



Editorial Introduction: Children's Food Practices and School Meals

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Contemporary research on children's food practices has brought to the fore children's voice and agency, in an effort to recognize that children's intersubjectivities affect and are affected by their own bodies, their families, their peers, teachers and food-serving staff, schools, markets, the media, publicity, food policies and, ultimately, the whole food provisioning system. Albeit this body of work has offered major contributions to understanding children's agential and powerful capacities in negotiating their food preferences with others, recent calls draw attention to start moving beyond voice and agency in order to fully account children (and people more generally) as 'embodied beings in the world' with feelings, emotions and senses (Kraftl, 2013; Martens et al., 2013, p. 1). However, these are not calls for dismissing voice and agency as unimportant, these are instead invitations to give more attention in childhood studies to embodied practice, affective experience and emotions (see Blazek and Windram-Geddes, 2013). Children's food practices and school meals are excellent research sites where such invitations can be enacted.

Apart from attention given in this special issue by several articles touching upon children's experiences, feelings and sensory relations with food, all authors without exception focus on the school as a site of enacting practice, intervention, marketing discourse or policy reflection. Thus, they move away from a recurrent tendency to focus on the private sphere to a less chartered terrain of public spaces of food provisioning. As in many other domains, schools are considered strategic in disciplining and educating children's eating habits. Schools are chief places in establishing emotional relations and the articles in this issue try to bring attention to how relations between children and food take shape in schools as places of becoming. In this sense such places should be understood as processes (Bartos, 2013), since they are constantly being constructed through their relationship with children. In accordance with recent calls to account for children's emotional geographies (see Blazek and Windram-Geddes, 2013) school places are connected to emotions, sensations and the body. Thus, eating practices and meals in schools may be understood as key to children's food lived experiences. Moreover, school food offers a lens through which its 'multifunctionality' (see Morgan, this issue) is fully displayed: from nutrition to

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taste and pleasure, from economics and budget concerns to environment and social justice, from sociability and sharing practice to autonomy and choice.

It is because of the synergetic character of food and its important relation with children and youth embodied practices, feelings and experiences that the guest editors of this special issue hosted the international conference 'Food, Children and Youth: What's Eating?' in Lisbon in February 2014. The conference brought together scholars, researchers and practitioners from an array of disciplines within social sciences, public health and nutrition, from different countries within and outside Europe, and exploring disparate theoretical and methodological approaches to children's food practices. The conference was organized under the remit of a Portuguese National Science Foundation funded project 'Between School and Family: Children's Food Knowledge and Eating Practices' (PTDC/CS-SOC/111214/2009). This special issue is the result of a small selection of the excellent papers presented at the conference, and that could establish a fitting dialogue with the general theme and critical approach to children food practices and school meals that underscores this collection. Together, the articles reflect refined and complex insights in researching children's food practices by focusing either on the contexts of situated and embodied practice or on the discourses that mediate such practices.

Children's eating practices are becoming increasingly scrutinized and perceived as problematic, reflecting concerns on childhood overweight and obesity rates in several countries, in Europe and elsewhere. Apart from issues with excess food, food deficit problems (malnutrition, food insecurity) are becoming ever more present in both developed and developing countries, since the rise in fuel, energy and food prices (especially in the aftermath of the 2007–2008 crises and the austerity measures forcefully applied in some countries). Both food surplus and deficit are having major repercussions on the health and well-being of children. Various policies and initiatives have been designed to tackle perceived 'risky' and 'unhealthy' diets by children and some innovative initiatives on school meals and food education programmes have offered interesting insights on how to push the public and private sector agendas towards healthy, sustainable, secure and socially just food. In all these debates, policies and strategies, visions of 'eating well' are put forward, often clashing with the everyday life feelings of children and youths, their embodied practices and experiences in schools, in commercial spaces, among friends or family.

Given a still limited literature on the experiences, feelings, emotions and visions of children regarding such school food reforms, various articles in this special issue aim at contributing to deepen this analytical position. Although some articles are strongly aligned with concerns common in the 'new social studies of childhood' (see Kraftl et al., 2012), where attention is given to children as active participants in the research design (Bruselius-Jensen, this issue), or in school food practices (Boni, this issue; Torralba and Guidali, this issue), their analytical scope moves beyond voice and agency by taking into account embodied food experiences and feelings. Therefore, most articles deal with children's engagements with and experiences of school meals in the context of food education programmes that have been implemented in different countries in Europe (e.g. UK, France, Spain, Denmark, Poland) over the last decade. In so doing they bring forward a set of topics for critical reflection, all based in empirically rich and diversified materials from different disciplinary backgrounds that span across the fields of sociology, education, communication, public health, anthropology, psychology, geography and planning:

1. the mismatches and tensions between the principles supported by school food reforms and children's tastes and practices;
2. children's creative tactics to eschew particular food orderings (e.g. nutrition, safety, hygiene, risk, table manners);
3. the school canteen seen as a relational and emotionally laden space where multiple and converging heterogeneous elements (e.g. children bodies, senses and emotions, carers, caterers, food education materials and booklets, teachers, meals) open up possibilities for holding in place conflicting food orderings (e.g. health, pleasure, conviviality, sustainability, social justice);
4. the venturing of private sector food education initiatives and its effects in the contexts of learning to 'eat well'.

Conceptual approaches and tools are utilized to grasp the relations of school food, bodies, feelings, emotions and practices. For example, the concepts of foodscape, lived experience, social interaction and framing are used to stress a relational and affective approach regarding children's engagements with school food. Indeed, many of the ideas that encompass the concept of foodscape seem to emerge as a common ground interlinking several articles in this collection, even if the concept itself is not always explicitly employed by the authors. Based in Appadurai's (1996) notion of 'scape', this concept is becoming increasingly used in food studies (Mikkelsen, 2011). More than mere food environments, foodscapes have often been thought of beyond the physical spaces of food production and consumption, allowing for exploring the interactions between food, people and environments. Indeed, foodscapes have been understood not just as places where people relate to food, but also as contexts where food is co-constructed, taking both physical/material settings and symbolic/discursive spaces (Brembeck et al., 2013), including 'the social, relational, and political construction of food' (Miewald and McCann, 2014, p. 537). The concept is especially helpful to analyse situated constructs and relationships with food in particular places (Miewald and McCann, 2014). In a Deleuzian perspective, foodscapes can also be understood as food-related structures that constantly evolve through the relationships established between food, people and other elements, affecting and being affected by them (Dolphijn, 2004; Brembeck et al., 2013).

Outline of the Special Issue

The first article, 'The Politics of the Public Plate: School Food and Sustainability', by Kevin Morgan, depicts the keynote speech offered at the opening session of the conference 'Food, Children and Youth: What's Eating?'. Having been a pioneering figure in the field of sustainable public procurement, Morgan explores the most pressing issues regarding the sustainability of school meals while reaffirming the right to 'good' food. It stresses the multifunctional and multidimensional character of food – that is, how food and eating are simultaneously a primary need for producing 'healthy' bodies, a pleasurable and sensorial experience, as well as a site for social justice mobilization, economic growth, ecological awareness, non-human relations, among other aspects. The discussion moves then to the difficulties (and opportunities) of creative and sustainable public food procurement, such as the perceived costs of sustainable procurement, the lack of information, the risks linked to innovation, weak leadership, the inertia around the development of initiatives, and legal issues. After giving some examples of civil society organizations promoting sustainability

through food procurement initiatives in cities, Morgan concludes by advocating the need for the development of public social partnerships that can constitute an alternative in schools and other sites to outsourcing food to private companies. Given the restrictive budgets of public services in the age of austerity, partnerships between non-profit civil society groups and municipalities can be feasible to ensure sustainable food arrangements in schools in particular, and in cities at large. This way, it reaffirms the right to 'good food' to children and the overall urban population.

Exploring a creative initiative in schools, the article by Pamela Louise Graham, Riccardo Russo, John Blackledge and Margaret Anne Defeyter queries the views of parents, children and school staff on a universal school breakfast scheme piloted in the UK. Drawing on semi-structured interviews in five schools in the North West of England, the authors sought to analyse the effectiveness of school breakfast initiatives as a tool for improving pupils' nutrition levels and eating practices. They argue that eating breakfast at school is intertwined with a wide variety of practices. It also requires sustainable funding, the definition of nutritionally balanced guidelines for breakfast meals and the coordination with parents by promoting better communication. The authors also show how school breakfast initiatives were valued by participants because such initiatives can contribute to perceived 'healthy' eating practices among children and youth, to alleviate household food insecurity, to improve academic performance and punctuality. Plus, the implementation of breakfast clubs impacted on family morning routines and the synchronization and sequencing of practices, to the point that some of the parents interviewed had a feeling of being less harried in the morning. The authors also point out that engaging directly with children's opinions, whose voice is often lessened in the planning of school meals programmes, might prove to be helpful in adapting certain aspects of school breakfast initiatives.

José Torralba and Barbara Guidalli's article prompts the rising debate on the relations between school meals and children's eating practices through developing a conceptual framework anchored in the concept of 'foodscapes' and combining it with the notion of 'legitimate peripheral participation' by Lave and Wenger (1991). Research data are based on a wide array of methods that include observations, focus groups, informal interviews and conversations with students, parents, lunchroom workers and administrators of several schools in Catalonia and one school in Madrid (Spain), together with audio and video recordings of eating contexts inside and outside the schools. The authors analyse children's food practices and debate the active role children play in structuring their food experiences in schools. The article discusses that learning to eat in schools is about contextualizing children's eating experiences in accordance to the specific elements of school's foodscapes. It involves comparing and articulating these experiences with others outside school, developing and learning to be an 'eater-in-context' where eating practices are collectively shared and situated in foodscapes composed of both material and immaterial resources. The authors call attention to the fact that nutritional initiatives at school tend to focus on the singular experience of children, and they would most benefit if they were understood inter-contextually, that is, considering the multiple foodscapes outside school.

Moving on to another case study in a different European country, Maria Bruseilius-Jensen depicts the results from a wider action-research project on Danish public school meals and dining environments for children. The article entails an enquiry on the opinions of children aged between 13 and 15 about what constitutes a good

school meal. It is shown that situating children as daily school meal practitioners and understanding their lived meal experiences provides stakeholders with a pluralistic framework for planning school meals that combines both the nutritional recommendations and the pupils' perspectives and preferences. By engaging with children's voices, emotions and senses, school meals emerge simultaneously as social, spatial and sensory experiences, thus contrasting with the disciplinary and normalizing features of school meals regulations. The article highlights that promoting healthy eating practices through school meals requires positioning children as competent actors, able to negotiate healthy and pleasant meal experiences without necessarily undermining the values encompassed by nutritional guidelines.

'Contested Interactions: School Shops, Children and Food in Warsaw', by Zofia Boni investigates the social and economic interactions occurring between children and food in the school tuck shops situated inside school premises. Drawing from the materials collected through ethnographic research in Warsaw (Poland), Boni states that school shops became contested spaces as they have gained problematic contours due to children's particular economic autonomy. They are contested because they fluctuate between sites of food education and sites of economic autonomy. In these places children are able to make their own food choices, which often implies buying food products perceived as unhealthy, and to establish relationships with the sellers considered by certain groups of adults to be representative of bad parenting and lack of care for children's health. In those places children enjoy the food they eat, they enact embodied food relations, gain autonomy, build and consolidate their status within peer groups. As it is shown, children are invited to choose in accordance to their tastes and feel happy by enjoying spending their money and sharing the food they buy. Boni concludes that the relations between children and the school shops are not merely economic, but go beyond the market onto social, moral, emotional and political contexts.

Simona De Iulio and Susan Kovacs show the findings from a qualitative study conducted in France on the tensions between pleasure and risk discourses. Such discourses, which can be interpreted as orientations to food practices, are contained in several media devices produced by both public and private sectors and used for food educational purposes by teachers in primary schools. Making use of semio-pragmatic analytic tools, the study aims at grasping children at the crossroads of multiple forms of knowing and learning about food: pleasure, embodied taste, consumer choice, health, environment and conviviality. De Iulio and Kovacs argue these media devices contribute to disseminating several aspects of children's eating practices, such as table manners, food traditions, nutritional balance, food diversity, safety and environmental awareness. They conclude that while sensory education is not absent from corporate and educational media devices, most tend to underplay the pleasurable and sensorial aspects of eating to the detriment of nutritional discipline, health and environmental risk awareness. It is important to note that this study does not focus on how the discourses disseminated through these media devices are actually appropriated and used by children both in the classroom and in their food lived experiences. However, these discourses are important tools that circulate the particular meanings of 'eating well' that inform children food practices.

As a whole, this collection calls attention to the relevance of processes that intertwine food provisioning, conflicting discourses and tensions around school meals (e.g. public vs. private, health vs. pleasure, free choice vs. regulated provision), children's embodied food practices and sensory experiences situated in schools, as well

as the articulation of schools with other foodscapes. Without dismissing the importance of children's voice and agency, this special issue also acknowledges the recent move to understanding children as 'embodied beings in the world' where feelings, emotions and sensorial experiences should be taken into account in social research on food.

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The Politics of the Public Plate: School Food and Sustainability

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Introduction

The topic of this conference – Children, Food and Youth – resonates extremely well with policymakers in the Global North and in the Global South. It even resonates in academic circles, which was not always the case. When we began our work about 14 years ago, I can still remember some colleagues in Cardiff feeling it was something comical, somehow beneath the dignity of academics, to look at such things as school food, the provenance of school meals, and what ended up on a child's plate. At that time it was not seen as a valid subject of academic inquiry, and I am delighted that in recent years the academy has begun to recognize the validity of these issues. Nowadays, such issues are second to none on the academic agenda, up there in the same category with climate change, dignified elder care, and other important public health issues. They are fundamental issues. Thus, if anyone still feels embarrassed in working with school food and children, s/he has no reason to feel like that today, because these issues have finally reached the top of both policy and academic agendas.

The main themes I want to address in this speech are the following: first, I start with where we began 14 years ago looking at the public plate with respect to school food, and I end up looking at cities because this is the transition that I personally did. I started with *school food provisioning* and ended up with *urban food planning* (Morgan, 2009). During this period the school food agenda has moved on and expanded, and it is now connecting with an exciting array of topics to do with urban food politics, policy and sustainability in the food system. This is what I feel is unique about food: its *multifunctional* capacity to link up with an array of other important issues. Clearly hunger and malnutrition are key topics in food studies around the world, but we can never reduce food studies to nutrition or, for that matter, economics. Second, I will address some of the barriers to creative public food procurement. Third, the compelling work of some school food pioneers over the last 14 years will be examined and, finally, I will show some examples of what civil-society groups are doing in several cities with pioneering municipalities, trying to promote sustainability through their food procurement policy.

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The Public Plate and the Multifunctional Capacity of Food

The term 'public plate' is shorthand, or a metaphor if you like, for public food provisioning whether delivered in the form of school food, hospital food, through care homes, kindergartens, prisons and so on. All these are different food settings but they all share one aspect in common. In different ways, they all deal with vulnerable consumers: people, patients, prisoners and pensioners (the 4Ps!). Until we can reclaim the public plate it is necessary to recover two things we are in danger of losing: one is to reaffirm the right to good food (in an era of nutritional poverty); the other is to recover our collective belief in the creativity of the public sector (now being decimated by the 'age of austerity').

As to the first, the right to good food has never been in more need of reaffirming in the world, even in Europe. The rise of nutritional poverty is one of the most insidious forms of poverty around the world today. Nutritional poverty is now an issue in mainstream politics in many European countries (including the United Kingdom) because of the growth of food banks and other charity food initiatives.

Regarding the second, the recovering of public sector creativity, it means that the state and its public organs and entities can play a creative role in addressing these problems and delivering solutions. However, if the public sector is to be creative, it means two things: competence and confidence. Both are currently being undermined in Europe by the age of austerity. I will come back to these points when I look at urban food pioneers. Our food services and municipal policy pioneers are playing creative and innovative roles *despite* the age of austerity and national regulations, rather than *because* of them. And these are some of the challenges that we all face.

As to the first issue I would like to address – the multifunctionality of food – it reveals how food is absolutely unique in its character, unlike any other topic. It is a business, but it is unlike any other business, it cannot be reduced only to market transactions or economic profit. It is considered a basic need opening up important issues such as the need for a balanced nutritional diet, for tackling hunger and malnutrition but also curbing obesity rates and other food-related disorders. And yet, we should not reduce food to just diet-related diseases and other problems. Food is also a joy and a pleasure, and we must not let our narratives of food studies be dominated by narratives of doom and gloom. Food has a unique status in our lives, more important than any other product. I would even dare to say it is more important than iPads and iPhones, although some children and youths would possibly dispute that! Many middle-class children do not know what it is like to feel hunger and they would perhaps change their minds if they did. Therefore, as I said earlier, while nutrition is second to none in importance, food is more than a nutritional issue: it has social justice, economic, ecological, non-human, cultural, sexual, psychological dimensions. It is a truly multifunctional and multidimensional issue.

In fact, there are many lenses through which we can study and understand food systems. Even so, multifunctionality also creates threats and opportunities. It is an opportunity because all these different dimensions come together to reveal what we may call the *convening power* of food. On its positive side, food can bring people from different walks of life together. On its problematical side, all these different dimensions can create single-issue politics. And this may explain why the food movement around the world often finds itself split and fragmented in each of these different policies. The American food movement partially broke up over the divisions between those who supported hunger and those who backed sustainability. There were issues of class and race that were not being addressed in the American

food movement. So we need to create a big tent where there is room for everybody because without it – the food movement – we will never be able to exert its real power. And then, there is the problem of municipalities and their departmental frictions and divisions. All the municipalities I ever worked with have always had the problem of where to locate food policy. And the answer is: wherever it is most advanced! It is a simple answer to a complex question. People come to food from so many different walks of life, from social justice, public health, ecological integrity, agriculture, it does not really matter where you come from. You end up at food and it gets located in whatever office or municipal department is most advanced to deal with it. But we must always remember: it is a multidimensional issue. So let's make food's convening power work for us and not against us.

The Power of Public Food Procurement: Opportunities and Barriers

Before moving on to the third topic – the public plate pioneers – it is important to recognize the power of public procurement, which currently accounts for some 18% of GDP in the European Union. I have always been astonished, ever since we started our work, at the incredible, untapped potential of public procurement. If you think of a government toolbox, it is pretty much the same toolbox all over the world. Governments have certain policy tools that they dispose of: the power to tax, to regulate, to police, the monopoly of violence, and not forgetting the power to buy goods and services – what we call the *power of purchase*. Of all these policies, public procurement has been the least utilized and the most neglected. The people responsible for public procurement in our public bodies have been back-office people, of low status, and they have carried a 'Cinderella' status about them. This is unlike private-sector procurement, which has moved from the *back room* to the *boardroom*, quite contrary to what happened in the public sector. When we first worked with school dinner ladies, for example, they had never ever met the leader of the municipality, they had never met the chief executive of the city council. It is the only service managed and run by women and, because of institutional sexism, it had a low political status. Chief executives did not know how much money they spent on food, not least because it was part of a comical stereotype with which food had come to be associated – something not important, something that was almost incidental in our lives. But those things are changing. So the paradox is clear: although it is a neglected issue, it has an enormous potential to affect social and economic change.

The following is one of the most compelling definitions of the sustainable public plate. It is by DEFRA, the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs:

'If we are what we eat, then public sector food purchasers help shape the lives of millions of people. In hospitals, schools, prisons, and canteens... good food helps maintain good health, promote healing rates and improve concentration and behaviour. But sustainable food procurement isn't just about better nutrition. It's about where the food comes from, how it's produced and transported, and where it ends up. It's about food quality, safety and choice. Most of all, it's about defining *best value* in its broadest sense' (Defra, 2003, emphasis added).

There are two features in this quote that resonate for all of us, wherever we may live or work. The first is the point about the multifunctionality of food, an aspect that I have already alluded to – *however important, we can never reduce food just to*

basic nutrition. The second point is contained in the last sentence: if we are to design and deliver sustainable food procurement policies, we have to frame *best value* in the widest sense of the term. In many municipalities, particularly in the UK and the United States, low cost and low price masquerade as best value. In other words, they preach best value, but they practice low cost. And this is coming back to haunt us now, as the age of austerity kicks in across many countries. And sadly DEFRA has backed off this definition as well. But it is still important to recognize the high point of official thinking on sustainable public procurement.

Below are the main barriers to sustainable public procurement, and many countries around the world have already experienced some of these constraints when implementing public food procurement initiatives:

- cost – perception of increased costs associated with sustainable procurement;
- knowledge – lack of information and awareness;
- risk – fear of innovation;
- leadership – lack of ownership and accountability;
- inertia – lack of incentives;
- legal issues – uncertainty as to what can and cannot be done under existing rules.

Cost is always the first issue that public procurement officers manage to throw back in your face when you ask them why they are not spending more money on better food ingredients, for example. The way they do the costing is such a narrow and desiccated process that they fail to factor in the diet-related costs of processed food or the environmental damage associated with industrial food production and procurement. It is based on very simple, amateurish and narrowed-down cost-benefit analyses. The level of knowledge in these departments is very low and usually they do not take into account the *life-cycle costs* of a product.

And then we have risk issues and legal issues, all of which conspire to prevent innovation. People are afraid to innovate if they think they might act illegally because they have misunderstood European Union public procurement regulations. There is nothing in those regulations that prevents people procuring sustainable food. If only officers and managers have the skills and confidence, the competence to interpret those regulations in a way that the pioneers have done in their creative public procurement initiatives. The key ingredient here is *leadership*. If we have good public sector leadership, all these other problems melt away as they have with our pioneers.

Creative and Sustainable Public Food Procurement: The Pioneers

Over the years we have been working with several pioneering public bodies. It is important to acknowledge this work, not because we consider they can be simply emulated (we can't emulate work practice!), but we can learn from it. We need to acknowledge these leaders because they have actually done it. And the most powerful form of learning is peer-to-peer learning. Some of the pioneers we have worked with were: the city of Rome, the East Ayrshire municipality in Scotland, New York City, Bristol in England, and Malmö in Sweden. Starting with Rome, the numbers were impressive a few years ago: 150 000 meals supplied every day (27 000 000 meals/year); 92% of the meals cooked in the schools; service entrusted to six catering companies but strictly monitored by the centre; 3,500 inspections by dietitians per year; 1,100 inspections performed by a specialized firm in 2005; involvement of

local health authorities; setting up of canteen commissions with the involvement of families. This was the high point of the Roman system. When Roberta Sonnino and I wrote the book *The School Food Revolution* (Morgan and Sonnino, 2008), Rome was probably one of the best school food systems we had ever encountered. It began to unravel and decline after 2008. Why? Because a right-wing mayor came into office and began to undermine the entire system. This is not where we are today in Rome. But you can see the scale of the public purchase, the importance attached to inspecting quality, the involvement of municipalities, and above all, the canteen commissions, which allow families to be involved in the design and the delivery of the school food system. This is what Rome was really famous for: revolutionizing the rating system with creative tendering criteria. In the 2004–2007 award criteria for tendering contracts, only 51% of the rating went to price. Other rating criteria encompassed the environment of those children, the quality of the projects, the training of catering staff, the inclusion of organic foods, etc. All the things that depended upon political support have sadly now begun to unravel.

Another pioneer we have been working with is the municipality of Malmö in southern Sweden (City of Malmö, 2010). This city is part of a national system, free at the point of use, which is very rare in my experience and makes it a very interesting case study. They use a S.M.A.R.T. model, with each letter standing for a particular aspect valued in the food system (Figure 1).

This initiative was driven initially by climate-friendly policies even though the public-health dividend in Malmö was also very important. Why I am so interested in Malmö is very simple: they have a target to go fully organic by 2020 and they want to do it in a cost-neutral way. I had never ever heard of that before, and I thought it was mission impossible. It still may be mission impossible but I am still admiring them and following them. And one of the ways to deliver a fully organic service in a cost-neutral way is largely through a radical menu redesign that reduces meat in the system. When they told me this, I said: ‘It’s like the British campaign for meat free Mondays’. But they said: ‘No, we don’t frame it in a negative way as part of a narrative of denial by denying children meat. We are giving them good food, which means meat and vegetarian food.’ Taking meat out of the diet – which delivers a double dividend in terms of better public health and lower greenhouse gas emissions – needs to be achieved in a positive way. This is also what it will take to make a cost-neutral transition. It will be a truly impressive achievement if they can do it, a real societal innovation, and they have certainly got the competence and the confidence to do it.



Figure 1: The eat S.M.A.R.T. model.

Source: City of Malmö, 2010.

And competence and confidence are the secret ingredients of public sector creativity. This is my favourite story in Malmö because instead of exalting others to innovate, they are saying: 'we will put our own house in order first'. Before we talk to the private sector, civil society or non-profit organizations, they are saying we will put our own house in order to walk the talk. And they are leading from the front, which is what public bodies ought to do, and what they can do, when they've got the confidence and competence to do so.

I am going to look at the New York City case now because I think there is something extraordinarily impressive and unique going on in New York. And then I want to look at London, to give two examples of how school food is spawning a new urban food politics.

The report *The Public Plate in New York City* (published in February 2014 by the Food Policy Center) is the most recent analysis of the New York public food procurement system. New York City spends something like half a billion dollars every year on its public plate and it serves a quarter of a million New Yorkers every year. In other words, New York City is one of the largest suppliers of meals in the world. It is one of the largest purveyors of school meals in the world. It has an enormous power of purchase, and it is now trying to synchronize its school food policy with a wider array of other policies: with food in the streets, in restaurants, and what children can drink. It is trying to change the climate of opinion in which food is viewed, valued, discussed and consumed in New York. To illustrate, there is a city-wide green gardens initiative that links wider to a green park policy. Thus, it is not a school food policy on its own, it becomes part of a wider urban food strategy. There are also several health campaigns to encourage New Yorkers to drink less fizzy drinks (or soda), which has become one of the most controversial campaigns displayed through the advertisement 'Are you pouring on the pounds? Don't drink yourself fat'. And it is encouraging the replacement of soda with NYC water because 'it has zero calories, it's healthy, delicious and clean', the ad announces. All these health campaigns are linked up with policies that require calorie counts on the menus of food services establishments as well as removing all trans fats from food preparation. I think we can say that New York City is to public health what California is to environmental regulations. These are the leading beacons of public regulation in the United States. This is a good example of what a city can do if it has the ambition to make a difference.

Interestingly, it is also a good example of a counter-rhetoric when Big Corporate Food fights back. A counter-campaign has emerged since these policies driven by Bloomberg, the former NYC mayor, were put in place. Bloomberg is no longer the mayor; he wasn't a particularly radical mayor but he took the city's public health mandate seriously by championing 'good food', trying to eradicate food poverty and reducing the quantities of soda drinking among its population. However, despite all these efforts there was a countermovement emerging and mocking all these health initiatives. A full-page advert in the *New York Times* appeared with Bloomberg dressed up as a 'nanny', personifying the figure of the 'nanny state' with the caption 'New Yorkers need a mayor, not a nanny'. This revealed the backlash of corporate America with this particular advert taken out by Consumer Freedom, an organization that was founded by large corporate agribusiness firms. Not so long ago this organization tried to persuade consumers that smoking was a good habit. This is an incredibly influential organization. And despite its name, which suggests it was founded by mums and dads, it is actually funded by big corporates. And this is the attack they launched on Bloomberg, as part of the nanny state, by sending the mes-

sage that anybody who tries to regulate the market by pushing healthy food will face the wrath of the fast-food industry.

But school food politics are changing. One significant aspect that is driving this change is the fact that civil society groups are adopting new tactics vis-à-vis the local state – from confrontation to collaboration and even co-governance (though this does not prevent them from confronting the local state when necessary). In the past they simply contested, and fought, the local state and demanded this or that. Now they are beginning to enter new engagements, collaborations, and even co-governance arrangements (which is not unproblematical of course).

Such tactics can be illustrated by the work of Sustain and the Soil Association. These organizations are possibly the two most effective food NGOs in the UK. *Good Food for London* is a publication from Sustain (2012), which displays graphical information about a league of the 33 London boroughs classified as leaders (red) and laggards (grey). (London consists of 33 boroughs and food policy is largely devolved to the boroughs.) The tactic here is to name and shame with information that is made visible in the public domain. Whenever the report is out (every year since 2011) they get phone calls from the leaders. In effect we don't have mayors as a much in England, but the leaders of the municipalities ring up and say, 'how come I am at the bottom of the league? I didn't know I was at bottom of the league'. And Sustain is able to say, 'now you know you are at the bottom of the league, what are you doing about it?' In other words, it is a matter of putting information out there, of which the public was not aware. And no leader, by the way, wants to be at the bottom of the league. This is just an example of the tactics Sustain uses regarding school food policy, and they do the same with sustainable fish, fair trade and so forth. So the public begins to be aware of what is going on around that; it is providing an evidence base that people can begin to engage with, and this partly explains the success of Sustain in tackling these issues and being an inspiration to implement change in practices.

Another good illustration of the ways that civil society organizations are changing their campaigning politics is the Soil Association's food policy initiatives. They are implementing one of the finest school food reform programmes in England. For many years the Soil Association was simply an organic certifier and campaigner. However, this organic food body is increasingly recognizing it has to come out of its organic food bunker. Food for Life is the first time the Soil Association has ever come out and embraced and championed non-organic food. Food for Life awards bronze, silver and gold to schools, depending on how much they procure of local, seasonal, fresh, organic food. This is a whole school food policy. It is not just of a few ingredients, it is about enhancing the take-up of school food. It is about offering good training skills and enforcing good quality school food. It is also about sourcing and getting children involved in cooking, in talking about food, in visiting farms. The overall result is pretty encouraging as the evaluations of the programme reveals through the report *Good Food for All: The Impact of the Food For Life Partnership* (Soil Association, 2012). This is the positive side.

Conclusion

Sadly all these little victories that have been made in the UK over the last 10 years are being threatened by the age of austerity. Some of the very best municipalities are feeling that they have to outsource, to privatize their school food services, because they can no longer operate without any public subsidy. And this is an opportunity

for civil society groups to come in and enter an alliance with municipalities, creating what we call, *public social partnerships*. Not public-private partnerships, as we have seen in the past, but public social partnerships where municipalities enter really sustainable food arrangements with non-profit civil society groups (Morgan, 2014). Our work in Cardiff is looking at some of these groups now. Thus, there is an alternative to outsourcing to private companies.

To sum up, over the years I have moved from working on school food policy to the current work on urban food planning. This is a telling trajectory that shows that we need to think about more than the school food service. We need to link those public plates up in schools, hospitals, care homes, prisons, so that we are creating a larger public market that can have more potential to deploy the power of purchase.

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Breakfast and Beyond: The Dietary, Social and Practical Impacts of a Universal Free School Breakfast Scheme in the North West of England, UK

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Abstract. Breakfast is widely recognized as the most important meal of the day due to the numerous benefits associated with breakfast consumption including healthy weight maintenance and greater nutrient intake. In an effort to promote healthy breakfast habits, many schools provide breakfast to children before the start of the formal school day. At present, a government-supported scheme is being rolled out to increase the number of school breakfast clubs available to children across the UK; however, few research studies have investigated the impact of school breakfast provision within this country. The current study aimed to address this issue by gaging the views of parents, children and school staff on a universal free breakfast scheme in the North West of England, UK. Interviews revealed that school breakfast has the potential to influence outcomes beyond diet, including social relationships, punctuality and academic performance.

Introduction

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2013), chronic hunger affected around one in eight people worldwide between 2011 and 2013. Ninety-eight percent of chronic hunger is situated in developing countries within Asia, Africa and Latin America, but hunger is also evident in the developed world. In the UK, over half a million children in 2012 were living in households that could not afford to feed them consistently. Furthermore, 93% of adults living in these households skipped meals to ensure that their children could eat (Poverty and Social Exclusion: UK, 2013).

The breakfast meal is particularly important within the context of food insecurity as breakfast is the meal most likely to be omitted when meals are skipped (Ramp-

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ersaud et al., 2009). This is concerning given that breakfast consumption has been associated with numerous benefits, including improvements in mood (Defeyter and Russo, 2013) and healthy weight maintenance (Sandercock et al., 2010), whilst breakfast skipping has been linked to increased unhealthy snack food consumption (Sjöberg et al., 2003) and declines in cognitive performance (Wesnes et al., 2003). Moreover, early breakfast consumption patterns can influence health outcomes into adulthood (Smith et al., 2010).

In an effort to counteract poor breakfast habits amongst children and adolescents many schools worldwide now run school breakfast clubs (Defeyter et al., 2010; Coe, 2013). In some cases children are also offered opportunities to partake in activities with peers, such as board games and sports, within breakfast clubs. Research into the effects of school breakfast on numerous health and behavioural outcomes has reported mixed results. In a study by Simpson et al. (2003), conducted in the UK, children who attended breakfast club reported intakes of vitamin C, vitamin D, protein, calcium, iron and zinc that were above recommended Reference Nutrient Intakes. Furthermore, when the data from children attending breakfast clubs were examined to include children's free school meal entitlement, analysis revealed that a greater number of children who were eligible for free school meals had nutrient intakes that were above the recommended levels for zinc, protein, vitamin D and vitamin C compared to children who were not entitled to free school meals. This suggests that breakfast club attendance may be particularly beneficial for those children who are 'in greatest need – i.e. pupils from lower socio-economic background as indicated by their eligibility for free school meals' (Simpson et al., 2003, p. 2). By contrast, in another UK-based study by Belderson et al. (2003) children who attended breakfast clubs reported significantly higher intakes of fat, saturated fat and salt and lower intakes of carbohydrate compared to those who did not attend breakfast clubs. In terms of behaviour, Bro et al. (1994) reported an increase in on-task behaviour of adolescents in the USA, following the implementation of school breakfast compared to when school breakfast was not available. However, UK-based research by Shemilt et al. (2004) found an association between breakfast club attendance and poorer teacher-reported behaviour. Furthermore, Shemilt et al. (2004) reported anecdotal evidence from school staff to suggest that children often arrived to class after breakfast club displaying boisterous behaviour and were consequently more difficult to settle at the start of the school day.

Despite mixed evidence surrounding the impact of school breakfast, the number of breakfast clubs available in schools has increased considerably in recent years, particularly in the UK (Harper et al., 2008). Moreover, the UK government recently announced it will invest £3.15 million during the next two years into setting up sustainable breakfast clubs in primary and secondary schools under the new *School Food Plan* (Dumbleby and Vincent, 2013). Released in January 2013, the *School Food Plan* sets out a number of recommendations to be addressed by policymakers, researchers and educators in order to improve food served in schools throughout the day. The Plan encourages a whole school approach to food through multiple means including the incorporation of food and nutrition within formal head teacher training; the development of new school food standards for all food served across the school day; sharing of best practice in addition to the implementation of almost 200 new breakfast clubs. However, UK-based research investigating the effectiveness of school breakfast clubs is scarce and the views of key stakeholders and users have rarely been considered. The current article sets out to address this dearth in the re-

search literature by presenting the findings from a qualitative evaluation of the pilot phase of a universal free primary school breakfast scheme in the North West of England, UK. The breakfast scheme was originally introduced into five primary schools (i.e. schools catering to children aged 4–11) by the local authority. Through the breakfast scheme, all children within the five pilot schools were offered a three-item breakfast free of charge at the start of each school day. Children had the choice of whether or not to eat the breakfast offered to them at school. The current study adopted a qualitative, semi-structured interview approach to determine the views of parents, children and school staff on the school breakfast scheme.

Method

Data were collected from parents, children and school staff through semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview approach provided a format that allowed participants to speak freely without fear of embarrassment or criticism from fellow participants.

Parents, children and school staff were recruited from five schools based in the North West of England. The characteristics of the five participating schools are presented in Table 1.

All schools were based in predominantly white British areas (>90% white British), populated by a higher proportion of white British citizens than the proportion of white British across the North West of England (87%) and the whole of England (79.8%). Three of the five school areas contained a higher proportion of working-age state-benefit claimants (24–55%) than the proportion reported for the North West of England (19%) and the whole of England (15%). One school had a slightly higher proportion of state-benefit claimants than the proportion for the whole of England. The remaining school had a low proportion of individuals claiming key state benefits but a high percentage of children entitled to free school meals; however, this school had a considerable number of children who travelled to school from other areas, which possibly explains the discrepancy between the high percentage of chil-

Table 1. School characteristics and school area demographics.

Schools	School Demographics ^a					School Local Area Demographics ^b	
	Pupils on roll (N)	School Type	Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with English as additional language	Pupils entitled to free school meals	All people of working age claiming a key benefit ^c	% white British
1	467	Community	13.9%	4.5%	48.7%	55%	90%
2	260	Voluntary Aided	7.3%	10.9%	25.5%	24%	95%
3	205	Community	12.2%	0%	62.8%	42%	95%
4	618	Community	4.9%	1.3%	8.4%	18%	98%
5	736	Community	12.1%	4.0%	51.4%	13%	94%

Notes: ^a Information taken from <<http://www.education.gov.uk>>; ^b Information taken from <<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>>; ^c State benefits including Jobseekers Allowance; Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance; Disability Living Allowance; Income Support

dren entitled to free school meals and the low percentage of adults claiming key state benefits in the area surrounding the school.

At the time the interviews took place all five pilot schools had been offering school breakfast to children for approximately eight weeks. Four schools offered breakfast to children in the classroom at the very start of the school day and one school provided breakfast in the school hall for 20 minutes immediately prior to the start of the school day. Children in all schools were offered a three-item breakfast each day consisting of juice or water; a bread or cereal item such as a bagel or a cereal bar; and a dried, chopped or whole fresh fruit item.

Seventeen white British parents (16 females and one male) from the five participating schools were interviewed. All participating parents had at least one child who had access to breakfast in their school throughout the school week. Two male and 12 female school staff from the five participating schools took part in the current study. All participating staff were white British and were familiar with their school breakfast club so were able to give their views on it. Finally, 38 children (14 males and 24 females) were recruited from the five participating schools. Children were aged between 5 years 6 months and 11 years 4 months ($M = 8$ years 6 months) and all had attended their school breakfast club during the eight weeks prior to the study taking place.

Three separate schedules of open-ended questions were developed for use with parents, school staff and children. Although the questions differed slightly between schedules to ensure that they were appropriate for the group being questioned, each schedule was designed to determine advantages and disadvantages of school breakfast. A digital Dictaphone was used to record all interviews to allow subsequent transcription to be conducted. Finally, NVivo (version 10) was utilized to store themes during data coding.

Following ethical approval from the University Ethics Committee, research information and opt-in consent forms were distributed. Individual interviews were arranged with all parents, children and school staff who opted to participate in the study. All interviews took place on school premises at a time most appropriate to each individual participant and their school.

On arriving for their interviews each participant was greeted by the interviewer and given a brief introduction to the research. Discussions were guided by interview schedules focusing on the potential positive and negative impacts of school breakfast and the changes that would occur if school breakfast was to end. Interviews lasted approximately 10–20 minutes and ended once all topics of interest had been exhausted and participants felt that they had nothing else to add to the discussion. Participants were verbally debriefed and were provided with printed debrief information to allow them to contact the researcher at a later date should the need arise.

Data were coded and analysed following published guidelines on thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Each transcript was read numerous times, then pertinent points referring to advantages and disadvantages of breakfast clubs were highlighted. The highlighted quotes were labelled to summarize the topics they referred to and similar topics were grouped together. Main themes and subthemes were developed from the topic groups and appropriate theme and subtheme headings were generated to summarize the data being presented. This inductive approach to thematic analysis was adopted as there is currently no published theoretical framework on breakfast clubs on which the current analysis could have been based. In line with recommendations set out in the research literature (Mounter and Noordegraaf,

2012) a second coder analysed just over 10% of the data (two parental interviews, two school staff interviews and four child interviews) to confirm the accuracy of the transcriptions against the audio recordings and to ensure that the themes generated by the first coder were representative of the data. The second coder confirmed that there was 100% agreement between the audio recordings and the corresponding transcriptions and there was 77% agreement between the first and second coding of the transcripts. The first and second coder discussed coding discrepancies before the final set of themes were decided.

Findings

Discussions with parents, children and school staff resulted in the establishment of three key themes pertaining to school breakfast: provision of breakfast, positive start to the school day, and practical considerations.

Provision of Breakfast

The provision of breakfast emerged as a predominant theme throughout interviews with parents, school staff and children. Children liked the variety of breakfast items made available to them through school breakfast and in some cases it allowed them to try foods that they would not be able to try at home:

‘It has some stuff that me and mummy don’t have’ (quote from child).

It became apparent that there was a definite need for the provision of school breakfast for some children as they were not provided with breakfast at home:

‘For those that don’t get it at home it’s brilliant because we’ve actually brought food in before now for children, odd children that don’t... say, mum’s too busy or they didn’t have time, so for them it’s fabulous’ (quote from school staff member).

However, it was clear that breakfast was not always skipped by children due to a lack of availability, as some parents pointed out that even when breakfast was readily available to children at home they did not always want to eat at the time breakfast was offered, but their children would happily eat breakfast at school:

‘One of my children doesn’t particularly... she’s not a morning eater so it’s great for her, especially because if everyone else is eating she wants to join in’ (quote from parent).

Moreover, it was noted that the breakfast served at school was more favourable than the breakfast made available to children at home:

‘He had a Fudge, then he had a Freddo, and then he had some sweet cigarettes, and obviously that was his breakfast and I’ve seen children before now eating crisps’ (quote from parent).

Children were also more willing to consume breakfast items at school that they refused at home:

‘The really, really good thing is they’ll drink milk here, they don’t like drinking... it has to be milkshake at home’ (quote from parent).

Despite school breakfast having a positive impact on children's breakfast habits, there were some concerns expressed among parents and school staff about the poor nutritional standards of some of the foods served:

'I do have some concerns about the amount of sugar and fat and things in some of the things we're giving them when you read the ingredients; even though we're giving them the best we can possibly get, I still think there's a bit too much sugar and fat in there' (quote from school staff member).

There were also concerns surrounding the large amount of food that children were able to consume across the school morning, as school breakfast was offered to all children regardless of whether they had eaten breakfast at home beforehand. As a result of their concerns some parents had started to implement ways to try to counteract the potential negative effects of excess breakfast consumption, such as weight gain:

'I do consciously give them a smaller portion of something and they also have a smaller lunch' (quote from parent).

Moreover, some school staff also noted that school breakfast was not utilized by all children as a means of obtaining a single breakfast meal where breakfast was not available at home. This caused some staff to question whether a universal breakfast scheme was wholly necessary, or whether targeted support for particular families would be better:

'I think they should look at maybe schools that require the full option and schools that don't need the full option, and look at the free school meal aspect and see whether all this food coming into our children is actually necessary' (quote from school staff member).

However, it was evident that schools would face considerable difficulty in trying to target breakfast provision, as some parents expressed disdain towards other parents who relied on school to give their children breakfast in the mornings:

'You get the ten percent of people here and I've heard them on TV: "right, oh we don't – this woman from [local school] – we don't have time to feed our kids breakfast in the morning", and I'm like hello you're their parents, where the hell are social services comes to mind!' (quote from parent).

Brief Discussion of 'Provision of Breakfast'

Interviews suggested that breakfast clubs are an enjoyable and in some cases necessary form of breakfast provision that are particularly beneficial for children who do not get breakfast at home or are given breakfast of poor nutritional quality. Moreover, there is potential for breakfast clubs to have a positive impact on children's dietary habits. In discussing food preferences, Conner and Armitage proposed that 'people come to prefer what they are used to' (2002, p. 14) indicating that exposure to foods is an important facet in the development of food preferences. Wardle et al. (2003) supported this idea as they reported findings from an experimental study showing that exposure to foods can increase a child's preference for those foods. It could therefore be argued that by serving items such as fruit and milk for breakfast, breakfast clubs could be helping to reinforce preferential dietary habits.

Nevertheless, some staff and parents believed that children were being allowed to consume a large quantity of food across the school day and some of the foods served for breakfast were thought to be high in sugar and fat, which is a cause for concern. At the current time there is no preferred definition of exactly what constitutes breakfast, there are no guidelines on how much food children should be allowed to consume in breakfast clubs, and there are no recommendations that children should be discouraged from obtaining a second breakfast at school if they have already eaten at home. This lack of detail has important implications for policymakers in charge of implementing breakfast club guidelines and those responsible for serving breakfast in schools. Research has shown that from around the age of 5, children become more susceptible to external food cues such as available portion size and are less reliant on appetite alone to decide when to stop eating (Rolls et al., 2000); thus if children are offered an appetizing breakfast at school they may be prone to overeating simply because the food is available.

It was evident that some parents had tried to make allowances for the food their children were having at school breakfast by reducing portions of home-provided food, and in some cases parents tried to discourage their children from consuming school breakfast. Yet such methods have the potential to be counterproductive. Fisher and Birch (1999) found that when children's access to a palatable food is restricted while it is still visible, their behaviour is directed towards that food; thus parental restrictions could increase the salience of particular foods and consequently increase their desire for and consumption of those foods.

While targeted support could reduce the number of children having two breakfasts, the stigma associated with a reliance on school breakfast would make such targeted support extremely challenging. It could therefore be argued that while breakfast clubs have the potential to make a positive contribution to children's dietary habits, more work is needed to implement more detailed recommendations regarding the nutritional content and proportion of foods that should be made available to children through school breakfast clubs.

Positive Start to the School Day

Parents, school staff and children described numerous ways in which school breakfast contributed to a positive start to the school day. First, the provision of school breakfast was believed to encourage a calmer start to the school day, beginning within the family home as morning routines were less rushed knowing that breakfast at home was not an absolute necessity as it was available at school:

'It's a lot easier, 'cause if you're in a rush you don't really have to think about breakfast; it's a lot easier' (quote from parent).

School breakfast was also thought in some cases to encourage children to arrive at school on time when they had otherwise been frequently late:

'Some of my ones that were persistently late are now coming on time because they want their breakfast' (quote from school staff member).

Though this view was not shared universally:

'It's definitely not getting them in any earlier, because we've still got exactly the same lateness that we had before' (quote from school staff member).

However, it seemed that staff were keen to ensure that all children were provided with a breakfast meal regardless of whether they were on time for school, so breakfast was not being used as an incentive to encourage punctuality:

'I think the children that seem to need it the most are the ones that obviously have a bit of a rush in the morning to get to school, and sometimes they're the ones that are late anyway so they do have to wait till playtime but at least they're getting something at some point in the morning' (quote from school staff member).

Once children were at school the breakfast they received was thought to contribute positively towards their ability to concentrate and pay attention in class as well as their mood and energy levels:

'They seem to be more alert in lessons. They seem to be able to concentrate a little bit more on their work straight away, rather than saying that they're hungry' (quote from school staff member).

'It gives me more energy and helps me think' (quote from child).

However, not all staff had noticed a change in children's ability to focus in class that could be attributed to school breakfast:

'I couldn't say, oh yeah, you can tell they've had breakfast this morning because they're performing much better, or they've not had breakfast because they're a bit sluggish. I've not noticed any difference at all' (quote from school staff member).

Though one member of staff did point out that although she had noticed no difference to children in her class in terms of their ability to concentrate, she was aware that the impact of breakfast on children's attention can be dependent on multiple factors:

'I haven't found any particular difference from my experience with the children that I work with, and I'm aware that that can vary depending on where you are and what social levels you are' (quote from school staff member).

Finally, in terms of providing a positive start to the school day, although the main aim of the breakfast scheme was to provide children with a nutritious breakfast at the start of the school day and time was not specifically set aside for additional activities, the value of social opportunities afforded to children through breakfast time spent with peers was recognized by children, parents and school staff:

'The best thing about eating breakfast for me [is] you sit on the table with your mates' (quote from child).

Brief Discussion of 'Positive Start to the School Day'

The theme of Positive Start to the School Day presented a mixed picture of findings with some suggestions that breakfast club was beneficial to children's punctuality and subsequent ability to focus in class, and some recognizing no such advantage to children's involvement in breakfast clubs. These findings suggest that the magnitude of an effect might depend on the characteristics of the children involved in the intervention (Grantham-McGregor, 2005) and highlight the importance of breakfast

clubs having clearly defined aims. It appears that only a certain number of targets can be met within one scheme and the achievement of one goal might counteract the potential to achieve another; the conflict between punctuality and the need to ensure all children are allocated a breakfast regardless of time of arrival is a clear demonstration of how one target can counteract another.

Despite these mixed views regarding punctuality and attainment, it was evident that breakfast clubs were recognized as a valuable provision for encouraging social interactions between children and providing a more settled start to the day beginning in the family home in the morning. Previous research has associated numerous benefits with eating a meal in the company of others, including opportunities to support the development of positive social skills in children (Eisenberg et al., 2004) and to facilitate interaction, creating a sense of community and belonging within a group (Cason, 2006; Fulkerson et al., 2006). By offering children the opportunity to eat with peers in the morning, breakfast clubs might promote some of the advantages associated with eating with others. Moreover, the finding that breakfast clubs gave families a calmer, less rushed start to the day supports previous findings of Shemilt et al. (2003), who reported that breakfast clubs can alleviate stress within the family home in the morning before school.

Practical Considerations

The final theme to emerge from discussions with parents, children and school staff was concerned with some practical issues surrounding the provision of breakfast in school. First of all, interviews with school staff revealed that, prior to implementation of the breakfast scheme, staff had been concerned that breakfast would be difficult to organize and would be more problematic than it has turned out to be, suggesting that the scheme had exceeded prior expectations:

‘I thought it would be a lot more troublesome. I thought it would take up more time, I thought children coming late into class and still eating when they come in, so we kind of envisaged more problems than there has been’ (quote from school staff member).

However, based on the views of parents, children and school staff some minor changes would be necessary to develop the scheme beyond the pilot phase. It was clear that the breakfast scheme had been implemented quickly and as a result parents felt that they lacked input and control over whether their children participated in school breakfast. They also felt ill-informed on what their children were offered for breakfast at school:

‘All I know is that they get their breakfast before... I think it’s while they’re having the register, but we’ve not been told what it is or anything, only off the children, so we’ve not been told what they get’ (quote from parent).

The lack of information that was shared about the breakfast scheme also led to concerns about the temporary nature of the scheme as it was unknown at the time of data collection whether the scheme would continue beyond the pilot phase. It was argued if the scheme ended parents would have to take responsibility for providing their children with breakfast again and this would result in some children skipping breakfast:

'Parents now at this school they've got into the habit of their children being fed for half a term, half a term and one week, and those parents are now gonna have to start thinking again about providing breakfast for the kids; and those children from deprived backgrounds that weren't getting breakfast anyway won't get it' (quote from school staff member).

A further issue raised by parents and school staff was that the scheme was extremely costly and some felt that the money could be better spent elsewhere:

'For me I think it's a great deal of money being spent on something that could be better spent elsewhere' (quote from parent).

However, some recognized the value of the scheme in ensuring children receive a breakfast meal before the start of school and therefore suggested that sponsorship would be a useful way to continue the scheme while reducing the cost to the Council:

'I think you need a sponsor off certain cereal companies or... I think that would help' (quote from parent).

Finally, although the scheme ran well in most classrooms, some school staff believed that the classroom was not an environment conducive to the serving of breakfast and breakfast should therefore be served elsewhere in school:

'I think the idea of maybe putting them somewhere for their breakfast in the morning is a good idea. Having it in the classroom where it's a learning environment, I don't think that's doing us any favour' (quote from school staff member).

Brief Discussion of 'Practical Considerations'

While the breakfast clubs in the current study were running better than expected, there were some concerns raised regarding parental input, cost and the breakfast environment that warrant attention by policymakers and educators. First, some parents felt that they had received little information about the breakfast scheme and were unable to offer any input on whether their children participated in the scheme. In the context of health promotion, school initiatives have been found to be more successful when parents are involved as this ensures that children are provided with clear and consistent messages at home as well as at school (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Moreover, parents have been described as 'critical in creating a healthy school environment' (Cho and Nadow, 2004, p. 433) as they play a key role in encouraging their children to eat healthily. Therefore, to ensure that breakfast clubs have the best chance of succeeding, policymakers need to be aware of the importance of utilizing parental input. Communication could begin with making menus freely accessible to parents through noticeboards and web pages, and giving parents opportunities to discuss any concerns with relevant school representatives.

In terms of cost of the breakfast scheme, some parents believed that the money being invested into the scheme could have been better spent elsewhere. Around the same time as the scheme was implemented in schools, many local authority employees learned that they would be made redundant (BBC, 2013). Additionally, the UK government announced changes to the benefits system with the introduction of Universal Credit and 'bedroom tax' (Department for Work and Pensions, 2013), meaning

that many people claiming benefits would see a reduction in the amount of money made available to them. The substantial financial changes that both employed and unemployed people in the North West of England were faced with at the time the breakfast scheme was set up might have led to the concerns about costs raised in the current study. It has been suggested that universal free breakfast schemes can save parents money by removing the need for them to provide breakfast for their children (Lewis and Cooper, 2013). Children's health can also be improved through positive changes in diet, which would consequently save government money in health care. However, any changes in parental and government spending are unlikely to be detectable in the short term, so cost-benefit analyses of school food initiatives are rare (Lucas, 2003). Cost-benefit analysis carried out on school breakfast schemes implemented in the United States under the School Breakfast Program have shown that free breakfast schemes can be implemented and run successfully while making profit through careful financial planning and evaluation (Hillner, 2007).

The finding that cost was an important issue to some parents illustrates that cost-benefit analysis should be included as part of future school breakfast interventions in the UK. This would allow those directly affected by local authority and government budget cuts to see the effects of investment in such schemes, and to form a more informed opinion on any future investments. Moreover, some parents argued that sponsorship of the school breakfast scheme would be a useful financial development as it would direct some of the costs away from the local authority. The suggested cost-benefit analysis might help local authorities to gain financial support for breakfast schemes from external organizations, which could in turn lead to further financial security for school breakfast schemes.

Finally, some staff believed that breakfast should not be served in the classroom, particularly because it hindered learning time. These findings lend support to the results of an investigation carried out by Bernstein et al. (2004), who reported on cases of school breakfast being moved from classrooms to school cafeterias due to problems with excess mess being made in the classroom during breakfast. Similarly, Lent and Emerson (2007) found that while the majority of staff involved in a Milwaukee Public School breakfast programme were satisfied with the way breakfast was served in their school, more than 20% of staff were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with breakfast being served in the classroom one month after programme implementation. Some of the staff had issues with the additional work load that was put upon them as a result of the scheme including the requirement to distribute breakfast, children requiring additional support such as opening wrappers, and the need to tidy away after breakfast.

However, Lent and Emerson (2007) also emphasized the positive outcomes associated with serving breakfast to children in the classroom. They reported that breakfast served in the classroom was more accessible to children than breakfast served elsewhere and they noted a 240% increase in the number of children accessing breakfast when a breakfast-in-the-classroom model was adopted.

The findings of the current study combined with the results of prior investigations suggest that while breakfast in the classroom can be a successful initiative for supporting children in accessing breakfast, this model might not be suitable in all cases. It is clear that what works well in one school might not be convenient to another so close liaison with school staff during the planning and early implementation phases of breakfast clubs is essential.

General Discussion

The current investigation set out to determine the views of parents, children and school staff on a universal free primary school breakfast scheme in the North West of England, UK, as the views of these individuals in the UK are under-represented within the research literature.

Qualitative analysis revealed that school breakfast provision was valued as it encouraged children to consume a healthy and varied breakfast, which was thought to be particularly beneficial for children who might otherwise skip breakfast either through choice or a lack of provision at home. School breakfast was also thought to provide a smooth transition between home and school by reducing pressure in the family home and encouraging some children to get to school on time. Moreover, school breakfast offered children opportunities for social interaction and led to improvements in concentration, mood and energy levels at the start of the school day for some children. In addition to the advantages of school breakfast, some concerns were raised surrounding the high amounts of sugar and fat available through some of the school breakfast food and drink combinations as well as the large amount of food available to children across the school morning. Lack of communication with parents, high financial investment by the council and in some cases a lack of support for breakfast taking place in the classroom were points that were raised as areas requiring attention prior to any further development of the breakfast scheme.

The qualitative findings from the current study support previous arguments put forward by policymakers (e.g. London Assembly Health and Environment Committee, 2013) and charities (Magic Breakfast, 2013) that school breakfast has the potential to play a prominent role in reducing child hunger and poverty by ensuring that children are provided with a breakfast meal prior to the start of the formal school day. Furthermore, even when breakfast was available to children at home, some preferred to eat it at school and were reported to be more willing to try new foods at school than they would be at home. Hence as well as school breakfast having the potential to counteract hunger and poverty, it may also influence children's breakfast habits and food preferences. It is therefore essential that close consideration is given to the foods served at school breakfast, particularly because childhood dietary habits can track into adulthood (Mikkila et al., 2005) and some concerns were raised in the current study regarding the nutritional content of school breakfast. Additionally, the wider reaching benefits of school breakfast, including the potential impacts on school performance, punctuality and family routines, suggest that policymakers and school breakfast staff need to ensure that they consider more than just food in the planning, implementation and evaluation of school breakfast. This is particularly relevant in the context of the School Food Plan (Dimpleby and Vincent, 2013), which outlines plans to support the implementation of 180 new breakfast clubs across the UK.

While the current findings offer a useful insight into UK school breakfast provision, the study is not without limitations. The school breakfast scheme was implemented very quickly, which meant that the study design was limited as it was not possible to consider using randomized controlled trials incorporating pre- and post-intervention measures. It has been argued that more stringent methodologies are required in the evaluation of real world interventions (Moore and Moore 2011); however, the current study illustrates that this can be difficult as there can be a mismatch between the need to implement schemes and the availability of research funding. Furthermore, previous research has shown that evaluation of real world interven-

tions using controlled trials can be problematic as contamination between treatment and control conditions can occur (e.g. Shemilt et al., 2004). A further limitation of the current study is that the evaluation was carried out in a small number of schools in one area of the UK, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Further research is needed nationally to provide a broader picture of benefits and drawbacks of school breakfast provision in the UK.

Overall the current findings suggest that school breakfast has the potential to influence positively children's breakfast habits as well as their social relationships, morning routines, classroom performance and mood. Through presentation of the views of parents, children and school staff, the present study offers a useful point of reference for policymakers and schools intending to implement breakfast provision.

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Developing a Conceptual Framework for Understanding Children's Eating Practices at School

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Abstract. Recent calls by the European Union for a broader focus on school food and children's eating practices have prompted a series of initiatives that seek to understand school meals beyond a traditional nutritional focus. The EU calls specifically identify processes of teaching and learning as central to this new refocusing. In this article, we offer a conceptual framework as a proposal for understanding how children learn to eat in school, and thus we address some of the theoretical and methodological aspects of this recent call. We employ the concepts of 'foodscapes' and legitimate peripheral participation as central mechanisms of such framework at the structural and agency levels respectively. Records of eating activity in and out of school, documents and interviews with children and adults across school lunchrooms, school kitchens, and classrooms are employed to demonstrate the applicability of the proposed framework. Preliminary results reveal children may be developing eating practices-in-context, meaning they selectively assess, adjust and develop eating practices according to the particular elements or/and factors existing within a foodscape but employ other foodscapes comparatively to assess their conditions, eating experiences and the food in school. These results are discussed within the context of claims and assumptions that teaching children 'how to eat' in school may become an inherent quality of the individual and will 'transfer' to other settings or foodscapes.

Introduction

Traditionally, school food reform efforts have had a strong focus on how to meet the nutritional and caloric needs of children through the preparation of balanced meals; that is, a central focus on the food itself (Poppendieck, 2010). This continues to be a critical aspect of school food reform especially in countries where government agencies are developing school meal programmes, or where a nutritionally balanced meal is the only daily meal children can secure (WFP, 2013). In addition, the role that nutrition, as guided by nutritional sciences, has played historically in schools as an equalizing agent for access to food, or of correcting specific nutritional deficiencies among less fortunate children, should be understood in social, developmental, and political terms (FAO/RLC, 2012). In short, a nutritional focus, even considering its

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shortcomings as aptly highlighted by some scholars recently (Scrinis, 2002; Pollan, 2008; Poppendieck, 2010), has played and continues to be a critical factor in school meal programmes.

However, recent research indicates that it may be necessary to go beyond nutritional and caloric needs and centre on *accompanying measures* that seek, through *teaching and learning interventions*, to modify the eating behaviour of school children (European Commission, 2012) and to re-conceptualize school food¹ and school eating practices in broader terms (Stewart et al., 2006; Weaver-Hightower, 2008; Poppendieck, 2010; Mikkelsen, 2014). The reasons for doing so vary, but most seem to agree that the predominant *nutritional paradigm* has tended to overshadow important elements affecting the eating practices of children in school.

For instance, Bauer et al. (2004) suggest that there may be aspects of school environments that prevent students from gaining the full benefits of recommended nutrition programmes and policies: the poor quality and palatability of food served; easy access to non-nutritious snacks; insufficient time in which to finish eating a full lunch; and students dieting and weight-related teasing were described by students and staff as overwhelming barriers to healthful nutrition. In fact, a study conducted by ODELA (Food Observatory of University of Barcelona) in 2004 showed that even if lunch menus are planned in accordance with nutritionally balanced standards, the meal actually eaten by a student is not necessarily balanced (Contreras and Gracia, 2004). Psycho-physiological factors (individual perceptions of the organoleptic characteristics of the food), sociocultural factors (social meanings of food and meals, gender and age differences, among others), and organizational-pedagogical factors related to the school cafeteria (specific behavioural rules, the level of interaction among the people involved – students, lunchroom monitors, cooks, teachers) can influence the attitudes and decisions of students towards food. The same study identifies that students dining at the same table ate similar foods and consumed similar portions. This highlights that the social exchange around the same table has a direct impact on the actual consumption by the students. Other literature on children's consumption also emphasizes the influence of peers in their eating practices (Fischler, 1995; Ross, 1995; Roos, 2002; Stewart et al., 2006; Ludvigsen and Scott, 2009).

Even in those cases when school lunchrooms offer more than one choice of nutritionally balanced meals, there is evidence that children gravitate toward a preferred food item and end up selecting a nutritionally unbalanced plate (Brannen and Storey, 1998). Food preferences are especially important determinants of children's food intake (Birch and Fisher, 1997). On the other hand, others have found that 'healthiness' has very little influence on children's choice, and that there is a strong inverse relationship between children's perceptions of the healthiness of foods and their preferences for those foods. Factors such as taste, texture, smell, appearance and satiety value were found to be more important (Noble et al., 2001). As other studies have also suggested, there is a *knowledge-behaviour gap* as children do not translate their basic understanding of a healthy diet into action while making food choices (Ross, 1995; Roos, 2002; Stewart et al., 2006; Ludvigsen and Scott, 2009).

In the same manner, Fischler (1995) highlights that nutritional knowledge and eating behaviour have been misinterpreted constantly, assuming that modification in one would affect the other automatically, which we know is not the case. As evidence of that, it is worth noting that the nutritional paradigm guiding school food has not impacted significantly the alarming increase in rates of obesity among school-age children (Poppendieck, 2010). Only those programmes that have utilized

a nutritional model embedded within broad interventions have shown a better effect on children obesity (Veugelers and Fitzgerald, 2005), and that seems to be a way to make school feeding and school food a more *integral* part of the educational mission of the school (Weaver-Hightower, 2008, 2011; Mikkelsen, 2011). Other researchers advocating such a widening conceptualization seek to understand the link between school food consumption, and the emergence and sustainability of local agricultural economies (Ruge and Mikkelsen, 2013).

What seems to be emerging among these initiatives are two distinct levels: on the one hand, there are calls and programmes to look *beyond* the school to factors affecting the school lunchroom and its organizational structures; and on the other hand, others attempt to look deeper *within* the school itself to examine how food and eating practices can be conceptualized as part of the 'educational' mission of this institution (Poppendieck, 2010). We think both are quite valid and critically important to school food reform, but we wish to caution about a possible divergence of approaches that may result in separate and unrelated levels of analysis of children's eating practices. Consequently, our initial approach in developing and proposing a conceptual framework centres on two distinct but highly interrelated levels. At a *structural* level, the framework attends to the organizational and sociocultural aspects of eating practices at school, employing and expanding on the notion of *foodscapes* (Johansson et al., 2009; Mikkelsen, 2011). At a more *agency* level, we propose a mechanism that could help us describe the processes of learning, and development that accompany those eating practices. We employ the notion of legitimate peripheral participation, or LPP (Lave and Wenger, 1991) to account for how individuals participate individually and collectively within the social practice of eating with others and develop an identity as *eat-in-context* (e.g. school eaters).

Considering that in the school lunchroom participants live the entire experience as a whole, these two levels (structural and agency) are mere analytical instruments. Nevertheless, we think that without an organizational and sociocultural analysis of school eating practices (structural level), we are left to conceptualize eating at school as an individual encounter with nutrients with possible over-attributed implications for the individual. Likewise, without an examination of processes of learning and development situated within a particular context (agency level), we are left with the need to explain how individuals and/or collectives act, change or develop within those organizational structures. In summary, the aim of this article is to propose an emerging conceptual framework, informed by our own observations, that seeks to link levels of participation around the act of eating at school at a level beyond the nutritional focus. We view this proposal as a first theoretical and methodological approximation to understanding the complexity of children's eating practices and thus we caution readers on its embryonic nature.

Theoretical Orientations

Considerations at the Structural Level

We use the concept of *foodscapes* (Dolphijn, 2005; Johansson et al., 2009; Mikkelsen, 2011) to conceptualize the *organizational* patterns of children's eating practices in school settings such as the lunchroom or canteen.² By 'organizational' we mean how people in a particular setting manage to organize themselves to do the work they are expected to do in that setting, and how existing resources available to them structure

such organization. In other words, we think the context or medium in which school eating takes place can be productively studied in interactional terms (Goodwin and Duranti, 1992; Becker, 1996). As Becker reminds us, 'concentrating on organized activity shows that what a medium can do is always a function of the way organizational constraints affect its use' (Becker, 2007, p. 15). Theoretically and methodologically, we seek to move away from the notion of 'setting' and its overwhelming attention to the physicality of a context and its *perceptive* effect on individuals. We prefer to think of individuals and settings in interactive fashion, meaning we centre less on the objects themselves and much more on the actions involving those objects. Nevertheless, this does not disregard the material culture of a school lunchroom: objects such as utensils, tables, and food itself are deeply embedded with histories, cultural attributes, and are often used to structure activity, but we prefer to examine how those objects are brought to life by its use in activity.

At a fundamental level, the notion of foodscapes evokes an ecological perspective, a description of the 'things' that compose a space and the relationship among them. From that perspective, it is safe to assume that disruptions or movements to one element in a foodscape will impact others in the same space (Odum and Barrett, 2005). When applied to institutional environments where children eat – what some authors refer to as 'captive' settings – then activities such as eating involve the participation of many agents and/or factors, and such activity is affected by and affects the context (Dolphijn, 2005). Mikkelsen defines foodscapes as 'the physical, organizational, and socio-cultural space in which clients/guest encounter meals, food, and food-related issues, including health-related messages' (Mikkelsen, 2011, p. 215). Johansson et al. provides a similar definition but with other nuances: 'the places and contexts where children eat and come into contact with food, and the meanings and associations connected to them' (Johansson et al., 2009, p. 30). These two definitions point toward the complexity of eating in a context (not just a 'place') composed of interactions, meanings, associations, organization, physicality and messages. Dolphijn provides a more interactive and constitutive notion of foodscape while examining consumption in public settings, by expressing an interest in 'how food moves in structures, how it changes them, and is changed by them' (Dolphijn, 2005, p. 8). We believe that the concept of foodscapes as defined by these authors (and others, see Winson, 2004; Sobal and Wansink, 2007; Burgoine et al., 2009; Freidberg, 2010) offers a theoretical and methodological approach in which to consider factors related to the act of eating in school that go beyond the intake of calories and nutrients.

We read these definitions as seeking to problematize a setting and a process that has traditionally been treated in a rather narrowed fashion (i.e. a site for the ingestion of food). Moreover, those definitions implicitly allude to one aspect we think is critical: *interactions*. Any 'socio-cultural space' (Mikkelsen, 2011, p. 215) is, by definition, an interactional space – a space where people interact with each other and with the resources (material or immaterial) available to them. Notice, for instance, that Johansson et al. (2009) do not talk about a 'child' or the meaning and association an individual creates or possesses. Instead they define foodscapes in terms of 'children' and the meanings and associations connected to 'them' (Johansson et al., 2009, p. 30). In short, we believe these authors are implicitly signaling a highly social and interactional environment in which children eat or relate to food in diverse manners. The conceptual framework we offer below is an attempt to elaborating on those definitions and operationalize the notion of foodscape in the context of school eating practices.

Considerations at the Agency Level

If foodscapes are complex interactional spaces, and if such conceptualization permits us to think of the main elements that constitute them, we are still left with the task of explaining behaviour inside of them through mechanisms that may take place below or through those elements. Thus, the theoretical task at hand is to use theories of interaction that may help analysis at that (agency) level. To do that, we centre on student feeding practices using sociocultural theories of learning and participation that can capture changes in the individual, and the collective eating practices of children. We are after the examination of *eating as a form of learning*, learning to participate in a collective practice, learning to become a member of a group, and learning to eat-in-context or within a particular foodscape. Within the interactionist perspective we offered above, those processes are all marked by *participation* as a leading activity. Participating is what provides purpose for participants and what directs learning or development (or not). As research in situated cognitions has revealed, 'learning is a process that takes place in a participatory framework, not in an individual mind' (Hanks, 1991, p. 15). Thus, for us the unit of analysis is the act of participation in the events of eating with the resources (such a language, norms, tables, etc.) employed to progressively become part of a group, or a community of school eaters (what we will later call, an *eater-in-context*).

At this agency level then, we employ the notions of *legitimate peripheral participation* (LPP – Lave and Wenger, 1991) to understand eating as a process of incorporation of the individual into a social group guided by personal goals and the collective norms of the group. This concept, used by Lave and Wenger to describe learning processes, apprenticeship and identity, allows us to examine the individual (in relation to a group) whose function is to *learn to eat in school* and be part of that group. In trying to understand what can be viewed as identity construction through legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) we propose the notion of *eater-in-context*. We think of an *eater-in-context* as an individual seeking to become part of a particular foodscape and to do that s/he employs, through repeated interactions with others, the material and immaterial resources available in that particular foodscape. Many of those resources are unique to the foodscape where the activity takes place (for instance, the way people organize themselves to eat in a school, the norms that guide such eating, the way food is served, etc.) and because of that, the learning that emerges out of a particular foodscape is context-bound or situated in the practice as it takes place there. But some resources are not unique, they exist across other foodscapes, and individuals make use of those resources to gain initial entry into other foodscapes (for example, children have knowledge of eating utensils and how to use them, even if they are employed differently across different foodscapes.) The notion of LPP thus serves us to understand and describe the development of interactions that take place in the school lunchroom or canteen between students and adults and among students in terms of what is expected institutionally from the student and what the student expects of the school lunchroom. This means understanding how students become or are incorporated into a way of eating in the school context. We offer the concept of *eater-in-context* to signal such construction and transmission of children's identity.

Inside those participatory structures, we make use of talk-in-interaction and language socialization theories (Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin, 1990) to understand how students use language in the process of 'learning to eat' at school. Through participation in school eating practices, and conversations with peers and adult supervisors,

students are socialized in relation to sanctioned foods, ways of eating, social order, and identity aspects of food (Karrebæk, 2012). *Participation in a community of practice* is the notion that links these two levels. The notion implies an activity-in-context and that context is in large part the structural, organizational and sociocultural elements of a foodscape. Yet, part of becoming a member of a particular community also involves a degree of resisting, contesting, and adapting those socialization efforts to form their own identities as school eaters (Torralba and Guidalli, 2013). We focus on how children in the school foodscape employ language resources with others to construct meaning and forge a collective identity as school eaters. As mentioned earlier, we offer an elaboration at the structural level of this conceptual framework, but first a word on methods.

Methods and Context

Methods

Data employed in this essay emerge from a larger corpus collected by the authors across schools in different parts of Spain. Some data come from observations, informal interviews and conversations with students, parents, lunchroom workers and school administrators at a public elementary school in Madrid, Spain, collected by Torralba during the 2012–2013, with the bulk of the observations taking place during the period of October 2013–February 2014. Observations were audio recorded, and conversations were transcribed in a relatively minimal conversation analytic standard (Karrebæk, 2013). A larger record emerged from extensive observations, informal conversations and focus group interviews with elementary and secondary students conducted by Guidalli in elementary and secondary schools across Catalonia (Spain). Consent from all participants was secured at the project levels (Guidalli) and the school level (Torralba), following institutional, national and European guidelines. We rely on student (and adult) perceptions of food, behaviour, and other social aspects of eating in and out of school. Those perceptions are articulated in statements made by children and adults in relation to food, dishes, eating in school, participating in a group, etc. As will become clear, we employ students' statements and observations to ground the development of our conceptual framework for those statements to illustrate the particular amplification to the notion of foodscape we offer in this article.

Audio records were used to produce *content logs*. That process consisted in laboriously reviewing video/audio recordings and making periodic notes and codes of moments representing instances associated with existing or emerging categories of relevance to processes highlighted by LPP and then writing analytical memos to examine their alignment with larger categories (e.g. organization, structure and interactions during lunch time). These content logs were then used as searchable records for additional examples and refinement of intended categories. Identified categories were used to guide subsequent analyses of data records, searching for samples and counterexamples of particular themes. The result of this iterative process is a collection of categories with exemplifying instances in the tradition of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss, 1987).

Guidalli's fieldwork took place over a longer period of time and as part of a larger project (ODELA, 2010–2012),³ which sought to characterize, analyse, understand and explain the actual attitudes and eating behaviours of children and adolescents in

their school context. The sample size included 19 Spanish schools. Detailed records of the organization of the lunchroom, its normative aspects and demographics were generated. Direct observations were conducted in each school during mealtimes to capture attitudes and gestures of the students in response to the dishes served and the interactions among students and between the lunchroom monitors and students. Throughout the observations, students were informally asked about the quality of the cafeteria food in general and for that day specifically. In addition, 15 discussion groups were carried out with children and adolescents between the ages of 6 and 16 years old about students' opinions and perceptions of their school's cafeteria, concerning its environment, rule system, and the daily menus offered. The students also discussed their own behaviour and attitudes towards food in general and towards certain ingredients, specific foods, dishes and preparations. Finally, a questionnaire on food preferences was given to a larger set of students nationwide ($n = 6,000$), in which students were instructed to write freely about their food preferences and/or habits. Some of these statements will be used on the analysis below.

Contextual Aspects

Usually, meal services offered by schools in Spain can be operated in three different manners: 1. a catering company delivers ready-made food daily; 2. schools with kitchen facilities elaborate their own meals; and 3. a catering company supplies the raw materials and the kitchen staff prepares the meals. The type of food service also depends on each school lunchroom: the menu can be served to the students seated at their tables or buffet style, using a serving-line system with plates or aluminum trays. Each month, families receive the planned menus. In general, the Spanish *school lunch menu*, consists of a first course (a starter) usually consisting of rice, vegetables, soup, beans or pasta; a second course (main dish) normally consisting of beef, chicken, pork, fish or eggs – often accompanied by salad or a garnish of vegetables – and a dessert, preferably fruit or yogurt. In the vast majority of schools, children have only one daily menu. The daily food options vary only for certain health issues (allergies, celiac disease, diabetes, etc.) or due to ethnic and religious variables (schoolchildren of Muslim origin are not offered pork). The lunchroom supervisors are key figures who ensure students consume the meal served, and comply with the rules and standards of behaviour of the dining hall. They are also responsible for assuring that students follow hygienic habits, use utensils properly, maintain proper posture while eating, at least taste all the food, etc. These individuals can be contracted by outside companies (catering or otherwise) or be employed by schools (Guidalli, 2012).

Conceptual Framework

Structural Considerations

The contexts of children eating in institutions such as schools have been conceptualized as 'captive out-of-home' environments (Mikkelsen, 2011). *Captivity* refers to the length of time students spend in school daily, presumably the fact that students have to be in school (in most countries primary and secondary education is mandatory), and the little choice or no choice they have over the food prepared and served at school. These factors can be found across other institutions where individuals (not

only children) spend long periods of time and are constrained by similar factors (e.g. hospitals, prisons, etc.). The issue of ‘captivity’ is fundamental for understanding the formulation and applicability of our framework because captivity for us is not a discrete dimension but rather a continuous variable that shifts when elements of a foodscape change, and is *felt* differently by children with implications for their autonomy and the levels of authority exerted by the institution. Our proposal is that for foodscape to be useful in the study of school eating practices, it should be considered a *permeable* unit, allowing key factors and agents to enter and leave. And, because of this permeability, it should also be viewed as a *dynamic unit* that can suffer organizational, structural and social changes through time (Torralba and Guidalli, 2013). We find it useful to think of foodscapes as *contexts* organized and structured for *collective use*. Below, we explore these dimensions using specific examples from our data.

Permeability

‘The school salad is not a salad, it’s lettuce! My mother puts in onions, carrots, olives, cheese, apples, pears, everything!’ (fourth-grade girl).

‘And they make “paella” in a big pot, covered with a top, but that’s not a real “paella”. We want it like in a restaurant! They don’t even add seafood, only peas and a little meat... it’s not a “paella”’ (fifth-grade boy).

These (negative) assessments of the school salad and school paella – a well-known Spanish dish – reveal how some resources (i.e. concepts of what a salad and a paella ought to look like) from the home and restaurant foodscapes *enter* the school foodscape and are employed to qualify a particular school food as not meeting the standards of what a salad or a paella ought to look like. We can think of this action as a factor entering a foodscape and possibly having an effect on the ongoing eating behaviour of this child, at least as far as salads and paellas are concerned. This is what we mean by a permeable system, one that permits (willingly or not) factors to come into it. If factors are capable of entering a foodscape, it is reasonable to assume others will exit that foodscape as well.

‘Vegetables in school are better than those at my home because they are juicier’ (second-grade girl).

We can conceptualize this statement as a factor *exiting* the school foodscape. In this case, the (positive) assessment of school vegetables is used in comparative fashion to judge the preparation of vegetables in this child’s home. That is, an element of the school foodscape (a particular food and the manner in which it is prepared) is used to evaluate (albeit indirectly) the same product at home. The analogy of a permeable cell membrane can be brought to bear here (Singer and Nicolson, 1972). Two basic characteristics of cell membranes are selectivity and protection. Selectivity (letting some molecules enter while keeping others out) is achieved through chemical means on most cells, while protection is the consequence of such selectivity. In a foodscape, selectivity might be achieved by the rules and norms of conduct of the school lunchroom and by the preferences brought in by children. ‘Protection’ is a term recently used by some scholars in reference to school foodscapes to denote a setting that protects children from certain types of unhealthy foods (Poppendieck, 2010; Mikkelsen and Ohri-Vachaspati, 2013). The school foodscape, as a *selectively permeable system*,

seeks to protect the nutrition of children by providing well-balanced diets and enacts a set of norms (the chemistry of its membrane) that allows for some behaviour to be acceptable at the school lunch while others are clearly left out (e.g. children cannot eat at different times, or by themselves, nor can they request a different dish).

Dynamism

A foodscape will change over time simply because its elements change and the interactions that characterize the relationships among these elements once inside of the foodscape will also change. Here, the ecological perspective of a foodscape mentioned in the first section may be helpful. In an ecological system any element that enters or exits that system creates a disruption in the existing relationships, and the system adapts to a greater or lesser extent. The important point is that the system changes over time (reaching a new equilibrium). We illustrate this below.

Shifting to Organic Food

Statements from adults and children at this particular school reflect the dynamic nature of a foodscape. These statements and observations emerge out of a school with its own kitchen that began to purchase a larger proportion of its food from organic sources. Their first step was to move towards organic fruits, vegetables, grains, and legumes (organic meats represented too much of a cost for them at the time).

'In this school they are introducing whole grain rice little by little. When I arrived at this school, they had already served it four times. The first day, according to the cook, was 'a disaster' but children are getting used to it, and the last time they serve it it was better accepted. The case of organic oranges is similar. When they first served organic oranges, the students resisted because they are darker than the ordinary non-organic oranges. Many children complained, the monitor explained, but after they tasted them they discovered that they taste 'better' than the non-organic ones' (Guidalli's field notes).

The introduction of these products can be viewed as a new element that *enters* this foodscape and clearly causes *changes* in the eating behaviour of children and in the food served. The change can be characterized by an initial rejection of and a gradual adaptation to the new (organic) food. In this case, the institution has brought about the shift to organic products, while the children are thought of as recipients of a 'good' thing, but nonetheless recipients. Their initial refusal to eat the organic oranges or whole grain rice no doubt changes to a certain degree the way these new foods were prepared for them and served (e.g. gradual introduction of brown rice as opposed to a complete shift from white to brown rice, perhaps a greater degree of interactions among children and adult supervisors who customarily circulate among the tables to ensure students eat their food). In the next set of statements we encounter a situation where the school foodscape changes but as a direct result of a minority's food preferences.

The Case of a School with a Majority of Romani Kids

Again, in Guidallis's field notes we find observations and conversations that are illustrative of how a school foodscape can be thought of as a dynamic system. Guidal-

li's notes refer to a school in the outskirts of Barcelona with a high degree of Romani⁴ students.

'All the food in this school is prepared in its own kitchen. Of the 97 students who eat school lunches, 60 are of Romani descent. Maribel, one of the cooks at this school, explains that they have had to adapt to the food preference of the Romani kids. "They like to eat hardier food." Maribel gives me some examples of how they have had to adjust:

- The rice always has to have food colourants so that it appears yellow to them, so they like it. If the rice is white they say it doesn't have any taste.
- The tomato sauce is made with preserved, fried tomatoes, not fresh tomatoes.
- They always want more salt than the other kids.
- The tomato sauce (used for paella, lentils, meat, etc.) must be very smooth.'

"The Gypsy children are very finicky about their food. If something doesn't appeal to them, they just won't eat it", explains Maribel. "To serve these children we need our own kitchen in the school. That's why a catering system will not work in this school'" (Guidalli's field notes).

Maribel is revealing how the elaboration of a school menu has been adapted to the local contingencies particular to that school (i.e. the changing demographics and a clear majority of Romani children, where somewhere else they will form a minority). The Romani children affect food preparation at this school, and thus we see that the permeability of the system has indeed resulted in a shift or a change. It is worth noting that this particular school foodscape has changed not only for the Romani children but also for the other 30% of children who are not of Romani descent. When asked about this matter, Maribel seems to suggest that the remainder of the children do not complain about the changes. They got used to them.

Collectivity

We find it analytically useful to think of foodscapes as *structures that are designed, organized and enacted for collective use*. Our (interactional) theoretical orientations seem to dictate that we examine eating in that context. This is not to say that an interactionist framework could not support the analysis of, for instance, a child eating by herself at the school playground; that event would be an interaction with food and all constrains and resources available to this child. We view such individual eating experience as not being guided or structured by the same type of norms, expectations, and institutional organization than the school lunchrooms, homes, or restaurants are. Even if five or six students decide to go into a corner to eat their snacks on the same school playground would be a quite different event for us analytically. However, we wish to express our tentative thinking in this area since, on the one hand, setting limits is always an exclusionary exercise. But not doing so, on the other hand, leaves us with definitions that encompass everything and thus places us in a worse situation analytically. For instance, if we think that any encounter with food or messages about food constitutes a foodscape, then we are forced to ask what is not a foodscape. If we cannot think of any event that will be outside of the formal defini-

tion of a foodscape, then we see little need for the notion of foodscape. We would like to think that the notion of foodscape borrows heavily from the notion of ecology. That is, the interrelationships between the elements of a particular habitat and the notion that any disruption in any elements of an ecological environment would have an effect on some or the remainder of the elements of that habitat. The image of a boy eating a snack on the school playground while watching his classmates play football does not carry that ecological weight in our view. We think the *intentionality* of the design and organization of a foodscape is quite important because it carries with it a set of assumptions about the collective use of such settings (even if an individual eats in such settings by him/herself). There are restaurants designed and organized for single eaters (e.g. Eenmaal, <<https://www.facebook.com/popupeenmaal>>), but even such design and organization assumes collective use. We think of foodscapes as complex settings where not only consumption of food takes place, but also interactions with it. For instance, for us going to a market and interacting with the food (even if one does not eat it, or buy it) constitutes a foodscape because that setting has been designed and organized for collective use (even if individual customers attend to food individually). The important point here analytically is the interaction with the food, with others, and the organizational structures that constrain and support a foodscape. Figure 1 tries to capture the three main analytical characteristics of a foodscape we have just elaborated.

This diagram represents what we see as the minimal elements and relationships of a school foodscape. We think it is quite important to view a foodscape in interactional terms, simply because that is what people do when they organize themselves to eat collectively: they interact with each other and the resources available for eating. In a school foodscape we can, at a minimum, identify these elements: children, adults, food and material and immaterial resources. Children interact with other children while eating, and with food. Those interactions are shaped by the perceptions, preferences and meanings they attribute to the food offered to them. Adults interact with other adults (for instance cooks and monitors or supervisors) and with children. Those interactions are centred on elaborating food in particular ways and providing it under certain constraints and norms. Finally, we can think of

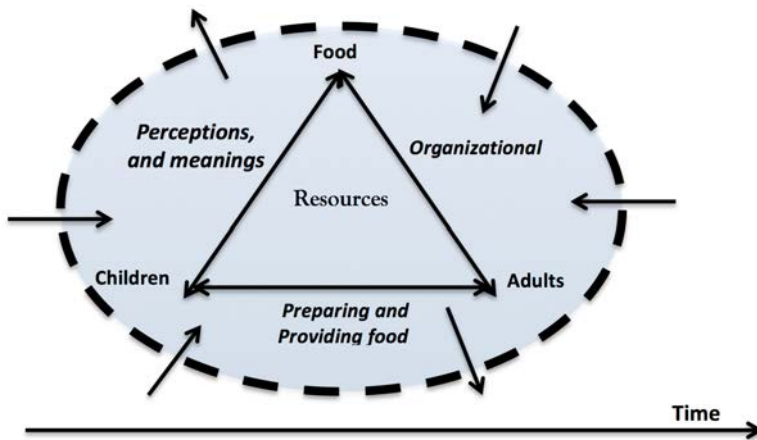


Figure 1. Permeable, dynamic and collective characteristics of a foodscape.

the interactions between adults and food as marked or mediated by the organizational, structural and institutional constraints. All these interactions are in some way mediated or facilitated by the material and immaterial resources available, such as plates, utensils, tables, cooking instruments, ingredients, norms, directives, routines, rituals, etc. *Using those three properties, we can think of foodscapes as more or less stable systems.* When we think of less stable systems, they become a *state of being*, while in more stable form they are marked by a *periodicity*. Some examples will help here: a school lunchroom is a stable foodscape, its daily periodicity marks its stability in time and space, while a birthday party on the school playground, or inside a classroom, is a transitory foodscape: even though it gathers many of the characteristics of a different foodscape, it ends.

Agency Considerations

How do children learn to eat inside of a foodscape? How do they develop into school eaters? These are questions that interest us because they represent: 1. fundamental knowledge about a particular human practice we seek to understand; and 2. answers that will reveal to a certain degree how best to intervene to improve the eating practices of children in school.

Our theoretical approach assumes that inside a school foodscape, children might be learning mainly through *participation* in what they see as the *leading activities* of that foodscape. That, of course, includes eating but it may go beyond that to include being with others, playing, creating alliances and so forth. We think such learning is mediated by interactions with people and resources, and language socialization may be a central resource in that process. Learning conceptualized as levels of participation implies movement or development. We think of development inside a foodscape as a way of becoming a type of eater. Under the LPP perspective, becoming a full practitioner of any sociocultural practice (such as eating collectively in school) involves a progressive movement from the periphery toward a centre of that practice. Just as in Lave and Wenger's model, we think in school foodscapes, or those foodscapes characterized as 'captive', such movement or development includes a permanent tension between what the institutions expect and what the children envision and construct as school eaters. This is often manifested by a gap in identity, which we adults recognize as 'undesirable eating patterns' on the part of children. Those gaps occupy a central concern of reform efforts (for instance, efforts to curb obesity, or to prevent food waste in schools).

Understanding how an individual becomes part of a sociocultural practice means that aspects on the context are not just important, they are constitutive – that is, they become part of the knowledge, skills, behaviours and identity constructed within that context. This suggests that children may be developing eating practices-in-context, meaning they selectively assess, adjust and develop eating practices according to the particular resources existing in the foodscapes they participate in. We propose the concept of *eater-in-context* to describe that process. An *eater-in-context* is an individual seeking to become part of a particular foodscape and to do that s/he employs, through repeated interactions with others, the material and immaterial resources available in that particular foodscape *to build a context-bound identity*. When we take this perspective, we begin to see that children are not necessarily passive recipients inside foodscapes, but instead, they become individually and collectively vested in crafting their eating experiences at the school foodscape. We will illustrate

this shortly. What this conceptual framework seems to suggest is that if children's eating practices change in relation to the foodscapes we may not be able to speak of a 'universal' good or bad eater, but instead of an *eater-in-context*. Below we offer statements gathered from students at different schools in Spain to give an example of how becoming a school eater may take place. The reader will notice that some of these same statements were employed in previous sections to illustrate the structural characteristics of a school foodscape. We are interested in how these statements reflect developmental stages in becoming a school eater, and how part of that development shows a *comparative framework* employed by students in assessing school food, their eating practices in the school foodscape, and thus position themselves as a type of school eater.

'And they make "paella" in a big pot, covered with a top, but that's not a real "paella". We want it like in a restaurant! They don't even add seafood, only peas and a little meat... it's not a paella' (fifth-grade boy).

In this first example, a boy compares two foodscapes (restaurant and school) to assess the integrity and quality of a dish served in school. Perceptions of how a paella should be cooked and what it should have in it are employed as a way to disqualify school paella. Here 'the restaurant' stands for a generic cook that should be used as a model. Thus, *becoming a school eater* for this boy may involve having to eat paella that is not really paella. In other words, the school eater learns to recognize 'school' paella, and the context in which such a dish can be eaten (albeit reluctantly).

'One day... there was a pretty good lunch... but I was still hungry after finishing it. You know? It was just like in those fancy restaurants where they put a little portion on your plate... it was just like that. They put a little bit on my plate and they didn't allow me to have a second serving' (sixth-grade girl).

Here, a similar comparison between two foodscapes is made to produce a critique of school serving and eating practices and implicitly to supply an alternative to what sort of eating experiences students envision at school. This student is producing elements of what may constitute a school eater. She expresses how she would like to eat in school in terms of quantities and to make more decisions about quantity.

Girl 1: 'The school salad is not a salad, it's lettuce! My mother puts in onions, carrots, olives, cheese, apples, pears, everything!'

Girl 2: 'My mother's salads are very fun, full of colours...'

Boy 1: 'My mother puts fruits and pine nuts, those little ones, in the salad...'

Girl 3: 'And my mother makes it with tomatoes and lots of things.'

In the above exchange (collected from Guidalli's group interviews), fourth-grade students evaluate the appropriateness of a school salad in relation to the preparation of that dish by their mothers at home. For these children, the school salad is just lettuce ('it's lettuce'), it lacks colour and variety of ingredients, while the salads prepared by their mothers seem to be quite different. Again, *becoming a school eater* in this case may involve learning what a school salad often looks like. Finally, not all is bad at school. Sometimes, children perceive elements of the school foodscape as providing desirable social conditions that cannot be found at home:

'In school, there are more children than at home... to talk with. This is something good' (first-grade girl).

For this child becoming a school eater may involve having always someone to talk with while eating there. The sociability of the school foodscape is perhaps better illustrated by the active role children take in becoming part of particular groups in the school lunchroom. Below we offer a case study of one such student, and examine this student's attempts at becoming part of a group as centrally related to identity building, attempts marked by his strategic and active use of the material and immaterial resources of a school lunchroom.

The student, Iñigo, is an eight-year-old Spanish boy who attended second grade in a public school in Madrid during the 2012–2013 academic year. Because he was identified as academically advanced for his grade, both the school and his parents decided to accelerate his progress through a slow transition into the grade level above his. Through the 2012–2013 period, he attended third grade in different subjects that could match his second-grade schedule. Thus, Iñigo was socializing with two different groups during that year. According to his mother, Blanca, the child 'felt much more comfortable in third than in second grade, he was more in line with third-grade peers... When he would attend the third-grade classroom, it was like the joy of the day for him'. In December 2012, Iñigo suggested to his mother that since he was almost a third grader, why couldn't he sit down with them at the third-grade table in the school lunchroom. It is worth noting that in this school the structure of the lunchroom is organized by grade level. We believe such geography was a key material resource to Iñigo for 'becoming' part of the third-grade table (see Figure 2). Iñigo recognized that geography, and employed it to develop affiliation and alliances with those sitting at the third-grade table. In these types of foodscares children like Iñigo develop collective ways of eating that at times align with how they are expected to eat and at other times do not. Eating becomes a highly social and collective practice uniting students into a group (a grade level in this school) and differentiates them from other groups and from adults. In this sense, we suspect that the daily interactions, the moment-by-moment interactions among peers at the tables are what

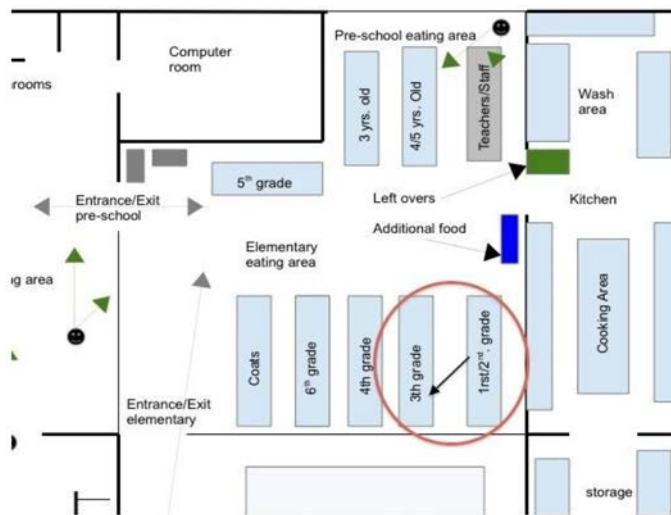


Figure 2. Iñigo's school lunchroom.

Note: The arrow shows Iñigo movement from the first- and second-grade table to the third-grade table.

supports the construction of identity, as part of a daily routine that may structure and mediate the type of peer culture,⁵ from where to develop the skills to become a member of a group. In other words, through interactions within the daily routine, students may be crafting a culture of school eaters, and those interactions at the table are the epicentre of that process.

After a few months, Iñigo's mother thought that the shift to the third-grade table was what made Iñigo feeling part of the new group. Before that switch, the boy 'was like a satellite, he came and went, one day two hours... another day one hour, yet another day he wouldn't even go to the third-grade class. But the lunchroom gave him a daily routine, a consistent time he was with the third graders every day, he ate with his fellow third graders.' For Blanca, the fact that Iñigo got to eat with the third graders was a step forward toward the integration process of Iñigo, but 'one that was not focused on academics, but instead on his emotional adjustment'.

If his moving to third grade was part of arrangements, reorganizations and changes at the academic level, eating with third graders functioned as a further step in that process carried out by him and the support of the school. Iñigo perceived the school lunchroom as an institutionalized setting to affirm and strengthen his efforts to join a new group and his identity as third grader. He was learning to be a third grader, and that was taking place academically at the classroom and socially through the lunchroom. Certainly, interactions mediated by language played a role in mediating or facilitating such learning. The pattern of interactions between school lunchroom supervisors and students as a collective was very present in Iñigo's statements, which referred to the third or second graders as a collective he sought to associate with (the third-grade table) or disassociate from (the second-grade table). Becoming a third grader on that table meant learning to play particular games during mealtimes without getting caught, learning to be punished as part of a collective, and recognizing that all these activities were part of one group and not of others.

The notion of legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) seems quite relevant to describe such development: as the theoretical construct indicates, Iñigo was actively utilizing the material and immaterial resources of that context for the purpose of moving toward to centre of activity, populated by way of acting as a third grader in and out of the lunchroom. On the other hand, being a third-grade eater in this foodscape may not be as stable or permanent as the practices Lave and Wenger used to develop through the concept of LPP (e.g. learning trades as tailoring, metal work, meat cutting). This means the learner must be quite attentive to shift at the centre.

In short, analytically we have captured an individual, Iñigo, in the process of becoming part of a particular community of practice, and that means we can witness all the work done by the individual and the collective in going forward or not as part of the process of becoming. That work is characterized by processes of learning, teaching, and development, all subsumed within the leading activity of becoming, of crafting an identity as a third-grade eater. The notion of *eater-in-context* requires us to examine these processes, and when we do that we may be enhancing our understanding of how children construct and transmit an identity that forms part of their eating practices.

Conclusion

Our analyses have shown that examining the eating practices of children in schools, from a child-centred perspective, is a productive exercise at least in identifying the

key elements of such processes (e.g. children's comparative frameworks, and collective sense of eating). We looked inside of the school lunchroom with particular attention to how children *interpret and use* the material and immaterial resources of that and other foodscapes to craft a context-bound identity. We begin to see that children are not necessarily passive recipients of knowledge, skills, and norms, but instead, they become *individually and collectively* vested in crafting their eating experiences at the school foodscape. Becoming a school eater entails: 1. appropriating ways of eating that are deeply context-bound (eater-in-context) and thus unique to the school foodscape; 2. comparing elements of different foodscapes to articulate (sometimes in the form of criticism) an image of one's eating experiences inside the school foodscape; and 3. developing a personal notion of eating as a collective social activity. In short, we think children's eating practices could be productively examined within a framework that encompasses the school and other foodscapes as well. More importantly, we think children's eating practices should be understood inter-contextually, or in a way that will allow us to explain and understand behaviour in relation to how it emerges naturally. Our data strongly suggest that children's eating practices are modulated and shaped by factors that span more than one foodscape. This suggests that the impact of any intervention in or out of school will depend on building an understanding of and designing approaches that span those foodscapes as well. In closing, we, along with others, think that developing nutrition interventions and education strategies that promote healthy eating behaviours in young people requires an understanding of eating behaviour and perceptions of food and factors that influence eating patterns and food choices (Stewart et al., 2006). As Contreras and Gracia (2005, p. 10) remark, 'eating is not a mere biological activity: the food is more than a mere collection of selected nutrients according to a strict dietary or biological rationality. "Eating" is a social and cultural phenomenon, while "nutrition" is a physiological and health issue.'

Notes

1. In this article we use the term 'school food' to mean the midday meal officially offered to children in school.
2. We employ the concept of foodscape to settings designed and organized for *collective* activity (as we will explain later on the article), thus we do not envision the notion to be particularly useful to describe or explain the eating activity of a child eating by themselves in the school playground, for example.
3. 'Comer en la escuela y sus circunstancias: aprendizaje, cultura y salud' ('Eating at School and its Circumstances: Learning, Culture and Health', a project funded by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation (CSO2009-08741).
4. Romani is the term currently preferred to refer to the Gypsy people. In Spain, Gipsy ('gitano') is the preferred term.
5. According to Corsaro and Eder (1990, p. 197), peer culture 'is a stable set of activities or routines, artifacts, values, and concerns that children produce and share in interaction with peers'.

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What Would Be the Best School Meal If You Were to Decide? Pupils' Perceptions on What Constitutes a Good School Meal

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Abstract. Much attention is given to school meals as a way to prevent childhood obesity. This article is concerned with a perspective that is often lost in the present debate, namely the perspective of pupils on what constitutes a good meal. The article draws on the findings of an action research process in a Danish public school and presents the perspectives of a group of eighth-grade pupils, with the aim of voicing their opinions and positioning them as co-constructors of school meals. Inspired by the work of Henri Lefebvre and literature on the sociology of childhood and meals, the article demonstrates how pupils' perspectives on what constitutes a good school meal are concerned with much more than food and are only associated weakly with healthy nutrition. Pupils perceive school meals as a means of being social and as a break from the order of school life. They are concerned with the construction of meal spaces and with the sensuous experience of eating. Subsequently, it is argued that there are both epistemological and ethical arguments for including pupils' perspectives in research on school meals. Furthermore, including pupils' preferences in the planning of school meals might eventually build school meals in which pupils enjoy to participate and are therefore more likely to be health promoting.

Introduction

School meals are high on the agenda in several Western countries. This interest is primarily fostered by the increase in the prevalence of obese and overweight children. Healthy school meals and increased physical activity during school hours have been widely identified as focal in the effort to fight growing obesity rates (WHO, 2009). Subsequently, numerous initiatives have been launched to promote healthy school meals (Morgan and Sonnino, 2008; de Silva-Sanigorski et al., 2011). The fact that this recent attention on school meals is driven by a political desire to reduce obesity strongly affects discourses defining school meals. Karresbæk (2012) demonstrates

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how meals, despite their often informal role, are a prominent part of the general socialization taking place in school, and Burke (2006) even describes how school meals become a central part of 'surviving' school life. Through a historical perspective on school meals, Burke (2006) furthermore underlines how, affected by scarcity or abundance, discourses on 'the good school meal' change and, thus, so do the socializing dynamics of the school meal. James et al. (2009) state that the contemporary focus on health-related food issues has made risk a prominent feature in young people's relations to food.

In Denmark, the effort to introduce provision of healthy school meals has been predominantly a top-down reform argued according to a narrow biomedical and instrumental perception of meals as nutrition to prevent obesity and promote learning readiness. Subsequently, this change has been mostly structural, defined by municipalities and, to some extent, teachers. Generally, pupils have not been consulted or involved and only few changes have been made to school spaces and structure. However, findings show that only few Danish pupils are using the new meal provision. A study of meal schemes in the municipality of Copenhagen has shown that as few as 7% of the pupils took advantage of the new meal options (Høyrup and Nielsen, 2010). This indicates that efforts to promote healthy eating through the introduction of the provision of school meals have not had the desired effect. A study of pupils' perceptions of different types of school meal systems indicates that if pupils are more involved in the daily production of the food as well as the organization of the meal, they become more inclined to eat the healthy food options (Bruselius-Jensen, 2007). This indicates a need to pay attention to pupils' preferences when planning school meals.

However, meal studies are rarely concerned with the perspectives of the users. By far the majority of food studies comprises studies on nutritional aspects, with research on dietary habits, the effects of different diets, and how to promote healthy diets. Nevertheless, there is a rich tradition in social science studies on human relations to food that stresses that the function of food is far more than nourishment. In anthropological studies, with Douglas (2002) being the most prominent scholar, studies of food and meal culture are a central point for gaining insight into foreign cultures. Sociologists have illustrated how taste is socially produced (Gronow, 1997) and strongly tied to social class (Bourdieu, 2010). As one grows up, eating practices are shaped in interaction with others (Lupton, 1996). James et al. (2009) state that even though much is written about the sociology of eating, not much scientific work deals with children's relation to food and much of this literature focuses only on historical aspects. Furthermore, the focus is predominantly on family meals, even though in contemporary society a large proportion of meals are eaten in public settings. James et al. (2009) stress the absence of research on young people's own experiences with food and eating. A few studies are concerned with both school meals and the pupil's perspective. For example, Valentine (2000) studied differences in pupils' agency over food choices at home and at school, Pike (2008) has drawn on the writings of Foucault to examine how the notion of governmentality and power of space played out in the school meal dining hall, and Dryden et al. (2009) interviewed children about the significance of meal boxes.

The lack of research in food studies considering the perspective of young people becomes even more conspicuous by the fact that, both in research and in politics, young people are increasingly constructed as capable individuals who actively participate in shaping their own life and surroundings. James et al. (1998) challenged

the view on children from developmental psychology and stated that children are not only 'becomings' needing to be shaped by adults to become functioning human beings; they are 'beings' who actively participate and shape their surroundings. A change in policy was implemented in an update of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNICEF, 1989) by the addition of a clause stating children's right to be consulted on matters that concern their everyday lives. Two decades later, the discussion on how best to explore, determine, represent, and reproduce young people's perspectives and voices in research methodologies is still central to youth research (Fielding, 2001; Clark, 2010). According to Warming (2007), arguments for participatory methodologies are twofold: ethical, in that young people have the right to be heard; and epistemological, in that young people's perspectives represent new knowledge that strengthens the theoretical insights and authenticity of youth research.

Recognizing the notion of young people as competent actors and co-producers of their everyday lives, as well as the contingent and political nature of contemporary discourses of the good school meal as healthy nutrition, this article argues the importance of giving a voice to pupils on what constitutes a good meal experience from their perspective. Based on the findings from an action research project, this article presents the perspectives of a group of pupils on what constitutes a good school meal. The general implications of introducing pupils' perspectives into the future planning of school meal schemes are discussed subsequently.

Methodology

Background

This study is part of a larger project on how the provision of school meals and especially dining environments should be developed to appeal to pupils (Bruselius-Jensen, 2011). The Danish Innovation Fund partly financed this project with the general aim of developing more sustainable meal systems in Danish primary schools. The project was based on two schools and involved second, sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. The study approach was participatory research and aimed to address the following questions: What would be the best school meal if you were to decide? What would you eat, with whom, where, and how? This article will only present findings from work with a group of eighth-grade pupils from one of the schools. The group consisted of a total of 20 pupils, seven girls and 13 boys, aged between 13 and 15, all of ethnic backgrounds other than Danish, namely, Middle Eastern, Balkan, and Asian.

The public school under study is situated in the city of Copenhagen in a socio-economically deprived area. A total of 98% of the pupils attending the school have an ethnic background other than Danish and most live with poor and low-educated parents. The new dining hall and meal provision represented a way to mend the somewhat frayed image of the school. At the time of the study, the school was in the initial stages of restructuring its meal services. The school wished to engage the perspectives of the pupils in the restructuring process and engage the researcher to support that process.

Danish school lunches are traditionally based on packed lunches brought from home and eaten in the classroom. However, during the time of the study, many Danish municipalities introduced some kind of meal provision with the aim of promot-

ing healthier food intake. In the school in question, introduction to meal provision implied a radical change in the whole school setting. The school had been granted money to establish both a dining hall and a production kitchen, with requirements for pupils to participate in meal preparation. When the new scheme was established, pupils participated in preparing food as part of home economics lessons. The lunch hour was prolonged, since pupils had to eat in two shifts due to limited seating in the new dining room. Teachers were obliged to eat lunch with the pupils instead of in the staff room. Finally, the new dining room formed a less formal space in the school setting where teachers and pupils could meet, with different rules and structures than those comprised in and by the classroom setting. Prior to the new meal setup, the school had an external meal provider selling lunches, either on the Web or from a booth at the school.

Action Research and Pupil Participation

The study was designed as an action research process that involved pupils in both defining their preferences in the new meal set-up and, preferably, to implement their ideas. Action research seeks to combine the development of scientific insights with social change processes in close interaction with lay people (Kemnis and McTaggart, 2000) and aims to produce knowledge that applies to real-life problems. Action research provides opportunities for lay people to bring forth their perspectives and knowledge and to act as genuine participants in matters that affect their everyday lives. Thereby, action research seeks to empower the people involved (Nielsen and Nielsen, 2006). The overall aim of the methods applied has been to enable pupils to form and express their perspectives on what constitutes a good school meal experience. It was repeatedly communicated to the pupils that the aim was for them to voice their ideas and preferences. The researcher was positioned as a helper rather than a regulator and controller. Subsequently, the working atmosphere was, when successful, playful and imaginative.

Contemporary childhood research has been especially sensitive about developing methods that allow pupils to express themselves. This has led to the introduction of using, for example, drawings, photographs and acting as methodological approaches (Thomson, 2008). However, recent work highlights the importance of allowing pupils to shape the working methods in participatory research processes (Percy-Smith, 2007; Warming, 2007), thus making it feasible to adjust to the interests and modes of expression of the pupils. Based on those assumptions, the methods aimed to be inclusive towards the pupils' way of expressing themselves and their way of participating. Following the aim of action research (Heron, 1971) to conduct research *with* and not *on* pupils, the applied methods were developed in dialogue with the pupils.

Project Design

The action research with the eighth-grade pupils was developed throughout a year. We met and worked together on 15 occasions during the year, sometimes for just a few hours and sometimes working together the whole day. Pupils were made aware of the fact that the teachers wanted the pupils to be part of the development of the new school meals.

The process evolved in four phases. The first phase consisted of a workshop aimed at supporting the pupils in generating a vision of their future school meal procurement and dining environment. The workshop was based on the methodology of the 'future creating workshop' (Jungk and Müllert, 1990; Nielsen et al., 1999). First, pupils collectively voiced their criticism of the present school meals, reflecting on the following questions: What are you most unsatisfied with regarding the present state of your school meals? What would you eat, with whom, where, and how? Second, mirroring criticisms, pupils defined their visions of good school meals, reflecting on the following questions: If anything were possible, what would be the best school meal if you were to decide? What would you eat, with whom, where, and how? The pupils expressed themselves through cues and all the cues were written on the blackboard. Through a collective process, the visions were categorized into themes and the pupils chose which theme they wanted to develop. Last, the thematic groups made a drawing of how their vision could be materialized. The data from this phase consisted of the written cues and the drawings by the thematic groups.

The second phase consisted of locally based experiments aiming to build experience and adjust the pupils' visions accordingly. During the group talks, a set of actions was decided upon by each group in response to the question of what they could do to carry out their visions. In the second phase, these actions were carried out as social experiments in the school setting. Data from this phase consisted of interviews with each of the thematic groups about their experiments, as well as notes taken during the process.

As a third phase, two visits to schools with meal schemes, a Danish school and a Swedish school,¹ were arranged. The aim was to widen the horizon of the pupils as to how school meals could be organized. The pupils worked in the groups defined during the first phase. A structure based on observations of sensuous experiences was defined for the pupils to use to systemize their experiences. The groups had the following tasks: to observe smells, documented by taking notes; to observe sound, documented by sound recordings; to observe tastes, documented by taking notes; and to observe visual appearance, documented by photographs. These impressions were presented and discussed during two class-based meetings used to further develop the visions of good school meals. The focus questions were as follows: What did we like and what was not good in the two school meals schemes? And can our ideas be strengthened by our new perspectives? Data from this phase consisted of primary data produced by the pupils during the field visits, as well as the class discussions, with data in the form of written cues.

The fourth phase aimed to implement elements of the visions in the new school meal system and to evaluate the school meal scheme. When the meal set-up had been implemented for two months, three observations were made during lunch hours, with one month in between. Observations were based on sound recordings, written notes, and pupils' photographs of meals.

Data Analysis

The action research process and the data produced were analysed to produce more generalized insights into young people's meal preferences and the possibilities and constraints associated with introducing pupils' preferences as a strong input in the development of school meal services. While action research has a strong focus on empowering local participants, as research methodology, it also has special episte-

mological qualities. Kurt Lewin (1946) coined the term *action research* and stated that, to gain knowledge about social organizations, one must try to change them. Kemnis and McTaggart (2000) extend this tradition to youth research, claiming that youth perspectives represent new knowledge to which adults could not otherwise gain access. Grover (2004) argues that participatory methods produce more 'authentic' knowledge about young people's subjective realities. Subsequently, the participating pupils local and specific perspectives on school meals simultaneously represent and mirror overriding social dynamics, in this case discourses of good meals and young people's responses to these within the school context. Following the terms of Gustavsen (2003), the study contains both local and praxis-based knowledge as well as generalized and theoretical knowledge.

To capture both local knowledge and the generalized perspective, the process was written both as a narrative of the process and the pupils' perspectives and as a theory-informed general social science approach on pupil's perspectives on school meals (Bruselius-Jensen, 2011). Fine et al. (2000) points out that qualitative research must avoid 'othering' in the form of writing scientific texts in ways that do not represent the authentic voices of young people. Therefore, both practice-based and theory-informed readings are presented in the findings.

The narrative is based on primary data from the pupils (e.g. cues from workshops, interviews, drawings, photographs, postcards) and notes from the researcher's diary. The narrative was written in an ongoing dialogue with the pupils.

Four months after the process ended, the researcher carried out a theory-informed reading of the narrative. First, the data were systematized according to the concurrence of the perspectives. Second, these first themes were studied in relation to sociological theory to extrapolate more general perspectives from locally embedded children's perspectives. Due to the strong notion of space in the perceptions and visions defined by the pupils, the analytical lines were primarily influenced by the works of the French philosopher, sociologist, and urban theorist Henri Lefebvre (1991, 2002) and his triad of the social production of space, as well as his focus on everyday life. Furthermore, literature on the sociology of childhood was applied in the analysis. An analytical framework was used to define the central themes and to discuss how these themes inform more generally about pupils' participation and about school meals as societal structure and discourse.

Study Ethics

Prior to the project, the parents of the pupils granted their informed consent. Based on the consideration of not doing harm, participation in the project was voluntary for the pupils. Even though the project took place in the school setting, where participation is obligatory, the researcher deemed it crucial for the democratic values of the project to give pupils the option to not participate in project activities. Two pupils chose not to participate in the second phase of the project and thus spent their time in the school library instead. They rejoined the project in the third phase. As noted above, allowing the pupils to affect the themes and working methods and recognizing their opinions were a central concern. Furthermore, all the data (photographs, drawings, workshop notes) were uploaded onto a shared class web page and pupils were urged to express if they did not want parts of the data to be used in the analysis. Furthermore, pupils were the first interpreters of all the visual material and all the scientific analysis was presented for the pupils and its validity discussed.

Findings

Producing Visions of Good School Meals

The criticisms expressed on the existing school lunches during the first phase of the initial workshop focused on the bad taste and smell, the prices and availability of the food sold by the existing external food service, and on the school environment. Additionally, some cues referred to ethnicity, such as the Danish climate, the poor quality of the vegetables, and general ethnic minorities' discrimination at the school. Visions of a good school meal 'if anything were possible' produced a wide range of cues in a playful atmosphere. The cues generally related to food items and dishes; material objects such as TV screens, music centres, and couches; and social organization, such as 'pupils decide the rules', 'free access to the dining hall', and 'a set-up like in high school'. Four thematic groups were formed based on the visionary cues.

The first thematic group was formed based on written cues about gaining more influence on the school space and opposing the interference of teachers. This vision was defined by a group of boys who named themselves the Security Group. It dealt with having access and the keys to the different rooms in the school, hence the group's name. The pupils wanted their own key and envisioned themselves as the ones in charge during school breaks. The vision was related to the whole school environment, since the school had a policy of locking all the doors and making the pupils wait outside. The pupils stated, 'We are fed up with spending so much time waiting for the teachers to unlock the doors'.

The second thematic group focused on developing a space at school for girls to eat their lunch. All the girls in the class formed a group to work with this vision and named themselves the Girls Group. Their work was based on written cues about clean toilets, vending machines, and a girls club. The girls wanted to eat by themselves, with no boys. They said, 'We want a place where we can talk about boys'.

The third thematic group was formed based on written cues about food and eating. The main cue of the theme was 'free food' and the theme was generally about having access to preferred dishes. The group was interested in both the price of food and good food as such. A group of boys chose to work with this theme and called themselves the Grosh Group. *Grosh* refers to an Albanian dish that the boys especially liked and that is surrounded with some degree of mysticism, since the recipes are passed on through generations.

A fourth vision was defined, but no group chose to work with it. The theme was based on cues about the design of a good school cafeteria, such as flat screen TV's, computers, music, and leather sofas. The theme also concerned the organization of the meal. The pupils preferred to eat only with the older pupils and were very inspired by the meal environments presented in American TV series. Most of these issues were incorporated into the work of the other groups.

In the second phase, all the groups decided on an action they wanted try to test their visions. During a period of two months, the groups developed their ideas and conducted small practical experiments during school hours. The Girls Group had lunches in a separate location to see how girls-only lunches worked. The Security Group experimented with having their own key to the classroom. Both the girl's lunches and the key management were short-lived experiments. The teachers were not in favour of the girls separating themselves from the boys and the boys did not manage the key very well and had too many quarrels with the other pupils. The Grosh Group managed to serve *grosh* for the whole school, and generally the group

was often engaged in activities in the kitchen during the project period. In this period, the visions did not change much, despite the new experiences and difficulties associated with making changes to the school setting. Finally, the class held a school party, initiated by the teachers, for which they decorated, cooked, served, and ate good food, listened to music during the meal, and participated in a range of other activities, all intended to implement their meal preferences.

In the third phase, two school visits were undertaken that were greatly enjoyed by the pupils and made them clearer and more realistic in the kinds of meals they wanted. In concluding the visits, the pupils each wrote a postcard stating the best features of the two meal schemes and ideas for their own cafeteria. One pupil wrote:

'I liked the buffet and that the food was richly seasoned and salted. It is important to have good teamwork in the cafeteria and I prefer to eat without noise. People need to be quiet!' (eighth-grade girl, age 14).

Another pupil wrote:

'I like the cafeteria to be clean. I think the system for dishes worked very well [in the school we visited]. I would like our school to smell of good food, so that you're attracted by the smell and you get the feeling that this is a good cafeteria. I want nice soft seating' (eighth-grade boy, age 13).

These quotes demonstrate that the visits helped the pupils become more aware of the importance of good food, most underlined by the importance of the smell of good food. The pupils also acquired new insight into what school meals could be like. This meant that the focus on American high-school meal systems,² as well as the focus on material objects, diminished.

During the process, the perspectives of the pupils were communicated to the group responsible for the new cafeteria. This group was keen on incorporating the visions of the pupils. However, mostly these did not fit well with the plans for the meal scheme. It was especially difficult to influence the material structure of the dining hall. Even though the material design was central to the pupils' visions, their only mark on the dining hall design was the installation of two sofas and a high table with bar stools. However, during the observations of the new school meal, it was apparent that the pupils were able to make their own spaces for meals. They started the meals by greeting each other loudly, gathering in groups in their regular places and marking their spots with jackets. The girls would sometimes gather in the Girls Group, but now they also seemed to like to sit with boys. Their wish for a buffet was granted, with a buffet every Friday. However, the food still did not seem to have much focus. Social meetings while having lunch and being out of the classroom in a less predefined space seemed to take place even on days the pupils did not like the food. Even though the pupils' influence on the actual meal scheme may seem minimal, they expressed a general feeling that it was 'their' dining hall. Furthermore, before the new meal set-up only 5–10% of the pupils took advantage of the meal provision offered. During the first year with the new set-up, 90% of the pupils in the school participated in lunch, despite the fact that they had to pay a monthly fee to participate. Participation was equally divided among age groups.

Three Central Themes

The theory-informed reading of the data produced condensed themes of a more generalized character. Three themes appeared most prominently in the perspectives

of the pupils: the social meal, the spatial meal, and the sensuous meal. These themes are presented in the following sections.

The Social School Meal

'Really, the most important thing about having school meals is to have a good time with friends and not having a grown-up buzzing you around' (eighth-grade boy, age 14).

The most prominent theme that emerged from the fieldwork was the importance of social meetings during the meal. This theme was omnipresent and remained relatively unchanged and unchallenged throughout the project.

The data material contains many examples of the importance of social meetings. All of the four visions had central elements related to social meetings. Obviously, the vision of the Girls Group basically concerned the possible social meeting of girls while having meals. Social meetings were also present in the Grosh Group, since the social act of serving a good meal for others to enjoy was a central drive for the boys in this group. In the vision of a good cafeteria space, being seated together in groups as well as standing together in line waiting for food were defined as being social. Another example is the pupils' desire to meet another class and have a meal with them during their field visits instead of merrily observing the meals. Finally, the importance of social meetings during meals was clearly demonstrated during observations of the established meal scheme in the fourth phase of the project.

The observations demonstrate how the pupils seemed to 're-meet' each other when entering the dining hall. Even though they had just been in class together, they still carried out a regular greeting: they shook hands, smiled, and hugged each other and gathered in groups and found common seating for lunch. This practice was maintained during all three observations, despite the decreasing novelty of the cafeteria. This indicates that social relationships during meals differ from the ones in class. During the fieldwork, the pupils expressed that social meetings were much more distinct in the new dining room compared to previously having lunch in the classroom. This, according to the pupils, greatly improved the lunches in the new dining room.

Observations also demonstrated that the Girls Group was the group that best succeeded at implementing their vision within the new meal scheme by making the 'girls lunch' an everyday reality within the confines of the new school meal scheme. The girls simply reserved a table, which the teachers let them do, and it soon became an unspoken rule that this was the girls table. Therefore, the girls managed to establish something that resembled their vision of a girls lunch, even though it had to be within the shared space of the dining hall. However, some days the girls would choose to sit with boys.

On the one hand, while pupils emphasized the importance of the social meeting, they did not just wish to be social. The interest of the girls group displayed a drive to have a social meeting in a purely female group, thereby distancing themselves from the boys. The girls longed to be alone to discuss 'girls matters'. They also found the younger pupils too noisy and longed to have more space of their own. In school, the pupils are forced to be together in large groups, within classes and within the entire school population. The pupils in the study expressed a wish to choose with whom to share their meals. They wished for the lunch break to be defined more like leisure time, by allowing them to choose more freely who to be with during lunch hours.

While the girls had a strong priority to dine in a strictly female group, they still had an interest in the other groups. While dining in their girls group, they would talk about the other girls and especially about the boys and sometimes the groups would make comments to each other across the cafeteria. The boys did not show the same interest in being separated from the girls. On the contrary, they were very interested in being with them. This became especially evident during our visit to the Swedish school. At our first appearance at the school, the Swedish girls clapped and cheered as we walked through the school entrance. Subsequently, during lunch, the boys took dozens of photographs of the Swedish girls and one particularly courageous boy managed to get the phone numbers of some particularly attractive girls. So, obviously, the lunch also facilitates meetings across social groups.

Meetings across groups also took place between pupils and teachers. During the fieldwork, the pupils stated that the relations with the adults were strained. While the younger pupils appreciated the presence of popular adults, the older pupils sought to have meals without the presence of adults or, more precisely, meals without adult rules and restrictions, and that would make pupils feel welcome. However, on several occasions, I observed the pupils having pleasant informal chats with the teachers during lunch in the new meal scheme.

The social importance of meals is far from a new theme in social studies about meals. Anthropologists, philosophers, and sociologists have often described meals as a central activity in the organization of daily life, as well as in the formation and demonstration of cultural values. Holm (2005) notes how shared meals mark a recognition of the family as a unit. This could indicate that the social meetings of the school meal signify a similar formation of a unit of pupils.

In their drawings, photographs, and practices, the pupils continuously demonstrated that meals are social and that the meal's perceived quality is closely related to the feasibility of establishing social meetings. However, the theme was also multidimensional. The pupils involved in this study were just becoming teenagers, so the social meeting was also about gender and reshaping identity. Furthermore, the social theme involved self-identification with certain groups and not others. From the pupils' perspectives, informal meetings with friends during meals are a crucial part of what constitutes a good meal experience at school. A good meal was associated with an informal space at school where pupils can meet, without being pupils, simply because they like one another.

The Spatial School Meal

'Sitting on a sofa is like being home. So having a good meal also means sitting on a sofa' (eighth-grade girl, age 13, during the Future Creating Workshop).

A strong theme concerning the importance of the meal space and school space as such was also present in the pupils' perspectives. Pupils criticized how the school space felt restrictive and controlling and a large proportion of their visions involved restructuring school spaces to accommodate their interests. Three out of the four visions of good school meals centred on issues concerned with access to and dominance of school space. In the visions of both the Security Group and the Girls Group, the material dimensions of the school spaces were crucial. Pupils envisioned a cafeteria with widescreen TVs, computers, music, and, most importantly, leather sofas

and focused on the organization of the meal. They preferred to eat solely with the older pupils and were very inspired by the meal environments presented in American TV series and films about high-school life.

The focus on the spatiality of the school meal developed throughout the project. As indicated in the findings, the theme was mostly mentioned as a criticism in the initial phases. The pupils would criticize how the school space and schedule worked to structure life at school. According to Lefebvre (1991), space is socially produced but simultaneously also produces social life. The criticism of the pupils presented the school space as having been produced by adult agendas and as structuring the lives of pupils. Following this perspective, Wyness (2006, p. 234) writes, 'Thus while schools are quintessentially children's places, there is little sense of children owning these places or having any control over how they are organised, run or structured.' In light of this critique, the time spent in school meal spaces was mostly associated with regulation and control, which the pupils opposed. The work and visions of the Security Group are a strong example.

In a research project about school architecture, Gitz-Johansen et al. (2001) note how predefined all the rooms in a school seem to be and how difficult it is for the pupils to affect the codex of usage for the rooms. Along the same lines, referring to the research of Devine, Gallagher (2006, p. 173) writes: 'She solicited pupils' views on the way in which the school controlled their time and space, and found (not surprisingly) that many children resented their powerlessness and resented the lack of consultation in the process of planning classroom layouts, timetabling and rule making.'

However, during the course of the project, the pupils became more aware of what a good school meal could potentially be and they related this closely with how the school space was structured. The school meal space became associated with a space within school that was not structured or predefined by teachers' agendas. In this school meal vision, the space would also potentially provide a break from formal school life and the formal role of being a pupil. It would allow the pupils to engage in matters of interest, such as playing, meeting up with friends, relaxing (in comfortable furniture), having informal meetings with teachers, and being taken care of in terms of being provided good food.

The Sensuous School Meal

'I noticed that the smell of food makes you hungry. I never thought of how important the sensation of smell is when we eat. It is sort of an invitation' (eighth-grade boy, age 14, during a field visit to a neighbouring school).

During the progression of the project, a third theme with a focus on the meal's sensuous dimensions emerged. This was the only theme closely related to food and eating. In the initial phase, food and eating did not capture the attention expected in a project about school meals. In the workshops, food items were mostly mentioned as provocative negations of public dietary advice and listings of unhealthy food items. However, this focus on unhealthy food slowly disappeared as the ideas and perspectives took shape.

Then, for a while, the focus changed to meal environments and school life. At times, it seemed that food was not present in the visions at all. Following that assumption, the pupils could be assumed to have no interest in food, as long as the

social and material conditions were inviting. However, a new interest in food and eating slowly started to emerge. Instead of merrily resisting dietary advice, the pupils began to define a vision of meals at school as a rich, sensuous experience, a meal with inviting smells and tastes, a meal leading to good bodily sensations: an aesthetic meal. Karresbæk (2012) demonstrates how the value of food is often defined in dichotomies of good–bad and healthy–unhealthy in contemporary school meal situations. Subsequently, with the sensuous experience of eating, pupils' perspectives seemed to exceed the binary categories, adding new value to eating.

When defining this vision of the good school meal, the pupils would mainly define themselves as the ones being cared for through the meal, very much like the role they have at home, having the parents take care of them. Most pupils found it to be the role of adults to ensure that the pupils were served good meals. However, there were ambiguities in the theme, since the Grosh Group envisioned themselves as the ones preparing lovely meals and serving them to all the pupils. Thereby, they positioned themselves in what the other pupils expected to be an adult role. However, in all cases, food and eating were associated with pleasure, not with nutrition.

Discussion, Conclusions and Limitations

Both the process and the theory-informed readings of the findings demonstrate the pupils' perceptions of what constitutes a good school meal as holistic and everyday based or, as Lefebvre (2002) would express it, a *lived* perspective. The pupils' perspectives represents that of those who practice school meals in everyday life and is therefore of epistemological value as an everyday perspective and local knowledge. The findings clearly demonstrate that school meals constitute an important time and space at school. Meals indicate opportunities to be within the school community in a less structured manner. Social, spatial, and sensuous dimensions are central values in meals, which has already been richly demonstrated in social science meal research (James et al., 2009). This article's contribution to the literature shows the way in which the pupils expressed the importance of these notions in their visions and actions during the school meal. In this research, pupils' perspectives point to a need for a spatial school meal that can accommodate their interest in social and sensuous experiences. The pupils' perspective includes a great deal more than food and the way it affects the body. School meals are presented as a potential break from the official school day and the role of being a pupil, a fact that is not often expressed in either research or politics. Therefore, the findings underline the value of including pupils' perspectives in the planning of meal set-ups.

Warming (2007) introduces two arguments for youth participation in research and development: an *ethical* argument, in that young people have the right to be heard; and an *epistemological* argument, in that young people's perspectives represent new knowledge that strengthens the theoretical insights and authenticity of youth research.

The findings clearly demonstrate that the perspectives of pupils represent valuable epistemological knowledge. The perspectives of pupils of what constitutes a good school meal differ strongly from the political agenda on promoting healthy food intake. With their practice-related approach, the pupils bring forth the value of the social meeting, the spaces where we eat, and the sensuous experience of dining, core values that are often neglected in the top-down planning of institutional meals.

According to Borg et al. (2012), research should allow room for multiple voices and realities because of the open and contingent character of the social world.

Simultaneously, pupils' perspectives claim influence on their everyday school life and thereby emphasize the ethical importance of taking their preferences into account when planning school meals. The visions of a social, spatial, and sensuous meal not only inform about pupils' meal perceptions, but also demonstrate that pupils miss these features and lack the possibility to incorporate these factors in school meals. As demonstrated by Burke (2006), Pike (2008) and Karresbæk (2012), school meals are arenas for controlling the social meal situation and the discipline and regulation of eating habits. Subsequently, the pupils in this study responded towards school meals as a regulating practice. The distinction between children's services and children's spaces (Moss, 2006) presents a framework for interpreting these findings. According to Moss (2006, p. 186), children's services refer to 'primarily technical and disciplinary undertakings, concerned with regulation, surveillance and normalisation, and instrumental in rationality and purpose', while children's places refer to spaces 'for children's own agendas, although not precluding adult agendas, where children are understood as fellow citizens with rights, participating members of social groups'. This distinction is illustrative of the position of the pupils versus the top-down planning of health-promoting schools, and thus in conceptualizing school meals as a service to promote children's healthy food intake as opposed to an event in which children participate on a daily basis and that they shape through their presence.

Even though pupils' preferences for good school meals do not articulate nutrition and health as important functions of eating, this does not suggest that pupils' participation in developing school meals is incompatible with eating healthily. As mentioned, the introduction of the provision of school food in Denmark has not been as successful as expected. However, in this study, the new meal set-up was very successful, with 90% of the pupils participating. In this case, pupils' preferences for meals were compatible with teachers' requests for healthy meals and led to a popular meal set-up. Likewise, promoting healthy food intake is not merely an issue of feeding healthy food to the pupils. Jensen's (1997) notion of health promotion as the development of action competence stresses that long-term healthy lifestyles are built by engaging young people in defining visions for a healthy life and taking action to change health determinants. Subsequently, engaging pupils in the development of school meals may be much more effective in promoting healthy diets than just providing healthy food.

The general value of the findings in this study can be questioned due to the limited study group, as can their representativity due to the fact that the pupils were from ethnic minority groups. Karresbæk (2012) demonstrates that teachers, in an act of cultural integration, may pay special attention to educating minority pupils on food issues and meal culture. This could explain the strong opinions of the pupils in this study. However, as mentioned in the methodology, parallel studies were conducted in classes with pupils representing the Danish middle-class and ethnic majority and their findings are remarkably close to those presented in this study (Bruselius-Jensen, 2011). Furthermore, it was not a strategic choice to study a school with pupils predominantly from socially deprived families, nearly all of which had different ethnic backgrounds. The school, however, presented a very good case study of pupils' perceptions of good school meals through an action research approach, since the pu-

pils were invited to take part in developing the school meals. This is seldom the case and made it possible to work with pupils during school hours for longer periods.

Notes

1. We have chosen a Swedish school because they provide free school meals, which are therefore organized very differently from typical Danish school meals.
2. Danish youth often watch TV series and movies that take place in an American high-school setting. At the time of the study, the musical film *High School Musical*, was very popular, and many of the scenes are set during school lunches. Danish schools generally do not have meal provision and cafeterias, therefore the pupils used the American films as inspiration.

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Contested Interactions: School Shops, Children and Food in Warsaw

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Abstract. Children's relationships and experiences with food are becoming increasingly of interest to many social actors in Poland. This is best illustrated by the ongoing debates around *sklepiki szkolne* (school tuck shops), which are small, food-selling retailers located on school premises. Based on 12 months of field-work conducted in Warsaw in 2012–2013, which included ethnographic research in primary schools, I argue that school shops are contested spaces. This is because varied interactions occurring in them – between children, adults, food and money – are increasingly perceived as problematic. School shops are entangled in multiple relations with multiple actors (state, family, business) who each have their own view of what a school shop and interactions within it should be. I show that while school shops are at the centre of both political and nutritional debates, for children they are the sites of important everyday social and economic relations, and provide them with a rare situation of autonomy.

Introduction

It's 9.30 am. The bell rings and the break starts. The classroom doors open and children run out of them. Within seconds the silence and peace of the school corridor turns into chaos. There is running, playing, screaming. I am standing near the school shop and the whole area is immediately filled with children. A queue forms within seconds. Everyone in turn talks to Mrs Teresa, a school shop seller, and buys something from her. One older boy is surrounded by others who suggest to him what he could buy – he has the money and the rest are hoping to benefit from this... A group of younger girls walk around the school shop looking at the display to find out what is for sale. They don't shop there yet, they are not allowed, but are preparing themselves for the future... The bell rings, denoting the end of the break, but there are still several children standing in line in front of the school shop, some of them spent the whole 10 minutes break standing in that line. They may be late for class. And if they end up not buying anything, they will probably be back on the next break' (extracts from my field notes, March–June 2013).¹

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Children's relationships and experiences with food, and their eating practices are becoming increasingly of interest to many social actors. In Poland, as in other cultural contexts (see Jing, 2000; James et al., 2009), there is a growing anxiety related to what children eat and in what way. Parents want their children to eat in a proper way and develop good food habits. The government wants them to eat in a certain way so that they can become healthy citizens. Food producers and marketers are interested in children's consumption patterns. Various NGOs and activists focus on children's food habits as an alarming social problem. Schools look closely at what their pupils eat as part of taking care of them. And finally, different media perceive this issue as an important and controversial topic and devote an increasing amount of attention to this matter. School shops – small, food-selling retailers located on school premises – are at the centre of these diverse concerns and thus offer a good lens through which to analyse the broader issues related to children and food in Poland.

The ethnographic vignette placed at the beginning shows the everyday life of many school shops in primary schools in Warsaw. Many children bring food from home to eat as a second breakfast;² they can also eat a meal in the school canteen. The school shop gives them the opportunity to choose and buy food and drinks throughout their school day. However, what might seem like simple interactions among customer-children and between a child and a school shop seller, are in fact complicated, morally contested exchanges. During these interactions, in each individual situation, as Goffman (1974, p. 9) explains, 'many different things are happening simultaneously – things that are likely to have begun at different moments and may terminate dissynchronously'. Being in the school shop is the result of a decision that is often carefully planned and negotiated before and might be discussed afterwards by children. And eating food bought there often lasts for much longer than the interactions taking place in the school shop. The fact that children have money is connected to negotiations with their parents. Moreover, the existence of the school shop is dependent on the school's principal. School shop sellers have to coordinate their work with their employers. And food products sold there – which similarly to money mediate and participate in the school shop interactions – are supplied by food producers and retailers.

The exchange between a buyer and a seller is one of the most common and ritualized interactions. And yet because it involves children – and also money and food – it is increasingly problematized in Poland, and school shops become contested spaces. It is not only that the interactions taking place in the school shop stretch over time and space, there are also multiple social actors engaged in them. The principals, teachers, parents, politicians, activists and journalists, food producers and marketers and state officials, all are interested in children's food choices and entangled in school shop interactions. As Bourdieu (2005, p. 148) puts it: 'the truth of the interaction [between purchaser and vendor] is not to be found in the interaction itself', the two agents do not only engage with each other, they also engage with the social space within which they are located. Bourdieu shows this through his analysis of the relations between buyers and sellers in the house market in France. In this article, I discuss what kind of social space the school shops, and interactions occurring in them, occupy in Warsaw. To understand these interactions, we have to look much beyond the transactions taking place, beyond the premises of the school shop, or even of the school institution.

In what follows I discuss the multiplicity of perspectives, frames – the ways of perceiving and organizing experiences and guiding the actions of individuals,

groups and societies (Goffman, 1974) – and practices related to school shops. I analyse the social space school shops inhabit in Warsaw, and discuss diverse (social, cultural, moral, economic and political) aspects of relations occurring there. I start by analysing the context of these interactions; then I turn to the rules of the interactions established by diverse social actors – the interaction order, as Goffman (1983) would say – and in the end I discuss the perspectives of the agents directly involved and the interactions themselves.

Methods

This article is based on research for my Ph.D. dissertation at the Department of Anthropology and Sociology in the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.³ I conducted 12 months of fieldwork in Warsaw, from September 2012 until August 2013. My research is based on the combination of various methods and field sites. Most of all – in relation to this article – I carried out ethnographic research in three public primary schools in Warsaw. In each of the schools I have observed the organization of feeding and eating, and diverse food practices. I have talked to the principals, teachers, school shop workers and owners, cooks and children (see Corsaro and Molinari, 2000; Pike, 2010). Although initially I focused on school shops in the most direct way – I included them in my ethnographic study of primary schools⁴ – with time I found out that they reoccur in many other contexts. School shops appeared as an issue when I was conducting other parts of my research: among families, state institutions, NGOs, food producers and marketers and when studying media; and as a result this article is informed by these different field sites.

I have worked with 15 diverse families from lower and middle classes, living in Warsaw. I participated in their daily food life and conducted interviews with mothers, fathers and grandparents, and with children who I treat as separate agents (see Mayall, 1994; James et al., 1998). While working with children I also used other methods, such as drawing, filling vignettes, doing photographs, which facilitated the process of the interview (see e.g. Christensen and James, 2000; O'Connell, 2013). Furthermore I focused on children's food markets: I studied the main companies producing food addressed to and intended for children, and conducted interviews with the representatives of these companies and with food marketers. Another part of my research was devoted to the state. I analysed laws and other official documents related to children and food, and I conducted interviews with the representatives of the state working in the Warsaw City Council, and in diverse other institutions, for example the National Food and Nutrition Institute and the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate. I have also done research among NGOs focused on children and food based in Warsaw, conducted expert interviews and followed media debates. The subject of school shops emerged in all these different contexts. The fact that I have encountered this issue so often when doing my research already shows how important a topic it has become.

The Context of the Interactions: Is the School Shop a Business or an Educational Institution?

The name 'school shop' in Polish is the diminutive version of the word shop (*sklep*): *sklepik*, meaning a tiny shop. This term is immediately recognized in the Polish con-

text – even if it is used without the suffix *szkolny* referring to the school – and signifies a shop run on school premises. School shops often take the form of rather small cubicles, square or rectangular, between three and four square metres in size. Walls are built from wood or cardboard construction, and there are glass windows where the items for sale are displayed. There is also a counter where transactions take place. Inside there are shelves filled with products: foods, beverages and stationery. Most often only one person can fit into this space (Figure 1).

School shops emerged in some schools during the Polish People's Republic and they were usually implemented by pupils, with the help of teachers. A student body organized the sales of food products: sandwiches, buns, rolls, which they prepared themselves or bought in the nearest bakery. The small profits were usually used by the school towards student-related expenses. This was one of the ways to keep children on school premises and prevent them from going outside during breaks, which they used to be able to do in Poland. The scale of these initiatives was very small. In the 1990s – in conjunction with the transition from socialism to capitalism – the number of shops organized on school premises increased and they have been commercialized and gradually outsourced. A school shop can be organized by the school, by teachers, pupils or parents; however, the most popular form since the 1990s is subletting the space to an outside entrepreneur who opens a small shop.

School shops are first and foremost business ventures. Subletting the space to an outside entrepreneur provides one of the rare occasions for the school to earn money. The contract between the school and the tenant is signed yearly. The principal of the school can dictate the terms of the contract and, for example, forbid the sales of certain products. The owner pays a monthly fee for renting the space and if either side is no longer satisfied the contract can be terminated by giving one or two months' notice. The next shop owner will be chosen on the basis of a tender, the rules of which are described by the principal, often in collaboration with parents. Owners either work in the shop themselves or employ other people, who are usually women



Figure 1. School shop.

Source: Photo by the author.

on retirement, hired on the basis of the interim contract: they are paid only for a certain amount of time, and they are not offered pension, health insurance or any other benefits with their contract.

In 2011, school shops existed in 107 primary schools out of 168 participating in a study conducted in Warsaw (Czarnecka-Skubina, 2011).⁵ One of the Polish magazines roughly estimates the market of school shops in Poland at zł200 million (€48 million) (Węgrzyn, 2014). Revenues from school shops vary significantly, depending on what kind of school they are in (primary, secondary or high school) and how many pupils are in it. During my fieldwork, I found out that the daily revenue from one shop run in a primary school with around 400 pupils varies between 200 złoty and 300 złoty (between 47 euro and 72 euro). This – if we count that there are 180 days of school per year, so school shops operate for 180 days – makes on average 45000 złoty (~10700 euro) per year from that one shop. And with that amount the owner has to invest in a school shop, take care of the rented space and hire employees. It might become a marginally profitable business – I have heard from the school shop owners – only if one opens more businesses. Still, most of the school shop owners in Warsaw – I was told – own either only one or a couple of school shops. Even though the name *sklepik* sounds fairly cute and childlike, its activity is grounded in a basic economic exchange: a customer buys certain things from a seller. Though it is not a simple economic interaction, the business side of that institution cannot simply be erased.

School shops became a problem in Poland largely due to what is sold in many of them: various beverages, chocolate bars, crisps, chips, buns, rolls, mini pizzas and a diverse range of confectionary, what James (1979) calls ‘kets’: cheap, unbranded and usually unwrapped, small products, in various shapes and colours, often inducing surprising sensations in a mouth, and with different textures and tastes, including lollipops, gummy candies, sweetmeats, sweet drops, chewing gums, etc. All of these can be considered children’s food: it is produced especially for them and for many reasons preferred by them, but at the same time it is considered unhealthy and thus especially harmful to them. What is sold in school shops has not changed much within the last 15 years, what has changed, however, is the growing problem of obesity among children and youth in Poland.⁶ The blame for the ‘obesity problem’, and subsequently the responsibility for it, is placed on diverse social actors, be it the state, the family, the market and its advertisements, and – similarly to the situation described by Tingstad (2009) in Norway – everyone shifts the blame on somebody else. It seems that recently the scapegoat has been found in the form of school shops and their owners, who in media presentations and public debates are framed as obstacles to children’s health, responsible for their weight problems.

Food producers and marketers, and school shop owners want the school shops to create ‘good consumers’ – at least they are often framed in that way. In fact, food producers have diversified opinions about school shops, and many of them told me that they are not trying to sell their products to children in schools; ‘if they found their way there’, one of them told me, ‘it is because the school shop owners decided to supply them’. The state officials, on the other hand, see the role of the school shops in creating ‘good citizens’ – that is, healthy citizens. In their opinion school shops have two main roles: educating children about proper foods and supplementing their diets during the school day. In a publication issued by the Warsaw City Council it is explained that decisions about opening a shop on school premises should not be dictated by commercial and financial motives (Widz, 2011). Every activity that is hap-

pening in schools has to be judged by the needs of the students and by what is good for them, which is not necessarily what they want. The role of the school shop is to provide consumer and nutrition education for children. 'A well run shop, which is used for food education', we read, 'may become a prime example of preventive care through preventive nutrition' (Widz, 2011, p. 20). As educational institutions, school shops should teach children about proper foods and support parents and teachers in their attempts to raise good and healthy citizens (see Gullberg, 2006). School shops have rarely fulfilled that role, and yet they became a problem only recently.

'Is the school shop a business or an educational institution?', was often the question asked at the conference closing one of the projects devoted to reducing the problem of obesity among children. The state officials present at that conference explained that they want the school shop to be an educational institution, which would teach children about proper eating and help in creating healthy citizens. Whereas the food producers and marketers – not invited to the conference – were depicted as treating school shops only as business institutions, which need to make money. School shops and their owners were problematized by diverse participants of the conference as main obstacles to children's proper eating habits, and consequently their health. It seems that according to many social actors, such as state officials, NGO activists or journalists, there are only two, mutually exclusive options for school shops: focusing either on the educational or on the business activity. And while the former option is clearly defined as the good (healthy) one, the latter is perceived as the bad and harmful (unhealthy) one.

School shops can in fact fulfil both of these roles, but its educational role might concern something else than what many adults would like, as I will show later in the text. Moreover, the morality behind this logic is based on the dominating health discourse, which simplifies the issue of school shops. Following Brembeck et al. (2013), I agree that bringing this whole matter only to a problem of healthy as opposed to unhealthy foods and dietetic principles reduces the topic of children and food to a question of nutrition. 'This also means', the authors explain, 'a perception of children as "victims" to be protected and guided by adults and forced to change lifestyles and eating habits, disregarding children's own agency and capabilities' (Brembeck et al., 2013, p. 85). This is a too limited and reductionist view of children and food.

Furthermore, the discussion highly visible in media and public debates concerning what is sold in school shops is only part of the problem. Another issue occurs somewhat implicitly in the ongoing debates and concerns about children's role as consumers. Buckingham and Tingstad (2010, p. 2) show that there are two main perspectives on positioning children as consumers: one perceives children as victims of powerful and manipulative consumer culture, which robs them of their childhood; the other constructs children as having power and even authority, competence that many adults may be lacking. In Poland children are mostly seen as innocent and naïve and because of the manipulation by the market, or because of being not knowledgeable – which is not necessarily true – they are perceived as poor decision makers, as their choices might be damaging to their health. That is why so many different social actors want to influence children's choices: they perceive themselves as better decision makers on behalf of children. The power struggles and tensions, shifting the blame and responsibility on each other, diverse discursive frames and ideas of what school shops are and what they should do, create a specific context for and at the same time influence the interactions taking place in school shops.

Changing the Rules of the Interactions: The Parental and the Governmental Influences on School Shops

The interactions occurring in school shops are guided by a certain interaction order (Goffman, 1983). It does not mean that the interaction is orderly, just that it is based on shared presuppositions – for example, that there is a queue or that money is exchanged for diverse products. Even though it is mostly pupils of primary schools and school shop sellers who are directly engaged in the interactions in school shops, the interaction order is influenced by various other social actors: principals, teachers, parents, state and government officials. As Goffman (1983, p. 5) explains: ‘what is desirable order from the perspective of some can be sensed as exclusion and repression from the point of view of others’. In this case the interaction order is to a large extent defined by adults and imposed on children.

The principals decide whether to open and how to organize a school shop on school premises. In a contract they can define the rules of the school shop’s existence: what can be sold, when it is open, etc. And they can decide to close it. This has happened in one of the schools I have studied. The conflict between the school shop owner and parents became so serious that when a current principal was appointed to her position, she decided to close that school shop. Its role was partly taken over by the vending machine. On the other hand, the principals often appreciate the additional money they can raise for the school from renting the space; and the possibility for children to buy something to eat and drink during their stay in school. In fact one of the school shop owners, Mr. Kowalski,⁷ told me that the principals are on their side and often defend the school shop owners from parents’ accusations. As he explained, it is mostly parents who have some problems with school shops. ‘Especially the fat ones!’, he added, ‘one time there was this mother, quite obese, and she had a can of coke in her hand, and her child was eating a bag of crisps, and she was complaining that we sell such horrible things!’ He argued implicitly that not all parents should be allowed to criticize him. Indeed, some parents are concerned about their children buying unhealthy foods in the school shop. For example, 36-year-old Ela told me about her 6-years-old son who is in preschool:

‘It worries me a lot! He doesn’t go to the school shop yet, he is not allowed, but he already knows what’s there and what he will buy. Crisps and these type of things, for example. I just hope that I can get it in his head that this is not healthy... But I’m really worried about this!’

And 40-year-old Natalia told me: ‘I’m really anxious about this school shop! I try to ask her, control what she buys there, but I don’t really know what’s going on there, do I?’ One way is to not give children money and prepare food and beverages for them to take to school. But that strategy only works when children are very young, the older ones always get some money. So parents establish various rules concerning what and how often can be bought in the school shop. For example, 9-year-old Kasia can buy sweet snacks in the school shop only on Wednesdays, because that is her ‘sweet day’; and 10-year-old Monika should rather buy sandwiches than crisps. These rules are often renegotiated on an everyday basis. Another way of trying to control what children buy, besides setting up the rules, is to ask them every day what they did in school, what they ate, whether they went to the school shop, and so forth. One mother asked a person working in a school shop to observe what her daughter buys and whether she obeys the rules her parents set for her. Still, chil-

dren often break these rules. I have seen Kasia buying sweets almost every day, and Monika rarely spent her money on sandwiches.

Attempting to control what kind of decisions children make is one of the ways to influence interactions in school shops. Another way is to monitor what is sold in school shops. Parents, in cooperation with schools, can influence the school shops to a great extent: they can cease to sublet the space to the outside entrepreneurs and close the shop, or run it themselves. There is always a lot of tension and struggle between all social agents involved. That is why quite often parents' influence is limited to affecting the principals in order to prohibit the sales of certain products. For example, in one school parents opposed the sales of ice cream, but they did not oppose the sale of crisps. In another school, gummy candies were generally accepted, but a kind of gummy candy that can be stuck to one's arm and eaten through licking was removed. What parents found especially disturbing was that children were licking each other's hands.

Not all parents find school shops problematic and attempt to change and influence the rules of the interactions taking place there. In general, parents want their children to be able to buy something to eat or drink during their school day, because not all of the students bring food from home or eat a meal in a school canteen, and sometimes these are not enough. Parents also want their children to have little treats and pleasures, to have fun with food, though many of them want to control what exactly their children eat.

Teachers are also in many ways entangled in these interactions. Some of them are very critical of school shops and, for example, prohibit children from coming to their classes with products bought there. In younger grades, some main teachers have taken upon themselves the roles of guardians and educators and confiscate certain snacks. They often perceive the school shop owners as evil and harmful: 'he is impossible and doesn't want to change his ways and what he's selling!', one of the teachers told me when we talked about Mr. Kowalski. At the same time teachers also often complain about parents: they criticize what they give their children to eat and sometimes confiscate it, which in one case resulted in the mother coming to school and blaming the teacher for breaking her parental and her child's consumer rights. They also comment on how parents harm their children through giving them a lot of money and allowing them to buy unhealthy foods in the school shop – which is not necessarily true, children can be breaking parental rules when doing that. On the other hand, many teachers do not have such strong opinions about school shops, and a lot of them shop there themselves during their working day in school.

Furthermore, the relations between parents and schools, and their influences on school shops, are deeply embedded in class politics: only certain (lower class) parents are perceived by actors in schools as engaging in bad parenting practices; at the same time, those parents who are interested in what is going on in school shops – and perceive them as obstacles to good parenting – are usually middle class (see Rawlins, 2009). Even though parents, and to some extent teachers as well, try to establish certain interaction orders within school shops, these spaces give children the opportunity to break the rules set up for them. Through that, they challenge parental control and authority, which is one of the reasons why they are perceived as problematic.

Another authority figure interested in children's choices in school shops is the government. The only way in which the government controls school shops at the moment is through sanitary inspections. However, in October 2012 the project of

changes in the Law on Food and Nutrition Safety was submitted to the Polish parliament by the Polish People's Party (a centrist, agrarian, and Christian democratic political party) (<<http://www.klub.psl.pl/projekty-ustaw-2012.html>>). It was aimed at school shops and the proposed changes concerned the prohibition of sales, administration, advertising or presentation of certain foods in kindergartens and primary and secondary schools in Poland.⁸ The principals of these institutions could terminate the contract with the shop owner or vending-machine distributor without giving notice, should they do not adhere to these rules. The implementation of these rules would be monitored and controlled by the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate. In the justification following the list of the new rules, the authors of this bill explained that the reason for it is the growing overweight and obesity among children and youth in Poland. They emphasized how important proper nutrition is for the present and future health of children. Furthermore, the future financial benefits for the state, resulting from the reduction of health problems, were emphasized.

High schools were omitted from the original proposal⁹ because teenagers were perceived as being able to make proper food choices. The decision of who knows and who does not know how to make proper decisions concerning food has been made, albeit arbitrarily, and children below 16 years old have been defined as being unable to decide on their own what is good for them. As Gibson and Dempsey (2013, p. 1) explain: 'because children are subjects who are socially constructed as both "future citizens" and "at risk", they are thereby seen as valid sites of biopolitical intervention in the name of the public good'. This bill is an example of such a biopolitical attempt to intervene in children's health: its disciplinary power is not directed at the individual child, but at the population of school children and it is dealing with a problem that is extremely political, at once scientific and biological, and at the same time an issue of power relations (Foucault, 1997, pp. 245). This intervention, designed to discipline children's bodies, is doing that through changing the order of the interaction in school shops.

This project was criticized by various nutritional experts, because according to these rules, for example, a banana could not be sold, presented or advertised in schools because it contains more than 10g of sugar in 100g of the product – this has been changed in a new version of the bill. Also the idea of solving obesity problems through national policies has been perceived by some as controversial. For example, Marta Widz – an official from the Warsaw City Council who coordinates the food education programme for children – has criticized this bill. In her opinion, food producers would quickly learn how to omit these rules. Also, it would be difficult to recognize which products are good and which are not for people who choose them – that is the school shop owners – while all the responsibility would be put on them. In her view, school shops should be transformed through showing good practices and examples, thereby encouraging change. Many people working in the non-governmental sector share this opinion. One of them told me: 'the education itself can be more valuable, than prohibitions and laws. If the school really wants to change something, it can be much more effective by itself than controls from the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate and sanctions.'

The proposed law has been criticized also by food producers who described it as inconsistent and factually wrong, and accused the authors of lack of consultations and cooperation with the market. One of them told me:

'We're open for the discussion, but nobody wants to talk with us, and this becomes a problem. I agree that the XXL chocolate bars should not be placed

in the school shops, but they have done this off the wall. Not only sweets, but also milk, yoghurts and bananas are prohibited... It starts with the family, there should be a long-term educational project that would change people's food practices, but nobody will do that now, because the elections are coming up and they want to show that they have done something.'

Food producers explained that their aim is not to make society fat, and that the responsibility for children's health should not be shed on them, as the greatest responsibility lies with parents (Koper, 2012). Others argue that it is a violation of consumer and trade rights. Mrs. Stepniak, a school shop owner, commented, for example, that the state cannot forbid something to which parents agree: 'surely this must be a violation of parents and children's rights!', she told me outraged.

This bill has been named the 'anti-junk food' law: through listing the unhealthy junk foods and limiting their consumption it is supposed to promote healthy foods. At the same time, the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate argues that we cannot talk about healthy and unhealthy foods, because all products released for consumption are safe. It would be better to talk about 'recommended' and 'not recommended' food products (Koper, 2012). Currently in Poland there is a struggle between state officials, nutritionists, activists and food producers over what healthy foods are, what should be recommended and what should be put on the "blacklist" and how to define these. However, this discussion is not only about healthy, not healthy and unhealthy foods, but also about personal rights and freedoms and the tensions between individual and collective responsibility. The school shops interactions have been intertwined in the politics of (un)healthy foods, the biopolitical interventions and power struggles; and diverse social actors are attempting to change and influence the rules and the order of these interactions.

Social and Economic Encounters in School Shops

I have shown the context of the interactions occurring in school shops in Warsaw, and diverse attempts made by different social actors to change the rules and redefine the interaction order; now it is time to discuss the perspectives of the agents directly involved and look at the interactions themselves.

The aim of a school shop is to earn money; however, it is deeply embedded within moral economy, described by Sayer (2000, p. 80) as 'the ways in which economic activities are influenced by moral-political norms and sentiments, and how conversely those norms are compromised by economic forces'. Every interaction in the school shop is embedded within broader political discourses concerning good and bad foods, making good or bad choices, proper parenting and healthy citizens. Moreover, the school shop owners and workers are often parents and grandparents. They think and talk about what is good and bad for children, both in a sense of being healthy and not healthy for them, and what they prefer and want. For the owners and people working there, school shops are often more than just businesses, and selling foods to children has more than just an economic meaning. They do feel a certain mission – or at least those whom I interviewed presented themselves in that way. For example, Mr. Kowalski, a 60-year-old owner of school shops, in this business for more than 20 years, now owns 11 shops (four in primary schools, six in secondary schools, and one in a high school) and employs 12 people. We talked about his business, how on his own he built many of the shops from scratch. He had 18

school shops when he started, and they were very popular: the schools were bigger, so there were more customers. ‘The 1990s were crazy’, he told me, ‘everyone was doing what they wanted. Everyone ate everything. Nobody heard about healthy foods, nobody cared.’ Healthy foods were a reoccurring issue in my discussions with the school shop owners, brought up every time by my interviewees. They felt they were under attack and before I have even asked about it, they defended themselves:

‘School shops became the scapegoat’, Mr. Kowalski explained to me, ‘they are perceived as evil and blamed for making children fat! But someone allowed these foods for consumption. And even if you control the school shops, the kids can always buy these products on their way to or from school. The school shops are needed, because small children have to eat and drink [during the school day]. I do not buy any of these “Chinese foods”.¹⁰ These shops are much safer than the corner shops, because you think of children when you buy the products, you select what’s good... They are not looking in the right place for the guilty party. It is the parental responsibility, a child should learn how and what to eat at home.’

He argues that he is taking care of children, because he makes sure that they have something to eat and drink during their school day, and he takes special care to buy good products. And because of the pressure on healthy foods – which, according to him, is coming both from the school and the government – he provides healthy foods in his shops. In a shop I have seen there was a special shelf with the sign ‘healthy foods’, where the small packages of cereals, crisp breads, grain bars and flavoured milk were placed. These products were, however, not popular among children and often went to waste. The rest of his food assortment included chocolate bars, crisps (a special line designed to sell in schools), confectionary and various beverages: water, flavoured drinks, and juices. ‘I would be happy selling only healthy food’, Mr. Kowalski told me, ‘I can start tomorrow, if anyone would buy it!’ One of his associates participated in part of our interview, and she commented by asking: ‘What does ‘healthy foods’ really mean?’ She explained that there is no clear definition of what healthy foods mean, and nobody wants to face it: ‘Maybe the chocolate bars that everyone gets so worked up about are actually not that bad?’ In her opinion, if things are allowed for sale then they cannot be unhealthy; otherwise it is the fault and the responsibility of the state.

Similar points were raised by another school shop owner with whom I talked, 45-year-old Mrs. Stępniać. She opened her first school shops six years ago and now owns a number of them (she was reluctant to tell me how many exactly). She also emphasized that she does not sell ‘Chinese products’; and that she cares about children, that it is important for her that they eat healthy snacks, so she provides them in her shop: veggie crisps, apples, crisp bread sandwiches, grain and dried fruit nibbles. The rest of her assortment included sandwiches, mini pizzas, diverse beverages, crisps, chocolate bars, and confectionary. Mrs. Stępniać explained to me that it is a myth that children eat bad and unhealthy things bought in school shops: ‘it was like that once, that only Coca-Cola and fatty crisps were sold, but it was twenty years ago, come on, it’s changed now!’ She has also raised the issue of healthy foods by asking: ‘If it’s unhealthy then why is it permitted to be sold? Why are parents exposed to the potential loss of their children’s health? If cola is harmful, then it shouldn’t be sold. There should be a ban on producing foods damaging to health!’

A recurring answer to that question – which I asked to many representatives of various food companies – is that no food or drink is harmful if it is consumed in proper amounts, as recommended by food producers. For example – as it was explained to me – a regular pack of gummy candies contains on average six food portions and it is not supposed to be eaten all at once.

The perception of school shops and their owners as evil and harmful to children, which I have discussed above, can be contradicted by their practices. Mrs. *Stepniak*, for example, thinks of economically deprived children, when on an everyday basis she brings all the sandwiches that were not sold to the day room, where a teacher distributes them among children who are hungry, but do not have money to buy anything. Moreover, women who work in school shops – at least those I was in contact with – care a lot about what children buy and eat. They often know children's names and establish certain relationships with them, either based on friendship and familiarity, or sometimes on dislike and animosity. They take upon themselves a peculiar role of gatekeepers and often control what children buy, even if that means smaller profits. Mrs. Barbara, a 67-year-old school shop seller, told me this story for example: 'One boy wanted to buy so many Mr. Snacks [crisps], that I asked him if he thinks that his mom would agree with that, and he reluctantly admitted that probably she would not, and bought less.' This was not the only time Mrs. Barbara was worried about what children eat. Another time, when she asked a girl who wanted to buy 15 gummy candies whether she will not get a bellyache, the girl responded that she is accumulating the sweets for the coming holiday period. Mrs. Barbara never denies children anything, but often asks or suggests that what they want is not such a good idea, and reflects on what their parents would say. Many of them comply with her suggestions. Mrs. *Stepniak* told me another story:

'There were these two boys, who bought a lot of sweets, crazy amounts. So I asked them to bring me the information from their parents, that they allow it, and their mother signed a paper in which she explained that she allows her children to eat as many sweets as they want. So I always had it in the school shop, just in case.'

It is not clear in case of what, but probably she refers to teachers or a principal worrying that she might sell too many sweets to these children, and as long as parents agree this has to be accepted, even if is not perceived as acceptable practice.

The school shop provides one of the most important food occasions for children during their school day, besides eating food brought from home or eating a meal in the school canteen. But it is also the site of some of the most important social and economic encounters children engage in. These small shops are centres of social life in schools.

"'What would you like to buy?'" asks Mrs. Barbara to two second-grade girls when it is their turn to approach the counter. They have climbed the stairs to the top floor of the school and have stood in the queue for most of the 10 minutes break. They've counted how much money they have together and tried to decide what to buy. When it is their turn, they put all the coins they have on the counter and ask Mrs. Barbara what they can buy for that amount. Mrs. Barbara counts how much money they have given her and says that they can buy either three bigger chewing gums, or one lollipop, two spiders, three warms [gummy candies], six lemons [chewing gums]. The girls discuss with each other what to buy – I cannot hear what

they are saying – and then tell their decision to Mrs Barbara. She gives them one warm wrapped in a napkin and four lemons in a small plastic bag. The girls grab it and move away with smiles on their faces. Right away they split the gummy candy and while one of them eats her half, the other one reaches for the chewing gum' (field notes, 13 March 2013).

For younger children – aged between 6 and 9 – going to the school shop is usually forbidden or limited by either their main teachers or by parents. In one of the schools they can go there only on Fridays. Additionally, school shops are often located on the highest floor, where older pupils have classes, and where younger children are in general not allowed to come. Going to the school shop is an important rite of passage; it signifies an important age-related transition and is awaited with impatience. Many children cannot wait for that moment to come, they plan exactly what they will buy once they have their own money and can spend it in the school shop. Six-year-old Janek told me: 'I can't wait when I'll be able to go to the school shop! I've seen that my favourite crisps are there, so I'll buy them!', while others break or bend the rules set up for them. For some children this may be the first economic transaction they make independently, without their parents watching.

Life around the school shop is very dynamic, as many children engage in the decision-making process and in diverse purchase and consumption strategies. The beginning of the week is usually busier because many children receive money during weekends, and then spend it on Monday in school. Similarly, the first couple of breaks are the fullest ones, partly because some children buy their breakfast there if they did not eat it at home, or they buy their second breakfast there if their parents gave them money, rather than preparing it. Some children buy snacks for the whole day, others come on every break for something small. The basic rule of the interactions in a school shop is that there should be a queue, and everyone should do their shopping in turn. However, there is a certain hierarchy in accessing the school shop, so the older children sometimes crowd in in front of the younger ones and adults can access the school shop without standing in line, they simply skip the queue and go straight to the counter.

Children usually come in pairs or small groups, and they either share the expenses: they count how much money they have altogether and decide what to buy and then share it; or they reciprocate gifts: 'so you will buy something for me today, and I will buy something for you tomorrow', as one of the young girls explained to her friend. It is often more about 'going to the school shop', than about eating itself. For example, children who do not buy anything, because for various reasons they choose not to or they do not have money, often accompany their friends when they do their shopping. Twelve-year-old Hania, for example, complained to me: 'there is nothing I can buy there, only unhealthy things! But I still go there sometimes, with my friends, when they want to buy something.'

Children usually share with others what they bought. And – similar to the situation among children in Beijing described by Chee (2000) – what a person buys and with whom it is shared influences the social positioning of a child. Children who have more money are often accompanied by others, who suggest what they should buy and hope to participate in eating it. The economic division is very visible in that practice: there are clearly children who often have more money, and others who can rarely afford to buy anything – even though very cheap products are supplied. It is also reflected in what they buy: the cheaper, unbranded, 'worse' foodstuffs or the more expensive, branded ones. What children buy is not only influenced by their

economic situation, but also differs with age and gender. The older ones usually know what they want, they have their favourites. They also have larger sums of money. The younger children often come to the counter, put all the coins they have there and ask women working in the school shops what they can buy with these amounts of money. It is often just 20 groszy or 50 groszy, up to 1 złoty (0.05 euro, 0.12 euro, 0.24 euro), so they usually buy the smallest and the cheapest foodstuffs, as in the above ethnographic vignette. The most evident gender dimension concerns older girls who often start watching their weight and what they eat, so they buy water or 'healthy foods'; except for some of the teachers, they are the only ones doing that.

'A boy is standing by the counter, asking every person in the line if they could lend him some money. And a couple of teenage girls are engaged in such an intense conversation about their plans for the weekend, that they cannot stop talking, so they all wait in line even though only one of them wants to buy a bottle of water. By the counter, Mrs Teresa is helping two young boys first count how much money they have, and then to count five chewing gums they asked for' (field notes, 29 May 2013).

When doing their shopping, children interact in diverse ways with the sellers and these relationships are never reduced only to their economic dimension. The sellers help younger children count the money, decide what to buy, ask what they want, and – as I mentioned – also discourage some children from buying too much. Above all, they often simply chat with one another. Children also interact with each other: they compromise, fight, share foods, make deals and learn from each other. Children's perspectives on school shops vary, some of them enjoy shopping there as they can buy and eat foods they are not allowed to eat and cannot buy elsewhere; others complain that there are no healthy foods, so they do not buy anything in school shops. Nevertheless, from children's point of view school shops are the sites of and mediate in important social relations and economic exchanges.

'Going to the school shop' is a deeply social occasion, one of the main entertainment activities in which children can engage during the break, which provides the opportunity for diverse interactions: among themselves, with adults, but also with food and money. In different parts of the school, children negotiate with each other when and with whom they are going to the school shop. They spend a lot of their time and attention on deciding what to buy. And later, once they purchased certain foods, they often share it. They eat it right away or take it back to class, sometimes they eat it throughout the whole day, and other times they take it back home, forgotten in their backpacks or pockets. From the children's perspective, school shops are very important places that allow them to bend adults' rules and fight with imposed ideas of what is good, proper and healthy, and what is bad and unhealthy. School shops make children the most active participants out of all food occasions in schools: they decide what they want and buy it (see Mauthner et al., 1993). Although these decisions and children's interactions in school shops are influenced by their financial resources, by their personal tastes and preferences, by their age and gender, and by the existing snack fashions (see Chee, 2000), they are also influenced by parental rules, by teachers' opinions and of course by what is available in school shops.

Conclusion

The social space school shops inhabit in Warsaw is very problematic. Their role stays ambiguous, while diverse social actors frame it in an increasingly dubious way. But

they were not always perceived as such. When school shops opened in many primary schools in Warsaw in the 1990s, they were an exciting novelty, not only for children, but for their parents as well. They were not perceived as problematic, but rather as a good solution to the food problem in schools.

But now they have become a problem. They are contested because interactions happening in them are increasingly perceived as problematic: the interactions between children and school shop sellers, but even more so between children and (bad) foods and money. Diverse actors are so anxious about it because it is one of the rare occasions when children can make independent and, additionally, economic choices; and children in general are not perceived as economic agents (see Levison, 2000; Zelizer, 2002). Moreover, it is assumed that their choices will be bad for their health. In fact, many children know what is supposed to be healthy for them, and some of them choose it, while others prefer not to. What is more, going to the school shop for children is not only about buying 'bad' foods, it is also – or even more so – about sharing it, about the social aspect of that occasion, about making choices and spending their own money. I cannot count how many times I have seen a child extremely happy and proud of herself because she is taking money out of her own small wallet. These are *their* spaces.

In school shops children interact with each other and with adults working there, but also with food and money. And these interactions are seen as obstacles to proper parenting and good care of children, and as interfering with creating healthy citizens. That is why diverse groups of adults want to influence children's decisions concerning food, and school shops are increasingly scrutinized. They have their own ideas of what is best for children and what is the best strategy to obtain it: through giving good examples, setting up rules, or controlling policies and biopolitical interventions. All of these debates focus on what is good for children; however, their perspectives are rarely taken into account. What is more, everyone wants to influence children's food choices in school shops, but no one takes the responsibility for their decisions – that is always blamed on somebody else.

The interactions in school shops, though in their basis economic, cannot be reduced only to their economic dimension. These are deeply social, moral and political relations. Many broader debates, concerns and issues are hidden behind the discussions about school shops. What does 'healthy' mean and how does it relate to what is good and bad for children? Who is supposed to decide about that? Is it a liberal right of children to choose what they want to eat, or their parents' right to choose how to feed their children? Or do the government, the principals and teachers, the journalists and activists have the right to limit these choices because of the broader social responsibility for the health of the future generation? The contested everyday interactions of school shops, children and food are at the centre of these broader debates.

Notes

1. The research, partly funded by the Polish National Science Centre (DEC-2012/07/N/HS3/04137), was conducted in Polish. All the translations are mine.
2. In Polish schools children do not eat lunch, but rather second breakfast brought from home.
3. In my dissertation I am interested in the discourses, practices and negotiations concerning the interrelated processes of feeding and eating in Warsaw, with a focus on children aged between 6 and 12 – this constitutes the age of primary school children in Poland.
4. School shops operated in two of the schools I have studied.

5. At that time there were 172 public primary schools in Warsaw and 33 private ones, which were not included in the study.
6. According to WHO, obesity and overweight among children and youth in Poland is increasing at an alarming rate (Currie et al., 2012). Twenty per cent of children between the ages of 7 and 18 have problems with overweight or obesity; it concerns 22% of boys and 18% of girls in primary schools (Kułaga et al., 2011). At the same time 162 000 children, which makes 7.4% of children in primary schools, are undernourished (Millward Brown, 2013).
7. The names of all my interlocutors, besides the official state representatives, were changed.
8. The prohibited foodstuffs were those that contain: more than 1.25g of salt in 100g of the product; more than 0.5g of sodium in 100g of the product; flavour enhancers, such as E621, E627, E631; artificial sweeteners and sweetening preparations containing fructose; more than 1g of trans fat acids in 100g of the product; more than 10g of simple sugars in 100g of the product.
9. When this article was submitted for publication, a new version of that bill was awaiting the vote in the parliament.
10. 'Chinese foods' is a Polish expression used to describe the foodstuffs with unknown origins and unknown content, generally not safe and not trustworthy.

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Between Pleasures and Risks: The Circulation of Knowledge about Food in French Primary Schools

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Abstract. Pleasures and risks associated with food are not stable entities but are constantly negotiated as elements of a network of social interactions. Educational, medical, commercial and political discourses play a determining role not only in the perception, but also in the configuration and circulation of the categories of pleasures and risks. Few studies have investigated the circulation of knowledge and values related to food from a communicational and informational perspective. This article aims at exploring how the tension between pleasure and risk characterizes discourses on food produced for school children by different actors: food companies, textbook editors, educators. Our considerations are based on an exploratory and qualitative study of information and communication devices related to food made available to teachers and pupils in the French region Nord-Pas de Calais. The messages in these devices correspond to often divergent trends and discursive positions. We will consider the presence of sensualist and responsibilizing discourses on food as they place children at the centre of a constellation of interacting voices promoting a range of concerns, types of engagement and forms of knowing.

Introduction

Food has an ambivalent status: it can offer pleasurable experiences but also it can be a potential source of dangers and diseases. This ambivalence appears even more strongly when food is associated with children. For youngsters, eating can be a delight for the senses, a moment of socializing with peers, a way to feel affection or to experience new emotions and sensations. At the same time, adults often see eating as a risk-taking activity for children. Under-eating or overeating, consuming food and drinks, which are high in fat, salt or sugar, are considered a threat; in particular for the bodies and health of children, who are assumed to be subjects at risk because of their biological instability.

Even if children's feeding has always given rise to ambiguous feelings situated between the desire to satisfy their expectations and the necessity to protect them from dangers, pleasures and risks associated with food are not stable entities. Rather, they

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are shifting phenomena that are modified constantly as elements of a network of social interactions. Educational, medical, commercial and political discourses, such as rhetorical processes at work in the public sphere, play a determining role not only in the perception, but also in the configuration and circulation of the categories of pleasures and risks. We will focus in this article upon the ways in which pleasures and risks associated with food are presented in the informational and pedagogical resources used in primary schools. Our concern is not to measure the direct impact of these devices upon children's actual food practices, but rather to characterize the messages that circulate in the school arena and that seek to shape the meanings children associate with food and food practices. We hypothesize that within these info-pedagogical devices, popular and scientific knowledge and values about the pleasures and risks related to food are rewritten, 'translated' and transposed. This process of 'trivialization' of information and beliefs (Jeanneret, 2008) participates in the shaping of pupils' and teachers' perspectives and attitudes about food.

In recent decades social scientists have given growing attention to children's food and eating practices in different contexts and to the ways in which childhood identities are constructed and mediated through food (Ludvigsen and Scott, 2009; James et al., 2010; Brougère and de la Ville, 2012). At the same time, food has been considered more and more as a communicational phenomenon (Cramer et al., 2011). Semiotic analysis of food and taste has shown how cooking, table manners, recipes and food presentation function symbolically as communicative practices (Boutaud, 2006; Manetti et al., 2006; Marrone and Giannitrapani, 2012). French studies in communication have opened up new areas of investigation by considering the presence of food rituals and practices in different media (Boutaud and Madelon, 2010; De Iulio, 2013; Lardellier, 2013).

Surprisingly, aside from a small body of recent research (Diasio, 2009; Maurice, 2010; Dupuy, 2013), little attention has been given to the circulation of knowledge about food in educational institutions. From preschool to the secondary school levels, schools are nevertheless crucial sites of mediation and individual and collective appropriation of knowledge about food and food behaviours. Schools are a key site for learning and practising forms of sociability and food consumption: the sharing and eating of snacks with fellow classmates, participation in festive meals and, of course, the daily lunch meal at the school canteen. Within schools, inside and outside the classroom, French pupils are also exposed to a variety of discourses on food, which we find inscribed within a wide range of documentary forms and educational practices.¹

This article focuses on the tension between pleasures and risks present in discourses on food that circulate in French primary schools. Our considerations are based on an exploratory and qualitative study of a sample of informational and pedagogical devices intended for teachers, pupils (and sometimes parents) and produced by different categories of actors: non-profit organizations and institutes, non-fiction book editors, food service companies and foundations.²

The aim of our contribution is twofold. First, we analyse the importance given to food pleasures in these pedagogical devices. Which sources of pleasure are singled out and highlighted in these documents? Which kinds of pleasure does food arouse? How is the pleasurable dimension of food characterized? Second, our contribution focuses on the status and importance given to risks. We aim to identify the sources and types of risk, and those forms of behaviour considered as risky or as risk-free in the discourses on food that circulate in French primary schools. We analyse as well

what kinds of arguments are used to support the claims concerning risks associated with food and eating habits. Our objective through this analysis is to consider the discourses on food as they place children at the centre of a constellation of interacting voices promoting a range of concerns and forms of knowing, from consumer choice, individual and family health, to environmental awareness and engagement. To what extent do these discourses seem to confer upon children the choice of how to navigate among the different pleasures and risks related to food?

Method and Corpus

In order to examine the ways in which knowledge, values and beliefs related to food pleasures and risks are portrayed in selected info-pedagogical devices, we used the tools of semio-pragmatic analysis in an exploratory qualitative approach (Meunier, 2004). Our ambition was not to produce a quantitative mapping of content through coding, but rather to highlight the lexical, thematic and rhetorical characteristics of each device as they reveal different strategies for engaging young readers. Taking into account both the visual and the verbal features of each device, we considered elements such as typography, illustrations and page layout, as well as vocabulary, informational domains covered or omitted, thematic organization, attitudes or subjectivity, enunciative features such as narrative voice and dialogue with intended readers, and narrative structuring. This integrated approach allowed us not only to identify the sources and types of pleasure and risk associated with food practices as presented in our corpus, but the relative importance assigned to each and the roles given to children, parents and other actors in pleasure-seeking, risk-taking or risk avoidance with relation to food.

Our corpus is composed of documents and kits, created and/or selected, on the one hand, by institutional actors for school children (non-profit and/or educational organizations, non-fiction book editors, national health agencies) and, on the other hand, by businesses or business foundations in the food-service sector who seek to become legitimate actors within the educational sphere.

Institutional Tools and Documents from the Educational Sphere

The corpus of pedagogical or instructional documents is composed of:

- a 33-page booklet for pupils, *Léo and the Earth (Léo et la terre)*, with its accompanying teacher's guide, created by the French National Agency for Prevention Health Education (INPES, 2005) as a tool to disseminate the principles and guidelines of the French National Nutrition and Health Program;
- a selection of published non-fiction works for children from the collections of the Lille public library;
- an educational loan kit on the theme of food and the environment, 'From My Plate to Our Planet' (MRES and Réseau IDée, 2010), comprising 45 documents;³
- a selection of works written for children on the theme of food, recommended in bibliographical resources produced by French national and regional educational resource centres or associations.

This 'institutional' corpus can be considered a representative sampling of the pedagogical tools and publications available to teachers or other professionals (nurses,

dieticians, mealtime and recess staff) at the primary school level in France, and which are intended for use during class time, lunchtime or after-school activities. The loan kit 'From My Plate to Our Planet' itself comprises a wide variety of documents selected by information professionals in Lille and Brussels to highlight the principles of sustainability in eating practices and food production, but in its variety this educational tool addresses a number of issues relating to nutrition, health, agriculture, biodiversity and cultural and historical eating practices. Authors and sources include both French and Belgian organizations or institutions specialized in health, nutrition and environmental issues and the major editors of non-fiction children's books. The majority of the selected publications are resources conceived on a national level rather than for a specific local population of school children, although some of the journals and brochures in the loan kit reflect local agricultural practices or concerns (Belgium, Northern France).

The selected works from the Lille public library were chosen by teachers and are kept in a special reserve room at the library in order to facilitate borrowing. As with the loan kit, we find in these non-fiction works, produced by French editors for teachers and young readers, a variety of approaches to food that remain unrelated to the specific region of Northern France: the history of food production techniques, profiles of specific foods and their production, cookbooks, poetry collections, picture books, guides to nutrition, taste and digestion. For this study we were able to borrow and analyse 10 of these works.

Pedagogical and Informational Devices of the Corporate Food Sector

Our corpus is also composed of:

- 10 pedagogical kits intended for children, parents and teachers produced by the Louis Bonduelle Foundation;
- 'Come to the Table', a 63-page kit for primary school teachers about French food culture, proposed by the Nestlé France Foundation (Fondation Nestlé France, 2014);
- a selection of pedagogical activity booklets created by the Danone Institute for primary school classes, concerning taste education, written, oral and visual expression about food;
- the quarterly newsletter *De Bouche à oreille*, published since 2010 by the French catering company Scolarest, targeting primary school children and their parents.

The desire to be responsible corporate citizens and to support important societal goals including food education is clearly expressed on the websites of these organizations (where these devices can be downloaded). In particular, the purpose of the Louis Bonduelle Foundation is to contribute 'to creating sustainable change in eating habits by putting vegetables and their benefits at the heart of its action' (Fondation Louis Bonduelle, 2014). The pedagogical engagement of the Danone France Institute reflects its mission 'to link knowledge and experiences in order to give a concrete answer to scientific, economic and societal questions in the field of food, health and wellness' (Institute Danone, 2014). 'Supporting the transmission of French food culture' (Fondation Nestlé France, 2014) is at the heart of the intention of the Nestlé France Foundation and, as suggested in its slogan 'Eating, Learning, Living', the

catering company Scolarest (2014) is committed to ‘sharing its knowledge on food balance’.

Through their offer of informational and pedagogical devices, food companies and foundations try to extend their discourse to the sphere of the public school and to be seen as legitimate actors of children’s food education. These devices propose different playful and pedagogical activities in a clear and simple layout that seems to be inspired by the style of school handbooks and children’s books or by the graphic composition of textbooks and handouts distributed in French school classes. In these resources the marketing aims are therefore dissimulated. The brands and the products of Bonduelle, Nestlé and Danone companies are absent, but they are evoked through the names of the foundations or institute, whose logos are printed on the cover and on the margin of every page.

A Variety of Pleasures in a Broad Conception of Food

Considering these pedagogical devices as a whole, we can say that they are designed to help teachers, and in some cases parents, capture children’s attention about foods not only as substances that provide nutritional support for the body, but also as cultural objects. Eating is presented as a physiological and nutritional process, as a sensory experience and as a set of norms, values and interdictions that are historically situated. Cooking is depicted as a creative activity that mobilizes knowledge and experiences linked to long national and familiar traditions. What these pedagogical devices try to introduce into primary school classes and into the children’s world is therefore a broad and complex conception of food and food-related practices. They reformulate and trivialize ideas and knowledge about nutritional principles, sensory education and sustainable eating practices, adapting selected information and points of view to the particular ambitions of each device. As we will see, varying importance is given to the different dimensions of the pleasures of food, eating and cooking.

The Pleasures of Discovery, Play and Having Fun with Food

In many of the documents included in the kit ‘From My Plate to Our Planet’, as well as in the National Agency for Prevention and Health Education booklet *Léo and the Earth* and the selected works in the Lille municipal library, we find that the pleasures related to food are, in part, created through the integration of activities and activity sheets, recipes, guessing games, experiments, puzzles, gardening activities, and multiple choice quizzes. These activities belong to a long tradition within popular science publications and pedagogical documents by which the process of learning is reinforced through play or games.

In non-fiction works on the theme of nutrition – for example, games, experiments, and ‘fun facts’ – are offered up to the young reader in order to emphasize or illustrate a nutritional or health message. In *Food, in Small Steps (Les Aliments à petits pas*, Mira Pons, 2008), a popular-science publication on food and nutrition included in the loan kit, we find a recipe for potato pancakes accompanied with salad that ends with the explanatory ‘now here is a balanced meal!’ and an idea for an activity designed to make children more open to trying new foods, followed by the exhortation: ‘and promise yourself to take a taste of an exotic dish that you hated until now’.

Activities and experiments relating to food in these educational documents are conceived not only to highlight nutritional norms but also to promote the process of intellectual discovery. In the cookbook/chemistry book *The Children's Saucepan* (*La casserole des enfants*, This, 1998) published by the French textbook editor Belin in 1998 – on reserve at the Lille library – the pleasures of learning come from experimenting with food in the kitchen. In this work, pleasures derive less from the actual experience of eating, cooking or touching foods, and more from the rewards of learning and discovery. Similarly, in a non-fiction work for children on gardening and cooking included in the loan kit, *The Book of Gardening and Cooking* (*Le livre du jardinage et de la cuisine*, Bloomfield, 2009), translated from a 2008 UK Dorling Kindersley publication, the delights of gardening are associated with the pleasures of ‘discovering on one’s own what works and what doesn’t work.’

Moreover, board games and puzzles are used in certain of the loan kit documents to address serious issues related to food: among the sets of activity sheets and booklets we find crosswords, fill in the blank sheets, and illustrations to rearrange in the correct order, on topics related to organic farming and world hunger. The kit also features a detective game created to prompt youngsters to discover what countries their food comes from, and a board game called the ‘Big Fountain Game’, in which children are encouraged to use their school water fountain, as they play together to clean up the playground through strategy and cooperation. Here role-playing and games prompt children to act out solutions in ways that differ from traditional classroom approaches to learning, while introducing them to the spheres of sustainability and health education, which teachers often find difficult to integrate into their teaching (Kovacs, 2012).

Exceptionally, we find documents in which food itself becomes an object of play and fantasy: a reissue of Bruno Munari’s graphical evocation, *Roses in the Salad* (*Des Roses dans la salade*, Munari, 2008 [1974]) is featured in the loan kit. Munari’s graphic experiment consists of using pieces of cut vegetables to create fanciful imprints. The world of vegetables is transformed into an imaginative game in which forms evoke faces, islands, tanks, spaceships, flowers and more. This work remains an exceptional incursion, within this loan kit, into the pleasure of spontaneous discovery derived from the use of food as an artistic object. Unlike this Munari work, the vast majority of educational resources on food borrow ludic forms while remaining centred upon educational content and nutritional messages, thus denaturing the frivolous essence of play (Brougère, 2010). The devices conceived by food companies, however, emphasize the enjoyment children can experience through amusing activities relating to food.

Indeed, learning by playing and discovery seem to be the aim of all of the info-pedagogical devices produced by food organizations. In order to ‘promote the public utility of vegetables’ as indicated on the logo, the strategy of the Louis Bonduelle Foundation kits is to suggest that not only is there something appealing to learn about vegetables and legumes, but also that such learning can be humorous and entertaining. These pedagogical devices try to integrate knowledge about food into two spheres of everyday experience that are more and more intertwined in children’s life: school and play. As Daniel T. Cook explains, ‘an object, edible or not, becomes “fun” for children when it somehow gives an indication of “belonging” to them – or more precisely, belonging to their world’ (Cook, 2005, p. 19). The Louis Bonduelle Foundation kits seek to develop children’s ability to recognize, identify and classify vegetables and legumes commonly used in French cooking and to indi-

cate their nutritional properties. Banal items from the trivial sphere of the table thus become objects of both learning processes and leisure activities. In an unexpected way, carrots, pies, courgettes, aubergines are at the centre of puzzles, quizzes and riddles. Vegetables are sometimes anthropomorphized, have a name, and become characters who give children instructions on the activities.

In the same way, pedagogical kits produced by other food business institutions place emphasis on the pleasure that comes from the association of food with elements specific to children's culture and everyday life. The majority of the activities proposed by the Danone Institute are an invitation to take part in a ludic, imaginative and amusing discovery of cooking and experiencing taste. The declared objectives are manifold: learn to identify, describe and experience different tastes; imagine, explain and illustrate a cooking recipe; recognize and classify fruits and vegetables. These learning goals are to be reached through a variety of tasting experiences and experiments and a range of playful exercises. In the Scolarest catering company newsletter, preparing and decorating a recipe is described as a creative and humorous way to appreciate the sensory qualities of the different ingredients.

Sensory Pleasures of Food

In most of the nutritional works included in the loan kit or the Lille library selection, the presentation of the sensory pleasures associated with the taste, smell and feel of food is subordinated to more serious messages. In some of these works, for example, taste is described as intellectual rather than sensorial in nature: *I Know What I Eat (Je sais ce que je mange*, Morguet, 2001), produced by the French textbook publisher Magnard, presents taste as an information-processing phenomenon rather than an individual sensory experience. When taste preferences are mentioned, as in the non-fiction work on nutrition *What Do We Eat? (Qu'est-ce qu'on mange?*, Chabrol, 1997), published by the children's editor Casterman in 1997, they are often quickly dismissed or rewritten as dangers. Thus, we are told that cooking with hot oil may create crunchy and delicious fries and fritters, yet these foods are quickly decried as fattening; the holiday festivities and the foods we associate with them bring on the risk of indigestion, and so on. Similarly, the loan kit documents, centred almost entirely on an ecological perspective (reduction of waste, consumer awareness, world poverty and famine, alternatives to fast food, organic farming, etc.), offer little or no consideration of the sensory dimensions of eating.

An activity to promote taste education in the National Agency for Prevention and Health Education (INPES) booklet *Léo and the Earth* is featured, significantly, at the end of the text and occupies a single page. This activity is intended to suggest the importance of the sense of sight in the eating experience, yet while activities concerning the other senses are proposed in the teacher's guide, these senses are not mentioned in the children's book. Moreover, taste education is presented in the teacher's handbook as useful essentially in avoiding children's snap judgements on food and for sharing impressions with others, competencies that are thus not a celebration of the senses in and of themselves. This resource for teachers remains primarily focused upon nutritional and environmental or civic awareness.

As opposed to this intellectual approach to taste, which seems to avoid mention of the senses, we do find among the resources of the loan kit a limited number works of poetry or picture books that depict the experiences of taste, smell and even the sounds made by food, with a spirit of abandon: lyrical discourse is as if freed from

the constraints of didacticism. The loan kit features a poetry book *Full Mouth (La bouche pleine, Friot, 2008)*, with lyric texts by Bernard Friot, which espouse the point of view of the child: coloured candies may be artificial and 'poisonous', but their vibrant colours and sweet taste help one get through the sad and grey days; the sounds of foods and cooking are compared to music, etc.

Yet for the most part, the sensual pleasures of food in these educational documents are depicted in order to fulfil an educational or even political purpose. In an illustrated cookbook, *A Kitchen as Big as the World (Une cuisine grande comme le monde, Serres, 2000)*, on reserve in the Lille public library, full-page illustrations of foreign lands, people, scenes and marketplaces alternate with selected recipes. Each recipe presents the olfactory, visual, gustative or even auditory delights associated with eating in each culture, in a message of cultural tolerance and diversity for which this French publishing house, Rue du Monde, is known.

Pleasure in these documents is seen as useful, and learned or acquired, rather than spontaneous and instinctive. In one of the works recommended to teachers interested in a sensory approach to food and nutrition, pleasure is 'conquered' through an educational process in which children progressively accept and appreciate new tastes: 'one must make the effort, even if what we see does not please us, and even if we do not like it, because surprises frequently happen in the mouth and they can be quite amusing. Pleasure is even greater when we do not expect it' (Stassart, 2003, p. 57).

Unlike the devices produced by the educational actors seen above, the sensory pleasures of food in the food company devices seem less subject to restrictions or conditions. The graphic tradition and visual playfulness of the Bruno Munari evocation seem to be revisited, as we can see in the Louis Bonduelle Foundation devices that invite children to play with the colours and the shapes of vegetables and legumes. These devices place particular emphasis upon the pleasure of the visual experience of these foods. Combined and arranged in an Arcimboldo-like style, onions, peppers and radishes compose imaginative and amusing faces to color. Images of potatoes, leeks and beans can also be cut, manipulated, pasted or become the protagonists of an unusual spelling book or of a picture book that brings out the aesthetic qualities of the forms, texture and colours of vegetables.

The pedagogical kits of the Nestlé France Foundation and the pedagogical projects created by the Danone Institute highlight the connection between gustatory pleasure and each of the five senses. Some of the proposed activities aim to demonstrate that the pleasure of taste can be learned and trained. For example, in order to prove that sight can influence taste, children are invited to test, with their eyes covered, foods that they like and dislike. They are supposed to appreciate foods that they do not like when they see them. To show the importance of sight, children can be offered foods with modified colours. Children will assume that a red cake is strawberry flavoured and that yellow yogurt is vanilla flavoured. But once they taste the cake and the yogurt, they will discover that their sense of sight has deceived them.

Pleasures Linked to Emotion, Affect and Sociability

Within the different works of the loan kit, the emotional and affective pleasures of eating, cooking or sharing food are often linked to the interests of world solidarity and civic awareness. In this kit, the non-fiction work *One Earth to Nourish Mankind*

(*Une seule Terre pour nourrir les hommes*, Thinard, 2009), is comprised (for two-thirds) of a photo album celebrating cultural identity and difference, showing vibrant and emotionally charged photographs of groups and families from different societies sharing a simple meal or going to market, or of farmers working together in a beautifully photographed agricultural scene.

In the Rue du Monde cookbook previously mentioned, illustrations and annotations depict the warm social context of sharing, giving and appreciating new and different cultures. Short marginal explanations on each page explain the culinary customs observed by families and social groups in different countries or present proverbs suggestive of the social pleasures of sharing meals, such as the Indian adage 'Look at the person with whom you eat rather than at your plate'.

In nutritional guides created for youngsters and selected for use by teachers in Lille, the description or illustration of mealtime gatherings is meant to demonstrate the dangers of not conforming to social norms and parental rules. In *Food, in Small Steps* included in the loan kit, the narrator explains that sharing a meal is like a party, and that the taste and smell of foods can evoke happy memories of family gatherings. An illustration shows a delighted family sharing a meal together. Yet later in the work we find the amusing portrait of 'Mélanie' who loves candies, sugary foods and is in open conflict with her parents, as we see in an illustration of the mealtime conflict. 'It's war with my parents; they want me to like the dishes... I'm often a bit hungry, [so] I keep candies and caramels in my pockets' (Mira Pons, 2008, pp. 26–27). Melanie's misguided pleasures are criticized by the narrator, yet here the child is portrayed as the master of her eating choices since she has found an alternative to the unappetizing meals prepared by her parents. Differing views on 'pleasures' of eating are thus shown to be a potential flashpoint between generations; the rhetorical device (giving voice to a youngster in order to better demonstrate his wrongdoings), which is intended to amuse as well as to instruct, seems to challenge the normative message of the work.

In the National Agency for Prevention and Health Education booklet *Léo and the Earth*, created for children aged 10–12, social rituals related to food are associated with civic education. In this pedagogical booklet, a group of school children learn about the Earth as a source of life and nutrition, as they joyously share canteen meals, picnics and other adventures. The pedagogical objectives mentioned in the guide are not centred on nutrition or food-related knowledge, however, as much as upon writing, speaking, debating and conflict resolution skills. The idea here is to show that individual hedonistic pleasures are to be channelled into collectively valuable experiences (sharing, respecting others' preferences, etc.). Pleasure is depicted as positive only if socially beneficial: in the accompanying guide we find a suggested activity in which the teacher is expected to thank pupils for their opinions and their motivations for eating sugary foods, and then to ask them each to write down a pleasurable experience that is also good for their health.

Devices produced by food companies highlight the pleasures of sharing without necessarily introducing concomitant notions of duty or obligation. The Nestlé France Foundation pedagogical kit places emphasis on conviviality and sharing – cooking, offering, eating together – as one of the main pleasures of the food experience. In particular, an entire section of the kit is dedicated to the cooking tradition of each French family and the importance of specific recipes for the pupils' family history. Children are encouraged to present a family recipe to their classmates and to share it with them. The drawings that illustrate this section as well as the picture on

the cover of the kit emphasize the pleasure of home cooking and of family members eating together.

With regard to the pleasurable and ludic aspects of food and eating, institutional and corporate devices thus have many elements in common: page layout, graphic style and iconographic themes, and a broad vision of food education covering a range of issues drawn from nutritional, environmental and sensory approaches to food that circulate in French society. But each gives different emphasis to the various forms of pleasure associated with food (see Table 1).

Risks in Educational Devices on Food: Dangers for the Body, Dangers for the Planet

Despite their differences, the devices produced by both educational and corporate actors present the pleasures of food as problematic: adults, teachers, educators and parents often see food and food experiences that children consider pleasurable, as risky. The word 'pleasure' appears just once in the pedagogical kits of the Louis Bonduelle Foundation and is associated with sweets. The correct answer to the question 'Candies, honey, sugar are good, but what are they good for?' is in fact just 'for pleasure'. Rather than other foods, which give our body good things (meat provides proteins and iron that are good for the muscles, fruits and vegetables provide vitamins that are good for the muscles and the brain...), the 'only' role sweets seem to fulfil is to satisfy the pleasure of taste. What is at stake is therefore the capacity of children to govern themselves and to manage with moderation and precaution the pleasures of the food experience. Pleasures of taste and in particular the pleasure of sweets can give rise to conflicts between adults who watch over their children and set the rules, and children who, through their gluttony and voracity, experiment, transgress, putting themselves in danger.

As suggested by the depictions of pleasure and preference in the works for children selected for the loan kit or for the teachers' reserve of the Lille library, risk and pleasure are almost always intertwined. Even in works that promote a sensory approach to taste, risks are present: risks that our food carries poisonous substances or is somehow dangerous to our health, or that rich foods can lead to an unsatisfactory or blurred gastronomic experience. In most of these works, the risks outweigh the pleasures of eating; priority is clearly given to the potential dangers related to poor nutrition rather than to the delights and curiosity related to food and food practices. The sometimes frightening representations of dangers are often directed at children

Table 1. Depictions of pleasure, comparison of institutional and corporate devices.

Types of pleasure	Institutional resources	Corporate devices
Playing to learn, playing with food	Activities, games that reinforce serious messages	Emphasis on amusement and surprise
Senses	Senses and taste remain secondary; seen as capacities that must be refined or 'civilized'	Focus on stimulating the five senses
Emotion, affect, sociability	Food sharing and conviviality presented in order to promote cultural tolerance and civic or global responsibility	Positive evocations of conviviality and sharing traditional food

as individuals, as if their food choices and practices were isolated from familial or social contexts. As one may expect, the primary risks found in these works are those related to poor nutrition, on the one hand, and security risks, on the other. In pedagogical kits created by food companies and foundations that emphasize different pleasant aspects of food and food practices, references to risks are not very frequent and the potential harms associated with food are often suggested implicitly. Nevertheless 'scare tactics' are used by the catering company Scolarest. In particular the pages of its newsletter *De bouche à oreille*, aimed at parents, is abound with explicit references to different dangers to which children are allegedly exposed if they do not acquire good food habits. How are these risks represented and to what extent are young readers given a role in preventing or accentuating risk?

Risks for Children's Bodies

In a number of the general works on nutrition, health risks are mentioned on almost every page. Behind every food, every eating practice, there is a corresponding danger. At the same time, these works often touch upon the most trivial risks, those that belong to children's everyday lives, while more serious health dangers remain very unclear, looming large yet in a vague and mysterious way. This is true of the two nutritional guides, *What Do We Eat?*, on reserve at the Lille public library, and *Food, in Small Steps*, included in the food kit, both of which introduce many health risks, for the most part limited to the minor consequences of bad eating habits such as flatulence, choking, bad digestion, hiccups or constipation. These 'minor' risks abound, whereas more serious health issues are often vaguely mentioned (a 'tired heart', a 'critical state of health' or 'artery problems that make people's lives sad') or even hidden through the use of difficult terms such as 'deficiency' (*carence*), defined in a glossary at the end of *Food, in Small Steps*.

Another nutritional guide, reserved by Lille teachers in the public library, while remaining vague about the precise symptoms and ailments that might occur if one overeats or eats the wrong foods, speaks openly of the risk of death: in *I Know What I Eat*, the young reader finds in the final chapter of the book that overeating can cause an increase in cholesterol leading to blood clots and death, and that mad cow disease is always fatal. Yet by confining risks to specific passages, and by using an impersonal, clinical language, the work suggests that these dangers are remote or exterior to the reader's universe.

This exteriority can also be emphasized by the apparent contradictions between text and image. In the non-fiction work *What Do We Eat?*, the reader is told that children should not drink alcohol, which can cause stomach aches or vomiting, and that, in adults, alcohol can produce liver ailments and heart problems as well as the risk of car accidents. Yet, a comical drawing of a drunk person inside a car shaped like a bottle introduces levity to a potentially dangerous subject. Similarly, if dioxins can be dangerous to our health, as we find in *Food, in Small Steps*, a humorous illustration shows a chicken sitting up on a plate pointing at a very surprised consumer while the text tells the young reader that dioxins are 'very dangerous to one's health'.

This ambiguity, created by the juxtaposition of humorous and serious interpretations of the health risks related to food is also to be found in the representation of the most prevalent risk to appear in these nutritional guides, that of being overweight, or obese. These two health issues are often not clearly distinguished, and the caricaturish visual representations seem to undermine the gravity of the health risk by

emphasizing social prejudices against 'fat people'. Thus, in *What Do We Eat?* the reader is told that the problem of obesity is increasingly widespread in our society, and therefore, that one should not call one's overweight friends cruel names. The accompanying illustration is, however, a comical portrait of a fat child on a see-saw. In *Food, in Small Steps* we find two illustrations (coloured drawings) of 'fat' people: a carefree and overweight girl reclining on a lounge chair in a bikini drinking soda and licking an ice cream cone, and a young overweight boy trying unsuccessfully to climb a rope in his physical education class, with other children pointing and laughing at him. These images, while they show the dangers of eating too much or eating the wrong foods, reinforce the negative cultural stereotypes concerning overweight people in our society and suggest that the reader can avoid these problems with sufficient will power. The textual messages are more serious and present overeating as a health danger: Which risk is meant to touch the reader more? That of social ostracism (fat people don't have friends) or that of the (imprecise) danger to our health?

Unlike the other resources examined here, the National Agency for Prevention and Health Education document *Léo and the Earth* produced for elementary school teachers does not emphasize health risks or poor eating habits. One of the only dangers mentioned is that of eating unripe fruit, which is bad for the digestion (and which the fictional children in the booklet proceed to do in order to miss an exam!). The young narrator Léo alludes to another health risk, yet he seems only to give voice to the social and health dangers he has heard about, in order to intimidate a schoolmate into sharing his picnic: 'I told him: if you eat too much, you won't be able to run and no one will want you on his football team' (INPES, 2005, p. 32). The health risk is brought up as a ploy, and Léo's threat to his friend suggests once again that social ostracism (with which the young reader can perhaps best identify) is the one of the primary risks of overeating. This pedagogical document avoids the vague and frightening presentation of risk that we find in many resources for children, yet one of the effects of this choice is to suggest that eating well is the obvious and easy solution to individual unbridled childhood impulses; we find no realistic explanation of nutritional choice-making in its social or familial context. Certain documents suggest, in a critical way, that normative discourse about nutrition fosters only parrot-like repetition, and that 'risk' is, for children, often merely empty language about food conveyed by parents and educators. In Bernard Friot's poetry book, included in the loan kit, nutritional advice intersperses the poems, reminding us that children hear these messages on a regular basis but can often consider them as the expression of dogmatic authority: 'fries are fatty / you'll see later on / the heart and so on'; 'too fat / the cakes / and he is too... WATCH OUT. DIET. BALANCED FOODS' (Friot, 2008, pp. 47, 49).

Unlike these general works on nutrition, in which risks are meant to make children aware of the consequences of their own eating habits, many of the documents in the loan kit accentuate the health risks related to industrial farming techniques or the introduction of chemicals into the farming process. These documents, in line with the ecological objectives of the loan kit, highlight dangers to our health that derive from environmentally unsound practices. Two examples can be found with the non-fiction books *Food (L'Alimentation)*, Benlakhel, 2008) and *Respecting My Stomach and My Planet (Je suis bien dans mon assiette, car je respecte mon estomac et ma planète)*, Gombert, 2007). In these two works, the fact of being obese is not a risk as much as a criticism of the inequalities of rich and poor: unlike children in poor counties who do not have enough to eat, children in France eat too much and snack too much. Health

risks, while linked to an ecological discourse, remain as vague as those presented in the nutritional works: eating too much meat can be bad for your health, intensive agriculture is a 'threat to our health', and genetically modified foods have unknown consequences on our health, therefore it is better to avoid them. The reader is also told that crowding chickens through intensive production perhaps leads to avian flu, yet no explanation is given to support this claim. In these environmental works, the risks remain so vague (additives, nitrates, a break in the 'cold chain', are dangerous) as to seem merely a pretext for enumerating the solutions, suggestions and other advice for sustainable eating and consuming.

In contrast to the light-hearted and frequently dismissive representations of risks that we find in certain of these works, and the vague but alarming messages in others, one of the politically engaged works in the loan kit, *One Earth to Nourish Mankind* openly criticizes social inequalities and its effects, including hunger and lack of water. Health risks are specified with greater detail than in the general nutrition works, since one of the objectives here is to introduce the young reader to the complexities and controversies surrounding agricultural industries: we thus find that certain vegetables are irradiated and can cause cancers, and that glutamates may have a health risk to the brain, yet the ultimate message is the need to act, to avoid the excesses inherent in our consumer society. The work ends on a positive note, encouraging the youngster to espouse a posture of engagement (political, environmental, international) and to participate in different strategic debates and issues, such as the fight to reduce industrial fishing, to reduce world hunger, to adopt an organic diet.

Food company devices, like the nutritional guides produced by children's editors, present some of the potential consequences of poor eating habits, as related specifically to the familiar universe of the child. For example, the spectre of failure at school hangs over the pages of *De bouche à oreille*, the Scolarest catering company newsletter aimed at parents. This device points in fact to bad food habits as a cause of bad school performance. A failed 'back to school' season, a child's inability to meet the often harsh demands of the school environment, a lack of concentration and energy needed to acquire knowledge, are some of the risks that children incur if they do not eat regularly, do not consume fresh fruits and seasonal vegetables, and if their diet is not varied and balanced. Healthy, well-balanced and tasty food is considered 'an incomparable advantage for success in school' (*De bouche à oreille*, Autumn 2011, p. 1). Bad food habits are also seen as the cause of bad sport results. 'Your child has an after school judo class? He can't be down and out on the tatami... Dried fruits, an orange, yogurt, with these your champion will never be knocked down' (*De bouche à oreille*, Winter 2011/2012, p. 1). Foods that contain the substances necessary to build a strong and efficient body are the remedy against such failures and can improve school and physical performance.

With the slogan 'Good Nutrition for Good Growth' the Louis Bonduelle Foundation pedagogical kits suggest implicitly that inadequate nutrition can provoke irregular growth. In the functionalist vision of food proposed in this device, every food contains substances that are useful for the proper working and regular development of children's bodies. As we have already seen, the only exceptions are sweets, whose unique purpose seems to be the satisfaction of the pleasure of taste. Bad nutrition and, in particular, an unbalanced diet, poor in vegetables and legumes, are presented as harmful for the child's development and therefore for the health of the adult in the making. Fruits and vegetables are also depicted as a real defence to prevent both minor and serious health diseases. In the Scolarest newslet-

ter, oranges, kiwis, exotic fruits, broccoli and spinach are recommended because of their high content in vitamins A and C, which can help the body's immune defences in the prevention of minor health concerns all winter long. The Danone Institute pedagogical kit also urges pupils to eat a lot of oranges, strawberries and kiwis, but here the medical implications are more serious: the danger is that of scurvy. The text contains a short description of the frightening symptoms of this disease resulting from a vitamin C deficiency. This illness is represented in a remote past, in the almost imaginary and adventurous world of British sailors of the fifteenth century. At the same time, however, advice given by the 'wise' professor Kimangedetout (Professor Eatswell) and reference to statistical data about the presence of scurvy among North American teenagers who do not eat any fruit and vegetables, portray the danger as real and near.

Thus, with regard to health risks, we find a variety of communication strategies, varying from alarmist messages to risk prevention information, social awareness and political activism. In nutritional guides and works, children are presented as individuals making potentially dangerous choices for their own health, whereas the more environmentally related publications imagine children as potentially engaged in these issues: environmental education seems more at ease with promoting active forms of engagement, whereas nutritional education publications depict the child as merely having mechanically interiorized the norms of good eating as risk prevention.

Risks for the Environment

It comes as no surprise that the environmental education loan kit includes many documents that mention the risks of pollution and environmental degradation related to food production and transport. These risks are often quickly transformed into opportunities, to act, to solve problems collectively, according to an ecological ethos. In *One Earth to Nourish Mankind*, for example, photographic images estheticize nature and agricultural work on a local scale, and stirringly depict the ravages of deforestation and the consequences of intensive agriculture across the world. In this work, photography is used to elicit feelings of sympathy with developing countries in a personal way (a portrait of a young girl with her goat shows the emotional attachment of children to animals as sources of food, unlike impersonal industrial food production). In the textual documents, we find information about the economic risks to small producers caused by the competition of industrial production, or risks to the environment of the use of pesticides and heavy industry, but emphasis is placed on finding and implementing solutions, through consumer choice in the home and participation in political activity. Since risks for the environment remain even more remote to children than health risks, dangers to the planet are rarely explained in detail; the practical side of life is given priority, as are the very concrete actions that children can take in their daily lives.

In certain very exceptional works, an effort is made to explain the sources of the discourse on risk and to develop critical awareness about media. In a non-fiction work on the fishing industry, *Where Do Fish Sticks Come From? (D'où vient le poisson pané?)*, Baumann, 2008), the reader is encouraged to seek verifiable information rather than listen to reports in the media. A scientist explains that there are indeed risks and dangers to the food chain if certain species disappear, but adds that there are governmental measures that can or should be taken. Thus the discourse on risk

is closely associated with attempts to suggest children's empowerment and political engagement, coupled with a heightened awareness of how different media operate.

Unlike other pedagogical kits proposed by food company foundations and institutes, the Scolarest quarterly newsletter goes beyond risks for children's bodies by stressing risks to the health of the planet caused by poor food practices: 'What is in our dishes has consequences for our health and on the future of the planet. Health crises, pollution, impact on biodiversity, are linked to our modes of production and consumption. What can we do to return to responsible, local and organic food?' (*De bouche à oreille*, Autumn 2013, p. 1). As an answer to this question, parents are encouraged to change their buying and cooking habits for their children and to become expert and responsible buyers and consumers. A long list of remedies to fight the risks to the environment is suggested: reading labels and information about the origin of products, choosing seasonal fruits and vegetables, buying locally produced food, choosing organic food, avoiding palm oil, and so on. Ample advice is also given to avoid waste, while reminding parents that they are an example for their children who must learn responsible behaviour as future 'consom-actors'. Yet unlike the devices in the environmental loan kit, Scolarest portrays parents and children primarily in their eating and consumption practices rather than in the sphere of political or social activism.

The institutional and corporate devices we have examined address the issues related to risk in similar ways, with a tendency to avoid emphasis on serious illnesses or environmental and sanitary crises, in an attempt to highlight the need for positive nutritional behaviour, individual preventive practices and consumer awareness. The two types of resources differ mostly with regard to the contexts in which risks are portrayed, corporate devices focusing exclusively on the private sphere of the child and their consumer behaviour, with institutional devices more readily placing risk within the wider-reaching arenas of social or political practice (see Table 2).

Conclusion

This analysis reveals both the variety of informational and pedagogical devices created for primary school children, and the wide scope of issues related to food and food practices, which these devices address. Teachers and other educational professionals, pupils and parents thus have access to a range of pedagogical kits comprised of diverse supports (booklets, worksheets, exercises, games), created and produced

Table 2. Depictions of risk, comparison of institutional and corporate devices.

Risks	Institutional resources	Corporate devices
Health risks	Risks to the body remain vague, sometimes laughable; emphasis on minor consequences of poor eating habits or overeating; social ostracism suggested	References to health risks infrequent and often implicitly suggested
Environmental risks	Risks to environment of agricultural or eating practices openly presented yet often seen as avoidable or reversible, through modern technologies or political activism	Few references to risks to the planet of poor food practices

not only by the actors traditionally associated with schools and educational institutions, but also by actors from the food industry sector. As whole, these devices propose a broad vision of food education that ranges from proper table manners to the respect of food traditions, from improving nutritional balance to the appreciation of different tastes, from the knowledge of food safety to the awareness of environmental issues related to food consumption. These pedagogical tools thus contribute to the shaping and dissemination of the notions of 'good food' and 'good food practices'. By highlighting the responsibility and the awareness of pupils in making appropriate food choices, these devices seek to inculcate in children the behavioural codes necessary to eat well and 'right' and to share the experience of eating in an acceptable way.

These codes of conduct seem to be divided between two divergent imperatives, those related to the quest for pleasure and those related to the protection from risk. The devices analysed here seek to make primary school pupils aware of a diversity of pleasurable experiences related to food and food practices: experiments and often adventurous discovery of new recipes, sensory exploration of new tastes, the joys of sharing meals and meal preparation with friends and family, developing curiosity about other countries through their culinary practices, etc. As we have shown, however, the pleasures of taste, of discovery and of conviviality in these devices are tied closely to a series of dangers for the body and for the environment, dangers that lurk on our plates.

The nature of the tension between the pleasures and risks of food differs according to the origin of these devices. Devices created by editors and actors specialized in the production of pedagogical and informational resources for children are often conceived primarily to educate children and to encourage them to interiorize the norms presented in their school curricula, which are closely related to the nutritional guidelines established at a national level, through the French National Nutrition and Health Program. Children are portrayed as tempted by uncontrolled (or unsanitary, and uncivilized) behaviour, and at the same time, as potential actors in their educational process. Children are also projected into the political discourse of ecologically minded educational publications. The ambiguous portrait of the passive-active child, who receives nutritional and ecological instruction and also participates willingly in the process of self improvement, reveals an attempt to involve children, often through humour and caricature, as independent individuals and empowered actors. Contemporary pedagogical discourse on empowerment and active learning traverses these texts, leaving little room for pleasure and placing the young child in a responsible social role that seems to leave out the various familial, cultural or social influences on his or her behaviour.

The pedagogical discourse of food industry multinational foundations and school food companies seeks to centre food and food practices within the everyday experiences of children, mixing learning, games and entertainment. While attempting to create ties to the school environment, from which these companies have long been excluded because they are not considered to have the required legitimacy to speak about food to children, actors in the food production sector seem to view children through a marketing ethnography approach, which, in the words of Stephen Kline, 'has validated children's emotional and fantasy experience, which the educational researchers have by and large avoided and derided' (Kline, 1993, p. 19). In these devices, children's daydreams, absurdist humour and keen sense of group identity are associated with food and eating and employed as tools to communicate with pupils

seen as consumers who have to be informed and educated. Through the actions of their research institutes and non-profit foundations, food companies try to play the role (and to offer the image) of corporate social responsibility, *entreprises-citoyennes*. To this end, they participate in the same strategy of responsabilizing children with regard to food choices as French governmental institutions. The food industry thus takes part in the production of authoritative knowledge about proper food habits, gives advice and seeks to educate children, leaving them (and sometimes their parents) accountable for their food choices and behaviours as personal matters.

While sensory education is not entirely absent from corporate and educational devices, the pleasures of taste and gastronomy are not at the forefront of the discursive shaping of these tools, but are subordinated to nutritional and environmental messages. Indeed, French gastronomy and traditional French culinary practices and meal-sharing experiences are often represented implicitly, or mentioned explicitly, as potential solutions for the health and environmental risks related to homogenized and globalized or fast food, or poor or individualistic eating habits, influenced by advertising. Not too unexpectedly, the United States is mentioned as a counterexample to French traditional eating and cooking practices. The construction of food risks and pleasures is thus related to national identity. A comparative approach to the risks and pleasures presented in informational and pedagogical devices of different countries or regions would allow further investigation of the links between identity and food practices, as constructed by the discursive position of educational and corporate actors. Our ongoing research on how the devices chosen by teachers are actually presented and used in the classroom will also allow us to understand just how teachers and pupils appropriate these resources, and how knowledge and values about food circulate in the school setting.

Notes

1. See the most recent official educational curricula published in the French *Bulletin officiel*, January 2012 (Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, 2012): children are expected to receive instruction about nutrition and personal hygiene starting in preschool and to learn to make reasoned choices about a balanced diet starting in elementary school. 'Taste class' approaches have also been adopted by a number of schools in France but are not integrated into the official school curriculum. See the guide for teachers on taste education published by the Education Ministry et al., Ministère de l'Agriculture and Ministère de l'Éducation nationale (2012).
2. This article presents the first results of a 2013 short-term research project on 'School Food: Actors, Practices and Discourses in Nord-Pas de Calais', funded by Lille Métropole and by the Louis Bonduelle Foundation.
3. This kit was created by a resource centre in Lille, specializing in environmental education, in cooperation with a Belgian educational network. For a description of this kit, see the website of the Lille Regional House of Environment and Solidarity (MRES) <<http://mres-asso.org/spip.php?breve333>>.

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