Area Structure Plan is only a framework, and detailed plans on the five neighborhoods within it are still to come. Despite the fall 2014 election of a new mayor, who was sympathetic to the local food movement, the city continues to grow by

annexation. Current plans supported by the mayor include land on the city's southern boundary toward the international airport, which could take more agricultural land out of food production. Despite the province's recognition of the loss of agricultural land through fragmentation and conversion, especially in the Calgary-Edmonton corridor, it has left it to the twenty-four mayors and reeves in the Edmonton Region to address it. They have finally agreed to do so, but recognize it as a "political minefield' (Stolte, 2014). This may provide another opportunity to build on the work done from 2006–13 and shift away from the property rights frame—but it would be naïve to ignore the power of large pools of capital and extensive land holdings of investors like Walton in the Region.

Edmonton did not have the options of cities such as Toronto, which initiated a food charter, created a food council, developed a food strategy and then used this process to engage in community development to build a local food movement. Edmonton's unconnected food activists were galvanized by the food crisis, concerns about food security and the loss of even more local food production capacity through impending land use decisions. GEA's focus on mobilizing citizens to get to the table may not have been successful in preserving the land in the northeast, but it forged coalitions of concerned and aware citizens. This case indicates that citizens are challenging Council's disregard for the need to ensure a sustainable and resilient local food system. More work will be needed, however, to preserve a local food system for all citizens—food eaters and producers alike—in the face of global investors speculating on agricultural land.

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Appendix – Timeline

April 2008 Ebenezer United Church Edmonton held a local food dinner.

September 2008 GEA's "Shake the Hand that Feeds You' organized purchases of 300 baskets of food from local farmers

Fall 2008 GEA attempted to engage key decision makers, mayor, chief planner, Walton CEO. First two refused, Walton would not negotiate.

Nov 12, 2008 GEA organized 500 citizens to come to City Hall for the first public hearing on the Municipal Development Plan. Council requested information from the administration on a Food Security Strategy, and mechanisms to protect prime agricultural land.

April-June 2009 500 citizens come to hearings on the Municipal Development Plan, and GEA presented *The Way We Eat*.

Sept 2009 The Great Potato Giveaway. Thousands dig for free potatoes prompting traffic jams in northeast.

February 2010 600 citizens see the MDP pass with a key amendment tying the development of agricultural land to the completion of, and compliance with, a Citywide Food and Agriculture Strategy.

Sept 2011 Horse Hill (NE) Area Structure Plan advisory group meets

Oct 2010 Northeast Agricultural Producers (NEAP**)** organize and join GEA.

Oct 2011 Food Strategy Advisory Group is established. GEA representative participated.

January to February 2012 GEA developed the ask of preserving in perpetuity 600 H of contiguous land in NE Edmonton (1/3 of the land currently being farmed).

Spring 2012 GEA/ NEAP organized house meetings (over 550 people) across city wards on the issue.

August 2012 GEA sponsored bus tours for the public of the Northeast food producing lands.

Sept 6 2012 GEA sponsored a workshop by the Mytaskis Institute on policy tools to preserve agricultural land.

Oct 1 2012 Draft Food Strategy released with online public feedback set for Tuesday Oct 8.

Oct 9 and Oct 18, 2012 GEA held two public meetings, inviting councillors and attempting to hold them accountable. Vast majority refused to come claiming they would prefer to hear from citizens on Oct 26.

Oct 19, 2012 Release of Final Draft of the food strategy. GEA Representative does not sign off, 6 advisory committee members are critical of the final report.

Oct 26 and Nov 2 City Hall Public hearings on the draft strategy before Executive Committee of Council. Strategy passes.

February 25-26, 2013 City Hall Public Hearings on the Horse Hill (Northeast) Area Structure Plan.

February 26 Council gave approval to first and second reading to the plan by a vote of 10-3.

April 2013 Area Structure Plan passes final hurdle at the regional level.

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Original Research Article

"Eating isn't just swallowing food": Food practices in the context of social class trajectory

Brenda L. Beagan,[1] Elaine M. Power,[2] and Gwen E. Chapman[3]

[1] Associate Professor, School of Occupational Therapy, Dalhousie University (corresponding author: brenda.beagan@dal.ca)

[2] Associate Professor, School of Kinesiology & Health Studies, Queen's University

[3] Professor, Food, Nutrition & Health, University of British Columbia

Abstract

Drawing from a qualitative study with 105 families across Canada, this paper focuses on sixteen households in which one or more adults experienced significant social class trajectories in their lifetimes. Using semi-structured interviews and two photo-elicitation techniques, adults and teens articulated their perceptions of healthy eating, eating well, conflicts and struggles around food, and typical household food patterns. This analysis examines how *habitus* from class of origin can influence food dispositions, as well as how participants used food and talk about food to mark symbolic and moral boundaries on the basis of class. In particular, people used discourses of cosmopolitan and omnivorous eating, ethical eating, and healthy eating, as well as the moral virtue of frugality, to align or disidentify with class of origin or current class location. Our analysis shows that food can be a powerful symbolic means of marking class boundaries.

Keywords: social class, eating patterns, eating habits, food practices, class mobility, class trajectory, socioeconomic status

Introduction

> *[If] middle-class existence is constituted on the basis of a radical exclusion,*
> *pathologizing and Othering of working-class existence, what happens when*
> *people occupy both a working-class and a middle-class habitus during the same*
> *lifetime? (Lawler, 1999, p. 14)*

Food and eating have long been markers of social class distinctions. In this paper we draw on qualitative interviews with people who have experienced upward or downward class mobility, to explore how they use food to mark symbolic class boundaries. Despite widespread belief in equality among Canadians, disparities persist in income levels, occupational statuses, and education levels that perpetuate and reproduce social inequities. While class distinctions are seldom articulated, everyday consumption is a key site for challenging and/or reproducing class. Following Bourdieu (1984), we first establish two differing dispositions toward food evident among study participants, demarcated by proximity to necessity. We then show how participants spoke through food to distinguish themselves from or align with particular class locations— sometimes aligning with class of origin, sometimes with current class location. Our intent is to show not how social class affects food practices, but rather how people use food practices and food talk to signal alignment with or distance from particular classes. We explore the social processes of boundary-marking through food.

Cultural distinction or omnivorousness?

Bourdieu (1984) argues that particular highbrow (elite) and lowbrow (base or popular) cultural tastes map onto social classes, serving to recreate and maintain class distinctions. *Habitus* is the embodiment of class through the development of tastes for particular cultural forms. People develop dispositions toward practices and tastes that fit with the class structures that produce them. Preferences that feel highly individual and personal are socially produced. Tastes enacted through consumption both express social class and recreate class hierarchies—not through deliberate exclusion processes but through apparently innocent preferences: "Through the expression of tastes, individuals classify themselves; the practices and goods with which people outfit themselves place them in a rank-ordering of classes and class fractions; in other words, tastes both reflect and reinscribe social status" (Elliott, 2013, p. 301).

  For Bourdieu (1984), all social practice has logic, related to varying amounts of capitals available in different class positions. Economic capital (income, wealth), cultural capital (education, cultural ease and goods, knowing the "right" things), social capital (networks, knowing the "right" people), and symbolic capital (honour, respect, recognition) all influence everyday cultural practices. According to Bourdieu, for those with little economic capital, everyday purchasing decisions always have a financial component with relatively limited choices and options. Those who live close to necessity may need to obtain the most calories for their

money to avoid hunger. Eating well means plenty of food, tasty and filling. Those more distant from necessity, with greater economic and other forms of capital, are more likely to cultivate an aesthetic disposition toward food, seeing it not as fuel, but as an arena of stylistic distinction, pleasure, and appreciation (Bourdieu, 1984). Choice in consumption is valued, and the practices of those closer to necessity are rejected as distasteful and unappealing (Lawler, 2005).

In recent years, the existence of distinct elite or highbrow cultural forms has been questioned. The cultural *omnivore thesis* (Peterson & Kern, 1996) suggests that in an anti-elitist or anti-snobbery move, social elites may consume both high- and lowbrow cultures, valuing breadth and variety over exclusivity. Comfort with a range of cultural forms is prized, with narrowness and rigidity being castigated as inferior (Bennett et al., 2009). In this case, eating in an elite way would mean eating omnivorously, consuming both highbrow and lowbrow foods. Canadian survey data show educational and economic capital clearly linked with highbrow cultural practices such as attending theatre, art galleries, historic sites, dance, opera, golf, and downhill skiing, while television-watching is associated with those who have lower economic and educational capital (Veenstra, 2010). Yet supporting the cultural omnivore thesis, *all* of the cultural practices investigated were common among those with higher educational and economic capital, who distinguish themselves by breadth and variety of pursuits, enjoying sports and television along with opera and downhill skiing. It appears there are distinctly elite objects of consumption, but omnivorous consumption has also become a marker of elite class status. This paper explores the use of omnivorousness and other markers of class distinction in relation to food.

Food as a site of class distinctions

In contemporary food practices, taste hierarchies may be marked through commitment to omnivorous and cosmopolitan eating, "ethical" eating, and to some extent "healthy" eating. Culinary omnivores seek out foods that are novel, authentic, and exotic (Johnston & Baumann, 2010; Kaplan, 2013; Zukin, 2008). They draw from an assortment of food cultures, unintimidated by distinctions of class or ethnicity, disparaging only mass-produced "common" foods. Unlike culinary "snobs" (Petersen & Kern, 1996), who may differentiate themselves through *expensive* tastes, culinary omnivores distinguish themselves through the adoption of *expansive* tastes (Conner, 2008, p. 34). Rigid food conventions are eschewed in favour of eclecticism and a range of cuisines that demonstrate worldliness and the confidence to defy food conventions (Mellor et al., 2010). Some lower class foods become celebrated, re-branded as "cool" (Kaplan, 2013), like the gourmet macaroni and cheese or organic buffalo burgers found in upscale restaurants. Elite forms of cosmopolitan eating demonstrate sophisticated palates through connoisseur knowledge of the most authentic "ethnic" food products, and exotic and hard-to-find ingredients (Cappeliez & Johnston, 2013; Kaplan 2013). For these consumers, "the cuisine of social Others is regarded as a source of intellectual curiosity and exotic interest" (Cappeliez & Johnston, 2013, p. 443). Heldke (2003) condemns what she sees as commodification and appropriation of the food

practices of exotic cultural Others for personal satisfaction, calling it cultural food colonialism. The same could be said of the appropriation of foods across class borders.

Ethical eating is another means of marking class distinctions through food: fair trade, sustainable, locally produced, humane, organic (Cairns et al., 2013; Elliott, 2013; Guthman, 2003; Johnston et al., 2011; Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010). Not only are such products more costly, they also often require more effort and travel time to obtain (Kriwy & Mecking, 2012). The extra time, money, knowledge, and energy required position ethical eating as a potential status-marker. It is important to note, however, that those with less economic capital to purchase ethical products may nonetheless engage in other aspects of ethical consumption, such as recycling, buying reduced packaging, buying in bulk, and avoiding food waste (Johnston et al., 2011).

Finally, "healthy eating"[1] may be employed as a marker of social class (Crawford, 2006; Ristovski-Slijepcevic et al., 2010). In Eastern Scotland, healthy eating was a major focus for middle-class parents' scrutiny of teen diets; cooking from scratch and avoiding prepared foods were priorities (Wills et al., 2011). These parents also promoted cosmopolitan eating, striving to cultivate future social and cultural capital in their offspring. Working class parents focused far less on molding children's palates, with young people's food preferences seen as their own concern (Backett-Millburn et al., 2010; Wills et al., 2011). In contrast, Shildrick and MacDonald (2013) found people living in (often extreme) poverty in Northeast England discursively positioned themselves as healthy eaters, and other (less deserving) "poor people" as unhealthy eaters. Though the distance between these studies—in time and in geography—is minimal, Shildrick and MacDonald suggest their findings reflect rising prejudice against the working class, with subsequent diminishment of working-class solidarity.

Food practices in class trajectories: Boundary marking

Lawler (1999) argues that those who experience upward class mobility face *disrupted habitus* (p. 14), a situation rife with pain, sense of displacement, shame, and anxiety about being caught out. The habitus formed in one's family of origin is most durable, probably because it is least conscious (Bourdieu, 1984). When social contexts change with class mobility, ways of being that feel natural or unconscious may no longer allow smooth movement through social settings; the primary habitus is no longer a good fit. Bourdieu (2000) called these situations double binds, which can leave people in a kind of "social schizophrenia" (Grenfell, 2004, p. 29) where class of origin social and cultural capital no longer reap benefits. While people may learn to skillfully and strategically straddle class differences, if adaptation proves impossible, the tension may amount to what Bourdieu (1984) called *hysteresis* (p. 142).

In Lawler's (1999) study, upwardly mobile women distanced themselves from their working class origins, depicting their families as lacking: "They do not know the right things,

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[1] There is no one, superior version of "healthy eating." Nonetheless, discourses that draw from nutritional science are employed to assess the eating practices of self and others, often making judgments about moral worth (Ristovski-Slijepcevic, Chapman & Beagan, 2010).

they do not value the right things, they do not want the right things" (p. 11). Similarly, in a study of middle-class dinner parties one woman saw her desire to provide high-quality food as distancing herself "from the shame of growing up poor, and specifically from the embarrassment of her family's struggle to afford enough food for guests" (Mellor et al., 2010, p. 11). Upward class mobility may leave people ever-conscious of their precarious social positions, anxious to renounce their class origins, yet not entirely comfortable with their new class locations (Friedman, 2012).

Double binds may be equally painful for the downwardly mobile. Gross and Rosenberger (2010) found that people in rural Oregon who had moved into poverty continued to seek middle-class cultural capital, to their own detriment. Their food dispositions no longer fit. They still strove to engage in ethical eating, and emphasized nutrition and preparing food from scratch— food practices they associated with the middle class—even though they no longer had the time or money for those food practices. They still preferred meat as a source of protein, for example, and might buy smaller amounts or cheaper cuts, rather than consume beans for protein. Participants still strove to display middle class affiliation: "The habits of their upbringing have ill-prepared them to strategize in the world they live in today as poor members of society" (Gross & Rosenberger, 2010, p. 67). Parents reported they themselves went hungry at times, but (unlike other families) their children never did. At times, "listening children rolled their eyes" (Gross & Rosenberger, 2010, p. 61).

Hierarchies of taste, where some sets of preferences are more highly prized than others, not only allow people to establish their own identities through social performances, but also to establish boundaries between "them" and "us," with a sense of moral or cultural superiority connected to "us." Groups construct their own rankings, establishing themselves as "worthy" on specific grounds in comparison to those perceived as higher and as lower than themselves (Lamont, 2010). When food consumption is employed in such boundary work (Lamont, 1992; Lamont & Molnár 2002), it can help define the parameters of inclusion and exclusion. As such, symbolic boundaries can construct members of lower classes as having less of everything valued by higher classes: less taste, less intelligence, less virtue, less respectability, less humanity (Lawler, 1999; 2005). Those in middle-class positions may "push away" with repugnance the practices of those in lower-class positions with a vehemence that can only be described as disgust. Such rejection helps to constitute and solidify their own class positions (Lawler, 2005).

It is important to note that symbolic and moral boundary marking is multidirectional; the lower classes, too, distinguish themselves through particular moral virtues (Lamont, 2000). As Bourdieu (1984) explains, "social identity lies in difference, and difference is asserted against what is closest, which represents the greatest threat" (p. 479). Those who feel shame in occupying a stigmatized social position (e.g., the working poor/impoverished) must work hard to assert their worth and dignity against those in a similar position, to assert their virtue in comparison with the less-virtuous masses. Thus, in a process of class disidentification, people living in poverty may take pains to distinguish themselves from "the poor" through their ability to manage, to cope, while nameless Others (the poor) are not coping due to moral failure

(Shildrick & MacDonald, 2013). Similarly, those who have moved from such a stigmatized position and still feel the sting of shame may do similar moral work by distancing themselves from their pasts (Lawler, 1999). On the other hand, those who have moved out of poverty may also draw upon the moral virtue structures of their pasts to distance from their new class location (Mellor et al., 2010).

In this paper we examine how people who have experienced class trajectories (moving upward or downward), resulting in situations of disrupted habitus, make use of available hierarchies in eating practices to symbolically mark class boundaries, displaying affiliation with or distance from particular class groups through food.

Methods

This paper draws from a large qualitative study with 105 families in ten sites (rural and urban) across Canada; guided by critical theory and social constructivism, that study explored how gender, class and place shape food practices. Following ethical approval in all sites,[2] families were recruited through advertising and word-of-mouth and were selected to ensure variety. "Family" meant whatever participants understood it to mean. Each family had to include minimally one adult woman and one teen willing to be interviewed. In each family we interviewed at least two members, one adult and one teen (thirteen to nineteen years), though often additional family members participated. In the first semi-structured interview, participants were asked about typical eating habits, food shopping, what they thought was good or not-so-good about the way they ate, and the influence of their upbringing on eating. They were then given cameras and asked to take photographs of foods they ate regularly, enjoyed, or disliked, and places where they shopped, ate out, or refused to frequent. These photos were the basis for discussion in a second interview. We also gave them photos of foods and eating establishments, asking them to sort those images into categories of comfortable or uncomfortable, trying to help people articulate the taken-for-granted concerning food. Interviews were recorded, professionally transcribed verbatim, and thematically coded using Atlas/ti (http://atlasti.com). The coding was conducted by research assistants at each site; regular team discussions ensured interpretive consensus among the team and the coding and analysis emerged.

Categorizing class and class trajectories

The analyses here draw on interviews from a sub-sample of sixteen families in which at least one parent had experienced significant class trajectory, upward or downward. We categorized class

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[2] Ethical approval was obtained at University of British Columbia for two sites in BC, at University of Alberta for two sites in Alberta, at University of Toronto for two sites in that city, at Queens University for two other sites in Ontario, and at Dalhousie University for two sites in Nova Scotia. In every case except Toronto, sites included one rural area plus one urban area.

taking into account education, income and occupational prestige (Gilbert, 2008; Goldthorpe, 1987; Lamont, 1992; Macionis & Gerber, 2011), employing five class categories.[3] Confusing situations were discussed until consensus was reached. For example, adults who did manual labour but ran small businesses to provide those services tended to be classified as lower-middle class, with relatively high income and autonomy, but lower occupational prestige. Those who had experienced class mobility were categorized primarily based on current employment and household income.

Six families had clear upward trajectories, such that at least one adult had significantly higher income and education than their parents, and had greater occupational prestige, such as moving from manual work to white-collar work; all were now categorized as upper-middle class. Seven families had clear downward trajectories, with at least one adult whose income and occupational prestige were significantly lower than the previous generation, whose education level may have been lower, and whose employment (if any) may have been more manual or clerical compared with managerial or professional employment in the previous generation; five families were now considered working poor/impoverished, one working class, and one lower-middle class. Three families had mixed class trajectories, moving up then down or vice versa, when comparing their income, prestige, education and occupational categories with those of their parents.

As is typical in Canada (Macionis & Gerber, 2011), class mobility was usually due to education, divorce, single parenting, illness, or disability (see Table 1). The current analysis excludes families that were recent migrants to Canada, since class trajectory and food habits are both thoroughly disrupted by migration (e.g., Vallianatos & Raine, 2008). For this analysis we draw only on the interviews with adults, as the teens had not really experienced class trajectory. The sub-sample for this analysis included sixteen adult women and three adult men. Annual incomes ranged from $8,000 to $420,000, and all but one family lived in urban areas. Participants were all of Euro-Canadian origin, except for three families. One single mother was half Aboriginal, half Euro-Canadian; two other mothers were of Dutch and Serbian heritage, though second-generation Canadian.

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[3] Class categories focused primarily on occupation (which to some extent incorporates education level, income). The categories used were: Upper class (live off existing wealth, top three to five percent of population); upper-middle class (high status white collar, managers, professionals, business people); lower-middle class (lower status white collar, highly skilled blue/pink collar, lower-level administrators and managers, nurses, executive assistants, skilled trades); working class (lower skilled blue/pink collar, manual and clerical jobs with less formal skills, training and education); and working poor/impoverished (precarious work and insecure incomes that fall at or below the poverty line, reliance on income assistance).

Table 1: Participant demographics

Upward trajectory						
Family	**Class origin**	**Current class**	**Trajectory**	**Education**	**Employment**	**Ethnicity**
#1	Working	Upper-middle	Higher education,* marriage	Graduate	Professional	White Euro-Canadian
#2	Working	Upper-middle	Higher education, marriage	Graduate	Professional	White Euro-Canadian
#3	Working	Upper-middle	Higher education, marriage	Graduate & undergrad	Professional	White Euro-Canadian
#4	Working	Upper-middle	Second generation Canadian, higher education, marriage	Graduate	Professional	Serbian Canadian second generation
#5	Working	Upper-middle	Higher education, marriage	Graduate & undergrad	Professional	White Euro-Canadian
#6	Working	Upper-middle	Higher education, marriage	Graduate	Professional	White Euro-Canadian

Downward trajectory						
Family	**Class origin**	**Current class**	**Trajectory**	**Education**	**Employment**	**Ethnicity**
#7	Upper- or lower-middle**	Working poor/impoverished	Lower education, disability	Some post-secondary	Income assistance	White Euro-Canadian
#8	Lower-middle	Working poor/impoverished	Health issues, unemployment	College diploma	Income assistance	White Euro-Canadian
#9	Upper- or lower-middle	Working	Divorce	Undergrad	Service and retail	White Euro-Canadian
#10	Lower-middle	Working poor/impoverished	Disability	Undergrad	Income assistance, part-time service work	White Euro-Canadian
#11	Upper- or lower-middle	Lower-middle	Lower education, unstable employment, single parenting	Some post-secondary	Clerical, between jobs	Dutch Canadian second generation
#12	Lower-middle	Working poor/impoverished	Divorce, disability	Some post-secondary	Income assistance	White Euro-Canadian
#13	Upper-middle	Working poor/impoverished	Single parent, lower education, disability	Some post-secondary	Income assistance	Aboriginal and Scottish (second generation)

Mixed trajectory						
Family	Class origin	Current class	Trajectory	Education	Employment	Ethnicity
#14	Lower-middle to impoverished then back up	Working	Single parent	College diploma	Administrative	White Euro-Canadian
#15	Lower-middle to impoverished then back up	Lower-middle	Higher education, divorce	Graduate diploma	Social services	White Euro-Canadian
#16	Working to upper-middle then income loss	Upper-middle (↓ income)	Higher education, marriage, divorce, unstable work	Undergrad	Sales	White Euro-Canadian

* Higher or lower education level relative to own parents
** Sometimes it was hard to precisely assess class of origin. For example, in family #7, the education of the mother's parents was not mentioned, but the mother talked about educational expectations, travelling for family vacations, a family car, a formal dining room, and all of her siblings earned graduate degrees.

Data analysis

For each family, in addition to line-by-line coding, we read all transcripts repeatedly, looking at the effects of income, upbringing, and how they talked about the eating practices of others, and themselves at previous times. We wrote summary memos for each family, then returned to transcripts, identifying themes. We attended to food practices, but also ideas and constructs concerning food, particularly as people indicated difference from or similarity to others. For the current analysis, all transcripts were read and re-read, with more detailed coding conducted by the first author specifically focused on how people used talk about food to distance from or affiliate with others by class.

Reflexivity and limitations

The larger research team included six researchers plus fourteen research assistants. Among us we included a wide range of ages, family forms and structures, class backgrounds, and personal food practices and values. We included men and women, health professionals as well as social scientists. Working closely as a team throughout data collection and analysis meant study rigour was enhanced by constant discussions that challenged individual biases. The authors of this paper have all experienced upward class trajectories, and have diverse current relationships to food. We include health professionals and social scientists. The current analysis is limited by our exclusion of recent migrants, who generally experience significant downward class mobility. Though we did not select for ethnicity from the remaining sample, the sixteen families included

here are nonetheless quite homogenous, with primarily British- or other Euro-Canadian origins. While this means fewer complicating factors, it also limits the ability to analyse intersections of class with ethnicity or race. Future studies should attend specifically to this gap.

Results

In the two sections below we first illustrate two differing orientations toward food (pragmatism and pleasure), evident in participants' food practices, marked by proximity to or distance from necessity (Bourdieu, 1984). Current income levels (available economic capital) featured heavily—though not exclusively—here. Secondly, we show how these participants who had experienced class mobility used discourses of healthy eating, ethical eating, and cosmopolitan eating, as well as an emphasis on frugality, to draw moral and symbolic boundaries around class (Lamont, 1992). Here the intent is not to show how social class affects food practices, but rather how people use food practices, and talk about food, to signal their alignment with or distance from specific class positions. The social processes are those of boundary-marking through food.

Food orientations: Pragmatism versus pleasure

Pragmatism

For some participants, food was a pragmatic, utilitarian necessity, with few elements of choice or satisfaction. For example, one woman said:

> Food is, to me it is a necessity.... I never would in my mind waste money frivolously on things that we really didn't need, but focus on what we did need. Like, always get your milk, your bread, your meat, your vegetable, et cetera. The fancy cakes, well, we'll save that for your birthday, kind of thing. (48, UMC, upward)[4]

This utilitarian approach was evident among most participants who were low income, but also many of those who had experienced upward mobility but carried a frugal, pragmatic habitus with them.

In the pragmatic orientation, food shopping was experienced as a necessary chore to be accomplished as efficiently as possible. Those with a low income tended to plan menus, shop from a list, buy in bulk, and use coupons. They had extensive knowledge about sales, discount pricing, and the costs of individual food items at different stores. Shopping was based on need, budget and cost, and convenience. The low-income participants rarely shopped at multiple

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[4] Quotations are identified by age, current class location (UMC=upper-middle class; LMC=lower-middle class; WC=working class) and whether their trajectory was upward or downward.

stores, but when they did, it was for "chasing sales." Despite their economic resources, some of the participants with upward class trajectories continued to value convenience and avoided shopping at multiple stores or specialty shops:

> It's just like "Oh God, I have to go grocery shopping," and I just hate it. So like you go to Safeway [large supermarket] because you know where everything is... I don't go to four other places... I'm just not that kind of a shopper. (50, UMC, upward)

Cooking in the pragmatic orientation was also a utilitarian chore, usually learned from family or friends, and rarely used for displays of capital. Those who were currently low income avoided experimenting with new foods or preparation methods.

> I'm not very adventuresome. If I'm going to cook I'm measuring everything carefully whereas I have a friend who just, "Oh, you put some of this and put some of that." I couldn't possibly cook like that because, partly because of the expense, because I wouldn't want to waste the money. (55, WC, downward)

Such pragmatism and caution suggest little distance from necessity and little ability to use food for displays of capital. Yet even when finances permitted, some with upward trajectories rejected the use of food to impress. When asked what she might prepare for guests, one woman said she would barbeque, "Nothing really fancy, but just food that people will like" (48, UMC, upward). Another participant described her cooking as "pretty basic," "just very straight cooking," such as hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken, and roasts. She described her upper-middle class husband as liking "to bring the cookbook out and do the fancy, come up with different tastes and things" (50, UMC, upward). Among pragmatic cooks, homemade foods were taken for granted, normal, just "what you do."

Aesthetics and pleasure

For many of those with greater distance from necessity, food was part of an "aesthetic disposition." Food was a source of pleasure, adventure, joy, connection, and discovery: "I'm fascinated by the flavours and the textures and the visuals of food as well. It's kind of an all-around package. The preparation of the food as well. It's not about how fast can I make something" (41, LMC, mixed). One very low income single mother insisted:

> Eating isn't just swallowing food... For me food is part of what I call wholesome sensuality. A beautiful part of being is food and preparing it and eating it and feeling good from it and knowing how connected it is to sustaining our well being. (62, working poor/impoverished, downward)

This orientation was most common among those with an upward class trajectory who had the financial resources to turn a biological necessity into an aesthetic choice and a vehicle for displays of capital in their search for distinction. As is evident in this quote, however, it then becomes available for marking class alignment among those who have slid downward in income, as we will discuss below.

In the pleasure orientation, food shopping was not a chore to be efficiently dispatched, but rather a leisure activity, an adventure, or as one participant said, "a destination":

> I'll find myself at the market maybe a couple of times over the course of a week
> to buy fresh things. And there are times when we feel like little splurges and that's
> when we go to places like the Grotto del Formaggio ... which has amazing
> cheeses and we love our cheeses. So we'll try a new, different kind of cheese. Or
> we'll go to Fratelli's bakery, and get some special treat there. And go to the deli
> on the Drive and—. Sort of make our shopping a bit of a destination, a bit of an
> activity that's fun to do.... Exploration and taste testing. It's a foodie experience.
> (41, LMC, mixed)

When finances allowed, shopping was based on wants and desires, rather than need or cost: "When I go shopping as I did for the last five weeks I didn't think about cost. I simply thought about what I was going cook with what I bought" (53, UMC, upward).

People tended to shop in multiple specialty shops, foregoing the convenience of a supermarket for the pleasure of seeking out just the right ingredients. They might go to a produce store, a farmers' market, a cheese shop, a fish monger, a meat market, a coffee shop, a bakery, and so on. They knew all the best places to get all the right ingredients. Despite lower incomes, some with downward trajectories retained this orientation to shopping. One woman had organic produce delivered, and also went to a discount grocery, and several other stores:

> I go to [family-owned] stores along Roncesvalles and some of the food markets
> there. And I try to go to Rowe's [meat vendor] once every couple weeks. And
> then there's a store on Queen Street called Good Catch General Store. Part of
> what they carry is what you'd see in a health food store. So the organic cheese
> and coffee beans from Alternative Grounds. The [organic] milk from Harmony...
> Bacchus [roti shop], and if we want a quick treat we go into Brown Sugar. It's a
> little café. (49, LMC, downward)

In the pleasure orientation, cooking was seen as leisure, indulgence, a focus of adventure and discovery, as well as a vehicle for self-expression and displays of cultural and symbolic capital. People had often learned to cook from books, the internet, television, and courses, yet were also highly experimental, willing to attempt any new dish or cuisine. One participant

described having spent an entire day making Thai food from scratch, something she'd never cooked before. Another stated, "I'll try new things with abandon... [I prefer] to cook Northern Indian food, Pakistani food, Iranian food, Mogul food, Southern Indian food, and Thai food" (53, UMC, upward). This participant regularly made bread in a brick oven he had built in his yard.

Through cooking, shopping and their overall approach to food, participants tended to display an orientation focused either on pragmatic utilitarianism, or pleasure and appreciation. Distance from necessity shaped this, through relative access to economic capital. But several participants displayed food orientations that were not obviously linked to current finances; it appeared that the habitus of their class of origin might be at play, directing an approach to food that was not in keeping with their current class status. People found ways to indulge in pleasure with food despite economic constraints, or continued to see food as a necessity despite access to ample financial resources.

Moral boundary marking

Participants used food symbolically to align with the perceived practices of the class to which they wished to signal their belonging, establishing themselves as virtuous, respectable or worthy in comparison to others whose practices they rejected. Some emphasized the practices and moral dispositions of their class of origin to distance themselves from their current class situation, some emphasized the practices and moral dispositions of their current class location to distinguish themselves from their class of origin.

Distancing from "lowbrow" food: A discourse of "healthy eating"

Most participants, regardless of class trajectory, distanced themselves from foods perceived as lower class, or "lowbrow." Foods that were spoken of contemptuously included soft drinks, fast food, "junk" food, processed meats, white flour, powdered milk, and margarine. This distancing was most often accomplished through the language of "healthy eating"[5] which seemed to cross class boundaries. One woman spoke of the children's lunches at a school in a low-income neighbourhood where she used to live, horrified that children brought pop, chocolate bars, cakes, and cookies: "I remember thinking 'Oh my God, this is just awful!' I couldn't believe it" (38, UMC, upward). Another woman suggested parents were "ignorant of the label-reading skills": "When you look at some of these lunches that these parents send these children, what are they thinking?" (46, working poor/impoverished, downward).Whether participants came from a lower class and were disparaging the way they grew up, or were now lower class and disparaging the ways people around them ate, lowbrow foods were almost universally disparaged as unhealthy.

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[5] Here we do not endorse the notion that there is one, uncontestable version of healthy eating; rather we are interested in how people used that concept, often left undefined, to evaluate themselves and others. When asked directly, most people did echo mainstream nutritional discourse to some extent. The point here, however, is the use of the idea of healthy eating, rather than its content.

Participants who were on income assistance (welfare) took pains to distinguish themselves from "the poor" who ate unhealthy foods. One woman spoke of people on welfare eating bologna, canned meats, hotdogs, "and I don't even know what they're called." Drawing a clear boundary of virtue, she went on, "Once I realized how processed those meats were, they became despicable to me" (62, working poor/impoverished, downward). Despicable is a word laden with moral overtones. Speaking about others on income assistance one woman said:

> Their diet will probably be McDonald's, processed cheese sandwich on white bread, and Kraft Dinner, wieners, hot dogs and bologna sandwiches ... Just about zero vegetables. Just about zero fruits. Tons of sugar, ice cream. Pop. ... Their diets are horrible, really, really bad. (49, working poor/impoverished, downward)

Notions of healthy eating were also used by some participants with upward class trajectories to distance from their food roots. One woman referred to having grown up in a "Hamburger Helper household," in which her employed mother relied on pre-packaged foods, cheap uncoloured margarine, and powdered milk: "It was gross... I hated it. I remember very clearly thinking, 'As soon as I get out of this place it's going to be real butter. It's going to be real milk'" (41, LMC, mixed). The disdain was palpable. One man even more explicitly disparaged the way he ate growing up working class in a small town:

> I grew up in a small lunch-bucket town in Ontario and all we ate was bologna sandwiches with ketchup. [laughter] That's the honest to God truth. ... It was brutal. And my mom cooked the bejeezus out of protein, boiled the snot out of brussels sprouts. Everything was mushy vegetables and burnt beef. [laughs] It was terrible! ... Salads with a base of Jello. It was amazing... That's what I grew up with. Blah... You were lucky if you had lettuce. ... When I look back on it, it was pretty abysmal. (53, UMC, upward)

His wife chimed in, "It wasn't healthy eating. It wasn't a healthy lifestyle."

Distancing through ethical eating

For those with enough economic capital, one way to distance themselves from Others and show their affiliation with prized class locations was to emphasize ethical eating over cost and necessity. Interestingly, participants with upward class trajectories tended not to show strong commitment to ethical eating. As one man said, "I'm still somewhat sceptical that the claims for organic are really, truly organic" (53, UMC, upward). Another participant suggested, "At some point if I can get enough time to do research and get my head around it I would definitely like to focus more on organic meats and stuff like that" (38, UMC, upward). Others commented on the cost and inconvenience of ethical eating. Perhaps these participants were showing the effects of

a working class habitus, resisting the expense of ethical consumption, or perhaps they were able to mark symbolic boundaries and display cultural capital in other ways.

The most extensive displays of ethical eating were by participants with downward and mixed class trajectories, marking alignment with middle-class origins. They emphasized knowing the nearby vendors of organic, local, sustainable foods, including organic delivery programs and food co-ops. One woman reported,

> I like to buy organic bananas because bananas are really heavily sprayed. And strawberries too, but they're expensive. And apples because you eat the peel, so those are the ones [organic products] I'd like to purchase most. ... The organic milk... I'm not as convinced that it's that much healthier. (55, WC, downward)

She went on to say she felt like "a complete hypocrite" because she could not afford to buy ethically produced food for her cat. These participants, despite often being very low income, spent scarce food dollars on ethical eating, and spoke about it as a type of moral virtue that set them apart from other lower class people around them. One working poor/impoverished woman purchased almost exclusively ethically produced products, including only organic flour. Though she had no access to a car, she preferred to buy from producers or small vendors rather than chain grocers, despite the inconvenience. Another participant noted that with the higher cost of ethical eating, she purchased organic, free-range, fair-trade, but bought less meat, poultry, and coffee: "I feel good about what it is that I'm eating but I try to keep it to a minimum" (41, LMC, mixed).

Distancing through cosmopolitan and omnivorous eating

The connoisseur mode of cosmopolitan eating, which tends to be associated with upper classes, is marked by food adventurousness, openness to any kind of cuisine, emphasis on esoteric food knowledge, and prizing authenticity (Cappeliez & Johnston, 2013; Kaplan, 2013). Adding culinary omnivorousness to this, we would expect to see openness to any kind of eating establishment as a feature of cultural capital displays (Conner, 2008; Johnston & Baumann, 2010). Such displays of culinary capital were evident in almost all of the families with upward class trajectories, and all of those with mixed trajectories.

Connoisseur cosmopolitanism rests on displays of specialized food knowledge. Several participants with upward class trajectories spoke in extraordinary detail about specific foods. For example:

> The little Crottin de Chavignol is really delicious.... It's a goat cheese, a French cheese and it just has a lovely sharpness to it and sweetness... There's this beautiful texture to it. It's approaching dry when it's in a form that I like. ... it's not as dry as chalky, but there's this certain dryness to it that is really appealing.

>   This is when I like them, about this age. If you let them really age, the outside
>   becomes very gnarly looking and the inside becomes more liquid. ... But this is
>   the form I like it, right about at that point. (53, UMC, upward)

These participants tended to display esoteric knowledge about ingredients and where to buy them, about specialty food markets, and about multiple types of restaurants, giving details about menus, owners and chefs.

Adventurousness and willingness to eat from any cuisine was another hallmark of cosmopolitanism, including willingness to prepare foods from any cuisine. Emphasizing the exotic, participants with upward and mixed class trajectories indicated confidence cooking Mexican, Northern Indian, Southern Indian, Pakistani, Iranian, Mogul, Ethiopian, Somalian, Greek, Lebanese, Thai, Japanese and Korean foods. One woman said,

>   I love different ethnic foods. I love Indian foods, curries and tabouleh… I love
>   different things, I love trying Greek foods, any of it. I like all different ethnic
>   foods. ... I'm up for whatever comes. I'll give it a whirl. I'll try anything once, if I
>   don't like it, I won't eat it again. (42, UMC, mixed)

These participants also spoke about very deliberately inculcating a preference for cosmopolitan eating in their children. One couple spoke with pride of their teen sons' favourite restaurant, noting that it was not a French bistro, but an Alsatian bistro (50 & 53, UMC, upward).

Authenticity is key to connoisseur cosmopolitanism. Among those with upward and mixed trajectories, homemade foods, which were taken for granted in the pragmatic food orientation, were prized as superior quality.

>   I like it to be all homemade, so you know homemade desserts and homemade
>   appetizers and just you know—I don't, it's pretty rare that I'll buy a boxed
>   something. Something pre-prepared. Because I want to be in charge of the
>   flavours and the ingredients. (41, LMC, mixed)

Participants vigorously distanced themselves from pre-packaged and prepared foods which seemed to be seen as common, lower quality: "We don't eat almost any packaged food at all, like pre-packaged skillet this or canned that" (51, UMC, upward). There was often little explanation, not even citing health, simply rejecting prepared foods as inferior. Participants might eat a grilled cheese sandwich, but only with specialized ingredients to mark distinction:

>   Really neat crusty bread, maybe marbled with a pumpernickel swirl running
>   through it and a really neat gruyere cheese with something else, you know, a
>   really interesting side dish, it might be construed as a deli dish or something, like
>   with really neat tomatoes. (51, UMC, upward)

Another participant said she would add "capers and olives" (50, UMC, upward).

Most participants with upward and mixed class trajectories also strenuously rejected fast food, seen as mass-produced and lacking quality. One man said he would eat fast food if he were "starving." Rather, they sought out the most authentic Thai curry or Caribbean roti, referring to little-known, "one of a kind" restaurants or take-outs. One couple described several "fantastic little hole-in-the-wall" places, providing the background stories about owners or chefs. Another participant said, "I find the best foods are often dingy little places, like little Thai places where they could care less about how things look" (39, UMC, upward).

All but one of the participants with upward or mixed trajectories reported being comfortable in any type of restaurant (except fast-food), from low-end to high-end: "From your really informal to your formal places, I mean everywhere I go I can make a choice that's good for me" (39, UMC, upward). One woman had developed comfort with high-end restaurants through waitressing, another through her husband: "His mom used to set a very fancy table, very formal table. Usually Sunday dinner. Or you would go to a restaurant with her like that. I wasn't raised like that" (50, UMC, upward).

Finally, two of the couples with upward class trajectories made a point of marking their food practices as not being elitist, snobbish, or pretentious. One man joked that the family didn't eat caviar. Another dismissed some restaurants as "too stuffy" and overly self-conscious. He and his wife specifically disparaged what they referred to as upper middle class "epicureanism," in which people sought out "the most fabulous baguette" rather than "normal bread", wanting to be "seen to consume the best." They saw this as superficial (53 & 50, UMC, upward).

Most participants with downward class trajectories seemed far less likely to use cosmopolitan eating to mark distinction. Some would prefer to eat more diverse cuisines, but could not afford the specialized ingredients, or the preparation time. Experimentation can be risky for those close to necessity. It seemed important to express openness to new foods, but current knowledge of diverse foods was hindered by low income. For example, one woman saw eating out as an opportunity to try something different: "It's like, wow, I've never tasted this before. This is awesome!" (39, working poor/impoverished, downward). Enthusiasm aside, she was unable to speak knowledgably about foods she could not afford to sample.

Three of the participants with downward class trajectories indicated they would be comfortable in any restaurant, stating, "I would think that I would find something on the menu at all these places" (49, LMC, downward). One woman clearly articulated the effects of her upper-middle class primary habitus:

> I'm also comfortable in very formal places because I was raised in a very rich
> family... I was raised with very proper manners and table settings and stuff so I'm
> not uncomfortable in that situation... We had very formal dinners with my
> grandmother. You know, the multi plates and many forks and knives, pure silver,
> crystal and all that so ... it's easier for me than most I guess. ... The most

comfortable I feel is really an easy-going atmosphere where you don't have to
pretend or use special manners. But I can pull them off immediately. (49, working
poor/impoverished, downward)

Distancing through frugality

Lastly, some of the participants who had upward class trajectories drew moral boundaries
distinguishing themselves from their current class location through emphasizing the virtue of
frugality, something they explicitly stated was retained from their lower class origins. There was
a sense of indirectly referencing the upper classes as wasteful, spendthrift, and less moral due to
their extravagance. As one woman remarked, "There are some couples that go out three times a
week and I said, wow that must really add up!... [I was] never really extravagant to begin with"
(48, UMC, upward). The highest income mother in our study repeated throughout her interviews
that she was frugal, thrifty, and hated spending money.

> Even though [husband] has a lot more money than me and he doesn't care, I still
> am in budget mode. I'm in budget mode. And that's probably, that's how I was
> raised. And that's how I will always be... I will always be frugal.... I don't believe
> in wasting money on anything. (38, UMC, upward)

This pride in frugality was one of the most obvious places where working-class habitus
conflicted with current class location, with the potential for *hysteresis* (Bourdieu, 1984). This
same participant described ongoing family tension concerning food-spending, though it did not
appear to elevate to conflict: "I'm really frugal when it comes to eating and that drives [my
husband] crazy. I think because I grew up so poor…It's just very different backgrounds, right?
He would just buy what he wants" (38, UMC, upward).

Discussion

We identified two distinct food orientations, one focused on pragmatic utilitarianism, one on
food as pleasure (Bourdieu, 1984). Among these participants who had experienced upward,
downward or mixed class trajectories, they did not map neatly onto current class situation—
though available economic capital made a difference. People with low incomes could not risk
being experimental—a culinary experiment resulting in potentially inedible food could pose too
great a cost to their food budgets. Frequenting multiple specialty shops lost pleasure when
travelling by foot or bus. Yet some people displayed food orientations that contradicted their
current financial circumstances, enjoying food as "wholesome sensuality" despite living on
$8,000 per year, or refusing to "waste money frivolously" despite an annual family income over
$200,000. While distance from necessity seemed to be part of the explanation, primary habitus

seemed also to have an effect. Many participants were in situations of *double binds* (Gross & Rosenberger, 2010) or *disrupted habitus* (Lawler, 1999), where their food dispositions no longer fit current class circumstances.

Those with upward and mixed trajectories sought distinction through culinary cosmopolitanism and omnivorousness, emphasizing specialized knowledge, exotic cuisines, authenticity, adventurousness, and openness to any food experience (Cappeliez & Johnston, 2013; Johnston & Baumann, 2010; Kaplan, 2013). These participants cultivated sophisticated palates in their children; such concern for children's culinary capital may distinguish the middle classes from the working class (Backett-Millburn, 2010; Gross & Rosenberger, 2010; Wills, 2011). Lowbrow foods were accepted, though often transformed with more exotic ingredients (Johnston & Baumann, 2010). Notably, however, fast foods and pre-packaged foods were soundly dismissed as unacceptable; as Conner (2008) suggests, "mass-produced foods may represent a homogenization of food culture that the omnivore must reject on principle" (p. 11). Distinction from that which is "common" matters (Lawler, 2005).

The omnivore thesis (Peterson & Kern, 1996) rests on the perceived superiority of a kind of "un-snobbish multiculturalism" in food practices (Kaplan, 2013, p. 249). There was some evidence in our sample of not just un-snobbishness, but even anti-snobbishness. A few participants who had moved up in class, and whole-heartedly drew distinctions through cosmopolitan and omnivorous eating, nonetheless took pains to establish that they were not food snobs. They stressed their discerning judgment regarding authenticity and quality, not only by insisting on their enjoyment of "hole-in-the-wall" diners, but also by baking bread in a wood-fired oven while castigating those who search out the best baguette as pretentious "epicureans." Their cultural capital lies in knowing where to get the best Caribbean roti, not the most elite caviar. This symbolic emphasis on authenticity may arise from having professional status, but not unlimited economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 291-95).

Surprisingly, dominant modes of ethical eating were not widely used by those with upward class trajectories to establish cultural capital. Why were they were not highly invested in ethical eating, a cultural repertoire linked with the upper-middle class (Elliott, 2013; Johnston et al., 2011)? Is cosmopolitan eating simply more valuable as an exchange for cultural capital? After all, once a piece of lamb is prepared in an authentic Moroccan curry who can tell if it was organic? Is it safe to express scepticism about the superiority of ethical products when economic, social and cultural capital are so clearly established in multiple other ways? Or are upwardly mobile participants who do not engage in ethical eating expressing a disrupted habitus, prioritizing the working class virtue of thrift and frugality over the cultural distinction of ethical eating? Perhaps as Julie Guthman (2003) has suggested, organic food production is losing its specialized status, and therefore its ability to distinguish?

In contrast, the downwardly mobile participants were almost all highly invested in ethical eating. Many ate organic, local, sustainable products, even when doing so cost dearly in money and effort. They described spending scarce food dollars on ethical products as a moral virtue that set them apart from others on low incomes. Given that ethical eating typically carries

high symbolic capital (Elliott, 2013; Johnston et al., 2011; Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010), it may be a means of moral boundary marking, distinguishing from lower-class others, and signalling continued belonging to the middle class, despite current circumstances. On the other hand, adherence to ethical eating when financial resources do not support this may reflect the operation of a middle-class habitus, the expression of taste, rather than intentional status-seeking (Elliott, 2013). This is particularly likely when the ethical consumption practices are relatively invisible (ibid.).

Lastly, like Shildrick and MacDonald (2013), we found support for the mainstream dictates of healthy eating across our sample, regardless of class of origin, or current financial circumstances. Perhaps signalling the overwhelming dominance of healthy eating discourses aligned with an anti-obesity framework (Beagan et al., 2015), almost everyone distanced themselves from lowbrow pre-packaged foods and fast foods, almost always through the moral discourse of healthy eating. Those with upward class trajectories were often harsh in disparaging their own lower class food histories as unhealthy ("gross," "abysmal," "just awful"). As Lawler (2005) suggests, the middle-class project of self-realization is never complete, and those who move into the middle classes are always at risk of being shamed (Lawler, 1999; Mellor et al., 2010). Expressions of disgust and repulsion at working-class lives entrench the middle classes as superior to the subordinate Other (Lawler, 2005). The intensity with which some upwardly mobile participants distanced from their earlier food practices suggests such disgust, in service of class distinction.

Healthy eating was employed at least as extensively by those with downward trajectories, who described the eating practices of others around them as "despicable," "horrible," "really bad," insisting that they would never eat like "those people". Shildrick and MacDonald (2013) call this class disidentification, suggesting that people living in poverty are necessarily "drawn into conjuring up phantom Others; an 'underclass' situated financially, culturally, socially and morally below them" (p. 299). In their study too, nutrition and diet were the focus for moral judgments, depicting the undeserving poor as providing food of poor nutritional quality for their families. In our study, participants with downward class trajectories used discourses of healthy eating to bolster their (former) middle-class identities, distancing from low-income others. While ethical eating concerns moral issues, neither it nor cosmopolitan eating seemed to carry the moral imperative of the healthy eating discourse; people seemed able to opt in or out of those food practices, to use them at will, without the accompanying messages of moral worth.

Conclusion

Food consumption practices are powerful means through which to mark symbolic class boundaries. Particular orientations to food are affected not only by current financial resources, but also by class of origin food dispositions. In an era when culinary cosmopolitanism and omnivorousness carry a certain cachet, people may use food knowledge, adventurousness and

openness to establish belonging in a social class to which they were not born. Similarly, those who slide down the class hierarchy may use ethical eating to establish their distinction from those who surround them, or may display food dispositions that no longer fit their economic circumstances. Healthy eating, the most prevalent discourse concerning food in Canada today (Beagan et al., 2015), appears to be employed for distinctly moral boundary marking, illustrated by the vociferousness with which participants marked their own eating practices as more worthy than those they deemed "abysmal" and "despicable." On an optimistic note for those involved in the field of nutrition, mainstream discourses of healthy eating seem to have become pervasive, available to and known across social class groups, suggesting dissemination of healthy eating messages has been highly effective.

Future research

Research in the area of class and food too often employs a narrow focus that equates class with current income, perhaps adding education level to the mix. While income obviously affects food practices in direct ways, more research is needed on the social processes through which "food dispositions" and food-related discourses are produced and employed. Food practices—and the values, beliefs and tendencies with which people approach food—do not necessarily change when economic capital changes, or simply through providing more education. Food and talk about food are used by people to navigate the moral and symbolic boundaries connected to social class. People are social actors who use food, as well as other consumption practices, to signify their social identities and positioning within complex social hierarchies. Considerably more research is needed to understand better how this works in relation to class, as well as gender, ethnicity, region, and other categories of difference.

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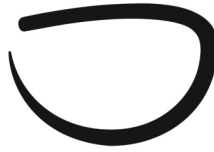
Original Research Article

Campus gardens: Food production or sense of place?

Natalee Ridgeway[1] and June Matthews[2]

[1] Master Student, Foods and Nutrition program, Brescia University College at Western
University
[2] Associate Professor, Division of Food and Nutritional Sciences, Brescia University College at
Western University (corresponding author: jmatth22@uwo.ca)

Abstract

Campus gardens can provide opportunities for experiential learning and enhanced physical and
mental health; however, they require substantial commitments of time, money, and effort. This
formative evaluation explores the perspectives of a university population on the establishment of
a campus garden prior to its implementation. Phase One involved an electronic survey of the
entire population at a small university (n=1293). Phase Two consisted of eleven in-depth
interviews with survey respondents who were interested in furthering the dialogue. The majority
(85%) of the 415 individuals who responded to the survey and all interviewees supported the
idea of a campus garden. Compared to a shared/community garden or rental plot, participants
preferred a low-maintenance forest garden. Food production was secondary to protection of the
natural environment and providing a space for rest and reflection. Participants' sense of
community, combined with knowledge of the university's history, mission, and values, reflected
a strong sense of place, a key component of social sustainability. This research supports the
consideration of alternative options to traditional community gardens on university campuses. It
suggests that forest gardens, with their low-maintenance approach to food production, and their
potential to promote social sustainability through an enhanced sense of place, may be a good
place to start.

Keywords: community garden, forest garden, campus garden, sense of place, social
sustainability, qualitative research

Introduction

Benefits of community gardens include better health, food source/food security, youth education, development, and employment, use and preservation of open space, crime prevention, neighbourhood beautification, leisure and outdoor recreation, cultural preservation and expression, social interactions/cultivation of relationships, stress relief, community empowerment, and mobilization (Armstrong, 2000; D'Abundo & Carden, 2008; Draper & Freedman, 2010; Ferris, Norman & Sempik, 2001; Kingsley, Townsen, & Henderson-Wilson, 2009; Van Den Berg & Custers, 2011). Gardens on university campuses in particular can address serious issues affecting students (e.g., nutritionally poor diets and food insecurity) (Chapparo et al., 2011; Hughes et al., 2011; Meldrum & Willows, 2006; Nugent, 2011). They also provide opportunities for environmental education and can foster a sense of community that transcends disciplines (Roubanis & Landis, 2007).

Food production has occurred on many North American university/college campuses since the nineteenth century (Lawson, 2005; Sayre, 2011). Campus gardens have increased in number over the past few decades with the "greening of the ivory tower" (Creighton, 1998) and official commitments by university administrators to sustainability in higher education (e.g., the Talloires Declaration) (University Leaders for a Sustainable Future, 2001). The primary focus, however, of most campus sustainability-related initiatives, including gardens, appears to be the *environmental* aspect (e.g., sustainability-related curriculum, "green" buildings, and improved campus management systems) (Quilley, 2009). The financial crisis of 2008 has also resulted in more attention to universities' *financial* sustainability (MTCU, 2013), and campus gardens are not immune from questions of profitability. They are rarely self-sustaining and rely heavily on volunteers, adding pressure on students or the institution to maintain them (Bell, 2013). Interestingly, *social* sustainability is not mentioned in any of the measures taken by the top eight schools in the *College Sustainability Report Card 2011* (Finlay & Massey, 2012); yet, this third pillar of sustainability is as important as the other two.

Social sustainability includes a broad range of concepts, including well-being, quality of life, social interaction, sense of community, and sense of place (Ghahramanpouri, Lamit & Sedaghatnia, 2013). MacKenzie (as cited in Davidson, 2010) has defined it as "a positive, life-enhancing condition within communities, and a process within communities that can achieve that condition" (p. 12). Obviously, what constitutes a life-enhancing condition will depend on the context. Canadian university students have identified "facilities" as the number one way in which universities could, in a systematic way, enhance their health and the student experience (Patterson & Kline, 2008). Indeed, the Campus Population Health Promotion Model, the NASPA Ecological Approach, and the UK Healthy Universities Model all emphasize the creation of supportive campus environments (CCL Health and Learning Knowledge Centre, 2009; NASPA, 2010; UK Healthy Universities Toolkit, 2011). Furthermore, the collection and use of institution-specific data to design settings that promote mental health and well-being for all is encouraged (MacKean, 2011). Exploring campus constituents' vision of a campus garden may therefore provide stakeholders with information that can be used to create a garden that is a life-enhancing condition for the campus community and addresses *all* aspects of sustainability.

Community gardens, as a communal pursuit, have been identified as providing a model for the promotion of urban sustainability (Holland, 2004). Yet Turner (2011) has suggested that any further development of the role community gardens can play in urban sustainability must "factor in the individual and (his/her) motivations and desires, not just those of an imagined

broader collective" (p. 514). Williams and Forbes (2012) built on this by saying, "if sustainability is to be more than an abstract idea, it must address the spirit of communities by speaking about what matters to them" (p. 116). Finally, the attainment of social sustainability involves "a process for creating sustainable, successful places that promote wellbeing, by understanding what people need from the places they live and work" (Social Life, as cited in Woodcraft et al., 2012, p. 16). Campus gardens should reflect the pluralism and diversity of the community within which they are situated. Given this, what might the motivations and desires of these individuals be regarding the establishment of a garden at their institution?

To answer this question, the authors conducted a formative evaluation at a small university. Formative evaluation/research involves a methodical, pragmatic approach to implementing a program based on the needs, wants, and resources of the community (Boyle & Holben, 1999) before the initiative is put into place. The goal is to identify participant preferences and obtain information pertinent to decision-making through systematic and rigorous data collection, to enhance the likelihood that the proposed initiative will be relevant to the populations involved, as well as feasible to implement and maintain (Schoster et al., 2012; Vastine et al., 2005). Conducting formative research demonstrates an interest in understanding both the population and the context. It can also "build trust, collaboration, and acceptance of the project" (Vastine et al., 2005, p.57). The objectives of this study were to (1) gauge interest in establishing a garden on campus; (2) explore various constituents' vision for a potential garden; (3) assess the willingness of the campus community to participate in the garden's implementation and maintenance; and (4) identify concerns and barriers. The findings, in particular the type of garden most preferred by participants and their reasons for that choice, speak to the importance of social sustainability on university campuses.

Method

The context for this study was Brescia University College, a small urban campus affiliated with Western University in London, Ontario. This university values holistic education, experiential learning, the spiritual dimension of the human person, the building of community, the struggle to raise social awareness and to promote social change, and the physical environment that enhances the spiritual search for truth and beauty (Brescia University College, 2013). Until 1962, Brescia University College produced much of its own food, including fodder crops for animals that were kept on the property. Professors "often went straight from lecture room to kitchen in harvest season" (Skidmore, 1980, p. 24) to preserve food. With renewed interest in gardening, and the fact that much of the campus continues to be farmed by a third party, many people have expressed interest in (re)establishing a garden on campus. The researchers, as members of this campus community, were aware of these "local murmurs" and decided that a formative evaluation would be a prudent and effective first step.

Phase One, an online survey of the entire campus population (n=1293), was distributed via email to all campus constituencies (i.e., students, staff, faculty, administration, and members of external boards). To increase response rate, two reminders were sent at one- and three-week intervals after the initial email (Archer, 2007). Respondents who completed the survey were invited to participate in a draw for one of two $75 gift certificates. The survey was created using online survey software (www.FluidSurveys.com) and consisted of fourteen questions regarding multiple aspects of establishing and maintaining a garden (e.g., type most preferred; willingness

to contribute to its establishment, maintenance, and sustainability; options for garden produce; potential fundraising opportunities and potential outcomes; and how a garden might support the university's role as an educational institution). Questions were based on literature, expert opinion, and an understanding of the university's history, vision, and values. Face validity was assessed by piloting the survey with several students; content validity was assessed by local gardening experts. Individuals who pilot-tested the survey did not participate in the study. Quantitative survey results were summarized as descriptive statistics using the survey software. Qualitative results were coded and categorized into tables using a word processor.

Phase Two participants were recruited from a list of survey respondents who indicated they were interested in participating in an interview. The goal was to explore key themes that emerged from the survey. Interviews were conducted in a private room on campus and participants received a $30 gift card. Responses were verified through member-checking at the end of each interview.

Interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Descriptive qualitative analysis (Mayan, 2009) occurred concurrently throughout the interview process. Using a constant comparative method, both researchers independently coded transcripts line-by-line to identify categories and themes (Charmaz, 2000; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Data were sorted into tables using a word processor. The researchers met frequently during this iterative process to discuss emerging themes until consensus was reached. Both researchers have experience in community gardening and one teaches about all aspects of the food system, including sustainable food production. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Board at Brescia University College.

Results

A total of 415 individuals responded to the survey (32% response rate). Staff members represented the highest response rate by constituency (Table 1). From the survey respondents who volunteered to participate in a post-survey interview (n=147), eleven individuals were purposively sampled to represent all constituencies (Table 1). Interviews lasted between thirty-five and seventy-five minutes, generating 151 pages of single-spaced transcripts. Quotes from survey respondents are anonymous; those from interviewees are identified by participant number and constituency (e.g., P3:Student; P11:Staff). Labeling quotes in this manner adds context without revealing the identity of the participant. It also indicates how often the same study participant has been quoted, which supports the credibility of the analyses.

Table 1: Participants by constituency for Phase One (survey) and Phase Two (interviews)

Constituency	Survey N (n)	Survey Response Rate (%)	Interviews (n)
Students	1100 (301)	27	3
Staff/Admin	55 (47)	85	3
Administration	11 (4)	36	1
Faculty	84 (34)	40	3
External Boards	43 (29)	67	1
Total	**1293 (415)**	**32**	**11**

Phase One: Online survey

1. High support for a garden on campus

The majority (n=328/400; 82%) of respondents indicated high support for establishing a campus garden (responses 8 to 10 on an 11-point scale with 0=NO agreement and 10=HIGH). Using a similar rating scale, more participants (n=215/371; 58%) gave high ratings to a forest garden than for a shared/community garden (n=185/369; 50%) or a rental plot (n=139/367; 38%). More respondents stated they would contribute physical versus administrative work (63% vs. 40% for garden establishment and 84% vs. 43% for maintenance, respectively). A plethora (n=196) of fundraising ideas were provided in response to an open-ended question on this topic. Although 80% (n=251/313) stated they would invest at least thirty minutes of their personal time per week towards the establishment of a garden, this dropped to 53% (n=197/373) when asked about maintenance. Thus, it appears the constituents of this campus would like a garden, but the sustainability of such an initiative might be compromised if the type of garden implemented would require a substantial amount of their personal time to maintain it.

2. Type of garden most preferred

Comments (n=76) provided in the open-ended section associated with the forest garden option reflected strong interest in this concept, with a third of respondents (n=24; 32%) using words such as "unique," "innovative," "exciting," "amazing," "interesting," and "intriguing." These respondents also stated that it was a "beautiful idea" and "definitely a more relaxed and less structured way to go." One of them commented on its potential to support well-being and enhanced connections with the Earth: "Yes!!! Please!!! A lovely serene place to be at one with nature, just outside our door!" while another stated, "Food production, being seasonal, and during the season when the university is least occupied, should be a secondary consideration. Sanctuary in, and protection of nature is more important to me." Ten respondents (13%) thought the idea of a forest garden was "very sustainable and would work for the long term," and believed the prospect of little/low human maintenance was "ideal," "a great idea," and "very cool." Eleven (14%) felt they could not comment on this type of garden due to a lack of familiarity with the concept, although they were willing to learn. Nine respondents (12%) wondered if such a garden would be difficult to maintain, stating it might become "unsightly," "unappealing," and look like "a weed and compost garden." Six (8%) expressed confusion about what types of food could be grown in a shaded area, yet others (n=4, 5%) were interested in growing "plants that are indigenous to this area." Four people (5%) felt that it would not be as useful as other types of gardens, especially for teaching students and faculty about gardening. Two (3%) believed a forest garden would support a sense of community; one (1%) felt there would be "less community involvement." The remaining comments (n=5; 7%) related to garden placement, security, and concerns about wildlife. Overall, this type of garden appealed to participants more for its novelty, purported low maintenance, and ability to provide a place for quiet reflection, rather than for its ability to produce food.

Comments on a shared/community garden were provided by seventy-one survey respondents. A number of them (n=14; 20%) noted "distinct advantages" to this "collaborative and co-operative" approach, and saw shared responsibility in a positive way. They also felt that organization and administration of the garden could be accomplished through "a paid

coordinator" or a "student club." One of these respondents felt that "team work and shared responsibility" would not be a problem as "Brescia is like our home." In contrast, almost twice that number (n=26, 37%) had concerns about how the garden would be managed, stating there would be a "diffusion of responsibility," and individuals may "get lazy," or "lose interest," negatively affecting the garden's appearance. One wrote: "a core group would end up doing most of the work." These respondents felt that the management of such a garden would be too complicated as there would be "too many cooks in the kitchen" and that "without committed leadership, this could fall apart very easily." Sixteen (22%) respondents suggested that gardens that are shared can "enhance a sense of togetherness that comes with food" and "engender a sense of community." These respondents wrote that this type of garden would "support Brescia's unique community feel" and "build community spirit and a collective goal." They felt that "a lush plant and flower garden" would be a "safe and welcoming space" that was "less intimidating" and would "encourage the development of new skills," including "cooperative and leadership skills." Twelve (17%) respondents' comments reflected concerns about lack of time, skill, and personnel, with one worried about "people from the community walking around campus with gardening tools." Another wrote: "I have so many gardens to keep up with at home (that I have trouble finding the time to tend to) that a shared garden, although a great idea, might contribute to my gardening guilt." This was supported by the following: "I don't think anybody (professors, staff or students) has the time to do any 'extra' work." The remaining three comments (4%) related to the use of produce and a suggestion for a mixed approach. In summary, with proper administration and oversight, a number of participants felt this would support community spirit. However, more people were concerned that this garden would require too much additional work for time-starved campus populations, resulting in a core group of people trying to maintain it.

Comments regarding a rental plot garden were received from fifty-seven respondents. A third (n=20; 35%) suggested that people would have a "greater sense of responsibility" and "higher commitment" to it. These respondents believed that people would be "more inclined to take care of their plot if it belonged to them alone." Several in this category also commented that "people value what they pay for" and "care for what they have invested in." Others added that rental plots would be "easier to organize," and that external garden plots in which they are involved "work out very well." In contrast, 17 (30%) felt this type of garden would look "shaggy," "unorganized, random, and unappealing," especially if some plots were neglected or abandoned. Most notably, this related to lack of time, as evidenced by these comments: "People get busy with school and will leave plots abandoned" and "the garden won't be a priority over school work." Three respondents (5%) felt that a rental plot garden could "be a revenue stream" and "allow for some profits to be made," however twice that number (n=6; 11%) were concerned that "not everyone can afford it," suggesting that it be "geared to income" or based on "ability to pay." Three (5%) felt this type of garden would engender a sense of community; however, one (1%) felt it "would lose the community aspect." Miscellaneous comments (n=7; 13%) related to the desire for mixed models, the use of produce to provide food security, and the perception that it "would be too much like a 'food box' program." A rental plot model therefore appealed to approximately a third of those who provided comments on this garden option, however a greater percentage had concerns about this approach.

When asked for other suggestions (n=24) for type of garden, nine respondents (38%) focused on the social aspect, as reflected in these comments: "a garden should be a nice space to visit and study," "read and reflect," and have "an area for reflection and spirituality" with

"benches where people can sit, read, talk, and relax," a place where "anyone who wants to learn about growing foods is accepted." Six (25%) participants wanted mixed models, with one suggesting benefits from all types presented for consideration: "a native plant/permaculture garden that's edible, does not need a lot of maintenance, with the community caring for it collectively." Five respondents (21%) wanted "affordable, local, and pesticide-free produce" for students or donated to local shelters. Two respondents (8%) wanted a rooftop garden; another two felt they lacked knowledge to comment. Interestingly, regardless of garden type (including this question asking for other suggestions), a recurring theme was respondents' desire for it to satisfy a social need, from providing sanctuary and a place for rest and reflection, to a place that would support cooperative and leadership skills, and enhance the sense of community on campus.

3. Potential outcomes of a garden on campus

When asked to rate the likelihood of 10 potential outcomes of a campus garden, 70% of respondents (n=246) rated "skill development" as highly likely (Table 2). Two-thirds of respondents (n=234) rated "enhanced sense of community" as a highly likely outcome (Table 2). Only 27% (n=96) believed there would be a high return on investment (i.e., benefits realized to time, money, and effort invested). The interesting aspect of this result is that "enhanced sense of community," while rated only slightly higher than leadership, access to food, and understanding of the food cycle, was still rated second most likely overall, suggesting the value respondents placed on this potential outcome.

Table 2: Highest ratings for potential outcomes of a garden on campus* (n=353)

Potential Outcomes	n (%)
Skill development	246 (70)
Enhanced sense of community on campus	234 (66)
Student leadership development	229 (65)
Increased access to food for garden participants	228 (65)
Increased understanding of the entire food cycle	227 (65)
Increased profile for university	218 (62)
Increased partnerships between the university and the broader community	197 (56)
Improved health of garden participants	189 (54)
High return on investment (benefits realized to time, money, and effort invested)	96 (27)
Increased recruitment and retention of students	94 (27)
Total	**353(100)**

* Includes responses 8 to 10 on an 11-point scale from 0 (very unlikely) to 10 (very likely). Respondents were allowed to rate each option provided. An open-ended question followed, to which respondents could provide additional outcomes.

4. How a garden might support the university's role as an educational institution

221 respondents provided 347 comments for this open-ended question (Table 3). Almost half (n=146) of the comments suggested that a garden was "the missing link in the FNS programs." As one respondent put it, "considering Brescia is known for its Food and Nutrition program, it only makes sense to teach students how to grow their own food, so they will go on to teach their own communities." A substantial number of responses (n=118, 34%), however, stated that a garden would support the social aspect of campus life. This included enhancing the existing sense of community at the college through the "sense of togetherness that comes with food." One wrote, "a community garden strengthens relationships between participants and brings greater understanding of the issues of hunger and access to fresh, local food. Gardening also brings people together from many different cultures. Sharing food is a tenet of faith." Several others wrote about how a garden would support enhanced spirituality: "Nature can help us understand the miracle of each of us existing at all. Many people report the presence of divinity in gardens, forests, by water, with animals, and in natural cycles." Finally, many of the comments suggested that "gardening is good for the soul" and would offer "mental health opportunities." One comment summed it up this way: "It could serve as an activity to reduce stress for students— which we greatly need."

Table 3: How a garden on campus might support the university's role as an educational institution

Topic	Comments N (%)
Course component - primarily for Food and Nutritional Sciences program	146 (42)
Supporting the social aspect of campus life - enhanced sense of community; networking and socializing; extracurricular activity; interdisciplinary, intercultural, and intergenerational relationships; stress relief; physical and mental well-being; a calming, inspirational, and spiritual place	118 (34)
Community education - workshops on healthy eating, gardening/living sustainably, local ecosystem	36 (10)
Skill development - gardening, cooking, leadership, teamwork, recycling, costing, etc.	33 (10)
Research	7 (2)
Other - use of produce in cafeteria	7 (2)
Total	**347 (100)**

While it is not surprising that potential outcomes for an educational institution would reflect skill development, key social aspects were identified by a third of respondents, reflecting that which emerged from the open-ended questions about type of garden preferred and why.

5. Potential challenges to establishing a garden on campus

Tempering the overwhelmingly positive responses in support of a garden on campus were 510 comments from 260 respondents regarding potential challenges (Table 4). The majority of concerns (n=293, 57%) related to garden organization and maintenance, particularly the time commitment required. While campus constituents may be very supportive of the idea of a campus garden, this suggests significant apprehension about the success of a garden in a setting where all constituencies have other (work/study) commitments.

Table 4: Potential challenges to establishing a garden on campus

Potential challenge	Comments N (%)
Organization and maintenance - time commitment, volunteer retention, student turnover, few students during summer, planting and harvest seasons occur during busy school year	282 (55)
Externalities - land quality/finding an appropriate space, availability of water, animal/insect interference, security/vandalism, meeting food safety regulations/other bylaws	110 (21)
Cost	86 (17)
Weather	24 (5)
Gardeners' lack of skills	8 (2)
Total	**510 (100)**

Overall, these results lend support to respondents' interest in a forest garden, one of the interesting findings to emerge from the survey. Their desire for a place of sanctuary and for developing a sense of community, combined with the appeal of a type of garden that promised lower maintenance than a traditional model (e.g., community, rental), provides valuable insight prior to the implementation of such an initiative. A second discovery was the overwhelming response regarding how a garden might support the university's role as an educational institution. Surprisingly, respondents wanted support for the social aspect of campus life, not just the opportunity for skill development, curriculum enhancement, or food production.

Phase 2: Individual interviews

During the post-survey interviews, the researchers further explored (1) the high level of support for a campus garden; (2) why a forest garden was most appealing; and (3) how a garden might support the university's role as an educational institution. Interviewees were also asked about potential barriers and challenges to establishing and maintaining a garden on campus. Challenges discussed in the interviews mirrored those on the survey (Table 4) and provided little additional information; therefore, only results from the first three themes are presented here.

1. Why such a high level of support for a garden on campus?

Each interviewee made comments such as, "it just seems to fit" (P9:Faculty), "it just sounds like something Brescia would have" (P3:Student), or "it just makes sense" (P4:Board Member). One stated:

> Because of our community nature, we are very well aware of our
> environment and our surroundings. A garden brings the community
> together and it allows us to obtain feedback from nature, which is great.
> It would allow every realm of the community to come together, which is
> really the core of what we're all about. (P5:Staff)

Echoing the comments made in the surveys about the value of a garden to the FNS programs, a faculty member said, "it seems kind of silly *not* to have that here because if you're going to study food, it (production) is a huge part of that." (P10:Faculty) Another explained that, due to climate change, experimenting with new food production techniques such as a forest garden will become a "bigger factor in your FNS programs than it has been in the past." This interviewee continued: "How do you balance nutrition within a local bioregion and environment? Draw on the human ecology aspect." (P11:Staff)

Reflecting the university's history of food production, one participant stated: "We've come full circle, so this is good." (P4:Board Member) She recalled the university founders selling pigs to finance building maintenance or being summoned over the PA system to retrieve the cows from the cornfields. She saw a garden as more than food production:

> This is part of who we've been from the beginning. There was a day when
> we could feed ourselves here. That's not realistic now. But it's that
> connection with the land, with the earth, with the growing of things, with
> respect for the land, with the fact that we are dependent upon it. The cry of
> our society is we have to save our environment. We are doing so much
> damage. (P4:Board Member)

Asking interviewees to explain why there was such a high level of support for a garden on campus revealed a strong sense of community, as well as their perceptions of the university's mission and values. Their awareness of the college's history and the physical nature of its campus helped to provide a foundation for responses to questions about garden type.

2. Why would a forest garden be the most appealing type of garden?

One participant summed up every other interviewee's responses to this question by saying, "Maintenance. Maintenance. Maintenance." (P9:Faculty) "Gardens are not magic," stated another, "they are hard work!" (P4:Board Member), pointing to the appeal of a low-maintenance option. Another acknowledged there would be work involved in establishing a forest garden by saying, "you don't just plunk a tree in the ground" (P10:Faculty), however another who was more familiar with the concept stated, "forest gardening—classic permaculture—tends to be low maintenance and not feel like a garden to some people." (P11:Staff) Deeper understanding of this concept prompted a student to provide another explanation for a forest garden's appeal: "A forest garden is more environmentally friendly. It's taking some things out and putting other things back in and equaling it out. It's not destroying your habitat as much." (P8:Student)

Underlying the appreciation for a low-maintenance garden was the desire to maintain continuity in light of the transience of the student population. One student felt that the student population lacked the continuity to support a traditional campus garden: "We come back in the fall (to participate in a course with a garden component), but now it's a mess and we have to start all over again and again and again. That's disheartening and costly." (P1:Student) Staff members felt they could play an important role, as they would provide "more continuity than faculty or students" (P11:Staff).

Contributing to the desire for a low-maintenance option were participants' expectations that garden organizers not rely exclusively on volunteer labor. One participant made it clear that, while the garden might be on university land, one should "not expect employees to do all the work." (P2:Administrator) One staff member was excited about the prospect of "popping out on their lunch hour to do a bit of weeding," but was also cognizant that "students, staff, and faculty here in the Brescia community are all torn in different directions, so that (less need for volunteers) would be appealing." (P5:Staff) Students' comments resonated with this as well:

> I want to say "yes" (that I would participate), and I want to say I would be
> super-enthusiastic about it, but once school starts, it's difficult to commit
> to things like that. It's such a good idea, but it's hard. I like the idea of
> being able to enjoy it without having to put too many hours of work into it.
> (P3:Student)

One faculty member expressed ideological support for the garden, and envisioned participating "from an academic standpoint, but not the actual physical labour. When I come to work, I am wearing work clothes (i.e., suits/dresses)." (P7:Faculty) Making commitments small enough that they are "doable" and paying attention to garden programming (e.g., designing work schedules where small tasks could be completed in short periods of time) were common suggestions.

It is apparent, therefore, that these campus constituents were well aware of their primary obligations and commitments (e.g., work/study), but expressed reluctance to over-commit themselves to such an initiative (regardless of their strong support for it).

3. How might a garden support the university's role as an educational institution?

All interviewees envisioned numerous teaching opportunities. The majority of interviewees also felt that food production would be secondary to protection of the natural environment and the

opportunity to provide a space for rest, reflection, and spirituality. As one student put it, "gardening can be very relaxing, sort of therapeutic at the individual level. Even support for students who need that little extra bit of relaxing and like to be outside and talk to other people. It can be a social thing." (P1:Student) Another student echoed this by saying, "It's relaxing and a good stress reliever…(a place to) visit and enjoy." (P3:Student) A staff member suggested that it would be important to provide seating areas where people would have "a chance to sit down, relax, and enjoy the sheer pleasure of it and the peace of it." (P11:Staff) Many said that a garden would enhance the sense of community, which resonated with the college's mission. Again, the idea of a garden addressing the social aspect of campus life emerged in response to a question about the institution's educational role, as it did in respondents' answers to the same question on the survey. This suggests that the social sustainability is an important aspect to consider for any campus initiative.

Overall, the results from Phase One (online survey) and Phase Two (individual interviews) indicate a high level of support for a campus garden. Greatest perceived challenges were organization and maintenance, with highest preference shown for a low-maintenance forest garden. While most participants believed that a garden would provide excellent learning opportunities, they also wanted a garden that would promote individual well-being and support the social aspect of campus life, often surpassing food production as a desired outcome.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to conduct a formative evaluation for a garden at Brescia University College prior to its implementation, allowing stakeholders to design a garden that meets the needs and wants of diverse campus constituents while minimizing the risk of failure. Participants' preference for a specific type of garden, and what they wanted to experience when participating in such a venture, constituted the most surprising results.

Garden type

In this study, campus food production *per se* was not rejected. Participants still wanted experiential learning opportunities, especially for students in the Food and Nutritional Sciences programs. In addition to proportion and frequency recommendations for consumption, these future dietitians will also need to possess broad-based food skills, understand the social aspect of sustainable agriculture (Coveney, 2000), and promote sustainable diets (characterized by seasonality, biodiversity, eco-friendliness, local food products, and supported by conviviality and rest) (Bach-Faig et al., 2011). Therefore, while healing gardens have been suggested as part of sustainable campus landscape design (Lau & Yang, 2009), these campus constituents wanted both food production and social benefits from a proposed campus garden.

Forest gardens, as a form of permaculture, were of specific interest to the majority of participants in this study. Quilley (2009) has suggested that the time is "ripe for experiments in permaculture" (p. 49) at schools, universities, and colleges. We agree. Forest gardens, a form of permaculture, epitomize environmental sustainability. They require few outside inputs and are "highly productive in relation to the amount of labour required" (Berezan, 2010). This coincides with participants' desire for a low-maintenance garden option. Quilley (2009) goes on to

suggest that universities have "sufficient land and student labour to move in the direction of food self-sufficiency, with the growing and processing of food at the core of the student experience" (p. 49), while Bell (2013) has suggested that "producing food on campus provides opportunities for students to learn about food production and increases food security, food sovereignty, and sustainability of a university" (Bell, 2013, p.1). While it is true that gardens have the potential to provide excellent and varied learning opportunities, relying on student labour to maintain campus gardens is unlikely to make universities more economically sustainable. Even with substantial volunteer commitments by students, staff, and faculty, gardens rarely sell their produce and cannot cover expenses through sales (Bell, 2013). Choosing a garden with low maintenance features therefore appears to be a good option to ease costs without compromising aspects of social sustainability (e.g., by adding more stress to maintain it and make it financially viable).

Sustainability

Participants in this formative research repeatedly used the phrase "it just fits" to describe why there seemed to be such strong support for a garden on campus. Shilling (2012) suggests that "revealing a community's existing character is key to developing a robust and enduring sense of place" (p. 237), an important component of social sustainability. Participants' sense of community, combined with their knowledge of the university's history, mission, and values, also contributes to "a robust and enduring sense of place" (Shilling, 2012, p. 237), where people aim to "preserve, enhance, and celebrate their community's unique story, design, and feel" (Shilling, 2012, p. 247). Therefore, exploring campus communities' needs and wants prior to the implementation of sustainability-related initiative such as a garden may help to ensure it enhances the site and serves the communities for which it is intended. Similar to research by Kingsley, Townsend, and Henderson-Wilson (2009), participants in this study also saw a garden as "a sanctuary from pressures of the world; a setting for learning, social connectedness, and place attachment; a supportive environment; a place for spirituality; and a sense of achievement" (pp. 211–213), additional aspects of social sustainability. Planning a garden that provides many of these outcomes has a greater chance for success and long-term sustainability.

While campus gardens have great potential to teach current and future leaders about sustainable food production, expecting/encouraging students to maintain a traditional community garden through volunteer labour adds extra pressure into an already high-pressure environment. By expressing interest in a low-maintenance garden, participants in this study confirmed Bell's (2013) findings that "opportunities for short-term, low commitment involvement" (p. 32) are crucial for success. Bell also found that "distributing the workload and reducing the pressure on students or the institution" (p. 32) to maintain gardens is important. A low-maintenance forest garden, therefore, may be the most feasible option to facilitate this. The high response rate of staff members in this study also confirms the findings of Brinkhurst et al. (2011), that staff members are "unrecognized champions of campus sustainability" (p. 351). They too, however, were wary of the time commitment involved. A garden could nonetheless be part of an employee wellness initiative.

Mental health

Given participants' interest in wanting a garden for its social benefits, planning one that supports positive mental health is a good option for a university campus. Post-secondary institutions are now recognized as high-stress environments and important settings for promoting mental health and well-being (MacKean, 2011). Indeed, social sustainability has been identified as one of the campus factors that affect student mental health (CACUSS & CMHA, 2013), and mental health is a high priority for colleges and universities. In the past twelve months, 90% of Canadian university students felt overwhelmed by all they had to do; 64% reported feeling very lonely, 38% felt so depressed that it was difficult to function, and almost 10% had seriously considered suicide (ACHA, 2013). Tragically, an increasing number have even ended their young lives (Kennedy, 2013). Thus, regardless of the type of initiative, addressing social sustainability (of which mental health and well-being are key components) on university campuses is timely and significant.

Gardeners have reported that good mental health was their primary reason for gardening (Miedema, Desjardins & Marshall, 2013). Sustainable garden design is also undergoing "a general shift from physiological to psychological needs" (Dewberry & Groggin 1994, as cited in Clavin, 2011). Perhaps these results, where participants talked extensively about their social needs and wants, are a reflection of the growing concerns about mental health and well-being in post-secondary institutions (MacKean, 2011). Many universities provide opportunities for tight-knit groups to form; however, permaculture can enhance both sustainable land use and human well-being (Mollison, 1990). Key considerations for a supportive, inclusive campus climate and environment include spaces where students, staff, and faculty can "gather, socialize, and connect" (CACUSS & CMHA, 2013), and a forest garden has the potential to provide this type of space.

Next steps

Based on these findings, the researchers plan to collaborate with student clubs, the Student Life Centre, and the Mental Health and Wellness Committee, to prepare a business plan and grant applications for the establishment of a garden on campus. In terms of research, the social aspect of sustainability, including its sub-components of mental health and well-being, is the least-examined pillar of sustainability. There is a great deal of debate about what the concept does and should actually mean (Davidson, 2010); future research might therefore explore what it means on a university campus. It would also be prudent to review the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) used by universities to "gauge their progress towards sustainability" (AASHE, 2013, p.4), as the word "stress" is mentioned only once in this 348-page document, and "health" on campus is primarily addressed through a work-related lens (e.g., human resources; workplace health and safety) (ASHE, 2013). Finally, future research related to campus gardens can make mental health and stress reduction a central point of enquiry.

Strengths and limitations of the study

Pairing quantitative and qualitative approaches can corroborate findings, generate more complete data, and enhance insights attained from one research method with a complementary approach (Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007). Furthermore, triangulation of methods (survey plus interviews), sources (members of all campus constituencies), and analysts (two authors plus one research assistant) facilitated deeper understanding of the data (Patton, 1999). The inclusion of quotes from survey respondents and interviewees supported study rigor, as it allows readers to understand the findings of the analyses and to evaluate the plausibility, credibility, and face validity of the researchers' claims (Patton, 1999).

Limited funds restricted the number of interviews; however, this was counterbalanced by the good response rate for the survey. Although we provided a "thick description" (Holloway, 1997) of the research setting to allow the reader to evaluate whether the conclusions have applicability to other settings, it is acknowledged that the study was conducted at a small university which may limit transferability of the results. Unfortunately, no additional guidance was provided to survey respondents regarding the option "benefits realized to time, money, and effort invested." It was up to the respondent to assess this from their own perspective. Another limitation was that those who were most likely to participate were also most likely supportive of establishing a garden on campus (self-selection bias). It is unknown whether non-participants would have the same interests and motivations.

Conclusion

A university campus hosts multiple environments in which people study, live, work, pray, and play. Moreover, it is a vibrant setting within which advocacy for change is fostered by the academy and by the continuing exuberance of its ever-changing student population. How can we harness these unique attributes to teach campus populations about food production while supporting the social aspect of sustainability? This preliminary formative research suggests that forest gardens, with their low-maintenance approach to food production and their potential to provide a life-enhancing condition for the campus community, may be a good place to start.

Acknowledgements

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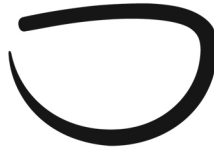
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Review Article

Standards as a commons: Private agri–food standards as governance for the 99 percent

Jennifer Sumner

Lecturer, Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Abstract

Private agri-food standards have emerged in response to the constraints imposed on the role of the state under the influence of neoliberalism. These standards reflect the ongoing "value wars between the money code of value and the life code of value" (McMurtry, 2002). While some private agri-food standards operate within the money code of value (e.g., Red Tractor or CanadaGAP), others can be more fruitfully situated within the life code of value because they "remove the veil" (Hudson & Hudson, 2003) from food commodities to reveal the exploitative social, economic, and environmental relations inherent in a global corporate food system driven by "feral capitalism" (Harvey, 2011). This article will use these codes of value to interpret three cases—organics, fair trade, and Local Food Plus—with the aim of informing discussion regarding the role of private agri-food standards. It will propose conceptualizing standards as a commons, i.e., a cooperative human construct that protects and/or enables universal access to life goods (McMurtry, 1998). This conceptualization will help us to better analyze the threats and opportunities posed by private agri-food standards and will open up the possibility that they can provide a form of life-protective governance for a more sustainable food system, one that benefits what has come to be known as "the 99 percent" (Weinstein, 2011).

Introduction

Standards are all around us, from arbitrating the size of screws and electrical plugs to setting benchmarks for food safety and wine quality. While seemingly neutral, agreed-upon conventions, standards are socially constructed and inevitably reflect values and beliefs about what is good and what is bad. And like all social constructions, standards also raise questions of power. In the words of Bain (2010), "the power to decide what standards will not be established is as telling and as consequential as deciding what standards will be established" (p. 366). Moreover, standards drive behaviour and in this sense can be understood as a form of governance.

Although standards play a crucial role in our lives, that role is changing with the spread of neoliberal globalization and the vastly increased movement of goods around the world (Hatanaka, Bain & Busch, 2005). Nowhere is this more evident than with agri-food standards. Originally enacted by governments to protect public health and safety, agri-food standards are now being developed by the private sector to control market share and protect brands (Henson & Reardon, 2005; Konefal, Mascarenhas & Hatanaka, 2005), and to minimize risk to capital accumulation (Lockie et al., 2013), contributing to a cascade of negative economic, social, and environmental externalities in the global corporate food system.

In the midst of the proliferation of private agri-food standards (Konefal et al., 2005), it is important to remember that not all of these new standards promote private wealth accumulation. This article will argue that some standards support public wealth creation—such as just livelihoods, a clean environment, and human rights—and will conceptualize standards as a commons due to their potential as a form of life-protective governance that benefits more than just a small percentage of the population. It will begin by examining standards and the larger context of neoliberalism that encourages the rise of private standards. The article will then introduce the life code of value and the money code of value, and use these value codes to interpret three cases—organics, fair trade, and Local Food Plus—to inform the discussion regarding standards as forms of governance. It will argue that some standards can be understood as part of the collective concept of the civil commons—cooperative human constructs that protect and/or enable universal access to life goods (McMurtry, 1998). Framing standards in this way has a three-fold outcome: it clarifies the threats and opportunities posed by the shift to private standards, it highlights the life-protective governance that standards can provide, and it illuminates the role that private agri-food standards can play in a more sustainable food system.

Standards

Standards frame every aspect of our lives, from the nuts and bolts that hold our material world together to life's genetic blueprint (Turner, 2011). In his recent book, Busch (2011) argues that standards have become the rules we live by and the range of possibilities available to us. He goes on to discuss a number of meanings for the term.

> Standards may imply that something is the best, or that it may be used as an exemplary measure or weight; or they may emphasize the moral character of someone or the superb qualities of something. Standards may also refer to rules or norms that embody the ideal or merely the average. Finally, standards may refer to tolerances permitted for both people and things (p. 25).

These meanings interconnect in the production of standards—the benchmarks that affect our lives in so many ways. Busch (2011) also points out that standards shape our physical, social, and personal worlds. In the most general terms, "standards either proscribe what are considered undesirable behaviors, uses, and/or processes, or prescribe those considered desirable, although most do a little of both" (Guthman 2004a, p. 512). Busch (2011) proposes that standards often involve boundaries wherein people with different backgrounds can stabilize a set of practices, even if those practices carry different meanings.

Setting the boundaries, however, is neither easy nor a foregone conclusion. Standards are both contentious and contested, especially because they designate winners and losers (Konefal et al., 2005), although the number of winners and losers can vary significantly, depending on the kind of standards involved and whether they are voluntary or mandatory. Given the contested nature of standards, it is not surprising that they have long been associated with power, which Busch views as the ability to set either the rules to be followed or the range of choices to be made. For Busch, this power can vary from direct power exercised by a ruler to anonymous power as standards take on a life of their own.

While Busch (2011) sees standards as connected to the power of moral, political, economic or technical authority, Schoechle (2009) connects them to the power of public authority. According to Schoechle,

> Historically, standards have been set largely by volunteers in committees operating within a range of environments, institutional rules and social practice, but they generally have espoused traditional principles of accessibility, democratic deliberation, public accountability, and balanced stakeholder representation (p. viii).

Schoechle (2009) goes on to note that the commons has been an essential concept of standardization. Linking the land enclosure movement in sixteenth century Britain (which involved converting common grazing lands to private ownership and control) to the recent privatization or enclosure of ideas in terms of intellectual property rights, he uses enclosure

discourse as a framework for examining the privatization of standards. Although Schoechle tantalizingly introduces the concept of standards as a commons, he does not elaborate on it, focussing instead on the question of digital enclosure, that is, the enclosure of information and ideas rather than land. This article addresses this new concept by investigating standards as a commons and, in particular, standards as a form of the civil commons.

Conceptualizing standards as a commons is important for a number of reasons. First, it reframes the way we look at standards, casting them in a new light that can help us to address the well-documented problems associated with the unsustainability of the global corporate food system. In addition, it overcomes the obfuscating dualism that is inherent in the characterization of public and private standards. It also helps to illuminate the links between standards and power, and to leverage the historical notion of the commons into modern practice. And, finally, it highlights the association between standards and life-protective or life-destructive governance.

Neoliberalism and the rise of private standards

Historically, standards were the provenance of nation states. While some of these public standards protected citizens from the excesses *of* the market (e.g., food safety standards), others provided better access *to* the market. For example, Hatanaka et al. (2005) argue that uniform public standards were seen as a way to reduce transaction costs and improve market efficiency. As such, they were considered neutral market lubricants (Giovannucci & Reardon, 2000). Recently, however, public standards are being eclipsed by private standards, which are developed and maintained by the private sector. Unlike the so-called neutrality of public standards,

> businesses use private standards today *strategically*, whether it is to gain access to new markets, to coordinate their operations, to provide quality and safety assurance to their consumers, to complement their brands, or to define niche products and markets (Hatanaka et al. 2005, p. 356).

The rise of private standards has occurred in a regulatory context in which the capacity of the state to regulate has been usurped or handed over to private-sector organizations (Lockie et al., 2013), reflecting the larger neoliberal context in which they operate. Geographer David Harvey (2006) has studied neoliberalism for many years and argues that

> Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices which proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices (p. 145).

Within such a political-economic climate, the eroding the power of nation-states means they no longer protect the health and rights of people, but now protect the property and profits of corporations (Shiva, 1997; Sumner, 2007). This transformation mirrors Harvey's (1989) earlier analysis of the shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism—from the local provision of services, facilities, and benefits to the fostering and encouragement of local development and growth. As a result of this shift, the state no longer creates and preserves an institutional framework appropriate to the provision of services, facilities, and benefits. On the contrary, while creating and preserving an institutional framework appropriate to growth, the state engages in both deregulation (of the rules governing the managerial state) and re-regulation (through the rules governing the entrepreneurial state). Once transformed into a neoliberal set of institutions, the state redistributes the flow of wealth from the lower classes to the upper classes (Harvey, 2006). At the same time, the state is also governed by a new set of regulations at the global level:

> The rules of engagement now established through the WTO (governing international trade) and by the IMF (governing international finance) instantiate neoliberalism as a global set of rules. All states that sign on to the WTO and the IMF (and who can afford to stay out?) agree to abide (albeit with a "grace period" to permit smooth adjustment) by these rules or face severe penalties (Harvey 2006, p. 145).

From a neoliberal perspective, public rules and regulations for the provision of services, facilities and benefits, including public standards, constitute barriers to trade that distort market outcomes. For this reason, neoliberalism favours private rules and regulations, preferably voluntary ones. This preference avoids public accountability and potential profit losses while simultaneously signaling that the private sector can responsibly govern itself. Corporate codes of conduct, corporate social responsibility charters, corporate mission statements and private standards are all examples of the "regulatory capture" (Jaffee & Howard, 2009) that typifies what has come to be known as the neoliberal shift from government to governance.

Governance is generally understood to be a broader term than government, addressing the distribution of power both within and beyond the state (Stoker, 1998). In the words of Andrew Taylor (2002), "whilst governance occurs without government, government cannot happen without governance" (p. 37). In the dominant environment, governance signals a shift in the way society is governed—a shift that is not random, but moves in a particular direction: from the public sector toward the private sector (Kooiman, 1993). This shift distributes more power to the private sector, which creates the regulatory playing field and the rules that must be followed. In the area of food, for example, the concept of governance helps us to understand the tools, techniques and activities—such as private agri-food standards—that food retailers use to both influence and coordinate production and consumption along the value chain (Bain et al., 2013).

Private agri-food standards

Just like other areas of life, food has been transformed by neoliberalism. Neoliberal policies have fostered the restructuring of the agriculture and food sectors through the privatization of land and water rights, the use of free trade agreements to dismantle national-level food safety regulations, and the protracted dismantling of food-oriented entitlement programs set up to combat hunger (Guthman, 2008). These neoliberal policies have resulted in a global corporate food system that is economically, socially, and environmentally unsustainable (Roberts, 2013; Sumner, 2012; Weis, 2012; Winson, 2013).

Within this neoliberal context, Henson and Reardon (2005) argue that private agri-food standards represent a response to both regulatory development and consumer concerns, and a way to compete in high-value agricultural and food markets. As a result, they maintain that private rather than public standards are becoming the predominant drivers of agri-food systems. Private standards for such services as food safety (e.g., Red Tractor in the UK and CanadaGAP in Canada) not only illustrate the rise of these new forms of governance, but also interface with private agri-food standards being developed at the global level—a form of global governance. For example, the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI), managed by the "independent" Consumer Goods Forum, gave full recognition to the CanadaGAP program, which was benchmarked against the GFSI requirements. Ostensibly, this recognition will give farmers who are CanadaGAP certified a competitive boost in global markets, which increasingly require companies to implement a recognized food safety program (see Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, 2011), but in reality will have significant consequences, including "the loss of Canadian control of food safety governance, commodification of food safety, deflection of responsibility from the GFSI and a decrease in consumer choice" (Driscoll, 2012, p. 93).

Value wars on the food front

It is important to note, however, that not all private agri-food standards are expressions of neoliberalism. The existence of organic standards and fair trade standards, for example, can even be understood as a challenge to neoliberalism, in spite of being privately developed. To illuminate this distinction, the actors engaged in defining and implementing private standards can be divided into two groups: business and civil society (Nadvi & Wältring, 2002). While this distinction opens up new ways of thinking, it is not particularly useful because the term "civil society" is so vague it has prompted critics to look at it more closely. For example, Antonio Gramsci (1971) maintained that civil society was part of the superstructure, along with political society (i.e., the state). Far from romantic, it was primarily, but not exclusively, a site of hegemony. Following Gramsci's understanding, civil society in a country like Canada would encompass not only the non-aligned Council of Canadians, but also the neoliberal think tank

called the Fraser Institute, while global civil society would encompass not only an NGO like Greenpeace, but also the World Trade Organization.

A more useful basis for distinguishing between the actors engaged in defining and implementing private standards would be the values driving their decision-making and actions. As Konefal et al. (2005) note, "standards are also the outcome of social processes and, therefore, are always imbued with value judgements" (p. 295). According to McMurtry (1998; 2002), two master codes of value underlie the long economic war expressed by history. From slave revolts through struggles to preserve common land to the Occupy Movement, battles between the powerful and the disenfranchised have marked our path through time. On the one hand, McMurtry posits the life code of value, which reproduces or increases life by providing life goods, or means of life, such as clean air, food, water, and shelter. In the life code of value, life is the regulating objective of thought and action, and a higher quality of life is always better by definition, regardless of the money that can be made. On the other hand, the money code of value increases money through such means as the sale of commodities or speculation in the stock market. In essence, it is the transformation of money into more money. In the money code of value, money is the regulating objective of thought and action, and a larger quantity of money is always better by definition, whatever happens to life.

The life code of value and the money code of value have been in conflict for millennia, struggling beneath slave, feudal, and industrial societies. Over the last thirty years, however, the money code of value has become enshrined in neoliberalism, thereby insinuating itself into our everyday lives through such strategies as trade agreements, public-private partnerships, austerity programs, public-service cuts, structural adjustment programs, and media campaigns. Standards represent yet another opportunity for the expression of the money code of value, and the rise of private agri-food standards can facilitate this.

In spite of the current hegemony of money values, life values still influence thought and action around the world, as evidenced by the rise of the Occupy Movement, the strength of the democracy movement and the vitality of food movements. As Gramsci (1971) reminds us, hegemony is never complete, but always contested. Private agri-food standards provide a fruitful site for examining this hegemonic struggle. From a money-values perspective, private agri-food standards offer an opportunity for re-regulation that favours the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms in the search for private profits. From a life-values perspective, private agri-food standards offer an opportunity to step in and support life if public standards are weak or non-existent. In other words, when life-support systems are threatened, private agri-food standards can help to protect them. This analytic framing will be used to interpret three cases—organic standards, fair trade standards, and Local Food Plus standards—and inform the subsequent discussion of standards as a commons. While there are many types of food standards, these three cases represent very clearly the hegemonic struggle between life values and money values, and the benefits of conceptualizing standards as a commons.

Organic standards

Organic farming began without private standards, but they were created as more people became interested in this alternative approach to agriculture. According to Rundgren (2003), voluntary standards and inspection systems began to develop independently in parts of Europe, the United States, and Australia, primarily driven by the producers and concerned consumers. Along with chefs, restaurateurs, and health-food store owners, they created the organic farming movement.

Originally, organic standards provided a mechanism for farmers who wanted to both pursue sustainability goals and receive compensation by the market for internalizing external costs (Lampkin, 1996 in DeLind, 2000). While producers currently engage in organic certification for many reasons, DeLind (2000) has argued that it is the absence of chemical residues on or in organically raised and processed foods that has afforded organic a reputation for quality in an increasingly health-conscious marketplace.

The first certification now considered part of the organic sector was the Demeter label, founded in 1928 from the teachings of Rudolph Steiner, and still attracting the highest price premiums in the market. But it took another fifty years for certification to gain momentum. Nelson et al. (2010) describe how, in the 1970s and 1980s, organic certification was generally voluntary and self-regulatory. Standards tended to be developed at the grassroots level among a variety of stakeholders, particularly producers. Since the standards were enforced by the producers themselves through systems of peer review, the process was known as "first party" certification, which often combined verification procedures with organic education and extension work. While first-party certification worked well when the organic sector was small, localized, and philosophically committed, the rapid growth of the sector in the late 1980s meant that such forms of certification were no longer viable. As a result, major organic certification groups such as the Organic Crop Improvement Association (OCIA) and Naturland changed to third-party certification, which was presumed to be disinterested and objective (Nelson et al., 2010). Gibson (2009) describes how the basis of certification—organic standards—serves different purposes for different groups:

a) standards provide information and guarantees to consumers on organic integrity
b) standards promote good practice by guiding organic producers, from whom all organic standards originally developed
c) standards provide the base for inspection, certification, and the accreditation of certifiers
d) standards are a tool for using the Precautionary Principle (excluding the known and suspected toxins from use)

Gibson (2009) then sets the stage for linking standards and life values when she describes certification as a tool:

> Some would say this tool is for meeting consumer demand for identity preservation and environmental services in their food production. Others would

> say certification is a tool, along with the standards and their founding principles,
> for building a more environmentally and socially responsible food system (p. 1).

In this way, organic standards can be understood as private agri-food standards that were developed to protect threatened life support systems, such as water, soil, climate, and food systems. This understanding has been challenged, ironically, by the very success of organic agriculture itself, which has drawn the attention of large corporate players. The organic price premium, combined with increasing consumer demand, has made organics ripe for co-optation by money values, reinforced by attempts to water down organic standards in certain parts of the world. For example, in the United States, "there [has been] tremendous political pressure to keep standards as simple and perhaps as weak as possible" (Guthman, 1998, p. 145).

The co-optation of organic standards represents a classic illustration of the ongoing struggle between life values and money values in the development of standards. Driven by the withdrawal of the state from the support of sustainable agriculture, organic farmers incorporated their life values into private agri-food standards. These values promoted the health and welfare of people, animals, communities, and the environment (Howard, 1943). This original private certification was developed by "a generation of organic growers [who] entered into organic production because of deeply held political, environmental, philosophical and/or spiritual values" (Guthman, 2004b, p. 23). As Fromartz (2006) has noted, the attraction of organics was not nostalgia for a simpler time, but rather a refusal to sacrifice all other values to the singular push for yield and profit. Over time, however, the push for yield and profit began to be felt in the very sector that was created to overcome the narrow pursuit of money values, not only in the creation of national standards, but also in the maintenance of those standards. "Bilateral and multilateral trade arrangements, national and state laws, FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius organic food labelling standards, and corporate concentration, mergers, and buyouts are daily influences and pressures on the organics value system" (Sligh, 2002, p. 279).

These influences and pressures illuminate the struggle between life values and money values. On the one hand, the traditional organic movement viewed organics as a means to sustain the values that motivated the movement, including family farming for a local foodshed and robust rural communities. For these people, divorcing their practices from their values is like severing the actions from the reasons for the actions, or the body from the head, as noted by earlier analysts reviewed by Guthman (2004c). On the other hand, the excision of traditional organic values from organic standards in the US was a necessary prerequisite to bringing organics into the corporate fold. According to DeLind (2000), the more organics was integrated into US agricultural policy, the more it was threatened by the disintegration of its founding principles. The chronic pressure to co-opt organic standards highlights the threat of overwhelming the life values promoted by the organic pioneers with the money values espoused by the increasingly neoliberal state and the market, so much so that Guthman (2004b) concluded that US organic agriculture had become what it set out to oppose, echoed by Rigby and Bown's

(2007) quote of Roger Blobaum, who argued that "organic is becoming what we hoped it would be an alternative to" (p. 81)—corporate agriculture that promotes money values above life values.

Fair trade standards

Another form of certification associated with private agri-food standards is fair trade—a program that emerged in the 1960s to ensure that producers were treated fairly in the market. Based on the guarantee of fair pricing, not market pricing, fair trade can be understood as a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency, and respect that seeks better trading conditions for, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers, especially in the South (EFTA, 2001). As an alternative market system, its objective is to correct the historically unfair trading relations between the global North and South and to create closer linkages between producers and consumers (Jaffee, Kloppenburg & Monroy, 2004). In short, fair trade focuses on the production and marketing conditions of small peasant producers with whom it has a relationship and who meet registration criteria (Renard, 2003). Operating both "in, as well as against, the market" (Raynolds 2002, p. 419), fair trade is seen as not just a theoretical choice but also a working alternative (Ransom 2001).

Unlike conventional market transactions, fair trade standards promote social and environmental goals, as well as economic ones. For example,

> Generalizing across commodities, at a minimum, fair trade standards are enacted by a price premium, a guaranteed price floor, long-term trading contracts, easier access to credit, and shorter supply chains. In turn, the cooperatives growing these products must be democratically organized and utilize the fair trade premium for the benefit of members. Also, producers commit themselves to improving the environmental conditions of production by reducing or avoiding pesticide use (Goodman, 2004, p. 897).

According to Fairtrade Canada (2011), standards were developed to clearly define the obligations for producers and businesses who buy from them in order for a product to be called Fairtrade certified, and a rigorous third-party monitoring system was implemented to ensure standards were being met. In addition, a label was created that would appear on products that had been independently Fairtrade certified. These accomplishments illustrate the growing influence of the fair trade movement, made up of producers, consumers and NGOs.

Fair trade standards can be understood as private agri-food standards based in life values that protect threatened life support systems, such as farming, rural communities, and food systems. Similar to organic standards, however, the struggle for "regulatory capture" by money values is unrelenting on a number of fronts. First, less stringent and/or more vague, private labels such as Rainforest Alliance have sprung up to attract the customers and the price premiums associated with fair trade. Second, large coffee retailers have also attempted to attract the benefits of fair trade without paying the real costs. For example, Canadian coffee retailer Tim

Hortons (2012) mentions fair trade in its online FAQs, posing the question, "What is Tim Hortons approach to Fair Trade Coffee?" Its response, "coffee partnership," has little to do with the rules and oversight associated with fair trade, but its logo mimics the fair trade logo. Third, although fair trade mandates that only coffee co-operatives composed of small farmers be certified, corporations like Starbucks have long pushed for this rule to be eliminated so they can expand their fair trade certification while working with their traditional coffee suppliers—giant landowners in the South (Fridell, 2011; McMurtry, 2014). Fourth, although campaigns to persuade large multinationals to sign onto fair trade have been relatively successful (including Wal-Mart, McDonalds, Dunkin' Donuts and Nestle), Fridell (2011, np) points out that

> this victory, however, comes with a paradox as corporations and their spin-doctors increasingly use fair trade certification as part of their multi-million dollar public relations campaigns to mask their broader agenda to the "free trade" policies that fair traders and their global justice allies have long fought against.

Fifth, there has also been an attempt to undermine the fair trade movement from within. Transfair USA has long insisted that fair trade change its standards to match the demands of new corporate partners (Fridell, 2011). When this did not occur, Transfair USA split from the international umbrella organization, Fairtrade International, in 2011 so it would not have to restrict itself to buying from small farmer co-operatives, but could also buy from large plantations. Renaming itself Fair Trade USA, the organization "seeks to move beyond the U.S. market and become a global certification body, essentially converting itself into a corporate-friendly alternative to traditional fair trade certification" (Fridell, 2011). Overall, the decision by Fair Trade USA to separate and extend their scope to include plantations and factories will have "long-term and far-reaching consequences for the Fair Trade Movement" (WFTO, 2011).

Local Food Plus

Local Food Plus (LFP) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization incorporated in 2005 in Toronto, Ontario, that certifies food as local and sustainable. LFP defines local food as products that have been produced, processed, and distributed within the province in which they are consumed (LFP 2011). Beginning as a regional label, it originally promoted public institutional purchases as a means to bring regional products into markets in the province of Ontario (Friedmann & McNair, 2008). Part of the local food movement, LFP is committed to creating local sustainable food systems that reduce reliance on fossil fuels, create meaningful jobs, and foster the preservation of farmland—and farmers (LFP, 2011). LFP not only lays out a set of standards for sustainable agricultural practices, but also focuses on the "local" aspect of sustainable production (Louden & MacRae, 2010). In other words, its uniqueness lies in bundling local and sustainable together.

On its website, LFP (2011) announces that it recognizes the need for a community economic development and job creation strategy, the importance of reducing greenhouse gas

emissions, and the benefits of a food system that supports positive change for all stakeholders— so it has developed standards that put these economic, environmental, and social issues at the forefront. The LFP system addresses production, labour, native habitat preservation, animal welfare, and on-farm energy use, and uses these standards to open new higher-value markets for farmers and processors. At present, it sees itself as the only organization in Canada developing supply chains and other infrastructure to link small and medium-sized producers with purchasers of all sizes to create food system change.

Unlike the application of organic standards, where producers have to meet the requirements of a set of fixed standards in order to be certified, LFP is not an inflexible form of certification. Instead, it has developed a collaborative, problem-solving relationship between producers and certifiers (Friedmann & McNair, 2008). In essence, LFP has created a points-based system that carries the potential for continuous improvement as producers adopt increasing numbers of the practices that generate points, which Friedmann (2007) argues helps farmers and corporations to progressively scale up local supply chains for sustainably grown products. In this way, LFP seeks to make it easy to raise standards of sustainability, not only in terms of proximity, but also in five other areas: sustainable agronomy, labour standards, wildlife management, energy, and animal welfare (Friedmann & McNair, 2008).

Like organic standards and fair trade standards, Local Food Plus standards can be understood as private agri-food standards that protect threatened life support systems, such as farming, energy, livelihood, and food systems. Unlike organic standards and fair trade standards, which have faced many challenges over the last half century, Local Food Plus standards were only developed in 2005. They have not had time to become a direct target in the struggle between the life code of value and the money code of value, but a few salvos have been launched by large food corporations trying to attract consumers with food that is local, but not sustainable. For example, Wal-Mart intends to buy more local produce as part of its so-called sustainability plan. As the world's largest grocer, it defines local produce as that grown and sold in the same state, and aims to double the percentage of locally grown produce it sells to nine percent in the US and thirty percent in Canada (increasing to 100 percent when local produce is available) (Clifford, 2010). Driven by the money code of value, the decision to carry local produce does not support the local economy, as profits return to company headquarters in Arkansas, and suppliers (including farmers) are squeezed so tightly on price that many are "forced into bankruptcy" (Freeman, 2003). Nor does Wal-Mart support labour standards—Goetz and Swaminathan (2004) have noted that media attention has focused on questionable labour practices, low wages and lack of benefits. If Wal-Mart is any indication of the challenges to come, the range of life values that underwrite Local Food Plus standards may be trampled in the rush to attract the profits that interest in local food can generate.[1]

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[1] Recently, Local Food Plus has had to scale back and run a minimal operation because of the difficulties funding this model.

Standards as a commons

Private agri-food standards have emerged as powerful forms of governance that create expectations, drive behaviour, and discipline players in the market. As the three cases indicate, the governance provided by private agri-food standards does not necessarily promote the accumulation of wealth for a small minority. It can also promote the accumulation of wealth for the large majority through systems of rule designed to build common wealth. In this way, the three cases also point to an emerging opportunity in terms of life-protective governance— standards as a commons. Modern conceptions of the commons speak to its importance as a template for transformation (Bollier, 2014), a source of hope for those who want to imagine a world beyond capitalism (Swift 2014), and a means of organizing and governing society that bridges the culture/nature divide (Menzies, 2014). Another approach involves the refinement of the commons into a term that both emphasizes the role human agency and defines a society's true level of life evolution: the civil commons (McMurtry, 2013). Conceptualizing standards as a commons allows us to see them in a new way—as part of a suite of life-protective mechanisms that can contribute to the transition to a more sustainable world.

Bain (2010) has observed that "standards are neither impartial nor value free" (p. 366). These three cases not only confirm her observation, but also illustrate that standards do not have to be driven by the money code of value—they can also be driven by the life code of value. The vehicle for the life code of value is the civil commons, which describes any co-operative human construct that enables the access of all members of a community to life goods (McMurtry, 1998). Based in the life code of value, the civil commons is co-operative, not competitive, in its mode of engagement. It is a human construct, not a naturally occurring phenomenon, and so must be built by human agency. It enables universal access, not paid access, and it provides life goods, or means of life, such as nutritious food, clean water, adequate shelter, education, healthcare, open spaces, and a safe workplace. In essence, the civil commons is "society's organized and community-funded capacity of universally accessible resources to provide for the life preservation and growth of society's members and their environmental life-host" (p. 24). In opposition to the money values embedded in neoliberalism, not one civil commons institution or practice is developed or financed to generate money profit for private investors (McMurtry, 2001).

Examples of the civil commons surround us every day: public education, universal healthcare, national parks, environmental legislation, health and safety regulations, women's rights, and public airwaves—all co-operative human constructs that protect and/or enable universal access to life goods. In the words of Noonan (2011), such civil commons institutions are "governed by the goal of universal provision and protection of life-requirements and life-standards" (p. 7). This co-operative, life-protective form of governance differs fundamentally from the competitive, life-destructive forms of governance associated with the money code of value.

Standards based in the life code of value can also be examples of the civil commons. As co-operative constructs co-ordinated by human agency, standards can provide universal access to a range of life goods, including safe workplaces, clean drinking water, and a stable climate. Private agri-food standards are no exception. If they are based in life values, they can provide universal access to such life goods as healthy environments, just livelihoods and sustainable food systems, as the three cases illustrate. Life-coherent private agri-food standards may follow the shift from government to governance, but they represent governance for more than just the elite who are shareholders or senior management in global food corporations. In essence, they represent an alternative mode of governance that benefits the large majority by building public wealth through the provision of life goods for everyone.

Framing standards in terms of the civil commons allows them to leverage the two defining functions of the civil commons: the preventative function and the enabling function (McMurtry, 2013). In the first function, the civil commons evolves a framework of law and regulatory protection for both human and environmental life, such as laws that prevent polluting the environment or violating labour rights. In the second function, the civil commons provides goods that directly enable human life to flourish, such as universal education or healthcare. Conceptualizing some standards as a form of the civil commons acknowledges their preventative and enabling functions, both of which can contribute to developing a more sustainable food system (Sumner, 2012).

Understanding standards as a form of the civil commons not only confirms DuPuis and Gillon's (2009) conclusion that "alternative modes of governance are designed to disrupt dominant economies through new forms of economic interactions and new actors" (p. 54), but also amplifies this finding by adding a values component—new forms of economic interactions (e.g., fair trade), new actors (e.g., social movements) and new values (e.g., life values). In addition, it complements and broadens the work of Schoechle (2009) and his understanding that the commons has historically been associated with standardization. In words that echo McMurtry's (1998) work, he argues that "standardization is basically a cooperative enterprise directed at the creation of a public good or a commons" (p. 27). This cooperative spirit of the commons can be found in the development of the standards associated with organics, fair trade and Local Food Plus. The competitive drive for private enrichment associated with the formation of other standards such as GlobalGAP can be seen as an enclosure of the commons and its life-protective qualities. Such enclosure has always threatened the commons, and is predictably at the heart of the problems these three cases face.

At their best, organics, fair trade, and Local Food Plus standards can all be seen as examples of the civil commons. Organics provides universal access to the life goods of vital soil and a clean environment. Fair trade provides universal access to the life goods of a just livelihood and a sustainable community. And Local Food Plus provides universal access to the life good of a sustainable food system. But the problems the three cases have experienced, and continue to experience, serve to highlight the difficulties facing all standards oriented to the life protective qualities of the civil commons. The chronic pressure to water down organic standards,

the inclusion of huge, multinationally owned, non-organic coffee plantations in fair trade standards (McMurtry, 2014), and the bypassing of Local Food Plus standards by large corporations focussing on local, but not sustainable, food all testify to the modern enclosure of commons opportunities and the stifling of a more sustainable food system.

Conclusion

Keeping in mind that the commons can be understood as a source of well-being that we all share (Rowe, 2002), this article has introduced the money code of value and the life code of value to interpret three cases—organics, fair trade and Local Food Plus—with the aim of informing discussion regarding the emergence of private agri-food standards as a form of life-protective governance for a more sustainable food system. In particular, it has developed the idea of standards as a commons—an alternative form of governance that challenges neoliberalism. The analysis points to a number of issues crucial to the question of standards as a commons.

To begin with, the three cases highlight the fact that private and public agri-food standards can have both negative and positive connotations. Born and Purcell (2006) put forward an analogous argument when they contend that local is not necessarily sustainable and global is not necessarily unsustainable—it depends on the agenda of those who are empowered by the scalar strategy. In terms of standards, it depends on the agenda of those empowered by the ownership strategy—private or public—and that agenda can be driven by the money code of value or the life code of value. If the agenda of private agri-food standards is driven by the money code of value, then the standards developed will promote a mode of governance that has the potential to have serious negative consequences for the environmental, social, and economic aspects of life for the vast majority. As Konefal et al. (2005) note, "the development of private standards for such things as food safety and quality are not necessarily driven by concerns for what is best for the public" (p. 298). But if the agenda of private agri-food standards is driven by the life code of value, then the standards developed will have the potential to produce the far-reaching positive environmental, social and economic benefits associated with the civil commons.

Standards are always contested, and private agri-food standards are no exception. Hatanaka (2010) hints at some of the hegemonic struggles associated with the development of standards when she contends that

> Forms of rule-based scientific governance, such as TPC [third-party certification] separate the governance for food and agriculture from their production and consumption. The outcome is potentially a political, yet undemocratic, form of food and agricultural governance where science functions to mask politics (p. 141).

Hatanaka's contention brings to mind Lipson's (1981) observation that politics is the process in which a community confronts a series of great issues and chooses between opposing values.

Values are an integral part of any standards development, and the foregrounding of codes of value in this article bring this basic understanding to light. On a related note, when the governance for food and agriculture is separated from their production and consumption, it runs the risk of becoming less transparent. This can be true for both public and private standards development. Governance based on the money code of value lowers the veil over systems of rule to avoid scrutiny of the benefits that accrue to the small minority to the detriment of the large majority—also known as the "99 percent" (Weinstein 2011).

The commons supports the 99 percent and threats of enclosure have always spelled catastrophe for the majority of people. The modern enclosure of the civil commons harms us all, preventing access to life-giving resources that maintain or increase our well-being. According to Monbiot (1998, p. 362), "For human beings, as for the biosphere, the tragedy of the commons is not the tragedy of their existence but the tragedy of their disappearance."

One of the routes to enclosure is co-optation, so meticulously outlined by Jaffee and Howard (2010). These authors offer some guidelines for the development and maintenance of standards as a commons. First, include a plan for growth management, tempering growth with life values. This is particularly applicable to Local Food Plus, as it experiences funding problems. Second, design explicit barriers that prevent the entry of big players so that the life code of value does not get overwhelmed by the money code of value, particularly in light of what we have learned about the expansion of organics. Third, pay heed to the initial design and structure of certification bodies, especially if LFP intends to scale up in the future. Fourth, keep in mind that the locus of standard setting also matters, especially considering that many forms of the civil commons have historically rested within the purview of the state. But as the cases of organics and fair trade illustrate, neither public nor private standards automatically guarantee life-protective governance for the vast majority. Regardless of the chosen locus, only the life code of value will achieve this end. And fifth, investigate the potential role of the citizen-consumer. Both boycotts and buycotts have been successful in the past—could consumers rally around standards like they have rallied around the products associated with standards?

This article has demonstrated that private agri-food standards can be a form of life-protective governance if they are based in life values. It has shown that the values behind the original organic standards, fair trade standards, and Local Food Plus standards protect and/or enable universal access to such life goods as a healthy environment, a just livelihood and sustainably produced food. The development of these private agri-food standards followed the shift from government to governance, but they enacted governance for more than just the elite who are shareholders or senior management in global food corporations. In their purest form, these standards are a commons—an alternative mode of life-protective governance that benefits the large majority by building public wealth in the form of a more sustainable food system.

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Field Report

From Food Mail to Nutrition North Canada: Reconsidering federal food subsidy programs for northern Ontario

Kristin Burnett,[1] Kelly Skinner,[2] and Joseph LeBlanc[3]

[1] Associate Professor, Department of Indigenous Learning, Lakehead University
[2] Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Indigenous Learning, Lakehead University
[3] Independent Scholar

Abstract

This article evaluates federal food subsidy programs in northern Canada, focusing specifically on the transition from the Food Mail Program to Nutrition North Canada. Although the report on Nutrition North Canada by the Auditor General of Canada, Michael Ferguson, released on November 25, 2014, revealed some of the program's problems, we argue that the situation is far more complicated. In particular, the Auditor General's report focuses on the arctic regions and disregards the equally alarming state of food insecurity in the provincial Norths.[1] By looking specifically at northern Ontario, this article outlines the diverse challenges and differences northerners face in ensuring access to affordable and nutritious food of good quality.

Keywords: food subsidy, Food Mail Program, Nutrition North Canada, Indigenous food insecurity, food quality, northern Ontario, provincial Norths

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[1] Here we draw on Ken Coates and define the provincial Norths as: the sub-arctic band that lies south of the 60th parallel and stretches from Northern British Columbia through the Canadian shield to northern Labrador. The population of the provincial Norths is primarily Indigenous (comprised of a range of diverse cultures and peoples) and the economy is largely resource dependent. Significantly, the provincial Norths constitute almost one half of Canada's land mass (Coates, 1996; Coates, 2014). The Canadian Far North is defined as the geographical regions located above the 60th parallel that are currently divided into Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and the Yukon.

Introduction

On November 25, 2014, the Auditor General of Canada (AG), Michael Ferguson, tabled his report on Nutrition North Canada (NNC), a subsidy program implemented by the federal government of Canada in April of 2011 to replace the long running Food Mail program (FMP), and designed to lower the cost of "perishable nutritious food" in northern communities as part of the "Government of Canada's Northern Strategy."[2] Ferguson's announcement—that he intended to audit the brand-new program—came in August of 2013, in response to repeated calls from Indigenous grassroots and political organizations, unanimous motions passed by all three northern territorial legislatures, and a letter from the NDP Member of Parliament for the Northwest Territories, Dennis Bevington. In his report, the AG identified three areas of concern regarding the program: (1) determining community eligibility; (2) identifying whether or not retailers were passing on the full subsidy to customers; and (3) developing program management and measurement tools (Auditor General, 2014, p. iii). The two largest northern grocery retailers, the North West Company and Arctic Co-ops Ltd., strongly supported the AG's "recommendations for fixing the federal governments' Nutrition North Scheme" (APTN, 2014). The Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Development, Bernard Valcourt, said that he "welcomed the report…and accept[ed] the five recommendations" (Valcourt, 2014). The AG's report was also well received by many northern Indigenous groups and organizations that described the report as a "scathing review of the Nutrition North program" (APTN, 2014).

While Ferguson certainly identified some of the key problems with the program—particularly around eligibility and tracking the application of the subsidy from the retailer to the customer—his report failed to clearly outline the breadth of the program's shortfalls. Moreover, the AG's review of the program does not illuminate the nature of the situation in the provincial Norths. Instead, most of the attention was paid to the Far North and in particular Nunavut – which receives the vast majority of NNC subsidies, at forty-four percent (the next highest region is northern Quebec at eighteen percent) (NNC, 2013-2014a). There are twenty-five remote communities in Nunavut with approximately 33,000 residents (Government of Canada, 2013) and all of them are fully eligible for the NNC subsidy (NNC, 2014b). In comparison, northern Ontario has more remote First Nations than any other region in Canada (Government of Canada, 2014)—with thirty-two remote communities—only eight of which are eligible for the full NNC subsidy (NNC, 2014b).

While we are certainly not arguing that Nunavut is undeserving of the subsidy (indeed quite the opposite), we want to draw attention to the dangers of conflating the problems facing northern communities throughout Canada. Focusing on regional and provincial experiences rather than just "the North" further elucidates problems with the program, revealing that NNC is

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[2] See official NNC website: http://www.nutritionnorthcanada.gc.ca/eng/1415385762263/1415385790537. The Northern Strategy has four components to it: exercise our Arctic sovereignty; protect our environmental heritage; promote social and economic development; and improve and devolve Northern governance. For more information see the federal government's website at: http://www.northernstrategy.gc.ca/index-eng.asp

even less effective in regions like northern Ontario where communities received only twelve percent of NNC subsidies (NNC, 2013–2014a). Nor has the cost or quality of food demonstrably improved in those communities fortunate enough to be eligible for the full NNC subsidy. Instead, the subsidy is serving as more of a benefit to the retailer than consumers (Galloway, 2014). In particular, the report fails to account for the diverse challenges and differences northerners face across Canada in ensuring access to affordable and nutritious food of good quality.

The AG's report is merely an effort by the current conservative government to justify its decision to eliminate the previous longstanding Food Mail Program (FMP). This followed the recommendations of the 2008 Dargo Report—a report commissioned by the same government. According to the Dargo Report, the best way to lower the cost of food in northern communities was to eliminate the FMP and allow the free market system to operate properly in the region— and thus naturally lower the cost of food through competition (p. 29–31). The NNC was designed to serve as a cost containment measure in the face of the rising—but entirely necessary—costs of the FMP, and support the development of a market-based solution. Moreover, the federal government's proposition of a market-based solution is a difficult plan to implement, especially in northern communities where there is no retail competition, and often all goods and services—from food sales, to banking, to gas, to pharmacies—are managed by one retailer (Galloway, 2014, p. 397).

The NNC budget is now capped at $54 million, in comparison to the budget of the FMP, which was between $55 and $58 million in its last year (Bell, 2011). Conveniently, on the Friday before the AG's report was released, the federal government announced an additional $11.3 million in funding for NNC. That the federal government described the $11.3 million as "additional funding" is misleading. The "additional" $11.3 million only brings current NNC funding levels up to previous funding levels that existed under the former FMP (Bevington, 2015). A recent internal report released by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada in early March 2015 recommended that funding for NNC should "at least be indexed to inflation or to changes in costs that are major contributors to the cost of food retailing in the North" (NNC, 2015).

What follows is a brief overview of food subsidy programs in northern Canada, an examination of program eligibility, and a discussion concerning the transition from FMP to NNC with a focus on northern Ontario. Finally, we take a look at two constant problems faced by many northerners regarding access to forest and freshwater foods and issues of food quality— neither of which can be addressed by food subsidy programs.

Project context

The research for this article is derived from a broader interdisciplinary research project that is community based and action oriented. The larger project pursues a number of different avenues of inquiry related to food security and sovereignty in northern Ontario and employs a mixed

methodology. Drawing on the diverse skill set of the research team and community members, this article relies on government and corporate records (located at Library Archives Canada and the Provincial Archives of Manitoba), interviews and surveys conducted with community members and former Indian Affairs employees, newspapers, and the reports and studies conducted by Health Canada, the Food Mail program, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, and various non-government organizations. Most of the reports and studies are available online.

The authors also have a great deal of personal and academic experience investigating food security in northern Canada. Kristin Burnett's research project looks at how government policy and corporate practices have manufactured food insecurity in northern Canada from an historical perspective. In particular, Burnett focuses on tracing the impact by federal food subsidy programs on the foodways of northern Indigenous peoples and the roles played by the Northern Department of the Hudson's Bay Company (later the North West Company) since World War II. Burnett's project has been informed by and developed in conjunction with community members. Kelly Skinner has worked closely with a number of First Nations communities in northern Ontario on community-based health and social projects related to food, nutrition, and food security. Her research has included an assessment of the prevalence and severity of food insecurity, critiques of food security measurement tools for northern populations, evaluation of community-led food initiatives, and food costing. For his part, Joseph LeBlanc has a great deal of experience working on food security in the North. His research looks at Indigenous food sovereignty and industrial natural resource management, with a particular focus on food system initiatives in northern Ontario that include community and forest gardening, forest and freshwater foods, and forest food system planning. LeBlanc was also a founding board member and president of True North Community Co-operative.

Food subsidy programs in northern Canada

After the Second World War, the federal government of Canada created what was officially called the Northern Air Stage Program—hereafter referred to as the Food Mail Program (FMP). From the 1960s, the FMP operated as a transportation subsidy run initially by Canada Post (a crown corporation) and by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) after 1991. Under this program, communities that lacked "year-round surface transportation" could have the cost of shipping food and goods into their communities subsidized. Food eligibility under the program was based on the Nutritious Food Basket,[3] but also included essential goods

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[3] According to the Ontario Ministry of Health Promotion, "A Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) is a survey tool that is a measure of the cost of basic healthy eating that represents current nutrition recommendations and average food purchasing patterns. Food costing is used to monitor both affordability and accessibility of foods by relating the cost of the food basket to individual/family incomes. The basket is comprised of 67 items and is designed to reflect an example of an eating pattern that meets *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*, and eating behaviours reflective of

like personal hygiene products, medical and hunting equipment, bottled water, and automobile parts (INAC, 2005; Lawn, 1998).

Before 1991 there were no standard guiding principles used by the federal government to determine which communities were eligible for the FMP (Dargo, 2008). When the FMP was taken over by INAC in 1991, it underwent a series of reviews in order to make the program more cost effective, consistent, and available to all communities rather than a select few (Hill, 1998). For instance, "postage rates for perishable foods were reduced in the territories and increased in the provinces, in order to provide a uniform rate for perishable food shipments to all eligible destinations" (Hill, 1998, p. 177). The range of foods that were eligible for the FMP subsidies were reduced, and instead higher subsidy rates were applied to those perishable foods determined to be more nutritious. In addition to cost, those foods subsidized have also been determined by existing Health Canada recommendations (Lawn, 1998a). Health Canada employs a fairly narrow and evolving definition of what constitutes nutritious food, which rarely reflects local preferences or culture (Interview #04). A brief glance at the most recent list of eligible "nutritious" foods under NNC illustrates how confusing certain decisions have been. Under NNC, frozen dinners still receive a subsidy while canned soup and stews have been removed; yogurt drinks are subsidized but frozen yogurt is not; and finally, bottled water is no longer subsidized even though as of August 2012, 119 communities First Nations, located primarily in northern Canada, were under "water advisories requiring residents to either boil their water or to heed 'do not drink warnings'" (NNC, 2013d; White, 2012, p. 1).

By 1996, the FMP was provided to "49 Inuit communities in the Northwest Territories, Quebec, and Labrador (about 30,000 people); 66 First Nation communities in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta, the western portion of NWT, Yukon, Labrador, and the James Bay and Lower North Shore regions of Quebec (about 37,000 people); and 37 non-Indigenous communities in southern Labrador (about 22,000 people)" (Hill, 1998, p. 177). FMP employees monitored the program closely, and reviewed compliance on an annual basis through onsite surprise visits. Every year government employees conducted food costing—including both perishable and nonperishable items—in approximately forty northern communities and the relevant supply centres/food entry points (AANDC, 2008). The data from this work is available on the AANDC website at: https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100035986/1100100035987. Moreover, employees of the FMP carried out additional studies to assess the impact of the program on food security and dietary intake in selected communities; from 1991 to 2010 more than thirty reports were released by the FMP. The surprise on-site visits no longer take place, however. Instead, retailers are self-reporting food costs to NNC with no external oversight. As such, there is no way to track whether or not subsidies are being passed on to consumers. The AG's report also concluded that the Contribution Agreements with retailers—that requires them

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the Canadian Community Health Survey." Ontario, Ministry of Health Promotion, *Nutritious Food Basket: Guidance Document* (Queen's Printer for Ontario, 2010), 7–8. The Canadian Community Health Survey is not conducted on reserve.

to provide the Department with monthly reports on food prices—is just a list of food prices, and does not help verify whether the full subsidy is passed on (Auditor General, 2014, p. 7).

Transition from the Food Mail Program to Nutrition North Canada

The federal government commissioned a report by Graeme Dargo, a partner of Dargo and Associates Consulting Firm, which was carried out in August 2008. Dargo found that although the FMP was necessary for access to affordable and nutritious foods, he believed the program had lost its focus and "vastly exceed[ed] the budget available" further predicting that "the current Program costs will continue to soar and with limited program performance results" (Dargo, 2008, p. 4). He recommended the following: that a market-based system be introduced that would work to develop a new delivery model in partnership with northern retailers; that the base budget of $27.6 million be revised; that management systems to ensure retailers would be "refunded for the subsides they would provide to consumers on behalf of Canada" be developed; that the eligibility criteria for communities and foods/goods be reevaluated; that a new country foods initiative be developed; that subsidy rates that have remained the same since 1993 be revised; that consideration be given to transferring the program to the Department of Health and Welfare; and that performance measurement tools be established (Dargo, 2008, p. 5). Dargo concluded that the federal government needed to end the FMP in order to contain the rising costs of the FMP and address the breadth of food insecurity in northern Canada, especially among Indigenous people. While Dargo's report recommended that the FMP be terminated, he also advised that something was still needed to offset the incredibly high costs of food in the North.

In May 2010 INAC announced that they were going to discontinue the FMP and introduce a new program entitled Nutrition North Canada (NNC). Widespread protests delayed the official start of the program until the spring of 2011. The stated goal of NNC was two-pronged and remarkably contradictory: to limit the rising costs of the FMP and improve communities' access to perishable nutritious foods. Costs for the program would be contained through two primary means: the elimination of many communities from the program and excluding almost all non-food, but necessary household items such as diapers, dental hygiene products, toilet paper, shampoo, fishing nets, boat motor parts, ammunition, gas (things necessary to pursue hunting and fishing activities), and the large, ambiguous category of "medical devices" (AANDC, 2013).

Community eligibility for subsidies was also redefined. While all remote communities, those without year-round surface transportation, were eligible under the FMP, NNC introduced ineligible, partially eligible, and non-eligible categories. Community eligibility for NNC was based on previous FMP use, focusing specifically on the weight of perishable goods shipped under the FMP during the 2009–10 fiscal period. In order to be eligible for the full subsidy, communities had to have received over 15,000 kg of perishable foods—or more than $4 per month per resident in transportation subsidies—between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010

(NNC, 2014b). Partially eligible communities had to have received between 100 and 14,999 kg—or more than $4 per month per resident in transportation subsidies.

This picture, however, is far more complicated than such criteria suggest, because communities for a number of reasons greatly underused the FMP. First, the FMP was not well promoted even after 1991, and awareness of the program across the North remained extremely poor. An internal review of the FMP in March of 2009 described the program as "invisible", "not widely publicized," and "flying under the radar" (AANDC, 2009). Second, there was a general perception that the FMP was something used only by "white people from the south" (Dargo, 2008; Boult, 2004). Third, in order to place personal orders people needed to use credit cards, which amounted to only about five percent of the program users (Boult, 2004, p. 3). According to the Dargo report, using the personal order component of the program was nearly impossible for many Indigenous community members because they "cannot obtain a credit card, do not own a personal vehicle or cannot communicate in French or English" (p. 17). David Boult noted these concerns four years earlier in a discussion paper on food insecurity in Inuit communities (2004). He reported that extensive paperwork and the need for a credit card limited the number of people who would or could access the program.

Finally, frequently those entities that shipped large volumes of perishable goods into the community on an annual basis—for example, the North West Company (NWC)—did not use the FMP because they found better shipping rates through independent carriers. According to the 2008 Dargo Report there were thirty-one eligible Northern Retailers "who chose not to subscribe to the Program as their current transportation costs are less or equal to the existing Food Mail subsidy rates" (Dargo, 2008, p. 13). Wholesalers and retailers in northern Manitoba indicated that certain Food Mail restrictions (e.g. perishable foods that are subsidized must be shipped separately from ineligible foods and non-perishables) also made using the program complicated and logistically difficult (Lyall, 2004). As a result, in the provincial Norths, large retailers did not generally use the FMP. Instead, locally owned stores, co-operatives, and individual residents were the principal program users in these regions. In regions like Baffin Island, however, the large retailers used the FMP because they were unable to negotiate shipping rates with airlines that were better than what was available under the FMP. Under the FMP, food shipping companies, and not the retail outlets operating in northern communities, applied for the subsidy (Boult, 2004; Lyall, 2004).

Under NNC, there are two levels of the subsidy: a higher amount (Level 1) applies to the most nutritious perishable foods and a lower amount (Level 2) applies to other nutritious perishable foods, to non-perishable foods and to non-food items. Examples of foods qualifying for the higher subsidy level are fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables, milk, and eggs. The amount of the full subsidy for store-bought items at each level are dependent on the remoteness of the community and the subsidy ranges from $1.20/kg to $16.00/kg for Level 1 items and $0.05/kg to $14.20/kg for Level 2 items. For partially eligible communities rates are the same for Levels 1 and 2 at $0.05/kg. A food pricing study of 353 food and household items from a store in a northern Ontario community did not find a difference in price ratio between perishable and non-

perishable goods (Socha et al., 2011). Yet they did find higher price ratios for items weighing more than one kilogram, fruits and vegetables, and liquid items. It was also noted that these three variables explained only a small proportion of variation in price ratio, and that other factors, such as the shorter shelf life of fruits and vegetables and the expense of shipping heavier items, contributed to the variability (Socha et al., 2011).

Currently, the NWC, the largest retailer of food and goods in the North, receives the vast majority of the NNC subsidy at fifty-nine percent; the second highest retailer is Arctic Co-operatives Ltd., which received thirteen percent of the total subsidy in 2013-2014 (NNC, 2013-2014a). While we do not know how this picture looks in other regions, in northern Ontario the NWC chose to not partake in the FMP because they could negotiate better shipping rates through regional airlines like Wasaya Airways and Air Creebec. The fact that the NWC did not use the FMP reflects how few communities are currently eligible for subsidies under NNC. In northern Ontario the largest users of the FMP were independent retailers and personal orders. As a result, only eight communities are currently fully eligible at $0.05 (Level 2) to $2.60 (Level 1) per kilogram—Attawapiskat, Bearskin Lake, Big Trout Lake, Fort Albany, Fort Severn, Kashechewan, Muskrat Dam, and Peawanuck—and another seven are eligible for a partial subsidy at a mere $0.05/kg. Table 1 shows the weights of perishable food received by communities in northern Ontario in 2009–10 and the resulting allocation of communities for eligibility to be full, partially, or not subsidized under NNC.

Table 1: The FMP assessment in 2009–10 for northern Ontario communities and weight of perishable food received to determine eligibility for subsidy during the transition to NNC

Community*	Weight received (kg)**	NNC Subsidy $/kg
Fully eligible		
		Level 1/Level 2
Attawapiskat	68,619	1.40/0.05
Bearskin Lake	35,140	1.30/0.05
Big Trout Lake (Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug)	155,862	1.60/0.05
Fort Albany	37,435	1.30/0.05
Fort Severn	109,007	2.60/0.80
Kashechewan	17,147	1.30/0.05
Muskrat Dam	43,442	1.50/0.05
Peawanuck	78,320	2.40/0.60
Partially eligible		
Wapekeka (Angling Lake)	9,577	0.05
Kasabonika Lake	5,975	0.05
Kingfisher Lake	5,188	0.05
Pikangikum	1,623	0.05
Sachigo Lake	5,736	0.05
North Caribou Lake	5,471	0.05
Wunnumin Lake	480	0.05
Ineligible		
Cat Lake	0	0
Deer Lake	0	0
Eabametoong	0	0
Sandy Lake	32	0
Keewaywin	0	0
Koocheching	0	0
Neskantaga	0	0
North Spirit Lake	0	0
Marten Falls	0	0
Poplar Hill	0	0
Nibinamik	0	0
Webequie	0	0
Wawakapewin	0	0
MacDowell Lake	0	0
Moose Cree	0	0
Whitewater Lake	0	0

*All communities listed are remote with no year-round road access and are considered fly-in communities.
**Weights based on personal communication with Carol Brillinger from Nutrition North Canada, December 19, 2011.

There are several reasons for the non-reported weights during the 2009–10 fiscal year. As mentioned, there were often better rates available from airlines than through the FMP and retailers were limited to airlines that held a Canada Post contract. Therefore, individuals and retailers often opted for better service or prices with other carriers. Many community residents did not place personal orders; and while shopping outside of their community in person, they were unable to utilize the FMP effectively. Unaware of the FMP, many community members shipped food and household items to themselves at full price, and as a result, the weight of their shipments were not counted in 2009–10. Many locally owned stores were also not always aware of how to access the FMP.

In a study conducted in 2011, the grocery store manager of a remote Northwestern Ontario community reported the challenges he faced. The store manager did not have control over the base cost of the items shipped to the store, but she did have control over the volume of each product shipped weekly. The manager's ability to predict sales contributed to the maintenance of lower prices. It was also noted that community members did not blame the store manager for the high cost of food. An independent grocer in Peawanuck, Ontario was interviewed in 2005 at a time when there were only independent locally owned retailers in the community prior to the opening of a Northern Store in 2008. The food items available at the independent store in 2005 consisted primarily of non-perishable and frozen foods. During the interview, the store manager was asked if he tried to bring in perishable produce for his customers. He explained that he had tried for a while, but he regularly received the food in such poor condition that he could not sell it to customers. According to the store manager, often what happened is that he would pay a regional carrier to fly perishable foods into the community, however, if a larger, more influential company wanted to use that plane (for instance resource development companies), his produce would be taken off and put in a freezer to be shipped at a later date. After being frozen and then thawed in transit the perishable food was spoiled (Anonymous, personal communication, July 19, 2005).

Nutrition North Canada's Country Foods Initiative

One of the flagships of the new NNC program, particularly celebrated by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC), was the program's Country Foods Initiative (CFI). The CFI is designed to promote access to meats commercially produced in northern Canada. Forest and freshwater foods accessed by individuals are not eligible for subsidy and plant-based foods commercially produced in the north are treated as Level 1 fruits or vegetables. Regrettably, the country foods initiative is completely ineffective in northern Ontario. Not one community in northern Ontario partakes in the subsidy for country foods (NNC, 2014c).

The rules governing how country food is distributed throughout the North explain the lack of uptake in the program. In order to legally ship forest and freshwater foods, including harvested meats, they must first be certified at one of the "federal regulated plants in the North

eligible for retail subsidy under NNC" (AANDC, 2011). There are only three licensed food processing facilities that meet the NNC program requirements in the North and they are all located in the territories.

It is also not clear whether government subsidy for country food programs is the best way to provide support as it diminishes the control that communities can exert over their own programs. Country food programs have been defined as "organized initiatives that support people living off the land in order to feed the local community" (Thompson et al., 2011; Thompson et al., 2012). In a similar provincial context, Thompson and colleagues (2012) found that country food programs had the greatest effect on rates of food security in northern Manitoba and indicated that country food programs created, led, and supported by local funding and community direction resulted in food sovereignty. Restricting the flow of country food—by requiring it to be approved through federally licensed processing facilities—greatly reduces the ability of these communities to govern their own country food systems.

Food quality

The freshness and quality of perishable foods like fruits and vegetables (Lawn et al., 1994) and the decision of northern retailers to sell food that is expired continues to be a major problem in many northern communities in Canada. In an online survey to gather community input about retail and food purchasing experiences in northern Canada, preliminary findings show that one of the top three concerns regarding food purchasing was the quality of the food available for purchase (e.g., freshness, expired food). Eighty-two percent stated that their store often or sometimes sold expired food and 57% of respondents reported perishable food was not usually in good condition (Burnett & Skinner, 2015).

Elaine Power (2007), in her background paper on food security for First Nations and Inuit, noted that the FMP also had no effect on the quality, variety, and availability of foods. This continues to be the case under NNC. NNC does not have control over the quality of the subsidized food items that are transported to northern retailers. Irrespective of whether a fresh fruit or vegetable is highly subsidized, its quality remains questionable. Often fruit and vegetables are bruised or inappropriately stored during transport, resulting in reduced quality, often making them unpalatable for consumers. Nor do northern retailers sell damaged food at a reduced price—as is often the case in the south (Burnett & Skinner, 2015; Feeding My Family, n.d.). The failure to sell foods at reduced or competitive rates may be a function of the lack of competition in most northern communities where customers have no choice and cannot vote with their feet.

Conclusion

In December of 2012, Olivier De Schutter, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, submitted his report to the Human Rights Council of the United Nations regarding his trip to Canada. The report observed many of the same concerns about Nutrition North Canada that were identified by the Auditor General of Canada two years later. The right to food is both a human and legal right. According to Jean Ziegler, the right to food "protects the right of all human beings to live in dignity, free from hunger, insecurity and malnutrition. The right to food is not about charity, but about ensuring that all people have the capacity to feed themselves in dignity" (Ziegler, 2015). Moreover, it is a right clearly protected under international law: article 25 of the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* and article 11 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights* (Ziegler, 2015). In Canada, studies have found that the prevalence of food insecurity was sixty percent of First Nations children in northern Manitoba households, seventy percent of adults living in Nunavut, and seventy percent of households in a remote community in northern Ontario (Skinner et al., 2014; De Schutter, 2012, p. 16). Further, these rates were "six times higher than the national average and represented the highest documented food insecurity rate for any aboriginal population in a developed country" (De Schutter, 2012, p. 16).

Geographically, the North is enormous; it is culturally diverse, it is resource rich, and it faces a range of challenges. In 1670 the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) became incorporated by the King of England and the Company was granted enormous tracts of land without the consent of Indigenous Nations who had lived on them since time immemorial. After 1821, the HBC operated as a virtual monopoly throughout much of northern Canada, often serving as liaison with Indigenous peoples for the British and later the federal government of Canada, as well as providing essential services normally undertaken by the state.

In 1958, the HBC formally opened their Northern Stores Department, which was an expansion of retail operations in the North on the foundations of their northern fur trade posts. Executives of the HBC and independent investors purchased the Northern Stores Department in 1987. The company trades under the North West Company but is popularly known as the Northern Store (in addition to its many other iterations), and functions as a virtual monopoly throughout northern Canada. The North West Company reported a record trading profit for 2012 of $134.3 million. Profits are up twelve percent or $65 million from the previous year, and almost eighty percent of this capital was generated from the sale of food (CBC News, 2013). The narrative encouraged by the NWC—in which they describe themselves as doing northerners a favour by selling in a challenging market—is completely false: the NWC makes more than enough profit to justify its continued presence as a retailer in the North, and its expansion into other rural, remote, and Indigenous communities in the South Pacific and Caribbean.

Focusing solely on Nutrition North Canada highlights some of the challenges faced by northern communities struggling to put healthy and affordable food on their tables, but it does not capture the enormity of the situation. In particular, the focus on the arctic regions disregards

the equally alarming state of food insecurity in the provincial Norths. Our narrative illustrates the situation for northern Ontario and provides a lens for similar scenarios in northern remote communities in other provinces. Food insecurity is a symptom of a larger problem that is rooted in Canada's colonial past. Food subsidy programs are band-aid solutions that do not address the source of the problem, and until Canada acknowledges the actual problem, the symptoms will continue.

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Field Report

Serious hunger games: Increasing awareness about food security in Canada through digital games

Una Lee[1] and Stephanie Fisher[2]

[1] Co-Design Facilitator, And Also Too
[2] PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, York University

Abstract

Digital games are becoming increasingly common knowledge transfer media. So-called "serious games" or "games for good" have attracted academic, industry, and mainstream attention through the proliferation of conferences, journals, blogs, and online communities. They offer what few other educational resources can in a single medium: interactive, user-led learning experiences based on discovery and experimentation, explorations of complex systems through skill development and decision making, and a personal connection with the content through role-playing (Bogost, 2007; Dahya, 2009; Gee, 2003; Kee & Bachynski, 2009). As digital games move out of the home and into public education, sharing experienced-based insights on how to navigate this new terrain is important and necessary to efficiently create media that is both informative and engaging. This field report reflects on the process of developing the educational game *Food Quest*, from conception to completion, including the challenges, surprises and lessons learned. After detailing the gameplay of *Food Quest*, we provide a chronological report on the design and development process, including origins and exploratory phases of the project, concerns around digital game-based learning, and the unanticipated obstacles that contributed to a lengthy development process. The report also provides preliminary evaluations and recommendations for others interested in create a similar digital resource to spread awareness about food security.

Introduction

Digital games are becoming increasingly common knowledge transfer media. So-called *serious games* or *games for good* have attracted academic, industry, and mainstream attention through a proliferation of conferences, journals, blogs, and online communities. They offer what few other educational resources can in a single medium: interactive, user-led learning experiences based on discovery and experimentation, explorations of complex systems through skill development and decision making, and a personal connection with the content through role-playing (Bogost, 2007; de Castell & Jenson, 2005; Gee, 2003; Kee & Bachynski, 2009). As digital games move out of the home and into public education, sharing experienced-based insights on how to navigate this new terrain is important and necessary to efficiently create media that is both informative and engaging. This field report reflects on the process of developing the educational game, *Food Quest*, from conception to completion—including the challenges, surprises, and lessons learned. It is written from the perspective of two community organizers committed to promoting and increasing awareness of particular social justice issues through digital game design. We believe that understanding the process from this perspective will be valuable to academics considering developing serious games in the context of food education, and as such, storytelling is our primary intention here. First, we briefly contextualize this report within the emerging genre of serious and social justice game design to increase awareness of socio-political issues. We then detail the gameplay of *Food Quest*, followed by a chronological report on the design and development process, including origins and exploratory phases of the project, concerns around digital game-based learning, and the unanticipated obstacles that contributed to a lengthy development process. The report also provides preliminary evaluations and recommendations for others interested in creating a similar digital resource to spread awareness about food security. In particular, we highlight the ongoing challenges pertaining to the perceived educational value of digital games, as well as the legitimacy of game studies as a scholarly field of inquiry.

Increasing awareness with socio-political games

The mechanics of today's socio-political games are more sophisticated than the poorly designed edutainment games of the 1980s or 1990s, where gameplay is decontextualized from learning (Gee, 2003). For example, in the popular 1990s educational games, *Word Rescue* and *Math Rescue*, players jump on enemies and collect coins in a two-dimensional, side-scrolling game world that mimics the gameplay style of the popular Super Mario games from the same era. Players are also required to answer questions that test basic literacy or numeracy skills before they are allowed to progress to the next level. In both *Word Rescue* and *Math Rescue*, the actual gameplay of collecting coins or killing enemies does not assist the player in answering the skill-testing questions, and therefore does not assist in the development of literacy or numeracy skills beyond the usual improvements derived from engaging in non-digitized, rote-learning exercises.

The reverse is also true: correctly answering the questions allows the player to gain access to the next level, but it does not enhance or support the gameplay. Socio-political games, however, are specifically designed to provide a contextualized learning experience, and make use of "persuasive rhetoric"[1] to educate players on a social or political topic, influencing social change through game play (Bogost, 2007; Dahya, 2009). A number of socio-political games have been developed to increase public awareness of serious issues such as war (e.g., *Darfur is Dying*, 2006), poverty in the third world (e.g. *Ayiti: The Cost of Life*, 2006), abuse (e.g., *Replay: Finding Zoe*, 2007), and homelessness (e.g., *Homeless: It's No Game*, 2006).

Over the last decade, a number of researchers and practitioners have brought a participatory angle to serious and socio-political game design (Danielsson & Wiberg, 2006; Khaled & Vasalous, 2014; Lochrie & Coulton, 2011). As a resource collaboratively developed by a hands-on working group comprised of representatives from national and provincial chronic disease and food security organizations, community-based groups as well as academics and government, *Food Quest* was developed according to the principles of iterative,[2] participatory design. Despite the positive impact of socio-political games in terms of increasing awareness of particular social issues (Games for Change, 2009), it was expected that the *Food Quest* working group would experience several challenges related to responsible game design on the extremely serious topics of hunger and food security, given that gaming continues to be perceived as a frivolous element of youth culture.

About *Food Quest*

Food Quest is a browser-based, digital game for Canadian youth aged twelve to eighteen that aims to demonstrate and transfer knowledge about the complex linkages between food insecurity, poverty, and chronic disease. *Food Quest* was funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada and is hosted by Meal Exchange, a national youth-driven organization that seeks to educate and mobilize Canadian youth and communities in alleviating hunger nationwide. A diverse working group guided the development of the resource at all stages. Participants from across Canada, working in government, frontline organizations, and academia, and in both health and food security, represented a diverse set of approaches, priorities, and philosophical

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[1] With regard to the use of serious games for education and social change, Ian Bogost (2007) supports the possibility that gameplay can be persuasive if a game's procedures are designed to express an argument or ideology. Rhetorical arguments can be carried by procedures, described as sequences of information derived from a combination of narrative, graphic design, text, sound and interactive game activities. A game's constraints, the meta-rules guiding the individual game procedures, create the framework in which the player plays. Each procedure then becomes a building block inside an already developed shell, whereby there is structure guiding the flexible and interactive experience of each player. Learning occurs as a result of the player's interaction with a series of activities or tasks, where knowledge and skill are built within the pre-designed framework that can include rules of play, narrative and the visual game space (Bogost, 2007; de Castell & Jenson, 2003; Gee, 2003).

[2] Iterative processes are the norm in game development (see Fullerton, 2008; Schell, 2008).

frameworks. Another team was hired to develop the game and the accompanying Facilitator's Guide. *Food Quest* was developed between 2010 and 2012 and is available to play for free at http://foodquest.ca.

Gameplay

The player can choose from five different character roles representing the range of food security challenges faced by people across Canada. *Food Quest* characters reflect demographics that are most vulnerable to food security issues, based on Canadian community-health survey data as well as ethnographic research (Edge & Howard, 2013). The characters are:

- **Brittany:** 18 years old, living in Vancouver, BC, unemployed
- **Anuk**: 23 years old, living in Iqaluit, NU, steady income
- **Josephine:** 47 years old, living in a First Nations Community in Thunder Bay, ON, on employment insurance
- **Jean-Baptiste:** 78 years old, living in Joliette, QC, on a fixed income
- **Meena**: 38 years old, living in Digby, NS, employed

The player must navigate through their chosen character's "food map" (Fig. 1), a maze that represents their community, to a final destination before they run out of money or energy. Energy depletes with every step but can be replenished by picking up food items, most of which cost money. Money cannot be replenished, so it must be budgeted carefully. There are "healthful foods" that are usually more costly but provide long lasting energy, and "unhealthful foods" that provide short spurts of energy but are less expensive. Food is available from various sources, including restaurants, grocery stores, convenience stores, and hunting and trapping. Some sources, such as food banks and dumpster diving, offer valuable sources of free food for survival.
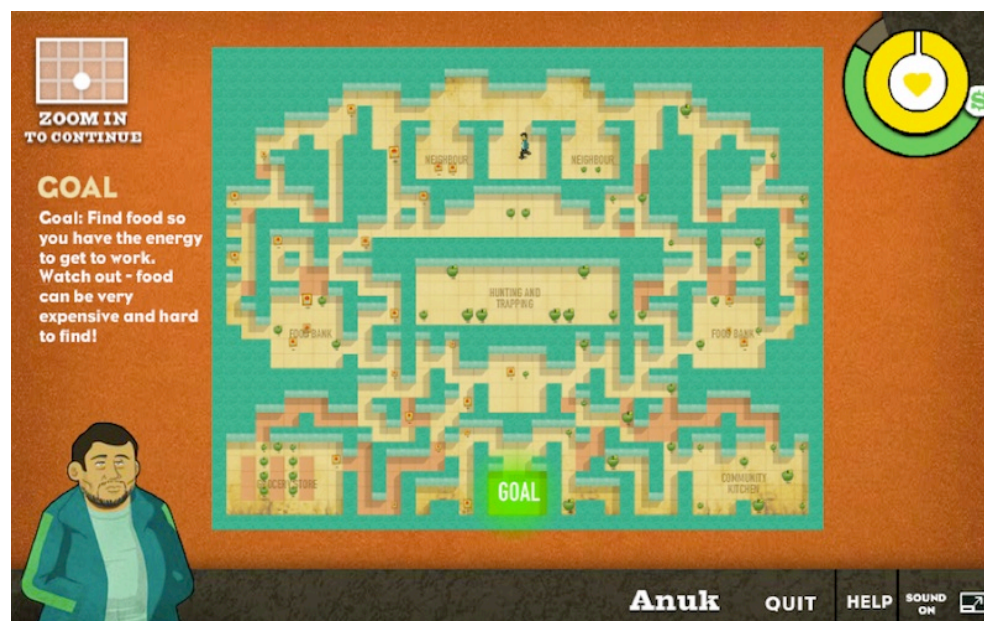

Figure 1

The structure of each maze reflects the accessibility of different foods and food sources to the different characters. Sources with healthful foods tend to be less accessible. On Anuk's map, for instance, hunting and trapping—a significant source of free and healthful food in the north—is surrounded by maze walls without any openings, representing the fact that Anuk cannot afford the required tools and weapons. Some food sources are surrounded by "rough terrain"—spaces that deplete more energy per step. These areas represent the added effort it would take to gain access to those food sources, either because of limited business hours or geographical inaccessibility. Food sources with primarily unhealthful foods such as convenience stores have more maze openings and little rough terrain surrounding them. The game also imposes random and unexpected challenges on the player, adding rough terrain to the map. These represent unexpected life events that can affect one's food security, such as a vehicle breaking down.

        As the player moves through the maze, her character provides additional information and feedback either through dialogue or body language (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).
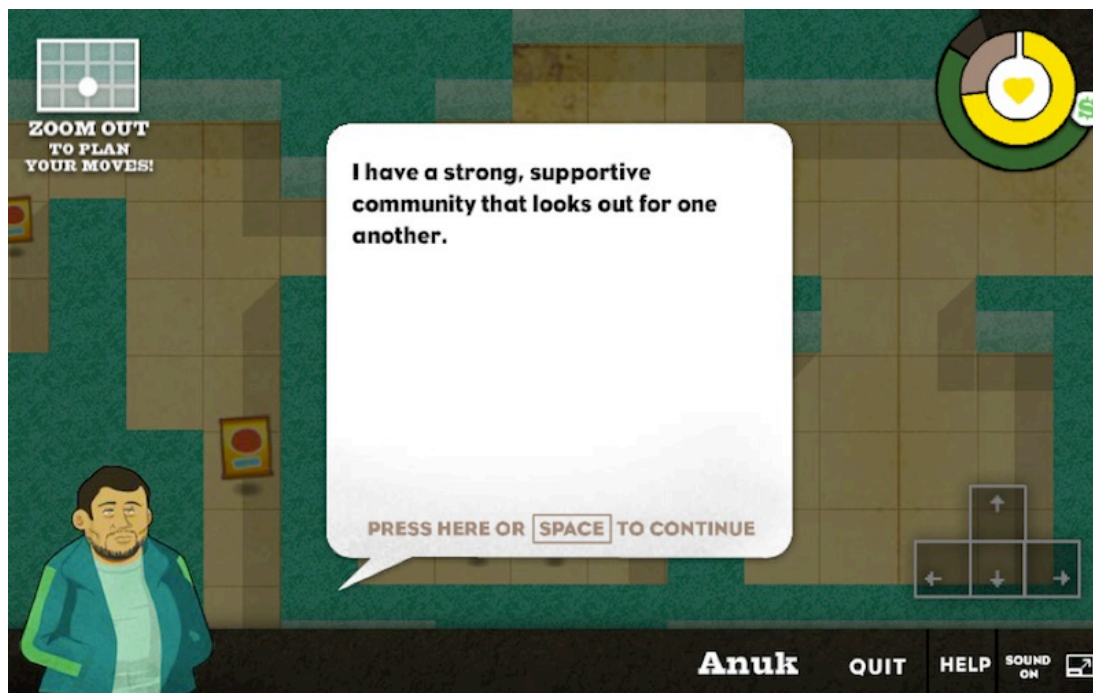

Figure 2

Figure 3

The game ends when the player (a) reaches her destination, (b) runs out of money, or (c) runs out of energy. *Food Quest* then provides an analysis of the player's game. The possible outcomes are:

1. Goal achieved, mostly healthful food consumed
2. Goal achieved, mostly unhealthful food consumed
3. Goal not achieved because budget ran out, mostly healthful food consumed
4. Goal not achieved because energy ran out, mostly healthful food consumed
5. Goal not achieved because budget ran out, mostly unhealthful food consumed
6. Goal not achieved because energy ran out, mostly unhealthful food consumed

The mazes are designed to make it very difficult to reach one's destination on the first attempt. Following the analysis, the game presents the player with the option to replay, but with a game variable altered. Three choices are offered: (a) increasing the amount of money a player begins with, (b) lowering the price of healthful food items, and (c) removing maze walls. All of the choices improve one's chances of being food secure and completing the game. The first two choices represent improvement through economic means, while the third represents other types of improvement, including physical access and greater food acquisition or preparation skills. After the replay ends, the game provides a new analysis based on the player's performance given the altered variable. This replay option is perhaps the most distinctive feature of *Food Quest*.

The game is intended for use in facilitated, face-to-face group settings, such as classrooms and community centres. Having people play in isolation was deemed unsupportive of the game's goals for numerous reasons. Although food insecurity affects people in personal and

individual ways, it is a community issue because it produced by more extensive forces, such as those due to food-system structures and community planning. In addition to raising awareness about the issue, the game was also intended to inspire and assist local food security initiatives; the post-game discussions and ideas that arise in a community setting are more difficult to initiate and facilitate in, for example, an online forum (i.e., the setting in an isolated-play scenario). Finally, any electronic knowledge transfer resource is subject to the limitations of its medium. In the case of a digital game, it is very challenging to expose the player to all the information included in the game, as the player discovers certain types of information through her own gameplay. Facilitated discussion allows players to learn from each other's choices, and to bring their own knowledge and experience of the issues into the conversation. A facilitator's guide is available, so group leaders are not required to be experts in food security or games.

From working group to digital game

Food Quest was one of several "knowledge to action" projects that were generated as part of the *Food Security Knowledge Initiative* (FSKI). Supported by the Public Health Agency of Canada, the purpose of FSKI was to advance action in the area of food insecurity and chronic disease risk while testing and learning about strategies and tools that facilitate effective knowledge exchange. In 2009, as part of FSKI, participants identified the need to raise awareness of the issues related to food insecurity and chronic disease. In particular, they sought to create an interactive and educational communication resource for public audiences that would support knowledge transfer and demonstrate the complex linkages between these interconnected issues as accurately and faithfully as possible, while maintaining audience engagement. Parameters were wide and participating organizations and partners were diverse. Representatives from national and provincial chronic disease and food security organizations, community-based groups, academics, and government representatives participated in a hands-on working group. The initial stages were funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada's Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention.

The creative agency and design studio The Public was hired to guide the funder and working group through an exploratory phase in order to determine what type of interactive resource would be best suited for the content. The Public conducted an extensive survey of existing digital resources in the issue area and made the following observations:

- no resources were found that were specifically focused on or demonstrated the linkages between food insecurity, poverty, and chronic disease
- most resources opted for more individual, rather than community or system-level calls to action, for example encouraging audiences eat more healthfully, buy local foods, and exercise more
- the most prevalent audience was the general public, i.e., people not working in fields related to the issues, such as policymaking, public health, and social services

- of this audience, young people were the key audience, perhaps because of their comfort and familiarity with digital media
- most resources took the form of documentaries and animated videos, i.e., storytelling media with no interactivity
- most resources were serious, dramatic, and ominous in tone

This knowledge of existing resources and the gaps therein helped the group develop the following creative brief:

> **Objective:** To educate and raise awareness of the connections between food security, poverty, and chronic disease in Canada based on the latest research findings from the field.

> **Key Message:** Ensuring access to good food for all is a key strategy for chronic disease prevention and a healthy Canada.

> **Audience:** General public

> **Tone:** Informative, accessible, personal, narrative

The Public also considered the strategic requirements of the resource, which included:

- establishing a personal connection and sense of empathy to the issues
- fostering a sense of concern and discomfort with food insecurity and its connection to poverty and chronic disease
- establishing an understanding of how the issues have an impact on the audience and their communities

With these parameters defined, The Public proposed two options. The first was a grocery shopping simulation game that challenged users to maintain a healthy diet with a limited budget and limited access to nutritious foods. The second was a map of interconnected videos that would invite the user to search for different food security narratives based on geographic, income, and health variables.

The group found both options exciting, and the presentation gave rise to a lively brainstorming session in which the group conceptualized a massive multiplayer online role-playing game that would represent multiple food sources and would incorporate video narratives. However, due to funding constraints and logistical limitations, the project scope was redefined as a one- or two-player game.

Games and knowledge transfer

Although few people in the working group expressed personal interest in or familiarity with digital games, they were excited by the innovative ways in which the medium would meet the objectives of the FSKI. In particular, there was interest in exploring novel ways of transferring research evidence other than through academic publications and reports in order to expand, reach, and catalyze conversations and exchange. The very nature of *Food Quest* as a digital game—still a rather uncommon medium in the public health realm—would attract attention and potentially offer greater reach. Role-playing would allow people who do not have personal experience with food insecurity to gain first-hand, empathetic insight, without being made to feel guilty or lectured to. By representing the issue at a systemic and community level, the player would better understand the complex and often indirect connections between economic status, health, community planning, and food security, through exploration and discovery. Inviting users to play as individuals in a complex system allowed for an in-built balancing of system critique and individual agency. Creating rules that define the food system and a variety of individual conditions would allow for agency within a constrained set of choices.

Despite this, the group had concerns about the connotations of the word *game*, especially since *Food Quest* is less about entertainment than it is about sharing evidenced-based research information with the player. Would producing what is seen largely as an entertainment medium trivialize a very serious and urgent issue? Furthermore, games by definition should be fun to play, yet food insecurity is decidedly not a fun experience. Would a fun experience of food insecurity undermine the game's objective? Digital game-based learning continues to be met with a high degree of skepticism, primarily because play and games are typically positioned as being antithetical or averse to the "serious" task of learning, which is rarely conceptualized as a pleasurable activity (de Castell & Jenson, 2005). To address this discomfort, the group decided to call the resource a *simulation*. The term still referred to interactivity, system design, and role-playing, but had none of the negative connotations of the word game. Curiously, as the process unfolded and the working group became more involved in the design and content, the word game gained favour and simulation fell out of use. The development team's key challenge was honouring the seriousness of the issue while making the game engaging enough for players to want to continue playing.

Although a digital game can house a vast amount of information, a player will only be exposed to content that is directly relevant to their play at that time, potentially leaving a large portion of in-game content unaccessed, and thus not learned. To circumvent these gaps in knowledge transfer, an accompanying Facilitator's Guide was developed. The guide details how to engage *Food Quest* players in post-game follow-up discussions on the issues, and possibly activate people into action. This guide included:

> **How to Play *Food Quest*:** A description of *Food Quest*, instructions for play and a description of the five characters that a player can choose.

Notes for Activities: Step-by-step instructions and materials lists for facilitating four different activities.

Appendices: Resources for facilitators to increase their understanding of food insecurity and chronic disease or to develop a knowledge foundation to comfortably facilitate the topic.

Arriving at a design

In late 2010, the development of the resource itself began. A development team consisting of a producer, game designer, programmer, and musician was hired and managed by The Public. As a first step, the development team and working group thoroughly discussed the proposed game content and features, arriving at the following design criteria:

- the player can choose from several different characters to play, representing people across Canada with food security challenges specific to their location, economic status, and other social determinants
- the player will be required to complete a task, of which the probability of success is determined by their chosen character's abilities and resources
- upon completing the task successfully or unsuccessfully, the player can choose to replay with a selected variable changed that would improve the chance of success
- the game will focus on demonstrated linkages between food security, poverty, and chronic disease

Based on the criteria, the development team conceptualized two game ideas, which were presented in person to the working group in January 2011. The first, called *Grocery Gathering*, was based on the game idea proposed in the strategy phase. The player must purchase one week's worth of groceries within a limited budget, weighing the needs of eating healthfully and satisfying hunger (Fig. 4).

Figure 4

The second idea, called *Food Quest*, offered a more metaphorical approach. It required the player to survive in an abstract world, buying food items on a limited budget (Fig. 5).
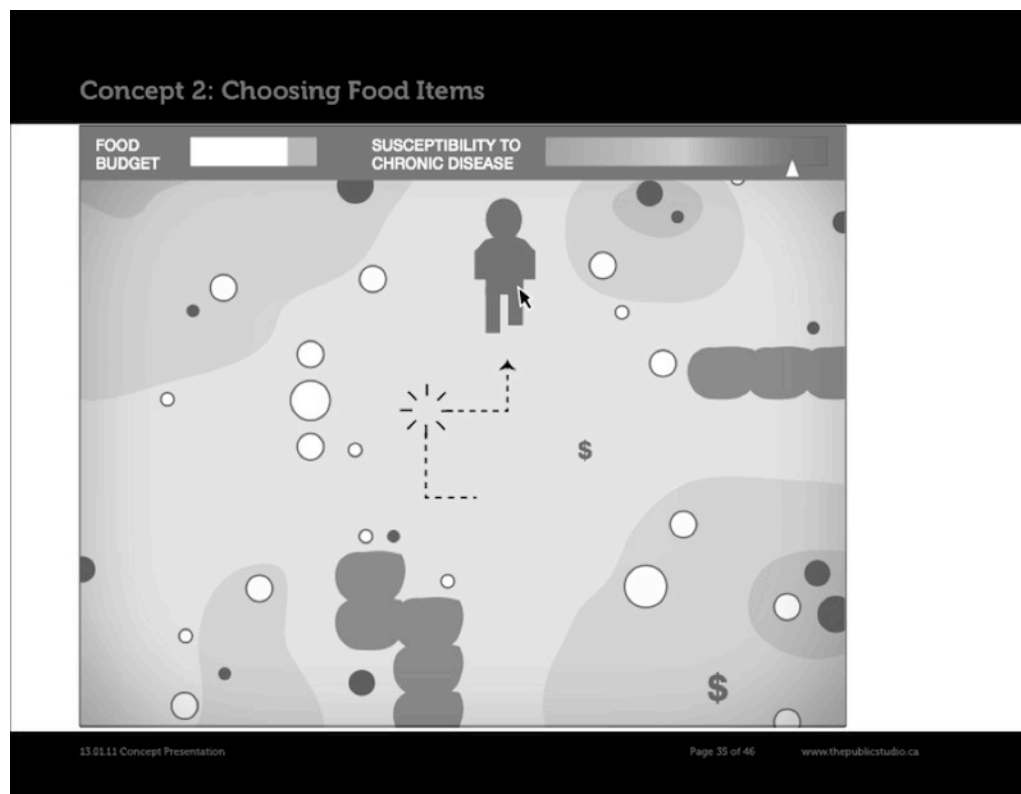

Figure 5

Food Quest was selected over *Grocery Gathering* because of its potential to represent a variety of food sources and a greater sense of player agency. From an engagement perspective, it seemed less overtly didactic and more interesting.

Reflections on the process

Although the development team was well acquainted with the game-making process and had prepared a development plan, the process of creating *Food Quest* was significantly slower, more emergent, collaborative, and iterative than originally intended. With "serious games," the biggest challenge to development is what, initially, appear to be conflicting goals of various team members: the stakeholders' legitimate need to present its messages and learning outcomes correctly, and the developers' desire to make an engaging system or simulation. *Food Quest's* timeline was delayed by the development team's need to understand the content and messages of the game more thoroughly, and for the working group to understand the possibilities and opportunities afforded by working within this medium.

This collaboration is often unique to serious games. With studio-initiated games, the scope of a product like *Food Quest* could range from eight months to two years, depending on the depth or complexity (number of assets, etc.) required. A major difference is the "ramping up" phase of the project, where all stakeholders need to fully understand the content, mission, and language that is required for the digital game to be effective. The timeline was also lengthened because each phase needed to pass through a competitive proposal and procurement process with the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The process consisted of presenting game builds, play-testing among the working group as well as other players, gathering feedback, exploring these new ideas and suggestions, implementing changes and new features, then presenting new builds (Fig. 6).
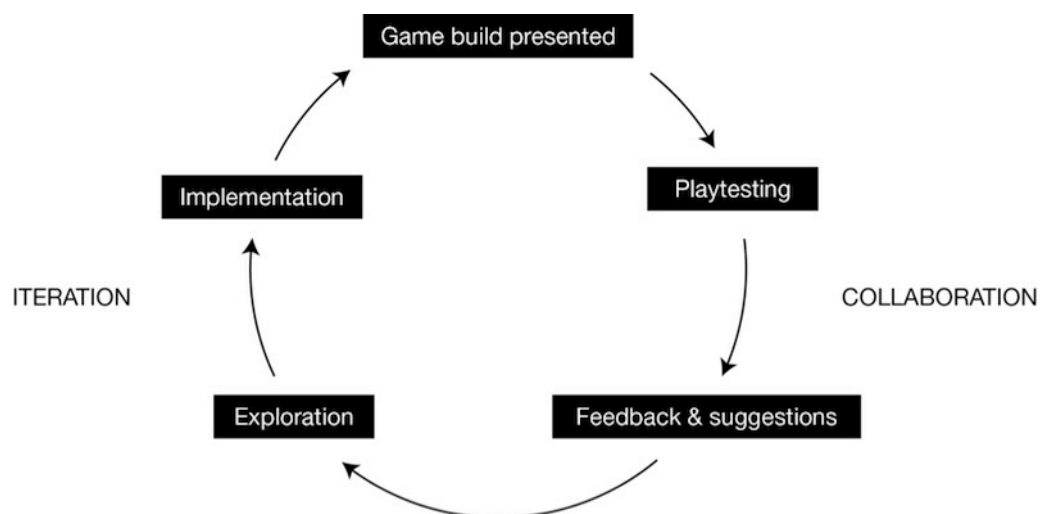

Figure 6

There are numerous explanations for which this iterative process was followed rather than a more linear approach. The working group was facilitated—rather than directed—by a representative of the funder, which contributed to an organic, consensus-based decision-making process and a group culture in which the members were actively engaged and more open to compromise. Attempts were made at each point in the process to incorporate input from all of the working group members and to reconcile, to the extent possible, their diverse philosophies, perspectives, and approaches. In terms of expertise, the distribution of knowledge between the working group and development team meant that discussion and collaboration between the two were integral to appropriately translating knowledge about food security, poverty, and chronic disease into game rules and features that would be both interesting and meaningful. The endeavour itself—creating a game about food security—was new and innovative and thus had potential risks associated with it. This sense, coupled with most of the working group's unfamiliarity with digital games, meant that game features needed to be built and playtested to be understood and evaluated. Interacting with these features through gameplay often resulted in reversing decisions that had been made at earlier stages, giving rise to more builds than initially anticipated.

Development was also delayed in part due to the working group's commitment to accurately represent the complexity of these issues. Game design decisions were intensely and repetitively scrutinized from multiple perspectives to ensure that *Food Quest* was fulfilling its objectives. The discussion around implementing a countdown timer, for instance, demonstrates how the inclusion of a common (and often taken-for-granted) gameplay trope in commercial games can mean something very different in the context of educational or serious game design. Some members felt that a countdown timer added nothing but unnecessary time pressure to an already stressful gameplay experience, while others noted that competitive play might create a more motivating and engaging experience. The final decision was a compromise: a discreet count-up timer that could only be seen if the map was fully zoomed out. Recording the length of time it took for the player to finish the maze enabled a competitive game play experience (players could compare their completion times) without the risk of creating a game that would not be enjoyable to play.

The team was also rigorous in the selection of in-game content, and was careful not to use or organize information in ways that were inaccurate or suggested outcomes that could not be supported by research. For example, how should food items be represented? Should consuming an apple provide the player with the exact amount of energy (in calories) that one would get from eating a real apple? Does representing the food in an abstract way ("healthful" or "unhealthful") oversimplify or misinform the player (i.e., that eating apples is a preventative measure against future health problems)? Issues related to food insecurity and chronic disease are incredibly complex, and with the exception of depression, it is difficult to make a knowledge claim regarding direct links or cause-and-effect relationships between the multiple layers and nuances of these issues. Indeed, it is the ability to show the complexity of these issues that make a digital game more appealing over other formats. A well-designed educational game requires

that meticulous attention be paid to decisions around design and content (e.g., win and lose states, replay conditions, speed of gameplay, character speech, sources and cost of food, etc.), as well as how these elements affect the gameplay experience and the knowledge that is acquired.

In addition to collaborative and attentive nature of the design process, other factors contributed to the extended development time frame. The working group was comprised of experts volunteering their time and participating from different time zones. Because of the commitment to consensus building, it was important that as many people as possible could participate in meetings, conference calls, and email threads. This resulted in gaps between builds to allow sufficient time for all members to provide feedback. Delays were further exacerbated by funding gaps and administrative processes. This longer than anticipated development process contributed to a degree of attrition in the working group membership, which was countered by inviting new members to participate after the launch of the beta version of *Food Quest*. However, because less feedback was required at this stage, engagement waned.

Although it delayed the development timeline of *Food Quest*, this unusual process was beneficial in many ways. Working group members were intimately involved in decisions and tradeoffs that were made in development, which may have assisted in keeping members involved through the multi-year process. The final game reflects multiple perspectives on food security from experts across the country. Without collaboration, the game might have been fun to play but lacking in meaningful content; without iteration and push back from the development team it might have been informative but uninteresting to play. Ultimately, *Food Quest* balances the player's desire for an engaging experience with the working group's goal of transferring knowledge.

Audience

One of the questions that was revisited was "Who is the game's target audience?" The working group initially defined the audience as the general public in the hopes that the resource would reach as many people as possible and reflect the multiplicity of perspectives the group represented. However, the development team struggled with this and was concerned that it would be impossible for the gameplay, difficulty level, artwork, writing, and music to appeal to everyone of all ages. As the game began to take shape, the target audience narrowed significantly. Because games are a relatively new medium, the group agreed that younger people would be more receptive to game-based learning. This was confirmed after testing the game among the working group and volunteer play-testers: although adults found it engaging, youth gained more insight and meaning from the experience. Upon deciding that the game would be presented in a facilitated context, the group identified that its greatest opportunities were in middle schools, secondary schools, and universities. The development team iterated the art style, difficulty, and writing with this in mind.

Preliminary evaluation

Food Quest was field tested in eight locations across Canada during a two-month span from January to March 2012. Field tests were conducted in high schools, on university/college campuses, and in community settings to determine the optimal game environment. Survey methodology was used and the main focus was on the gameplay and usability experience as well as learning outcomes. Although the field testing had a limited timeline and sample size (122 respondents), valuable learnings were gathered. In addition to constructive feedback on improvements related to usability, there was also evidence of self-assessed knowledge gain. The importance of using *FoodQuest* as part of a facilitated experience, as opposed to a stand-alone game, was also confirmed through respondent feedback.

At the time of writing, *Food Quest* is still seeking feedback from players and workshop organizers on how to improve the game and identify potential audiences.[3] Our colleagues reported that during preliminary play-testing sessions, players did gain insight into the interconnections between physical, geographical, economic access to healthy food with food insecurity, chronic disease and poverty, and that the game also showed promise as a facilitated educational experience. When *Food Quest* was presented to attendees of the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada Conference, it had strong appeal and there was significant interest in using the game in chronic disease prevention and public health work. A facilitator involved in the testing phased shared the following positive feedback:

> I think that having a facilitated workshop made playing *Food Quest* more educational. Providing them with the character pages and explaining about the Take Home Facts From the Game gave more depth to their experience. For example, one participant had Brittany, and she kept saying something along the lines of "Will my life ever get better?" That we were able to make links between poor nutrition, and chronic mental illness, and depression, created a learning opportunity.

Based on the acclamations attributed to issue-based games such as *Ayiti: The Cost of Life* (Dahya, 2009) or persuasive educational games such as *Outbreak* (Kee & Bachynski, 2009), it seems that digital games have a promising future and will likely play an integral role in twenty-first-century public education. Although *Food Quest* is not (and cannot be) the most detailed and quantitatively informative resource, it does offer an innovative and engaging way to build awareness and empathetic understanding of the issues. Moreover, it is the only interactive resource available that might appeal to youth—the adults of tomorrow who might be facing or tackling these issues themselves in the future.

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[3] To contribute to this feedback, please go to http://foodquest.ca/index.php/fdback.html

Recommendations

Digital games are a new medium; newer still is their use as educational tools. The making of *Food Quest* was as much a creative process as it was a process of discovery. Based on these experiences, we make the following recommendations to those interested in developing a socio-political game:

1. **Consider whether a game is the most appropriate medium for the content and message.** Games work well for resources that need to demonstrate how a system works and how it can be changed, that aim to foster empathy, and that lend themselves to learning through either winning or losing. Games also encourage and create an active learning experience, which has shown to be more effective for knowledge acquisition. However, games are less able than conventional resources to present a large quantity of content and evidence. Games teach through doing; if the content requires a focus on reading and reflecting, a game might not be the most appropriate medium.

2. **Those working on the content side must be, or become, familiar with games.** A lack of shared gaming vocabulary and unfamiliarity with certain game features and tropes requires additional time for explanation and demonstration. Improving game literacy through playing games as a group and discussing what makes some work better than others can speed up the process. A game development team should facilitate this learning process by assembling and demonstrating a set of games that use the proposed features, as well as games that are both engaging and educational.

3. **Those working on the game development side must be or become familiar with the content.** Translating content and messages into gameplay requires that the developers have an in-depth understanding of the issues. Before the development team begins designing a game, the members should immerse themselves in readings provided by the working group. Having knowledge of the issues allows for more effective communication of ideas between the working group and development team.

4. **Seek uptake opportunities.** Although games are becoming more widely accepted as educational tools, there remains a significant degree of unfamiliarity with the idea of games for learning and their value in knowledge transfer. This can hinder uptake and enthusiasm, thereby limiting the potential reach of the game. Working groups should identify organizations, institutions, and individuals that might be open to using a game and then tailor the game design to those audiences. Alternatively, identifying a specific audience and key settings from the outset (or earlier) may be preferable.

5. **The funder and participants must be prepared for an iterative and non-linear development process.** Game development is essentially a trial-and-error process. A gameplay hypothesis is formulated and can be best tested through building and playing the game. Feedback then modifies that hypothesis, which requires a new build and repeated testing. This trial and error process will be particularly true when the gameplay is relatively unusual, rather than being a remake of a pre-existing game style or genre. A

funding organization that allows for flexible accountability and funding mechanisms, and that explicitly embraces risk-taking as a critical precursor to innovation would be best suited for funding an educational game.

6. **Carefully consider the structure and decision-making process of the working group.** Working groups should be structured to maximize participation and incorporate a multiplicity of food security perspectives. This will make for a more consensus-based, participatory process and a final resource that better represents the complexity of the issues. If the group is made up of people who live in different time zones and work on the project in a volunteer capacity, scheduling calls, gathering feedback, and making decisions may prove time-consuming. For projects that require more rapid development cycles, this needs to be considered. Moreover, while including a diversity of perspectives contributes to the richness of the end product, it may also make achieving consensus and defining a clear and well-honed message more challenging. Pleasing everyone in the group may come at the expense of a diluted mission statement or objective. An in-person briefing meeting and creative presentation may prove productive; teams might also consider meeting more frequently to "jam"[4] on game iterations in real time.

7. **Know the audience and the context.** Although the defined audience and context for a game may shift through the development process, coming to a concrete understanding of both will assist in making design and content decisions.

8. **Know how the audience should be engaged.** Understanding the kind of experience the player should have will help determine what kind of engagement should be engineered. Games may not be intended to be joyful or fun; rather, a team may hope to engage the audience through other means, such as the tension of challenge and suspense. Players may remain engaged throughout a game because it presents a challenge that can be overcome through skill and reasoned decision-making. The challenge itself, in addition to a system of feedback and reward present in most games, will keep the player engaged, even if the game is not typically "fun".

9. **Know that this is new territory.** There is still much to be learned about what makes for an effective social-justice oriented game, and there is no singular formula for a smooth and rapid development pipeline. This means that, compared to older and more conventional educational resources, there is a greater potential for development to run over budget and time, for the resource to be ineffective, and for uptake to be limited. Being aware of and accepting these risks might not prevent failure, but can provide perspective when the process seems frustrating or unfamiliar.

Engaging in participatory processes to inform the design of technology requires a mutual respect for and an understanding of the diverse perspectives and disciplinary cultures of working group

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[4] A game jam is an organized get-together with the intention of creating a game—usually in its entirety, from conception to completion—in a pre-determined, short period of time.

members (Kensing & Blomberg, 1998; Muller et al., 2003). Although scholarly inquiry on digital games is strongly supported here in Canada (see the Canadian Game Studies Association), this was not the case a decade or two ago. Beyond a small (but growing) interdisciplinary community, the legitimacy of Game Studies as an academic field is not as respected its analog media predecessors, (e.g., Film and Television Studies) (Parker, 2013). Indeed, many presentations and publications about non-entertainment uses for digital games still require scholars to include a justification for studying digital games in the first place. This is indicative of how Game Studies continue to be challenged as a legitimate field of scholarly inquiry, which can extend to undervaluing the scholarly expertise surrounding the design of socio-political or serious games with educative potential.

Game designers working with a team of multiple stakeholders can find themselves in a similar situation, in that they may be the ones who nurture these ideas from concept to product, even as their expertise is undervalued during the process or rendered invisible during knowledge dissemination. Designers and developers are encouraged to play with the underlying technical, conceptual, and social systems of their work, and engage in a creative collaborative practice that is central to the new economy (O'Donnell, 2014). An ongoing challenge in serious game development is thus establishing the legitimacy of digital games as a scholarly field and professional practice that simultaneously encourages (a) building on expertise (or expert knowledges), and (b) engaging in boundary-pushing and experimentation in the name of innovation. In short, working in digital games encourages practitioners take risks in design, which may create uncomfortable working conditions for some group members (at least initially).

Conclusion

The goal of this field report was to share, from a practitioner standpoint, the processes, challenges, surprises and lessons learned from the experience of designing and developing the game *Food Quest*. In addition to the recommendations above, this report shares what can happen when like-minded, committed people work together to bring about a shared vision of change; in this case, a Canada in which all people have access to healthful and affordable food. While the innovative nature of educational games is typically at odds with the risk-averse cultures that they are now starting to serve, the benefits are evident. In the words of one member of the working group, "trying something new is a courageous risk—parts of it may work, other parts may not— you need to be able to critique the costs, benefits, successes and failures realistically as you go along. We still have a lot to learn regarding the best use of new technologies."

Acknowledgements

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Field Report

Social economic organizations tackling food insecurity amid a booming economy: The development of the Good Food Junction Cooperative in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Josie Steeves, University of Saskatchewan

Abstract

Food insecurity is a phenomenon found around the world, including in developed countries that enjoy a large portion of the world's wealth. Although the economy of the Canadian province of Saskatchewan is currently booming, a large food desert still exists in one low-income area of the city of Saskatoon. This article examines the response of a social economic organization to this issue where government and private industry have failed to act. Although the creation of the Good Food Junction Cooperative (GFJ) is one step in the right direction, there are still many challenges for this organization to overcome food insecurity in this area of the city.

Keywords: Food security, social economic organizations, food desert, social policy

Introduction

Saskatoon has received national and international attention regarding its booming economy amidst a lackluster world situation. In 2009, CNN declared Saskatchewan a jobs "hot spot" and the Conference Board of Canada predicted Saskatchewan would lead the country in economic growth (Simon, 2009). While this has led to wealth for many, the growing economy has been financially and socially devastating for others. Poverty has proved unrelenting amid this wave of

prosperity, as thousands struggle for the basic human need of affordable and accessible food. Like much of the developing and developed world, Saskatoon has long struggled to find a way to ensure its residents have secure access to healthful food. As with other areas of market failure, Social Economic Organizations (SEOs) have responded (Broad, 2011; Karaphillis et al., 2012). The Good Food Junction Co-operative is one such organization. This article provides an examination of how this organization developed to tackle the issue of food insecurity in a neighbourhood in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Context

The World Health Organization has defined food security as existing "when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life" (World Health Organization, 2015). For a population to be food secure, they must have healthful and culturally acceptable food available to them, the means to have access to sufficient food, and the knowledge to choose and prepare nutritious foods. In 2010, 925 million people were considered undernourished (Food and Agriculture Organization, 2010). This is a global issue (Godfray and Associates, 2010; Koç et al., 1999), with urban food security a growing problem (Mougeot, 1999) in both the developing and developed world.

People living in urban areas are vulnerable to global and local food trends, since they are distanced from food production and rely on commercialized food access. They are limited in their ability to supplement their food supplies with existing agriculture or husbandry infrastructure as those in rural areas may be (Maxwell et al., 2000). The global population is set to reach nine billion by 2050 (United Nations, 2011), with urbanization (United Nations, 2012) and poverty levels rising (Chen & Ravallion, 2007). Further, food prices around the world are increasing due to environmental and resource trends like soil erosion, climate change, and the increasing use of grain to fuel vehicles (Brown, 2009). All of these factors create a worsening situation that has been referred to as "the greatest humanitarian problem of the next century" (Atkinson, 1995, p. 152), with calls for policy makers and researchers to pay increased attention to urban food security issues (Cohen & Garrett, 2010; Crush & Frayne, 2011). Increasingly, SEOs in the international realm are responding to these concerns primarily through promoting urban agriculture (Brown, 2009; Zezza & Tasciotti, 2010) and local food production (Koç et al., 1999).

Food Security in Canada

Although Canada is a prosperous nation in many ways, there are four million Canadians with some level of food insecurity (Tarasuk et al., 2014), with urban residents facing more dire situations than rural areas (Lirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2011). Urban food security issues have largely been left to the social economy to address. Three main responses from SEOs have been identified: the antipoverty approach (including the use and promotion of food banks), sustainable

agriculture (such as farmer's markets and people producing their own food) (Power, 1999), and food markets run by volunteers.

Within Canada, the largest urban food security organization is FoodShare Toronto, a non-profit organization with a vision of "good healthy food for all" (FoodShare, 2015). It runs a number of food education programs, in addition to the Good Food Box (GFB) and Good Food Markets. The GFB was developed as a sustainable solution, and has spread to a number of other communities (Scharf, 1999). GFB delivers local food to specified locations in the city based on advanced orders. The Good Food Markets operate on a similar concept, but offer food in stationary locations around the city at specified times.

Neechie Foods Co-op Ltd., an Aboriginal grocery store in Winnipeg that has been in operation since 1989, offers a different approach. It markets itself as "a community store, based around the principles of an Aboriginal owned and operated worker co-operative" (Neechie Foods Co-op Ltd., 2015). It is run much like a regular co-operative grocery store, but with locally produced and culturally meaningful foods and items.

Food security in Saskatoon

Food deserts have been defined as "areas of relative exclusion where people experience physical and economic barriers to accessing healthy food" (Reisig & Hobbiss, 2000, p. 138). These barriers include a lack of access to transportation and a decline in the number of food retail stores in an area. While some areas of Saskatoon have seen investment and growth, the core neighbourhoods west of downtown have not. They experience higher than average societal problems, including declines in available and accessible housing, high poverty rates, and limited access to nutritious food (Hurd, 2012)—leading to the existence of a food desert in the area (Saskatoon Community Clinic, 2008).

In a study of grocery store geography from 1984—2004 in Saskatoon, researchers found the changes had a much larger negative impact on food security in the core neighbourhoods than in other areas of the city (Peter & McCreary, 2008). By 2004 the number of grocery stores had declined from twelve to five (Peter & McCreary, 2008). Although the core neighbourhoods were retaining convenience stores, confectionaries, and smaller grocery stores, they are a "poor substitute for the vacancy of major grocers which the majority of shoppers use" (p. 95). These changes have resulted in "substantially reduced access to low cost healthy foods for the highest poverty neighbourhoods in Saskatoon" (p. 98). Since this study was completed only one major store, Giant Tiger, has opened in the area, but it does not carry a wide variety of affordable healthy food options (Hurd, 2012).

Measuring poverty is a process that is contentious at best (OECD, 2011; World Bank, 2015). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) classify people as poor when "their equivalised household income is less than half of the median prevailing" (OECD, 2011). This allows for poverty to be measured relative to the local circumstances, but is far from a perfect definition. The median income in Saskatoon in 2010

was $80,570 (Statistics Canada, 2012). According to the OECD, those living in households making less than $40,285 would be considered poor. The average income of families in the core neighbourhoods is less than $20,000, while Aboriginal families—of which there is a high proportion—earn on average $16,000 (Saskatoon Community Clinic, 2008, p. 4). With the lack of affordable food options in accessible locations in the core neighbourhoods, this widespread poverty exacerbates the situation.

Methods

This case study was completed through a document analysis as described by Bowen (2009). Documents are excellent sources of data to examine phenomena that is otherwise difficult to access (Merriam, 2009). Glaser and Strauss (1967) discussed the similarities between fieldwork and library research:

> When someone stands in the library stacks, he is, metaphorically, surrounded by voices begging to be heard. Every book, every magazine article, represents at least one person who is equivalent to the anthropologist's informant or the sociologist's interviewee. In those publications, people converse, announce positions, argue with a range of eloquence, and describe events or scenes in ways entirely comparable to what is seen and heard during fieldwork (p. 163).

This article is based on documentation available in the public domain (primarily through internet sources), reports by the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives (University of Saskatchewan, 2014), and a comprehensive review of the literature. Newsletters, organizational websites, third party reports, and news articles informed this article to provide a well-rounded picture of the GFJ, how it developed, and how it responded to issues of food insecurity in Saskatoon.

Good Food Junction: organizational purpose and history

In 2001 the Community-University Institute for Social Research (CUISR) looked at how people in the core neighbourhoods gained access to healthful food, and found there was little access to food in general, much less healthful food (Johnson, 2012). Conversations surrounding this and other socio-economic issues in the area began in 2003 between two SEOs: Quint Development, a community-run economic development corporation, and Child Hunger and Education Program Good Food Inc. (CHEP), a Saskatoon organization focused on food security issues. These conversations led to the conceptualization of a holistic community service organization, now known as Station 20 West (Hurd, 2012). The fate of Station 20 West and the GFJ were intertwined. Station 20 West was conceived to include spaces for different community

organizations, office space for the University, health services, and a grocery store—the Good Food Junction Co-operative (Hurd, 2012). The literature supports this "bottom-up" approach, where the social economy takes responsibility for community concerns instead of waiting for government or the private sector to respond (Amyot et al., 2012; Thompson & Emmanuel, 2012).

In 2006, the newly formed GFJ Board held a feast and round dance on what was to become the home of the store (GFJ News, 2012). At this point, their vision was a "store that strengthens our community by promoting healthy foods and providing a positive working, learning, and shopping environment" (GFJ News, 2007). GFJ was founded by those who saw a need that could be addressed using a community-based approach, as is the case throughout co-operative history (Bouchard et al., 2006; Fairbairn, 2006). The mission has not changed substantially since that day. Their current objective is to sell good food at competitive prices, maintain a fair and good working environment for employees, sell local when possible, work with other community organizations, and "use a holistic approach to community-based economic and social development" (GFJ, 2015).

Funding

The GFJ has found funding in conjunction with Station 20 West. Government had committed $8 million in funding in 2007 (GFJ News, 2007), but a provincial election saw a new government elected, and funding was withdrawn. Due to the commercial nature of the SEO, many saw it as a private industry, and not appropriate for government to intervene. Businesses saw the government involvement creating an "unlevel playing field for private business" (Diamantopulos & Findlay, 2007, p. 38). As a result, a scaled-down version of the building and the GFJ store was envisioned (GFJ News, 2008a). This meant that the majority of the funding had to be secured through fundraising campaigns and donations. Individuals, families, churches, businesses, and organizations jointly donated millions of dollars for Station 20 West. Fundraising activities were held, including concerts, art auctions, and dances (GFJ News, 2008b). The GFJ also received assistance from the federal Co-operative Development Initiative to hire Ralph Winterhalt as business development manager (GFJ News, 2011). As the owner of several confectionary businesses in Saskatoon, he had been involved as a member of the advisory committee, and later became the Store Manager (GFJ News, 2012). A mortgage was used to fund the remaining amount (GFJ News, 2010). Finally on September 7, 2012, the GFJ opened its doors to the public.

Barriers to the organizational evolution

The process of achieving this goal was not without challenges—outside of the funding difficulties. Station 20 West and the GFJ had a mandate as a holistic organization for community health and engagement. As a result, they were "now expected by government and the community to be able to meet all the needs of the inner-city. It's a catch-22 and perhaps a good example of

the limitations of a community economic development (CED) strategy without complementary access to social enterprise infrastructure" (Hurd, 2012, p. 18). Everyone had high expectations for the initiative, but there existed very little formal government or structural support.

It has also been argued that a lack of technical assistance in the development of the store posed a challenge. Quint did not have the necessary expertise, making the development of the GFJ a difficult task. Staff and volunteers were frustrated by the lack of information and awareness of organizational models and best practices. Lastly, due to some reported negative history with Quint, an Aboriginal group claimed that the Station 20 West initiative, and by extension the GFJ, were not inclusive of their needs (Hurd, 2012).

Despite these barriers, support grew for the initiative due to community consultation and involvement. The GFJ Board worked closely with the Grocery People—a subsidiary of Federated Co-operatives—for assistance in the early phases of development, as co-ops are ineligible for membership in the Federated Co-op until they have been established for a number of years (GFJ News, 2007). There was also support and assistance from similar initiatives in other jurisdictions, such as Neechi Food Co-op Ltd. (Hurd, 2012). Then, in 2008 the Saskatoon Co-operative Association voted to give the GFJ their full support (GFJ News, 2008a). After some serious setbacks dealt by government and a lack of a comprehensive CED strategy for the area, organizers were able to move forward, bringing more community support and assistance into the organization.

Incorporation status

The GFJ was initially incorporated as a for-profit co-operative, a similar operating model to Neechie Food Co-op Ltd. In 2009, Station 20 West applied for charitable status (GFJ News, 2009). By Spring 2011, the GFJ Board recommended a change to non-profit to "clarify intentions to the public and alleviate concerns among those who have difficulty supporting a charitable organization (Station 20 West) that would otherwise have been leasing space to a for-profit store" (GFJ News, 2011). This status as a non-profit organization makes GFJ unique; it is different from other food co-operative model in western Canada who run on a for-profit model. Other approaches SEOs take to food security that differ from the GFJ model include food markets, the GFB, and schemes where groups pre-purchase a share of a farmer's produce at an affordable rate (Christensen & Neil, 2009). Other grocery stores that operate in Canada, like By the Bushel Community Food Co-operative in Peterborough, have limited hours of operation (By The Bushel, 2015). Neechie Food Co-op Ltd. seems to be the most comparable SEO in Canada, but GFJ has an incorporation status adapted to local circumstances.

Organizational characteristics today

Today, the GFJ comprises 4900 square feet of space in Station 20 West (GFJ News, 2010), with three full-time and four part-time employees in addition to the Store Manager (Johnson, 2012). GFJ sells shares in the form of lifetime memberships, but as they are incorporated as a non-profit, there are no dividends to be paid (GFJ News, 2011). Anyone is able to shop in the store. Members are entered into a weekly draw for a fifty dollar gift certificate every time they purchase something at the store (GFJ, 2015b). Members are also asked to make a pledge as to how much they will spend in the store. If they fulfill the pledge, they are entered into draws for prizes (GFJ News, 2012).

Governance model

A Board of Directors is elected at the Annual General Meeting (GFJ News, 2008a). There are also spots for several organizations such as the Saskatchewan Tribal Council and CHEP (Warren, 2012). All who purchase memberships have voting privileges at these annual meetings, and can sit on a variety of committees such as finance, human resources, membership, and wholesaler relations (GFJ News, 2007). The GFJ makes it very well known that this is a SEO that belongs to the community, and encourages people to become involved in its decision making processes.

Organizational challenges

The main challenge is obvious: creating a grocery store that community members will use. Even though this is an organization with a strong social mandate, it still needs to operate in a business-like fashion and recoup costs. Part of this challenge is determining and supplying services the community wants and needs. However, as the store has been scaled down, carrying a multitude of brands and options is a challenge. The community identified national brands as particularly important. The GFJ has potentially developed a solution to this through periodic "warehouse" days where residents can buy specific products in bulk (Hurd, 2012, p. 21). The GFJ has continued to work with residents and research bodies to try to construct an organization that truly reflects the community.

Organizational successes

The main organizational success in the GFJ story has been opening the store and engaging the community as a whole in the process—an important aspect in SEO success (MacPherson & Toye, 2011; Findlay et al., 2011). In the face of significant funding and organizational

challenges, Station 20 West and GFJ were able to rally the community behind them to garner enough support and resources to make the vision a reality: 500 memberships were sold even before the store opened (Warren, 2012). So far, the organization has proven to be successful in their endeavours. However, as the GFJ has been in operation for a short time, it is premature to label it as a complete success.

Conclusion

Ensuring that all people have access to healthful food is a central tenet of a healthy society. Organizations like the GFJ are initiated by communities to fill a food security gap that private industry and the state do not view as a priority. In essence, GFJ is responding to a larger societal problem: the existence of poverty within a sea of wealth. Although it has only been open as a store for a few months, it originates from a project that was years in the making. If the experience of Neechie Foods Coop Ltd. is an indicator of the future, GFJ is set to see a surge of use and calls for expansion (Neechie Food Co-op Ltd., 2015b). Station 20 West and the GFJ are examples of people working together, regardless of ethnicity, gender, political stripe, and religion. They are testament to community strength and perseverance in Saskatoon.

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Book Review

The no-nonsense guide to world food: New edition
Wayne Roberts
New Internationalist Press, 2013: 184 pages

Review by Jenelle Regnier-Davies and Steffanie Scott, University of Waterloo

For many, the world of food is complicated and riddled with confusion and misinformation. The food system has become so globalized and convoluted that it has become difficult for even the most conscientious reader or eater to feel adequately informed. Wayne Roberts' *No-Nonsense Guide to World Food* is a helpful antidote, and an accessible read appropriate for activists, students, or anyone curious about the complex terrain of food politics. This edition of *World Food* is both informal and informative—qualities known in the "No-Nonsense" book series.

Wayne Roberts is a prolific writer, social-media entrepreneur, and policy analyst based in Toronto, Ontario. Roberts has significantly influenced both local and national politics through his work with the Toronto Food Policy Council, and through his board membership with Food Secure Canada. He is known throughout the food community as an advocate for positive change, a cheerleader for civic involvement and innovation, and an actionist, as exemplified through his most recent publication *Food for City Building: A Field Guide for Planners, Actionists & Entrepreneurs*. His writing mirrors his personality, being peppered with positivity and encouragement. In many ways, *World Food* is comparable to a winding conversation with Roberts—one that is woven with personal reflections and a lifetime of learning about the complicated world of food systems and food politics.

The No-Nonsense Guide to World Food is pitched at readers in an era in which food and its "problems" have become part of daily discussion on the international stage. The book was revised and published following the peak of the 2008 global food crises and civil unrest, which were sparked by food shortage and price spikes in an era of food abundance and "cheap food." Roberts argues throughout that food is at the heart of future transformative change, and

illustrates this point in six chapters that outline various conceptual tools that he sees as catalysts for new food revolutions.

In the introduction, Roberts apprises the reader of events and transitions that have occurred since the first edition (published five years earlier), observing that cities have become hubs for food policy change and activism—and that within them, youth have emerged at the forefront of the food movement. In Chapter 1, Roberts challenges the commonplace dichotomous views of food as a "problem" and notions of "good" vs. "bad" foods, and argues that alleged food "problems" are really problems with our food *system* that require systems-based solutions—such as improved systems of governance. A common sentiment throughout the book is that food should not be seen as a source of problems, but as a cause for joy and an opportunity for positive change.

In Chapters 2 through 4, the author briefs readers on transformations associated with the industrialization and supermarketization of the food system, which has become characterized—in North America—by abundance, choice, and convenience. The author assesses the implications of the modernist food system, highlighting environmental degradation, growing rates of chronic disease and obesity, and social polarization globally. However, Roberts does not dwell on these sobering trends of the havoc wreaked by the industrialized global food system. Rather, he reviews these issues as part of a history and baseline for readers, in order to reinforce the message of the need to change the (food) system.

In the last two chapters, Roberts shifts the focus to seeds of change seen around the world, where hegemonic food-system models are being contested. The book offers a series of vignettes from various corners of the globe, to convey how food systems are intricately connected with social, cultural, and ecological processes, rather than merely commercial food supply chains. Here, he argues that there is value in the commons and its ecosystems—including forests, meadows, and oceans—for nutritionally rich, wild food sources that can sustain food security and food sovereignty.

World Food is ideal for anyone who is new to food-system politics, as a primer for understanding many of the issues discussed in both academic and popular literature today. Likewise, this book would also be a useful tool for those who are already actively engaged in food activism, or have studied the issues to some degree, as the historical context is both illuminating and helpful in understanding present day circumstances. This book's greatest strengths are two-fold. First, it makes relatively complicated issues accessible for readers new to the subject. One section that stands out in this regard is Chapter 3, in which Roberts discusses "the real cost of cheap food," explaining how a system that produces cheap food exacerbates hunger and environmental degradation. He addresses the question: is cheap food cheap *despite* being processed, or *because of* being processed? Roberts also demystifies the complicated world of subsidies and "agro-financing"—the interconnections between economic systems and agricultural commodities. Trained as a historian—of all things—Roberts provides a fascinating account of the governance of food and health in World War II when nutrition was a national priority, to support industrial productivity and soldiers on the front lines. But postwar, food fell

under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture, not Health, and foods were increasingly stripped of their nutritional qualities, since the health of the population was not part of the Agriculture ministry's mandate. We also learn the dynamics of how, through industrialization and modernization, home cooks were de-skilled and the food system was de-personalized, as abundance, consumer choice, convenience, and affordability ruled the day. Peri-urban land for market gardens gave way to suburban sprawl, and food became de-localized.

In another section, Roberts explains the difference between the important, and often misinterpreted, concepts "food sovereignty" and "food security." He highlights the histories of their emergence, and distinguishes between them with the statement, "food security is about consumers, not producers" (p. 92). Here Roberts establishes that food sovereignty is deeply embedded in peasant movements of the "global south", while food security largely protects the needs of consumers generally, and does not include food producers within its definition. Though these concepts are arguably slightly simplified, their framing offers a good platform for those new to these terms.

The second key strength of this short and cleverly written book is its upbeat tone, emphasizing the opportunities to turn food system "problems" into triple-win solutions that enhance equity, economic viability, and ecological protection. This book also stands apart from some texts in that it does not encourage individualistic consumer-driven activism—a common critique of Michael Pollan's recent publications. Roberts sees this type of discourse as problematic in that it inhibits real change that should be occurring on the governance, or wider, systemic level. Having said this, we worry that for those who are new to navigating the food system, the title of this book may lead them to expect that it will offer eaters a handbook or guide to make more informed decisions about what they consume. It does not provide this level of decision-making advice, but does open up a much wider view of the many levels of change that are possible, from individual and community-scale, to provincial, national, and global initiatives.

The use of "world food" in this book's title could also mislead some readers. *The No-Nonsense Guide to World Food* is largely framed within a North American context, and refers to the experiences from elsewhere in relation to this global North reference point. The patterns of industrial agriculture—and food system activism—seen in North America were, and are, experienced differently in China, India, or the continent of Africa—some of the world's largest and most populated regions. That said, this book does positively highlight interesting histories, institutional food system innovations, joined up food policy, and social and agroecological movements in Cuba, Honduras, Brazil, South Korea, and beyond. And from a recent discussion with Wayne Roberts, we learned that he anticipates further research and writing to encompass cases from yet more corners of the world in a future edition—but don't let that stop you from buying this one in the meantime!

Jenelle Regnier-Davies is a Community Service Worker at the Centre for Immigrant and Community Services (CICS), where she develops and facilitates food literacy programs. Jenelle

is always busy organizing garden-to-kitchen workshops and community events in Scarborough, where she also co-chairs the Steeles/L'Amoreaux Food Security Committee. Jenelle is currently completing an MA in Geography at the University of Waterloo, where she has been researching household food security in urban China.

Steffanie Scott is in the Department of Geography and Environmental Management at the University of Waterloo, and is engaged in research on sustainable food systems and ecological agriculture in China and Canada. She co-founded a LinkedIn group called "China's Changing Food System," is past president of the Canadian Association for Food Studies, and is past co-chair of the Waterloo Region Food System Roundtable. Recently she has been teaching herself Chinese vegetarian cooking.

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Book Review

Globalization and food sovereignty: Global and local change in the new politics of food

Edited by Peter Andrée, Jeffrey Ayres, Michael J. Bosia, and
Marie-Josée Massicotte
University of Toronto Press, 2014: 392 Pages

Review by Patrick Clark, Chantal Clément, and Amanda DiVito Wilson, Carleton University

"To demand a space of food sovereignty is to demand specific arrangements to govern territory and space" (Patel, 2009, p. 667). However, the further we move into a globalized system of food and agricultural production, the more these specific arrangements come into conflict with current global systems of governance. Andrée et al.'s *Globalization and Food Sovereignty* provides an insightful account of the tensions and complexities of the burgeoning concept of food sovereignty. Its holistic examination of how food sovereignty plays out in both theoretical terms and in practice, in the Global North and South, and at both the local and global levels, serves as one of its greatest strengths. Through a superb set of case studies, it shows how the two themes of food sovereignty and neoliberal globalization interact, manifesting in different ways in different locales and contexts, and at times for different ends. Drawing on contributions from a range of academic disciplines, but directed specifically at political science, this book engages in a theoretically driven analysis of food sovereignty that urges us to take notice of this "new politics of food."

Part I delves into the politics around the term food sovereignty, exploring its various theoretical and discursive debates. Though the section begins by highlighting the benefits and productivity gained by a globalized neoliberal food system, it sets the tone for the rest of the volume in problematizing that very same system. Neoliberalism stands at the forefront of the

work, serving simultaneously as the arena in which food sovereignty movements operate, as well as the source of what they are working against. It is in fact the critical discourse around neoliberalism that has allowed food sovereignty movements to thrive across the globe, whether through adaptation, resistance, or co-optation.

Chapter 1 provides an insightful overview of the tensions and paradoxes inherent to the study of food, setting the stage for the remaining chapters in this section. Menser traces the development of food sovereignty, and along with many of the other authors, creates discursive space for a conception of democracy and sovereignty outside of their usual articulation within a Westphalian state system—what he calls "maximal democracy." Indeed, Menser, MacMahon, Andrée, and Martin all move beyond the traditional boundaries of the state, whether through social networks or market entrepreneurship, to redefine notions of self-determination, participatory democracy, and space.

Zerbe puts forward a study of the global fair trade movement in contrast to the growth of the local food movement. In particular, he argues that alternative food networks, as exemplified here by the fair trade movement, limit their own success through the smaller scale of operation they favour, and also by operating within a very globalized capitalist agri-food system that is not regulated in favor of small-scale producers or agricultural workers. Zerbe's argument—that the transformative potential of these initiatives should not be overemphasized—is a welcome counterpoint to the usual emphasis placed on the small and local scale. Similarly, MacMahon provides an excellent experiential critique of neoliberalism and of the local food movement's limitation in serving as a "movement for change." She stresses the inability of alternative movements to address the underlying struggles caused by the system, not only through their lack of capacity to affect the broader policies affecting them, but also in their clinging to a more individualist and consumer-focused discourse over a more radical agrarian citizenship-based discourse, rooted in food democracy and food justice.

Part I questions the utility of "the state" as an organizing concept and the ability of the market to move beyond a capitalist and consumer-based focus, and—if so—how the state, market, and local food movement can better address the goals of food sovereignty. As expected, delving into the complexities and contradictions within the concept of food sovereignty itself is an exercise that raises more questions than answers.

Part II of the book turns its attention to how the "neoliberalization" of food and agriculture and the responding efforts at food sovereignty are manifested in practice. These processes are presented as contested and embedded rather than overarching and uniform, illustrating how different actors in different spaces "do food sovereignty" (Wright, p. 201) in the face of "actually existing neoliberalism" (Brenner & Theodor, 2002, p. 349). In doing so, the authors are part of a broader shift towards non-linear theorizing, a very welcome step away from the tendency towards deterministic theories of agro-food studies' past (Carolan, 2013). In addition, these chapters take us beyond the material, discussing food sovereignty as both a

practice to pursue social and environmental sustainability and a discourse mobilized to gain power and authority.

Each of the case studies brings a different context and set of actors to the discussion, highlighting the breadth and diversity of ways that food sovereignty claims and strategies have been taken up. Andrée looks at the potential for food sovereignty to be advanced through market-based alternative agriculture in Australia, while Martin and Andrée take a critical look at how NGOs use the discourse of food sovereignty to assert power and authority in areas previously provided for by the state. In this context neoliberalism both enables and constrains food sovereignty efforts. The chapters by Wright and Knezevic widen our gaze outside of the common sites of analysis within the AFN literature to Eastern Europe and the Phillipines, and use a food sovereignty lens to understand the efforts of both farmers and consumers to challenge and circumvent neoliberal agricultural policy.

One recurring theme in this section and throughout the book is the significance of individual action—the degree to which we can understand the individual actions of producer or consumers as part of a broader movement for social change. While Andrée and Knezevic propose that the actions of "citizen-farmers" have the potential to contribute to collective goals, even if they are not described as such, the earlier chapters by Zerbe and Mahon present a less favourable assessment. Again, we are left with diverse possibilities and outcomes rather than one overarching narrative of social change.

Section Three delves into the contentious politics of food sovereignty, exploring how social movements have invoked the concept in their strategies of political and social organization. As evidenced by the case studies of farmers' movements in Vermont and France by Ayers and Bosia, and Massicotte's study of the strategies of the MST in Brazil, these politics are generally presented as forms of "localized resistance" (Ayers & Bosia, p. 319), or "maximal democracy" (Menser, p. 60), struggles for greater control and autonomy in the face of encroaching global processes. While these tendencies reflect the broader "think global act local" rallying cry of the alter-globalization movement, local spaces can hardly ever be considered "sovereign" and this is why it is questionable how effective or significant these acts of "local resistance" are in the face of a global system. As Smythe's chapter demonstrates, action and organizing for change needs to happen concurrently at multiple scales and levels. Smythe focuses on the question of food labeling as one mechanism which—in the vein of Karl Polanyi—can provide some protection from the market and the global corporate food regime. Polanyi (1957, p. 141) reminds us that "laissez-faire was planned" and Smythe's case study of the WTO and Codex demonstrates that the global food regime has also been "planned" by the international institutional arrangements that are limiting national policy space on the issue of food labeling. As Smythe argues, resistance to these arrangements has focused on institutions both national and transnational in scope, not at the local level. McMichael also recognizes this issue in the conclusion of the book, emphasizing that the movement towards greater food sovereignty will require concurrent action and political change at multiple scales including the national level and

the transnational level. While many food sovereignty movements draw their strength from place-based resistance, localized action may be insufficient as the sole driver of systemic change.

Food sovereignty is both a critique of neoliberal globalization and a proposal for alternative food systems outside of corporate agriculture. While many of the cases in this book demonstrate that political demands often revolve around greater autonomy and self-management, the reality is that these movements are not isolated from the national and global forces that underpin the global corporate food regime. This raises the question "what 'sovereignty' is invoked by food sovereignty?" The concept of sovereignty is used as a critique of neoliberal globalization and the loss of sovereignty over food and agriculture, however it is not clear how new sovereignties over food and agriculture are to be constructed, and what they will look like. As Hospes (2014) has argued, while food sovereignty draws on the concept of sovereignty, it refers concurrently to both a Westphalian state-centric conception of sovereignty and a plural conception of sovereignty that is not state-centered. This results in the mobilization of competing notions of sovereignty, a contradiction that is recognized and explored but not necessarily resolved by the authors in this volume. This lack of conceptual clarity may be, as Hospes suggests, part of the process of bridging divergent notions of sovereignty in new ways.

This volume showcases the richness of initiatives and forms of resistance laying claim to the concept of food sovereignty. However, the desire to make food sovereignty an inclusionary term, uniting a number of social movements' struggles around food, can be as much a weakness as a strength. Much like the growing discourse around "governance" or "sustainability," as food sovereignty plays out in the diversity of the case studies and issues surveyed here, we face an increasing diversity of definitions of the term. As Minnery (2007) writes on governance, terms seeking to encompass everything run the risk of meaning nothing. What unites food sovereignty movements is that they have grown up in opposition to the global corporate food regime described by McMichael (2005), but this does not mean that these disparate movements have the same kind of politics or even advocate for the same alternatives to the current system. It is hard to imagine that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and MASIPAG coalition of farmers in the Philippines, both promoters of the idea of food sovereignty, would in practice find themselves on the same side of many agricultural issues—hence the dangers of stretching the concept of food sovereignty too far.

McMichael references the "elasticity" (p. 345) of the concept of food sovereignty in the book's conclusions, and while we agree with an understanding that acknowledges the multiple—and sometimes divergent—ways that food sovereignty can be understood, this must be balanced against some sort of basic unity of principles rooted in actual practices and empirical realities. This "elasticity" can be a danger and it may be necessary for movements analyzed in this volume—some of which are affiliated with La Via Campesina—to be more upfront about the heterogeneity of perspectives, interests, and practices amongst their members. From this flows the question of actual strategies to achieve greater food sovereignty by unifying this diversity through action for change. Overall, while it leaves us with a breadth of new perspectives,

Globalization and Food Sovereignty inevitably also leaves us—both as academics and practitioners—with the glaring acknowledgement of the task we have at hand in facing the growing crises of our current global food regime, as well as with more fundamental questions about the concept of food sovereignty itself.

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Patrick Clark is a PhD candidate in Political Science at Carleton University and a researcher at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) in Quito, Ecuador. He is currently writing his doctoral dissertation, which examines the institutionalization of food sovereignty in Ecuador.

Chantal Clément is PhD candidate in Political Science at Carleton University. Her current doctoral research compares municipal-level governance mechanisms to support the transition to sustainable food systems in Canada and the EU.

Amanda DiVito Wilson is a PhD candidate in Sociology at Carleton University. Her research explores how post-capitalist possibilities are reconciled with the day-to-day negotiations of earning a living in food-based livelihoods.

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Book Review

Seasonal workers in Mediterranean agriculture:
The social costs of eating fresh
Edited by Jörg Gertel and Sarah Ruth Sippel
Earthscan from Routledge, 2014: 294 pages

Review by Anelyse Weiler, University of Toronto

One of the most common justifications for maintaining low-paid, precarious conditions for farm workers is that while farmers are being squeezed by globalized competition, economic turmoil and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns, labour remains one of the few costs they can control. This lends a Thatcherian logic of "no alternative" to the expanding complexes of seasonal labour migration, which mobilize workers from economically marginalized regions of the world to orchards, fields, and greenhouses in wealthier nations. *Seasonal Workers in Mediterranean Agriculture* compellingly portrays how migrants bear the harshest costs of procuring year-round fresh fruits and vegetables for a privileged few. While giving voice to the social inequality that fuels the dominant agri-food system, the authors aim to show how the stretching of growing seasons and national borders has made room for new forms of insecurity and profitability.

The meticulously documented historical, ethnographic, and quantitative case studies of this twenty-chapter edited volume are organized into three regional sections, encompassing France, Spain, and Morocco. In turn, these countries are linked to migrant-sending regions elsewhere in North Africa as well as Latin America and Eastern Europe. Comparative and conceptual chapters woven throughout provide coherency to a text that, at times, narrowly avoids being weighed down by its breadth of empirical content. An editorial pruning or merging a few slightly repetitive contextual chapters might have rendered the book more affordable for those on a student budget. Nonetheless, a streamlined writing style and structure from cover to cover

makes for fluid prose. This is all the more remarkable considering the text was translated across multiple disciplines and languages.

Written mainly for academic audiences, *Seasonal Workers* offers an innovative contribution to food studies literature by integrating analyses of global agri-food systems with geographies of labour migration. Scholars concerned with gendered and racialized labour markets, precarious migration, environmental justice, and the economic geography of food retail and trade will all find valuable insights in the text. Canadian readers will likely note striking parallels between descriptions of circular labour migration schemes in the Mediterranean and agricultural streams of Canada's Temporary Foreign Worker Program.

Throughout the book, the overarching themes of "flexicurity" and "flexiprofity" provide helpful conceptual bridges between broad-level discussions of political economy on the one hand, and workers' embodied accounts of navigating intense exploitation on the other. The volatile conditions associated with flexicurity create a workforce prepared to adapt to high levels of risk, often mobilizing all of their personal resources to achieve a temporary modicum of security. Flexiprofity for employers arises within the same neoliberal context of ruptured social bonds and uncertainty; it involves an attempt to secure short-term profits by offloading costs to others. One of the key arguments the book advances is that amidst "sea of plastic" greenhouses that symbolize the Mediterranean's agricultural intensification and global integration, the stability of farmers' livelihoods has becoming increasingly dependent on the low negotiating power of seasonal workers.

Notwithstanding their social justice analysis, the authors avoid facilely victimizing workers or vilifying employers. Instead, they detail how complex social relations and class differentiations in seasonal farm labour have unfolded through histories of economic hardships, including the legacy of colonialism in Morocco and the loss of traditional livelihoods in both migrant sending and receiving countries. This approach is particularly evocative in several chapters that explore how social constructions of gender have become institutionalized in farm labour migration. As Sippel and Nieto illustrate in Chapters 15 and 16, the almost exclusively feminized workforce in Moroccan export-oriented strawberry production draws heavily on cultural and gender stereotypes. Moroccan women are constructed as "ideal workers" based on their supposed patience and ability to handle crops more delicately. However, these qualities are portrayed as natural, taken-for-granted traits rather than indispensable skills that warrant commensurate remuneration. As argued throughout the book, discourses depicting seasonal workers as unskilled and individually replaceable ensure a supply of low-cost, flexible workers. In examining how such a compliant, relatively captive migrant workforce is achieved in Spanish strawberry monocultures, Hellio (Chapter 12) unpacks country-of-origin labour contracts that require Moroccan employees to be married women with young children, with an application co-signed by their husband. In effect, the gender regime established by Spanish employers and Moroccan recruiters is seen as "one of the most effective control mechanisms of the worker's mobility" (p. 149). Noting that some Moroccan women now time their pregnancies around

circular migration contracts, Hellio follows the trajectory of agricultural restructuring across shifting borders and pervading intimate spheres of family life.

When addressing the relationship between capital and state, the text provides a shrewd evaluation of how the state-market nexus occasionally nods to migrants' rights while negotiating profit accumulation and xenophobic discourses. In Chapter 19, Lewis considers New Zealand's Recognized Seasonal Employer scheme as an example of a small, tightly regulated labour migration program that can generate mutual benefits and rights for workers, albeit while entrenching new forms of socio-spatial inequality. The tone of Lewis's approach to seasonal labour regulation in New Zealand contrasts with that of Lindner and Kathmann (Chapter 10). They stress how state-supported seasonal worker programs in Spain and the EU at large bind workers to a single employer and prevent migrants' social integration. From their perspective, "the formalization of labour mobility within Europe is associated with a legalization that does not correspond to increased rights" (p. 121).

By closely tracing the strategies migrants and their families draw upon in pursuing migration projects, the authors underscore the mutability between formal migration and "tolerated" undocumented migration in Mediterranean agri-food regimes. These regimes provide some scope for migrants to seek a better life. As the book demonstrates, however, they simultaneously ensure seasonal workers—along with affected ecosystems—shoulder the brunt of harms arising from fresh food production. These include physical exposure to agro-chemicals and difficult working conditions, social and familial isolation, and the emotional costs of accepting an uncertain, subordinate status.

While the book sets out to explore the drivers of perishable food production and the social costs of "eating fresh," one of its main shortfalls is a lack of attention paid to the consumption side of the equation. If we accept the widely touted proposition that shifting toward diets of unprocessed, plant-based foods can help to resolve global crises of human health and climate change, where do farm workers fit in this win-win algebra? In addition, I would like to have seen further nuance around descriptions of "industrial" agriculture as the fundamental site of rising inequality for seasonal workers. As discussed in the cases of Bouches-du-Rhône, France and Almería, Spain, relatively small, family-managed farms play a role in the demand for flexible labour. That these farms may draw on either traditional production methods or highly intensive technologies challenges the standard normative framing of "good" family farms and "bad" industrial agriculture, suggesting a more complicated hybrid.

On the whole, however, *Seasonal Workers in Mediterranean Agriculture* presents an extremely well researched and troubling tale about the human and ecological costs of contemporary fresh fruit and vegetable provisioning. It contributes to critically under-explored conversations about how sweeping economic and social changes in our food system have often hinged on developing new ways to commodify the most marginalized members of society.

Anelyse Weiler is a PhD student in the University of Toronto's Department of Sociology, a Trudeau Scholar, and an affiliate with the Global Labour Research Centre at York University.

Her research explores the relationships between sustainable food movements, migration, and farm workers in Canada. More broadly, her community-based scholarly and advocacy work focuses on food sovereignty and health equity.

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Book Review

Alternative agrifood movements: Patterns of convergence and divergence

Edited by Douglas H. Constance, Marie–Christine Renard, and
Marta G. Rivera–Ferre
Research In Rural Sociology and Development, Volume 21
Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2014: 331 pages

Review by Theresa Schumilas, Wilfrid Laurier University

For almost two decades, a considerable scholarship has interrogated the rapid expansion and the "alternativeness" of alternative agri-food networks (AAFNs) and movements using multiple disciplinary perspectives.[1] The recently published *Alternative Agrifood Movements: Patterns of Convergence and Divergence*, edited by Douglas Constance, Marie-Christine Renard, and Marta Rivera-Ferre, offers a strong overview of this scholarship and draws into conversation case studies and examples from countries in the global North and South.

The book is the outcome of a mini-conference sponsored by Research Committee 40: Sociology of Agriculture and Food of the International Sociological Association, held in Lisbon, Portugal in 2012, coupled with a series of invited papers. In thirteen chapters, the book examines the ways in which patterns of convergence and divergence are evidenced in AAFNs. The book's strength is that it draws into conversation examples and case studies from both the global North and South, and thus offers a collection of diverse perspectives and examples. However, knitting this diversity together in a cohesive package poses a challenge. The conceptual and theoretical

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[1] See Goodman, DuPuis & Goodman, 2012; *International Planning Studies* 4(3), 1999; *Sociologia Ruralis* 40 (2 & 4), 2000, 41(1), 2001, 42 (4), 2002; *Journal of Rural Studies* 19(1), 2003; *Environment and Planning A* 35 (3), 2003; *British Food Journal* 105 (8), 2003; *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food* 19 (3), 2012.

threads chosen by the editors to draw conclusions across the chapters seem limited next to the diversity of the case studies themselves.

The book opens by asking a provocative question: to what degree can AAFNs be understood as the "the agrifood wing of the 'movement of movements'" (p 30). The chapters that follow lay out a variety of perspectives in response, offering many more equally engaging questions. Anyone new to this scholarship would find the book's introduction to be a useful overview. The introduction is furthered by two chapters that consider different ways of framing AAFNs and their potential for social change. Patricia Allen highlights how alternative food movements are converging around social justice goals and discourses of racism, classism, and sexism, but diverging around visions and practices for achieving these goals. This message is amplified in the chapter by Marie-Christine Renard, who draws on concepts of standards and public-private space to also suggest a convergence of values, but a divergence in practices and performances.

Four chapters that draw on examples of food sovereignty movements in the global South follow this conceptual framing. Annette Desmarais, Marta Rivera-Ferre, and Beatriz Gasco explore La Via Campesina's challenges with alliance building and convergence among like-minded AAFNs focusing on social justice. Building on these themes, Debora Lerrer and Leonilde Servolo de Mederios describe how the Landless Workers Movement in Brazil has moved from a struggle for land to a critique of the dominant agricultural model, converging in common political construction with La Via Campesina. The focus on the emancipatory question and social justice continues with Peter Rosset and Maria Martinez-Torres describing convergence of social movements through their construction of collective processes and dialogues about different ways of knowing. Indeed, bringing these examples drawn from the global South into discussions of global North AAFNs represents a welcomed milestone in alternative food scholarship. However, I find these chapters to present relatively homogeneous examples. Supplementing these with more diverse global South case studies (from East and South-East Asia for example) would illustrate the disparate and contradictory ways in which food-related resistance is understood and practiced, and thus complicate the offered conclusions about convergence.

In the final section of the book, scholars interrogate themes of convergence and divergence using a variety of AAFN examples from the global North. Michael Long and Douglas Murray suggest a convergence of individual market choices and collective action in their analysis of the motivations behind organic, fair trade, locally grown, and animal-friendly labels in the US. Phil Mount, Shelley Hazen, Shawna Holmes, Evan Fraser, Anthony Winson, Irenea Knezevic, Erin Nelson, Lisa Ohberg, Peter Andrée, and Karen Landman explore local food initiatives in Ontario. Detailing a highly variegated terrain, they argue that despite diverging motivations, rationales, organizational forms, and trajectories, these local food initiatives are converging around ideals, barriers, and opportunities. Continuing to challenge a binary view of convergence or divergence, the chapter by Jason Konefal, Maki Hatanaka, and Douglas Constance—as well as the chapter by Bernhard Freyer and Jim Bingen—observe both these processes underway

simultaneously in their studies of sustainability and organic standards in the US, and underscore the hope of democratic process in the examples they cite. In efforts to help us further understand these converging and diverging elements, Patrick Mooney, Keiko Tanaka, and Gabriele Ciciurkaite question what is meant by "convergence" and bring some fresh thinking to questions of emancipation and transformation processes in AAFNs and movements. Using the example of Food Policy Councils in North America, they suggest a convergence around a democratic master frame and new forms of citizenship, and offer that the alternativeness of AAFNs might lie in the ways in which they incubate new and potentially oppositional practices.

The case studies examined in this book are diverse and the chapters reveal the complexities in convergence and divergence processes in food movements in both the global North and the global South. However, while the authors of the book's chapters embrace nuance, multiplicity, and relationality in their consideration of disparate cases, the book's editors seem to overgeneralize in the conclusions they draw, and tie the chapters into binary thinking about the global North and global South. Whereas the chapters speak to the politics of the possible (Harris, 2009), the conclusion closes off such opportunities. In a somewhat artificial delineation between "progressive" and "radical" trajectories, Marta Rivera-Ferre, Douglas Constance, and Marie-Christine Renard summarize that the chapters reveal a common class consciousness in the movements in the global South and reformist market-based approaches in the global North. The conclusion seems overly celebratory of food sovereignty movements in the global South and overly pessimistic of alternative food movements of the global North. It feels like a neat and tidy conclusion for a set of rather messy case studies. I would rather leave it messy and unwrapped, and keep struggling with its contents, instead of forcing such a definitive conclusion. Indeed market-based approaches are not limited to the global North, and "civil society/political approaches" are not limited to the global South. Global North AAFNs are engaged with food justice and transformative change (Alkon et al., 2013), and the food sovereignty movement in the global South faces serious theoretical and practical questions about its relationship to global markets (Agarwal, 2014; Edelman, 2014).

Indeed, reading the chapters for diversity, not dominance, reveals remarkably reflexive processes in all the cases discussed. The examples shared from the global North and global South alike, illustrate how alternative food protagonists are committed to listening with open minds, strengthening capacities, respecting different views, infusing flexibility into processes, challenging themselves to incorporate gender, race, and class perspectives and working collectively to address power structures. If—as the editors suggest—a goal is to find ways for the transformative approach they attach to food justice movements originating in the global South to infuse the neoliberalized context of the global North, without being co-opted or conventionalized, then creating camps is not very helpful. It strikes me as a rather stark binary to portray protagonists of AAFNs in the global North as defending ideas of the market while movement participants in the global South are defending their lives and livelihoods. Such a portrayal does little to help these movements build alliances, learn from each other, and jointly resist neoliberal capitalist relations.

In conclusion, the introduction to this volume offers a concise overview of the history and state of AAFN scholarship, making it a great early read for newcomers to the field. Drawing together experiences of global South food justice movements and global North alternative food movements is welcomed and a critical foundation to an engaged scholarship that can help unite food movements. I hope we can expand such comparisons. However, the book's conclusion seems to iron out the wrinkles and messiness with sweeping generalizations, thereby eclipsing possibilities.

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Theresa Schumilas holds a SSHRC postdoctoral fellowship at Wilfrid Laurier University, and is an organic CSA and flower farmer outside of Waterloo. Introducing the term "digital food activism," her research explores the world of Canada's food "hackers," "crackers," "slackers," and "snackers." Her doctoral dissertation examined the economic, ecological, interpersonal and political dimensions of nascent alternative food networks (AFNs) in China. Before returning to academia, Theresa directed food-related health policy research for the Region Municipality of Waterloo.

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