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Food Security Conversations ...charting the way forward

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Editor's Note

This is the first of hopefully numerous future editions of the *Graduate Food Discussions Paper Series*. With the upsurge in graduate student work and interest in food-related research, and the urgency to consider food security in light of the recent global food crisis, the timing of this Series is certainly opportune. I hope that the Series will provide opportunities for sharing graduate research but also encourages dialogue and collaboration among graduate colleagues.

The idea for the Series emerged following the 2009 Graduate Student Food Colloquium, which in turn was a timely response to the extreme growth of interest in food-related graduate study; it was also a response to the tremendous energy, action and discussions that have arisen recently on how to best respond to our current insecure global food system. The Colloquium, organized by Jasmine Kwong and myself as part of our work with the Centre for Studies in Food Security, was hosted as part of Toronto's *Food For Talk* (FFT) whose primary mandate and aim is to provide a place for conversations to take place between people who explore and work with the emerging and challenging issues around food security, agricultural transformation, and local food alternatives/networks. The goal of the Colloquium was to enhance the tri-university experience among York University, the University of Toronto, and Ryerson University students. It was also to serve as a place to share and to learn about other students' current research and interest in food-related study; to network; and to present current work in a highly collegial environment.

The Colloquium was most certainly successful in instilling a renewed sense of enthusiasm and energy among presenters and attendees -so much so that it was often vocalized that the "momentum generated today" must not be lost. I hope that the *Graduate Food Discussions Paper Series* will be a catalyst for spurring on this momentum as well as a space for celebrating the diversity of food-related research taking place and harnessing ideas for a sustainable future.

Your colleague,

Evelyn Gere
2009 Editor

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Please note that most of the contributions in this Series were presented at the Graduate Student Food Colloquium on April 25, 2009. They contain mostly preliminary research material, but have undergone an anonymous peer-review involving all contributors of this volume. They might eventually be published with similar and/or revised content in an academic journal.

Food Marketing to Children: The Case of Market Failure in Canada

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Abstract

Food marketing to children has received considerable attention due to its association with childhood obesity. Although causative links are not established in the literature, there is now substantial evidence supporting the relationship between marketing and children's food consumption behaviours. In Canada, food marketing to children falls under federal jurisdiction, but is mainly regulated by industry, leading to a high degree of oversight. This paper uses the framework of market failure to argue for more stringent policies and enforcement in order to protect the health and well being of children. The recent release of the Canadian Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) provides a timely opportunity to revise policies with increased government involvement, and the goal of regulating compliance. The implications and evaluative measures of the proposed policy options are also discussed.

Children's diets today reflect a dramatic change in the food system over the past thirty years. The average diet is higher in calories, saturated fat, sugars and sodium than that of previous generations (Institute of Medicine, 2006). This change - along with myriad other lifestyle factors - is contributing to the epidemic of childhood obesity. The increasing prevalence of childhood obesity on a global scale has been well documented (World Health Organization, 2004a); a concerning trend due to the risk of long-term health consequences, including Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, respiratory disorders, cardiovascular disease, orthopedic problems and depression (Canadian Pediatric Society, 2002). In Canada, 26% of young people (age 2-17) are overweight or obese; most alarmingly, the obesity rate of 12-17 year olds has tripled in the past 25 years (Shields, 2006). Thus, the exigent nature of childhood obesity and its many possible etiologies have led international organizations to urge policy recommendations to address the epidemic (World Health Organization, 2004b; International Obesity Task Force, n.d.).

One widely criticized association is the abundance of food marketing to children. Researchers report that children are exposed to approximately 5500 food advertisements per year (Desrocher & Holt, 2007), mostly for sugary breakfast cereals, confectionaries, savoury snacks, soft drinks, and fast foods (Hastings et al., 2003). In addition, unprecedented mediums such as Internet, cell phones, video games,

magazines, sponsorships, school competitions and prizes are ubiquitous in children's lives today (Desrocher & Holt, 2007). Although television advertisements have declined since thirty years ago, emerging mediums are increasingly pervasive, and their effects on children's food choices remain unknown.

In Canada, Quebec has received international recognition for banning food advertising to children less than 12 years old (Quebec Consumer Protection Office, 1980). Other provinces have codes that address food advertising, but are primarily self-regulated by the food industry (World Health Organization, 2004b). This paper argues for more stringent federal policy concerning food marketing to children under the age of 13. The concept of market failure is used to support the case for increased government intervention. Specifically, this paper urges two federal government departments - Health Canada and Industry Canada - to collaborate with a recent industry initiative (Canadian Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative) in order to create a policy framework that meets the needs of both sectors. Evaluation of the policy recommendations will also be discussed.

The World Health Organization (2004b) defines marketing as "the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives" (p.3). An international definition is important to acknowledge due to the globalized nature of food marketing; however, this paper will refer to marketing in a more simplistic form: advertising and promotions of products. In the context of food marketing, policies take the form of statutory, non-statutory or self-regulations (World Health Organization, 2004b). The former are rules or legislation enforced by government or mandated bodies; examples are laws on consumer protection, advertising and communications (World Health Organization, 2004b). Non-statutory guidelines are similar in nature but are not enshrined by law. Self-regulation is characterized by the presence of "ethically-based guidelines" and a process for review, which are both regulated by industry (World Health Organization, 2004b, p. 3).

Review of Literature: Science or Ethics?

Due to the myriad etiologies of childhood obesity, it is unlikely that the scientific literature can demonstrate true cause and effect relationships with food marketing, or any other associated contributing factor. Regardless, two influential systematic reviews have provided strong support for the relationship between food marketing and child consumption behaviours.

Hastings and colleagues (2003) assessed 155 studies and summarized two important findings. First, food and beverages targeted for children are mostly calorie dense and nutrient poor (Hastings et al., 2003). Second, not only does advertising affect children's food preferences, their short-term consumption and purchase requests also increase (Hastings et al., 2003). The authors conclude that there is a strong association between children's exposure to TV advertising and overweight and obesity (Hastings et al., 2003).

A comprehensive review conducted by the Institute of Medicine (2006) reported that television advertising influences children's (age 2-11) dietary intake and purchasing requests. The main conclusion from this review highlighted that "food and beverage marketing practices geared to children and youth are out of balance with healthful diets and contribute to an environment that puts their health at risk (Institute of Medicine, 2006, p.1).

In addition, many reputable organizations have released position statements urging governments to implement more stringent policies: Center for Science in the Public Interest (2006), Kaiser Family Foundation (2003), American Psychological Association (Kunkel et al., 2004), and American Academy of Pediatrics (2006). Taken together, there is overwhelming support from various communities and stakeholder groups for increased government intervention to protect children.

Although the two key reviews by the Institute of Medicine (2006) and the Hastings et al. (2003) offer promising support for the association between food marketing and childhood obesity, often evidence alone is insufficient for policy change (Brownson, Royer, Ewing & McBride, 2006; Wilde, 2009). Hawkes and colleagues (2007) contend

that in the absence of evidence, the ethical debate has driven the emergence and proliferation of policies addressing food marketing. For example, the stringent ban in Quebec was based on ethical considerations, rather than scientific evidence (World Health Organization, 2004b).

Purcell (2008) charges the Canadian government with neglecting to implement policies that protect children, thereby violating the legal facets of Article 17 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Children*, which stresses that children be protected from “information and material injurious to his or her well-being” (UNICEF, 2008). The accusation emphasizes the ethical nature of this issue. Wilde (2009) adds that if the government were to accept marketing to children as unethical, it would shift the burden of proof from science. In this way, the ethical argument transcends national policies or scientific evidence; instead, it draws upon the universal principles to promote the protection of children and their health.

In addition to the limited literature available, it is key to note what is missing from the body of literature. Most cited studies to date are cross-sectional and focused on television advertising from thirty years ago (Moore, 2007). Since that time, new marketing practices have emerged, leading to entire new sectors that have only preliminary evidence (Moore, 2007). Researchers agree that future studies need to examine the impact of new mediums, such as video game advertisements, product placement, mobile phones and podcasts. These marketing mediums are increasingly omnipresent in markets today and little is known about their impact on children’s food consumption.

The Case of Food Marketing as Market Failure

Market failure is defined as a situation in which markets do not efficiently and equally utilize society’s resources in a manner that serves public interest (Rocha, 2007). Borrowing this concept from economics, this paper highlights how food marketing to children leads to causes of market failure, thereby creating an argument for increased government intervention. In other words, if the current trend of minimal government

regulation continues, the free market alone cannot protect the social and physical welfare of children. Seiders & Petty (2007) add that the discrepancies between economic models and real-world market operations necessitate policy interventions. Due to simplified assumptions about consumer behaviour, economic models do not account for many variables, consequently creating discrepancies or market failures (Seiders & Petty, 2007). Examples of sources of market failure – which can be used to understand appropriate remedies and develop policy recommendations – are discussed.

First, the market model is based on an assumption that consumers make rational purchasing decisions – a concept that does not apply to children (Seiders & Petty, 2007). The Institute of Medicine (2006) analyzed current literature and reported that children under 8 years of age lack the ability to understand that a) advertisements may be biased, b) biased messages require an alternative method of interpretation, and c) advertisers attempt to persuade the consumer. Therefore, it can be argued that children are not considered rational consumers due to their limitations in synthesizing information with rationality and foresight (Wilde, 2008).

Second, the assumption of free consumer choice neglects children's lack of autonomy to make alternative food purchases. For example, children are lawfully required to attend school; thus, their exposure to company sponsorship and monopolized food & beverage supplies at school cannot be determined as free choices in the market (Wilde, 2009). In addition, children from low-income families face considerable economic barriers to making healthier 'choices,' even if parents desire to provide such food items (Seiders & Petty, 2004). Examples of barriers are higher costs of healthful food items and decreased access to stores with healthier options in low-income neighbourhoods (Caraher & Coveney, 2003). Therefore, the market model assumes that consumers have alternative choices for healthy food – neglecting an increasing percentage of the population for which this is not a reality (Seiders & Petty, 2007).

Third, an identified cause of market failure is the incidence of negative externalities, which are created when the cost to society outweighs the potential

benefits enjoyed by its citizens (Rocha, 2007). As discussed, evidence linking food marketing directly to childhood obesity is limited; however, studies associate food marketing exposure with poor dietary behaviours and a tendency towards 'obesogenic' foods (Hastings et al., 2003; Institute of Medicine, 2006). The term 'obesogenic' implies the type of food (i.e. higher calorie, simple sugars), as well as dietary behaviours, such as limited portion control (Lake, 2006). Experts caution that many of these behaviours are adopted and carried into adulthood (Hastings et al., 2003). The social and health costs of poor dietary choices - as they relate to non-communicable diseases - are well documented (Cash, Goddard & Lerohl, 2006; World Health Organization, 2004a). Maxwell & Slater (2003) underscore the consequences of diet-related disease, stating that by 2025, the costs will exceed under-nutrition in developing countries. Statistics Canada reports the difficult nature of estimating such costs in the case of childhood obesity, mainly due to delayed health consequences of poor lifestyle behaviours (Shields, 2006). However, in 2001, the Canadian government cited Katzmarzyk & Janssen (2004)'s estimation that direct and indirect costs were \$4.3 billion dollars, a bill that is shared by all tax-paying citizens within the social health care system.

In addition to the burden of health expenses as externalities, there are substantial immeasurable costs that are paid by children. Diet-related diseases in childhood lead to higher risk of morbidity and mortality; in addition, poor quality of life and psychological disease are common (World Health Organization, 2004a). Therefore, in addition to measurable health care costs, it is important to be mindful of the unacceptable psychosocial externalities to children (Caraher & Coveney, 2003).

Finally, although it is accepted that children are not rational consumers, some argue that parents (who bear the responsibility of feeding their children) are operating in the market with imperfect information (Seiders & Petty, 2004). This rebuttal emerged in response to the food industry's initial claim that food marketing to children was acceptable because parents are solely responsible for their child's food behaviours (Linn, 2004). In the context of the food market, Seiders & Petty (2004) contend that parents are misinformed about the health consequences of poor dietary habits for their

child; thus, making purchasing decisions with imperfect information. It is widely documented that parents inaccurately perceive their child's weight (Eckstein et al., 2006); parents also underestimate the health effects of poor dietary choices: some viewing obesity as simply a cosmetic problem (Seiders & Petty, 2004). The health community voices concerns that if parents are misinformed about the consequences of unhealthy dietary patterns for their child, those who do have the resources for alternative options may be acting with imperfect information, thus leading to market failure (Wilde, 2009). Finally, it is well recognized now that parents alone cannot compete against a billion dollar industry, consequently elevating food marketing to a societal issue (Linn, 2004).

A Global Issue

Policies targeted on food marketing to children around the world have varied in their scope and effectiveness. As Maxwell & Slater (2003) discuss, globalization highly affects marketing practice and policies because of multi-national food corporations and global practices. This is problematic when considering the effectiveness of a national food marketing ban, as children are still exposed through international channels (e.g. cross-border television advertising and the Internet). Therefore, policies on an international level are of high relevance to Canadian practices.

The World Health Organization (2004) reviewed 73 countries and report that television advertising to children is regulated in 62 countries, while food advertising is specifically addressed in just 22 countries. The United States is primarily regulated by industry and the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) (World Health Organization, 2004b). The United Kingdom recently imposed a television ban of high fat, sugar and salt foods to all children under 16 years old (World Health Organization, 2004b). In the European Union, Norway and Sweden prohibit commercial advertising to children, although the ban is limited to radio and television (World Health Organization, 2004b). Most regulations consider only television mediums, thus neglecting all other forms of advertisements that are increasingly pervasive in children's lives. As technologies

advance and children are exposed to myriad advertising mediums, many challenges lie ahead for how to adequately and appropriately regulate the market.

Current Policy in Canada

In a brief review of Canadian policies for food marketing to children, the World Health Organization (2004b) pointed out a high degree of oversight and loose enforcement. The existing policy structure consists of government legislation and regulation; however, advertisements are mostly pre-screened and self-regulated by industry (Advertising Standards Canada, 2006). Marketing jurisdiction falls under three federal departments - Health Canada, Industry Canada and Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC). National laws such as *The Food and Drugs Act* and *The Competition Act* provide overarching regulation for advertising to children. These acts work to limit such practices as commercial time during children's programming, but do not specify food and beverage advertising to children.

The province of Quebec enforced the *Consumer Protection Act* (1980), which is known as the most rigid food advertising ban in the world (Quebec Protection Office, 1980). The act states, "no person may make use of commercial advertising directed at persons under thirteen years of age" (Quebec Protection Office, 1980, as cited in Toronto Public Health, 2008, p. 11). Although the act has received international recognition, several problems remain. First, the ban is directed only for ads created in Quebec, thus, children are still exposed to messages from outside. Second, the ban does not address industry partnerships with public sectors to produce health messages; thus, industry has found ways to reach children through public health initiatives (Toronto Public Health, 2008). Third, although the Consumer Protection Office administers the ban, it is loosely regulated by citizen initiated complaints. Fourth, the law was created before the era of Internet and mobile phones, thus it lacks guidance on how it can be enforced for new mediums.

Following the ban in Quebec, the Irwin Toy Company filed a suit, charging that the legislation limited their freedom of expression (Irwin Toy Ltd. v. Québec, 1989). A

similar incident in the United States in 1980 had stripped the Federal Trade Commission of the authority to pass industry wide regulations on advertising (Wilde, 2009). In Canada, however, the Supreme Court ruled in favour of the ban, stating “advertisers should not be able to capitalize upon children’s credulity” and “advertising directed at young children is per se manipulative” (Irwin Toy Ltd. v. Québec, 1989, p. 65). This was a precedent setting case, due to the blatant acknowledgement of the manipulative nature of marketing to children.

As noted, the majority of food advertising in Canada is monitored by industry self-regulation, under the jurisdiction of Advertising Standards Canada (ASC). Consisting of Canada’s largest food producers and retailers, this group enforces the *Canadian Code of Advertising Standards*, which oversees all forms of media (Advertising Standards Canada, 2006). Under this code, children (12 years and younger) are protected from direct harm and exploitation of their credulity, lack of experience or sense of loyalty (Advertising Standards Canada, 2006). Critics of this code have highlighted that it ignores children’s cognitive inability to comprehend the nature of advertisement (Toronto Public Health, 2008). In addition, Committee members and activities are not made public. Finally, minimal penalties or enforcement measures exist for companies that violate the code (Toronto Public Health, 2008).

In 2008, 16 food and beverage companies created the Canadian Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI), which focuses on healthier food promotion to children under 12 years old [see Appendix One]. Under CFBAI, some companies (eg. Coca-Cola, McCain, PepsiCo) commit to avoid advertising altogether to children under 12; while others (e.g. Kellogg, Kraft, McDonald, Nestle) will focus 100% of advertising to ‘healthier’ food choices (Advertising Standards Canada, 2006). The criteria used to define ‘healthier’ are reportedly taken from Health Canada; however, products such as Kellogg’s Froot Loops are considered within the scope (Advertising Standards Canada, 2006). Critics posit that this initiative for self-regulation is mainly to avoid government regulation and not one that concerns childrens’ health and welfare (Hawkes, 2007).

Problems with Current Policy

The current reliance on industry self-regulation is described by critics as “foxes guarding the henhouse” (Center for Science in Public Interest, 2003, p. 42), representing a problematic situation for several reasons. First, although industry intends to promote health, the primary goal remains to make a profit. Therefore, while objectives for brand loyalty and profits are expected as a corporation, the goal of protecting children’s health consequently falls secondary. This responsibility then, lies in the hands of the state. Second, the CFBAI put forth by industry is fairly new, however, its inability to properly regulate food marketing is already apparent in the lack of enforcement measures and loose definitions of ‘healthier dietary choices.’ Third, in the absence of scientific evidence examining the efficacy of self-regulation, public health experts point to other historical examples, such as tobacco, where industry self-regulation was highly ineffective (World Health Organization, 2001) and public health not adequately protected when left in the hands of industry alone.

Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendations are made with an acute awareness that they will likely impact merely one contributing factor (of many) that influence dietary and other lifestyle behaviours contributing to childhood obesity. Regardless, Wilde (2009) describes the situation as being at a critical juncture for policymakers, due to new industry initiatives for self-regulation. As mentioned, the recent adoption of the Canadian Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI) by 16 companies presents an optimal opportunity for government to ensure policies protect children. By capturing this pilot initiative in the early stages, government can enact a timely new policy, in order to a) decrease children’s exposure to food choices higher in calories, saturated fat, sugar and salt, and b) decrease manipulative marketing methods (e.g. in schools), and c) capitalize on industry’s marketing techniques to promote healthful, nutrient-dense foods. I promote a partnership between Health Canada, Industry Canada, and the food and beverage industry, in order to revise and enforce the CFBAI.

The following revisions are recommended:

- a) Enforce the CFBAI as mandatory for all food and beverage companies.
- b) Enforce stringent guidelines around acceptable 'healthier' food and beverage items for marketing practices (see Appendix 2 for examples provided by Center for Science in Public Interest).
- c) Create a government organization to actively monitor and measure compliance to CFBAI; impose heavy penalties for companies in violation. The monies collected from such penalties will be allocated to the government for children's health promotion activities.
- d) Enforce a ban on the following: food marketing in elementary and high schools, any use of characters (cartoons, celebrities), and all child-targeted sweepstakes and contests.

The proposed policies are meant to encourage a compromise between the Government of Canada and industry, in order to combat childhood eating behaviours and obesity. For a problem of this magnitude, policies must consider the goals of both sectors in order to be sustainable.

First, by collaborating with an initiative already put forth by industry, the new policies can be implemented more efficiently due to buy-in from these major stakeholders. One main concern with voluntary self-regulation is that, without proper enforcement or penalties, the 16 CFBAI companies would eventually abandon the initiative in order to remain competitive with those companies who did not join (Toronto Public Health, 2008). Therefore, the new policies aim to be sustainable and fair: all companies with business in Canada will be subject to the same regulations, thereby ensuring equal competitive advantage on the market. Also, a government body would enforce compliance, thereby ensuring transparency, consistency, and proper adherence – three factors that are lacking in the current policy structure (World Health

Organization, 2004b). This component is the most significant change that the new policies introduce.

Second, experts remind us: “food companies are not focused on making people fat; they are focused on making money” (as cited in Wilde, 2009, p. 159). The current policy for ‘healthier’ foods outlines haphazard nutritional guidelines, leaving very little economic incentive for industry to consider health consequences (social externalities) of their marketing practices. With revised guidelines for healthier food products, companies will creatively and competitively formulate new options for consumers; thus, meeting profit margins while attempting to decrease externalities to society. This improvement in nutrient profiles addresses the market failure of limited ‘choices’ and resources for healthier options that many families face (Seiders & Petty, 2007). Those who cannot participate in the market with alternative choices should have access to affordable options. In this way, the policy revision takes advantage of industry’s capacity to use food marketing for healthful food options (Center for Science in Public Interest, 2006).

Third, although the government will build upon an existing policy initiative, specific areas will be more stringently enforced. As discussed, one identified cause of market failure is the fact that children are not rational consumers and cannot make free choices in circumstances during school hours. Therefore, bans on school-based marketing, the elimination of cartoon or celebrity characters, and the prohibition of sweepstakes/contest will be enforced. By addressing those obvious areas, the government can exercise its responsibility to children by protecting them in these specific situations. Further, cartoon or celebrity cartoon use has increasingly been eliminated by some companies. Violations of these bans will be strictly enforced, with penalty funds contributing to Health Canada activities for children’s health promotion.

Potential Limitations

Authors acknowledge the difficulty in assessing effectiveness of policies restricting food marketing to children (Wilde, 2009; World Health Organization, 2004b). Industry has

pointed to countries with strict bans, such as Norway & Sweden, stating that their childhood obesity rates have increased and thus, the ban is ineffective (World Health Organization, 2004b); however, this association is inappropriate due to myriad confounding factors surrounding obesity. A study in Quebec following the ban on advertising found that children eat less sugary cereals compared to other children in Canada (Goldberg, 1991). The results are inconclusive, however, due to lack of baseline data and control group. Based on the recommendations presented here, another outcome measure may be the nutritional quality of products available on the market; this may be evaluated by an environmental scan at baseline and few years following the new policies. Therefore, the proposed policies should be evaluated for effectiveness based on outcomes such as children's consumption patterns or availability of healthful food products, rather than on obesity rates.

Policy effectiveness cannot be measured rigorously without considering all mediums of marketing that are pervasive in children's lives. The current policy recommendations do not address Internet, or other cross-border mediums, which stands to be a limitation to the proposed framework. However, despite the challenge posed by the international market, current recommendations target market failures in Canada, and set a precedent for future policy considerations that can address cross-border mediums.

Conclusion

This paper outlined problems associated with food marketing to children in the context of market failures. The manipulation of children, who are not considered to be rational consumers, produce externalities – health consequences and medical costs - that are unacceptable burdens to society (Seiders & Petty, 2007). The concept that parents have sole responsibility for their child's health is also challenged by new arguments that parents may possess imperfect information in the market, and also may be futile against the power of multi-national food corporations (Seiders & Petty, 2004). Many policies addressing food marketing to children have been driven by ethical considerations,

rather than scientific evidence (Hawkes, 2007). One example is the increasing emergence of industry self-regulation – a phenomenon present in Canada. This paper proposes that the federal government take advantage of a newly presented industry initiative (CFBAI) to collaborate with major stakeholders and create a new set of policies that protect children’s health. The recommendations consider remedies to market failures and attempt to reduce externalities in a system of resource disparity. A major challenge at this time is to address all mediums of marketing – posed by international corporations and policies – however, it is felt that the current framework will be an effective and timely start. As an expert panel from Toronto Public Health states: “complexity is not an excuse for inaction” (Toronto Public Health, 2008, p. 4).

Appendix 1: Comparison of proposed revisions to the current Canadian Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative (CFBAI)

Current CFBAI	Proposed Revisions
Adopted by 16 food companies	Mandatory for <u>all</u> food and beverage companies
'Healthier' options as outlined by Health Canada – lack of transparency in standards and parameters used	Enforce more stringent guidelines around acceptable 'healthier' food and beverage items (see Appendix 2)
Mainly regulated by industry	Create a government organization to actively monitor and measure compliance to CFBAI and impose penalties for those companies in violation
Restricts food marketing in elementary schools	Ban food marketing in elementary and high schools
Restricts third-party licensed characters to be used in food marketing	Ban any characters or celebrity endorsements used for food marketing

Appendix 2: Sample guidelines for marketing food to children (As listed in Center for Science in the Public Interest , 2006)

Nutrient	Criteria
Fat	no more than 35% of total calories, excluding nuts, seeds, and peanut or other nut butters
Saturated plus trans fat	no more than 10% of calories
Added sugars	less than 35% of added sugars by weight (Added sugars exclude naturally occurring sugars from fruit, vegetable, and dairy ingredients.)
Sodium	no more than: 1) 230 mg per serving of chips, crackers, cheeses, baked goods, French fries, and other snack items; 2) 480 mg per serving for cereals, soups, pastas, and meats; 3) 600 mg for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes; and 4) 770 mg for meals
Nutrient content	contains one or more of the following: 1) 10% of the DRI of (naturally occurring/without fortification) vitamins A, C, or E, calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron, or fiber; 2) half a serving of fruit or vegetable; or 3) 51% or more (by weight) whole grain ingredients

Portion size limits for foods and beverages

Individual items	no larger than the standard serving size used for Nutrition Facts labels (except for fruits and vegetables, which are exempt from portion size limits)
Meals	no more than one-third of the daily caloric requirement for the average child in the age range targeted by the marketing

Beverages

Low-nutrition beverages (as defined below) should not be marketed to children.

Nutritious/healthful beverages

Water and seltzer without added sweeteners

Beverages that contain at least 50% juice and that do not contain added sweeteners

Low-fat and fat-free milk, including flavored milks and calcium-fortified soy and rice beverages

Low-nutrition beverages

Soft drinks, sports drinks, and sweetened iced teas

Fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% juice or that contain added sweeteners

Drinks containing caffeine (except low-fat and fat-free chocolate milk, which contain trivial amounts of caffeine)

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New Spaces and New Places: Adult Education and the Creation of Alternative Foodscapes

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Abstract

This paper uses a political-economy approach to focus on the creation of alternative foodscapes (Mair & Sumner, 2008). It draws on research from sociology and food studies to understand the contributions adult education has made, and can make, to the creation of new spaces and places for the consumption – that is, both the purchasing and eating – of food. This paper focuses on informal learning within two alternative foodscapes: the 100-mile diet and the interface between high tech and home cooking.

The term foodscape is derived from geographic and sociological literature on the landscape to describe the spatial distribution of food (Johnston, Biro & MacKendrick 2009). It has been used to describe the food landscape (Panelli & Tipa 2009) across urban spaces and institutional settings (Johnston, Biro & MacKendrick 2009; Winson, 2004). Foodscapes include supermarket chain store operations, fast food stores, specialty food stores, and convenience stores, as well as farmers markets (Winson 2004).

Foodscapes involve more than just “the multiplicity of sites where food is displayed for purchase, and where it may also be consumed” (Winson 2004, 301). Foodscapes also include the farms and gardens where food is grown, and the spaces and places where food is discussed, from classrooms to the Internet. Foodscapes are social constructions that encompass the “cultural ideals of how food relates to places, people and food systems” (Johnston, Biro & MacKendrick 2009, 512). Hence, the term encompasses places and spaces surrounding food; places as in geographic food sites, and spaces as in enabling a dialogue on food culture that facilitates change through a social (or food) movement. Foodscapes can also expose the politics of food, nutrition and health, thereby highlighting problems of economic inequality, social discrimination and nutritional health (Panelli & Tipa 2009)

Much of the literature has focused on the North American urban foodscape. Over the last fifty years, the so-called ‘Western Diet’ – based on large quantities of oil, sugar

and salt – has dominated the foodscape in North America (Frazao; 1999; Nestle, 2002; Schlosser, 2005). This dominance is associated with corporate concentration, the loss of local foodways, rising levels of obesity and increased food-related diseases such as type II diabetes and certain forms of cancer.

However, there has been a new shift in our view of food. Recent food scares and concerns as well as recognition that responsible agriculture must be viable as well as economically, environmentally and socially sustainable (Gold, 1997; Ikerd, 2001) have increased attention on our food systems and changed our views on the food we eat. We are becoming more critical and discerning about our food systems (Pollan 2008; Schlosser 2005). This recent shift in attitudes among many Canadians with regard to food and eating habits has facilitated the creation of alternative foodscapes, moving beyond the traditional urban foodscape. Adult education has contributed to this shift through a range of learning experiences including informal social, experiential and transformative learning.

This paper will focus on adult education and the creation of alternative foodscapes by drawing on disciplines like sociology and psychology and food studies on the production, distribution, and consumption of food. The purpose of this paper is to understand the role of adult learning in the creation of new spaces and places for the food consumption – that is, both the purchasing and eating – of food, and spaces and places where food is grown and discussed. First, the paper will discuss food movements as a form of social movement. Second, it will discuss alternative foodscapes and adult learning, focusing on two examples: the 100-mile market and high-tech meal-making. Finally, it will compare and contrast these two very different foodscapes and discuss their relationship to adult education and the implications for a more sustainable world.

Food Movements, Social Change and Adult Learning

Many things led to the development of the Western Diet. Industrialization, mobility, changes in the labour force and agribusiness led to changes in diet and eating habits (Pollan 2008; Schlosser 2005). And as Canadians move from rural to urban areas and

their standard of living increases, many lose direct connections with the origins of their food. Instead, they come to rely on supermarket and fast food chains to provide them with their sustenance. As purveyors of the Western Diet, these chains have been instrumental in changing how we think about food. No longer the centre of a home economy, prepared from basic ingredients and eaten in groups around a table, much of our food has become a commodity of convenience, made from “edible food-like substances” (Pollen 2008, 1) and eaten in cars, malls and office cubicles, or in front of a television (Schlosser 2005).

Consuming food is not meant to be a solitary and isolating experience, but a communal one. In cultures and countries around the world, the consumption of food takes place within one’s community of family and friends. In Asian and South American countries, the sharing of food is so common that food is placed in the middle of the table and eaten by all. In European countries, eating is a dining experience to be shared with friends and family. This is in complete contrast to the Western experience of ingesting fast food as quickly and cheaply as possible. As other cultures begin to adopt our Western Diet, they too lose their connection to community, culture and place.

During the last decade, several social movements have developed in response to this culinary disconnection. These food movements, such as the 100-mile diet, the Slow Food movement, the local food movement, the organic movement, the fair trade movement and the food justice movement, involve activities such as food festivals, informal conversations, conferences, street protests, dining events, cooking programs, recipe sharing, Internet sites and discussion groups devoted to food issues. All of these are sites of informal learning. This growing grass-roots awareness of food occurs against a backdrop of food scares and rising food prices, at a time when climate destabilization and the spectre of peak oil make buying local food and cooking from scratch, while eschewing placeless processed foods, more attractive. Food-related activism has become so popular that many restaurants, grocery chains, coffee shops and other food-related businesses have followed suit, if only to promote their organizational brand and increase sales.

All of these food movements reconnect individuals to community and socially oriented values. For example, the local food movement reconnects individuals to local agriculture and local farmers, which can develop a stronger and more sustainable community, promote quality of life and enhance the local economy, all of which is critical during this difficult economic time. The local food movement has been supported by an increase in the size and number of farmers' markets as well as in market attendance. This movement, in turn, overlaps with the Slow Food movement, which promotes real, local, heritage food that is 'good, clean and fair' and by definition challenges the corporate foodscape of the Western Diet.

One of the impacts of these food movements is to re-establish a connection to the land, developing a sense of place through an emphasis on eating – a conscious slowing down and recognition of the physical, social, spiritual, emotional and political value of food. With this comes a recognition of the contribution farmers make to our families and communities, and the knowledge that they need to be better compensated for the work they do. Adult education has been critical to this transformation as individuals rediscover the importance of food in their lives. After all, everyone eats, but only recently have they begun to seriously scrutinize what they are eating and view it in a new light.

Hall and Clover (2005) argue that whatever else social movements are or do, they are exceedingly rich learning environments. For these authors, social movement learning involves both learning by people who are part of a social movement and learning by people who are outside of a social movement, as a result of actions taken or simply by the existence of social movements. This learning dynamic corroborates Miles (1996) who maintains that the ideal context for the motivation to learn, and for adult education for social change, is social movement. She refers to Miles Horton and Paulo Freire when she argues that little pockets of hope can provide the context for education for social change: "In generally quiescent times the challenge for progressive adult educators is not to initiate abstract general educational campaigns so much as to find and foster and serve these 'pockets of hope'" (277).

As sites of adult learning, food movements are ‘pockets of hope’ that create new spaces and places for alternative foodscapes. Two such foodscapes – 100-mile markets and high-tech-meal-making – will help to illustrate the role of adult education in the creation of alternative foodscapes and the quest for a more sustainable world.

Alternative Foodscapes I: Hundred-Mile Markets

Recently, 100-mile markets have begun to appear in the foodscape, taking inspiration from Alisa Smith and J.B. MacKinnon’s 2007 book “The 100-mile diet: A year of local eating”. In Ontario, the first such market opened in the town of Meaford in 2007, followed by a second in the village of Creemore in 2008. Others are in the planning stages. These innovative retail outlets only offer food products from within a hundred-mile radius, drawing on the output of farmers and processors from the region. Since store owners interact directly with producers, every product has a story, which they pass on to consumers. This narrative results in ‘food with a face,’ a rare phenomenon in a world now dominated by an impersonal, industrialized global food system.

The emergence of 100-mile markets heralds a change in the way people think about food. While farmers’ markets can include products brought in from around the world, and tourist shops may offer some local products as part of their retail mix, 100-mile markets are exclusively dedicated to building local sustainable food systems. They deliberately buy food grown, raised and/or processed by local producers and sell it to local consumers. In so doing, they are becoming a nexus for local supply and demand. On the supply side, they create dependable, year-round markets for local food producers, allowing them to create, maintain or expand their operations and encouraging innovation. On the demand side, they satisfy the growing desire for safe, abundant, secure sources of sustainably grown food. In this way, 100-mile markets have the potential to form part of the physical infrastructure for a local sustainable food system.

As an alternative foodscape, 100-mile markets exist at the interface of the local food movement, the organic farming movement and the Slow Food movement, which

gives them enormous potential as sites of adult learning for social change. The 100-mile market in Creemore provides some examples of how this potential can be realized. This market will be focused on.

Bankrolled in 2008 by a syndicate of local and regional women who individually or in partnership with other women put in \$1000 per share, the Creemore 100 Mile Store is owned and operated by two women from the village. It stocks local vegetables, fruit, meat, dairy, eggs, bread and desserts, as well as value-added products such as jams and cookie mixes. Each product sold in the store carries a sign indicating the name of the farm or business and the distance from the store. While Organic Meadow dairy products may originate 70 miles from the store, the bread has a sign that says, “around the corner,” indicating that the retired man on the sidestreet next to the shop brings in his home-made bread several days a week. Since every product has a story, this narrative is passed on from farmer to store owner to customer, forming the basis of the adult learning for social change. From these narratives, people learn “food patriotism” (Bell and Valentine 1997 in Hinrichs 2003, 40) – a new relationship with food that runs broader and deeper than the faceless, placeless, fetishized commodities found in supermarkets, builds loyalty to place, forms the building blocks of a local sustainable food system. The 100 Mile Store promotes food patriotism through the store itself, through its website and through an email list highlighting breaking news about which farmer has just supplied what product for the delectation of customers.

As a place for food patriotism, the 100 Mile Store in Creemore creates spaces for adult learning for social change. It provides opportunities for informal learning involving interactions among producers, owners and customers. The store is also a site of social learning, as the village continues its journey toward becoming a more sustainable community. It offers embodied learning, as individuals learn to viscerally appreciate the taste, and the difference, of local food. The store promotes experiential learning, as people taste samples and meet farmers. It can also be a site of restorative learning (Lange 2004), as customers come back home to the foods, tastes and values they grew up with. And the store is a site of transformative learning, as people come together to

create an alternative foodscape – a potent protest that turns its back on the industrial food system and actively chooses to create new spaces and places to spearhead social change. By frequenting the store and consuming local foods, one can become altered by the experience.

Alternative Foodscapes II: High-Tech Meal-Making

Another growing foodscape is one that brings high technology into the kitchen, not through the use of trendy gadgets, but in a very practical, chef-savvy way. New and experienced cooks who are comfortable with the latest in technology and on-line social networking sites are connecting, sharing, exchanging and teaching others about food. This movement creates personal as well as broad on-line communities that support informal, social learning and have the potential to transform the way we view, purchase, prepare and eat our food. This technology-focused foodscape is in some cases connected to current food movements, such as local, organic, or Slow Food, depending on the values and beliefs of the individual cooks involved.

As society turns away from convenience and fast food and embraces home cooking, more and more cooks have discovered the benefits derived from the interface between communication technology and the kitchen. One example of this foodscape is that cooking-related websites have sprung up. Individuals are using these sites (such as www.epicurious.com) to learn about food and cooking, to find new recipes and then to share their favourites with others. Through this, on-line communities and hence new learning spaces and places are created. Practically speaking, home cooks stumped over what to make for dinner can enter ingredients they have on hand into a search engine to decide what to feed the family. The convenience of this technique to solve the dinner dilemma leads to sharing favourite websites with friends and family, the result being more individuals visiting these on-line cooking and recipe spaces and either joining the on-line community or at least participating on its fringes.

Similarly, plugged-in home cooks and chefs have begun shopping with their browser-enabled cellphone or iPod. The immediacy and convenience of on-line

resources are the draw, enabling cooks to hone in on what looks freshest at the market or grocer, check on-line preparation tips and nutrition information, search for a recipe using that item, sometimes complete with a picture, and pick up anything else the recipe calls for. For some, it is changing the way they shop and cook. For these individuals, multifunctional devices that connect them to a wider on-line community and enable them to not only search for recipes on-line, but convert imperial to metric measurements for purchasing the right amount, and look up cooking terms or the history of the dish have changed not only how they purchase and prepare food, but how they think about food and their connection to it. In our geographically dispersed society, some have created their own on-line personal community of food-loving friends and family with whom they instant message in order to get cooking ideas and input, then they make the dish, take pictures of the finished product and email it to the group. Some of these friends and family members will be trying to create that same dish themselves, pushing the boundaries of informal, social learning into the on-line, virtual realm. For example, creative cooks can share their ideas for kid friendly eats with others through the social networking site Facebook (funkylunch.com; Van Der Voort, 2009).

With on-line access and so much information on-line, individuals can research food and source ingredients. Depending on the cook or chef, high-tech meal-making can be at the interface of the Slow Food, organic or local food movement. High-tech meal-making appears to have re-energized and re-engaged people in cooking from scratch, using organic or local ingredients, as well as in the pure joy of food. In taking the time to cook from scratch, with carefully selecting ingredients, and putting together recipes and healthy meals, individuals are connecting with the world around them, reconnecting with the basic needs of life, and to the land and their geographic 'place', all through this new foodscape. Local produce is versatile and buying local can be adapted to any form of cooking, whether it is families using high-tech meal-making to create homecooking comforts or professional chefs who create fine dining. They have changed their food buying and eating habits to embrace the Slow Food, organic and/or local food movements. This is another step toward social change.

As a space and a place, high-tech meal-making is at the interface between communication technology and cooking. This interface creates a new learning environment that has developed as individuals change their purchasing and eating habits, initiate or deepen on-line relationships and explore the parameters of this alternative foodscape.

Discussion

Both food movements and alternative foodscapes provide rich learning environments. In combination, they are indeed 'pockets of hope' for a more sustainable world. Through the creation of new spaces and places for learning, they enable the exchange of knowledge and information about food, food issues and food concerns among people who are part of these social movements and who operate within these foodscapes, as well as facilitating learning by those outside of these movements and locations. While a great deal of study has been devoted to learning within social movements, little, if any, has been devoted to learning within foodscapes. The two examples in this paper provide a starting point for such a study by offering an opportunity for the discussion of their similarities and differences as sites of adult learning.

Both foodscapes examples offer new spaces and places for adult learning. The 100-mile market in Creemore provides a physical place and space for a rich face-to-face learning environment for a number of social movements, while high-tech meal-making creates a virtual place and space for social-movement learning. Further, both the 100-mile market and high-tech meal-making create opportunities for different sorts of adult learning: informal learning, social learning, experiential learning, embodied learning, restorative learning and transformative learning.

Both alternative foodscapes also facilitate the building of community – a catalyst for adult learning. Traditionally, there are three types of communities: geographic communities (such as Creemore or Toronto), communities of interest (such as ethnic communities or food communities) and communities of practice (such as adult educators or regional planners). The creation of community is evident in both the 100-

mile market and high-tech meal-making, thus enhancing the already-existing adult learning opportunities. The 100-mile market occurs in a rural community of place, but it also provides a springboard for a lively community of interest based on food and an opening for communities of practice as planners look to create regional sustainable food systems. In contrast, high-tech meal-making is mainly occurring in virtual communities of interest and in communities of practice such as chefs, but it is beginning to corporealize in urban communities of place.

Another point of comparison centres on class, gender and ethnicity. In both of these foodscape examples, men and women are actively involved. However, like many social movements, these alternative foodscapes are largely made up of middle-class people. This has implications for issues of power, knowledge and the cross-cutting questions of race, ethnicity and gender. As Friedmann (1993, 215) reminds us, “food has long been about wealth as well as power,” which plays into the development of a more sustainable food system and a more sustainable future, and we all must work together towards real change in our food system to reduce carbon emissions and the carbon footprint of our Western Diet. Other alternative foodscapes, such as farmer’s markets provide food sites that are assessable to people from all classes and income levels (Larsen & Guilliland, in press) and the vendors often sell locally produced food, meeting the demands of locavores. In time, more 100-mile markets and other innovative foodscapes will be created. In addition, there are hopeful and positive steps being taken, as more ethnic foods are grown on local farms (David, 2009; Toronto Environmental Alliance, 2007) which can meet the needs of recent immigrants. These alternative foodscapes provide excellent examples that move us closer to greater food democracy and food security.

By embracing either of these alternative foodscapes, individuals can become changed by the learning experience. Some individuals may not fully embrace this opportunity for change and this is a potential challenge. Other individuals may find the alternate foodscape experience enlightening and meaningful, and this may propel them towards living more sustainably on the planet.

Finally, both of these alternative foodscapes help to reinforce social movements as sites of adult learning. Food movements are not isolated entities but rather they are fluid, overlapping and interconnected. In addition, they are always embedded within a larger context and exist within different foodscapes. The 100-mile market connects the local food movement, the organic farming movement and the Slow Food movement. Through high-tech meal-making, individuals are connecting with these same food movements. This connection between foodscapes and social movements compounds already existing learning opportunities and lays the foundation for progressive social change, with food as the portal to a more sustainable world where we humans produce fewer carbon emissions to meet our food needs.

While the two foodscapes offer fruitful points of comparison, they also differ from each other in some fundamental ways. For example, the 100-mile market exists in a real place, while high-tech meal-making is part of the virtual world of the Internet. As a result, the 100-mile market promotes face-to-face interaction while high-tech meal-making facilitates virtual interaction, which is heavily textbased. These different sites of interaction may appeal to different types of adult learners and may encourage different sorts of learning. In addition, the 100-mile store is a privately owned business, while high-tech meal-making takes place in the commons of the Internet. These different ownership structures may affect the type of learning that takes place. In spite of these differences, however, both foodscapes are powerful sites of adult learning and thus have the potential to become a springboard to a more sustainable world.

Food has been described as an edible dynamic (Belasco 2007); it is ever changing. As such, it has the potential to catalyse new ways of thinking, feeling and acting. Foodscapes incorporate this dynamic and open up physical and virtual places and spaces for adult education for social change as people learn to ‘talk the talk’ and ‘walk the talk’ down the road to a more sustainable future.

While there are conflicts between fair trade, local, organic, Slow Food and the 100-mile diet, individual consumers need to be informed in order to make educated choices about the foods they consume. Alternative foodscapes provide learning

opportunities by creating new spaces and places for the purchase, consumption and discussion of food. Future research needs to further examine alternative foodscapes and the learning communities these foodscapes create. For example, farmers markets, community supported agriculture, and on-line food movements need to be studied as sites of adult education and learning. Much learning occurs not only as people purchase, discuss, cook and prepare food, but as people learn about and appreciate sustainable agriculture, food security and food democracy. Research should investigate the potential of these foodscapes for social change and greater food democracy.

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Engaging Community Food Security Through Social Movement Networks

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Abstract

This paper will critically explore debates surrounding the efforts of food activists and non-profit organizations within the Canadian Community Food Security (CFS) movement. The discourse around CFS is becoming widely adopted as a goal and a central organizing principle of the emerging food movement. While there is some debate around the nuances of the definition, many descriptions point to a broad interconnected ideology surrounding community health, sustainable environment and principles of social justice. As these initiatives have become more widespread, critiques have charged food movement initiatives with producing and reproducing neoliberal spaces of governance and mentalities, fetishizing the “local” scale, and a failure to incorporate goals of social justice into their practice. This paper will explore the politics of the possible through engaging these critiques in order to cultivate a stronger CFS movement. I will argue that identifying and delineating activities simply as individual initiatives fails to grasp the potential of collective endeavours and their efficacy for social change. Alternatively, conceiving of food-related initiatives as a part of multi-scale networks enables a re-imagining of their potential impact. Excogitating the broad scope of grassroots initiatives and conceptualizing them in relation to a broader movement produces opportunities to open space for political action. To illustrate the potentials and challenges of this approach, I will draw on the experience of Food Secure Canada/Sécurité Alimentaire Canada, The Stop Community Food Centre.

Canadians’ increasing interest in food issues is evident from the expanding numbers of community gardens, farmers markets, niche food labelling, and the regular reporting of food-related stories in popular media. Correspondingly, people are becoming more concerned about the production and distribution of their food and the environmental, political and economic implications of a concentrated, industrial, global food system. In response to these interests and concerns, the past decade has witnessed an expansion of Alternative Food Initiatives (AFIs) in both number and scope that aim to challenge the existing food system while seeking to build viable and sustainable alternatives. These initiatives cover a wide range of activities including attempts to reconnect farmers and consumers, empowering marginalized communities, and engaging in broad food system education. As AFIs have become more prevalent, critical studies have questioned their ability to address the structural challenges of the current food system. These critiques are framed by the contemporary Canadian political context where there are no guarantees to the state’s international and domestic commitments to the right to food (Rideout et. al. 2007). As the uneven affects of neoliberalism become increasingly

apparent, many AFIs are caught between developing alternatives to the current food system and taking over the role of the state amidst cutbacks in social services and a consensus that the market is the most efficient way to meet human needs.

The current context of neoliberalism can be broadly described as a political-economic project that emerged in the 1970s in order to consolidate class power by removing state regulations and supporting the free movement of capital. Described by Harvey (2005) as a set of theories and discourses about social ordering, neoliberalism has been put into practice through mechanisms that promote privatization, free markets, individual responsibility and the withdrawal of the state from social welfare provision. In an attempting to naturalize its impacts, this hegemonic project has left many gaps in services, regulations, and social protections (Jessop 2002). Allen and Guthman (2006) explain “neoliberalism has become a ‘regime of truth’ that justifies everything, including itself, with notions of progress and rationalization, and in so doing, reduces the political space that allows for questioning or reflexivity” (412). The uneven affects of neoliberalism in Canada can be traced through the increasing prevalence of poverty and hunger since the late 1970s.

Prior to the economic depression of the 1930s there had been almost no large-scale incidents of hunger in Canada until the recession in the early 1980s (Davis and Tarasuk 1994). Stemming from the oil crisis in the late 1970s, and the onset of neoliberal regulatory reforms, Canadians began to witness rising inflation and interest along with increased unemployment and poverty. As pressures on working Canadians increased, they were met with inadequate responses from federal unemployment insurance and provincial social assistance programs (Riches 1986). The National Council of Welfare (1985) estimated that by 1983 one in six Canadians lived on low incomes, below Statistics Canada’s Low Income Cut-Off (LICO). These proportions were significantly higher for seniors and children. As increasing numbers of Canadians struggled to meet their basic needs, shelter and clothing expenses often took precedence over purchasing food.

Recognizing the growing crisis, community groups in Canada began to look to the United States for solutions where extreme levels of hunger and poverty had persisted for decades. Food banks in the US had existed since 1967, serving as a central location to collect and distribute donated foodstuffs. The basic philosophy was that in a society with so much wealth, food waste could be efficiently redistributed to those in need. The first Canadian food bank was established in Edmonton, Alberta in 1981. At the time it was intended as a temporary solution but, by 1985 over 75 food banks existed across the country (Riches 1986), and in 2008 there were known to be well over 700 (FBC 2008). Thus, food banks quickly became the predominant response to hunger providing emergency services within the charity sector. Their continued existence illuminates the downloading of responsibility from the state and the breakdown of the social welfare system. Many critiques have accused food banks, along with other aspects of the charitable sector, of protecting and even bolstering the inequalities of capitalism, neoliberalism, and depoliticizing hunger (Poppendieck 1998; Shields and Bryan 1998).

Almost 30 years after the establishment of the first food bank, poverty and inequality are still rapidly increasing now coupled with concerns around diet related health problems, environmental impacts from industrial farming practices, and political and economic implications of an increasingly globalized food system. Amongst this reality, AFIs across the country have rapidly expanded their efforts in recent years in an attempt to develop alternative solutions. The central problem posed by critiques focuses on whether these initiatives are actually making an impact on the structural causes of poverty, hunger and environmental degradation. Building on these arguments, this paper will explore the question: *Are AFIs addressing core issues of social justice and environmental sustainability or are they simply complicit in a wider neoliberal consensus?* In order to address this question, I will suggest that critical studies of AFIs tend to identify and delineate activities simply as individual initiatives that are fixed in time and space.

Alternatively, I will show that while there is a need to understand and take seriously the prevailing critiques, critical studies of AFIs must situate individual initiatives as part of a broader social movement. Rather than being static, AFIs are dynamic entities and part of multi-scale, multi-dimensional networks where they interact, evolve and can develop counter hegemonic politics. By taking into consideration the broad scope of AFIs and conceptualizing them in relation to a broader social movement, there is an increased opportunity to enable a re-imagining of their potential impact and to open new spaces for political action. Beyond contributing to debates within the food literature, this paper will also address a broader gap in the academic literature by bringing together scale and network theories (Born and Purcell 2006; Nicholls 2009). To illustrate the potentials and challenges of this approach, I will draw on the experience of The Stop Community Food Centre's Green Barn project, and Food Secure Canada/Sécurité Alimentaire Canada's People's Food Policy Project.

Critiquing Alternative Food Initiatives

In her book analyzing the US food movement, Patricia Allen (2004) argues that despite their important and inspiring work, AFIs will continue to reside on the margins until they begin to address the long-term, structural challenges within the food system. While the contexts between the two countries differ, this insight is equally as relevant to Canadian AFIs. This argument does not insinuate that every initiative should be actively taking on the entire array of social and environmental challenges in the food system. It does however demand a certain reflexivity and recognition around broader issues surrounding inequality, oppression, and human relationships with the natural world. Without critical reflection around their activities, AFIs will lack a broader impact and may risk reproducing particular inequalities and injustices. In this section I will briefly summarize three interconnected critiques surrounding AFIs, which include producing and reproducing neoliberalism, fetishism of the local scale, and failing to implement social justice.

Producing and Reproducing Neoliberalism

Prominent voices in the food literature have argued that while many AFIs oppose neoliberalization, they have been complicit in propagating neoliberal ideals (Allen 2004; Guthman 2006; Poppendieck 1998). As discussed above, the retreat of the state from social welfare provisioning and the downloading of responsibility to the private sector have illuminated the inability of governments to equally safeguard their citizens. As a response to the growing needs and lack of government action, concerned individuals have gravitated to community-based organizations that offer an alternative approach. This devolution of responsibility is characteristic of what Peck and Tickell (2002) describe as “roll-out” neoliberalism. In this phase originating in the mid-1990s, non-profit organizations, businesses, and faith-based groups increasingly took over state responsibilities developing new public-private institutionalized partnerships. Through relinquished government responsibility, local communities, depending on their capacity, were left to pick up the pieces.

The subjugation of food to the private realm is illustrated by the current trend towards what Guthman (2007b) labels “eating as politics”. From this pervasive, individual choice around what to eat is assumed to result in a trickle-down effect where eating becomes a political end in and of itself. In describing the “messianic” growth industry of food writing, Guthman points to popular authors that have promoted this approach such as Michael Pollan’s (2006) recent book *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*. Specifically, she critiques the over-simplification of issues such as excessively available cheap food as a key problem in the food industry. “Food politics,” argues Guthman (2007b), “has become a progenitor of a neoliberal anti-politics that devolves regulatory responsibility to consumers’ via their dietary choices” (264). The food movement’s propensity towards “knowing where your food comes from” often ignores basic ideals of social justice and the historical and structural conditions that have led to contemporary inequality and environmental degradation.

Following from this, critiques have argued that AFIs have been complicit in neoliberalism through the creation of consumer subjects through an uncritical

acceptance of entrepreneurialism and self-improvement. This is illustrated by the trend of “ethical” or “green” consumption where regulatory control is placed in the hands of consumer choice. Guthman (2007a) points specifically to the role of voluntary food labels (such as fair trade) as advancing property rights and valuating ethical behavior. This move towards consumption-based regulation is in direct opposition to entitlement or rights-based approaches to food, instead promoting self-improvement and entrepreneurialism. According to Guthman (2006), “it seems that notions of the seasonal, local, organic have hailed a foodie/yuppie subject to be the carrier of transformation in agro-food politics” (1177). Through this perspective, consumerism is believed to result in progressive social change.

In her research, Johnston (2008) explores the viability of a “citizen-consumer” hybrid, which implies a social practice of “voting with your dollar.” In her analysis she questions whether there can be a common ground between ideologies of consumerism (rooted in individual, self-interest) and citizenship (rooted in collective social and environmental responsibility). While she does not dismiss the idea altogether, her empirical observations reveal that claims of “ethical consumerism” manifest primarily in forms of corporate niche marketing targeted at privileged, conscientious consumers, as opposed to addressing social justice or environmental sustainability.

Despite their intention to embrace a progressive politics, by filling the gaps left by government cutbacks and uncritically accepting the responsibility and accountability at the local level, AFIs are accused of being complicit in a wider neoliberal consensus and its uneven affects. The production of consumer subjects and an encouragement of individual responsibility serve as a distraction from the longer-term, structural concerns within the food system.

Fetishism of the local scale

A second set of critiques revolves around what I will refer to as a fetishism of the local scale. This is illustrated by the burgeoning local food rhetoric, widespread among AFIs and prevalent in popular media (see for example Cloud 2007). The idea behind these

initiatives is that the broad goals of justice and sustainability can be met by reconstructing the local scale through community-based food systems. Critics have argued however, that for AFIs, the local scale is increasingly being evoked as a fixed and binary opposite to trends of global integration and corporate consolidation, which are seen as contrary to a community's ability to exert democratic control within food systems (Allen et. al. 2003; Born and Purcell 2006; DuPuis and Goodman 2005; Hinrichs et. al. 1998; Winter 2003). In this sense, local is equated with essential characteristics and assumed to be more socially just and environmentally sustainable. Thus, it becomes an ultimate goal and is assumed to be an entirely desirable process.

In contrast to ideas of fixed scales, discussions in geography literature argue that scale is a spatial relation that is socially constructed (Marston 2000; Swyngedouw 1997). DuPuis and Goodman (2005) equate these differences to the fact that agro-food literature has largely ignored these debates on the politics of place and space. Elaborating on these differences, Born and Purcell (2006) highlight three general agreements in the current geography literature surrounding scale that should be considered by food systems theorists: 1) scale is socially produced through struggle; 2) scale is simultaneously fluid and fixed; 3) scale is a relational concept. The failure to take these perspectives of scale into consideration relate to Harvey's (1996) description of militant particularism, which he uses to critically describe the way that the problematic particulars of social action are often carried forward unresolved and unexamined. He argues that 'ideals forged out of the affirmative experience of solidarities in one place get generalized and universalized as a working model of a society that will benefit all humanity (Harvey, 1996: 32). Allen et. al. (2003) expand on Harvey, arguing that AFI's goals of social justice and environmental sustainability may have different meanings depending on the context in which they arise and cannot be carried forward unexamined.

In practice, essentializing the local scale can result in multiple tensions that increase the challenges to community food organizing. In discussing the negative ways that this can manifest within communities, Hinrichs (2003) describes a "politics of

defensive localism”, which describes the construction of rigid barriers in the protection of local spaces while exhibiting reluctance towards difference. These barriers have the potential to polarize and exclude particular cultural and social groups by portraying the perception of a homogeneous version of local that excludes the non-local other. Fetishism of the local scale can also narrow the sphere of caring as individuals focus their attention on the immediate community as opposed to inequalities that exist in the broader society.

Failure to implement social justice

Building on the previous arguments, the third critique focuses on AFIs that fail to address issues of social justice. Although most AFIs purport to be engaging issues of social justice in their mandates, critical studies have shown that many fail to translate their discourse into practice on a programmatic level (Allen 2008; Allen et. al. 2003; Guthman 2007b; Guthman 2006; Tarasuk 2001). While social justice has always been a part of alternative food organizing (from early farmer organizing to the anti-hunger movements), today, many justice issues that aim to create an engaged citizenry are reduced simply to an approach of “ethical consumption” in the marketplace further devolving action towards individual choice and responsibility as a key method of social decision-making (Johnston 2008; Lockie 2009).

This failure of AFIs to address the structural causes of social Justice and environmental sustainability is reflected in a number of observations. First, while AFIs do attract a diversity of participants, the leadership and management tend to be white and middle class while recipients of services are more often from marginalized groups (Slocum 2006). This reality has overt racial overtones in what Guthman (2008) describes as “bringing good food to others”. From her own observations, she discusses the ways that contemporary food activism reflects white desires more than the communities it claims to serve. Guthman charges that many AFIs “seem oblivious to the racial character of these discourses – if anything they presume them to be universal – and so are

ignorant of the way in which employment of these discourses might constitute another kind of exclusionary practice” (434).

A second general observation results from the devolution of responsibility to the private sector where programs can be uneven in reach as community groups with more experience, and resources are typically more successful in taking on projects. As a result, alternatives become more accessible by virtue of their location or people’s ability to pay for them. In the case of farmers markets and Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) projects for example, food costs are often higher in order to ensure better prices for farmers and tend to be located in wealthier neighbourhoods. They also tend to be “white spaces” reflected not simply by those who participate but also in their implicit design (Guthman 2008; Slocum 2006). As a colonialist project, Canadian political and social systems have historically been laden with interlocking layers of racism, which are also reflected in the food system. Slocum (2006) notes that many AFI organizations remain unaware or closed to the ways that racism works in the food system and in their own practices. Unacknowledged white privilege exposes AFI’s inability to address social justice and long-term sustainability.

A third observation around the discrepancy between AFI discourse and practices can be related to the reality that activists work within the constraints of the political-economic system, which pushes toward neoliberal forms of governance. Neoliberalism poses serious restraints to what is conceivable “because it limits the arguable, the fundable, the organizable, the scale of effective action, and compels activists to focus on putting out fires” (Guthman 2006: 1180). Since many AFIs are dependent on funding from private foundations they are often forced to temper their politics. While this may seem obvious to any non-profit organization, unreflexive acceptance can result in an abandonment of critical politics altogether. Furthermore, as AFIs grow in number and influence, their existence can give the impression that despite the immense need, the hungry are being taken care of, the environment is a priority, and that capitalism is working. These activities of non-profit organizations more generally, have been accused of “cushioning” the inequities of corporate capitalism, and enabling the neoliberal

dismantling of the welfare state (Seccombe 2002; Shields and Bryan 1998). Without social justice and environmental sustainability at its core, AFIs risk engendering a two-tier food system based on politics of complicity.

While the studies that constitute the critiques discussed in this section are valuable to consider, they tend to identify and delineate activities simply as individual initiatives that are fixed in time and space. While there is a need to understand and take seriously these critiques, critical studies of AFIs must situate individual initiatives as part of a broader food movement. I will now turn to a brief description of the way that this movement has taken shape in Canada.

The Canadian Community Food Security Movement

Canada has a rich tradition of collective activism for social change initiated by actors within the food industry (Kneen 1993; Winson 1993). Recognizing recent trends around the diversity of activities and the connections being made between individuals, communities, and organizations, analysts have pointed to evidence of an emerging food movement in Canada (Allen 2004; Miller 2008; Wakefield 2007; Wekerle 2004). While food is the central catalyst in this work, the movement has made powerful connections between contemporary social justice, community health, and environmental challenges facing populations around the world. Observing these developments, Friedmann and McNair (2008) comment, “A cascading shift in consciousness is taking place, in which it is increasingly possible to see food and agriculture not as sideshows of ‘growth’, but as the seed around which can crystallize multiple, intractable and life-threatening issues” (430). Building on this shift, the movement can be described as an informal alliance between disparate social actors mobilizing against various aspects of the dominant centralized, industrial, global food system.

For the purposes of this paper I will use the term *community food security (CFS)* to describe the philosophy of the food movement. CFS is defined by the North American-based Community Food Security Coalition (CFSC 2009) as: “a condition in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally

adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice”. The choice of terminology is significant because it frames the movement’s discourse and becomes a powerful part of uniting diverse actors across spatial divides. I have selected this term for two reasons. First, the framing of CFS is widely used and accepted among North American AFI actors; and second because it is fairly comprehensive and incorporates key issues among the diverse perspectives.

A Conceptual Framework

Developing a movement that aims to build a viable and sustainable alternative to the current food system requires a wide diversity of approaches and initiatives. In a discussion of the diversity of AFIs and the value of their interconnections, Friedmann and Mcnair (2008) write: “Just as plants growing through cracks in asphalt can eventually replace a roadway with a forest, tiny projects in the interstices of agrifood capitals might potentially – and eventually – become a new way of organizing food and agriculture, at once locally embedded and globally connected” (427). In order to situate the disparate elements of this broad based CFS movement I will build on the warrior-builder-weaver framework developed by Stevenson et. al. (2007) (see also Hinrichs et. al. 1998).

This framework conceptualizes the diversity of AFIs into three interrelated strategic orientations: Warrior activities are interventionist with a goal to change political and economic structures along with civil society beliefs (e.g. protests, boycotts, policy advocates); Builder activities seek to create alternative initiatives either within the economic sector or by creating political structures (e.g. economic enterprises, alternative production systems, payment for ecological goods and services); Weaver activities aim to develop strategic and conceptual linkages within and between warrior and builder activities through network building (e.g. non-profit organizations). Weaver work involves both horizontal linkages “based on space and locality by facilitating alliances across agrifood work and complimentary social change efforts within a bounded area” and vertical linkages involving “strategic connections between structural,

geographic, or analytical levels” (Stevenson et. al. 2008: 47). Using this integrated framework, building alternatives to the current food system requires a wide diversity of AFIs from all three strategic orientations.

This framework implicitly recognizes and engages a number of the critiques discussed in this paper. It avoids reifying either the global or local scale and directly challenges the supposed fixed or static nature of AFIs. It also recognizes that each of the strategic orientations provides an important function, creating political and cultural spaces where AFIs can experiment with and develop alternative models.

Weaver Networks

Building on the warrior-builder-weaver framework, weaver organizations as part of the CFS movement are in the unique position to create multi-scale and multi-dimensional networks that can facilitate mutual learning and critical self-reflection among AFIs. These networks can become spaces of reflexivity that bring together and influence ideas and perspectives to enhance alternative food discourse and practice. Through these networks, AFIs rooted in a particular context are given the opportunity to participate in collective endeavours thereby opening new spaces for political action and re-imagining a politics of the possible.

In discussing the value of networks within social movements, Della Porta and Diani (2006) note that, “it is through the channels of communication and exchange constituted by social networks, that the mobilization of resources and the emergence of collective actors become possible” (121). The powers of these networks lie in their ability to overcome the suppression of information that sustains abuses of power through interaction across space, reframing debates and enabling participation from a wide array of members. Diani and Bison (2004) note a key difference between building social movement networks and a temporary coalition process. The latter is described as alliances between specific organizations formed to achieve specific goals. Network building speaks to the structure of weaver networks within the CFS movement where dense inter-organizational networking occurs, linking actors through solidarities and

shared identities that survive specific coalitions and campaigns. Building on this idea, Misch (2003) discusses the ways that social movement networks are spaces where ideas, identities and frames are shared and exchanged. As spaces that facilitate dynamic and evolving discourses and practices, these networks have the potential to foster progressive change within each organizational constituent and within the movement itself.

Commenting on the power of networks in the CFS movement, Hinrichs et. al. (1998) notes,

“While the local basis of many such initiatives is important, the connections between them across space are critical. What appears to be necessary for ‘sustainable resistance’ or ‘sustainable mobilization’ is for local groups and initiatives to establish connections to similar groups in other localities and especially to groups capable of coordinating actions at regional and national levels.”

Since networks are forged in particular places and social contexts, a geographical analysis plays an important role in understanding the differences both within and between networks. Bound by shared values, Nicholls (2009) explains that networks are important political spaces that blur the boundaries between geographical scales as participants develop alliances and share resources across localities.

Underlying this perspective is that the idea that AFIs are not fixed or static entities but are dynamic, living, learning and have the ability to change and evolve through interaction within CFS social movement networks. Weaver organizations take an integrated approach where collaboration and partnership occur through decentralized, free-flowing, multi-scale networks. This interconnection of ideas, perspectives and approaches becomes a precondition for a more democratic, socially just and environmentally sustainable food system. This approach allows us to consider different strategies together that are not necessarily mutually exclusive. While the work of certain AFIs may be more counter-hegemonic, others can act as an entry point into social movement networks. Once connected to these networks, they become open to critical examination. Popular food writers for example, have had an incredible impact on

the public consciousness and popular interest around food issues. Returning to Michael Pollan (2008), a recent article published in the *New York Times Magazine* in the form of a letter to the incoming US President addresses many of the wider policy and regulatory concerns related to food and agriculture issues. In this letter Pollan's accessible writing style and careful blending of individual and state responsibility is a testament to the way that approaches can be reflexive and evolve.

Canadian Weaver Organizations

I will now introduce two examples of Canadian weaver organizations working within the CFS movement that have been actively involved in developing multi-scale and multi-dimensional networks. The first, The Stop Community Food Centre (The Stop), is a neighbourhood-based, non-profit organization in Toronto. The second, Food Secure Canada/Sécurité Alimentaire Canada (FSC/SAC), is a national non-profit organization based on Ottawa. The mandate of both of these organizations is to facilitate and support strategic coalitions (albeit on different scales) in order to develop viable and sustainable alternatives to the conventional food system. Both these organizations are involved in what Stevenson et. al. (2008) refer to as "movement base building" which involves facilitating new leadership that includes diverse participants such as traditionally marginalized communities. They focus on a broad framing of CFS and demonstrate ways that weaver organizations can enhance the movement by effectively combining warrior and builder activities. The Stop and FSC/SAC are both actively supporting and critically challenging AFIs with the intention of building a stronger and more effective CFS movement.

The Stop Community Food Centre's Green Barn Project

The Stop first opened its doors in downtown Toronto in the late 1970s. Its original mandate was developed in direct response to neighbourhood residents living on low incomes who were increasingly in need of food. Incorporating as one of Canada's first food banks, The Stop gradually became involved in a wide array of political and social

initiatives realizing that confronting hunger must go beyond charity-based food provisioning. By combining respectful emergency service delivery to meet basic food needs, community development, social justice and environmental sustainability, The Stop has developed a wide range of programming that includes community drop-ins, a food bank, a perinatal program, civic engagement, food and farmer markets, community cooking, community advocacy, education, and urban agriculture. The Stop's approach has been developed alongside and in coordination with the emerging CFS movement in Canada. Through connections with other individuals and organizations involved in social movement networks, The Stop's discourse and practices have developed as part of an ongoing evolutionary process.

While The Stop runs a wide array of initiatives, I will focus on the organizations newest and most ambitious project. The Green Barn officially opened its doors in November 2008 as a part of the Artscape Wychwood Barns. The effort has been a partnership between The Stop and Artscape, a non-profit arts-based organization dedicated to culture-led regeneration with a focus on creating sustainable and affordable community spaces. A product of over eight years of development, the Green Barn aims to be an extension of The Stop's work and an experiment in applying its innovative approach in a broader community context. The project was established on a Toronto Transit Commission property through the renovation of five streetcar repair barns originally built in the early 1900s. The Barns take advantage of the latest environmental technology boasting the first heritage preservation project in Ontario to earn a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Canada certification. The Stop's objective for the Green Barn is to create a community centre that will increase food access for people living on low incomes, act as a model for innovative environmental growing methods and provide a space for people to come together to participate in programming related to the environment, social justice and the arts. The space brings together a number of AFIs including a greenhouse, a protected garden, a teaching kitchen, and a brick oven. Beyond community and youth programs in their early stages, a weekly farmers' market is already well underway.

Food Secure Canada/Sécurité Alimentaire Canada's People's Food Policy Project

As a response to the 1996 World Food Summit and leading up to the 2001 Summit, Ryerson University held a gathering in June 2001 entitled Working Together: Civil Society Input for Food Security in Canada. The gathering brought together representatives from grassroots community organizations and networks from across the country and globally with the objective of developing strategies for increasing Canada's commitment to food security both domestically and internationally (Koc and MacRae 2001). The event was the impetus for the development of FAC/SAC. Today, FSC/SAC exists as a national non-profit organization with the aim of uniting individuals and organizations from a wide diversity of sectors and working to support a broad array of food-related policies and programs in Canada and globally. It facilitates collaborative activities by members to advance three interconnected goals: zero hunger, a sustainable food system, and healthy and safe food. Organizational activities include holding a biennial conference in order to identify collaborative projects, supporting member organizations and becoming a common voice for food issues in Canada.

The history of FSC/SAC exemplifies a weaver strategic orientation. From its early development, FSC/SAC has struggled with balancing ways to bring together the diverse actors and approaches to food issues in Canada while at the same time working realize a mandate that connects issues of social justice and environmental sustainability (Koc et. al. 2008). A central tenant of the organizations formation in response to these realities was that it would not act as a centralized decision making body, but take on an aggregate function responsible for facilitating coalition building and networking while supporting member projects within the CFS movement in Canada. To this ends, consensus decision-making and inclusive representation remain core processes. Resulting in often long, tense, and tedious processes, FSC/SAC has managed to bring together an incredible diversity of food actors and create space for new political opportunities.

I will focus here on the newest project of FSC/SAC, the People's Food Policy

Project (PFPP). The project was officially launched in November 2008 and builds on the work of the People's Food Commission (PFC). In 1978, the PFC brought together diverse grassroots actors for the first time to discuss social change in relation to the broader food system. Through informal hearings and creative expression the Commission's objective was to document a wide range of challenges and opportunities for change (PFC 1980). While the report was eventually shelved due to lack of funds and political will, its impacts have permeated food organizing over the past three decades.

The PFPP brings together communities from across Canada and from diverse sectors to collaboratively propose and prioritize a food policy platform planned to be launched in November 2010 (PFPP 2008). The project will be facilitated through FSC/SAC in coordination with over 20 community animators who will carry out the majority of the grassroots mobilizing. The overall goals of the project are to increase food policy and food literacy; to support grassroots organizations in developing and adopting food policies; and to build communication and collaboration across peoples, regions and sectors to facilitate ongoing policy analysis.

Engaging Critiques

In this section, I will discuss the ways that The Stop's Green Barn and FSC/SAC's PFPP are engaging critiques through multi-scale, multi-dimensional networks to facilitate social justice, health, and environmental sustainability among different AFIs.

Challenging a fixed approach to scale

As weaver organizations, The Stop and FAC/SAC are challenging a fixed approach to scale by taking a reflexive approach to localism and towards alliances across location and space. Hinrichs (2003) explains the benefits of this reflexive approach as "diversity-receptive localization", which recognizes and encourages difference both within and beyond local spaces. From this perspective, local can be understood as a part of a "larger national or world community, recognizing that the content and interests of 'local' are relational and open to change" (Hinrichs 2003: 37). These tendencies point to

the importance of problematizing the local and using it to break down barriers as opposed to build them up. CFS movement networks can be seen as political spaces that blur the boundaries between the local, regional, and national as participants develop relationships across geographical locations and participate in politics on multiple levels simultaneously.

In a discussion around networks and scale, Wekerle (204) notes that since scale is a social construct, “within a globalized environment, they [social movements] ‘jump scales’ creating networks that operate at the local and transnational levels and those in between” (379). Taking this one step further, Marston et. al. (2005) propose completely removing hierarchy from the idea of scale. Tracing the debates through human geography over the last twenty years they conclude that the local/global conceptual architecture make politics inaccessible to grassroots movements. These problems stem from the fact that “social practice takes a lower rung on the hierarchy, while ‘broader forces’, such as the juggernaut of globalization, are assigned a greater degree of social and territorial significance” (Marston et. al. 2005: 427). Through the discourse of globalization as external to the local, corporate actors are relieved of any responsibility for their activities. The proposed ‘flat’ alternative places greater value on network interactions across a multiplicity of social sites.

The Stop and FSC/SAC exhibit both a connection to place and simultaneously transcend spatial boundaries through their multiple connections across localities and scales. Thus, locality becomes a political space “motivated not by some perceived virtue inherent to a particular location but by the prospect of fostering the engagement of citizens in an active process of change in which proximity literally grounds thought and action” (Kloppenburg and Hassanein 2006: 418). These ideas speak to the way that social movements have the potential to use scale as a strategy to embed initiatives in a local context and to engage with different political actors while maintaining a constant attention to issues of social justice and environmental sustainability. With ongoing critical reflexivity, the challenge for social movements is to use their networks to ensure that conceptions of the local act as transparent and flexible.

The Stop exemplifies an ability to focus its work locally while recognizing the value of connecting to networks and coalitions within the broader CFS movement. The Green Barn's AFIs directly engage individuals in the politics of their daily lives, empowering them to make connections to broader political issues. The Stop's approach has evolved from incorporating, sharing and coordinating with other organizations and different perspectives. This has involved a strategic navigation between different spaces including the organization's local Davenport-West neighbourhood, regionally in the city of Toronto, nationally and even globally. This multi-scale perspective has enabled The Stop to remain grounded in its locality while simultaneously being active beyond its geographical borders. At the root of these activities lies an awareness that the boundaries encompassing a locality are socially constructed and thus fluid. Working in multiple spatial locations simultaneously has enabled The Stop to maintain a core connection to neighbourhood residents and to work with others to further develop a critical discourse and improve its practice.

The Stop envisions the Green Barn project as both a support and an extension of its work. Although the Barns are located over two kilometers from the main site in the Davenport-West neighbourhood, many of the Stop's current programs make use of the new space. The new garden and greenhouse will grow food for the food bank, the meal program and the community kitchens and volunteers and participants will be encouraged to be involved in both locations. The project also brings The Stop into new territory in a different neighbourhood with a challenge to take on new issues. Through the Green Barn, The Stop has become deeply involved with other organizations and initiatives throughout Toronto, hosting and sponsoring conferences, educational events, activist and advocacy meetings, and bringing on new staff, volunteers and participants.

The Stop has also been directly involved in national and international networks that have shaped the organization's work. For example, The Green Barn project was partly inspired by other innovations such as Growing Power's Community Food Centre and Brazil's Zero Hunger Program. Since 2006 Stop staff has attended trainings and educational workshops at Growing Power's innovative two-acre farm in Wisconsin. In

2004, Nick Saul, The Stop's executive director, participated in the founding conference of Brazil's Zero Hunger movement as part of a Toronto-based delegation. Their intention was to learn how municipal governments could work closely with citizen representatives to develop and carry out an integrated food-policy addressing malnutrition and hunger in the region. These are both examples of the ways that participation in social movement networks can help to develop organizational discourse and practice.

The development of FSC/SAC also illustrates the way that the Canadian CFS movement has challenged a fixed notion of scale. Since its establishment, FSC-SAC has attempted to incorporate many diverse voices from around the country and has directly confronted the tensions that can arise when different perspectives attempt to collaborate. Its flexible, decentralized, and non-hierarchical structure along with increasing member familiarity through its networks has enabled FAC/SAC to make strategic connections across regional, national, and global scales. This multi-scale approach is at the core of the PFFP, which is charged with making connections between local AFIs and national policy objectives. Through participation, individuals and organizations are directly exposed to the values of a "diversity-receptive localism". The PFFP is also a step towards developing a unified voice of the Canadian CFS movement and to progress the discourse around food issues using networks that include a diversity of voices and opinions.

Growing Food Citizens

Another way that weaver organizations in the CFS movement are engaging critiques is through teaching knowledge and skills as a part of wider citizen building project. While critiques have pointed to self-improvement and individualism as part of the neoliberal project, social movement networks have the potential to enable individuals to make strong connections leading to a more politically engaged citizenry. Instead of features such as volunteering being seen as complicit in neoliberalism, there are valuable knowledge and skills that can be gained from participation in AFIs when associated with the CFS movement. In discussing the way that food can be a powerful entry point,

Johnston (2007) explains that social movement activities can create important spaces of emancipation from capitalism and develop a counter-hegemonic food politics.

Welsh and McRae (1998) use the term “food citizenship” to build on the idea that food has been relegated to the private realm and its commodification has resulted in a population that lacks the basic skills around public participation. It is also a direct response to the tendencies of the current food system to actively transform citizens into consumers through the illusion of personal choice. Food citizenship can be described as the practice of engaging in food-related behaviors that “support, rather than threaten, the development of a democratic, socially and economically just, and environmentally sustainable food system” (Wilkins 2005: 271). Food citizenship can also be associated with particular rights and involves moving beyond food shopping to engage with the multi-dimensional aspects of the food system.

Similarly, Hassanein (2003) points to the interconnected goal of food democracy referring to the idea that “people can and should be actively participating in shaping the food system, rather than remaining passive spectators on the sidelines . . . [It is about] citizens having power to determine agro-food policies and practices locally, regionally, nationally and globally” (79). Realizing food democracy requires that people develop the knowledge and skills necessary to actively participate in society and to have an impact on different political levels. In the literature surrounding consumer politics, theorists have noted that while the transformation of consumer to citizen is challenging, alternative food initiatives within the CFS movement have the potential to facilitate this process (Holzer 2006; Johnston 2008; Lockie 2009). Through weaver networks, collective groups of citizens are able to work together to raise public awareness, put pressure on governments, and build viable alternatives to the current food system.

Both The Stop and FSC/SAC have directly engaged individuals and organizations in a learning and skill building process that encourages both food citizenship and food democracy. Participation in CFS movement networks can foster the development of strong civic virtues and critical perspectives along with experience in understanding policy processes. Making public deputations through the PFPP and participating in

programs at the Green Barn has the ability to increase the confidence, political efficacy, knowledge, and skills of those involved. The Civic Engagement program developed by The Stop focuses on the root causes of poverty by facilitating community members' training and application knowledge and skills through events and actions to address issues of poverty across Ontario. Beginning directly from their own experience, these individuals speaking on behalf of a broader movement may be far more influential and effective at speaking to policy makers than third party advocates.

FAC/SAC's use of animators for the PFPP facilitates the translation of place-specific issues into a broader social context. Together participants can determine the challenges that face their local communities and develop strategies for social change. By working together on a common vision, participants directly witness the strengthening of their community. Their commitment and ownership establishes a greater sense of control and power over their lives while working towards structural political change.

Engaging Social Justice and Environmental Sustainability

A third way that weaver organizations are engaging contradictions through CFS movement networks is by ensuring that social justice and environmental sustainability is at the core of their practice. Put another way, food has often been positioned in the private realm and considered a matter of individual choice and responsibility. Instead, weaver organizations shift food into the public realm and recognize that social justice and environmental sustainability require support of the state and government policy. This is facilitated through the interaction of local AFIs as weaver organizational networks encourage more than an exchange of resources, but also ideas and identities. This has the potential to directly challenge the discourses and practices of each participating AFI. In order to build a diverse CFS movement that is both democratic and based on principles of inclusion, Slocum (2006) suggests that these coalitions require "heterogeneity and an affinity of differences rather than consensus through similarity" (343). If social justice and environmental sustainability remain at the core of a weaver organization's approach, these ideals will be translated throughout participant

interactions.

A way that alternative food initiatives can make a broader impact around structural issues is through scaling-up their work. Johnston and Baker (2005) point to weaver organizations' potential ability to scale-up initiatives by taking food issues beyond the micro-scale into municipal, regional and national political realms. As The Stop and FSC/SAC have illustrated, this can occur through the development of an organizational structure that acts as a democratic aggregate process for AFIs as opposed to developing a power-based hierarchy. Weaver organizations are in a particularly strong position to facilitate this process in terms of their capacity, structure, and their ability to incorporate social justice and environmental sustainability in order to develop a more reflexive and comprehensive approach.

While food acts as a starting point, alternative food initiatives must also move beyond food and consider foundational issues such as human rights, wealth redistribution, along with energy and resource use. Referring, for example, to principles of anti-racist practice, Slocum (2006) notes the ways that race, class and gender relations are interconnected with the conventional food system. AFIs must therefore focus on issues of land tenure, farm workers, food processors and food server exploitation in order to create a more equitable food system. Guthman (2007) echoes these ideas and argues that food activism should focus on the injustices that underlie disparities in food access and environmental degradation. She suggests focusing on initiatives such as investing in urban renewal, expanding entitlement programs, obtaining living wages, along with eliminating toxins from the mainstream food supply.

The politicization and right to food lies at the core mandates of both The Stop and FSC/SAC. While The Stop began as a food bank, its leadership was well aware of ways that the charity model had been used to protect and even bolster the inequalities of capitalism through depoliticizing hunger. The Stop's early transition away from a charity approach reflects the realization that handing out food does not provide long-term solutions to hunger. The organization's initial development of an anti-poverty approach attempted to reframe hunger in a discourse of political responsibility and to

address the structural barriers that cause unemployment and poverty. Through its evolution and despite its aversion to emergency food provisioning, The Stop has recognized the extensive need for its services, even if they are only a short-term solution. Although the majority of its work has moved well beyond a charity-approach, the food bank still brings more people to The Stop than any other program. The Green Barn builds on this reality by attempting to remove the stigma attached to using emergency services and making the experience as dignified as possible. Regardless of why people come to The Stop, they are met with an opportunity to be part of a community project and to become involved in a number of other more political initiatives. All programs at the Green Barn have been designed to incorporate these basic principles of social justice and environmental sustainability.

Similarly, FSC/SAC's PFPP is founded on the basis of placing decision-making power about food systems in the hands of communities. It also reflects a commitment to international solidarity recognizing that CFS in Canada cannot be achieved at the expense of other countries. The project's ultimate intention of democratically developing a set of food policies is to further the goal of a socially just and environmentally sustainable food system. For both organizations, AFIs are not initiated as self-serving pursuits, but result directly from demands by marginalized peoples who want to be actors in changing larger structural issues. These activities become sites of mobilization for civic engagement.

Conclusion

To conclude will return to this paper's original question: *Are AFIs addressing core issues of social justice and environmental sustainability or are they simply complicit in a wider neoliberal consensus?* I have argued that to address this question AFIs must be situated as part of multi-scale and multi-dimensional CFS networks where they have the opportunity to interact, evolve and develop counter hegemonic politics. As weaver organizations, the aim of both The Stop and FSC/SAC is to bring together the diversity of AFIs and to actualize an inclusive CFS perspective with the goal of broad system

transformation. Through these examples I have emphasized some of the most relevant and positive qualities of each of the organizations and their respective programs. However, they also represent an imperfect politics and are participating in an ongoing critical and reflexive process.

Some of these challenges they encounter stem from the reality that there is still debate around the form, structure and constitution of the CFS movement. There is also no consensus around a common voice, approach or message. This has resulted in struggles between different organizations that have not been able to reconcile differences in perspective. Further, even though some organizations, including the ones explored in this paper agree with the principles of CFS, it is not necessarily the case that all staff, volunteers, or participants 'get it' and as a result the application of the discourse is not always consistent. Related to this, Koc et. al. (2008) have also pointed to the fact that the current CFS movement lacks tactical sophistication referring to its ability to develop a coordinated process to design and implement a strategic plan to confront and develop alternatives to the current food system.

Since the movement is young, the longer-term impacts of the initiatives and collective approaches are still unclear. There is currently not a significant amount of documented evidence around how AFIs have impacted the broader food system or wider socio-political relations. Further, as discussed above, even the most counter-hegemonic AFIs exist within a neoliberal, capitalist system that is laden with multiple-inequalities. Ideally all AFIs could focus their energies on the structural causes of injustice and environmental degradation, but the reality of a dependency on charitable service persists. This poses a conundrum to the CFS movement around how to successfully balance emergency services with structural change. While organizations like The Stop and FSC/SAC are experimenting with alternative models, questions remain around long-term impacts and how these models could be applied in other localities. Nevertheless, a young movement necessarily implies an ongoing and further process of growth and development. While CFS is an important and lofty goal, it may be more important to focus on the process and the steps involved in how AFIs reach that goal. Embodying an acceptance of imperfection and a critical reflexivity is an important first step.

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A Global Food Crisis? Production and Consumption

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Abstract

In 2009, the food economy is undoubtedly driven by the global capitalist market. This is no accident. But what are the forces that helped in the creation of this system and what are its inevitable consequences? Karl Marx theory of crisis helps explain what so many writers have described with regard to this topic. The key lies in making the connection between production and consumption (Raj Patel, Michael Pollan, Eric Schlosser, Marion Nestle and others). I will look at Vandana Shiva's analysis of the transformation of India's food production via the green revolution to understand the effects of capitalist industrialization in agriculture (1991, 1997). However, capitalist production, Marx argues, is essentially overproduction and will result in a collapse of the system unless met with increased consumption. This created significant dilemma for food marketers because one cannot simply increase how much one eats, but with the ingenuity (or disingenuity) of scientific thought, overconsumption was effectively accomplished. And, as farmers (big and small) compete to outproduce one-another into liquidation, poverty and/or government subsidies, consumers overeat overprocessed food that makes them sick. I will argue that this system is already in the process of bringing itself to a crashing halt and that our goal today should be to decrease both consumption and production to improve our health and ecological situations. In the last century, many of the world's farmers have switched from traditional methods of food production to industrialized ones. This has also led to a shift in reliance primarily on local inputs and labour to intensive industrialized methods that employ artificial labour, irrigation, fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. While this seemed like a step forward earlier in the 20th century, it was also a step towards disenfranchisement, debt, poverty and ecological problems. On the other side of the coin of increased production, the corporations that market and sell the food have found new ways to sell us that same food. On similar principles of biology, scientists were inventing, along with new ways of producing, new ways of consuming. However, even with the new knowledge, obesity, cancer and heart disease are on the rise around the world. Using the themes of expansion of markets, unintentional consequences, and resistance and change, this paper will show that current trends in food production and consumption are in a state of crisis.

Karl Marx's basic theory of crisis can help and should be kept in mind throughout this paper. Ernest Mandel tackles this theme in Marx's writing (1990). Mandel writes, "Capitalist economic crises are always crises of overproduction of commodities..." (1990). But its source really is that overall the capitalists' (i.e. the shareholders of corporations) rate of profit begins to drop (1990). Profit is the key to capitalism's functioning, as Marx explains in *Capital Volume 1* (1977). But crisis in this paper is not important only in the economic sense, it is also important in a larger social sense.

Although Marx's theorization of crisis deals with economics, Marx never reduced his understanding of society strictly to economics. Liberal economists (like those who base their theories on Adam Smith) tend to evaluate economic relations only in terms of

the value of goods. Marx's approach was to critique that and insert human relations into the equation. These human relations revolve around the commodity, which he called commodity fetishism. We, as regular human beings participating in a capitalist economy, generally understand commodities in two ways, one is their value, as in their price in relation to all other commodities (i.e. the price of a car versus the price of a loaf of bread versus the price of housing) and their use value as in what we can do with them to better our lives. Liberal economists put all emphasis on market value and it very often does not really matter if something is useful for the society or not. This is very different from Marxist understanding of the commodity. Marx understands the commodity in terms of who is involved in producing it, the workers, and the capitalist (the owner of the factory or land). In this way, Marx argued that profit actually comes from the worker who puts their labour into the commodity, making it what it is, but the capitalist gets to keep that profit. A crisis occurs when capitalists, on average, notice a rate of decline on that profit. There are different explanations for why crises happen, but generally speaking it comes from too many commodities on the market, the poorest consumers not being able to afford the product(s), and/or consumers not buying enough (Mandel, 1990). These factors will be explored further to show that signs of a crisis are indeed present in the food production system.

Production

Expanding Markets

An examination of the history of the system can reveal a consistent battle to expand markets for food. There are many examples to look at with regard to industrialization of agriculture, which has been the main avenue to expand production, but the one chosen here is India, specifically the state of Punjab as outlined by Vandana Shiva (1991). The period she describes begins at a point when the United States was fighting to crush and keep at bay any radical movements within its own borders and abroad (Palmer, 2004 & Dowie, 2002). But in an era where so many colonially oppressed countries around the world saw the USSR and China as inspirations, that was difficult to do (Shiva, 1991). The

rural population of Asia was seen as particularly problematic because of their potential to revolt against powerful groups. As such, the strategy was to change "... the agrarian relations which had previously been politically so troublesome" (Shiva, 1991). The idea here was to separate the producer from his products in order to make him/her dependent on the market of commodities (both for political and economic reasons). This is a classic example of what can be called accumulation through dispossession. It turns a producer from self-sufficient to market-dependent, thus expanding the world market for food.

Unintended Consequences

The change mentioned above is generally referred to as the Green Revolution. It is widely "...heralded as a political and technological achievement, unprecedented in human history" (Shiva, 1991). However, from it came consequences which can be seen through how machinery, seeds, irrigation projects and chemicals were brought to third-world countries to transform their 'backward' agriculture. The initial step of the transformation lies with the seed. Seeds determine the crop that grows and, given the right conditions, how big the yield is. The seeds that were introduced from Western research institutes were known for their high yields; however, the amounts of resources that these seeds required to produce a full yield were significantly greater than local varieties. Dams for irrigation and chemical fertilizers were never needed by Indian farmers to produce before, but with these new seeds, they were.

The intensified use of resources was literally an assault on nature, one that sparked violence and tensions between regions over water resources in the Indian state of Punjab (Shiva, 1991). The violence against nature meant "... diseased soils, pest infested crops, waterlogged [marsh] deserts, and indebted and discontented farmers" (Shiva, 1991). The use of Western seeds brought with it the idea of growing only a single kind of crop instead of a diversity of crops. This led to increased susceptibility to pests and crop disease, which in turn meant that farmers had to buy more pesticides to protect their crops. The purchasing of these inputs meant debt, and debt eventually

translated for many to loss of their land. Although for some time the total food production increased, there were significant and troubling consequences to the development, which were not foreseen, including ecological disruption, social conflicts and debt for farmers.

Resistance and Change

After two decades of transformation, ecological, social and culturo-ethnic crises emerged in the state of Punjab. Shiva describes the difficult situation of Punjab peasants following the years of the Green Revolution's transformations. Due to the initial large increase in production of particular commodities such as wheat and rice, prices fell drastically. The farmers who initially gained from producing more crop, soon found that they were not gaining much and compared to the cost of the inputs (fertilizers, herbicides, pesticides), which they could not continue without, were earning even less money than they did to begin with. This is where we see the crisis is manifest. Although in recent years, many farmers have opted out of the Green Revolution's economics by revitalization traditional systems of exchanging seeds (Shiva, 2005). The old seed trade allowed India's farmers to make the most out of the ecological system they were working in without trying to control nature as the Green Revolution did (Shiva, 2005).

The Crisis

Despite the positive changes in Punjab and many other places around the world, most farmers still subscribe to the principles of the Green Revolution (Albritton, 2009). Many of farmers simply receive subsidies from their states, for example in the European Union and the United States, and some even get money for destroying their crops and herds (Albritton, 2009). However, there is still too much food being produced around the world. Fred Weston (2008) writes that according to reports there is currently "...more than 2 kilos of food per day per person are produced, divided roughly into 1.2 kilos of grains, beans, nuts, 0.5 kilos of fruit and vegetables, and 0.5 kilos of meat, milk and egg," but of this, 3500 calories can be attributed to gains, which theoretically should be

way more than enough to feed everyone. This can be complimented by an article in the Environment News Service, cites FAO and other experts as suggesting that half of all food produced is wasted (2008). In addition to this, which is what Weston is most concerned with, is that there are way too many people in the world who cannot afford to buy that food. This is also a problem that Albritton tackles. He raises the contradiction that exists in the food production system where so much food is destroyed while over a billion people on the planet are underfed. That there are people who cannot afford the commodity and that there is too much food being produced is a sign of a system in crisis. But, if there is so much food being produced, and there is only so much people can eat, somebody must be losing money. So the question is: why are things not falling apart? One way of answering this question is by looking at the system of consumption.

Consumption

Expansion of Markets

Consumption is the sale and distribution food. Multiple strategies are used for increasing sales today; however, what we have seen the longest, or perhaps missed the longest, was the transition towards increased processing of food. Michael Pollan deals with this issue in his book *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto* (2008). Pollan describes the early science of nutrition, revealing an interesting oddity. The same story keeps on repeating itself over and over. First, scientists discover the macronutrients, carbohydrates, proteins and fats. Then, they realize that there are more substances in the food, which they call minerals. Soon after, someone looks outside the box and solves another mystery, calling the substance vitamins. As more and more hidden ingredients of food are unveiled, like omega fats and antioxidants, and more mysteries are solved as to their uses, one cannot help but get the feeling, that there will *always* be more. In other words, the quest for total nutritional information is a never-ending one. Pollan refers to it by the term *nutritionism*, which he found first used by Gyorgy Scrinis (2002).

Nutritionism's story of the "new discovery" has just the power needed to make us buy certain foods. However, since the main foods we can buy with these features are packaged foods that specifically advertise that they contain substances such as vitamins and anti-oxidants, we are effectively made participants in additional exchanges (Nestle, 2002). We are paying more for more work done on a particular food and it is this food that divorces us from independent producers. Food bought out of convenience is also food that we do not wash, cut or cook. These processes are taken away from us and put into a factory. The more work that is normally done by us personally becomes a part of commodity exchanges, the more transactions occur through the market. In this way, we are actually expanding the market of food commodities.

A similar situation is present for corn production. In *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, Pollan describes the processes by which corn is turned into various other commodities such as corn syrup used for making pop or animal feed, which helps raise cattle (2006). Most recently, Weston (2008) argues that the cause of a major food crisis was that the United States has enacted a policy, which shifted the designated market for corn from human consumption to biofuels. Biofuels is a new way of consuming food; instead of eating it, it is used up by our cars. But what is important to notice here is that whether corn is used for animal feed or to power cars, a large amount of the calories is lost. To explain how the food production system is able to produce much more food than needed, it is quite easy to show that much of that food is simply not designated for consumption.

Unintended Consequences

Processed foods are detrimental to our health, as Gyorgy Scrinis (2002) argues in his article "Sorry Marge". He writes that in order to understand processing, we really need only two categories, industrial foods, describing processing, and whole foods, describing foods that generally involve much fewer steps of processing before they reach a consumer. Pollan (2008) carries Scrinis's argument further by citing evidence of various diets non-reliant on processing (i.e. Mediterranean peasants', Australian traditional

Aborigine, and various other groups' diets) to illustrate an indirect adverse relationship between health and diet.

Pollan's argument for a more holistic diet can be considered in parallel with Richard Levins' (2007) and Albritton (2009) who take a close look at the third world and poorer populations in the United States to show the kind of health problems that emerge from the introduction and reliance on industrial diets. Diseases such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease – customarily thought of “diseases of the rich” as they were associated with wealth - are emerging all over the world in poorer populations (Levins, 2007). Processed foods used to be a luxury only the rich could afford; but this, as Pollan (2006) describes, has changed as the affordability of processed foods has increased. It is now difficult and expensive to avoid processed foods.

That is not to say that scientists did not try to come up with a solution to the problem. Pollan outlines how nutritionists were supposed tackle these health problems going as far back as the early 20th century, but many of the studies and scientific conclusions made have been fruitless in assisting with these particular health problems. As Nestle, (2002) Pollan (2008) and Scrinis (2002) suggest, nutritionists are generally limited by corporations that have invested in food production such as sugar or meat products, which are associated with health problems. Nutrition, as other sciences, enjoys a good deal of power in our society in the sense that people believe in it (Pollan, 2008). Unfortunately, most people do not realize how contradictory it is to their interests. Pollan building on Scrinis' argument writes, “We like to think of scientists as being free from ideological taint...[but] they are as much the product of their ideological environment as the rest of us”. Scrinis is particularly keen in his insight to note that the most popular findings of nutritionists have actually assisted the food industry to sell processed foods, instead of helping eliminate a health problem. Even science, which most people believe to be working in their interests, has the effect of unintentionally harming as result of its interplay with the food industry.

Resistance and Change

As we see a theme of unintentional consequences in production and consequent social movements emerging in Shiva's literature on the third-world, we can see these movements emerge in Western oriented books too. Pollan talks about the organic movement (2006) and healthy food movement (2008), Eric Schlosser (2005) mentions the slow food movement, and there are plenty of organizations, which target change to this system through the consumers' actions. These books, movements, and organizations have been popular enough to keep the books on this topic coming out. But it is truly hard to say whether significant change is being achieved. Levins (2007) however poses a very different solution compared to these other writers. He writes about change that has already happened and is in the process of reflecting and restructuring itself. His book discusses Cuba's food system where production is local, primarily organic, minimally processed, brings consumers closer to the land, is just to the workers and is designed to minimize ecological harm. He attributes these achievements to socialism and challenges the reader to think that if something like that can be achieved in a poor, economically isolated island, what the prospects can be for richer countries throughout the world.

The Crisis

Although from the perspective of consumption it is not directly visible that there is a crisis, it certainly exists even for consumers, as health problems are still on the rise (Albritton, 2009). Even more importantly, looking at food production from the point of view of consumption demonstrates how the overproduction of food is transformed into production of higher-value foods. Food is a unique commodity in this way; it has two important properties that most other commodities do not have. The amount of food people buy is limited by how much they can eat, which is limited by their biology and the food we eat is influenced by experts with incomplete understanding of that biology and who fully acknowledge that, often openly (Pollan, 2008). Thus, to overcome the first obstacle, and take advantage of the second, the food industry corporations have been

using food processing to alleviate the obstacles that stand in the way of their profits and evading the effects of a crisis.

The food production system is in a state of crisis, which was explored using themes of expansion of markets, unintentional consequences and resistance and change. But this leaves us in a perplexing situation: if the food industry is able to avoid the effects of these crises and even take advantage of them to make profit, what then? Understanding this situation is the first step. The second is revealing the contradictions that are inherent within this system, which all the writers cited in this paper and many more books and people have been doing. Considering that the writer who describes the most successful solution is Levins, that would be the logical choice, but socialism is no easy goal and sometimes might not even seem desirable, perhaps Albritton's suggestion is the most reasonable one. How can change be made in a society where citizens generally do not have control over the actions of corporations? Albritton suggests that the biggest obstacle as to why corporations cannot be held accountable is because of their legal status as "legal persons" so their privacy cannot be breached. But if these institutions are acting in ways that affect everyone, people need to know what they are doing in order to protect the public interest. This is particularly an important step in wealthy countries in which many transnational corporations are based. It is difficult to work towards something as abstract and often confusing like socialism, but Albritton's suggestion is a goal with benefits that can be seen directly and be something many will agree to easily. He writes, "Faced with the global dangers of our era, we must open our minds to radical alternatives that bring economics and ethics into closer contact...," which seems like something worthy for citizens to demand from their governments.

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