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## Sites of learning: exploring political ecologies and visceral pedagogies of surplus food redistribution in the UK

Journal:	<i>Policy Futures in Education</i>
Manuscript ID	PFIE-17-0160.R2
Manuscript Type:	Special Issue: Eating in the anthropocene: Learning the practice and ethics of food politics
Keywords:	food waste, food insecurity, food access, surplus food redistribution, visceral pedagogies, political ecology of the body
Abstract:	<p>Drawing on ethnographic research with organisations redistributing food waste, this paper explores potentials for political and ethical learning by comparing different approaches to food handling and teaching. Food acts as instigator and tool for learning about ecological impacts, wellbeing, food journeys, health, and pleasure. Re-learning wasted food challenges accusations of its stigmatising potential while attempting to address serious material issues of food insecurity and community food access. Taking seriously the charge that 'community-level' approaches might depoliticise and individualise food distribution at the expense of structural critique and action, these pragmatic and polysemic enrolments of food waste can nevertheless embody a teleology of change, through changing practices of food handling and fostering critical understandings of food system issues. While acknowledging the spatial, temporal and technological mediators of foodstuff's journey between bin and mouth, attention is paid to the sensorial, embodied, and affective means by which the food/waste distinction is known and taught/learned. A 'political ecology of the body' framework is used to explore the 'visceral realm' of food access as always situated in learners' diverse former experiences. These visceral pedagogies of knowing food sit alongside the power dynamics of regulatory food governance in the form of, for example, expiry-date labels. In short, these practices, albeit rooted in environmentally damaging and unequally-distributed foodscapes requiring systemic transformation, can nevertheless foster more vibrant sympathies between people and food, more care-ful connections between learners and their food futures.</p>

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2 **Title: Sites of learning: exploring political ecologies and visceral pedagogies of**  
3 **surplus food redistribution in the UK**

4  
5 **Abstract**

6 Drawing on ethnographic research with organisations redistributing wasted food, this  
7 paper explores potentials for political and ethical learning by comparing different  
8 approaches to food handling and teaching. Food acts as instigator and tool for  
9 learning about ecological impacts, wellbeing, provenance, health, and pleasure. Re-  
10 learning wasted food challenges accusations of its stigmatising potential while  
11 attempting to address serious material issues of food insecurity and community food  
12 access. Taking seriously the charge that ‘community-level’ approaches might  
13 depoliticise and individualise food distribution at the expense of structural critique  
14 and action, these pragmatic and polysemic enrolments of food waste can nevertheless  
15 embody a teleology of change, through changing practices of food handling and  
16 fostering critical understandings of food system issues. While acknowledging the  
17 spatial, temporal and technological mediators of food’s journey from bin towards  
18 mouth, attention is paid to the sensorial, embodied, and affective means by which the  
19 food/waste distinction is known and taught/learned. A ‘political ecology of the body’  
20 framework is used to explore the ‘visceral realm’ of food access as always part-  
21 situated in learners’ diverse foodscapes. These visceral pedagogies of knowing food  
22 sit alongside the power dynamics of regulatory food governance in the form of, for  
23 example, expiry-date labels. In short, these practices, albeit rooted in environmentally  
24 damaging and unequally-distributed foodscapes requiring systemic transformation,  
25 can nevertheless foster more vibrant sympathies between people and food, more care-  
26 ful connections between learners and their food futures.

27 **Keywords: food waste; food insecurity; food access; surplus food redistribution;**  
28 **visceral pedagogies; political ecology of the body**

29  
30  
31 The growing prevalence of schemes to intercept and redistribute food wasted by  
32 producers and retailers has responded to, and further problematised, not only the  
33 extent of food wastage in wealthy food economies, but also the uneven distribution of

1  
2  
3 34 wealth and food access manifest in growing evidence of ‘household food insecurity’  
4 (Midgley, 2013). Attention to food insecurity in UK media, civil society organisation  
5 (CSO) and policy discourse has renewed concerns over its prevalence in schools e.g.  
6  
7 36  
8 37 All-Party Parliamentary Group on School Food (2015). As charitable food banking in  
9 the UK has expanded, CSOs and community groups have increased provision of  
10 38  
11 holiday-period food assistance. Additionally, the growth of school breakfast provision  
12 39  
13 suggests schools’ widening role in children’s foodways. This paper highlights  
14 40  
15 41 ambiguous implications of a food waste activism network’s school food programme.  
16 42  
17 Its pedagogical practices raise questions around a two-fold concern. Firstly, the role  
18 43  
19 of community organisations in responding to systemic problems; namely food  
20 44  
21 insecurity and food wastage. Do locally-grounded charitable and activist responses to  
22 45  
23 food inequalities risk depoliticising or deflecting structural causes and solutions?  
24 46  
25 Secondly, ‘surplus food redistribution’ in schools raises questions about children’s  
26 47  
27 responsibilities over their own food choices. How does the summoning and  
28 48  
29 cultivation of childrens’ embodied and sensory capacities to know food differently  
30 49  
31 affect, on the one hand, their health and food access and, on the other, their  
32 50  
33 responsabilisation for systemic issues lying beyond their control? Through the  
34 51  
35 framework of a ‘political ecology of the body’ (Hayes-Conroy, 2015), and  
36 52  
37 specifically the notion of ‘visceral access’, binary notions assumed by these questions  
38 53  
39 will be challenged: ‘charity v activist’ frames of surplus food redistribution, and  
40 54  
41 ‘agency v structure’ binaries assumed by the question of whether food waste  
42 55  
43 pedagogies empower or responsabilise young people (the verbal form ‘wasted’ rather  
44 56  
45 than ‘surplus’ food is adopted, conveying human-induced processes by which food is  
46 57  
47 rendered waste). These questions will be explored through two empirical cases;  
48 58  
49 primarily, a school programme using wasted food intercepted by a network of  
50 59  
51 redistribution activists, and a charity that redistributes food similarly to a US-style  
52 60  
53 foodbank. First, literature considering the political implications of food provision and  
54 61  
55 pedagogies in schools are explored.

## 62 **Knowing food as more-than-food**

63 Food is an ontologically-multiple medium for learning about the politics and ethics of  
64 64  
65 food systems. Biltekoff (2016) analyses ‘framing contests’ at play in the design of  
66 65  
67 school curricula by food activist and food industry bodies. These aim to shape  
68 66  
69 “different kinds of consumers” but also to “stabilize different versions of what food

1  
2  
3 67 is” (2016:55). Biltekoff compares polarised articulations of processed food, where  
4  
5 68 ‘Real Food’ (a discussion guide by sustainable food activists) frames food as  
6  
7 69 “connections across natural and social systems” (2016:53), while ‘Real Facts’ (a food  
8  
9 70 trade association’s education materials) frames food not as systemic and political but  
10  
11 71 ontologically ‘singular’: a commodity delivering consumer needs and producer  
12  
13 72 profits. Biltekoff distinguishes ontologies of health inhering in the curricula: Real  
14  
15 73 Food “decentres the individual” and highlights issues of “access and policy”  
16  
17 74 (2016:52-3), while Real Facts’ “anti-politics of health...frames and enables health as  
18  
19 75 the result of individual biology, personal responsibility, and information” (2016:54).  
20  
21 76 Advocating dialogic research that recognises food system problems and solutions as  
22  
23 77 technical *and* social, her analysis reveals how food pedagogies differently construe,  
24  
25 78 responsabilise and/or empower children and their foodscapes. The following section  
26  
27 79 introduces another approach to understanding foodscapes as ontologically multiple.

### 80 **Political ecology of the body**

81 Hayes-Conroy’s (2015) political ecology of the body (PEB) framework encompasses  
82  
83 analytical attention to structural, discursive and material dimensions of health and  
84  
85 wellbeing. Its hybrid foci mirror shifts in political ecological thought from situating  
86  
87 ecological struggle within political economic constraints towards embracing post-  
88  
89 humanism (Heynen, 2013). PEB builds on feminist critiques of social constructivism  
90  
91 in highlighting affect, materiality, embodiment, emotion, performativity and non-  
92  
93 representational methodologies for grasping life-as-lived. Bodies and eating offer  
94  
95 vantage points for understanding food as the material grounds of survival, structural  
96  
97 enabler and constraints of this, and discursive practices mediating food access at  
98  
99 multiple scales. Considered through a PEB lens, everyday work of food redistribution  
100  
101 involves agentic encounters with food items, ideas about that food and more or less  
102  
103 explicit engagement with structures that both enable and constrain practices.

### 104 **Visceral food access**

105 Hayes-Conroy (2017:51) writes that theoretical attention to ‘the visceral realm’ seeks  
106  
107 to understand political agency “from the body out”. By ‘visceral’ she denotes the  
108  
109 “state/feeling of bodies in interrelation with environments/space”. As a specifically  
110  
111 political pursuit, we must not only ‘follow’ bodies but also “experiences of social  
112  
113 position(ing), norms and difference”. This includes methodological reflexivity in

1  
2  
3 99 research praxis, including attending to race, class and gender. Hayes-Conroy &  
4  
5 100 Hayes-Conroy (2013) apply the framework to school cooking-and-gardening  
6  
7 101 programmes. They acknowledge diverse “visceral topographies” that individual  
8  
9 102 learners bring to learning encounters. Bringing students into relation with new foods  
10  
11 103 and ideas can “widen the scope of emotional possibilities” (2013:84) and (re)shape  
12  
13 104 material sensitivities, identities and relationships available to them. However,  
14  
15 105 learners’ different backgrounds and experiences may engender frustration or  
16  
17 106 resentment towards programme interventions: hoped-for outcomes depend on  
18  
19 107 contingent and haphazard encounters between teachers, learners and more-than-  
20  
21 108 human mediators. The authors’ notion of ‘visceral access’ acknowledges bodily  
22  
23 109 senses and motivations as micro-spaces of encounter. Children’s “specific bodily  
24  
25 110 histories and prior and current affective/emotional relations with alternative foods”  
26  
27 111 (2013:82) comingle with embodied sensations of food handling and eating to  
28  
29 112 (re)shape visceral access, body-food relationships and encounters whose  
30  
31 113 consequences can stretch beyond the classroom.

32  
33 114 PEB’s attention to children’s life-assemblages highlights school as just one node in  
34  
35 115 ‘foodscapes’ (Brembeck et al., 2013) and the importance of recognising food choice  
36  
37 116 as a more-than-individual matter comprising families, homes, shops and sensory  
38  
39 117 experience. This takes us beyond the precepts of ‘sensory education’, which aims to  
40  
41 118 teach children to eat healthily through making novel/healthy foods sensorily familiar  
42  
43 119 e.g. Reverdy (2011). By critiquing socio-environmental change premised solely on  
44  
45 120 ‘attitudes, behaviours and choices’ of individuals (Shove, 2010), PEB can attend to  
46  
47 121 micro-level food-body assemblages as well as how food redistribution organisations  
48  
49 122 address, or neglect, broader issues of political responsibility for hunger and waste. I  
50  
51 123 now turn to consider political modalities of such redistribution.

#### 52 124 **Community feeding programmes: revolutionary possibilities?**

53 125 Ethnographies of wasted food redistribution, and community feeding programmes  
54  
55 126 more broadly, reveal its complex ethico-political implications, often relying upon a  
56  
57 127 binary distinction between activism and charity. Heynen (2010) contrasts the political  
58  
59 128 containment functions of charitable food with radical forms of food redistribution  
60  
129 that, historically, have contested uneven “geographies of survival”.

1  
2  
3 130 Patel (2011) analyses conditions transforming food assistance from ‘pacifying to  
4  
5 131 revolutionary’ in the Black Panther Party (BPP)’s politics of the everyday. The BPP  
6  
7 132 exemplifies political possibilities in everyday, material mechanisms of social  
8  
9 133 reproduction, including community food programmes. Its ‘Free Breakfast for  
10  
11 134 Schoolchildren’ programme was launched in 1968, feeding thousands of children  
12  
13 135 across America at its peak (Heynen, 2009). It addressed corporeal realities of uneven  
14  
15 136 urban food access given state failures to meet basic biophysical needs of African-  
16  
17 137 Americans. Importantly, such ‘survival programmes’ were explicitly recognised as  
18  
19 138 “not solutions to our problems”, but to nourish “survival pending revolution” (Huey  
20  
21 139 P. Newton Foundation, 2008:4). Grounding politics in everyday bodily survival and  
22  
23 140 creating spaces/relationships of mutual aid, Heynen argues, was necessary for broader  
24  
25 141 solidarities to emerge. Neighbourhood care networks could extend to national-global  
26  
27 142 assemblages of solidarity, stretching the concept of ‘community’. This challenges  
28  
29 143 binary interpretations of whether ‘community-level’ praxis enables or constrains  
30  
31 144 systemic political change at multiple scales.

32  
33 145 Patel (2011:122-3) distinguishes the BPP’s “vision for social change” from charity:

34  
35 146 By bursting the idea of food as...charity bestowed by rich to poor, setting in its  
36  
37 147 place the notion that food is a right- and...that an order might be composed  
38  
39 148 without private property- the act of feeding children was transformed from  
40  
41 149 pacifying to revolutionary (p.25)

42  
43 150 This transformation is rooted in nurturing material geographies of everyday survival  
44  
45 151 and, Heynen (2009) argues, challenging the patriarchal dissociation of revolutionary  
46  
47 152 praxis from domesticity and care. The BPP’s breakfast programme appears in  
48  
49 153 dialectical light, where food nurtured bodies, ideas and communal spaces as a  
50  
51 154 necessary (if insufficient) vehicle of broader systemic transformation that nevertheless  
52  
53 155 instigated considerable structural change. Pressure on Hoover’s government as a  
54  
55 156 result of BPP activism led to the breakfast programme’s co-optation in the rollout of  
56  
57 157 federally-funded school breakfast programmes (Patel 2011). Such articulations of  
58  
59 158 practical action and political organising suggest counter-possibilities for community  
60  
159 food programmes to engender multi-level change, for bottom-up organising to foster  
160 systemic change, albeit in unpredictable ways. While operating in a different context,  
161 UK schools are increasingly recognising impacts of food insecurity among families  
162 on young peoples’ learning (Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2017). Where state  
163 entitlements have declined, living costs have risen and employment does not



1  
2  
3 164 necessarily protect against poverty. In this context, can wasted food redistribution,  
4  
5 165 and the politics it generates, foster systemic change while addressing bodily needs?  
6  
7 166 Debates are underway in the UK as to the kind of solution ‘surplus food  
8  
9 167 redistribution’ offers as a response to hunger and/or food waste, and its distribution of  
10  
11 168 benefits (Caraher & Furey, 2017). The following section explores redistribution as  
12  
13 169 contesting commodification as a vector of edible food’s unnecessary wastage.

#### 14 170 **Eating waste as affective activism**

15  
16  
17 171 Critical food waste scholarship analyses the commodification of food’s cosmetic  
18  
19 172 qualities as an aspect of systematic wastage. Commodification facilitates wastage if  
20  
21 173 foodstuffs’ exchange value is not realised. Giles (2016) analyses “postcard-perfect”  
22  
23 174 rows of produce in Seattle’s Pike Place market as “meta-signifiers” of world-class  
24  
25 175 consumption, exuding an “anthropocentric cosmopolitanism, diametrically opposed to  
26  
27 176 the contingency of a natural world which resists the ontological standardisation of  
28  
29 177 form and function inherent in the commodity” (Giles 2016:84). Theories of affective  
30  
31 178 politics, such as Thrift (2004) on “the manipulation of affect for political ends”, can  
32  
33 179 help to account for wasted food’s materiality, including the moral discomfort and  
34  
35 180 visceral feelings its presence often prompts. What matters in food’s aesthetic  
36  
37 181 fetishisation is not the capacity of food-commodities to nourish bodies and uphold  
38  
39 182 subsistence rights, but the logics of capital accumulation, premised on the routine  
40  
41 183 expulsion of ‘ex-commodities’ (Barnard, 2016). Understanding food’s wastage for  
42  
43 184 commercial reasons regardless of its edibility leads social movement activists to  
44  
45 185 acknowledge, articulate, and challenge this logic, demonstrating use values by eating  
46  
47 186 recovered food and bequeathing it an alternative biopolitical trajectory from its  
48  
49 187 commodity form.

50  
51  
52 188 Barnard notes the conflation between waste’s symbolism and its visceral capacities,  
53  
54 189 arguing that “we are now frequently disgusted by anything labelled ‘waste’”  
55  
56 190 (2016:129). For ‘freegans’ in his study, eating ‘polluted’ food attempts to  
57  
58 191 symbolically “flip the object of disgust onto the companies that created ex-  
59  
60 192 commodities in the first place” (ibid.). Freegans refracted the ‘dirt’ of wasted food by  
193  
194 visually displaying ‘dumpster-dived’ foods on sidewalks with speeches decrying the  
195  
196 capitalist logics and socio-ecological harm represented by food wastage to passers-by.  
197  
198 Patel (2011) notes how the BPP obtained breakfast programme foods from the San



1  
2  
3 196 Francisco Diggers, whose redistribution of wasted food as free public meals  
4  
5 197 constituted a prefigurative politics of demonstrating alternatives to capitalism. The  
6  
7 198 BPP framed their reliance on donated food as a way for businesses to express  
8  
9 199 community care. They envisaged businesses lowering their prices given their analysis  
10  
11 200 of capitalist “robbery”, the “ridiculously high prices that we must pay for food, which  
12  
13 201 is necessary for our daily sustenance” (Huey P. Newton Foundation, 2008:39).  
14  
15 202 Contrastingly, Barnard and Mourad (2014) explore how superficially similar acts of  
16  
17 203 redistributing surplus food can enact divergent political repertoires that may or may  
18  
19 204 not be understood/shared by eaters. Food’s politicised redistribution bears a long  
20  
21 205 history; activists’ analyses of its commodification and material possibilities suggest  
22  
23 206 discursive repertoires that can be compared with the empirical cases explored in this  
24  
25 207 paper.

### 208 **Reconfiguring the senses**

209 Theorising the activism of Food Not Bombs, Giles argues that food commodities’  
210  
211 “material agency” as ripening or bruising amounts to corrupting trajectories towards  
212  
213 “matter out of place” that renders food (commercially) waste (2016:84). Barnard  
214  
215 notes the dominance of the visual in determining food’s status:

213       The fetishism of waste partly comes through our overreliance on sight and  
214       misconceptions about hygiene; by adopting new practices and norms, freegans  
215       were prefiguring a “post-fetish” world (2016:130)

216 For activists, food recovery means more than material survival, enacting “direct  
217  
218 action that challenged the power of retailers to determine what was, and was not,  
219  
220 good to eat” (Barnard 2016:127). This prompts us to consider *who and what else*  
221  
222 might have the power to determine what is good to eat, and how. Wasted food’s  
223  
224 structural, representational and material qualities can be re-configured through  
225  
226 practice, and it is practices of food acquisition, handling and teaching that will be  
227  
228 considered in relation to the school programme’s politics.

223 Here we see opportunities for a PEB analysis of food redistribution practices,  
224  
225 considering multi-bodied affect as well as the politics of representation and  
226  
227 knowledge-production around food/eating. Structural forces of different natures and  
228  
229 scales are acknowledged, for example the role of regulation. US reluctance to  
230  
231 legislate for standardised expiry-dates, Barnard argues (2016:127), reflects corporate  
232  
233 interests, which “make more money when consumers don’t trust their senses and

1  
2  
3 229 throw out food that has passed a conservative sell-by date”. For freegans, challenging  
4  
5 230 expiry-dates and commercial cosmetic standards to distinguish food from waste  
6  
7 231 involves the cultivation of embodied discernment of food via the senses. The  
8  
9 232 embodied knowledge politics through which edibility is conferred by engaging  
10  
11 233 sensorily with food thus serve as a means to critique government inaction and  
12  
13 234 corporate greed.

### 14 235 **Food safety as praxis**

16 236 Barnard notes that freegans, ironically, actually know little about where their food  
17  
18 237 comes from and that food may have been wasted because it is unsafe, such as product  
19  
20 238 recalls (Barnard, 2016:128). Food’s potential to make people ill constitutes valid  
21  
22 239 anxiety that can hasten food’s categorisation as waste in homes (Evans, 2014:47).  
23  
24 240 Freegans’ risk-minimisation strategies included careful procedures for washing,  
25  
26 241 preparing and cooking food. One way to compare the politics of food redistribution is  
27  
28 242 thus to examine how different redistributors negotiate ideas, devices and practices for  
29  
30 243 determining wasted food’s suitability for feeding to people. Rather than objectively  
31  
32 244 judge food as ‘safe’ and ‘edible’, the task here is to analyse redistributors’ mediations  
33  
34 245 for knowing good food, and for teaching this to others, which will be later analysed in  
35  
36 246 challenging binary distinctions between redistribution-as-activism and redistribution-  
37  
38 247 as-charity. The next section examines literature critiquing the latter.

### 38 248 **Charitable food redistribution**

40 249 Unlike activists’ de-fetishisation efforts, wasted food provides a vehicle for ‘doing  
41  
42 250 good’ by charitable organisations, not primarily to critique causes of food wastage,  
43  
44 251 but to feed food-insecure people. North American literature suggests important  
45  
46 252 distinctions between transient, subcultural redistribution by social movements as  
47  
48 253 described above, and institutionalised charitable redistribution. Poppendieck (1998)  
49  
50 254 roots the latter in chaotic origins of utilising food surpluses to provide a temporary  
51  
52 255 solution to the poverty wrought by Reaganomics. This expanded to become highly-  
53  
54 256 resourced, integrated and professionalised foodbanking networks. These, she argues,  
55  
56 257 oversimplify and depoliticise poverty through “cosmetic solutions”, redefining the  
57  
58 258 retrenchment of public entitlement as individualised hunger that can be solved by  
59  
60 259 gifts of food (1998:315).

1  
2  
3 260 UK debates around responsibilities of government, charity and corporations in  
4  
5 261 addressing poverty through food redistribution have intensified since the onset of  
6  
7 262 post-recessionary austerity Conservative Party policy-making in 2010 (Midgley,  
8  
9 263 2013). Critics have questioned the quality and appropriateness of charitable food  
10  
11 264 (Caraher & Furey, 2017). Power imbalances implied by Patel's description of charity  
12  
13 265 as 'pacification' have been analysed in terms of stigma, shame and powerlessness  
14  
15 266 (van der Horst et al., 2014). While uneven emotional and affective dynamics of food  
16  
17 267 aid encounters have been explored (Williams et al., 2016), less attention has been paid  
18  
19 268 to the visceral realm of wasted charitable food. Critics have, however, shed light on  
20  
21 269 the qualities of donated and wasted food; Tarasuk and Eakin (2005) noted the "limited  
22  
23 270 and highly variable supply of food donations" as a limiting factor of foodbank  
24  
25 271 provision. Van der Horst et al. (2014:1512) note that for some recipients the  
26  
27 272 "experience of poverty is heightened by the content of the food parcels", including  
28  
29 273 regular inclusion of "spoiled food" where expiration dates prompted emotional  
30  
31 274 responses to "embodied taboos" around eating 'waste'. Recipients were expected to  
32  
33 275 "overcome...inhibitions" (ibid.) through volunteers educating them about the  
34  
35 276 relevance of expiration dates. This contrasts with the discursive refraction by which  
36  
37 277 freegan activists re-framed food as edible and desirable by challenging 'embodied  
38  
39 278 taboos' around expiry-dates as regulatory constructions, not as flawed individual  
40  
41 279 knowledge.

### 280 **Political food ecologies: challenging the activist/charity binary**

42  
43 281 Before turning to our methodology, we bring together some of the strands laid out in  
44  
45 282 identifying a nexus of food politics, ethics and pedagogy that blur the distinction  
46  
47 283 between pacifying and revolutionary. The PEB framework critiques efforts to teach  
48  
49 284 'ethical' food to students whose classed, racialised and gendered 'visceral  
50  
51 285 topographies' may be obscured by pedagogical programmes that aim to broaden  
52  
53 286 learners' foodscapes without acknowledging the structural, representational and  
54  
55 287 material constraints affecting all teaching and learning (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-  
56  
57 288 Conroy, 2013). Critiques of the individualising propensities of charitable  
58  
59 289 redistribution (Poppendieck 1998) can nevertheless be applied to more radical  
60  
290 redistribution practices. While 'dumpster diving' for some provides a means to  
291 disavow waste resulting from strict cosmetic standards, conservative expiry dates and  
292 abundantly-stocked shop shelves, its positing of individual practice in pursuit of more

1  
2  
3 293 ethical forms of consumption arguably misses the “extent to which these practices are  
4 294 constrained by the existing organization of food production, distribution and  
5 295 consumption” (Mourad & Barnard, 2016).  
6  
7  
8

9 296 The PEB framework, however, embraces the interactions of the structural, discursive  
10 297 and material operations of power and we consider political activity at multiple levels,  
11 298 rather than analyse all consumption-focussed activity as embodying neoliberal  
12 299 strategy. We will thus explore different ways that redistribution organisations  
13 300 configure food qualities, especially safety and edibility, and their political  
14 301 implications. Exploring differences between organisations’ more-than-human  
15 302 assembling of food ethics is an attempt to identify spaces for debate around a key  
16 303 question for food justice: how should we regard/utilise wasted food?  
17  
18  
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23 304 As suggested, actors utilise wasted food for different ends, using diverse practical and  
24 305 discursive means for representing and handling food/waste, which translate into  
25 306 distinctive pedagogies of ‘knowing food’ that can then be taught to others. These  
26 307 range from activists’ performances revealing the extent and mundane capitalist logics  
27 308 of food wastage to expanding charitable movements framing wasted food as a  
28 309 resource for addressing poverty. While reflecting distinct political repertoires, they do  
29 310 however overlap and converge in important ways: their reliance on donated food, and  
30 311 their enabling of food access through re-diverting flows of decommodified food. The  
31 312 everyday work of redistribution involves agentic encounters with food items, ideas  
32 313 about that food and more or less explicit engagement with structures that both enable  
33 314 and constrain practices. Patel (2011:129), however, argues that the difference between  
34 315 ‘pacification’ and ‘revolution’ lies in the recognition that food provision is not enough  
35 316 to transform food injustices, which requires envisaging and acting upon the scale of  
36 317 injustice through “political education and effective action”. He also notes the  
37 318 importance of grappling with gender, race and other intersectional vectors of  
38 319 inequality in the pursuit of radical change. Might UK food redistribution offer a  
39 320 politics of empowerment, solidarity and critique rather than pacification, the  
40 321 disciplinary function served by charities in the neoliberal rollback of redistributive  
41 322 policy (Poppendieck, 1998)?  
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57 323 In conjunction with theory laid out, our empirics will challenge the activist/charity  
58 324 binary by highlighting differing redistribution organisations’ mutual concerns,  
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3 325 challenges and role in an expanding field of food aid. A focus on sensory praxis will  
4 326 draw out this challenged binary by examining pedagogies of teaching food/waste  
5 327 distinctions by two organisations, and by considering how organisations attempted to  
6 328 provide food that was appropriate, desirable, and safe.  
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## 10 329 **Methodology**

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14 330 Having situated our study in analyses of wasted food redistribution for diverse ends,  
15 331 we introduce the redistribution projects studied. The main focus is the school-  
16 332 educational programme of a network of pay-as-you-feel cafes serving wasted food. Its  
17 333 initial aim was to protest food waste's environmental hazards by demonstrating its  
18 334 extent and needlessness, but several participants also highlighted the network's role in  
19 335 bolstering food access in deprived neighbourhoods. Food is generally acquired  
20 336 through local businesses donating surplus food rather than bin-diving, though activists  
21 337 describe donations as 'interceptions' in a politics of refusal to acknowledge the  
22 338 beneficence of the food industry whose profit-motivated excess, they argue, *causes*  
23 339 wastage. Receiving donations also minimises risks of redistributing unsafe food,  
24 340 which Barnard (2016) notes is a risk of freegan practice.  
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33 341 The programme delivers wasted food to schools, which is subsequently redistributed  
34 342 to families through pay-as-you-feel market stalls manned by parents, teachers and/or  
35 343 children. It aims to alleviate school hunger (e.g. providing morning toast in  
36 344 classrooms) while raising awareness of food wastage. It was co-founded by a school  
37 345 in an area of high deprivation in a city in the north of England, described by the co-  
38 346 ordinator as a "desert" of access to both food and service provision. Organisers lead  
39 347 assemblies and classes to teach children about health, sustainability and  
40 348 entrepreneurship through handling wasted food. The programme also aims to  
41 349 contribute to the network's campaign strategy, "empowering" children to "feel like  
42 350 they have the power to be an activist", as one organiser described. Its aims thus go  
43 351 beyond providing inexpensive foods to families. Further, it hopes to instil changes in  
44 352 children's attitudes and skills around food that it is hoped will help them prevent food  
45 353 waste in their own and others' lives. Research, undertaken from 2015-2016, included  
46 354 a year of participant observation and semi-structured interviews with ten members of  
47 355 the pay-as-you-feel cafe network, including school programme organisers (referred to  
48 356 as 'activist-educators' below). Ethical and time considerations precluded interviewing  
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3 357 children/parents, so interviews aimed to capture organisers' experiences in relatively  
4 358 early stages of the programme.

7 359 The school programme's approach is compared with a national charity redistributing  
8 360 wasted food with the explicit aim of alleviating 'food poverty'. It redistributes food  
9 361 from major industry partner-donors to local charities through an expanding  
10 362 infrastructure of warehousing and transportation. It must adhere to the national  
11 363 charity's food-safety guidelines. Fieldwork took place over one year from November  
12 364 2015, with one regional depot.

18 365 Ethics approval for the research was granted by the university and informed consent  
19 366 granted by organisers and participants in all locations. Interviews were recorded,  
20 367 transcribed and analysed, drawing on tools of Critical Grounded Theory (Belfrage &  
21 368 Hauf, 2017) which facilitates attention to structural, discursive and relational/material  
22 369 dimensions. The two organisations' distinct origins, relationships with donors and  
23 370 modes of redistributing food offer ways to consider the political import of differing  
24 371 approaches to distinguishing food from waste through embodied praxis.

30 372 **School-based redistribution: depoliticising or meeting immediate needs?**

33 373 The first question to be addressed empirically is whether community-level food  
34 374 assistance depoliticises structural issues of poverty and waste. Heynen's (2009:408)  
35 375 reminder of the under-theorised mundane, "horrifying reality of hunger" situates  
36 376 urban hunger "within the context of political economy, social reproduction, and  
37 377 poverty". Projects attending to this can thus provide not just vital sustenance but a  
38 378 window onto spatial and structural determinants of hunger. The activist network  
39 379 expressed attention to these, as shown below. Most pay-as-you-feel café network  
40 380 members differentiated themselves from charitable food aid providers, highlighting  
41 381 their primary purpose as campaigning against food waste. One characterised the  
42 382 redistribution charity's donor relationships as "so far up Tesco's arses that they'll  
43 383 never campaign to end food waste" (interview, café organiser, 19/1/16). She  
44 384 nevertheless described differences between cafés' emphases on addressing hunger  
45 385 locally, a point verified by other interviews, suggesting a mutual concern with the  
46 386 charity.

57 387 While the wider network tended to downplay its hunger relief role, the school  
58 388 programme (just one of the network's multiple conduits for redistributing surplus



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3 389 food) cites alleviating in-school hunger as a primary aim. The founding school is  
4 390 located in area categorised as in the "bottom 2% of deprivation nationally" (Joe,  
5 391 school staff, interview 25/10/16). Joe described it as a "food desert", with the local  
6 392 supermarket 2.5 miles away. With most parents lacking a car, the £5 cost of taxis and  
7 393 buses to the shops meant less money to spend on healthier foods. The "medium of  
8 394 food", Joe suggested, was a means to engage parents in the school community,  
9 395 including its provision of English lessons, housing and welfare services. With over  
10 396 forty languages spoken by the school's families, he acknowledged multiple forms of  
11 397 deprivation affecting the school's refugee and asylum-seeking families. Joe's analyses  
12 398 reflect sensitivity of school staff to the structural determinants of hunger affecting  
13 399 pupils in their familial and geographical contexts. Staff have, alongside the activist  
14 400 network, advocated for income-based solutions by participating in national campaigns  
15 401 to address school-related hunger.

16  
17 402 However, everyday activities raise questions about the appropriateness of surplus  
18 403 food market stalls, even if situated in broader political discourse. Food deliveries to  
19 404 schools are pre-sorted by volunteers of the café/activist network to ensure no high-  
20 405 risk food (bearing a 'use-by' date or needing refrigeration) is included. Schools  
21 406 receive a mixture of fruits/vegetables, bread/"cereal-type items" and "treats". While  
22 407 the network has secured enough donors to allow some predictability, and families are  
23 408 able to choose what to take, supplies are still dependent on available surpluses and  
24 409 can reflect the highly-processed, highly-packaged products one often encountered in  
25 410 redistribution spaces throughout the research. The 'market' is not intended to meet  
26 411 families' full food needs, and schools may use food internally for classroom learning  
27 412 or morning toast. While boosting food access, the stall nevertheless offers a partial  
28 413 and contingent source of food rather than fulfilling the human right to food, a  
29 414 challenge similarly levelled at charitable foodbanking (Tarasuk & Eakin, 2005).

30  
31 415 The pay-as-you-feel model of accessing food was noted in some interviews to be  
32 416 confusing and even frustrating for certain 'shoppers', prompting questions around the  
33 417 nuances of re-marketing food in school settings. Intended as a redistribution model  
34 418 that does not require referrals to foodbanks and is thus available to anybody, it  
35 419 nevertheless re-confers an exchange value onto food where the normative mode of  
36 420 paying is with money (rather than 'skills or time', which the organisation also invites  
37 421 as means of paying). In line with Barnard and Mourad's (2014) argument that food



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3 422 waste activists' political repertoires may not be apparent to those receiving the food,  
4 423 the market stall could become seen as just one more node in an expanding network of  
5 424 charitable feeding. These points suggest the capacity of schools to bolster  
6  
7 425 communities' access to food and other services, but also the latent disciplinarity of  
8  
9 426 this extension of pastoral care to parents and the wider community. Engaging parents  
10  
11 427 in the job-searching, financial literacy and upskilling techniques of austerity  
12  
13 428 Workfare-style contemporary welfare through the 'medium of food' suggests a need  
14  
15 429 for critical attention to responsibilities of the state, through schools, in providing  
16  
17 430 welfare services. Little evidence appeared from initial interviews of a coordinated  
18  
19 431 political strategy that engaged families, schools and activists, without which Patel  
20  
21 432 (2011) suggests food distribution can remain 'pacifying', leaving structural  
22  
23 433 determinants of hunger/waste largely unchallenged.

24  
25 434 How does the redistribution charity's model compare? First, it delivers food to a range  
26  
27 435 of organisations whose varied political work can be seeing as "flying in under the  
28  
29 436 cover" of the charity, as Henderson (2004) skilfully argued of the articulations  
30  
31 437 between depoliticised charities and those they serve. Interviews revealed a diversity  
32  
33 438 of workers' beliefs about structural causes of hunger/waste, and motivations to  
34  
35 439 address these. Fundamentally, however, the charity's key priorities were upholding  
36  
37 440 donor relations, expanding infrastructure and regulatory compliance priorities, not  
38  
39 441 campaigning. While workers learned about problems including school hunger and  
40  
41 442 geographical deprivation through their articulations and engagements with recipients,  
42  
43 443 the charity's key remit remains alleviating need through food provision, not structural  
44  
45 444 change.

46  
47 445 We now turn to examine the visceral pedagogies through which wasted food was  
48  
49 446 (re)configured through experiential learning, using the PEB framework to consider  
50  
51 447 such learning on the de/politicisation spectrum outlined in Biltekoff's (2016) analysis  
52  
53 448 of curricular design.

#### 54 449 **Viscerally learning food**

55  
56 450 As noted, the 'curation' of schools' food deliveries at the redistribution network's  
57  
58 451 warehouses yields some consistency in type/quality and may prompt questioning  
59  
60 452 among children as to why visibly-edible food has been thrown away, and what might  
453 be done with it. Pupils' receiving and re-sorting food for their market stall entails

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2  
3 454 visceral engagement with food. By handling and exploring its affective qualities,  
4  
5 455 food's designation as 'waste' can thus be reconfigured. Food thus arrives at the school  
6  
7 456 as ontologically plural, as not simply a commodity or nourishment, but the result of a  
8  
9 457 systemic journey of wastage and recovery, as explained in tailored classes.

10  
11 458 Activist-educator Tim designed lessons to challenge 'embodied taboos' around, for  
12  
13 459 example, past-dated food. He described a pupil complaining that the food was "just  
14  
15 460 manky bananas", so planned an initial lesson to

16  
17 461 ...remove anything that children would have already thought...like for example  
18 462 the manky banana comment; they think that it's just gonna be out-of-date food.  
19 463 (Tim, activist-educator, interview 26/10/17)

20  
21 464 Playful tactility prompted disgust reactions:

22  
23 465 I take a squishy banana, one that's slightly bruised...and get them to pass it  
24 466 around...it's like a hot potato, like urgh, urgh, and they want to pass it on as  
25 467 quickly as possible (Tim)

26  
27 468 Disgust was then challenged through preparation practices, re-tooling the 'manky'  
28  
29 469 banana by blending it into a smoothie for everyone to taste. Such touch-sight-taste  
30  
31 470 reconfigurations provided visceral opportunities to (potentially) counter pre-  
32  
33 471 conceptions. Contrasting effects of food on visual and gustatory receptors provide  
34  
35 472 potential openings/blockages in the holistic assemblage that is motivation to try foods.  
36  
37 473 These learning encounters create shared spaces for children's diverse 'visceral  
38  
39 474 topographies' to be re-traced, perhaps challenging visual and haptic food judgements  
40  
41 475 through food practices and tasting.

#### 42 43 476 **Fostering 'healthy' connections with food**

44  
45 477 Handling less-than-perfect foods was thus intended to widen children's affective  
46  
47 478 repertoires with food. Educators aimed to foster bodily habits of engaging with food  
48  
49 479 to be better able to discern, sense, and appreciate food's qualities: as edible, healthy,  
50  
51 480 desirable. Fruits and vegetables were frequently mentioned as suited to sensory  
52  
53 481 learning, suggesting the programme's alignment with dominant curricular concerns  
54  
55 482 around 'healthy' eating. However, foods were re-contextualised as connective actants  
56  
57 483 in food systems where 'health' emerges relationally rather than residing in individuals  
58  
59 484 (Biltekoff, 2016). During an activity where children tried to place food in familiar  
60  
485 categories, Nik re-positioned children's surprise at learning cucumbers as fruit within  
486 a narrative of food-plants' teleologies:

1  
2  
3 487 We talk about...actually what's a fruit for...if you understand [that] then you'll  
4 488 understand why it's very nutritious 'cause the whole point of the fruit is to feed  
5 489 the little seedling and so it's all about making those connections about actually,  
6 490 this is not just something that you put in your mouth and it tastes a certain way,  
7 491 it might grow a bit or whatever else; there's a whole lot more to it...(Nik)  
8  
9 492 Nik thus reframed fruit as more-than-food: a relational "material-semiotic actor"  
10  
11 493 (Haraway, 1988) whose 'job' is to do more than feed humans. Here, multi-sensory  
12  
13 494 engagement implied more than intensified sensory receptivity, by layering cognitive  
14  
15 495 knowledge *about* food with immediate sensation.

### 16 496 **Co-creating knowledge?**

17  
18  
19 497 Biltekoff notes how the 'Real Food' curriculum cast pupils not as passive recipients of  
20  
21 498 knowledge but as co-creators of learning rooted in their broader foodscapes. While  
22  
23 499 Tim acknowledged children's preconceptions, activist-educator Nik framed children's  
24  
25 500 prior food knowledge as lacking: "before I go into the classroom, if you ask someone  
26  
27 501 where food comes from, it comes from a shelf in a shop and before that it becomes a  
28  
29 502 bit of a...dark grey hole". Learner-subject's 'grey holes' suggest blank slates for the  
30  
31 503 inscription of food systems knowledge. This masks somewhat the complexities of  
32  
33 504 children's prior ways of knowing food, perhaps the materiality of past shopping trips,  
34  
35 505 and partially obscures the co-constructive, contestable nature of learning given  
36  
37 506 children's diverse 'visceral topographies'. However, one organiser mentioned parents  
38  
39 507 being invited to food waste assemblies, suggesting attention to children's wider  
40  
41 508 foodscapes, and the relationships that populate them.

### 42 509 **Sensing food/waste**

43 510 Foods' changing qualities as they degrade were instrumentalised to reconfigure  
44  
45 511 assumptions about food-as-waste using visual, olfactory and even auditory cues.  
46  
47 512 Children were encouraged to suggest how they might use different sense modalities to  
48  
49 513 determine whether food is "good to eat":

50 514 There'll usually be one person who knows about tapping a melon...every sense  
51 515 will have a...relevant application to understanding whether the food is ripe or  
52 516 rotten (Nik)

53  
54 517 Mushrooms' "stink" prompted giggles, prompting Nik to recast disgust reactions  
55  
56 518 through re-framing the mushroom as a "fungal fruit". Yellowing broccoli was re-  
57  
58 519 framed as a "bunch of flowers" opening up. New ways of seeing, handling and  
59  
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3 520 describing food were thus presented, aiming to widen children's acceptance of  
4  
5 521 imperfect food as potential nourishment but also ecologically conscious consumption.

6  
7 522 **Situating food safety**

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9  
10 523 Activist-educators aimed to teach food safety as a contextual matter of interpreting  
11 524 regulatory determinants of waste. Improving expiry-date literacy has been an aim of  
12  
13 525 government research and behaviour-change programmes around food waste  
14  
15 526 (Lyndhurst, 2008). One organiser asked children to discuss their understanding of  
16  
17 527 different expiry-dates:

18  
19 528       What it does is create confusion, and that's probably the best word to describe  
20 529       how dates work on food in this country, confusion...(Tim, 26/10/2016)

21  
22 530 After explaining differences between 'use-by' and 'best-before' expiry-dates (Milne  
23  
24 531 2012), children were encouraged to consider them in context:

25  
26 532       We use the example...if there's two pieces of meat...one's been stored in the  
27 533       fridge, one's been out in the sun- they're both still within the use-by date- can  
28 534       you eat them both? (Tim)

29  
30 535 He reported that most children would reply "yes", suggesting primacy of the expiry-  
31 536 date as a mode for interpreting edibility. He would tell them:

32  
33 537       ... 'no, you can't, because it hasn't been stored correctly, and actually you don't  
34 538       know how your food's been stored up to the point you get it'...we're really  
35 539       pushing that confidence and use of their senses as much as they can...(Tim)

36  
37 540 Contextual re-presentation aimed to destabilise the expiry-date's authority and 'push'  
38  
39 541 different kinds of confidence, by enacting sensorial, emotional and situated  
40  
41 542 knowledge (Haraway, 1988).

42  
43 543 Food regulation has often followed crises of public trust in food systems following  
44  
45 544 'scandals' rooted in intensive production (Milne, 2012). Contra the scientific  
46  
47 545 expertise congealed in expiry-dates, activists' beliefs that such technologies arbitrarily  
48  
49 546 contribute to unnecessary waste prompted other kinds of knowing to take precedence  
50  
51 547 in their pedagogies of knowing food:

52  
53 548       ...[sensory engagement]'s also an alternative way to understand when  
54 549       something's still good to eat- that if you don't want to look at that stupid date  
55 550       then what do you do then? (Nik)

56  
57 551 Activist-educators did account for children's diverse prior knowledge. Nik suspected  
58  
59 552 that children knowing precisely what different dates mean was "informed by a family  
60  
553 having to do that [eat past-date foods] rather than having made the ethical choice but

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2  
3 554 informed by not really having that much money to spend”, while other children  
4  
5 555 expressed “overly strict behaviour around dates”. While describing expiry-dates as  
6  
7 556 ‘stupid’ expresses frustrated belief that they cause unnecessary waste, educators thus  
8  
9 557 recognised the limitations of individualising children’s behaviour given its rootedness  
10  
11 558 in their variable foodscapes and the ways thriftiness may well already figure highly in  
12  
13 559 families' strategies to cope with food insecurity.

14 560 **Charitable food: date-adherence as preserving dignity?**

15  
16 561 How does the redistribution charity position food safety? It does not distribute past-  
17  
18 562 date food, reflecting concerns around donor compliance but also about the quality and  
19  
20 563 reputational implications of redistributed food. Following a briefing paper suggesting  
21  
22 564 the “inferior choice, accessibility and (nutritional) quality” of redistributed surplus  
23  
24 565 food (Caraher & Furey, 2017:13), the charity communicated via social media that it  
25  
26 566 distributes nutritious, in-date, desirable food. Staff frequently emphasised that it  
27  
28 567 delivered food to organisations cooking meals rather than giving food bags,  
29  
30 568 emphasising provision of commensal, familial, ‘proper’ food. Redistributing fresh  
31  
32 569 produce was described as a way to provide healthy-yet-compliant food, with loose  
33  
34 570 produce not requiring an expiry-date. This non-requirement lends space for more  
35  
36 571 contextual practice; warehouse manager Graham maximised the opportunities it  
37  
38 572 afforded for removing packaging. He argued that much produce comes in “its own  
39  
40 573 packaging” and can be sorted by its sensory qualities. He combined concern for  
41  
42 574 preserving recipients’ dignity by providing fresh, high-quality food with skills to  
43  
44 575 predict temporalities of fresh produce’s capacity to degrade:

43 576 [charity clients] don’t want fruit and veg sorted to a low standard...four days  
44 577 later we finally get it to the customer and the next day...they open the  
45 578 cupboard...and go “why have they given me a bag of mush?” It’s gotta be good  
46 579 standards from the start, and it’s respect as well. You’re feeding people in need-  
47 580 oh, here’s some rotten old crap for you...(Graham, interview, 14/11/2016)

48  
49 581 The inferred ‘neediness’ of eventual food recipients was thus invoked in justifying  
50  
51 582 sorting practices that required volunteers to follow expiry-dates but also their  
52  
53 583 embodied skill in knowing food in its present and predicted future state. Unlike the  
54  
55 584 school programme, the charity model does not permit such close engagement  
56  
57 585 between redistributors, eventual eaters and the visceral affordances of food. However,  
58  
59 586 Graham and other food sorters' care-ful praxis suggests that eventual eaters' sensory  
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3 587 experiences were indeed a concern that commanded volunteers' own embodied and  
4  
5 588 sensory labours.

6  
7 589 **Affective assemblages as politics?**  
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9  
10 590 How might we analyse these multiple positionings of food and children politically?  
11 591 The activist network taught food materialities as contextual and systemic, involving  
12 592 visceral contact with food items and cognitive learning about food systems, safety and  
13 593 health. Classroom sessions constituted amalgams of images, imaginings, narratives,  
14 594 and tactilities, glued together by the intimate group setting and atmosphere of  
15 595 excitement. This recalls Bennett's conceptualisation of 'vibrant matter' as 'conative  
16 596 bodies', from whose mutually "confederate agency" new sympathies between bodies  
17 597 might arise (Bennett, 2010). Bennett locates political action in the emergence of  
18 598 publics, "groups of bodies with the capacity to affect and be affected", whose  
19 599 experience/articulation of shared harms prompts engagement in "new acts that will  
20 600 restore their power", albeit with unpredictable consequences (2010:101). Similarly,  
21 601 volunteers sorting food in charitable spaces expressed affective and discursive re-  
22 602 learnings of food with potential consequences both for eventual eaters and their own  
23 603 foodscapes. Politics viewed thus is immanent in the micro-encounter of intimate  
24 604 person-food relating as well as systemic knowledge and policy change. Crafting close  
25 605 encounters for children and food lends space for a processual, more distributed kind  
26 606 of ethics than the charitable ethic of giving/receiving based on a narrow  
27 607 conceptualisation of 'need', recalling a Foucauldian distinction between ethics and  
28 608 morality (Foucault, 1997).

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43 609 While inferring potential for 'vibrant encounters' to transform children's intimate  
44 610 relationships with food, different children may not experience the same 'participatory'  
45 611 space in the same way (Kraftl, 2013:15). Activist-educators tended to problematise  
46 612 children's/families food choices and behaviours as sites for transformation, hoping  
47 613 that this might galvanise future activism towards eliminating food waste. Meanwhile,  
48 614 however, structural limitations upon foodscapes persist: neighbourhood deprivation,  
49 615 food access and immigration status among others. Families' capacities to join/form  
50 616 'groups of bodies' united against the 'shared harms' of wasted food and hunger require,  
51 617 first and foremost, their acquiring adequate food and other resources to metabolise  
52 618 social reproduction. Bennett's theorisation of the political promise of more-than-  
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3 619 human confederacies challenges the instrumentalising of matter (including food) that  
4  
5 620 “feeds human hubris and our earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption”  
6  
7 621 (2010:ix). This injects ecological hope into efforts to nurture more vibrant person-  
8  
9 622 food relationships through food redistribution. However, it obscures humans' different  
10  
11 623 propensities for hubris, where such 'fantasies of...consumption' may emerge from  
12  
13 624 experiencing prolonged deprivation. PEB's attention to political-economic structures  
14  
15 625 is here recalled, in recognition of the ever-urgent task of countering welfare  
16  
17 626 retrenchment and systemic inequality. The distinctive political ontology of Bennett  
18  
19 627 and others' materialism is hard to reconcile with a Marxist critique. However,  
20  
21 628 embracing both, we can see wasted food redistribution as meeting bodily needs *and*  
22  
23 629 potentially instigating political action at unexpected sites, shedding light on diverse  
24  
25 630 forms of uneven urban development whose transformation might prevent growing  
26  
27 631 reliance on food charity and projects dependent on unsustainable supplies of surplus  
28  
29 632 food.

### 633 **Conclusion**

30  
31 634 Our analysis suggests that activist-educators *and* charity redistributors drew upon  
32  
33 635 both visceral and regulatory techniques for distinguishing food from waste. Haptic,  
34  
35 636 gustatory, olfactory, visual and even auditory engagements with food allowed both  
36  
37 637 activist and charity volunteers to separate food from the beyond-the-pale in an effort  
38  
39 638 to redistribute ‘good’ food. Wasted food’s journey is mediated by complexes of  
40  
41 639 bodies, infrastructures, regulations, practices and discourses that escape the  
42  
43 640 activist/charity binary. The PEB framework acknowledges structural, discursive and  
44  
45 641 material factors not as separate but interacting. Expiry-dates are determined by law  
46  
47 642 and corporate production processes, but learners and educators’ knowledge and  
48  
49 643 attitudes towards their relevance vary for diverse reasons. Sensual engagement with  
50  
51 644 food may accompany attention to expiry-dates, while embodied practices of cutting,  
52  
53 645 cooking and storing food interact with such cognitive attention and regulatory  
54  
55 646 rendering of responsibility for food management.

56  
57 647 We have presented tensions between ethical possibilities opened up by close  
58  
59 648 engagement with wasted foods and the risks of prioritising individual food choices as  
60  
649 a means to address hunger/waste. While activists sought to redefine ex-commodified  
650  
651 650 food as vibrant matter through which to kindle new, potentially-transgressive kinds of



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2  
3 651 food-body knowing, the charity's purpose in handling food was not only based on  
4 652 engagement with recipients but also to maintain donor compliance and justify a  
5 653 reputation as providing adequate food. On the other hand, the diverse organisations  
6 654 receiving the charity's food could be using it for radical community work, from  
7 655 feeding unmet needs for food to fostering networks of solidarity at different  
8 656 'community' scales including national and global campaigns.

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13  
14 657 Food not only *is* connection, but *does* connecting, and both activist and charitable  
15 658 redistribution makes such connections possible. However, the charity's public-facing  
16 659 emphasis on growing quantities redistributed or people fed suggests its lack of  
17 660 engagement with food's resonant qualities and affordances for critiquing/transforming  
18 661 food systems. The school programme, while it risks being perceived as another form  
19 662 of charitable food assistance, created collective spaces for reflecting upon food and its  
20 663 systemic transformations and possibilities. Food waste pedagogies could potentially  
21 664 go beyond de-fetishising food, towards interrogating human fascinations with food  
22 665 commodities and their consumption (Bennett, 2001) and recognising 'reflexive  
23 666 consciousness' of the ethical food consumer as a classed modality (Guthman, 2003).  
24 667 Ultimately, wasted food redistribution reflects and responds to deep economic  
25 668 imbalances. Redistribution actors' knowledge of injustices affecting the communities  
26 669 they feed constitutes vital grounds for redistribution practices that nourish minded-  
27 670 bodies, public critique and, through reflexive alliance-building, transform food  
28 671 (re)distribution structures.

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