

FOOD TRANSGRESSIONS

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Food Transgressions

Making Sense of Contemporary Food Politics

Edited by

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ASHGATE

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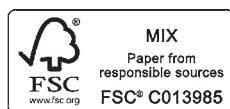
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Foreword

Anne Murcott

Transgressions are liable to attract attention. There are the sinful and the salacious, the daring and the heroic, not to mention the tragic when breaking one rule is the only honourable way of obeying another. Transgressions are necessarily inextricably coupled with boundaries, physical as well as social, literal as well as abstract. Transgressing boundaries entails rupture, infraction and powerful sanction. Popular understandings such as these are reflected in the lists of meanings of the verb 'to transgress' given in *The Oxford English Dictionary*: to go beyond the bounds of limits prescribed by a law or command; to break, contravene, trespass against, violate or infringe. Commonly enough, however, the correspondence between popular meanings and academic usage is not exact, with social scientists making use of words for their own, more technical purposes. Adapting the notion of transgression is just what Michael Goodman, Colin Sage and their colleagues have done in this collection of articles on 'Making Sense of Contemporary Food Politics', adopting the word to provide a distinctive interpretation via which to consider an array of topics of current concern. It is the distinctiveness of their approach that serves as the point of departure for this brief foreword to their thought-provoking contribution – using it as licence to muse on the theme of transgressions and social scientific studies of food.

What might be regarded as the strong version of transgression centres on dramatic rule-breaking. This conjures the realm of food taboos catalogued, albeit controversially, by the geographer Frederick Simoons (1994) who talks of 'prejudices' against eating flesh; Moslem avoidances of pork, Hindu of beef, American of horse or English of dog. *Unmentionable Cuisine* (1979) is Schwabe's more popular book which includes rat, lampreys and calves eyeballs. And, since his intent is serious in aiming to reduce the amount of food that is wasted, he also adds recipes. Such books list items that are nutritious and safe to ingest but that are or have been proscribed, deemed unclean, unfit to eat according to some rules somewhere in the world at some point in recorded human history. The contents of this pair of books is purposely selected for mention here to play on their lists of would-be edibles' capacity for evoking revulsion and disgust; transgressing the rules involved testifies to so forceful a prohibition that the response to the very idea may be embodied, a physiological reaction. In turn, this highlights the more general question of not just the strength of a prohibition but the concomitant heinousness of the transgression.

1 Of course, the topic of so-called food avoidances belongs as well to the 1
 2 realm of pollution and of culturally definable prescriptions and proscriptions 2
 3 of classic anthropology. In addition food transgressions to do with association 3
 4 between members of different groups are part of the realm of social status and the 4
 5 maintenance of social distance – topics that also belong to classic sociology. These 5
 6 come together in long standing studies of the caste system, that very particular 6
 7 form of Hindu social stratification in India (but arguably, historically at least, also 7
 8 found elsewhere). Though changing and not as rigid as in the past, its well-known 8
 9 contours are still evident; relationships between castes governed by a complex of 9
 10 values, rituals and permitted/ forbidden forms of social interaction. Not only are 10
 11 certain foodstuffs proscribed for the highest castes, strict rules control who may 11
 12 accept food from whom, with, broadly, the highest castes not allowed to accept 12
 13 food from any of those below, although lower castes may accept food from those 13
 14 above. For feasts when members of different castes might be invited – perhaps, 14
 15 as André Bétéille (1996) reports for a South Indian village he studied in the early 15
 16 1960s, when servants or tenants attend a wedding feast – members of lower castes 16
 17 would be liable to be given their food separately, in a backyard and only after those 17
 18 of the high caste had eaten. Bétéille also records a cautionary tale told in the village 18
 19 of an attempt at getting round this complex of prescriptions and proscriptions for 19
 20 eating, when a member of a lower caste sought to pass himself off as a Brahmin, 20
 21 the highest. 21

22
 23 The Non-Brahmin had sat down to eat a ceremonial meal along with the 23
 24 Brahmins, a thing which would never be permitted unless he were to conceal 24
 25 his identity. Before commencing the meal, the Non-Brahmin, in imitation of the 25
 26 Brahmins, began performing the *parishesanam*. But instead of moving his right 26
 27 hand in the clockwise direction as should be done, he moved it counterclockwise. 27
 28 His identity was immediately revealed, and he was beaten and thrown out of the 28
 29 gathering. (Bétéille 1996: 56) 29
 30 30

31 By whichever word listed in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the Non-Brahmin's 31
 32 effort at masquerading as a Brahmin qualifies as a transgression; the ferocity of the 32
 33 punishment testifying to the profundity of the rule's social significance. 33

34 Much more recently, Chris Jenks (2003) pursues the same apprehension of 34
 35 transgression in his book-length treatment of the matter, a work cited approvingly 35
 36 by Goodman and Sage in their introduction to the present collection. It needs a 36
 37 glance at no more than the vocabulary of the contents page of Jenks' invaluable 37
 38 summary of discussions of the topic, to be reminded of the dangerous territory the 38
 39 word transgression inhabits: sacred and profane, liminality, normal/pathological, 39
 40 excess, horror and the Marquis de Sade. Jenks adopts the following definition: 40
 41 41

42 To transgress is to go beyond the bounds or limits set by a commandment or 42
 43 law or convention, it is to violate or to infringe. But to transgress is also more 43
 44 44

1 than this, it is to announce and even laudate the commandment, the law or the 1
 2 convention. Transgression is a deeply reflexive act of denial and affirmation. 2
 3 (Jenks 2003: 2) 3
 4 4
 5 The final elements of Jenks' definition serve as one of the points where Goodman 5
 6 and Sage insert a wedge to develop their extended usage of the word transgression. 6
 7 Attention, they propose, is to be focussed on the boundaries that are transgress- 7
 8 able and for them, such crossings operate at a multiplicity of scales and in an as 8
 9 yet un-numbered collection of forms – from discourses, knowledge regimes or 9
 10 technologies to ethics and the boundaries of the human body itself. In electing 10
 11 to highlight a feature that lies on the margins of Jenks' discussion, Goodman and 11
 12 Sage reveal the direction in which they wish to take the notion of transgression: 12
 13 away from the sanction and prohibitions and towards all kinds of boundaries, in 13
 14 effect – although they do not say as much explicitly – away from a static historical 14
 15 view towards one that is more dynamic, attending (with Mol and Law) to blurred, 15
 16 shifting or overlapping boundaries. 16
 17 Thus Goodman and Sage adapt the notion of transgressions. Their interpretation 17
 18 of the term uses the simple idea of some sort of crossing as a way of turning 18
 19 attention to one or other boundary and it is this meaning of transgression that 19
 20 serves as the hallmark for collecting together their colleagues' discussions. 20
 21 Theirs is a light hand; the word transgression is adopted as a touchstone rather 21
 22 than analytic concept. They and their contributors stretch the notion a long way, 22
 23 but also leave it muted. Yet scope for further development is from time to time 23
 24 implied. While some contributors introduce the word in passing, others provide 24
 25 a definition opening the way for reflection on more detailed considerations, from 25
 26 reference to the movement of actors into new arenas to designations of the type of 26
 27 border crossings. 27
 28 A host of new questions is thus prompted in the reader. How are transgressions/ 28
 29 crossings and their associated boundaries to be identified? Who is to do the 29
 30 identifying – is it the actors involved (the emic level) or the analysts (the etic 30
 31 level)? How does this new characterisation of the matter shed new light on the 31
 32 political economy of food? How does it go further than existing modes of analysis 32
 33 in terms say, of social movements, the interplay of powerful actors or disparities 33
 34 in power? Do penalties for crossing remain in the picture, or are they completely 34
 35 dispensed with? Does the strength or social significance of the boundary still 35
 36 matter to the discussion? 36
 37 In implicitly raising questions such as these, Goodman, Sage and colleagues 37
 38 have laid the foundations for a very ambitious intellectual agenda; that is, to 38
 39 demonstrate the manner in which *transgressing* borders – rather than simply 39
 40 crossing them – tells us something we really have to know the better to understand 40
 41 about the contemporary politics of food. Their stretching of *transgressions* in 41
 42 this volume has not just been bold and inventive. It paves the way for the next 42
 43 and vital phase of work that begins systematic investigation of that essential trio: 43
 44 44

1 structural circumstances, human agency and historical conditions under which 1
2 food transgressions do and do not take place and, in their turn, do and do not 2
3 become institutionalised. 3

4 Anne Murcott 4
5 London 2013 5

6 6

7 7

8 **References** 8

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Preface

This volume started life as a conversation over dinner between the two editors – in the company of Michael Redclift – after a seminar in the Geography Department at King's. Much of it was taken up by a discussion of the ways that alternative foods, such as organic and fair trade goods, were already or were becoming established fare at conventional food outlets like supermarkets. We were familiar with the arguments made by Lewis Holloway and his colleagues about their desire to move away from the qualifying term of 'alternative' given the ways that, with this contemporary mixing up and entanglement of food networks, the established 'oppositional' framing of conventional versus alternative was not conceptually or theoretically helpful. Yet something continued to niggle, as the conversation travelled across and into new and different threads related to the intentional mixing of alternative and conventional food networks. Moreover, questions of power, agency and relationships were increasingly defining alternative food markets as they moved into the mainstream of farming, shopping and eating life in the UK and Ireland. As we started to reflect more, one of us asked the following question: what might be a useful way to conceptualise what was going on here, as well as capture these entanglements as *processes* and *practices*? Out of this and subsequent discussions, the idea of food 'transgressions' was born as a concept and organising idea that might be useful to allow us (and others) to think about the processes, power and intentions embedded in the increasingly entangled, and now almost indistinguishable, worlds of conventional and alternative foods.

But, of course – and as a key motivation for this volume – when one brings this idea of transgression and that of transgressive practices to bear on the worlds of food, it cannot but open up the *multitude* of ways that food is transgressive well beyond our more narrow initial discussion of the crossovers between conventional and alternative food networks. Thus, as we embarked upon a series of conversations with the authors, they were asked to think about, grapple with and explore the ways that food was/is transgressive or to reflect upon the food transgressions that were occurring in their respective research projects. The concept was meant to be a way for the authors to explore the liminality, the border-crossings, the boundary-jumping and boundary-(re)setting of food in all its cultural, political, ethical, technological, material, spatial and social glory.

As a result of some often extended and occasionally vexed conversations with authors, who all displayed remarkable patience and fortitude, we believe that we have helped forge a rich volume, full of theoretical and empirical depth that begins to tease out some of the wide and wonderful ways that food crosses boundaries and borders as well as sets them anew. Nevertheless, the chapters in this volume

1	are, we hope, merely the first steps in what will be a more sustained and extensive	1
2	exploration of the concept of transgressions as a lens on the socio-material life of	2
3	food. We firmly believe that there is enormous research potential in exploring the	3
4	processes, practices and histories of food transgressions, and the ways that food	4
5	transgresses so much of contemporary life, and the lives we lead, the world over.	5
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Acknowledgements

We would like to recognize – as well as profusely thank – all the authors in this volume for their patience and fortitude in our efforts to get this book to print; it is a testament to their willingness to stick with us through the thick and thin of putting it all together over a (much too) long time period. We wish also to thank those at Ashgate, namely Valerie Rose and Katy Crossan for sticking with us as well, along with maintaining their enthusiasm for Mike’s Critical Food Studies book series which is beginning to come along nicely. Alex Loftus gave us some much appreciated feedback on the introductory chapter and his insight was invaluable, although we were not able to act on all of his excellent suggestions. Many thanks go to Anne Murcott for her illuminating and supportive Forward for the volume; her continually incisive and to-the-point comments have made Mike, in particular, a much better and more careful scholar; her thoughts here demonstrate her invaluable contributions to the field of food studies.

Colin would first like to express his appreciation to Mike Goodman who has been a most excellent co-editor: resourceful, insightful, enthusiastic and utterly supportive. It has been a privilege to work with him on this. Colin would also like to thank: colleagues in UCC, particularly Ed Byrne, Ger Mullally and others associated with the Environmental Citizenship research cluster; Cork Environmental Forum for their award to me in 2011; and Katherine Harford and other members of the Food Focus pilot project in Knocknaheeny. He would also like to acknowledge the inspiration and support of Philip McMichael, Mike Carolan, and Jules Pretty, as well as that of colleagues in Italy: Davide Papotti (Parma); Cristina Grasseni and Francesca Forno in Bergamo; the ‘Other Economies’ group in Verona; friends in Siena; and the staff in Pollenzo. Finally, Colin appreciates the love and support of his family, Elmarie, Liadán and Aisling, as well as that of Sue and Noel in Tasmania.

Mike would like to thank Colin Sage for embarking on this project and becoming an excellent colleague and valuable friend in the process. He would also like to thank colleagues at King’s, namely Nick Clifford, Kate Maclean, Andrew Brooks, Alex Loftus, Bruce Malamud and Rob Francis, for their ongoing support of his academic (and personal) eccentricities and foibles. Working with Lewis Holloway, Damian Maye and Moya Kneafsey (yes, my textbook chapters are coming!) as well as with Mike Carolan, Josée Johnston, Elaine Swan and Rick Flowers has made this job that much more worthwhile; they have all been excellent and supportive colleagues in their own ways and I greatly appreciate our ongoing relationships and engagements. David Goodman has been a constant source of invaluable inspiration, support and guidance; perhaps one day I will

1	come to follow his efficient ‘pipeline’ model of research and writing, but not as	1
2	of yet. Finally, like everything else I do, Janet, Vance and Wyatt have been there	2
3	for me in more ways than I can say and I greatly value their ongoing spoken and	3
4	unspoken support.	4
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11		11
12	For the human body, besides sex, there are few things more essentially	12
13	transgressive and boundary-crossing than food. As Elspeth Probyn has it in her	13
14	opening to <i>Carnal Appetites</i> , '[i]n the act of ingestion, strict divisions get blurred	14
15	(14). ... [E]ating conjoins us in a network of the edible and inedible, the human	15
16	and non-human, the animate and the inanimate (17) ... [at the same time it] ...	16
17	places different orders of things and ways of being alongside each other, inside	17
18	and outside inextricably linked' (Probyn 2000: 32). And, as this boundary-crossing	18
19	<i>embodiment</i> of food writes itself onto our metabolising, corporeal selves, there	19
20	is – at the same time – a wider transgressive <i>politics</i> of food that shapes and	20
21	is shaped by the economic, social and ecological systems that serve multi-scalar	21
22	production and consumption networks. Here, these embodiments and politics	22
23	of food reflect struggles over food's governmentality, something that Lang and	23
24	Heasman (2004) have called 'the global battle for mouths, minds and markets'.	24
25	Such governmentality stretches from scientific research engaged in redesigning	25
26	the basic building blocks of life that constitute the basis of our food system – seeds	26
27	and animal embryos – through to the moments of ingestion and embodiment.	27
28	Across this spectrum we witness a continuous and contested dynamic around new	28
29	forms of morality in food provisioning, shifting socio-techno regimes, concerns	29
30	over ecological and bodily health, globalised food cultures and connections, and	30
31	shifting centres of food power. In short, we observe a multiplicity of boundary-	31
32	crossings or contemporary <i>transgressions</i> of knowledges, practices and politics	32
33	around food.	33
34	This volume has consequently been devised as a way to chronicle, critique	34
35	and engage with the ways in which contemporary food systems build upon and	35
36	reshape geographies, politics and histories. Arguably, there is almost nothing	36
37	more geographical than food in the ways that it intimately interlinks production	37
38	and consumption, nature and society, bodies and landscapes, the global and the	38
39	local, and indeed spaces, places and everywhere in between. We are <i>where</i> we	39
40	eat, just as much as <i>what</i> we eat (Bell and Valentine 1997; see also Coles and	40
41	Crang 2011; Cook and Crang 1996; Goodman et al. 2010a; Sage 2010). But more	41
42	explicitly, as all the contributors to this volume demonstrate, we share an interest	42
43	in exploring the ways that the contemporary cultural and political economies	43
44	of food are co-producing a fascinating array of material, discursive, spatial	44

1 and political *transgressions* in food and food networks around the globe. For 1
 2 example, several of the chapters in the volume touch on the ways that alternative 2
 3 food networks (AFNs) have effectively transgressed the boundaries of taste (in 3
 4 the Bourdieuan sense) that rendered them elite or niche phenomena, to become 4
 5 more conventionalised food supply chains that have allowed their products to be 5
 6 more accessible (although not necessarily more affordable) everyday items (see 6
 7 also Goodman et al. 2012). Paradoxically, AFNs have also transgressed into the 7
 8 business of feeding poor and disadvantaged people in the guise of localised food 8
 9 justice schemes, while offering up transgressive cosmopolitan economies of care. 9
 10 In contrast, corporate food interests, in the form of retailers, are expanding 10
 11 into novel geographical and economic spaces as well as those of bodily and 11
 12 landscape ecologies. Food marketing and the construction of taste is now a 12
 13 thoroughly transgressive tool of ethical trade, development, political ecologies 13
 14 and livelihood formation designed to shrink the spatial, economic and socio- 14
 15 cultural distances between producers and consumers. In this regard, transgressive 15
 16 ‘cultures of consumption’ figure quite prominently in the chapters that follow in 16
 17 the context of working to create new and more ethical food provisioning systems. 17
 18 Moreover, situated and scientific knowledge boundaries are being transgressed 18
 19 to create novel bio-economies in the development of food networks; academic 19
 20 knowledge regimes and methodologies are similarly being transgressed in efforts 20
 21 to discursively ‘bring to life’ the bodily as well as wider political-economic and 21
 22 political-ecological a/effects of contemporary food geographies and politics. 22
 23 Thus, while keeping true to the use of the established concept of transgression 23
 24 in social theory such that it denotes ‘... that which exceeds boundaries or 24
 25 exceeds limits ... [of norms] ... conduct and cultural productions’ (Jenks 2003: 25
 26 7–8), we wish to move beyond these existing definitions and understandings of 26
 27 transgression in order to suggest that, in the particular case of food, other forms 27
 28 of boundary-crossing are a vital part of its ‘practice’ as well as conceptualisation. 28
 29 To be clear: food’s *bodily* transgressions – articulated as it is above in Probyn’s 29
 30 work and that of many others (e.g. Carolan 2011; Colls 2008; Evans and Miele 30
 31 2012; Lupton 1996; Roe 2006a, b; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy 2010a, b) 31
 32 – is only one, albeit important, instance of food’s liminalities. Rather, we extend 32
 33 this idea of transgression, again in the specific context of food, to include fault- 33
 34 lines and boundary-crossings that implicate and affect knowledge regimes and 34
 35 discourses, spaces and places, nature and culture, society and technology, bodies 35
 36 and environments, the personal and the political, ethics and morality and, indeed, 36
 37 even disciplinary and theoretical approaches to food’s ‘wily’ nature. 37
 38 In this, exploring food transgressions also means interrogating the very 38
 39 boundaries that actions, knowledges, materialities and ethics are meant to and 39
 40 do transgress (e.g. Cook et al. 2008; Cook et al. 1998, 1999; Duruz 2005; Lind 40
 41 and Barham 2004; Whatmore 1997). For in order to *be* transgressed boundaries, 41
 42 borders and norms – whether behavioural, spatial, discursive, material or ethical – 42
 43 must be created, become established, and be maintained in order to be subsequently 43
 44 crossed. In other words, as Jenks (2003: 7) puts it ‘[t]ransgressive behaviour ... 44

1 does not deny limits or boundaries, rather it exceeds them and thus completes 1
 2 them'. For him, '[w]e need to know the collective order, to recognize the edges 2
 3 in order to transcend them' (7). Mol and Law work to take these concerns about 3
 4 transgressions, edges and transcendence further and in different directions by 4
 5 deploying a series of deceptively simple yet profound questions in their writings 5
 6 on 'boundary variations': 'What, for instance, is it to *cross* a boundary? What is a 6
 7 boundary when it is *blurred*? What happens when boundaries *move around*? Or 7
 8 when they *fold*? Or when they act as *semipermeable membranes*?' (Mol and Law, 8
 9 2005: 637, emphasis in original) These questions and concerns about how both 9
 10 boundaries and borders have been set up but also crossed, blurred and moved in 10
 11 the context of food are at the very centre of the chapters in this volume. 11

12 Importantly, though, the research represented here on transgressions within 12
 13 contemporary foodscapes builds from more general multi- and inter-disciplinary 13
 14 writings on entanglements, actor-networks, collectives, assemblages, hybridities 14
 15 and relationalities (e.g. Bennett 2010; Latour 1993; Law 1994; Whatmore 2002). 15
 16 Much of this writing and theorising – coming, as it does, out of the 'materialist' 16
 17 social sciences and science studies – is dedicated to a normative, intellectual and 17
 18 ontological project designed to explore the ways that societies, natures, actants, 18
 19 materialities and cultures are stitched together in the various orderings of the 19
 20 multi-faceted worlds we inhabit and create. Here, in working to normatively and 20
 21 intellectually overcome the 'false divisions' of nature and society and materiality 21
 22 and representation, boundaries, borders and edges will not only be 'normally' 22
 23 transgressed but disappear or dissolve altogether. In other words within the new 23
 24 ontologies of what might be called a 'compositional cosmopolitics' (Latour 2010) 24
 25 where nature(s)-culture(s) – and a number of other hyphenated binaries and states 25
 26 of being (e.g. Cloke and Johnston 2005) – reign(s) supreme, it might be assumed 26
 27 that everything has always (and already) been transgressed in the makings of 27
 28 socio-material worlds (cf. Lorimer 2012). 28

29 Given its liminal properties and characteristics, food has played a significant 29
 30 role in these debates as a number of key writings demonstrate (see, *inter alia*, 30
 31 Busch and Juska 1997; Goodman 1999; Goodman and Goodman 2001; Mol 31
 32 2008; Murdoch 2000; Whatmore 1997; Whatmore and Thorne 1997). It should 32
 33 come as no surprise, then, that a majority of the chapters in this book tack to 33
 34 these emerging ontologies in varied ways, ranging from the more prosaic use of 34
 35 common terminologies such as 'networks' and 'entanglements', to specifically 35
 36 deeper ontological commitments that attempt to unsettle established nature/ 36
 37 culture/technology boundaries, divides and edges. 37

38 Yet, while allied and also committed to this work and its border-crossing 38
 39 ontologies, our use of the terms 'transgression' and 'transgressive' is deliberate in 39
 40 that it is meant to firmly signal and highlight two forces at play within contemporary 40
 41 debates around food. The first concerns the significance of foregrounding the 41
 42 *intentions* and *intentionalities* of many current food transgressions. Looming large 42
 43 here are the *ethical* dimensions where transgressions catalogued in this book speak 43
 44 to the desire to do 'good' or do 'better' in the provisioning of food (cf. Goodman 44

1 et al. 2010b; Sage 2003). As a number of the chapters document and explain, there 1
 2 are numerous ways in which boundaries and borders are being transgressed in the 2
 3 name of doing the ethically and/or morally 'right' thing(s) for producers, eaters and/ 3
 4 or ecologies. Also playing a relatedly important role are the *economic* intentions of 4
 5 value generation through food transgressions and the ways that these transgressive 5
 6 intentions lead to novel and/or different forms and instances of accumulation. 6
 7 Thus, what is of both empirical and theoretical interest here is an exploration of the 7
 8 *practices* and *processes* of food transgressions and the intentionalities that have 8
 9 activated them within food networks. Indeed, instead of simply foregrounding the 9
 10 ontological givens of, for example, nature-cultures and other, 'radical symmetries', 10
 11 the authors in this volume are concerned with exploring those practices, processes, 11
 12 intentions and motivations of transgression involved in the very *stitching together* 12
 13 of natures, cultures, spaces, and technologies in the provisioning of food. Overall, 13
 14 the chapters and their case studies build on Jenks' (2003: 2) argument that '... 14
 15 transgressions are manifestly situation-specific and vary considerably across 15
 16 social space and through time' such that the characteristics, outcome and outline 16
 17 of boundary-crossings in food are dependent upon the transgressive practices, 17
 18 processes and motivations that are firmly embedded in particular spaces, histories 18
 19 and materialities. 19

20 The second force that the use of the terms 'transgression' and 'transgressive' 20
 21 is meant to highlight is that of *power*. In particular, we and the authors here are 21
 22 concerned with the 'who' of the actors behind the intentions of various food 22
 23 transgressions detailed in the book: who is *able* to put these food transgressions 23
 24 into train and then who *benefits* as a result? Related to these questions are the 24
 25 following: *why* are transgressive intentions put into practice, what are the 25
 26 *outcomes* and for *whom*? Again, the power of the intentions of particular actants 26
 27 to 'do the right thing(s)' in organising and facilitating ethical and/or different 27
 28 food networks figures heavily in the stories of food transgressions being told in 28
 29 this book. However, as we well know, power encompasses many different forms 29
 30 and expressions: from the everyday, capillary-like expressions of inter-personal 30
 31 power to those varied and far-reaching expressions of power wielded by capital, 31
 32 institutions and governments. Thus, questions of power inform not just border- 32
 33 crossing instances of personal decision-making about what to eat, but extend to the 33
 34 governance of international food trade networks involving investment decisions 34
 35 by supermarkets about where they set up shop and what foods they will stock. An 35
 36 exploration of transgressive food power is also an exploration of the ways that food 36
 37 transgressions *generate* the power – in *both* the Foucauldian and Marxian senses 37
 38 – to create and govern new geographies, connections and politics. As noted above, 38
 39 the border-, boundary- and edge-crossings embedded in food transgressions can 39
 40 work to reconfigure spaces and places, connections and relationalities, politics and 40
 41 policies. Food transgressions are infused with, but also produce, new forms and 41
 42 relations of power from the spaces of the everyday to those of the global, from the 42
 43 *bodily* politic to the *body* politic. 43

44

44

1 This volume offers up a series of carefully considered, inter-disciplinary 1
 2 chapters that – through different perspectives and theoretical approaches – explore 2
 3 a diversity of types, forms and instances of food transgressions, transgressive 3
 4 foods and the political geographies that direct and result from these transgressions, 4
 5 novel assemblages and food networks. In introducing the chapters, as we do 5
 6 below, we highlight the three themes of *ethics*, *governance*, and *geographies* that 6
 7 interweave themselves in and out of the various chapters' engagements with food 7
 8 transgressions, as well as interweave amongst themselves in these tales about 8
 9 transgressive foods. In this, we hope that the foregrounding of these three themes 9
 10 is as much a substantive effort as it is one designed to facilitate an introduction of 10
 11 each of the chapters in the volume. 11

12

13

14 **Ethics of Transgression/Transgressive Ethics** 14

15

16 The power of ethics – as motivation, as driving force, as framing mechanism 16
 17 and as discourse – is one of the themes that feature most clearly in the food 17
 18 transgressions that travel in and out of the chapters in this book. In the chapter by 18
 19 Berlan and Dolan and that of Nelson, Tallontire, Opondo and Martin, a number of 19
 20 the transgressions in the food networks they discuss – particularly around supply 20
 21 chain standards and their governance – are facilitated by the desire to do good, 21
 22 better and/or the 'right' things in the creation of more ethical and fair trading 22
 23 relations. Both sets of authors work to explore the contradictions, complications 23
 24 and complexities of the ways that the desire to do the ethically right things in 24
 25 alternative trade networks actually gets played out in the politics of practice 25
 26 within these networks. For Berlan and Dolan, the very 'ethics of care' embedded 26
 27 in fair trade's moral economy of connection between producers and consumers 27
 28 has – through its conventionalisation and standardisation – been transgressed in 28
 29 ways that re-align it along pathways of, in their words, 'disconnection, distance 29
 30 and detachment'. In Nelson et al.'s chapter, transgressions into multi-stakeholder 30
 31 supply chain management between Africa and the UK, designed to promote more 31
 32 ethical labour standards and working conditions, were not able to be *transgressive* 32
 33 *enough* to disturb existing power relationships in which retailers remain in control. 33
 34 Their detailed account demonstrates that, even with an ethically-motivated 34
 35 transgression of bringing other voices to the trade-governance table, it is actually 35
 36 transformation of the relations of power in trade circuits that should be the issue 36
 37 under discussion and that needs to be achieved in the name of more ethical trade. 37
 38 Thus, their account is one that reveals how, at one level, some boundaries are 38
 39 crossed in the creation of more ethical trading networks but, at a different level, 39
 40 boundaries are either being created anew and/or existing, un-crossable boundaries 40
 41 are 'hardened' and brought to the fore. 41

42 An ethics of care, as presented in Berlan and Dolan's chapter, similarly informs 42
 43 the arguments of the chapter by Cox, Kneafsey, Holloway, Dowler and Venn. For 43
 44 them, the care ethics embedded in a local community supported agriculture (CSA) 44

1 project in Scotland works to transgress the 'care of the self' in the form of eating 1
 2 local, fresh and healthy foods, to encompass the care of (unknown) others as well 2
 3 as the environment at a variety of different scales. In a case that serves to some 3
 4 degree as a corrective to DuPuis and Goodman's (2005) caution regarding the 4
 5 conservative and exclusionary potential of local food projects and ideologies, 5
 6 empirical evidence suggested a series of practice-driven transgressions across 6
 7 'the self and others, the political and the practical, the careful and the ordinary 7
 8 and, importantly, bodies, spaces, places and (alternative) food'. And, while not 8
 9 using this formulation specifically, Davolio and Sassattelli, in their contemporary 9
 10 history of the widening vision of the Slow Food movement, suggest that the 10
 11 movement's changing ethics of care is now working to transgress into not just 11
 12 tasty, quality food but that which takes on food safety, ecologies and health. What 12
 13 they call Slow Food's 'polite transgression' is an account of the changing focus of 13
 14 the politics and practices of the movement that sees food pleasure as a right for not 14
 15 just middle and upper-class foodies (cf. Johnston and Bauman 2010) but for all, in 15
 16 such a way that food becomes the epicenter of the reformation of our relationships 16
 17 to economies, cultures, ethics, politics and ecologies. 17

18 In the chapters of Dixon, Hattersley and Isaacs, and that of Goodman, it is the 18
 19 ethics of value generation and profit maximisation that, seemingly, is working to 19
 20 drive the transgressions of retail capital into novel, even green, pursuits in terms of 20
 21 food supply and supply chain management. Dixon et al.'s chapter begins by noting 21
 22 the domination of the Australian food retail sector by just two supermarket chains, 22
 23 as well as the transgressions of food retail that are well underway in Thailand. 23
 24 Given the scale of supermarket power, they argue that a key element of corporate 24
 25 strategy is to seek legitimacy for their roles as social and political actors in both 25
 26 jurisdictions using 'liminoid power' to redefine rights and responsibilities within 26
 27 the food system. This legitimisation involves supplying shoppers with transgressive 27
 28 foods that come embedded with social responsibility, environmental-friendliness 28
 29 and consumer health. Liminoid power, according to Dixon et al., is little more 29
 30 than a ruse, designed to extract further value by providing volunteeristic consumer 30
 31 solutions to the very problems that supermarkets are implicated in causing in the 31
 32 first place. Goodman similarly explores the liminoid power of supermarkets in the 32
 33 UK in their explicit transgressions into, but more importantly, control of the so- 33
 34 called alternative supply chains for organic foods. Here, as he shows, the growing 34
 35 power of supermarkets to capture the ethics of care embedded in the discourses 35
 36 of the organic as local, fresh, environmentally- and small-farmer-friendly runs in 36
 37 parallel to those of value generation by controlling and supplying organic foods 37
 38 to the majority of hungry UK consumers. And, it is the similar drives of value- 38
 39 generation and control that have led to the 'geneticisation' of livestock rearing by 39
 40 supermarkets, also in the UK. Here, Holloway, Morris, Gibbs and Gilna's chapter, 40
 41 using the perspective of bio-power, works to explore the ways and means by which 41
 42 retail capital and its surrogates have transgressed into the power and functionalities 42
 43 of genes in the desire to produce, rear and supply tasty, high quality and the 43
 44 'right' kinds of meat. It is 'supply chain integration' – from genetic material, to 44

1 scientists and scientific knowledge, to breeders, to new insemination technologies, 1
 2 to abattoirs – that comes to structure what the authors call ‘genetic knowledge- 2
 3 practices’ which, in turn, facilitate the ethical and practical transgression of ‘when 3
 4 animals become food’ (Miele and Evans 2010). 4

5 Finally, Caraher and Dowler chronicle and critically explore the possibilities 5
 6 and limitations facing AFNs as they seek to transgress, particularly under the 6
 7 circumstances of the ‘new austerity’, into anti-hunger politics and practices. At 7
 8 the same time, the authors consider how long-standing food poverty campaigns 8
 9 have had to draw back from more oppositional politics as they take on more 9
 10 responsibility for alleviating hunger with the declining provision under state 10
 11 welfare policies. Caraher and Dowler’s chapter gradually begins to reveal the 11
 12 possibilities of transgression by both anti-hunger and AFN movements into 12
 13 each other’s ‘territory’ of politics and practice. Access to nutritious and healthy 13
 14 foods for the poor, hungry and marginal, they argue, can and, perhaps, should be 14
 15 addressed by AFNs in alliance with social justice campaigners who understand 15
 16 the structural determinants of poverty and who can ensure such initiatives are 16
 17 as equitable and inclusive as possible. Consequently, Caraher and Dowler argue 17
 18 that the possibilities for such an alliance offer not only an oppositional platform 18
 19 to the status quo, but the envisioning of new ways to produce and consume food 19
 20 that provides health, security and pleasure. And it is the development of new 20
 21 alternatives in the realms of meat production and consumption that underpins 21
 22 Sage’s chapter. Starting from a concern for the environmental, ethical and health 22
 23 aspects of meat-based diets, Sage considers the potential of different transgressive 23
 24 options, new dietary choices in the forms of meat analogues, in-vitro tissue culture 24
 25 and insects. Such options have the potential to not only reduce the impact of 25
 26 livestock’s so-called ‘long shadow’ (Steinfeld et al. 2006) but also increase the 26
 27 nutritional intake of undernourished poor consumers around the world. Clearly, 27
 28 cultural and cuisine-related transgressions will need to become the order of the 28
 29 day in order to encourage this branching out into other forms of protein and so 29
 30 the ways that new forms of ‘meat’ become ethically acceptable (or not) is, as Sage 30
 31 recommends, worth much future research. 31

32 32
 33 33

34 **Governance Transgressions/Transgressive Governance** 34

35 35
 36 A second set of related themes that feature throughout many of the chapters in 36
 37 this volume involve the ways that new governance regimes work to transgress a 37
 38 number of different boundaries in the production and consumption of food. For 38
 39 instance, De Laurentis and Cooke’s chapter explores the ways that food systems in 39
 40 the UK in general, but Wales in particular, have shifted away from an exclusively 40
 41 productivist food governance paradigm to one that is arguably more broadly-based. 41
 42 This has developed furthest in Wales where the development of more sustainable 42
 43 production methods including organic farming, has been combined with a more 43
 44 niche-oriented and regionally-embedded strategic focus. De Laurentis and Cooke 44

1 call this an ‘organicist’ food regime, one in which value is added through place- 1
 2 and process-marketing mechanisms. So while knowledge transgressions amongst 2
 3 producers are key to developing and promoting new Welsh food products, 3
 4 crucially, these become closely tied to place promotion and the encouragement 4
 5 of agri-tourism ventures. Crucial here, of course, are the sustainable development 5
 6 governance structures put into place by the Welsh Government, suggesting that 6
 7 one of the key transgressions in the changing shape and form of the Welsh agro- 7
 8 food sector is that between established and emerging markets, between those in 8
 9 the process of private sector-led development and those being facilitated by the 9
 10 state. 10

11 A number of chapters in the book work to explore the ways that retail capital 11
 12 in the form of supermarkets is rupturing, reforming and transgressing agri- 12
 13 food governance networks. The power of supermarkets – and other corporate 13
 14 players in agri-food networks – and their capacity to engender new governance 14
 15 transgressions is illustrated in the chapters on organic food in the UK (Goodman); 15
 16 on fair and ethical trading schemes (Berlan and Dolan, and Nelson et al.); on 16
 17 nutritional and socio-ecological metabolisms (Dixon et al.); and in the chapter 17
 18 on meat qualities (Holloway et al.). Through the examples of fair trade chocolate 18
 19 and ethically-produced and -traded flowers, Berlan and Dolan and Nelson et al., 19
 20 respectively, show the ways that retail and corporate capital has transgressed into 20
 21 the realms of governance so as to shape what is meant by ‘fair’ and ‘ethical’ in 21
 22 practice. Goodman, on the other hand, looks at the particular ways and means by 22
 23 which retailers in the UK deepen their market reach by providing transgressive 23
 24 access to the so-called alternative spaces and ethics of organic food. Dixon et 24
 25 al., meanwhile, explore the boundary-crossing implications of supermarket food 25
 26 supply in Australia and Thailand, arguing that such corporate transgressions occur 26
 27 to the detriment of the spaces and ethics of food provisioning and citizens in 27
 28 both societies. Holloway et al. explore the co-production of the bio-politics, bio- 28
 29 economies and bio-knowledges of meat production through the ability and desire 29
 30 of supermarkets and their surrogates to infiltrate and entangle themselves into the 30
 31 very processes of ‘life itself’: Corporate retail bio-power, in other words, exercise 31
 32 the very genetic governance of traits and qualities in livestock in their supply 32
 33 chains. And, as Davolio and Sassattelli’s chapter outlines, even in the case of 33
 34 Slow Food which is working to position itself into the mainstream, supermarkets 34
 35 have become key players to be negotiated and worked with in order to spread and 35
 36 develop the Slow Food brand. 36

37 A final theme in terms of governance concerns the ways that shifting diets 37
 38 and food consumption cultures also act as expressions of food transgressions. 38
 39 Different chapters take up these concerns and explorations in different ways. 39
 40 Davolio and Sassattelli, for example, show how the ‘cultural intermediary’ 40
 41 that is Slow Food attempts the (re)governing of entire food networks through 41
 42 reconfiguring consuming cultures, such that it places pleasure, quality and 42
 43 tradition at the forefront of eaters’ concerns. Governance, through these novel 43
 44 consumer cultures, works to be transgressively multi-spatial, in that it crosses 44

1 from the local, to the national, to the regional, to the global; but it also seeks 1
 2 to be multi-vocal as it attempts to communicate on the multiple registers of the 2
 3 economic, cultural, ethical and political. Cox et al., writing from the specific 3
 4 experience of one AFN, explore how a transgressive ethics of care can attempt 4
 5 to govern peoples', producers', consumers' and communities' everyday practices 5
 6 as well as geographical imaginations in the context of food choice. For Sage, 6
 7 it is the possibilities of alternative forms of meat and, especially, the need to 7
 8 transgress from meat-centric diets that must inform better governance around 8
 9 food choice and consumer cultures. In the context of creating more and better 9
 10 conditions for justice in food systems in post-industrialised countries – which 10
 11 form the core concerns of Caraher and Dowler's chapter – the possibilities of 11
 12 AFNs transgressing into the governance of anti-hunger provisioning schemes 12
 13 comes in for sustained discussion and critique. Here access to nutritious food for 13
 14 those less well-off is not just a question of governance and practice but goes to the 14
 15 heart of the ideological constraints that present themselves within the current array 15
 16 of AFNs. What Caraher and Dowler suggest is the need for greater and more far- 16
 17 reaching transgressions and boundary-crossings, but ones which are historically, 17
 18 spatially and socio-ecologically embedded, in the development of new and more 18
 19 suitable food justice networks and movements. 19

20

21

22 **Geographies of Transgression/Transgressive Geographies** 22

23

24 The crossing of spatial boundaries and the ways that food and food politics create 24
 25 and facilitate spatial transgressions is the third and final set of themes that we see 25
 26 weaving in and out of the chapters in this volume. For many of the authors, such 26
 27 transgressions are identified through a series of discursive, material or governance 27
 28 practices connecting spaces of production and consumption. One of the clearest 28
 29 examples of this is found in De Laurentis and Cooke's chapter where they describe 29
 30 a kind of 'selling of place to save it'. In this case Wales, as a geographical entity 30
 31 that produces and markets itself through agri-tourism and branded regional and 31
 32 locally-produced foods, works to transgress space and place in order to promote 32
 33 territorial development. Making use of regional designation schemes, for example, 33
 34 Wales seeks to become a branded, 'foodie' place that not only produces quality 34
 35 products for others to eat but also a place that they will connect with. For 35
 36 Cox et al., the boundaries of the local CSA farm are transgressed through the 36
 37 geographical imaginary of the ethics of care embedded within it, its producers and 37
 38 its consumers. Literal and figurative distance is lessened or even disappears (cf. 38
 39 Barnett et al. 2005) in the care relations that transgress geographies, ecologies and 39
 40 many other boundaries. In the fair, ethical and green agri-food networks explored 40
 41 in the chapters by Berlan and Dolan, Nelson et al. and Goodman, the ultimate 41
 42 purpose of these networks is to transgress the boundaries of socio-economic and 42
 43 ecological relations of production and consumption and, indeed, of producers and 43
 44 consumers. For Davolio and Sassattelli, it is a politics of pleasure that works to 44

1 transgress and connect the spaces and place of production and consumption, this 1
 2 connection becoming ‘materialised’ on the plates and palates of Slow Food eaters. 2
 3 Such transgressions, set out as they are in Slow Food’s new drive to express the 3
 4 universal right of food pleasure for all, still present a series of practical question 4
 5 of which, perhaps, the most pressing being: who is it that gets to participate in 5
 6 these Slow Food spaces, places, politics and pleasures? Transgressive intentions 6
 7 are now clearly embedded in Slow Food’s politics, but one of the things that 7
 8 still needs urgently to be explored – and answered – is the extent to which the 8
 9 ‘everyday spaces’ of Slow Food consumption cultures remain privileged and 9
 10 exclusive. Questions about everyday spaces also make an appearance in Holloway 10
 11 et al.’s chapter where, in the case of the geneticisation of livestock rearing, they 11
 12 describe how knowledge practices of breeding become transgressed and entangled 12
 13 with the interests of laboratories, scientists and their institutions as well as with 13
 14 the supermarkets where the meat is eventually sold. Part of their story is also how 14
 15 these everyday spaces become the sites of resistance to this geneticisation and 15
 16 where the resulting bio-politics are played out. 16

17 For Dixon et al., the Australian and Thai cases provide contrasting but 17
 18 complementary illustrations of the spatial transgressions of supermarkets. In 18
 19 Australia the two retail chains that enjoy a dominant position in market-share are 19
 20 well-placed to continue to shape the retail foodscape there, while in Thailand a 20
 21 more novel, rapidly changing food provisioning system also presents a number 21
 22 of dietary, nutritional, ecological and socio-economic challenges. One of the key 22
 23 observations of the authors is the relative ease of the supermarkets to embark 23
 24 upon and achieve this transgressing without regulatory restriction, thus illustrating 24
 25 their growing power in shaping everyday foodscapes. And part of this power, as 25
 26 detailed in Sage’s chapter on meat production and consumption, is the ways that 26
 27 supermarkets and food service companies have been able to make the provision 27
 28 of meat a truly every day and ubiquitous item. As meat production becomes more 28
 29 expensive in human health and ecological terms, the transgressive potential of 29
 30 different and alternative proteins grows. What Sage points to is the need for 30
 31 less ecological and geographical transgression – perhaps built around more 31
 32 locally-just and locally-sustainable, integrated agro-ecological farming systems 32
 33 – but also, paradoxically, more transgression in terms of consumption with the 33
 34 development of novel forms of protein. There are echoes of Sage’s underlying 34
 35 arguments in Caraher and Dowler’s suggestion for the geographical transgression 35
 36 of anti-hunger movements by those with a more traditional AFN approach. And, 36
 37 while they see potential in these practical and discursive transgressions of food 37
 38 poverty movements and those of AFNs, what might result from these continuing 38
 39 discussions and trials might be like nothing we have seen before and, indeed, 39
 40 provide potential for confronting the spaces of hunger and development that Young 40
 41 (2012) sees stalking the globe. The key of course, will be a series of boundary- 41
 42 crossing projects and parallel movements that begin to tackle issues related, not 42
 43 only to food deficiencies, but also those more generally of ‘malconsumption’ (Sage 43
 44 44

2012b, 2013; see also Sage 2012a) and that might become truly transgressively
global in focus and local in character.

Transgressive Endings and Beginnings

The chapters in this volume work to explore the ways that food – and its co-incident politics, spatialities and histories – can be found to transgress a multiplicity of boundaries and borders including those of bodies, cultures, economies, materialities, ideologies, ethics, geographies, politics, technologies, knowledges and ecologies, as well as current theoretical and disciplinary-based analysis of food. The chapters detail food's transgressive qualities, the specific ways it has transgressed boundaries, but how it has also built boundaries anew through these crossings. Our own and the authors' use of the terms transgression and transgressive is not only designed to get at food's fluidities, liminalities, flows, entanglements and travels, but to do so in a way that documents the intentions and questions the expressions of power in these transgressions. Ultimately, what we see as the contemporary politics and geographies that define these transgressions can be located on the scale from the everyday and local through to the global and structural. In this, the individual chapters of the volume – and, indeed, the volume itself – not only add to debates about the politics, spatialities and power of food, but we believe that by conceptualising and detailing cases of food transgressions and transgressive foods provides a novel theoretical window on the state and expression of contemporary food politics and geographies. We see, then, this volume as only the first word in opening up discussion and exploration about food transgressions, boundary-crossing and border-(re)making in a world in need of more debate on creating sustainable and just food futures through all forms of theoretical and empirical engagement and at all manner of scales. We, along with the contributors to this volume, look forward to engaging in dialogue on these matters here and further into the future.

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1	Chapter 2	1
2		2
3	Pathways of Transformation or	3
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5	Transgression? Power Relations,	5
6		6
7	Ethical Space and Labour Rights in	7
8		8
9	Kenyan Agri-Food Value Chains	9
10		10
11	Valerie Nelson, Anne Tallontire, Maggie Opondo	11
12	and Adrienne Martin	12
13		13
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16		16
17	Introduction	17
18		18
19	In the widespread trend for more participatory governance in public policy and	19
20	planning (Cornwall and Coelho 2007; Nelson 2008; Gaventa and Mayo 2009),	20
21	novel forms of engagement between private authority and civil society are also	21
22	emerging, for example, in the development of private standards and monitoring	22
23	systems (Giovannucci and Ponte 2005; Busch and Bain 2004). This chapter	23
24	focuses on participation in private sector and value chain governance. In the	24
25	late 1990s international NGOs and trade unions engaged with large retailers	25
26	and brands to improve the content and implementation of labour codes, which	26
27	had been initially written by companies in response to media, NGO and trade	27
28	union pressure (Barrientos 2000, Hughes et al. 2007). The participation of private	28
29	sector, trade unions, and NGO representatives and government observers in multi-	29
30	stakeholder initiatives theoretically represents a new opportunity for improving	30
31	the development and implementation of labour standards in global value chains	31
32	(Tallontire 2007).	32
33	We focus on a multi-stakeholder standards initiative (MSI) in Kenya, called	33
34	the Horticultural Ethical Business Initiative (HEBI) drawing upon the findings	34
35	of research on private standards in agrifood chains. ¹ Through our analysis we	35
36		36
37		37
38	1 The authors gratefully acknowledge funding from the UK's Economic and	38
39	Social Research Council and Department for International Development, for the project	39
40	Governance Implications of Private Standards Initiatives in Agri-Food Chains, grant ref:	40
41	RES-167-25-0195. Empirical research between 2007–9 has included over 60 interviews in	41
42	Kenya and Europe with private and public sector actors, non-governmental organisations	42
43	and trade unions, focus group discussions with workers and smallholders in the Kenyan	43
44	export horticulture industry July and December 2008, and three stakeholder workshops in	44
	Nairobi (September 2008).	

1 seek to build up an understanding of the politics of MSIs, and broader trajectories 1
 2 of transgression into corporate activity and vice versa. The term ‘transgression’ 2
 3 infers an overstepping of boundaries, but the desirability of the boundary and its 3
 4 transgression depends upon an individual’s or a group’s social position, relative 4
 5 power, perspective and identity. Transformation, similarly, has a subjective 5
 6 element but refers to a process of more radical and profound change; again the 6
 7 desirability of a pathway depends upon normative objectives. 7

8 To achieve the normative objective of improvements in worker livelihoods and 8
 9 empowerment, in the context of retailer power, a critical question is ‘how effective 9
 10 are standards and MSIs in achieving these goals?’ The next section sets out a 10
 11 conceptual framework which characterises value chain governance processes. 11
 12 The framework is used to analyse whether MSIs are shaping action on social 12
 13 and environmental issues and if so, in whose interests? Our analysis of the now- 13
 14 defunct HEBI suggests that despite momentum leading to increased participation 14
 15 in governance in public policy, the creation of ‘invited’ or ‘claimed spaces’ on 15
 16 their own cannot alter power or change the status quo; in the context of significant 16
 17 power imbalances the potential of MSIs to effect change is severely limited. This 17
 18 is because overarching power relations shape the space – sometimes leading to 18
 19 the sidelining of alternative voices. The private sector is not monolithic, and 19
 20 there are divergences of approach, and in other countries the national context and 20
 21 political landscape may provide more fertile ground for an MSI to operate in. But 21
 22 in the context of retailer power, we contend that ethical sourcing and stakeholder 22
 23 engagement in these spaces is not yet, nor is it likely to lead to, a *transformation* 23
 24 of worker rights. This is because in a context of such significant power inequalities 24
 25 in value chains, more powerful actors tend to control social discourse and material 25
 26 resources, shaping the outcomes of new spaces in their own interests. This will 26
 27 continue to be the case whilst support is lacking for workers, smallholders and 27
 28 local communities to articulate their own narratives about ethics in value chains 28
 29 and for collective action to challenge hegemonic discourses and power relations. 29
 30
 31

32 **Unpacking Power and Processes of Change in Value Chain Governance** 32

33
 34 To analyse power in MSIs in the context of global agri-food chains, we draw on 34
 35 and extend the ‘power cube’ analysis of democratic spaces for citizen engagement 35
 36 developed by Gaventa (2006, 2007) as means of unpicking how the ‘ethical 36
 37 space’ (i.e. the arena for action on ethical issues in agri-food chains), is shaped, 37
 38 extended, closed and transgressed. The creation of ‘ethical spaces’ has been driven 38
 39 largely from the North, but in recent years there have been efforts to mark out new 39
 40 ‘ethical spaces’ in the Global South. The creation of new spaces for debate, policy- 40
 41 making and collective action (and the associated rhetoric) theoretically represents 41
 42 an advance in development terms, where progressive objectives can be achieved 42
 43 through them. However, it is not always clear exactly how such spaces emerge in 43
 44 reality, who they involve, and what their potentials might be. There is a risk that 44

1 such spaces can merely mask power inequalities, in situations where more deep- 1
2 seated structural changes are needed (Gaventa 2006: 23). 2

3 Our conceptual framework here is based upon Gaventa's analytical tool, 3
4 known as the 'power cube' (2006) which can be presented diagrammatically with 4
5 three inter-related dimensions (one along each side of the cube), namely: a) power; 5
6 b) place; and c) space. In Gaventa's work and our extension of it, we interconnect 6
7 with other research and writing from human geographers, political scientists and 7
8 critical development scholars (e.g. Escobar 1995; Sharp et al. 2000; Sharp 2009). 8
9 We seek to explore 'what it means to be powerful and what ... the essence of 9
10 power [is]' (Crawford 2003: 143); and to understand the dialectics of domination 10
11 and resistance and the intimately related connections of knowledge, power and 11
12 space/place. 12

13 In order to develop a fuller understanding of MSIs and their power and 13
14 spatial relationships over time, we have added the concept of '*pathways*' to 14
15 emphasize the temporal element of value chain governance processes and human 15
16 development. Thus, in the context of MSIs, value chains and their governance, we 16
17 use the following understandings of power, place, space and pathways. These are 17
18 explained in turn below. 18

19 20 *Power*

21
22 Our analysis of power operating within private initiatives on ethical issues involves 22
23 a threefold distinction between visible, hidden, and invisible power. *Visible power* 23
24 – or instrumental/overt power – was originally defined as 'A has power over B 24
25 to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do' 25
26 (Dahl 1957 as cited in Lukes 2005: 16; Clapp and Fuchs 2009: 8). However, the 26
27 powerful can limit the choices of others through setting the agenda or restricting 27
28 the choices that others can make (Lukes 2005) through '*hidden*' power. This is 28
29 also known as 'structural' power because of its linkage to social, economic and 29
30 political structures in society (Clapp and Fuchs 2009:8). *Invisible power* is exerted 30
31 through social processes which encompass 'the various ways of suppressing latent 31
32 conflicts within society' such as through the media (Lukes 2005: 59). Also known 32
33 as '*discursive power*' (Clapp and Fuchs 2009), this extends to 'the norms and 33
34 rules governing social behaviour' which 'tend to ensure that certain outcomes are 34
35 reproduced without any apparent exercise of agency' (Kabeer 1999: 437). 35

36 Discursive power can be empirically elusive, but is part of the process by which 36
37 the powerless can gain power from within and be empowered (Rowlands 1997) 37
38 and thus of relevance to worker empowerment. The operation of discursive power 38
39 and the agency of social groups in value chain governance has been relatively 39
40 neglected to date. Earlier studies concentrate more on economic power and market 40
41 share (Clapp and Fuchs 2009) and whilst recent analyses touch upon value chain 41
42 power dynamics at a macro level (Gibbon and Ponte 2005), they rarely capture 42
43 the nuanced dynamics or unpack different stakeholder narratives adequately. 43
44 Nor do they address the actual impacts of value chains at the local level (Nelson, 44

1 Martin and Ewert 2002, 2007; Bolwig et al. 2008; Tallontire 2007; Tallontire et 1
2 al. forthcoming).

4 *Place*

5
6 Power – whether visible, hidden or invisible – interacts with and is exercised in 6
7 specific geographical locations or *places* and Gaventa (2006) suggests there are 7
8 three dimensions: the local, national and global. This is because an analysis can 8
9 focus on power in everyday local life; on the mediating role of the nation state 9
10 (e.g. in decentralization processes); or on global governance and the challenges 10
11 for citizen engagement in different contexts. MSIs are being created at multiple 11
12 locations, both North and South, primarily because of international drivers 12
13 promoting ethical sourcing. Global agri-food chains comprise commodities which 13
14 are produced in specific social and environmental places and spaces, and moved 14
15 around the globe for consumption in other places and spaces. 15

17 *Space*

18
19 To explore the notion of space as a democratic arena for participation and 19
20 negotiation, we draw from Cornwall (2002). The creation of a new space of 20
21 citizen or civil society engagement with government or private authority is not 21
22 a neutral act: it has repercussions both within the space and in other decision- 22
23 making spheres which are insufficiently recognised. Certain actors and factions 23
24 may be given entry to debate and decision-making, but others may be excluded 24
25 and agendas reshaped. 25

26 A critical question is how a space is formed and by whom, i.e. is it closed, 26
27 invited or claimed? (Gaventa 2006). Closed spaces are restricted to representatives 27
28 of authorities with limited external consultation. Invited spaces are those in which 28
29 an authority allows other stakeholders to participate. Claimed spaces are those 29
30 in which less powerful groups create sufficient pressure to gain entry to a closed 30
31 space and articulate their demands. Perceptions may vary amongst stakeholders 31
32 as to which category a new space falls into and what legitimacy it has. MSIs in 32
33 agri-food chains could be viewed as an *invited* policy space (private sector inviting 33
34 other actors in to the regulatory arena), but it could also be argued that there is 34
35 a counter process of *claiming* space occurring, internationally and nationally, as 35
36 NGOs, trade unions and sometimes donors engage in labour and environmental 36
37 issues in value chains. 37

38 State-society relations in any particular location will shape the context in which 38
39 these new spaces emerge (Commins 2007). For example, participatory budgeting 39
40 has been qualitatively different in Brazil and the UK; where in the former it is 40
41 occurring in a context of social inequality, demand for change, and has followed 41
42 principles of wealth redistribution; whereas in the UK it has been initiated by 42
43 government with a narrow focus on existing problems and without explicit and 43
44 integral wealth redistribution (Nelson 2008). Human geographers have long 44

1 argued that power is asserted through the landscape with boundary setting around 1
 2 places (Sharp 2009). Power struggles occur in which different groups seek to 2
 3 define a place, and shape relationships between the municipal and national 3
 4 structures of government and influence international processes (Sharp et al. 2000). 4
 5 Value chains are actually *simultaneously* shaped through power struggles amongst 5
 6 value chain actors, with top-down influence from globally-branded firms playing 6
 7 out in interaction with bottom-up responses of local, place-based institutions. In 7
 8 other words, local institutional environments interact with the governance of value 8
 9 chains at the global scale in a process of struggle which co-produces outcomes in 9
 10 a specific place (Neilson and Pritchard 2009). To date, limited analyses have been 10
 11 conducted of how these struggles occur in the context of private standard setting 11
 12 and implementation and MSI creation. 12

13 Space and place are consequently not coterminous, particularly in the context 13
 14 of globalised communication and information networks (Massey 1994). Spaces 14
 15 can be viewed in a material sense (as distinct places which can be filled and 15
 16 populated, but still essentially a fluid concept), or as metaphorical spaces which 16
 17 are meeting points (a network or grouping that is less tied to a particular physical 17
 18 location), or to synchronous communication. In global value chains discursive 18
 19 and invisible power is exerted by powerful actors at some physical distance from 19
 20 physical location of production and from emergent MSIs. 20

21 22 *Pathways* 22 23

24 The power cube can be used to consider power dynamics over time (Gaventa 2006), 24
 25 but the temporal dimensions are not made particularly explicit. We have thus added 25
 26 a *pathways* dimension to our conceptual framework to consider the historical 26
 27 and future trajectories of value chain governance and the relative resilience of 27
 28 MSIs. Will they collapse, or survive and to what effect? This follows the trend in 28
 29 geography, political science, development studies, and climate adaptation which 29
 30 explores governance as a *process*. Moving beyond static ideas of power structures, 30
 31 more fluid understandings of governance are sought in which power relations are 31
 32 socially constructed and enacted and multiple narratives compete over time. For 32
 33 example, Manuel-Navarrete et al. (2009) argue that (climate change) governance 33
 34 evolves, with power relations persisting, breaking down or being gradually 34
 35 transformed through the agency of factions in a power sphere within a broader 35
 36 socio-ecological context. Similarly, work on resilience in complex, adaptive social- 36
 37 ecological systems (Chapin et al. 2009; Walker and Salt 2006) also emphasises 37
 38 the importance of understanding *pathways* because of the new challenges that 38
 39 climate change poses: the imperative of planning within longer timeframes 39
 40 and with recognition that past decisions may lock-in societies to unsustainable 40
 41 development paths which can be difficult to overturn. The uncertainties of climate 41
 42 change mean that decision-making is becoming increasingly complex, requiring 42
 43 greater foresight, adaptive capacity and resilience. Social groups and movements, 43
 44 however, have agency to influence development pathways, but more powerful 44

1 groups dominate social discourses and material wealth drowning out alternative 1
2 visions (Leach, Scoones and Stirling 2010). 2

3 With these renderings of power, place, space and pathways in mind, we focus on 3
4 value chain governance as a *process* in the particular context of Kenya by analysing 4
5 pathways and stakeholder narratives. We wish to identify where boundaries are 5
6 being transgressed and whether changes are of a systemic and fundamental nature. 6
7 We ask ‘How are the constellations of actors in the ethical “spaces” such as MSIs 7
8 changing or persisting over time, and with what consequences for development?’ 8
9 Before examining the specific case of HEBI as an MSI, we wish to more generally 9
10 explore the rise of MSIs as progressive governance tools in agri-food supply 10
11 chains that start in the Global South. 11

12 13 14 **Multi-stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs)** 14 15 15

16 International MSIs emerged in the mid 1990s as some international NGOs, 16
17 trade unions and large retailers agreed to collaborate to develop more robust, 17
18 consistent labour standards.² Global sourcing by retailers and brands had rapidly 18
19 expanded, often based on cheap labour in producing countries, but concerns about 19
20 working conditions led some civil society organisations to demand improvements 20
21 (Barrientos and Dolan 2006). Their engagement in MSIs, for instrumental and 21
22 efficiency reasons, represented a step-change from the confrontational relationships 22
23 of the past (FIAS 2005, Barrientos 2007, Pattberg 2006). Many stakeholders were 23
24 optimistic about piloting MSIs as a potential ‘safe space for discussion to address 24
25 common problems’ (Brown 2007: 16). For example, in the South African wine 25
26 industry, an MSI was established – WIETA – to promote ‘social dialogue’ with 26
27 the result that ‘both workers and employers are benefiting’ (ibid.: 14). However, 27
28 the limitations of MSIs in contexts of significant power differentials were noted: 28
29 e.g. the limited voice given to workers, the replication of gender inequalities and 29
30 the importance of covering the interests of casual, contract, and migrant workers 30
31 (Blowfield 2005; Dolan and Opondo 2005; Nelson et al. 2005; Martin et al. 2006; 31
32 Tallontire et al. 2007; Barrientos 2008; Blowfield and Dolan 2008). 32

33 Standardisation in UK retailer-led global chains has been driven not only by 33
34 labour issues, but also by food safety imperatives with company and then industry 34
35 level private standards being applied to production conditions (Jaffee 2005; 35
36 Fulponi 2006). GlobalGAP certification has become a minimum requirement for 36
37 suppliers wishing to sell through multiple retailers, often supplemented by retailer 37
38 food safety and quality standards in certain European markets. Consequently food 38
39 safety has dominated the attentions of many retailers, suppliers and bilateral donor 39
40 links (Henson and Reardon 2005; Jaffee 2005; Humphrey 2008). In 1998 the 40
41 UK government established the Ethical Trading Initiative involving the private 41

42
43 2 See O’Rourke 2006 for discussion of the evolution of different forms of MSI in the 43
44 US apparel sector; see Hughes et al. 2007 for a contrast between MSIs in the US and UK. 44

1 sector, NGOs and trade unions to tackle ethical issues in value chains. Elsewhere 1
 2 in Europe concerns focused mainly on fair trade in flowers and sectoral initiatives, 2
 3 but rarely involved mainstreaming of ethical issues in food retailer value chains. 3
 4 Food safety proponents also recognised the need to address labour standards,³ but 4
 5 adopted a ‘welfare’ focus rather than a labour *rights* approach.⁴ 5

6 Standards and auditing have formed the basis of ethical sourcing to date and 6
 7 have proliferated, but a number of concerns have been raised. First, one of the 7
 8 most important issues has been about the effectiveness of auditing *social* issues 8
 9 (O’Rourke 2003; Auret and Barrientos 2004; ETI 2006). Secondly, the capability 9
 10 of third-party auditing firms and the quality of service has been questioned (ETI 10
 11 2006; O’Rourke 2006; Usher and Newitt 2009). Thirdly, the evidence of continuing 11
 12 labour abuses, particularly at smaller farms and in countries where there has 12
 13 been less experience of codes of practice (Women Working Worldwide 2007). 13
 14 Fourthly, technical issues such as excessive cost, instances of fraud, the failure 14
 15 to incorporate elements of good practice (use of local expertise, confidential, off- 15
 16 site interviews with workers, and a more iterative approach to interviewing) have 16
 17 been questioned. Finally, the findings of recent impact assessments which have 17
 18 shown limited progress particularly on empowerment indicators, discovered a 18
 19 poor fit between workers and code provisions and lack of coverage for temporary 19
 20 workers despite standard implementation and auditing experimentation (Nelson et 20
 21 al. 2006; Barrientos and Smith 2007). 21

22 UK retailers and brands have tried to respond to these concerns through a 22
 23 number of parallel initiatives which simultaneously advance their interests yet 23
 24 control and compete with other approaches. For example, they have created a 24
 25 centralised database to assess risk based on third party auditing and a standardised 25
 26 auditing methodology.⁵ Some of the biggest global food retailers and brands 26
 27 (especially Carrefour, Tesco, Metro, Migros, Ahold, Wal-Mart and Delhaize) 27
 28 are also part of the Consumer Goods Forum⁶ which has begun a Global Social 28
 29 Compliance Programme (GSCP). This is essentially a private sector led body, with 29
 30 limited trade union and NGO involvement which aims to harmonise social codes 30
 31 (GSCP 2008). However, critics argue that the GSCP may ignore existing efforts 31
 32 32

33 3 Beginning in 2005 the GlobalGAP Risk Assessment on Social Practices (GRASP) 33
 34 was developed as a ‘voluntary’ add-on to GlobalGAP certification (Heise et al. 2007). 34

35 4 GlobalGAP clauses on ‘worker health, safety and welfare’ (WHSW) were recently 35
 36 strengthened but do not cover ILO Core Labour Rights (GlobalGAP 2008). 36

37 5 A database called SEDEX has been established to share data amongst buyers on the 37
 38 extent of code compliance of suppliers. Similarly the SEDEX Associate Auditor Group has 38
 39 attempted to fine-tune social auditing so that ‘best practice’ is accumulated (the SMETA 39
 40 methodology). 40

41 6 The Consumer Goods Forum is a grouping of major retail and manufacturing 41
 42 companies which was created in June 2009 by the merger of CIES – The Food Business 42
 43 Forum, the Global Commerce Initiative (GCI) and the Global CEO Forum, CIES was 43
 44 originally Comité International d’Entreprises à Succursales (CIES – International 44
 45 Committee of Food Retail Chains), see <http://www.ciesnet.com/index.asp>.

1 at harmonisation or indeed undermine them.⁷ Labour rights standards are thus a 1
2 crowded field with new ethical spaces of different kinds emerging at different 2
3 levels, primarily originating in industrialised countries and often competing with 3
4 each other for priority in the overall ethical or technical agenda. 4

5 The next section explores the experiences of the development, governance and 5
6 ultimate abandonment of the HEBI as a way to institute more progressive and 6
7 ethical labour standards in Kenyan horticulture. In exploring this case, we provide 7
8 a brief historical background but then take the specific conceptual framings 8
9 presented earlier of power, place, space and pathways as separate analytical 'slices' 9
10 through the specific case of HEBI. In doing so, we hope to reveal and elucidate 10
11 the political dynamics at work within this particular MSI, and to provide insights 11
12 and questions for those involved in similar initiatives about who is ultimately 12
13 shaping the ethical space in value chains and to highlight processes of cooperation, 13
14 resistance and discursive power. 14

15 16 17 **HEBI: A New Ethical Space in Kenya?** 17 18 18

19 Export-oriented horticulture began in Kenya in the 1940s and floriculture started 19
20 in the 1950s with rapid growth in the eighties and nineties (Dolan and Humphrey 20
21 2000; Dolan et al. 2003). The economic success story of the horticulture sector 21
22 has been marred lately by allegations of labour rights abuses, and poor working 22
23 conditions and environmental management. By the mid 1990s horticultural 23
24 producers, particularly in the flower sector, were the subject of a myriad of social 24
25 codes (Barrientos et al. 2003). In 1996 a group of cut flower producers formed 25
26 their own association, the Kenya Flower Council (KFC), with the objective of 26
27 developing a reputation for quality. In the 1990s the KFC strengthened social 27
28 aspects of its code as labour rights campaigns began in Switzerland and Germany 28
29 focusing on the flower sector (Dolan et al. 2003).⁸ 29

30 An initial local campaign began when workers at the Del Monte pineapple 30
31 plantation and factory made allegations of labour rights abuses and complained 31
32 of union inaction at a national level. The shop stewards of the Kenya Union of 32
33 Commercial and Allied Workers approached the civil society organisation, Kenya 33
34 Human Rights Commission (KHRC), in mid 1999 and the latter coordinated a 34
35 campaign which led to some changes by suppliers with steps taken to establish a 35
36 Kenya Standard on Social Accountability. But many NGOs were not satisfied with 36
37 progress (Brown 2005: 12). 37

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41 ⁷ See for example letter from the Clean Clothes Campaign rejecting an invitation to 40
42 participate with GSCP, <http://www.cleanclothes.org/documents/07-06-07-GSCP.pdf>. 41

42 ⁸ Both the KFC and the Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya (FPEAK) 42
43 had codes of practice from the late 1990s although with limited reference to worker issues 43
44 beyond health and safety and largely focused on quality and food safety. 44

1 Campaign attention soon turned to the flower sector and initial allegations from 1
 2 KHRC on poor practices in this sector were followed by a joint study by Women 2
 3 Working Worldwide (a British NGO and member of the ETI) and the Kenyan 3
 4 Women Workers Organization (KEWWO). The UK based NGO suggested that 4
 5 the ETI complaints mechanism be activated, given the systematic violation of the 5
 6 ETI code by retailer members (Hale and Opondo 2005: 308). Simultaneously, 6
 7 the KHRC ‘threatened to go international’ with the campaign unless working 7
 8 conditions were improved within three months (Dolan and Opondo 2005: 12). An 8
 9 ETI delegation visited Kenya to investigate. Just prior to their arrival a number 9
 10 of Kenyan stakeholders undertook a series of stakeholder workshops funded by 10
 11 DFID and the Royal Dutch Embassy (Brown 2005: 12). A Steering Committee 11
 12 was set up to promote social accountability in horticulture and this became the 12
 13 Horticultural Ethical Business Initiative (HEBI) in early 2003 (Dolan and Opondo 13
 14 2005; ETI 2005; Hale and Opondo 2005). 14

15 The stated aim of HEBI was ‘promotion of ethical social behaviour in 15
 16 the horticulture and floriculture industry in Kenya’ (HEBI n.d.) and initially 16
 17 comprised government, civil society organisations, trade associations, employers 17
 18 and donor/NGO observers. But a critical stakeholder, the trade unions, did not 18
 19 accept the invitation to participate because of historical antagonism between the 19
 20 unions and NGOs related to roles and mandates (Dolan and Opondo 2005: 94–95). 20
 21 Initial progress was made in establishing HEBI as an organisation, in adapting 21
 22 international codes to the Kenyan context, in adopting a participatory social 22
 23 auditing methodology and in conducting pilot audits.⁹ 23

24 Although international press reports maintained pressure on the industry, 24
 25 HEBI then stalled. Stakeholder narratives on the causes of the failure of HEBI 25
 26 vary and are unpacked in the next section in order to understand how different 26
 27 groups articulate the role of this particular ethical space. In doing this we use the 27
 28 lenses of visible, hidden and invisible power to reveal how the excessive power of 28
 29 the retailers dominates value chain governance but interacts with local context and 29
 30 place, to co-produce specific outcomes in Kenya and in the HEBI ethical space. 30

31 31

32 32

33 **Analysing Labour Rights Power in HEBI and the Broader Value Chain** 33

34 34

35 In this section we discuss the different types of power at work in Kenyan cut flower 35
 36 value chain governance as exercised by diverse factions and groups in different 36
 37 locations and the nature of the ethical space in terms of how and by whom it was 37
 38 created. 38

39 39

40 40

41 9 A Kenya-specific code was developed by HEBI stakeholders, adapted from the 41
 42 ETI base code. A small secretariat and Board of Directors were inscribed. A participatory 42
 43 social auditing (PSA) methodology was developed and training of individuals and firms 43
 44 carried out. Pilot social audits were conducted on 10 farms. Both key industry associations 44
 44 – FPEAK for vegetables and flowers and KFC – for flowers endorsed HEBI. 44

1 *Power Relations in HEBI*

2

3 *Visible power* From the point of view of the civil society stakeholders involved, 3
 4 retailers and the ETI used visible power to form HEBI. They were not overtly 4
 5 forced to participate in the process and the objective may not have been intentional 5
 6 on the part of the private sector actors involved, but the effect of using this MSI 6
 7 to advance action on labour rights has actually been to quash the momentum 7
 8 generated by the pressures being applied by the press and NGOs. Civil society 8
 9 activists were prevented from using information collected during the pilot social 9
 10 audits in their advocacy activities and their participation in HEBI was only 10
 11 permitted if they agreed to maintain complete confidentiality. When HEBI faltered, 11
 12 the private sector moved decision-making power away to more closed spaces such 12
 13 as the Kenya Flower Council. Thus the power of the private sector at both the 13
 14 national and international levels has largely maintained its force in determining 14
 15 the trajectory of labour rights action and in agenda setting. The sudden expansion 15
 16 of Fairtrade added to HEBI's hiatus, as did election violence in Kenya, and some 16
 17 of the international NGOs and donors have also shifted their attention away from 17
 18 labour rights – but according to most civil society representatives interviewed, 18
 19 HEBI was not given the support it required from the private sector to be effective 19
 20 and at the same time the momentum of the on-going campaigns was undermined. 20
 21 Retailers can therefore use their power to create and validate local or Southern 21
 22 MSIs when it suits their objectives, and then facilitate their decline when no longer 22
 23 required. 23

24

25 *Hidden power* In the historical governance of the HEBI two instances of what 25
 26 we are calling 'hidden power' have worked to limit the role of HEBI and its 26
 27 effectiveness as a progressive tool for improving labour rights, and ultimately this 27
 28 has led to its demise. First, Kenyan exporters exercised hidden power, especially in 28
 29 the early days of shaping the agenda for HEBI. KFC played a fairly significant role 29
 30 in developing HEBI's code, but did not follow up with support for the organisation. 30
 31 Ineffectual management was installed with the support of private sector actors 31
 32 and some barriers to cooperation were put in place. In our stakeholder workshops 32
 33 several NGO participants argued that they had not had sufficient opportunity to 33
 34 participate in audits. 34

35 Secondly, retailers exerted hidden power in framing the debate in HEBI by 35
 36 ensuring that their vision of what an MSI should be would prevail, i.e. a space focused 36
 37 on compliance and problem solving rather than a space to enhance accountability 37
 38 and voice of workers and communities through the use of participatory social 38
 39 auditing. However, even amongst the retailers, there were two countervailing trends: 39
 40 whilst steps were taken for greater harmonisation in social auditing, some retailers 40
 41 recognised the limitations of compliance-oriented social audits. As a result some 41
 42 retailers have supported both widespread risk assessment followed by a smaller 42
 43 number of rapid audits or more detailed studies and remediation sometimes using 43
 44 participatory social auditing and local expertise. In the early 2000s, proponents of 44

1 participatory social auditing envisaged its use by retailers on a regular basis (e.g. 1
2 see Auret and Barrientos 2004). However, this has not happened, because retailers 2
3 are more concerned with ensuring their sourcing is 'ethical' through compliance 3
4 with certain standards rather than promoting transformational social change. A 4
5 private sector consultant we interviewed stated that participatory social auditing 5
6 as an integrated approach to workplace management is 'dead in the water'. In 6
7 contrast, many NGO representatives involved in the HEBI still argue that the full 7
8 participatory social auditing methodology should form the basis of all audits in 8
9 this arena. 9

10 Whilst NGO representatives stressed the importance of using a Kenyan code 10
11 such as the HEBI code, which is adapted to local conditions, retailers preferred 11
12 code harmonisation, but conceded that there may be local variation in indicators. 12
13 In Kenya, HEBI civil society members argued for the use of the HEBI code in all 13
14 audits, whereas retailers used their buying power to demand that internationally 14
15 agreed codes were used (with national code processes *interpreting* certain criteria 15
16 from a local perspective only). Local MSIs are viewed by many retailers as 16
17 'local resources' or service-oriented bodies, that may be involved in verification, 17
18 witnessing some audits, analysing the data and engaging in awareness raising, 18
19 but not as an entity that can bring together local actors and voices to promote 19
20 accountability and change. HEBI participants were aiming to develop their own 20
21 *auditing* body to oversee the use of the HEBI code, but this over-stepped the mark 21
22 in the view of key retailers and so this construction of the MSI ethical space has 22
23 been excluded through the use of this hidden power of retailers. 23

24 Some NGOs and trade unionists argue that donors and some international 24
25 companies were unrealistic and naïve about 'local' MSIs and politics, a view also 25
26 shared by some retailers. For many participants involved in the early days of HEBI, 26
27 its establishment was a rapid response to the 2002 allegations, providing a quick fix. 27
28 Some Kenyan civil society members reflected that ETI and other northern actors 28
29 'rushed the formation of HEBI without proper institutional structures in place'. 29
30 However, interviews with Northern private sector interests found a clear desire 30
31 for rapid establishment of HEBI and quick action to tackle problems. The private 31
32 sector retailers and Kenyan exporters, with their resources, competitive edge and 32
33 driving objective of maintaining reputation, were generally less encumbered by 33
34 concerns of achieving consensus and legitimacy in the development of the MSI. 34
35 Many of the private sector actors interviewed emphasise the need for 'pragmatic' 35
36 approaches to finding solutions,¹⁰ but their discourse of learning is a technocratic 36
37 one, which often glosses over the power related issues of differentiated access to 37
38 resources and agendas. Despite sitting on the HEBI board, leading Kenyan flower 38
39 exporters and their associations gave it only faint support. They did not value the 39
40 greater credibility and legitimacy that HEBI might offer, were protective of their 40
41 41

42 10 E.g. Some retailers, brands and NGOs have recently jointly employed a 42
43 consultancy to help them in a 'pragmatic' approach to learning, drawing on local expertise 43
44 for assessments and remediation (Impactt 2009: 21). 44

own code, and resistant to the increased scrutiny of participatory social auditing and the changes that might then be required.

Invisible or discursive power Invisible or discursive power can be linked to the influence of specific agents or can be used to refer to prevailing dominant ideas (Fuchs and Lederer 2007: 8–9). Our fieldwork has revealed that there are dominating narratives which are shared across stakeholder groups in this industry which are not questioned by less powerful actors.

First, the assumption that private standards are the main (possibly only) solution to improving worker conditions/rights is widespread amongst donors and the private sector and to some extent the NGOs that have participated in the ETI. Alternative approaches (e.g. capacity building, awareness raising, shared equity schemes, worker alliance building, networking and advocacy) and enforcement of governmental regulation have received a lot less financial support and attention than private labour and other ethical standards, which raises questions of opportunity costs. Secondly, assumptions are common that code compliance and impact assessment are one and the same, but recent impact assessments indicate patchy progress. Thirdly, many civil society stakeholders suggest that private standards and MSIs are demanded by organised consumer activist movements in the North, and retailer power in the value chain is thus underestimated. Fourthly, participatory social auditing is still seen by many NGO representatives as a methodology which can render private standards more effective (e.g. see Hale and Opondo 2005), but the HEBI story indicates that a method alone cannot be successful without major attitudinal shifts of suppliers and retailers to implement the process fully. Yet Kenyan civil society and private sector actors interviewed were not calling for retailers to share in the costs of upgrading labour standards.¹¹ Private sector actors resisted the application of the PSA methodology which was a key part of HEBI (preventing NGO representatives from discussing the findings publicly, stopping implementation, shifting to more commercial methods and auditors etc.). The emphasis on auditing in HEBI also diverted the energy of civil society campaigning away from discussion of broader, structurally embedded issues (e.g. the living wage, the role of retailers in assisting suppliers to achieve higher labour standards).

Retailers have used their control of social discourse to shift the dominant narratives around local MSIs as accountability and transformation mechanisms to service provision tools, with participatory social auditing used only in cases deemed problematic. However, many of the civil society and some government representatives gave positive appraisals of the HEBI as a means of adapting standards to the local context – compared to the use of international auditors who are not familiar with local conditions. Local NGO representatives have

¹¹ In our workshops there were complaints about the cost of compliance and a desire for others to share in this, but this was only when pushed by the facilitators and with little detail on what this may entail.

1 called for HEBI and participatory social auditing to be revived, indicating limited 1
 2 awareness of the shift in position of Northern retailers which has effectively closed 2
 3 the ethical policy space – at least in the sense of a mechanism of transformative 3
 4 change. National and international private sector actors have adapted and adopted 4
 5 countervailing measures, whilst giving HEBI insufficient support. Suppliers have 5
 6 little choice but to follow what is demanded of the retailers and these alternative 6
 7 measures become the norm. 7

8

9 *Place in HEBI* 9

10

11 The power relations shaping HEBI emanate from different geographical locations 11
 12 and have implications for place with respect to HEBI – in which place does it 12
 13 belong? Is it an international, national or local initiative? Whilst HEBI can be 13
 14 regarded as a national level organisation (being registered in Kenya and with a 14
 15 local stakeholder steering committee), retailers and international actors clearly 15
 16 have a hidden role in determining its existence, the boundaries of its operation and 16
 17 who is invited to participate or is left out. National level dynamics influenced the 17
 18 evolution of HEBI (e.g. the refusal of trade union leaders to formally participate 18
 19 and the reluctant participation of private sector and NGO actors). These actors 19
 20 operated primarily at the national level, with participation from the local level 20
 21 being negligible – workers and smallholders were not directly represented in the 21
 22 discussions of HEBI either by community representatives, or by effective trade 22
 23 unions. There was also an implicit assumption that NGOs could play a role in 23
 24 representing the local level. However, much of the power shaping and influencing 24
 25 HEBI emanates from outside the national level, local level actors had no 25
 26 involvement at all, and the nature of this international power is poorly understood 26
 27 by many of the national level actors. 27

28 The majority of the Kenya HEBI stakeholders interviewed (such as middle 28
 29 management, NGO representatives and auditors) did not understand how power is 29
 30 exerted by buyers in the global value chain. Quite often they referred to ‘the market’ 30
 31 in an abstract sense, with Western consumers perceived as highly organised ethical 31
 32 activists demanding change from retailers, with the latter being fairly passive 32
 33 followers of consumer demands. It is not clear if this obfuscation of the actual 33
 34 power of retailers in the UK market is intentional or not. Large-scale consumer 34
 35 campaigns have not been the major driver for change that Kenyan stakeholders 35
 36 assume – more it is the concerns of retailers to avoid reputational damage that has 36
 37 driven their activities in the ethical sphere, and they are active generally in seeking 37
 38 market advantage through interpreting and forecasting consumer desires. 38

39

40 *Spaces in HEBI* 40

41

42 In the Kenyan agricultural sector labour rights are conventionally discussed and 42
 43 regulated through labour laws in a *closed* space in which the Ministry of Labour 43
 44 has authority to set minimum standards. Government also facilitates dialogue 44

1 between the labour unions and employers which forms the basis of collective 1
 2 bargaining agreements (CBAs). The national space relating to labour rights was 2
 3 not only previously 'closed' but also ineffective, leading to the emergence of 3
 4 private forms of governance in horticulture. Whilst Kenyan horticulture is not 4
 5 alone in having problems with the process of 'social dialogue', there has been 5
 6 widespread discussion of the catalogue of poor compliance with labour laws due 6
 7 to a lack of enforcement and governmental capacity and limited observance of 7
 8 workers' rights and relatively weak trade unions (Dolan et al. 2003; Kiai 2003; 8
 9 Women Working Worldwide 2007). The private sector had been relatively free to 9
 10 determine labour standards on their own farms. 10

11 The new 'ethical' space of HEBI represented an opening up of labour rights 11
 12 regulation to other actors. Whilst civil society actions demanded this and could 12
 13 say this is 'claimed space', the mechanism which emerged – the MSI – was not 13
 14 of their choosing. Seeing a window of opportunity as the space begin to open 14
 15 donors encouraged the key stakeholders to join a committee and, following ETI's 15
 16 intervention, this became the formalised HEBI institution. Only some Kenyan 16
 17 horticultural companies were part of the process (typically those involved in KFC, 17
 18 partly due to their prominence and links to UK buyers), and although by doing this 18
 19 they helped to further open up the ethical space on labour rights governance, they 19
 20 did not give it sufficient support to flourish. 20

21 International retailers played a key role in sowing the seeds of the idea for 21
 22 HEBI as an MSI and international NGOs also saw the ETI model as the way to 22
 23 forge a co-operative alliance between stakeholders (see the ETI report by Brown 23
 24 2005: 12). Donors, particularly the UK Department for International Development 24
 25 and the Royal Dutch Embassy, supported the formation of HEBI by providing 25
 26 funding. Thus it could be said that donors, international NGOs, international 26
 27 retailers and the ETI shaped an *invited* space between them, in which a mechanism 27
 28 was chosen (an MSI) and civil society and trade unions were allowed to participate. 28
 29 The mechanism itself and the stakeholders it included may have had potential for 29
 30 transformative action, but was depoliticised rapidly through the choices of the 30
 31 more powerful retailers and the absence of the trade unions. The latter rejected this 31
 32 ethical space as lacking legitimacy (maybe with good reason), but the real driver 32
 33 for non-participation was personal antagonism and self-interest rather than any 33
 34 kind of principled stand or constructive alternatives (Riisgaard 2009). 34

35 Some NGOs have recently reported that they were actually reluctant to be 35
 36 involved in HEBI which, in their view, was specifically designed to 'clip the wings 36
 37 of civil society', but felt pressured to join. Nevertheless, there was some optimism 37
 38 from some parts of civil society: one of the HEBI civil society participants said 38
 39 that they had hoped that the MSI would provide an entry point to engagement on 39
 40 labour rights with the private sector and 'would be a gateway to the horticulture 40
 41 business in the long run'. Several civil society interviewees also commented 41
 42 that there was insufficient time given to build trust between the private sector 42
 43 and themselves, on top of the underwhelming support from the growers for the 43
 44 initiative which then led to its demise. 44

1 Interestingly, many Kenyan export managers also now distance themselves 1
 2 from the initiative, seeing it as belonging to civil society, perhaps reflecting the 2
 3 fact that the decision-making power was actually strongest amongst international 3
 4 actors. Kenyan companies, as represented by the KFC, which was seeking 4
 5 to establish itself as the arbiter of quality and reputation in the national flower 5
 6 sector, agreed to the participatory social auditing training and pilots in response 6
 7 to the media and NGO pressure, but with the creation of HEBI this pressure 7
 8 was somewhat reduced and they did not follow through by using HEBI tools 8
 9 and services or ensuring appropriate management systems were developed. The 9
 10 secretariat failed to produce a strategic plan, convene regular meetings or move 10
 11 forward with concrete action, and donor funding was withdrawn around 2007. 11
 12 Several civil society actors claim that this led to HEBI being ‘assassinated’. 12
 13 Neither civil society organisations nor private sector actors in Kenya now lay 13
 14 claim to, or feel ownership of HEBI, although some representatives of the former 14
 15 think that its revival might still be worthwhile – reflecting their frustration at a lack 15
 16 of progress on labour standards and their perception of being sidelined from the 16
 17 ethical space. The KFC and some of the export companies regard HEBI as being 17
 18 ‘done and dusted’, although they have drawn some lessons (e.g. the value of using 18
 19 female auditors and instigation of gender committees). 19

20 21 *The Pathways of ‘Ethical Space’* 21

22
23 Analysing the historical pathway and its conditions informs our understanding of 23
 24 where action on Kenyan labour rights might go next. HEBI’s short lifespan has 24
 25 its antecedents in the historical, institutional context of antagonism between all 25
 26 major actors and limited space for civil society engagement in policy-making.¹² 26
 27 Kenyan NGOs and trade unions have previously lacked freedom and voice 27
 28 (Brown 2004) and personality clashes and role conflicts characterise relations. 28
 29 The lack of union participation in HEBI undermined its credibility and frustrated 29
 30 NGO representatives. The shift from campaigning to collaboration was also rather 30
 31 sudden for some NGO representatives. Private sector participants continued to 31
 32 distrust the participating NGO and human rights activists as being too biased and 32
 33 political, not ‘working with the industry but against the industry’. Retailers have 33
 34 sought other less complicated and challenging means of tackling labour rights or 34
 35 rather of minimizing reputational risk relating to labour rights. The KFC remains 35
 36 the main Kenyan body concerned with labour rights issues in the horticulture 36
 37 sector, given the limited reach of the union and the concentration on food safety 37
 38 issues by the other industry association. One interviewee feared that the end of 38
 39 HEBI signalled a return to ‘rich farmers auditing rich farmers’ – i.e. a closed club. 39

40
41
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44
12 Exemplified in the attacks on NGOs in speeches by the leadership of COTU (e.g. 41
 accusation that NGOs were inciting workers [Atundi 2005, COTU 2006]) and accusations 42
 by NGOs of the trade unions being too close to government and therefore ineffectual (see 43
 Kiai 2003). 44

1 Whilst this is largely true there are some nuances to this story, with the Kenya 1
 2 Flower Council continuing to engage with *some* NGOs and increasingly with 2
 3 government in response to changes in labour laws.¹³ 3

4 One of the key flaws in HEBI (and private standards generally) was the 4
 5 historically negligible representation or direct participation of workers and 5
 6 smallholders (never mind other local communities and social groups) in debates, 6
 7 in the setting of standards and in their implementation (e.g. through auditing 7
 8 by an MSI). Some small steps may have been taken in terms of labour union 8
 9 engagement with industry, at least informally, particularly on Fairtrade certified 9
 10 farms.¹⁴ There appears to be the beginnings of dialogue between the KFC and the 10
 11 main union in question – KPAWU.¹⁵ However, there is still resistance to unions 11
 12 amongst Kenyan flower and vegetable exporters, some of whom have lobbied 12
 13 against the implementation of a new labour law. Some leading Kenyan flower 13
 14 companies demonstrate greater willingness to engage with NGOs in awareness 14
 15 raising and capacity building, particularly at the workplace level or in relation to 15
 16 welfare issues. 16

17 Some retailers and supply chain partners began to look beyond HEBI for 17
 18 social auditing in their mainstream business and some UK retailers sought market 18
 19 differentiation through Fairtrade certification, which also contributed to HEBI's 19
 20 failure.¹⁶ At the same time, some of the powerful international retailers have 20
 21 concentrated their control, shifting decision-making back to the international 21
 22 rather than the national sphere, and to more exclusive private authority rather 22
 23 than multi-stakeholder initiatives involving civil society and trade unions and the 23
 24 learning-by-doing approach ethos of the ETI. 24

25 Civil society actors have searched for new ways to seek improvements 25
 26 in labour rights in Kenya. The Kenyan NGO, KEWWO, is establishing new 26
 27 regional networks (the Global Horticultural Workers' and Environmental Rights 27
 28 28

29 13 The KFC code and auditing procedures have drawn upon HEBI's code and 29
 30 approaches to a certain degree, and the KFC certification committee which approves audit 30
 31 reports does include non-executive non-industry members as well. The KFC is also fostering 31
 32 dialogue within the industry and with NGOs, but only more service-oriented ones such as 32
 33 AfricaNow. In fact KFC is increasingly seeking more interface with government, including 33
 34 an arrangement with Kenya Bureau of Standards and in recognition of the stronger labour 34
 35 laws. 35

36 14 Fairtrade has been regarded as a key driver for adoption of collective bargaining 36
 37 agreements on flower farms. 37

38 15 KPAWU was invited to sit on the KFC certification committee in 2009; it is not 38
 39 clear if this has been accepted. 39

40 16 Kenyan flower farms had been certified to Fairtrade standards before 2005 but 40
 41 only through one national labelling initiative (Max Havelaar Switzerland). In 2008 the FLO 41
 42 cut flower standard enabled several larger exporters with direct links to UK retailers to seek 42
 43 Fairtrade certification for their roses. By 2008, there 20 FLO certified companies in Kenya, 43
 44 18 producers and two traders in Kenya, FLO-Cert database, [http://www.flo-cert.net/flo-](http://www.flo-cert.net/flo-cert/index.php) 44
[cert/index.php](http://www.flo-cert.net/flo-cert/index.php), accessed 23 December 2008. 44

1 Network, GHOWERN), which also involves some trade unions, although as yet 1
 2 the key Kenyan union (KPAWU) has not co-operated.¹⁷ These new networks may 2
 3 renew earlier (pre-HEBI) energy to shape the necessary pre-conditions for more 3
 4 successful MSIs in the future or find alternative strategies for improving labour 4
 5 rights. 5

6 The limited impact of the ETI base code, especially in food sectors compared 6
 7 to clothing has been acknowledged,¹⁸ and the ETI Board now argues that members 7
 8 must make a 'quantum leap', moving away from auditing and remediation 8
 9 alone, to creating 'good workplaces' based on 'mature industrial relations'.¹⁹ 9
 10 However, some global retail and food industry players are keen to promote greater 10
 11 harmonisation of standards and practices, and have characterised ETI and other 11
 12 MSIs as national 'silos', operating by their own rules in their distinct market 12
 13 spheres and with limited reference to others.²⁰ There is a risk that the ETI (and 13
 14 other southern MSIs with which it is engaging) could lose ground in the wake of 14
 15 the emergence of new global level initiatives further concentrating power into the 15
 16 hands of Northern retailers in value chain governance. 16

17

18

19 **Conclusion**

20

21 Can MSIs lead to transformational changes in labour rights for workers? The 21
 22 HEBI case indicates that ethical spaces can be opened up by NGO and media 22
 23 pressure allowing broader stakeholder influence over labour rights, but for this 23
 24 space to be effective and to persist requires the transgression by the interests of 24
 25 more powerful, private sector value chain actors to be prevented. The huge power 25
 26 of UK retailers in the UK market and in their global supply chains means that 26
 27 they have significant power over Kenyan labour rights and their agenda is more 27
 28 likely to hold sway. Having flirted with southern multi-stakeholder initiatives, 28
 29 they have moved back to the international sphere, although now there is greater 29
 30 coordination between globally powerful retailers and closed spaces dominated by 30
 31 compliance approaches dominate at international and national levels. Both NGOs 31
 32 and retailers have generally shifted their focus away from labour standards to 32
 33 some extent, because of the rise of competing priorities (e.g. food safety, climate 33
 34 change etc.) which has also undermined specific national level campaigns in 34

35

36

37 17 For example whilst union representatives from elsewhere in East Africa 37
 38 participated in a September 2009 GHOWERN conference in Nairobi, KPAWU was absent. 38

39 18 At the ETI Tenth Anniversary Conference, 23 October 2008 a new strategy aimed 39
 40 at re-energising labour organisation and representation was launched and the deepening the 40
 41 relationship between voluntary codes and labour regulation was emphasised. 41

42 19 <http://www.ethicaltrade.org/news-and-events/news/ethical-trade-quantum-leap>, 42
 43 accessed 14 October 2009. There have also been moves to improve ETI member reporting, 43
 44 not only in relation to the Base Code but also the Principles of Implementation. 44

44

20 For example conference speeches publicising GSCP in late 2008.

1 producing countries. The substantial investment and efforts to transform labour 1
 2 rights that is needed from retailers and suppliers has yet to be mobilised and the 2
 3 agency of workers is limited by an approach which holds little meaning for them, 3
 4 as it is based on documentary control and has proscribed boundaries. Arguably, 4
 5 the spaces for dialogue have changed, but only through a reconfiguration of the 5
 6 existing constellation of actors, rather than any transformational change in the 6
 7 actors having influence and in action on the ground on labour standards. 7

8 Some progress has been achieved, with the horticulture industry finally 8
 9 acknowledging that serious labour rights abuses are occurring. Suppliers are now 9
 10 collaborating with some of the less combative, service oriented NGOs as well. 10
 11 However, this was arguably achieved by the campaigns rather than HEBI itself. 11
 12 Similarly, the Kenyan government is more active on labour issues, promulgating 12
 13 new labour legislation, which faces resistance from the private sector, and the 13
 14 labour inspectorate suffers from decades of under-investment. Given the continued 14
 15 weakness of the trade unions and the side-lining of advocacy-oriented NGOs, the 15
 16 possibilities for accountability to workers in this new policy context is limited, 16
 17 unless civil society actors can claim and sustain new, more effective ethical spaces 17
 18 for action. 18

19 Gaventa (2006: 30) suggests that transformation only occurs in a new power 19
 20 space in 'rare moments when social movements or social actors are able to work 20
 21 effectively across each of the dimensions simultaneously'. To try and create such 21
 22 a moment, it is likely that increased alliance building, vertically and horizontally, 22
 23 may be required in more overtly politicised approaches to stimulate new forms 23
 24 of dialogue, challenge dominant narratives in ethical policy spaces which restrict 24
 25 the types of action undertaken and generate alternative narratives on desirable 25
 26 development and labour rights pathways. 26

27 More collective action by citizens, communities of practice and social 27
 28 movements is still urgently needed, but cannot be confined to the contingent spaces 28
 29 of MSIs – where the boundaries and decisions are largely being driven by more 29
 30 powerful factions within the private sector, as well as by donors and governments. 30
 31 Donors and governments, in particular, must review their understanding of the 31
 32 potential of standards and MSIs to achieve progress on labour rights, with greater 32
 33 awareness given to the political processes by which groups jostle for control of 33
 34 material resources and social discourse. More analyses of governance processes in 34
 35 agri-food value chains (including the role of MSIs) in other countries are needed, 35
 36 with an unpacking of dominant narratives a top priority. More anthropological 36
 37 analysis would be useful to show how these dominant narratives are formed through 37
 38 shared symbolic representations at the root of a group or faction's language, ritual, 38
 39 values, cultural practices and myths, conferring identity on the members, enabling 39
 40 those members to assert their own interests. 40

41 More thought and attention should be given on how to support less powerful 41
 42 groups to articulate their *own* narratives and to encourage the emergence of more 42
 43 transformational ethical spaces for debate and action. Greater horizontal linking 43
 44 and citizen mobilisation – at multiple scales – is needed to allow alternative 44

1 narratives to challenge the hegemonic ones. This process should help to *transform* 1
 2 the social contract that businesses have with farmers, workers, consumers and 2
 3 wider society in the global North and South, achieving more socially just and 3
 4 environmentally sustainable pathways. 4

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Proof Copy

1	Chapter 3	1
2		2
3	Of Red Herrings and Immutabilities:	3
4		4
5	Rethinking Fairtrade's Ethic of	5
6		6
7	Relationality among Cocoa Producers	7
8		8
9	Amanda Berlan and Catherine Dolan	9
10		10
11		11
12		12
13		13
14	Introduction	14
15		15
16	In the globalised food system, where the path from farm to fork is marked	16
17	by complex and spatially dispersed production chains, northern consumers	17
18	increasingly face what Eden et al. (2008: 1045) term 'the distance problem of	18
19	consumption'. For many consumers, far removed from the sites in which their	19
20	food is produced, this 'food from nowhere' problem has thrown up a range of	20
21	anxieties – from greenhouse gases and food-borne illnesses to GMOs and labour	21
22	abuses – over the consequences of an ever more corporate and de-territorialised	22
23	food supply (Giddens 1990, Polanyi 1944).	23
24	Like other 'alternative' food networks ('local', 'slow', 'organic' etc.), the	24
25	Fairtrade movement emerged, in part, to address this distance problem by	25
26	challenging normative suppositions about how markets are organised and the	26
27	calculating, self-interested rationality upon which they reputedly rest. The	27
28	movement confronts the alienating effects of modern capitalism by re-embedding	28
29	sociality in hitherto impersonal market processes, seeking to forge a moral	29
30	economy of enduring, inter-dependent, and direct producer-consumer relations.	30
31	This relational ethic 'transgresses' the social and economic norms of conventional	31
32	food systems and forms the crux of the Fairtrade promise, a promise embodied in	32
33	the Fairtrade ¹ label that today dons thousands of products on supermarket shelves.	33
34	Yet while the label replaces the complexity of food production and processing	34
35	with a symbolic shorthand for trust and assurance (Eden 2009), it can also gloss	35
36	over some of the emerging tensions and challenges to Fairtrade's 'ethics of care'	36
37	(Whatmore 1997).	37
38	This chapter ² explores how the forms and practices of Fairtrade can create	38
39	multiple, if not contradictory transgressions, at times radically challenging the	39
40		40
41	¹ This chapter is concerned specifically with Fairtrade products that are certified by	41
42	the Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO) and not the wider ethical trade	42
43	movement and market.	43
44	² The authors thank Michael Goodman for his constructive comments on this chapter.	44

1 normative structures of global capitalism and at other times re-conventionalising 1
 2 the spaces of 'alternative' production and consumption (c.f. Guthman 2004). Such 2
 3 transgressions have been recognised in the realm of marketing and retail where 3
 4 the boundary between Fairtrade's seminal ethics and commercial imperatives are 4
 5 increasingly blurred through the 'mainstreaming' of Fairtrade products (Dolan 5
 6 2010, M. Goodman 2010, Low and Davenport 2006, Renard 2005). Today, the 6
 7 ethical space of Fairtrade is as likely to be populated by corporate manufacturers, 7
 8 retailers and supermarkets (Chiquita, Starbucks, Tate and Lyle, Nestlé, Cadbury's, 8
 9 Wal-Mart) as by Third World, fair trade and/or independent shops. This wave 9
 10 of corporate engagement has been celebrated by some, lauded for presenting 10
 11 a welcome opportunity to grow market share and spread development benefits 11
 12 to a wider tranche of producers (Barrientos and Dolan 2006: 181). For others, 12
 13 however, this 'means justifies the ends' consequentialism (Goodman 2007: 1) is 13
 14 less palatable, cast as an instrument for corporate self-interest that adulterates the 14
 15 moral landscape of Fairtrade under the mantle of ethical business. Yet, aside from 15
 16 the ideological disjuncture and ambivalences associated with mainstreaming, the 16
 17 transgressions of Fairtrade's moral vision also exist within the socio-material 17
 18 processes of certification itself. 18

19 Drawing on in-depth studies of cocoa and Fairtrade conducted in Ghana and 19
 20 the Dominican Republic we examine how the principles of relationality such as 20
 21 dialogue, transparency and respect are expressed, materialised and 'transgressed' 21
 22 through Fairtrade standards. Like the boundary objects conceptualised by Star and 22
 23 Griesemer (1989), these standards aim to translate ethical ideals across diverse 23
 24 communities, circulating through and extending networks of moral practice. 24
 25 However, in contrast to other certification systems, where standards facilitate an 25
 26 'ethic of detachment' (Cross(2011), Fairtrade aims to invest market transactions 26
 27 with values of partnership and mutual obligation, values that implicitly 27
 28 accommodate differing viewpoints and negotiated understandings. We suggest, 28
 29 however, that despite its paradigm of engagement and interdependence, the 29
 30 practices of Fairtrade can also generate an ethic of detachment. By focusing on 30
 31 standards that aim to engender 'equal exchange' such as the minimum price, social 31
 32 premium and long-term trading relations, we argue that Fairtrade standards echo 32
 33 Latour's '*immutable mobiles*', objects whose meanings and forms remain stable as 33
 34 they engage diverse networks and geographies. While the cocoa commodity chain 34
 35 includes different groups of producers, intermediaries, companies, and buyers, 35
 36 their capacity to shape Fairtrade's ethic – to participate in defining, modifying 36
 37 and challenging the processes of Fairtrade – is often limited. This, we argue, 37
 38 challenges us to rethink what counts as a relationship in ethical networks and 38
 39 whether what consumers construe as an ethic of relationality should not also be 39
 40 considered one of disconnection, distance and detachment, that is, a transgression 40
 41 of its 'ethics of care'. 41

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1 The Immobility of Attachment

Several studies have shown how the branding and marketing of Fairtrade constructs the relationality of Fairtrade discursively, replacing the abstraction and anonymity of markets with metaphorical connections between northern consumers and southern producers. But the ethic of relationality is not simply a marketing strategy; it is embodied in the core ethos and mission of Fairtrade, as reflected in the International Federation of Alternative Trade definition of Fairtrade:

Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade. It contributes to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions to, and securing the rights of, marginalized producers and workers – especially in the South. Fair Trade organisations (backed by consumers) are engaged actively in supporting producers, awareness raising, and in campaigning for changes in the rules and practice of conventional international trade.³

In a practical sense, Fairtrade constructs this relational vision of empowerment through a set of organisational principles and standards (e.g. long-term supply chain relations, a social premium, and a ‘fair’ price) that are communicated across diverse social and geographic sites. In theory these standards, and their associated practices, knowledge forms and meanings represent boundary objects, a term originally developed by Star and Greisemer (1989) to denote artefacts (physical or conceptual) that inhabit and connect actors in multiple contexts and act as translation devices to bridge diverse and often dispersed communities of practice (e.g. between producers and consumers) (Eden 2009, Hunter 2008). These objects are sufficiently elastic in meaning and/or form to render them recognizable (relevant) across contexts but yet ‘robust enough to maintain a common identity’ within them (Star and Greisemer 1989: 393).

The boundary object concept was originally developed to understand the coordination mechanisms in establishing Berkeley’s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, but has been applied across disciplinary fields to unpack how diverse communities interact, collaborate and cohere around policy concerns, including the certification of food and natural resources.⁴ Eden (2009), for example, conceptualises the labels of food assurance schemes and the tick-tree of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as boundary objects, detailing how each coalesces dispersed communities of regulators, scientists, retailers, auditors, producers and consumers. In the same vein, Feldman et al. (2006) describe how organic certification in the USA serves as a boundary object that reconciles the conflicting

³ <http://www.maketrade-fair.com/en/index.php?file=21052002111743.htm&cat=4&subcat=1&select=5> [accessed 9.8.10].

⁴ See, for example, Hunter (2008) and Callon (1994) on science; Halfon (2006) on population; Andrews et al. (2008) on energy; and Emad and Roth (2009) on education.

1 interpretations of conventional and alternative agriculture networks to create 1
 2 shared understandings of 'healthy' food. Central to these studies is the capacity of 2
 3 a boundary object to encompass the perspectives, interests and needs of distinct 3
 4 communities 'without necessarily fusing them into one' (Eden 2009: 384). 4

5 The capacity of a boundary object to 'bridge' heterogeneous communities is, 5
 6 at first blush, highly relevant to analyses of Fairtrade, which aims to facilitate co- 6
 7 operation and collaboration and to surmount rather than strengthen boundaries 7
 8 between North and South (Star and Griesemer 1989: 414). Indeed, as shown in 8
 9 the IFAT definition, the seminal values of Fairtrade, and the locus of its moral 9
 10 legitimacy, lay in its ethic of solidarity that aims to extend universal rights while 10
 11 preserving the eco-cultural identity of producer communities. 11

12 However, in this chapter we suggest that Fairtrade's capacity to accommodate 12
 13 'local' meanings, social practices, and interests is mixed. What is deemed an 13
 14 ethical value, who deems it so and how values are calculated is often closed to 14
 15 producer participation despite the fact that interpretations of 'quality', 'fairness' 15
 16 and 'equity' differ across producer communities (c.f. Reineke 2010). The 16
 17 system therefore could be better conceptualised as what Latour (1987) terms an 17
 18 immutable mobile, a set of unmediated, standardised objects produced in 'centres 18
 19 of calculation' that convey unchanging information as they pass 'from one person 19
 20 or group to another' across geographic and temporal contexts (Mol and Law 1994, 20
 21 Neyland 2006: 35). In contrast to many boundary objects, the static nature of the 21
 22 immutable mobile 'stands above' particular contexts (Mosse 2007: 2), acting as 22
 23 a travelling vessel for the predetermined positions and agendas of specific social 23
 24 actors (Oswick and Robertson 2009). Unlike the FSC standard, for instance, which 24
 25 is customised to adapt to diverse national and regional ecosystems (Eden 2009), 25
 26 Fairtrade standards (with the exception of price under certain conditions) do not 26
 27 recognise geo-cultural specificity and are largely developed by actors who have a 27
 28 more or less similar notion of what constitutes fair and ethical behaviour (Freidberg 28
 29 2003). While these standards enable the coherence of a Fairtrade network across 29
 30 contexts, they do so through diffusion rather than co-ordination, radiating out from 30
 31 the Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (FLO) to communities that are 31
 32 spatially, organisationally and culturally distinct. 32

33 This has implications for the moral geographies and ethic of attachment that 33
 34 Fairtrade seeks to create. Certification standards are 'technologies' that facilitate 34
 35 co-ordination 'at a distance', replacing the complexity of food production with a 35
 36 'black box' of assurance that serves as a proxy for, rather than complement to trust 36
 37 (Barry 2004, Dolan 2010, Eden 2009, D. Goodman 2010, Miller and Rose 1990: 37
 38 1, Shore and Wright 2000). These mobile universals, or what Craig and Porter 38
 39 (2006: 120) might term 'travelling rationalities', mediate face-to-face relations 39
 40 through a phenomenal form – a supra-cultural ethic that introduces uniformity 40
 41 and consistency across production spaces (Goodman et al. 2010: 11). Yet while 41
 42 they seek to bring producers, traders and consumers into ethical alignment, they 42
 43 also generate an alienated form of relationality that replaces domestic conventions 43
 44 of interpersonal trust with codified norms for social, environmental and ethical 44

behaviour (D. Goodman 2010, Vandergeest 2007). As Lockie (2002: 283) notes, immutable mobiles do not simply ‘relay facts about the world but play an active role in the reconfiguration of the world in their own image’ as they confront landscapes with different values, norms and interests. Standardised definitions and conventions of ‘quality’ are thus not simply transmitted from principal labelling institutions (e.g. FLO) to disparate production sites across the globe but shape and ‘govern’ them, often in unseen and unintended ways (Renard 2005).

The mark of a fair and ethical system, however, is not simply about the content of standards but how they are internalised and ‘practiced’ within different value chains (Tallontire 2009). In the following sections, we draw on secondary data, key informant interviews carried out in the UK, and anthropological fieldwork carried out by Berlan in Ghana (2001–2003) and the Dominican Republic (2009–2010) to examine three Fairtrade standards that reflect an organisational embodiment of the immutable mobile: the minimum price, social premium and long-term trading relations. Each of these criteria flow from what Latour (1987) terms a ‘centre of calculation’, circulating a set of global policy ideals surrounding fairness, equity, and participation through the spaces of cocoa production in Ghana and the Dominican Republic. Yet while the immutability of these certification processes may generate an ‘ethics effect’ among Northern consumers, the privileging of the universal over the relational can exact a price on the values of solidarity that Fairtrade seeks to cultivate, often crafting relations of power as much as affection (Mosse 2007).

The Growth of Fairtrade Cocoa

Over the last decade Fairtrade has experienced impressive growth rates and increased levels of consumer loyalty. In the UK consumer awareness of the Fairtrade mark has grown from 20 per cent of the population in 2002 to 82 per cent in 2009, with consumers in Britain purchasing more Fairtrade-labelled products per capita than any other country (Fairtrade Foundation 2009). In 2008 UK retail sales of Fairtrade-labelled products topped £700m with over 4,500 Fairtrade-certified products for sale in retail and catering outlets (Fairtrade Foundation 2009; Mintel 2009). Sales of Fairtrade cocoa products have been particularly strong, increasing from 2.3 to 44 million GBP over the period 1999–2009 (Fairtrade Foundation n.d.), and receiving an important boost from the commitments of global chocolate and confectionary giants to convert some or all of their chocolate brands to Fairtrade (e.g. Cadbury Dairy Milk, Nestlé UK’s Kit Kat, Ben & Jerry’s and Green & Black’s) (FLO 2010).

Ghana and the Dominican Republic are well-established cocoa-producing countries. They have both acquired strong reputations in particular segments of the global cocoa market, and particularly in the export of Fairtrade cocoa. Cocoa has been a mainstay of Ghana’s economy since exports began in the late nineteenth century and it is currently the country’s largest cash crop and second-largest export

1 earner. Importantly, due to the high quality of cocoa it produces, Ghana is the 1
 2 only country in the world which receives a quality premium on the international 2
 3 market for its cocoa. In 2009, it replaced the Dominican Republic as the world's 3
 4 largest exporter of Fairtrade cocoa when Cadbury's opted to certify its Dairy 4
 5 Milk bar as Fairtrade. The Dominican Republic remains a significant exporter 5
 6 of Fairtrade cocoa and is the largest global exporter of organic cocoa, which at 6
 7 times commands high organic premiums on the world market. Although long- 7
 8 established in the country, cocoa from the Dominican Republic did not acquire 8
 9 a strong global reputation until it successfully resolved important quality issues 9
 10 in the 1980s (as explained below) and began to certify its production as organic. 10

11 The reasons why Ghana and the Dominican Republic have emerged as the most 11
 12 significant producers of Fairtrade cocoa relate to the development of producer co- 12
 13 operatives in both countries. In Ghana, the cooperative Kuapa Kokoo incorporates 13
 14 over 60,000 farmers organised in village societies, a significant increase from its 14
 15 initial membership of 2,000 farmers in 1993 (Barrientos and Smith 2007). The 15
 16 cooperative was spearheaded by a far-sighted local entrepreneur, Nana Frimpong 16
 17 Abrebrese, with assistance from some UK-based organisations. It obtained 17
 18 Fairtrade certification in 1995 and has been exporting Fairtrade cocoa steadily 18
 19 since, although Fairtrade has at times only made up a small proportion of their 19
 20 exports (in 2001/02, for example, Fairtrade sales represented only 1.2 percent of 20
 21 Kuapa Kokoo's total sales).⁵ Broadly speaking, the mission of Kuapa Kokoo is to 21
 22 work 'at improving the social, economic and political wellbeing of its members'.⁶ 22
 23 In the Dominican Republic, exports of Fairtrade cocoa are led by CONACADO 23
 24 (the acronym of *La Confederación Nacional de Cacaocultores Dominicanos*). 24
 25 Founded in 1988, the co-operative brings together approximately 10,000 cocoa 25
 26 farmers who are organised into 182 local associations that form 8 regional 26
 27 'Bloques'. Like Kuapa Kokoo, CONACADO was established as a local initiative 27
 28 (with Western support) prior to receiving Fairtrade certification. The creation of 28
 29 CONACADO also represented a significant step in the broader Dominican cocoa 29
 30 industry as it included setting up drying and fermentation facilities (an initiative 30
 31 since replicated by other Dominican cocoa export companies) which resulted in 31
 32 substantial quality improvements and resultant higher prices for producers (Berlan 32
 33 and Bergés 2013). 33

34 Both cooperatives have enjoyed remarkable success, comprising over 90 per 34
 35 cent of global Fairtrade cocoa sales by 2003 (ICCO 2005). From their modest 35
 36 beginnings, they have grown to significant numbers and engendered both material 36
 37 and social benefits for their members (Berlan 2008, Berlan and Bergés 2013). The 37
 38 volume of Fairtrade sales has generated sizeable social premiums for investment 38
 39 in community development. For example, in 2007/2008 CONACADO sold 39

41 5 http://www.fairtrade.org.uk/producers/cacao/kuapa_kokoo_union.aspx [accessed 41
 42 18.8.10]. 42

43 6 http://www.kuapakokoo.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=48&Itemid=56 [accessed 9.8.10]. 43
 44 44 44

1 approximately 50 per cent of its production on the Fairtrade market, receiving 1
 2 a premium of US\$888,479 with which they established a number of projects to 2
 3 assist their members. Both cooperatives have secured stable business relationships 3
 4 with major chocolate companies such as Cadbury's and Green and Black's. In the 4
 5 case of Kuapa Kokoo, they also own a significant share of the UK-based chocolate 5
 6 company Divine Chocolate. In doing so, the cooperatives have raised awareness 6
 7 globally of the needs of producer communities and they have increased the 7
 8 visibility of their respective countries in the international cocoa market. Beyond 8
 9 quantifiable returns, their cooperative nature and association with Fairtrade have 9
 10 also brought many intangible benefits to their members (Berlan 2008; Ronchi 10
 11 2003). These include, for example, participatory democracy and a long-term 11
 12 commitment to bring about gender equality in the case of Kuapa Kokoo (Berlan 12
 13 2008: 179) and promoting higher quality and self-esteem among producers in the 13
 14 case of CONACADO. 14

15 The successes of the cooperatives have gained considerable attention in the 15
 16 UK and garnered widespread exposure in the media and in academic literature. 16
 17 However, coverage of their achievements has at times overshadowed some of the 17
 18 less obvious and often unintended dimensions of the Fairtrade cocoa supply chain. 18
 19 One example of this is the way in which Fairtrade's emphasis on co-operation 19
 20 and partnership and producer/consumer linkages is affected by the instrumentality 20
 21 of Fairtrade standards. While standards construct fairness as a straightforward 21
 22 attainable goal by setting out particular criteria for stakeholders to meet, they 22
 23 can also work against Fairtrade's relational principles, collapsing complicated 23
 24 and variegated social worlds into standardised concepts and categories (Dolan 24
 25 2008). This raises questions about whether what consumers construe as an ethic 25
 26 of relationality, is not in fact, one of detachment, and whether Fairtrade's model 26
 27 of economic solidarity is indeed more affective than the abstract transactions of 27
 28 conventional supply chains. More broadly, it challenges us to consider whether 28
 29 attempts to codify and standardise 'fairness', however externally appealing, have 29
 30 a realistic future in an increasingly complex and globalised world. 30

31

32

33 **Minimum Price** 33

34

35 The global minimum price carries considerable moral weight in Fairtrade discourse 35
 36 and is widely viewed as the 'clearest direct benefit' from participation in Fairtrade 36
 37 schemes (Taylor et al. 2005). It is through the mechanism of price that principles 37
 38 of solidarity are integrated into hitherto impersonal market relations, thus 38
 39 distinguishing Fairtrade from mainstream trade by mitigating the price volatility 39
 40 of global commodity markets (Reinecke 2010) and extending economic justice to 40
 41 small producers around the world. As summarised by FLO, the minimum price 41
 42 aims to: 42

43

44

ensure that producers receive prices that cover their average costs of sustainable production; provide an additional Fairtrade Premium which can be invested in projects that enhance social, economic and environmental development; enable pre-financing for producers who require it; [and] facilitate long-term trading partnerships and enable greater producer control over the trading process.⁷

The minimum price for cocoa beans established by FLO now stands at US\$ 2,000/MT (FOB) plus a premium for social projects of US\$200/MT (FOB). The price was raised in October 2010 (with effect from 1 January 2011)⁸ and represents a significant increase from the previous price of US\$1,600/MT with a premium of US\$150/MT. When world market prices exceed the minimum of US\$ 2,000/MT, the Fairtrade price is calculated as the world market price plus the Fairtrade premium.

The establishment of a 'fair' return through the standardised, quantifiable and globally applicable criterion of price is central to the construction of ethicality and to creating identifiable norms that consumers can recognise and trust. For example, the Fairtrade Foundation website, which provides details of four cocoa producer groups globally (which include CONACADO and Kuapa Kokoo), cites the minimum price as one of the primary benefits of Fairtrade for each one of them. In the case of CONACADO the website states:

Cocoa accounts for 90 percent of members' cash income, so the stable price from Fairtrade sales makes a significant difference in the farmers' lives and allows the organisation to budget for its outgoings between harvests.

As Reineke (2010: 5) notes, however, the minimum price not only redefines how value is calculated, but 'what it is that should be valued and who values'. From the perspective of producers, how value is translated into the concept of a minimum price and the normative assumptions the price conveys about their needs can be problematic for a number of reasons.

Firstly, as the New York price has consistently exceeded the Fairtrade minimum price in recent years, farmer cooperatives have not enjoyed the higher prices or price stability that Fairtrade claims to guarantee. This raises questions on the extent to which Fairtrade can be considered different from the conventional supply chains through which cocoa is normally exported from the pricing point of view (although Fairtrade is obviously different in other respects such as the fact that a social premium is paid). Furthermore, individual producers do not receive a higher price for their cocoa, even if it is sold via Fairtrade channels. Indeed, as explained by the International Cocoa Organization, farmers selling to Fairtrade-certified co-operatives 'receive the same price for their cocoa as when the co-operative sells mainstream cocoa. In most cases, the co-operatives pay the same

⁷ http://www.fairtrade.net/aims_of_fairtrade_standards.html [accessed 10.8.10].

⁸ <http://bit.ly/aC0wHz> [accessed 5.11.10].

1 price to all farmers and they sell only part of their total trade volume under the 1
 2 fair-trade arrangement' (ICCO 2005). The reason for this is that farmer prices are 2
 3 set in country and not internationally. In Ghana the price is established annually 3
 4 by COCOBOD (the government-run Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board) which offers 4
 5 the same price to all farmers throughout the year, irrespective of world market 5
 6 fluctuations (Berlan 2004, Berlan 2008). This fixed price policy was introduced 6
 7 following Ghanaian independence in order to stabilise the prices paid to farmers 7
 8 in the wake of volatility in the international cocoa price in the post-WWII period 8
 9 (see Berlan 2004: 159–163). In the Dominican Republic, pricing arrangements are 9
 10 more complex. To summarise it broadly but succinctly, the price farmers receive 10
 11 is set daily by the individual export companies based on the world market price. 11
 12 The Dominican National Cocoa Commission (a multi-stakeholder consortium 12
 13 which includes the government, private companies and producer cooperatives) 13
 14 obtains prices from the cocoa exporters and releases daily averages which become 14
 15 the minimum reference prices for the farmers. Exporters voluntarily follow this 15
 16 price to protect against price abnormalities but are free to give additional quantity/ 16
 17 quality bonuses to producers if they wish. Both in Ghana and the Dominican 17
 18 Republic, farmers selling to Kuapa Kokoo/CONACADO receive seasonal 18
 19 bonuses. However, this is due to the fact they are associated with a cooperative, 19
 20 which, although supported by Fairtrade, is not a direct pricing benefit of Fairtrade 20
 21 (Larbi-Jones 2001, Ronchi 2003). Therefore, the Fairtrade minimum price is the 21
 22 export price that cooperatives such as CONACADO or Kuapa Kokoo receive as 22
 23 export companies (provided it is higher than world market prices), but it does not 23
 24 determine individual producer prices. 24

25 Secondly, the Fairtrade minimum price, which as previously noted covers 25
 26 producers' 'average costs of sustainable production', is a problematic concept. 26
 27 The US\$2,000/MT price, which was announced in October 2010, represents a 27
 28 long-overdue increase from the previous price of US\$1,600/MT, which was 28
 29 originally set in 1997. The stagnation of this price for such an extended period of 29
 30 time, coupled with the fact that the world market price for cocoa has consistently 30
 31 exceeded Fairtrade's minimum price in recent years, raises questions on whether 31
 32 the minimum price remains relevant for cocoa producer groups.⁹ Furthermore, 32
 33 if world market prices had fallen prior to the price increase and producer groups 33
 34 been forced to rely on the US\$1,600/MT price, it is unlikely that this price would 34
 35 have been financially sustainable. When asked why the Fairtrade minimum price 35
 36 had not been reviewed for so long, key informants in Fairtrade organisations 36
 37 attributed this to it being an extremely complex consultative process because of 37
 38 the wide range of stakeholders involved (such as alternative trading organisations, 38
 39 retailers, large companies, NGOs, producer groups etc.). Problematically, these 39
 40 40

41 9 Similarly, the price for Fairtrade coffee was not adjusted for inflation until a minor 41
 42 increase in 2007/2008 and has lost 30–60 per cent of the original (1988) purchasing power. 42
 43 For many producers, especially in coffee networks, Fairtrade prices remain below cost of 43
 44 production (Bacon and CLAC 2006, Jaffee 2007). 44

1 stakeholders are located in different countries across different continents, and they 1
2 often have conflicting views and interests. 2

3 Aside from the failure to review and update the minimum price regularly, the 3
4 very concept of a minimum price provides an apt illustration of Latourian (1987) 4
5 immutability. The process of price setting takes place at FLO, which Latour (1987) 5
6 would call a 'centre of calculation', and is orchestrated by the Standards Unit, 6
7 which serves as 'impartial mediator between conflicting stakeholder interests' 7
8 (Reineke 2010: 8). In contrast to the implied sociality of Fairtrade, price setting 8
9 is a highly rationalistic exercise based on a Cost of Sustainable Production 9
10 methodology (CoSP), which is constructed to mirror real cost-covering prices 10
11 based on objective facts (Reineke 2010). As Reineke writes in reference to 11
12 Fairtrade coffee (2010: 8), 'determining a fair price was treated like a quasi- 12
13 scientific problem that could be researched and, eventually, objectively defined'. 13
14 While the Standards Unit feeds price proposals to National Labelling Initiatives for 14
15 consultation, the extent to which producer groups globally are integrated into this 15
16 process is nominal. In effect, producer cooperatives act as 'spaces of calculability', 16
17 that is, de-contextualised environments that facilitate the capacity for economic 17
18 calculation (Callon 1998). Yet while price-setting may entail the technical and 18
19 asocial processes of marketisation, one may question whether a price which was 19
20 not reviewed for 13 years can be said to reflect market dynamics. Nevertheless, the 20
21 technical price setting process, coupled with the standardisation and quantification 21
22 of fairness, can subvert the notion of relationality by removing the process of value 22
23 determination from the arena of producer decision making. The assumption that 23
24 costs of production can be reduced to a global 'one-size-fits-all' by detaching the 24
25 costs of production from the political, social and ecological context thus divests 25
26 Fairtrade of its mutuality, while depoliticising the fundamentally political question 26
27 of economic justice (cf. Ferguson 1994). 27

28 It is not only the meaning of fairness embodied in the minimum price that 28
29 is problematic but that the price itself can favour producer groups in regions 29
30 with lower production costs. Ghana has lower production costs for cocoa than 30
31 the Dominican Republic and therefore producer organisations do not gain equal 31
32 profits from trade based on a standardised price. However, a regionally specific 32
33 price would inevitably lead buyers to purchase from the cheapest supplier, thus 33
34 disadvantaging producers in regions with higher production costs. The issue of 34
35 minimum price is especially problematic when pegged to accommodate varying 35
36 regional production costs (e.g. tea and fresh fruit, including bananas) (Dolan 36
37 2010, Smith 2008). As Dolan's (2010) study of Fairtrade tea shows, regional price 37
38 variations provide an advantage for producers where country of origin matters to 38
39 brand and marketing differentiation (e.g. Kenyan coffee) but can disadvantage 39
40 co-operatives who produce products and/or ingredients that are blended, and 40
41 are thus more easily substituted with lower-cost alternatives. Such 'race to the 41
42 bottom' practices appear to have become more pronounced with the increased 42
43 numbers of certified producers and participating supermarkets in Fairtrade; as 43
44 evermore producer groups become Fairtrade certified, those supermarkets without 44

1 agreements/partnerships with specific producer groups enjoy considerable 1
 2 flexibility to source from a pool of lower cost countries (Smith 2008). In this 2
 3 context, a floor price is not only somewhat meaningless as it encourages buyers 3
 4 to source from producers with the lowest minimum price (Blowfield and Dolan 4
 5 2010), but can transgress the associational supply chain relations Fairtrade 5
 6 espouses and potentially pit producer groups against each other (cf. Mutersbaugh 6
 7 2002). In essence, in both Ghana and the Dominican Republic, the minimum price 7
 8 can act as a sort of '*red herring*', diverting consumer attention from the enduring 8
 9 challenges producers face in the global economy. 9

10 We suggest that the assumption that a single model of fairness can have any 10
 11 cross-cultural validity, an assumption that lies at the heart of consumer expectations 11
 12 and of the rhetoric of the Fairtrade movement, may require reconsideration. While 12
 13 the literature has drawn attention to the fractious nature of Fairtrade's relational 13
 14 claim in light of visible disparities between the ethical dispositions of northern 14
 15 consumers and the realities faced by Southern producers (Berlan 2008, Dolan 15
 16 2010, Jaffee 2007), here our emphasis is on an additional *structural* problem with 16
 17 relationality. It is not simply the branding and marketing of Fairtrade products that 17
 18 undercuts the ideal of partnership by parlaying the subjectivities of producers into a 18
 19 source of economic value (Dolan 2008). As evidenced by the issue of the minimum 19
 20 price, the Fairtrade system itself can circumscribe the potential for collaboration, 20
 21 simultaneously calling for and negating true engagement with producer groups. 21
 22 Such contradictions, or indeed transgressions, are not unique to Fairtrade, but 22
 23 rather have become archetypal features of ethical regulation. All contemporary 23
 24 CSR systems (codes of practice, sustainability guidelines, performance indicators 24
 25 etc.) subordinate socio-economic and cultural variability through supranational 25
 26 standards that render ethics globally applicable. This is productive (for both 26
 27 activists and business) as standardising heterogeneous production spaces through 27
 28 universal criteria creates a legible trading process and commensurability among 28
 29 producer groups, thereby facilitating the global dispersion of ethics, whether 29
 30 Fairtrade, organic, bird-friendly or otherwise (see Dunn 2005, Mutersbaugh 30
 31 2005). Yet such productivity rests on extending 'economic precepts' and market 31
 32 criteria 'to a whole spectrum of human practice' (Lemke 2001), producing a model 32
 33 of development premised largely on market rationalities, one that recasts social 33
 34 relations in terms of an economistic notion of human behaviour (cf. Chopra 2003). 34

35 This redrafting of subjectivities in economic form is a signature feature of 35
 36 neoliberalism, where social relations are deemed anathema to the rational and 36
 37 efficient functioning of markets (Biggart and Castanias 2001). Under the weight of 37
 38 neoliberal rationalities, individuals around the world (citizens, consumers, workers) 38
 39 have been recast as objects of economic calculation, as calculative rationalities 39
 40 are extended into the hitherto non-economic spheres of social relations. Scholars 40
 41 of development, for example, have drawn attention to the way 'informal' and 41
 42 'subsistence' workers are re-purposed as entrepreneurial 'clients', as development 42
 43 practice in a neoliberal context shifts from state- to market-led approaches such 43
 44 as microcredit (Elyachar 2002, Rankin 2001, Sharma 2006). Anthropologists 44

1 (Cross 2011, Dolan 2010) have shown how CSR's ethical protocols (standards, 1
 2 guidelines, auditing practices) increasingly replace face-to-face social interaction 2
 3 with the routinised exchanges of codified information, 'disembedding' (Polanyi 3
 4 1944) affective bonds in the process of ethical regulation. That this spectre of 4
 5 neoliberal capitalism should emerge in the practices of Fairtrade should thus 5
 6 not surprise us, particularly as the neoliberal drive for rationality, calculation, 6
 7 and standardisation becomes even more pronounced with spatial/knowledge 7
 8 distance (Goodman personal communication). Yet the increasing rationalisation of 8
 9 Fairtrade unsettles precisely because Fairtrade emerged as a palliative to this sort of 9
 10 economic abstraction and generated a global movement premised on rendering the 10
 11 social world of production *more* visible. The tendency towards immutability and 11
 12 rationalisation in certain Fairtrade supply chains thus sits uneasily with an ethic 12
 13 that has acquired considerable resonance in consumer markets, and risks diluting 13
 14 the distinction between conventional and 'alternative' food systems (Dolan 2008). 14

15

16

17 **Social Premium**

18

19 The social premium also acts as a fundamental 'marker' of the difference between 19
 20 Fairtrade and the abstracting, impersonal nature of conventional forms of trade. As 20
 21 previously outlined, the social premium has generated significant sums of money 21
 22 and boosted social development by funding an impressive number of projects in 22
 23 many cocoa-producing communities. However, these virtues notwithstanding, 23
 24 there is often a significant gap between the way the social premium is presented 24
 25 to consumers and how it is conceptualised by cocoa producers. Like the 25
 26 discourses surrounding the minimum price, there is a tendency to publicise widely 26
 27 recognised, 'typical' social development benefits rather than the less emotive 27
 28 and often technical projects adopted by producers. Broadly speaking, there has 28
 29 been a disproportionate emphasis on health, gender, education and clean water in 29
 30 marketing material issued by UK Fairtrade organisations on the use of the social 30
 31 premium. From the perspective of communities interviewed, while social projects 31
 32 relating to these issues were valued and welcomed, the producers also expressed 32
 33 many 'non-orthodox' preferences for how the premium should be spent ranging 33
 34 from wanting better roads, cars, televisions, places of worship or simply a cash 34
 35 transfer in place of a community project. 35

36 The significance of this is not to cast doubts on the effectiveness of the 36
 37 social premium but rather to challenge the way in which it is presented. While 37
 38 communities are able to select and vote on the projects they wish the premium 38
 39 to fund, there is clearly a selective bias towards, and wider dissemination of, 39
 40 the projects which are particularly amenable to Western audiences. Yet while 40
 41 messages about clean water, women's empowerment or building school blocks 41
 42 resonate well with Western consumers (by casting producers as needy and poor 42
 43 [Berlan 2008; Dolan 2007] and evoking themes common to charity appeals), 43
 44 such projects do not necessarily reflect the most pressing needs and aspirations of 44

1 producer communities in different regions. Indeed, as Blowfield and Dolan (2010) 1
 2 note, the perception that certain development benefits are worthy can often-times 2
 3 shape community desires, particularly where FLO and other northern Fairtrade 3
 4 organisations articulate the preferences, or even the parameters for legitimate 4
 5 projects. Indeed, while the rationale of the social premium is founded on an ethic of 5
 6 collective participation and redistribution, in practice it is not always as amenable 6
 7 to local specificity and negotiation as implied. In fact, like the minimum price, 7
 8 the celebratory discourse surrounding the social premium can camouflage the 8
 9 inflexibility that is sometimes at work, a rigidity that transgresses the aspirational 9
 10 parity of Fairtrade relations (Dolan 2008). 10

11 Aside from the paternalism that can accompany the execution of the social 11
 12 premium, the focus on projects appealing to Western audiences can marginalise 12
 13 areas that could enhance the overall potential of Fairtrade. For example, one of the 13
 14 main (but largely underreported) global challenges at the heart of cocoa production 14
 15 is increasing productivity. Berlan and Bergés (2013) found that the productivity 15
 16 of many cocoa farmers in the Dominican Republic was approximately half what 16
 17 it could be in certain areas while a recent study of Ghanaian cocoa found that the 17
 18 sector averages ‘350–400 kilograms per hectare (...) as compared with rates of 1000 18
 19 kilograms per hectare and over in some cocoa-producing countries’ (Barrientos et 19
 20 al. 2008: 78). The reasons behind low productivity in cocoa vary according to the 20
 21 context but often include a lack of farm maintenance (such as weeding), low use 21
 22 and poor understanding of the potential of hybrid trees, under-usage of grafting 22
 23 techniques, pest-related losses, poor control of cocoa tree disease (such as Black 23
 24 Pod disease), the high cost of hired labour and other factors. Yet such issues are of 24
 25 limited interest to a majority of cocoa/chocolate consumers who are accustomed to 25
 26 more socially-resonant (and often sexier) messages about clean water or women’s 26
 27 empowerment. However, both in Ghana and the Dominican Republic, these are 27
 28 crucially important issues for farmers as low productivity results in low earnings 28
 29 from cocoa, and this perpetuates a cycle of poverty, underinvestment in farm 29
 30 maintenance and low productivity. 30

31 In both countries (although to varying extents) this is an area where the 31
 32 Fairtrade premium has benefited farmers by funding vital agricultural extension 32
 33 support and other services. However, there is considerable scope to expand such 33
 34 initiatives according to the individual needs of particular producer communities. 34
 35 Doing so could signal Fairtrade’s existing achievements on the issue more clearly 35
 36 to Western audiences, and demonstrate that it can engage with issues of key 36
 37 relevance to the livelihood of farmers and to the overall sustainability of the cocoa 37
 38 trade. The technicalities of cocoa production may seem far removed from the 38
 39 aesthetics of commodity biographies found on UK supermarket shelves and the 39
 40 priorities of producers envisioned by Western consumers. However, unless some 40
 41 of the production issues listed above are addressed and the vicious cycle of low 41
 42 productivity and underinvestment is broken, cocoa farming will not be attractive 42
 43 to younger generations and the global chocolate industry faces an uncertain future. 43
 44 In this respect, there is a pressing need for Fairtrade to adopt the flexibility and 44

1 dialogue its ethic implies, encompassing rather than resisting novel interpretations 1
2 and uses of the social premium. 2

3 3

4 4

5 **Long-term Direct Trading Relationships** 5

6 6

7 In the Fairtrade model, abstract situations of exchange are re-socialized and 7
8 re-spatialised through networks of trust and collaboration (Appadurai 1986, 8
9 D. Goodman 2010). However, in the case of cocoa, where supply chains are 9
10 often dispersed and fragmented, enhancing producer control over the trading 10
11 process and facilitating long-term trading relationships is challenging. The 11
12 producer cooperatives interviewed had clearly benefited from the long-term and 12
13 consistent business support of key Fairtrade organisations and companies in the 13
14 UK and elsewhere. They gained access to new networks, advice and funds for 14
15 business expansion, governance and organisational strengthening, assistance 15
16 with certification issues, and crucially, new markets for fairly-traded cocoa. In 16
17 this respect, the Fairtrade aim to build long-term trading partnerships was being 17
18 realised, and realised very successfully. However, the ethical and relational 18
19 coherence of Fairtrade was also weakened by some of the more distant stakeholders 19
20 in the supply chain. For example, one of the cooperatives, when asked about their 20
21 engagement with a particular retailer, answered that they had had no dealings 21
22 with them, even though the name of the cooperative, pictures of their producers 22
23 and the Fairtrade logo appeared on the retailer's own-brand bars of chocolate. 23
24 Upon investigation, it emerged that the cooperative had no direct contact with the 24
25 retailer but rather had a long-term contract with a chocolate manufacturer who 25
26 made the chocolate for the retailer in question. This was not an isolated example; 26
27 several situations emerged in which particular retailers in different countries were 27
28 using the names of Fairtrade cooperatives on their products (thus implying a 28
29 sense of partnership, especially as the wrappers often stated that Fairtrade brought 29
30 socio-economic development) without having had direct contact with them. These 30
31 episodes illustrate how producer groups can be objectified and commodified in 31
32 Fairtrade transactions, their names and faces providing surplus value for retailers 32
33 that do not necessarily commit to long-term engagement or support (see also, 33
34 Dolan 2011, Goodman 2004, Wright 2004). While this did not contravene the 34
35 letter of the Fairtrade standards – the appropriate prices and social premiums had 35
36 been paid to the producer organisations – it falls foul of the Fairtrade 'spirit' and 36
37 churns up questions about the nature of the relationality behind the label. 37

38 While Fairtrade emphasises long-term relationships, it does not stipulate who 38
39 the relationship should be with, and this introduces tolerance for intermediaries 39
40 which undermines the very relationality Fairtrade aims to promote. For example, 40
41 under existing FLO rules, supermarket own-brand products may carry the 41
42 Fairtrade logo without the supermarket itself being licensed as long as products 42
43 are sourced from the FLO register. While Fairtrade does not prevent a retailer 43
44 from registering as a licensee as long as they comply with Fairtrade standards, 44

1 in practice it is not supermarkets but their own labelled suppliers who are the 1
 2 Fairtrade licensee (Doherty and Tranchell 2007). This exempts retailers from 2
 3 the sustained collaboration and ongoing supply chain interactions that Fairtrade 3
 4 exhorts, providing latitude for engaging in untoward practices such as ‘parallel 4
 5 production’, in which retailers purchase only a small proportion of products under 5
 6 Fairtrade-certified terms whilst leaving their conventional sourcing strategies 6
 7 intact (Mutersbaugh 2005: 398, Ransom 2005). The capacity of certain retailers 7
 8 to exploit this loophole is problematic as it not only overshadows the genuine and 8
 9 valuable long-term partnerships that Fairtrade-certified cooperatives have with 9
 10 some of their international partners and corporate clients, but also risks rendering 10
 11 Fairtrade ‘a supply chain standard that is passed down the chain, rather than an 11
 12 opportunity to work in partnership with particular buyers’ (Tallontire 2009: 1012). 12
 13 While both producers and Fairtrade licensees enjoy increased visibility by 13
 14 appearing on the products of big retailers, this visibility overshadows the fact 14
 15 that their interests remain a marginal part of the trading exchange and reaffirms 15
 16 rather than challenges the power asymmetries in global trade. Like the prisoners in 16
 17 Bentham’s Panopticon prison – as articulated by Foucault (1977: 200) – producers 17
 18 are highly visible but de-individualised objects of information rather than subjects 18
 19 in communication or in this case, agents of change. 19

20

21

22 Conclusion 22

23

24 Fairtrade aims to re-moralise the economy by challenging the unequal trade 24
 25 relations that characterize the contemporary global economy. In contrast to 25
 26 other certification systems, where standards and auditing technologies facilitate 26
 27 governance at a distance, Fairtrade is premised on an ethic of relationality that 27
 28 aims to reconfigure the meanings and materialities of exchange by embedding 28
 29 affective ties in abstract market relations. As Goodman et al. (2010: 19) note, it 29
 30 is through this idiom of reconnection that consumers are able to strip away the 30
 31 effects of their consumption and ‘see’ and ‘know’ the ‘other’, thereby countering 31
 32 the depersonalising forces of the global economy. 32

33 This ethics of care is fostered through a set of standards that draw diverse 33
 34 communities into the moral fold of Fairtrade. Like the boundary object 34
 35 conceptualised by Star and Griesemer (1989), standards simplify information 35
 36 while enabling ‘collective work across worlds with different viewpoints and 36
 37 agendas’ (Fujimura 1992: 169), thereby mitigating geographical, social and 37
 38 economic distinctions (Goodman et al. 2010: 11). Yet the spatial mobility of 38
 39 this ethics notwithstanding, Fairtrade’s politics of reconnection is constrained 39
 40 by a number of factors, from the absence of producer participation to the ethical 40
 41 normativity of certification requirements. While the stability and coherence 41
 42 of Fairtrade standards allow the process to maintain integrity as it moves from 42
 43 one geographic and cultural setting to another, simultaneously routinising and 43
 44 extending its moral reach, they are also bounded instruments that are closed to 44

1 situated meanings, social practices, and interests. The notion of what counts as 1
 2 ethical and who lies within or beyond the boundaries of moral considerability 2
 3 provides little scope for ambiguity. Indeed, while Fairtrade seeks to redress the 3
 4 impersonality of a mainstream unregulated market, it can also crowd out alternative 4
 5 readings of ethical practice with the black box of the Fairtrade label, a label that 5
 6 supplants rather than fosters producer/consumer linkages. As this discussion of 6
 7 cocoa production reveals, the praxis of relationality can be more calculable than 7
 8 affective as processes of standardisation and certification replace sociality with the 8
 9 devices of ethical regulation (Dolan 2008). This constitutes, in effect, the double 9
 10 transgression of Fairtrade. While the movement emerged to remoralise economic 10
 11 relations through transnational forms of care and responsibility (Lawson 2007), 11
 12 *some* of its efforts to do so have reproduced the alienation and detachment it once 12
 13 sought to address. 13

14 This is not to suggest that Fairtrade does not engender concrete material benefits 14
 15 among producers or give rise to new ethical dispositions among consumers in the 15
 16 North. It has captured unprecedented interest among consumers, policy makers 16
 17 and researchers, and carries considerable symbolic and moral weight in the 17
 18 panoply of 'ethical' and 'alternative' food networks. But given the gap between its 18
 19 development aspirations and actualities, described here and elsewhere, we might 19
 20 ask why the movement shies away from critique, repeating rather than rectifying 20
 21 some of its less sanguine practices when exposed by the media, academics and 21
 22 practitioners. Marres and McGoey (2010) use the term 'entropic failure' to 22
 23 describe this sort of phenomenon, that is, where a failed approach inevitably 23
 24 leads to the use of the same methods that precipitated problems in the first place, 24
 25 whilst leaving the ideational roots of the problem unnoticed and unexamined 25
 26 (Rieff 2006: 34). Like Michael Power's (1994) insightful work on failed auditing 26
 27 systems, where he describes how the response to failed audits is not an indictment 27
 28 of the methodology but a call to do more of the same (i.e. conduct more audits), 28
 29 the fallibilities of Fairtrade do not compel a rethinking of the legitimacy of its 29
 30 ethic but rather call for a more robust process of implementation (e.g. improve the 30
 31 rigour, transparency, and accountability of monitoring and certification systems). 31
 32 Yet this bias toward success, which focuses on improving the effectiveness of 32
 33 instruments (for example, better metrics of sustainable price calculation, more 33
 34 proficient auditing systems, enhanced stakeholder participation), rather than 34
 35 examining the contradictions that arise from 'external' immutable solutions 35
 36 such as certification, is not only self-reinforcing (McGoey 2010) but crowds out 36
 37 different ways of thinking and speaking about Fairtrade. In particular, it sidesteps 37
 38 discussions of how power shapes and reproduces the inequalities of Fairtrade, 38
 39 leaving the stubborn chestnut of privilege and politics hidden from view. 39

40 This view may appear unduly harsh, denying Fairtrade the latitude to 40
 41 experiment and falter as it finds its feet as one of the world's most powerful 41
 42 consumer movements. Clearly, Fairtrade is not a failure, as its rapid diffusion 42
 43 across political, social and ecological geographies of production and consumption 43
 44 attests. Nor is the movement emptied out of its seminal transgressive meanings 44

1 or its praxis completely disembodied from the moral imaginings of Northern
 2 consumers. But as this chapter suggests, certain forms of Fairtrade do risk
 3 replicating 'what it set out to oppose', sustaining the potency of market forces in
 4 commodity agriculture (Guthman 2004: 3), and potentially polarising the ethical
 5 landscape between 'real' and 'faux' Fairtrade. Such a division could potentially
 6 hollow out the moral authority Fairtrade has come to enjoy, broad-brushing the
 7 entire movement as cosmetic at best and harmful at worst. It is therefore important
 8 to gain greater purchase on the conditions under which Fairtrades' radical vision
 9 of transnational economic justice is actualised and those under which it is
 10 transgressed and subverted, allowing its achievements as well as its ambiguities
 11 to come into full view.

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Chapter 4

Greater than the Sum of the Parts?: Unpacking Ethics of Care within a Community Supported Agriculture Scheme

Rosie Cox, Moya Kneafsey, Lewis Holloway,
Elizabeth Dowler and Laura Venn

15 Introduction

17 Several commentators have recently identified the emergence of a new ‘moral
18 economy’ of food, which is concerned with building a fairer, healthier, more
19 environmentally sustainable and democratic food system (Jackson et al. 2009;
20 Morgan et al. 2006). As noted by Jackson et al., this ‘moral economy’, in which
21 notions of trust and reciprocity are foregrounded, can be contrasted with powerful
22 impulses towards the growth and consolidation of a ‘neoliberal’ economy,
23 characterised by distant and anonymous relations between the producers and
24 consumers of food, and profit maximisation at the expense of social justice,
25 fair trade, individual well-being and environmental sustainability. In the ‘moral
26 economy’, local and place-based ethical frameworks are often contrasted with
27 what DuPuis and Goodman (2005) have described as the ‘systemic placelessness’
28 created by global industrialised agriculture and food systems.

29 The concept of the moral economy directs our attention to the moral and
30 ethical frameworks through which everyday decisions are framed and enacted. It
31 provides a helpful context for our work, in which we foreground the concept of
32 the ethic of care as a framing device for understanding participant motivations in
33 EarthShare, a Community Supported Agriculture scheme in northern Scotland.
34 Drawing on the work of Tronto (1993) in particular, we argue that care, when
35 understood in broad terms as acts of reaching out to something other than self,
36 provides a powerful incentive for participation in the scheme. Not only this, but
37 our work underlines the significance of care ethics as the basis for the emergence
38 of what DuPuis and Goodman (2005) have described as a ‘reflexive politics of the
39 local’. This is because care not only requires recognition of the needs of others,
40 but also demands *action* which prioritise those needs. An everyday ethic of care is
41 relational and responsive to the needs of others; it breeds tolerance of difference
42 rather than condemnation.

43 In this chapter, we show that by exposing the very real differences in the
44 priorities and actions of EarthShare members, we can escape imaginings of local

1 food systems as ‘perfect’ or entirely free from ambiguity or conflict but still see 1
 2 them as sites of political potential. The chapter begins by introducing the concept 2
 3 of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and locating CSA within a broader 3
 4 literature on local food, moral economies and ethics of care. We next introduce our 4
 5 case study CSA in more detail and describe the research methods used. We then 5
 6 explore the various cares and priorities of EarthShare members before looking at 6
 7 how they negotiate these priorities at three key moments of interaction: planning 7
 8 meetings, workshifts and social events. By understanding members’ differing 8
 9 motivations in terms of care ethics we can accept their multifarious nature, 9
 10 respect their differences and see them as complementary rather than competitive. 10
 11 Moreover, by concentrating on the everyday acts that make up EarthShare 11
 12 members’ ethical practice, we illustrate the ways in which embodied and quotidian 12
 13 practices can be understood as sites of political engagement (Thrift 2008). While 13
 14 we do not argue that EarthShare has achieved a *fully* inclusive politics in place, 14
 15 we suggest that in the subscribers’ interactions and reflections on practice, we may 15
 16 see the beginnings of a process of constructing a more ‘reflexive’ politics of place, 16
 17 such as that envisaged by DuPuis and Goodman (2005), and one that works to 17
 18 entangle – or ‘transgress’ in the parlance of this volume – the self and others, the 18
 19 political and the practical, the careful and the ordinary and, importantly, bodies, 19
 20 spaces, places and (alternative) food. 20

21

22

23 **Community Supported Agriculture, Local Food and Ethics of Care** 23

24

25 CSAs have been heralded as offering opportunities to strengthen place-based 25
 26 community relationships between food growers and eaters (see, for example, 26
 27 Cone and Myhre 2000; Grey 2000; DeLind and Ferguson 1999; Wells, Gradwell 27
 28 and Yoder 1999). Feagan and Henderson (2008) frame CSAs within a ‘moral 28
 29 economy’, which includes exchange based on social or moral sanctions; the de- 29
 30 commodification of food; attempts to develop non-market relationships among 30
 31 people, social groups and institutions; and the re-organisation of food systems 31
 32 for the reinvigoration of familial, community and civic agriculture (adapted from 32
 33 Feagan and Henderson 2008). Whilst there are several variations in the form that a 33
 34 CSA can take, at its core, it involves local people investing in a crop in advance of 34
 35 the harvest. This guarantees an income for the farmer and shares the risk amongst 35
 36 the subscribers. In return, the subscribers get a share of the harvest. This is often 36
 37 an organic vegetable box, but it could also be fruit, eggs or meat. Many CSAs 37
 38 also include elements such as social events and work details for members to help 38
 39 at certain times of year. Some CSAs involve members in decision-making and 39
 40 even in owning the farm (see Soil Association [2007] for information on the UK; 40
 41 USDA [2007] and Robyn Van En Centre [2007] for information on USA CSAs). 41
 42 In the USA there are now over 1200 CSA schemes (Robyn Van En Centre 2007) 42
 43 but in the UK they are still rather rare – the latest available figures suggest that 43
 44 in 2006 there were 30 in the whole country (Cultivating Communities 2006). The 44

1 number stands to grow, however, with money from the UK's National Lottery 1
2 being directed towards supporting the establishment of new CSAs. 2

3 Whilst advocates of CSA routinely stress 'localness' as a key strength, DuPuis 3
4 and Goodman (2005) raise important questions about whether 'the local' is any 4
5 more likely to be a site of altruistic and caring behaviour, and query the ways 5
6 that 'normative localism places a set of pure, conflict-free local values and local 6
7 knowledges in resistance to anomic and contradictory capitalist forces' (359). 7
8 They argue that there are many problems with associating the local with an ethic 8
9 of care: who gets to define what is local? For whom do you care and how? In their 9
10 view, the local as a concept intrinsically includes and excludes particular people, 10
11 places and lifestyles. They question whether localism itself is socially just, and 11
12 suggest that it can be associated with an 'unreflexive politics' whereby a 'small, 12
13 unrepresentative group decides what is "best" for everyone and then attempts to 13
14 change the world by converting everyone to accept their utopian ideal' (361; see 14
15 also Feagan 2007, Winter 2003). They cite the work of authors such as Hinrichs 15
16 (2003; also Allen et al. [2003], Hinrichs and Kremer [2002] and Winter [2003]) 16
17 to demonstrate that many of the actors in alternative food movements and other 17
18 local-based social movements are middle class and white and are able to steer 18
19 reforms in their own interests and to reflect their visions of perfection. 19

20 DuPuis and Goodman (2005: 362) stress that their aim is not to 'de-legitimize' 20
21 localism, but 'to provide a better understanding of the complexity and pitfalls of 21
22 local politics and the long-term deleterious effects of reform movements controlled 22
23 primarily by members of the middle class'. They call for a greater recognition of 23
24 the role of spatial politics in the construction of food localism, and argue that a 24
25 more open and reflexive 'politics in place' is needed which recognises the mutual 25
26 constitution of scale, and allows for the emergence of a democratic politics of 26
27 'respect'. In this paper, we argue that a powerful route towards the construction 27
28 of more reflexive politics in place is to recognise the significance of every day 28
29 care ethics in daily consumption decisions, and to examine the structures (in this 29
30 case of food production and consumption) which enable people to express their 30
31 desire to care. We interpret our case study, EarthShare, as an example of a structure 31
32 which enables people to express diverse cares, and also to tolerate and understand 32
33 the cares and priorities of others, without feeling alienated or excluded by them. 33

34 The literature on care ethics then, offers a lens through which to see the actions 34
35 of people (CSA members here) as based in, and belonging to, their *relationships* to 35
36 others. The articulation of care and relations to others is conceptualised as a position 36
37 from which decisions are taken and practices develop. Within this wider literature 37
38 we have found Joan Tronto's (1987, 1993, 2006) work particularly useful. She 38
39 focuses on the political potential of an ethic of care and proposes that 'care' can be 39
40 used as a basis for rethinking the moral boundaries which preserve inequalities of 40
41 power and privilege (1993, 2006). Her conceptualisation of care has several key 41
42 features that make it particularly relevant to our work. Summarised in brief, they 42
43 are first that 'care' is not restricted to human interactions with other humans; it can 43
44 also include objects and the environment. Second, caring is not presumed to be 44

1 dyadic or individualistic as often assumed in the relationship between mother and 1
 2 child; limiting our understanding of care to such relationships, threatens to reduce 2
 3 the social and political potential of care (Tronto 1993: 103). Third, the activity of 3
 4 caring is largely defined culturally, in that it will vary among different cultures. 4
 5 Fourth, caring is ongoing – it can describe a single activity or a process. Caring, 5
 6 moreover, is ‘not simply a cerebral concern, or character trait, but the concern of 6
 7 living, active humans engaged in the processes of everyday living. Care is both 7
 8 a practice and a disposition’ (Tronto 1993: 104). In Fisher and Tronto (1990: 4) 8
 9 caring is further defined as ‘a species activity that includes everything we do to 9
 10 maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as 10
 11 possible’. Crucially, care implies reaching out to something beyond the self and it 11
 12 involves some kind of action (see Tronto 1993: 103). As noted above, care is more 12
 13 than simply disposition, and it is more than ‘concern’. In Tronto’s words (1993: 13
 14 103) ‘we would think someone who said “I care about the world’s hungry”, but 14
 15 who did nothing to alleviate world hunger did not know what it meant to say that 15
 16 she cared about hunger’. 16

17 Community Supported Agriculture has been identified specifically as a form 17
 18 of food production/consumption that can be characterised as ‘caring practice’ 18
 19 (Wells and Gradwell 2001). By forging relationships between the growers and 19
 20 eaters of food within comparatively small geographical areas, it has been argued 20
 21 that not only do CSAs reduce food miles and excessive food packaging, but they 21
 22 also promote ‘closeness’ between producers and consumers in terms of improved 22
 23 mutual knowledge, understanding, and relationships. Wells and Gradwell 23
 24 (2001) found care within the CSAs they studied in terms of the treatment of the 24
 25 environment, resources, other growers and shareholder members. They found 25
 26 that concern for land, water and other resources, non-human nature, people, 26
 27 community, place, the future and a need to make a living, were all motivational 27
 28 aspects for involvement in CSA. Moreover, the growers they interviewed revealed 28
 29 the ‘primacy of relationships’ as they spoke of ‘closing the gap between grower and 29
 30 eater, and between people and nature; of land, plants and animals as community 30
 31 members, not commodities; and of moving from control of nature to partnership 31
 32 and respect’ (2001: 117). Similarly, we have shown in our work elsewhere (Cox 32
 33 et al. 2008, Kneafsey et al. 2008) that participants in EarthShare – both producers 33
 34 and consumers- have recognised the relationships they are entwined in and the 34
 35 existence of needs such as the need for producers to make a fair and ‘decent’ living, 35
 36 the need for consumers and their families to have access to safe, fresh food, and 36
 37 the need for community and environmental resources to be protected, enhanced 37
 38 and sustained. We have argued that the people we encountered in our research 38
 39 all exhibited a preparedness to act to meet the needs that they had recognised, 39
 40 whether these be the needs of their children, spouse or partner, or the needs of the 40
 41 producer or the wider community and environment, or the needs of all of these 41
 42 recipients simultaneously. In this chapter, we extend our analysis to demonstrate 42
 43 how the sometimes contradictory and competing cares of EarthShare subscribers 43
 44 are negotiated through different forms of interaction between and among the 44

1 individuals involved. Moreover, we argue that within these interactions we can
 2 identify the formulation of reflexive and responsive consumer identities which are
 3 concerned simultaneously with the politics of food *and* of place.

4 In our discussion of the ethical practices of EarthShare members we draw on
 5 an understanding of everyday ethics and embodied political practice as expressed
 6 through quotidian objects such as food, household cleaning products, recycling
 7 bins and ordinary, everyday acts such as eating and sorting waste¹. Relationships
 8 within and beyond the home are negotiated through such objects and practices and
 9 they can be used to try to influence the behaviour and ethics of others (Hawkins
 10 2006, Hobson 2006). Hobson (2006: 331) has commented that the use of eco-
 11 efficient technologies by her interviewees is not an overt politics but that dwelling
 12 with eco-efficient technologies, creates change:

13
 14 [T]hrough these objects' continual prompting of environmental considerations
 15 that permeate other areas of daily life and further sensitise individuals to the
 16 environment, thus providing the means through which participants talk to others
 17 about sustainability. This gives rise to a form of techno-ethics – relational,
 18 reflexive, and evolving, through the extension of new practices to other domains
 19 and domestic.

20
 21 Hawkins suggests that it is impossible to engage in changing everyday practice
 22 without engaging in a process of reflexivity. She goes on to argue that politics,
 23 as a process of 'active experimentation' is located in such minor practices and
 24 everyday actions, and in questions of bodies, ethics and materialities (2006: 6).
 25 It is in this sense of everyday practice as political that we consider the potential
 26 of EarthShare CSA. This is not to claim that reflexive consumption is the only,
 27 or best, form of politics available to EarthShare members – it is certainly not the
 28 only form they are involved in. Rather it is to recognise the myriad embodied and
 29 routine practices that constitute the political possibilities of a CSA and to show
 30 how discussions of food consumption are able to reveal who cares, how and why.

31 With this in mind, the next section gives some background to EarthShare
 32 and explains our research methods. The chapter then reflects on the cares and
 33 priorities of EarthShare members in order to reveal their differences and potentials
 34 for conflict and ambiguity.

37 **Researching EarthShare CSA**

38
 39 EarthShare is a not-for-profit co-operative organisation which was founded
 40 in 1994 in Forres near Inverness, Scotland. It is the longest running CSA in
 41 Britain. Members pay a subscription in return for a weekly organic vegetable box
 42 containing a share of that week's harvest. The cheapest way to subscribe is to

43
 44 ¹ We would like to thank the reviewers for suggesting this literature.

1 pre-pay at the start of each year, but a monthly standing order can also be set 1
 2 up. Subscribers can also receive a substantial discount if they help out at three 2
 3 workshifts each year. Workshifts are an important part of the scheme, with three- 3
 4 quarters of subscribers taking part in activities such as weeding or harvesting. For 4
 5 a standard box, providing enough vegetables for a family of four, the cost in 2008 5
 6 was £9.17 per week if the workshares are undertaken. Up to 20 per cent of the cost 6
 7 of subscriptions can be paid for through LETS (Local Exchange Trading Scheme) 7
 8 and people who provide extra help with harvesting are in turn paid for their 8
 9 work in LETS. Thus EarthShare represents a comparatively cheap way for some 9
 10 consumers to access organic, locally produced food. Indeed, a price comparison 10
 11 undertaken in 2004 showed that if an equivalent box of produce was to be sourced 11
 12 from a supermarket it would have cost £11.50; at the time the maximum cost of 12
 13 an EarthShare box was £8.95.² Similar comparisons have been undertaken with 13
 14 other CSAs (Hamer 2008). Money from subscriptions is used to fund the rent 14
 15 of land and the pay of the growers and a scheme manager, all of whom are paid 15
 16 agricultural minimum wage (about £6 per hour in 2007). Although subscribers 16
 17 fund the scheme they do not actively direct it in terms of its organization or goals, 17
 18 as happens in some CSAs (see for example Stroud Community Agriculture [2007] 18
 19 another well-established CSA in Britain, or De Lind and Ferguson [1999] for a US 19
 20 example). If there is a bumper crop, subscribers get lots of produce, but if there is a 20
 21 poor harvest they get less. Produce is not brought in to supplement what is grown. 21
 22 The scheme has a capacity of 195 subscriptions, and although most members do 22
 23 stay on from year to year, numbers do vary. In 2004, when we first interviewed 23
 24 the manager, there were 165 subscribers but by our next interview a year later the 24
 25 scheme was oversubscribed and a waiting list had been set up. At the end of 2008 25
 26 there were 170 subscribers. 26

27 EarthShare is located in a relatively remote area of northern Scotland. Average 27
 28 incomes in the area are below the Scottish average, as are house prices and rates 28
 29 of car ownership. Unemployment is relatively high but educational attainment 29
 30 is slightly better than average, as are life expectancy and rates of limiting long- 30
 31 term illness. One important aspect of the location is that EarthShare operates in 31
 32 the same area as the Findhorn Foundation³ – an ‘alternative’ spiritual community, 32
 33 ecovillage and holistic education centre that attracts many downshifters and 33
 34 those interested in less materially-focused ways of life. Over 300 people live at 34
 35 the Findhorn Foundation park and many other members and supporters of the 35
 36 Foundation live in the immediate area. The Foundation provides a wide range 36
 37 of workshops and education opportunities which attract visitors from all over 37
 38 the world who use services, such as shops, bed and breakfasts and alternative 38
 39 therapies, in the local area as well as at the Foundation. The Foundation is a major 39
 40 subscriber to EarthShare (taking 75 subscriptions for its kitchens and 10 to sell on 40
 41 in its shop) but has no formal control of the scheme. 41

42 42
 43 2 See Hammer (2008) for similar comparisons with other CSAs. 43
 44 3 See http://www.findhorn.org/about_us/display_new.php for more information. 44

1 Research was carried out with EarthShare over a two year period between 1
 2 2004 and 2006. This involved two rounds of interviews with the manager and 2
 3 growers, including visits to the field and garden; two rounds of workshops with 3
 4 subscribers (11 people in the first workshop and 14 in the second); two rounds of 4
 5 interviews with subscribers (9 people in each) and an in-depth household study 5
 6 with two households. This involved the participants in keeping food diaries, 6
 7 notes, receipts and photographic records of their eating over four weeks and being 7
 8 visited by a researcher two to three times during that period to discuss their food 8
 9 procurement, cooking and eating in detail. Subscriber participants were contacted 9
 10 through a leaflet that was put into boxes. This invited them to reply to the research 10
 11 team, either by phone or e-mail or by leaving their contact details in a folder at 11
 12 the box pick-up point. The self-selecting nature of participants is likely to mean 12
 13 that those subscribers who are most committed to EarthShare and who identify 13
 14 with it most strongly could be over-represented amongst the group. However, we 14
 15 have found that workshop and interviewee participants varied widely, including 15
 16 those who had been subscribers for a less than a year, as well as those who had 16
 17 been with the scheme since its inception, and encompassing people who had never 17
 18 attended workshifts or social events, as well as others who regularly attended all 18
 19 of these and contributed to the scheme in other ways. We collected some socio- 19
 20 demographic data from interviewees and this showed a wide range of income 20
 21 levels and household arrangements. Interviewees ranged in age from 43 to 78 and 21
 22 63 per cent were female. Annual household incomes varied from below £20,000 to 22
 23 over £50,000 (average household incomes in the UK 2005–6 were £26,500 [Jones 23
 24 2007]). Typical forms of employment amongst the sample were either in the 24
 25 public sector such as in education and social work or self-employed, for example 25
 26 as writers or providing alternative therapies. 26
 27 27
 28 28

29 **Motivations and Cares within a CSA** 29

30 30
 31 In this section we explore the different cares of EarthShare subscribers by focusing 31
 32 on the motivations they described for joining and remaining with the scheme. 32
 33 Everyone we spoke to had their own motivations for participation in EarthShare, 33
 34 which combined different types of care – care for different things and different 34
 35 philosophies about how best to care for those things. These priorities could also 35
 36 be seen as mapping onto the meanings subscribers gave to their vegetable box and 36
 37 the scheme as a whole. In general subscribers each understood EarthShare to be a 37
 38 response to their priorities and highlighted the specific aspects of the scheme that 38
 39 they thought exemplified this. 39

40 To give an idea of the range of motivations and priorities subscribers had, at 40
 41 our second workshop we asked the subscribers to tell us what they thought made 41
 42 a successful CSA. Table 4.1 shows the range of responses we were given. The 42
 43 discussion surrounding these responses revealed that the subscribers were listing 43
 44 the things that they value about EarthShare rather than answering an abstract 44

question about CSAs. The groups talked enthusiastically and participants often used concrete examples of events or practices to communicate the ideas they wanted included. As the table shows, the responses were extremely diverse and this diversity was repeated in interviews when we asked subscribers about their motivations for being members of EarthShare

Table 4.1 Summary of EarthShare subscribers' responses to the question: 'What makes a successful CSA?'

The qualities of the food	Seasonal, locally grown, fresh and organic. Available in regular supply, of consistent quality. Should include unusual varieties, not found in the mainstream. Should taste good.
The cost of the food	Some respondents felt that food should be 'cheap', others that it should be 'affordable'.
The nature of the relationships between the different actors	Respondents identified the key important relationships as being between: The growers and eaters of food The members of the CSA The CSA and the wider community The members and the land Tools to promote these connections include: newsletters, recipes, social events, work details, visits, children's activities Respondents stressed the importance of a sense of 'pride' and 'belonging' arising from the feeling of doing something 'important'
Economic viability	The CSA should provide a living for the growers, and should also support the local economy rather than big business.
Good organisation	The CSA should be well co-ordinated, have accessible distribution points, should employ skilled growers with the right equipment.

Care for the natural environment, both the specific local environment and the natural environment more generally was an important motivation for many of the EarthShare members we spoke to. This was expressed through concerns about farming methods (conventional versus organic), the transport of food (food miles) and the types of foods eaten, for example reducing consumption of meat and fish,

1 and increasing consumption of vegetables because of the environmental damage 1
 2 meat production does, seasonality and reduced packaging. One subscriber, Ian – 2
 3 who was one of the original members of EarthShare – was extremely articulate 3
 4 about his motivations for being in the scheme. 4

5 These are part of a philosophy which rests on respect for the environment and 5
 6 an ethic of inter-generational responsibility. He said: 6

7 7
 8 [F]or ourselves, my wife and myself, it isn't the food, that's partly it but it's 8
 9 really because you can't say that the present generation owns the soil. One can't 9
 10 say that a person from whom EarthShare rents the 22 acres owns that for you, he 10
 11 doesn't, he's the tenant, he's the tenant for the ... in a sense for the generations to 11
 12 come. We feel this very deeply indeed, you cannot hand over to your incoming 12
 13 people, your incoming generations, soil that is so desperately polluted and inert 13
 14 it's lost its life. 14

15 15
 16 He went on to add: 16

17 17
 18 I see it very much as a political experiment in social organisation which has the 18
 19 material benefit of producing organic food and it's whole objective is to hand 19
 20 over to the community roundabout that's coming, the soil in good condition. 20
 21 21

22 Ian also mentioned the benefits to community and personal health of being in the 22
 23 scheme but his interest in the natural environment clearly predominated and was 23
 24 a crucial influence on many of his practices. Another subscriber, Mark, showed 24
 25 how his care for the environment was closely related to care for other people and 25
 26 a whole way of life, he said: 26

27 27
 28 [T]here's also an element of looking after the land and of feeling that, you know, 28
 29 if you actually replace instead of just throwing chemicals at everything, and 29
 30 actually sort of looking after the land, good husbandry in other words, then 30
 31 you're actually using people in sort of an inherently satisfying way and you're, 31
 32 you know, it's, it's a life that's kind of what we're supposed to live as a being, 32
 33 as opposed to being this sort of artificial sort of commercial type, commercially 33
 34 driven life. And I think there's a sort of an element of "yeah I'd like to support 34
 35 that". 35
 36 36

37 Strongly related to the wish to care for the local environment was a desire to 37
 38 care about people in place and to support or build the local community. For 38
 39 most of our interviewees this was mentioned as an added benefit in addition to 39
 40 a primary motivation perhaps related to their health or the physical environment, 40
 41 but for a small number of subscribers we spoke to, care for the local community 41
 42 was their main reason for joining the CSA. Shaun and Eleanor, two subscribers 42
 43 who were very involved with the Findhorn Foundation, perhaps best exemplify 43
 44 this approach. Their motivations for participating in EarthShare revolve around 44

1 community building and a desire to support the 'alternative' lifestyle culture that 1
 2 has developed around the Foundation. When asked why they are subscribers they 2
 3 said: 3

4 4

5 Eleanor: Well because it's organic stuff, it's good stuff, you know it's, its yeah 5
 6 local produce you know. 6

7 7

8 Shaun: We know who grows it, we can taste their sweat (laughter) ... Yeah it's a 8
 9 community ... We are part of the community and that is, with EarthShare it's so 9
 10 much part of the whole conglomeration, Findhorn Foundation so of course how 10
 11 can we not basically. We are so much part of the Foundation and EarthShare is 11
 12 part of, part of the whole thing. 12

13 13

14 Shaun went on to add: 14

15 15

16 There's no sense of belonging [with Tesco], this [EarthShare] is really the 16
 17 belonging of the family again yeah. We know the people who grow them. Like 17
 18 a few years ago, when there was a GM crop field north of Inverness we were 18
 19 in the field together chopping the things down, this kind of thing, so really total 19
 20 involvement in, in the organic scheme. ... We meet each other in the meetings in 20
 21 the Foundation, we meet each other in social events in the Foundation, concerts 21
 22 and sharing, yeah. ... So the social events are part of that and Earthshare 22
 23 organises some of the social events that, the harvesting and the tattie feast and 23
 24 whatever else and the Foundation organises things and we organise things in our 24
 25 house and so everything just intermingles, it's just one exchange of energies. 25
 26 Yeah that's basically what it is, that's it, an exchange of energies. 26

27 27

28 The aspects of the scheme that Shaun highlights – its close relationship to the 28
 29 Findhorn Foundation, the social events organised and the direct connection he 29
 30 feels to the people who grow the food – illustrate the way in which he is able to 30
 31 focus on those things which are most important to him and thereby understand 31
 32 EarthShare as particularly addressing his cares. 32

33 While the relationship to the local community was clearly important to many 33
 34 EarthShare members, this was also one aspect of the CSA that was identified 34
 35 as off-putting by other members, particularly when EarthShare was seen as too 35
 36 closely related to the Findhorn Foundation. For example, Mary, who described 36
 37 her reasons for joining as not 'political' in any way, just 'private and personal', 37
 38 commented: 38

39 39

40 [T]here are some of us who would much prefer it to be a much more mainstream 40
 41 thing and there are some of us who suspect that were the Findhorn Foundation 41
 42 not so involved it would be a much more mainstream thing, because people are, 42
 43 are silently rejecting of this value system. ... I mean it doesn't bother me but I 43
 44 know lots, I know it does bother a lot of people. 44

1 And Julie, another subscriber said she is not involved in the community building 1
 2 side of things, although she says she is glad that this happens, but she is positively 2
 3 put off by the association with the Findhorn Foundation, saying: 3
 4 4
 5 I think well some of them, well how do I say this without being, sounding 5
 6 horrible and unkind ... I sometimes think some of them are just, you know from 6
 7 a different planet, I think would I have anything really to say to them? 7
 8 8
 9 Julie describes her participation in EarthShare as ‘selfish’ as the cares that drive 9
 10 her are for her own health and her own convenience, motivations that she shares 10
 11 with many other subscribers. When asked about her motivations she said: 11
 12 12
 13 I would say health [...] Yes I would. Yeah, because, well I’m 52 now and I mean 13
 14 you realise when you’re filling in forms especially, there’s very few little boxes 14
 15 left for you now. And I think, oh, well that sort of centres you and you think 15
 16 “wait a minute here, and I am sort of trying ...” As I get older if I can help this 16
 17 body be more healthy, as I get older, that’s what I sort of strive for. 17
 18 18
 19 However, her reasons are clearly complex, she aims to buy organic food whenever 19
 20 she can and uses ‘environmentally friendly’ products when possible. She also has 20
 21 strong opinions about supermarkets and will particularly avoid Asda/Walmart 21
 22 because: 22
 23 23
 24 I don’t agree with what they do in America, what they’ve done. I just think “why 24
 25 should they be allowed?” 25
 26 26
 27 Thus her motivations suggest a care for unknown human others, and for the natural 27
 28 environment, as well as the ‘selfish’ cares that she herself highlighted. Other 28
 29 subscribers also mentioned a desire to buy less from supermarkets as a motivation 29
 30 for joining EarthShare, stating their care for the natural environment and local 30
 31 communities as the reasons behind this. 31
 32 EarthShare subscribers appear to be able to take from the scheme the elements 32
 33 which best address their own cares and priorities. In part they do this in the ways 33
 34 they make meanings through their involvement in the CSA. Hobson (2006: 320) 34
 35 comments that ‘individuals not only use eco-efficient objects to achieve rational 35
 36 ends, but also produce meaning through the material world’. We can see in the 36
 37 way that EarthShare subscribers highlight different aspects of the scheme their 37
 38 processes of negotiating meanings that make sense within their ethical frameworks. 38
 39 For Shaun it is community building that is important, for Julie, organic production 39
 40 and for Ian, protection of the soil. EarthShare subscribers are using both material 40
 41 objects (the food within their boxes) and also the relationships that the CSA allows 41
 42 to negotiate these meanings. 42
 43 43
 44 44

1 **Greater than the Sum of the Parts? Negotiating Competing Cares in a CSA**

2
3 As the discussion of motivations above illustrates there is a wide range of cares 3
4 and priorities that motivate participation in this small CSA. The people we spoke 4
5 to generally felt passionate about their own positions and also passionate about 5
6 EarthShare. Most of them perceived EarthShare as having the same priorities 6
7 that they had even though they were all different from each other. Given these 7
8 passions, differences and, to a certain extent, disagreements, EarthShare could, in 8
9 theory, be plagued by destructive in-fighting, domination by the most powerful and 9
10 suffer other problems identified by DuPuis and Goodman (2005) as typical within 10
11 locally based movements. Yet this does not appear to be the case. EarthShare is 11
12 a very long running, very successful CSA and when the different subscribers are 12
13 together, in our workshops at least, the effect is of a harmonious, though multi- 13
14 faceted, enthusiasm. Indeed, our findings are similar to those reported by Feagan 14
15 and Henderson (2008) in their detailed research on the Devon Acres CSA in 15
16 Ontario. They illustrate the 'patchwork' quality of individual participation, and 16
17 the 'messy', complex and contingent nature of the CSA they studied. 17

18 In this section we examine the practices that allow this diversity to exist 18
19 and EarthShare to flourish. By focusing on three moments at which EarthShare 19
20 subscribers can meet each other: planning meetings, workshifts and social events, 20
21 we explore how individuals experienced and negotiated (or more often did not 21
22 negotiate) the competing cares within the group. Subscribers are able to join in 22
23 with any or none of these things, and so participate in ways which are convenient 23
24 or practical for them and that resonate with their cares and priorities. The way in 24
25 which EarthShare is organised means that it does not require that members agree 25
26 about philosophical principles or on the details of how the scheme operates, nor 26
27 do they have to interact often. It enables different cares to be prioritised while 27
28 still allowing continual reflection on consumption practices, through contact with 28
29 the food in the box and other EarthShare members, which can create change in 29
30 subscriber behaviour which ripples out to others too. 30

31 Planning meetings are the formal mechanism by which subscribers feed into 31
32 the running of the CSA. They normally involve discussions about what should 32
33 be grown in the coming year and subscribers feed back what they liked in past 33
34 seasons' produce. All subscribers are invited to meetings but in reality very few 34
35 go, the vast majority seem to be happy to let others make decisions about how the 35
36 scheme is run. Few of our interviewees or workshop participants had attended 36
37 many meetings (except Ian) and those that had were not the same people who also 37
38 took part in other activities. As Julie comments: 38

39
40 I would say if you went to the work shift you would be closer to it, you would 40
41 feel more involved. I feel I'm just you know on the periphery of it and reaping 41
42 the benefits and maybe from a selfish point of view, you know I just pick and 42
43 choose what I want from what they can offer and I mean I'm getting all the 43
44 44

1 vegetables and if there's a little meeting that I want to along, oh well I'll go to 1
 2 that [...] I wouldn't want to be on committees or, or anything like that. 2
 3 3
 4 Julie's slightly distant 'pick and choose' attitude was typical of the subscribers 4
 5 we spoke to. We got no impression that there was a small group with time or 5
 6 resources who were influential upon the scheme and, in fact, the scheme manager 6
 7 commented that they would have liked more people to be more involved. There 7
 8 was no evidence from formal meetings that the different cares of subscribers 8
 9 caused conflict within the operation of EarthShare or that the most privileged 9
 10 members are trying to inflict their version of what is 'best' on others (DuPuis and 10
 11 Goodman 2005). 11
 12 There are other events where EarthShare members can meet and these are 12
 13 also sites where the nature of the CSA is negotiated, or not negotiated, by its 13
 14 subscribers. Workshifts are an important element in differentiating EarthShare 14
 15 from a commercial vegetable box scheme. The shifts allow members to spend 15
 16 time in the fields gaining a better idea of the practices involved in food production, 16
 17 and allow them to cut the cost of their subscription. Subscribers who did the shifts 17
 18 highlighted this social element and clearly enjoyed them. For example Mark 18
 19 commented: 19
 20 20
 21 [S]ometimes you go [to do workshifts] and its a wonderful day and there's loads 21
 22 of people there and its sort of really a bit of a jolly party except you have to do 22
 23 a little bit of work. 23
 24 24
 25 Mary said that she does the workshifts for sheer enjoyment but has actually met 25
 26 many new people through them: 26
 27 27
 28 Int: Do you know anybody else in EarthShare? 28
 29 29
 30 Mary: Oh yes, I mean quite a lot of people especially from working on the land 30
 31 you get to know, with your work shifts. 31
 32 32
 33 Int: You do them then? 33
 34 34
 35 Mary: Oh yes, I love them absolutely love them because I mean otherwise you 35
 36 know I mean that's just the perfect foil for the rest of my life because I'm very 36
 37 much, well I was going to say cerebral, but I'm not at all, but you know I do sit 37
 38 behind a computer a lot and it's wonderful to go off on your bike you know and 38
 39 pick strawberries for an afternoon, can you imagine with this heavenly world 39
 40 around you up here and the views and, and just lovely, I love doing it. Not for 40
 41 any idealistic reason I just enjoy it, I enjoy pulling weeds up in the rain too. 41
 42 42
 43 Mary is emphatic that she does the shifts for pleasure rather than for 'idealistic' 43
 44 reasons and this would not be uncommon amongst our interviewees. However, her 44

1 description of the experience, which brings out so vividly the joy of being outside 1
2 in a beautiful place, suggests that she finds the activity satisfying in many ways. 2

3 The subscribers that we spoke to who did not do their shifts generally expressed 3
4 regret about this, and put it down to lack of time rather than any lack of support 4
5 for the CSA. There were also members who had made the decision not to do the 5
6 shifts and did not feel guilt or regret about this. As Julia put it 'I contribute in other 6
7 ways and I pay more so they can pay someone else to do it'. Workshifts, while 7
8 being a distinctive aspect of EarthShare membership, were not something that all 8
9 members felt they had to do or to do for the same reasons. They were something 9
10 that could be dipped in and out of, embraced or rejected. There was no criticism 10
11 of people who did not do them by those who did, except that Mary commented 11
12 that she wondered if some people did not do them because they thought they were 12
13 'above' menial work, and no evidence that those who did shifts were considered 13
14 to be 'better' subscribers. 14

15 However, workshifts did appear to be a site for reflection on behaviour and 15
16 engagement in the food system. Ruth commented: 16

17 17
18 They ask you to do 2–3 shifts then that's good, because I think people appreciate 18
19 if they have to do the work, it's hard work. I think if you do experience it directly, 19
20 then you know what's involved, so you're going to less likely get on your high 20
21 horse and complain about things ... but I think it's important people realise just 21
22 how much work goes into their food. I mean in supermarkets ... you forget. 22

23 23
24 Even for Julie, who does not do the shifts herself, the visibility of this work within 24
25 the scheme encourages her to reflect upon her food and the relationships that it is 25
26 part of: 26

27 27
28 if you think about where your food came from and whose work has gone into 28
29 getting that, the growing of it, the planting of it and getting it to you, and now 29
30 when I'm doing the vegetables I think well somebody's been out in that field and 30
31 you do feel better having those kind of thoughts and it's not just an anonymous 31
32 carrot (laughter) it has come from that field and somebody had to plant it, 32
33 somebody had to pick it then box it and you think well a lot of people have gone 33
34 to a lot of effort. 34

35 35
36 She went on to explain that this affected how she used her food and made her 36
37 anxious not to waste it. The food in Julie's box each week provides a physical 37
38 reminder of the labour involved in food production which spurs her to further 38
39 reflection on the wider food system and her engagement with it in a similar way 39
40 that Hobson (2006) found that living with a shower timer was an impetus to 40
41 considering household resource use more widely. 41

42 EarthShare members also meet at social events organised by the CSA, and 42
43 although these are seemingly not about the formal organisation of the scheme, they 43
44 were the element which prompted the most critical comments from interviewees. 44

1 There are three large social events each year, a Summer garden party, the ‘Tattie 1
 2 Fest’ (for the potato harvest) and a Spring blessing. While they were the favourite 2
 3 element of some interviewees the ‘spiritual’ aspects of these events elicited 3
 4 strong negative comments from some members. Mary, who was also critical of 4
 5 the influence of the Findhorn Foundation (above) commented about the Spring 5
 6 Blessing: 6
 7 7
 8 [B]ecause it’s just new age, it’s just crap and shit you know, dancing round a 8
 9 bloody sacred pot, you know, it’s just not really my scene ... for me it’s very 9
 10 unattractive but that’s me. I’m just not into nature, spirits and talking to trees 10
 11 and things. 11
 12 12
 13 Michelle appeared to link the social events with a particular approach, or set of 13
 14 behaviours when she said: 14
 15 15
 16 I don’t go to the to the thanksgiving thing and *all that kind of stuff*. (Emphasis 16
 17 added) 17
 18 18
 19 These comments suggest that certain aspects of EarthShare are experienced as 19
 20 unwelcome or exclusionary by some members and there is in no sense a shared 20
 21 philosophical approach. Yet this dissonance was not threatening to the success of 21
 22 the CSA because subscribers just chose not to participate in the elements that they 22
 23 did not like. Michelle went on to say: 23
 24 24
 25 [U]p till now I haven’t done the work share but I will do that, but that’s more 25
 26 just a time thing. This year I meant to do it and I just didn’t and I, but I will do 26
 27 it next year so no it’s not from, I don’t have a great deal of contact with them. 27
 28 28
 29 Mark similarly commented: 29
 30 30
 31 The other thing about EarthShare is that you go out and do some picking and 31
 32 weeding or whatever it is and do your bit, so you’re still connected but you don’t 32
 33 actually have to do all the bits. 33
 34 34
 35 Many other interviewees also talked about just joining in with the bits that they 35
 36 wanted to. This suggests that rather than getting into disagreements about their 36
 37 differences, or negotiating to find a shared position, EarthShare members opted 37
 38 simply not to arbitrate between their differing cares or priorities. 38
 39 We have found that despite their differences EarthShare members were 39
 40 generally respectful of each other’s cares. They liked the fact that other subscribers 40
 41 felt passionately for things even if they did not share those passions or agree with 41
 42 the actions that people took. Repeatedly in interviews subscribers would hedge 42
 43 their opinions by stressing that they were personal and not for everyone and would 43
 44 show sympathy for subscribers with different opinions or forms of engagement 44

1 by saying they did not expect everyone to act or think in the same way. In our 1
 2 workshops subscribers were united in their praise of their scheme and their desire 2
 3 for more people to have access to something similar. When asked how that would 3
 4 happen they sought for solutions that would include as many people with different 4
 5 views and circumstances as possible. There were never suggestions that only some 5
 6 groups or some people would be appropriate or welcome members. 6

7 One result of this approach was that people left each other alone to concentrate 7
 8 on the bits of the scheme that interested them – some would do workshifts, others 8
 9 go to social events, two members had written a cookery book and did cookery 9
 10 demonstrations, Ian does ‘wild larder’ walks, while Shaun and Eleanor destroyed 10
 11 GM crops. Each of these activities carried on with the support of only some 11
 12 members. There was no evidence of powerful groups dominating or of certain 12
 13 people or groups of people being driven out. Whilst we did not interview any 13
 14 former members of EarthShare we were able to ask the scheme manager about the 14
 15 reasons people gave for leaving. We were told that these were generally expressed 15
 16 in terms of the food received – there being too much food to cope with being the 16
 17 most common issue – or because of changes in circumstances such as moving 17
 18 house. Some reasons for leaving could be read as showing a lack of commitment 18
 19 on the part of members and perhaps an instrumentalist or functionalist approach 19
 20 to CSA as found by Feagan and Henderson (2008). However, these attitudes did 20
 21 not appear to cause friction within the scheme nor threaten its stability once it was 21
 22 well established and the majority of subscribers continue with their subscriptions 22
 23 from year to year. 23

24 This ‘live and let live’ attitude may suggest that EarthShare does not operate as a 24
 25 group or a ‘food democracy’ in any meaningful way, yet we also found evidence that 25
 26 being a subscriber to EarthShare did involve people in reflection on their practices 26
 27 and changes in their behaviour because of their contact with other members and 27
 28 could, therefore be seen as a forum for political action. This happened in utterly 28
 29 mundane ways, as subscribers reflected on their own consumption and exchanged 29
 30 information with each other. For example Ruth, describes the importance of ‘a 30
 31 supportive community’ in helping her to reject mainstream forms of consumption: 31

32 32
 33 [W]hen you do start to question things of course it’s very unsettling as well, and 33
 34 this is what I mean that ... you know, a sort of supportive community, and people 34
 35 that have got the same kind of like minds so you don’t feel suddenly you’re the 35
 36 odd one, because you don’t want to shop at supermarkets anymore or you don’t 36
 37 want what everybody else is you know happy [with]. ... And you wonder if 37
 38 anybody else was thinking about these things ... to the depth or breadth you are 38
 39 ... but, I mean, of course they are. And, but then you kind of feel quite powerless 39
 40 at times. It’s quite important to either have, you know, a sort of group of friends 40
 41 or people that you can connect with so that you don’t feel that you’re quite an 41
 42 oddball. 42

43 43
 44 44

1 EarthShare provides Ruth with the support she needs to resist ‘what everybody else 1
 2 is happy with’ and to act on her cares. The connection to ‘like-minded’ people helps 2
 3 her to overcome the powerlessness she feels when thinking about supermarkets. 3
 4 Other subscribers talked about exchanging information with each other, this could 4
 5 be simple things like recipes that help deal with a glut of vegetables, but it could 5
 6 also be about sources of eco-friendly products, community-based services or 6
 7 how to do something like composting. Through these exchanges of information 7
 8 subscribers are able to become informed about each other’s interests and to adapt 8
 9 their behaviour if they want to. EarthShare thus supports myriad small-scale 9
 10 changes to people’s lives without ever demanding that they share each other’s 10
 11 goals. Participation in this CSA is helping members to engage in a broad range of 11
 12 caring practices. These include practices which care for the self and known others, 12
 13 for the local environment and community and for unknown others and the natural 13
 14 environment more broadly. These priorities are not in competition but accrete to 14
 15 become greater than the sum of the parts. 15

16

17

18 **Conclusion**

19

20 The extant literature on CSAs has identified them as ‘caring practice’ (Wells and 20
 21 Gradwell 2001) – a possible space within which members and growers can care for 21
 22 people and places both near and far. This is in keeping with writing on alternative 22
 23 and ethical food movements more generally which suggests that food procurement 23
 24 is one area in which people can act to care for others (M. Goodman 2004, Popke 24
 25 2006; see also Goodman et al. 2010). Yet existing literature also identifies CSAs 25
 26 as possible sites of disagreement or conflict with member participation being 26
 27 characterised as instrumental, partial and conflicted (Feagan and Henderson 27
 28 2008; see also Cone and Myhre 2000, Guthman et al. 2006, Hinrichs 2000, 28
 29 Perez et al. 2003). More broadly, local food initiatives have been criticised as 29
 30 unlikely to deliver the economic, social and environmental sustainability that they 30
 31 have been heralded as producing (Feagan 2007, McCarthy 2006). DuPuis and 31
 32 Goodman (2005) have highlighted the potentially problematic nature of local food 32
 33 movements and query their ability to meet goals of equality, and to bring about 33
 34 social justice. They caution against assuming that locally-based food movements 34
 35 will necessarily involve non-instrumental, ethics-based interpersonal relations 35
 36 and show how open such movements are to becoming unreflexive, elitist and 36
 37 reactionary. 37

38 Whilst we have discussed EarthShare here in the context of local food 38
 39 movements, we do not claim the CSA is a local political movement in any 39
 40 traditional sense. For example, it does not require active participation from 40
 41 members nor does it require that members sign up to any set views or beliefs. 41
 42 Similarly, our interviewees did not describe their food practices as political for the 42
 43 most part but rather understood their membership of EarthShare as a way in which 43
 44 they could address their own rather than shared priorities, a way that they could 44

1 move through their careful geographies of consumption. However, in terms of its 1
 2 potential to prompt and/or support individual movement from ‘passive consumers’ 2
 3 to ‘informed citizens’, EarthShare does provide a space in which community 3
 4 building can happen and traditional forms of political practice – such as opposition 4
 5 to GM crops – can be organised. In addition EarthShare is organised in such a way 5
 6 that subscribers can meet each other regularly and the CSA brings together people 6
 7 who share an interest in one aspect of their food consumption but who might 7
 8 otherwise have different priorities, politics and motivations. For some subscribers 8
 9 interaction with the other members will be an important source of information 9
 10 about food and political/ethical issues more generally. Such interaction can be 10
 11 significant in raising people’s awareness of issues, and can be seen as part of an 11
 12 everyday political practice (Hobson 2006). Conversations between members serve 12
 13 to locate EarthShare within networks and relationships helping subscribers to see 13
 14 the scheme as something more than a source of organic vegetables. However, 14
 15 because these conversations are informal, between peers, they do not necessitate a 15
 16 sharing of conclusions or ideals. They may be a spur to reflection and to a change 16
 17 in practices for some consumers, but there is no pressure from the scheme for 17
 18 conformity of views and no privilege given to one position over another. 18

19 In this chapter, we have used the lens of care ethics to unpack the differing 19
 20 motivations of members within a successful CSA and have shown that while these 20
 21 are focused on a local food scheme they extend far beyond the immediate area. 21
 22 While they include ‘selfish’ cares for individual bodies and locally-focused cares 22
 23 for community development and the local environment, they also embrace care 23
 24 for the natural environment *en toto* and for unknown others. The motivations of 24
 25 EarthShare members cannot be characterised as privileging the local over more 25
 26 global concerns and as yet the scheme has not shown any risk of being dominated 26
 27 by more powerful groups of members. 27

28 Although we accept DuPuis and Goodman’s criticisms of the ‘purifying’ 28
 29 and potentially exclusionary nature of local food movements, we also want to 29
 30 support local food initiatives in forging sustainable forms of local democracy 30
 31 and offering alternatives to the capitalist food systems. We have argued that by 31
 32 exposing differences in the priorities and actions of EarthShare members we can 32
 33 escape imaginings of EarthShare as perfect or entirely free from ambiguity or 33
 34 conflict, as has sometimes been the case in reporting of local food movements. 34
 35 Yet by also understanding members’ differing motivations in terms of care ethics 35
 36 we can accept their multifarious nature, respect their differences and see them as 36
 37 complementary rather than competitive. Moreover, we propose that using the lens 37
 38 of the ethic of care to focus on people’s motives for their regular food consumption 38
 39 practices reveals the political potential of everyday actions, both to shape one’s 39
 40 own behaviour and reach beyond the self. We suggest that EarthShare is a forum 40
 41 which supports this form of politics because – however flawed or partial – it offers 41
 42 an environment in which people can address their cares and influence others. 42

43

44

43

44

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2
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Chapter 5

Polite Transgressions? Pleasure as Economic Device and Ethical Stance in Slow Food

Federica Davolio and Roberta Sassatelli

12 Introduction

Slow Food has increasingly established itself as an influential – and controversial – actor on the scene of alternative food networks advocacy. Parallel to the international ascent of its public visibility, this cultural and economic actor started to draw much attention within the scientific community. Passionate endorsement or sceptical dismissals are still the prevailing attitudes towards Slow Food (hereafter SF) in academic understanding. Still, a few contributions have looked at it through a more detached eye, convincingly inscribing SF's cultural values in a wider debate on social movements, moral economy and citizenship in post-modern societies (Binkley 2008; Miele and Murdoch 2002, 2003; Murdoch and Miele 2004; Parkins and Craig 2006; Pietrykowski 2004). At the same time, SF has been widely documented to work as a powerful economic agent for the promotion of artisanal products (Brunori 2006; Fonte 2006; Friedmann and McNair 2008; Leitch 2003; Lotti 2009; Pratt 2007), especially through its astute management of media coverage and public relations (Peace 2006, 2008). In such capacity SF has been so successful that it has been defined by two Italian economists as, 'a new business paradigm' for traditional, regional and/or local products (Nosi and Zanni 2004).

These different qualifications clearly point to the *transgressive* character of this multilayered (local, national, international) and multi-vocal (economic, cultural, ethical and political) collective actor. As we shall try to argue, such transgression takes less the form of subversion than reformation, presenting itself as a polite, well-meaning and well-networked organised system of initiatives. Still, as an organisation, SF works by transgressing many of the boundaries in conventional markets and politics: in other terms, SF is both *hybrid* in character and *complex* in architecture. To account for this unity in the face of hybridity and complexity, here we look at SF as a *cultural intermediary*.

Let's take a closer look at this notion. In his seminal work on tastes and social classes in post-war France (Bourdieu 1984), the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu describes the emergence of a new social class, the 'new *petite bourgeoisie*', engaged in defining its position against more well-established social fractions, via distinctive cultural practices, tastes and a consumption-oriented ethos (see

1 also Featherstone 1990 and Hesmondhalgh 2006). Cultural intermediation has 1
 2 been identified by Bourdieu as the quintessential professional area for the new 2
 3 *petite bourgeoisie*. In other terms, this social stratum consolidated its position 3
 4 by colonising ‘all the occupations involving presentation and representation 4
 5 (sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion, decoration and so 5
 6 forth) and all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services’ (Bourdieu 6
 7 1984: 359). Embracing Bourdieu’s analytical tool enables us to focus on the 7
 8 symbolic articulation between production and consumption. We think of cultural 8
 9 intermediaries not as necessarily linked to the reproduction of cultural hegemony 9
 10 in the classification of tastes (see Negus 2002a, 2002b), but still as exerting a 10
 11 powerful influence by opening and shaping new consumption fields, and by 11
 12 negotiating the cultural-economic value of goods in the public arena. This is made 12
 13 possible by their mastery of cultural industries’ rules and resources. 13

14 To consider SF as a cultural intermediary helps us to focus on both its 14
 15 economic and its cultural role as two indissoluble sides of its working, and SF 15
 16 itself as evolving through the continuous adjustment of this Janus-faced nature, 16
 17 thereby contributing to the shifting boundary between economy and culture. 17
 18 We believe that this is an advantageous position from which to investigate 18
 19 the rhetorical repertoires displayed by the organisation as interfacing with its 19
 20 economic, organisational and social positioning and without falling into a simple 20
 21 base-superstructure scheme. In this light, we frame SF as a social mediator and 21
 22 communicator, that develops cultural representations of quality (of food) and 22
 23 value (of consumption). Besides this, following through the notion of cultural 23
 24 intermediation, we not only provide an indication of the particular cultural 24
 25 function of SFoodists as cultural intermediaries, but we also propose hints as to 25
 26 how the particular cultural logic which Bourdieu associated with these figures is 26
 27 modified by SF. This requires giving attention to SF members and their rhetorical 27
 28 frames. At both national and chapter level, SFoodists can be defined as a group 28
 29 of people equipped with high symbolic, cultural and social capital working on the 29
 30 transformation of meanings for a wide and highly differentiated audience, from 30
 31 producers and consumers, to public functionaries and members of other cultural 31
 32 and economic organisations. Clearly, intermediaries’ dispositions and tastes are 32
 33 for them fundamental tools for both consumption and production, and Bourdieu is 33
 34 very explicit in suggesting that these social groups are in the position to promote 34
 35 new styles of consumption which potentially cut across traditional social divisions 35
 36 and embrace an emphasis on pleasurable experiences. As we shall see, like 36
 37 Bourdieu’s original cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu 1984: 310), SF is responding 37
 38 to a new cultural and economic logic which ‘rejects the ascetic ethic of production 38
 39 and accumulation, based on (...) saving and calculation’, but it does this not so 39
 40 much ‘in favour of a hedonistic morality of consumption based on credit, spending 40
 41 and enjoyment’. Indeed, as we shall argue in this paper, SF marries the ascetic 41
 42 disciplining of taste, with a drive towards its considerate cultivation, with a refined 42
 43 hedonism based on the appreciation of slowness and simplicity, if not sobriety. We 43
 44

1 thus propose a less dichotomous argument, and consider how hedonism does not 1
 2 simply replace asceticism, but takes on different meanings and is realised through 2
 3 different qualifications. 3

4 To prepare the ground for such a theoretically-informed discussion, in this 4
 5 chapter we start by offering a brief reconstruction of the historical and cultural 5
 6 genealogy of SF, with relevant details about its social and political background as 6
 7 well as organisational set-up. This sets the context for a discussion of SF's current 7
 8 politics, which we approach by looking, first, at the place that SF occupies within 8
 9 the broader field of 'critical consumption'; secondly, at SF's transgressive nature 9
 10 and complex architecture as cultural and economic intermediary; and, thirdly, 10
 11 at its rendering of pleasure as a universal 'right'. This latter point represents a 11
 12 cornerstone of SF philosophy whose articulation reveals the specificity, potentiality 12
 13 and limits of its approach to food. Overall, we aim to address both the link between 13
 14 cultural values and economic interests as expressed by SF initiatives and its vision 14
 15 of quality, as well as its take on the tension between elitism and universalism in 15
 16 its contribution to what has been defined as the 'turn to quality' (Goodman 2003). 16

17 To proceed in this direction, this chapter relies on empirical research conducted 17
 18 on SF's Italian core activities, much of which revolves around the town of Bra in 18
 19 Piedmont, where more than 100 employees staff the headquarters of the national 19
 20 and international associations. Since 2003 we have conducted ethnographic 20
 21 observations at the major SF international events in Turin, such as *Il salone del gusto* 21
 22 (Hall of Taste) and *Terra Madre*, the biannual meeting that runs in parallel with the 22
 23 *Salone*, gathering sustainable food producers, cooks, educators and activists from 23
 24 around the world to discuss their ideas for developing small-scale, sustainable 24
 25 food production. We have recorded speeches and collected official documents as 25
 26 well as analysed *Slow*, the international magazine of SF from its first issue in 1996. 26
 27 And we draw upon 27 semi-structured interviews conducted with key members 27
 28 of the SF headquarters in Bra and with Italian *convivium* leaders in regions where 28
 29 SF has its strongest roots (Piedmont, Lombardy, Tuscany and Emilia-Romagna). 29
 30 This wealth of evidence allows for a deep grasp of SF self-understanding and 30
 31 presentational issues. Indeed, in conceiving of SF as a broad network of initiatives 31
 32 united by a common rhetoric and a set of practices increasingly leaning towards 32
 33 the politicisation of food pleasure, we have endeavoured to capture both its 33
 34 multifaceted and layered nature and its emergent core cultural values to understand 34
 35 its role as a cultural intermediary. 35

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38 **Slow Food, Eco-gastronomy and Biodiversity** 38

39 39
 40 Slow Food is a non-profit international member-supported organisation whose 40
 41 goal is 'to defend good food and gastronomic pleasure, hence to support a slow 41
 42 pace of life' (Slow Food Companion 2008: 2). It began in Italy in 1986, with 42
 43 43
 44 44

1 the foundation of its forerunner organisation, Arcigola,¹ by a group of cooks 1
 2 and gastronomes who wanted to promote regional foodways and cultures as a 2
 3 defensive strategy against the advance of fast food chains and heavily processed, 3
 4 industrial food. Although the foundation-myth established the protest against the 4
 5 opening of a McDonald's near the Spanish steps in Rome as the origin of the 5
 6 association, this is 'a deceptively simple story' (Chrzan 2004), whose roots are to 6
 7 be found in the turbulent social and political environment of Italy during the 1970s 7
 8 and in the food and wine industry crises that characterised the 1980s, culminating 8
 9 in 1986 in a large methanol wine scandal that tragically impacted on the Italian 9
 10 wine industry (Andrews 2008; Parasecoli 2003; Petrini 2003; Petrini and Padovan 10
 11 2006; Pietrykowski 2009: 116). 11

12 Since SF went international in 1989, both its membership and the number of 12
 13 its activities grew quickly. At present, it claims membership of about 100,000 13
 14 people in 132 countries, organised in local branches (called *convivia*) linked to the 14
 15 international headquarters in Bra by regional (as well as in national, in some cases) 15
 16 executive committees. The organisational structure is thus partly decentralised 16
 17 but strictly hierarchical: each *convivium* has a leader who is responsible for 17
 18 both finances and activities, but usually she – or more typically he² – follows 18
 19 detailed guidelines provided by the management. What is most relevant here, 19
 20 though, is that an extremely differentiated set of activities has been set up: at its 20
 21 grass-roots level, SF organises convivial events aimed at spreading knowledge of 21
 22 local food legacy, but also farmers' markets, school gardens and taste education 22
 23 courses; at the headquarter level, it established a renowned quality food fair – 23
 24 the '*Salone del Gusto*' (Hall of Taste) – a successful publishing house (with a 24
 25 diversified publishing strategy that includes both essays on sustainable agriculture 25
 26 and gastronomic guides), a University of Gastronomic Sciences and a Foundation 26
 27 for Biodiversity whose main projects are a catalogue of breeds and species 27
 28 under threat of extinction ('Ark of Taste') and the marketing of small-scale food 28
 29 products marginalised by large-scale retail. The latter project is called '*Presidia*' 29
 30 and turns into financial benefits (grants, legal aid) and communication support 30
 31 (packaging and advertising tools) a primacy that SF staff assigns to some Ark's 31
 32 products, according to sensory, ecological and cultural (local embeddedness) 32
 33 criteria. According to SF *Social Report* (Foundation for Biodiversity 2008) 33
 34 *Presidia* have been booming: initiated in 1999 with a pilot Italian project, SF now 34
 35 35
 36 36

37 1 The name is the combination of 'Archi', acronym for the recreation association of 37
 38 the Italian Communist Party, and whose meaning as a prefix is close to 'extra' or 'super', 38
 39 and 'Gola', an Italian word that means both 'gluttony' and 'throat' and is associated with a 39
 40 strong material imaginary and even with one of the seven sins in Catholicism. 40

41 2 At least in Italy, where according to the association address book, male *convivium* 41
 42 leaders totalled an astonishing majority of 78.4 per cent in 2008. Although gender is not 42
 43 the focus of this chapter, the disproportionate make-up of these organisational structures 43
 44 cannot but resonate with the literature on the existence of a gender issue in SF philosophy 44
 (see Chrzan 2004; Donati 2005; Gaytan 2004; Pilcher 2006).

1 counts more than 300 of them across 46 countries in the world). Recently, a second
 2 foundation ('*Terra Madre*') has been established to sustain the network amongst
 3 food communities and their biannual meeting in Turin, in correspondence with the
 4 '*Salone del Gusto*'. 'Food communities', according to the SF lexicon, involve all
 5 the actors who work towards increasing small-scale, traditional, and sustainable
 6 food production in a localised ecological and social environment. *Terra Madre* has
 7 been the main instrument to reach out to issues, such as food security and North-
 8 South food imbalances, which were originally beyond the scope for SF.

9 Drawing on successful promotion of economic enterprises, media events and
 10 – to a lesser degree – social movement tools such as petitions and protest events,³
 11 SF has thus been developing worldwide as a peculiarly hybrid creature, with both
 12 economic and cultural aims, whose significance and potential is continuously
 13 shifting. In this light, it is important to recall SF's trajectory, as well as its cultural
 14 heritage – something that especially the core members often turn to in search of
 15 coherence and distinctiveness. As recalled, the founders of SF came from the left-
 16 wing Italian intelligentsia, but they had to qualify themselves both as against more
 17 traditional forms of gastronomic association, and the left-wing political culture
 18 that was their very milieu. As Carlo Petrini, SF's charismatic founder and president
 19 insists, they had to 'make a name for themselves' proving they were neither 'a
 20 bunch of good-timers interested only in stuffing ourselves' (as they were branded
 21 by ascetic left-wing critiques), nor 'incompetent intruders with an ideological
 22 agenda' (as suggested by conservative gastronomes' critiques) (Petrini 2003: 10).
 23 The evolution of SF since the 'Ark of taste' project in 1996 broadly testifies to the
 24 complex process SF has undergone linking gastronomy and politics.

25 In particular, under the aegis of the Foundation for Biodiversity, SF has
 26 broadened the scope of its mission and the width of its audience, trying to position
 27 itself as an advocate for both consumers and producers, involved in both 'obesity-
 28 afflicted' countries as well as in the 'poverty-plagued' ones. It actually obtained
 29 official recognition for this: in 2004 the UN Food and Agriculture Organization
 30 acknowledged the Foundation for Biodiversity as a non-profit partner to cooperate
 31 with. This yielded a more legitimate and intense collaboration with Italian NGOs
 32 involved in rural development and fair trade projects, particularly in Africa
 33 and Latin America. The President of the Foundation for Biodiversity states his
 34 objectives pragmatically: 'Our Foundation is focused primarily on local agriculture
 35 and food education, and it doesn't set impossible objectives. We are well aware
 36 that we can't do much about desertification, the road system, the causes of climate
 37 change or shortcomings in public health' (Foundation for Biodiversity 2008: 6).
 38 Consistent with this 'aims-fitting-the-resources' perspective, are the paraphernalia
 39 set up to fulfil the Foundation's objectives. In fact, if we look closer at the projects

41 _____
 42 3 SF protest events are called 'Eat-ins' and consist of potluck meals of homemade
 43 foods in symbolic spaces (schools, parks, squares, farms, McDonald's parking, etc.) under
 44 media coverage. Some *convivia* are also endorsing guerrilla gardening actions, as the SF
 USA president reported in a web magazine interview (*Flavorwire*, 23 September 2009).

1 the Foundation is involved in, we see that it relies on a narrow number of slightly 1
 2 re-moulded, well-established and distinctive tools (Ark of Taste, Presidia, Farmers' 2
 3 Markets, taste education workshops for children and adults) instead of adopting *ad* 3
 4 *hoc* adaptive arrangements. Amongst its partners, SF seems to occupy a specific 4
 5 role, carved out on the base of its recognised communication and marketing skills. 5
 6 It is thus involved in information and awareness campaigns on nutrition issues as 6
 7 well as in the realisation of local markets and in the identification and re-launch 7
 8 of special local products on a larger scale – the latter representing SF's main 8
 9 uniqueness. In other terms, the involvement of SF in rural development projects 9
 10 is apparently rooted in the specific nature and performance of SF as a cultural 10
 11 intermediary whose characteristics we'll detail in the next section. 11

12 Such networking moves resulted in driving SF to a much more conventionally 12
 13 politicised terrain, one wherein other organisations and groups are working 13
 14 towards global change both of the agro-food system and of consumers' behaviours. 14
 15 Through a process of cultural 'contamination' and organisational learning, this 15
 16 encounter with other actors from civil society has led to a reframing of SF core 16
 17 philosophy, deeply rooted in a notion of consumers' rights (Chrzan 2004). Indeed, 17
 18 acknowledging the food chain's problems and specifically the conditions of 18
 19 production, has crucially contributed to the development of a wider picture that 19
 20 nonetheless sustains SF's focus on consumption. 20

21 Looking at SF's self-presentation, the notion of 'eco-gastronomy' is the pivot 21
 22 on which this cultural change took place, together with the more explicit political 22
 23 stances we are pointing out: 'agriculture and ecology are part of gastronomy', 23
 24 explains Petrini (2007: 68), 'because they help us understand where our food 24
 25 comes from and produce it in the best possible way, by simultaneously observing 25
 26 the principles of taste, respect for the environment, and biodiversity'. This take 26
 27 on food frames quality as something more than the proprieties inherent in the 27
 28 product: quality is intrinsically multifaceted because we grasp it when placing the 28
 29 product in context, with reference to the environment and people. Petrini sums up 29
 30 this approach to the social and environmental nuances of pleasure in what has then 30
 31 become SF's slogan: quality products have to be 'good, clean and fair'. Therefore, 31
 32 pleasure ('good food', in the tripartite *mantra*) is not simply complemented, but 32
 33 fundamentally accomplished through environmental consciousness and fairness 33
 34 in what appears to be today's frontier for SFoodists. It is both an ethical and 34
 35 economic position for, as we shall see, SF clearly works at transforming attention 35
 36 to localities, nature, and fairness into perceived economic values (influencing 36
 37 consumers' demand and, what is most important, experts' valuations). But this 37
 38 is done not simply on instrumental grounds – as a conventional economic actor 38
 39 would do. In other words, SF does not promote its view of quality simply because 39
 40 it sells, but promotes as *sellable* an ethically rich view of quality. As we shall see, 40
 41 considering the responsible, reflexive pursuit of pleasure as a universal right indeed 41
 42 allows for this view of quality to take the guise of an ethical stance, something 42
 43 that should help reappraising consumerism and food standardisation as well as 43
 44 44

1 distribution and sustainability – and which nonetheless harbours contradictions 1
2 and tensions, demanding a constant negotiation of values. 2

3 Whatever its future, this new course has disclosed the opportunity for a more 3
4 intense partnership with organisations committed to food sovereignty, fair trade, 4
5 sustainable agriculture and biodiversity. But this has also implied a more or 5
6 less explicit confrontation of SF with the wide and complex world of ‘critical 6
7 consumerism’. This confrontation is not always easy: while SF insists on its 7
8 specific cultural identity, based on the education of taste, critical consumption 8
9 activists in Italy are often sceptical of SF initiatives. 9

10 10

11 11

12 **Entering the Field of Critical Consumerism** 12

13 13

14 Alternative or critical consumerism, for us, refers to a varied set of consumer 14
15 practices and discourses which critically address contemporary consumer culture 15
16 from within, raising issues of fairness (in North-South relations and production 16
17 consumption relations), sustainability (both global and local) and democracy (food 17
18 sovereignty, for example). It both indicates alternative, ethically coded products – 18
19 such as fair trade goods or green products – and commercial network alternative 19
20 to mainstream, mass-market relations – such as farmers’ markets, box schemes, 20
21 and alternative purchasing networks supporting local farming. It also reaches 21
22 as far as consumer boycotts and symbolic protest in the form of, for example, 22
23 sub-advertising. These initiatives are now flourishing worldwide, and there is 23
24 likewise a flourishing literature on how social movements of an alternative-global 24
25 variety have resorted to the whole spectrum of consumer action (Micheletti 2003; 25
26 Micheletti and McFarland 2009), on ethical consumption (Barnett et al.’s 2011; 26
27 Harrison et al. 2005; Lyon and Moberg 2010) and on alternative food networks 27
28 (Dubouisson-Quellier and Lamine 2004; Goodman 2004; Holloway et al. 2006; 28
29 Renting et al. 2003; Sage 2003, 2007). Italian consumers and organisations 29
30 have contributed their share to this wave of critical consumerism. Many studies 30
31 document the field, its characteristics and specificity (Bovone and Mora 2007; 31
32 Ceccarini 2008; Leonini and Sassatelli 2008; Rebughini and Sassatelli 2008; Tosi 32
33 2006). Here it will suffice to mention a few distinctive traits. Critical consumption 33
34 initiatives are penetrating the Italian market notably through existing social 34
35 networks, including the missionary world and progressive organisations. They 35
36 range broadly from political movements aimed at countering corruption and mafia 36
37 through ethical purchasing in the South (Addio Pizzo, for example) to a powerful, 37
38 capillary network of fair trade cooperative shops which are concentrated in the 38
39 centre-north of the country; from a thriving network of alternative purchasing 39
40 groups typically sustaining small-scale, organic local agriculture to voluntary 40
41 simplicity associations. On the whole, the existing literature points to the fact that 41
42 these initiatives are rarely inspired by an ethic of mere renunciation and, especially 42
43 in the case of food, a reference to quality, tradition and pleasure is ubiquitous. 43
44 Yet they typically start from a morally-strong notion of choice as responsibility 44

1 and duty rather than from taste (Sassatelli 2006; 2008). We shall thereby draw 1
 2 on a recent empirical research conducted in Italy among critical consumers and 2
 3 activists⁴ to focus on a smaller, but more expedient task for the purposes of the 3
 4 chapter: we shall consider how critical consumers and activists portray SF as 4
 5 an association. We will then get back to the present research and, conversely, 5
 6 consider how SFoodists place themselves in relation to other critical initiatives. 6
 7 This dual focus shall give some hints as to SF's perceived identity within the 7
 8 critical consumerist field. 8

9 SF is widely known in Italy amongst critical consumers and is perceived 9
 10 by activists as a possible partner for future coordinated initiatives, with its 10
 11 appeal mainly arising from both its global reach and resonance and its media 11
 12 expertise. SF's capacity to act as a springboard for a variety of food issues and 12
 13 its entrepreneurial strength are, in other terms, considered valuable by activists 13
 14 who are keen on signalling affinities and differences. Here is a telling quote on SF 14
 15 from a well-known critical consumption campaigner and the founder of one of the 15
 16 earliest alternative purchasing networks from Turin: 16

17
 18 ... [S]ome ideas are similar, don't you think? Like [the discovery and promotion 18
 19 of] local traditions, local agriculture, typical products together with taste ... 19
 20 SF's focus on supporting good practices locally, local culture which is what our 20
 21 solidarity purchasing network does, but there are also many other things for us 21
 22 ... What we do criticize is that at the Hall of Taste there is the risk to get elitarian 22
 23 [sic], just have a look at the prices of the products, of the ticket to get in, too 23
 24 sophisticated things. Yes we are interested in taste, in typical products, but we 24
 25 are also interested in bread, flour, potatoes ... we do have a different approach, 25
 26 there are similarities, but also differences ... (Critical consumption campaigner, 26
 27 author of the main guide to ethical purchasing networks) 27
 28 28

29 Among consumers engaged in one or more form of alternative consumption 29
 30 practices, there is comparatively more suspicion. SF campaigns against taste 30
 31 standardisation and for local specificity and territory clearly resonate with their 31
 32 concerns. But they also brand SF 'different' in that, on the one hand it is concerned 32
 33 only with special products (in their words: 'rare typical products' rather than 33
 34 'ordinary stuff', or 'banal staples' which make up the everyday diet), and on the 34
 35 other hand it is 'not very interested in participation' in the community as a whole 35
 36 ('it's about food, while we do think in broader terms, we do community work'). 36
 37 37

38
 39 4 The research we draw on for these data was managed by one of the authors and 39
 40 conducted between 2003 and 2006, thus largely coinciding with our research on SF. 40
 41 Conducted in Turin, Milan, Bologna and Rome, it is as now the largest qualitative research 41
 42 on the field of critical consumption in Italy, based on 127 narrative interviews with ethical 42
 43 economy NGOs activists and sympathisers, Voluntary Simplicity members, Fair trade 43
 44 campaigners and consumers, members of alternative purchasing networks, and Alterglobal 44
 45 food initiatives campaigners (see Leonini and Sassatelli 2008). 44

1 Quite often, among responsible consumers SF itself is conceived as, by and large, 1
2 'elitist'. 2

3 If we now turn to SF's self-understanding in the broad field of critical 3
4 consumerism, we get a mirrored picture, but also a rebuttal of, the charge of 4
5 elitism. Interestingly, if we look at SF's self-narrative, we see how hedonism and 5
6 elitism are often considered by SF's members as a single, entangled charge when 6
7 accounting for their position: 7

8

9 Elitist, hedonist, you know, we are used to *this accusation*, these words are a 9
10 compact block against SF. If we focus our defense on elitism, they attack us 10
11 on hedonism and vice-versa. I'm bored. That's why I usually try to reject both 11
12 of these critiques in the same sentence. Always anticipate the move of your 12
13 adversary! (SF regional governor, field notes TM 2008, authors' emphasis) 13

14

15 In our interviews, charges of elitism are accounted for via communication 15
16 inefficiencies on SF's side ('we have to better communicate who we are' – 16
17 Coordinator of the Italian Association) or misunderstanding on recipients' side ('a 17
18 dialogue is difficult to build when people don't try to really understand; we feel 18
19 rather disregarded' – *convivium* leader). In both cases such a rhetorical strategy 19
20 helps the organization to handle dissent without triggering conflicts or losing 20
21 potential allies. As well summarized by a *convivium* leader, SFoodists are keen 21
22 on portraying their position as unique but open-minded and receptive: 'we are 22
23 rather alone, but we are not isolating ourselves'. Open-mindedness is coupled with 23
24 awareness – even when they conceive of SFoodists as foodies, they are said to be 24
25 'modern foodies', claiming for themselves a more enlightened, critical role: 25

26

27 [Modern foodies are] not only curious, but also intelligent ... [we] do not look 27
28 for pleasure as such, but for pleasure which is compatible with the environment, 28
29 and with wider social and cultural needs ... now we want to understand where 29
30 the dish comes from. ... We used to organize parties and entertainments, now 30
31 we want to help raise questions about food. (*convivium* leader from Emilia 31
32 Romagna) 32

33

34 Our interviewees are clearly aware that in the eye of other critical initiatives the 34
35 'original sin of SF is its devotion to food pleasure'. A reference to taste, which 35
36 as we saw before, engaged consumers from the critical consumption field, has 36
37 become *the* terrain onto which SF identity evolves. Indeed, many *convivia* across 37
38 Italy still have to work out a fully-fledged eco-gastronomy profile: '[now] the 38
39 discourse is extended to all levels, from enogastronomic, to environmental and 39
40 social issues. But if you talk to the majority of the *convivium* leaders, you realise 40
41 that the enogastronomic area is still the leading one' (Coordinator of the Italian 41
42 Association). Taste and pleasure remain, as we shall argue more extensively later, 42
43 the specific grounds for SF initiatives, but their connotations are shifting. 43

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1 A clear cleavage between the headquarters and the local chapters emerged from 1
 2 our interviews, since a full awareness of the ecological and social fairness strands 2
 3 that are so crucial in the current SF philosophy has yet to reach many chapters 3
 4 in Italy (Sassatelli and Davolio 2010). According to an internal document, the 4
 5 national headquarters urged consistency through a demand that, by 2010, every 5
 6 *convivium* had to be involved in ‘both an educational project and a project towards 6
 7 the protection of its rural community’ via school gardens, farmers’ markets or 7
 8 ethical purchasing networks in order to continue to exist within the SF umbrella 8
 9 (Slowfood 2008). A two-fold process seems to be ongoing, with the international 9
 10 headquarters struggling via management networking on the outside front and 10
 11 command on the inside front to favourably change a public perception of elitism- 11
 12 hedonism constantly reinforced by the ‘old-style’ activities that SF members 12
 13 still promote at the local level, such as speciality food fairs and pricey dinners or 13
 14 tasting tours. 14

15 The spectrum of SF’s synergies mirrors this cleavage in its very structure. 15
 16 Alliances are spreading at the management level, from both a formal (mutual 16
 17 acknowledgement) and an operational point of view, with SF’s most popular 17
 18 representatives invited as keynote speakers at sustainable agriculture conferences 18
 19 in US and Europe, increased cooperation with development NGOs and fair 19
 20 trade associations as regards *Presidia* projects, and SF taking part in national 20
 21 coalitions on ecological issues such as GMOs. Nonetheless, at *convivia* level in 21
 22 Italy, the incorporation of SF in critical consumption networks is slower and more 22
 23 troublesome: SF’s main stakeholders are still local institutions, such as Chambers 23
 24 of Commerce or tourist council offices, as well as trade associations because 24
 25 when it comes to grassroots, ‘the genuine, militant organic or fair trade consumer 25
 26 hardly gets it right about us’ (President of the Foundation for Biodiversity, int. 10). 26
 27 Therefore, although we suggest that SF’s increasingly political investment of food 27
 28 seems to allow for synergies with alternative food networks, some qualifications 28
 29 necessarily apply, as this ‘split’ networking process and set of practices testifies. 29

30 The extent to which SF may be considered ‘critical’ is a vital question in 30
 31 defining how SF places itself in the galaxy of critical consumerism. Many groups or 31
 32 associations in the field of critical consumerism present themselves as alternative 32
 33 and posing a confrontation to capitalist market economies, applying concepts such 33
 34 as ‘solidarity economy’ or ‘participative economy’. When we turn to SF, we see 34
 35 that the critical potential is smoothed by SF transgressing ambivalences. On the 35
 36 organisational front, we see how arguments on food politics often end up building 36
 37 a frame in which ‘slowness’ – around which the whole SF philosophy is built – is 37
 38 set as ‘thoughtful action’ against ‘instinctive, passionate protest not conducive 38
 39 of any improvement’ (Italian SF member, field notes, TM 2008). The following 39
 40 comparison between SF and Jose Bové, a well-known figure for anti-global protest 40
 41 initiatives, the founder of *Confédération Paysanne* and now spokesmen of Via 41
 42 Campesina, powerfully conveys such a frame: 42

43 43
 44 44

1 Bové's movement quickly reached popularity because of those extraordinary 1
2 actions ... On the one side you gain visibility, on the other side you have to 2
3 simplify both what you say and what you want. And we [i.e. SF] have always 3
4 refused to oversimplify ... In my opinion, what most differentiates SF from 4
5 these movements is the strong will we have to slowly, calmly percolate the 5
6 fabric of society. (Director of the SF Study Centre) 6
7 7

8 The SF ideal actions repertoire – 'free from over-ideological defilement, 8
9 sustained instead by feasible solutions' (SF International executive, int. 15) – 9
10 matches another fundamental trait of SF initiatives that lean on capitalist market 10
11 economies and move on a thin ridge between quality certification and social 11
12 change. SF's approach to food production, as we'll detail in the next section, 12
13 fosters a peculiar ambivalence: it aims at creating alternatives to the mechanisms 13
14 and distortions of neoliberal food globalisation partially relying on its same tools 14
15 (from product marketing to large distribution) with results that are at best parallel, 15
16 at worst encompassed by that economic mainframe that SF aims at fighting. This 16
17 lessens SF's confrontation potential and induces hesitancy in partners when critical 17
18 initiatives are to be set. 18

19 On the other side, and turning again to SF's self-reflection, we see that a strong 19
20 sense of singularity permeates SFoodists' understanding of the networking process. 20
21 Looked at with both interest and suspicion, SF hardly finds a strong affinity with 21
22 other critical consumption initiatives in Italy, such as fair trade distribution coops 22
23 (e.g. *Botteghe del mondo*), alternative purchasing networks, voluntary simplicity 23
24 movements (e.g. *Bilanci di Giustizia*), and so on. At the same time, though, 24
25 regardless of its early and deep roots in consumers' defence, it doesn't recognise 25
26 itself as close to Italian consumer's associations, as these are accused by SF to be 26
27 excessively uncritical on the 'best buy' free-market ideology that SF refuses: 27
28 28

29 We are different, even if our battles are similar ... It's a very consumerist world: 29
30 they fight for newspaper price but do not care at all for paper's provenance. 30
31 Quality stands for good price and correct contract, that's all ... Too little indeed, 31
32 nowadays. (President of the Foundation for Biodiversity) 32
33 33

34 As we shall discuss in the next section, SF's profile as a cultural intermediary – 34
35 with both economic and ethical aims, and with a complex organisational structure 35
36 – greatly contributes to its continuous vindication of cultural distinctness, its 36
37 increasing collaboration with NGOs at the highest, international level, and its 37
38 regular, relatively unchanging image at the grassroots level. 38
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1 **Ambivalence and Complexity:**

2 **Slow Food's Transgressions as a Cultural Intermediary**

3
4 To understand SF's political scope on the backdrop of the development of 4
5 alternative and critical consumerism, neither the economic entrepreneurship 5
6 nor the moral stance and ideological appeal of this collective actor should be 6
7 overlooked, as entrepreneurship and morality are actually deeply entangled in 7
8 SF. To a point, this is always true in economic circuits, since economic valuation 8
9 as priced commodity happens on the appreciation of quality as valuable good 9
10 (Sassatelli 2007). However, in the case of SF, what counts as quality refers to a 10
11 universe of values which is explicitly aesthetically and ethically elaborated, and 11
12 which appears to be increasingly shifting towards politics. Janus-faced, SF has 12
13 deployed the same themes and rhetoric over the years to nourish and legitimise 13
14 both its sides. Still this has happened thanks to its complex architecture, which has 14
15 allowed a quite differentiated rendering of themes and rhetoric, as well as giving 15
16 way to conflicting outcomes in terms of public image and available partnerships. 16
17 Framing this organisation as a cultural and economic intermediary in food circuits 17
18 enables us to analyse SF's ambivalences. 18

19 Let's then consider first what actual practices, and second what cultural values 19
20 are conveyed by SF. As we saw, according to Bourdieu's perspective, cultural 20
21 intermediaries qualify goods and shape symbolic practices via their control of 21
22 media resources and techniques. When we turn to SF, we immediately see how the 22
23 headquarters in Bra is at the core of this activity – through the publishing house, 23
24 the events and public relations office and the press area, in charge of reading 24
25 and re-launching facts and opinions in the light of SF approach to food issues. 25
26 Petrini himself acts as a crucial cultural intermediary through his contribution as a 26
27 freelance journalist for nationwide newspapers. What is most interesting about SF, 27
28 though, is the fact that each and every organisational level – not just the national 28
29 staff--is involved in the intermediation activity. Through its diffused practices and 29
30 people (chapter leaders and regional governors) SF is able to identify food items 30
31 as valuable and promote their qualities as values. It identifies and defines products 31
32 that, so its rhetoric goes, deserve to be launched on the market of food excellence 32
33 and sustains them activating a promotional circuit that ranges from members' 33
34 dinners in restaurants owned by SF sympathisers to food fairs, farmers' markets 34
35 or large retail chains (Fonte 2006). Clearly these varied channels entail different 35
36 forms of mediation, from the more personalised ones (such as dinners) to the more 36
37 generalised ones (such as retail chains) wherein consumers directly get to know 37
38 these products without further intermediation (of cooks, experts, etc.). 38

39 Additionally, in contrast to SF romantic imagery, we can draw on the well- 39
40 known cultural industry model proposed by Hirsh (1972 and 2000) to explain 40
41 how innovation (new products but also new markets and marketing strategies for 41
42 existing products) is regulated through a selection process enacted via several 42
43 loops along the SF hierarchical network. Local members and representatives are 43
44 first and foremost talent scouts that act on behalf of SF headquarters in Bra: they 44

1 select and classify products, producers, eateries ('inputs', in Hirsh's words) that
 2 deserve to be 'processed' (qualified) through the SF organisational machine and
 3 then re-introduced as 'outputs' on the market via the communication practices of
 4 SF intermediaries (journalists, editors, packaging experts, event organisers at the
 5 core level, and chapter leaders at the local level, the latter thus playing a double
 6 gate-keeping role).

7 *Presidia* projects offer some of the most fertile ground to analyse not only how
 8 this process works, but also the cultural framework that sustains SF intermediation.
 9 Although SF talent scouts define themselves as 'taste archaeologists' (*convivium*
 10 leader, int. 5), with a label that stresses historical depth, a creative process is
 11 often involved at the selection stage. In fact, as one of our interviewees stated,
 12 'Presidia want to be identity-making products, they fix a reference in taste' (SF
 13 regional governor, int. 3) and to fulfil this criterion – which is fully cultural and
 14 economic at the same time – SF is involved in a complex activity to ensure that
 15 the place-related material culture corresponds to the SF standards. SF talent scouts
 16 and taste makers actually draw on different registers (aesthetic, ethical, historical,
 17 economic), to communicate the legitimacy of their selection. They usually identify
 18 marginal or extinguished food products and draw them out of the inventory of
 19 local foods using what we may call an *authenticity device* that legitimises and
 20 naturalises the product because of its potential links to rich and ancient traditions.
 21 Usually this device is paired with an *emergency device*: what is most authentic is
 22 at risk because of its reliance on a background that is continually perceived by SF
 23 as at stake because of social and cultural transformation. In Italy, this rhetorical
 24 strategy often has to do with a pre-industrial past, somewhat romanticised as more
 25 authentic, and contrasted to industrial produce. This is clearly illustrated by the
 26 following excerpt on the Mortadella *Presidium*:⁵

27
 28 It's a very old recipe: no spices, no preservatives, the colour is duller than the
 29 "normal" Mortadella. We [conducted extensive] research on its origins, we tried
 30 and enjoyed its unusual taste and then asked this producer to start the *Presidium*.
 31 Actually, he's not only a *Presidium* producer. He has other conventional
 32 products, with preservatives and so on, but we managed to convince him to
 33 make some pieces of Mortadella from time to time. (*convivium* leader)

34
 35 Here the work of SF as an intermediary is evident through these small compromises.
 36 Notwithstanding these, the romanticisation of a pre-industrial past guides the re-
 37 discovery of a product identity, and conversely, in this as in other cases, SFoodists
 38 describe their work as talent scouts and gatekeepers by reference to a rhetorical
 39 strategy based on keywords such as 'difference', 'peculiarity', 'tradition' and
 40 'history'. At the core of SF cultural intermediation activity lies a manipulation of

41
 42 5 'Mortadella' is a large Italian cold cut made of pork sausage. A traditional local
 43 specialty of Bologna, in the region of Emilia Romagna and one of its most exclusive
 44 sausages a few centuries ago, nowadays it's a popular, cheap, industrial product in Italy.

1 meanings and memories that proceeds by selecting (enhancing) some features from 1
 2 the economic and social fabric of the territory while downplaying other traits. This 2
 3 is furthered, in our interviews as well as SF documents, by reference to the French 3
 4 notion of '*terroir*' that operates as a synthesis of each and every place-related 4
 5 food specificity, but also as 'a sensibility, a mode of discernment, a philosophy of 5
 6 practice, and an analytical category' (Trubek 2008, 21). This concept was initially 6
 7 used in French wine appreciation to denote the peculiar geographical and human 7
 8 characteristics that bestowed individuality upon the product and was a crucial tool 8
 9 in the AOC system of regulation (Barham 2003; Trubek 2008). Indeed, the concept 9
 10 of *terroir* lies at the very core of the SF gate-keeping activity. We may thus think of 10
 11 it as the key SF deploys to read the local inventory of food and wine products as a 11
 12 valuable heritage, but most of all as the tool that legitimises both the authenticity 12
 13 device and the rhetoric of emergency that has guided SF activities since the Ark 13
 14 of Taste. The 'taste of place' amounts to both a set of operational procedures that 14
 15 refer to it and an overarching rhetorical justification for such characteristics. 15

16 In our interviews the somewhat technical practices that SF promotes vary from 16
 17 classificatory activities such as writing a 'technical' card that introduces a potential 17
 18 *Presidium* product to the Bra headquarters, to packaging design, to the outlining 18
 19 of a marketing strategy for the product. All of them appear indeed in line with an 19
 20 entrepreneurial function, namely choosing a food item that is no longer produced 20
 21 or risks extinction and finding someone that agrees to bring it back to 'market' as 21
 22 in the aforementioned Mortadella case. 22

23 When reflecting on the consequences of this intermediation activity, we see 23
 24 that almost every cultural activity pursued by SF implies considerable economic 24
 25 outcomes and entrepreneurial nuance. From the strong promotional circuit it 25
 26 marshals via the *convivia* dinners and food fairs, to the *Presidia* trademark 26
 27 registered in 2008 designed 'to increase the producers capacity to be identified 27
 28 by the consumers and the safeguard against falsification', as the SF website 28
 29 declares. On the basis of our analysis, in many ways we cannot but agree with 29
 30 historian Victoria de Grazia (2005: 472) that 'SF has flourished because of its 30
 31 good commercial instinct'. Still, as suggested, commercial instinct can be realised 31
 32 in many different ways. SF commercialism was always deeply associated to a 32
 33 particular vision of pleasure, which has been conducive to a shift towards ecology 33
 34 and global justice. However, such a shift is more a layering of initiatives and a 34
 35 widening of rhetorical repertoire than a 'new course' for the association. SFoodists 35
 36 and *convivia* membership stress the continuity: SF is often endorsed for self- 36
 37 promotion or commercial goals⁶ – a successful tool for spreading visibility or a 37
 38 short-cut to niche marketing – as it is for an ideological or ethical commitment. 38
 39 This surely begs the question of SF politics, and in particular of its potential as 39
 40 an alternative force in the market, and ultimately an agent of structural change. 40

41
 42
 43 6 According to a US *convivium* leader, a third out of the 950 New York City members 43
 44 are involved in food business (reported in Andrews 2008, 78). 44

1 Whatever such potential, however, it is clear that now SF presents itself as one 1
2 way to further alternative, responsible consumption and production. 2

3 3

4 4

5 **The Right to Pleasure: Elitist or Universal?** 5

6 6

7 SF can arguably be taken as characteristically middle-class in its dual emphasis 7
8 on aesthetically elaborated and ecologically- and socially-informed consumption 8
9 (Sassatelli and Davolio 2010). But this may or may not entail elitism. If we look 9
10 at the Manifesto presented in 1989 at the founding congress of SF international 10
11 in Paris we see that food is placed in a wide context, which opens the window 11
12 to a broad problematisation of food as a key element of the ‘quality of life’. In 12
13 particular, the Manifesto states that ‘a firm defence of quiet material pleasure is the 13
14 only way to oppose the universal folly of *Fast Life*. In the name of productivity, 14
15 *Fast Life* has changed our way of being and threatens our environment and our 15
16 landscapes. So Slow Food is now the only progressive answer’. The subtitle of 16
17 the Manifesto was ‘International Movement of the Defence of and the Right to 17
18 Pleasure’. The foundational and yet elusive nature of such rights and such pleasure 18
19 has always been stressed by SFoodists as a challenge that allows SF the opportunity 19
20 to continually express its distinctiveness. Folco Portinari (the Manifesto’s writer) 20
21 illustrates this point, acknowledging the ineffable nature of pleasure but also its 21
22 grounding in embodied humanity: 22

23 23

24 Movement of the Defence of and the Right to Pleasure is a deceptively easy 24
25 idea. Pleasure neither provides definite identifying signs nor has a universally 25
26 shared status. It has no rules, it embodies the highest level of subjectivity. [...] 26
27 It can only be approached as an approximation through analogy. But again, its 27
28 mystery comes also from its complex synthetic structure that involves each and 28
29 every sense. (Portinari 2006) 29

30 30

31 Highly arbitrary and potentially selfish with its roots in embodied subjectivity, 31
32 pleasure was nonetheless invoked as a platform for creating a community of feeling 32
33 and intents. To this end it was somehow tamed into a cognitive, consciousness- 33
34 raising device, a human capacity to be polished, worked upon, educated and 34
35 ultimately linked to the very conditions for its furthering both within and without 35
36 the foods to be experienced. In this guise, pleasure becomes a self-reflexive, 36
37 committed, sustained and attentive – *thereby necessarily slow* – appreciation of 37
38 materiality as culture. In other words, reference to a ‘Right to Pleasure’ allows SF 38
39 to paint a particular normative vision of pleasure: pleasure as a distinctively human 39
40 capacity to realise humanity, reaching out beyond a narrowly defined foodism. 40
41 Out of this committed attitude towards food came also a growing attention for 41
42 the conditions of production of food and their effects. Pleasure requires paying 42
43 attention to experience, which may entail paying more for it. Addressing well- 43
44 off consumers in the States, Petrini said that ‘food can’t cost so little. You need 44

1 to be prepared to pay more for quality. We're too used to cheap food. And we 1
 2 need to be eating better-quality food, but less of it' (interview, *New York Times*, 2
 3 26.7.2003). He stays away from elitarian arguments and dresses over-fed Western 3
 4 consumers in a universalistic coat, stating that food must be given more value 4
 5 and adumbrating a general dialectic between quality and quantity. Such rhetoric 5
 6 contributes to the entanglement of commercial and ethical elements, stressing SF's 6
 7 transgressive nature. On the one hand, this discursive strategy is functional to 7
 8 the consolidation of production standards in niche markets, discouraging heavy 8
 9 consumption of quality products and countering their mass production. On the 9
 10 other hand, a vindication of moderation is drawing SF closer to ecological issues 10
 11 and sobriety. Indeed, reference to scarcity, poverty, sustainability, fairness – and 11
 12 even 'de-growth' – is now prevalent in SF official rhetoric as a way to qualify 12
 13 its commitment to eco-gastronomy (see Sassatelli and Davolio 2010). Still, the 13
 14 cleavage between the headquarters and the local level prevents the common 14
 15 ground shared by Petrini and World Champion of de-growth Serge Latouche, from 15
 16 burgeoning into intense collaboration at the grassroots level. 16

17 Let us explore SF transgressions and ambiguities further from the angle of 17
 18 pleasure. SF deploys rhetorical tropes which are marshalled by environmentalist 18
 19 movements to substantiate its core value, the Right to Pleasure. Traces of ecological 19
 20 themes were already present in 1989, but the more SF began to read its initial 20
 21 Manifesto through the notion of eco-gastronomy, the more the environmental 21
 22 element acquired importance: 'given the state to which we have reduced the earth, 22
 23 the gastronome ought to have an environmental conscience and be well informed 23
 24 about ecology' (Petrini 2007: 66). In terms of rhetoric, such a shift implied adding 24
 25 the semantics of the notion of food as a part of endangered nature to the original, 25
 26 core idea of food as a relevant expression of culture through material practices 26
 27 (see Jacobsen 2004). This meant borrowing ecological themes and keywords 27
 28 and adding them to the concept of cultural loss which has characterised the SF 28
 29 emergency discourse on biodiversity since the Ark of Taste. In particular, SF 29
 30 endorsed the environmentalist idea of an incumbent ecological crisis and risk 30
 31 (see also Beck 1992) as well as the utilitarian view of conservation (Soper 1995) 31
 32 whereby nature has to be protected as the most essential resource for humankind. 32
 33 The rhetoric of emergency, though, is not predicated *directly* on environmental 33
 34 premises, but on the reappraisal of pleasure characteristic of SF: 34

35
 36 [W]e quickly realised that the flavours we wanted to save were closely connected 36
 37 to the work of people – of farmers, who with their ancient knowledge are the true 37
 38 custodians of biodiversity and the land. We had this fundamental realisation of 38
 39 the connection between sustainable agriculture and gastronomic culture. (Petrini 39
 40 2004) 40

41
 42 As this excerpt shows, environmental concerns are never voiced as a starting 42
 43 point or in isolation. They are rather framed within a broad, multifaceted notion 43
 44 of quality of life that marries sustainability with conviviality, social fairness for 44

1 producers with individual sensory enjoyment for consumers. The second element 1
 2 in these couplings is what critical consumers, often derogatorily, recognise as SF 2
 3 specificity: the couplings themselves, their internal hierarchies included, are what 3
 4 SFoodists would today define as their distinctiveness. 4

5 SF distinctiveness as predicated on the Right to Pleasure is thus intrinsically 5
 6 ambivalent, drawing links among semantic universes that are more typically 6
 7 separated. The result is a broad rhetorical strategy that links consumption as 7
 8 aesthetic delight with production as rural development. On the one hand, SF 8
 9 actors at both the headquarters and the local level deploy such rhetoric as a 9
 10 selection criterion on the gate-keeping side and as a value-building device on the 10
 11 promotion side. On the other hand, mainly at the headquarters level, this same 11
 12 rhetoric turns into prescriptions on the world dynamics of food which offer SF 12
 13 audiences a template for incorporating sustainability concerns. Aesthetic pleasure 13
 14 and conviviality are enlisted to SF's eco-gastronomical turn through reference to 14
 15 emergency, which in turn translates a feel for the scarcity of quality food and 15
 16 nostalgia for natural produce into support for a downscaling, globally networked 16
 17 localism. This is to be achieved through responsible consumers aware of what lies 17
 18 behind the proliferation of cheap, fast commodities and who are willing to support 18
 19 other ways to articulate production and consumption. 19

20 Recent literature illustrates how reference to emergency lies behind both 20
 21 activists' attention to ethical and political food issues (Soper 2007 and 2008; 21
 22 Thompson and Koskuner-Balli 2007) and middle-class pursuits of aesthetic 22
 23 refinement as distinction (Johnston and Baumann 2009 and 2007; see also Davolio 23
 24 and Sassatelli 2009; Peterson 2005; Warde 2008). In SF rhetoric and practices, 24
 25 these two fronts are mingled in ways that do not allow for a simplistic dismissal 25
 26 of SF as elitist. To be sure, elitism is a charge whose burden SF shares with many 26
 27 actors within critical consumerism, due to a constituency largely made up of 27
 28 middle-class folks in developed countries with enough cultural and economical 28
 29 resources to invest in alternative life projects. And indeed, a middle-class bias 29
 30 remains an SF conundrum when we turn to matters of constituency. A recent survey 30
 31 commissioned by SF Italy among its members is emblematic of the burden SF is 31
 32 still experiencing because of its original eno-gastronomical appeal: 33.8 per cent 32
 33 of the SF interviewees were entrepreneurs, managers or professionals and 40.9 per 33
 34 cent of them held a university degree.⁷ Although middle-class constituency and 34
 35 cultural appreciation of food go hand in hand in painting a picture of self-righteous 35
 36 highbrow alternative consumption in the best case, and selfish hedonism in the 36
 37 worst, we must not ignore the role that a vertical and hierarchical organisation 37
 38 may play in re-orienting SF members' attitude towards consumption, thanks to 38
 39 the educational action of trained chapter leaders on the local level. In fact, as we 39
 40 detailed in the first section, although a strong cleavage between the more politicised 40
 41 41

42 ⁷ The survey was committed by the Italian headquarters to an external survey agency 42
 43 in 2007. The sample consisted of 800 out of the 35,000 Italian members, selected along 43
 44 gender and geographical variables. 44

1 headquarters and the more conservative base exists, the headquarters is committed 1
 2 to shorten the gap via institutional tools (best practice formats, improved internal 2
 3 communications, and also demands). This brings us to focus on the headquarters 3
 4 and consider how SF addresses the elitism issue among its members and likewise 4
 5 consider what specific solutions the organisation appears to have favoured to 5
 6 tackle the dilemmas of scarcity and that of access which are embedded in SF. 6
 7 Indeed, for us, it is arguable that the way a collective actor identifies and addresses 7
 8 the dilemmas of scarcity (and access) are revelatory of the political potential of 8
 9 critical initiatives especially in matters of social inequalities. 9

10 SF has tackled the issues of food sovereignty, scarcity and access in two 10
 11 main ways. First, as suggested, indirectly, through *Terra Madre*, thus acting as a 11
 12 catalyst and a promotion platform of more political initiatives. Secondly, directly, 12
 13 by re-drafting its identity through the notion of eco-gastronomy. Scarcity is here 13
 14 rendered through issues not only of environmental sustainability but also of access 14
 15 and food security. This has triggered a network of changes in the SF approach, 15
 16 including a reworking of taste, implying an adjustment of the quality criterion, 16
 17 which in turn promotes a different outlook towards industrial food. Industrial food 17
 18 was once dismissed by SF as homologated junk food; it is now considered as 18
 19 the new frontier to make SF ideas more accessible and its actions effective on 19
 20 a larger scale. The following excerpt from one of our interviews illustrates this 20
 21 development: 21

22 22
 23 [W]e no longer believe in the idea of an absolute quality. It's like the Einstein 23
 24 theory had been applied to SF posture: we now endorse the idea of a relative 24
 25 quality that depends on many other things, such as time, environment, cultures, 25
 26 responsibility towards producers ... We now face the new challenge of ... 26
 27 collaboration with food industry. We understood that there's a problem, namely 27
 28 the improvement and valorisation of industrial production, because that's what 28
 29 the ordinary table is about ... After all, we want [Presidia] to act as catalysts to 29
 30 raise overall quality. (SF governor) 30
 31 31

32 The food industry, as well as hospital catering,⁸ is identified by SF headquarters as 32
 33 a track to 'ordinary food', both a strategic tool to downplay the charge of elitism 33
 34 and a testing ground for its humanistic idea of pleasure – stressing its universal and 34
 35 democratic potential, as the following provocative quote testifies: 35
 36 36
 37 37
 38 38
 39 39

40 8 In 2007 SF signed a protocol agreement with the Italian Health Ministry aimed at 40
 41 monitoring and improving the quality of food in hospitals, establishing direct links between 41
 42 hospital catering managers, patients and local producers. Likewise, the focus on everyday 42
 43 diet and food education has been reinforced since 2004, when SF embraced school garden 43
 44 projects under the influence of Alice Waters – SF International vice-president and champion 44
 of the sustainable food movement in the United States.

1 Gastronomic pleasures are and should be for all. We work for quality food to 1
 2 be as widespread as possible. For too long gastronomy has had this aura of 2
 3 elitism, of not being serious, of emphasising only the playful and luxurious 3
 4 ... Gastronomic pleasure can be experienced eating *fejoada* in a *favela*: it's a 4
 5 physiological fact, not a luxury of the rich. (Petrini 2004) 5
 6 6
 7 In SF rendering, framing pleasure as a universal right should help to turn taste into 7
 8 a political category and allow an association with its middle-class constituency to 8
 9 reach out of itself. Again, though, this stresses SF's distinctiveness: the category of 9
 10 taste remains the hinge on which this organisation operates in-between commerce 10
 11 to politics, and on which it negotiates its position regarding exclusiveness versus 11
 12 inclusiveness in food practices. 12
 13 13
 14 14
 15 **Conclusions** 15
 16 16
 17 In many ways, our research has shown that SF is contributing to a (re)shaping of 17
 18 contemporary food politics, that it is neither locked into gastronomic conviviality, 18
 19 nor subservient to market forces. SF's evolution has proceeded by working out 19
 20 the concept of food quality, widened to embrace different meanings – aesthetics, 20
 21 ethics, food safety and environment protection – at the same time holding firm 21
 22 the focus on the 'quite material pleasures' invoked in the Manifesto and a sort 22
 23 of 'sensory primacy'. Since visibility started to grow during the mid 1990s, SF 23
 24 came to occupy a particular position in the symbolic space of the politicisation of 24
 25 food consumption. This space is rooted in the vindication of pleasure (sensory and 25
 26 intellectual) as a basis for politics, as Petrini's (in Chapman 2009) crystal clear 26
 27 statement recalls: 'Slow Food wants to reconcile pleasure with duty. Pleasure is a 27
 28 universal right. And responsibility is a universal duty'. 28
 29 We should not be fooled by the language of right, as clearly SF pleasure is 29
 30 highly normative; it contains a picture of what makes people better persons in both 30
 31 mind and body. That is the pursuit of a responsible, aware pleasure, often coded 31
 32 as 'slowness'. This normative view of pleasure is deployed as an *ethical stance* 32
 33 to trace the moral boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate consumption 33
 34 practices, and their relation to the whole food chain. A thick vision of pleasure 34
 35 qualifies mainly SF's relations with consumers. In the concept of 'food quality' 35
 36 promoted by SF, we find a vision of the consumer persona which is remarkably 36
 37 active (a co-producer, in SF lexicon), competent and demanding. Only such a 37
 38 consumer may indeed be able to recognise quality and support it with considered 38
 39 market behaviour. This aesthetic slant to the politicisation of taste brings practical 39
 40 individual training to the fore: the ideal consumer will acquire and improve 40
 41 awareness and competency by repeating the tasting experience, frequenting 41
 42 food producers, reading and travelling around food. These are precisely the 42
 43 activities which support the expertise of the *convivium* leader, who ends acting 43
 44 as a cultural intermediary because of his or her competence as a model-consumer. 44

1 The enhancement of an aesthetic disposition (Bourdieu 1984) towards ‘good food’ 1
 2 is the driving force to increase the consumer’s ecological and social awareness. 2
 3 Depending on the capacity to narrow the gap between headquarters and local 3
 4 chapters, this may consolidate a class privilege shrouded in self-satisfying cosmetic 4
 5 responsibility or on the contrary it may act as a lever toward a more radical and 5
 6 democratic politics of pleasure. 6

7 At the same time, the particular vision of pleasure which SF elaborates acts as 7
 8 an *economic device* when we turn to SF relations with producers. It is deployed by 8
 9 SFoodists as cultural intermediaries during the selective procedures for *Presidia* 9
 10 initiatives, as well as when considering marketing details such as evaluating how 10
 11 much consumers may pay for artisanal food. The latter shows that as an economic 11
 12 device, pleasure also has political implications: the marshalling of an aware 12
 13 consumer may be used to convince producers to stick with high standards, include 13
 14 further ethical specifications and set up a promotional investment supporting 14
 15 *Presidia*. The Director of the Study Centre (int.18), discussing a coffee *presidium* 15
 16 project in Guatemala explains that ‘no one in the cooperative was an expert, a 16
 17 taster, they didn’t know whether to roast the coffee a bit more or some less [...] 17
 18 Our job was then letting them notice and appreciate quality’. Her words illustrate 18
 19 beautifully how pleasure and the idea of ‘training to quality’ via an education of 19
 20 the senses may become a tool towards economic achievements. SF’s view of the 20
 21 consumer starts and ends with pleasure, but a refined, slow pleasure which requires 21
 22 well-cultured and indeed well-meaning producers. In turn, ethical consumption is 22
 23 seen as sustainable, and indeed moral, only if it meets such a view: again, as 23
 24 the director of the Study Centre (int. 18) elaborates: ‘Ethical production makes 24
 25 sense if you can then create a market, something you can succeed in doing if the 25
 26 consumer gets accustomed to that product. And the consumer gets accustomed 26
 27 to the product if and only if he likes it. No ethical reason is enough to bear a bad 27
 28 coffee every morning.’ 28

29 As we can see, there are several possible contradictory trails which cut 29
 30 across SF’s dual investment of pleasure: SF’s reconciliatory view of production 30
 31 and consumption rests on the premise that (small, local) producers produce 31
 32 (sustainable) high quality products, which (well trained) consumers may consume 32
 33 (appreciate and support). All that is included in brackets in this premise is 33
 34 what is indeed continuously disputed, fought about, and which is consequently 34
 35 extremely unstable. The kind of boundary work that SF as cultural intermediary 35
 36 does is precisely that of keeping these bracketed elements in, thereby defining 36
 37 their meaning, relevance and relations. Framing gratification from food as an 37
 38 aesthetic/sensual experience but also as the result of responsible awareness, SF has 38
 39 developed a complex discourse on pleasure, which may risk dualistic outcomes 39
 40 that scholars of consumption are very aware of (with an ethic criterion on the side 40
 41 of consumers and an economic resource on the side of producers) and which posits 41
 42 itself as steering such duality. 42

43 As pointed out, a mix of entrepreneurial strategies and social critique 43
 44 characterises this cultural intermediary and its transgressive nature from its very 44

1 start has represented a clear asset for its international growth. SF discourses 1
 2 embrace the whole food commodity circuit with quite different accents, 2
 3 multiplying the interconnectedness of the tracks that could be outlined. Still, SF's 3
 4 transgression is best defined as *polite*. It is polite as it largely aims at transforming, 4
 5 or better reforming, the market from within, with a humanistic attitude whereby 5
 6 the idea of civilising and educating taste and transforming it into a universalising 6
 7 instrument of social and ethical progress is central. It is polite because the educated 7
 8 taste transforms the refining of pleasure into a positive commitment towards the 8
 9 reformation of consumption. The extent to which this collective actor might 9
 10 be successfully alternative greatly relies on how well it manages to incarnate 10
 11 politeness as a distinctive – but not exclusivist – approach to food economies, 11
 12 fostering alliances between producers and consumers which effectively allow for 12
 13 different, accessible commodity chains to develop. 13
 14 14
 15 15

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Chapter 6

Eating Powerful Transgressions: (Re)Assessing the Spaces and Ethics of Organic Food in the UK¹

Michael K. Goodman

Recent scholarship has begun to assess, explore and critically engage with so-called ‘ethical foodscapes’ (Goodman et al. 2010; see also Jackson et al. 2009). Often mired in the ‘moral turn’ – which has now already been cast as the ‘post-moral turn’ (Barnett et al. 2011) – of geography and the wider social sciences, the moral and ethical a/effects of food, and relational aspects of ‘good foods’ in particular, are coming under increasing scrutiny (e.g. Connell et al. 2008). From ‘animals becoming food’ (Meile and Evans 2010), to the ‘ethical complexes’ of food activists and the media (Freidberg 2004), to the diverse cultures of ethical food consumption (Beagan et al. 2010), to the politics of care in ‘reconnecting’ alternative food networks (Kneafsey et al. 2009; Cox et al. 2013), work is beginning to explore numerous fascinating aspects of the fundamentally embedded moral/ethical *essentialism* of food as well as the ways that food is *being* embedded with moral/ethical meanings and materialities. Over the last two decades, organic foods in particular have been given this treatment through a number of different theoretical and disciplinary lenses (e.g. James 1993; Kaltoft 1999; Guthman 2002, 2003; Lockie 2002; Lockie et al. 2002; Seyfang 2006).

A recent paper by Clarke et al. (2008) has been particularly crucial in developing an intervention and set of arguments in relation to what they call ‘the spaces and ethics of organic food’ in the UK. Here, based on their engagements with a number of individuals working at Riverford Organics, one of the largest organic food box delivery companies in the UK, these authors work to, as they put it,

¹ I would like to heartily thank Ben Coles, Lewis Holloway, Joseé Johnston and Colin Sage for fulsome and very helpful comments on earlier drafts of the chapter; I am truly lucky to have such excellent colleagues willing to take the time to critically engage with my work. I did my best, but many of their excellent suggestions I simply did not have space to develop in the chapter and I hope to do this elsewhere. Thanks also to Janet Goodman for her thoughts on the chapter and especially my portrayals of our family’s organic eating habits. The SOAS London Food Writers’ Workshop thoroughly chewed this chapter over in one of the most intellectually supportive and encouraging of environments I have been party to; specific thanks to Harry West, Anne Murcott, Jakob Klein, Emma-Jayne Abbots, Lizzie Hull, Julie Botticello and Sami Zubaida. And, yes, organic milk does taste better.

1 ... move beyond and ... destabilise [the] too often dichotomised ideas about 1
 2 organic food ... to deconstruct the perceived yawning gap between the 2
 3 supposedly “authentic” and ethical organic food which comes from small- 3
 4 scale, idyllic counter-cultural farms, and the supposedly “mainstream” and 4
 5 less-than-ethical organic food supposedly produced on industrial, corporate but 5
 6 environmentally responsible farms. (Clarke et al. 2008: 221) 6
 7 7
 8 Subsequently, from their research, they argue that, 8
 9 9
 10 ... in the case of Riverford, the space of organic food production and distribution 10
 11 is neither the small, local, counter-cultural farm nor the large, transnational, 11
 12 corporate firm. Rather, simultaneously, the spaces of organic food production 12
 13 and distribution are the national network, the regional distribution system 13
 14 and the local farm. In addition, in the case of Riverford, the ethics of organic 14
 15 food exhibit few grand designs (of environmental sustainability, for example). 15
 16 (Clarke et al. 2008: 219) 16
 17 17
 18 From this, a series of generalised and generalisable arguments about the ethics of 18
 19 organic foods production and consumption are developed: 19
 20 20
 21 ... the ethics of organic food are best characterised as: *ordinary*, since they 21
 22 relate to concerns about taste, value for money, care within the family and so on; 22
 23 *diverse*, since multiple practices steer the production and distribution of organic 23
 24 food; and *graspable*, in that both vegetables and box have material and symbolic 24
 25 presence for consumers. (Clarke et al. 2008: 219, emphasis in original) 25
 26 26
 27 This chapter looks to specifically explore and question – again in the UK – these 27
 28 more generic assertions made by the authors (referred to hereafter as either ‘Clark 28
 29 et al.’ or ‘the authors’) about the spaces and ethics of organic food, especially since 29
 30 several years have passed since the publication of their paper but also because 30
 31 the authors base their generalised conclusions on research carried out with the 31
 32 unique entity of Riverford Organics. This will be done in the light of two different 32
 33 ‘lenses’ that work to come at organic food in the UK from different angles than 33
 34 those used in previous studies. The first lens suggests the need to pull back and 34
 35 contextualise the market for organic foods in the UK in the first instance; in this, 35
 36 how might the assertions about the spaces and ethics of organic foods made by 36
 37 Clarke et al. be (re)assessed if it is acknowledged that the vast majority of organic 37
 38 foods sold in the UK are supplied to and purchased at supermarkets? Given that 38
 39 the majority of consumers – ethical or otherwise – ‘make contact’ with organic 39
 40 foods in UK supermarkets now and also at the timing of the writing of their paper, 40
 41 there are other, and indeed more predominant, spaces and ethics of organic foods 41
 42 in circulation and in need of consideration when asserting their generalised spatial 42
 43 and moral economies. 43
 44 44

1 The second lens involves ‘looking through the eyes’ of the consumers of 1
 2 organic foods, a perspective which Clarke et al. confess they are unable to address 2
 3 despite their general conclusions *about* organic food consumption and consumers 3
 4 as related above.² In this chapter, I do this by writing my family’s engagements 4
 5 with organic food and organic food shopping, ‘into’ this account of organic food, 5
 6 food consumption and food ethics. This discussion builds on the growing trend of 6
 7 ‘autobiography’ in the social sciences that uses personal experiences, especially 7
 8 around questions of affect and ethics, as a form of data and as one more way to 8
 9 breakdown the subject/object dualism in academic writing that provide first-hand 9
 10 accounts of events, emotions and experiences (Moss 2001; Butz and Besio 2009; 10
 11 Longhurst 2011; see also, for example, Warren and Berry 2009; Lorimer 2010; 11
 12 Soderstrom 2011).³ 12

13 Overall, this chapter looks to do its own ‘destablisation’ and/or ‘filling in’ of 13
 14 the arguments put forward by Clarke et al. through their work with one particular 14
 15 organic food business/institution in the UK in the form of Riverford Organics. 15
 16 Using a more contextualised approach to organic foods in the UK, what I wish 16
 17 to do here is re-open the three intertwined questions originally put forward 17
 18 by Clarke et al. which asks: ‘What do organic food networks try to do for us, 18
 19 and what could they do, or should they do for us?’ (p. 221), and ‘What are the 19
 20 ethics of organic foods?’ (p. 223). More specifically though, this chapter seeks to 20
 21 explore the following questions: *how*, in what *ways*, and for *whom* are the ethics 21
 22 of organic foods ‘ordinary’, ‘diverse’ and ‘graspable’?⁴ It is my contention here 22
 23 that the massive ‘transgression’ of supermarkets into the market for organic foods 23
 24 matters in substantial and multitudinous ways, not least for the ways in which 24
 25 we consider the spaces and ethics of organics in the UK. I also want to assert 25
 26 that ‘transgressions’ into the realms of the personal through autobiography is one 26
 27 increasingly important way of not only ‘writing ourselves in’ to food and food 27
 28 studies, but can render useful insights into the a/effects of (organic) food. 28

29 I continue as follows. First, I discuss the state of the market for organic foods in 29
 30 the UK and what this might mean for the understandings of the spaces and ethics of 30
 31 organic food. Second, I use my family’s own ‘spaces and ethics of organic foods’ 31
 32 32

35 2 Thus, the ‘practices’ of the spaces and ethics that Clarke et al. are at pains to 35
 36 empirically explore here only include those of production and distribution through the lens 36
 37 of one food box producer without the benefit of speaking to or engaging food box or any 37
 38 other type of organic consumers either in person or through other published sources. 38

39 3 This is especially in the case of work on food (e.g. Guthman 2008; Longhurst et al. 39
 40 2009; Hayes-Conroy 2010; Carolan 2011; Longhurst 2011) and other commodity cultures 40
 41 (Cook et al. 2004). 41

42 4 Another important question Lewis Holloway asked in reviewing this chapter was 42
 43 ‘what do organic foods do *to* us?’ i.e. how and in what ways do organic foods construct us 43
 44 and/or all us into being as consumers? Many thanks to Lewis for this theoretically knotty 44
 44 question that needs to be pursued elsewhere. 44

1 – as well as current research and statistics on organic food consumption⁵ – to work
 2 to interrogate the characteristics that Clarke et al. use to describe and analyse the
 3 spaces and ethics of organic foods from their research with Riverford. In this, I
 4 seek to explore the related and/or different ways that organic foods are ordinary
 5 and graspable (or not) from our own perspective as predominantly supermarket
 6 shoppers of organic foods suggests to me the need to excavate, situate, and
 7 complicate the spaces and ethics of organic foods in the UK. I end with a series
 8 of questions for further work on the organic food market in the UK and beyond.

10
 11 **(Pro)Found(ly) in the Supermarket:**
 12 **The ‘Conventionalisation’ of UK Organic Consumption**

13
 14 It almost goes without saying that supermarkets have a great influence over what
 15 we eat, why and how, in addition to their powerful influence over food supply
 16 chains. Geographers and others (e.g. Wrigley 1998; Friedberg 2003; Blythman
 17 2004; Tallontire and Vorley 2005; Wrigley and Lowe 2007) have documented this
 18 and, in particular, the concentration of food retailing power into the hands of a
 19 few key firms at a global scale, for some time now. For example, in 2011, just four
 20 firms controlled approximately 75 per cent of the market for all food in the UK
 21 with one retail firm in particular (Tesco) controlling close to 30 per cent of the total
 22 food market (Grocerynews.com 2012).

23 What is seemingly less well known is the level of involvement and control that
 24 supermarkets have over the so-called ‘alternative food networks’ (Goodman et al.
 25 2012) of both fair trade and organic foods and goods. With the UK as the largest
 26 fair trade market in the world in 2011 (topping £1 billion in sales), Sainsbury’s
 27 is the world’s largest retailer of fair trade goods at £276 million in 2010, with
 28 hopes to get to £500 million by 2015 (*The Independent* 2011). As Barrientos and
 29 Smith (2007) have documented, in the form of supermarket own-label brand fair
 30 trade goods, this is having or has the potential to have profound effects on the
 31 transparency, direct-ness and power relations of fair trade networks:

32
 33 Supermarket own brand Fair Trade has brought it further into the ambit of the
 34 more conventional agrofood system and potentially enhanced the power that
 35 supermarket buyers can exert within Fair Trade networks. This is compounded
 36 by an anomaly in the FLO system that allows supermarkets to use the FLO
 37 mark on their own brand products without having to become a licensee, due to
 38 the fact they outsource packing and labeling. Since supermarkets are therefore

39
 40
 41 ⁵ Other recent work on the cultures of organic food consumption and shopping
 42 include excellent interventions by Joséé Johnston and her colleagues (Johnston and Baker
 43 2005; Johnston 2008; Johnston and Bauman 2010; Johnston et al. 2011; Johnston and
 44 Szabo 2011), as well as that by Bean and Sharp (2011), Chinnici et al. (2002), Cicia et al.
 (2002), Makatouni (2002) and Roe (2006).

1 not necessarily bound by Fair Trade rules and regulations, their suppliers are 1
 2 potentially being exposed to the types of practices and pressures that exist in 2
 3 conventional production networks (103). ... [Moreover, d]irect contact between 3
 4 supermarket buyers and Fair Trade producers is rare. Some supermarkets 4
 5 actively resist relationships being developed between supermarket buyers and 5
 6 producers by rotating staff frequently between product sectors, which makes it 6
 7 difficult to take a process approach in line with the development objectives of 7
 8 Fair Trade producers. (Barrientos and Smith 2007: 119) 8
 9 9

10 More importantly for this chapter, though, the organic foods market is even more 10
 11 concentrated than that for fair trade goods with over 71.4 per cent of organic food 11
 12 sales in the UK coming from supermarkets in 2011, with, also in 2011, over 50 per 12
 13 cent of this market held by Tesco (27.1 per cent) and Sainsbury's (23.6 per cent) 13
 14 (Soil Association 2012). In addition, approximately 30 per cent of organic food 14
 15 supplied and consumed in the UK is imported – a figure that has dropped from 70 15
 16 per cent from five years ago – and this is mostly of items such as bananas, coffee 16
 17 and tea that cannot be produced in the UK (Next Generation Food 2012; see also 17
 18 Raynolds 2004). Major food conglomerates, for example, in the form of Horizon 18
 19 Organic Dairy, Dean Foods and now Groupe Lactalis⁶ have made substantial 19
 20 headway into the UK organic dairy market – the largest sector of the organic 20
 21 market at almost 30 per cent of total sales – through the acquisition of Rachel's 21
 22 organic milk and yoghurt, the UK's first certified organic dairy farm (Goodman et 22
 23 al. 2012; Soil Association 2012). 23

24 Thus, to my mind, any sort of generalised analysis and set of arguments about 24
 25 organic foods need to *start* from the fact that the *predominant* spaces and ethics 25
 26 of organic foods in the UK are and have been thoroughly and unequivocally 26
 27 'supermarketised' and 'corporatised'. Moreover, the spaces and ethics of organic 27
 28 food production and consumption in the UK must be understood – or, at the very 28
 29 least, *considered* – through this lens given that the vast majority of organic farmers 29
 30 and eaters either sell to or get their organic foods from supermarkets. This does 30
 31 not negate the analysis of Clarke et al.; rather, it suggests that *the majority* of the 31
 32 spaces and ethics of organic food in the UK – both quantitatively and qualitatively 32
 33 in this more contextualised perspective – are quite varied and differently practiced 33
 34 by the *vast majority* of organic growers and consumers in the UK than the authors' 34
 35 analysis of Riverford suggests. 35

36 In a very tangible way, then, the ordinariness of the ethics of organic foods 36
 37 – the fact that they are about taste, value for money and care within the family 37
 38 (p. 219)⁷ – has been and is *a function* of the increased access to and visibility 38
 39 of organic foods as they have moved into the spaces of and been colonised by 39
 40 40

41 6 This is the largest dairy products group in the world and the company that owns 41
 42 Danone, Sorrento, Société, Bridel, Président, and Valmont, in addition to Rachel's Organic. 42
 43 It is owned by the Belgian conglomerate known as BSA International. 43

44 7 Interestingly, the environmental benefits of organic food production and/or any 44

1 supermarkets and corporations over the last 10 years.⁸ Supermarkets have, 1
 2 consequently, played a crucial role in the ‘ordinary making’ of organic foods, 2
 3 in terms of both ethics and spaces, in the UK. Given these developments, one 3
 4 of the key ordinary ethical characteristics of UK organic foods must surely be 4
 5 that of value creation with supermarkets as the dominant players in the organic 5
 6 foods market. In short, profit and capital accumulation should be considered as 6
 7 equally, if not more, ‘ordinary’ in organic food networks. Moreover, one of the 7
 8 key ordinary spaces of organic foods is not only that of global capital in the form 8
 9 of supermarkets and global firms, but also the spaces of the international given 9
 10 the fact that a continuing substantial portion of organic foods in the UK are still 10
 11 imported from abroad.⁹ These predominantly – and thus in my formulation here, 11
 12 ordinarily – supermarketised, corporatised and internationalised spaces and ethics 12
 13 of organic foods have consequences for growers: as we have put it in talking 13
 14 about the effects of the post-2008 recession on organic markets (Goodman et al. 14
 15 2012: 98), organic products have reportedly been ‘crowded out’ by value-ranges 15
 16 and producers have been ‘squeezed’ to accept lower prices and pay for product 16
 17 promotions and shelf space given that in store ‘... shelf space for organics is 17
 18 subject to supermarkets’ marketing strategy and profit targets, just as it is for any 18
 19 other product range’. Thus, another supermarket-related ethic rears its ‘ordinary’ 19
 20 head here: this is the embedded ethic of competition in tightly controlled and 20
 21 recession-related shrinking markets for organics; these increasingly competitive 21
 22 conditions, then, dictate the ways and means by which organic food markets in 22
 23 the UK operate and, in effect, dictates which firms, supply chains, companies and 23
 24 farmers then become a part of and *construct* the ordinary ethics of, as Clarke et al. 24
 25 put it, ‘taste, value for money, care within the family and so on’ (p. 219) for the 25
 26 preponderance of organic consumers in the UK. 26

27 This supermarketisation of organic foods similarly qualifies the claims of 27
 28 the ‘diversity’ of the ethics and indeed, spaces of organic foods as argued by the 28
 29 authors (p. 219).¹⁰ In short, although organic product lines themselves might be 29
 30 diversifying, the spaces of organic food retail are seemingly doing no such thing 30
 31 with 50 per cent of the market in the hands of just two supermarket firms for some 31
 32 time now; indeed, according to the Soil Association (2012) box schemes included 32
 33 33

34 notions of care about environments are not considered as an important ordinary concern for 34
 35 consumers in Clarke et al.’s analysis. 35

36 8 The ‘ordinaryification’ of organic food is not just simply because they are normal 36
 37 fare at supermarkets but that goods like organic milk can now be found at fast food 37
 38 restaurants like McDonald’s. As the Soil Association (2012) reports, all the milk in all of 38
 39 the tea and coffee sold at McDonald’s in the UK is organic from UK organic dairy farms, 39
 40 with 2011 seeing a 9 per cent increase in demand from the company. 40

41 9 Indeed, more recently, even Riverford Organic imports various parts of its food box 41
 42 from farms it owns in France (Goodman et al. 2012: 99). 42

43 10 Diversification is one of the hallmarks of post-Fordist, neo-liberal capitalism – 43
 44 often used to obscure the concentration of ownership – and not necessarily progressive. 44
 44 Many thanks to Joséé Johnston for alerting me to this important point. 44

1 only 10 per cent of the organic market with Abel and Cole and Riverford having 1
 2 by far the largest chunks of this market as noted ‘mega’ organic box suppliers. The 2
 3 spaces of organic food, from the perspective of the ordinary retail and shopping 3
 4 encounter at least, are anything *but* diverse. 4

5 The same seems to go for the ‘diverse ethics’ that the authors argue inhabit 5
 6 the ‘... multiple practices [that] steer the production and distribution of organic 6
 7 food’ (p. 219). I do accept that there is a diversity of ethics motivating the 7
 8 practices of organic foods: For Riverford it is about a great deal more than those 8
 9 of environmental sustainability – including, for example, pleasure and business 9
 10 success. Other research,¹¹ has highlighted how organic production can be about 10
 11 care and sustainability through socio-ecological reconnections (e.g. Kneafsey 11
 12 et al. 2009; see also Goodman and Goodman 2001), eco-modernisation and 12
 13 entrepreneurialism (Marsden and Smith 2005), globalised ‘ecological citizenship’ 13
 14 (Seyfang 2006) or what Puig De La Bellacasa (2010) calls ‘alter-biopolitical 14
 15 interventions’. Yet, what is becoming clear is that the ethics of the practices related 15
 16 to organic food distribution are seemingly now not just controlled by supermarkets 16
 17 but, as stated above, also predominantly characterised by the ethics of competition, 17
 18 value generation and profit. Here, as organics have moved into the mainstream – 18
 19 what Johnston et al. (2009) refer to as the novel ‘corporate-organic foodscape’ 19
 20 – the diversity of ethics that have seemed to animate organic foods from their 20
 21 previous movement-oriented, grander ‘hippy’ days focused on transformation and 21
 22 structural changes to the food system are being ‘squeezed’ and ‘crowded’ out in 22
 23 the hyper-competitive and recession-fuelled environments of the ordinary spaces 23
 24 of the supermarket. As the Soil Association (2012: 4) put it in their latest market 24
 25 report on organics, there are now ‘[c]ontinuing cuts by nearly all the retailers in 25
 26 ranges and shelf space, reducing choice and availability. Some have gone in just 26
 27 27

28 28
 29 29
 30 11 As Clarke et al. (pp. 226–227) show us in their deconstruction of the marketing 30
 31 materials and customer newsletters of Riverford, the promotion of the reconnection and 31
 32 connection of customers and their food through ‘disseminated knowledge’ of the items in 32
 33 the food box (e.g. Rhubarb) through these materials and newsletters is done through the 33
 34 language of the ‘pleasures’ of these foods; thus, for them this is about a ‘refetishisation’ of 34
 35 these food items that is ‘desirable when the purpose is to raise political consciousness’ and 35
 36 ‘move organic food into the mainstream’. Surprisingly, in conjunction with these statements 36
 37 in their paper, they cite my work (e.g. Bryant and Goodman 2004; Goodman 2004) as 36
 38 an example of writing that has argued, as they put it, that ‘refetishisation is *essentially* 37
 39 undesirable’ as a way to distinguish their arguments from my own. I signal this here to 38
 40 say that attributing these arguments to me is a complete mis-interpretation and/or mis- 39
 41 representation of what I said and that, moreover, I have said absolutely nothing of the sort 40
 42 in the context of fair trade marketing. Rather, I have shown and argued, I thought quite 41
 43 clearly, that refetishisation as a process can and does work to the advantage of poor farmers 42
 44 (the idea of them ‘seizing the fetish’) by potentially raising the political consciousness of 43
 45 consumers as well as being one of the key strategies of moving it into the mainstream by 44
 46 making fair trade a ‘quality’ product; see Goodman (2010) for further elaboration. 44

1 three years from positive ‘choice editing’ (offering only organic options on some 1
2 lines) to negative choice denial (offering no organic option at all)’ 2

3 Additionally, but not so surprisingly, as Johnston et al. (2009) have shown in 3
4 Canada, many of the more radical ‘food democracy’ discourses and images of the 4
5 past are being incorporated into the tropes of supermarkets and corporate-organic 5
6 foodscapes. As they have documented and argued, 6

7
8 Images and messages associated with place, locality, and “real” producers do 8
9 seem compatible with food democracy ideals, yet become more problematic 9
10 when we consider how these messages have been produced within a corporate 10
11 foodscape designed to maximize profitability through long-distance commodity 11
12 chains, economies of scale, and centralized corporate control. The corporate 12
13 vision necessarily sees food as a commodity, or in other words, a vehicle for the 13
14 accumulation of value. (Johnston et al. 2009: 525) 14
15

16 Thus, in regard to distribution, retailing and the cultural politics of organic 16
17 foods in the UK, there is now much less material and cultural ‘airspace’ for 17
18 the kinds of dichotomies of ‘small, authentic and ethical organic equals good’ 18
19 versus ‘large, unethical, industrial organic equals bad’ that Clarke et al. worry 19
20 about destabilising.¹² Supermarkets have seemingly taken over the narrative and 20
21 ‘real’ spaces of organic supply chains, and so now have the power to shape these 21
22 narratives, ethics and spaces of much of the UK organic food market in their own 22
23 ethical and value-generating image. 23

24 The so-called ‘graspability’ of the spaces and ethics of organic foods also 24
25 needs to be qualified in the context of the supermarketisation of organics in the 25
26 UK. As the authors argue (p. 227), the graspability of the ethics of organic foods – 26
27 their physical and material presence of ‘difference’ and ‘difference making’ – are 27
28 articulated through the practices, performances and symbolisms of the delivered 28
29 food box itself and the food items on offer in the box as people prepare and eat 29
30 them. This is not in dispute here for the authors’s particular case, but rather that 30
31 this experiential, material and ethical graspability of organic foods is simply 31
32 *not* the case, again, for the vast majority of organic food consumers in the UK. 32
33 Instead, the graspability of the ethics of organic foods are not only predominantly 33
34

35 12 In many ways, the – as they put it – ‘too often dichotomised ideas about organic 35
36 food’ is an utterly straw argument that allowed them to make many of the conceptual 36
37 and theoretical claims about UK organic foods that they do through their work with 37
38 Riverford; indeed in much of the writing before and since the publication of the Clarke 38
39 et al. paper, academic writers, at least, have worked hard to point out the problems with 39
40 these dichotomies, especially in their normative calculations about the scale of organic 40
41 food production, and, in addition, also done so from the consumerist perspective missing 41
42 from their own paper; see, amongst others, Allen et al. (2003) Allen (2004), DuPuis and 42
43 Goodman (2005), Goodman (2004), Goodman et al. (2010), Guthman (2003), Guthman 43
44 (2004), Holloway et al. (2007), Illbery and Maye (2005), Johnston and Baker (2005) 44
45 Johnston et al. (2009) and Johnston et al. (2011). 45

1 *made* possible through the materialities and symbolologies of more ‘ordinary’ and 1
 2 ‘everyday’ supermarket shopping, these are, by far, *the* dominate pathways to 2
 3 the graspable ethics and ethical actions embedded in organic foods. For instance, 3
 4 instead of the visible symbol of the food box and the ways that the food in the 4
 5 box – covered with dirt, loose in the box and perhaps un-chosen and/or unfamiliar 5
 6 in what they are and how they should be prepared – supermarket organics are 6
 7 required to be up to the same visual and quality standards of conventional items, 7
 8 they offer up similar or parallel choices to conventional products, and are most 8
 9 likely carted away and brought into the house in plastic carrier bags (or those re- 9
 10 usable bags supplied by the consumer). Thus, what I want to suggest here is that 10
 11 there is a much different kind of (ordinary?) materiality and practiced graspability 11
 12 at work in the majority of the spaces and ethics of organic food in the UK for the 12
 13 majority of organic food consumers who operate outside of box delivery schemes 13
 14 such as Riverford. Indeed, for many, the ethics of organics have, in a way, become 14
 15 even *less* material and graspable, or at least graspable in a much more spectacular 15
 16 and different way, through the use of online shopping and home delivery of 16
 17 organic foods as part and parcel of a much bigger shop and as attached to the more 17
 18 ordinary ways we ‘spend and get’ in the context of food. A final point to make here 18
 19 is that the mainstreaming of organics into supermarkets has meant that organic 19
 20 foods – as consumable goods – are more graspable to a larger number of different 20
 21 people and, in particular, different socio-economic groups in the UK over time, 21
 22 although this too has been effected by the recession and is substantially dominated 22
 23 by upper-income groups. The Soil Association (2012: 6) puts it this way: 23
 24

25 Organic food and drink continue to have a broad appeal. Eight out of ten 25
 26 households (83%) bought organic products [in 2011].¹³ On average consumers 26
 27 bought organic products 13 times during the year, compared to 14 times in 2010. 27
 28 The appeal of organic products extends across the social spectrum but a tough 28
 29 year economically has put a particular squeeze on lower-income households. 29
 30 Consumers on higher incomes accounted for 71% of spending on organic 30
 31 products in 2011, compared to 67% in 2010. Those in the C2, D and E social 31
 32 groups – which cover manual and casual workers, pensioners, students and 32
 33 people on benefits – accounted for 29% of spend, compared to 33% the previous 33
 34 year. 34
 35

36 To add to this, the report states that there has been a 16 per cent growth in organic 36
 37 sales at the two dominate discount retailers in the UK (Lidl and Aldi) and because 37
 38

39
 40 13 Although, quite problematically, what is not relayed in the report are the differential 40
 41 market-sizes/-values for the different income groups, thus the by-line of ‘eight out of ten 41
 42 consumers bought organic foods in 2011’ does not at all say how much each of these eight 42
 43 out of ten purchased over the year nor which socio-economic group they belonged to; my 43
 44 guess is that by value, most purchases over the year were substantially carried out those in 44
 45 higher income groups.

1 of this it shows a ‘... continuing appeal of organic food across the social spectrum’ 1
 2 (Soil Association 2012: 6). While this latter point is, I think, a mis-interpretation 2
 3 of what is happening – instead of poorer households buying more organic foods 3
 4 at Lidl and Aldi, it is more middle- and upper-income organically-predisposed 4
 5 shoppers who are shopping at these two stores as the recession has deepened in 5
 6 the UK – that one-third of organic consumers come from lower-income groups is, 6
 7 I think, a firm testament to this supermarketisation of organic food through lower 7
 8 prices, increased access and diversified product lines. 8

9 What has happened, to make several wider point here, is that for the majority of 9
 10 organic food consumers, and indeed, ordinary consumers in the UK, there has been 10
 11 a kind of ‘conventionalisation’ of organic food consumption (cf. Buck et al. 1997) 11
 12 given that the predominant places we come into contact with organics has shifted 12
 13 into supermarket aisles, check-out counters and online shopping environments 13
 14 over the last decade. This conventionalisation of organic food consumption – 14
 15 facilitated, promoted and constructed by the wider supermarketisation of organic 15
 16 food supplies, sales and cultural politics – means a great deal to any (re)evaluation 16
 17 of the spaces and ethics of organic foods in the UK. First, the spaces of organic 17
 18 food are overwhelmingly and thoroughly corporatized, global and international, 18
 19 but also still quite local as supermarkets have taken on the tropes of ‘local’ and 19
 20 ‘authentic’ into their marketing and self-presentation of organic foods as shown in 20
 21 Johnston et al.’s (2009) research. The predominant spaces of organic food in the 21
 22 UK then are those controlled and operated by supermarkets which are then, also, 22
 23 the spaces through which the majority of organic foods are sold and purchased and 23
 24 so the prevailing space in which consumers come into contact with organic foods in 24
 25 the UK. Second, again, given the predominance of supermarket involvement in all 25
 26 aspects of the organic food market the ethics of organic foods are perhaps ordinary, 26
 27 diverse and graspable but, as highlighted above, not in the ways or through the 27
 28 processes put forward as generally indicative as seen through the rather narrow 28
 29 lens of Riverford’s box scheme. Indeed, and carrying forward my arguments in 29
 30 the chapter, Clarke et al.’s assumptions about the ethics of organic food from the 30
 31 perspective of the consumer and, principally, consumers’ engagements with and 31
 32 co-constructions of the spaces and ethics of organic foods, need to also be further 32
 33 re-evaluated and qualified. I do this now through an engagement with my family’s 33
 34 shopping, purchasing, preparation and eating of organic foods. The crucial point 34
 35 here, and one I will return to below and in the conclusion, is that assessments of 35
 36 the spaces and ethics of organic foods must be, *in the first instance*, historicised, 36
 37 situated and contextualised. 37

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 44 44

1 Through the Eyes and Words of the Conventionalised Consumer(s):	1
2 How My Family Practices and Eats in the (Supermarket) Spaces	2
3 and Ethics of Organic Foods	3
4	4
5 Aspects of my family's engagements with organic foods resonates with the	5
6 generalised conclusions about the spaces and ethics of organic foods articulated	6
7 by Clarke et al. but, to a much greater extent they do not, particularly in the rather	7
8 simplistic ways they suggest in their paper. Our entanglements with organic foods,	8
9 such as they are, have shifted over time as our family composition (i.e. one child	9
10 to two), residential location and tastes have changed and have been shaped by	10
11 our ability and desire to access and purchase most of our groceries from various	11
12 supermarkets (Waitrose, Sainsbury's and Aldi) as well as our local, independent	12
13 farmshop known as Wingroves. While writing about our own practices of organic	13
14 food consumption might be seen as the worst form of self-indulgence or narrowly	14
15 ideographic, what I want to suggest here is that our experiences and practices	15
16 probably come closer to those of other organic food consumers and eaters in the	16
17 UK – albeit those embedded in a white, middle-class lifestyle like ours – than	17
18 those generalised from Clarke et al.'s take on the experiences and practices of	18
19 consumption through their engagements with Riverford. Below, I explore our own	19
20 spaces of organic foods first, through some general discussion, then get into our	20
21 ethics of organic foods and parse this into two of the three aspects – ordinary	21
22 and graspable – that the authors argue as inhabiting and making up the ethics of	22
23 organic foods and their consumption in the UK.	23
24	24
25 <i>Tripping the Supermarket Fantastic:</i>	25
26 <i>Scaling Organic Food Shopping and Consumption</i>	26
27	27
28 Our spaces of organic food in habit and cross all the scales that UK organic foods	28
29 inhabit and cross: from the international and national in the form of supermarkets,	29
30 to the local in that the supermarkets and farmshop we frequent are spatially	30
31 proximate, to, finally, the domestic space of our home as we order groceries online	31
32 to have them delivered to our front door. Our organic food spaces are only regional	32
33 through the regionally labelled foods we purchase, such as the organic lamb from	33
34 Daylesford farm in Gloucestershire purchased about a month ago that we ate as	34
35 part of an evening meal. I assume that the organic milk we drink is also relatively	35
36 regionally produced given that it is expensive for fresh milk to travel very far and	36
37 regional milk-sheds are seemingly already well-embedded in the foodscape given	37
38 the history of milk production in the UK. The truth is with the milk – since it is	38
39 not regionally labelled and is usually from Rachel's Organic given that, as my	39
40 partner puts it, their milk is 'cheaper and better tasting' than other brands – I have	40
41 little idea about its provenance. Nor do we as a family really care all that much	41
42 about where it comes from, i.e. its spatial relationships to us, as the most important	42
43 thing about our milk is that it is simply organic as my partner is 'grossed out' if	43
44 we don't have it and organic milk 'tastes better and is of better quality' across the	44

1 board compared to conventional milk.¹⁴ Our local farmshop milk, while indeed 1
 2 regionally sourced and produced on a farm in Harefield – about a 20 minute drive 2
 3 from us – and certainly very tasty, is not organic so we only buy and drink it when 3
 4 we run out of the organic milk we get from the supermarket. 4

5 Our organic food space is one of shared labour, experience and output, all 5
 6 of which has changed over family time and space. Indeed, as we are now in the 6
 7 summer holidays at the time of writing this chapter, most of our organic food space 7
 8 has been that of the home, as we prefer not to have to take the children shopping 8
 9 and so have been having groceries delivered to the house after purchasing them 9
 10 online through Ocado, the main delivery service for Waitrose, an up-market 10
 11 supermarket chain that is part of the John Lewis retail empire. Online shopping 11
 12 has become part of our routine after the birth of our second child as neither of 12
 13 us had the time and energy to physically go to the supermarket nor virtually any 13
 14 local shop to buy groceries. In general, for me, my own organic spaces, at least 14
 15 conscious ones, are those of the local supermarket – either Sainsbury's or Aldi 15
 16 as we don't do physical shopping at Waitrose – the farmshop which I do a bit of 16
 17 shopping at on the weekends, or through the labelled products that we buy and use 17
 18 to cook with. 18

19 Thus, our spaces of organic foods are dictated and contextualised by how much 19
 20 money we want to spend (do we get an Ocado/Waitrose delivery or do I/we go to 20
 21 Aldi/Sainsbury's in order to save money?), our desire to have good tasting foods 21
 22 for us and the children, the rhythms and routines of the day and work week and the 22
 23 serendipitous shopping that goes along with this, who does and is able to do the 23
 24 shopping as well as cooking, what might need to be restocked and, of course, what 24
 25 we might want for dinner that night. In essence, for us, the spatialised practices 25
 26 and experiences of organic food are quite 'local' – as we shop local and/or buy 26
 27 online – but do indeed materially cross scales as we do most of our shopping 27
 28 at supermarkets that are national, regional and international in the spaces they 28
 29 inhabit and access supplies from. At the same time, these are also very much 29
 30 embodied spaces and so intimate and visceral (e.g. Goodman 2011; Hayes-Conroy 30
 31 and Hayes-Conroy 2010; see also FitzSimmons and Goodman 1998) in relation 31
 32 to concerns of taste, ingestion and cleanliness vis-à-vis foods like conventional 32
 33 milk. Thus, the point here is that our spaces of organic foods are multiple and 33
 34 contextualised in our lifestyle and livelihood socio-economic relations but also 34
 35 distinctly scale- and space-crossing – all the way down to our bodies and visceral 35
 36 affects – rather than either distinctly regional or dichotomised into spatial and 36
 37 normative 'containers' of local and authentic versus global and corporate. The 37
 38 spaces of organic foods are importantly not just about scale and place but are also 38
 39 39

40
 41 14 For us, the environmental-friendliness of organic food forms more of the 40
 42 'background noise' for the reasons for its purchase in that this jostles alongside our concerns 41
 43 about cost, taste, and diet; it is one of the reasons we do buy organic when we can, but 42
 44 is now more a part of our collective sub-conscious given organic mainstreaming and the 43
 44 diversification of organic food products, brands and access. 44

1 about the other ways that these spaces are constructed and bounded through family, 1
 2 gender and social relations within our – and others’ – family’s daily routines of 2
 3 getting, spending and working. 3

4 4
 5 ‘We would go broke if we only ate organic foods’: 5

6 *Ordinary Organic Food Consumption, but for Whom?* 6

7 7

8 Are our ethics in relation to organic foods ‘ordinary’, i.e. about taste, value 8
 9 for money and care within the family, in the sense that the authors refer to the 9
 10 ordinary ethics of organic foods? Unequivocally, the answer for us is a resounded 10
 11 ‘yes’, with value for money leading the way as the quote from my partner 11
 12 opening this section shows, but also very much about care and the visceralities 12
 13 of taste.¹⁵ Indeed, that organic foods are and can be about value for money is 13
 14 a clear testament to their supermarketisation and increased access for more and 14
 15 different eaters. Complicating this, however, our ‘yes’ is mostly for those goods 15
 16 we deem as important to have as organic, such as meat, milk, eggs and yoghurt, 16
 17 rather than *everything* we eat and/or buy. This also goes for items on sale in that 17
 18 we will get organic fruits and vegetables only if they are on sale; the newest online 18
 19 invention in this regard are the ‘flash sales’ that Ocado/Waitrose has that pop up 19
 20 right before one pays for their items and electronically ‘checks out’. Thus, in a 20
 21 way our purchasing and eating of certain food items can become ‘extra-ordinary’ 21
 22 depending on what is on sale, how well Ocado knows our shopping preferences 22
 23 and tastes to recommend us certain items or what Ocado/Waitrose has for sale that 23
 24 day; these ‘flash organics’ have, in some ways, changed what we eat given the 24
 25 importance of bargain shopping for us in the spaces of the current recession. Yet, 25
 26 additionally, as our household income has shifted over time, the fact that these 26
 27 ordinarily ethical evaluations about organic foods have become an established part 27
 28 of our daily decision making has increased; in short, with more money – although 28
 29 we are concerned about saving it as much as possible – there are now, on the 29
 30 whole, more opportunities for organic foods to be more ordinarily ethical for my 30
 31 family. The key here then, again, is the context and situatedness of organic foods 31
 32 in the ways that they enter people’s lives (or don’t) to become ordinarily ethical (or 32
 33 not) based on access, income and family socio-economic status. 33

34 This last point leads me into an important question and one fundamental to 34
 35 understanding the spaces and ethics of organic foods. Rather than simply *stating* 35
 36 that the ethics of organic foods are ordinary, I think we need to ask the following 36

37 37

38 38

39 15 We left our own ‘regional’ box scheme and turned to our local supermarkets 39
 40 because of the poor tasting and low quality items in their box, it was very expensive vis- 40
 41 à-vis supermarkets and we were getting items we simply could not eat as a family given 41
 42 they were so far off of our ‘normal’ palate; more needs to be made of the ‘tacit knowledge’ 42
 43 in relation to box schemes like this, i.e. how do they related to culinary skills, tastes and 43
 44 capabilities? Do they encourage us to expand our food repertoires or close them down, as 44
 45 they did in our case? Many thanks to Colin Sage for these excellent points and questions. 44

1 more specific and meaningful questions: *For whom* are organic foods ethically 1
 2 ordinary? And through what means do organic foods *become* ordinarily ethical? 2
 3 Put in a different way, for which consumers are organic foods *allowed* to become 3
 4 ethical questions of taste, value for money and the care of the family? Clearly 4
 5 class position is the crucial – if not the determining factor as the Soil Association 5
 6 statistics on who consumes organic foods are to be believed – in terms of this kind 6
 7 of ordinary-isation of the ethics of organic foods.¹⁶ If anything, Bourdieu's (2005 7
 8 [1979]) arguments about the importance of understanding 'taste distinctions' – 8
 9 and the ways that organoleptic tastes are relational to those of class-based 'tastes' 9
 10 – are exceedingly prescient in the context of organic foods in the UK, although 10
 11 perhaps in need of much more critical socio-economic assessment as the organic 11
 12 food market has changed and expanded over time.¹⁷ As he has put it, 'it is clear 12
 13 that tastes in food cannot be considered in complete independence of the other 13
 14 dimensions of the relationship to the world, to others and to one's own body, 14
 15 through which the practical philosophy of each class is enacted' (Bourdieu 2005: 15
 16 193). So for us, our staid, middle-class-ness – in addition to our visceral concerns 16
 17 over conventional food supplies – translates into the *ability* to choose and *make* 17
 18 organic foods, their shopping and their eating *ordinary*. The ordinary ethics of 18
 19 organic food are completely and utterly relational (e.g. Goodman et al. 2010) and 19
 20 indeed, don't come into being *as ordinary* until they enter into these relationalities 20
 21 with, as the Soil Association report (2012) clearly points out, upper- and middle- 21
 22 income consumers in the UK. The class-loaded nature of this ordinary-isation of 22
 23 organic foods as ordinarily ethical must, at all times, as Johnston et al. (2011) point 23
 24 out, be at the forefront of our understandings of the spaces and ethics of organic 24
 25 foods in the UK and elsewhere. 25

26 27 *Of Mice and Trolleys: Other/Different Spaces of Organic Food Graspability* 27

28
29 Given that we do not subscribe to an organic box delivery scheme, the material 29
 30 graspability of organic food ethics operates in a very different way for us; our 30
 31 graspability of organic foods is most often performed through the mouse, keyboard 31
 32 and computer monitor while also intermittently performed through the shopping 32
 33 trolley in supermarket spaces when we have the time to physically make it to 33
 34 34

35 16 I want to be clear here though: This is not at all to suggest that those of lower 35
 36 socio-economic classes '... do not know about, care about or engage with moral issues 36
 37 surrounding eating' (Johnston et al. 2011: 312) as both Johnston et al.'s (2011) and 37
 38 Guthman's (2003, 2008) work points out in stark, empirical detail. Rather, the point being 38
 39 made here is that middle- and upper-income consumers have more and better opportunities 39
 40 to choose and, thus are able to have these ordinary ethical concerns specifically in the 40
 41 context of organic foods. 41

42 17 For an update on Bourdieu's 'Food Space' that I don't necessarily agree with – nor 42
 43 have space to get into – but is valuable as an interesting take on organic foods (amongst 43
 44 others), see this blog post by Molly Watson on the *Gastronomica* journal's website: [http://](http://www.gastronomica.org/bourdieu-food-space/) 44
www.gastronomica.org/bourdieu-food-space/. 44

1 our local supermarket. The graspable ethics of organic foods become material for 1
 2 us when these items are literally ‘grasped’ off the shelves or clicked-on while 2
 3 doing our shopping through and in these very different spaces; there is also now, 3
 4 however, a kind of serendipitous graspability that occurs through the ‘flash sales’ 4
 5 on the Ocado/Waitrose website mentioned above. 5

6 Once home or delivered to us, these items are put away in the refrigerator or 6
 7 storage shelves, the only reminder they are organic coming on their way to being 7
 8 put away, through a perusal of the store/delivery receipt or when they are taken 8
 9 out to be eaten or cooked into a meal. Graspability of the ethics of organic food is, 9
 10 as also mentioned above, literally non-existent for our two children who are much 10
 11 more concerned with taste, eating and consuming regardless of the provenance of 11
 12 the food in question or in front of them. In short, I am guessing that, like us, for 12
 13 most supermarket organic shoppers, the graspability of the ethics of organic foods 13
 14 are not only fleeting – with much less of the ‘material and symbolic presence for 14
 15 consumers’ that the food box and dirty ‘hybrid’ organic vegetables have (p. 227) 15
 16 – but also requires a kind of ‘renewal’ each time one does the online or trolley 16
 17 shopping without the organic food box turning up automatically on the stoop 17
 18 each week. Moreover, the ordinary-making of the ethics of organic foods through 18
 19 their supermarketisation have completely lowered the ‘tone’ of the material and 19
 20 symbolic presence that the authors have as inhabiting the box and vegetables of 20
 21 Riverford; we hardly know or acknowledge their presence and materiality once 21
 22 in the fridge, put away or on the plate. Thus, for us, rather than the food box, 22
 23 it is the transnational but yet still local (for our shopping anyway) supermarket 23
 24 that ‘facilitate[s], enable[s] and make[s] possible ethical action’ and does so as an 24
 25 ‘ingrained ... routine practice and performance’ (p. 227) as a part of our normal, 25
 26 everyday – and very often slog-like – graspable events and materialities of online 26
 27 and trolley-embedded grocery shopping. 27

28

29

30 **Conclusions**

31

32 The supermarketisation and ordinary-ification of organic foods in the UK – 32
 33 and, thus, the conventionalisation of their consumption – has had a series of 33
 34 consequences for the spaces and ethics of organic food markets and consumption. 34
 35 Indeed, it is only by contextualising the UK’s organic foods market in terms of 35
 36 who the predominant sellers and buyers of organic foods are that we can get a 36
 37 much better view of what these spaces and ethics look like, rather than making 37
 38 a series of assumptions and generalised conclusions about their characteristics 38
 39 from research carried out with one mega organic box seller and no consumers. 39
 40 Situating UK organic food spaces and ethics this way suggests that we cannot talk 40
 41 and generalise about the practices of organic food production, distribution and 41
 42 consumption – and in particular their spatial and ethical make-up – devoid of the 42
 43 political- and socio-economic contexts that they are relational to, operate within 43
 44 and co-construct. In short, that the majority of organic foods are sold through 44

1 supermarkets and the majority of consumers are of middle- and upper-class socio- 1
 2 economic status matters and matters in important ways to how we understand 2
 3 the spaces and ethics of organic food, and, indeed, how Riverford as a mega box 3
 4 scheme – but a miniscule part of this overall market – fits into and out of these 4
 5 wider spaces and ethics of organic foods in the UK. 5

6 Thus, seen through the lens of the supermarketisation of organic foods and 6
 7 by writing my own family's experience as organic food consumers as I have 7
 8 done here, spatially then UK organic foods include every sort of scale from the 8
 9 transnational and global, to the national and regional to the local and micro in the 9
 10 form of people's bodies. In terms of distribution, purchase and consumption, for 10
 11 the majority of consumers who buy their organic foods at supermarkets, the spaces 11
 12 of organic are not only local and/or of the home through online grocery shopping 12
 13 and delivery, but tied very much into the transnational and global spaces of capital 13
 14 and supply chains for organic foods. Ethically, as also seen through these two 14
 15 lenses, organic foods take on much different characteristics and/or make-up than 15
 16 those proposed by Clarke et al.: the ordinary ethics of organics are, fundamentally, 16
 17 those of profit and competition for supermarkets which effect farmers and suppliers 17
 18 in important ways, and speaking as a consumer through myself and my family, 18
 19 the ordinary ethics of organic foods are about taste, value for money and care 19
 20 within the family but in selective and serendipitous ways that beg questions about 20
 21 the class-embedded status of this ordinarily ethical nature of organic foods. The 21
 22 diversity of the ethics of organic foods, as argued by the authors is, I would argue, 22
 23 on the wane. Instead, given the predominance of supermarkets in organic food 23
 24 markets and the values of profit generation rather than those of food democracy, 24
 25 sustainability and fairness – although as Johnston et al. (2009) point out, this is 25
 26 being quickly enrolled into supermarket organic narratives to further expand value- 26
 27 generating possibilities – seem to rule the day. Finally, that the ethics of organic 27
 28 food are materially graspable might be true in the Riverford box scheme, but are 28
 29 very much differently enacted and performed by the majority of consumers, my 29
 30 family included, given that our graspability of the ethics of organic food are much 30
 31 more fleeting and tangential as we either do our shopping at the supermarket itself 31
 32 or online. The predominance and the power of the transgressions of supermarkets 32
 33 into the market, supply chains, marketing and consumption of organic foods not 33
 34 only makes the spaces and ethics of organic foods in the UK 'more complex' 34
 35 as Clarke et al. (228) put it (rather obviously) in their conclusion reflecting on 35
 36 Riverford's box scheme, but does so in a way that greatly affects these spaces and 36
 37 ethics in far-reaching and crucial ways. 37

38 But where to go from here? Future research, in my opinion, should focus on 38
 39 more, at both the wider political economic level but also that of the micro and 39
 40 ethnographic, of what this mainstreaming of organic foods has wrought in the UK. 40
 41 Much more work needs to be done on the impacts all of this is having on organic 41
 42 farming and farmers, but also more fully on people's engagements with organic 42
 43 foods as eaters, members of families, communities and wider societies. Indeed, 43
 44 how is this supermarketisation and corporatisation of organic foods impacting the 44

1 wider politics of organic foods and the organic foods movements? Is this now the 1
 2 end game for many or is there more to come: Organic foods are now widely available 2
 3 at supermarkets and relatively affordable, or at least much more so than in the past, 3
 4 and so all we need to do is expand supply and develop more demand in order to 4
 5 further expand access? How and in what ways have supermarkets developed and 5
 6 controlled the debate about organic food production and consumption and indeed 6
 7 sustainable food supplies more broadly? If they are now the leading voices for 7
 8 food democracy, but ones controlled and made profitable by and for them, where 8
 9 and what are the Other voices for food democracy, sovereignty and security, and 9
 10 how are these being articulated? And, indeed, perhaps a bit more *norm*-isation – 10
 11 something Clarke et al. are loathe to do with respect to organic food politics – is in 11
 12 order in the context of the multitudinous and multi-faceted food crises facing and 12
 13 predicted to face many now and in the near future. 13

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1	Chapter 7	1
2		2
3	Transgressing Retail: Supermarkets,	3
4		4
5	Liminoid Power and the Metabolic Rift	5
6		6
7	Jane Dixon, Libby Hattersley and Bronwyn Isaacs	7
8		8
9		9
10		10
11		11
12	Background	12
13		13
14	Supermarket shoppers are increasingly participating in a form of consumption which	14
15	entails the dislocation of food production and exchange from their bio-spheric and	15
16	socio-cultural contexts. While this dynamic is present in supermarket aisles the	16
17	world over, this chapter focuses on the Asia-Pacific region, and specifically on two	17
18	countries – Australia and Thailand – with very different culinary and food retail	18
19	histories, yet whose agrifood sectors as well as food shoppers are now inextricably	19
20	linked by a globally-integrated food system.	20
21	The Australian food retail sector is dominated by just two major supermarket	21
22	chains, Wesfarmers-Coles and Woolworths Ltd, which together account for	22
23	approximately 70 per cent of all packaged grocery sales in the country and 50 per	23
24	cent of fresh produce sales (ACCC 2008). While a recent Government inquiry into	24
25	the sector failed to determine the existence of a lack of competition (ACCC 2008),	25
26	Australia is widely considered to be entrenched in an effective and very powerful	26
27	grocery duopoly. Over the last decade, market-driven forces have converged with	27
28	increasingly harsh and unpredictable climatic conditions to present a number of	28
29	additional challenges for the country's agrifood industries, and horticulture has	29
30	proven to be uniquely vulnerable to these. Today, the vast majority of fresh produce	30
31	consumed in Australia is still domestically-grown, and demand from supermarket	31
32	shoppers for Australian fresh fruit and vegetables remains high. However, imports	32
33	of processed fruit and vegetable products continue to rise, with Australia's	33
34	major supermarket chains leveraging their market power to seek suppliers who	34
35	can deliver volume, consistency and the right price. The long-term viability of	35
36	Australia's horticultural and food processing industries is unclear, as is consumer	36
37	sentiment towards Australia's growing reliance on the global trade in food.	37
38	Thailand's food retail sector is more dynamic than Australia's, being	38
39	characterised by a rapid and sustained penetration of foreign-owned food retailers	39
40	since the 1997 economic crash. The success of transnational food retailers in	40
41	Thailand has been attributed to their dual globalising and localising business	41
42	strategies. These have included: stocking traditional (and regional) speciality	42
43	Thai foods alongside imported products; strategic integration into local space,	43
44	including opening express and micro outlets attached to gas stations and in urban	44

1 streets; and setting up market stall areas around hypermarkets and shopping malls 1
 2 to more closely approximate a traditional Thai shopping experience (Kanchoochat 2
 3 2008, Gorton et al. 2009). European-owned hypermarkets sell Australian fruits 3
 4 such as peaches as expensive delicacies to consumers with increased spending 4
 5 money seeking foreign produce. Indeed, Thailand is Australia's biggest pome and 5
 6 temperate stone fruit export market (DPI 2009). 6

7 In both Australia and Thailand, core consumer values of food affordability, 7
 8 cultural acceptability and quality are situated within a broader context of increasing 8
 9 corporate-control and global integration of food supply networks, alongside 9
 10 complex environmental change. These dynamics hold profound implications for 10
 11 agro-ecological, socio-cultural, and human metabolic states (Friedmann 2005, 11
 12 McMichael 2005, Lang and Barling 2007, Uljaszek 2007, Isaacs et al. 2010), and 12
 13 it is this context that forms the backdrop to this chapter. 13
 14 14
 15 15

16 **Transgressions, the Metabolic Rift and Liminoid Power** 16 17 17

18 Transgressions can occur as 'sins' of commission ('crimes') as well as of 18
 19 omission ('lapses'). They may lead to crises or ruptures in previously resilient 19
 20 arrangements by undermining capacity for renewal ('transgression as rupture'), 20
 21 or they may give rise to more muted transitions between one state to another 21
 22 (understood by anthropologists as states of liminality). For the purposes of this 22
 23 chapter, transgressions are understood as the uninvited, although sometimes 23
 24 welcome, movement of social actors and their networks into spheres of authority, 24
 25 interdependencies and resource management. 25

26 The strongest account of 'transgression as rupture' is present in Marx's 26
 27 descriptions of the metabolic rift, or the disrupted exchange of energy and 27
 28 nutrients between humans and nature (Marx 1967). Influenced by German chemist 28
 29 Von Liebig, who made prominent contributions to the fields of agriculture and 29
 30 human nutrition (Dixon 2009), Marx observed that the metabolic cycle operated 30
 31 sustainably when functioning as a closed system comprising the people living in 31
 32 and working their nutritionally-embedded lands for their own needs. Marx saw the 32
 33 symbiotic relationship between social and natural systems as the most fundamental 33
 34 of all relationships when he defined the labour process as 'the metabolic interaction 34
 35 between men and nature'. 35

36 As capitalism prised open the agrarian system, subsuming land and labour 36
 37 to produce food commodities for urban factory workers and for mercantile 37
 38 and imperial ambitions, it created what is considered another closed system: 38
 39 the enclosure of the commons. The new system was an inevitable outcome of 39
 40 the capitalist approach to governing labour and nature, rupturing city from 40
 41 countryside, society from nature, and production from consumption. Under the 41
 42 agrarian system, there had been direct feedbacks between nutrient cycles, plant 42
 43 and animal yields, and human life and death. With capitalism, Marx wrote, 'the 43
 44 original sources of wealth – the soil and the worker' were undermined (Foster 44

1 1999: 378–379); and drawing from Von Liebig he identified capital's depletion of
2 soils as 'a robbery system'.

3 To ensure its survival in a context of exploited soil systems, the capitalist system
4 had no option but to expand its territorial reach to find nutrient-rich environments,
5 to intensify its activities in existing locales through applying technologies to create
6 a nutrition additive complex (synthetic fertilisers) in order to revive depleted soils,
7 and to manufacture new plant and animal varieties which could survive nutrient-
8 depleted states. It also had to establish a cultural economy of commodity fetishism
9 in order to legitimise the usurpation of territories and nutrient sources.

10 Moore (2000) dates the appearance of the metabolic rift to the sixteenth
11 century; exemplified by nascent capitalism's establishment of sugar plantations,
12 slave labour forces, and imperial power relations forged through long-distance
13 trade in 'quick energy'. This is a story familiar to social scientists courtesy of
14 Sydney Mintz's (1985) *Sweetness and Power*; an account of sugar production,
15 trade and consumption underpinning a world system of geo-political manoeuvring,
16 social class reproduction and nutritional outcomes.

17 However, commodity complex analyses such as Mintz's (1985) have given
18 little attention to ecological despoliation. This connection has been explored over
19 the last decade in a steady stream of work by political ecologists and environmental
20 sociologists, who have returned to the metabolic rift to explain current ecological
21 crises, including climate change attributable to anthropogenic activity (Foster
22 1999, Moore 2000, Clark and York 2005, Clausen 2005, Foster 2007, Foster et
23 al. 2009). This new work underscores how the social-ecological system of global
24 capitalism, with capital accumulation being predicated on movement to literally
25 new pastures, labour forces and commodity markets, has become so complex that
26 system feedbacks are impossible to detect, or are easily obscured. The multi-scalar
27 nature of the system, the time-lags in effects, and the hard-to-detect substitution
28 of natural with man-made elements (for example, nanotechnology), all contribute.

29 Agrifood sociologists and geographers are also employing the metabolic rift
30 concept with a modern twist (Campbell 2009, McClintock 2010) when describing
31 the repercussions of 'ecologies at a distance': where nutrients, labour power
32 and environmental hazards are exported far from their source (Friedmann 2005,
33 Friedmann 2009). This work has been important in understanding rising social
34 resistance to the psycho-social anxieties, and nutritional and environmental
35 security risks posed by a corporatized food supply based on durable (industrial/
36 processed), distant (not-local/unfamiliar), and technologically altered foods.
37 Counter-movements attempting to 'heal' the metabolic rift through repudiating
38 the corporatised food system have been identified, ranging from urban agriculture
39 to the Slow Food Foundation on Biodiversity.

40 Friedmann (2005) has also documented a counter-offensive to this new food
41 movement by corporations, in what she has termed the 'corporate environmental
42 regime'. Here, manufacturers and retailers respond to consumer concerns by
43 inviting them to consider a range of values beyond the economic (for example, fair-
44 trade, animal ethics, climate change, sustainable marine stewardship) when making

1 purchasing decisions. However, the focus is resoundingly consumption-oriented 1
 2 and, rather than encourage people to consume *less*, shoppers are encouraged 2
 3 to consume *differently* by switching brands. In this context, trade-marked 3
 4 certifications and logos referencing geographic specificity and environmental and 4
 5 health qualities are attached to products in order to re-embed them in the public's 5
 6 imagination. 6

7 In the present chapter, we draw on the concept of liminality, especially as 7
 8 interpreted by Turner (1967), to understand the practice of cultural value-adding 8
 9 by the corporate food sector. The liminal state stresses transitions between states, 9
 10 of periods of indeterminacy, and of hybrid forms. It is used most commonly 10
 11 in describing rites of passage between different life stages (for example, youth 11
 12 to adulthood, life to death), and what happens when a threshold or boundary is 12
 13 reached (for example, political revolution). For older social formations, where 13
 14 long-established values and practices have been sustained through rituals, the 14
 15 liminal experience is non-negotiable (for example, observing the Day of the 15
 16 Dead in Mexico, a day on which the living commune with dead relatives). As 16
 17 part of the enculturated rhythm of life, liminal experiences can be contrasted with 17
 18 experiences which entail crossing optional and experimental thresholds. This 18
 19 latter type of experience is described as liminoid; and for Turner, the liminoid is 19
 20 a more transformative experience because it does not have prior institutional or 20
 21 universal recognition. 21

22 It is liminoid power, we contend, that the corporate food sector is now exercising, 22
 23 with major supermarket chains in particular rapidly assuming responsibilities that 23
 24 were unexpected and voluntary, extending into the environmental, human health, 24
 25 and citizenship spheres. Importantly, they are also offering places and opportunities 25
 26 for suppliers and consumers to experience unfamiliar responsibilities and 26
 27 commodity engagements. For example, shoppers can exercise ethical citizenship 27
 28 through their purchasing decisions for the purposes of environmental sustainability, 28
 29 ethical trade, and protection of their own, and their family's health and wellbeing. 29
 30 In the past the same consumers might have boycotted a particular brand, or forced 30
 31 regulatory concessions through the ballot box. Liminoid relations also facilitate 31
 32 opportunities for new situational framings (for example, in the framing of supply 32
 33 chain 'partnerships' rather than buyer-seller relationships) and ways of living (for 33
 34 example, the deployment of consumption for moral purposes). 34
 35 35
 36 36

37 **Transgressive Retail: Supermarkets and the Metabolic Rift** 37 38 **in Australia and Thailand** 38 39 39

40 Clark and York (2005) nominate three socio-environmental features of the 40
 41 metabolic rift: the disruption or interruption of natural processes and cycles; the 41
 42 accumulation of waste; and environmental degradation. Drawing on McMichael 42
 43 and Friedmann (2007), Campbell (2009), McMichael (2009) and our own 43
 44 research, we argue that the contemporary metabolic rift extends beyond the 44

1 disrupted exchange between social and natural systems, and is being propelled by 1
2 four major ecological ruptures: 2

- 3 3
- 4 1. Depleted agro-ecologies – the environmental support systems to sustain 4
5 food production – due to bio-physical system degradation including waste 5
6 generation. 6
- 7 2. An erosion of food sovereignty at the nation state level, due to a 7
8 reconfiguration of food system governance arrangements and foreign direct 8
9 investments in food retailing systems. 9
- 10 3. The erosion of cuisines – consisting of knowledge, rules, cooking skills and 10
11 food provisioning strategies – due to the penetration of corporate interests. 11
- 12 4. Stressed human metabolic states, as a result of easy access to dietary energy 12
13 coupled with a lack of physical activity, and the corporate restructuring 13
14 of local food environments which, in turn, reduces options for obtaining 14
15 ‘good nutritional’ diversity. 15
- 16 16

17 In this chapter, we examine these four ruptured states with a focus on the 17
18 specific role major supermarket chains have played in deepening each. The 18
19 critical roles various other actors have played, including agri-business and 19
20 financial corporations, governments, and numerous cultural intermediaries 20
21 must be acknowledged; however it is supermarkets who, over the last two 21
22 decades, have emerged as ‘the masters of the food system’ (Winson 1993) and 22
23 the ‘orchestra leader’ conducting food system transformations (Harvey 2007). 23
24 Through the mobilisation of sophisticated cultural economy processes, including 24
25 new governance arrangements, these pivotal food system actors are considered 25
26 to have prefigured ‘market authority’ and established themselves as major social 26
27 institutions (Dixon 2003, Burch and Lawrence 2007, Dixon 2008). Encapsulating 27
28 the metabolic rift concept, McMichael and Friedmann (2007: 297) have observed 28
29 that supermarkets 29

30 30

31 ... are vehicles of social and ecological reorganization: transforming historical 31
32 relations embedded in local food systems, crop varieties and knowledges, rural 32
33 communities, peasant producers and small farmers, waste recycling systems, 33
34 biological processes, hydrological cycles, and a variety of urban experiences 34
35 and cultural lifestyles. 35

36 36

37 Drawing from cultural histories, ethnographic fieldwork, and analysis of 37
38 supply relationships between actors involved in the production and exchange 38
39 of deciduous fruits in Australia and Thailand,¹ the remainder of this chapter 39

40 40

41 1 Field research on the production, distribution and supply of deciduous fruits 41
42 through Australian supermarkets was conducted in March 2008–March 2010. Ethnographic 42
43 research on the food retail transition underway in Thailand was conducted in June–July 43
44 2008 (Chiang Mai) and November 2008 (Suphan Buri) (see Isaacs 2009, Isaacs et al. 2010). 44

1 will highlight the multi-dimensional and multi-scalar nature of supermarket 1
 2 supply networks in these two countries. In examining how the disruption of bio- 2
 3 sphere resources in a leading agricultural nation like Australia has contributed to 3
 4 corporate decisions to shift sites of production overseas, and resulted in positive 4
 5 and negative consequences for a middle income country like Thailand, the chapter 5
 6 amplifies features of a world food system under considerable stress due to the 6
 7 synergistic effects of all four dimensions of the contemporary metabolic rift. 7

8

9 *Agro-ecological Depletion Due to an Unsustainable Food Production* 9

10 *and Distribution System* 10

11 11
 12 There are indications that by 2050, food production will need to double in order 12
 13 to keep pace with current trends in population growth and consumption patterns 13
 14 (Campbell 2008), yet there is growing consensus that the way in which the world's 14
 15 food is being produced, distributed and consumed is unsustainable and harmful 15
 16 to population health. Secure and sustainable food supply, ecological wellbeing, 16
 17 and human health are irrevocably linked states: one state cannot be achieved in 17
 18 isolation of the others. Contemporary industrial food systems carry significant 18
 19 environmental costs, contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and 19
 20 global environmental change, unsustainable resource extraction, degradation 20
 21 of soils and fresh water resources, and waste generation. Global environmental 21
 22 change is subsequently threatening food yields and control of food-borne disease 22
 23 transmission, and affecting producer livelihoods, regional economies, community 23
 24 cohesion, and social equity (D'Souza et al. 2004, Cohen et al. 2008, Godfray et al. 24
 25 2010). In fact, climate change has been recognised as the single largest threat to 25
 26 global food security and population health (Capon and Hanna 2009, McMichael 26
 27 and Butler 2009). There is increasing awareness of these relationships, and of 27
 28 a 'strong correlation between the dietary changes recommended for improved 28
 29 health ... and reduced environmental impact' (Elinder 2005, McMichael et al. 29
 30 2007, Larsen et al. 2008: 36, McMichael 2008), yet the agro-ecological impact of 30
 31 our food supply remains alarmingly high. 31

32 Every link in the food chain is implicated in environmental degradation, with 32
 33 different sectors responsible for different 'hot spots'. Agricultural production, for 33
 34 example, has been shown to contribute the greatest share of food system-related 34
 35 greenhouse gas emissions while a significant amount of food wastage occurs in 35
 36 the household (Larsen et al. 2008). Yet it is the world's major food retailers, due to 36
 37 the sheer scale of their operations, demand for high volumes of commodities, and 37
 38 now the extent of their control over their supply chains, which are having the most 38
 39 profound influence over agro-ecologies. 39

40 The new 'temporalities of innovation' demanded by supermarkets, for example, 40
 41 requires that product innovation be matched by a 24-hour cycle of product orders 41
 42 flowing into supermarket-owned or contracted transportation firms Harvey 42
 43 (2007). Food distribution systems are high energy-dependent systems, especially 43
 44 in the vast land mass of Australia (Larsen et al. 2010). The Australian landscape 44

1 is connected by over 810,000 kilometres of road and 44,000 kilometres of rail 1
 2 networks in Australia. Road freight is by far the dominant mode of food transport 2
 3 (for human and animal consumption), both by total volumes carried (94.7 per 3
 4 cent of food distributed within Australia travels by road) and by tonne-kilometres 4
 5 (86.8 per cent). This is due largely to the short shelf life and highly perishable 5
 6 nature of many food products, which makes timing critical. Rail freight is used 6
 7 primarily for bulk movement of commodities that have low value per tonne, such 7
 8 as grains and sugar. Fertilisers and petroleum products are critical inputs into the 8
 9 current agricultural system, and fertilisers alone make up a further 16 per cent 9
 10 of the tonnes moved on Australia's roads. These energy-intense logistics systems 10
 11 are among the less debated dimensions of the complex web of food supply and 11
 12 ecological sustainability issues. 12

13 The impacts of harsh weather patterns on food production in Australia are clearly 13
 14 apparent, with large numbers of Australian agricultural businesses reporting using 14
 15 financial reserves and/ or taking on increasing liabilities in response to adverse 15
 16 seasonal conditions in 2006–2007 (Hennessy et al. 2007, ABS 2008). Australia's 16
 17 Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has provided a scenario 17
 18 for climate change impacts on agricultural productivity if there were no planned 18
 19 mitigation or adaptation measures. Between 2006 and 2050, it forecast falls in 19
 20 wheat, sheep, beef, dairy and sugar ranging from over 18 per cent for beef and 20
 21 dairy to 13 per cent for wheat (DAFF 2009). 21

22 One of our study sites, the Goulburn Valley in central Victoria, is among 22
 23 Australia's most important food producing and processing regions, contributing 23
 24 13.2 per cent of Victoria's gross value of agricultural production (GVP) (ABS 24
 25 2009). The 14,287 km² of land it encompasses (DPCD 2008) is some of the most 25
 26 intensively farmed and irrigated in the country, and its communities are heavily 26
 27 reliant on agriculture and its associated industries for their livelihoods. One of 27
 28 the Goulburn Valley's largest and most important industries is the production and 28
 29 processing of pome and temperate stone fruits, with the region contributing 38.1 29
 30 per cent of Australia's GVP and 71.7 per cent of Victoria's GVP for this sector in 30
 31 2007–8. However over the last decade, market-driven forces have converged with 31
 32 a prolonged drought, declining water available for irrigation, and increasingly 32
 33 unpredictable climatic conditions to rapidly alter the conditions under which the 33
 34 stone and pome fruit, as well as other local agrifood industries, are operating. 34
 35 Pome and stone fruit crops are highly vulnerable to climate change due to the high 35
 36 sensitivity of their quality and appearance to climatic factors such as heat stress, 36
 37 wind and hail, as well as to pests and disease. A period of winter chilling and a 37
 38 reliable supply of water at critical periods are both critical (Stokes and Howden 38
 39 2008). A poor growing season can result in fruit considered unacceptable for 39
 40 supermarket sale (for example, too small or bruised), or the loss of entire crops, 40
 41 inevitably diminishing the returns a grower can expect to receive. 41

42 Australian supermarkets have responded to recent concerns over what is 42
 43 happening to the environment by positioning themselves as industry leaders 43
 44 in environmental responsibility through a range of highly public strategies. As 44

1 elsewhere (Jones et al. 2007), they have sought out the 'green' consumer (Bryant 1
 2 and Goodman 2004) using organic produce as the primary vehicle, albeit at a 2
 3 more leisurely pace than in Europe or the US (Lockie et al. 2006: 115). Given 3
 4 the highly select nature of the stores offering an extensive organics range (Lyons 4
 5 2007), this appears aimed at attracting affluent and educated consumers who 5
 6 may seek organics products as part of a distinctive, virtuous lifestyle. Australian 6
 7 supermarkets have also incorporated waste reduction and recovery schemes in 7
 8 their corporate social responsibility charters. Woolworths, for example, sells heat- 8
 9 affected produce at lower prices, donating all profits from one day's business to 9
 10 farming families and communities through the Country Woman's Association for 10
 11 third year running. 11

12 13 *The Erosion of National Sovereignty* 13 14 14

15 Central to any modern state is the establishment of a food regulatory system 15
 16 comprising government agencies whose mandate is to develop, implement, 16
 17 enforce and monitor food safety and nutrient reference standards. Governments 17
 18 are also expected to participate in pan-national agencies: the Food and Agriculture 18
 19 Organization (FAO), the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and the GATT/WTO/ 19
 20 Doha Development Round sequence of bodies, which govern food security, safety 20
 21 and trade respectively. 21

22 To complicate matters, there has been an appreciable widening of the non- 22
 23 legislative basis for the governance of national food systems. A neo-liberal agenda 23
 24 to encourage 'innovation' has been accompanied by private regulation of the 24
 25 risks that accompany new forms of production (Lawrence and Burch 2007). As 25
 26 a result, a plethora of non-government and corporate sector schemes has evolved 26
 27 to manage new consumer concerns relating to food safety (including pesticide 27
 28 residues), animal welfare, environmental sustainability, and producer livelihoods 28
 29 (see Hughes 2005, Campbell and Le Heron 2007, Lang and Barling 2007, Lyons 29
 30 2007, Oresund Food Network and Oresund Environment Academy 2008). A raft 30
 31 of privately-administered 'quality controls' has shifted the centre of gravity for 31
 32 food system governance away from nation states to pan-national consortia of 32
 33 NGOs and private corporations. 33

34 As has been extensively documented, global supermarket chains have played 34
 35 a leading role in the growth of corporate food governance schemes (Campbell 35
 36 2005). The best-known of these, the GlobalGAP (previously EurepGAP) alliance, 36
 37 was initiated by a consortium of Europe's leading supermarket chains, although its 37
 38 influence now reaches worldwide. An increasing number of national GAP standards 38
 39 (for example, ChinaGAP, JGAP (Japan), and New Zealand GAP), benchmarked 39
 40 against GlobalGAP, are also emerging. GlobalGAP has been described as a hybrid 40
 41 governance model operating between the private sector and social movements 41
 42 (Campbell 2009). 42

43 As Busch (2009) has observed, the shift to private governance over food safety 43
 44 and quality has had positive consequences for many consumers worldwide, with 44

1 improvements in the quality, diversity and safety of foods. Food products labelled 1
 2 with various forms of supermarket-endorsed quality audit information continue to 2
 3 increase in popularity amongst wealthy consumers, yet the social legitimacy of this 3
 4 niche market hinges on the continued existence of a mainstream, mass-produced 4
 5 'food from nowhere' market (Campbell 2009). The unintended consequence of 5
 6 stronger private sector commitment to food safety, the environment and social 6
 7 causes has been an ever increasing concentration of power within the food system 7
 8 at the buyer end. 8

9 Australian organics certification bodies are reportedly concerned about the entry 9
 10 of the large supermarkets, which now account for close to one half of all organic 10
 11 produce sold (Lyons 2007: 159). Retailing of organics through supermarkets 11
 12 results in a 'domino' effect up-stream (Whatmore 2002), creating demand for 12
 13 large-scale organic producers who operate according to the same exacting supply 13
 14 arrangements as conventional producers. The onerous reality of food system 14
 15 governance from an organic producer's perspective supplying Coles supermarket 15
 16 is described in-depth by Lyons (2007). Their impact is to lower premiums for 16
 17 small-scale producers as well as exacerbating supplier occupational stress due to 17
 18 compliance with supermarket contracts. In an ironic twist, the commercialisation 18
 19 of organic foods has created antipathy for both that part of the food supply and 19
 20 for those trading in the industrially-produced alternative foods (Guthman 2004). 20
 21 There is evidence too that the multiplication of accreditation schemes creates 21
 22 considerable stress for consumers (see Campbell and Le Heron 2007, Lyons 2007). 22

23 Due to the level of market power supermarkets hold in the agrifood system, the 23
 24 'voluntary' standards they put in place are for all practical purposes mandatory: 24
 25 producers and suppliers must meet retailer requirements in order to access the 25
 26 market. In submissions to a recent Australian competition inquiry, retailers 26
 27 emphasised their fair and transparent partnerships with suppliers – using terms 27
 28 such as 'mutually beneficial', 'cooperative' and 'transparent' – and repeatedly 28
 29 expressing their support for Australian producers. In one of the submissions 29
 30 from the second largest chain, Coles highlighted that it is not in their 'long-term 30
 31 commercial interest to undermine these relationships by setting out to achieve 31
 32 one-sided outcomes' (Coles Supermarkets 2008). In contrast, a very different 32
 33 argument was made in submissions from organisations representing primary 33
 34 producers and suppliers. These submissions argued that the supermarkets wield 34
 35 enormous bargaining power over suppliers, to the extent that responsibility and 35
 36 cost burdens which would traditionally lie in the retail sphere are being pushed 36
 37 back up the supply chain (see for example HAC 2008, HAL 2008, NFF 2008). 37

38 These same dynamics are now being played out in middle income countries. 38
 39 The potential scale of the transferral of power in the food system away from 39
 40 producers was demonstrated clearly in Thailand's economic crisis of 1997 that 40
 41 led to the foreign takeover of Thai/international grocery partnerships. With that 41
 42 crisis, a structural adjustment process was put into place by the IMF and World 42
 43 Bank which recommended liberalising national markets, thus clearing the way 43
 44 for foreign partners to take control of local retail chains (Baker and Phongpaichit 44

2005). Transnational food companies proceeded to massively expand their operations especially into hypermarkets (defined as 15,000 to 20,000 square metres) providing all consumer needs under one roof (Shaffner et al. 2005). The diffusion into regional centres occurred as rural incomes rose and transnational companies bought large areas of land (Kanchoochat 2008). The main companies involved in the expansion were Tesco (UK), Carrefour (French) and Big C (French) (Kanchoochat 2008) although Thailand's own CP (Chaoren Pokphand) group was, and continues to be, at the forefront of introducing global innovations. Accompanying the rapid expansion of supermarkets and hypermarkets has been the annual loss of around 25000 small retailers (Hawkes 2008).

Table 7.1 demonstrates how the ownership of grocery retailers transferred over the years following the 1997 crisis.

Table 7.1 Large-scale food retail chains in Thailand, before and after the 1997 economic crisis

Name	Type of retail format	Year of entry into Thailand	Ownership pre-1997 crisis	Ownership post-1997 crisis	Sales in Thailand, 2005 (US\$ million)
Lotus	Hypermarket, Supermarket, Convenience Store	1994 Advice given by Wal-Mart USA	CP (Thai), Investment by Tesco (UK)	100% Tesco (UK), renamed Tesco Lotus	2, 200
CP 7-Eleven	Convenience Store	1980s	CP (Thai)	CP (Thai)	1, 695
Big C	Hypermarket	1994	Central (Thai)	68% Casino (France)	1, 488
Makro	Cash and Carry	1989	65% CP (Thai), 35% Makro (Netherlands)	100% Makro (Netherlands) via regional partners	1, 200
Carrefour	Hypermarket	1996	60% Central (Thai), 40% Carrefour (France)	100% Carrefour (France)	602
Tops	Supermarket	1995	50% Central (Thai), 49% Royal Ahold	100% Central (Thai), (Royal Ahold retreats from Asian Market in 2004)	1, 823 (combined total with Central's department store Robinsons)

Source: May (2006), Kanchoochat (2008) and Nethipo (2008).

By 2002, Thailand had the most transnational food retailers of any middle-income Asian nation (Mutebi 2007); and between 2000 and 2001, half of the

country's small local supermarkets had closed because they had lost customers to the new chains offering lower grocery prices (Isaacs 2009). Other figures suggest that a 35:65 modern to traditional retail format mix in 1999 had swung to an almost even share of modern to traditional formats (48:52) in the short space of 5 years (AC Nielsen 2006).

The international chains named in the table continue to spread across Thailand, establishing new hypermarkets, convenience stores and other retail formats. However, there is evidence of growing community resistance to the role supermarkets are playing in the food system. In Thailand, local television and newspapers have frequently reported marches and protests by small 'mom and pop' shop owners, whose livelihoods are threatened by international hypermarkets and convenience stores that sell cheaper, modern goods (see, for example, *Bangkok Post* 2001, 2006). In some locales, community members successfully prevented or stalled the entrance of supermarket giants. Kanchoochat (2008) reports that in openings in Prachinburi province the municipal council refused Tesco the right to buy land and open a store until Tesco won a court decision for unfair discrimination. While in many towns the new stores received a favourable welcome, the strong national sentiment against international supermarkets was clearly indicated by Thaksin's 2001 bold and popular (albeit largely unexecuted) election promise to regulate the foreign retailers and offer small business protection (Lamoshi 2002, Shannon 2009).

Erosion of the Culinary State through the Rise of a Culture of Healthy Convenience

Historically, the most enduring system regulating the food supply and consumption has been based in civil society and involved cuisine: the intergenerational sharing of food knowledge, preferred ingredients based on seasonal and local conditions and cooking skills (Ulijaszek 2002). However, patterns of feeding that have dominated human societies for millennia, such as resource seasonality and energy-intensive foraging for energy-dense and palatable foods (Ulijaszek 2002), have been broken by the cheap, industrial food supply. Earlier 'inconvenient' or labour intensive forms of household food governance have been usurped by the rise of the culture of convenience which, alongside the idea of 'choice', has arguably been the most profitable symbolic quality convention for supermarkets.

Supermarkets entered Australia on a large-scale in the 1960s offering 'one-stop shopping' and the offer of 'short-cuts' and 'meal solutions', thus freeing up diets from the household regulation of a culinary culture rooted in history and local environmental conditions (Dixon 2002). By the 1980s, supermarkets had added 'health' to their corporate image by promoting themselves as the 'fresh food people' (Woolworths), probably in response to widespread media coverage of the negative health consequences of convenience foods (Lang and Rayner 2007, Ulijaszek 2007). By stocking and promoting foods labelled as healthy (appealing to the weight-conscious consumer, the 'green' consumer, or the consumer in

1 search of health-enhancing ‘super foods’), in conjunction with promotion of 1
 2 themselves as sources of expert advice and information on nutrition, healthy eating 2
 3 and lifestyle, supermarkets are increasingly positioning themselves as ‘wellness’ 3
 4 companies (Burch and Lawrence 2009). They can be considered traders in health 4
 5 and nutrition (Dixon 2009). Australia’s largest supermarket chain, Woolworths, 5
 6 recently acquired the country’s largest organic supermarket operator, Macro 6
 7 Wholefoods, in a move to expand its presence in this high-margin grocery market. 7
 8 Moreover, beating their fast food service sector competitors to the table, 8
 9 supermarkets introduced consumers to the idea of ‘healthy convenience’ by 9
 10 coupling ‘fresh’ foods with a ‘convenient’ food retailing format. Through this 10
 11 liminoid strategy, they promote twin propositions that health can be sold and 11
 12 bought and that it is an easy state to attain. 12

13 Thai hypermarkets are also applying a liminoid strategy when they present 13
 14 their consumers as new ‘corporate citizens’ by suggesting other forms of retail to 14
 15 be outdated particularly in regards to food safety. For many centuries fresh markets 15
 16 had been the site of traditional food retailing in Thailand, supporting family 16
 17 livelihoods. Women in particular used markets as a site of ‘intimate economies’ 17
 18 where through buying and selling they provided for their families with little 18
 19 available capital (Wilson 2004). Nowadays, those who shop and work at ‘fresh 19
 20 markets’ are side-lined as nostalgic motifs – performing a function that is better 20
 21 appropriated by supermarket formats with their own sanitised and standardised 21
 22 versions of ‘fresh food’. Fresh fruit and vegetables are sold in tight packaging and 22
 23 with certification stickers that guarantee food safety. 23

24 Nevertheless, the nostalgia of the fresh market persists. In Chiang Mai, as 24
 25 elsewhere, local fresh markets serve as sites for community meetings, fundraising 25
 26 takes place and they perpetuate a role for the elderly as gate-keepers of knowledge 26
 27 in cuisine and culture. In Thailand, foreign owned supermarkets are entering 27
 28 community ecologies previously centred on daily engagement with fresh 28
 29 markets. In order to encourage Thais to cross the threshold from fresh market 29
 30 to supermarket, supermarkets have created liminoid thresholds with an aura of 30
 31 familiarity by allowing small market stalls on their boundaries and by offering 31
 32 family entertainment and leisure opportunities – highly valued by Thais – in the 32
 33 surrounding mall areas. Within their stores, they have established spaces and 33
 34 opportunities for other expressions of Thainess: through the inclusion of Buddhist 34
 35 shrines and goods appropriate for religious festivals and other rituals. They are 35
 36 visible community citizens, sponsoring community events and their floats appear 36
 37 in religious festivities alongside the floats of long established civic groups. 37
 38 Through becoming legitimate Thai identities, these corporations encourage Thais 38
 39 to cross a threshold from a pre-modern to a modern citizen, complete with modern 39
 40 concerns for health and the environment. The liminoid power of the supermarket 40
 41 is more transparent in this context, and it is revealed as the capacity to encourage 41
 42 people to relatively rapidly and repeatedly cross from the unfamiliar to embrace 42
 43 the new. It involves strategies for suspending cultural norms historically associated 43
 44 with Thai food and local markets, and places cultural authority in the new creator 44

1 of 'corporate citizens'. Ethnographic research from Chiang Mai shows that these 1
 2 stores now wield considerable cultural authority, transferring allocations of status 2
 3 and practices for health and spirituality, away from more community oriented 3
 4 fresh markets (Isaacs 2009). Tesco hypermarkets for example, offer free aerobic 4
 5 classes on weeknights and use inter-regional competitions to raise money for 5
 6 local communities. In these new settings, the community-oriented consumer can 6
 7 practice community obligation via the supermarket corporation. Furthermore, in 7
 8 this new corporate community, traditional culinary practices that place emphasis 8
 9 on the authority of the elderly within extended social networks lose relevancy 9
 10 thereby undermining civic control over food provisioning and diets. 10
 11

12 *Stressed Human Metabolic States through the Ubiquitous Availability of Energy* 12
 13

14 At the same time as agricultural yields are expected to decline worldwide, there is an 14
 15 increasing availability of dietary energy (McMichael 2005: 711). The most popular 15
 16 foods in modernising nations are the most energy-intensive food commodities and 16
 17 the most health damaging: animal-based foods, fats and oils, and sweets, snacks 17
 18 and drinks (Carlsson-Kanyama et al. 2003, Hawkes 2008, 2010, Oresund Food 18
 19 Network and Oresund Environment Academy 2008). Epidemiological studies 19
 20 agree that the primary determinant of diet-related disease is the result of an energy- 20
 21 enriched food supply that can be easily accessed around the clock, and which is 21
 22 heavily marketed as convenient, cheap and safe (Cutler et al. 2003, Chou et al. 22
 23 2004, Drewnowski 2004). Trade in processed food products has been growing 23
 24 more quickly than bulk commodities since the early 1980s, now accounting for 24
 25 66 per cent of agricultural trade (Clapp and Fuchs 2009: ch. 1). Societies have 25
 26 been cut adrift from social and bio-physical ecosystems through 24/7 access to 26
 27 processed foods, challenging the human metabolic state (McMichael 2005). 27

28 Within a context of their extensive contribution to theorising the metabolic 28
 29 rift, Clark and York (2005) introduce discussion of what economists know as 29
 30 'Jevons Paradox', a principle which seems very relevant to the discussion of over- 30
 31 nutrition, obesity and associated disorders. In relation to the coal industry, Jevons 31
 32 documented how greater efficiencies in coal mining did not reduce demand for 32
 33 coal but hastened demand for this most significant of contributors to greenhouse 33
 34 gas emissions. Subsequent analyses went on to show that 'with the drive for 34
 35 the accumulation of capital, [entailing] the continued material consumption of 35
 36 transformed nature to fuel its operations ... rising efficiency is associated with 36
 37 rising consumption' (Clark and York 2005: 411). As with coal, the highly efficient 37
 38 manufacture of natural plant and animal material into 'quick energy' foods; that 38
 39 is, foods which are easily metabolised, has been implicated in the global obesity 39
 40 epidemic (WHO/FAO 2003). 40

41 Australia boasts one of the most obese populations in the world; more than 41
 42 two thirds of adult men are now overweight or obese with slightly more than half 42
 43 the adult female population in the same category (NPHT 2008). The Australian 43
 44 government has acknowledged that steep rises in rates of overweight have 44

1 occurred in the last 25 years (House of Representatives 2009), the period in which 1
 2 supermarket penetration has become both extensive and intensive. This has also 2
 3 been the era in which fast food chains, replete with energy dense foods, became a 3
 4 ubiquitous feature of local food environments. While it is not possible to generalise 4
 5 the human health impacts of different food retail formats (White 2007, Reardon 5
 6 et al. 2010), it is generally agreed that supermarkets not only promulgated the 6
 7 cultural economy practice of convenience but also the practice of thrift or 'value 7
 8 for money' (Kingston 1994, Humphery 1998). Cheap food is an important feature 8
 9 of the Australian food system, as it is for the national political system as reflected 9
 10 by successive inquiries into the food retail sector for which this consideration 10
 11 overrides all others. 11

12 The socio-political valuing of thrift explains, in part, why Australia's fruit 12
 13 consumption is well below dietary recommendations (according to the limited 13
 14 nationally-representative data available²) for moderate consumption of fruits in 14
 15 their whole or minimally processed form (see, for example, recommendations from 15
 16 the Joint WHO/FAO Expert Consultation on Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of 16
 17 Chronic Diseases, and the 2007 World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute 17
 18 for Cancer Research report). Relative to the Consumer Price Index and to fast 18
 19 food prices, fruit prices have increased relatively higher, particularly over the last 19
 20 decade of drought (Queensland Health 2006, Quiggin 2010). However, the relative 20
 21 price increases could also be due a lack of food retail competition, which has been 21
 22 judged by some public health experts to constitute a national health hazard for the 22
 23 very reason that the prices of nutritious fresh foods appear to be growing faster 23
 24 in Australia than countries with greater retail competition (Wardle et al. 2009). 24
 25 Over the years, the two large supermarket chains have displaced thousands of 25
 26 small suburban 'greengrocers' and as a result are Australia's major purveyors of 26
 27 fruit and vegetables. Clearly supermarkets cannot be solely held accountable for 27
 28 influencing the dietary choices of consumers, but they are also major purveyors of 28
 29 Jevons Paradox. They have instilled the value of the cheap and efficient production 29
 30 and consumption of energy into the Australian culinary culture. 30

31 Although associations between industrial food providers and disease have 31
 32 been widely documented in Western nations, the same association is now observed 32
 33 in the Asian region. In Thailand, overweight and obesity among adults amounted 33
 34 to almost half of the population in 2004, which was a significant increase over 34
 35 the 1997 prevalence data (Banwell et al. 2009). Those most at risk were living 35
 36 in Bangkok and the relatively prosperous central region of Thailand, where the 36
 37 penetration of convenience stores and supermarkets is most marked. 37

38 Elsewhere, we have described at length the highly structured meal patterning 38
 39 and culturally and geographically embedded nature of Thai eating based on wild 39
 40 plants, fish and rice prepared and cooked in individual households or by single 40
 41 operator street vendors (Seubsman et al. 2009). We noted how daily life was 41

42 _____ 42
 43 2 Food consumption data is notoriously limited and more than 15 years have passed 43
 44 since the last national nutrition survey. 44

1 underpinned by a familiar expression, '*Ma kin khao kin pla kan* – come to eat rice 1
2 and fish together'. Sharing a meal made up of diverse dishes operated as social 2
3 glue. More recently the common refrain is another greeting, '*Pai kin khao kan* – go 3
4 to eat rice' with the reply being '*ran nai dee* –which restaurant is better'. 4

5 Whilst the convenience of street foods has been a traditional food provisioning 5
6 strategy in Thailand, it would seem that as in many Asian countries (Hawkes 6
7 2010) the arrival of a cheap, industrial food supply has broken patterns of food 7
8 provisioning that dominated their societies for millennia: resource seasonality, 8
9 energy-intensive foraging for energy-dense and palatable foods (Ulijaszek 2002). 9
10 In a recent analysis, Banwell et al. (2009) reported that between 1969 and 2003 the 10
11 estimated intake of kilocalories in Thailand increased from 2110 to 2400; and over 11
12 two decades (1983–2003), sugar consumption among Thais more than doubled 12
13 from 12.7 to 30.5 kilograms per person per year. The implications of this emerging 13
14 weight 'epidemic' are troubling for middle and low income countries in Asia: high 14
15 weight-related non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus (NIDDM) is of particular 15
16 concern as Asian people may have a genetic disposition towards insulin resistance 16
17 at a lesser degree of obesity than Europeans (Cheng 2010). Diabetes has already 17
18 increased rapidly in the region, including Thailand. 18

19 As in Australia, the co-temporaneous spread of different modern retail formats 19
20 in Thailand means it is very hard to draw cause and effect relationships between 20
21 supermarkets and human health outcomes. However, in an analysis of the timing 21
22 of the arrival and spread of supermarkets and hypermarkets beginning in Bangkok 22
23 and spreading to regional centres and the rapid onset of obesity, Kelly et al. (2010) 23
24 point to a strong association between the two trends. 24

25

26

27 Conclusion 27

28

29 The power exercised by retail capital, and by supermarkets as one retail capital 29
30 segment, has received considerable scholarly attention over the last two decades. 30
31 As a result, we now understand supermarket power to be largely dependent on 31
32 their capacity for capital conversion strategies involving economic, cultural, social 32
33 and human capital (Ducatel and Blomley 1990, Dixon 2002). A key feature of 33
34 multi-capital conversion is to constantly deploy legitimization and re-legitimation 34
35 strategies, and based on the research reported in this chapter, supermarkets are 35
36 observed to be currently seeking legitimacy for their role as major social and political 36
37 actors in Australia and Thailand in three major domains: social responsibility, the 37
38 environment, and health and wellbeing. These findings are supported by the work 38
39 of other agrifood scholars (Humphery 1998, Freidberg 2004, Friedmann 2005, 39
40 Hughes 2005, Burch and Lawrence 2007, Campbell and Le Heron 2007). 40

41 The major contribution this chapter makes to understanding the multi-faceted 41
42 power exercised by supermarkets is to unpack the way in which supermarkets are 42
43 moving into new, unexpected spheres of activity, and, due to their existing authority, 43
44 the 'tipping' of other actors into new roles and responsibilities. Another way of 44

1 expressing this dynamic is in terms of transgression and the exercise of liminoid 1
 2 power. In looking for unexpected and voluntary movements and relatively rapid 2
 3 transitions in social relations, we are able to reinterpret supermarket legitimisation 3
 4 strategies both in terms of how they exercise influence, as well as the impacts of 4
 5 their operations in multiple dimensions. 5

6 Mobilising a rationale that producers and consumers have to act differently to 6
 7 help resolve a range of food crises, supermarkets use liminoid power to redefine 7
 8 rights and responsibilities in relation to the food system. Helping consumers to see 8
 9 food purchases as ethical acts is but the clearest example. Through constructing 9
 10 the ‘eco-consumer’ and the ‘eco-producer’, supermarkets are re-orienting both the 10
 11 substance and meaning of fundamentally important social practices. Influenced 11
 12 by Campbell’s work (2009), we note that corporate leadership in these realms 12
 13 has a troubling limitation: the environmental, health and community feedbacks 13
 14 which arise from new forms of production and consumption remain largely 14
 15 unknown to producers and consumers, being privy to key participants in privatised 15
 16 regulatory systems only (namely the supermarkets). However, because of time 16
 17 lags in environmental, community and population health impacts it is questionable 17
 18 whether supermarkets can monitor what effects their activities are having. The 18
 19 lack of willingness by national governments to provide regulatory oversight of 19
 20 the ecological impacts of such important economic and cultural institutions is 20
 21 noteworthy. 21

22 In amplifying the consequences of the transgressive behaviour of supermarkets, 22
 23 we have illuminated an often over-looked dimension of the newly fashionable 23
 24 metabolic rift theory, which typically focuses on the relationship between a 24
 25 depleted biosphere and exploitative social relations. In shaping the nature and 25
 26 content of global food supply networks, and culinary cultures, supermarkets are 26
 27 not simply consolidating the dislocation between society and nature, they are also 27
 28 contributing to a profound disturbance in human metabolism in the direction of 28
 29 encouraging the over-consumption of food and energy. 29

30 While no single set of events, actor or actor networks is responsible for 30
 31 the metabolic rift, it is hard to deny the influence of national and pan-national 31
 32 supermarket chains as the key globalising force in the food system over the last three 32
 33 decades. Supermarkets are amongst the most enthusiastic adopters of capitalist- 33
 34 inspired modes of efficiency and the attendant need to exploit new territories and 34
 35 markets. Further, they constantly undermine a food system comprising diverse 35
 36 local and regional economic models and producer-consumer engagements; which, 36
 37 alongside the protection of bio-diversity, is considered by some to be the hallmark 37
 38 of a sustainable food system (Larsen et al. 2008). In this context, the exercise of 38
 39 supermarket power under the rubric of food system sustainability or health and 39
 40 wellness is limited in its capacity to resolve the deepening ecological crisis of the 40
 41 food system. 41

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1	Chapter 8	1
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3	Making Meat Collectivities:	3
4		4
5	Entanglements of Geneticisation, Integration	5
6		6
7	and Contestation in Livestock Breeding	7
8		8
9	Lewis Holloway, Carol Morris, David Gibbs and Ben Gilna	9
10		10
11		11
12		12
13		13
14	Introduction	14
15		15
16	The issue of UK trade magazine <i>Farmers Weekly</i> dated 27 November 2009 carries	16
17	a supplement dedicated to AgriLIVE, ‘agriculture’s new food, technology and	17
18	business event’, to be held a couple of weeks later in December 2009 at Stoneleigh	18
19	Park, Warwickshire, the home of the Royal Agricultural Society of England. A	19
20	feature article (Balsom 2009) within the supplement uses a case study of a farm in	20
21	Oxfordshire to highlight a recent trend in UK meat networks. The article refers to	21
22	the farm’s relationship with the Dovecote Park/Waitrose ‘Cattle Connect’ scheme,	22
23	to make a case for the value of ‘being part of a designated supply chain ... [which]	23
24	... emphasises integration of the supply chain by linking dairy and beef suppliers’	24
25	(p. 4). Supplying beef solely to the Waitrose supermarket chain, via Dovecote	25
26	Park abattoir and meat processing company, itself similarly dedicated to Waitrose,	26
27	is argued to increase farm production efficiencies and profits by coordinating	27
28	the demands of the retailer with on-farm cattle rearing practices. The farming	28
29	practices which Waitrose and Dovecote Park jointly aim to influence through such	29
30	integration include breeding, and in particular Dovecote Park selects which bulls	30
31	are used to sire the cattle which will eventually be sent to their abattoirs. In doing	31
32	this, Dovecote Park, amongst other things, uses particular <i>genetic</i> knowledge-	32
33	practices in attempts to ensure as far as possible that bulls will pass on desirable	33
34	traits (in terms of such things as growth rates and meat quality) to their offspring.	34
35	To explore some of the contours of this meat ‘supply chain integration’ – ‘the	35
36	phrase of the moment’ according to <i>Farmers Weekly</i> – this chapter draws on	36
37	research conducted as part of a project exploring the effects of the emergence of	37
38	particular types of genetic knowledge-practice in beef cattle and sheep breeding	38
39	in the UK and their entanglement with ‘traditional’ ways of knowing and valuing	39
40	livestock. The research is interested in the production and circulation of genetic	40
41	knowledge-practices in agriculture, in examining how such knowledge-practices	41
42	become established and gain legitimacy, how they become tangled up with visual	42
43	and other traditional knowledge-practices, and in the effects of genetic knowledge-	43
44	practices on how cattle and sheep are bred and managed and on human-nonhuman	44

1 animal relationships in livestock farming. The research has increasingly led us to 1
 2 explore the process of 'geneticisation' beyond the farm gate, to look at how the 2
 3 establishment of particular genetic truths or ways of rendering 'life itself' (Franklin 3
 4 2000) are entangled with processes of restructuring and differentiation within UK 4
 5 food systems. On the one hand, there are possibilities for some large corporations 5
 6 in the food sector, particularly supermarkets, to use the existence and increasing 6
 7 sophistication and complexity of genetic techniques to exert greater control over 7
 8 the on-farm breeding and management of animals whose meat they later come to 8
 9 retail. For these retail corporations, their demands for efficiency, standardisation, 9
 10 traceability and an ability to increasingly regulate and monitor all aspects of their 10
 11 suppliers' activities (Burch and Lawrence 2007) are driving the reshaping of the 11
 12 meat supply system. But on the other hand, there is evidence that geneticisation 12
 13 as it is currently conceived and practised can be contested, particularly by those 13
 14 breeding livestock and marketing meat products partly or wholly out with the 14
 15 'conventional' corporate food system. 15

16 In this chapter then, we use the results of work with UK sheep and cattle breed 16
 17 societies and a range of commercial and research institutions and industry bodies 17
 18 associated with these agricultural sectors to examine some of the dimensions of 18
 19 geneticisation of beef cattle and sheep breeding, specifically in relation to how this 19
 20 process might be associated with greater corporate-led and -dominated integration 20
 21 of the various actors in meat networks. We also explore the ways in which both 21
 22 geneticisation and integration are being resisted in some parts of the beef and sheep 22
 23 sectors, on the basis that genetic techniques are inappropriate for breeding animals 23
 24 whose meat is intended for some of the more specialist, niche marketing strategies. 24
 25 Our argument is less that the potential for geneticisation is driving integration and 25
 26 (further) differentiation in the food system, and more that geneticisation, as the 26
 27 deployment of genetic 'truths' and the instigation of particular practices informed 27
 28 by those truths, highlights particular aspects of systemic changes in how food is 28
 29 farmed, processed, retailed and consumed, and gives insight into how particular 29
 30 entanglements of different types of agricultural 'knowledge-practice' (Mol and 30
 31 Law 2002) are tied to changing food network power-knowledge relationships. 31

32 We begin below by outlining an analytical perspective – Foucault's biopower 32
 33 – which we have found increasingly useful in making sense of some of the power- 33
 34 knowledge relationships associated with the shifting political economy of the 34
 35 livestock sector and with the geneticisation of livestock breeding. We then outline 35
 36 two particular genetic techniques that between them have become the core of the 36
 37 research project. Next, we develop two empirical sections, the first looking at the 37
 38 emerging relationships between geneticisation in 'integrative' meat systems, the 38
 39 second exploring the contestation of geneticisation in 'non-integrative' systems. 39
 40 The chapter ends with a discussion of the implications of the role of geneticisation 40
 41 and its discontents (Bridge et al. 2003) in food system differentiation. Here, 41
 42 we briefly address wider debates about the supposed differences between 42
 43 'conventional' and 'alternative' food networks. Questioning the tendency to 43
 44 associate concerns with food 'quality' and food system 'reconnection' with so- 44

1 called ‘alternative’ food networks (e.g. Morgan et al. 2006), we conclude that both 1
2 ‘quality’ and ‘reconnection’ are being defined and enacted in different ways in 2
3 different systems. In sum, then, the chapter is interested in a number of different 3
4 entanglements: first, between different livestock breeding knowledge-practices, 4
5 second, between different modes of food production-consumption, and third, 5
6 between the various humans and nonhumans in meat supply networks. 6

9 **Power, Knowledge and Life** 9

10
11 That food – in terms of the way it is produced, processed, retailed and consumed 11
12 – is political, has long been recognised. Detailed examinations of the changing 12
13 political economies of agriculture produced during the 1980s and 1990s focused, 13
14 for example, on the problematic position of relatively small, independent farm 14
15 businesses vis-à-vis processes of integration and corporatisation in the wider 15
16 capitalist economy (e.g. Marsden et al. 1986a, 1986b, 1987, 1992). More 16
17 specifically, and more relevant to the theme of this chapter, studies examined 17
18 the changing agricultural bioeconomy, exploring the expanding roles of large 18
19 biotechnology companies and food industry conglomerates in crop-genetic and 19
20 agri-chemical experimentation and ‘technology transfer’ (see Goodman et al. 20
21 1987, Goodman and Redclift 1991, and for a more recent study, Gibbs et al. 21
22 2009). Discourses of progress, modernisation and rationalisation in relation to 22
23 food production have become significant, and are similarly important in the case 23
24 of the advancement of genetic knowledge-practices in livestock breeding. While 24
25 this important work on political economic power relations in the food industry has 25
26 continued (see, for example, Morgan et al. 2006), more recent work has begun to 26
27 pay more attention to the politics of food consumption, arguing that consumption 27
28 practices are as embedded in power relations and struggles as production and 28
29 processing practices (e.g. Lien and Nerlich 2004). In some cases, work has aimed 29
30 to integrate production and consumption relations by looking at supply chains 30
31 or networks, focusing for example on how value and meaning is produced at the 31
32 different nodes of the system (e.g. Jackson et al. 2006). 32

33 As an alternative approach to examining some of the power relationships, 33
34 or power-knowledge relationships, associated with genetic knowledge-practices 34
35 in livestock agriculture we have increasingly found the concept of *biopower*, 35
36 as set out by Michel Foucault (1990, 2004, 2007) and particularly as read by 36
37 Rabinow and Rose (2006), to be effective. We expand on these ideas in some 37
38 detail elsewhere (see Holloway et al. 2009, Morris and Holloway 2009), but here 38
39 provide a summary of the concept, argue that a conceptualisation about humans 39
40 is also appropriate for thinking about humans *and nonhumans* in their entangled 40
41 relationships, and explain exactly how we find it so useful. 41

42 For Rabinow and Rose (2003: 24), biopower involves both a ‘knowledge 42
43 of vital life processes’ and ‘power relations that take humans as living beings 43
44 as their object’. As Rose (2007: 53) suggests, biopower comes out of struggles 44

1 to understand and intervene in the lives of subjects, ‘a multitude of attempts to 1
2 manage their life, to turn their individual and collective lives into information 2
3 and knowledge, and to intervene on them’. Foucault himself said, in his 1977– 3
4 1978 lecture series *Security, Territory, Population* that ‘By [biopower] I mean 4
5 a number of phenomena that seem to me to be quite significant, namely, the set 5
6 of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species 6
7 become the object of a political strategy’ (Foucault 2007: 1). 7

8 Rabinow and Rose (2006) provide a schema for understanding the functioning 8
9 of relations of biopower in any particular situation. First, biopower is associated 9
10 with particular truths which are told about life, and which gain in legitimacy 10
11 through their association with particular authorities regarded as competent to 11
12 speak that truth. In Foucault’s examples of the emergence of the nation state and 12
13 the bureaucracies tied to emergent understandings of particular human populations 13
14 in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Western Europe (Foucault 2004), 14
15 it is an understanding of *population* in terms of certain biological processes (like 15
16 birth, death and morbidity rates) which take on significance and are constructed 16
17 as key ‘truths’ concerning life. Second, biopower is in part a set of interventions 17
18 in the ‘life itself’ of individuals and populations. If life is understood in terms of 18
19 *processes*, for example, it is processes which are intervened in. So, the particular 19
20 strategies for intervention which attempt to influence those (always uncertain and 20
21 complex) processes, for example through the implementation of particular health 21
22 regimes, are seen to relate directly to a specific conception of life. Third, biopower 22
23 also works through regimes of subjectification, through which individuals are 23
24 enrolled into particular truth discourses, and work on themselves and others in 24
25 accordance with the truths they embody. For example, they may act to foster their 25
26 own and their families’ health and fitness. 26

27 Foucault argues that, in this way, biopower accounts for humans (and 27
28 constitutes humans) at two different scales: as both individuals and as populations. 28
29 It consists of an anamopolitics, which focuses on the individual, their body and 29
30 their subjectivity, and a biopolitics, which focuses on the dynamics of populations. 30
31 The joint concepts of anamopolitics and biopolitics are articulated for Foucault 31
32 (1976) particularly through processes of normalisation or regularisation, by 32
33 which both individuals and populations (characterised in terms of their statistical 33
34 qualities) can be assessed in terms of their closeness to or distance from norms. 34
35 Rabinow and Rose (2006) and Rabinow (1999) extend Foucault’s conception of 35
36 populations as human groupings tied to nation states, to think about what they term 36
37 *biosocial collectivities*. These entities are non-territorialised human groupings 37
38 whose shared biological (and particularly genetic) characteristics bring them 38
39 together as communities with shared interests. Their examples are drawn from 39
40 medicine, referring to people who share the experience of particular illnesses. 40

41 In the research on which this chapter draws, however, we are clearly dealing 41
42 with both humans *and nonhumans*, and this requires us to further extend Foucault’s 42
43 and Rabinow and Rose’s conceptions of populations and biosocial collectivities. 43
44 This requires a rethinking of how agency and subjectivity are understood in 44

1 relation to Rabinow and Rose's (2006) threefold parsing of biopower (see 1
 2 Holloway et al. 2009). Our argument is that in relation to genetic techniques in 2
 3 livestock breeding, particular truths are established alongside the establishment 3
 4 of forms of authority, and that particularly 'genetic' interventions take place. 4
 5 That this is in relation to nonhumans does not actually matter – the 'life itself' of 5
 6 humans and, for example, cattle and pigs can be rendered in very similar ways as 6
 7 the effects of the constitution of genetic truths about life itself. Similarly, human 7
 8 and nonhuman life can be regarded in terms of processes, and can be fostered 8
 9 through both anamopolitical and biopolitical interventions. As Youatt argues 9
 10 (2008: 409), 'the "bio" in biopower should be taken seriously as involving all of 10
 11 life' (see also Holloway et al. 2009, Shukin 2009, Twine 2007). What is perhaps 11
 12 more problematic is Rabinow and Rose's (2006) third element of biopower – 12
 13 subjectification. It is difficult to conceptualise animals working on themselves in 13
 14 response to truth discourses in the same way that humans might. In response, we 14
 15 have articulated the notion of *heterogeneous biosocial collectivities*, extending 15
 16 Rabinow's (1999) terminology to encompass situations like livestock breeding 16
 17 where human and nonhuman animals exist in entangled relationships, and in 17
 18 which the humans work on themselves *and* on the animals in accordance with 18
 19 particular truth discourses. In such collectivities, the subjectification of humans 19
 20 simultaneously and necessarily affects the lives and bodies of nonhuman animals, 20
 21 and the work which is done, the agency in the situation, can be articulated as an 21
 22 effect of the collectivity rather than something which is simply centred in either the 22
 23 humans or the animals involved. In the empirical sections of the chapter, we thus 23
 24 attempt to delineate different heterogeneous biosocial collectivities, associating 24
 25 these with 'conventional' and with 'alternative' meat networks. Truth discourses, 25
 26 authorities, interventions and subjectivities are articulated in different ways, and 26
 27 to different ends, in the different collectivities. 27

28 Returning to earlier political economic conceptualisations of agricultural 28
 29 industrialisation and corporatisation, we can provide a new inflection on the 29
 30 processes to which such approaches draw attention by viewing them through the 30
 31 lens of biopower, not because biopower (as Foucault is clear) is an explanation or 31
 32 theory, but because of its analytical potential. Biopower is, perhaps, a way of seeing 32
 33 these structural processes such that how they are involved in the 'fostering' of life 33
 34 comes into clearer focus. As such, the particular political economic processes we 34
 35 explore below in relation to the livestock sector – integration, corporatisation, etc. 35
 36 – can be seen as bound up with the sorts of truths, authorities, interventions and 36
 37 subjectifications identified by Rabinow and Rose (2006). The conceptualisation of 37
 38 biopower also provides space for us to understand resistance to these processes in 38
 39 the same terms. Jeffrey Nealon (2008) for example, argues that particular forms of 39
 40 resistance and contestation are urged and made possible by the particular power- 40
 41 knowledge relations the concept of biopower attempts to define. His suggestion is 41
 42 that, as modes of biopower represent both an intensification of, and the saturation 42
 43 of all social spaces by, disciplinary power-knowledge relations, resistance too is 43
 44 intensified, yet more subtle, as it permeates the mundane spaces of everyday life 44

1 (such as the production, processing and retailing of food). For Nealon, 'As power 1
2 becomes increasingly more invested in the minute details of our lives, so too have 2
3 our modes of resistance become increasingly subtle and intense' (2008: 108). 3
4 In the empirical case this chapter focuses on, the everyday spaces of livestock 4
5 breeding can be framed in terms of how they are, on the one hand, permeated 5
6 by anatomopolitical and biopolitical strategies associated with corporatisation 6
7 and integration which render the life of livestock animals increasingly in genetic 7
8 terms, and on the other hand, in dialectical relation to this, sites of some resistance 8
9 to such genetic knowledge-practices. 9

10 From here, then, we move to explore the specific case of the rise of genetic 10
11 knowledge-practices in livestock breeding. The process of 'geneticisation' 11
12 (Gannett 1999, Haraway 1997, Keller 1992, 2000, Rose 2001) has been recognised 12
13 in relation to various, particularly medical, fields, and suggests an increasing 13
14 scientific preoccupation with understanding and intervening in life on the basis 14
15 of genetic 'truths'. But, establishing and legitimising such truths and normalising 15
16 particular interventions in new fields such as livestock breeding takes work and 16
17 in practice is contested, depends on forging and sustaining sometimes fragile new 17
18 relationships, and is tangled up with other knowledge-practices. So, although 18
19 in many of the diverse and everyday sites involved in livestock production and 19
20 the processing and retail of meat products, genetic truths may be gaining in 20
21 legitimacy, in other sites the truths and authorities associated with geneticisation 21
22 and its particular take on the life of livestock animals is being challenged. In the 22
23 empirical sections of this chapter, we explore both of these perspectives. 23
24 24
25 25

26 **Genetic Knowledge-practices:** 26

27 **Estimated Breeding Values and Genetic Markers** 27

28 28
29 Two particular genetic knowledge-practices have formed the focus of the research. 29
30 Their increasing profile in livestock breeding is emphasised in the following 30
31 quotation taken from the UK trade publication *Farmers Weekly*: 31
32 32

33 For centuries, farmers have used phenotype to improve livestock. They selected 33
34 the best looking and performing animals to produce their next generations. Then 34
35 they had *breeding values*. These gave an estimate of the animal's ability to 35
36 pass its desirable genes to the next generation. But now we can go further. Our 36
37 knowledge today goes right down to the *gene* ... With this knowledge we can 37
38 identify animals with the potential to produce larger litters, more tender meat, 38
39 fight disease or retain bodily condition. (Hardy 2005, emphases added) 39
40 40

41 In this comment, reference is first made to visual assessment of phenotype and 41
42 ancestry. This relates to established and culturally significant knowledge-practices 42
43 of selecting animals 'by eye' and on the basis of pedigree records and so on (Derry 43
44 2003, Orland 2004, Ritvo 1987), but such knowledge-practices are increasingly 44

1 open to challenge by the promoters of genetic knowledge-practices. In the 1
2 quotation above, breeding values and genes (genetic markers) are mentioned as 2
3 particular techniques contributing to the geneticisation of livestock breeding. 3
4 Breeding values, more usually referred to as *Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs)* 4
5 are a 'classical' genetic technique based on statistical relationships between 5
6 genetically related animals in a breed population. They are developed from a 6
7 series of measurements taken from animals' bodies (for example, weight at 7
8 various stages, amounts of fat and muscle in key bodily locations) and records of 8
9 animals' performance and productivity (for example, in relation to calving ease/ 9
10 difficulty or milk production). The measurements and relationships are processed 10
11 using a Best Linear Unbiased Predictor (BLUP) programme, and the results 11
12 purport to show, for any animal, how likely they are to pass on particular desirable 12
13 qualities to future generations. Animals can thus be selected for breeding on the 13
14 basis of their statistical genetic profile. EBVs have generated new ways of seeing 14
15 and understanding animals (Holloway and Morris 2008, Holloway et al. 2009), 15
16 for example this quantitative approach provides new ways of ranking animals in 16
17 relation to each other. 17

18 EBVs have been in use in the UK for several decades, although they are 18
19 not universally accepted and, indeed, much work is done by various industry 19
20 organisations and 'progressive' breed societies to persuade breeders of the 20
21 advantages of using EBVs. *Genetic markers*, in contrast, are only beginning to 21
22 emerge as a commercially-viable technique for selecting breeding livestock. 22
23 Genetic markers relate to actual genetic material which, its promoters claim, 23
24 can be associated with particular commercially-valuable corporeal traits such 24
25 as liveweight gain, meat tenderness (i.e. its quality) and resistance to particular 25
26 diseases. Genetic markers are identifiable via quite straightforward tests on blood 26
27 or hair samples which breeders send to one of the small number of commercial 27
28 companies selling such tests in the UK. Again in contrast to the way EBVs 28
29 generate probabilities which have a greater or lesser degree of accuracy, genetic 29
30 markers, it is claimed, are always highly accurate because they can determine very 30
31 clearly the presence or absence of genetic material. What is perhaps less accurate, 31
32 according to some, is the extent to which the genetic markers precisely relate to 32
33 the traits they are claimed to do. As such, both EBVs and genetic markers are open 33
34 to contestation. 34

35 In the following empirical sections, we draw on material collected during our 35
36 research into how breeders are engaging with these genetic knowledge-practices, 36
37 how they become entangled with established livestock breeding knowledge- 37
38 practices and techniques such as embryo transfer and artificial insemination, and 38
39 into how they are transforming the wider knowledge-practices and geographies 39
40 of livestock breeding in the UK. Focusing on the sheep and beef cattle sectors, 40
41 the project involved interviews with representatives of 21 breed societies 41
42 (organisations which maintain records of the animals belonging to their particular 42
43 breed and which also promote the breed), 31 'institutional' interviews with 43
44 representatives of various research institutes, industry bodies and commercial 44

1 organisations associated with the livestock sector (including abattoirs, meat 1
2 processing companies and retailers), and 25 pedigree and 'commercial' livestock 2
3 breeders (adopting terminology used in the sector, pedigree breeders breed 'pure- 3
4 bred' animals which are registered members of a particular breed; commercial 4
5 breeders produce often cross-bred animals mainly for slaughter. In practice, these 5
6 activities frequently overlap). We also held discussion groups with members of two 6
7 beef cattle and two sheep breed societies, and formed a project Consultation Panel 7
8 which received and discussed research findings at an early stage and contributed 8
9 to the formulation of research strategy. 9

10 Here, we specifically use material taken from the 'institutional' and breed 10
11 society interviews. Rather than trying to produce an overview of the empirical 11
12 material collected, we focus in more detail on a small number of illustrative 12
13 breed society and institutional case studies,¹ looking first, at the way in which 13
14 joint processes of geneticisation and integration are occurring in a co-constitutive 14
15 way, and second, more briefly here, how in other instances, geneticisation is 15
16 being resisted. The former approach can be associated with a strengthening or 16
17 intensification of power-knowledge relationships within this particular part of 17
18 the food supply system; the latter approach with those types of 'alternative' food 18
19 network (notwithstanding the problematics of this terminology – see Holloway 19
20 et al. 2007, Ilbery and Maye 2005, Watts et al. 2005) which exist in part to resist 20
21 corporate domination of how food is produced, processed and retailed. 21

22 23 24 **Geneticisation and Integration – Tying Up Meat Production with 'Genetic'** 24 25 **Knowledge-practices?** 25 26 26

27 In this section, we turn to the ways in which genetic truths, authorities, interventions 27
28 and subjectifications are contributing to integration processes in meat networks. 28
29 Rather than discussing food system integration per se, a wider theme beyond the 29
30 scope of this chapter, we focus specifically on geneticisation as a discourse or 30
31 set of knowledge-practices which is involved in enacting particular integrational 31
32 processes in the UK beef and lamb sectors. We do this by presenting material from 32
33 interviews with three companies, all of which are intermediaries between farmers 33
34 and large retail multiples in their respective meat networks. The three case studies 34
35 demonstrate varying levels and kinds of integration, ranging from the informal 35
36 network to formalised contractual relations, and similarly genetic knowledge- 36
37 practices play variable roles in the nature and extent of the integration which 37
38 is demonstrated. We start with the least (formally) integrated and finish with a 38
39 company where relations of integration have become quite intensified. We end the 39
40 section by commenting on this empirical material from the analytical perspective 40

41 41
42 ¹ Interviewee and organisation names have been removed to protect interviewee 42
43 anonymity. 43
44 44

1 of biopower and heterogeneous biosocial collectivity, thinking particularly about 1
2 truths, authorities, interventions and subjectification in these integrating meat 2
3 networks. 3
4 4
5 *Company A: Informal Integration of Supermarket Meat Supply* 5
6 6
7 Company A processes and packs meat exclusively for a major UK supermarket 7
8 chain, taking responsibility for about half of that supermarket's beef supply. In 8
9 this demanding and challenging position, the company acts as a broker between 9
10 the supermarket, and the farmers and abattoirs who rear and slaughter the cattle. 10
11 This has meant they have needed to extend their role into attempting to influence 11
12 what abattoirs and farmers do, in various ways, in order to achieve a continuous 12
13 supply of consistently sized and packaged meat of a consistent quality. As the 13
14 interviewee said, 14
15 15
16 Whatever [the supermarket's] criteria is, this is where I come in to say [to the 16
17 abattoir company] this is what we want. Can you deliver it? What are your 17
18 volumes like? And then *how do we move that in one direction or another? How* 18
19 *do we tell the farming community* that we do want Angus or we do want them 19
20 grazed for six months? Or they ought to be fed vitamin E or something like that 20
21 in the last 90 days. I help with that communication role, *making sure we have got* 21
22 *the right message on the ground and the abattoirs know what they are doing ...* 22
23 my primary role is about availability to make sure we can fill meat demand, but 23
24 then it is about improving quality. (Emphasis added) 24
25 25
26 The work of communication and intervention is emphasised here. In doing this work 26
27 with various actors in the meat network, the genetic techniques we are interested 27
28 in were not mentioned as a primary mode of intervention; instead, emphasis was 28
29 placed on animal welfare before slaughter (as stress prior to slaughter can have a 29
30 detrimental effect on meat quality), animals' diet and vitamin intake (again, related 30
31 to meat quality), and on the use of particular breeds to ensure consistency and 31
32 quality. 32
33 33
34 But yes we all work together. We have all got the same objectives at the end 34
35 of the day and we need to sell meat ... So once you have got the processing 35
36 facilities right, the lairage² facilities right, your next thing is to target *down the* 36
37 *chain onto the farm* and it is a hard thing to do especially when you are dealing 37
38 with the numbers that [the supermarket] are. (Emphasis added) 38
39 39
40 There is clearly recognition that integration in such a network is challenging and 40
41 problematic, due to the fragmentation of the farming sector and the particular 41
42 nature of the commodity being 'made'. We were told, 'we are dealing with a very 42
43 43
44 2 Lairage is the area of an abattoir where animals are kept prior to slaughter. 44

1 backwards industry. In what other industry do you take a product and then chop it 1
 2 all about and sell it differently? Everyone else you have an assembly line. We have 2
 3 a disassembly line'. In the case of Company A, integration is relatively informal, 3
 4 so that although it's possible to identify how power and knowledge within the 4
 5 network are being redistributed towards large corporations, the actual farmers are 5
 6 nevertheless still relatively independent actors. 6

7 An important way of trying to guide farmers' conduct is by aiming to 7
 8 provide them with more information on the 'performance' of their animals when 8
 9 slaughtered than they would usually get. A consistent theme in the research has 9
 10 been that genetic interventions such as the use of EBVs and genetic markers in 10
 11 livestock populations have been 'held back' as most farmers tend to sell finished 11
 12 (i.e. ready for slaughter) animals 'liveweight' through auction markets. In that 12
 13 system, the purchasing abattoir provides minimal feedback to the farmer using 13
 14 an unsophisticated grid that summarises the 'performance' of each animal as a 14
 15 carcass on the basis of subjectively appraised 'yield' (i.e. proportion of muscle) 15
 16 and fat content. Under this EU-wide scheme, no price premium is awarded for the 16
 17 great majority of the attributes both EBVs and genetic markers measure, providing 17
 18 little financial incentive for their uptake. In response, Company A is working to 18
 19 provide much more information to farmers in efforts to help them provide more 19
 20 consistent animals. It is claimed that this also helps farmers to rear their animals 20
 21 more efficiently, decreasing the costs of raising livestock. So, in general terms, 21
 22 Company A is acting within an informally integrating network, translating the 22
 23 demands of its supermarket customer into specific interventions in other actors in 23
 24 its meat network. 24

25 As we were told, genetic knowledge-practices in this particular network are 25
 26 subsumed into wider strategies for intervention into the entangled lives of humans 26
 27 and animals. They are seen as having potential in the longer term rather than being 27
 28 a current focus. In this regard, the 'hyping' of genetic knowledge-practices evident 28
 29 in much agricultural research and some farming practice (Holloway and Morris 29
 30 2008) is importantly played down here; for this interviewee at least there are 30
 31 some more basic and fundamental changes which need to be made in the pursuit 31
 32 of consistent meat products, before attention can be turned to the possibilities 32
 33 presented by EBVs and genetic markers. As she said, 33
 34 34

35 So I will do a sort of pyramid of quotes. Let us get the lairage right, let's get the 35
 36 farmers efficient and focused on the business model and then let's look at the 36
 37 breeds. Which breeds are more efficient as far as the farmer goes? ... Because 37
 38 if we get the breeds right to start with then we can work on the genetics of the 38
 39 breed. That is where you can then work with the [breed] societies to say look at 39
 40 EBVs, look at genetics in general and then we can work on the actual science 40
 41 of it. 41

42 42
 43 43
 44 44

1 Despite this caution, genetic knowledge-practices are being explored as the 1
2 possible basis for future interventions. The interviewee said that their supermarket 2
3 customer would like to be able to use genetic techniques to guarantee quality, 3
4 and Company A will be involved at the level of identifying the right breeds and 4
5 within that ensuring EBVs work and the right ones are examined. They may 5
6 be in a position in the future, possibly, to specify particular figures and traits 6
7 to farmers who supply them with animals. In this, then, the potential for future 7
8 further integration is set out, as this particular network changes to reflect some 8
9 of the processes commented on below in relation to some of the other case study 9
10 companies. 10

11

12 *Company B: Genetic Interventions and Dedicated Meat Networks* 12

13

14 Company B plays a similar intermediary role to Company A in its meat network 14
15 associated with another supermarket company, but is also an abattoir. Like 15
16 Company A, Company B emphasises the dedicated supply chain role it occupies 16
17 in relation to its supermarket customer, with the interviewee saying ‘we are 100% 17
18 really dedicated to [the supermarket]’, and going on to discuss how: 18

19

20 ... [W]e are totally focused on one customer, one retailer. We are geared up 100% 20
21 dedicated to them and also to our producers [farmers] who quite a majority of 21
22 those will now be dedicating to us, so ... the producers [farmers] get a lot nearer 22
23 the front end than they would do in other retail chains I think really. 23

24

25 In contrast to Company A, however, genetic knowledge-practices are much more 25
26 significant in Company B’s attempts to intervene in meat network heterogeneous 26
27 biosocial collectivities. This is evident from the interviewee’s comments on how 27
28 they achieve the quality and consistency the supermarket requires. The aim is to 28

29

30 ... deliver a more consistent and quality eating product for [the supermarket], 30
31 so we are looking at on the front end of the farm, we are looking at EBVs and 31
32 genetic traits within bulls to improve growth rates ... [and also] ... looking at 32
33 [genetic] markers for the tender gene. 33

34

35 For Company B, then, genetic knowledge-practices are expected to work alongside 35
36 a set of other mechanisms deployed as a way of disciplining farmers, to ensure that 36
37 the required standards and consistencies are met – for example, only animals of 37
38 a certain age and weight will be accepted, and animals must arrive at the abattoir 38
39 direct from the farm in under six hours. Careful pre-slaughter care is given to 39
40 avoid stress. Integration in this case then allows Company B to ‘try and reduce 40
41 the peaks and troughs of any variability within tenderness and succulence by the 41
42 processes we have before slaughter’. 42

43

44

1 Genetic knowledge-practices are part of increasingly intensive modes of 1
 2 integration, with particular genetic truths and interventions associated with work 2
 3 done on the subjectivities of the farmers involved, as they are exhorted to work 3
 4 on the lives of the animals they rear. Increasingly, then, Company B plays a role 4
 5 in on-farm breeding of cattle, selecting bulls with particular genetic qualities and 5
 6 expecting farmers to use them to sire cattle intended for its abattoirs. Increasingly, 6
 7 then, 7

8
 9 [W]e are having input into the bull side of it. We are buying a lot of semen, we 9
 10 buy quite few bulls and place them on the farm ... So we do help as much as we 10
 11 can on the genetics and feeding side. 11
 12 12

13 That genetic truths are increasingly powerful in this meat network was indicated 13
 14 in a separate interview with the supplier of some of the semen used in this way, 14
 15 a separate company, in which EBVs and genetic markers were described as 'a 15
 16 revolution'. However, it was interesting that genetic knowledge-practices were 16
 17 discussed in quite complex ways in the interview with Company B. In some 17
 18 ways, the truths they embody were represented as increasingly imperative. For 18
 19 example, 'some breeding has been left in the dinosaur age and it is needed really 19
 20 fast and we are still working with the scientists now to quickly implement genetic 20
 21 improvement ... Tender gene markers, that is going to be a must'. But at the same 21
 22 time, some rather more subtle views about their entanglement with other ways of 22
 23 assessing animals, and future of integration vis-à-vis genetic knowledge-practices, 23
 24 were expressed. 24

25 First, the representative of Company B argued that their supermarket customer 25
 26 is dealing with sophisticated consumers, 'you know they are very, very switched 26
 27 on and educated people and they also understand quality of meat'. As such, 27
 28 particular meat qualities are required and genetic truths and interventions are a 28
 29 significant part of achieving those: 'so that is always a target for us to try and 29
 30 work with the farmers again and through genetic traits, and bulls we are trying to 30
 31 isolate that to pick bulls who breed tender and some degree of marbling within 31
 32 their genetic make-up'. 32

33 Second, however, the specific, high value sector of the market Company B is 33
 34 integrated into means that, although EBVs are used extensively, they are used in a 34
 35 particular way and given a particular inflection: 35
 36 36

37 For us quality is about flavour, tenderness of product, it is slightly different [than 37
 38 just going for weight gain] ... I can see the industry splitting into more extensive 38
 39 beef and then intensive beef and if you are going intensive then I don't think you 39
 40 ever question EBVs ... So, we do recommend to producers to use them but as a 40
 41 guidance rather than an absolute must. 41
 42 42

43 The foregoing comment argues that, for beef networks drawing on more 43
 44 intensively reared cattle to supply relatively cheap meat, then EBVs (which have 44

1 tended to focus on traits such as rapid weight gain) are suitable. However, for 1
2 Company B's meat network, which draws on more extensively reared cattle to 2
3 supply relatively expensive meat, then characteristics other than those assessed by 3
4 EBVs should also be taken into account (and indeed, this accords with some of 4
5 the comments made by actors in 'alternative' meat networks in the next empirical 5
6 section). While EBVs have provided some important benefits, then, 'that doesn't 6
7 necessarily fit with everything that we do because EBVs are a tool, particularly 7
8 if they are live weight gain and conformation traits, that doesn't necessarily meet 8
9 our spec[ification]'. Clearly, then, integration of meat networks is not a simple 9
10 and single process, but can take different forms and differently involve genetic 10
11 knowledge-practices, truths and interventions in constituting quite different 11
12 heterogeneous biosocial collectivities. 12

13 14 *Company C: Intensive Integration* 14

15
16 Company C occupies a rather different position in its meat network than 16
17 Companies A and B, as it engages in a much more intensive form of integration 17
18 by establishing formal contractual relations between itself and farmers who are 18
19 paid to rear carefully-bred calves in carefully-specified ways. Calves thus bred 19
20 and reared should be consistent and of an appropriate quality for Company C's 20
21 customers in the meat network. According to the company's representative, their 21
22 approach to integration was at the time of interview unique in the UK; as he put it: 22

23
24 So [Company C] controls the chain, if you like, from the animal being born and 24
25 being sold to us, through to it being slaughtered here. When it's slaughtered 25
26 here, the actual slaughtering arm is [another company name] which is a sister 26
27 organization. In a nutshell, what it is, is an integrated supply chain, okay. 27

28
29 The process is described in detail in the following comments, which are worth 29
30 quoting at length here because of the way they exemplify the intensity of this 30
31 particular integrative relationship and set of interventions in this biosocial 31
32 collectivity. 32

33
34 What we're trying to do is a total system in that, all to do with meat quality 34
35 basically. So we've got a bull that we know is genetically superior ... Producing 35
36 us calves that grow quickly. We've got a rearing system which we ... it's a 36
37 very prescribed system, alright, different from other organizations. Other 37
38 organizations usually sell the calf to the rearer, let them pick up all the bills 38
39 and do it how he wants to and then buy the calf from the other end. We don't. 39
40 We actually contract the rearer to rear our calves, pay them a fee, we put in 40
41 all the medicines, all of the feed, all the milk powder, alright. So we dictate to 41
42 that rearer ... We dictate protocol, health protocols, feed protocol as well. They 42
43 follow that and basically what we want is, the whole crux of the system we put 43
44 batches of calves in to order, everything we rear is presold before it goes in. 44

1 For Company C, genetic knowledge-practices are only part of a bigger set of 1
 2 complex management processes which must all mesh together in that pursuit of 2
 3 consistency and quality; Company C is able to do this through its contracting and 3
 4 integration. However, genetic truths have clearly been established here, so that 4
 5 'genetics is the initial foundation step, alright. If you get the genetics right, and you 5
 6 get the right bull with the right potential, then it leads on to more efficiencies down 6
 7 the chain'. A direct and immediate genetic intervention is thus made; Company C, 7
 8 in partnership with a major UK cattle breeding company, has selected an Aberdeen 8
 9 Angus bull with the desired genetic characteristics, and supplies semen from him 9
 10 for artificial insemination of the dairy cows who will give birth to the calves which 10
 11 enter their contract rearing system. The bull was chosen to have a combination of 11
 12 high production trait EBVs and specific genetic markers, he has 'high EBV, good 12
 13 tender gene marker, good rib-eye scoring gene marker, good liveweight gain and 13
 14 easy calving'.

15 Genetic markers are regarded as having a great potential future contribution. 15
 16 Company C's representative, however, wanted to engage with the production 16
 17 of genetic knowledge-practices rather than simply adopt what was made 17
 18 commercially available. He thus criticised a situation where, in his view, 18
 19 companies offering genetic marker tests were more interested in generating profits 19
 20 *now*, than in engaging in longer-term and more thorough testing regimes which 20
 21 would establish particular tests as valid and useful in the future and for particular 21
 22 cattle populations. As he said: 22

23
 24 I think it's in its infancy really. I mean, you ... to me, I could see, if I, you've 24
 25 got [a genetic marker company], they've done the easy route³ ... but what they 25
 26 should be doing is also coming to commercial people like myself and evaluating 26
 27 it within a system ... It's understandable, but what I would be doing is like, 27
 28 this bull here, we'll do a total gene marker on him, as much as we can, then get 28
 29 our bull, the progeny of that bull on farms, through the system, and we could 29
 30 monitor all the way through and then come out with some, even to the meat end 30
 31 of the operation, it's going to come out with some validated evidence, you know. 31
 32 That's where I think we should be going. 32
 33

34 For Company C then, their already intensively integrated and self-styled 34
 35 'dictatorial' system provides opportunities for the further development and 35
 36 extension of genetic knowledge-practices; indeed, without modes of integration 36
 37 which foster the tracing and recording of animals at all stages of rearing (from 37
 38 birth to slaughter) and the construction of 'centres of calculation' (Latour 1999) 38
 39 surrounding them, the further establishment of genetic knowledge-practices is 39
 40 unlikely to happen. 40

41
 42 3 The interviewee is here referring to how the genetic marker company mentioned 42
 43 is currently selling tests which, in his view, yet need further testing and validation for 43
 44 particular animal populations. The rush to get tests to market is his criticism. 44

1 We finish this section by briefly reviewing some of the general points which 1
2 emerge from these three case study companies, using biopower as an analytical 2
3 lens. It is clear that to varying degrees, genetic truths and modes of intervention 3
4 are becoming established as legitimate ways of fostering 'supply chain integration' 4
5 (to re-use the expression from *Farmers Weekly*). Whether genetic knowledge- 5
6 practices are regarded as of secondary importance (e.g. Company A) or as the 6
7 foundation of integration (e.g. Company C), in all cases they are entangled with 7
8 other processes and practices, including interventions aimed at remodelling 8
9 farmers' subjectivities in efforts to intervene in how they breed and manage their 9
10 animals, and interventions aimed at altering how abattoirs handle animals prior 10
11 to slaughter in efforts to reduce stress and improve meat quality. In these cases, 11
12 what farmers are expected to know and do is altered so that their subjectivities 12
13 and interventions are more aligned with both integrative strategies in general 13
14 and geneticisation in particular. Thinking and acting within a genetic paradigm 14
15 involves some surrender of a farmer's autonomy. The farmer-and-herd/flock is 15
16 woven into a network of standardised comparisons and measurements across 16
17 new rigorously (re)defined populations, stretching beyond the bounds of the farm 17
18 and into modernised, globalised, homogenised industrial systems. Farm-level 18
19 heterogeneous biosocial collectivities thus become constituted differently as the 19
20 life itself of livestock animals becomes viewed increasingly through the prism of 20
21 genetic knowledge-practices. 21

22 Processes of supply chain integration point to redistributions of power and 22
23 knowledge in meat networks, and this takes on particular inflections in relation to 23
24 the emergence of genetic knowledge-practices where a range of other institutions 24
25 are necessarily involved in generating EBVs and/or undertaking genetic marker 25
26 testing. For those farmers who enter into these 'dedicated' supply chain relationships, 26
27 decision making about how breeding should be done is increasingly something 27
28 that involves the powerful intervention of these case study companies (and others 28
29 like them) along with the range of institutions associated with EBVs and genetic 29
30 markers. At the same time, of course, these intermediary companies' practices 30
31 are strongly influenced by their own customers, the supermarket companies, and 31
32 those in turn by what consumers 'demand' or have been taught to expect (e.g. 32
33 Lang and Heasman 2004, Marsden et al. 2000). Right through this, however, the 33
34 'life itself' of the livestock animals involved is understood, or reconstituted, in 34
35 ways which increasingly include particularly genetic truths which are associated 35
36 by these companies with the potential to provide meat product *consistency* and 36
37 *quality*, both consistently named as the holy grails of their enterprises. Indeed, 37
38 here, quality is defined partly in terms of consistency. Quality is constructed here 38
39 in specific ways which are tied to the integrative requirements of supermarket 39
40 buyers and to the purported expectations of customers (for example, the demand 40
41 for leanness, tenderness and predictability). This definition of quality contrasts 41
42 with other definitions associated with different meat supply networks, as we 42
43 suggest below. At the same time, integration implies the forging of new types of 43
44 connectedness between the various nodes in meat supply systems, in the name 44

1 of efficiency and of making consistency and quality more probable. Again, this 1
 2 construal of connection can be contrasted with modes of connection sought in 2
 3 other kinds of meat supply network. We return to this point in the conclusions. 3

4 5 6 **Contesting Geneticisation – Resisting Genetic ‘Truths’** 6 7 7

8 There is another side to all this of course. In this second, rather briefer empirical 8
 9 section we present the perspectives of some of those who are less likely to have 9
 10 become enrolled into relations of integration. In these cases, there is a related 10
 11 resistance to, or at least a wary questioning of, the genetic knowledge-practices 11
 12 which are part of meat network integration. Resistance to integration and resistance 12
 13 to genetic knowledge-practices are thus associated in these cases, suggesting 13
 14 that the production of particular knowledge-practices about livestock breeding 14
 15 is in fact closely allied to integrative processes which are displacing the locus 15
 16 of knowledgeability away from farms and towards companies. Our empirical 16
 17 material here thus reflects the perspectives of livestock breeders themselves, in 17
 18 contrast to the perspectives of the companies referred to in the previous section. 18
 19 We focus on two breed society representatives, the first speaking for a beef cattle 19
 20 breed society, the second for a sheep breed society. 20
 21 21

22 *Breed Society A: Breeding Beef Cattle for Niche Markets* 22 23 23

24 Breed A is a so-called ‘traditional’ and ‘native’ breed, associated with south 24
 25 west England. Contrasting immediately with the idea described above of being 25
 26 dedicated to a particular supermarket supply chain, the breed society representative 26
 27 positioned his breed explicitly outside supermarket-driven notions of what is 27
 28 desirable in meat. As he said, 28
 29 29

30 ... because of the intra-muscular fat, they are not desired by a supermarket, so 30
 31 from the mid 1970s onwards they’ve rapidly declined because the supermarkets 31
 32 wouldn’t buy them. 32
 33 33

34 Yet, in common with dedicated, integrated supply chains there is at the same time 34
 35 a focus on meat *quality*. Here, this is described in terms of how the breed is reared, 35
 36 and in the detail of the meat produced and how it is cooked. 36
 37 37

38 [T]he majority of our members are driven by producing a premium product ... 38
 39 it is early maturing, so it is full flavour at 24–26 months. The meat’s marbled⁴ 39
 40 intra-muscular fat, so it cooks inside out. Because of the systems they are reared 40
 41 41

42 4 Marbling refers to the distribution of intra-muscular fat in meat. It can be valued, as 42
 43 here, as it imparts flavour and tenderness to cooked meat, or it can be discriminated against 43
 44 due to consumers’ apparent concerns about visible fat in meat. 44

1 on, natural grass based systems, you get all the flavour of the herbs and whatever 1
2 mixed pastures the cattle are eating. And trials have shown it's the best tasting 2
3 meat in the world ... 3
4 4
5 Rather than supermarket customers, such premium meat is produced with other 5
6 types of customer and consumer in mind. 6
7 7
8 the market for the end product ... are high street butchers, specialist retail outlets 8
9 and farmer retailers, and they are supplying the upper end of the market ... a 9
10 lot of our members now are retailing their own steers in boxes ... a lot of our 10
11 members are saying that they retail their own meat for sale, that they don't need 11
12 to advertise, [customers] come back repeatedly, time after time because of the 12
13 quality and the flavour of the meat. 13
14 14
15 Positioning the breed and the meat in this way again rejects the supermarket- 15
16 driven agenda which the companies in the previous section were closely aligned 16
17 with. Instead, the breed is more closely associated with the sorts of 'alternative' 17
18 food network which focus, as many have noted (see, for example, Kneafsey et al. 18
19 2008), on production-consumption relationships which foster particular modes of 19
20 reconnection and care. 20
21 This positioning of the breed, then, is associated with a different response to 21
22 the genetic knowledge-practices which are taking on such importance in more 22
23 'conventional' food networks. Like many breeds, Breed Society A as an institution 23
24 does encourage breeders to engage with EBVs. This is related to their establishment 24
25 of a formal Breed Improvement Committee and a tight inspection and classification 25
26 system which regulates which animals are of a good enough standard to be used 26
27 to produce future generations of the 'pure-bred' breed, evidence that interventions 27
28 aimed at fostering the lives of (animal) members of the breed towards particular 28
29 agricultural ends are in progress. However, the breed society has struggled to 29
30 persuade breeders to adopt and use EBVs, and this is argued to be because the 30
31 EBV system as currently constituted does not favour breeds and farming systems 31
32 of the type Breed Society A is involved with. As we were told, 32
33 33
34 I think the reason for that [low rate of adoption of EBVs] is, we don't sell a lot 34
35 of crossing bulls on fast growth and muscling, and basically your EBVs are 35
36 based on that. 36
37 37
38 Here then, EBVs as a particular genetic knowledge-practice are regarded as 38
39 something which is more applicable to the requirements of supermarket retailers, 39
40 because of their focus on 'productivist' traits such as growth rate. Where a breed 40
41 is more concerned with a 'quality' defined in terms of flavour, texture, even *terroir* 41
42 (e.g. Barham 2003, Goodman 2003), EBVs are less useful, perhaps irrelevant. 42
43 Similarly, the EBV system has in the past tended to have paid less attention to 43
44 so-called 'maternal' traits, such as milk production, calving ease and longevity, 44

1 again making it less suited to a breed where, '[h]istorically we sold crossing bulls 1
2 because of their docility and their fertility. And their ability to pass on this marbling 2
3 to progeny'. EBVs are seen as associated with, and, constitutive of, particular 3
4 breeding aims which are not suited to this breed. 4

5 This does not mean that genetic knowledge-practices are rejected by Breed 5
6 Society A. As we were told, the current shift towards developing 'maternal' 6
7 EBVs is likely to make the system more useful to them, and the society would be 7
8 interested in the development of an EBV for meat marbling and also in genetic 8
9 markers associated with meat tenderness. In this case, EBVs have the potential 9
10 to become more entangled with the established modes of knowing and valuing 10
11 this breed of cattle. Yet even then, the actual *need* for such markers is questioned 11
12 because Breed Society A knows already that their animals' meat is tender. Genetic 12
13 markers, then, were represented as necessary for other breeds where the history 13
14 of interventions rendering them more suited for 'conventional' food networks had 14
15 resulted in a loss of what Breed Society A would call quality: 15
16 16

17 [T]he breeds who are solely producing commodity beef in the supermarkets are 17
18 interested, very interested in it because they've got to get back, try and get back 18
19 the meat quality, eating quality. The traditional breeds, I would say, uptake is 19
20 fairly slim because we already have that eating quality and tenderness ... So it is 20
21 pointless testing for it because we already have that ... I would say for us it is too 21
22 expensive, because it's only going to prove what we already know. 22
23 23

24 *Breed Society B: Breeding a Minority Sheep Breed* 24

25 25
26 Breed B is a large 'terminal' sheep breed, which although currently a minority 26
27 breed, has a long history of use for crossing with smaller ewes to produce big 27
28 lambs aimed at specific markets for meat. At present, in common with Breed A, 28
29 there are specialist markets for such a sheep, 29
30 30

31 ... there are certain sort of niche marketing people, who sell in farm shops and 31
32 things, and perhaps who want larger carcasses, or who want to trade on farms, 32
33 sort of meat from older breeds. 33
34 34

35 And again in common with Breed Society A, Breed Society B positions its breed in 35
36 opposition to prevalent supermarket-led food networks, this time drawing attention 36
37 to the way some consumers and other customers (e.g. chefs and independent 37
38 butchers) are looking for 'alternative' sources of meat products. 38
39 39

40 I think it is probably because there is a reaction against the supermarkets. You 40
41 see, the supermarkets have to have the standard product, and personally, we 41
42 ourselves, sell the lambs ... we sell them direct to the butchers ... the private 42
43 butchers want something different. For example, they want a little bit more 43
44 44

1 fat cover⁵ ... So, the private butchers and the quality market, restaurants and 1
2 so forth, they want a different class of stock than the standard they sell in the 2
3 supermarket. 3
4 4
5 For the representative of Breed Society B, genetic knowledge-practices were 5
6 rejected as irrelevant, with breeding selection 'by eye' remaining the primary 6
7 knowledge-practice deployed: 'We have got no interest in the recording scheme.' 7
8 This is not to say that breeders of Breed B have not experimented with EBVs, but 8
9 according to this interviewee at least, their validity is strongly contested because 9
10 the focus on EBV figures can lead to a neglect of other traits, particularly those for 10
11 which EBVs have not been constituted. As we were told, 11
12 12
13 ... you can prove all sorts of things with figures, and I have seen one [breed 13
14 name] flock that will be nameless, that he completely ruined it by recording 14
15 because he went entirely on the figures and didn't bother about the legs and so 15
16 the feet went. He didn't bother about the mouths and the mouths went. He got 16
17 entropion ... in growing eyelids. It is a genetic defect ... 17
18 18
19 In this case, and for this interviewee, the unanticipated effects of using EBVs 19
20 make their use illegitimate as a breeding knowledge-practice, with this point 20
21 reinforcing the sense that, as a breed which is not aligned with the agendas of 21
22 supermarket retailers, for Breed B genetic knowledge-practices are of little value 22
23 and are potentially damaging to this breed's heterogeneous biosocial collectivity. 23
24 This collectivity, and Breed Society A's collectivity, for instance, is constructed in 24
25 part around very different notions of quality and connection to those which pertain 25
26 to the 'integrative' supply systems discussed in the previous section. The desired 26
27 qualities of taste or fat presence, and connection through inter-personal relations, 27
28 are enacted through knowledge-practices which are very different to those which 28
29 enact integration and *its* conceptions of quality and connection. 29
30 We end this section with some comments from the representative of a national 30
31 'umbrella' organisation which represents most sheep breed societies. The interview 31
32 emphasised that there are counter-discourses concerning both geneticisation and 32
33 integration. This interviewee contrasted the mode of vertical integration described 33
34 earlier in this chapter, which he associated with trends towards the homogenisation 34
35 of the UK's sheep population, with the persistence of horizontal differentiation in 35
36 livestock breeding, that is, in the continuing presence of large numbers of different 36
37 breeds. On the one hand, the value of integration in providing opportunities for 37
38 'geneticised' interventions in livestock breeding was acknowledged: 38
39 39
40 40
41 41
42 42
43 5 This allows meat to be 'hung' for longer and acquire flavour, in contrast to the rapid 43
44 processing of meat common to 'conventional' meat retail. 44

1 [I]f the vertical integration worked and everybody played their part properly, 1
 2 there is, it is much easier to drive genetic change in the vertical supply chain 2
 3 than it is horizontal wise. 3
 4 4

5 But on the other hand, vertical integration was also represented as creating a 5
 6 potential weakness because of its tendency to reduce diversity. Strength was seen 6
 7 to lie in continued horizontal diversity. 7
 8 8

9 We've got an industry which is really diverse, which gives it strength ... You 9
 10 create a weakness by vertically integrating, so the horizontal diversity is the 10
 11 strength and you can make that comparison to the genetic world where if you 11
 12 become too narrow ... it ends up in a weakness. 12
 13 13

14 Here, a wider biopolitics is expressed in terms of concerns about the importance for 14
 15 current and future (perhaps as yet unknown) needs of fostering the genetic diversity 15
 16 of intra-species and intra-breed populations (see also Defra 2006, Holloway and 16
 17 Morris 2007). This biopolitics expresses too, a different 'truth' about life and what 17
 18 interventions are appropriate in the sort of non-integrative heterogeneous biosocial 18
 19 collectivities he is associated with. Clearly, this interviewee and the institution he 19
 20 represents have an interest in the continued existence of a large number of different 20
 21 breeds, yet these comments also reflect wider concerns which have been expressed 21
 22 about the potential for genetic knowledge-practices such as EBVs and genetic 22
 23 markers to reduce the genetic diversity or 'gene pool' of domestic livestock, with 23
 24 possible consequences for the availability of suitable animals in unknown future 24
 25 economic and environmental conditions (Holloway and Morris 2007). 25
 26 26
 27 27

28 **Conclusions** 28 29 29

30 Using Rabinow and Rose's framing of biopower, summarised as 'a knowledge 30
 31 of vital life processes, power relations which take human beings as their object, 31
 32 and the modes of subjectification through which subjects work on themselves 32
 33 qua living beings' (2006: 215), and drawing on a more heterogeneous sense of 33
 34 biosocial collectivity so that power relations entrain nonhumans as well as humans, 34
 35 differences in understandings of genetics and 'life' between the examples of first, 35
 36 companies, and second, breed societies, used in the foregoing two empirical 36
 37 sections can be described as follows. 37

38 First, different 'truths' about life, associated with different structures of 38
 39 legitimisation and authority, are evident. In the case of the companies, genetic 39
 40 truths about nonhuman life are increasingly important and are associated with 40
 41 an intensification of the relationships of control between both the companies 41
 42 and breeders, and between breeders and their animals. As such, certain specific 42
 43 interventions (such as selecting a bull on the basis of his EBV record or fostering 43
 44 meat tenderness using genetic markers) become established and expected, founded 44

1 on the authority of livestock genetic science to speak such truths. Genetic truths 1
2 and interventions are nevertheless only one part of this set of interventions, and 2
3 are entangled with other mechanisms (such as specifying how animals are to be 3
4 fed and medicated) which aim to regulate breeding activities, fostering animal life 4
5 towards particular ends. In the case of the two breed societies used in this chapter, 5
6 however, genetic truths are less significant, or problematic in that they don't 6
7 provide breeders with the knowledge about their animals that they need to have. 7
8 Again, in these cases, genetic truths may be entangled with 'established' livestock 8
9 breeding knowledge-practices and other truths about animals' bodies and animal 9
10 life. These other knowledge-practices are founded on an authority associated with 10
11 breeders' experience and with breed societies' established modes of recording and 11
12 certifying animal 'members' of the breed. 12

13 Second, different processes of subjectification, in terms of what breeders are 13
14 expected to know and do, are also evident. Associated with the companies, breeders 14
15 are expected to become aligned with particular breeding strategies and interventions 15
16 as a key part of the integration process, increasingly entraining genetic knowledge- 16
17 practices. Breeders work on the bodies of their animals, but they also work on 17
18 themselves, remaking their knowledge-practices and identities as breeders allied 18
19 with modes of livestock production increasingly integrated with and controlled by 19
20 other, corporate, actors such as supermarkets. As such, they lose some autonomy 20
21 in making breeding decisions, and are enrolled into heterogeneous biosocial 21
22 collectivities centred around integrative practices including genetic interventions 22
23 in livestock populations. Contrastingly, breeder autonomy is fostered in cases 23
24 where genetic knowledge-practices and integrative processes are questioned or 24
25 resisted. Here, subjectification and heterogeneous biosocial collectivity occurs 25
26 around alternate knowledge-practices which emphasise breeders' experiential 26
27 understandings of their animals, animals' characteristics which cannot be captured 27
28 by genetic techniques, and alignment with quite different breeding and marketing 28
29 strategies. 29

30 On the one hand, then, the preceding empirical discussion outlines a process of 30
31 differentiation within livestock breeding. From this perspective, we might identify 31
32 two broad tendencies – integrative and non-integrative. Within 'conventional' 32
33 food networks there is an ongoing process of integration and increasing levels 33
34 of corporate involvement in livestock breeding. Existing and emerging genetic 34
35 knowledge-practices are becoming significant within this integration process, 35
36 potentially giving retailers greater control over livestock breeding practices 36
37 on farms. There is thus the potential for increasingly corporatised control over 37
38 breeding practices and livestock agriculture more widely. Although the limits 38
39 of such intervention have to be recognised – in particular, attempts to remodel 39
40 livestock animals are constrained by the corporeal capacities of individual animals 40
41 and of populations of animals – integration is, according to our interviewees, 41
42 producing animals which increasingly embody the qualities they require. While 42
43 genetic techniques are only part of this process (the process also demands other 43
44 integrative mechanisms and redistributions of power in food networks) they 44

1 represent the potential for integration to be intensified through the deployment 1
 2 of particular knowledge-practices. At the same time, associated often with 2
 3 'alternative' food networks, there are livestock breeders and breed societies who 3
 4 are very resistant to such integration and geneticisation, seeing the quantities and 4
 5 qualities emphasised in the 'conventional' networks as inappropriate to what they 5
 6 are trying to do. In these different instances, genetic knowledge-practices become 6
 7 entangled with other processes and other knowledge-practices in particular ways. 7
 8 Where integration is occurring, genetic techniques are caught up in wider processes 8
 9 of attempting to reconfigure farming and farmer subjectivities. Where integration 9
 10 is contested, genetic techniques may be forcefully rebuffed, or tangled up with 10
 11 'traditional' knowledge practices in complex ways (Holloway and Morris 2008). 11
 12 On the other hand, however, despite this apparent divergence there are 12
 13 interesting commonalities between integrative and non-integrative tendencies. 13
 14 This represents, perhaps, a transgression of assumed boundaries between 14
 15 'conventional'/integrative and 'alternative'/non-integrative food networks, since 15
 16 a number of concerns appear in common to both, although they are discursively 16
 17 constructed and take material effect in quite different ways. As the empirical 17
 18 material illustrated, both are very much concerned with ideas of meat 'quality', 18
 19 although 'quality' is defined or at least affectively understood in rather different 19
 20 ways in the different networks. Similarly, both are very much concerned with 20
 21 reconnection. It's become something of a truism to identify the notion of producer- 21
 22 consumer reconnection with 'alternative' food networks, yet it is clear from the 22
 23 preceding discussions that reconnection is also central to efforts to create meat 23
 24 'supply chain integration'. The representative of Company B, for example, 24
 25 argued that integration brought farmers nearer to meat consumers. Thus 'supply 25
 26 chain integration' suggests a collapse of the distancing between producer and 26
 27 consumer, in a different sense to that associated with 'alternative' food networks, 27
 28 but nevertheless raising interesting possibilities for the reconceptualisation of 28
 29 reconnection. 29
 30 Our case study of genetics and changing knowledge-practices in livestock 30
 31 breeding is in a sense simply illustrative of processes going on in food networks 31
 32 more widely, including supply chain differentiation, the entanglement and 32
 33 contestation of different knowledge-practices, the emergence of different relations 33
 34 of control and authority, and the establishment of different types of producer- 34
 35 consumer relationship. Genetic knowledge-practices mark one way in which 35
 36 'conventional', corporate production-consumption relations are being restructured 36
 37 in order to guarantee certain outcomes more effectively. That is, they represent an 37
 38 intensification of control through the food chain by supermarkets and processors 38
 39 as part of a mode of biopower relations which involves genetic techniques and 39
 40 other ways of disciplining the everyday practices of livestock breeders. At the 40
 41 same time, however, integration is being contested through alternatives which also 41
 42 involve the contestation of genetic knowledge-practices. 42
 43 Despite the commonalities identified above, what remains is great contrasts 43
 44 in the distributions and redistributions of knowledgeability and power between 44

1 integrative and non-integrative tendencies. And that certain sorts of bodies and 1
 2 certain sorts of knowledge-practices are more appropriate for these different 2
 3 understandings of quality and reconnection. ‘Conventional’ integrative networks 3
 4 and ‘alternative’ non-integrative networks can be associated with different sorts 4
 5 of heterogeneous biosocial collectivity, in which different combinations of human 5
 6 and livestock animal lives are subject to different sorts of intervention related 6
 7 to differently constituted truths about ‘life itself’. In the former, geneticised 7
 8 understandings of life promote particular sorts of intervention, fostering the life 8
 9 of living beings towards quantitatively measurable goals such as weight gains, 9
 10 consistency of size, or meat tenderness. Genetics illustrate, are part of and intensify 10
 11 integration tendencies and greater reliance is placed in off-farm authorities in 11
 12 deciding on the right interventions to be made. In the latter, more weight is given 12
 13 to qualitative assessments based in breeders’ experiential knowledges, which may 13
 14 or which may not be entangled with genetic knowledge-practices. Interventions 14
 15 are still made at the level of the heterogeneous biosocial collectivity, but they are 15
 16 subjectively very different and resist corporatisation. 16

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20
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1	Chapter 9	1
2		2
3	Making and Un-Making Meat:	3
4		4
5	Cultural Boundaries, Environmental	5
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7	Thresholds and Dietary Transgressions	7
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9	Colin Sage	9
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14	Introduction	14
15		15
16	It is generally acknowledged that the human species evolved as omnivores,	16
17	physiologically and culturally adapted to eating a wide range of foods, including	17
18	those of animal origin. However, the past five decades have witnessed a marked	18
19	' <i>meatification</i> ' of the human diet, spreading from long-established high-	19
20	consumption societies to the 'emerging market economies' of Asia and Latin	20
21	America which have been undergoing a 'nutrition transition' (Popkin 2005; Weis	21
22	2007). As Carolan states, 'eating large quantities of meat has become a cultural	22
23	imperative throughout much of the world, having become a sign of affluence and	23
24	modernity and a 'right' of consumer choice' (2011: 84). Moreover, nutritional	24
25	orthodoxy generally attributes population health gains to increased consumption	25
26	of meat and other livestock products which are important sources of protein,	26
27	energy, vitamins and minerals, and therefore regarded as a remedy for global	27
28	malnourishment (Neo 2011). Yet there is growing concern around the extent to	28
29	which this process of global dietary convergence featuring high levels of meat	29
30	consumption is having a detrimental effect on human and environmental health	30
31	(Cannon 1999; Friel et al. 2009).	31
32	Indeed, the apparently insatiable human appetite for meat has begun to raise	32
33	important questions about limits: what is an acceptable level of consumption that	33
34	satisfies nutritional requirements without compromising individual or ecological	34
35	health? What are the wider moral parameters of satisfying our hunger for this	35
36	profoundly elemental food source as cheaply as possible when it has such profound	36
37	repercussions for other species and for future generations of our kind? As we shall	37
38	see, such questions pose others in turn: does a minimum threshold that satisfies	38
39	dietary need adequately fulfil cultural or material expectations? And if rising	39
40	economic prosperity has almost universally come to mean rising levels of meat	40
41	intake, how should this relationship be decoupled in rapidly growing economies	41
42	where industrial meat production is taking hold?	42
43		43
44		44

1 What this Chapter is About

2

3 Since the publication of *Livestock's Long Shadow* (Steinfeld et al. 2006) there 3
 4 has been increasing attention given to the environmental consequences of the 4
 5 rising farm animal population worldwide, in particular its contribution through 5
 6 greenhouse gas emissions to global climate change (cf. Garnett 2009; Nordgren 6
 7 2012; Stehfest et al. 2009; Sage 2012). At the same time, other work has sought 7
 8 to explore awareness of eating practices involving animal-derived foods and how 8
 9 these are shaped by consideration of environmental or animal welfare concerns 9
 10 (cf. Cole et al. 2009; Evans and Miele 2012; Miele and Evans 2010). Gradually, 10
 11 a body of work has emerged that problematises meat consumption practices and 11
 12 seeks to explore options for lowering demand for animal products in high-income 12
 13 countries. The challenges are considerable, not least because our societies appear to 13
 14 be 'locked-into' consumption patterns that benefit from positive feedback despite 14
 15 the persistence of negative health and environmental outcomes (Frank 2007). 15

16 This chapter briefly summarises some of the key issues surrounding rising 16
 17 numbers of intensively-reared livestock and the consequently high levels of meat 17
 18 consumption in the rich North. Meat is, and has long been, a deeply culturally 18
 19 embedded food, although the quantities consumed in the North and, increasingly 19
 20 across the rapidly developing economies of the Global South, are quite novel. 20
 21 While there is a case that societies in the South should have room to increase 21
 22 consumption as a means to alleviate malnourishment, it is clear that in the North 22
 23 aggregate levels should fall significantly – by at least 30 per cent – in the interests 23
 24 of environmental and human health. However, this is unlikely to be achieved by 24
 25 making appeals to eating less as they are likely to be rejected as contravening the 25
 26 basic principles of consumer sovereignty. Thus the chapter sets out to explore 26
 27 possible alternative pathways of *de-meatification* recognising that each possesses 27
 28 different transgressive qualities that challenge many prevailing cultural and 28
 29 societal norms. How, for example, are campaigns for meatless days regarded by 29
 30 those who unreflexively consume meat products and where the animal origins of 30
 31 such foods simply do not figure? What role might be played by celebrity chefs 31
 32 in leading a cultural revolution against meat-dominated meals? And what are the 32
 33 prospects for industrial alternatives to animal bodies as providers of meat and meat 33
 34 analogues? While this chapter is unable to provide answers to all these questions, 34
 35 it highlights the culturally transgressive nature of such innovations and contributes 35
 36 to the developing debate surrounding meat production and consumption practices. 36

37

38

39 Livestock, Meat and Environmental Thresholds

40

41 The global food industry has arguably been built upon a pillar of meat, comprising 41
 42 beef in the bun, pork in the roll and chicken in the nugget. Meat production has 42
 43 tripled in volume worldwide since the 1970s; it has grown by more than one-fifth 43
 44 since 2000; and it is expected to double by 2050 (FAO 2009). Per capita meat 44

1 consumption now averages 41.2 kg per year, up from 30 kg in 1980. However, 1
 2 there remains considerable disparity across the world: in India just 5.8 kg of meat 2
 3 are eaten per person per year whereas the USA accounts for almost 127 kg per 3
 4 person. Consumption of animal products, including milk and eggs, has grown most 4
 5 quickly in China where around 60 kg of meat are consumed annually per capita, a 5
 6 rate that has grown by four times since 1980 and by 50 per cent since 1995 (FAO 6
 7 2009). Underpinning all of this, of course, are farmed animals, principally cattle, 7
 8 pigs and chickens that together account for 88 per cent of all animal flesh by 8
 9 volume (Weis 2007). In 2005 more than 55 billion farm animals were slaughtered: 9
 10 a more than five-fold increase in four decades. Today more than 40 per cent of 10
 11 all meat production worldwide is produced by factory farms, a production model 11
 12 that illustrates the almost complete globalisation of the industrial grain – livestock 12
 13 complex (Weis 2007). 13

14 Given rising per capita demand for meat worldwide, consequences arising 14
 15 from its provision are coming under increased scrutiny from a variety of different 15
 16 perspectives. Amongst the key areas of concern highlighted within the recent 16
 17 literature regarding the intensification of animal production and meat consumption 17
 18 are the following: 18

- 19
 20 1. Global meat consumption has been estimated at 228 million tonnes (FAO 20
 21 2009) and is expected to double by 2050 to 465 million tonnes. Given that 21
 22 livestock currently account for 40 percent of global grain production, by 22
 23 2050 livestock will be consuming food that could feed 4 billion people 23
 24 directly (Carolan 2011). The conversion of plant to animal protein is 24
 25 inefficient; livestock consume 77 million tonnes of protein in feedstuffs 25
 26 that could potentially be used for human nutrition, whereas the products 26
 27 that livestock supply contain only 58 million tonnes of protein. In dietary 27
 28 energy terms, the net loss is even higher (Steinfeld et al. 2006; Pimentel 28
 29 and Pimentel 2003), with meat supplying just 15 per cent of all calories 29
 30 (Stokstad 2010). With food prices on an upward, if highly volatile, trend 30
 31 it is becoming critical to consider how meat consumption interacts with 31
 32 global food security. 32
- 33 2. Meat and dairy products are the foods carrying the greatest environmental 33
 34 burden (Garnett 2009; Tukker et al. 2006). Livestock are estimated to 34
 35 account for around 37 percent of anthropogenic methane, 65 per cent of 35
 36 nitrous oxide and 9 per cent of carbon dioxide, that together constitute 36
 37 18 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions, a share greater than the 37
 38 transport sector worldwide. Robert Goodland has conducted a calculation 38
 39 incorporating land set aside for both livestock and for feed production and 39
 40 estimated that livestock account for as much as 51 per cent of human- 40
 41 induced GHG emissions (Goodland and Anhang 2009). Livestock-induced 41
 42 land use change is estimated to generate 2.4 billion tonnes of CO₂ per 42
 43 year, representing around 7 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions 43
 44 (Garnett 2009). Given the prevailing scientific understanding of the need 44

for abatement measures that would avoid serious climatic perturbation, how are we to achieve stabilisation of the global climate system if animal numbers grow further? Intensive livestock farming also gives rise to other significant waste streams to air (e.g. ammonia), land and water resulting in loss of environmental quality (CIWF 2008). In the Netherlands, for example, it has been estimated that livestock produce 4,000 kg of manure for every human inhabitant, resulting in acidification, eutrophication and contamination of surface and ground water (Aarts et al. 2010).

3. The meat and livestock sector has come to exemplify Fordist production processes with emphasis placed on rising volumes and faster throughput. This has involved a scaling up of production represented by stocking densities, as well as a speeding up of animal metabolisms through breeding practices that shorten life-spans before animals achieve market weight (Emel and Wolch 1998). Rising concerns over animal welfare has brought such practices under the spotlight, but has also led the food industry to develop more 'animal friendly' lines (Miele 2011).
4. Stocking densities and feeding practices, including the use of sub-therapeutic doses of antibiotics to inhibit the spread of disease, have contributed to the resurgence of communicable diseases in recent decades, three-quarters of which are attributable to animals and animal products (Hinchcliffe et al. 2012). Episodes such as BSE in cattle, salmonella in eggs, E. coli in hamburgers, and outbreaks of swine and avian influenza have heightened anxieties over the biosecurity of livestock farming and the safety and integrity of meat products.
5. Levels of meat consumption in the developed countries have been high and growing steadily for several decades, aided by an ever greater array of products to eat within or outside the home, and in real terms at lower prices. Yet growing clinical evidence has demonstrated the problematic association of diets high in saturated fats with obesity, cardio-vascular disease, hyper-tension and cancer (Friel et al 2009).

It is as a result of the complex interaction of these issues that has led growing numbers of organizations and individuals, including celebrity chefs, to reflect upon the practices of meat consumption and production and the way these might be changed (e.g. *Hugh's Chicken Run* 2012; *Jamie Saves Our Bacon* 2012). While this is not to suggest large numbers are making a conversion to vegetarianism, there has been a marked increase in purchases of products certified as animal welfare-friendly (e.g. Freedom Food). This testifies to ways in which the 'moral turn' affecting food consumption practices more broadly (Goodman et al. 2010) is challenging the primacy of meat on the plate. This is giving rise to a number of interesting social and technical innovations, which the second part of this chapter will explore. First, however, it is necessary briefly to review how meat has come to occupy such a central position in contemporary diets and given rise to the global grain-livestock-meat complex.

1 The Meatification of the Human Diet

2
3 The consumption of animal flesh is surrounded by taboos, comprising outright 3
4 prohibition or socially sanctioned norms about what is acceptable to eat. In the 4
5 Islamic world strict dietary laws prohibit the consumption of pork, blood or the 5
6 meat of any animal not slaughtered according to the code of *halal*. For Hindus 6
7 the slaughter of a cow constitutes a major transgression of religious norms and of 7
8 Indian federal law, although this has not prevented the country from becoming the 8
9 world's largest exporter of beef, as we shall see. Cultural acceptability has meant 9
10 that horse meat remains popular in Northern Italy, France and Japan, but there 10
11 is a strong aversion in Ireland and the UK where recreation with equines makes 11
12 them a companion species rather than a food source¹. Guinea pigs, a frequent 12
13 ingredient of a stew in highland Bolivia and Peru, are regarded as children's pets 13
14 in the UK. But this is as nothing compared to the revulsion felt by much of the 14
15 Western world about the eating of dog, which remains on the menu in China and 15
16 South Korea (Davidson 2006). The species of an animal consequently constitutes 16
17 a fundamental cultural boundary as regards its acceptability as a source of meat. 17
18 Moreover, if cooking is truly the rendering of 'raw nature' into culture, as 18
19 Lévi-Strauss observed, there are sharp differences around the application of 19
20 heat to meat. Steak tartare and carpaccio (of horse or beef) are examples of raw 20
21 meat served finely cut in western cuisine, while many like their steaks to be 21
22 done 'rare' when eating in restaurants. The oozing of blood from fibres along the 22
23 line of cut may be relished by the diner, but may be treated with horror by their 23
24 dining companion who may have requested their meat to be 'well done'. There 24
25 is a carefully constructed sensibility around rawness in these contexts, perhaps 25
26 mediated by starched napkins, sauces and seasoning; these are features that were 26
27 visibly absent when I was drinking in a pub in Addis Abbaba a few years ago and 27
28 watched fellow drinkers at an adjacent table use sharp knives to cut slices from a 28
29 large raw hind of beef as if they were sharing a packet of pork scratchings. Across 29
30 these diverse contexts we can appreciate that meat is a deeply culturally embedded 30
31 material, connecting us with a distant past and with powerfully engendered 31
32 associations, as the male fascination with cooking over an open flame (aka a 32
33 barbecue) testifies (Buerkle 2012). 33

34
35
36
37 1 The European 'horsemeat scandal' – where processed meat products ostensibly 37
38 comprising beef were found to include unlabelled horse and/or pork meat – broke in 38
39 January 2013 shortly after the completion of this chapter. The initial discovery of this 39
40 'contamination' (with the horsemeat ingredient ranging from trace DNA up to almost half 40
41 of the meat content of the product) was first traced to food processing firms in Ireland but 41
42 quickly spread to envelope suppliers, manufacturers, retailers and catering interests across 42
43 Europe. The incident served sharply to reveal many of the social, cultural and material 43
44 boundaries around meat – and their hidden transgressions – and provided an unwelcome 44
45 revelation for many consumers about what our processed food products actually comprise.

1 But to argue that animal foods – whether scavenged, collected, hunted or 1
 2 produced from domesticated species – have been a universal feature of human 2
 3 behaviour is not to assert their universal primacy as a source of nutrition. Livestock 3
 4 products do provide an important source of protein, minerals such as iron and 4
 5 calcium, and vitamins including B12, but also large quantities of saturated fat that 5
 6 are directly linked to heart disease. Most stable agrarian societies of the past – as 6
 7 opposed to pastoralists – ate relatively little meat, with most nutritional needs 7
 8 supplied by a starchy staple (comprising a cereal or tuber) together with a legume 8
 9 (as in rice and beans, tortilla and beans, chapatti and dhal etc.) that combine to 9
 10 provide complementary amino acids (Mintz and Schlettwein-Gsell 2001). Yet the 10
 11 dominant nutritional message emerging from the global development agencies is 11
 12 that the rural poor of the present day are not consuming enough animal-based 12
 13 food given the high incidence of nutrient deficiencies, such as iron (FAO 2009). 13
 14 Given the vital multifunctional role played by animals (for draught, milk, wool) 14
 15 few are slaughtered as a source of fresh meat, and this is generally confined to 15
 16 ritual occasions. For the rural poor, animal proteins are consumed as fermented or 16
 17 preserved products in modest quantities and as fringe components of the starchy 17
 18 core (Mintz and Schlettwein-Gsell 2001). 18

19 Without seeking to romanticize indigenous culinary traditions evidence 19
 20 does suggest that most were remarkably effective in providing a balanced – if 20
 21 not especially varied – diet and that the deteriorating nutritional status of many 21
 22 rural societies today is as a result of the displacement of mixed farming with 22
 23 market-oriented monocultures. Little wonder that the expansion of the global 23
 24 food economy which has done so much to transform dietary patterns has come to 24
 25 associate meat consumption with progress, wealth and status. As countries become 25
 26 more integrated into the world economy dietary patterns converge with ‘increased 26
 27 consumption of meat and meat products, dairy products, edible oil, salt and sugar, 27
 28 and a lower intake of dietary fibre’ (Hawkes 2006: 3). And it would appear that 28
 29 this vital role of meat in dietary change and its positive associations with improved 29
 30 prosperity were developed first and most powerfully in the United States and from 30
 31 where this experience has served to become a generalised model. 31

32 According to Horowitz (2006: 11), who traces the history of meat consumption 32
 33 in the United States, regardless of ‘regional, ethnic or racial variations, as incomes 33
 34 rose so did the demand for beef and poultry’. Indeed, across the nineteenth 34
 35 century average annual consumption of meat was of the order 150–200 lbs per 35
 36 person (68–91 kgs). Meat consumption then fell to unusually low levels during 36
 37 the Great Depression, according to Horowitz, but recovered during the 1940s 37
 38 though remained sharply differentiated across income groups. It began to climb 38
 39 dramatically in the 1950s and, according to him: 39

40
 41 By 1965 it had reached the highest level in American history with virtually all 41
 42 groups eating over 200 lbs per capita annually. Gains were especially pronounced 42
 43 at the lower socioeconomic levels; urban residents earning less than \$3,000 43
 44 annually still ate 205.2 lbs (93.27 kgs) of meat per year. Income continued to 44

1 matter, though, as the wealthiest strata of urban Americans consumed almost 50 1
2 lbs more per person than the lowest income group. (2006: 15–16) 2
3 3
4 This relationship between rising income and increased meat consumption is now 4
5 recognised as almost a universal phenomenon, with Bennett’s Law describing 5
6 the shift from starchy staples to more fatty foods as people get richer (Godfray 6
7 et al. 2010). Global dietary patterns are changing as a consequence of complex 7
8 social and economic processes, including: increased urbanisation, greater market 8
9 penetration by foreign retail and food service chains and brands, the expansion of 9
10 advertising and mass media, and highly competitive prices. However, this process 10
11 of Nutrition Transition (Popkin 2005) where western-style highly processed 11
12 products comprising higher levels of meat intake displace long-established dietary 12
13 patterns should not be regarded as inevitable or necessarily desirable. Changing 13
14 diets are also being reflected in changing patterns of body composition as a result 14
15 of malconsumption (Sage 2013). As Rayner and Lang (2012) highlight, mass 15
16 population weight gain and obesity is a worldwide phenomenon that is entirely 16
17 modern and is adding a new disease burden to health services. 17
18 18
19 19
20 **The Production of (Animals for) Meat** 20
21 21
22 The U.S. Department of Agriculture temporarily closed Hanford-based Central 22
23 Valley Meat Co. after reviewing video footage from the animal rights group 23
24 Compassion Over Killing, which said it had captured images of torture and 24
25 intentional cruelty to cows. (*Los Angeles Times*, 22 August 2012) 25
26 26
27 Since the domestication of livestock more than 8,000 years ago, the raising 27
28 of animals was closely tied to their ability to digest local resources in order to 28
29 perform multifunctional roles for farm families. The grazing of crop residues in 29
30 fields as part of rotations and to avail of manure, the capacity of pigs to root and 30
31 break up the sod after a long fallow, or the conversion of organic wastes, including 31
32 human faeces, to meat and eggs were all part of sedentary farming life. Indeed, 32
33 less than 50 years ago a few pigs and small flock of hens was a visible feature 33
34 of many European and North American farmyards. However, the progressive 34
35 elimination of small-scale and multifunctional animal husbandry by the drive to 35
36 scale economies underpinned by a hygienist regulatory mind-set (Marsden 2003) 36
37 has seen much livestock rearing disappear behind closed doors (and shielded by 37
38 a strict biosecurity protocol). Together with the reconstitution of animal products 38
39 into myriad disembodied processed products, this has meant that the visibility of 39
40 animals has become progressively obscured such that there is little association 40
41 between the meat on our plate and its origin. As Evan and Miele (2012) observe, 41
42 the animal is made to not matter within the materiality of the food. 42
43 Although livestock husbandry may still support the livelihoods of 600 million 43
44 poor smallholder farmers in the developing world (Thornton 2010) modern animal 44

1 production must surely employ many more than that in extended market chains 1
 2 governed by the logic of cost reduction and efficiency. The emergence of grain 2
 3 feeding of animals began in the USA in the 1950s and spread quickly to Europe, 3
 4 the Soviet Union and Japan in the 1960s: suddenly there were no local resource 4
 5 constraints to the number of animals that could be raised. This has had an utterly 5
 6 transformative effect on the production of monogastrics (pigs and poultry), but it 6
 7 has also had a big impact on the cattle sector, with beef and dairy cattle removed 7
 8 from pasture in favour of stall-feeding. Characterised by high stocking densities, 8
 9 confinement practices and measures aimed at ‘speeding up’ the growth cycle of 9
 10 animals, intensive livestock operations (also known as confined animal feeding 10
 11 operations (CAFOs) or more colloquially as ‘factory farms’) have come to account 11
 12 for around 40 per cent of global meat production by volume, with around three- 12
 13 quarters of the world’s poultry meat, 68 per cent of egg production and about half 13
 14 of the world’s pig meat produced in confined feeding operations (Weis 2007). 14

15 Taking a generous view, and notwithstanding the quotation from the *Los* 15
 16 *Angeles Times* above, it might be argued that modern animal production did not 16
 17 set out to be cruel or wasteful, but to be efficient, to get more output for less input. 17
 18 Above all, modern methods were designed to reduce labour with other inputs either 18
 19 freely available (air, water) or relatively cheap (energy, feeds) (Gussow 1994). The 19
 20 development of large-scale meat and dairy production offered new opportunities 20
 21 for agro-industrial appropriationism through the supply of: ‘balanced’ feeds, 21
 22 veterinary medicines, dedicated animal housing units, waste management 22
 23 equipment, and above all, the breeding of higher yielding and faster maturing 23
 24 pigs, chickens and cattle. As Page (1997) describes for the US, the diffusion of 24
 25 capital-intensive techniques resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of 25
 26 farms raising pigs and a sharp increase in the average number of pigs per farm. 26
 27 The worldwide expansion of intensive livestock operations has been led by the 27
 28 world’s largest grain and agribusiness companies and financially supported by the 28
 29 lending policies of the World Bank and the regional development banks. It is this 29
 30 which has enabled China to now account for half of total world pork production 30
 31 (Holt-Giménez and Patel 2009; USDA 2012). 31

32 Indeed, perhaps the best illustration of the worldwide expansion of the 32
 33 intensive livestock industry is that India is set to become in 2012 the world’s largest 33
 34 exporter of beef. While at first glance this would appear to constitute the clearest 34
 35 transgression of deeply established cultural-religious norms, in fact India’s exports 35
 36 exclusively comprise deboned frozen water buffalo (genus *Bubalus*). Though not 36
 37 of the genus *Bos*, the sacred bovine, it is of the same sub-family (*Bovinae*) and is 37
 38 thus regarded as beef within the USDA global estimates of production. In a country 38
 39 where federal law prohibits the slaughter of all cattle, India’s export trade in beef 39
 40 (known as *carabeef*) is driven by the slaughter of male and non-milk yielding 40
 41 female water buffalo. While global beef production has levelled off in recent years 41
 42 and estimated at 57 million tonnes in 2012, Indian exports are growing strongly. 42
 43 This is due to the lower price of *carabeef* but also that its production meets halal 43
 44 44

1 standards and is therefore expanding in the markets of the Middle East and North 1
2 Africa and South East Asia (USDA 2012). 2

3 The dramatic increase in meat production worldwide has been due to a growth 3
4 in animal numbers – with 45 per cent now in exclusively confined systems – but 4
5 also to extensive breeding efforts. Today, the carcass weight of broiler chickens 5
6 is 30 per cent heavier than it was 30 or so years ago, with hens laying 25 per cent 6
7 more eggs and cows yielding up to 40 per cent more milk. These increases have 7
8 largely been achieved through ‘conventional’ breeding techniques which, though 8
9 stretching back over three centuries, have become an increasingly technical 9
10 and institutionalized process (Ritvo 2004). Yet crossing varieties to exploit the 10
11 desirable qualities of different strains, and within breed selection to optimise 11
12 particular traits, has had significant animal welfare consequences: chickens that 12
13 cannot support their own weight, cattle that cannot give natural birth to a calf; pigs 13
14 with weakened skeletal strength, and so on. Yet the rate of genetic change amongst 14
15 commercial livestock is increasing not only in pursuit of higher productivity, but 15
16 to achieve other desirable attributes including product quality (e.g. leaner meat or 16
17 that with higher levels of omega-3), disease resistance, or lower environmental 17
18 impacts (e.g. methane emissions). It has been argued that a broader spectrum of 18
19 breeding objectives is likely to facilitate public acceptance of genomic technology 19
20 which is ‘likely to revolutionize animal breeding’ (Thornton 2010: 2858). In 20
21 other words, moral anxieties around the development and application of new 21
22 scientific methods may be offset by claims that the meat is leaner, healthier, more 22
23 environmentally friendly, and cheaper. 23

24 Yet beyond the efforts of conventional or novel breeding tools rest the 24
25 everyday production practices of intensive livestock farming that are causing 25
26 growing numbers of people to pause and reflect upon their meat-eating habits. 26
27 Animal welfare organisations have drawn attention to confinement practices that 27
28 include the use of cages for battery hens and pens for nursing sows that do not even 28
29 allow sufficient room to turn and have highlighted common surgical procedures 29
30 including de-beaking, docking tails, clipping piglets’ teeth, and castration without 30
31 anaesthetic. In the Netherlands alone, 50 million one-day-old male chicks are 31
32 gassed or shredded alive each year because they serve no useful production 32
33 purpose (Arts et al. 2010). 33

34 Managing reproduction in pigs can involve surgically relocating a boar’s penis 34
35 so that it can identify sows in a fertile state but allows the semen to be collected by 35
36 a handler which can then be carefully allocated in order to artificially inseminate 36
37 20 sows. These are all practices that combine to drive down costs of production 37
38 so that meat can become an ever cheaper food staple (Singer and Mason 2006). It 38
39 is little wonder that these creatures appear to have lost their sentient character to 39
40 become much like machines housed in rural factories, and subject to the kinds of 40
41 everyday cruelty noted in the extract that opened this section. 41

42 Although there is a wide spectrum of animal welfare organisations in the 42
43 UK, stretching from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals 43
44 (RSPCA) through to the Animal Liberation Front, persistent lobbying by such as 44

1 the RSPCA and Compassion in World Farming have done a great deal to raise 1
 2 welfare standards around farmed animals. The creation of a food assurance and 2
 3 labelling scheme such as the RSPCA's Freedom Food² seems to have proven a 3
 4 success in the market place with consumer spending on Freedom Food labelled 4
 5 chicken growing for the year from March 2009 from £16.4 million to £71.6 5
 6 million, compared to a drop of more than £26 million for standard chicken (FCRN 6
 7 2010). 7

8 But it is with regard to environmental impacts that the aggregate effect of meat 8
 9 consumption is drawing growing concern. Livestock now account for over 70 per 9
 10 cent of all agricultural land with over one-third of global arable land given over to 10
 11 the production of animal feeds. Only 62 per cent of crop production is allocated 11
 12 to human food, with 35 per cent to animal feed (Foley et al. 2011). The increasing 12
 13 volumes of cereals and oil seeds produced for dedicated use in the animal feeds 13
 14 sector, to be converted into meat and other livestock products, is a matter of growing 14
 15 concern in the context of the prevailing global food security discourse. The oft 15
 16 repeated statement that food output must double to meet an expected population 16
 17 of nine billion by 2050 has become a powerful framing device and justification for 17
 18 a reinvigorated policy of productivism (Horlings and Marsden 2011; Tomlinson 18
 19 2011) in which meat is regarded as a vital element. Yet, the pressing question 19
 20 remains: to what extent can western dietary norms be maintained in the West, let 20
 21 alone extended to the rest of the world without imperilling planetary limits? 21

22 22
 23 23

24 **Re-establishing and Transgressing Boundaries in Meat Consumption** 24 25 25

26 In less than 50 years the world has not only achieved a high level of meat 26
 27 consumption: it has cemented almost universal expectations about meat 27
 28 consumption that will be catastrophic to maintain but very hard to change (Roberts 28
 29 2008). As we have seen, meat consumption practices appear to be closely anchored 29
 30 to cultural traits, even if the quantities consumed are entirely modern. This 30
 31 makes it extremely difficult to devise and implement pathways to lower levels of 31
 32 consumption. Supporting and protecting contemporary eating practices are layers 32
 33 of norms that present a formidable defence: notions of consumer sovereignty 33
 34 provide almost a 'constitutional right' for the consumer to eat whatsoever they 34
 35 want, when they want, in quantities they want even if it might hasten their demise. 35
 36 Moreover, to be sure the food industry would spring to the defence of consumer 36
 37 rights for it is the prime beneficiary of refashioned consumption norms and would 37
 38 not allow them to be vulnerable to state-led exhortations to eat less for the sake of 38
 39 the planet. 39

40 40

41 2 Freedom Food provides an audited assurance scheme that animals enjoy five 41
 42 basic freedoms: freedom from fear and distress; freedom from hunger and thirst; freedom 42
 43 from discomfort; freedom from pain, injury and disease; and freedom to express normal 43
 44 behaviour (http://www.ukagriculture.com/food/freedom_food.cfm). 44

1 Peeling back the outer layers of self-interest and consumer rights exposes 1
2 rather tougher matters: a central axiom that states ‘meat provides the protein and 2
3 other nutritional requirements needed for a healthy life’. How can a coherent 3
4 nutritional strategy emerge that clarifies for the majority of people that eating 4
5 less – or even no – meat does not leave them vulnerable to under-nourishment? 5
6 And then at the core are cultural assumptions and timeless generalisations about 6
7 food where meat and other animal products reveal a level of embeddedness that 7
8 suggests the challenge for change will indeed involve a series of profound cultural 8
9 and societal transgressions. 9

10 Yet as Rayner and Lang (2012) remind us, the Nutrition Transition which has 10
11 been characterised as a shift in dietary practice across the Global South toward 11
12 more Western style eating featuring higher levels of meat intake is at root a *cultural* 12
13 and *societal* transition, not just an eating one. As they say, other forces make this 13
14 happen: ‘marketing, logistics, cheap energy and changed lifestyles’ (p. 211). As 14
15 an integrating concept the Nutrition Transition has captured the imagination of 15
16 policy-makers everywhere for it encapsulates the visible phenomenon of heavier 16
17 bodies. However, fragmentation of responsibility between government ministries 17
18 poses problems for the kind of holistic and integrated response that the Nutrition 18
19 Transition requires. Consequently, according to Rayner and Lang, policy initiatives 19
20 to date have tended to be weak, voluntary and dependent on appeals to consumers 20
21 to change. Exploring pathways towards less meat-intensive diets – a process of 21
22 *de-meatification* – nevertheless remains an urgent public and environmental health 22
23 priority and requires widening the lens of possible policy options and related 23
24 socio-cultural changes. 24

25 What is developed below is a way of considering possible transition pathways 25
26 toward a future of less meat. It involves a simple three-level typology that ranges 26
27 from minimal change (‘reluctance’) through a greater willingness on the part of 27
28 consumers to engage with reducing meat intake (‘flexitarianism’) to a third category 28
29 requiring individuals to transgress culturally prescribed boundaries around eating 29
30 (‘pioneers’). In this regard these three levels are more than merely options for 30
31 *behavioural* change, but speak to the different requirements for embodied social, 31
32 cultural and material transgressions. This simple typology has parallels with the 32
33 three ‘routes of transition’ described by de Bakker and Dagevos (2012), but theirs 33
34 is constructed and differentiated by levels of expectations around consumers’ 34
35 willingness to change. Their paper draws upon research findings involving a large- 35
36 scale consumer survey commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture that 36
37 wished to identify opportunities to promote sustainable protein consumption. Some 37
38 of their observations regarding possibilities for shaping consumer behaviour are 38
39 included below. Moreover, I also draw upon Evans and Miele’s (2012) argument 39
40 regarding the connections and disconnections of meat consumption and animal 40
41 lives and seek to weave this into a consideration of the ways in which consumers 41
42 might make choices regarding prospects for change. 42

43
44 43
44

1 Reluctance

2
3 In their paper, de Bakker and Dagevos (2012) label their first route as 3
4 'Sustainability by Stealth' where food consumers are regarded as fairly passive 4
5 when it comes to their food, and see no reason to pose difficult questions or make 5
6 significant changes. As noted earlier, there are strong commitments to meat eating 6
7 underpinned by a range of justifications: nutrition and health; culture and tradition; 7
8 enjoyment and indulgence; even masculinity, strength and virility (Buerkle 2012; 8
9 Lockie et al. 1999; Twigg 1983). While de Bakker and Dagevos found in their 9
10 survey that cultural values around meat are slowly changing, health and nutrition 10
11 remain significant obstacles to consumers moderating their consumption of meat. 11
12 As they note, 'most consumers in the Netherlands are unaware of the fact that they 12
13 eat much more animal proteins than they actually require'³ and that there is little 13
14 knowledge that one 'could cut down on meat or dairy a few days a week' without 14
15 putting themselves at nutritional risk (de Bakker and Dagevos 2012: 882). 15

16 One way in which public policy might look to lead on this process of 'cutting 16
17 down' on meat for a day or more each week has emerged in the 'Meat Free Mondays' 17
18 campaign. Building on wartime messages to civilian populations to conserve 18
19 food for troops serving overseas, the idea of 'Meatless Monday' was resurrected 19
20 in 2003 as a public health awareness programme in association with the Johns 20
21 Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and was widely implemented across 21
22 the Baltimore school system. In May 2009 the Belgian city of Ghent declared 22
23 Thursday a meat- (and fish-) free day, while San Francisco city council made a 23
24 similar ruling in April 2010. Meat-free days are a potentially powerful tool to 24
25 capture the public imagination, and the celebrity vegetarian Paul McCartney is 25
26 the very public face of the *Meat Free Mondays* campaign in the UK and beyond.⁴ 26
27 Nevertheless, while there appears to be some momentum around this international 27
28 movement, there remain obstacles and opponents who will resist such notions. An 28
29 example here was the attempt by Brighton and Hove Council to introduce a meat- 29
30 free Monday in its staff canteens in July 2011. Much to the delight of the vitriolic 30
31 *Daily Mail*, 'a protest was staged by the 'disgusted' workers when their canteen 31
32 removed bacon butties and lamb chops from the menu' (*Daily Mail* 29 July 2011). 32

33 A category considering minimal levels of change to extant food consumption 33
34 practices is one where animals are more likely to be literally absent from 34
35 consideration. As Evans and Miele (2012) observe, 'meat is simply meat, and 35
36 animals simply do not figure or physically matter' (p. 303). In tracing the basis of 36
37 this disconnection through focus group discussions as part of their research, Evans 37
38 and Miele identified a number of practical ways, besides simply wilful denial, that 38
39 cause this cognitive and material disconnection between animals and foods. These 39

41 3 Average EU consumption of animal protein per capita is about twice the global 41
42 average while the total per-capita protein consumption (including vegetable sources) is 42
43 about 70 per cent higher than recommended (Westhoek et al. 2011). 43

44 4 See <http://www.meatfreemondays.com/> for more information. 44

1 include: the speed and timing of shopping practices, where shopping in a hurry 1
2 affects attentiveness to food labels; the material presentation of animal foods, 2
3 where highly processed products (chicken nuggets) invoke little reaction compared 3
4 to cuts with recognisable features (eyes, face, legs); the backgrounding of animal 4
5 origins compared to other ethical concerns, such as feeding and nourishing the 5
6 family and other aspects of care that take priority over animal well-being; and, 6
7 finally, everyday food vocabularies that disconnect the foods from their animal 7
8 origins. 8

9 Evans and Miele are consequently interested in ways by which animals can 9
10 be made to matter, though the challenge that they, and others concerned with 10
11 lowering meat consumption, face is that ‘eating an animal is an astonishingly 11
12 smooth and unremarkable practice’ (2012: 312). Clearly, maintaining this system 12
13 requires the production and slaughter of animals to remain out of sight, as well 13
14 as the deployment of presentational and other devices such as vocabularies to be 14
15 presented in certain ways. Consequently, raising consciousness or connectedness 15
16 with animal lives may require making these features more visible which is a 16
17 challenging prospect. One alternative may be to find ways of providing a meat 17
18 substitute. 18

19 This has been a principle underlying the development and promotion of meat 19
20 analogue products which are designed to mimic the processed meat equivalents 20
21 such as burgers, chicken, or mince. The two main meat analogue materials are: 21
22 textured vegetable protein (TVP) which is derived from soybeans and which is 22
23 considered high in protein and fibre content; and Quorn, a trademarked mycoprotein 23
24 product that is low in fat and high in protein and fibre. Both analogues are 24
25 promoted as ‘healthy options’ with Quorn achieving approval by the Vegetarian 25
26 Society. However, Quorn has come under sustained scrutiny from the Centre for 26
27 Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) based in Washington, DC, which has brought 27
28 two charges against the product. The first is that there has been a relatively high 28
29 incidence of allergic reaction following consumption with the CSPI documenting 29
30 cases of consumers experiencing severe symptoms across Europe and Australia 30
31 as well as the USA. The second charge that CSPI makes is that Marlow Foods, 31
32 Quorn’s manufacturer, is engaged in misrepresenting it as being mushroom based 32
33 when it is in fact derived from a fungus, *Fusarium venenatum*. As CSPI argues, 33
34 ‘While all mushrooms are fungi, not all fungi are mushrooms’ (Manjoo 2002). 34
35 Indeed, it is worth noting how a ‘healthy’ meat alternative is created in this brief 35
36 profile: 36
37 37

38 The principal ingredient is a microscopic fungus, *Fusarium venenatum*, which 38
39 the company feeds with oxygenated water, glucose, and other nutrients in giant 39
40 fermentation tanks. Once harvested from the tanks, the material is heat-treated in 40
41 order to remove its excess RNA, and then dewatered in a centrifuge. Combined 41
42 with egg albumen and other ingredients, it is then “texturized” into various 42
43 meat-like shapes. (CSPI 2011) 43
44 44

1 Ironically, this product was developed from collaboration between two industrial 1
 2 corporations, Rank Hovis McDougall and ICI, at a time during the 1960s 2
 3 when there was fear of a worldwide protein shortage (O'Connell 2009). As the 3
 4 description of the manufacturing process above suggests, this is an industrial 4
 5 product with purely functional attributes: a synthetic material, designed to mimic 5
 6 the texture and flavour of different meats with reduced fat content. There is little 6
 7 that is 'alternative', ethical or 'natural' about its production or consumption. 7
 8 Nevertheless, with its label of approval from the Vegetarian Society and its range 8
 9 of over 100 prepared, largely convenience, products, Quorn might well appeal to 9
 10 meat eaters reluctant to fundamentally change their dietary practices but willing to 10
 11 consider a degree of substitution. 11

12

13

14 **Flexitarianism** 14

15

16 In their second route of transition which they label 'moderate involvement', 16
 17 De Bakker and Dagevos (2011) assume a level of engagement by consumers in 17
 18 reducing meat intake through smaller portion size or by regularly incorporating a 18
 19 meatless day which would itself become normalised. They regard this segment of 19
 20 consumers as the major target group capable of reversing the trends in rising levels 20
 21 of meat consumption; the vanguard, if you like, of de-meatification. But how can 21
 22 such a process be encouraged and developed? For De Bakker and Dagevos the 22
 23 challenge is to develop further 'meatless or low-meat dinner concepts' and to do 23
 24 so in a way that moves beyond the mere substitution of meat on the plate with 24
 25 meat analogues. In this regard, the normalisation of meatless meals might begin 25
 26 with a campaign led by celebrity chefs as they take on the challenge in their latest 26
 27 television series and accompanying book⁵ or include the spread of 'low carbon diet' 27
 28 books and guides (Ghazi and Lewis 2007; Lappé 2010). But a more fundamental 28
 29 change is required within the catering and hospitality industry that goes beyond 29
 30 training of kitchen staff and encourages an entire system of mentoring for climate- 30
 31 friendly and sustainable diets. 31

32 This category comprises food consumers that remain omnivorous albeit with a 32
 33 sense of trying to make a difference. *Flexitarian* has emerged as a term to describe 33
 34 those who are willing to embrace non-meat meals as part of an 'ecologically 34

35

36

37 5 In the UK Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall has been most recently associated with a 37
 38 pan-European movement to promote sustainable fishing and 'ethical' fish eating through 38
 39 his 2011 'Fish Fight' programme, internet petition and Facebook campaign. He has also 39
 40 recently 'gone veggie' through the publication of *River Cottage Veg Every Day!* (2011, 40
 41 Bloomsbury) and a 'coming out' article in the *Guardian* newspaper (Fearnley-Whittingstall, 41
 42 2011). For Fearnley-Whittingstall (2011), 'we need to eat more vegetables and less flesh 42
 43 because vegetables are the foods that do us the most good and our planet the least harm'. 43
 44 The cookbook won *The Observer Food Monthly's* best cookbook award for 2012 given that 44
 it has 'he has rescued vegetables from vegetarianism' (Anthony, 2012).

1 balanced' diet. While this might suggest moral ambiguity or a tendency to dietary 1
2 lapses, this group differs significantly from 'pioneers' (see below) as it is not 2
3 assumed to possess a coherent and explicit food *ideology* (Twigg 1983) or fixed 3
4 set of values. Rather, we might regard this group as comprising 'regular people' 4
5 struggling to do the right thing in a '*meatogenic*' foodscape. Besides, given the 5
6 evidence that animal husbandry has a major role to play in maintaining sustainable 6
7 and biodiverse landscapes (Tudge 2003) there is a strong argument that Gussow 7
8 makes without in any way promoting meat consumption that, 'it would be 8
9 beneficial if everyone were to acknowledge the ecological appropriateness of 9
10 omnivorousness' (1994: 1115). 10

11 The term 'ethical carnivore' might also be associated with this category to refer 11
12 to consumers who reject factory farming but not meat eating and, again, this might 12
13 be the result of quite different motivations. For example, a 'flexi-gastronome' 13
14 may relish the taste and succulence of free-range fresh meat or *charcuterie* that 14
15 carries a label of designated origin. The welfare of the animals that provide such 15
16 products may be of lesser importance than the name or location of the curing 16
17 enterprise. Secondly, consumers who are worried by tales of antibiotic residues in 17
18 conventionally-raised meat may, on the other hand, prefer to choose organically- 18
19 labelled products. In both cases the concern is care for oneself rather than 19
20 care for animals. And third, there are those who search out products that they 20
21 know to derive from small carefully managed herds or flocks and for which all 21
22 necessary care has been taken with the creature during its, albeit foreshortened, 22
23 life. Short food supply chains are a way that consumers can connect directly to 23
24 such producers. Nevertheless, the charge might be made that flexitarianism simply 24
25 reinforces self-identity for, as Buller (2010) argues, the ethical consumer benefits 25
26 twice: by acquiring quality food *and* ethical standing. For him this attempt to build 26
27 a new food ethics centred upon consumption lacks transformative power. 27

28 Yet, while embracing a range of different motivations, this category of 28
29 flexitarianism arguably does attempt to make a greater connectedness between the 29
30 food on the plate and the animals from which it originated and reveals an awareness 30
31 of other criteria besides those of price and convenience. Here, Evans and Miele 31
32 suggest that beyond the explicit labelling of 'animal-welfare-friendly' foods there 32
33 is an effort by consumers 'to sense and make sense of the farm animal welfare 33
34 credentials of their foods' (2012: 306). In other words, the texture of meat, the 34
35 colour of egg yolks and taste become central to connecting with animals. However, 35
36 the rationale underpinning these connections may be complex and contradictory, 36
37 with tastes and other desirable markers of food quality demonstrating their 37
38 culturally, biologically and historically contingent nature (Evans and Miele 2012). 38

39 Whether this is sufficient to open up the prospect, following Wolch and Emel 39
40 (1998: xii; see also Whatmore, 2002) of reintroducing animals to the circle of 40
41 morality and subjectivity remains uncertain. As Lynn argues (1998: 286): 41

42 42
43 43
44 44

1 When we speak out for the moral value of animals, we are engaging in boundary 1
 2 transgressions, that is, transgressing the boundaries of our human-centred moral 2
 3 community by demanding the inclusion of animals. 3
 4 4

5 One group that can be said to have spoken out to some extent on behalf of animals 5
 6 and their welfare is vegetarians, and they open up the third of the transition 6
 7 pathways, labelled 'pioneers'. 7
 8 8
 9 9

10 **Pioneers** 10

11 11
 12 This third and final category of hypothetical transition pathways toward a future of 12
 13 less meat considers options that mark more profound transgressions of culturally 13
 14 prescribed boundaries. It is appropriate to begin with an evaluation of the option 14
 15 that simply eschews meat: vegetarianism. Yet vegetarians can be differentiated 15
 16 according to the degree to which they exclude the use of animal products. Lacto- 16
 17 ovo-vegetarians permit the consumption of dairy and eggs, while vegans seek 17
 18 to eliminate all animal products from their lives, including leather. Due to the 18
 19 widespread use of animal derived ingredients in processed food – for example 19
 20 gelatine is a by-product of the meat and leather industries and is widely used as a 20
 21 setting agent, while rennet used in cheese making was traditionally derived from 21
 22 the stomachs of calves, lambs or kids – vegetarianism requires vigilance. The 22
 23 more individuals construct their identity around the avoidance of animal products, 23
 24 the more clearly does vegetarianism become an explicit food ideology requiring 24
 25 those individuals to 'step outside the culturally prescribed forms of eating' (Twigg 25
 26 1983: 19). 26

27 Vegetarian dietary cosmology disrupts and, to some degree, inverts the 27
 28 dominant culture's hierarchy of foods that places meat – especially red meat – at its 28
 29 apex. Such an ordering generally regards cereals and vegetables, fruits and nuts as 29
 30 constituting little more than dietary supplements and largely as ancillary items to 30
 31 the formation of a meal centred upon meat. Vegetarians, in contrast, celebrate the 31
 32 *vitality* of such foods, especially in their most natural state: minimally processed 32
 33 and frequently raw. Indeed, rawness here is valued in much the same way as the 33
 34 dominant culture celebrates cooking, but with no complex cultural mediation 34
 35 required (Twigg 1983). Raw foodism is currently enjoying some popular attention 35
 36 as its health-giving properties are extolled by minor celebrities and kitchen gurus, 36
 37 although it is hard to imagine under prevailing norms how this might become a 37
 38 more widespread feature of contemporary eating. 38

39 Nevertheless, the existence of a vegetarian movement – albeit one beset by 39
 40 tensions and cleavages over the respective priority attached to moral goals (animal 40
 41 welfare) as opposed to instrumental personal health considerations (Morris and 41
 42 Kirwan 2012) – might arguably play an important role in holding up a mirror to 42
 43 dominant attitudes to meat. It can raise questions about the values we assign to 43
 44 environmental public goods as compared to the supply of cheap animal products 44

1 and offer the case for more sustainable dietary ecology. But Western concern with 1
2 ethical foods largely rests upon offering a highly individualised alternative mode 2
3 of eating and way of relating to the world (Morris and Kirwan 2012). It does 3
4 not, for example, do much to address the one billion undernourished primarily 4
5 in countries of the South (Buller 2010). Moreover, given the current contribution 5
6 of the livestock sector to climate change, accounting for around one-fifth of 6
7 greenhouse gas emissions, as well as other environmental impacts discussed 7
8 earlier, the projected doubling of meat consumption worldwide arguably makes 8
9 such behavioural changes as of relatively limited significance in regard to the scale 9
10 of the changes required. 10

11 The reality is that there are enormous disparities in levels of meat consumption 11
12 worldwide with the most developed countries recording excessive intakes that 12
13 correlate with high incidence of obesity and cardio-vascular disease. A reduction 13
14 in the consumption of red meat and animal fat is generally recognised amongst 14
15 health professionals as likely to result in substantial public health improvements, 15
16 including lowered incidence of heart disease and colorectal cancer (McMichael 16
17 et al. 2007). In contrast, the ‘consumption of a small amount of animal-source 17
18 foods per day in low-consumption populations could help to alleviate the burden 18
19 of undernutrition’ (Friel et al. 2009: 2022), and is thought to play a protective 19
20 role in reduction of strokes (McMichael et al. 2007). Consequently, what is 20
21 needed in the interests of global justice – on both an inter-generational and intra- 21
22 generational basis – is a policy framework that would reduce meat consumption in 22
23 high-income societies to an established ceiling to which low- and middle-income 23
24 countries would then converge (McMichael et al. 2007). This ‘contraction and 24
25 convergence’ model has been widely discussed as the most equitable framework 25
26 for greenhouse gas reductions in pursuit of climate stability (Global Commons 26
27 Institute 2012). Building an effective global policy framework around limits to 27
28 livestock production and meat consumption equally offers an equitable and truly 28
29 pioneering initiative, and one that calls for political and moral leadership in public 29
30 policy. 30

31 Building effective governance around a global strategy of convergence 31
32 will require a host of measures, including technological innovation, economic 32
33 incentives and significant social and cultural change. Taxation, for example, could 33
34 prove an important instrument to help shift consumption patterns from red meat to 34
35 white, and from meat to farmed non-predator fish. Indeed, taxation might extend 35
36 from environmental externalities (e.g. based on emissions) to include welfare 36
37 considerations (Vinnari and Tapio 2012). Technological innovations might equally 37
38 extend beyond ways of reducing enteric fermentation in ruminants through 38
39 changing diets or by improving manure management, to include the development 39
40 of entirely new meats. This is the prospect offered by current work on *in-vitro* 40
41 meat. 41

42 In-vitro meat, otherwise known as ‘cultured meat’, is derived from tissue 42
43 engineering techniques and involves the growing of animal muscle cells in a 43
44 nutrient-rich medium. The initial cells may be derived from animal embryo stem 44

1 cells or from muscle biopsies of live animals, while the medium is composed of 1
 2 cyanobacteria that can be cultivated in ponds. According to the organisation, New 2
 3 Harvest, 3

4 Cells are capable of multiplying so many times in culture that, in theory, a 4
 5 single cell could be used to produce enough meat to feed the global population for 5
 6 a year. After the cells are multiplied, they are attached to a sponge-like ‘scaffold’ 6
 7 and soaked with nutrients. They may also be mechanically stretched to increase 7
 8 their size and protein content. The resulting cells can then be harvested, seasoned, 8
 9 cooked, and consumed as a boneless, processed meat, such as sausage, hamburger, 9
 10 or chicken nuggets (New Harvest 2012). 10

11 While in-vitro meat is still at an early stage of development, there is considerable 11
 12 optimism about the technological feasibility of scaling up production from the 12
 13 experimental laboratory work currently underway. There are certainly significant 13
 14 claims for its environmental, ethical, safety and nutritional benefits over animal- 14
 15 derived meat. Using life cycle assessment methods on a large-scale production 15
 16 model, Tuomisto and Teixeira de Mattos (2011: 6120) report that, 16

17 17
 18 cultured meat production emits substantially less GHG emissions and requires 18
 19 only a fraction of land and water compared to conventionally produced meat in 19
 20 Europe ... [as e]nergy requirements are lower compared to beef, sheep and pork, 20
 21 but higher compared to poultry. 21

22 22
 23 Naturally, there are no animal welfare or associated ethical concerns as this 23
 24 ‘meat’ does not require the raising and slaughter of farm animals: it will simply 24
 25 be manufactured in vats in large volumes. What it will also offer is an opportunity 25
 26 for capital to finally shake off the constraints of biological processes, those key 26
 27 stages of life, growth and death that, while they have been speeded up through 27
 28 genetic manipulation, have remained an obstacle to the rapid realisation of profit. 28
 29 While the commercial potential of this food will largely depend upon consumer 29
 30 acceptance, as it falls within the hybrid/meat analogue food category discussed 30
 31 above, it has the potential to appeal to a wide range of reflexive eaters, including 31
 32 vegetarians, as well as those who may simply be attracted by its low price. 32

33 33
 34 34

35 **Conclusion** 35
 36 36

37 A growing body of scientific evidence suggests that the rising appetite for 37
 38 meat around the world cannot be met without increasing the environmental 38
 39 burden on soils, water, and the climate system. In this regard there are grounds 39
 40 to consider high levels of meat consumption in rich societies as constituting a 40
 41 violation or transgression of an environmental threshold: the maintenance of 41
 42 biospheric integrity. Yet it is clear that simply encouraging voluntary change on 42
 43 the part of consumers is unlikely to achieve the aggregate levels of reductions 43
 44 in environmental impacts required, nor do much to facilitate the emergence of 44

- 1 alternative forms of production. It simply does not challenge the prevailing order 1
- 2 of the contemporary agri-food system. 2
- 3 Yet while factory farming in the North and middle income countries has 3
- 4 resulted in animals being taken off the land and put into cages, pens, stalls and 4
- 5 feedlots for the rapid metabolism of feed into food, in the rest of the world 5
- 6 animals still perform multifunctional roles, converting material that humans 6
- 7 cannot eat – grass, shrubs, crop residues and other wastes – into human food 7
- 8 and providing many more services besides. Moreover, there is a strong case for 8
- 9 strengthening access to animal products by poor and middle-income citizens in 9
- 10 the South as a means of enhancing their nutritional security. Yet efforts need to be 10
- 11 made to reverse the diversion of large volume of cereals into the livestock feed 11
- 12 chain, and to encourage more extensive grazing as ecologically appropriate. All 12
- 13 of this has to be achieved within a complex social and cultural matrix where meat 13
- 14 holds many different and important meanings. Ultimately, there will need to be a 14
- 15 wide range of different instruments brought to bear to tackle this multidimensional 15
- 16 challenge, including serious engagement from public policy makers, as well as 16
- 17 heightened levels of individual responsibility. Inevitably there will be major 17
- 18 transgressions of established norms and cultural boundaries including challenges 18
- 19 to the sovereign ‘rights’ of consumers and, potentially, the prospect of dietary 19
- 20 changes with the introduction of new climate-friendly foods. However this plays 20
- 21 out, it remains vital to continue to build an alliance for reconnecting sustainable 21
- 22 eating to sustainable food production. 22
- 23 23
- 24 24
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Proof Copy

1	Chapter 10	1
2		2
3	Knowing Brand Wales:	3
4		4
5	Agro-Food Transitions in Firms,	5
6		6
7	Innovation and Governance	7
8		8
9	Carla De Laurentis and Philip Cooke	9
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14	Introduction	14
15		15
16	As the first industrial nation, the UK was one of the earliest countries to experience	16
17	the industrialisation of agriculture, a process that led to an increase in productivity,	17
18	with more food produced by fewer people. As a result of this <i>productivist</i> turn,	18
19	UK agro-food production and processing technologies are today among the most	19
20	advanced in the world (Goodman and Watts, 1997). The sector as a whole is	20
21	characterised by high levels of scientific knowledge and expertise in research and	21
22	development, product innovation and food supply-chain technologies. To a greater	22
23	extent than in many other European countries, supermarkets have become the key	23
24	players in shaping food consumption patterns in the UK. The sector remains one of	24
25	the most regulated, in the UK and internationally yet, despite this, <i>productivism</i> is	25
26	regularly prone to ‘food scares’ in which disease may move systemically through	26
27	major agro-food supply chains (Cooke 2007). Cases of UK ‘food scares’ have	27
28	been well-documented and lethal, ranging from ‘mad cow’ to ‘e-coli’ including	28
29	the (2010) entry of unregulated transgenic milk and meat into the food chain.	29
30	This suggests that although British agro-food production has been substantially	30
31	re-institutionalised (with the closure of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and	31
32	Food (MAFF) in 2000 and its replacement by DEFRA and the Food Standards	32
33	Agency) the new system is by no means fool proof.	33
34	Accordingly, economic, environmental and consumer pressures have strongly	34
35	influenced institutional development in the UK agro-food industry in recent years.	35
36	But agro-food itself has experienced significant structural change as product,	36
37	process and organisational innovation and renewal efforts have been implemented	37
38	to respond to new customer demands. These include: obesity concerns; high	38
39	salt-content in processed food; health-labelling (something some producers and	39
40	supermarkets are still reluctant to implement except on their own terms); and	40
41	the undoubted rise, albeit from a low base of demand, for organically produced	41
42	food. Producers of industrial food are under increasing market pressure to develop	42
43	more dedicated products and marketing strategies by emphasising domestic,	43
44	locally-produced or organic qualities without losing the efficiency of standardised	44

1 production and distribution technologies. In the organic food sector innovation 1
 2 efforts are carried out to better standardise products and technologies and expand 2
 3 markets without losing the embedded qualities (assumed health and ecological 3
 4 benefits) which differentiate them from mainstream products. There is also an extra 4
 5 tension as firm strategies try, on the one hand, to broaden the customer base by 5
 6 selling through the large-scale distribution channels of supermarket chains and, on 6
 7 the other, seek to avoid that route and utilise more localised distribution involving 7
 8 less energy expenditure. Those in the latter category hold that supermarket 8
 9 distribution compromises the more 'sustainable' product profile of organic foods, 9
 10 shifting it in the direction of conventional food products which might be regarded 10
 11 as unhealthy and unsound. 11

12 In what follows, we provide an analysis based on a funded research 12
 13 investigation¹ of the UK, and particularly the Welsh agro-food industry, in order 13
 14 to understand the extent to which it has demonstrated innovation in escaping 14
 15 its *productivist* post-war cage. The chapter has three main aims. First, we seek 15
 16 to better understand the extent to which current practices appear to transgress 16
 17 inherited food production and consumption norms. Second, we seek to explore 17
 18 how an emerging new 'paradigm' of production and 'regime'² regulating 18
 19 consumption impact market access. Third, we ask to what extent is Wales 19
 20 exploring 'new path creation' in the face of a hitherto dominant *productivist* 20
 21 paradigm and if so, why and with what effects elsewhere? In Wales, as opposed 21
 22 to other parts of the UK, this appears to be introducing a distinctive process 22
 23 of transition from dairy to premium grassland meat production. First, however, 23
 24 we must review the UK agro-food context before we are able to anatomise the 24
 25 Welsh transition in terms of players, institutions and governance systems. 25

26 26
 27 27

28 **Contrasts of Agro-food Paradigm and Regime Change: The UK and Wales** 28 29 29

30 In line with the 'territorial knowledge flows' focus of the EURODITE research 30
 31 project, Table 10.1 shows how the food and drink sector in the UK represents an 31
 32 exemplary 'platform' (rather than a single food industry 'cluster') of activities 32
 33 displaying 'related variety' (Boschma and Frenken 2011). Normally in these 33
 34 circumstances, knowledge produced and used within one sector comes from many 34
 35 others sectors. Increasingly within the agro-food platform, however, knowledge 35
 36 flows are not only characterised by vertical flows within the food sector but also 36
 37 by horizontal knowledge flows between 'traditional' sectors have that led to 37
 38 38
 39 39

40 40
 41 1 EURODITE 'Regional Trajectories to the Knowledge Economy: A Dynamic 41
 42 Model' was funded under the EU Sixth Framework Programme between 2005 and 2008. 42

43 2 'Regime' is used here to refer to the rules, practices and institutional arrangements 43
 44 surrounding contemporary forms of production and consumption. It is not used in the same 44
 45 sense as Friedmann or McMichael's work on 'food regimes'. 45

1 new innovation possibilities (e.g. food and tourism, food and media, food and
2 knowledge-intensive business services and so on.

3

4

5 **Table 10.1 The food and drink sector and its sub-sectors**

6

7	agro-food biotechnology	brewing	catering equipment	7
8	catering establishments	bakery products	ready meals and	8
9			cook-chill products	9
10				10
11	dairy products	food packaging services	beverages and	11
12			alcoholic drinks	12
13	food and drink	primary food processing	hotels	13
14	manufacturing			14
15	tobacco products	pet food	restaurants	15
16				16
17	secondary food processing,	processed meats and		17
18	including baking, freezing,	meat products		18
19	dehydrating, canning and			19
20	bottling			20

21 *Source:* Centre for Advanced Studies, Cardiff University.

22

23

24 The UK is the world's fourth largest importer of food and drink and the fifth
25 largest exporter of value-added food and drink. The key drivers of the UK agro-
26 food sector's exporting strength are recognised as the following:

27

- 28 1. A developing domestic market with more diversification across well- 28
- 29 known brands; 29
- 30 2. Increasing demand from emerging economies experiencing rising levels of 30
- 31 national income, especially driven by UK retailers entering new markets; 31
- 32 3. The number of UK tourists and expatriates living overseas; and 32
- 33 4. Foreign nationals visiting the UK, sampling the variety of foods available 33
- 34 in supermarkets and restaurants and returning home with new consumption 34
- 35 demands. 35

36

37 Developed markets (e.g. the EU, Japan) and developing markets (e.g. China) 37
38 are all showing increasing interest in UK products. Total UK exports of food 38
39 and drink in 2007 came to £11.45 billion, up 9.1 per cent from 2006 (Food from 39
40 Britain, 2008). Food exports alone accounted for £7.3 billion, up 8.8 per cent, 40
41 while drinks registered £4.1 billion, up 9.8 per cent. Whisky exports set a new 41
42 record of £2.8 billion and this represents a quarter of all exports (Food from 42
43 Britain 2008). Financially, the biggest contributors to the export sector are spirits, 43
44 bakery-related products, beer and breakfast cereals, while the fastest growth 44

sectors include cereals, bakery products, confectionery, meat, fish, spices, ready meals, non-European recipes and private-label products. The major markets for exports are Ireland, France, the USA, Spain and Germany (Food from Britain, 2008); see Table 10.2.

Table 10.2 UK VAT registered food firms: Size by turnover and number of businesses

Turnover (£)	Number of enterprises 2005	% of total	Year	No. of businesses
1–49	600	9.5	2001	7,015
50–99	800	12.7	2002	6,765
100–249	1,300	20.6	2003	6,695
250–499	840	13.3	2004	6,350
500–999	640	10.1	2005	6,310
1,000–4,999	1,125	17.8		
5,000+	1,005	15.9		
Total	6,310	100		

Source: ADAS, 2007.

The food and drink industry is the largest of the UK's manufacturing sectors, accounting for 15 per cent of manufacturing overall, with a total turnover of £70bn. The industry employs some 500,000 people, equating to 13 per cent of the UK manufacturing workforce. Food and drink remains the single biggest consumer spending category: in 2005, consumer spending on food and drink was nearly £153.8bn, 20 per cent of total UK consumer expenditure (ADAS, 2007).

Clearly, these numbers refer almost wholly to the UK's *productivist* agro-food sector, and the data cited above can be interpreted in such a way that 'larger scale' and the 'penetration of new markets' are virtues that benefit 'UK plc'. In this, the institutional structure of farming advice bodies and promotional agencies are complicit in promulgating the 'more is better' productivist paradigm that has dominated discourse for decades and which has enveloped the entire agro-food sector. This stretches from businesses engaged in primary production (plants, crops, livestock and fisheries) to processing and post-harvest technologies and related science and environmental technologies, through wholesaling, retailing and food service operations. The sector also includes training, education and consultancy services (e.g. finance, law, design, advertising, PR). The sizes of the

firms in the sector demonstrate a strong spread across all size categories (see Table 10.2), with the food manufacturing sector accounting for 6,310 firms in 2005.

Yet, set against the productivist paradigm, according to a recent report from a leading advisory and consultancy company (ADAS 2007), the industry is becoming characterised by the following trends:

- Consumer expenditure on food is increasing across *all* agro-food sub-sectors;
- Demand for ‘natural’ and ‘healthy’ foods is growing, particularly in dairy products, eggs, oils and fats. Functional foods, such as pro-biotic drinks and yoghurts, and cholesterol-reducing spreads and milk, are in increasing demand along with organic (worth £1.3 billion in 2005) and omega-3 infused products;
- Consumers are increasingly demanding local sourcing and regional brands;
- Until the 2008–9 recession consumption of quality food products had increased while supermarket retailing became increasingly bifurcated: between budget outlets and lines on the one hand; and ‘quality’ stores and brands on the other;
- Eco-labelling demands have risen such that ‘food miles’ have become an issue and supermarkets take steps to display both local sourcing and minimal unnecessary transportation in their credentials.

These developments coincide with a process of institutional regime change and a transgression of productivist food norms that have unquestionably raised the ‘food quality’ consciousness of UK consumers, but have far from eroded the ‘cheap food’ imperatives of many of those committed to ‘affordable food’ budgets. In particular, the ADAS (2007) report reflects elements of a ‘food revolution’ among the British middle classes. Under the productivist regime, British consumers were, in general amongst citizens of advanced economies, the least knowledgeable about food quality and provenance. Expectations were low and convenience imperatives were high: in essence British consumers abdicated responsibility for food quality and provenance to the producer interests represented principally by MAFF.

However, transitions from one regime to another one seldom run smoothly and institutional failures associated with transgressing of inherited and embedded norms are indicative of this. By the early 2000s primary responsibility for agro-food rested with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the Food Standards Agency and the devolved administrations (e.g. Wales, Scotland). Support schemes for farmers (such as the EU Single Farm Payment) were now operated by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) in England and through the Parliaments and Assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in the devolved territories of the UK. As of 2010, however, the RPA was the subject of a highly critical report on the inefficiencies of its operations. Moreover, the incoming coalition government in 2010 announced its dissatisfaction with

1 the growing ‘quangoisation’³ of UK administrative affairs during the 1997–2010 1
 2 period of New Labour government. It consequently cancelled the £75 million 2
 3 ‘Change4Life’ healthy food advertising campaign, handing responsibility for food 3
 4 health to the private sector, removed responsibility for eco-labelling from the Food 4
 5 Standards Agency and announced a review into its future. 5

6 Overall, this marks a sea change from the ‘small is beautiful’ tone of the report 6
 7 published by the Commission on the Future of Farming and Food (Curry 2002), 7
 8 which recommended – and only in the context of England – greater emphasis on 8
 9 the opportunities that local food production could bring to farmers and consumers. 9
 10 The Commission distinguished between local food – which comes from near the 10
 11 purchaser – and ‘locality food’, which comes from farther afield but has a strong 11
 12 sense of provenance. Following the Commission’s report regional food began to 12
 13 develop a distinctive definition as: 13

14 14
 15 Food produced within a particular geographical area (whether administrative 15
 16 region, county, town or other appellation) and is marketed as coming from 16
 17 that area. However, it may be sold within or outside that area. Regional food is 17
 18 perceived to have a distinctive quality because of the area in or the method by 18
 19 which it is produced. (DEFRA 2002) 19
 20 20
 21 21

22 **A New Agro-food Regime for Wales: Knowledge Drivers,** 22 23 **Welsh Identities and Institutional Support** 23 24 24

25 To shift from a productivist to an ‘*organicist*’ agro-food regime – as Wales has 25
 26 attempted to do through this process of regionalisation – requires knowledge. 26
 27 The modes by which this is acquired range from agricultural research to the 27
 28 establishment of new ‘organic’ knowledge institutions and varieties of ‘learning 28
 29 by doing’. Examples of each are presented below, including building a market for 29
 30 a new product inside professional football, which opens unrivalled opportunities 30
 31 at home and abroad. As noted earlier, in Wales food and agriculture are devolved 31
 32 matters and DEFRA has no remit in the agro-food sphere. Nevertheless, the 32
 33 multi-level governance ladder means the trends and challenges that the agro-food 33
 34 sector in Wales is facing have some overlaps with what prevails in England (and 34
 35 Scotland). A typical early strategic document to set up direction and focus for the 35
 36 development of the agro-food industry in Wales argued that: 36

37 37
 38 The fundamental choice facing the industry in Wales is whether to continue 38
 39 to try to compete in the markets for basic agriculture and food commodities, 39
 40 where competition is on price, or whether to move as far as possible along the 40
 41 41

42 3 ‘Quango’ is a term used here to refer to those quasi-autonomous national government 42
 43 organisations to which authority has been allocated for the delivery of a particular function 43
 44 within the public realm. 44

1 spectrum towards competing less on price and more on quality. The latter is the 1
 2 only realistic option if the objective is to try to slow the decline in agriculture 2
 3 employment and help as many family farms as possible to survive. This means 3
 4 developing high quality, value-added, branded products, which are aimed, where 4
 5 possible, at more specialised and niche markets. (WAG 2001) 5
 6 6
 7 Morgan et al. (2006) note that a Welsh Food Strategy had been prepared in the 7
 8 mid 1990s but it was problematic as it was designed in a top-down fashion, 8
 9 largely written by civil servants mainly addressing producers with little cross- 9
 10 sectoral involvement of other players in the food industry. The emergence of a 10
 11 directly elected Welsh Government genuinely committed to a new agenda – not 11
 12 just for agriculture but for *sustainable development* in the broad sense of the term 12
 13 – emphasised a move towards a more integrated vision that connects agriculture 13
 14 to ecology and sustainability. The task of promoting a new strategy (transgressing 14
 15 inherited productivist UK food regime norms) and heralding a new regional agro- 15
 16 food regime was given to a newly formed body, created in 1999, The *Agro-food* 16
 17 *Partnership*, that aimed to provide greater focus and a more ‘joined-up’ approach 17
 18 for the development of the agro-food industry in Wales. Membership of the 18
 19 Partnership consists of public and private sector individuals and reflects the whole 19
 20 supply chain. Initially three sector groups were established to develop action plans 20
 21 in the Red Meat, Dairy and Organic Sectors, and a Farm Development Group was 21
 22 set up to address cross-cutting issues. In 2002, two further sector groups were 22
 23 established and action plans developed for Fisheries and Aquaculture, and for 23
 24 Horticulture. 24
 25 This development better reflected the environmental realities of agro-food in 25
 26 Wales, as well as the long-standing spatial division separating the western and 26
 27 eastern regions of Britain, with the former geared to livestock and the latter to 27
 28 arable production. In the past Welsh agriculture was deeply embedded in a dairy- 28
 29 farming regime and was one of the UK’s main sources of dairy produce. That 29
 30 path dependence was seriously eroded by the introduction of EU milk quotas and 30
 31 the drive for increasing farm sizes to promote productivist efficiencies through 31
 32 enhanced economies of scale. This EU and UK model of agriculture was suited 32
 33 to lowland agrarianism but wholly unsuited to pastoral agronomy. Consequently, 33
 34 the number of dairy farmers declined precipitously and the resulting consolidated 34
 35 farm units evolved towards beef and sheep breeding and production. Improving 35
 36 grass quality in the wet and acidic pasture of the Welsh highlands became an even 36
 37 greater imperative, especially as market sentiment moved towards leaner cuts of 37
 38 meat than hitherto. Quality of product rather than scale of production became the 38
 39 mantra of the evolving livestock agro-food industry 39
 40 Given that much of Wales falls under the EU designation of Less Favoured Area 40
 41 (LFA) status (77 per cent of the country) such conditions also help to explain the 41
 42 narrow sectoral patterns of specialisation. With some 10 per cent of the UK dairy 42
 43 herd, 13 per cent of UK beef herd and over 25 per cent of all UK sheep, Wales is 43
 44 virtually synonymous with the livestock sector and livestock products accounted 44

1 for 85 per cent of total Welsh agricultural output in 2002 (WDA 2004). Countering 1
 2 the unfavourable combination of soil, terrain and climate that traditionally made 2
 3 highland Wales a challenging territory to farm was the task of the Institute of 3
 4 Grassland and Environmental Research (IGER) at Aberystwyth University (since 4
 5 2007 known as the Institute for Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences 5
 6 [IBERS]). One of the outcomes of its research was the development of hardy and 6
 7 nutritious pasture that supported premium beef and lamb production better suited 7
 8 to the leaner, more flavoursome cuts growing in consumer preference during this 8
 9 period. 9

10 Nevertheless, many of these mainstream products – milk, beef and lamb 10
 11 especially – have remained trapped in the low value-added commodity category 11
 12 because, until very recently, there was little effort to engage in serious product 12
 13 branding exercises or producer-controlled processing activities. The key challenge 13
 14 in recent years has been to break this path-dependent process of basic commodity 14
 15 production in favour of premium product processing with key actors now 15
 16 perceiving this as the priority for the Welsh agro-food sector. 16

17 One of the key characteristics that has somewhat eased these transitions is 17
 18 that, in contrast to the large-scale agri-businesses that characterise the agro-food 18
 19 sector in many parts of England, the small family farm remains the dominant 19
 20 social unit of Welsh agriculture. This small family-farm structure also assumes a 20
 21 relevant cultural significance as it provides the well-spring of the Welsh language 21
 22 and defines the character of rural society (Morgan et al. 2006). A food company 22
 23 executive interviewed in our EURODITE research echoed this sense of the 23
 24 importance of ‘embeddedness’ in the following way: 24

25 25
 26 People are absorbed into the culture ... I can think of many who have been here 26
 27 for 10 years and myself coming up to 7 years, so I believe there is an affinity 27
 28 by virtue of the family that own the company. You can wander round and see 28
 29 them, we are not working for shareholders we are working for a guy who lives 29
 30 and breathes and parks in the car park with everyone else, and with his son and 30
 31 daughter too. I think it helps you gel with the company. 31

32 32
 33 Importantly, then, family farming perpetrates a sense of identity as well as 33
 34 promoting a sense of *Welshness*. Here is a different dimension of transgression: 34
 35 the determination to forge a relevant new path of development that expresses the 35
 36 sense of place, history, language and culture that is associated with generations 36
 37 of survival against the odds. And, having an institutional power centre (the 37
 38 Welsh Assembly) that is closer in understanding and proximity (relational and 38
 39 geographical) to the hill farming experience gives confidence in the pursuit of 39
 40 a distinctive pathway. Conventions of lowland, agrarian scale-based production 40
 41 and its subsidy-regime which results in ‘barley barons’ is simply alien to a more 41
 42 collective, less individualistic agro-food culture. This is underlined by the fact that 42
 43 more than half of all farmers speak Welsh and such identity may be threatened 43
 44 by the seemingly ineluctable growth of larger farming units. Nevertheless, it is 44

1 vital to distinguish between the different sub-sectors and the variegated regional	1
2 capabilities across the country.	2
3	3
4	4
5 Varieties of 'New Paradigm' Welsh Agro-food Outputs	5
6	6
7 The changing cultural and institutional regime in favour of 'quality' over 'quantity'	7
8 and local over global sourcing – even extending to emergent 'local food networks'	8
9 (see below) – is also associated with 'related variety' in the focus of agro-food	9
10 production. This is exemplified in the brief accounts of sub-regional production	10
11 specialities associated with different areas of Wales. As will become clear,	11
12 knowledge – of innovation, markets and production regimes – is fundamental to	12
13 transgressions of productivist norms and the evolution of new agro-food pathways.	13
14	14
15 <i>The Dairy Sector: Cheese</i>	15
16	16
17 The range of local cheeses produced in Wales now stretches far beyond the long-	17
18 standing, large volume and lightly favoured Caerphilly. <i>Gorwydd</i> illustrates the	18
19 artisan expression of this cheese variety and which has become a regular feature	19
20 of quality food markets such as the Borough market in London or Murray's cheese	20
21 shop in New York. <i>Caws Cenarth</i> , a blue-veined Brie, is made in West Wales	21
22 while in North Wales <i>Perl Las</i> adds to the soft cheese variety. Numerous flavoured	22
23 cheeses such as <i>Harlech</i> , <i>Tintern</i> and <i>Y Fenni</i> testify to the innovativeness of	23
24 regional cheese-making in distinctive areas of north and south Wales. Accordingly,	24
25 the industry has seen the formation of a new marketing co-operative for cheese	25
26 producers, <i>Cheeses from Wales – Cawsiau o Gymru</i> , which has been successful in	26
27 finding new markets for Welsh cheese producers across the UK and beyond. The	27
28 dairy processing sector has also expanded, with £26 million in investment through	28
29 processing and marketing grants.	29
30	30
31 <i>The Organic Sector</i>	31
32	32
33 The Welsh organic food industry is small scale in comparison to mainstream	33
34 beef, lamb and dairy production. However, though varying by sub-sector, it is	34
35 an increasingly dynamic industry with the potential to grow production capacity	35
36 and market share. In 2002, there were around 70 organic food producers in Wales	36
37 with an additional 45 producers 'in-conversion'. By 2008, the figure had grown to	37
38 over 950 producers, with the area of organically managed land extending to over	38
39 100,000 ha, including grassland. A recent survey showed that the primary concern	39
40 for farmers was the reduction in the premium for organic beef and sheep, and the	40
41 large number of sheep farms currently in conversion. Cost of production data,	41
42 however, confirmed that the organic red meat sector performed well in 2007/8 and	42
43 will remain competitive even at conventional prices. The organic dairy premium	43
44	44

is still significant, and arable and horticultural producers were relatively confident about the future. A snapshot of the industry is produced in Box 10.1.

Box 10.1 Key Welsh organic food statistics, 2006

Production

- Between December 2005 and December 2006, the area of organically managed land in Wales increased by 11.5 per cent, outperforming every other nation in the UK.
- By December 2006, 78,973 ha of land were managed to organic standards across 710 organic holdings throughout Wales.
- In December 2006 there were 710 registered organic producers in Wales, 15.3 per cent of the UK total.
- Beef and sheep production dominate organic farming in Wales, and as a consequence 81 per cent of fully organic land in Wales is permanent grassland.
- The average organic farm size has increased from 94 hectares in April 2004 to 111 hectares in December 2006.

Processing

- The number of registered organic processors in Wales increased from 112 in Dec 2005 to 125 in December 2006.

Sales

- The Welsh organic meat market is currently worth £2.4 million and is growing at 3 per cent a year.
- Issues relating to supply and demand of organic cereals are giving considerable cause for concern at the present.
- The farm-gate value of Welsh produced organic fruit and vegetables is estimated to be around £1.8 million.

Source: ADAS 2007.

In 2000, the Organic Centre Wales (OCW) was established to become the focal point for the dissemination of information on organic food and farming to producers and other interested parties in Wales. In 2003, it was agreed that it should extend its focus to public education, public procurement, and policy and strategy development, thus providing support to the whole of the organic community in Wales. This is an indication of the cultural-institutional connectivity that is such a crucial part of regime change for the agro-food industry as it breaks out of path dependence around a traditional productivist paradigm.

OCW is run by a partnership of three organisations actively involved in organic farming research and knowledge transfer in Wales: ADAS, The Organic Research

1 Centre Elm Farm and IBERS at Aberystwyth University. Its funding comes from 1
2 the Welsh Government and *Farming Connect*, with additional support from the 2
3 European Union EAGGF Objective 1 funds and payments derived from its work 3
4 on the Organic Conversion Information Service. This is evidence of the ‘multi- 4
5 institutional’ (rather than ‘quangoised’) change management system invoked to 5
6 induce and secure paradigm shift in production and regime change in regulation. 6

7 The sector accounts for many innovative firms, one of which is *Trioni Ltd.*, 7
8 an organic dairy business, established in 2002 in West Wales. *Trioni* (in Welsh, 8
9 ‘three of us’) is a family farming business, which has won several awards, among 9
10 them the ‘True Taste’ award of Wales. Interestingly, its key product is flavoured 10
11 milk, branded *Daioni*, developed by three organic farmers in Pembrokeshire that 11
12 has helped to rejuvenate the milk sector, encouraging dairy consumption amongst 12
13 school children. *Daioni* (‘goodness’ in Welsh) is the brand leader of *Trioni*, which 13
14 started selling organic milk under the Three Farms Milk – *Llaeth Tair Fferm* – 14
15 brand but then came up with the concept for *Daioni*, which comes in strawberry, 15
16 chocolate and banana flavours. Developed with the help of the Food Centre Wales 16
17 at Horeb and advice from the Welsh Government through their True Marketing 17
18 initiative, *Daioni* recently landed the Milk Development Council’s award for 18
19 innovation in dairy development. The flavoured milks are sold to schools and 19
20 colleges, as well as 500 retail outlets across the UK and is starting to enter 20
21 international markets (e.g. Greece). Conceived initially as an alternative to the 21
22 fizzy, sugary drinks generally available to children and with its low fat and sugar 22
23 content and avoidance of artificial colours and preservatives, the product has made 23
24 inroads into the sports market. Chelsea Football Club was an early customer of 24
25 *Daioni* and more recently Tottenham Hotspur FC has joined them by serving it to 25
26 their players and in the club restaurants. The farming enterprise employs 11 staff 26
27 and *Trioni* eight people, together with part time and relief workers, and the annual 27
28 turnover of the company is close to £1m. 28

29

30 *The Red Meat Sector* 30

31

32 The Beef and Sheep Sectors are recognised as essential contributors to the 32
33 economy of Wales and, arguably, to its culture and environment. The establishment 33
34 of *Hybu Cig Cymru* (HCC) / Meat Promotion Wales has brought together all the 34
35 key organisations involved in the red meat sector to focus activity in developing 35
36 the industry and promoting Welsh Lamb and Beef. HCC was formed as a result 36
37 of the strategy document published by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2001, 37
38 and its remit is to devise and execute a strategic plan involving the development, 38
39 promotion and marketing of the red meat sector in Wales. The organisation works 39
40 across the industry, from farmers through to retailers, in an effort to develop the 40
41 product and build profitable markets for Welsh Lamb and Beef. This market has 41
42 recently been boosted by the acquisition of PGI status (Protected Geographical 42
43 Indication, a European designation) for Welsh Lamb and Welsh Beef. 43

44

1 Another regional strength in the sector is represented by the work carried out 1
 2 by IBERS on grassland based livestock agriculture, involving plant breeding and 2
 3 genetics, agronomy, livestock nutrition, forage conservation, and soil and farm 3
 4 waste nutrient management. As one of the EURODITE interviewees put it about 4
 5 IBERS: 5

6
 7 It is essentially non-genetic engineering; we mentioned this as an alternative 7
 8 technology that might be applied in the future. We work with big companies and 8
 9 small companies, and the other one we haven't discussed is the farming industry, 9
 10 they give knowledge to us, we give knowledge to them. The areas of technology 10
 11 within IBERS get split up into programmes but there are overlaps between them. 11
 12 So the plant breeders and the ruminant nutrition people work pretty much side 12
 13 by side, obviously they are scientists from different disciplines but they come 13
 14 together to do joint research. For example in terms of increasing yield of meat 14
 15 and milk one of our key areas that we've been looking at recently is production 15
 16 of high sugar grasses. 16

17
 18 IBERS works in association with *Castell Howell*, a wholesaler of food products 18
 19 based in Wales, and together they developed a cattle feed ('Celtic Pride feed') 19
 20 that guarantees that the beef produced is fed 100 per cent on Welsh material. 20
 21 Beef is also marketed under the *Celtic Pride* brand and besides traceability from 21
 22 the farm to the customer and PGI designation, it strives to achieve the highest 22
 23 standards of quality, health, taste, and safety; standards which are achieved by the 23
 24 adoption of best practice in production, procurement, processing and sales. *Castell* 24
 25 *Howell*, responding to customers' concerns around food provenance, 'food miles', 25
 26 traceability (including ingredients), sustainability and animal welfare issues, 26
 27 launched the 'Produce from Wales' range. Designed to promote and support Welsh 27
 28 food producers and their products, the range is constantly updated and many of the 28
 29 products have been winners of the True Taste Award. 29

30
 31 The company purchases around £6 million worth of stock from producers who 31
 32 are based in Wales (including beef and lamb, Welsh cakes, water, crisps, ready 32
 33 meals, confectionary, cockles, mussels, etc.) our rationale is we buy local as long 33
 34 as there is a local source which is a viable option – it has got to be commercially 34
 35 viable and available and all the local suppliers are monitored and audited to 35
 36 make sure they meet food safety standards. (EURODITE interviewee) 36

37
 38 Another company in the red meat sector which has based its success on the PGI 38
 39 status is *Cig Calon Cymru* ('Meat from the Heart of Wales'). The owner of the 39
 40 company saw the market potential of premium Welsh beef, but crucially his 40
 41 innovation was to achieve PGI status for a single breed, the iconic Welsh Black 41
 42 beef cattle. The innovative concept of this entrepreneur was to create an integrated 42
 43 local food network involving construction of a state-of-the-art, integrated abattoir, 43
 44 meat butchering, processing, packaging, marketing and catering business to utilise 44

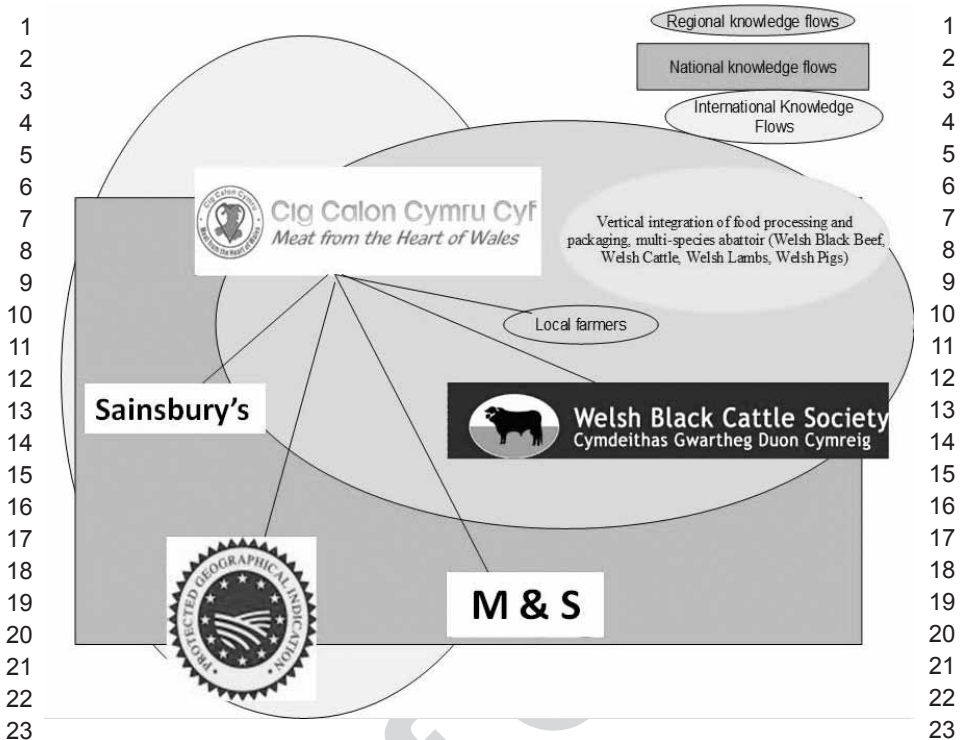


Figure 10.1 Cig Calon Cymru knowledge value chain

local Welsh Black beef and Welsh lamb. The shop is located at the front of the processing plant serving the general public; a catering unit is at the rear preparing products for the restaurant trade; and, alongside, a wholesale unit was built to serve the requirements of Marks and Spencer (M&S) and Sainsbury's, two of the biggest supermarkets in the UK. The knowledge value chain associated with this enterprise is shown in Figure 10.1.

The Horticulture Sector

The new strategic action plan for horticulture was launched in 2003. Since that time research has been carried out into the size and nature of the sector; its supply chains; and its skills and training requirements. Production horticulture has been incorporated into Farming Connect, with a Development Centre for Horticulture and Novel Crops launched in 2010. As one EURODITE interviewee put it:

At the moment you could argue that horticulture is a niche product in Wales, whereas I think that it is going to become much more of a staple requirement

1 To address consumers' demand for more locally grown products, a recent initiative 1
 2 funded by EU Objective 1 and the Welsh Assembly Government has been the 2
 3 creation of Horticulture Network Wales (HNW). HNW's aim is to support the 3
 4 industry through a number of tailored programmes that aim at developing 4
 5 cooperating clusters across the sector so that small-scale producers can access 5
 6 increasingly centralised markets. The project will help develop entrepreneurial 6
 7 skills that will aid the competitiveness of potential and existing horticultural 7
 8 businesses and also help in identifying new market opportunities. 8
 9 9

10 *Functional Foods* 10

11 11
 12 Another sub-sector that is becoming an increasingly important part of the agro-food 12
 13 sector is the functional foods market. Rising health awareness among consumers 13
 14 has led to a sustained growth in demand for foods with added nutritional benefits. 14
 15 The global market in functional foods is predicted to grow 72 per cent in the next 15
 16 five years to reach £1 billion by 2012, according to the consumer market research 16
 17 company *Mintel*. Although this is slower than the 140 per cent increase achieved 17
 18 between 2002 and 2007, it is more impressive in a maturing market, and will 18
 19 be driven by a new range of products beyond basic micronutrient and vitamin 19
 20 supplements. 20

21 Scientifically, functional foods have been defined as products that are beneficial 21
 22 to one or more target functions in the body. That is, they go beyond the delivery of 22
 23 conventional nutritional effects in a way that is relevant to either an improved state 23
 24 of health and well-being and/or a reduction of risk or disease. To date, the biggest 24
 25 impact that these types of products have made has been in the dairy category (on 25
 26 *probiotics* in this sector in Sweden, see Lagnevik et al. 2003). 26

27 Functional food can be developed using one of two approaches: 27

- 28 28
- 29 • By adding value to an existing product e.g. through manipulating the diet 29
- 30 of dairy cows to increase the omega-3 levels in milk, or similarly raising 30
- 31 omega-3 levels in beef or pork, or producing bread high in *glucan* fibre; or 31
- 32 • By developing new innovative products such as yoghurt drinks, cereal 32
- 33 bars, functional snacks or edible oils/blends. 33
- 34 34

35 As expressed by one EUODITE interviewee, functional foods require a 35
 36 high level of symbolic and synthetic knowledge (in the form of marketing and 36
 37 the testing of benefits, respectively) but also, equally important, is the role that 37
 38 cumulative knowledge (from the food sector) plays: 38

39 39
 40 Adapting the nutritional profile of every day products can add value and it is 40
 41 often the marketing strategy that emphasises the product as being a 'functional 41
 42 food'. Functional food development requires good technical knowledge on food 42
 43 production and processing but also a clear understanding of current labelling 43
 44 legislation and the use of health claims is necessary to develop functional foods 44

1 legally. Success with functional products has a greater dependency on effective 1
 2 promotion compared to conventional foods, because consumers need to be 2
 3 educated about the health benefits and simultaneously be persuaded to purchase 3
 4 the product. 4
 5 5
 6 As the benefits of functional foods must be proven through scientific research or 6
 7 trials, then the knowledge value chain must critically involve key actors such as 7
 8 laboratories, research centres and universities. 8
 9 9
 10 We are very much research orientated so one of our selling points is the backup 10
 11 that we can provide with technical support and our own research. We are almost 11
 12 academic commercial people in that we have got interest in doing research for 12
 13 the sake of it but we have also got commercial output at the end of it. Our focus 13
 14 is probiotics, fish oils. So one of the studies we have got running at the moment 14
 15 is at the medical school in Swansea, looking at the prevention of allergy asthma 15
 16 in babies, which will be ongoing for a few years more. In Cardiff we have got 16
 17 a project, really an academic thing, looking at the use of plant antimicrobials 17
 18 and colony types like MRSA infections. We have just set up a project in Cardiff 18
 19 looking at fish oils with Alzheimer's and osteoarthritis. We have run a project 19
 20 on irritable bowel syndrome in Sheffield. So they are the sorts of institutions we 20
 21 have worked with. (EURODITE interviewee) 21
 22 22
 23 Other important actors within this sub-sector are knowledge intermediaries 23
 24 such as *Madryn* which takes on a combination of 'knowledge aggregator' and 24
 25 'entrepreneurship accelerator'. It works closely, for example, with an association 25
 26 of farmers that are seeking to diversify into agro-bio and sustainable product 26
 27 development and marketing; and with a range of small firms producing 'green 27
 28 cosmeceuticals' (herbal make-up), functional foods and locally-grown culinary 28
 29 oils enriched with Omega-3 oils. An example of this kind of development was 29
 30 revealed by one of our EURODITE interviewees: 30
 31 31
 32 What is happening now, and this is going back to my husband talking with 32
 33 our customers, is that we have developed our own products and also our own 33
 34 branded product which is called Very Wise. These products here – Winter Wise, 34
 35 Cod Liver Oil, Joint Wise – a range of products that we have developed which 35
 36 are fish oil based, emulsion based nutritional supplements. That happened in the 36
 37 last two years. 37
 38 38
 39 One of *Madryn's* serial entrepreneurial ventures was to establish a company to 39
 40 launch a range of healthy cooking oils, *Calon Lân* ('Pure Heart'), which was 40
 41 launched in 2006. This innovative oil is distributed to over 20 delicatessens and 41
 42 healthy food shops in Gwynedd, Conwy, Anglesey and Cardiff, and can also be 42
 43 purchased online. It is also entering the English market after exhibiting at the 43
 44 International Food and Drink Event, the UK's largest sectoral showcase. 44

1 To summarise, then, across these ‘emerging’ Wales agro-food sub-sectors: the 1
 2 discussion shows that knowledge flows in the food industry are quite complex, 2
 3 with similarities but also differences dependent on the diverse sub-sectors. 3
 4 Nevertheless, firms in the agro-food sector utilise different types of knowledge: 4
 5 from the scientific and analytical to the synthetic and symbolic (Cooke et al. 5
 6 2007). Also relevant is the interaction of existing knowledge within the sector 6
 7 with external knowledge flows coming from outside the sector (as in the case 7
 8 for marketing and distribution). However, not surprisingly considering the drive 8
 9 from consumer demand for more locally sourced produce, the spatial scale that 9
 10 predominates, especially in more traditional food sub-sectors (e.g. organic and red 10
 11 meat) is the local and regional level. 11

12 Regional capabilities, knowledge endowment and farming culture in the region 12
 13 also play an important role as mentioned in some of the interviews: 13
 14 14

15 In our case at this point in time I think Wales is the only place for us. I have 15
 16 tried hard in other areas, including Scotland, to get the support that we have got 16
 17 here. But in our particular case nobody has come close to giving us what we 17
 18 have got in terms of research excellence at Cardiff, plus the technical expertise 18
 19 that BW and his team have got is just right for us. The core skills that we are 19
 20 developing are being done in one lab; the best place to be is our lab in Cardiff. 20
 21 That would probably apply to a lot of early stage life science companies because 21
 22 their biggest asset should be their knowledge. 22
 23 23
 24 24

25 **Emergent Agro-tourism in Wales** 25

26 26
 27 As shown above, the agro-food sector is significant to the Welsh economy in terms 27
 28 of employment and wages, with some relatively large firms but also many self- 28
 29 employed. Statistics show that the sector is concentrated and defined as a cluster 29
 30 in terms of location quotient (LQ) but experiencing declining gross value added 30
 31 (GVA) and relatively weak in terms of GVA per capita. Perhaps one of the most 31
 32 interesting changes that are occurring in the sector has been the move towards 32
 33 a more sustainable and integrated approach such as the coupling of tourism and 33
 34 food-related initiatives. 34

35 On the one hand, hospitality and tourism businesses are themselves becoming 35
 36 more involved in the use, selling and promotion of regional food products. On 36
 37 the other, several food-related tourism initiatives have been created to encourage 37
 38 and assist hotels and restaurants across the region to meet the growing consumer 38
 39 demand for local food. One example is the Local Food Talks initiative which 39
 40 involves food-tasting sessions, workshops and training events, and which is 40
 41 supported by a range of agencies for mid-Wales. Such initiatives are designed 41
 42 to enable local food and tourism industries to further capitalise on the business 42
 43 benefits of using regional food. As an interviewee put it: 43
 44 44

1 Eighty-one percent of visitors to Mid Wales want to find local foods on the menu 1
 2 and are willing to pay around 13% more for them, so there is a real business 2
 3 opportunity here; visitors are increasingly searching for an authentic experience 3
 4 and are demanding regional foods. Mid Wales has everything that's needed to 4
 5 meet this ever increasing demand. 5
 6 6
 7 As shown earlier, promoting high quality local produce and demonstrating the 7
 8 sustainable dimension of food-related tourism initiatives is becoming a key 8
 9 priority for the Welsh Assembly Government. The development of the agro-food 9
 10 industry brand True Taste, its associated Food and Drink Awards, food festivals and 10
 11 publications (such as 'Dinning Out in Wales') have done much to raise the profile 11
 12 of the relationship of food and tourism and its market potential. Foundations have 12
 13 been laid to build further on this important aspect of marketing and promotion in 13
 14 linking together the food, hospitality and tourism sectors. More businesses within 14
 15 the agro-food sector are starting to understand the importance of branding to build 15
 16 and add value to their product and are finding ways of differentiating through their 16
 17 links with place. 17
 18 One interesting development is also represented by the way in which Wales as 18
 19 a *brand in itself* is being promoted by the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) 19
 20 and the role that regional food plays in constructing its distinctive identity. The 20
 21 underlying concept from the WAG is to start with 'Wales' the brand, avoiding 21
 22 past stereotypes, and to use this as a base both for agro-food business and tourism 22
 23 strategies, rather than trying to promote specific 'products' or destinations. This 23
 24 new development comes from the realisation that many of the policy strategies 24
 25 developed in the 1990s were derived from an obsession with 'innovation', both 25
 26 from policy-makers and academics. However, within the region policy makers 26
 27 are starting to realise that the biggest impact is often post-production and an 27
 28 increasingly important role is played by branding and marketing-driven strategies 28
 29 to differentiate products. Thus the idea of co-evolving regional product and image 29
 30 branding is a key theme that has emerged, emphasising the role played by symbolic 30
 31 knowledge in regional branding. 31
 32 The new Wales approach to regional branding is based on '*Wales as a* 32
 33 '*Challenger*' brand'. As a challenger, the brand will have to stand out and do 33
 34 something that differentiates it from the Lead Brand. This means focusing on 34
 35 reputation, but in a more subtle way (i.e. avoid the clichés), using a common starting 35
 36 point to underpin all sectors. For example, for Wales this might be self-deprecating 36
 37 humour, irreverence, lack of respect for authority and so on. This highlights how 37
 38 Welsh firms are now becoming more self-confident and less conservative in the 38
 39 imagery and regional cultural references that they use to brand and promote their 39
 40 own products. One relevant aspect is the way marketing strategies are using food- 40
 41 and drink-related images, such that food and tourism are seen as a key aspect 41
 42 in promoting the region. This reveals once again the important role of symbolic 42
 43 knowledge within the agro-food sector and the ways in which knowledge flows 43
 44 within and between sectors facilitated by developments in new media and in 44

1 knowledge-intensive business services (Petrini 2001; Long 2005; Skuras et al. 1
2 2006; Westgaard 2007). 2

3 The Government of Wales Act 1998 made it a legal duty for the Assembly 3
4 to promote sustainable development (WAG, 2000) and committed Wales to a 4
5 sustainable, multifunctional agriculture. The Welsh Assembly Government is 5
6 committed to its long-term strategy document 'Farming for the Future' (2001) 6
7 which sets out 52 action points to create a sustainable future for agriculture in 7
8 Wales. Amongst the key issues of current concern are: 8

- 9 9
- 10 • Local food procurement: how to maximise this opportunity through, for 10
11 example, encouraging buyers to be more attuned to the benefits of buying 11
12 Welsh produce and organic food; 12
- 13 • Broadening the development agenda where the horticulture and fisheries 13
14 strategies, for example, might drive part of the diversification agenda; 14
- 15 • Farming Connect, which aims at encouraging farmers to evaluate their 15
16 options and to take actions necessary to develop sustainable and successful 16
17 long term businesses. The establishment of Farming Connect with its 17
18 wealth of support activity (demonstration farms, development centres, farm 18
19 business development plans etc.) is considered a significant achievement 19
20 across all sectors. 20

21 21

22 The Agro-Food Strategy, which is outlined in Figure 10.2, draws its vision from 22
23 Farming for the Future and seeks to address the problems and the action required 23
24 to deal with them. 24

25 It sets out 'a new vision for the future of Welsh agriculture' and, in doing so, 25
26 places the social dimension of sustainability ahead of all others: 26

27 27

28 The objective should be to promote agriculture which is economically, 28
29 environmentally and socially sustainable in all areas. What Wales therefore 29
30 needs is an agriculture which delivers the following outputs: 30

- 31 31
- 32 • Safe, healthy food and non food products, produced with high standards of 32
33 care for the environment and animal welfare and targeted; 33
- 34 • Much more closely focussed on market opportunities to give farming 34
35 families a better return; 35
- 36 • A countryside which is visually attractive and rich in its biodiversity, 36
37 archaeology, history and culture not only for its own sake but for the people's 37
38 enjoyment and to help support tourism; 38
- 39 • Distinctive local food products as the basis for a cuisine which helps promote 39
40 tourism and which through all the above contributes to a positive image for 40
41 Wales in the world (WAG 2001). 41

42 42

43 One of the distinctive features of the Strategy is that it reaches way beyond the 43
44 realm of the primary producer and supply-side targets, but recognises the need to 44

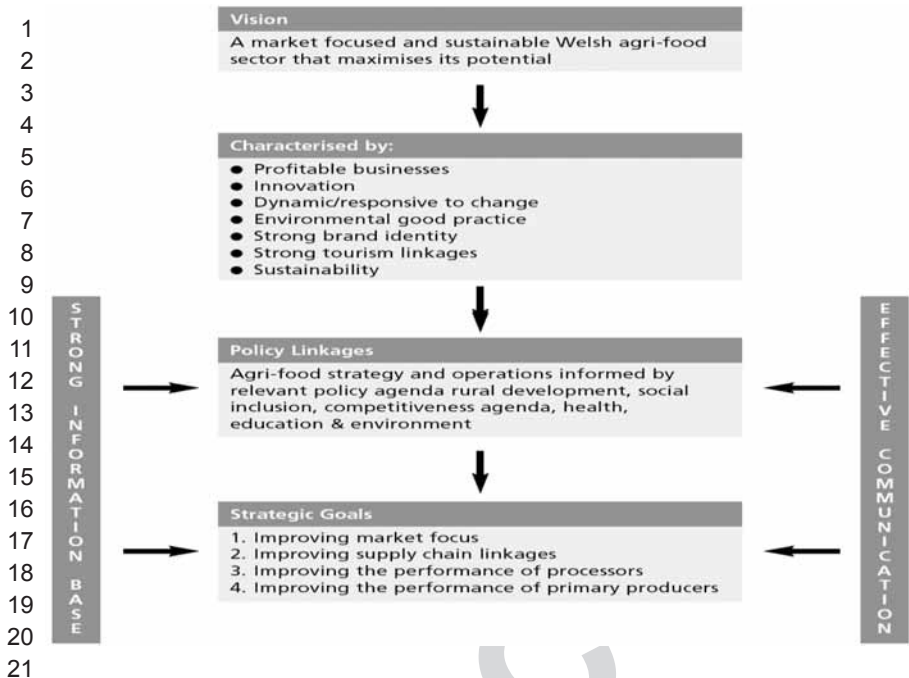


Figure 10.2 Strategy for Welsh agro-food sector: An outline

Source: Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), 2001.

stimulate the demand-side of the market for quality food products. Initiatives run under the strategy include festivals and awards noted earlier, all of which have helped to showcase a wide array of products with Taste Award winners going on to secure important supply contracts. International food competitions are also becoming more important with Welsh saltmarsh lamb winning a top prize in a competition adjudicated by leading Parisian chefs, and Welsh Black beef winning the best beef competition in London in 2003. However, the pursuit of sales into distant markets which award winning facilitates has been criticised by some. As an interviewee commented:

I can't understand why meat producers are going over to Dubai to sell Welsh lamb when we have only got to go over the border to England where there are plenty of markets.

To complement the fine restaurant side of the market, the public procurement market has also been targeted for special attention. As Morgan et al. (2006) argued, this segment had been ignored despite the fact that schools, hospitals, care homes and the like collectively spend some £60 million per annum on purchasing food. Nevertheless, more needs to be done on this area to fully exploit its potential. The

1 challenge is that it requires a 'cultural change' among both buyers and suppliers: 1
 2 the former are used to foraging in low-cost and low-quality supply chains, while 2
 3 the latter have never developed the specialised skills to secure public-sector 3
 4 catering contracts (Morgan et al. 2006). 4

5 5
 6 6

7 **Conclusions** 7

8 8

9 We have seen in this chapter how agro-food in Wales is in transition. Markets are 9
 10 fragmenting and yet such fragmentation is vulnerable to external shocks such as 10
 11 that of 2007–2009 that presaged the worst recessionary emergency experienced 11
 12 globally since the 1930s and because of its extensive global impact probably the 12
 13 worst in the modern history of capitalism. Consumers had been turning away in 13
 14 moderate numbers from *productivist* agro-food that promised mainly 'placeless 14
 15 foodscapes' (Ilberly and Kneafsey, 2000) due to an Americanised marketing 15
 16 perception that since fresh purchases cannot be tasted beforehand, selling should 16
 17 be based on colour, appearance (flawless) and ubiquity (end of seasonality). 17
 18 Food miles were not considered a problem before the era of cheap and abundant 18
 19 hydrocarbons began to peak in the mid 2000s, and the loss of freshness and 19
 20 nutrition implied by modern food logistics were thought likely to be compensated 20
 21 by consumers' preference for lower prices. 21

22 From the 1970s and the rise of both 'fundamentalist' and 'organic empire' 22
 23 (Guthman, 2005) organic farming and catering in northern California (Cooke, 23
 24 2007) this regime has been under threat from the emergence of the organic niche 24
 25 on the one hand and the 'functional food' niche on the other (Manniche, 2007). 25
 26 Agro-food regions such as Wales showed themselves adept at transitioning from 26
 27 a productivist to an *organicist* model and many agro-food innovations (not to 27
 28 mention bioenergy and biocomposite novel agricultural products) occurred 28
 29 accordingly. 29

30 Notwithstanding the current credit crunch the markets for such products show 30
 31 resilience and indeed continued growth. Premium Welsh Black Beef processors 31
 32 like *Cig Calon Cymru* have added to their demand for premium organic beef from 32
 33 the likes of Marks and Spencer and Sainsbury, even during the recession. However, 33
 34 an interesting paradox in the development of such designations as Products of 34
 35 Geographical Indication is that 'localised food' imposes limits to growth, at least 35
 36 for such products as beef (availability of grazing) and even more so in the case of 36
 37 Welsh saltmarsh lamb which is naturally constrained by the extent of saltmarsh 37
 38 inundation. Scale is demanded but PGI eschews it to a marked extent. This is in 38
 39 keeping with a strict interpretation that all food supply should endeavour to be local 39
 40 or regional and therefore fundamentally different to *productivist* scalar thinking. 40
 41 The transition to clean and healthy food may run into unanticipated buffers of a 41
 42 chameleon-like agro-industrial paradigm that shows itself capable of absorbing 42
 43 then subverting transition dynamics springing often from ethical origins back into 43
 44 44

1 an old pro-excess profits scalar paradigm. The future of agro-food transition across 1
2 the landscapes of Wales, however, remains to be written. 2

3 3

4 4

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1	Chapter 11	1
2		2
3	Food for Poorer People: Conventional	3
4	and ‘Alternative’ Transgressions?	4
5		5
6		6
7	Martin Caraher and Elizabeth Dowler	7
8		8
9		9
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11		11
12	Introduction	12
13		13
14	What goes around comes around. Many features of the new generation ‘alternative	14
15	food’ projects arguably mirror the workings of an earlier generation of anti-hunger	15
16	projects: they challenge a hegemonic system and seek to transform how people	16
17	produce and obtain or consume food in the global North. However, such similarities	17
18	mask significant differences not least over ‘choice’. In the emerging ‘alternative’	18
19	food initiatives and movements, deliberative choices by producers, processors	19
20	and consumers are regarded as essential counters to the disempowered producers	20
21	and disengaged consumers implicit in the vertically controlled, corporate global	21
22	food system. In earlier anti-hunger projects, in contrast, people engaged because	22
23	fundamentally they had no choice: they had to find ways to feed themselves or	23
24	perish, socially and possibly literally. The objective of this chapter, then, is to	24
25	examine the overlaps and dissonances between these movements, including the	25
26	ways conventional food system transgressions into feeding poorer people are	26
27	growing. We confine our discussion to post-industrial countries since this is where	27
28	our recent experiences and research are located.	28
29	In this chapter, we consider a number of issues. To what extent are ‘alternative’	29
30	food movements and practices exclusionary? Do they, by definition, focus on	30
31	the needs of those with agency and capacity to engage with different ways of	31
32	producing or obtaining food – whether defined in terms of social class or material	32
33	wellbeing – i.e. are they a ‘middle class niche’, and only for those who can	33
34	afford them? Secondly, how do current ‘alternative’ practices, whether within or	34
35	outwith the corporate food system, engage with the needs of poorer households	35
36	and communities, for healthy food choices? How far do they mirror the anti-	36
37	hunger movements, past and present? Thirdly, what can be learnt from the history	37
38	of such movements, particularly for contemporary poor households’ needs? And	38
39	thus, finally, what is the scope for present and future alternatives to a corporate	39
40	system which, despite the rhetoric and, to some degree, the reality of ‘keeping	40
41	food cheap’, nevertheless excludes the poorest while seeking to provide solutions.	41
42	We begin with a brief summary of contemporary food inequalities, and the	42
43	links to poverty. This is a huge topic, much discussed elsewhere; here we merely	43
44	comment on the salient relationship with food consumption for those whose	44

1 incomes are low according to prevailing norms in their society, and/or whose 1
 2 living experiences, whether through employment, schooling or home, are unlikely 2
 3 to enable easy ways to obtain appropriate food. We only address dimensions of 3
 4 social and cultural difference insofar as material conditions are involved. 4

5 5
 6 6

7 **Contemporary Inequalities** 7

8 8

9 As is widely documented elsewhere, in the UK, US, Canada and across Europe, 9
 10 those who are richer are more likely than those who are poorer to have dietary 10
 11 patterns, nutrient intake and blood levels which contribute to healthier outcomes; 11
 12 they are also likely to be taller, and less likely to be overweight or obese 12
 13 (CSDH 2008; Dowler et al. 2007). Such differentials are particularly observed 13
 14 when comparison is by household income, economic activity (employed versus 14
 15 unemployed or in receipt of welfare benefits), or household composition; in 15
 16 other words, differences are more marked if indicators of material wellbeing are 16
 17 used than indicators based on occupation or educational level, which are proxy 17
 18 indicators of wealth, cultural and social capital (DEFRA 2006). Food poverty is 18
 19 linked to other dimensions of poverty such as income and fuel poverty. This implies 19
 20 the critical issues are having sufficient money for food and other necessities, 20
 21 particularly if these household level challenges are compounded by conditions 21
 22 in areas of multiple deprivations, such as job opportunities and food access. 22
 23 Assessing household financial sufficiency is not straightforward, but one method 23
 24 of assessment is to use budget standard methodologies to establish benchmarks 24
 25 for assessing the potential for wages or welfare levels to enable people to live in 25
 26 ways which meet normative and expert-agreed standards for health and decency 26
 27 (Hirsch 2011). Consensual budget standards for the UK suggest that those living 27
 28 at or below the minimum wage, or on state benefits, are increasingly unlikely to 28
 29 have sufficient money to meet basic needs, including food, however carefully they 29
 30 budget, shop and cook, and whatever their household composition (Dowler 2010; 30
 31 Hirsch 2011; Morris et al., 2000). In practice, food prices vary by retail source, 31
 32 as well as by quality, brands etc. Large multiple retailers (whose prices were used 32
 33 in the budget standards costings) are likely to sustain the lowest prices for basic 33
 34 commodities because of their greater buying power, larger economies of scale 34
 35 and 'loss leader' practices, although traditional markets and discounters can be 35
 36 cheaper for some foods (Donkin et al. 2000; Machell and Caraher 2011; White et 36
 37 al. 2004). Those who cannot shop in such places and obtain goods for the prices 37
 38 used are even less likely to have sufficient money for the food needed for healthy 38
 39 outcomes. Thus spatial and environmental inequalities contribute to inadequate 39
 40 incomes from wages, pensions and other state benefits, in their effects on food and 40
 41 health (CSDH 2008; Diez-Roux et al. 2000; Dowler et al. 2007). 41

42 Of course cultural capital is also important: food choice is intimately bound up 42
 43 with class and social identities as well as conditioned by the material circumstances 43
 44 discussed above. Thus a daily, embedded, largely unconscious, practice, which 44

1 acts as a marker of worth and difference (Caplan 1997; Lupton 1996), is critical 1
 2 in contributing in the short- and longer-term to health and wellbeing. There is a 2
 3 long history of assumptions about the purported inadequacies in nutritional or 3
 4 housekeeping skills among those who are of lower social class and/or poorer, but 4
 5 their legitimacy is questionable (see Crotty and Germov 2004; Pember Reeves 5
 6 1913/2008), as is the social patterning of cooking skills (Caraher et al. 1999). The 6
 7 latter probably depend on household member age and cultural identity as much 7
 8 as class; anecdotally younger, poorer mothers are empowered by projects which 8
 9 offer 'cook and eat' and thus increase confidence in their own capabilities (CFH 9
 10 2007). Whether poorer people buy more 'ready-meals' than do richer is a moot 10
 11 point; they do buy different convenience foods, and may rely more on 'fast foods' 11
 12 because they are filling, cheap and readily available, particularly for those who 12
 13 work long and unsociable hours, or have difficult caring responsibilities (IOM 13
 14 2011). Poorer people are probably more likely to buy familiar foods which offer 14
 15 predictable, affordable and acceptable fillers (Dowler et al. 2007) when they have 15
 16 little economic or social opportunity to exercise the real choices on which the food 16
 17 system is predicated and cannot afford to take chances on food being wasted. 17

18 Significantly, recent increases in food prices, alongside rising costs of rent, 18
 19 fuel, travel and local taxes (Evans 2008; Hirsch 2011), have all had a greater 19
 20 impact on poorer people's budgets for three main reasons. These items form a 20
 21 higher proportion of total household expenditure than for the better-off; poorer 21
 22 households are less likely to have financial reserves to mitigate their effects; and 22
 23 because they are more likely to be dependent on below-average wages (Levell 23
 24 and Oldfield 2011). Thus poorer people are even less likely to be able to afford 24
 25 food and nutrient intakes needed for health. In practice, expenditure on food is 25
 26 invariably the item on which savings are made in order to meet other pressing 26
 27 demands, including debt repayments, since technically one can survive on simple, 27
 28 monotonous food even if it does not meet dietary requirements for health. The 28
 29 misery and anxiety thus engendered emerges in qualitative accounts: reliance 29
 30 on cheaper foodstuffs, high in hidden fats and sugars, that contribute to rising 30
 31 levels of obesity and Type II diabetes among the least food secure (Drewnowski 31
 32 and Specter 2004; IOM 2011). National surveys, such as the US Department 32
 33 of Agriculture Food Security survey (Nord et al. 2010), annually document the 33
 34 proportion of the population who run out of money for food on a regular basis, and 34
 35 experience hunger. A survey of low income households in the UK, carried out well 35
 36 before the current food price increases, similarly showed a considerable proportion 36
 37 of those living in material deprivation are worried that food would run out before 37
 38 money for more was obtained (Nelson et al. 2007). In Canada, and many European 38
 39 countries, indications of individual and household food insecurity associated with 39
 40 poverty and/or destitution are drawn from numbers using foodbanks (Köhler et al. 40
 41 1997; Riches 2002; Castetbon et al. 2011), although more national survey data sets 41
 42 are now being used to characterise conditions (Vozoris and Tarasuk 2003). 42

43 The recent financial crisis with its cuts in job security and welfare spending has 43
 44 significantly impacted upon the sufficiency of household budgets to meet essential 44

1 needs, although such monitoring has largely been led by research groups (such as 1
 2 the Minimum Income Standards Group or Institute of Fiscal Studies in the UK¹). 2
 3 Such work demonstrates that while numbers of the destitute are rising in many rich 3
 4 nations, their social and economic characteristics may also be changing. As well 4
 5 as those whose incomes from wages or state benefits is increasingly inadequate 5
 6 to meet food purchasing needs, there are a growing number of people in Europe 6
 7 and North America who have neither job nor access to welfare, and no hope of 7
 8 either (IOM 2011). This includes 'people living in extreme situations such as some 8
 9 minority ethnic groups, especially the Roma, immigrants, undocumented migrants, 9
 10 the homeless, and people living in or leaving institutions' (EAPN 2009). While 10
 11 there have been concomitant rises in charitable feeding to help meet immediate 11
 12 needs, civil society and/or small scale state-funded local food initiatives have 12
 13 no capacity to address the structural issues which are driving such rising hunger. 13
 14 Thus, there is a new and growing group of people living in food poverty many of 14
 15 whom are low income working households who have to absorb higher food prices 15
 16 but who are not entitled to benefits. This group is finding help from food banks and 16
 17 charities which emerged to fill gaps in state provision but which have now become 17
 18 the main sources of food welfare² 18

19

20

21 **Locating AFNs Today: Filling or Widening Gaps or Both?** 21

22

23 Setting aside these more recent, pressing needs, it is legitimate, nonetheless, to ask 23
 24 to what extent 'alternative' food networks and initiatives help address the conditions 24
 25 of those who are worse off materially and perhaps culturally. We should note that 25
 26 such initiatives are, as discussed elsewhere in this volume, heterogeneous in their 26
 27 means of food supply (some are 'local', variously defined; some are seasonal and 27
 28 some are simply 'different from the corporate'), in what they offer and how, and in 28
 29 their reach and space. However, one consistent critique is that they are by nature 29
 30 exclusionary (e.g. Guthman 2008): the food for sale is at a higher price than can 30
 31 be afforded by those on low incomes, particularly in recessionary times, and the 31
 32 cultural capital they rely on is less likely to be found among households living 32
 33 in multiple deprivation. Clearly there are circumstances where both of these are 33
 34 the case, and where an intention to satisfy middle-class aspirations is the driver 34
 35 for a given set of initiatives (e.g. farmers' markets may be located in particular 35
 36 neighbourhoods that would be largely inaccessible to a non-car owner who did 36
 37 not live locally, while the regularity of paying for a vegetable box of unknown 37
 38 contents would be beyond many low income household budgets). Furthermore, 38
 39 the 'transgressive' elements of mainstream supermarket retail of food produced (to 39
 40 'organic' production standards or respecting conditions of good animal welfare) 40

41

42

1 <http://www.minimumincomestandard.org/>; <http://www.ifs.org.uk/>.

43

44

2 See the Trussel Trust website for examples and stories of this new group: <http://www.trusselltrust.org/>. 44

1 or marketed (named producer provenance) in particular ways usually carries a significant price premium. The own brand/economy lines in supermarkets seldom satisfy these higher standards.

Nevertheless, few 'alternative' initiatives actually directly exclude people: anyone can shop in a farmers' market or Farm Shop (direct sale), buying as little as they want, or even join a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) scheme. Indeed, there are examples one of us has encountered in UK based research where, for instance, people on low incomes or in receipt of welfare benefits, specifically joined a CSA, or use a Farm Shop, because they judge the food gives better value for money (Seyfang 2006; Cox et al. 2008; Kneafsey et al. 2008), and are prepared to eat differently to accommodate costs (e.g. less meat). Motivations and practices for good, healthy and sustainable food can be observed across the income and class spectrum (Donald and Blay-Palmer 2006; Gribben and Gitsham 2007). However, such examples are not yet especially abundant and this can be explained by the fact that many AFNs were and are not set up to tackle food poverty as their main objective.

There are, however, a growing number of initiatives which *explicitly* target low income households' needs, and/or are located in areas of multiple deprivations. These are more often conceptualised under the rubric 'local food initiatives', with a basis in a local community and, for the most part, not driven by profit and business. What they have in common is '*food* (its production, preparation or consumption), *local involvement* (management, delivery, paid/unpaid workers) and *state support* (funding, space, professional input, transport, equipment)' (Dowler and Caraher 2003: 58, italics in original). 'Alternative', again, covers great heterogeneity in terms of management structure and activity, which can include practical sessions on cooking, food co-ops or transport schemes, community cafés, gardening, and school breakfast clubs. There is also fluidity in practice: for example, the development of social enterprise models has introduced business perspectives, if not profit per se, to what were previously voluntary or charitable enterprises. For example, in 2011, Community Food Initiatives North East (CFINE) in Scotland bought a local family owned fruit and vegetable business in Aberdeenshire in order to expand its operations, under the Social Firms Scotland's Acquiring Business for Good programme and with funding from the National Lottery.³ Other UK examples include Growing Communities in London,⁴ which runs a farm, a market and box schemes on a not-for-profit basis and Salop Drive Market Garden in the West Midlands⁵. Both cases are structured around delivering benefits to local residents, whose participation is not means-tested but who are more likely to be lower income households because of their location. The boundaries are hard to draw: larger, national commercial box schemes or developing local food

³ See <http://scotlandonsunday.scotsman.com/business/First-for-pioneering-project-as-6676955.jp>, *Scotland on Sunday*.

⁴ <http://www.growingcommunities.org/>.

⁵ <http://www.sandwellfoodnetwork.org/viewProject.php?id=1>.

1 hubs (such as in Vancouver [Connelly et al. 2011], or Brighton, UK⁶) often grow 1
 2 from smaller, more localised schemes, and can share objectives in sustainability 2
 3 and social justice. Or, often, many of these initiatives simply absorb these costs 3
 4 which are subsidised by the state, and they are not necessarily commercially viable 4
 5 without direct state and other sources of financial support. 5

6 As we and others have discussed elsewhere (Caraher and Dowler 2007; Dowler 6
 7 and Caraher 2003; Rex and Blair 2003), 'local food initiatives' such as food 7
 8 cooperatives, community shops and some local box schemes have the potential to 8
 9 address the immediate, day-to-day needs of those either with little money for food 9
 10 and/or living in areas where spatial dimensions of food access are difficult. In this 10
 11 they can offer ways to buy fruit and vegetables and other key commodities for very 11
 12 low prices and without having to pay transport costs to and from shops. However, 12
 13 people's motivations for taking part are likely to be mixed; some, as argued above, 13
 14 share similar ideals to those with more money and cultural capacity, while others 14
 15 are driven by anxieties about hunger and feeding their family. Initiatives which 15
 16 seek to develop skills, through e.g. grow-your-own, community/school allotments, 16
 17 cook-and-eat, or community shops, can offer longer term gain in confidence and 17
 18 scaling up of skills among householders who have been casualties of a capitalist 18
 19 system which educates poorer people inadequately and, certainly in the latter years 19
 20 of the twentieth century, saw no need for food provisioning skills within formal 20
 21 education (Lang et al. 2009; Morgan et al. 2006). 21

22 What is also the case is that those running local food initiatives which address 22
 23 the needs of poorer households have had to adapt and respond to shifting state and 23
 24 civil society funding streams (Dowler et al. 2007). So as support has changed to 24
 25 reflect different priorities so the 'initiatives' themselves have adapted to reflect 25
 26 these changing priorities and opportunities moving, over the last decade or so, 26
 27 from a focus on social inclusion to 'health' projects, which in turn have gone 27
 28 from 'anti-cancer' (which included many of the 5 A Day fruit and vegetable 28
 29 promotion projects) to anti-obesity initiatives. In recent years projects have also 29
 30 incorporated elements of more 'ecological health' promotional activities around 30
 31 food (Lang 2009; Lang et al. 2009), including aspects of environmental and social 31
 32 sustainability. Thus food projects which address aspects of poverty and inequality 32
 33 have also made links to local sustainability agendas, although attention to growing 33
 34 'local', 'organic' or artisan foods has been a less important motive, particularly for 34
 35 profit or business.⁷ But, critically, such projects are often small in scale and very 35
 36 reliant on voluntary labour, as well as intermittent external funding, and they face 36
 37 considerable challenges in scaling up (Caraher and Dowler 2007; Connelly et al. 37
 38 2011). The 'anti-poverty' element has seldom been attractive to funders and the 38
 39 voluntary element, so essential to keep many food cooperatives and community 39

40
 41

42 ⁶ <http://www.bhfood.org.uk/>. 42

43 ⁷ See, for instance, 2012 Growing Spaces/Capital growth: <http://www.capitalgrowth.org/>. 43
 44 org/. 44

1 shops going, often struggles in areas of multiple deprivation, not least because 1
2 what people in such places often want are wage-paying jobs. 2

3 The kind of local initiatives around food that have been driven by public health 3
4 and/or sustainability agendas briefly outlined above, have been subject to less 4
5 academic research by those working on 'alternative food networks', although, as 5
6 implied, the two strands of activity are merging in some instances. Such activities 6
7 can have a direct role in improving social wellbeing and health by enabling all 7
8 people to access the essentials of life while not being excluded from cultural 8
9 norms. Thus, people do not have to eat differently from others, or queue in line 9
10 for rejected food, just because they cannot afford to shop and eat in the same 10
11 way as everyone else (Dowler 2003; Köhler et al. 1997). Structural factors and 11
12 their link to agency are much more important in dietary choice than policy-makers 12
13 or local practitioners have hitherto allowed, despite the considerable work on 13
14 structural determinants of health (Marmot 2010). 'Diet' is still too often located 14
15 as an individual 'lifestyle choice' and personal taste; a behavioural risk factor 15
16 which contributes to health outcomes (Dowler et al. 2007). Local food initiatives 16
17 can contribute to challenging this individualistic focus by addressing, in however 17
18 limited a way, some structural determinants such as spatial access and cultural 18
19 capacities. 19

20 The challenge to more traditional 'alternative' initiatives is the extent to which 20
21 they reinforce the individualistic notions of dietary choice and pay insufficient 21
22 attention to the circumstances within which people live and the structural 22
23 determinants of food behaviour. Many position themselves as challenging the 23
24 corporate food system, offering opportunities for 'reconnecting' producers and 24
25 processors with consumers, and creating food encounters that seek to re-engage 25
26 people as empowered citizens rather than as passive consumers of market driven 26
27 activities. Yet we must ask: are all people welcomed as 'citizens' equally included 27
28 as deserving of the right to food? Much more research is needed here, for it is clear 28
29 that 'alternative' food initiatives do vary enormously across different classes and 29
30 circumstances, and that geography is critical in this respect. 30

31

32

33 **Anti-hunger and Food Poverty Initiatives: Are they 'Alternative'?** 33

34

35 We argued above that across OECD nations there are many living in poverty 35
36 whose capacity to source food and feed themselves is limited. In addition to the 36
37 households long recognised as likely to face financial problems (lone parent, 37
38 older people with inadequate pensions, those with disabilities, the unemployed, 38
39 the homeless) there is a large emerging group of 'new poor' among recent 39
40 migrants, who may have ambiguous status and entitlement to welfare and security 40
41 benefits in many states, and those in work whose wages are too low to enable the 41
42 purchase of sufficient food, particularly where jobs are insecure (Dowler 2001; 42
43 FAO 2010; Köhler et al. 1997; Poppendieck 2010). Those with low waged or 43
44 unstable work may not be entitled to welfare and food benefits and, as food prices 44

1 rise, are increasingly unable to afford sufficient food for health. Rising poverty is 1
 2 acknowledged in such societies, but the effects on household ability to provision 2
 3 and eat decently are not. 'Hunger' thus exists in many communities in rich nations, 3
 4 exacerbated by the global economic crises and often hidden from national public 4
 5 view and response. It is shameful to acknowledge this fact; also, therefore, it is 5
 6 difficult for professionals and policy makers to recognise the power of fear of 6
 7 hunger as a driver of behaviours (Vernon 2007). Those who are poor and/or live in 7
 8 areas of multiple deprivation may thus take part in food initiatives not so much to 8
 9 improve their health, as to ensure that children and other family members do not 9
 10 go hungry and perhaps also to reduce their isolation. 10

11 Throughout the world there is a long history of anti-hunger work emerging 11
 12 from communities; sometimes this responsibility is then taken over, variously, 12
 13 by the state. For example, in her work on food welfare in the US, Poppendieck 13
 14 (1999) documents the development of emergency food in the US through the work 14
 15 of charitable and civil society organisations⁸. This movement, which began by 15
 16 highlighting the problem of hunger, then embarked upon projects that produced and 16
 17 sourced, cooked and distributed food to the needy. Food co-operatives that enabled 17
 18 people to source their own food also grew out of this response to necessity. This 18
 19 huge movement was supported in the US by parallel state developments in food 19
 20 welfare in terms of the federally-assisted food stamp program, and the state food 20
 21 assistance to poor pregnant women and children (WIC) and rural communities. 21
 22 Over time, the roles of the state and the private sector have morphed and shifted. 22
 23 For instance, early aims in anti-poverty and anti-hunger approaches not only to 23
 24 feed people but to reduce national levels of food waste have been taken up and 24
 25 embellished by many companies. Disposing of surplus food in 'bottom-of-line' 25
 26 packaging and/or by selling food which is near 'sell-by-date', to the large scale 26
 27 food banks run by the charitable sector, has become an alternative to landfill or 27
 28 other means of destruction. Companies can benefit twice from these actions – they 28
 29 avoid landfill taxation and achieve elements of Corporate Social Responsibility 29
 30 (Hawkes and Webster 2000). 30

31 During the latter half of the twentieth century, the charitable philanthropic 31
 32 sector has found itself increasingly delivering services which supplement the 32
 33 inadequacy of state welfare provision. Thus the considerable growth in food 33
 34 banks and emergency food provision (Cohen 2010; Poppendieck 2010; Riches 34
 35 2002) is condoned by governments and citizens alike as appropriate response to 35
 36 increasing numbers unable to feed themselves and their families. In Germany, 36
 37 for instance, food -distribution centres, known as the 'table movement', which 37
 38 began in Wuppertal in 1995 borrowing on the practice of the US 'City Harvest' 38
 39 project, take surplus food from supermarkets and distribute it. Now, over 1000 39
 40 towns in Germany have so-called 'tables', as the state has redrawn welfare lines 40
 41 and entitlements (Walker 2007). Meanwhile, our own ongoing on-line monitoring 41

42 42
 43 43
 44 8 Such as Feeding America see <http://feedingamerica.org/>. 44

1 of foodbanks in the UK showed an increase of 800 in 2011 from 2010, a finding 1
2 that is echoed in the regular statements from the Trussell Trust.⁹ 2

3 Garr (1995) and Poppendieck (1999) suggest that community and voluntary 3
4 groups have the potential to offer succour in a more humane and effective way 4
5 than large bureaucracies. However, day-to-day problems in institutional survival 5
6 and limited capacity to deliver such services mean that these initiatives can seldom 6
7 move from responsive to strategic mode in addressing long-term food problems 7
8 (Poppendieck 1986, 1999). Thus, as voluntary and charity food provision rises 8
9 to the challenge of meeting growing household and individual food insecurity it 9
10 potentially diverts attention from wider issues of distributional politics and income 10
11 inequality, and rights to adequate food (Caraher and Carr-Hill 2007; Dowler et al. 11
12 2001; Dowler 2012).¹⁰ 12

13 Consequently, we might ask: how does this long-standing and growing work 13
14 from the grassroots, which offers food to those who could not otherwise easily 14
15 obtain it, mesh with 'alternative' food initiatives as usually understood? There are 15
16 some obvious links: the US federal assistance programme Special Supplemental 16
17 Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provides vouchers for 17
18 farmers' markets to eligible participants in many states;¹¹ and there is evidence 18
19 that those using the vouchers increase their purchase and consumption of fresh 19
20 fruit and vegetables, while the uptake of vouchers has had significant effect 20
21 on producer practices in growing fresh produce (Oliveira and Frazão 2009; 21
22 Poppendieck 1999). Of course, those enrolling in WIC are following a means- 22
23 tested pathway to food support; in practice they have little other choice for 23
24 survival, and participation requires engagement in health promotional activities. 24
25 Furthermore, most of the food sourcing is from the corporate system (particularly 25
26 the infant feeding companies), and although the promotional work is to encourage 26
27 less usage of processed food high in fat, salt and sugar, for the majority of users, 27
28 getting food as cheaply as possible from local discount stores to avoid hunger is 28
29 the key motivation (IOM 2011). 29

30 We have found little evidence that the anti-hunger, emergency feeding work 30
31 produces significant challenge to the state either in terms of why people cannot 31
32 feed themselves, or through the increasing inadequacies of welfare assistance. 32
33 Current rhetoric easily reverts to the need for people to budget and cook adequately, 33
34 locating the problem at the individual level yet again. Yet there is a long history of 34
35 research in the UK, for instance, that sufficiency of income is essential to enable 35
36 households to feed themselves adequately: from the pioneering work of Rowntree 36
37 and Cadbury in documenting the extent of food poverty, via Boyd Orr in the 37
38 1930s, through NGO advocacy and academic research in the late twentieth century 38
39 39

40 9 <http://www.trusselltrust.org/>. 40

41 10 However, the Canadian Association of Food Banks produced a report (CAFB, 41
42 2003) challenging Canadian society over whether foodbanks were the way to tackle food 42
43 poverty, an issue Riches (2002) has long highlighted. 43

44 11 <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/FMNP/FMNPfaqs.htm>. 44

1 (Dowler and Turner, with Dobson 2001; Dowler 2003; Rowntree 2000). Arguably, 1
 2 this is not well known outside food activist circles and, similarly, among those 2
 3 who work on poverty, few address the food element (see, for example, Bradshaw 3
 4 and Sainsbury 2000). This matters in that work on poverty and exclusion, and the 4
 5 newer generation of 'food initiatives', are presented in ways which ignore this 5
 6 longer tradition of understanding and response. We might also argue that the need 6
 7 to keep 'rebranding' food poverty work (as social inclusion, healthy eating (5 A 7
 8 Day), obesity prevention and, latterly, sustainability), is a result of this ignorance, 8
 9 which means the underinvestment is not challenged. Perhaps it is correct to argue 9
 10 that neither the older 'anti-poverty/hunger' interventions nor the newer 'alternative 10
 11 food initiatives' tackle root causes but simply focus on problematic symptoms of 11
 12 the capitalist food system. 12

13

14

15 **Scope for the Future?** 15

16

17 Some see contemporary work on the so called 'new austerity' or 'new frugality' 17
 18 as offering new possibilities for tackling hunger and food poverty.¹² For instance, 18
 19 Pollan (2008, 2009) is regarded as a key advocate for this 'new austerity' in food 19
 20 and living as a longstanding critic of the corporate food system (he was instrumental 20
 21 in the production of the widely viewed film *Food Inc.*¹³ see also Weber 2009). In 21
 22 his work he promotes rules for a 'food manifesto' which typify the 'new austerity' 22
 23 approach, among which are (Pollan 2008): 23

24

- 25 • Don't eat anything your great-grandmother wouldn't recognize as food; 25
- 26 • Avoid food products containing ingredients that are: (a) unfamiliar; (b) 26
- 27 unpronounceable; (c) more than five in number; or that include (d) high- 27
- 28 fructose corn syrup; 28
- 29 • Avoid food products that make health claims; 29
- 30 • Shop the peripheries of the supermarket and stay out of the middle; 30
- 31 • Get out of the supermarket whenever possible; 31
- 32 • Eat more like the French. Or the Italians. Or the Japanese. Or the Indians. 32
- 33 Or the Greeks; 33
- 34 • Regard non-traditional food with scepticism; 34
- 35 • Pay more, eat less; 35
- 36 • Eat meals; 36
- 37 • Do all your eating at a table; 37

38

39 12 Redolent of such arguments is that by Alex James ex-rockstar and now cheese 39
 40 maker says that there is no need for the poor to go without and says that 'even if you're 40
 41 on the dole, you can eat like a king' (The NS Interview by C. Player in *New Statesman*, 27 41
 42 June, 2011, p. 30). 42

43 13 <http://www.foodincmovie.com/> (accessed 8 July 2011). 43

44

- 1 • Don't get your fuel from the same place your car does;
- 2 • Try not to eat alone.

3
 4 Lang and Heasman (2004) produced a similar set of guide-points, and Tudge 4
 5 (2007), in arguing for agroecological approaches to the food system, reduces 5
 6 eating well to '*plenty of plants, not much meat, and maximum variety*' (p. 57), 6
 7 based on traditional meals the world over. What contribution can such thinking 7
 8 and practice make to addressing food poverty and inequalities? While there might 8
 9 be no intrinsic reason why those with fewer means should find it more difficult to 9
 10 eat in the ways Pollan or Lang and Heasman encourage than those who are richer 10
 11 – indeed, people who are poor probably eat less profligately, throw less away and 11
 12 are less likely to drive to the shops – we should note that, for instance, many in the 12
 13 UK and US who are poor do not have tables or cars; they often have to eat while 13
 14 working or travelling, and could not hope to emulate traditional cuisines from 14
 15 other parts of the world. They have to eat what they can get, when they can get 15
 16 it and for as cheaply as possible – which very often means the highly processed, 16
 17 bargain foods such writers eschew. Those whose food is provided or supplemented 17
 18 by foodbanks also have to take what is provided, which may be far from ideal 18
 19 from a health or sustainability perspective (despite increasing efforts on the part 19
 20 of foodbank managers to improve it (IOM 2011). Even Tudge's simple maxim is 20
 21 hard to achieve on a minimum income: lack of dietary diversity is the hallmark of 21
 22 food patterns of poor households the world over. 22

23 Thus, advice which is couched in terms of appropriate ways of choosing to 23
 24 live more sustainably and without relying on exploitative food systems can widen 24
 25 inequalities of practice. Where such proposals are framed in terms of individual 25
 26 choice, with little by way of challenge to the structural determinants of behaviour, 26
 27 they are of no help to those with little agency or the resources needed to make such 27
 28 changes and, ultimately, perpetuate disparities. For some, the 'new austerity' is a 28
 29 lifestyle choice; for others, living austere – but not necessarily well – is a fact 29
 30 of life. Indeed, much of the new austerity movement seems to encourage group 30
 31 action to meet the aims and needs of those individuals working together, unlike 31
 32 earlier anti-hunger movements, where arguably people worked together for the 32
 33 overall benefits of the wider community rather than only those engaged in the 33
 34 activism (Albritton 2009; O Gráda 2009). Current movements are often based on 34
 35 assumptions about the power of the individual to make changes happen within 35
 36 the system and thus about individual capacity or agency which may not apply to 36
 37 those who are poor (Belasco 2007). The immediate concern of those in the most 37
 38 precarious circumstances may be survival (physiological and social), however 38
 39 much they may share anti-corporate aims. Not only, then are such movements 39
 40 in danger of being exclusionary, they also tend to reinforce victim-blaming and 40
 41 criticism of those who are poor for refusing to amend their food purchasing 41
 42 practices. 42

43 A more extreme version is represented by the 'freegan' movement that engages 43
 44 in 'dumpster diving' as part of an alternative lifestyle that seeks to draw attention to 44

1 capitalist over-production and the endemic waste of the current food system (Stuart 1
 2 2009). Freegans are 'people who employ alternative strategies for living based 2
 3 on limited participation in the conventional economy and minimal consumption 3
 4 of resources. Freegans embrace community, generosity, social concern, freedom, 4
 5 cooperation, and sharing in opposition to a society based on materialism, moral 5
 6 apathy, competition, conformity, and greed'.¹⁴ However, it is deeply questionable 6
 7 whether this can be a choice of lifestyle for everyone, especially those living in 7
 8 poverty. Raiding skips outside restaurants and supermarkets to obtain food on 8
 9 a systematic basis in fact requires resources of time, transport and storage, and 9
 10 skills in food preparation as well as knowledge of the law to defend practice. For 10
 11 the majority of people in welfare or work related poverty, or even in destitute 11
 12 circumstances, such a way of living is untenable, undignified and impractical, 12
 13 not least because many who are poor have disabilities, or are elderly, or have 13
 14 dependent children; and for those who are new migrants with uncertain welfare or 14
 15 work status, such an activity would be regarded as highly risky. But for those who 15
 16 are single, able-bodied and poor, and who have somewhere to store and cook food, 16
 17 such a lifestyle might conceivably be possible, yet it is likely to be a choice based 17
 18 on principle rather than necessity. 18

19 The move to austerity nevertheless also chimes with grassroots movements 19
 20 seeking to change citizens' thinking and practice as a way of solving global 20
 21 problems, including ecological sustainability, peak oil and even the over- 21
 22 industrialisation of the food system and its concentrations of power. The desire 22
 23 to empower communities to tackle these major problems and make a difference 23
 24 through initiatives such as the Transition Movement is gaining support, and 24
 25 includes challenging corporate, oil-based food production, processing and retailing 25
 26 (Hopkins 2008; Pinkerton and Hopkins 2009). Such 'oppositional' characteristics 26
 27 may not extend to a total abandonment of capitalist ideas and trading, but can 27
 28 lead to new forms of economic engagement. Indeed, Gibson-Graham (2008) 28
 29 argues that 'alternative' does not necessarily equate to 'archaic and regressive' 29
 30 but rather, in the best cases, uses different capitals to create something that is 30
 31 more than the aim of 'economic monism', to act as a transformative force. So, for 31
 32 instance, the Transition Town movement often engages in Local Exchange and 32
 33 Trading Schemes, and places are experimenting with different forms of exchange 33
 34 currency.¹⁵ This can also be seen in the UK in the emergence of a new generation 34
 35 of community owned companies (or community interest companies, CICs), where 35
 36 the focus is on new models of ownership with reinvestment of financial and social 36
 37 surplus back into the community. 37

38 There are different complexities here, whose overlapping dimensions are not 38
 39 yet clear, including the values and aims underpinning practice changes. Belasco 39
 40 (2007; see also Goodman et al. 2012) notes that some of the original US 'alternative 40
 41

42 14 <http://freegan.info/> (accessed 8 July 2011). 42

43 15 <http://www.transitionnetwork.org/>; [http://www.letslinkuk.net/practice/transition.](http://www.letslinkuk.net/practice/transition.htm) 43
 44 htm. 44

1 food networks' were torn apart in the 1970s by disputes over whether an emerging 1
 2 focus on meeting consumers' new ideals was undermining original motivations of 2
 3 more 'oppositional' politics and practices. Such challenges are certainly emerging 3
 4 in places where different approaches are being tried to '*re-build local food systems* 4
 5 *based on the principles of sustainability and social justice*' (Connelly et al. 2011: 5
 6 317). In this instance, in Edmonton and Vancouver, scaling up local food initiatives 6
 7 revealed conflicting values and needs in terms of social and physical infrastructure, 7
 8 which are having to be negotiated, not least because '*social justice does not fit* 8
 9 *well with business plans or development pro-formas*' (Connelly et al. 2011: 318). 9
 10 These issues are being explored in different places and circumstances; perhaps 10
 11 critically, they also need academic researchers to document, analyse and reflect 11
 12 on the experiences. In a way then, from our reading of this landscape, solutions to 12
 13 hunger, food poverty and inequalities cannot be found within the mainstream: a 13
 14 new agrarian food system, based on agroecological principles of production and 14
 15 consumption, with social and environmental sustainability and rights, is the only 15
 16 way forward (Tudge 2007). This is emerging in the food sovereignty movement 16
 17 from Via Campesina¹⁶ and nascent groups in Europe (Desmarais 2008; Patel 2009; 17
 18 Pimbert 2010; UK Food Group 2010) with the possibilities for change discussed 18
 19 in McMichael (2009) and Holt-Giménez and Shattock (2011). 19

20 So what is the role for community interventions, such as local food growing, 20
 21 which offer opportunities for reskilling, sociability and improved access to fresh 21
 22 produce and can be located in areas of multiple deprivations? When combined 22
 23 with city-wide approaches seeking different ways of food provisioning (such as, 23
 24 in the UK, Bristol¹⁷ or Brighton and Hove¹⁸), they can help to challenge structural 24
 25 determinants of access. They do critically depend on communities having 25
 26 access to suitable land, and the space to grow and live safely. Such movements 26
 27 are increasingly city-wide food partnerships and thus appropriately framed for 27
 28 beginning to build resilient, local structures for food provisioning (Steel 2008), 28
 29 and many include social justice and reduction of inequalities as explicit aims. 29
 30 Toronto¹⁹ has led the way with its ecological food policy that has sought to 30
 31 influence its own food supply hinterland (Straessle 2007, Lister 2007). Critically, 31
 32 Toronto food policy is embedded in the systems of the state, which, while bringing 32
 33 some disadvantages, enables the possibility of more structural and lasting changes 33
 34 in terms of what can be achieved, including more systematic attempts to address 34
 35 food poverty. Few such initiatives tackle sufficiency of income, from wages or 35
 36 social assistance; work on 'food access' is usually limited to improving provision 36
 37 of subsidized healthy food outlets and creating opportunities to grow food or to 37

38
 39

40 16 <http://viacampesina.org/en/> (accessed 19 July 2011). 40

41 17 [http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Health-Social-Care/health-policy/food-](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/ccm/content/Health-Social-Care/health-policy/food-news.en) 41
 42 news.en. 42

43 18 <http://www.bhfood.org.uk/index.php>. Note that both Bristol and Brighton & Hove 43
 44 are piloting a Landshare initiative. 44

44 19 http://www.toronto.ca/health/tfpc_index.htm. 44

1 develop CSA or food cooperatives. Recent analysis of London and New York 1
 2 as cities with new ‘sustainable urban food’ strategies points up that work on 2
 3 improving food access in New York is largely confined to *Green Cart* and *Healthy* 3
 4 *Bodega* schemes (i.e. small ‘alternative’ provisioning) and in both cities is through 4
 5 improvements to school food (which itself is patchy and subject to funding cuts) 5
 6 (Morgan and Sonnino 2010). 6

7 There is an argument that the new generation of ‘alternative’ initiatives have 7
 8 contributed to the development of a more acceptable, consumer-friendly, form of 8
 9 capitalism (Fromartz 2006; Pollan, 2008). Albritton (2009) is not alone in claiming 9
 10 capitalism ‘creates hunger and obesity’; Tudge (2007) and Patel (2007), among 10
 11 others, argue along similar lines, that these new dialectics of poverty are the result 11
 12 of control of the food system by a small number of global companies right through 12
 13 the food chain. This control, they claim, not only impoverishes poor farmers and 13
 14 producers in the global South, it also impoverishes those working in the food 14
 15 system in rich countries too – small producers, processors, retail workers²⁰. In 15
 16 other words, the corporate food system contributes to poverty, as well as claiming 16
 17 to help relieve it through keeping prices down. 17

18 Clearly, the issues of hunger and food poverty discussed here have a social – 18
 19 as well as physiological – component which many ‘alternative’ food initiatives 19
 20 specifically seek to redress (Kneafsey et al. 2008; Morgan et al. 2006). A sense of 20
 21 connection to locality may be as important for those who are poor as for anyone 21
 22 – indeed, for some, it may be critical to recovering a sense of self and possibility 22
 23 for change. As we argue above, such research as exists suggests that those on low- 23
 24 incomes may be as interested in ecological and social sustainability, exhibiting 24
 25 similar values of altruism, caring for nature and local economies, as other socio- 25
 26 economic groups. Yet what those with less social or economic capital are not so 26
 27 able to do, however, is to act on those values, or envision other ways of living. In 27
 28 contrast to those who espouse the new ‘simpler lifestyle’ including eating (e.g. 100 28
 29 mile diets,²¹ locavore movement etc.), beliefs can be put into practice (Goodman 29
 30 2010; Kingsolver 2007). Thus, it is the task of ‘alternative’ and sustainable food 30
 31 interventions to ensure that those who lack economic, social or cultural capital or 31
 32 access are not excluded because they ‘cannot afford to be green’. 32
 33 33
 34 34

35 **Conclusion: Back to the Food Equality and Social Justice Future?** 35

36 36
 37 Our aim here has been to offer a critique based on equity and inclusiveness. There 37
 38 are a number of ways that ‘alternative’ food initiatives and movements, including 38
 39 ‘freeganism’, can address poverty and exclusion but there is a need that issues of 39
 40 40

41 20 For example, UK campaign at the time of writing for fair wages for workers in 41
 42 Sainsbury’s, a major retailer: [http://www.unitetheunion.org/campaigns/sainsbury_s_-_pay](http://www.unitetheunion.org/campaigns/sainsbury_s_-_pay_a_living_wag.aspx) 42
 43 [_a_living_wag.aspx](http://www.unitetheunion.org/campaigns/sainsbury_s_-_pay_a_living_wag.aspx). 43

44 21 <http://100milediet.org/> (accessed 19 July 2011). 44

1 social justice and equity in the food system must be more broadly embraced. Indeed, 1
 2 as has been found in the city partnerships mentioned above, explicit principles and 2
 3 policies have to be in place to ensure practices do not widen inequalities – requiring 3
 4 almost an ‘equity audit’ of activities (FEC, 2010). As discussed, this also requires 4
 5 thoughtful negotiation of potentially conflicting aims and outcomes if the needs of 5
 6 those on lower incomes are to be addressed. Moreover, given their heterogeneous 6
 7 circumstances and diverse immediate needs what is also critical is the involvement 7
 8 of those usually excluded on grounds of class or capacity, in the planning and 8
 9 implementation of different forms of ‘alternative’ ways of provisioning. 9

10 The changing nature of food poverty allied to a ‘nutrition transition’ has to 10
 11 embrace policy solutions beyond a narrow focus on individual behaviour and 11
 12 consumer choice. In some cases ‘alternative’ networks and movements may 12
 13 exacerbate the problems of those who are food poor, and, perhaps unwittingly, 13
 14 encourage policies rooted in self-help and alterity which do not fundamentally 14
 15 change social determinants of poor food and health inequalities and distract 15
 16 attention from the underlying causes to the symptoms. The more radical, 16
 17 oppositional movements which embrace more participative approaches, as well 17
 18 as food sovereignty and rights, hold considerable potential for uniting desires for 18
 19 reconnection, local economic and social sustainability and less exploitative food 19
 20 provisioning. The role of the corporate food sector and potential for ‘transgressive 20
 21 performance’ is probably considerable here, although less confrontational, process- 21
 22 focussed practices of negotiation are also being explored. Thus, the possibilities 22
 23 of broad alliances between those engaged in food poverty/anti-hunger work and in 23
 24 ‘alternative’ networks need to maximise strengths, find common ground and build, 24
 25 not only on the oppositional, but also in the envisioning of new ways to produce 25
 26 and consume food. Food is not only fundamental to health and functioning, it is a 26
 27 source of pleasure, both for individuals and for hospitality, even for those without 27
 28 much money or capacity; denying this denies humanity. ‘Alternative’ systems can 28
 29 contribute to challenging parsimonious definitions of poverty and basic needs, and 29
 30 point up possibilities for change. Even the poorest in rich societies, excluded from 30
 31 all that is regarded as normal, who live what might seem chaotic lives, sometimes 31
 32 with no regular address, can be transformed by being enabled to grow, cook and 32
 33 share food, gaining skills, self-respect and pleasure instead of living in scarcity 33
 34 and hunger. 34

35 35
 36 36

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