
Graduate Journal *of* Food Studies

*a peer-reviewed journal
on food studies
by graduate students*



Graduate Journal of Food Studies

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Cover: Eliza Murphy, **Cabbage**, 2015

American STUDIES



Graduate Association
for Food Studies

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I hate food puns.

Food studies scholarship is full of them: Scholarly debates become “food fights,” underprivileged people struggle for “a place at the table,” and historical eccentrics’ ideas are always “half-baked.” You can’t read an article or attend a conference without considering a “cornucopia” of evidence or getting down to the “marrow” of an argument. And don’t get me started on “food for thought,” a phrase that sounds charming but is actually quite vague—are we thinking of a local steak, or a bag of cheesy puffs?

My annoyance is not merely an editor’s pet peeve; I love wordplay as much as the next recovering English major. But I worry that these puns come to us easily—too easily—when we’re talking about food. They slip right off the tongue (or keyboard), making our discipline seem clever, approachable, and more “fun” than other academic pursuits.

Food studies should *not* be easy. Let me make a plea for a little more seriousness in a world where too many people dismiss our discipline and, for that matter, many others as a luxury. We are researching no less than the stuff of life. We have to find new words to do it. Let’s study taste, pleasure, and heritage but also scarcity, cruelty, and oppression. Let’s take food seriously and encourage the world to do the same. And for goodness’ sake, let’s do it without puns.

This issue of the *Journal* takes up the difficult and often dark side of food studies. Three articles explore contemporary food challenges, in which food systems obscure the origins of food, economic pressures necessitate cheap meals, and choices between “industrial” and “local” are not as simple as they seem. Siobhan Watters’s “The Spectacular Origins of the EU Horse Meat Scandal” takes the 2013 discovery of contaminated meat products as a case study for theorizing policy, advertising, and consumerism in industrial food systems. In “Margarine for Butter: Budget Cooking in America,” Ashley Higgs examines the ways in which budget cookbooks of the past six decades have offered tips for cooking affordable meals but also striven to preserve the dignity of those who must economize on food. The final article, Richard Richards’s “Alternative Food Systems: Expectations and Reality,” argues that it is impossible to draw a firm boundary between industrial and alternative food systems. This issue’s artworks also investigate a more serious side of food studies, as Eliza Murphy’s meat landscape paintings capture the blood and beauty of making animals into meat. Taken together, these works suggest that food studies as a discipline is turning towards urgent questions of ethics, accessibility, and sustainability.

The dark side of food studies is one of many themes that the Graduate Association for Food Studies will reflect on at its first conference this fall at Harvard University. This graduate conference, entitled “The Future of Food Studies,” will appraise the choices facing an increasingly institutionalized discipline and survey the new subjects, methods, and theories that will reshape the study of food in the coming years. The editorial board of the *Journal* looks forward to publishing selected proceedings of this conference in a future issue.

Finally, in the spirit of seriousness, I want to offer supreme gratitude to everyone who put time and energy into this issue: our contributors, editors, and reviewers. A special note of thanks to our editorial board members, all of whom achieved one or more of the following milestones during the making of this issue: completed masters degrees, passed qualifying exams, or were accepted to PhD programs. It’s a privilege to work with such a brilliant and dedicated team.

And remember, no puns.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Carla Cevasco", followed by a long horizontal flourish line.

Liz Bada is a masters student in gastronomy at Boston University. She holds a BA in anthropology from Temple University, where she graduated with distinction. Her research interests center around American foodways. She has a particular interest in mid-20th century American cookbooks, and her current research is on the evolution of *The Joy of Cooking*. She has also worked as a cheesemonger for nearly a decade.

Kimi Ceridon received a Master of Liberal Arts in Gastronomy from Boston University in May 2015. She is currently employed by the Trustees as the Kitchen Program Coordinator for the Boston Public Market. She focuses on culinary arts, food policy, food access, and sustainability. Kimi also holds a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Emily Contois is currently a PhD student in American Studies at Brown University. From trophy kitchens to Vegemite, women who eat Activia yogurt to men who diet, her research explores food, eating, health, and the body in the everyday American experience and popular culture. Emily holds a BA in Letters from the University of Oklahoma, an MPH focused in Public Health Nutrition from the University of California, Berkeley, and an MLA in Gastronomy from Boston University. She blogs at EMILYCONTOIS.COM and tweets @EMILYCONTOIS.

Ashley Higgs is a masters candidate in gastronomy at Boston University and holds a BS in Biology from the University of Oklahoma (2013). Her research interests lie in food insecurity and the human right to food both nationally and internationally, with a focus on the social, political, and economic atmospheres at the root cause of hunger.

John C. Jones is a doctoral candidate in the joint Urban Systems Program hosted by Rutgers University and the New Jersey Institute of Technology. John's research interests include post-industrial cities, food system politics, urban agriculture, and urban inequality. His dissertation will examine local food system development as an economic development and

a public health promotion tool in post-industrial cities. He holds a BA in Political Science and an MPA from the University of Dayton. John has taught courses on public administration, political science, and food policy. He currently serves on the review board for the *Graduate Journal of Food Studies*.

Ariel Knoebel is completing her masters degree in Gastronomy at Boston University. Her current research focuses on craft food and traditional food provisioning methods. She is also interested in gender and domestic work and the effects of capitalism on the modern household.

Gurpinder Lalli holds a lectureship at the University of Wolverhampton, teaching Education Studies within the Institute of Education. Prior to this, he taught in further education colleges for eight years. Previous roles have included working as a visiting lecturer at Coventry, De Montfort, and Worcester Universities, teaching Education Studies, Sociology, and English for Academic Purposes. He is a fellow of the Higher Education Academy. He earned his first degree at Coventry in Sociology and Social Policy, with an MA focused on Social and Cultural Theory gained at Staffordshire University. For his PhD research, he carried out an ethnographic case study on the impact of food on learning at the University of Leicester.

Jessica Loyer has a background in history and anthropology with a focus on foodways and migration and an interest in the intersection of food, health, and values. She is currently a PhD candidate in Food Studies at the University of Adelaide, working on a project researching the significance of superfoods as both a health food trend and as global agricultural products. She can be found on Twitter @jessloyer.

Emma McDonell is a doctoral student in Indiana University's Anthropology Department and Food Studies Program. She is currently working on a dissertation project examining the ways quinoa producers in the Peruvian highlands negotiate changing quinoa production and consumption practices in the context of a boom/bust cycle and increasing

climate uncertainty. More broadly, she is interested in the politics of indigenous recognition and authenticity in traditional food revitalization projects, global food networks, and sensory memory. Email her at EKMCDONE@INDIANA.EDU, and find her on Twitter [@EMMcDONELL](https://twitter.com/EMMcDONELL).

Robert McKeown has worked in all aspects of the design, media, and food/travel industries. He served as editor-at-large and Asia correspondent for *Gourmet*, *Wallpaper**, *Travel+Leisure*, *DestinAsian*, and *Gourmet Traveller*. He has won numerous awards, including a nomination as World's Best Food Journalist. In the world of hospitality, he's helped develop concepts for chefs like Jean-Georges Vongerichten and Neil Perry; hotels like The Fullerton Bay (Singapore) and Hotel Muse (Bangkok); and Hong Kong brasserie and craft cocktail bar Lily + BLOOM. His research has been presented in forums like the Oxford Food Symposium and the World Summit for Peace through Tourism.

Eliza Murphy is a student of the land. A painter and farmer raised in Massachusetts, Eliza has a BA in Studio Art from Wellesley College. A lifelong lover of prunes, Eliza lives in northern California.

Richard Richards is a masters candidate in Food Systems at the University of Vermont. Before applying to graduate school, Richard worked

on organic vegetable farms in his native Italy and rural Virginia. He is interested in alternative food systems and their potential to improve communities' economic, social, and environmental sustainability.

Anett K. Toth is an masters student in the Sociology and Social Anthropology program at the Central European University, Budapest. Her research interests include science and technology studies, development studies, the anthropology, sociology and politics of food and nutrition, and the relationships between knowledge and power. She conducted ethnographic research on the articulation of Kurdish identity in various culinary spaces of Budapest. Currently she is working on her thesis examining multilateral nutritional interventions in Nepal.

Siobhan Watters is a doctoral student in Communication at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada. Taking an interdisciplinary approach to food, Siobhan uses Marx's value theory, phenomenology, and media archaeology to reframe food from a decidedly nonrepresentational point of view. While food is rarely seen as a communicative object itself, Siobhan explores how the matter we call food serves as a medium for capitalist value and how matter-as-food has been shaped and penetrated by the capitalist imperatives of acceleration and efficiency.



Pig Head | 2015
by Eliza Murphy

Eliza Murphy is a student of the land. A painter and farmer raised in Massachusetts, Eliza has a BA in Studio Art from Wellesley College. A life long lover of prunes, Eliza lives in northern California.

I am fascinated by the dynamic nature of farming and have found that working with plants sustains me in an expansive way which lends itself to paint. In these works I consider how we relate to land when we eat. I choose an agricultural lens to study this, focusing on how we grow food and how the land reacts to these plans we impose on it. My own history and current work in farming leads me to expand on aspects of caring for soil and the mark farming makes. I look to the physical alteration of landscape from tilling, grazing, growing crops, as well as the food itself; meat and plant. I aim to illuminate the processes that provide for food, the richness of soil, the geology and backbones that topsoil rests on. Within the act of growing of food, I look at the balance of care, attention and urgency that the work fosters. With treatment of material in my art I contrast the visceral experience of the food with the landscape and memory that is implicit in that landscape.

In the paintings, I look at my understanding of raising meat as well as the study of a cabbage. While working and living on a ranch on the northern coast of California, I have been able to examine the process of tending animals and raising meat. In some of the works, I consider food as object, and create a context for it that suggests the complex system that allows me to consider it in this way. I look to invoke the memory that land holds, sometimes in the look of it, but also in the fruit that it bears. I study this through plant material. By understanding how this food is produced, I can also speak to the food traditions that stem from working with such a landscape, what specific foods it allows.

The Spectacular Origins of the EU Horse Meat Scandal

abstract | *This article discusses the implications of the 2013 EU horse meat scandal, not only for consumers, but all actors in the food supply chain, including governments and retailers. Nearly 200 beef products sold in the EU were found to contain horse meat, but the scale of the supply chain made investigating the source of the adulteration extremely challenging. Moreover, the proportions in which meat is produced allowed the horse meat to mingle with beef unnoticed—only DNA testing could sort one being from the other. To analyze this case of mistaken identity, I use Guy Debord’s theory of the spectacle, as it provides a useful conceptual framework for discussing how appearances mediate various levels of commodity circulation and consumption. The article also draws on Marx’s value theory, for concepts such as the commodity and exchange–value form the basis of Debord’s theses on the spectacle. I conclude that the spectacle of packaging, price, and the supply chain leaves us prone to risks far more fatal than any concern the horse meat scandal posed to European beef-eaters.*

keywords | *spectacle, horse meat scandal, Debord, supply chain, commodity*

INTRODUCTION We are currently faced with a scale of industrial food production that has reached inhuman proportions. Even our mediated forms of oversight (e.g., quality control, food inspection, sensor technologies) cannot fully capture all the movements of inputs and outputs across the globe. The 2013 horse meat scandal in Europe made this very clear. Nearly 200 beef products sold in the EU were found to contain horse meat, but the scale of the supply chain—its extension in space and the dizzying number of suppliers—made investigating the source of the contamination extremely challenging. The proportions (a phenomenological term I will give greater attention to later) in which meat is produced—disassembled and ground up, distributed, and reassembled from thousands of animals—allowed the horse meat to mingle with beef unnoticed. Only DNA testing could sort one being from the other. Using Marx’s value theory and Guy Debord’s theory of the spectacle, this article focuses on (1) the food commodity and its packaging, arguing that these are less about informing the consumer and more about producing spectacle; and (2) the opacity of the supply chain in terms of its scale and the source of the horse meat contamination, arguing that this opacity adds to the spectacular nature of commodities and obscures the potential dangers of mass-produced and distributed foods.

Debord’s theory of the spectacle uses Marx’s value theory as its point of departure, particularly the value-form, which is the form in which the abstract substance *value* must appear. The spectacle is a “theoretical extension of [value] beyond those forms that Marx outlined: accidental,

expanded, general, and money,”¹ money being the most concrete form of value’s appearance. Value is otherwise imperceptible and, without a form, nonexistent. The spectacle, according to Debord, “is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image.”² It is a visible affirmation of the invisible world of value, typically associated with film, advertising, and packaging.

Though spectacle belongs to the realm of sight, its reach goes much further. That is why the horse meat scandal is striking: it allows us to see a rift in the spectacular veil of commodity production but also to acknowledge how its effects extend to the body, effects that may begin on one side of the globe and increase in magnitude as they are distributed through the supply chain and to our bodies. One of the first considerations when news of the adulteration reached government officials was whether it was an issue of fraud alone or a risk to human health as well. In this instance, it was judged that it was an example of food crime and that only the sensibilities of the public had been offended. But there is yet a darker lining to this story: If something so seemingly substantial as horse flesh can mix imperceptibly with beef flesh and be distributed unobserved and untested across the EU, then one can only imagine what other invisibles could pass through the supply chain and into our bodies unnoticed.

The argument of this article proceeds as follows: I first provide a timeline and description of the events surrounding the discovery of the horse meat adulteration. Following this, I introduce the concept of the spectacle and explain why it is such an apt tool for understanding

the scandal. I then break down the spectacular elements of commodity production that contributed to the scandal, analyzing in particular the role that food packaging, price (arguably, a form of packaging), and the supply chain played in creating the conditions for this single instance of food adulteration and its far-reaching consequences. While the spectacular nature of the commodity form is central to Debord's theory, I argue that the role the spectacle plays in today's food supply chain goes largely unrecognized, creating a blind spot with dangerous consequences. As I subsequently argue, the spectacle of packaging, price, and the supply chain leaves us prone to risks far more fatal than any concern the horse meat adulteration posed to European beef-eaters.³

THE SCANDAL The scandal dates back to January 2013, when food inspectors in Ireland discovered horse meat in frozen beef burgers being sold in Irish and British supermarkets. At that time, of twenty-seven tested products, ten were found to contain horse meat.⁴ In early February, a report was made to the European Commission that the British company and frozen food brand Findus UK had also been selling adulterated beef products, this time frozen beef lasagna supplied by the French company Comigel. Tests of the Comigel product showed it to contain 80-100 percent horse meat.⁵ The UK, Ireland, France, and Romania were named often in the scandal, but a long list of countries also reported findings of adulterated beef in the weeks following the initial discovery, including Sweden, Poland, Italy, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Austria, and more.⁶

Initially, 7,259 tests were carried out across the twenty-seven member states of the EU.⁷ While horse meat is not considered harmful to human health, the antibiotic phenylbutazone, with which horses are sometimes treated, is. Of the number of tests described, 4,144 tested for the presence of horse meat, and 3,115 tested for the presence of phenylbutazone, also known as 'bute.' 193 products tested positive for horse meat DNA. Put another way, 4.66% of beef products on the EU market were found to contain more than trace amounts of horse DNA (that is, above 1%). Sixteen products showed positive traces of bute, but at a rate of less than 1 percent, which is considered to be below the threshold of what is harmful to humans.⁸ A further 7,951 tests were carried out in a second round of testing, which produced another 110 positive tests for horse meat DNA.⁹ Overall, "the horse-for-beef switch affected more than 4.5 million processed products representing at least 1,000 tons of food."¹⁰

Originally targeted as the main culprit of the adulteration, the French company Comigel said the horse meat came from the French supplier Spanghero, which has since been investigated on charges of aggravated fraud and mislabeling of food products, culminating in the arrest of eight managers in September 2013.¹¹ Prior to these arrests, Spanghero maintained that the Romanian suppliers of its beef meat had committed fraud, but the consensus is that Spanghero received horse meat, relabeled it, and shipped it out as beef. French authorities allege that Spanghero knowingly sold approximately 750 tons of horse meat as beef over a period of six months.¹² In another instance, Spanghero is also said to have banned mechanically separated mutton on its premises, because it had a greater chance of containing bone fragments, which heighten the risk of the transmission of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, also known as mad cow disease, a source of previous anxiety in Europe.¹³

Overall, the scandal was considered a crisis of consumer confidence. In a report commissioned by the UK government in response to the scandal, the author Chris Elliott argued that greater attention needs to be paid to the opaque and distributed nature of the supply chain and its proneness to incidences of 'food crime.'¹⁴ Indeed, Elliott insists further that a food crime unit be established, as the horse meat scandal only revealed what is already a trend in food adulteration in the EU and around the world. A 2014 article in *The Guardian* stated that one-third of food products fail authenticity testing to some degree, meaning that they are mislabeled, contain unintended ingredients, or were purposively adulterated.¹⁵ This is a concern not only for risk of food-borne illness or contamination but for those with cultural or dietary restrictions. In the early days of the horse meat scandal, reports emerged from a UK prison that Muslim prisoners had been served halal meals that tested positive for pork DNA.¹⁶ Following that, reports were made about pork-contaminated halal sausages served as part of a London school lunch program. A similar labyrinthine investigation and circuit of finger-pointing followed on these discoveries. Unlike the horse meat scandal, however, the halal meat scares were considered an issue of human error. Of the initial twenty-seven tests when news first broke of horse meat contamination, far more products tested positive for pig DNA: twenty-three total. When it came to the pig meat contamination, the reaction of the chief executive of the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) lacked the horror associated with the horse meat contamination. Beef and pig meat may be processed in the same facilities, and thus, there was an implication that such

accidents are bound to and clearly *do* happen.¹⁷ Horse meat was an anomaly only because it is not typically produced for food in the UK and Ireland, and so there is no plausible way for it to make its way accidentally into the supply chain.

The scandal epitomizes the post-war food regime, which is marked by high-input, outsourced, industrial agriculture and an emphasis on cheap produce.¹⁸ This “Food from Nowhere” tends to obscure the exploitative labour relations, geographic scale, and questionable processing techniques complicit in low-cost production.¹⁹ More recently, food scares, a distrust of science, and so-called crises relating to obesity and malnutrition have culminated in the emergence of the subsequently termed “Food from Somewhere” regime.²⁰ This is typified by EU labeling standards and represented in the mainstream by authors such as Michael Pollen, Eric Schlosser, and documentaries like *Food, Inc.* Nevertheless, even in the EU, where food regulation is considered to be strongest, Food from Nowhere reared its ugly, equine head in the horse meat scandal. Indeed, the high-input, low cost paradigm revealed itself to be operating at full strength despite the latest efforts of supermarkets to stock Foods from Somewhere and, particularly in the UK, foods sourced in Britain, which in an import-heavy economy is near impossible to achieve. In a way, Food from Somewhere needs Food from Nowhere to exist: These contradictory regimes shape and stabilize one another.²¹

Despite increasing consumer skepticism around processed meat, Larissa Drescher et al. show that “convenience in food production has been clearly identified as important to consumers” and consequently that processed foods “are the fastest growing category of agricultural trade.”²² Moreover, using a national survey of 9,000 Canadian households, Drescher et al. show that levels of consumer trust in processed meat, whether they be low or high, do not ultimately affect overall purchasing decisions, which are determined more by socioeconomic factors such as income, work schedule, and education.²³ Indeed, while British butchers saw fresh meat sales increase in the immediate aftermath of the scandal, consistent with Drescher et al.’s findings, consumers started to return to their previous purchasing habits only months after, as had been the case following the BSE outbreak in Britain.²⁴ For, as one British butcher stated so succinctly, consumers “are only interested in price,” and from this author’s point of view, consumers constrained by the wage relation are given little other choice.²⁵

Reports produced in the wake of the scandal that debated labeling regulations in the EU suggest that

consumers want their products marked with origin labeling but that such desires do not factor into their purchasing decisions.²⁶ Is there a discrepancy here between consumer desire and behavior or simply an inability to pursue that desire in dollar terms? After all, the costs of increasing transparency and tracking in the supply chain either fall on producers or consumers.²⁷ When the European Commission published a report on improving pork commodity labeling, it was reported that “on average in the EU27 about 12% of the extra costs for labeling [would be] transmitted to the producers, while about 88% of the extra costs [would be] transmitted to the consumer.”²⁸ For poultry commodity labeling, consumers were projected to bear 91% of the costs of labeling.²⁹ Notably, in the year following the scandal, it would appear that consumers voted with their wallets, purchasing less red meat in volume than they had in years previous to the scandal, a 3% decline.³⁰ However, as retailers endeavored to make good on their promises to source meat from local farms, consumers were clearly bearing the cost of heightened regulation. The volume of beef purchased in 2013 may have dropped, but British consumers were paying more per pound (an average of 7% more), showing that price played as big a role as provenance, if not bigger, in determining consumer behavior.³¹

THE SPECTACLE Thesis 1 of *The Society of the Spectacle* is a detournement of the opening to Marx’s *Capital*, vol.

1. It reads: “The whole life of those societies in which modern conditions of production prevail presents itself as an immense accumulation of spectacles. All that once was directly lived has become mere representation.”³² Debord takes Marx’s description of the commodity and extends it to the images that draw us further into the commodity fetish, valorizing the process of exchange and presenting it as the means by which we may attain everything we lack. The commodity fetish is a supersensuous relationship among all commodities which obscures the concrete reality of their production, and which is an effect of the alienation of humans from the products of their labor and further exacerbated by the global division of labor.³³ A logical development of the commodity fetish, the spectacle becomes that which unifies the alienated and divided subject through appearance as well as participates in the virtual collapse of distances that mark our global food supply chain. Debord states further in Thesis 3 that “the spectacle appears at once as society itself, as a part of society and as a means of unification.”³⁴ What events like the horse meat scandal do is reveal the divisions that underlie global commodity production, i.e. the spatially dispersed

points of production that together contributed to the fraudulent labeling of horse meat as beef, not to mention the divided nature of the mechanically separated meat that was adulterated. The packaging of, for example, Tesco's frozen spaghetti bolognese (Figure 1) belied the composite nature of its contents—assembled from numberless beef carcasses, but presenting images of the whole, unified animal on its surface.



FIGURE 1. Packages of Tesco's Everyday Value spaghetti bolognese were found to contain up to 100% horse meat. PHOTO: *The Guardian* (UK)

The event also undermines any sense of a unified and manageable supply chain the EU or governing bodies like it may idealize.³⁵ Consider the supply chain and its opacity in terms of Paul Virilio's concept of arrival:³⁶ The commodity is produced at such distances, and across such divides, that it moves without the knowledge of man and merely has the effect of "arriving" at market. The sense of departure, or in this case origin, is lost. This immanent state of arrival glosses over the many divisions and departures that characterize capitalist food production.

The spectacle can quickly suture what events like the horse meat scandal reveal to be partial and separate, and indeed, Tesco responded to the scandal with a new ad campaign, called "Love Every Mouthful" (Figure 2). With this campaign, Tesco moved away from its former emphasis on price to a more spectacular meditation on the sensuous qualities of food, as well as provenance, that is, the location of a commodity's production and the history of ownership associated with its movement through various stages of production and distribution. Previous to the scandal, Tesco was accused by the anti-poverty group War on Want of "having a disturbing ignorance of its own supply chain."³⁷ Since this accusation proved to be true, and because the horse meat in Tesco products was touted as a foreign invasion, it is no surprise that the new campaign placed

more emphasis on produce of British provenance. In effect, "Love Every Mouthful" is an attempt to show consumers that Tesco has control over its supply chain—"every farmer, every picker, every baker" as one of its ads claims—as well as being a total deflection away from the frozen, low-price food that was the focus of the scandal.

Let us consider further the role the spectacle arguably played in the scandal. After all, Debord states that the spectacle is a form of packaging for the commodity, a general gloss that hides the rationality of the system. I will consider this rationality from two points of view: (1) packaging and price, which is also to say value in Marx's sense of the word, and (2) the supply chain.



FIGURE 2. Tesco introduced its new "Love Every Mouthful" campaign in July 2013.

PACKAGING AND PRICE Debord's Thesis 15 stands out as an apt starting point for a discussion of packaging:

As the indispensable packaging for things produced as they are now produced, as a general gloss on the rationality of the system, and as the advanced economic sector directly responsible for the manufacture of an ever-growing mass of image-objects, the spectacle is the chief product of present-day society.³⁸

Here, Debord states that the spectacle is the packaging for our impoverished life under capital; it is also a description of the spectacular nature of commodity packaging itself, especially the very opaque paper and plastic packaging of convenience foods, like the frozen foods predominately impacted by the horse meat adulteration. The spectacle is the negation of life, according to Debord, as the packaging of a food commodity likewise negates the contents of the package that are considered too

banal or are too opaque to communicate as well as negating the circumstance of its production.³⁹ More importantly, it glosses over the rationality of the system of food production, which is no longer about feeding people (and other animals) but about profit. The capitalist is indifferent to what shape a commodity takes, that is, its use-value or concrete form; the use-value is seen merely as a container for value. The capitalist as food producer may be indifferent to the nutritional content or wholesomeness of a food commodity, so long as it is preserved in transit and remains unspoiled until the time of its sale.

The purpose of packaging is to protect and preserve a commodity, and to communicate. Historically, packaging's communicative purpose was proprietary, that is, displaying the brand or the name of the product's maker, and intended to establish provenance.⁴⁰ With the rise of the self-service store, packaging was supposed to be a "silent salesman" and, in today's retail environment, accelerate the rate of purchase.⁴¹ "The packaging design ... articulates the brand's promise" and—in language that points to the unifying nature of spectacular packaging—"fuses" with the product "in the mind of the consumer;" I would add that price is a part of this spectacular unity.⁴² Increasingly, the image-object becomes the thing desired, the package rather than the contents. In the hierarchy of information on a product's packaging, brand and imagery take precedence over nutritional labeling, which is almost always located on sides of a package not immediately visible to the consumer. The FDA, for instance, only mandates that the brand, name of the food, and net quantity of a product be included on the principal display panel (the forward-facing side of a product).⁴³

Both the package and contents of a commodity are the bodies in which value appears, its value-form. Price, too, is the consumer-facing image of value, or, in Marx's words "the money-name of the quantity of social labor objectified in [the commodity]."⁴⁴ Price, more than packaging, creates the illusion of intrinsic value in commodities but is itself a form of packaging and an agent of the spectacle. Price is the relation the consumer bears to a product, and it obscures the true relations objectified in the natural body or concrete form of the product. During the moment of exchange we can only perceive the sensuous object, that is, the commodity's use-value, though packaging makes this more difficult. Due to the commodity fetish, we mistake value in its price-form (\$5.99 for a frozen pizza) as intrinsic to the use-value, that is, as an indicator of the product's material worth. Value, however, does not issue from a commodity's natural, physical form. It rather comes into being through the act of

exchange when two commodities are brought into relation with one another.

Value, according to Marx, is a social and abstract phenomenon. The price of a commodity is projected on a concrete, physical object but is determined by circumstances wholly unrelated to the particular use-value or the conditions of its manufacture. Just as there can be a total divorce between what is communicated on the package of a commodity and its contents, so too can the price of a commodity misrepresent the true human and material expense of the commodities we are confronted with. As I will discuss with reference to the supply chain, price is also what appears to the middleman choosing between meat commodities when he can realize more profit by substituting horse meat for beef. By considering price before all else, the middleman demonstrates how the commodity's "sublime objectivity as a value differs from its stiff and starchy existence as a body."⁴⁵ The objectivity of value supersedes any consideration of the ontological-physiological difference of these substances, their provenance, or regulatory consequences, let alone any ethical relationship between the myriad individuals implicated in each product. The use-value or "concrete labor becomes the form or manifestation of its opposite, abstract social labor."⁴⁶ This is one of the contradictions of the commodity: to be both qualitative and quantitative, or concrete and abstract in nature, with those natures being divided and utterly disassociated.⁴⁷

We can discuss what role price may have played in the horse meat scandal, and to do so, we must turn to the retailers who increasingly set the price on food products. It has long been acknowledged that retailers have grown increasingly powerful compared to their counterparts in the manufacturing and distribution sectors.⁴⁸ Retailers, such as Tesco in the UK and WalMart worldwide, know that consumers in general, and low-income consumers in particular, respond to low prices. Minimum-wage workers have little choice but to purchase low-priced items because their income or work schedules undercut their ability to buy and prepare whole, nutritious foods.⁴⁹ One must also consider the promotion of ready-made convenience food, which can be turned over rapidly as a commodity and consumed quickly, but which is also nutrient-deprived due to the processes used to make the product shelf-stable. In the case of foods like these, capitalist reproduction takes precedence over metabolic reproduction. For 90 percent of Americans, processed prepackaged foods have become the foremost option for meals inside the home.⁵⁰ The popularity, necessity, or tragedy of our relationship to these foods can

be understood as an aspect of the deskilling that pervades both the spheres of production and consumption.⁵¹

Retailers also have the power to conceive of a price they wish to offer their customers and demand the cost efficiencies required to produce that cheap a product from their partners in manufacturing and supply. As Marx puts it, a product's character as a value, or in this case, its value in price-form, is often already "taken into consideration during production."⁵² For example, the second-largest grocery retailer in the United Kingdom, Asda, was able to work with the supplier Northern Foods to produce a one-pound frozen pizza—fifty pence cheaper than the lowest priced frozen pizza retailing at the time.⁵³ This venture was successful. In his report on the scandal, Elliott also learned of an instance in the United Kingdom where a company asked a supplier to produce a thirty-pence 'gourmet' burger, requiring the use of low-grade meat to achieve such a low unit cost.⁵⁴ The supplier declined to provide the product under those conditions, but one can imagine that others may rise to the occasion. This may create a situation for suppliers where they seek out lower prices for the inputs to their food products that ultimately have nefarious origins, as was the case with the horse meat scandal. The optics of price is relevant in the sphere of production, as well. As Elliott suggests, a lower price for prepacked, minced beef could indicate that its journey to market may have included unsanctioned suppliers or even adulteration, such as when meat categorized as fit only for animal feed is packaged for human consumption.⁵⁵

Tesco and other companies' cost-cutting measures and price focus are not performed out of concern for their low-income customers. In reality, these companies pursue a low-cost item that can be produced en masse, so as to realize profit quickly and repeatedly. Debord says that the spectacle is the "omnipresent affirmation of the choice already made in production."⁵⁶ The consumer does not make purchasing decisions in a vacuum and, in the case of food purchases, has less agency than the appearance of sprawling heterogeneity on store shelves implies, especially as relates to the constituent ingredients of those products (which, in the case of the brand-differentiated adulterated beef products, were of the very same origin; more on this below). Alf Hornborg states that, due to the inherent biases of global IT and the global distribution of technical infrastructure, we have seen "the pivotal evaluative moment shifted from the local to the global level," and this applies aptly to the food supply chain.⁵⁷ Decision-making power does not lie at the individual level, despite the long-held assumption that consumer demand structures the

market. The choice, today, often lies with retailers, with manufacturers and suppliers left scrambling to fulfill the retailer's desire.⁵⁸ Let us briefly consider one such example of how global industrial agriculture interests supersedes individual consumer agency and comes to inform what we may think is our personal choice. Here, I refer to that ubiquitous substance, corn.

When advancements in agricultural techniques resulted in record yields of corn in the mid-twentieth century, corn became, and remains, a near-universal commodity for production.⁵⁹ It is a commodity crop, like wheat or soybeans, overproduced to provide a cheap input for several sectors of industry. Corn is ubiquitous in the marketplace and production because it is particularly convenient for multiplying the points of exchange as a substrate for value, that is, as various commodities.⁶⁰ Not only is corn a product for direct human consumption, it has also become a prolific source of feed in industrial meat production; serves as a filler and preservative for processed food products; and is more and more produced for biofuels. When we are advertised "grain-fed" beef (or chicken, and now fish), we are presented with an attribute of current food products as if it is a virtue in itself. Corn feed was imposed on animals that do not naturally digest the substance in order to produce mass amounts of meat commodities.⁶¹ It is one of countless examples of tastes we are led to believe we have formed on our own when, really, we are responding to a new, value-adding technique of which we were not conscious.⁶²

Choice at the level of the consumer is often only a choice between brands and products made with very similar ingredients and processes. Whether or not these foods are worth buying is up to the consumer, and companies can righteously point to their packaging as laying everything out in facts and figures for the eye to see. Of course, the focus of this paper is what is *not* seen on the package. The responsibility of choosing lies with the consumer, who is only given a choice of spectacles (commodities), rather than producers having to bear the responsibility of producing unadulterated, healthy, safe, and transparent products. Wynonah Hauter's *Foodopoly* describes the voluntary labeling systems American companies have adopted to circumvent stricter policies being imposed on them by the Food and Drug Administration.⁶³ Nutrition professor Dr. Marion Nestle called these voluntary labeling programs an effort to "preempt the FDA's front-of-packaging food-labeling initiatives that might make food companies reveal more about the 'negatives' in processed foods."⁶⁴ Packages become busy with weights and measures of

constituent ingredients, but without any context as to how nutritional or harmful those contents are. Consistent with the spectacle, these positive attestations to a product's contents negate any quality of its production that might deter the customer from purchasing it.

THE SUPPLY CHAIN “Proportions are the limit of Being”: There is a phenomenological, perceptual relationship to the way we define categories of being.⁶⁵ From the imperceptibly large to the imperceptibly small, the proportion of an object determines its status as a being among other beings.⁶⁶ Food objects also need to be of a certain “proportion” to be manageable by the human hand and mouth, and so the cow as category gives way to “beef,” and then to “steak” or “ground” or whatever more individual a portion is desired by the consumer or, as I have emphasized, the producers and retailers.⁶⁷ The proportions imposed upon a food object mediate between the thing that it was and the thing it is intended to be. In industrial meat production, that mediation is far more profound, taken to the limits of material breakdown and the imposition of force. But there remains a huge representational gap between the concept of beef, the images it conjures up of farm-fresh, butchered joints, and the inputs of ready-made and convenience food manufacture; the packaging is merely a photo negative, an undeveloped glimpse of the total picture. Indeed, the commodity fetish takes a negative form—a “present absence,” to borrow a term from Bruno Latour—that resolves the contradictions of a commodity's divided nature; the spectacle resolves those contradictions in the positive form of an image, as, for example, the images of cows on Tesco's horse-contaminated products were intended to do.⁶⁸ Compare this image with an image of the mechanically separated meat used to make products like it (Figure 3).



FIGURE 3. USDA image of mechanically separated beef.

I meditate on this close-up of industrial food manufacturing to emphasize that the divisive nature of capital, and the visible form it takes as the spectacle, pervades every aspect of the supply chain. According to Debord, the “spectacular prestige” of the commodity “evaporates into vulgarity as soon as the object is taken home by a consumer—and hence by all other consumers too. At this point its essential poverty, the natural outcome of the poverty of its production, stands revealed too late.”⁶⁹ The often sickly, hyper-processed appearance and qualitative homogeneity of food products are masked by packaging. With the horse meat scandal, this homogeneity was brought to the fore when it became clear that so many products in Europe were touched by a singular instance of adulteration. The material that was mass-processed, a mixing of diverse bodies, and divided once again, became the substratum of a relatively high number of competing products, breaking down any claims that the various retailers made about the superiority of their product, for all of the products contained the very same meat. The distributed nature of food production and supply means that the reach of contamination is vast, potentially global. Not only were horse meat-contaminated products found in at least a dozen EU countries, the products had even made it to Hong Kong.⁷⁰

In his report, Elliott outlined a few of the circumstances contributing to the horse meat adulteration that are rooted in the nature of industrial meat production and the organization of power in the supply chain. He acknowledges, as I have described, that the increased power of retailers in setting the terms of their contracts puts a downward pressure on suppliers to provide products at set prices, making them responsible for achieving the efficiencies needed to produce at such a low cost.⁷¹ At the same time, the state of mechanically separated meats makes them ripe for adulteration, as they already look so little like the animal flesh from which they are made.

While some suppliers may be duped into buying mislabeled foods, it is likely that deliberate human intervention occurred somewhere in the supply chain, as cheaper commodities can be sold at higher prices, for instance if pork is substituted for beef. Elliott also describes instances where Category 3 food, which the EU states is only suitable for animal consumption, makes its way into products destined for human consumption.⁷² The margin of profit would be very high for the offending middleman. For example, Category 3 animal by-product would sell for one pound per kilogram, whereas if repackaged as fit for human consumption, it could sell for at least three pounds fifty

per kilogram. Elliott says that a too-low price on any meat commodity should also alert suppliers and distributors to the possibility of fraud in their product's history.⁷³

Elliott identifies an important site of potential fraud and opacity in the cold storage facilities where large blocks of mechanically separated meat are shipped (Figure 4). It is easy to make the low-quality trim meat contained in these blocks appear higher quality by mixing them with meat from cheaper species or adding red offal, such as heart and lungs, into the mix.⁷⁴ The blocks themselves, when frozen, are the very definition of opaque, being impenetrable by eye and often wrapped in layers of plastic that further obscure the contents. They are also often handled mechanically, and in addition, the EU food supply chain relies heavily on paper accounting and only turned to testing real products in the wake of the scandal.⁷⁵



FIGURE 4. Frozen blocks of mechanically separated beef.

The system the EU uses to monitor and quality control the supply chain was developed in the United States. It is called HACCP: the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point system. In the United States, HACCP has been used extensively as a cost-cutting measure, seeing more and more inspectors removed from food processing plants, but also from a technical point of view, where inspection at an earlier point in production is dispensed with in favor of introducing bacteria-killing techniques like irradiation and chemical rinses at a later stage in the process.⁷⁶ Even with meat being easier to test once thawed from the frozen blocks, food manufacturers in the EU took the meat supply labeling for granted and processed it into food products, untested.

CONCLUSION: CONSEQUENCES The spectacle reaches inside the body as well as out, which the horse meat scandal makes clear. Unsuspecting European consumers had seen and purchased beef, but the body was fed horse—and who knows what else. As already mentioned, a third of UK products are adulterated or contain uncommunicated ingredients. There is also something to be said for products

that are marketed as food and yet bear no nutritional value or pose harmful effects for the body. Despite the ubiquity and abundance of foodstuffs, we must take account of how people may be able to feed themselves adequately in terms of quantity but not in terms of nutrition. Someone who is fed with packaged, processed foods throughout the day can still be considered malnourished. For this reason, low-income people are the spectacle's most frequent victims, and not only because of the usual health risks associated with spectacular food, which is to say, food that masquerades as more than it truly is. In terms of the horse meat scandal—and we can see this is true for any cheap, mass-produced and processed product—Elliott commented that low-income people are most often the victims of food fraud or contamination, since they are forced to buy products that are the most easily adulterated.⁷⁷

There are two kinds of risk debated in the wake of events like the horse meat scandal. One is the risk to business that contaminations and product recalls pose. Retailers, especially those as large as Tesco or Asda in the United Kingdom, have risk assessment profiles and insurance to cover them in instances where a product is proven harmful to human health and must be recalled. However, insurance assessments for food crime, which, again, is considered to be an ongoing and increasing possibility in today's food supply chain, are not standard.⁷⁸ The horse meat scandal has prompted food suppliers and retailers to consider fraudulent labeling and adulteration as inevitable, as contamination is already considered to be.

The other risk I speak of is that posed to those who ingest potentially harmful food products. The scale of the supply chain poses the largest risk to human bodies, as a single instance of contamination or adulteration can be widely distributed, due to both the distances that food commodities travel and the degree to which they are processed and recombined. In *Foodopoly*, Huter provides an extensive list of outbreaks in the United States that crossed state lines and affected thousands of people. In 2010, 500 million eggs produced in only two Iowa facilities were recalled after having caused at least two thousand traceable cases of salmonella poisoning, with links to tens of thousands of cases of illness nationwide. In 2008, a salmonella outbreak in peanut products affected people in forty-three states and killed nine people. The outbreak was traced back to a single processing plant in Georgia that had never been inspected prior to the outbreak. The plant supplied 275 different companies, which had to recall a total of 3,500 different products.⁷⁹ The striking consistency in these examples and the horse meat scandal is that little

or no oversight occurs at the original site of processing or production, that a “sightless” system like HACCP is trusted to indicate human risk, and that it is often too little too late in terms of stopping an outbreak from spreading. In fact, when testing does produce evidence of contamination, consumers often are not alerted to the fact until the majority or all of the product has been consumed.⁸⁰

What becomes evident as one looks closer at the horse meat scandal is there is a proportionate decline in oversight as the spectacle secures its rule. Debord says,

*Owing to the very success of this separated system of production, whose product is separation itself, that fundamental area of experience which was associated in earlier societies with an individual's principal work is being transformed at last at the leading edge of the system's evolution—into a realm of non-work, of inactivity. Such inactivity, however, is by no means emancipated from productive activity: it remains in thrall to that activity, in an uneasy and worshipful subjection to production's needs and results; indeed it is itself a product of the rationality of production ... within the spectacle all activity is banned.*⁸¹

The human's role in overseeing production has been radically reduced, replaced with paper accounting, a development that caters to profits rather than people. The spectacle stakes an even greater claim on the human, rendering us inactive in the production of one of the most important materials to our survival: food. Hauter describes how “job-killing” rhetoric is often thrown around in American discussions of food inspections, as the discovery of adulteration and contamination can shut down production lines as well as opportunities for profit. The American context is relevant, considering that the United Kingdom used the same system of “oversight” developed in the United States up until the scandal. Under these primarily paper accounting systems, inspectors are told to “let the system work.”⁸² As ever, we are supposed to trust that technical systems are superior to us, benign, and working in our best interest.

Writing several decades after Debord, Virilio expressed the fear that we are “about to lose our status as eyewitness[es] of tangible reality, once and for all, to the benefit of technical substitutes.”⁸³ Such technical substitutes are enlisted in the spectacle, smoothing and accelerating the way of exchange while negating the role of the human in the production and distribution of products

which are for us the means of subsistence but for capital are merely a means of circulating value. Even food packaging, with its pictures and information panels, becomes a substitute for the individual consumer's ability to see, touch, and taste a product before purchasing it.

The point of this article was to discuss the implications of the EU horse meat scandal, not only for consumers but for all actors in the food supply chain, including the government and retailers. While consumers bear the most risk in events like these, this article has attempted to show that everyone, in a sense, falls victim to the spectacle of price and packaging. The horse meat scandal, with its spectacular origins, is exemplary for showing just how opaque the nature of food production and distribution has become. The pulverizing mechanisms of meat processing allowed horse meat to easily masquerade as beef, while the EU's protracted supply chain obscured the country and facility of origin. Further manufacturing processes, like the addition of packaging that definitively advertised the contents as “beef,” added insult to spectacular injury. The irony is in our assumption that the scandal is a mark of human folly, attributable to individual greed or ignorance. The scandal truly lies in our continued disavowal of the inequities concretised and reproduced by the topologies of capital.

ENDNOTES

1. Mark P. Worrel, “The Cult of Exchange Value and the Critical Theory of the Spectacle,” *Fast Capitalism* 5.2 (2009), http://www.uta.edu/huma/agger/fastcapitalism/5_2/Worrell5_2.html.
2. Guy Debord, *The Society of The Spectacle* (Brooklyn: Zone, 2008), 24.
3. This article focuses on the European context of food production and supply and, even more specifically, the United Kingdom. Hence, I will refer to prices using British currency. I also discuss the American context in a few instances, which is interesting generally as a foil for EU food policy, since the US is far less stringent with regulation, for example, with its continued use of rapid growth hormones in beef production. Wynonah Hauter, *Foodopoly* (New York: The New Press, 2012), 143.
4. Food Safety Authority of Ireland, “FSAI survey finds horse DNA found in some beef burger products,” 2013.
5. European Commission, “Q&A on horsemeat,” Health and Consumers: Food, *Europa*, 2013.
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8. "A person would have to eat 500 to 600 burgers of pure tainted horse meat a day to consume close to a human's daily dose." Rudy Ruitenberg, "Horse-meat suspect Spanghero denies beef scam responsibility," *Bloomberg*, February 15, 2013.
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16. Lucy Crossley, "Halal pies and pasties given to Muslim prisoners found to contain pork in latest meat contamination scandal," *Daily Mail UK*, February 2, 2013.
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18. Harriet Friedmann, "From Colonialism to Green Capitalism: Social Movements and the Emergence of Food Regimes," *New Directions in the Sociology of Global Development*, ed. Frederick Buttel and Phillip McMichael (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2005).
19. Hugh Campbell, "Breaking New Ground in Food Regime Theory: Corporate Environmentalism, Ecological Feedbacks, and the 'Food from Somewhere' Regime?," *Agriculture and Human Values* 26 (2009): 311.
20. Ibid., 309.
21. Ibid., 317.
22. Larissa Drescher et al., "Consumer's Stated Trust in the Food Industry and Meat Purchases," *Agriculture and Human Values* 29 (2012): 509. On this point, Drescher et al. cite J. Michael Harris and Rimma Shiptsova, "Consumer Demand for Convenience Foods: Demographics and Expenditures," *Journal of Food Distribution Research* 38, no. 3 (2007): 22-36; and Klaus G. Grunert, "Future Trends and Consumer Life-styles with Regard to Meat Consumption," *Meat Science* 74, no. 1 (September 2006): 149-160.
23. Drescher et al., "Consumer's Stated Trust," 510, 515.
24. "Boom for butchers dies down six months after horse meat scandal," *The Gloucester Citizen*, July 5, 2013. Andrew Fearn, "Post-bse Impacts on the Beef Industry and the Value Chain: Insights from the UK," presented to the Tiffin Conference (2004), Lethbridge Community College, Lethbridge, Alberta.
25. "Boom for butchers," July 5, 2013. This argument proceeds on the assumption that to some degree, all people under capitalism are subject to coercion, most obviously in the wage labor relation but also in the ways in which they reproduce themselves (through eating and leisure), which are likewise mediated by the commodity form.
26. European Commission, "Executive Summary: Study on Mandatory Origin Labelling for Pig, Poultry and Sheep & Goat Meat," Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development, *Europa*, 2013: 4.
27. Ibid., 7, 9.
28. Ibid., 7.
29. Ibid., 9.
30. Sarah Butler and Rebecca Smithers, "Horsemeat scandal results in slide in sales of red meat in Britain," *The Guardian*, January 10, 2014.
31. Ibid.
32. Guy Debord, *Spectacle*, 12.
33. Marx states in *Capital*, vol. 1 that "the relations connecting the labor of one individual with that of the rest appear, not as direct social relations between individuals at work, but as ... material relations between persons and social relations between things" (1976, 166). This is his description of the commodity fetish, whereby commodities serve as subjects around which humans organize themselves, both in the workplace, and as consumers. The process by which humans come into a fetishized relationship with the products of their labor is a historical one. While there is no way of possibly pinpointing the historical origins of the fetish, it is consistent with the increasing move away from subsistence living, where humans produced food and various other items for direct, personal use, to market economies, where humans began producing items for someone else's use, that is, to be sold. Alongside these events, the increasing spe-

cialization and division of labor meant that humans were increasingly separated from the production of all manner of useful things, except for the one item they were employed to produce. In the end, one only comes into contact with the products of human labor at the market, bearing no relationship to those people who produced them, which is especially true in today's global market. Even though people may meet at the market, they do so as buyers and sellers of commodities. Their relationship therefore revolves around the commodity.

34. Debord, *Spectacle*, 12.

35. Kerstin Gustafsson et al., *Retailing Logistics and Fresh Food Packaging: Managing Change in the Supply Chain* (Philadelphia: Kogan Page US, 2006), 41.

36. Paul Virilio, *Open Sky* (London and New York: Verso, 2008), 56.

37. Andrew Seth and Geoffrey Randall, *The Grocers: The Rise and Rise of the Supermarket Chains* (London: Kogan Page, 2011), 38.

38. Debord, *Spectacle*, 16. Emphasis added.

39. "In this manner the labor objectified in the values of commodities is not just presented negatively, as labor in which abstraction is made from all the concrete forms and useful properties of work. Its own positive nature is explicitly brought out, namely the fact that it is the reduction of all kinds of actual labor to their common character ... human labor in general, of being the expenditure of human labor-power" (Marx 1976, 160).

40. Marianne R. Klimchuk and Sandra A. Krasovec, *Packaging Design: Successful Product Branding from Concept to Shelf* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2006), 5.

41. Ibid., 22, 30.

42. Ibid., 40.

43. Ibid., 235.

44. Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1976), 202.

45. Ibid., 144.

46. Ibid., 150.

47. Ibid., 165.

48. Hauter, *Foodopoly*, 70. Gustafsson et al., *Retailing Logistics*, 44.

49. Drescher et al., "Consumer's Stated Trust," 510, 515.

50. Hauter, *Foodopoly*, 66.

51. By deskilling, I refer to the loss of traditional skills like cooking, attributable to the pressures of work life but also promoted by food manufacturers, and a common quality of life in automated settings like factories or fast food restaurants.

52. Marx, *Capital*, 166.

53. Seth and Randall, *The Grocers*, 48.

54. Elliott, "Elliott Review," 22.

55. Ibid., 37.

56. Debord, *Spectacle*, 13.

57. Alf Hornborg, "Technology as Fetish: Marx, Latour, and the Cultural Foundations of Capital," *Theory, Culture and Society* 31, no. 4 (2013): 14.

58. Reports produced in the wake of the scandal that debated labeling regulations in the EU suggest that consumers want their products marked with origin labeling but that such things do not factor into their purchasing decisions. European Commission, "Executive Summary: Study on Mandatory Origin Labelling," 4. Is there a discrepancy here between consumer desire and behaviour or simply an inability to pursue that desire in dollar terms? After all, the costs of increasing transparency and tracking in the supply chain either fall on producers or consumers. Ibid., 7, 9. When the European Commission published a report on improving pork commodity labeling, it was reported that "on average in the EU27 about 12% of the extra costs for labeling [would be] transmitted to the producers, while about 88% of the extra costs [would be] transmitted to the consumer." Ibid., 7. For poultry commodity labeling, consumers were projected to bear 91% of the costs of labeling. Ibid., 9.

59. Hauter, *Foodopoly*, 34.

60. Marx, *Capital*, 293.

61. Hauter, *Foodopoly*, 157.

62. "Value," here and in the context of "value-added," does not refer to Marx's definition of the term. It is rather a general term used by economists.

63. Hauter, *Foodopoly*, 47.

64. Ibid.

65. Paul Virilio, *Grey Ecology* (New York: Atropos, 2008), 34.

66. Virilio tells us that what we know to be human, or any other ontological category, is a matter of proportion: "There is no object without proportions. There is no man without dimensions." Virilio, *Grey Ecology*, 27. I take my understanding of the ontological nature of proportion from the follow-

ing passage in particular: “What we call real-time leads to the space-time continuum suffering a temporal contraction which reduces to nothing or practically nothing the vastness of the world ... Great or weak, this vastness constitutes the power of Being. And now I’ll give you a very clear example: to be a man is to measure basically between one and two meters. If a man measures 20 meters in height, it is not a man. This is unthinkable. Today, everything is like this. It is amazing to what degree proportions have disappeared from the modern world.” Virilio, *Grey Ecology*, 27-28.

67. See Eric Schlosser’s *Fast Food Nation* (2005) for a history of McDonald’s effect on the poultry industry, particularly how its demand for hand-held food portions (i.e. for chicken McNuggets) influenced the production and sale of chicken portions like thighs and breasts when people had previously only purchased chickens whole.

68. Bruno Latour, *Pandora’s Box: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 189.

69. Debord, *Spectacle*, 45.

70. Radio France Internationale, “French police arrest

Spanghero managers.”

71. Elliott, “Elliott Review,” 15, 22.

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75. J. Blythman, “The really bad news? Horse burgers aren’t the only nasty secret in the chill cabinets,” *Daily Mail UK*, January 17, 2013.

76. Hauter, *Foodopoly*, 123.

77. Elliott, “Elliott Review,” 12.

78. Sarah Veysey, “European horse meat scandal not expected to trigger insurance claims,” *Business Insurance*, February 14, 2013.

79. Hauter, *Foodopoly*, 137-8.

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81. Debord, *Spectacle*, 21.

82. Hauter, *Foodopoly*, 129.

83. Virilio, *Open Sky*, 91.

Margarine for Butter: Budget Cooking in America

abstract | The 1960s and 1970s are known politically for Lyndon B. Johnson's "War on Poverty" and economically for high inflation; since the 1970s, income inequality has continued to grow. This paper investigates the effect of this atmosphere on the ways in which people eat cheaply. It does this through analysis of nine budget cookbooks published in the United States before and after The Food Stamp Act. By comparing recipes in budget cookbooks to editions of *Joy of Cooking*, this paper argues that budget cookbooks teach readers how to cook common mainstream recipes inexpensively. The analysis finds that ingredients are often substituted, deleted, and added in different ways to achieve this cheaper goal.

keywords | Budget cooking, cookbooks, ingredients, food stamps, poverty

Cheese Fondue

3 tablespoons butter or margarine
5 slices bread cut in cubes or strips
1 cup (1/4 pound) processed American cheese, shredded
1 large egg, beaten
1 cup milk
½ teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon dry mustard
Dash of pepper

"Alternate layers of bread then cheese in the casserole. Combine egg, milk and seasonings. Pour over bread and cheese ... Bake for 40 minutes. Makes 4 servings."

—Budget Cook Book, 1964

Fondue

1 lb. Emmenthaler or ½ lb. Emmenthaler and ½ lb. Gruyère cheese
A clove of garlic
2 cups dry white wine
3 tablespoons kirsch
1 teaspoon cornstarch
Nutmeg, white pepper or paprika

"Have ready a bread basket or bowl filled with crusty French or Italian bread cut into 1 x 1 x ¾-inch pieces, making sure that each piece has one side of crust. At this point the guests, each equipped with a heatproof-handled fork—preferably two or three-tined—spear the bread from the soft side and dip the impaled bit into the well-warmed cheese ... Serve with fresh fruit and tea."

—Joy of Cooking, 1964

INTRODUCTION Budget cooking takes many shapes and forms. In the above recipe comparison, a 1964 budget-minded cookbook gives the reader a cheap alternative for making "Fondue," typically a fancy teatime meal eaten with guests. Cookbooks catering to readers on a budget are not a new phenomenon. Early American budget cookbooks include *Tempting Dishes for Small Incomes*, published in 1881, and *Dainty Dishes for Slender Incomes*, published in 1900.¹ But in the United States, a real social consciousness of cooking on a budget took off in the 1970s. A quick sorting of cookbook titles by decade from a Library of Congress online catalog keyword search of "budget cooking" reveals the following: Before 1900, five budget cookbooks were published; from 1900 to 1969, there were twenty-five; from 1970 to 2014, there were 223.² Comparing numbers of budget cookbooks published in the 1960s and the 1970s produces striking results: Four were published in the '60s

and forty-two in the '70s, which is a 950 percent increase.³ For reference, a keyword search in the online catalog of just the word "cookbook" yields 469 cookbooks published in the 1960s and 1,006 in the 1970s, which is only a 114 percent increase.⁴ This data suggests that from the 1970s onward, budget cooking was rising in the American public consciousness.

Economic Situation Looking at the broader political-economic situation in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, several trends explain this piqued and ultimately sustained interest in budget cooking. In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson launched his "War on Poverty" legislation in response to a national poverty rate that reached 22.1 percent in 1959.⁵ One piece of legislation was The Food Stamp Act (P.L. 88-525). Food stamps were not a new concept; they had been issued from 1939 to 1943.⁶ But

the '60s saw resurgence in need for them, and a program was introduced in 1961, culminating in the 1964 Act.⁷

Economically, the end of the '60s saw persistent inflation that would not drop below 5.5 percent (except for two years) between 1969 and 1982.⁸ The average yearly unemployment rate jumped to 5 percent in 1970 from 3.5 percent the year before and did not drop again until 1997.⁹ Inflation means the general costs of goods—including food—increases over time.¹⁰ Looking at food alone, the annualized price increase from 1950 to 1968 was 1.3 percent; from 1969 to 1983, the annualized price increased 7.1 percent.¹¹ The price of food was rising dramatically in the 1970s, the same time the number of published budget cookbooks rose.

Budget cookbooks, however, continued to increase in number as inflation rates stabilized. The inflation rate remained low relative to the '70s, staying below that decade's low of 5.5 percent.¹² Similarly, the rate of increase in the price of food slowed, increasing only 2.9 percent from 1983 to 2013.¹³ However, the poverty and unemployment rates remained high. Although dropping from 1959's high of 22.1 percent, the poverty rate remained between 12.4 and 14.3 percent from 1969 to 2009.¹⁴ The unemployment rate never dropped below 4 percent from 1997 to 2007 and then shot up thereafter, peaking at 9.6 percent in 2010.¹⁵

High unemployment and poverty rates were accompanied by a widening gap between the upper and middle classes. The middle class's wealth largely stagnated or shifted downward as decently-paid blue-collar jobs disappeared and the ranks of the part-time service workforce increased.¹⁶ According to one account, "the inflation in food prices in the early '70s redirected middle-

class attention away from the cost of the shopping baskets of the poor and towards their own."¹⁷ While inflation rates stabilized and food prices increased only slightly, the income gap has expanded today, with 21 percent of families' wealth 6.6 times greater than that of the 46 percent in the middle.¹⁸ This gap in the '80s created a "budget-conscious" blue-collar market, and today consumers almost unanimously report price as an important or very important consideration when grocery shopping.¹⁹ This socioeconomic atmosphere of the widening gap is reflected in the sustained publishing of budget-focused cookbooks.

Cookbooks Cookbooks are important sources for understanding cooking and eating behaviors of the past.²⁰ Analyzed, they reveal a society's food preferences.²¹ They also provide credible information that can be correlated to a society's historic and social events.²² The political and economic histories described above mark important events and economic states in American history. This paper argues that the political and economic changes in America from the 1960s to the present decade were responsible for the dramatic and sustained increase in the number of budget cookbooks published from the 1970s on. Furthermore, it argues that the recipes found in this emerging genre of cookbooks mimic culturally common, mainstream recipes, as opposed to forging a completely new budget-cooking culture. Cheaper versions of mainstream dishes are created with cheap ingredient substitutions, additions, and subtractions.

This paper analyzes nine different budget cookbooks published in the United States from the 1950s to the

Books analyzed:

<i>Year Published</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Author</i>
1951	<i>Econo-Meals: Budget Menus</i>	Procter & Gamble Company (pamphlet)
1964	<i>Budget Cook Book</i>	Better Cooking Library
1971	<i>The Food Stamp Gourmet</i>	Wm. Brown
1979	<i>Budget Cookbook</i>	Mary Kowit and Steve Kowit
1980	<i>Budget Saving Meals Cookbook</i>	Donna M. Paananen
1985	<i>The Food Stamp Gourmet</i>	Carrie Bailey
1996	<i>Good Cheap Food</i>	Miriam Ungerer
2012	<i>The Food Stamp Budget Gourmet Cookbook</i>	Don J. Dinerstein
2014	<i>Good and Cheap: Eat Well on \$4/Day</i>	Leanne Brown

present day. In order to compare budget cookbooks to their mainstream analogues, the paper also analyzes four editions of *Joy of Cooking* (1964, 1975, 1997, and 2006). *Joy of Cooking* is used because it has been an influence in American kitchens since its original publication in 1931. It was a nationwide bestseller in 1943 and reached the nonfiction bestseller lists in 1962 and 1997.²³ It is known as the “kitchen bible,” and each edition has evolved to reflect current trends in the kitchen and gained new recipes.²⁴ New editions are important as, according to Edith Hörandner, they “permit good conclusions to be made about altered cooking- and eating-behaviour.”²⁵ In this way, *Joy of Cooking* serves as a control for cultural shifts in cooking that should not be attributed to budget cooking per se. From this point forward, *Joy of Cooking* will be referred to as *Joy*.

METHODS

Document Analysis Document analysis is a qualitative research methodology that focuses on “discovery and description” to find underlying patterns, meanings, and themes in documents analyzed.²⁶ Such qualitative analysis relies on adaptable data collection, coding, analysis, and interpretation that uses categories to direct initial study but is open to constant discovery and comparison of new situations that arise in the documents.²⁷ Cookbooks as documents can serve as records of cooking and eating by societies from which they are published.²⁸ Cookbooks are large repositories of knowledge, and therefore examining a single facet of a cookbook or group of cookbooks, such as cataloging ingredients and their qualities, is a useful method by which to analyze their content.²⁹ This paper applies qualitative document analysis methods of adaptable categorization focusing on ingredients and their qualities to compare budget cooking to mainstream cooking methods.

Books and Recipes These cookbooks were chosen for analysis because they have the words “budget,” “cheap,” or “food stamp” in the title.³⁰ The analysis focuses on ingredient comparisons between recipes for the same or similar dishes in the budget cookbooks and *Joy*. As the book sample size is large, only chicken- and vegetable-based main dishes are included.³¹ For books that contain separate soup, egg, or vegetable sections, chicken- and vegetable-based dishes are only included if the authors write or imply that such dishes are good as main meals. Chicken- and vegetable-based dishes are analyzed for economic reasons. Of chicken, beef, and pork, chicken was the cheapest meat during most of the time period analyzed.³² The exception is the 1950s, when chicken cost more than beef.³³ Also,

consumption data show that from 1965 to 2012, beef and pork consumption declined while chicken consumption increased rapidly, from 33.7 pounds annually per capita in 1965 to 81.8 pounds in 2012.³⁴ It was expected, therefore, that chicken would be a popular meat protein in budget cookbooks. Non-meat proteins, mainly grains, legumes, and eggs, have remained cheaper than meat from the 1950s to the present.³⁵

Recipe Analysis First, a list of all recipe titles for main meal chicken- or vegetable-based dishes was compiled. This list was then compared to the index of the *Joy* published in the corresponding decade for the same or similar recipes. These recipes did not necessarily have the exact same title, as often titles in the budget cookbooks include people’s names or creative takes on common titles. In such cases, however, ingredients and methods were used to determine if recipes were comparable. Each recipe found in both the budget cookbooks and *Joy* was then coded by recipe title, number of servings, ingredients used, cooking methods, equipment required, preparation time (if given by author), cost (if given by author), and any additional notes (such as pictures, history of recipe, tips, etc.).

The following data analysis focuses on ingredients used in the budget cookbook recipes compared to the ingredients used in their counterpart *Joy* recipes. Specific attention is paid to ingredient substitution, addition, and deletion trends and what these trends say about budget cooking in light of economic data.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS Results appear chronologically by date published and appear by budget cookbook title. Each begins with a brief description of the book, followed by analysis and discussion of ingredients and trends.

Econo-Meals: Budget Menus *Econo-Meals: Budget Menus* is a small, thirty-four-page pamphlet released by the Procter & Gamble Home Economics Department in 1951. The cover states that these budget menus are “delicious,” “thrifty,” and “nutritious.”³⁶ The pamphlet opens with a two-page introduction addressed, “Dear Homemaker,” and states that the pamphlet was specially created for the homemaker to help her with one of her “most trying tasks today—meal planning within the family budget.”³⁷ Each page of the book provides a dinner menu with a main dish, sides, and a dessert, with recipes for one or two items from the menu.³⁸

Every recipe in *Econo-Meals* includes Crisco (vegetable shortening), as it is a promotional pamphlet cookbook for the product.³⁹ *Joy of Cooking* 1964 does call for shortening

as an ingredient in certain recipes but does not use it in the recipes analyzed.⁴⁰ Using Crisco as a fat ingredient in every recipe makes economic sense for a budget cookbook of this time, as Crisco in 1951 was cheaper than butter and vegetable oils.⁴¹

Of twenty-five main dish recipes, seventeen are found in *Joy*, three of which are chicken recipes and none of which were vegetable-based.⁴² In light of chicken actually costing more than beef in the 1950s (compared to the opposite in all proceeding decades) and combined with meat consumption patterns showing beef was the highest consumed, these data is expected.⁴³ As prices change, consumption patterns change in response.⁴⁴

The three recipes are *Turkey Tetrizzini* (the cookbook notes it could also be made with chicken), *Individual Chicken Casseroles*, and *Southern Fried Chicken*.⁴⁵ Of these recipes, *Econo-Meals* compared to *Joy* uses fewer ingredients per dish and less kitchen equipment.⁴⁶ Specifically, *Econo-Meals* uses less meat per serving, showing frugality, and the Tetrizzini calls for leftover turkey or chicken, showing resourcefulness and a commitment to preventing food waste, and, therefore, money waste.⁴⁷ *Econo-Meals* also relies solely on salt and pepper for spicing dishes, while *Joy* calls for additional spices and herbs, such as parsley, paprika, and basil.⁴⁸ Ingredient comparison on the whole reveals that *Econo-Meals* recipes are basic versions of fleshed-out *Joy* recipes.⁴⁹

Budget Cook Book *Budget Cook Book* was published in 1964 to help home cooks budget money and time.⁵⁰ The introduction states that the word “budget” when concerning food can be frightening but reassures the reader that this does not have to be so.⁵¹ It further states that this book will show the reader how to make dishes economically and use prepared foods such as canned soups and cake mixes with new flavor twists and tricks to “fancy up” dishes and “give a gourmet’s touch.”⁵² These statements reveal that the author believes cheap food is assumed not to look or taste good and is not associated with gourmet food or cooking. This book strives to portray budget food as elegant, from the introduction to the pictures of prepared recipes on every page, with meals served on fine china set on tablecloths with vases of flowers.⁵³ The photos, combined with small black and white illustrations of fancy foods and cooking utensils around page borders, emphasize that *Budget Cook Book* strives to teach gourmet cooking.⁵⁴

The ingredients data align with the book’s gourmet-on-a-budget endeavor. Of the fifteen recipes both in *Budget Cook Book* and *Joy*, whenever butter is called for the

ingredients list, the recipe also notes, “or margarine.”⁵⁵ On margarine, *Joy of Cooking* 1964 says it “lack[s] the desirable butter flavor” and produces different textures than butter in baking.⁵⁶ Margarine does not appear in ingredients lists for any recipe analyzed in this edition of *Joy* or the proceeding three editions also analyzed.⁵⁷ Margarine was (and still is) cheaper than butter.⁵⁸ Butter in 1960 cost three times more than margarine, and so despite its shortcomings, margarine was an economical substitution for the budget cook.⁵⁹

Meat is another ingredient where *Budget Cook Book* cuts costs. One-third of the main dish recipes are chicken- or vegetable-based.⁶⁰ While consumption data in this decade still favored beef and pork, chicken was then more economical.⁶¹ Recipes in *Budget Cook Book* reflect this trend by either using less meat per serving than corresponding recipes in *Joy* or by using chicken instead of more expensive choices such as lobster and crab.⁶² Also, American cheese—a cheap cheese product—is used almost exclusively as the cheese ingredient for any recipe requiring cheese other than Parmesan.⁶³ These three main ingredient substitutions demonstrate how budget recipes mimic mainstream recipes with cheaper ingredients.

One noteworthy recipe comparison is the *Fondue*. The *Joy* recipe makes a traditional melted cheese dish in which one dips bread.⁶⁴ The *Budget Cook Book* recipe makes a bread and American cheese casserole.⁶⁵ No doubt cheaper without the Emmentaler cheese, wine, and kirsch, *Budget Cook Book* takes what is generally portrayed as a fancy dish and makes it a basic, cheap, and easy family meal with the same classy name.⁶⁶

The Food Stamp Gourmet Published in 1971 by Wm. Brown, this book was written in a decade that saw an explosion of budget cookbooks on the shelves, including several specifically catering to federal food stamp recipients.⁶⁷ This book states that it is written for people “who would like to eat excellent food, but must do it on a budget.”⁶⁸ It further states that it is called *The Food Stamp Gourmet* “because food stamps are now one of the most popular ways of eating cheaply.”⁶⁹ These statements cater to readers’ desires to still eat good food when not able to afford much; the author works to overcome the shame potentially associated with food stamps by calling them trendy.⁷⁰ In contrast to *Budget Cook Book* that mimics gourmet, fancy food, *The Food Stamp Gourmet* features cheap but hip and delicious food while striving to imitate mainstream dishes.

Strewn with caricatures of people from all walks of life, *The Food Stamp Gourmet* assumes the reader is new to

cooking.⁷¹ Each recipe lists the ingredients and equipment required, time needed, cost per serving, and in the margins again lists the ingredients one will need in each step alongside the actual cooking instructions.⁷²

Although written for a novice, budget-bound cook, *The Food Stamp Gourmet* mimics mainstream recipes in a cheap fashion. Of thirty total main dish recipes, seven include chicken, zero are vegetable-based, and five also appear in *Joy of Cooking 1975*.⁷³ These five reveal that, in order to cut costs, *Food Stamp Gourmet* recipes tend to use less meat per serving plus a smaller variety of ingredients than corresponding *Joy* recipes.⁷⁴ Like in *Budget Cook Book*, margarine is always listed as an alternative wherever butter is required.⁷⁵ Several recipes call for wine in both *Joy* and *The Food Stamp Gourmet*, but the author of the latter suggests using domestic dry white vermouth as a cheaper option.⁷⁶ *The Food Stamp Gourmet*'s dishes mimic the mainstream dishes' principal flavors and ingredients, but they do so cheaply with substitutes, lower quality, and less quantity of ingredients. And all with dignity: On Parmesan cheese in *Risotto*, the author instructs the cook to stir in a half cup of Parmesan, "if you have some and feel like it."⁷⁷ An essential ingredient in risotto becomes optional at the cook's discretion, preserving the elegance of the dish and the wallet of the cook.

Budget Cookbook Published in 1979, *Budget Cookbook* declares, "This book is a weapon against runaway inflation."⁷⁸ Readers can learn how to "shop for value," preserve foods, make substitutions for expensive ingredients, "prepare basic foods ... for a fraction of the price," and make "elegant" use of leftovers.⁷⁹ This book is written for families with limited money for food but with a bit of time to learn how to avoid high food expenses while still eating mainstream dishes.

Of seventy-seven main dish recipes, twenty-eight are chicken- or vegetable-based, and of those, thirteen have corresponding recipes in *Joy of Cooking 1975*.⁸⁰ Many cheaper ingredient trends are found in comparing *Budget Cookbook* and *Joy*. One trend is that several vegetable budget dishes only correspond to recipes in *Joy* that contain meat (while *Joy* has no vegetable alternative).⁸¹ Substitute meat ingredients include beans, cheese, and eggs.⁸² In 1970, fifty-nine cents could buy a dozen large eggs or one pound of pork chops.⁸³ Another trend is that *Budget Cookbook* recipes use less of an expensive ingredient per serving.⁸⁴ The most striking example is *Oven-Fried Chicken*: The budget recipe calls for one whole chicken to serve four to six people, while *Joy* calls for the same to serve

two.⁸⁵ Soups that are served thin and as starters in *Joy* are prepared heartier in the budget recipe and are expected to be served as main courses.⁸⁶ Recipes are made more substantial by adding more of the cheaper ingredients like onions and potatoes, as in the *Creamy Onion Soup* and *Cream of Mushroom Soup*.⁸⁷ The *Soufflé* budget recipe, like *Fondue* in *Budget Cook Book*, is just a bread and cheese casserole.⁸⁸ But with a sophisticated name like "soufflé," a simple and cheap dish is elegantly transformed into a more expensive-sounding meal. Lastly, the most common and basic money-saving trends are the substitution of regular oil for olive oil, margarine for butter, and milk combined with dry milk for cream; *Budget Cooking* uses the former, where *Joy* calls for the latter. These substitutions are found in every recipe, where *Joy* called for the latter of these pairings.⁸⁹

Budget Saving Meals Cookbook This budget cookbook was published in 1980. While the book lacks an introduction, short paragraphs prefacing each section, a few photos, and the recipes themselves all suggest the reader has a family and is cooking on a tight budget.⁹⁰ The reader also wants to put a healthy, cheap, yet elegant meal on the table, as implied by several references to gardening to obtain free vegetables and the photographs of meals served in nice dishes on cloth-covered tables set with flowers.⁹¹

Of fifty total main dish recipes, twenty-nine are either chicken- or vegetable-based, with sixteen also appearing in *Joy of Cooking 1975*.⁹² These sixteen recipes showcase several examples of mainstream recipe mimicry with ingredient cost shortcuts. First of all, ten of the fourteen vegetable-based dishes have meat in the corresponding *Joy* recipes.⁹³ Using less meat is a very economical way to cook, explained both in *Budget Saving Meals Cookbook* and by the economic data of the time.⁹⁴ In 1980, a dozen large eggs were eighty-three cents compared to beef at \$2.79 per pound.⁹⁵ Second, any recipe calling for butter in *Joy* either also suggests or only lists margarine in *Budget Saving Meals*.⁹⁶ Three, a smaller variety of ingredients is used in many of the recipes. Several examples are: the chili, which uses only beans for protein and water for the liquid, compared to meat and beans for protein and canned tomatoes for the liquid in *Joy*; the *Stuffed Eggplant*, which called for a one-pound eggplant compared to a two-pound eggplant for the same number of people in the *Joy* equivalent; and smaller amounts of the main protein used per serving in numerous recipes, such as the lentil soup.⁹⁷ Four, dry milk mixed with fresh milk is almost exclusively used in any recipe that may otherwise call for cream.⁹⁸ Looking at all sixteen of the recipes and their comparisons,

most recipes in *Budget Saving Meals* closely replicate the versions found in *Joy* with cheaper and/or fewer ingredients.⁹⁹

The Food Stamp Gourmet *The Food Stamp Gourmet*, published in 1985, is written for people on food stamps or on a similarly tight food budget. Each meal is designed to cost sixty cents per person per meal, the amount allotted by the National Food Stamp Program at the time.¹⁰⁰ Additionally, each recipe states the total cost of the meal for the number of servings listed.¹⁰¹ In the preface, the author declares, “many of these recipes are simplified versions of foods served in elegant restaurants.”¹⁰² The ingredients data support her claim. However, it is interesting to note that unlike several other budget cookbooks that have photographs of meals served in fancy dishes or black and white drawings detailing foods and kitchen utensils, this book has instead one small, humble sketch per page of an ingredient or utensil, creating an approachable space for anyone trying to learn to cook or cook cheaply.¹⁰³

Of twenty-four total main dish recipes, fifteen are chicken- or vegetable-based, and eight appear in *Joy of Cooking 1975*.¹⁰⁴ More than half of the total main dish recipes use cheaper protein ingredients, and more than half of the analyzed sample strive to replicate mainstream dishes. These recipes are generally simpler versions of *Joy* recipes. Counting all of the different ingredients used in the eight recipes in both books highlights this parallel. For the same recipes, *The Food Stamp Gourmet* uses eighteen different ingredients while *Joy* uses thirty-one.¹⁰⁵ A smaller range of ingredients for a seemingly diverse menu suggests simpler recipes. Looking at specific recipe comparisons also reveals this. One example is the *Cheese Fondue*. The *Joy* version begins with a history of fondue and its traditional Swiss methods, including the use of the “correct” kind of cheese (Emmentaler) and alcohol (kirsch and white wine).¹⁰⁶ Also, it is to be served for brunch or afternoon tea.¹⁰⁷ In contrast, *The Food Stamp Gourmet* takes a different approach to fondue: The dish becomes dinner. It also uses less cheese per serving, permits the use of any cheese or “cheese food,” adds milk and eggs to make up for less cheese, and skips the kirsch and wine.¹⁰⁸ This fondue is cheap but puts an elegant-sounding spin on an otherwise plain bread, egg, and dairy main meal.

Ingredient trends in this budget cookbook are as follows: Water is substituted for stock; bouillon cubes replace any stock not replaced with water; and “cheese food” is an alternative every time cheese is required.¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, all recipes analyzed are vegetable-based.¹¹⁰

This is because meat recipe analysis is limited to chicken and does not include recipes calling for unspecified meat, as is the case for most meat dishes in *The Food Stamp Gourmet*, to enable flexibility for cooks to buy what is cheapest and most available that day.¹¹¹ These trends all support the book’s efforts to provide recipes for elegant mainstream main dishes for less money.

Good Cheap Food *Good Cheap Food* was published in 1996 and has a different attitude toward food than the previous decades’ budget cookbooks. The emphasis is on local and fresh foods and mentions that they and other foods are cheap in section introductions.¹¹² But cheapness rarely manifests as a substitute of lesser quality. One example is the author’s unconvincing and circumstantial acceptance of margarine (where other budget books embrace it as an inexpensive alternative to butter).¹¹³ Another is her opinion on olive oil substitutes: She writes, “When it comes to olive oil, I don’t mean ‘salad oil’ unless specified, because the substitution would result in a fatal dullness.”¹¹⁴ Olive oil costs more than salad oil, but a sacrifice of taste for money will not be made.

Of 153 main dish recipes total, forty-nine are chicken- or vegetable-based, and thirteen are in *Joy of Cooking 1997*.¹¹⁵ These data do not strongly support economic or consumption data of the time—chicken and vegetable proteins costing the least and chicken consumption being the highest—nor does it support budget cookbooks mimicking mainstream recipes.¹¹⁶ The tone and content of *Good Cheap Food* is different from all other budget cookbooks analyzed. This book is for people who have an interest in food and cooking that goes beyond just feeding mouths for less money. It is 331 pages long, with lengthy introductions to each section, ingredient biographies, and recipes reading more like an extended conversation than an easy-to-use, practical reference book.¹¹⁷ The user of this book has the time to read and cook extensively and probably has a higher food budget than one governed by food stamps.

However, in looking at the ingredients data in *Good Cheap Food* compared to corresponding recipes in *Joy of Cooking 1997*, recipes do require less or the same number of ingredients the majority of the time, which keeps costs lower.¹¹⁸ Also, these recipes are very similar in ingredients, methods, and equipment to *Joy*, showing that not all recipes are completely original ideas.¹¹⁹

The Food Stamp Budget Gourmet Cookbook This book was published in 2012 for those hit especially hard by the

economic downturn in 2008—for those eating on a food stamp budget.¹²⁰ The book is available as an electronic book online for just \$2.99.¹²¹ *The Food Stamp Budget Gourmet Cookbook* features thirty-one main dish recipes and claims all can be made for less than five dollars per serving, cheaper than a fast food meal for one.¹²² The book is divided by cuisine categories: American, Asian, Italian, Tex Mex, and Vegetarian.¹²³ This is the first book to be divided in this way and reflects Americans' growing interest in ethnic cuisines, beginning in the 1960s among the upper class and later incorporated into the mainstream corporate food system.¹²⁴ (Cultural cuisine categories are more prevalent in *Joy of Cooking* 2006 as well).¹²⁵

Of thirty-one main dish recipes, seventeen are chicken- or vegetable-based, and twelve have corresponding recipes in *Joy*.¹²⁶ This high number of chicken and vegetable dishes suggests price is often kept low by using a cheaper protein. A high number of corresponding recipes in *Joy* suggest *The Food Stamp Budget Gourmet* mimics mainstream dishes at lower cost. The ingredient trends seen in earlier published budget cookbooks are not as prevalent in these modern recipes. For example, margarine never appears; recipes always call for butter.¹²⁷ The same is true of olive oil: It is never substituted for by salad oil.¹²⁸ The book, however, introduces a new substitution. Calls for sea salt are always accompanied by "can substitute with regular table salt," a cheaper alternative costing one-quarter of the price per ounce.¹²⁹ Another way prices are kept low is by recommending and providing recipes for basic packaged ingredients, such as tortillas and enchilada sauce.¹³⁰ In 2012, a package of eight flour tortillas cost \$3.59, while the amount of flour needed to make eight tortillas from the recipe would cost forty-two cents.¹³¹

A new trend is that several main dish recipes correspond to recipes in the appetizers section of *Joy*, such as egg rolls, quesadillas, chicken wings, and stuffed mushrooms.¹³² According to *Joy*, appetizers are either a first course (meaning there are more courses to follow) or served at cocktail parties.¹³³ Both scenarios suggest a food event beyond a normal dinner meal, and therefore the appetizer marks a special occasion. The use of traditional appetizer foods as the main meal in *The Food Stamp Budget Gourmet* elevates the meal's status and has the feel of a more expensive meal while suiting a tight budget.

Good and Cheap: Eat Well on \$4/Day This book was published in 2014 and is "designed ... to fit the budget of people living on SNAP" and the "untold millions more ... liv[ing] under similar conditions."¹³⁴ As this introduction and

the title suggest, this book has recipes for cheap food but also good food, with many having corresponding recipes in *Joy of Cooking* 2006.

Of a total of thirty-one main dishes in *Good and Cheap*, there are twenty-two vegetable-based and two chicken recipes, with sixteen of those combined that also appear in *Joy*.¹³⁵ Like *The Food Stamp Budget Gourmet* (2012), margarine is never used, as butter is always called for, and olive oil is used wherever appropriate without suggesting a cheaper substitute.¹³⁶ Three recipes in *Joy* call for meat when *Good and Cheap* does not.¹³⁷ However, *Joy* offers both vegetable and meat versions of several more recipes for which *Good and Cheap* only has a vegetable version, such as tacos, dumplings, quiche, and fettuccini.¹³⁸ This suggests that vegetable-based main dishes are becoming more popular in mainstream cooking and corresponds to dietary choice trend data: In 2012, 5 percent of the American population was vegetarian compared to 1 percent in 1971.¹³⁹

By the number of ingredients required in each recipe, *Good and Cheap* and *Joy* are fairly equivalent, unlike budget cookbooks of previous decades that simply called for less.¹⁴⁰ However, further analysis reveals that the budget recipes are based on one or two fewer substantial ingredients than the corresponding *Joy* recipes (substantial ingredients being any ingredient that contributes significantly to the caloric content of the dish). The bulk of ingredients listed are spices that recur throughout the entire book.¹⁴¹ This is the main way these recipes are cheap: Fewer ingredients to buy means less money spent. Also, the focus on vegetables is economically logical for cheap meals: In 2014, the price range for fresh vegetables, spanning from potatoes to bell peppers, was sixty-seven cents to \$2.37 per pound; the price range for meat, spanning from whole chicken to steak, was \$1.55 to \$8.10 per pound.¹⁴²

Another way these recipes fit into a four-dollar-a-day budget is that they are flexible, and ingredient substitution is highly encouraged. Stated in the introduction, a "strict budget requires flexibility and a willingness" to buy and cook whatever is on sale at the time.¹⁴³ This leaves room for the cook to evaluate what is cheapest. For example, the recipe for *Dal* has separate instructions for the different types of lentils one may use;¹⁴⁴ the recipe for *Butternut Soup* recommends that any winter squash will be a fine substitute.¹⁴⁵ This built-in flexibility gives already cheap recipes the opportunity to be even cheaper.

CONCLUSION A national poverty rate of over 20 percent culminating in The Food Stamp Act of 1964 brought poverty and hunger to the forefront of the American

conscience. Soon thereafter, the economy in the '70s slowed and inflation rose quickly, turning the focus from helping the poor to budgeting for oneself.¹⁴⁶ These events are reflected in the jump in the number of budget cookbooks published. Although inflation rates decreased in the '80s, a large and growing portion of the population nevertheless could not shake the need to budget food expenses, with an increasingly poorer middle and lower class and high poverty and unemployment rates.¹⁴⁷ Budget cooking remained in the public consciousness; cookbooks with budget-focused titles continued to be published through the second decade of the twenty-first century. As the results and analysis show, this emergence of a newly popular cookbook genre did not, however, create an entirely new budget cuisine. Budget cookbooks largely mimicked culturally common, mainstream recipes in cheaper ways. Common methods included ingredient substitutions, deletions, and additions, such as margarine substituted for butter.

Prior research on budget cookbooks is limited or nonexistent. This paper analyzes ingredients from nine budget cookbooks with attention to economic decisions made by each author. Future research on budget cooking could address a wide variety of concerns. One approach may focus on audience and whether these books actually target and are read and used by populations that would benefit economically from their instructions; another option is to focus on the end products by preparing meals from budget cookbooks and non-budget cookbooks at the time, to better understand how cheaply mimicked meals cook up.

ENDNOTES

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Pork Ribs | 2015
by Eliza Murphy



Radicchio | 2015
by Eliza Murphy

Alternative Food Systems: Expectations and Reality

abstract | *Short food supply chains (SFSCs) are a type of alternative food system (AFS) whose alterity is defined by socially proximal economic exchanges that are embedded in and regulated by social relationships. Recent scholarship has questioned assumptions of a causal relationship between participation in AFS structures and producer adherence to AFS value systems and broader food systems outcomes. One area where these assumptions have cast a shadow is on the motivations that farmers have for participating in SFSC market venues. To shed light on these motivations, nineteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with Vermont vegetable and diversified vegetable farmers. Within individuals and between interviews, some farmers seemed to hold contradictory goals. A qualitative coding framework based on the theoretical arc of Granovetter, Block, and Hinrichs was developed to parse out and organize these internal contradictions. The results demonstrate how formal and substantive rationality can both play a role in motivations to participate or not participate in certain SFSC markets. These findings challenge common assumptions about AFS alterity.*

keywords | *Alternative Food Systems, Short Food Supply Chains, Embeddedness, Karl Polanyi*

The debate regarding the legitimacy of the theoretical underpinnings of alternative food systems (AFSs) and whether or not they live up to expectations continues to evolve.¹ There is at present a lack of in-depth qualitative studies that examine the values, motivations, and practices of farmers participating in AFSs.² In part, this research gap is a consequence of assumptions that AFSs are fundamentally different and opposed to the dominant paradigm of food production and distribution—here referred to as the conventional food system (CFS).³ This notion of fundamental difference stems from a perceived dominant role of formal and substantive rationality in the CFS and the AFS respectively.

This oppositional framing finds its roots in the theory of economic anthropologist Karl Polanyi, which has been subsequently critiqued and modified by Marc Granovetter, Fred Block, and Clare Hinrichs.⁴ These scholars posit a concomitant influence of formal and substantive rationality in economic decision making. In this study, this model is used to interpret the motivations that a sample of Vermont vegetable and diversified vegetable farmers have for participating in a type of AFS known as a short food supply chain (SFSC). In doing so, this paper contributes to both the theoretical and practical literature on AFSs by confirming recent challenges to AFS alterity as well as providing practical insight into farmer motivations. First, the paper briefly reviews the evolution of AFS theory. Second, the paper explains how the analytical framework for this study was developed from recent AFS literature. Third, the analytical framework is applied to three case studies.

Finally, the paper concludes that formal and substantive rationality can both be playing a role in motivations to participate or not participate in certain SFSC markets. These motivations can be aligned in pursuit of a common goal or can at times come into conflict. Implications of this conclusion are discussed, and areas in need of further research are identified.

BACKGROUND

The Conventional Food System

There are numerous problems associated with agriculture and the food system today. Some of these impacts are tangible, including environmental damage, vanishing farmer livelihoods and rural communities, human health impacts, and social justice issues.⁵ Other impacts are more existential, including a sense of alienation from production, a lack of transparency and trust, and a yearning for more authentic foodways.⁶ For a certain subset of concerned producers and consumers, these impacts arise from a set of values, practices, and characteristics that typify the dominant paradigm of agricultural production and exchange—here referred to as the conventional food system (CFS).⁷

These concerned individuals perceive the CFS to embody such processes and values as centralization, consumer dependence, competition, domination of nature, specialization, and exploitation.⁸ These values have in turn shaped the structural characteristics of the CFS, which include increasingly fewer and larger farms; vertical and

horizontal integration of input manufacturers, producers, processors, distributors, and retailers in the food supply chain; increasingly globalized supply chains; and increased physical and social distance between producers and consumers.⁹ A growing social movement rejects CFS values, practices, and characteristics across the board, in order to resolve negative impacts that are perceived to be a consequence of these variables.¹⁰ The values and structures that are emerging from this movement have been loosely labeled alternative food networks—here referred to as alternative food systems (AFSs).¹¹

Origins of the Conventional and Alternative Food

Systems Sociologist Elizabeth Barham argues that all AFS movements can be viewed as a kind of anti-systemic protest against the disembedding of economic activity.¹² The idea of a disembedded economy was developed by economic anthropologist Karl Polanyi in his 1944 book *The Great Transformation*.¹³ Polanyi believed that in pre-industrial societies, economic decisions were evaluated primarily through substantive rationality; that is, economic activity was viewed primarily as a means for achieving noneconomic socially defined objectives, such as social, religious, or political considerations, as well as to meet individual needs. In this way, economic activity was embedded within society.¹⁴

Polanyi argued that Western societies made an abrupt transformation following the industrial revolution, beginning to perceive economic transactions as being informed and motivated by formal rationality. According to the theory of formal rationality, economic decision making is ideally guided by an internal logic of maximizing individual gain or utility. This formal rationality is posited as a universal human trait, not as a product of a unique sociocultural structures and interactions. Polanyi argued that by adopting this interpretation of the economy, Western culture created an idea of economics with a logic outside of social control; or in his words, the economy became disembedded from society.¹⁵ Polanyi predicted that this unrestrained economy would have severe negative impacts and that people would take action to protect themselves from the disembedded economy. AFSs can be understood as a countermovement against the formalization and disembedding of agricultural production and exchange that typify the CFS.¹⁶

Theoretical Foundations of SFSCs FSs have become incredibly diverse in terms of which values and impacts of the CFS they focus on as a point of differentiation. The Fair Trade and organic movements, community supported agriculture (CSA), farmers markets, localism, and more can

all ultimately be characterized as rejections of a value or impacts of the CFS.¹⁷ One type of AFS is called a short food supply chain (SFSC). SFSCs attempt to challenge the CFS specifically by socially re-embedding agricultural economic exchanges through structurally differentiated markets that foster more direct interactions between producers and consumers and deliver socially contextualizing information along with agricultural products.

There are three kinds of short food supply chain transactions.¹⁸ First, there are face-to-face transactions. These are the most embedded and likely the most local. Examples of face-to-face transactions include farmers markets, pick-your-own operations, community supported agriculture (CSA), and on-farm retail. Second, there are spatially proximal transactions, which are conducted by local middlemen while still delivering products that remain encoded with information about the context of production. These could include cooperatives, specialty stores, grocery stores, restaurants, and even institutions and schools. Finally, there are spatially extended transactions, which occur through non-local middlemen and non-local consumers but still deliver products with socially contextualizing information. One example of spatially extended transactions would be a regional distributor who sells products locally as well as up and down the East Coast.

The first two kinds of transactions create the most opportunity for economic exchanges to be experienced as situated in a social relationship and are understood to have the shortest relational distance.¹⁹ Thus, the SFSC structurally differentiates itself from the CFS through the elimination, reduction, or social contextualization of middlemen in the food supply chain, provisioning food products that also deliver social relationships and trust. The relational closeness that defines SFSCs confers upon consumers a direct role in what producers provision and how—a power that is confirmed by SFSC producers.²⁰ Relational closeness allows consumers to directly communicate the values they want embodied in their foods and also confirm through questioning and observation that these values are present. This degree of perceived control and transparency is impossible in the CFS due to the lack of contextual information delivered with a commodity product and the relational distance between producers and consumers.

Provisioning contextual information to consumers who are willing to pay for it gives farmers a way to profit from values that are not rewarded in commodity markets. Such opportunities are attractive to farmers who do not wish to or can no longer successfully participate in the increasingly

competitive CFS. Another potential benefit of SFSCs includes community economic development, achieved by keeping economic exchanges local, cutting profit-taking middlemen out of the supply chain, and even generating additional economic activity—an effect called an economic multiplier.²¹ Perhaps more controversially, it has been argued that communities with more spatially and socially proximal businesses score higher on quality of life indicators and experience higher rates of civic engagement.²²

The Debate Over AFSs The structure of AFS exchange seems to allow for greater transparency, consumer and producer agency, consumer-producer relationships, market valuation of public goods, local economic activity, and more. However, as short food supply chains have become more widespread, there is increasing concern that consumers and policy makers alike may be making a number of unfounded assumptions about short food supply chains.

There is increasing evidence that individuals seem to assume that certain values, practices, or impacts are a necessary outcome of the use and proliferation of AFS structures like SFSCs. Academic and political entities have overemphasized structural approaches to respatialize and resocialize food production in efforts to achieve desirable food systems improvements.²³ It has been demonstrated that consumers make many assumptions about a product's context of production and producer adherence to the consumer's value system simply as a result of the product being spatially proximal. Consumers have been shown to believe that local food is fresher, of higher quality, more natural, and less environmentally harmful than food purchased through spatially extended conventional supply chains. Nevertheless, these assumptions have been shown not necessarily to be true.²⁴ These studies begin to suggest that consumers conflate the structure of an exchange with adherence to certain values or with certain outcomes or impacts, even though they do not take the initiative to test these assumptions or do not have a way to test them.

Similarly, consumers may be susceptible to making assumptions with respect to social proximity. Short food supply chains are supposed to enable consumers to interrogate producers about the methods used in the production of and values embodied in their food purchases. However, some research suggests that consumers in SFSCs are liable to be predisposed to trust producers in direct exchanges, rather than generate trust through relationship building.²⁵ Thus, it seems that even trust, which is supposed to be an outcome of a process, is perceived to be an inherent quality of the type of exchange. In addition, despite placing an emphasis on social proximity, SFSCs have at times

been shown to be neglectful of the broader social good, perpetuating white privilege, unequitable distribution, and other harmful social dynamics.²⁶

Some argue that assumptions that certain values and outcomes are an inherent quality of AFSs arise from their inappropriate framing as being opposed to, superior to, and fundamentally different from the CFS.²⁷ This dichotomous oppositional framing appears to be at the core of AFS authenticity as discussed through the work of Polanyi and Barham above. Fundamentally, the assumption of opposing values, practices, and structures rests upon Karl Polanyi's opposing forms of formal and substantive rationality. Since AFSs are framed as being opposed to the formally motivated CFS, there seem to be assumptions that producers who participate in AFS market structures privilege substantive rationality. An authentic AFS producer is expected to value independence, community, harmony with nature, diversity, and restraint—substantively motivated goals—rather than the formally motivated, gain-maximizing behaviors such as centralization, consumer dependence, competition, domination of nature, specialization, and exploitation associated with the CFS.²⁸ However, it is not an inherent quality of AFS structures such as SFSCs that this dichotomy should be enacted.²⁹

Granovetter called into question the dichotomous framing of disembedded and embedded economies posited by Polanyi.³⁰ Granovetter argued that modern economic activity is never wholly disembedded and that preindustrial economies were never wholly embedded either. He supported his argument by examining ways in which social relationships inform and constrain the supposedly independent logic of the free market in modern societies.

Fred Block further refines the argument of the always embedded economy by positing that the consideration of embeddedness is in tension with considerations of marketness and instrumentalism in every economic transaction. Embeddedness, marketness, and instrumentalism refer to the importance of social relations and expectations, the importance of price, and the importance of individual goals, respectively.³¹ Depending on the unique characteristics of the actors and the context of the transaction, embeddedness, marketness, and instrumentalism play varying roles in a transaction. While embeddedness is opposed to marketness and instrumentalism, it does not preclude them, and all could play a role in any given economic transaction.³² Thus, Granovetter and Block completely do away with the notion of a society shaped and constrained by an independent market logic or completely constrained by the expectations

of society. Instead, economic decisions are always embedded in society, and individuals are independently acting upon prioritization of marketness, instrumentalism, and embeddedness in every economic exchange. Marketness and instrumentalism, both involving the pursuit of individual gain, are informed by formal rationality, while embeddedness prioritizing social and moral obligations is informed by substantive rationality.

Hinrichs brings Block's interpretation of economic exchange to bear on AFSs, using it to dismantle their posited alterity based on embeddedness.³³ If embeddedness can be found to influence the workings of the supposedly formally rational CFS, Hinrichs asks, could marketness and instrumentalism be found in the supposedly hyper-embedded exchanges of the AFS? By observing economic exchanges at farmers markets and CSAs, two of the most relationally proximal types of AFS exchanges, Hinrichs determines that instrumentalism and marketness are present. Thus, "embeddedness should not be seen as the friendly antithesis of the market."³⁴ This evolving dialogue provides evidence and a framework for explaining how formal rationality and substantive rationality can simultaneously motivate decision making on the SFSC farm level. It is from this theoretical context that the analytical framework for parsing out farmer motivations for participating in SFSC markets is derived.

METHODS Nineteen interviews were conducted by the author with vegetable and diversified vegetable farmers who operated near Burlington or Montpelier, Vermont, and participated in SFSCs. Initially, farmers who had previously participated in University of Vermont studies were interviewed, but subsequently snowball sampling methods were used to identify potential interviewees.³⁵ This method was particularly useful for identifying farmers who had not yet built a significant reputation or market presence. The interviews ranged in length from as short as half an hour to as long as two hours, though most were about an hour long. Most of the interviews occurred at the farms during the winter and early spring months of 2014. Two of the interviews were done over the phone, and three other interviews were done in person but away from the farm. Interviews were transcribed with HyperTranscribe, and these transcripts were coded with HyperResearch.

In addition to semi-structured interviews, participant observation was conducted on three farms. Two days were spent working alongside the selected farmers and their employees. There were many opportunities to ask

questions and take copious notes. Insights gained from the participant observation helped to support and inform the analysis, and these three farms are showcased in greater depth below.

ANALYSIS Qualitative data coding was conducted in two stages using methods outlined in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*.³⁶ First-cycle coding methods, which were used to gain familiarity with the data and identify potential themes, began while farmer interviews and participant observation were still being conducted. Two first-cycle coding strategies were used. First, attribute coding was done to pull out farm and farmer characteristics such as farm type, size, farmer experience, age, market participation, and additional demographic features. Second, a form of exploratory coding known as holistic coding was undertaken to gain familiarity with the data. These holistic codes identified general farmer goals, challenges, and motivations. After all the data were collected and had been attribute and holistically coded, a second-cycle coding scheme, which classified and organized first-cycle codes, was developed. This second-cycle coding technique, known as structural coding, organized the holistic codes into an analytical framework discussed below.³⁷

The holistic codes and the participant observation revealed incongruities in some farmers' motivations for participating in SFSC markets. Within individuals and between interviews, some farmers seemed to hold contradictory goals. A structural coding framework based on the theoretical arc of Granovetter, Block, and Hinrichs was developed to parse out and organize these internal contradictions.

The first order of codes indicated what kind of SFSC market venue was being discussed: a face-to-face market, a spatially proximal market, or a spatially extended market. The second order of codes indicated whether the motivation was a positive motivation to participate or a negative motivation to reduce or avoid participation in a market. Next, the type of rationality informing the motivation was coded as being marketness, instrumentalism, or embeddedness. Later, this order of codes was recoded back into broader categories of formal and substantive rationality to simplify the analysis. Marketness and instrumentalism, both informed by formal rationality, are often equally weighted.³⁸ Finally, the actual motivations, identified through the holistic first-cycle coding process, were lumped together using a second-cycle coding technique called pattern coding to identify relevant themes. These pattern codes were embedded in the

structural coding framework so that their relationships to each other were made apparent. Figure 1 shows the overall organization of the final coding scheme.

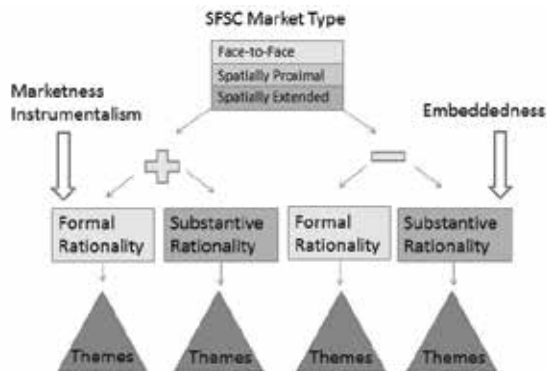


FIGURE 1. Shows the operational diagram used to code farmer motivations for participating in SFSC markets. The structure will frame the results below.

DISCUSSION The analysis described above was conducted for all farms participating in the study.³⁹ In this paper, the experiences of a select number of farmers will be highlighted in order to demonstrate how formal and substantive rationality can both play a role in motivations to participate or not participate in certain SFSC markets. Some farmers seem to privilege formal rationality, while others operate farms that achieve both formal and substantive goals, though at times these goals can be in tension.

Formal Rationality Participant observation was conducted on Frank's farm during the height of the potato and winter squash harvests.⁴⁰ The following description of Frank's farm operation is derived from both the coding of the interview and observations gathered while working on the farm. Frank's farm, average in size for this study at around twelve acres, was located about a half an hour from Burlington, Vermont, where most of his products are sold through a number of nearby cooperatives and specialty stores, as well as at a face-to-face winter farmers market. Frank is in his thirties, is married, and has a young child. The farm is unmarked to passersby, with no visible signage from the road that abuts the farm property. The farm is relatively mechanized with several tractors, implements, specialized vegetable washing equipment, and a new climate-controlled vegetable storage and processing area. Frank manages his farm operations and market venues strictly in accordance with how well they contribute to the farm's economic success.

This penchant for formal rationality was demonstrated at the very beginning of the interview when Frank was asked about his goals for the farm: "Well, it's mainly about hitting a revenue figure. In this industry, most people are not

netting more than 25 percent of their farm's gross, so how much money do you want to earn?" It was clear that Frank wanted to earn more than "most people" in this notoriously difficult business.

On the farm, Frank pursued this goal in several ways. The first was through extensive record keeping regarding labor costs, input costs, and sales figures. Unlike many farmers who were interviewed, Frank inputs and examines these data on a regular basis and claims to enjoy doing so.

I probably spend ... between one to two hours of actual computer work a day, just for the farm. Some people might say it is overkill how much time I spend doing statistical comparisons on stuff. But that is how my brain likes to look at stuff.

This data informed management decisions on the farm.

I have in my computer every single sale I have made, what crops were in that sale, how much of each, and at what price. That all tallies up at the bottom of the page. I know exactly how many pounds of everything I have sold, what I sold it for, how many acres I planted. So, I know what my yields and dollars are per acre. All the stuff that helps you make management decisions.

Unlike many farmers participating in SFSC markets in the area who grow upwards of forty different commercial crops in a growing season, Frank only grew about six commercial crops. His reasoning, as demonstrated in the following quotation, is to maximize the efficient use of his land and labor in pursuit of an economic return.

At this point we have about six main crops, and they all complement each other in terms of the time of year they require the most work, so the idea is that nothing is in competition [for labor]. So in May, we put the onions in the first week, potatoes in the second, winter squash the third, sweet potatoes the fourth, and into June, and they harvest in that sequence too ... I try to be pretty systematic, I hope I am not guessing at much most of the time, we are crossing our fingers a lot of the time, but I like to think we are not guessing, because this business is not that forgiving.

This prioritization of formal rationality for managing on-farm decision making is reflected in Frank's motivations for participating in certain SFSC markets.

Face to Face Markets With respect to face-to-face market venues, Frank only participates in a winter farmers market. Frank only discusses formally motivated reasons for participating in this market, and some of his comments suggest a negative perception of these market venues. The main reason Frank participates in face-to-face markets is a desire to capture the price premium that he can capture there, which he does not get through his spatially proximal wholesale outlets. However, this positive motivation to enter these markets on a wider scale was tempered by what Frank perceived to be their inherent economic inefficiency.

When I started [farming] I couldn't go to farmers markets, I had a full time job. And you know farmers markets you are taking an entire day away just to stand and sell stuff. For some people, they are really good at it, they get a lot of energy from it, and that is a great situation. I am kind of neutral on farmers markets.

This quote succinctly demonstrates Frank's own conception and self-positioning on the formal-substantive spectrum. Frank seems to be saying that some farmers participate in face-to-face transactions in order to fulfil goals that are motivated by something other than formal economic calculations (they get "energy" from participating), but by Frank's calculations it is clear that in most situations farmers markets are a waste of economically valuable time. This sentiment is repeated later in the interview when Frank implies that one of the main nonpecuniary rewards of farmer's market participation is social interaction, something he doesn't need much of to be satisfied.

I like talking to people, and I get that when I go deliver to the stores. I don't think I need to go talk to hundred people at a market to get my fill of social gratification. I get that even now, I bump into someone and they'll say 'Oh I bought some of your sweet potatoes at [a local coop], and they were really delicious.' And I say 'Thank you!' and that is really great to hear. Getting that once a week or something is plenty.

The other reasons that Frank participates in the winter farmers market and his negative motivations for not expanding these market opportunities also seem to be informed by formal rationality. First, in the winter farmers market, it is acceptable to bring a low diversity of

products, which aligns with his on-farm production plan that prioritizes efficient production of a low diversity of crops. However, in the spring and summer this diversity of crops is no longer acceptable to farmers market and CSA customers. Rather than meet this demand, Frank elects to utilize spatially proximal wholesale markets. Second, during the winter there are fewer alternative economically productive activities competing for his time.

Spatially Proximal Wholesale Markets Frank wants to spend the least amount of time finding buyers, delivering, and selling his products and wants to achieve the highest possible financial returns. Where Frank finds these goals met is in spatially proximal wholesale markets, including local cooperative grocery stores and specialty stores. Several of these stores plan their purchases during the winter, eliminating the need for Frank to find buyers during the season, and they buy high volumes of product and pay higher prices than spatially distant markets. Frank avoids spatially proximal sales that take too much time to negotiate or to deliver to in proportion to the volume of sales.

I sell almost all of my stuff to six customers, and the idea of making calls to restaurants to make forty dollars in sales is just not where I want to be in the summer, so I stick to the plan to a degree, especially with perishable stuff. But some people love driving around, and chatting with chefs, and they spend like 6 hours on a Tuesday driving. That would work for a farm at the Intervale, but I can't be away from the farm for that long. When I do deliveries it takes me three hours for five stops.

Spatially Extended Markets Though Frank views spatially extended markets as extremely efficient, he cannot participate in them because the low prices would hurt the viability of his business model. Other farmers, however, are more motivated by substantive rationality. They may choose to participate in the same markets as a more formally motivated farmer but to different degree, in a different way, or for different reasons.

Formal and Substantive Rationality Helen and her husband operate a relatively large farm, with over 40 acres in vegetable production and many more acres involved in livestock production. They have been in operation for over ten years, and they are middle-aged and have young children. Participant observation was conducted on this farm while numerous crops were being weeded and harvested and while sheep were being dewormed and

moved from one pasture to another. The farm was well kept and picturesque. A large farm-themed mural painted on the farm's packing shed was visible from the road, and signage invited drivers to pull into the farm's parking lot to purchase advertised foods from the farm store. A large new cooler was being built to accommodate the farm's focus on storing root crops for winter markets. Helen expressed both formal and substantive motivations for participating and not participating in certain SFSC markets.

Face-to-Face Markets When asked about her farming philosophy, Helen describes her relationship to farming as a way to make a living but also as a form of community service. This suggests a stronger role of substantive rationality in her motivations for participating in certain markets.

You know this is something people need. They need food, they need high quality food, and they need a connection to land too ... Like with the CSA, we have always wanted to have an on-farm pick up component. We do deliver shares now, and I have kind of resisted it, and I really don't like it, but it is sort of a part of the market. But I always, always want this on farm pick-up component, and I always feel like the people who come to the farm and pick up their shares just get so much more out of the program. They have the opportunity to come pick in the gardens, or even just talk to us and see a field. They don't even have to go out there if they don't want to. But I think it is important and I want to offer that. I want people to say, I know where this food comes from, I know how it grows, I can see it as well as eat it and experience it.

The quote reveals a tension between the formally motivated pursuit of lucrative market opportunities in the form of a delivery CSA and Helen's substantively motivated desire to provide a community service. Helen notes elsewhere in the interview that summer CSAs that have customers pick up shares on the farm have become increasingly competitive and take a significant amount of time and effort to organize and maintain. Nonetheless, Helen mentions several formally motivated reasons to participate in them. Helen's CSA is profitable and provides cash flow at the beginning of the season; in addition, preseason subscriptions make for easier crop and livestock planning.

A similar tension is revealed in Helen's discussions

regarding farmers markets. Helen is attracted to farmers markets for both formal and substantive reasons. With respect to substantive rationality, she enjoys cultivating social connections, and they fit into her philosophy of serving her neighbors. When she started farming commercially she only operated a CSA and at a farmers market. The quote below explains her motivations for doing so.

I wanted to sell directly to the consumer. I wanted to give people the opportunity, like I said to know a farm and know how their food was grown and be a part of that. And you know growing up here, more so then than now, everybody had gardens and everything, and now it is much less so, and you know there was this sense in the community that there were people who appreciated big gardens, and fresh food, but just couldn't fit it into their lives. So I was like, 'Ok, I am going to fill that role for them.' So I used to babysit their kids, and now I grow their vegetables.

Helen's farm continues to attend a farmers market, but the role of farmers markets on this farm has diminished as the farm has evolved. Helen envisions herself eventually eliminating this final farmers market from the business model and transitioning to spatially proximal wholesale accounts. Formal rationality has much to do with this transition.

According to Helen, the most significant formal motivation for participating in farmers markets, besides generating income, is initial public exposure and the development of a reputation as an authentic AFS producer that participates in alternative market structures. However, now that her reputation is established, Helen feels that that formal motivation for participating in these markets is diminished, and she is confident that the income for participating in these markets can be made up through spatially proximal wholesale venues. A negative formal motivation for not participating in farmers markets is the significant amount of time, energy, and labor costs she feels is required to participate in them, which she no longer feels is a necessary sacrifice for the economic sustainability of her business. Helen described her evolving opinion about farmers markets in this way:

Weaning from the farmers market is more of a life choice, you know, it is a lot of work, and it is weekends, and to really be effective at the farmers markets we feel that one of us, the business owners, needs to be there, we can't

just always have our staff do it ... we think it is important for one of us [the farm owners] to be there, and that is a huge commitment every Saturday to be at the farmers market.

This transition away from farmers markets to wholesale markets could threaten her substantive goals of community service; however, she explicitly manages these spatially proximal markets in such a way and keeps part of her business rooted in face-to-face markets so that this does not occur.

Spatially Proximal Markets With respect to formal rationality-informed motivations for increasing sales to spatially proximal local coops, specialty stores, and restaurants, Helen gives many reasons. These market venues are more efficient with respect to the labor time needed to sell a unit of product; certain buyers reliably buy large volumes of goods; and they are flexible if for some reason anticipated production does not meet their demand. The majority of Helen's revenue now comes from these market venues; however, her commitment to her local community and her substantive goals continue to play a strong role. As the quotation below demonstrates, not only does Helen frame participation in these markets as a way to meet these substantive goals, these goals directly guide and even constrain her participation in spatially proximal markets, potentially curbing economic rewards.

So, on the wholesale end, what I found as we expanded, we started talking to buyers for eggs we got to know them personally, and even though we didn't know all of their customers per se, we got to understand each restaurant or store as who they were as an entity and what they were trying to do, so then we were like 'Ok, now we are supporting them in reaching these customers directly to get their food local.' You know, we realize that not everybody is going to come to the farm stand three days a week to buy their groceries, so as our volume and production capacity increased it made sense to reach out to wholesale ... We only work with buyers who we know are committed to the local movement, or who have a customer base who are interested in it. It is all within 25 miles of the farm and we don't use any distributors.

Helen perceives there to be additional market opportunities both in spatially proximal and spatially extended markets which she could successfully exploit, but she chooses not to in order to meet her substantive

goals of serving her local community. Helen has found a way to successfully balance her formally and substantively motivated goals by keeping her farm involved in relatively less efficient and lucrative face-to-face markets and engaging only with spatially proximal wholesalers who share her substantive values while rejecting participation in spatially extended markets. While there is a negotiation between formal and substantive goals, on Helen's farm the relationship seems to be harmonious. This harmony seems dependent on the ability to take on certain economic costs in the pursuit of substantive goals. Conflict between substantive and formal rationality seems to arise when economic goals are proving hard to meet.

Conflict between Formal and Substantive Rationality There were numerous instances where farmers noted a conflict between the way that they would ideally like to market their products and the way that they currently did. Conflicts between formal and substantive rationality were often most visible in these instances. Eddy's farm was located on a dead-end gravel dirt road. Participant observation was conducted while lettuce harvesting, squash fertilizing, and field weeding were the main tasks at hand. There was one small greenhouse, a high tunnel, and sturdy handmade outdoor wash and pack area and cooler on the property. Little of the farm operation was visible from the road, and there was no signage indicating the presence of the operation.

Eddy's goals are to make a decent living, care for the soil, and participate cooperatively with other small farmers to supply a local food system. Eddy started his farm two seasons ago, intending to establish his operation through intensive hand-powered cultivation of a small number of crops sold to local wholesalers and through a CSA. However, his goals have been interrupted. Poor weather conditions and inexperience with the soils on his new property led to a number of crop failures. It became difficult to meet the expectations that his customers had for a wide variety of fresh produce, and Eddy felt that he was working too much and not making enough money.

Formal rationality informed Eddy's motivations to transition to regional wholesale markets.

The advantage [of wholesale] is that you know what you are going to be getting into, in terms of income. It allows you to be more efficient. You know, I only do a little over 3/4 of an acre. You know with the parsley I can get a high return on a small amount of space ... There is a trucking charge and there is a commission, so your margins are lower, but you

have more volume of sale, and you don't have to spend a lot of time working again, so as long as you know how to grow it properly. You know I didn't think it was going to be as much of a focus as it was, but I just make so much more money doing that than some of the other things that are a little more marginal, like salad mix. You know, it all depends on where you are. If I was in Burlington, and I could get ten dollars a pound for my salad mix, then that would be much different than getting five dollars a pound.

Though the motivation to more efficiently pull in more income has caused Eddy to transition to regional wholesale markets, he expressed substantively informed long-term goals to return to selling to local markets several times throughout the interview.

I think long term I'd rather have sales based more in the local area. You know I sell to the [regional grocery stores and distributors] for monetary reasons, but I would like to be more part of the local food system ... Yea, it's partly ethical, and its more just about what I, yea, it's my vision of what I want to do. You know, if I really wanted to make a huge business out of it then I would be at a different scale, you know, growing a lot of stuff for wholesale.

There is a tension between an expressed substantive motivation to participate in market venues that serve the local food system and the present need to generate income in an efficient way. For Eddy, face-to-face markets and spatially proximal wholesale markets are viewed as viable ways to achieve both formal and substantive goals in the long run.

CONCLUSION It is clear that both formal and substantive rationality play a role in the motivations that farmers have for participating in SFSC markets, validating the theoretical framework of Granovetter, Block, and Hinrichs. The dichotomous opposition between substantive rationality and formal rationality that is reflected in the oppositional framing of the AFS and the CFS is not strictly enacted by AFS participants. In fact, there seems to be a spectrum regarding the role of substantive rationality for participating in SFSC markets. Some farmers, such as Frank, seem to privilege formal rationality while successfully operating within the AFS. Others, such as Helen and Eddy, actively recognize that substantive goals play a role in

guiding the management of their farm operations and reasons for participation in the AFS. Nonetheless, these farm businesses must make a profit, and in the face of monetary or labor resource constraints, these substantive goals seem vulnerable to compromise. This raises a question of how well substantive goals can persist as AFSs become more popular and the markets more competitive.

Several experienced farmers interviewed in this study identified increasing competitive pressure as reasons for stopping or reducing participation in face-to-face markets, turning to spatially proximal and spatially extended markets to meet financial goals. To serve these markets, the structure of their farm business evolves as does their relationship to the community. Research needs to be done to identify measurable impacts that such transitions—and AFS participants in general—have on environmental, social, and economic sustainability. One potential metric for measurement might be the Community Capitals framework.⁴¹ If increasing competition and the scaling up of AFSs do indeed threaten substantive goals and community capital it may be necessary to intervene in that process.

There are many models upon which to base such interventions. Within the current paradigm of agricultural production for the purposes of exchange food systems, education could be intensified in order to change consumer values and grow the body of consumers who can effectively engage in these markets. Alternatively, subsidies could be used to support certain farm management strategies that are found to be beneficial or to minimize the financial stress on family farms by reducing costs such as healthcare, childcare, and infrastructure investments. Of course, there are some, such as proponents of the food sovereignty movement, who advocate for more radical changes that remove agricultural production from the realm of capitalist exchange. In doing so, the impacts of agricultural production and distribution would be determined by democratic engagement rather than through the price mechanisms of the free or regulated market. It remains to be seen how the impacts and the character of AFS will change as they respond to increased competition and popularity. However, even now AFS are not the panacea that many assume them to be. Could AFS in fact be a smokescreen, distracting from the pursuit of more fundamental and lasting change?

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ENDNOTES

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food sovereignty, which is the ability to have agency over the food system. The Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC; n.d.

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 34. Ibid, 296.
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Basque Garden| 2015
by Eliza Murphy



Piglet | 2015
by Eliza Murphy

Food, Farms & Solidarity: French Farmers Challenge Industrial Agriculture and Genetically Modified Crops

Chaia Heller

Durham: Duke University Press. 2013. 352 pp.

In *Food, Farms and Solidarity*, anthropologist Chaia Heller investigates the *Confédération Paysanne* (CP), a union of French *paysans* (peasants) who led a campaign against genetically modified organisms (GMOs) that expanded the scope of public debates about GMOs and played a pivotal role in their prohibition throughout Europe. Opposition to GM crops constitutes one aspect of CP's broader challenge to an encroaching industrial agriculture model and neoliberal development paradigm that threatens the viability of small-scale farming. While consumers typically lead alternative food movements in the Global North (e.g. organics), the *paysans'* mission is explicitly in solidarity with peasants in the Global South who are also fighting for their way of life.

Heller's lucid analysis of CP's creative protest tactics employs rich ethnographic detail and critical theory to impart practical insights and theoretical tools that can inspire and instruct anyone who dreams of a more just food system. *Food, Farms and Solidarity* makes valuable contributions to academic scholarship within social movement studies, food studies, and political ecology, though the book's most important impact is its integration of analysis *of* and analysis *for* food activists. Heller's innovative model of activist scholarship makes CP's successes and the analytical tools scholars use to analyze social movements accessible to a diverse readership. When public debates about GMOs erupted in Europe in the early 1990s, discussions revolved around potential risks GMOs pose to human and ecological health. Consumer groups and environmentalists spearheaded anti-GMO activism, contending GMOs were "Frankenfoods" that would incur indelible harm to consumers and the environment. Proponents argued the potential benefits to consumers (i.e., new products) far outweighed the inflated risks. Within this hegemonic "riskocentric" discourse, GMOs were either too risky or the dangers were grossly exaggerated; only scientists had the expertise to back claims for either camp.

When CP began organizing anti-GMO demonstrations in the mid-1990s, they broadened the terms of debate to include GMOs' impacts on producers, and in doing so they expanded the category of experts to include farmers.

For *paysans*, GMOs pose an imminent threat not because they are a health hazard but because they are a political and social hazard epitomizing the instrumentalist logic of capital-intensive agriculture that makes profit-making the primary goal of farming and attempts to render their services obsolete. *Paysans* categorize GM seeds alongside chemical fertilizers and monocultures as technologies that enhance the profit-making capacities of plantation-style farms while rendering smallholder farming "economically inefficient" and thereby unviable.

In contrast to the economizing logic of capital, Heller convincingly argues that *paysans* advocate a "solidarity-based rationality" concerned with maintaining the integrity of social fabrics and human well-being. While farmers have innovated new genetic material through seed saving and trading practices since the advent of agriculture, practices which also foster farmer solidarity, biotechnology affords this power to multinational corporations. As GM seeds are subject to private property law, corporations prohibit farmers from sharing or reusing seeds, and often GM seeds require fertilizers sold by the same company, undermining knowledge networks between farmers. While multinational corporations engineering seeds in labs and selling them to farmers is "efficient," *paysans* see GMOs as detrimental to the social relationships at the heart of exchanges of seeds, food, and knowledge. As such, CP considers GMOs unethical not because they are produced by "unnatural" tinkering with Mother Nature but because it is corporations that do the tinkering and profit from the products of the tinkering.

While CP's immediate aim is to challenge the neoliberalization of European agricultural policies, Heller shows that their solidarity ethic reaches beyond France. By identifying as peasants and networking with peasant organizations such as Via Campesina, *paysans* cultivate unity with the millions of self-identified peasants in the Global South who are also fighting for their livelihoods. While the term "peasant" is often associated with backwardness, *paysans* choose to identify as peasants to assert that peasants are not characters from the past but pioneers of a more ecologically and socially just future.

Heller draws upon extensive ethnographic fieldwork to detail the highly symbolic direct action strategies *paysans* use to capture media attention and provoke shifts at a discursive level. By combining nonviolent protest with performance art and juxtaposing unexpected signs like business suits and cow manure, these protests create a comical or ironic effect that disrupts neoliberal symbolic orders. *Paysans* frequently create "farms of the future" by hauling dirt, hay, and livestock into government offices or

fast food restaurants and then staging a leisurely picnic with farm-fresh food. Another common demonstration is a “crop pull,” in which demonstrators enter a GM crop field, uproot plants, and toss roughage into “hazardous material” bags. The movement’s most famous demonstration took place in 1999, when CP’s spokesperson, José Bové, was arrested while symbolically dismantling a McDonald’s under construction in Millau. When 50,000 demonstrators showed up in support outside Bové’s trial, the *paysans’* cause garnered international media attention. By detailing the *Confédération’s* stunt-like protests and powerful effects, Heller equips readers with the know-how to design their own protests that aim to subvert hegemonic logics.

Heller enlists an impressive array of social theorists including Michel Foucault, Antonio Gramsci, and Donna Haraway to explain how *Confédération Paysanne* provoked a discursive shift and why their tactics prove so effective in swaying public opinion about GMOs in Europe. Yet unlike most scholarship that would use the movement as a case study to develop theory, Heller explicates abstractions like hegemony and Foucauldian discourse in refreshingly clear prose and applies them to CP’s campaigns so readers can conduct similar analyses of the movements they engage in and use their conclusions to foster more effective actions.

While it has become commonplace for social scientists to call for engaged scholarship relevant beyond the walls of the Ivory Tower, research products that communicate findings in accessible prose without sacrificing analytical rigor remain exceedingly rare. Chaia Heller’s investigation presents an encouraging example of scholarship that truly transgresses boundaries of academic/nonacademic writing. Offering more than a captivating read, this book will ignite conversations between scholars, students, and activists and sow the seeds to imagine and create more ecologically and socially just food systems.

BOOK REVIEW | JOHN C. JONES

Food Activism: Agency, Democracy, and Economy Carole Counihan and Valeria Siniscalchi

New York: Bloomsbury. 2014. 251 pp.

From the biodynamic viticulture of activist French winegrowers to the corporate sector-born Utz certification for global coffee trade, *Food Activism: Agency, Democracy,*

and Economy is a collection of ethnographic case studies collected and edited by Carole Counihan and Valeria Siniscalchi. The editors decided to assemble this book while conducting field research about the Slow Food Movement. Counihan and Siniscalchi take a broad view of food activism, defining it as “efforts by people to change the food system across the globe by modifying the way they produce, distribute, and/or consume food” (3). Their goal for *Food Activism* was fourfold: 1) to document examples of food activism across the globe; 2) to demonstrate the interconnected nature of global food activism; 3) to discuss tensions within food activist movements; and 4) to investigate the interaction between globalization and food activist movements. The editors achieved each of these goals by effectively weaving a holistic examination of food activism across the world. The case studies they have assembled individually suggest both diversity and uniformity within food activist movements across geographic, economic, political, and cultural boundaries. Taken collectively, the editors present a narrative of increasing awareness of self-determination in the face of globalization. This self-determination surrounding food is interconnected with other movements of varying scope across the world. This idea resonates within food system scholarship but also calls to the deeply primal relationship between food and humanity.

Food Activism’s chapters are easily readable for anyone with a basic understanding of food system theory and a solid social science background. Common themes include resistance, agency in the face of neoliberalism, democratic populism, local control of production, and the ritual space of food. Counihan and Siniscalchi present fourteen case studies in total, with each chapter of the text addressing one case. The chapter authors are a diverse group of anthropologists and sociologists from across the globe. This diversity extends across geographic location, level of experience, and research interests under the broad food system umbrella. The editors divide the book into three parts, each examining food activism at a different scale. The book’s ethnographies include five local cases, four national-scale movements, and five international movements. Chapter authors examine cases from both the Global North and Global South, including Canada, the United States, Egypt, France, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Columbia. The geographic diversity of the cases supports the editors’ central contention that food activism is truly an interconnected, multi-nodal global system.

Although most of the authors in this volume agree on the definition of food activism, divergent definitions

suggested by some authors offer readers a more complete, complex, and nuanced idea of food activism around the world. Two chapters highlight food activism as a unifying force against exterior power. First, Nefissa Naguib's chapter entitled "Brothers in Faith: Islamic Food Activism in Egypt" describes the activism of youth members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Accounting to Naguib, this "Islamic food activism" is rooted both in Islam's communal obligation to the poor and needy and in youth members' need to buck the authority of their superiors both within the Brotherhood and in the Egyptian state. A powerful example of youth activism is the impromptu, unauthorized inspection of local government-sanctioned bakeries to ensure bakers do not mix dirt into the flour used to bake price-controlled bread. Second, Teresa M. Mares's chapter entitled "Engaging Latino Immigrants in Seattle Food Activism through Urban Agriculture" presents the Cuban people's subtle resistance to state-sponsored food production. Confronted with decreased food accessibility due to a combination of the American embargo and the withdrawal of food aid from post-Soviet Russia, common people engaged in several indirect attacks against food produced by the central government, including rumors, discursive language, and boycotting consumption.

Conversely, two other chapters highlight food activism as resistance to external power, but from a divided position. First, "Food Activism and Antimafia Cooperatives in Contemporary Sicily" by Theodoros Rakopoulos demonstrates that unity in activism is not always universal by exploring the class conflict between the production and distribution sides of agrarian anti-mafia wine cooperatives in Italy. In this case, the cooperative's distributors possess an anti-mafia and organic production activism that is separate from their working-class counterparts. Second, in "Peasants' Transnational Mobilization for Food Sovereignty in La Via Campesina," Delphine Thivet casts the rural peasant movement Via Campesina and the movement's idea of food sovereignty in opposition to both neoliberal corporate interests as well as concerns over traditional food security expressed by established international bodies like the United Nations and the World Bank. For Thivet, Via Campesina is a bottom-up movement that supports the rights of farmers to produce food within their home countries, regardless of both neoliberal economic policies and hegemonic international organizations.

Readers may observe two minor issues with the work. First, the editors neglected to present any food activism specifically tied to anti-hunger campaigns, suggesting that an examination of food activism related to anti-hunger

initiatives would require its own book. This narrowing of scope is both logical as well as practical. The absence of anti-hunger activism from the work is not noticeable. Second, the work contains no concluding chapter. This is problematic, as a concluding chapter would provide the editors an excellent opportunity to revisit their central thesis with readers. Absent such a conclusion, readers must occasionally stretch to understand the interrelated nature of some of the movements mentioned in individual chapters.

A number of readers will find *Food Activism* useful. Students will find the work clearly written, with minimal use of jargon, as well as excellent material for in-class discussions and research projects. Food system scholars will find the nuance between the profiled movements intriguing, as it challenges notions of agency and control within food movements. Activists and food policy experts will find inspiration for their own initiatives and policies from the cases presented.

BOOK REVIEW | JESSICA LOYER

Hidden Hunger: Gender and the Politics of Smarter Foods Aya Hirata Kimura

Cornell University Press. 2013. 226 pp.

The "hidden hunger" to which Aya Hirata Kimura refers in the title of her critique of fortification-based interventions into the problems of hunger and malnutrition in the developing world is generally understood to refer to micronutrient deficiencies, or the lack of sufficient nutrients in the diets of the world's poor. According to prominent hidden hunger discourse, diseases and disorders caused by a lack of essential micronutrients, such as vitamin A, iron, and iodine, are often invisible to those who suffer from them. Therefore the "hunger" is hidden from them and requires expert intervention to cure it. But Kimura points out that something else is hidden in these discourses and practices: the voices of the very people who live with hunger, disease, and poverty, many of whom are women. The fact that these are the very people whose bodies are targeted by hidden hunger interventions increases the irony that their voices are silenced as the experts who constitute the international food policy community determine how best to improve their health and nutrition.

Drawing upon theoretical foundations in feminist food studies, agrofood studies, and science and technology

studies, Kimura constructs a nuanced critique of the discourses and practices that constitute the focus on micronutrient deficiencies as the primary problem of hunger and malnutrition in the developing world. In the 1990s, international food policy regarding these problems witnessed what Kimura calls the “micronutrient turn.” Experts and policy makers diagnosed the lack of sufficient micronutrients, such as iron, zinc, vitamin A, and iodine, as the predominant problem in developing world diets. Simultaneously, they advocated technological fixes of fortification (adding nutrients to processed foods) and biofortification (altering foods at the genetic level to produce more nutrient-dense crops) as the solutions. By framing the problem as a technical question best addressed by nutritional and agricultural science, the micronutrient turn not only put the power to solve this problem in the hands of expert scientists and agrofood companies but also served to portray the problem as apolitical in nature. Instead of situating hunger and malnutrition within the broader context of poverty and social inequality, it sought to address nutritional inadequacies without changing their underlying causes.

Kimura implicates the ideology of nutritionism, in which food is viewed primarily as a vehicle for delivering nutrients rather than in context of the complex relationships between food, health, and the body, in the increasingly scientized approach to addressing food insecurity. Under nutritionism, “nutritional composition of food and bad eating habits of individuals come to be considered the problem, rather than living conditions, low wages, lack of land and other productive resources, or rising food prices” (5). But while nutritionism is certainly responsible for the diagnosis of the third world’s food problem as a nutritional one, it is only in combination with widespread neoliberalization that the solution to the problem came to be cast in terms of fortification and biofortification. Neoliberalism encouraged a market-based solution in line with an ideology of global trade as the best way to provide affordable food to the world’s poor. Thus solutions to micronutrient deficiencies “became synonymous with the consumption of nutrient-enriched products offered by the market” (11).

The book is structured to first develop the theoretical context for Kimura’s critique on global malnutrition and hunger alleviation policies in Chapter 1 and then provide historically and geographically specific cases to support her arguments in subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 serves to emphasize the historically contingent nature of the representation of malnutrition and the food problem. She develops the concept of “charismatic nutrients” to

demonstrate how discourses about the food problem have changed from the 1960s to the present day as a factor of social, political and economic factors, not simply as a matter of changing scientific knowledge. In Chapter 3 she dissects the “micronutrient network” that supplies fortified and biofortified foods to the world’s poor by investigating the global politics of hidden hunger. She reveals the role of the World Bank and similar lending organizations in advocating fortification as a favored intervention because of its good fit with neoliberal ideology. Chapters 4 through 7 examine anti-hunger initiatives in Indonesia as an example of how such interventions occur in practice, beginning by situating her study in the historical evolution of Indonesian food and nutrition policy. She presents individual commodity studies grounded in historical analysis and ethnographic fieldwork in Chapters 5, 6, and 7. Each chapter looks at a different type of intervention: mandatory fortification in the case of wheat flour, voluntary fortification in the case of baby food, and biofortification in the case of golden rice. She shows how these interventions are united under a discourse of nutritionism and an ideology of neoliberal market-based solutions.

Perhaps the greatest contribution of this book to the field of food studies is Kimura’s strong feminist approach, through which she reveals the highly gendered nature of hidden hunger policies and practices. She raises crucial questions about how casting the problem of hidden hunger as a technical matter requiring expert intervention has simultaneously brought attention to women as innocent victims of nutritional ignorance, shamed them for not providing proper nourishment for their children, and silenced their ability to contribute their perspectives despite their intimate knowledge of the experiences of malnutrition and the daily challenges of feeding their families. The alternative that she offers is a radical departure from scientized mainstream food insecurity discourses and draws upon the work of grassroots social movements such as Via Campesina. This alternative requires not only new solutions but a new reframing of the problem itself not as one of micronutrient deficiency or even of hunger but, instead, of “food sovereignty.” Most of all, it begs for recognition of that which is truly hidden by the “scientific triumphalism” of hidden hunger: discourses that are the social, political, and economic foundations of such hunger and issues that can be addressed “only by listening to people’s—and particularly women’s—voices” (171).

Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture, Second Edition E.N. Anderson.

New York: New York University Press. 2014. 362 pp.

Everyone Eats provides insight into the biocultural reasons for food choices. Most studies of world food problems tend to place focus on production while taking consumption for granted. The rise of nutritional anthropology and food history has recently shifted toward emphasizing the newly common phrase, “it’s not what we eat, it’s how we eat.” *Everyone Eats* draws on a nutritional context to explain the social and cultural reasons for why humans eat what they do. Anderson argues that consumption determines production by creating effective demand (4). The act of buying and acquiring food sparks particular interests. Therefore, emerging literature should focus on the entire food system, specifically looking at production, distribution, and consumption as part of a single process. The author points out that nutritional anthropology is, by definition, biocultural and biosocial. One cannot separate biology and genetics from cultural and social studies.

The book is organized into thirteen chapters, all of which explore the biocultural issues of food choices from the aesthetics of eating and various sensory perceptions between cultures. Overall, the key topics covered include human evolution, foodways, religion and ethnicity, food as pleasure, and food and medicine. Chapter 7, “Food as Pleasure,” details Anderson’s personal views of food as pleasure in an autoethnographic piece of research. The data collected are based on the author’s past experiences in China, Papua New Guinea, Istanbul, Mexico, and the Mediterranean countries and include powerful images, which are part of the ethnography. Anderson’s personal presence is clear throughout this book in his vivid reflections and literature. Anderson also utilizes poetry from an early medieval era and the mid-eighteenth century to illustrate desires for and consumption of alcohol.

Chapter 9 also draws on an autobiographical account from the author, with a discussion about food as a means of communication. It is most clearly a tool of communication in the process of a person defining his individuality and his place in society (171). Food communicates social class, ethnicity, and lifestyle. Such social distinction can be seen in social messages surrounding Chinese feast behavior. This section also advocates further exploration of food and social matters, and it argues that food study requires a phenomenological approach.

Chapter 13, an account of world food problems, places focus on the importance of understanding foodways. While ample food is available throughout the world, over a billion people are still undernourished, and starvation is one of the most common causes of death (250). These facts together demonstrate the importance of food as a universal phenomenon. The need for social justice is a real problem in the politics of food and science, where too often agricultural research funds are ploughed into luxury crops for the wealthy rather than to staples for the poor. Anderson discusses the political aspects of food distribution and critiques those who claim that the whole world can be fed based on the food available, which he claims is an idealistic vision in which all governments are able to overcome any mishaps, miscalculations, wars, and corruption. This chapter is situated well as the book’s final word on the politics of food.

The final chapter of the book recognizes unsung food creators who have never been previously identified. For Anderson, nutritional anthropology has a responsibility to ensure that the accomplishments of these individuals are recognized, which is one of the reasons for his emphasis of historical factors and food choices.

This book offers a snapshot of the recent drive towards exploring the sociocultural processes of food choices and is a particularly inviting text for undergraduates entering the field of food studies. The author’s emphasis of his own personal experiences of foods makes for an interesting account on perceptions. He offers a reflective view of how foods have impacted his life experiences. *Everyone Eats* is a relevant text for researchers exploring the relationship between food and society. Furthermore, it is a provocative text for future course design and policy making, as it provides a diverse account of the complexities involved in exploring the importance of food choices in today’s societies.

Nutritionism: The Science and Politics of Dietary Advice Gyorgy Scrinis

New York: Columbia University Press. 2013. 352 pp.

We currently live in the age of “functional nutritionism.” We are surrounded by cereals enhanced with calcium, soft drinks fortified with vitamins, butters and yogurts low in fat, and breads low in carbohydrates. These products all

claim to make us healthier and skinnier by optimizing our consumption of beneficial nutrients and minimizing our consumption of harmful ones. As Gyorgy Scrinis shows in his book *Nutritionism*, though, these foods do not always have the effects we expect. He argues that by focusing on the nutrient composition of foods, the presence of “good” nutrients, and the absence of “bad” nutrients, we draw our attention away from more important issues, such as the production and processing quality of our supposedly healthy food. Scrinis refers to this reductive focus as “nutritionism” and illustrates how the concept shaped the practices of the food industry, nutritional science, dietary guidelines, and the public understanding of food in the past 150 years.

Drawing on scientific, sociological, historical, and contemporary popular accounts and debates on nutrition, Scrinis claims to have a strong critique of nutrition science. He argues that other critics of nutrition science, such as Marion Nestle or Michael Pollan, have focused only on how scientific knowledge is mistranslated into dietary advice and thus overlook the larger problems of nutrition science. Scrinis questions the conventional paradigms of nutritional science, which he argues fail to offer a solid and trustworthy dietary guidance for the public. Scrinis powerfully illustrates the contested history of nutrition science through his nutritionism concept and offers a comprehensive critique of how nutritionism has been applied, utilized, and exploited in dietary guidelines, nutrition labeling, food engineering, and food marketing. Yet the book falls short by failing to present a real alternative paradigm to nutritionism or to give directions in today’s confusing nutritional landscape.

One of the best sections of this book is an analysis of the evolution of scientific knowledge from the perspective of his nutritionism concept. Nutritionism has taken different forms throughout the history of nutrition science. Scrinis identifies three main paradigms: “quantifying nutritionism,” “good-and-bad nutritionism,” and “functional nutritionism.” These paradigms frame the production, interpretation, and application of nutritional knowledge from the 1800s to the present (45).

The era of quantifying nutritionism ranges from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries and is characterized by the scientific discoveries of carbohydrates, protein, fats, vitamins, and calories. These nutrients deconstruct and decontextualize food, thereby turning it into a measurable, comparable, and quantifiable object. They also constitute the nutritional message of this era, which advocated people “eat more” of these essentially “good” and protective nutrients to meet their recommended

calorie intake. Beginning in the 1960s, scientists started to distinguish between these nutrients and identified “bad” nutrients that can lead to chronic diseases. This is the era of good-and-bad nutritionism, and the dominant paradigm was to “eat less” of “harmful” nutrients and foods, such as fat and butter. Finally, the era of functional nutritionism began in the 1990s and continues today. It perpetuates the notion of a single causal relationship between nutrients and bodily health but emphasizes the positive, health-enhancing role of special nutrients and foods. Functional nutritionism suggests optimizing the consumption of functional nutrients to “eat smarter” (162).

The “trans-fats fiasco” or the history of margarine described in Chapter 6 illuminates the practices of nutritional reductionism and illustrates the shifting paradigms identified by Scrinis. Before the 1960s, margarine had been mainly a cheap substitute for butter, consumed by the poorer segment of the population. But when scientists in the early 1960s found evidence of the relationship between saturated fats and heart diseases, margarine, which is made from polyunsaturated fats, was cast as a healthier, more desirable alternative to butter. Scrinis in this chapter shows how nutritional experts promoted margarine over butter in the era of good-and-bad nutritionism based on then-premier nutritional research, which claimed that saturated, “bad” fats increase the risk of heart disease. He also illustrates how the food industry took advantage of the reductive focus on nutrients in the era of functional nutritionism by claiming margarine reduces blood cholesterol levels. This history shows how the reductive focus on a single nutrient—in this case the presence or absence of “good” and “bad” fats—can distract attention from the highly processed and chemical components of the product itself by removing a nutrient from its broader dietary context, exaggerating the health benefits of a single nutrient and simplifying the relationship between saturated fats and the risk of heart disease.

In the final chapters of the book, Scrinis presents an alternative paradigm to nutritionism, the “food quality paradigm,” a more nuanced and complex framework meant to understand healthy and nutritious food without eliminating the findings of nutritional science. This paradigm focuses on the quality of production and the level of processing when evaluating food, distinguishing between whole, refined-processed, and processed-reconstituted foods (218–19). While refined-processed foods only contain additives, refined, and extracted ingredients, processed-reconstituted foods are constructed entirely from these ingredients. This frame emphasizes the importance of

cultural-traditional knowledge about food and health as well as the sensual-practical experiences of growing and preparing food to identify healthy and wholesome food and diets (236).

Despite the complexity of the food quality paradigm, Scrinis's alternative seems to agree with the "weak criticism" he earlier disparages: Eat less processed food. While his nutritionism concept is powerful in its critical presentation of the history of nutrition science, the several other concepts he introduces within his "Nutritionism and Food Quality Lexicon," such as the "nutritional gaze" or the "nutricentric person," are rather confusing for our understanding of nutrition science and do not help Scrinis to further his critique.

Overall, Scrinis's expertise is the history and philosophy of science and social theory, which makes *Nutritionism* a unique theory of nutrition science. He uses social theory to extensively critique nutritional science as a practice, a paradigm, and an ideology. His ideas range from the epistemic practices of the scientific field to the strategies of big food corporations in exploiting this knowledge. His historical approach offers a detailed background that supports and illustrates his arguments and renders visible the working mechanisms of this nutritional ideology. Even though the neologisms and complex theoretical framework are confusing at times, the book is still worthy of the attention of nutrition and social scientists as well as of the lay audience.

BOOK REVIEW | EMILY CONTOIS

A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age Amy Bentley (editor)

New York: Bloomsbury. 2012. 272 pp.

Featuring eleven essays penned by a veritable *Who's Who* of food studies scholars, *A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age* concludes the six-volume set edited by Fabio Parasecoli and Peter Scholliers that encompasses the cultural history of food from antiquity to the very near present. Focusing primarily on the West, *Food in the Modern Age* takes up the years from 1920 onward. Both broad in scope and specific in detail, the text reinforces what E. Melanie DuPuis argues in *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink* (2002): There are no perfect stories about food, eating, eaters, or food systems. The making

of the modern food system is a story best told not with a linear narrative arc of either ascension and progress or decline and degeneration. Rather, the story of food in the modern age must accommodate, balance, and negotiate contradictions and paradoxes.

Laying volumes of context in less than twenty-five pages, editor Amy Bentley's introduction sketches the political events, technological developments, economic changes, and social transformations that shaped the modern history of food. In this story, processed food emerges as a central character, full of ambivalent meanings and compounding consequences. Pre-war advancements began the industrialization of the food supply, yielding diets that boasted new variety and improved nutritional adequacy for many eaters. Bentley demonstrates, however, that World War II "changed, accelerated, and altered the production, manufacturing, and advertising of industrialized food, setting the stage for the remainder of the century" (5). The policies, products, and technologies of the war made a uniquely American mark on foodscapes of every size and locality: farm fields shaped by the Green Revolution; supermarkets full of processed items; dinner tables at which families consumed canned, bottled, and boxed foods; fast food restaurants serving quick, cheap fare.

Food systems became not only more industrialized during the modern age but also more globally connected and dependent. While globalization has shaped food since the Columbian Exchange, in the first chapter on food production, Jeffrey Pilcher effectively and succinctly argues that modern food has been characterized by "greater concentration, standardization, and globalization" (44). Such actions have yielded exceptional, but ultimately unsustainable, levels of production. Despite this, Peter Atkins asserts in the text's third chapter, "A history of the twentieth century is a history of hunger" (69). To support his nearly polemic statement, he organizes his chapter on food security, safety, and crises around the common tropes of famine, which took more lives in the twentieth century than ever before. Maya Joseph and Marion Nestle reveal why this is so in their chapter dedicated to food politics. They argue that despite the potential desire and ability of the global food system to produce safe, nutritious, abundant, accessible, and affordable food, political debates inundate every stage and sector of the food system because of intense social stakes and economic implications (88). In his chapter on food systems, Daniel Block also demonstrates the limits of global food production, citing not only recent attention to food deserts but also the salience of "the Eggo story." Block uses this brief 2009 shortage of Kellogg's

Eggo waffles, which was of nearly hyperbolic concern to consumers at the time, to demonstrate that despite industrial food's vulnerabilities, excesses, and problems, it "is still very much a part of not only American eating but also American culture" (67).

In Chapter 5, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson examines the boundaries constructed to divide eating in and out—between insiders and intruders, tradition and innovation, the simple and the fancy, the quotidian and the spectacular. In her study of eating out, she argues that a globalized world so blurs the distinctions between private and public that the meaning of eating out becomes "manifestly variable" and "perceptibly unstable" (113). She concludes, "In the twenty-first century, more than ever, dining out will be about producing difference" in order to ensure the survival of restaurants within a competitive culinary environment (125). In Chapters 6 and 7, Amy Trubek and Alice Julier also explore how all aspects of cooking and eating, in spaces marked both private and public, are intricately linked to the structures of the broader, global food system. In her study of kitchen work, Trubek explores the fluidity of culinary practices, demonstrating how the twentieth century's social transformations altered the location, hierarchical arrangement, social prestige, and affective character of paid kitchen labor. Within this constantly shifting context, Julier addresses family and domesticity, arguing, "In contemporary times, the family meal has become the locus of concern for food and for social and political development" (163). It is at the dinner table, both real and imagined, that the global systems determining what and how consumers eat collide with social ideals of family (particularly those enacted by women and mothers) and nostalgic feelings for "a mythic agrarian past" (147).

In Chapter 8, "Body and Soul," Warren Belasco also explores this conflict, characterizing the act of eating as one in which eaters eternally aspire "to reconcile the material demands of the body with the noble longings of the soul" (182). This process of reconciliation grew more pronounced, moralized, complicated, and elusive during the modern era, as advancements in science, global linkages, and consumer cultures "also broadened people's awareness of connections and consequences" (179). In Chapter 10, "World Developments," Fabio Parasecoli explores these connections and consequences "at the margins of Western modernity," working to decentralize and contextualize the text's dominant focus upon the United States and Europe as well as to provide inspiration for further research (ix).

In her study of food media and representations in Chapter 9, Signe Rousseau offers perhaps the most

optimistic account of food in the modern era, gesturing to its continuity over time. Citing scientific literature, food porn, fine art, magazines, and television programs, she argues, "People will continue to tell stories about—and through—food, because it is a natural conduit for thinking about and negotiating life" (200). In this way, Rosseau points to the achievement of this text and series. Despite past moments when the academy shunned food as a topic unworthy of serious inquiry, this series dedicated to the cultural history of food is now not only possible but demonstrative, enlightening, and cohesive. This volume singularly contributes valuable insights to the study of food and global history. *A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age* provides a thorough, varied, and dynamic history of food during our most recent century and is sure to engage scholars and students alike.

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BOOK REVIEW | KIMI CERIDON

Sugar & Spice: Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England, 1650–1830 Jon Stobart

Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2012. 304 pp.

Jon Stobart persuasively shows that daily purchasing habits, procurement techniques, and modern retailing practices date as far back as long seventeenth century in *Sugar & Spice: Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England*. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, he examines systems of flexible procurement and selling practices that led to adaptive retailing techniques for acquiring and selling newly available products such as spices, sugar, tea, coffee, and tobacco. Widespread availability meant these new goods were enjoyed not only by the gentry and elite: the middling and lower classes could purchase these specialty items at a variety of shopkeepers, such as apothecaries, drapers and metalsmiths. *Sugar & Spice* shows that by developing a complex supply network and by cultivating their personalized selling practices, grocers differentiated themselves from other retailers to become the most trusted sellers of these items. Through the examination of particular

grocers' sales records and the purchasing habits of corresponding consumers, Stobart takes a localized view to discuss the everyday consumption habits of individuals. By focusing on the practices of individuals within global trade, Stobart effectively reminds us the global is constituted and influenced by individual consumers and sellers.

Stobart uses a social history approach to examine individuals within the global system. He draws on geographical trends, descriptions, and illustrations of selling spaces, advertising and handbill materials, estate inventories, tax accounts, store receipts, grocer credit records and correspondences, and recipe books to examine day-to-day shopping interactions. Unlike Mui and Mui who, in *Shops and Shopkeepers of Eighteenth-Century England*, argue new products suddenly revolutionized retailing, Stobart pieces together a more nuanced picture in which shopkeepers used customized and flexible techniques to hone their trade over time.

Sellers and consumers cultivated relationships through trust, quality, authenticity, and personal reputation. Advertising media and trade-cards used provenance and imagery to further enforce these qualities. Such imagery from the eighteenth century endures in contemporary tea packaging through graphics of pagodas and Chinese figures. To establish trust, grocers created welcoming environments, with parlors for polite socialization and displays of goods for ready inspection.

Unlike historian Jan de Vries's market-based economic perspective in *The Industrious Revolution*, Stobart zooms in and examines habits of grocers and households. He argues that treating eighteenth-century purchasing behaviors as driven by novelty and imitation results in a caricature of the consumer as a mindless, homogeneous group with no agency. He dismisses this caricature by creating a portrait of the consumer as a person making daily consumptive decisions based on his or her individual needs, desires, and ability to define identity. As such, Stobart treats consumers and grocers as individuals and recognizes the importance of individual actions in building a global economy. Stobart does not dismiss the notions of novelty and imitation but rather argues they are only part of more complex motivations behind consumer behavior.

Stobart uses store records and advertising to support the assertion that individuals made grocery-shopping decisions based on day-to-day circumstances rather than due to a constant pursuit of novelty and imitation. Sometimes and for some individuals, this meant habitual purchasing. For others, purchases were made in response to the state of household supplies. Yet others made erratic

and often chaotic purchases likely based on instantaneous needs. People did not purchase groceries on a whim, swayed by fashion. Rather, most consumers visited their grocer with intent, planning purchases prior to shopping. Grocery shopping emerged as a process of addressing needs, comfort, individual preference, economy, and availability rather than as a process for creating and cultivating market distinction.

Stobart recognizes that the novelty of new groceries (tea, for example) eventually wore off, and new consumer patterns and habits emerged to maintain the demand. From a close examination of credit records, he shows that lower-class customers regularly purchased lower grades of tea and infrequently purchased higher grades of tea, indicating not purchasing patterns driven by imitation but rather purchases expressing preference, affordability, and occasion. The most telling piece of evidence Stobart discusses is an overseer's accounts of the St. John's workhouse. Here supposed luxuries such as treacle, tea, and tobacco are purchased for inmates. Since most inmates were not in the position to imitate the elite, purchases indicate these goods were part of ordinary day-to-day life and offered as comforts.

While Stobart demonstrates grocers and consumers exerted agency in defining their trade and consumption according to individual preferences, he does so with evidence from small geographic areas of England. He draws conclusions from evidence that is disparate in both time and location. For example, he compares the purchasing habits of one grocer in the early eighteenth century to those of a grocer in the late eighteenth century to show two grocers acting according to needs specific to a time and location. Such limited comparisons could constitute either a trend or an anomaly.

The same may be said of establishing temporal and spatial conclusions about consumption based on the limited availability of recipe books and estate inventories. The close examination of print advertising and the credit accounts of multiple grocers provides cohesion in the narrative, but it is unclear how larger socioeconomic forces exerted pressure on the behaviors of grocers and consumers. In this sense, Stobart struggles to balance the local perspective with the global perspectives. An analysis encompassing all of England may not be sufficiently local to sharpen this contrast. Despite the limitations of available evidence, however, Stobart does effectively show that eighteenth-century consumers were purchasing groceries due less to trendiness and more to individual circumstances. If anything, *Sugar & Spice* demonstrates the need for more

localized social histories that examine the roles individuals play in global trade.

Overall, Stobart provides a compelling case for treating eighteenth-century grocery purchases as driven by individual and personal choices rather than solely emulation. As a social history tracing the development of eighteenth century retailing, *Sugar & Spice* successfully localizes and, thus, examines eighteenth-century global trade on an individual level. While global economics indicate increasing consumption of new goods like spices, sugar, tea, coffee, and tobacco, Stobart presents a compelling case for examining the local influences of individual consumers and sellers.

BOOK REVIEW | ARIEL KNOEBEL

The Untold History of Ramen: How Political Crisis in Japan Spawned a Global Food Craze George Solt

University of California Press. 2014. 222 pp.

George Solt's ample narrative of the history of Japan's beloved national food traces ramen from its origins as the calorie-rich sustenance of Chinese immigrants and manual laborers to a fashionable worldwide craze. Solt begins his introduction with a comprehensive definition of ramen, paying respect to the variety of styles and regional characteristics, and moves on to discuss the ubiquity of ramen and the extensive documentation of its consumption in Japanese cultural texts. He speaks of ramen not simply as an evolving dish but as a lens to discuss food, labor, and Japan's changing national identity. Solt traces the cultural history of Japan through ramen's changing representations in popular culture but deliberately avoids examining ramen as a fetish food. Instead, he examines issues of global trade during Cold War and Japanese national identity.

Any reader can see through Solt's record that ramen is a dish worthy of its own narrative: It evolved from Shina soba, originally associated with manual labor, poverty, and Chinese immigrant identity, into a Japanese cultural export to cosmopolitan crowds across the globe. Solt uses the first three chapters to trace the dish's history. In the late nineteenth century, European imperialism directed cultural changes in Japan while migrant Chinese workers brought their food traditions to the quickly industrializing country.

Chapter 2 uses a well-researched analysis of declassified US government documents to discuss Cold War food rationing and the shortages in wheat and meat that caused the effective elimination of ramen from the Japanese diet. Chapter 3 changes focus to discuss instant ramen marketing and technology in Japan and examines many of the implications of ramen's popularity on both Japanese and American culture.

Chapters 4 and 5 follow the transformation of ramen into a Japanese national food and a globally iconic dish. One of the most remarkable parts of the story of ramen is the dish's staying power as a Japanese cultural staple and its ability to transform into a globally regarded culinary masterpiece. Solt places the Japanese Raumen Museum at the forefront of his analysis here, going into great depth about its creation and contents. He then expands his scope to the international scene, in which ramen has risen to popularity in recent years. In his final analysis of ramen's place in today's food world, Solt examines the continuing artistry and commitment to excellence of many ramen chefs but misses an opportunity to examine the social implications of the most recent ramen crazes outside of Japan from a consumer level.

This first section of the book feels rife with digressions and cultural analyses that lack strong context or connection to Solt's main argument. He offers strong descriptions of specific case studies—the Raumen Museum, the Nissin corporation, and popular movies and books—but provides few tie-ins to his central argument. These important pieces of evidence, which could have strengthened the thesis of the book, instead just feel like digressive stories with frail relation to the central theme. By contrast, the stronger second section includes much more appropriate readings of cultural artifacts, which relate to the main argument in a significantly more compelling way. Here, Solt describes the transformation of ramen into a fashionable object worthy of specialty shops and subcultures across the world.

Although Solt makes a compelling argument regarding the cultural relevance of ramen both in a historical and modern context, large portions of the book feel unaligned with the central point. Solt's work could have been divided into three separate books: a discussion of the historical cultural and labor changes in Japan through representations of ramen in popular culture, a comprehensive look at food rationing in Asia during the Cold War (when ramen was essentially removed from the menu), and a history of the instant ramen industry in Japan and the world. Solt's lengthy discussion of food rationing takes up a large portion of the book's content, causing the reader to miss

out on interesting evidence of ramen on the Japanese black market—a facet of the ramen story that is only alluded to and never discussed. Solt seemed to be stretching his evidence about wheat rationing in order to relate it to ramen noodles when records appeared to be much more about bread and other foodstuffs. He includes mere mentions of a black market for ramen but offers no further discussion of the cultural implications or history of this time period. Further research in this vein would have supported Solt's argument and engaged the reader further, in contrast to his digressive approach, which appeared blind to an important part of Japanese culture in the inter-war period.

Overall, Solt's account feels well researched and easy to read. The book is accessible and appealing to scholars and interested readers alike. However, *The Untold History of Ramen* falls short in fully utilizing this evidence to enhance the author's argument about ramen as a marker of cultural change in Japan. Upon concluding, the book leaves the reader with a general satisfaction regarding ramen's role in Japan's cultural supremacy but without a thorough understanding of exactly how that came to be.

BOOK REVIEW | ROBERT MCKEOWN

Dubious Gastronomy: The Cultural Politics of Eating Asian in the USA Robert Ji-Song Ku

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. 2014. 304 pp.

The last decade has seen a boom of interest in Asian cooking as well as a parallel increase in its availability around the world. One consequence has been the rise of dishes and cuisines that are not just available in the mainstream but ubiquitous. Within the borders of the United States they have come to represent a new category of foods: those synonymous with Asia but entirely part and parcel of a culture that is representative of Asians in America. This category has risen at a time author Robert Ji-Song Ku labels as defined by “trans-national flows of labor and capital, shifting geographic borders, flexible cultural citizenships, and fluid ethnic identities”—in other words, an era that demands new ways to discuss and define why and how we eat (1).

Set against a backdrop of fear for the waning of “authentic” Asian cultures and cuisines—especially outside their natural borders—Ji-Song Ku's *Dubious Gastronomy*:

The Cultural Politics of Eating Asian in America asks what, exactly, does the Americanization of Asian food culture mean? Rather than lamenting the bastardization and ruination of so-called authentic foods, Ji-Song Ku relocates the very focus of authenticity by positing that there is an entirely new set of cultural politics at work: one which he labels with fondness and energy as “the dubious,” or more specifically something which has undergone a doubt-inducing, disrespectful (in the traditional sense) process of Americanization and, finally, transformation. In a series of critical explorations of Asian foods in America, he questions: Is authenticity an illusion? Or is it a trap? By refashioning the idea of authenticity in certain globalized Asian foods, he sets out to prove that, while Asian-American food cultures may appear less robustly “authentic” in the traditional sense, they are also more subtle and pervasive in their complexity than we may think.

Ji-Song Ku compares the Americanization of Asian foods to the pidgin form of any language and the traditional Asian food culture to a mother tongue. He underlines that the elevated status of any form of language only holds thanks to a certain political economy of communication. Indeed, this structuring philosophy plays a key role in the way he discusses food in both a cultural and political sense. This type of discourse, he furthers, rules all forms of culture, with the edible variety being no exception. He calls upon the oft-cited Arjun Appadurai, in his Letter on Authenticity, to underline the constant state of transformation at work within the boundaries of his object of study: “all cuisines have a history: tastes shift, regional distinctions go in and out of focus, new techniques and technologies appear” (25).

Spotlighting the tension between trend-driven cultural status and historically-rooted patterns of identification, Ji-Song Ku argues that if “the health and vitality of a cultural practice are directly connected [to trends, then] food culture in Queens is as important,” as equally meaningful, as the very existence of a cuisine at its gastronomic root—say, a laksa cooked in Penang or a miso paste-permeated soup in Seoul (5).

Dubious Gastronomy focuses on three cultures—Japan, China, and Korea—and takes as a series of taste cases some of their respective entries into the psyche and landscape of consumption in North America. On one level, this book is a cross-disciplinary exploration of food and culture (Asian and Asian-American); on another, it is an intellectual yet personal yarn from a lover of all things edible whose background (Korean-American) and places of birth and residence (Los Angeles, Manhattan, and Hawaii) play a clear role in the choice of topic. Ji-Song Ku mixes ethnographic

research and field interviews with forays into linguistic origins, literary theory, ethnic history, and textual analysis, extrapolated for an increasingly complex time in which food culture has assumed a place in the populist pantheon.

Matching his culinary focus to the borders of the United States, Ji-Song Ku redeploys Asian-Americans from a position of cultural isolation to one defined by a “discursive fellowship” in their constant role as guardians of culture and politics for their native cuisines. There are three distinct sections in *Dubious Gastronomy*, and each examines a different aspect of “the dubious” through a case study and ethnographic exploration of a single aspect of Asian-American food culture. The first discusses “inauthentic gastronomy,” using California rolls and Chinese takeout as subjects; the second, “disreputable gastronomy,” focuses on kimchi and dog meat; the third, “artificial gastronomy,” tackles monosodium glutamate and SPAM.

Deep, ethnographic histories of his subjects are a strong feature of Ji-Song Ku’s work. He traces the historic development of the California roll, unpacking different creation myths and their meanings. American hegemony in culture takes center stage, as do discourses of authenticity. In his ode to kimchi, Ji-Song Ku traces the creation and path of a bottle of the fermented cabbage pickle that his parents gave him to take the reader to the extremes of the Korean homeland, through the history of the New World exchange of ingredients (most importantly, the chile) and to his childhood haunt of Flushing, Queens, the most diverse place on earth. He gives kimchi context as a product of certain ingredients; as a chile-laden dish; and as a food once considered shameful and stinky. He documents the dish’s battles with Japanese conglomerates at a CODEX hearing (meant to establish parameters for what can be called kimchi), tracing its path as it becomes a celebrated Korean national treasure with its own museum and a present-day superfood in the United States. Monosodium glutamate (MSG) follows a similar redemption trail, beginning with a Japanese scientist’s discovery and later finding its way into *Vogue* magazine and an enormous percentage of American foodstuffs. Once derided, he notes, MSG is now available as a table condiment in a generation of hipster-run, chef-driven restaurants.

If there are weaknesses to Ji-Song Ku’s approach, they tend to emerge from the same areas that are also his obvious strengths. His exclusive focus on a handful of Northeast Asian foodstuffs from three cultures excludes the dimensions of regional cuisines—fiery Szechuan food or delicate Kyoto cooking and tea culture, for example. Some of the East’s most celebrated cuisines, from Thailand to

India, are entirely without recognition here. What Ji-Song Ku’s book accomplishes, however, is not so much identifying questions and providing concise answers. His is a gesture that invites the likes of food adventurers, home cooks, professional chefs, and academics all to take a seat around a common America table—one on which Asian cuisine is served and constantly changing.

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BOOK REVIEW | LIZ BADA

Eating Asian America: A Food Studies Reader

Robert Ji-Song Ku, Martin F. Manalansan IV, and Anita Mannur (Editors)

New York: New York University Press. 2013. 210 pp.

Eating Asian America addresses the question of why Asian and Asian-influenced food is an integral art of the American foodscape. Common posits for this are that Asians are naturally good cooks, Asian food is intrinsically delicious, or Asians are more devoted to entrepreneurship than other immigrant or ethnic groups. The editors of *Eating Asian America* consider a different, more complex answer. The overwhelming Asian presence in the American foodscape is the result of external forces and inequalities that have restricted and defined Asians into an alimentary role. Food is a permissible realm for Asian advancement and visibility in America, whether as indentured workers, famous chefs, or business owners. *Eating Asian America* works around the premise that food is a way to facilitate the process of racialization. This process essentializes Asians into a single gastronomic body and subsumes national and regional differences under generic headings such as “Chinese,” “Asian,” or “foreign.” This results in the term “Asian” being “not merely a descriptive category for a people and nation . . . [but] a commodity to be bought, possessed, and ingested” (3). The authors of *Eating Asian America* refute the idea of a generic multiculturalism that uses food to simultaneously and superficially celebrate diversity and unity. They argue that Asian American foodways are not the sole product of culinary tradition but

result from a combination of “racial, gendered, sexualized, and classed hierarchies” (6).

There are four sections in *Eating Asian America*, each focusing on a different aspect of the Asian gastronomical experience. In Part I, the authors address the issue of labor and entrepreneurship in food service. In Part II, the authors discuss the processes through which food came to be the primary way for the majority to interpret Asian/Asian Americanness. In Part III, the authors investigate how the category of “Asian American” is constructed. Finally, in Part IV, the authors explore literary and artistic representations of food as a guide to understanding the construction and definition of Asian American identity.

Part I centers the discussion about Asian American culinary labor upon the agency of Asian Americans. In this section, Erin M. Curtis focuses her essay on Cambodian-owned donut shops in Los Angeles. Los Angeles is home to more donut shops than any other city in the world, and Cambodians own approximately 90 percent of those shops. Curtis traces this phenomenon back to the confluence of a culture primed for donut businesses to flourish and a single headstrong immigrant, Ted Ngoy. Curtis argues that donut shops act as a site of cultural negotiation. This is supported strongly by her analysis of how that negotiation occurs, not only between cultures, but within Cambodian immigrant culture as well. Although providing a uniquely American commodity, donut shops also provide a means for creating a unified immigrant culture. The overwhelming presence of Cambodian donut shops has resulted in a network perfectly structured to help maintain and reproduce Cambodian culture. Through constant contact with Angelenos, donut shops provide a safe space in which immigrants can learn to navigate American culture.

Part IV shifts the focus from the experiential to the artistic. In Part IV, Delores B. Phillips discusses the cookbook *Madhur Jaffrey's World Vegetarian* and the way in which it recenters globalization on the South Asian experience. By addressing globalism from a South Asian perspective, Jaffrey's text opposes the presence of hegemonic global corporations, which work to reduce globalization to a set of market forces. Phillips explores Jaffrey's process of describing a cultural space by its culinary practices. This recartography draws the world in a very different shape than maps based upon cultural features such as language or religion. It results in much broader regions, with loosely defined and overlapping borders. “The result of the cartographies that she draws is a sense of place that implies the wideness of the world but is still small enough to fit into a single bite” (375). Phillips also

allows that Jaffrey's text is not without its problems. Jaffrey both highlights and obscures Third World women from the First World reader. She transforms the specific cultural experience of Indian women sorting lentils to a generalized Third World process that the reader can observe but has no investment in or connection to. Third World labor is reduced to a picturesque introduction to First World actions.

Eating Asian America brings a number of new voices into the ongoing conversation about the interaction between food and identity. While the concept itself is not entirely novel, the authors address it from a perspective largely absent from the field. One of *Eating Asian America's* strengths is its exploration of the economic aspects of identity. This book does address the role of Asian Americans in the service economy. However, this book avoids the common trope of slotting Asian American labor into essentialized characters like “the cook” or “the delivery boy.” Asian American labor is discussed not just in relation to food service but also in terms of production, distribution, consumption, and artistic efforts. The relationships between food and labor have not been extensively studied in any arena, but this is a particularly glaring omission in relation to Asian Americans, as Asian American immigrant history is rooted in migrant labor. This book highlights the agency of Asian Americans in the global marketplace, as leaders and creators of economic movements.

Eating Asian America also puts particular emphasis on the expression, as opposed to the formation, of identity. The essays in this book focus not on how Asian American identities are created but rather on how those established identities are performed and received. In addition, this book takes care to include a wide spectrum of voices. While the stories of Chinese restaurant workers or Japanese American internment camps may have been previously encountered, it is unlikely that scholars outside of this field of study are as familiar with the Filipino diaspora or Uzbek communities in Brooklyn.

Eating Asian America does an excellent job of introducing the Asian/Asian American perspective to the discipline of food studies. This book is a highly useful, and much needed, addition to food studies. It is a significant addition to the growing conversation about American foodways; as such, it is important that this book not be considered to explore a niche topic. *Eating Asian America* should be recognized as a vital aspect of American food culture and not relegated to a specialty subject.



Scene with Venison | 2015
by Eliza Murphy

Call for Members

THE ASSOCIATION

The Graduate Association for Food Studies (GAFS) is an interdisciplinary academic community founded in the spring of 2014 with the goals of connecting graduate students who are interested in food and promoting their exceptional work.

The organization publishes the *Graduate Journal of Food Studies*, provides its members with calls for papers for food-related conferences, offers short primers on professionalization, and is currently organizing its first annual conference. For more information on joining, please visit the website.

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THE JOURNAL

The *Graduate Journal of Food Studies* is an international student-run and refereed journal dedicated to encouraging and promoting interdisciplinary food scholarship at the graduate level. The *Journal* is now accepting submissions for its fourth edition; the deadline is **31 January 2016**.

Published bi-annually in digital and print form, the journal is a space in which promising scholars showcase their exceptional academic research. The *Graduate Journal of Food Studies* hopes to foster dialogue and engender debate among students across the academic community.

The *Journal* features food-focused articles from diverse disciplines including, but not limited to: anthropology, history, history of science, sociology, cultural studies, gender studies, economics, art, politics, pedagogy, nutrition, philosophy, religion, and the natural sciences. The *Journal* also includes a section for Book Reviews.

WWW.GRADUATEFOODASSOCIATION.ORG/JOURNAL

Call for Artwork

THE JOURNAL

The *Graduate Journal of Food Studies* is seeking original artwork from artists, students, and readers to feature in forthcoming issues. Artwork must consider the topic of *food* broadly including, but not limited to: its production, availability, preparation, journey, cultural context and history, taste, texture, etc. Work conceived as a series is appreciated but not required.

While we live in a photographic social networking age, it's important that your contributions are ambitious and considerate of both broader media, as well as tried and true techniques. The *Journal* welcomes drawings, paintings, and collages as alternatives to digital snap shots of dinner courses in exotic locales (though these could be interesting too).

If you are interested in submitting your work for our review, please send 6-10 images formatted on 8.5x11 sheets as hi-resolution (300 dpi) .pdf or .jpg files to the following address:

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A Word on the Fonts

Given the importance of self-presentation in academics, we think that having a striking-yet-professional graphic look is important for the GAFS. Designer Claudia Catalano gave the *Journal* its original layout, something we've tinkered with just slightly in our move to print. With that move, we decided that we needed both a serif and sans serif font, both of which would do well in print as well as digitally. We went with the following two fonts, Lato and Merriweather, and here's a bit about them (with some text borrowed from Google Fonts).

Lato

Lato is a sans serif typeface family started in the summer of 2010 by Warsaw-based designer Łukasz Dziedzic ("Lato" means "Summer" in Polish). When working on Lato, Łukasz tried to carefully balance some potentially conflicting priorities. He wanted to create a typeface that would seem quite "transparent" when used in body text but would display some original traits when used in larger sizes. He used classical proportions (particularly visible in the uppercase) to give the letterforms familiar harmony and elegance. The semi-rounded details of the letters give Lato a feeling of warmth, while the strong structure provides stability and seriousness.

Merriweather

Merriweather was designed to be a text face that is pleasant to read on screens. There are currently four weights: Regular, Light, Bold, and Black. Designed by Eben Sorkin, Merriweather features a very large x height, slightly condensed letterforms, a mild diagonal stress, sturdy serifs, and open forms.

