PUTTING MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS:
HUNGER, CAUSE-RELATED MARKETING & THE POLITICS OF
CORPORATE FOOD BANK PHILANTHROPY

by

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Abstract

In this study, I employ a combination of social semiotics and critical discourse analysis to examine the marketing media from corporate social responsibility campaigns focused on food bank philanthropy and awareness-raising for the issue of hunger. I use media from a sample of six of the largest and most visible corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns to represent a broad range of their differences. Each campaign is analyzed for how the problem of hunger and the solution as food banks are represented. Hunger is represented by these corporations as a problem of a lack of food that can happen to anyone, anytime, anywhere, for which families and/or local communities bear responsibility. This typification of the problem of hunger comes packaged conceptually with a characterization of the solution to that problem in food banks represented as a food-focused, charity-based, volunteer-run response that relies on corporate sponsorships and corporate social responsibility programs to harnesses the marketability of hunger to increase donations. These representations are evidence form the basis on an analysis of how the problem of hunger is currently thought about and acted upon in Canada. Claims about hunger exist at a juncture between the resources available and the kinds of responses to hunger that are likely to arise. This study demonstrates what corporate claims about hunger mean in relation to the ongoing development of food banking. This study is also an analysis of a particular case of corporate food bank philanthropy as an example campaign to highlight how the corporate construction of hunger is deployed to obscure, marginalize, and foreclose on the possibility of the emergence of alternative understandings of hunger and approaches beyond food banking based on a charity model. The dominant typification of the problem of hunger by corporations further institutionalizes an inadequate food banking paradigm that cannot address the social underpinnings that lead to the expression of hunger.

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Introduction

1.1 Hunger as a Social Problem

Hunger is discussed on the radio, on television, in local grocery stores, coffee houses, and downtown shops. Talk of hunger vibrates through speakers at political rallies, echoes through the halls of our schools, and buzzes around at work, home, and even sporting events. We are usually reminded that people in *our* communities are going hungry. Often in the same breath that claims are made about hunger, food banks are also mentioned: "Don't forget to donate to your local food bank!" or "Remember your non-perishable food item!" or "Help a family in need in *your* community!" You might drop a can of soup or a box of macaroni and cheese into an empty barrel on the way into a hockey game. You might donate $1 at the grocery store checkout for the honour of having your name displayed on a wall alongside the other donors. You might even take a food item to work in exchange for a day when you can wear jeans. But few of us think more deeply about food banking or wonder how effective it really is at addressing hunger.

When a radio disc jockey says, "40% of those who use food banks are children," or a news anchor says, "Just under 900,000 Canadians use a food bank every month," most people find it difficult to put those numbers into perspective. Likewise, if a food drive raises 168kg of food, or a company donates 300,000 cans of beans, or a wealthy philanthropist donates $50,000 to a food bank, most people lack adequate reference points to contextualize what those numbers mean in the grand scheme of things. Since it is difficult for us to understand the sheer scale of an issue like hunger, we are generally

left with the impression that any food is good food when it comes to the fight against hunger. We are left with the impression that somehow someone somewhere in the country is going hungry, but also that food is being raised and donated to the hungry by someone, somewhere, somehow.

What makes hunger a social problem, though, is not just the objective condition, nor the number of people who feel a grumbling in the stomach, nor even the amount of food measured by its weight. Hunger is a social problem that is more complex than any measurement of hungry people against an absence of food. What makes it a social problem is the general perception that hunger has troubling social implications. The question of hunger as a social problem is a question of how it is perceived as socially problematic. What makes hunger a social problem is not its existence in any objective terms, but in the way people think and talk about it as problematic. However, the way a social problem is thought and talked about has important implications for how that problem can then be addressed because the way we think and talk about social problems forms the contours of the conceptual realm of possible societal responses.

Hunger is a complex issue, and food banks are complex institutions, yet simple claims are made about them everywhere, every day. While claims-making about social problems is always contested by different claims-makers who make different claims, simple claims about hunger are most often formulated, distributed and reproduced as marketing media by corporations that sponsor large-scale food bank philanthropy campaigns. Their claims now dominate the discourse. Since these corporations invest in and advocate for food banks through their philanthropy, they inevitably make claims about hunger and the solutions to hunger, and this has important implications for how

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hunger is thought of as a social problem, and therefore also for how hunger is addressed—or not.

1.2 Hunger as Social Relations

While the short-term remedy to hunger is food, hunger is not just about food or eating, but also about social relations. Social relations constitute the causes of hunger in the first place, as well as the method of attaining food, the actual food received, and the ways in which the food is prepared and eaten. Do people ever literally produce their own dinners, including all the ingredients and tools used in the process? Likely never. When people talk about "hunger"—but really anything related to food—they are describing an effect of an arrangement of social relations. Hunger is a manifestation of breakdowns or dysfunctions in social relations regarding the effective distribution of, and access to, food. When people talk about "ending hunger", they are also making implicit claims about how society is and ought to be, the kind of politics necessary to achieve those ends, the economic implications of trying, and meaning of all that in cultural terms.

Any scenario that involves food also involves consideration of social relations. Some families may pool money in order to purchase enough food for the week, which could mean the difference between eating one thing over another, or whether they eat at all. A group of young college or university students may negotiate a particular division of labour or a trade-off of value for dinner (e.g. funding dinner versus cooking it) to provide a fair return for their various efforts. For other groups of people, eating may involve religious or cultural rituals that could even determine if, or under what circumstances, food can be consumed. A single mother without family or friends who lives in a food desert on inadequate social assistance may not eat at all some days, while another woman

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in similar circumstances with a strong family and support network may never suffer from hunger in her entire lifetime. Whether at the societal level or your own kitchen table, hunger is an issue that fundamentally involves the consideration of social relations.

At our own kitchen tables, many of us feed other people on a daily basis without a second thought. Few actually oppose feeding hungry people. When we make dinner for family members, buy lunch for a co-worker, or offer someone we have just met something to eat, we typically act emphatically to make sure their needs are met. At our own kitchen tables, food is often exempt from the prejudiced implications of arbitrary social categories like age, ability, wealth, employment, whether someone helped cook or not, and so on. At our own kitchen tables, social relations are often horizontal, symmetrical, inclusive, and reciprocal. Do parents keep tabs on the food their children eat growing up in order to present them with an invoice for it later? Do you require that your friends bring equally as much food as they eat when they come over for an evening get-together? Would you deny food to your child's friend because you thought negatively of their dependence on parental welfare, or their work ethic at school, or their naive views on life? Such notions seem absurd.

Why, then, are people denied food by structures of social relations at a broader level in a way we would never accept if those people were sitting at our own kitchen tables? In such an affluent country like Canada, why do we have the problem of hunger at all? Hunger exists in Canada because the relations that make up the food economy are different than those of your kitchen table. The kinds of relations that make up the food economy are usually vertical, asymmetrical, exclusive, and unilateral. The structures of

the food economy are rigid one-way systems that can function to deny some people access to food altogether.

Hunger is not a completely unexplainable or tragically inevitable phenomenon that escapes our understanding. Instead, hunger manifests as the result of a particular arrangement of social relations—created through deliberate political decision-making—that have far-reaching implications for how we think, talk, and act upon hunger as socially problematic. Social relations could be structured differently to effectively address hunger when it does manifest or, better still, prevent the manifestation of hunger in the first place. To truly understand hunger, we must recognize and acknowledge that how we think, talk and act influences the kind of society we build for ourselves, and then how those behaviours produce the kind of social relations that tend towards the expression of hunger. How we think about, and then act upon, hunger as socially problematic should be a main concern for those who wish to effectively address hunger.

1.3 Hunger as Typification and Response

Janet Poppendieck's essay *Hunger in America: Typification and Response* (1995), focuses on the sociological relationship between typification and institutionalization regarding the notion of hunger specifically. In her essay, Poppendieck argues that hunger has been "discovered and rediscovered" (p. 11) at least three times over the past century in the United States. She describes how hunger was typified differently by prominent claims-makers during each rediscovery. Poppendieck further argues that when prominent claims-makers typify a problem, they set the stage for the likely societal responses in a "conceptual loop, in which typification and solution are in constant interaction" (p. 12). As she explains, the resources available during each era frame how the problem can be

defined. The resources available define the contours of the realm of possibility in advance of the typification of the problem. Hence, the solutions to social problems are predetermined by how the kind of society that already exists influences our understanding of problems.

Poppendieck shows how during each era of rediscovery in the United States, the notion of hunger has been typified as something more than just a lack of food. Hunger has always been typified as a particular kind of problem. For example, during the Great Depression, hunger was contrasted against agricultural surpluses, so it became shameful to "waste amid want" (p. 17). Since the resources available to counteract hunger were agricultural surpluses, the implied solution was to institutionalize a coordinated federal food assistance program funded by those surpluses. Hunger as 'waste amid want' was characterized in direct relation to, and because of, those agricultural surpluses. Hunger was therefore popularly understood as a problem of waste that could be solved via collaboration between the agricultural industry and the federal government to redirect surpluses to the hungry.

The 1960s saw a different typification of hunger by prominent claims-makers as a "failure of government to ensure citizens' rights to food itself and to due process and equal treatment in food programs" (p. 21). The available remedies at the time were oriented less towards agricultural surpluses and more towards judicial approaches partly due to the prominence of the civil rights movement in the United States during that time. The solution to hunger became to enact new laws, institute new rights, and formulate new policies to ensure equal access to food. Hunger as a rights issue was characterized in

direct relation to, and because of, this new emphasis on jurisprudence. Hunger became popularly understood as a problem of exclusion to be solved via legal means.

During the most recent era, in the 1980s, the notion of hunger was typified in yet another way: "an emergency" (p. 26). As a result of cut-backs across the board to social welfare spending that were precipitated by political changes to the welfare state and a deep economic recession, the available resources at that time were those of *ad hoc* community-based organizations. The solution was to rapidly expand an emergency food assistance system that included the massive mobilization of charity and volunteerism. The rise of emergency food was characterized in direct relation to, and because of, the community-based nature of the responses available. Hunger became popularly understood as a problem for community-based food operations like local pantries and soup kitchens to solve via charity and volunteerism. In each of these eras, the problem of hunger was typified in a particular way. However, it was the parameters set in advance by the available remedies, not just the objective condition of hungry people, that influenced how the problem was thought about and acted upon.

However, as Poppendieck notes, "the relationship between typification and response... is neither simple nor consecutive" (p. 29). In other words, the relationship is not necessarily determinative as in cause-effect. To commit sociology is to think more abstractly. Poppendieck concluded that typification and solution interact in a general but discernible way, and she outlines three main principles: 1) awareness of the possibility of "solution" is precondition for the perception of a problem; 2) the nature of the available remedy contributes to the content of the typification; and 3) the dominant typification tends to obscure and foreclose the possibility of alternate solutions (Poppendieck, 1995,

29-30). This last point is important. While it is important to think about the relationship between the available remedies and the typification of hunger as a social problem, the institutionalization process occurs because alternative views do not—or cannot—emerge.

1.4 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine how hunger and food banking are represented by prominent claims-makers in Canada today. Since claims about hunger in Canada today are predominantly made by corporations, this study will analyze their marketing media to consider what these representations can tell us about the relationship between the available remedies to hunger in an era of neoliberalism, the typification of hunger as a particular kind of social problem with a particular kind of solution, and the most recent phase in the ongoing institutionalization of food banking. This study also provides a basis to speculate further about how these interactions frame the contours of how hunger is thought about and acted upon in a way that excludes, marginalizes, and forecloses on the emergence of possible alternatives.

To achieve this purpose, I assess whether the same fundamental insight that Poppendieck shared about the typification-institutionalization relationship in the United States during the last century can also be applied to perhaps a new *corporate* rediscovery of the notion of hunger in Canada today. If corporations that engage in food bank philanthropy are prominent claims-makers about the problem of hunger and its solutions, then they must characterize hunger as a particular kind of problem in relation to the remedies available, implying a particular kind of solution. This analysis will determine whether corporations that engage in food bank philanthropy collectively typify hunger as a particular kind of problem, and if their common typification of hunger comes packaged

conceptually with a corresponding solution. This analysis will also determine how the available remedies to hunger influence its typification, which then leads to an institutionalization process that precludes alternative approaches.

1.5 Research Questions

The questions to be researched are framed around the sociological relationship between typification and institutionalization. First, has hunger been rediscovered by corporations and why? Does the marketing media from corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns construct hunger as a particular kind of problem as part of a corporate typification of hunger? If so, what does the typification of the problem imply for a solution? Second, what does an analysis of the sociological relationship between this typification and the institutionalization of food banks imply about corporate food bank philanthropy? Finally, how might this analysis help us understand how to overcome cultural and ideological barriers that continue to prevent the emergence of a Canada in which no citizens are hungry and all are food secure?

This study unfolds in five chapters. The first chapter introduces hunger as a manifestation of social relations that is acted upon based on how it is thought about. The second chapter draws on relevant literature to explore the social factors that influence food banking in Canada and contextualize the currently available remedies to hunger. The third chapter bases the framework of this study in theory and provides the methodology used to guide the design of appropriate methods. The fourth chapter provides the results of this study and explores them in the context of the relevant literature. The fifth chapter is a discussion of the results of this study framed around the interactions between the available remedies, the typification of the problem, and the

institutionalization of the response, then concludes with some comments about the value

of this study and the direction of future studies.

Chapter 2

Contextualizing the Issues

Since there is very little academic literature on corporate involvement in food banking and anti-hunger activism, this chapter is not a conventional academic literature review that presents what has already been said about a topic in academic publications. A literature review of the issues related to this study can only address academic literature that has been produced around the topics of this study. The aim of this chapter, then, is to illustrate how developments in our understanding of the issues that surround hunger and food banking feed into the subjects of this study, and serve as jumping off points into an analysis of the recent popularity of corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns.

This chapter explores relevant literature to contextualize the currently available remedies to hunger in Canada, and it unfolds in five sections. The first section explores important political and economic implications for social welfare related to the emergence of an era of neoliberalism and the scaling down of the traditional Canadian welfare state. The second section traces the history of food banking in Canada to explain why food banking is the dominant societal response to hunger today. The third section accounts for the inadequacies of the current state of the food banking model as an effective long-term solution to hunger, as well as some reasons for its resilience. The fourth section explores the social underpinnings of hunger by relating food bank usage to food insecurity, poverty and income inequality. The fifth section explores how the popularity of corporate social responsibility has shifted the focus of some corporations towards hunger and food bank philanthropy. The following factors coalesce to account for the most socially significant available remedies to hunger today.

2.1 The Neoliberalization of the Canadian Welfare State

This section contextualizes the most recent rediscovery of hunger as "an emergency" (Poppendieck, 1995) and the subsequent institutionalization of food banking as symptomatic of broader social cahnges. To understand the proliferation of food banking and the evolution of hunger into the social problem as it is understood today, we must begin with a discussion of the broad reconfigurations of the Canadian welfare state that began during the early-1980s. The manifestation of hunger as a prominent social issue and the emergence of food banking as a dominant institution of social welfare both owe their legacies to the transformations to the Canadian welfare state that began in the early-1980s and continue today.

Hunger and food banking emerged from a void left by the scaling down of the Canadian welfare state by successive governments over the last several decades at the municipal, provincial and federal levels. As Graham Riches put it, "It is essential that we understand hunger as primarily a political issue... [and] the roots of hunger must be acknowledged to be man-made" (Riches, 1997: p. 12). Canada's traditionally liberal welfare state has been rolled back into what is currently a residual-market and community-based welfare system (Riches, 2011). As Graham Riches wrote about the increased reliance on markets amid this scaling down of the welfare state, "Canada's commitment to a guaranteed social minimum, the last line of defense against hunger and poverty, has been undermined" (Riches, 1997: p. 60). The welfare state is now a shadow of its former self because markets are more often deferred to for the provision of social welfare.

Welfare states in different countries have different sets of state bureaucracies, welfare institutions, and social programs. However, each configuration is designed to maintain "social reproduction," or the process by which citizens' basic needs are met in the realms of education, healthcare, and income. The welfare state in Canada in particular was constituted in a "piecemeal and fragmentary fashion" that included interactions between the state, the markets, labour unions, community organizations, and the institution of the family (McKeen & Porter, 2003, p. 109-110). The welfare state in Canada is just one example of how a state administers social welfare.

In a market economy like Canada's, people generally purchase the food they need to survive from food vendors and retailers with the wages they earn by selling their labour power in the labour market. The ability to eat in Canada is intrinsically linked to the ability to purchase food in the food economy. However, as Riches notes, "If the right to food security is to be constrained by people's ability to participate fully in the marketplace, particularly in societies which show little inclination to support full employment, the future is one of increasing risk and vulnerability" (Riches, 1997: p. 5). The premise in a market economy of full participation in the marketplace is problematic because not everyone *can* fully participate in the marketplace. When they cannot, the welfare state deploys programs to ensure that the inability to participate in the marketplace does not infringe on citizens' rights. Without adequate welfare assistance, some Canadians would be unable to participate in the food economy at all, and would go hungry as a result. The welfare state attempts to mitigate the social injustice of hunger in a market economy.

As Gøsta Esping-Andersen points out, welfare states are often too narrowly defined because definitions of them tend to focus on the financial aspects of welfare states, or how it works in the service of citizens' rights, or in the pursuit of equality. As Esping-Andersen puts it, "The welfare state cannot be understood just in terms of the rights it grants. We must also take into account how state activities are interlocked with the market's and the family's role in social provision" (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 21). A broader definition of the welfare state reminds us that, although financial mechanisms and rights protections are important components of welfare states, other actors and institutions play their own roles in the provision of social welfare outside of the confines of the state (Esping-Andersen, 1990). This is an important consideration when discussing the evolution of food banking in Canada.

Esping-Andersen identifies two general functions of a welfare state that broaden out the definition of what welfare states are and do. First, a welfare state de-commodifies certain rights; that is, it emancipates those citizens for whom outright dependence on markets would lead to an infringement of rights. Esping-Andersen was correct to say that, "Peoples' rights to survive outside the market are at stake" (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 35). Because markets can be volatile, the welfare state is meant to buffer the potentially harmful effects of market fluctuations on the poor. Second, a welfare state is a system of stratification promoted by social policy as an active force in the structuring of social relations. As Esping-Andersen writes, "The welfare state is not just a mechanism that intervenes in, and possibly corrects, the structure of inequality; it is, in its own right, a system of stratification" (Esping-Andersen, 1990, p. 23). Importantly, these functions of

the welfare state, which have implications for the social manifestation of hunger, each involve political decision-making.

Esping-Andersen's theory does not focus on any particular political, economic or social classification, but social relations instead. Crucially, Esping-Andersen's theory is "interactive" (Esping-Andersen, 1990: p. 32), in that it involves actions and reactions between all the component parts of social welfare provision, from state administered to community-based. From this perspective, Esping-Andersen demonstrates that welfare states tend to cluster into three distinct regime-types. Welfare states operate within the parameters of one of three distinct regime-types, which each have different implications for the future development of those states. Esping-Andersen concludes that welfare states can be analyzed for their unique development based on consideration of the various interactions between actors and institutions within a welfare system and the class character of that welfare state's regime-type.

The first and largest of these regime-types is the "liberal" welfare state regime. Canada's welfare state is a good example of a liberal welfare state. Characteristics of liberal welfare states are universal rights, means-testing, and social assistance. In a liberal welfare state, the state encourages markets to cater to those who can purchase welfare while it provides paltry benefits to those who do not work in an effort to encourage those people to return to the labour market. Esping-Andersen sums up the consequence: "This type of regime minimizes de-commodification-effects, effectively contains the realm of social rights, and erects an order of stratification that is a blend of a relative equality of poverty among state-welfare recipients, market-differentiated welfare among the majorities, and a class-political dualism between the two" (Esping-Andersen, 1990: p.

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27). Esping-Andersen's argument here is that liberal welfare states tend toward social inequality.

When it comes to income supports, Canada's liberal welfare state services the needs of those who live in low-income households or poverty, not necessarily those of the middle- and upper-classes. This produces a dualism between a poor minority and a middle-class majority, as well as loyalties along those class distinctions. Esping-Andersen importantly concludes that, "The risk of welfare-state backlash depends not on spending, but on the class character of welfare states... In this sense, the class coalition in which the three welfare-state regime-types were founded explain not only their past evolution but also their future prospects" (Esping-Andersen, 1990: p. 33). The implication here is that opposition would likely come in the form of lacklustre support of social welfare from the middle-classes, who would likely view welfare as a financial burden that only benefits undeserving welfare dependents. The role of the state in effectively de-commodifying rights would erode in deference to market-differentiated welfare for all, and the dynamics of social stratification would shift to eliminate even the relative welfare of poverty.

The welfare state was intended to represent the kinds of values we traditionally associate with Canada; equality, universality, inclusion, and so on. However, the Canadian welfare state is now characterized as a system of exclusion because it creates "new categories of the deserving and undeserving poor dividing claimants into employable and unemployable groups" (Riches, 1997: p. 12). Old categories and stereotypes about welfare recipients—lazy, uneducated, intoxicated, and so on—have intensified. These stereotypes are arbitrary generalizations that are biased towards Anglo-

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Saxon and Protestant values and work-ethic, but they nevertheless pervade Canadian

institutions and public discourse even today. The notion that people have fundamental

and inalienable rights is now subordinate to the notion that rights are contingent on the

ability to work. As McKeen and Porter put it, "Not only has the welfare state been

restructured, it has been transformed... from a more generous system to what neoliberals

have described as a "tough love" social welfare system that aims to help welfare

"dependents" kick their habit" (McKeen & Porter, 2003: p. 111). Such a system of

welfare requires robust markets to support all, but less than robust markets strongly

influenced the scaling down of the welfare state in the first place.

The dismantling of the Canadian welfare state is related to a phenomenon

described as the "austerity consensus" among states (Farnsworth & Irving, 2012).

Farnsworth and Irving speculate that we are fast approaching an "end of history for

welfare states given the widespread regression of social provision and the view that

welfare states have become unaffordable" (p. 113) against which "a strong counter-

narrative has failed to emerge" (p. 145). Popular opinion in Canada now holds, even

among policy-makers and legislators, that social welfare is just too expensive—so much

so that Canada must renege on its traditional values and responsibilities regarding

citizens' rights in order to reduce budget deficits (Farnsworth & Irving, 2012).

Concerted effort began in the early-1980s, which continues today under Canada's

current government, to restructure Canadian institutions and policy to align with

neoliberal ideals regarding political economy. David Harvey described neoliberalism as

follows: "Neoliberalism is a theory of political economic practices that proposes that

human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms

and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade." (Harvey, 2005: p. 2) The Canadian political and economic order was reorganized in accordance with this framework. In short, the Canadian welfare state underwent a process of "neoliberalization" (Harvey, 2005).

Neoliberalism has become hegemonic both as political practice and mode of discourse in Canada and other industrialized societies. The traces of neoliberal ideology are found in the sayings and metaphors we in Canada call upon to furnish our collective understanding of the world today. Neoliberalism is now the taken-for-granted "common sense" story we tell ourselves about ourselves and our social world. However, the values that underpin neoliberalism have an uneasy relationship with the values that the traditional liberal Canadian welfare state embodied. There is no place for a welfare state in a neoliberal political economy.

The neoliberalization of governance in Canada led to the withdrawal of the state from the provision of social welfare and the subsequent deregulation and privatization of industries that had traditionally been part of the public sector. Neoliberalism requires a political and economic context characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade, which must be upheld as sacrosanct institutions. From a neoliberal perspective, hunger is a problem the market should solve, and if not the market, then through the charitable efforts of local communities. The state's role is only to establish these institutions but never to intervene in their free functioning unless intervention will preserve them (Harvey, 2005, pp. 76-78).

As the traditional roles of the Canadian welfare state have receded, market mechanisms have been increasingly relied on by legislators and policy-makers to provide

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the social services that the traditional welfare state once did. The neoliberal state is an aloof facilitator of free enterprise that functions mainly as a symbolic embodiment of political legitimacy that ensures the relative power of capital vis-à-vis labour (Harvey, 2005, pp. 64-86). As such, the neoliberal state represents a "shift from government (state power on its own) to governance (a broader configuration of a state and key element of civil society)" (Harvey, 2005, pg.77). This characterization of the neoliberal state is important for any discussion of the current state of hunger and food banking in Canada because food banks have their place in a neoliberal social order as key elements of civil society in social welfare provision.

The burden of responsibility for welfare has shifted from the state to individuals, families, or communities. More than ever, people are expected to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" as state-integrated welfare has shifted to a system of welfare that is residual of market activity. This has left many Canadians exposed to the deleterious effects of poverty with little to no external assistance. The culture of self-reliance that is central to market liberalism dictates that if someone is hungry, it is their own fault; if someone is poor, it is their own fault. Neoliberalism masquerades as a spontaneously ordered social arrangement that is not a social system, nor an order of social relations. Neoliberalism was billed as democracy in action, an economic meritocracy, and the social order that resulted was therefore viewed as natural and inevitable.

However, as Harvey argues, the utopian core of neoliberalism legitimates a fundamentally unjust political project. As Harvey put it, neoliberalism is either "innocently utopian or a deliberate obfuscation of the processes that will lead to the concentration of wealth" (Harvey, 2005: p. 68). Neoliberalism refers to the political and

economic context in which significantly disproportionate degrees of wealth and power inequality has been created in Canada. Analysis of neoliberalism provides insight into the political and economic context that led to the rediscovery of hunger as "an emergency" in popular discourse and the emergence of food banks. Out of a context of the neoliberalization of Canadian political economy came the rediscovery of hunger as a prominent social issue in the early-1980s and the rise of food banking as the dominant institutional paradigm of that time.

2.2 The Institutionalization of Food Banks in Canada

This section illustrates that the rediscovery of hunger and the rise of food banking in the early-1980s were phenomena born of particular social, political and economic conditions. In developed or industrialized societies like Canada, hunger is not a problem of food scarcity, but mostly a problem of distribution and access. Access to food is denied to some in Canada because they cannot engage with the mainstream food economy. The structural barrier that influences food insecurity in Canada the most is a lack of money, or income insufficiency. For the poorest Canadians, hunger boils down to their inability to pay for enough nutritious and culturally appropriate food to enable healthy living. In the context of the neoliberalization of the Canadian welfare state, the manifestation of hunger and the rise of food banking in Canada during the 1980s represented a shift in ideology that precipitated the breakdown of the social safety net, the inadequacy of social assistance, and a failure to mobilize a state-led response to unacceptably high rates of unemployment, homelessness and poverty (Riches, 1986: pp. 71-113). These elements thrust the issue of hunger into the public spotlight.

Canada was already going through a period of inflation and rising unemployment but an economic recession that, at the time, was widely regarded as the worst since the Great Depression. The recession of the early-1980s made unemployment, homelessness and poverty particularly acute. As an early manifestation of the underlying economic and political dysfunctions of that time, hunger gained immediate attention as a pressing public concern because it manifested at peoples' doorsteps. Additionally, hunger is a problem that can easily be organized around due to its universal appeal. As Janet Poppendieck (1998) puts it, "When was the last time a panhandler asked you for a contribution towards a night's lodgings? Even in the coldest weather, most beggars will ask for money for *food*; they know what works" (p. 86). Hunger became a crux issue for many community-based non-governmental organizations precisely because hunger presents itself as an easy problem with a seemingly easy answer, *more food*. For those confronted with these problems in their own communities, hunger was viewed as a simple problem with a simple answer that required urgent action, and it got it.

According to Riches, the first Canadian food bank opened in Edmonton in 1981, and by the time he had published his book five years later, every province except Newfoundland and PEI had established food banks, mostly in the three westernmost provinces (Riches, 1986: p. 17). Borrowed from the USA and adapted for Canada, the food banking idea represented a community-based non-governmental response to what was perceived as a hunger emergency. Food banks initially distributed surplus food to front-line agencies as an intermediary between donors of surplus food and those who could not afford to eat. The food banking idea was designed to facilitate the collective efforts of community-based non-governmental organizations like local churches, labour

groups and community soup kitchens in their efforts to feed the hungry when government would or could not. Food banks were supposed to be temporary operations that would close once the economy recovered so they were set up for *ad hoc* purposes, on a charity and volunteer basis, to provide supplementary food assistance with food that might otherwise go to waste. Food banking was a short-term, narrowly-focused response to a complex problem, yet it became popular.

The initial popularity of food banking in Canada was due to several factors. Provincial and federal governments, the media, community groups, and industry, were all factors in the legitimation of food banking during this period. Governments encouraged a culture of volunteerism since volunteerism would provide an outlet for a swelling unemployed reserve labour pool while they slashed budget deficits. Meanwhile, the food industry possessed production surpluses that would otherwise go to waste. Due to a variety of production problems like mislabeled products or missing ingredients, some companies would sometimes find themselves with unsaleable goods that would simply be destroyed. This was generally perceived as an unacceptable waste in the context of hunger. In short, the public began to warm to the notion that food banks could divert food waste, feed the hungry, and provide a focus for civic-mindedness while also allowing governments to balance their books (Riches, 1986: p. 18-23).

Government cut-backs to social services created a void that was ultimately filled by the private, non-governmental, and volunteer sectors, whose focuses were on downstream manifestations of social problems, including hunger, not upstream causes of them like unemployment, low wages and inadequate social assistance rates. Furthermore, the pro-business strategy of legislators and policy-makers in the federal and provincial

governments was simply assumed to be a social panacea. The dominant view came to be that any failures in the ability for markets to meet the needs of all Canadians fell on external factors like peoples' personal failings or temperamental consumer markets. Food banking ultimately allowed government in particular wash its hands of the political and economic dysfunctions that cause hunger by relying on the public and their community relations to deal with the social implications of neoliberalism (Riches, 2011).

Food banking also dovetails with the interests of the food industry. Companies in the food industry avoid tipping fees while presenting themselves as charitable and well-intentioned community-members. The first food banks provided food by co-opting, or piggybacking, on a complex food distribution network that is controlled and owned by the food industry. The enormous amounts of food that was, and continues to be, wasted by the food industry, and the substantial need for food expressed in Canadian communities. The massive amounts of wasted food stands in stark contrast contrast to the hunger problem, which opens up the possibility for food companies that hunger might be bad for business (Riches, 1986). Later, food producers would see opportunity to turn the shame of food waste into a positive public relations move by partnering with food banks.

Food banking also exhibits how willing Canadians have been to engage in anti-hunger initiatives. The popularity of food banks led to an outpouring of public charity, volunteerism, and support, and personal associations with food banks has become significantly meaningful for many of the people involved in food banking (Tarasuk & Eakin, 2003; 2005). Food banks have managed to collect significant amounts of food that is donated or given away for free. People who get assistance from food banks can often put a face to the hand that helps them, which may be a welcome change from the

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faceless, cold bureaucracy of traditional social welfare institutions. Those who volunteer at food banks get to interact with the people they help. Food banks offer a place for social interaction among members of society who have traditionally been marginalized or disenfranchised, as well as an opportunity for dialogue to foster empathy among those who don't experience poverty.

However, none of these positive aspects of food banking have as much cultural power as the notion of charity. As Poppendieck writes on the seductions of charity, "There is a pervasive feeling that these are the people who care, who stop quibbling over political or philosophical differences and get on with the job, who light candles instead of curse darkness" (p. 180). Hunger has motivated so many people to action and food banks have become the go-to response. While they are by no means perfect, food banks have many positive aspects in the eyes of many people (Poppendieck, 1994). Food banks are focal points for many social dynamics. Food banks are places where meanings are expressed and consumed, and where social classes interact, so they relate to how the reemergence of hunger in Canada is the manifestations of a particular way of thinking and behaving.

Food banks became popular because food drives for hunger are generally viewed as uncontroversial and apolitical, but this popularity promoted the mobilization of community-based resources such as soup kitchens and food pantries around the notion of hunger. As Poppendieck wrote, "Each new kitchen or pantry, and each new hunger walkathon or other hunger-related event helped to reinforce the definition of the problem as *hunger* in the public mind, and each new round of publicity for hunger elicited more anti-hunger activity" (p. 91). Since hunger presents itself as a food-based problem with

an individual focus, food-based solutions like food banks became the acceptable societal response. The public recognized food banks as "common sense" in the context of a neoliberal understanding of political economy and took them for granted as the most effective remedy for a food-based conception of hunger. The issue of hunger and the response of food banking had penetrated the public psyche enough to normalize their relationship and instigate a positive public response. Food banks then sprouted up everywhere to address hunger. As the hunger problem continued to grow through the early-1980s, more and more community-based non-governmental responses sprouted up, which necessitated a much more elaborate network of charity food distribution and warehousing than what was available.

As the need for food continued to grow, so too did the need for larger, stronger and better organized food banks. Food banks proliferated rapidly across the country through the 1980s onwards. The kinds of tenuous social relations and *ad hoc* institutional arrangements that were necessary to meet the hunger problem became institutionalized over time because overwhelming need drove the growth of the food banking paradigm. As Poppendieck wrote, "To some extent institutionalization is a by-product of growth... As an organization grows, as more and more resources are invested, the need for financial accountability increases" (p. 116). Poppendieck goes on to say that, "It is obvious that growth promotes a drive toward stability... But the opposite is also true -- that stability promotes growth (p. 118). The interactions between food banks and their suppliers and front-line agencies mutually reinforce each other. As Poppendieck put it, "Symbiosis is visible throughout the system, and it is a symbiosis that fosters growth" (p. 120). Soon food banks were no longer *ad hoc* charities, but corporatized non-profit organizations.

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Food banks in Canada have evolved from a relatively disparate and eclectic

collection of *ad hoc* grassroots organization into a coordinated national food sharing

system. Food Banks Canada, the national organization for food banks, now has ten

member organizations that represent each province, which themselves operate on behalf

of their own local networks of food banks, which themselves associate with smaller

church organizations, food pantries, soup kitchens, and the like. There are now over 800

food banks and 3,000 food programs operating in Canada, 4,743 organizations overall

that participated in the collection of data for their report. Most of these food banking

organizations even offer resources as varied as skills training, social advocacy and

community support programs, totalling 78% of food banking organizations that provide a

'non-traditional service' (Food Banks Canada, 2013: pp. 4, 9). However, there is still

little evidence to suggest that the food banking model is an effective solution to hunger.

2.3 The Food Banking Model

Food banking is inadequate as a long-term solution to hunger. Despite their rapid

expansion over the last several decades, food banks are ill-equipped to handle Canada's

overwhelming hunger problem. Food banks in Canada operate in a context of hunger that

cannot be fully captured by the food banking model. Rates of food bank usage are

inaccurate indicators of the scope and extent of the problem of hunger and does not

provide any insight into the social underpinnings of hunger. Despite their shortcomings,

food banks are at the frontlines of hunger because there is no coordinated program to

address the problem.

According to Food Banks Canada's *Hunger Count 2013*, a total of 833,098

Canadians used a food bank in the month of March in 2013, which is 23% higher than

2008. Of those who were assisted in March of 2013, 43% lived in single-person

households, and 36% were children. Over that same time period, soup kitchens, shelters

and school breakfast initiatives prepared 4,341,659 meals. One might take this as

indication that food banks are incredibly successful, except food bank usage has

continued to grow (23% higher than in 2008, though 4.5% lower than in 2012), and so

too has meal program usage (40% higher than in 2008 and 11% higher than in 2012).

These are growth rates that outstrip the ability of food banks to meet demand, to the point

that 8% of food banks reportedly turned away people or referred them to somewhere else

in 2013 (Hunger Count 2010; Hunger Count 2012; Hunger Count 2013). Food banks only

partially address the need for food that is expressed outside their own doors while much

bigger and more complex sets of forces exert their pressure on food banks to keep their

doors open.

Poppendieck summed up many of the problems that food banks face in the United

States, many of which apply to Canadian food banks. According to Poppendieck, the

food banking model is extremely precarious and suffers from what she calls "the seven

deadly ins" (Poppendieck, 1998: pp. 209-30): insufficiency, inappropriateness, nutritional

inadequacy, instability, inaccessibility, inefficiency, and indignity. Food banks in Canada

likely collectively suffer from all of these institutional shortcomings. Not all food banks

will experience all of these problems at once. Every food banks in Canada are likely

experiences at least one of these shortcomings, or maybe more.

Insufficiency refers to the fact that food banks lack the resources to feed those

who need assistance. When a food bank runs out of money, or food, or volunteers, or

storage space, they must close their doors to people even though those people desperately

need food assistance. According to Food Banks Canada's *Hunger Count 2010*, 35% of food banks ran out of food in March of 2010 and 50% had such low levels of food donations that they needed to "cut back on the amount of food provided to each household" (Food Banks Canada, 2010: p. 10). More recently, Food Banks Canada's *Hunger Count 2013* reported that 53% of food banks actually had to "buy more food than usual because in-kind donations did not meet need" (Food Banks Canada, 2013: p. 11). These statistics demonstrate how Canadian food banks struggle to provide assistance even to the few people they can. Demand might even spread an already short supply of charity food too thin for smaller operations to cope with if more relied on food bank assistance.

Inappropriateness refers to the fact that there is no guarantee that the food people receive will be ethnically, culturally, or religiously appropriate for them. If a company donates mislabeled food to a food bank because it is unsaleable, then that product is what people will receive, since that is what was available by chance that day. For example, food banks do not have the luxury to consider different ethnic, cultural, or religious culinary preferences. In reaction to this, the Muslim community in Toronto have created their own food sharing system, currently comprised of two food banks in the Greater Toronto Area, which attempt to address the specific culinary requirements of Muslims who cannot afford food. Food banks cannot typically appeal to a wide range of palates because food banks offer what is available. People take what they are given or nothing at all.

Inadequacy refers to the fact that a diet based entirely on food from a food bank can never be a healthy, balanced diet. Food banks can provide staple food items, but due

to their *ad hoc* institutional structure, they often cannot provide fresh or high quality foods to round out a healthy diet compared someone else. The two most important considerations about food from the perspective of food bank organizers is how long food will last on a shelf and how easily food can be transported. Most food bank organizers are keenly aware of the implications of sell-before or best-before dates in the rotation of the food at their warehouses and pantries. The longer food can survive on a shelf, the more likely it is that food banks will invest resources in those products. The high cost associated with the transportation of food means that food banks are unlikely to have the resources to transport temperamental or needy fresh food products such as leafy greens. As a result, most hampers consist of few whole foods like fresh fruits and vegetables and contain more prepared, non-perishable items that are typically low in nutritional value (Teron & Tarasuk, 1999).

Instability refers to the fact that food banking guarantees nothing. Food banks are entirely dependent on the ebbs and flows of markets, charitable donations, political decision-making, public opinion, and the volunteer labour pool; they don't have the luxury of long-term planning so they help whoever they can, whenever they can, with whatever they have. Food banks only receive sporadic and often unanticipated donations of capital or food, and sometimes experience prolonged and equally unanticipated periods of severe shortage. Food banks receive seasonal increases in donations through certain times of the year, but often run out of food at other times if donations wane. The quality and quantity of food in food bank hampers is also contingent on the volume and composition of voluntary donations. Food banks typically rely on charitable donations and volunteers, leaving organizers little predictability. This leaves organizers and

volunteers constantly scrambling to keep their food banks operational. Food banks are down-stream institutions that struggle to provide food assistance

Inaccessibility refers to the fact that, since food banks take what they can get or afford, they just set up their operations where organizers are. As a result, food banks are often located in places to which some people are unable to travel, especially those food banks that are located in rural areas. Food banks may have food available, but unless people can get to the food bank, they cannot receive it. Some are even outright resistant to the idea because of the social stigma associated with food bank use (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2013). Many of those who would be classified as food insecure simply choose not to use the food bank, since they would rather refuse assistance than undergo what many experience as a humiliating and degrading process. While many of those who use food banks in Canada are food insecure, not all of those who are food insecure use food banks (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2013). Less than 1/4 of people who are classified as living in food insecure households in Canada will actually end up using a food bank (Kirkpatrick, & Tarasuk, 2009). Even those who do use food banks will continue to be food insecure despite the sporadic temporary assistance due to limitations of use, both regarding the frequency of visits and the amount of food received.

Inefficiency refers to the fact that the food banking model, while it may seem like it does much with very little, is only able to do such grand things because it does not have to account for the real value of donated resources. Food banks represent a second tier in the food distribution network in Canada where food is distributed and people work for free, which makes the overall system inefficient in broader market terms. None of that value is fed back into the Canadian economy. In short, the *ad hoc* nature of food banks

means that, even if organizers consider the potential for these shortcomings, they likely would not be able to address them even if they wanted to. Not only do food banks not get enough food to those who need it, but the entire food-based strategy that defines that food banking paradigm is inadequate.

There are currently no federal policies or programs designed to specifically address hunger in Canada, and food banks have been left holding the bag. In May 2012, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier De Schutter, wrote in his report from his official visit to Canada, "It has become clear that Canada is in need of a national food strategy," and that he was, "disconcerted by the deep and severe food insecurity facing aboriginals" (De Shutter, 2013). The Canadian news media speculated openly about whether De Schutter's visit should be viewed as a national embarrassment stemming from the Government of Canada's inability to implement an effective food security plan. After a week, the issue was dropped completely. Amid a glut of food, Canada continues to have a sustained and prolonged hunger problem.

2.4 The Links to Poverty

Since not all of those who suffer from hunger will use a food bank, rates of food bank usage only provide so much insight into the extent and nature of the problem. Food insecurity is a term that has been used to measure hunger in a more defined way. There are various ways in which hunger manifests, but the degree to which hunger is a persistent and sustained state of existence for some people can be measured by using the term food insecurity. Food insecurity is an effect of a confluence of political, economic and cultural circumstances that tends toward its expression as a persistent and sustained state of existence for some. While the immediate cause of hunger is a lack of food, since

hunger is a manifestation of social relations, food insecurity connects broad social circumstances to that lack of food. If prominent social circumstances tend toward the expression of hunger, we should attempt to change those social circumstances.

Food security is a specific term that can be used to compare and judge rates of food bank usage against a standard. Food security can contextualize food bank usage in the wider scope of the problem. Food security also provides the basis to judge food banking as an effective strategy in the fight against the social underpinnings of hunger. Food security is defined by the World Health Organization as "access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life" and it is comprised of three pillars: availability, access, and use (WHO, 2013). While few government agencies or academics focus on definitions of food insecurity, the reverse also holds. Food insecurity can be defined as a deficiency or absence of any of the three pillars of food security that denies availability, access, and use of food.

Statistics Canada collects data on household food insecurity through the Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS). Health Canada defines the difference between food security and household food insecurity as follows: "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life... Household food insecurity is the inability [at the household level] to acquire or consume an adequate diet quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways, or the uncertainty that one will be able to do so" (Health Canada, 2012). There are three classifications of food insecurity at the household level: marginal, moderate, and severe. Households are classified as marginally food insecure if residents report "some concern or problem of

food access over the past 12 months," as moderately food insecure if residents report "compromises in the quality and/or quantity of food consumed," or as severely food insecure if residents report "reduced food intake because of a lack of money or food" (Tarasuk et al. 2013: p. 7). Whether an individual will suffer from food security depends significantly on whether that person resides in a household classified as a food insecure household. The CCHS has been a valuable tool, but less so when estimating the prevalence of individual food insecurity due to its focus on the household.

For example, not every individual suffering from food insecurity lives in a "domicile" so the true extent of individual food insecurity escapes the full scope of national statistics on household food insecurity. Government data collection on household food insecurity tends to omit people of First Nations, those living on Crown land, the homeless, and the incarcerated, which implies that even the true extent of individual food insecurity in Canada has been underestimated (Tarasuk et al, 2013). Yet we know that food insecurity is not something that happens to just anyone. While it is true that anyone could, at some point in their lives, require food assistance from a food bank, food insecurity as a persistent and sustained phenomenon happens to particular kinds of people at particular socio-demographic intersections. For example, single parents—single mothers in particular—with dependents under the age of 18 make up the most prominent demographic suffering from food insecurity (Tarasuk et al. 2013, p. 10). There are particular social circumstances that tend toward the expression of food insecurity as hunger.

The relationship between food insecurity and household income is particularly striking. As Tarasuk outlines, "One-third of households with incomes below the LIM

[Low Income Measure] were food insecure. The lower household income is in relation to the LIM, the greater the prevalence of food insecurity" (Tarasuk et al, 2013, p. 10) Severe food insecurity occurs when there is limited money at the household level. Yet money is required to purchase food in the Canadian mainstream. Having money is the single most important factor that determines whether or not someone will be food insecure. The definition of severe food insecurity should not read as hunger due to limited money or food, but limited money *for* food. The issue with hunger is not that only that some people do not have enough food to have a healthy diet. The problem is that some people have poor diets because they cannot purchase the food they need to fulfill those necessary requirements.

Valerie Tarasuk has shown that the lower the income in a household, the higher the risk of food insecurity; and with higher income, the risk of food insecurity decreases, and sharply. PROOF is a research group based at the University of Toronto whose mission it is to "identify policy options to reduce food insecurity" (PROOF, 2013). Among the poorest Canadians who take home less than $10,000 a year, there are approximately 45% who suffer from food insecurity, yet for those making a modest annual income of between $40,000-$50,000 the prevalence of food security is less than 10% (PROOF, 2013). When the prevalence of food insecurity decreases sharply with only modest increases to income compared to national averages. Hunger is less a concern because of a lack of food leads to poor diet, but because of its association with income inequality and poverty—a link the food banking paradigm bypasses or overlooks.

Even talking about the solution to hunger in terms of weight of food misses the root causes of hunger entirely. We should be talking about poverty, income inequality,

economic and political disenfranchisement, and the social structural dysfunctions that give rise to these circumstances. Toronto Public Health calculated the percentage of monthly income a nutritious food basket would cost people with different incomes and household makeups. A Toronto household of four with a median Ontario income only spends about 30% of their monthly income on a nutritious diet, whereas a one-person household in Toronto supported solely by Ontario Works would have to spend about 160% of their monthly income to meet the financial demands of a healthy diet. With the costs of food rising 4% in 2013 from 2012, many face an ongoing insufficiency of finances required to eat a healthy diet in Toronto (Toronto Public Health, 2013).

The food banking strategy attempts to address chronic hunger and presumably its associated negative health consequences with more food. There are very good reasons for this. Hunger is especially linked to chronic conditions and severe adverse health consequences (Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2008; Kirkpatrick, et al. 2010). Even food insufficient households risk adverse health effects as a direct consequence of poor diet (Vozoris & Tarasuk, 2003). However, chronic hunger is problematic not only because it is linked to poor health outcomes. Those who rely on food banks risk poor health outcomes, not just because of the poor quality and quantity of food at food banks, nor even simply because people who use food banks are likely to be chronically hungry, but mainly because food bank usage is indicative of persistent and sustained poverty (Tarasuk & Beaton, 1999). Poverty and unequal social relations are unhealthy, not exclusively chronic hunger (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009). Hunger is a poverty-related health issue.

Wilkinson and Pickett argued that inequality is bad for health, especially for those who are unequally treated. The research of Wilkinson and Pickett on the connection between socioeconomic inequality and health demonstrates something profound: income and social position *vis a vis* the social positions of others tells us a lot about health inequalities. There is a distinct socio-economic health gradient among citizens in unequal countries. This socio-economic gradient demonstrates a trend that people with higher-than-average incomes generally live longer, healthier lives than those with lower-than-average incomes, who typically live shorter and sicker lives on average. What matters is not the average income in a society, but the degree of inequality in that society. The more unequal the society, the more the health effects become exaggerated. Wilkinson and Pickett pointed out that income inequality is the single most important factor when considering health gradients (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009).

Wilkinson and Pickett explain how "inequality gets under the skin" and use the term "social evaluation anxiety" (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009, p. 43) to specify the kind of stress that links inequality with steep socio-economic health gradients. If structural inequalities are the scaffolding onto which other inequalities become marked, pervasive, and therefore real, food banks do nothing for the negative health effects of inequality, even if they provide temporary food aid. Receiving assistance from a food bank is a terribly humiliating, degrading and embarrassing experience. Accompanied by a pervasive burden of individual blame, going to a food bank serves as a cold reminder of low social status. Nobody wants to be considered a food bank user, and the stigma against people who use food banks is enough to keep some from going. Those who must use food banks undergo social evaluation as part of the process, which creates the kind of

stress that has direct negative health consequences. Food banks are therefore not just places where food is exchanged, but where inequality gets under the skin.

Hunger presents a political dilemma for health that cannot be solved with more charity food through food banks. While the food banking strategy continues to focus on hunger as a food-based problem, food banks are actually at the front-lines of persistent and sustained poverty attempting to address the manifestations of social inequality. Hunger is not just a food-based problem that can be solved with some kind-hearted donations every now and then by a few charitable folks here and there. Hunger is a poverty-related health inequality problem that requires changes to the fundamental political and economic functions of Canadian society. Food banks are not a viable solution to hunger because they are not a viable solution to poverty and the deleterious health consequences of inequality. Despite these shortcomings, a charity model has overridden the social justice model as the dominant and most socially acceptable solution to hunger in Canada through the institutionalization of food banking.

Food charity has become so depoliticized and culturally acceptable that the full extent of hunger in Canada is denied at all levels of government because charity allows people to ignore the issue of poverty and social justice altogether. Food banks create the false impression that hunger is being adequately addressed. Food banks reinforce the idea that hunger is a food-based problem. Food banks serve as evidence for state minimalists to claims that they represent the emergence of a new kind of residual-market welfare. The focus on hunger and food charity removes poverty and hunger from the political agenda and lets everyone off the hook for the problem of poverty and inequality more generally (Power, 2011). The definition of the problem of hunger must be expanded beyond food-

based issues. The scope of possible solutions must be expanded beyond *ad hoc* charitable food-based strategies.

2.5 The Era of Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporations have assumed a more prominent role in the provision of social services through a period of rapid food bank formation. Corporate charity has become a popular source for community-based non-governmental organizations to raise the resources necessary to provide a basic minimum of social welfare. Many circumstances and social ingredients coalesced to influence the popularity of the notion of corporate social responsibility and the practice of corporate food bank philanthropy. Corporate donations to food banks have become common practice, and corporate marketing through food banking organizations has become a distinct method of corporate social engagement. This section will contextualize these changes to explain why corporate social responsibility campaigns that focus on hunger have emerged to be so popular.

Corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns are related to corporate social responsibility, strategic philanthropy, and cause-related marketing. Each of these terms will be addressed in turn. Corporate social responsibility is a concept with a contested meaning but in general it refers to the belief that corporations have responsibilities that transcend their own narrow economic self-interests. This idea has emerged as part of a general shift in thinking in the business world in response to recent changes in the ways consumers are reached, the ways they are marketed to, and the ways charities now do business.

There are four different kinds of corporate responsibilities. The first responsibility that corporations have is an economic responsibility to their shareholders that they will

return shareholders' investments plus profit. However, in the pursuit of profit, corporations also have a legal responsibility not to break the laws, policies, or regulations they are subject to. Yet some claim that corporations have a further ethical responsibility not to behave in such a way that, even if not explicitly illegal, would be construed as amoral. Finally, corporations can be thought to have discretionary responsibilities, which are responsibilities for which there is no moral, legal, or commercial expectation. These responsibilities are also called philanthropic responsibilities because "the best examples of it were charitable, humanistic activities business undertook to help society along with its own interest" (Carroll, 2012, p. 8).

Corporate social responsibility is not a unified approach but it is a concept that has been subdivided into several approaches under the auspice of the term. The most important of these sub-categories, for the purposes of this study, is called strategic philanthropy. This kind of corporate social responsibility is strategic in that it aligns the discretionary endeavours of corporations with their own business interests. As the SAGE guide highlights, "The use of the term strategic implies that the discretionary socially-oriented activities of the firm are intended to have direct or indirect benefits for the firm—that is, to somehow help to firm achieve its strategic and economic objectives" (Waddock, 2012, p. 13). Strategic philanthropy is philanthropy that either directly or indirectly serves the interests of the corporation. The rationale behind strategic philanthropy is that corporations can create relationships in which both parties benefit.

Cause-related marketing is another form of strategic philanthropy that blends philanthropy and marketing. Also known as *quid pro quo* philanthropy, cause-related marketing is a way to promote the products, services, or brands of corporations by

connecting them to specific causes, but which may not necessarily be explicitly philanthropic relationships. The central premise of the strategy of cause-related marketing is that a company can achieve the goals of both the cause and the company. As the SAGE guide outlines, cause-related marketing is a strategy that can be used to help a company "increase consumer loyalty and brand image, strengthen employee loyalty and productivity, enhance corporate reputation, and expand into emerging markets" (Carroll, 2012, p. 21). In cause-related marketing campaigns, the goodwill of people is harnessed to market and sell goods and services, and the charitable sentiment becomes the product-meaning that is consumed.

Corporate social responsibility campaigns help corporations adapt to a rapidly changing business environment and better interact with actors such as governments, non-governmental organizations, and the public. These campaigns are usually part of a broader corporate strategy that, among other things, "mitigates risk, creates positive brand association, and maintains competitive advantage in the marketplace" (Bronn, P. and Albana Vrioni, 2001). However, some benefits of corporate social responsibility cannot be measured. Corporate social responsibility is also a strategy to avoid "unwelcome criticism, unfavourable media coverage, stakeholder pressure tactics such as protests and consumer boycotts, and government intervention and oversight (Swanson, 2012, p. 153). Corporations employ the tools they have available through corporate social responsibility campaigns to manage stakeholders and issues to prevent their own implication in the adverse consequences of their businesses. These strategies are always designed to help achieve the long-term business goals of individual corporations.

Corporate social responsibility can also be used to manage issues and stakeholders to preserve core business interests. Issues management is the term used to refer to the ways in which corporations use their corporate social responsibility initiatives to control the issues that arise. As the SAGE guide outlines regarding the purpose of issues management, "The goals are straightforward, to prevent the issue from arising and if that fails to amend, alter, and shape the issue in ways favourable to the organization and/or to place the issue in a specific area of resolution (legislative, judicial, regulatory) where the organization believes it has an advantage over other stakeholders on this issue" (Mahon, 2012, p. 158). The point of issues management is to get ahead of or on top of issues to influence how they are perceived to preserve business interests.

Since issues management cannot be successful all the time, corporations also employ strategies to manage their stakeholders. Public affairs helps corporations gain a competitive advantage over competitors or alternate stakeholders by engaging in ongoing relationships with them. These relationships are meant to manage the activities of integral stakeholders with the best interests of the corporation in mind. The SAGE guide highlights, "To be very clear, public affairs is about positioning the organization in such a way that it can deal with external pressures, groups, and situations in a thoughtful manner that meets organizational objectives" (Mahon, 2012, p. 159). Corporate social responsibility is not a value neutral strategy. Corporations attempt to dominate issues to control the discourse and interact with stakeholders to control their social environment, always to benefit their businesses.

Corporate social responsibility campaigns are now extremely popular. Today, corporate philanthropy predominantly take the forms of structured charitable donation

programs rather than the discretionary activities of a few corporations. Corporate social responsibility, strategic philanthropy, and cause-related marketing have exploded in recent years for three reasons, "one consumer-based... one based on changes in corporate responsibility, and one based on new methods of charitable fundraising" (Einstein, 2012: p. 3). All three of the shifts mentioned—in consumer behaviour, corporate responsibilities, and charitable fundraising—worked together to thrust the idea of charity into the marketing spotlight, producing excellent results from the perspectives of marketers and charities alike (Einstein, 2012).

The increasingly limited reach of traditional forms of media was the essential change to the marketing landscape that instigated these initiatives. Combined with the overarching free market ideology that posits all needs can be met through market mechanisms—and a personalized economy that promotes instant gratification—the limited reach of traditional media has forced marketers to conceive of new ways to connect people with products. This has led to an increased emphasis on branding, community engagement by corporations, and the financialization of charities into what Einstein (2012) calls "hypercharities" (p. 71) that specialize in "charitainment" (p. 94). These shifts have allowed people to short-circuit the link between what they think the intended effects of corporate philanthropy are, and what they actually are (Einstein, 2012).

The consumer-based change came in the form of an increased emphasis on the importance of the meaning of products. Consumers now connect with products through powerful brand mythologies that tap into their personal desires and sense of identity. Consumers now expect to consume meanings as part of the value of consuming products.

Whereas products were once marketed based on the merits of their utility, products are now marketed more subtly to personal desires, peoples' sense of individual identity, underlying cultural narratives, and so on. Brands are the currency of marketing. The brand is the new product, and branding is fundamentally about meaning. As Einstein puts it, "Branding is about communicating an idea through a product. It is about creating meaning—taking a physical object and turning it into more than the sum of its parts. It is about creating a personal connection between consumers and products (or services) through communications that lead to thoughts and feelings that have nothing to do with the product's physical attributes. Branding is about fulfilling a need, what marketers call the benefit" (Einstein, 2012, p. 11). The point here is that brands are the central focus of the meaning that is consumed as part of corporate social responsibility campaigns.

The shift in corporate responsibilities came when people involved with corporate advertising and public relations identified that perhaps a synergy could be achieved between the goals of charitable organizations and corporate profit-making, which changed popular notions about corporate responsibilities in the business world. As Einstein puts it, "CRM campaigns tied corporations to causes that improved their public reputations while promoting brands and increasing sales" (Einstein, 2012, p. 33). These relationships are synergistic because it appears that everyone benefits in some way. Regarding this logic applied to food banks, Einstein cynically wrote, "Food banks get food; Feeding America [the American version of Food Banks Canada] gets funding; hungry people get fed. So what's the problem?... Win-win on the corporate side" (Einstein, 2012: p. 27). However, Einstein points out that the interests of corporations and charitable organizations rarely produce synergy, or even coincide. The interests of the

businesses that operate behind these charitable initiatives tend to overshadow the interests of the charities used to front them.

How charitable funds are raised has turned some charities into what Einstein calls "hypercharities" that sometimes specialize in "charitainment". A hypercharity is "an organization that is structured and promoted to appeal to large corporations looking to tie in with a charity partner for maximum marketing exposure... *they* have become brand entities" (Einstein, 2012: p. 71). Corporations must cut through the noisy media environment to reach consumers with their message of philanthropy, so logos of well-known charities on their products or in their marketing serve as effective vehicles for this purpose. From the perspective of charities, the goal is to promote corporate campaigns to increase donations to their charitable organizations. From the perspective of corporations, their relationships with charities promote their product to consumers with a particular brand-meaning. The logos from hypercharities serve as symbols for corporate social responsibility initiatives that both improve the success of the campaign and promote consumption of products.

Charities are forced to engage in marketing tactics to survive in a competitive marketing environment, but they can become the brand that sells, not the organization that helps. Corporate social responsibility and its related practices of strategic philanthropy and cause-related marketing are part of an overall corporate profit-making strategy (Einstein, 2012). Deferring our ethical responsibilities to the whims of markets and the strategies of marketers will not produce the kind of results that marketers would have us envision in the media they produce. As Einstein put it, charities can begin to market their brand in a way that "masks the systemic social dysfunction that creates

issues like poverty and disease and obesity" (p. 98). Charities now feel compelled to lend their brands to corporate marketing even if the interests of marketing will tend to trump the interests of their cause in a way that depoliticizes the relevant issues.

Chapter 3

Theory, Methodology & Method

This chapter presents the details of the design of this study to show the relation of the design to theory and methodology. The first section bases this study in relevant theory related to the interactions between the available remedies to hunger, the typification of hunger as a social problem, and how that influences the institutionalization of a corresponding response. These interactions help explain how ideas become embedded in society so this study draws on theories of social constructionism to make those connections. The second section explores how to analyze these relationships with a combination of social semiotics and discourse analysis that accounts for the depth and breadth of meaning evident in the marketing media from corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns. The third section presents the design of this study and how the relevant theory and methods are deployed. These components ultimately justify the theoretical and methodological assumptions inherent to this study about the relationships between the available remedies to hunger, the typification of the problem, and how that influences the institutionalization of a corresponding response.

3.1 Theory

This study relies on the concepts of 'typification' and 'institutionalization' from the theory of social constructionism. Social constructionism provides a framework to understand how what we perceive as objective social reality—the "truth" of social life— is actually historically contingent shared subjective perceptions that become learned as "the taken-for-granted... common-sense reality of everyday life" (Berger & Luckmann,

1966). This section begins with a brief overview of social constructionism, then continues to a review of the relationship between the concepts of typification and institutionalization, and ends with a discussion of how social constructionists apply social constructionism to their interpretation of social problems.

3.1.1 Social Constructionism

This study employs the concepts of typification and institutionalization from the theory of social constructionism. Social constructionism helps us to understand how the notion of hunger and the institutions of food banks mutually reinforce each other. The dominant typification of hunger influences the institutionalization of food banks, and the institutionalization of food banks reinforces the typification of hunger as such, which then further influences food bank institutionalization, and so on. This study critiques the way in which hunger is socially constructed, both as a shared concept and as a social institution. The relationship between the typification of hunger and its social institutionalization is problematic because it tends to obscure, distract from, or foreclose the possibility of alternative long-term approaches to the problem of hunger. Social constructionism helps us to understand why this relationship has the potential to be very problematic.

Best and Harris dispel the idea that social problems can be isolated as the product of objective social conditions. Social problems are ongoing, but there is no clear way to determine what is and is not "a problem" from an objective perspective. Instead, a social problem is whatever tends to be dominantly perceived as "the problem". As Best and Harris write, "Social problems are subjective interpretations rather than objective conditions. It is the process of calling attention to a troubling condition, not the condition

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itself, that makes something a social problem" (Best & Harris, 2013). Both authors

recognize that social problems do not just happen "out there" as a result of social

conditions; although there certainly is some objectivity to teen pregnancy, obesity, drug

addiction, hunger, and so on—they do happen. Yet we refer to social problems with ideas

that are not *literally* the social problems themselves, so the assumptions that make up

those ideas come to stand in for what we perceive as objective social reality and the

nature of the world.

Social constructionism generally holds that meaning is produced in social

contexts, not by the inherent nature of things. Meaning is produced through an

amalgamation of shared subjective perspectives that become part of the fabric of society.

Berger and Luckmann outline the process by which meaning becomes embedded in

society. Since communication is necessary for social life, people must share concepts

about the world in common so that they may understand each other. However, these

shared concepts require shared assumptions about the nature of the world, which can over

time become "the reality of everyday life... taken for granted *as* reality" (Berger &

Luckmann, 1966: p. 37), though they are actually only abstract notions, not the objective

nature of things.

As Berger and Luckmann argue, our shared abstract notions about the nature of

social reality come to stand in as objective reality, even though those abstractions cannot

possibly express the full nuance and diversity of the categories to which those ideas refer.

However, those shared concepts are what facilitate social interaction. The consequence is

that those shared assumptions about the nature of things play out in social life and

become embodied by society, which inevitably reinforces those same assumptions. These

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assumptions not only become embodied in institutions, but they also become embedded in social life. Social behaviour is heavily influenced by shared socialized assumptions about the nature of the world that are disseminated through language. Through these shared assumptions about the nature of the world, we ultimately create and reproduce our own social reality.

Hacking defined what social constructionist analysis tries to accomplish in *The Social Construction of What?* (1995). The point of social constructionism was to raise consciousness about the contingent nature of what we perceive as inevitable or natural, and of how the meanings attributed to things are not purely some inherent properties of their so-called reality. Hacking presents the logic of social constructionism as comprising two main stages, the first of which must be fulfilled in order for the second to hold. First, social constructionists claim that *X* (the social construction) "is taken for granted; [it] appears to be inevitable" (12). Second, social constructionists show that *X* "is not determined by the nature of things; it is not inevitable" (6). Sometimes social constructionists take this logic to a third and fourth stage. Some social constructionists argue that *X* is bad, that a particular social construction can be harmful, or wrong on moral grounds. Some social constructionists even claim that their analyses are grounds for radical social and political transformation of the structures that underlie *X*. Social constructionism works well for this study precisely because this study can go through all four stages.

Hacking describes different "gradations of constructionist commitment" (p. 19) with regards to how social constructionists view the implications of their analyses. First, and least committed of all, are historical constructionists, who seek to demonstrate that *X*

is the contingent upshot of history. Second, ironic constructionists, who are slightly more committed, attempt to show that what is generally conceived of as inevitable could actually have been much different given any random variance in circumstance. Third, there are the reformist constructionists, who are committed insofar as they seek to change some marginal aspects of *X* but not do away with it completely. Fourth are the rebellious constructionists, the second most committed group, who hold dear their claims that *X* is bad, and that it should be fundamentally changed. Finally, the most committed group of all, the revolutionary constructionists, seek broader paradigm shifts in metaphysical socio-political practice that include changes in the underlying processes that regulate the things about which we create social constructions.

This study asks whether the social construction of hunger and the institutionalization of food banks has become so normalized that both seem inevitable and taken-for-granted in Canadian society today. Furthermore, I wonder how the social construction of hunger and the institutionalization of food banks are contingent on social, historical, institutional and cultural forces that preceded their constitution, or if given different circumstances, whether hunger may have come to mean something else or food banks never existed. Moreover, it could be that the dominant social construction of hunger produces harmful effects. Finally, if a social constructionist analysis provides reasonable basis to argue that the dominant social construction of hunger is harmful to the goal of alleviating hunger, then this implies the need for a comprehensive re-thinking of the relationship between our ideas about hunger and the approach we have taken to it, food banking.

3.1.2 Typification and Institutionalization

The process of social construction involves two different but related sub-processes. Typification is the process of creating categorical generalizations. Institutionalization is the societal result of social interaction premised on the assumption that people will behave *as if* our ideas about things were real properties of the things themselves. These two concepts have a cyclically interactive relationship—one influences the other and *vice versa*.

Typification is defined as "the pragmatic reduction and equalization of attributes relevant to the particular purpose at hand for which the type has been formed, and involves disregarding those individual differences of the typified objects that are not relevant to such a purpose" (McKinney, 1969: p.1). In other words, typification is to reduce the diversity and variety within a particular category to a shared understanding of the basic assumptions about the category in which diversity and variety already exists.

For example, cars are designed to perform a specific function. A car is made of a metal frame, and usually sits atop four wheels so that it may be propelled by an engine to roll along a road. A car could not be, for instance, a ballooned vehicle made of rubber with a small basket propelled by hot air and wind currents. Cars definitely exist in real life. Car is measurable, touchable, and some need of new mufflers or wheels or brakes. In this way cars are knowable. But how do we know a car when we see one, and how do we know when something is not a car? The answer is that cars have been typified. Typification is not necessarily restricted by characteristics about, for instance, how big any specific car is, or what any specific car is made of. The notion of "car-ness" is the typified notion that people conjure up in their minds to answer the question, "What is the

essence of the car?" To typify the car is to make claim about the nature of cars in general, despite the fact that the assumptions that inform that typification are always subjective.

This relationship produces the social construction of hunger as an idea, or a typification, and also constitutes the actual things embodied as institutions. Each process reinforces and reproduces the other in a feedback loop. Although one word is often used to refer to a social construction—as in the social construction of "hunger"—that word actually refers to two different aspects of the same thing in an interactive process. The social construction is both the idea and the thing, but also describes the way in which the idea influences the thing, and how the constitution of the thing then reinforces the idea, and so on. When something is referred to as "socially constructed," that is not a denial of the thing, but a reference to ideas in actual fact. The result of a particular typification of something is the institutionalization of that idea in the fabric of social life (Hacking, 1999).

According to the theory of sociological neoinstitutionalism, organizations such as food banks are not solely or necessarily born from a fervent bout of facilitated interactions between self-interested and rational social agents, as traditional institutional analysis may hold, nor does it take a deterministic approach to the effects of institutions on behaviour. Instead, organizations are recognized as being formed in a social environment that includes the entire symbolic order in which social life is based. Sociological neoinstitutionalism suggests that institutions arise from the symbolic order, not from social interaction itself. Any analysis of institutionalization from this perspective begins with an evaluation of the typification of ideas to determine how those ideas become embedded in social structures.

There are three pillars of neoinstitutional analysis: regulative, normative, and cultural/cognitive (Scott, 2008: pp. 50-59). These pillars are the forces that continually reconstitute institutions. For any institution, each of these three pillars may operate in isolation, or in conjunction, while other may be more dominant, or some passive. The regulative pillar refers to the way in which institutions influence behaviour via the enforcement of rules and the use of carrots and sticks to regulate or constrain behaviour. The normative pillar refers to the ways in which values factor into the construction of institutions, which emphasizes "the stabilizing influence of social beliefs and norms that are both internalized and imposed by others" (p. 56). The cultural/cognitive pillar refers to the way in which the internalization of symbols and meaning helps social beings make sense of the world, but at the same time provides a symbolic foundation for life that strongly influences how they will then behave, and the kinds of institutions that such behaviour will require.

Specifically regarding the cultural/cognitive pillar, food banks continually reconstitute themselves precisely because too few alternate perspectives gain legitimacy and attention for deliberation in the public sphere. Indeed, other perspectives seem inconceivable. Scott provided a multistage model of institutionalization (Scott, p. 105, Fig. 5.1) in which a crucial detail stands out. As social problems are generated, preexisting institutions may be able to address them. However, if a problem is new and recurrent, that problem must first be typified. Crucially, if the typification is not sufficiently contested by many different groups of claims-makers and there are not multiple visible responses to a recurring social problem, the societal responses are continually reconstituted as *ad hoc* institutions. The presence or absence of multiple

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visible perspectives and responses in the institutionalization process represents a critical

juncture that, if cut off, can result in the reinforcement of a particular typification of the

problem, and a particular institution to address that problem in a way that prevents the

conceivability of alternatives. The identification of a particular typification of hunger by

prominent claims-makers is so important to explain why *ad hoc* institutions like food

banks have been unsuccessful, but still remain.

3.1.3 Bullshit

Any analysis of the relationship between the typification of a social problem like

hunger and the institutionalization of a societal response like food banks has to account

theoretically for why alternative perspectives have failed to emerge as better or more

effective solutions to hunger. The absence of public exposure to alternative perspectives

tends to narrow the public debate, which therefore narrows the conceptual realm of

possible responses. The relationship between typification and institutionalization must

account theoretically for the mechanism through which a particular typification is

defended, preserved, and secured as dominant. Otherwise, the theoretical relationship

would not help explain why the current responses to hunger remain *ad hoc* institutions

like food banks. This study requires a theoretical basis to understand the discursive

mechanisms through which the typification of a social problem deflects from contestation

to remain popular. That theory is that certain claims-makers make claims about hunger

that can be characterized as bullshit.

While it may be unorthodox to use the term bullshit in academic work, there is a

theoretical basis for its use in this study. Bullshit is a useful way to characterize certain

claims related to hunger because it helps understand how, in specific instances, certain

claims can depoliticize issues and prevent alternative perspectives from emerging.

Bullshit claims are specific kinds of claims. Emeritus professor of philosophy at

Princeton University Harry G. Frankfurt differentiates between lying and bullshitting to

help explain the term as follows:

> "Now the concept most central to the distinctive nature of a lie is that of
>
> falsity: the liar is essentially someone who deliberately promulgates a
>
> falsehood... For the essence of bullshit is not that it is *false* but that it is
>
> *phony*... This points to a fundamental aspect of the nature of bullshit:
>
> although it is produced without concern with the truth, it need not be false.
>
> The bullshitter is faking things, but that does not necessarily mean he gets
>
> them wrong" (Frankfurt, 2005, 46-8).

Bullshitting is not lying because bullshitters are unconcerned with "truth".

Bullshitting is about making others think that the bullshitter believes in bullshit claims.

Bullshitters do not attempt to intentionally misrepresent facts, or the state of things.

Bullshitters intentionally represent their own state of mind in a certain way to impress

upon others a certain image of themselves. Whether they truthfully represent their state of

mind is irrelevant. What matters is that bullshitters represent their state of mind, or

perspective on the world, in a way that creates a favourable impression of the bullshitter

in the minds of others. The bullshitter does not feel compelled to bullshit for the sake of

bullshitting, but compelled to have others think the bullshitter genuinely believes in

bullshit claims.

The best bullshit claims are unverifiable, but unfalsifiable. The best bullshit is the

kind of claim that engenders an admiration from others for making an obvious, popular,

or culturally significant claims that cannot be held to account. For example, the claim "I believe that no one should ever go hungry" is a bullshit claim. There is no way to prove that the claims-maker is being truthful about what they believe. Besides, who does not think that? Yet the central aspect of bullshit claims is that bullshitters are unconcerned with the truth-value of their bullshit, only with the impression of themselves that making certain claims creates in the minds of others. Others might buy into the representations of themselves that bullshitter attempt to manufacture. Bullshit claims leave the impression that bullshitters are really just good people after all. This short-circuits accountability and deliberative discourse.

Obvious, politically correct or popular claims raise interesting questions about the motivations behind those who make those claims. Bullshitting is much safer than lying. The consequences of being caught bullshitting are less severe than lying. As Frankfurt wrote, "We may seek to distance ourselves from bullshit, but we are more likely to turn away from it with an impatient or irritated shrug than with the sense of violation or outrage that lies often inspire" (Frankfurt, 2005, p. 50). Bullshit is important not necessarily due to its relationship to "truth", but its ability to depoliticize, pacify or deflect from alternative perspectives with a favourable image of the bullshitter. The proliferation of bullshit claims surrounding the issue of hunger is an important and useful factor in any discussion about the dominance of a particular typification of hunger as part of the institutionalization process of food banks.

Bullshitting is useful for advertisers and public relations officials because they never have to make a specific claim, take a definitive stance, or articulate any particular narrative. As a result, any attempts to produce counter-claims, counter-arguments, or

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counter-narratives, are left grasping at air. Bullshit can be used to impress upon the public certain ideas that cannot necessarily be substantiated, but which cannot also be refuted. Laura Penny described how advertisers and public relations firms use bullshit: "Bullshit distracts with exaggeration, omission, obfuscation, stock phrases, pretentious jargon, faux folksiness, feigned ignorance, and sloganeering... Bullshit aggrandizes and amplifies... Bullshit also minimizes" (Penny, 2005, p. 5-7). Penny identifies two kinds of bullshit, the complex and the simple. Complex bullshit is the inaccessible fine print at the bottom of car commercials. Simple bullshit is a promise of guaranteed satisfaction. Complex and simple bullshit work together, "with simple bullshit running interference and serving as the smiling public face of complex bullshit" (Penny, 2005: p. 11). The point of all of this is to create a favourable impression of corporations while they pursue potentially unfavourable business goals.

The reason that bullshit is so applicable to claims-making about hunger and food banking is that these issues evoke strong emotions in people. Hunger is an idea with significant cultural meaning. It is an easy sell to make claims about caring about hunger or engage in food bank philanthropy. Hardly anyone takes a critical look at such claims and practices. Whenever someone claims they caring about hunger or donates to a food banks, it casts them in a positive light. However, claims about hunger and food bank philanthropy are typically not held to account precisely for this reason. An anti-hunger posture is almost expected as politically correct or culturally mainstream. When people make those claims and engage in practices that attempt to address the problem, it is easy to present oneself as an upstanding moral person. In short, hunger and food banking are easy to bullshit about.

3.2 Methodology

To follow the social constructionist path that Hacking had laid out (Hacking, 1999), this research study combines social semiotics and discourse analysis. On the one hand, this study requires a critical look at the meaning of certain texts in their social context; but on the other hand, it also requires a critical look at how those texts relate to each other. Social semiotics can provide insight into the ideological function of certain representations by tracing their meaning back to particular social positions, and then by analyzing the implications of those claims given political, economic and cultural considerations. Yet representations sometimes share meanings across their various forms and social positions, and this creates a field for discursive analysis which has even broader cultural implications. The methods of this study involves a kneading of the depth and breadth of meaning to contextualize hunger as a social construction in representations about it by prominent claims-makers.

Social semiotics was used to trace meaning back to the social positions they legitimate (Hodge & Kress, 1988). I also sought to understand how those representations fit into our broader social context by theorizing that discourse in relation to a broader "regime of truth" (Foucault, 1978), a distinct set of regularities in the deployment of meaning that have the effect of naturalizing and objectifying particular claims to truth. This study uses social semiotics to interpret the ideological underpinnings of specific texts, and combines that with the use of discourse analysis to trace the connections between texts and in relation to a broader regime of truth. This study analyzes the social effects of meaning along two dimensions, both within and among representations. This

section will explore how social semiotics and discourses analysis can be used in conjunction by first addressing social semiotics and then discourse analysis.

3.2.1 Social Semiotics

As described by Hodge & Kress, social semiotics is a way to interpret texts that is not content-centric. Social semiotics asks what texts say about social context as a broader realm of meaning. As Hodge and Kress wrote, "We wish to show that a social semiotic account cannot proceed with a naive text-context dichotomy, but rather, that context has to be theorized as another set of texts" (Hodge & Kress, 1988: p. 8). Social semiotics tries to understand the production of meaning as a by-product of the interactions in society through the study of signs and symbols. Analyses that employ social semiotics lead to interesting insights about the power relations inherent to the production of meaning by interrogating their social, political and economic basis.

As a methodology, social semiotics contrasts ideology and science. For the purposes of an analysis that employs social semiotics, ideology is used to refer to "knowledge that legitimates the social position of dominant groups… and reflects the interests of power" (Rose, 2013, p. 107). By contrast, science refers to the evidence that disrupts the ways in which ideology legitimates those positions of power. The purpose of social semiotics is to show how popular representations have ideological meaning, and that they are not neutral or natural. To do this, studies that employ social semiotics contrasts ideological meaning with some sort of evidence that exposes the social structural basis for particular representations. This study deploys this idea to contrast the ideological meaning of representations about hunger and food banking with various

forms of qualitative and quantitative evidence to critically interrogate representations of hunger and food banking.

The interpretation of ideological meaning presents some problems for the interpreter. Research that employs social semiotics cannot contrast representations with objective knowledge, or "truth," because that very social "science" rests on the assumption that all meaning can be traced back to social positions. As Rose puts it, "The implication of this argument is that the critical goals of semiology are just as ideological as the adverts or whatever that are being critiqued; the difference between them is in the social effects of the knowledges each depends on, not its truth status" (Rose, 2013, p. 107). Evidence is never absolute or infallible, but what matters most is how the evidence contrasts against what is being studied and how that disrupts the discursive field. Social semiotics therefore provides a basis to study the social effects of ideological representations by contrasting them with other forms of knowledge.

The principle aim is not to provide an unbiased or objective view of representations of hunger and food banking, or to determine whether they tell the "truth," but to give a rich account of those representations as just another viewer with an alternate point of view. Social semiotics requires self-reflexivity about my own viewing biases as an academic. However, this study addresses very specific questions about corporate claims-making about hunger and food banking that force those biases to be held to account. Hacking (1999) laid out the standard that provides a critical methodological basis to analyze the relationship between the typification of hunger and the institutionalization of food banks because it sets up social constructionist analysis with a set of checkpoints that carry a burden of proof for the researcher.

3.2.2 Discourse Analysis

While this study is a critical interrogation of texts conceived as representations with ideological meaning, it is also a study designed to contextualize those meanings in the broader Canadian social and political discourses. This study explores what the society in which we live say about representations of hunger and food banking, and what those texts say about the society in which we live. If social semiotics is a way to contextualize the depth of meaning in specific texts, discourse analysis is a way to connect those meanings across a breadth of other texts to identify the discursive mechanisms that regulate how hunger is thought about and acted upon. Social semiotics gives us insight into the depth of meaning within texts, while discourse gives us insight into the breadth of meaning across and among them. This combination gives the texts being studied two dimensions as a discourse that does ideological work.

Michel Foucault uses the concept of discourse to theoretically account for the exercise of power through language, as opposed to the legitimation or mystification of power positions with language, which those who had employed the concept of ideology have done, semiologists included. According to Foucault, the use of the concept of ideology suffers from three main theoretical shortcomings: "[Ideology] always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth… [Ideology] refers, I think necessarily, to something of the order of a subject… [Ideology] stands in a secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant" (Foucault, 1978, p. 118). According to Foucault, the problem with the concept of ideology is that it always gives the same predictable answers about the nature of the social world. As Foucault advises regarding research that focuses

on ideology, "Since indeed it never ceases to say the same thing, it perhaps says nothing" (Foucault, 1978, p. 78).

While discourse is a diverse and complex idea, for the methodological purposes of this study, the most important aspect of discourse is power. For Foucault, truth is not a neutral, innocent, or transparent reality that lingers against the backdrop of our social world, which we can refer to, usually through scientific means, as evidence against ideology. As Foucault put it, "Truth isn't outside power, or lacking in power… Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced by virtue of multiple forms of constraints. Each society has its regime of truth: that is, the types of discourses that it accepts and makes function as true" (Foucault, 1978, p. 131). The point here is that the power of discourse depends in large part on how the knowledge produced fits within a broader regime of truth; how it relates with the discourses that are already there.

Discourse constitutes our social reality against the regime of truth, including all the social assumptions built into language, which we then reference, and call upon for validation. Discourse analysis, then, explores "how specific views or accounts are constructed as real or truthful or natural through particular regimes of truth" (Rose, 2013: p. 196). Discourse analysts have employed the concept of intertextuality to explore these connections. As Rose put it, "Intertextuality refers to the way that the meanings of any one discursive image or text depend not only on that one text or image, but also on the meanings carried by other images and texts" (Rose, 2013, p. 191). Intertextuality is a methodological tool that addresses the meaning of texts as determined by their connection to other texts within a broader regime of truth. Intertextuality can occur between a cluster of texts, what Foucault may have called a discursive formation, and

also among the texts that make up the broader discursive regime of truth. Through these connections, this study will explore the discursive power of texts produced by a corporate claims-makers about hunger and food banks as a specific discursive formation that is made to function in media discourse as true.

The tension between discourse analysis and ideology critique play out throughout this study. Ultimately, to build on the literature on the subject of hunger and to say something new in relation to that preexisting literature, this study relied on social constructionism, mainly because Jan Poppendieck, who said so much about hunger and food banking in the United States, used social constructionism. This study relied on the notion of ideology critique because the preexisting literature on hunger and food banking is heavily influenced by social constructionism. Social constructionism is conducive to ideology critique because it implies a separation between the construction of the notion and the construction of our social world, or the idea and its materiality, or representation and truth. Ideology critique attempts to illuminate the assumed hidden meanings behind the obfuscation of ideological representation. Discourse analysis blurs the lines between ideological representation as an obfuscation of truth because discourse analysis shows how power function through the discursive production of truth.

Discourse analysis also provides insights into corporate food bank philanthropy as a cultural phenomenon. Discourse analysis explores how corporate food bank philanthropy functions to reproduce and reinforce corporate food bank philanthropy as truth, perhaps as making sense in the context of neoliberalism. As Samantha King asks about breast cancer, "What, in other words, is the appeal of breast cancer? Or, more accurately, how and why has it been *made* to appeal?" (King, 2006: p. xxv). This

question from the beginning of *Pink Ribbons, Inc.* indicates that King relies on a theory of discourse. Discourse makes social meaning open to contention and diversity, as opposed to a theory of ideology, which views social meaning as monolithic. An analysis of discourse views meaning as less certain than a critique of ideology.

As King writes on this subject related to her own work, "The contention here is not that tool such as breast-cancer-related marketing… are simply manipulation or propaganda that imposes meanings and values on docile consumers or incites false desires in the name of diffusing or neutralizing political unrest" (King, 2006: p. 2). King relies on discourse to explore the role of breast cancer philanthropy in a broader redefinition of the contours of the public sphere and corporatizing public life as part of the general shift of neoliberalism. As King writes, "The corporatization of breast cancer activism and the emergence of personal and institutional philanthropy… are, at one level, just one set of symptoms of a much broader set of social, political and economic conditions" (King, 2006: p. 123). King identifies that the neoliberal notion of good citizenship through corporate social responsibility, cause-related marketing, consumerism-based charity and organized giving have constituted "a struggle over how and by whom socioeconomic management should be undertaken" (King, 2006: p. 123). This approach is still concerned with who gets what, where, when, how, and why, but explains the social productivity of culture without having to distinguish between representation and reality. Since this study employs some elements from ideology critique, and some from discourse analysis, the tensions between these approaches are evident throughout.

Ultimately, that poverty is the root cause of hunger, and that the current state of food banking cannot adequately address hunger over the long term, are truth claims, and they contend with other truths. However, truth claims can be evaluated in different ways and supported by different kinds of evidence. What the corporate construction of hunger and food banking does is prevent the emergence of a view of hunger and its solutions that is supported by evidence. The evidence strongly suggests that a far better characterization of the problem is that hunger results because of a lack of money *for* food, which implies a solution based on a model of social and economic justice. Evidence is the standard used to evaluate corporate claims about hunger and food banking. There are good and better truths depending on what evidence there is to support them. Why better approaches do not emerge despite sometimes overwhelming evidence to support a change of view is accounted for in a discourse analysis by considering the whole composition of contending truths about hunger. However, this study is limited as part ideology critique because such an analysis approaches the corporate construction of hunger as monolithic, immutable, and supreme. Rather, it is important to note that corporate food bank philanthropy is a diverse practice with nuances and implications that escape this analysis.

3.3 Method

This study designates corporations as prominent claims-makers about hunger in Canada today. As previously discussed, the way hunger is represented by prominent claims-makers has important implications for the kinds of response that becomes institutionalized and embedded in society. This study traces the connections between the available remedies to hunger, the typification of the problem, and the institutionalization of the societal response by looking at how corporations represent hunger in their

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marketing media for their food bank philanthropy campaigns and interpreting their claims in the context of the evidence.

3.3.1 Research Design

This study has been designed to critically interrogate the marketing media from a sample of large and visible corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns that have taken place over the last three years (2012-2014). I created brief descriptions of each campaign and a comprehensive list of all the media used from each campaign (See Appendix A). I then accounted for the charitable donations from each campaign in the context of food bank usage and food insecurity in Canada, as well as corporate profits and investment behavior. I coded how each campaign characterizes hunger and food banking (See Appendix B). I also analyzed a few specific images to deconstruct their meaning in the context of the evidence. I looked closely at the Help Hunger Disappear campaign and a product called Nourish by Campbell's Canada as an illustration of a corporate food bank philanthropy initiative to demonstrate how such a campaign forecloses on the conceptual realm of possibility for alternate approaches by making certain kinds of claims about hunger and food banking. Finally, I address how the findings of this study fit into the theoretical framework around the available remedies, the typification, and the institutionalization of the response.

3.3.2 Data Sources

This study used media that was produced specifically by corporations because corporations can be designated as a prominent, if not predominant, group of claims-makers about the issue. For the purposes of this study, a corporation is a business venture that is responsible to shareholders, whether public or private. Corporations tend to have

similar political and economic interests, so not only are they similar in form, but similar in behavior. Corporations are likely to make similar claims about hunger because they share similar political and economic interests. A food bank philanthropy campaign is a program to either donate or help raise food and funds for food banks in Canada, whether directly through corporate donation or indirectly through sponsorships of community food drives or consumerism-based campaigns.

The focus on hunger is important. Hunger is a small word that can embody and transmit a significant amount of meaning that can be characterized richly enough by a disparate group of claims-makers. The focus on food banking is also important. Food banks are everywhere and, for the most part, are accepted as common sense. The relationship between hunger and food banking has become so normalized that whenever we hear about hunger, we hear about food banks, and whenever we hear about food banks, we hear about hunger. Food banking has, for the most part, managed to avoid critique in the court of popular opinion. Food banking was chosen for this study because it is a social practice that seems to be popularly understood as an unmitigated good.

Corporations that engage in food bank philanthropy tend to produce multimedia marketing campaigns to disseminate their campaign's message. Broadcast commercials are a popular way for corporations to market charity-related brands. Since the internet has become a popular route through which marketers can reach consumers, many of these corporations have a website specifically devoted to their food bank philanthropy campaign. Social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are also new platforms that marketers now use extensively to reach more people in a much more targeted way. Press and media releases also served as fruitful sources of data. These

sources substantiated many of the claims made in the marketing media and typically reported on the goals of the campaigns as well as the actual funds or food raised and donated. Stock quotes and news reports provided information on corporate profits, investments and to contextualize the amounts of food or money raised by each campaign to situate these campaigns in the current order of political economy.

All of these were good data sources precisely because food bank philanthropy has been integrated into corporate branding. Most campaigns have a few complete pieces of marketing that include everything they wish to convey. Like all commercial branding, these sources strove to be short, direct, and clear. As a result, these sources, even if a specific campaign did not employ each, included the components necessary to answer the research questions posed here: a characterization of hunger, an explicit or implicit characterization of the solution to hunger as food banking, and therefore a specific social construction of hunger than can be analyzed for its social implications. I gathered as much media as possible that was available via the internet, and then created a data pool of media for each campaign (See Appendix A).

3.3.3 Sampling

A list of corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns could be absurdly long, but the campaigns used in this study were chosen because they are visible and well-known. Most importantly, the campaigns included in this study produced enough publicly available media to make a rich enough account of a corporate characterization of hunger and food banking, but also about the relationship between hunger and food banking. Corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns can be very different but they all involve

corporations making claims about hunger and food bank philanthropy through marketing media.

Despite the use of corporate food bank philanthropy as a blanket term for what is actually a complex, eclectic and often contradictory phenomenon, these campaigns nevertheless seem to take three main forms: donations of money or food, sponsorships of food drives or hunger awareness-raising campaigns, and cause-related campaigns that promote consumer-driven philanthropy. Each of these types of campaigns was used in this study to include a variety of different kinds of corporate claims-making about hunger and food banking. The campaigns used in this study are: the Help Hunger Disappear campaign by Campbell's Canada; the Extra Helping campaign by Loblaw Companies Limited through Loblaw's grocery retailers; the Fill the Food Bank campaign by Shaw Communications; Purolator's Tackle Hunger campaign, which operates in association with the Canadian Football League (CFL); the Food For Families campaign by Kraft Canada; and the Drive Away Hunger campaign by Farm Credit Canada.

The criteria for inclusion in this study, then, was marketing media produced for corporate campaigns that specifically mention hunger and practiced some form of philanthropy related to food banking, whether it was direct investment, or consumer-driven food drives, or sponsorships of local events. I remained open to the possibility that a food-related corporate campaign may not mention hunger specifically, or even engage with food banks at all. Nevertheless, food-related corporate philanthropy initiatives in Canada overwhelmingly mention hunger and focus their efforts on food banks. Even companies that make products that are not foods relate their donation of those products to hunger. What determined inclusion or exclusion from this study was already implied

around corporate donors as a group of claims-makers regarding the issue of hunger that were also involved in food bank philanthropy, and studies of culture are always concerned with the obvious.

3.3.4 Coding

This study analyzes the three most common and prominent characterizations of both the problem of and solution to hunger in marketing media for corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns. Sometimes those characterizations were explicit, and sometimes they were implicit, but they always involved interpretation on my part. This study was designed to approach these representations as junctures in the relationships between the available solutions, the typifications of the problem, and the kinds of institutions that arise to address that problem. I answered the following questions for each campaign: How does this campaign characterize the problem of hunger in social, political, economic and cultural terms? How does this campaign characterize the solution to hunger as food banking in social, political, economic and cultural terms (See Appendix B)?

Chapter 4

Researching Findings

This chapter presents the findings of this study in three ways. The first section presents the findings regarding corporate contributions of food and money to food banks, which are juxtaposed with corporate profits, executive compensation, and investment behaviours. The second section presents the findings of this study regarding how hunger and food banking are socially constructed in the marketing media of corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns in an analysis of the shared representations across different campaigns, as well as in some specific examples. The third section applies the notion of bullshit to an example campaign to explore the way corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns can prevent alternative conceptions of the problem and solution from emerging by narrowing the focus to food, and thus depoliticize hunger as an unfortunate or unexplainable problem for which the solution will continue to be more corporate food bank charity.

4.1 Corporate Food Bank Philanthropy Campaigns by the Numbers

All of the campaigns used in this study boasted about the amount of food, money, or other resources that they either directly or indirectly raised for Canadian food banks. Since we know approximately how many people access food banks in an average month, and we know approximately how many people in Canada suffer from at least some measure of food insecurity, then the goals and achievements of these campaigns can be put into context, and ultimately judged for their effectiveness as a solution to the problem. Likewise, since we know approximately how much revenues and profits some

corporations operate with, or how much corporate executives receive as compensation, or how much capital corporations sink into their long-term investments, then their commitment to their own claims can be put into context, and ultimately judged for their effectiveness.

The following analysis illustrates what little effect these campaigns have on a continuous and prolonged hunger problem. This section juxtaposes the amounts of food and money raised through these campaigns against the backdrop of the evidence on rates of food bank usage and food insecurity to demonstrate how little corporate food charity means for an individual food bank user and an individual who suffers from food insecurity. Furthermore, the money invested by corporations for their other activities are analyzed to calculate what some corporations could do to more effectively address hunger. Ultimately, the following sections are intended to create a frame of reference for understanding corporate involvement in food bank philanthropy in a social context characterized by socioeconomic inequality and asymmetric power relations. Food charity is nowhere near enough food and money to address hunger over the long-term in a social context of socioeconomic injustice.

4.1.1 Campbell Company of Canada

Campbell Company of Canada launched a hunger awareness and food drive campaign in 2008 called Help Hunger Disappear which they claim has "helped drive [their] donations to Food Banks Canada and encouraged Canadians to get involved and make donations to their local food banks" (Help Hunger Disappear, 2012). Campbell's has fostered relationships with Food Banks Canada, the UN World Food Programme, and the Daily Bread Food Bank, who Campbell's describes as "[their] partners in helping

alleviate hunger." Campbell's claims to have provided these organizations with "annual donations of funds and wholesome products," including "one million pounds of wholesome food," as well as "charitable funds, research resources, and support for community and awareness building programs" (Help Hunger Disappear, 2012).

Campbell's flagship product in the Help Hunger Disappear campaign is called Nourish, which Campbell's describes as "one of the most meaningful products in [their] history... a nutrient-dense, complete meal, with a full serving of three food groups… an ideal option for donation to food banks" (The Story of NOURISH, 2011). Campbell's claims to have donated 350,000 cans of Nourish to various food banks since the product launched in early 2011, which has been ongoing ever since (Help Hunger Disappear, 2012). Campbell's has also mobilized a targeted multimedia marketing campaign to encourage consumers to purchase Nourish on the premise that "net profits can actually go to fund more production of Nourish, which will be donated to more people" (The Story of NOURISH, 2011).

For each Help Hunger Disappear event, Campbell's provides skids of its own products, including Nourish, to grocery stores. These Campbell's products are then constructed into a giant display that spells the word H-U-N-G-E-R out of flats of soup cans. Participants and grocery store employees are provided t-shirts with Campbell's logos and 'Help Hunger Disappear' across them, as well as blow-up Campbell's soup can balloons, and other products produced by Campbell's. The display is visible and sometimes there are volunteers who approach potential donors in the store. Customers are pitched this deal: Buy four cans of Campbell's soup and save a $1 with a coupon at the cash register, and then Campbell's will donate another $1 to a local food bank.

Consumers can even purchase Campbell's products and donate them to the food bank on the spot, and they can donate money. As consumers purchase the products, and the cans of soup that make up the display dwindle in number, the word hunger disappears.

Campbell's states it has donated 350,000 cans of their Nourish product to food banks all across Canada. At 425 grams a can, converted into .936965 pounds of food per can and multiplied by 350,000 cans, Campbell's entire donation of Nourish amounts to 327,937.75 pounds of food since it launched in 2011. If divided by the 833,098 people who accessed a food bank in March 2013 according to the latest data, Campbell's manages to get 0.13 pounds of food to each of those people, per year. If divided by the approximately 3.9 million people who suffer from at least some measure of food insecurity in Canada, Campbell's manages to get 0.028 pounds of food to each of those people, per year. That converts to just under 1/7 of a can of soup per person, per year.

As of Feburary 1, 2014 Campbell's total revenue was $8,010,000,000 with gross profits of $2,910,000,000 over the trailing 12 months (Yahoo!Finance CPB, 2014). President and Chief Executive Officer Denise M. Morris had a total executive compensation package of $8,708,442 in 2013, and the whole pool of Campbell's executives took home $24,230,189 in the same year (Morningstar CPB, 2014). The United States Congress mandated under the Securities and Exchange Commission that publicly traded corporations must "disclose the ratio of their chief executive officers' compensation to the median of the rest of their employees" and Bloomberg has created a working table for these ratios and how they are reported (Bloomberg, 2013). According to Bloomberg, that ratio for Campbell's Soup Co. was estimated to be 219 to 1. That's $8,800,000 to $39,934 in fiscal year 2012, meaning $733,333 to $3,327 per month, and

$169,230 to $768 per week. At that rate, to make what an average Campbell's employee makes in an entire year, Denise M. Morris only has to work for a little less than 2 days. To make what Denise M. Morris made in 2012, an average Campbell's employee would have to work for just over 220 years.

4.1.2 Loblaw Companies Limited

Loblaw Companies Ltd. operates a campaign twice annually through their Loblaw's and Zehrs food retailers called The Extra Helping Spring & Holiday Food Drive. Grocery store customers can donate food or funds directly to food banks at the point of sale. Cashiers ask customers whether they are interested in donating money to their local food bank, which would get added to their total, or whether they are interested in purchasing pre-packaged bundles of President's Choice brand food that goes directly to their local food bank. These bundles are displayed around the cash area in brown paper bags with the price of each bundle labelled onto them. Customers either volunteer their money for this purpose, purchase the pre-packaged donation bags of President's Choice products, or politely decline. This campaign happens in Loblaw's grocery stores all across the country twice a year.

Loblaw's states it has helped raise over $6,400,000 and 6,700,000 pounds of food for food banks across Canada since their Extra Helping campaign launched in 2009 (Food Banks Canada, 2013). Even though the Extra Helping campaign is a consumer-driven campaign that relies on funds from individual household incomes, not direct corporate investment, the sponsorship of this campaign by Loblaw's can still be put into context of the numbers. According to the Corporate Social Responsibility Report for Loblaw Companies Limited for 2012, the Extra Helping campaign raised $1,800,000 and

1,900,000 pounds of food in 2012 (Loblaws, 2012). Against the 833,098 people who access a food bank every month, the Extra Helping campaign from 2012 raised $2.16 per person per year, and 2.28 pounds of food per person per year. That works out to some change and a couple of boxes of macaroni and cheese per person per year.

As of February 1, 2014 Loblaw Companies Limited had total revenues of $32,200,000,000 for the trailing 12 months with a quarterly revenue growth of 1.9% (Yahoo!Finance, L, 2014). On July 15, 2013 Loblaw Companies Limited announced a $12,400,000,000 deal to takeover the Canadian retailer Shoppers Drug Mart (CBC News, July 15, 2013). Only a few months later, Loblaw Companies announced they were cutting 275 management and administrative jobs across the company "to streamline the organization and strengthen its competitive position" (CBC News, Oct 16, 2013). This shows what this company can do when it commits to something it feels is important, like competitiveness. When hunger is concerned, Loblaw Companies Limited helps annually raise less than a day's worth of food and a fistful of change for each food bank user.

4.1.3 Shaw Communications Limited

Shaw Communications operates a food drive campaign through social media called Fill The Food Banks. Through social media and other media outlets that Shaw Communications controls, such as The Food Network or HGTV, Shaw promotes a food drive campaign that is linked directly to its brand exposure. Shaw promises to donate $1 for every view of a YouTube video about food banks. Shaw partners with Campbell's Canada for this campaign, so that for every view of the YouTube video, Shaw donates $1, and Campbell's donates 1 pound of food to Canada's food banks. Their goal was to reach 250,000 views. The premise of the video is to raise awareness about food banks

usage, and specifically the idea that you never know who, in your very own social network, could be using a food bank on a regular basis.

Shaw Communications claims to have helped their employees and customers donate more than $630,000 and 1,200,000 pounds of food to food bank nationally in 2012 for their Fill The Food Banks campaign, which took place at over 300 local events and involved over 10,000 volunteer hours (Shaw Communications, June 13, 2012). As part of its social media initiative, Shaw promised to donate $1 for every view up to 250,000 of their YouTube video entitled "Shaw Fill the Food Banks 2012" (YouTube), and since that video reached more than 300,000 views, Shaw donated $250,000 and its partner Campbell's donated 250,000 pounds of food to Food Banks Canada during Hunger Awareness Week of that year. Divided by the 833,098 people who access a food bank every month, Shaw Communications helped raise 1.44 pounds of food and $0.75 per person per year. Shaw is "filling the food banks" by giving every food bank user a few quarters and lunch once a year.

As of Feburary 1, 2014 Shaw Communications boasts $5,180,000,000 in revenues with an operating cash flow of $1,750,000,000 over the trailing 12 months (Yahoo!Finance, SJR-B.TO, 2014). Shaw's declared for its most recent quarter a 3% improvement in revenues and net income was $245,000,000 over those 3 months (Shaw Communications, 2014). For fiscal year 2013, executives at Shaw Communications took home a total of $56,000,000 on top of their $8,800,000 combined salaries (Calgary Herald, 2013). With the bonuses that Shaw paid to its executives last year, they alone could have paid for a sustained school breakfast program for the 44% of the 48,653 food bank users in Alberta who are children (Hunger Count 2013), which would mean that

each of those 21,455 children would get $2,610 per year, $217.50 per month, $50 per week, and $7.15 per day. That is just one thing that one company could do for hunger in the province where it is headquartered. Instead, Shaw gave $30,000,000 to 5 people.

4.1.4 Purolator Incorporated

Purolator operates a food drive campaign in association with the Canadian Football League (CFL) called Tackle Hunger. In the CFL, there are 9 competing teams that represent 9 Canadian cities. For each team and city, Purolator sponsors a food drive at a home game at the team's home field. The premise of the campaign is to have the fans in each city compete to see who can raise the most food for their local food bank. In conjunction with this competition, the Tackle Hunger campaign incorporates a QB Sack Tally. For every time the quarterback from either team gets sacked (i.e. tackled or "downed" behind the line of scrimmage) at a Tackle Hunger game, Purolator will donate the weight of that quarterback in food to the home city's local food banks. Last season, the Tackle Hunger campaign raised 1,149,029 pounds of food, the QB Sack Tally raised 118,500 pounds of food, and fans of the Hamilton Tigercats won the competition by raising 220,500 pounds of food at their home game.

Purolator has claimed to have helped donate 6,500,000 pounds of food to food banks since their annual Tackle Hunger campaign began in 2003, including a record setting 2012 campaign that raised over 1,019,336 pounds of food (Purolator, 2014). Their 2013 campaign raised even more food, which continued the campaigns run of significant increases in donated food every year, totalling 1,149,029 pounds (Purolator, 2013). New for 2013 was the QB Sack Tally that ran alongside the regular campaign. Every time a quarterback was sacked, Purolator would donated his weight in food to the local food

bank in the city where the game was played. In total there were 395 sacks in 2013, resulting in 118,500 additional pounds of food donated to Canadian food banks by Purolator. Divided by the 833,098 people who access a food bank every month, Purolator helped get just over 1.5 pounds of food to each individual, per year.

4.1.5 Kraft Canada

Kraft Canada operates a campaign related to increasing food bank capacity called Food For Families. The Food For Families campaign is focused on improving the capacity of food banks to provides food to everyone who needs it. As Kraft identifies it, capacity issues are widely reported by food bank operators as being an important factor in whether they can assist the people who need it (Food Banks Canada Hunger Count, 2010, 2012, 2013). In an attempt to address this issue, Kraft created a petition-like contest. Once a day, every day, people can visit Kraft's website to submit their names in support of their local food bank. Each time a name is added to a food bank, Kraft donates 50¢ to that food bank. In each of the five regions into which Kraft divides Canada, a total of $20,000 is available. The food bank with the most names at the end of the campaign gets an additional $5,000 from Kraft to address a capacity issue.

Kraft's stated goal in 2012 was to donate $125,000 to food banks in Canada through their Food For Families campaign, Kraft has claimed to have donated up to $20,000 in each of the 5 regions of Canada that they designated "Pacific, Western, Ontario, East, and Atlantic" making a total of $100,000 in available funds nationally with an additional $5,000 paid to the food bank with the most names. Divided by the over 800 food banks in Canada that are members of the provincial food banking associations and Food Banks Canada (Food Banks Canada, Hunger Count 2012), if Kraft reached its goal,

it would have raised an average of $156.25 per food bank, per year. But this campaign was a lottery based on the amount of signatures received for a pool of food banks that only included those that Kraft chose to be included. That amount of money barely helps the capacity problems that Kraft identifies as being the major drawback of food banks.

4.1.6 Farm Credit Canada

Farm Credit Canada has operates a food drive campaign called Drive Away Hunger, which has been executed annually for the last 10 years. According to their websites, Farm Credit Canada sees itself as being "in the business of agriculture" so they see an obvious connection between their business and hunger. They enlist their employees at their offices across the country to volunteer for the food drive. Farm Credit Canada drives a tractor and trailer to their offices in various communities all across the country. Employees and community members are encouraged to show up to these events and donate food or cash.

Farm Credit Canada makes sure to state that 100% of the cash and food that is raised goes to food banks in Canada. Last year, Farm Credit Canada helped raise $6,500,000 worth in cash and food. At the start of their most recent campaign, Farm Credit Canada donated $100,000 before the drive even began. Farm Credit Canada claims to have helped raise 9,200,000 pounds of food and $760,000 since the drive began 10 years ago. Half of the donations are intended for Food Banks Canada to distribute to the food banks that need it. The other half of the donations are intended to be split between Food Banks Canada's Hunger Awareness Week and Rural Support Program.

Since their Drive Hunger Away campaign began in 2004, Farm Credit Canada states it has helped raise over 9,200,000 pounds of food and $760,000 for food banks

across Canada. Last year in 2013, they managed to help raise over $6,500,000 worth in cash and food. Divided by the 833,098 unique individuals who access a food bank in an average month, Farm Credit Canada has helped raise an average of just over 1.1 pounds of food and just over 9¢ for each of those individuals, per year. In 2013, the Drive Hunger Away was the most successful it has ever been. Divided by the 833,098 people who accessed a food bank in March of that year, the $6,500,000 worth of cash and food the Drive Hunger Away campaign raised only provides each person 65¢ per month, and $7.80 all year.

4.2 Corporate Food Bank Philanthropy as a Social Construction

Corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns contribute to a social construction of hunger as a problem and food banking as the solution. This social construction is defined by the related claims that the problem is hunger and that the solution to hunger is food banking, and that the way to support food banking is to participate in corporate programs of fundraising and donation drives. The problem is collectively characterized in a particular way and it comes packaged conceptually with a characterization of food banks as a particular kind of solution. Corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns collectively characterize hunger as as a food-based, short-term, temporary, or seasonal problem that can happen to anyone, anywhere, anytime, for which families or communities are responsible. Corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns collectively characterize food banking as a food-focused, charity-based and volunteer-run approach that can harness corporate sponsorships to make donating to food banks marketable to, and appealing for, consumers (See Appendix B).

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This particular social construction of hunger and food banking was not only commonly evident in the media from many corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns, but it is also evident in many of the images used to market corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns. The following examples of marketing media from corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns can be used to show how this social construction is represented (See Figure 1 and Figure 2).

Fig. 1 is a piece of marketing media from the Toonies for Tummys campaign by the Grocery Foundation. The image is a representation of a young child with a hole figuratively cut out from where her stomach would be. Off to the side, money is symbolized as a toonie with a dotted cut-out line traced around it. The image has a caption that reads, "A toonie is all it takes to fill a hungry tummy. Please donate $2 and give breakfast to a hungry child in your community." The implication here is that the viewer of this media should symbolically fill the empty space with the toonie by donating their own toonies to the Grocery Foundation at the grocery store checkout.

This image embodies many of the elements of the corporate social construction of hunger and food banking. The subject that is represented is a child. Every single corporate food bank philanthropy campaign cites the statistic from Food Banks Canada that approximately 40% of those who use food banks are children, sometimes several times over. Whatever the percentage of food bank user are children, the focus on children situates hunger as a family problem. And no matter the reason for hunger at the family level, the child is always constructed as an innocent victims of their circumstances, not having made their own choices or caused their own problems, and who are therefore worthy of charitable support. The focus on children is also likely to evoke the kind of

emotional response that encourages people to donate to philanthropic initiatives because those emotions vividly exemplify the power dynamics inherent to food charity. The emotional appeal of the corporate construction of hunger and food banking reinforces and perpetuates an "us and them" mentality between those who are perceived as powerless, passive recipients and those who are perceived as selflessly benevolent donors.

The symbolic act of filling the child's empty stomach with a coin reinforces the idea that hunger is about a lack of money for food, but not as a matter of insufficient income. Rather, what is implied in this image is that child hunger is a matter of insufficient charitable donations. The toonie symbolizes the donors' money, not the child's. While the problem of hunger is matter of a lack of money for food, the problem is not one of insufficient charity, but of the inability of people to make their own choices about food because they lack the funds necessary to do so. The indicates how the symbolism of money have different meanings depending on the perspective it is viewed from.

Fig. 2 is a piece of media from the Together is Amazing initiative by Shaw Communications, with which Fill The Food Banks is associated. This text is representation of several aspects of the corporate social construction of hunger and food banking. The intended audience of this example of media is again potential donors, designated by the caption, "With your donation, food will be the last thing on their minds." Not only does this situate food as the focus of hunger, but it implies that food is all that is necessary to absolve the poor of all their worries, enough to go blow bubbles in a field as a family. Again, hunger as a family-centric problem is reinforced through the representation of the child with his mother.

This presents the solutions to hunger in a nonthreatening way dissociated from the political and economic dynamics of society. Charity is a kinder, gentler way to address hunger. Charity passes the responsibility for hunger to charity without any consideration for a justice model for addressing hunger. The assurance that "your dollar goes a long way to feed the people in your community" plays into the larger neoliberal assumption that hunger should be addressed with the most efficient market mechanisms possible, which makes hunger at matter for the charitable donation of commodities as an adjunct to, or second tier of, the mainstream food economy.

These are just a couple of examples of how text can represent hunger and food banking in a particular way in a feedback loop. They share similar characteristic and this narrows the scope of the debate about hunger to particular issues without getting to the social dimension of hunger that constitute a dominant cause. The marketing media from corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns characterize the problem of hunger and the solution to that problem as food banking in a particular way. These representations ultimately influence the kind of problem hunger is thought about to be, as well as the kinds of societal responses that are conceivable to act upon the problem with. These images are representations of how corporations socially construct hunger, both as a notion and institutions such as food banks.

4.3 Corporate Food Bank Philanthropy as Bullshitting

The Help Hunger Disappear campaign and the product Nourish exemplify many of the ideas presented in this study. In particular, they exemplify the way in which corporations make bullshit claims to present a positive public face to create a favourable impression of themselves in the minds of others. A close look at Help Hunger Disappear

and Nourish will show how a corporate food bank philanthropy campaign deploys

bullshit claims. Bullshitting obscures the social dimensions of hunger by creating the

impression of these corporations as just a bunch of honest, selflessly benevolent folks

who genuinely care about hunger. The Help Hunger Disappear campaign can be used to

exemplify this idea. Corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns can also foreclose on

the possibility of the emergence of alternatives to food banking by narrowing the focus to

food. Campbell's product called Nourish will be used to exemplify that idea.

4.3.1 Help Hunger Disappear

Campbell's makes claims in media from the Help Hunger Disappear campaign,

which can be neither verified nor falsified, but are intended to create a favourable

impression in the minds of the public. Some quotes from the Help Hunger Disappear

campaign can demonstrate how bullshit effectively depoliticizes the issue of hunger. As

Laura Delind noted decades ago, corporate campaigns that celebrate hunger, "keep

alternative realities and social constructions removed from public awareness and

discourse" (Delind, 1994, p. 68) Sometimes unverifiable but unfalsifiable claims like

"We are committed to reducing hunger" can be bullshit. What matters is the impression

that the bullshitter cares about hunger, not whether they really think what they are doing

is effective. The point for the bullshitter is only to create the impression that they believe

their own bullshit, which can be shown to effectively depoliticize hunger.

The following statement from a piece of marketing media from the Help Hunger

Disappear campaign serves as a good example of how bullshit statements can depoliticize

hunger: "I'm always hesitant of drawing stereotypes because unfortunately any of us

could end up using and needing the services of a food bank" (HELP HUNGER

DISAPPEAR, YouTube, 2012). This is a bullshit statement. Food bank users, and those

classified as food insecure, can belong to every socio-economic classification in Canada.

Yet this statement ignores a number of unpleasant social differentiations: that the poorest

20% of Canadians account for higher rates of food insecurity than the richest 80%

combined; that First Nations and Inuit communities are overwhelmingly the most

prominent demographic who are food insecure; that single mothers make up almost half

of those who use food banks. However, this statement lends to a favourable impression of

Campbell's as being against prejudicial thinking when it comes to hunger, and in so

doing obscures the political and economic dimensions of hunger by shrugging off the

problem as an unexplainable and random phenomenon that can happen to anyone.

The following statement can serve as another example: "Hunger is an issue year

round, but more so in the summertime because donations do fall to the way-side" (HELP

HUNGER DISAPPEAR, YouTube, 2012). This statement is also neither true nor false.

Correlation does not necessarily mean causation. That donations fall to the wayside in the

summer does not necessarily mean that hunger is particularly acute in the winter, or

declines during the summer. This statement creates the impression that there is a real

connection between the food charity provided by Campbell's and effective solutions to

hunger. This statement creates the favourable impression that Campbell's is doing

something about hunger just in time, but reinforces the problem of hunger as seasonal,

and not as a matter of ongoing economic and political processes.

From what is apparent in online content posted to YouTube by participants of

Help Hunger Disappear events, the participants' own words and actions reflected the

same statements made by Campbell's. Participants rarely provided any fresh insight or

alternative perspectives. Almost every participant reiterated the clichés and platitudes from the marketing campaign for Help Hunger Disappear. Most notably, participants reverted to marketing slogans when they were posed a kind of question like, "So, what are we doing here today?" The overwhelming response to these kinds of questions was, "Helping hunger disappear!" The goal of the Help Hunger Disappear campaign, as described by participants in videos from local events, is to "end" or "eradicate" or "solve" hunger; or as one participant put it, to "kick hunger in the butt". These statements lend to a favourable impression of Campbell's campaign in a way that misses the core of the problem of hunger as rooted in poverty.

4.3.2 Nourish

While Help Hunger Disappear obscures important political and economic implications of hunger, Nourish narrows our focus to food-focused solutions for what is reinforced as a food-based problem, also in a way that obscures the political and economic dimensions of hunger. Food-based conceptions of the problem as hunger and food-based conceptions of solutions to hunger have a mutually reinforcing relationship. This relationship tends to foreclose on possible alternatives, especially once those practices become institutionalized and alternatives have failed to emerge. As Tarasuk pointed out, "The capacity of current initiatives to improve household food insecurity appears limited by their inability to overcome or alter the poverty that underpins this problem. This may relate to the continued focus on food-based responses…" (Tarasuk, 2001). Nourish can be used as an example to show how a focus on food can form the contours of the debate about hunger in a way that defines the conceptual realm of possible responses and deflects from alternative approaches.

The following quote shows the kind of hopes that Campbell's has for Nourish: "At Campbell's Canada, we believe that access to healthy food should be a right, and because of who we are and what we make, we must take a lead role in helping to alleviate hunger" (THE STORY OF NOURISH, YouTube, 2012). This is a clear characterization of hunger as a food-based problem couched in a statement that is intended to present a favourable image of Campbell's as a food company in the public mind. They imply that the problem of hunger is a food-based problem, which put them in a position to address the problem defined as such. The point is for Campbell's to make the claim that they care about hunger, but that claim requires that they characterize the problem as food-based problem with a food-focused solution to put them in the position to create a favourable impression of themselves. Campbell's positions itself publicly as a benevolent philanthropist at the expense of a narrow definition of the problem and solution.

The following quote can be used to demonstrate how Campbell's presents itself as selflessly benevolent at the expense of a food-based conception of the problem that implies a food-focused conception of the solution: "The net profits [from Nourish] can actually go to fund more production of Nourish that will be donated to more people" (THE STORY OF NOURISH, YouTube, 2012). The marketers for Campbell's succeed here at subtly drawing the connection between the growth and prosperity of Campbell's as a food company and effective anti-hunger activism. While Campbell's gets to present itself as altruistic, they also present the problem as one of a lack of commodities to be solved with—wait for it—more commodities. Campbell's, not unsurprisingly, creates the impression that a complex social issue like hunger can be solved by eating lots of Campbell's soup. Not only does this depoliticize hunger as a matter of commodities, but

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it sells more soup for Campbell's. Campbell's benefits from the mere existence of hunger because hunger sells soup.

Campbell's characterizes the problem of hunger in a way that puts them in control of the the solution to the problem defined as such. Hunger as a food-based problem puts Campbell's, a food company, front and centre as part of a food-focused solution. This puts them in a position to control the issues surrounding hunger in public discourse and engage with stakeholders in the food banking community to manage the long-term success of their joint initiatives. However, this reinforces a popular definition of hunger as a food-based problem that requires a food-focused solution. Campbell's may sell more products, but their characterization of the problem reinforces the notion that hunger is a matter of commodities and misses the core element of hunger as a matter of poverty, economic inequality, and inadequate social assistance.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This study was designed to build on the framework from Jan Poppendieck's article "Hunger in America: Typification & Response" (1995). I used that framework to explore the relationship between a specifically corporate typification of hunger in an era of neoliberalism in Canada and the ongoing development of food bank institutionalization. This study shows that the available remedy to hunger in the current era of neoliberalism in Canada is for food banks to partner with corporate investors and long-term donors in mutually beneficial relationships. The corporate typification of hunger that has emerged in these campaigns aligns with corporate business interests, not only by driving product sales and increasing brand exposure, but also by insulating corporations from the social implications of hunger as poverty-related, especially with regards to corporate taxation. The kind of food banks that have emerged from this context promote, legitimate, and oblige corporate campaigns, products, and brands to encourage more donations from corporations and consumers through marketing campaigns. The following is a discussion about the social, political, economic and cultural implications of these relationships.

5.1 The Available Remedy: Corporatization

Corporations now involve themselves in many of the areas of social welfare that the state used to be more heavily involved in. The Canadian welfare state has been deliberately scaled down in favour of a business model for social welfare provision. The responsibility for social welfare has since been downloaded to families and community-

based organizations such as food banks. As food banks have become further

institutionalized, but struggle to address the problem they were supposed to solve, private

corporations linger as potentially able to remedy many of the problems food banks face.

Due to changes to the social environment in which they exist, such as the scaling down of

the Canadian welfare state amid the rise of neoliberalism, those who attempt to address

hunger have had to adopt a new strategy to survive in changing social circumstances.

Despite that food banking began with a diverse few small local operations, food banks

have become institutions, some even large multi-faceted organizations, that now cultivate

long-term relationships with corporate partners as a common practice to gather more

donations of food and money. The food banking strategy now amalgamates the interests

of charity with the business interests of wealthy corporations. These new developments

have changed the practice of food banking in Canada in a fundamental way.

Hunger awareness-raising campaigns and food drives for food banks

conspicuously sponsored by private organizations have emerged such as Hunger

Awareness Week sponsored by Food Banks Canada. Private organizations of all kinds

now donate food, money, labour and other resources directly to food banks, or they may

support them indirectly through sponsorships or participation in awareness raising

consumerism-based campaigns. These efforts typically take the form of social

responsibility or community outreach campaigns designed to engage with people at the

local level in the shared support of food banks. They are usually accompanied by targeted

multimedia marking campaigns that disseminate the donors' messages to make these

campaigns visible to the public. They often involve significant coordination and

negotiation between many different institutions, policies and actors throughout Canada

for the purposes of garnering support of grassroots community organizations and individual donors.

Instead of periodic donations of surplus food, corporations and food banks now engage in ongoing mutually agreeable relationships. Over time, these relationships have tended to produce an alignment of interests between corporations and food banking organizations. This process has transformed food banks into corporately-structured institutions. These relationships have occurred due to changes to the social context in which food bank coexist with corporations. The state is now less reliable as a source of capital, both for food banks and those likely to use them, so food banking organizations have had to streamline their operations and secure alternate sources of capital to assist people. From the perspective of food banking organizations, corporations are now more promising and probable sources of the exposure, capital investment, and donations they need to survive in a neoliberal political and economic context. Food banking organizations are compelled by their social circumstance to partner with corporations.

While food banks get donations and resources more reliably, corporations get their interests served too. Corporations invest in food banking because they get something out of it. Corporations now invest in food banking not necessarily because they believe in the long-term integrity of those relationships, or even their own claims, but because the mere appearance of those relationships, and the mere making of certain claims, helps them to preserve their business interests from public criticism by presenting a positive socially-conscious brand image. Food bank philanthropy is just one aspect of a general business strategy that has very little to do with effective anti-hunger activism, making crucial connections between poverty and hunger, or creating programs with the

goal to achieve food security. Corporate food banks philanthropy insures corporations against the social implications of hunger as poverty-related that would be detrimental to business interests.

In particular, food bank philanthropy is a method of social welfare provision that insulates corporations from the suggestion that there should be an increase to the corporate tax rate in the context of widening income inequality because food charity is the "common sense" method of political engagement for an issue like hunger from the perspective of neoliberalism. Corporations have enjoyed unprecedented cost savings due to cuts to the corporate tax rate, which were intended to stimulate economic growth and job creation. The corporate tax rate was reduced from 22.1% in 2008 to 15% currently by Stephen Harper's government (Power, Riches & Tarasuk, 2012). However, it has been difficult to find a correlation between these cuts and meaningful increases in permanent well-paying jobs to balance the scale.

Meanwhile, corporations have benefited from these cuts tremendously. According to research conducted at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 198 of the 245 companies on the TSX—chosen because they had public year-end data 2000-2009—have enjoyed 50% increases in profits and 20% reduction in taxes since 2000 while their rate of job creation growth was only 5%, which is actually 1% less than the average national rate (CCPA, 2011). Meanwhile, the average full-time wages and salary earnings in Canada came to $46,634 annually, while average compensation for the top 100 CEOs in Canada levelled off at $7,960,300 annually—and a measly $20,989 was the average annual income for minimum wage earners that year (CCPA, 2014). The policy to reduce corporate tax rates has had the opposite effect to what was intended.

The social dynamics of hunger in Canada—such as a lack of money *for* food due to poverty—necessitates a solution predicated on an equalization of socioeconomic relations. Poverty is a byproduct of an unequal society. To mediate the asymmetric power relations that characterize the dynamic between those living in poverty and the power excesses of the corporate world, the response may have to involve mechanisms of policy like taxation. However, any equalization of economic relations in Canada will harm corporate interests. Hunger commonly understood and acted up as poverty-related has the potential to delegitimize corporate positions of power and unravel the neoliberal social order they benefit from. To keep that from happening, corporations may attempt to depoliticize hunger as an unfortunate and unexplainable phenomenon. Corporations tend to define the problem of hunger and its solution in their terms, so they insure themselves against the political and social implications of poverty-related hunger in the context of corporate power concentration and capital accumulation.

5.2 The Typification: Hunger as a Business Interest

Corporations construct anti-hunger activism, and define the interests of the causes they contribute to, in a way that complements their business interests. Supported by policy that includes reduced rates of taxation, corporations typify hunger in a way that reflects the interests of their positions of power. Hunger as a poverty-related issue is not in the interest of corporations to promote. The promotion of poverty-related hunger is something that corporations will avoid. Corporations tend to avoid the political and economic dimensions of hunger. From their particular positions of power, the expectation is that hunger will be typified by corporations as a seasonal food-based problem that communities bear responsibility for. This typification implies a solution that is short-term

charity-based and volunteer-run corporately sponsored food drives and consumerism-driven commodity sales campaigns. Through this typification of hunger, and the corresponding implied solution, corporations insulate themselves from the political and social implications of poverty-related hunger in the context of corporate power because charity is now dominantly viewed as an unmitigated good.

Hunger as a food-based problem firmly situates corporations, especially food companies, in control of the issue. Food companies control the conditions under which food banks receive food. Since the entire concept of food banking is based on food, food companies are likely to focus on a food-based response because it situates them as benefactors in relation to food banks. Benefactors enjoys the positive public perception of food bank philanthropy and control over the relevant issues and stakeholders. Corporations enjoy positive public perception of their brand because some of their food products are commonly associated with food bank philanthropy, such as Campbell's soup, or President's Choice macaroni and cheese. That brand association is what puts corporations in a position of power in cultural terms around the issue of hunger and food banking. Hunger as a food-based problem reinforces hunger as caused by a lack of food, and depoliticizes the notion of hunger as caused by a lack of money *for* food.

Hunger as a seasonal problem gives corporations control over when, and for how long, they will sponsor food drives or commit support to individual food banks. Hunger as a seasonal problem implies a solution that is temporary and short-term, which complements corporate interests because corporations can reinvest their efforts elsewhere once their commitment has ended, which gives them freedom of action. When opportunities exist elsewhere or circumstances threaten the flow of returns, these

corporations can act quickly to divert resources, change location, or renew their business options. Hunger as a seasonal problem lets corporations set the parameters of their relationships with food banks because it gives them an opportunity to leave those relationships.

Any notion of poverty-related hunger in the context of income inequality will be avoided. A possible solution to a poverty-related characterization of hunger—more money *for* food—would harm corporate interests because it necessitates an equalization of the current socioeconomic order. It is in the interest of corporations to talk and act as if hunger can be solved by overwhelming food banks with charity food. Charity is always a success—any food is good food. There is no need to clearly articulate a goal, or think too much about the problem, when success is a matter of charity. Corporations get to congratulate themselves absolutely any time they help make donations to food banks, or sponsor a food drive event, or sell a hunger-related product, no matter how effective it actually is. Charity means that corporations do not have to make any commitments. They get to set their own goals. Since their charity is volunteered, corporations do not have to tie themselves down with the responsibility of food insecurity as a persistent and sustained phenomenon.

Corporations also reinforce hunger as a matter for volunteers to address in their spare time. Corporations are likely to gravitate toward a model for food banking that is heavily reliant on volunteerism because volunteers are not paid. Volunteers provide free labour for corporate anti-hunger campaigns. The increased reliance on volunteerism evident in corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns is a symptom of a neoliberal approach to political economy. Volunteers assume responsibility for the functions of

community-based welfare because neoliberal ideals about citizenship promote a method of social welfare provision that does not burden business. Enactus is an example of a company that invests in entrepreneurship in a way that has structured the volunteer labour pool. Enactus presents volunteerism as the first step in successful entrepreneurship ventures. They find volunteers for these campaigns and represent volunteerism as a favourable trait for people in a neoliberal economy, even though it means working for free. Enactus was used by Campbell's in their Help Hunger Disappear campaign to manufacture a local presence of volunteers who execute their events. Volunteerism gives corporations to cut down on labour costs of these campaigns. Yet volunteerism is also symptomatic of neoliberal ideals about appropriate expressions of citizenship and proper methods of political activism.

Hunger represented as a problem for families or local communities to address atomizes families and ignores the social make-up of families that tend to go hungry, as if hunger were just a matter of putting food on tables, and not a matter of putting money in pockets. As a problem for local communities to address, this characterization puts the solution squarely in the hands of consumers since consumerism has become the vehicle through which people are encouraged to register their social, political, economic and cultural preferences. These corporations make an implicit connection between the success of their business and the success of their anti-hunger campaigns, but the most important goal is to sell products. This makes hunger a matter for commodities and consumerism in the implication that people can help their neighbours by shopping at the grocery store. This benefits corporate interests because consumerism-driven corporate food bank

philanthropy drives product sales, creates brand association, and fosters a positive public perception of their businesses.

Hunger as a matter for consumerism means that hunger is marketed to people to evoke an empathic response that translates into the consumption of commodities. Consumerism-based charity evokes strong emotions for the donor. These products are marketed to peoples' personal desires and senses of their own identities. When food bank philanthropy is marketed to consumers' desires, their needs tend to trump the needs of the cause. Charity puts the donor in a position of power over the accepting party, which can result in cause-related consumer narcissism. Consumerism-based food bank charity helps donors establish or reinforce some aspect of their identity or assuage their guilt about current social circumstances. Charity can be both a selfless expression of a desire to help others as an genuine empathic response, but also a form of self-therapy or self-promotion. Corporate anti-hunger message that are associated with the purchase of their products can therefore depoliticize hunger by aggrandizing the donors.

Corporations are not bound by their claims and they are not responsible for people who lack sufficient money to eat. Corporations, publicly traded or not, are only accountable to their share-holders. Corporate food bank philanthropy is one aspect of a grand business strategy that is mostly concerned with how their contributions translate into net benefits for corporations in the court of public opinion. The increased brand exposure, added value to their products, and "halo effect" that food bank philanthropy provides are worth much more than a few million pounds of a food every year. Corporations benefit from the mere appearance that they are involved in anti-hunger

activities, or the mere act of making anti-hunger claims, even if that appearance has no substance, and especially if those claims are never held to account.

5.3 The Institution: Food Banks Canada

The kind of food banking institutions that have emerged from this context can be exemplified by Food Banks Canada. There is now a Canadian food banking establishment under the auspice of Food Banks Canada that coordinates food banking in Canada. Food Banks Canada has recognized the need to keep corporate friends if some food banks are to continue their operations. Some food banks in Canada now rely on corporate charity, so Food Banks Canada has made efforts to make donations as enticing for corporations as possible by promoting corporations that sponsor food drive campaigns as good corporate citizens.

Food bank philanthropy makes corporations appear to be good citizens. Food banks are so accepted in Canada today that their associations with corporate anti-hunger campaigns benefit the corporations, not just the other way around. Corporations use Food Banks Canada as a symbol of legitimacy to help promote and connect their brands and products to notions about good corporate citizenship. Food Banks Canada as a symbol of legitimacy adds value to corporate brands because it generates consumer brand loyalty. Food Banks Canada provides maximum return on investment—the biggest bang for buck—by legitimizing the corporations they associate with as a bunch of kind, generous folks. Food banks are no longer an adjunct to the economy, or some second tier to the economy. Rather, food banks may now be integrated with corporate business strategy as part of the neoliberal political economy. Food Banks Canada has been more than happy to oblige corporate interests in the development of those kinds of relationships.

The interests of charity and business have been amalgamated by Food Banks

Canada. Even though the main interest of Food Banks Canada is to encourage as much

donation as possible, this interest has been aligned with corporate business strategy. Food

Banks Canada recently called for a "tax incentive [for] manufacturers, importers and

distributors," which would allow food companies to "deduce from taxable income the

production cost of food donated to food banks" (Food Banks Canada, 2012). Under the

proposed policy changes, food companies would receive a tax subsidy to donate

unsaleable food to food banks, which would save the corporation money on the

production cost of donated goods. To encourage as much food charity as possible, Food

Banks Canada now makes policy proposals to government on behalf of corporate

interests. These policy proposals are likely to be well received by governments and the

public because food banks have a more favourable public perception and lack the same

political baggage that corporations are encumbered with.

Food Banks Canada also goes to great lengths to promote corporate anti-hunger

campaigns through social media and other marketing. Food Banks Canada has an interest

in the success of these campaigns because successful corporate anti-hunger campaigns

mean an increase in donations. In a promotional capacity, Food Banks Canada hopes to

encourage more donations, but the side-effect is that Food Banks Canada tacitly promotes

corporate messages and products to the public. Food Banks Canada attempts to

encourage the success of corporate campaigns by making a positive connection between

corporate brands and food bank philanthropy. Corporation are often thanked publicly for

their donations or sponsorships, and people are encouraged by Food Banks Canada to

engage in these campaigns via social media. This means that while Food Banks Canada

encourages donations, it also promotes the consumption of corporate brands and products.

Food Banks Canada also gives out special corporate donor awards every year. Food Banks Canada calls these their "Corporate Partnership awards" (Food Banks Canada, 2013). Currently, their "Award of Excellence" is held by Farm Credit Canada for their "long-term commitment to raise food and funds to support the food bank network across the country" (Food Banks Canada, 2014). Their "Donor of the Year" award is currently held by Loblaw Companies Ltd. to "acknowledge the success of its twice annual Extra Helping national food and fund drive" (Food Banks Canada, 2014). The "Innovator of the Year" award is currently held by Target Canada for their "participation in Food Banks Canada's Retail Food Program" (Food Banks Canada, 2014). These corporations are publicly anointed with awards to encourage them to continue their support of Food Banks Canada, which further reinforces their positive image.

Food Banks Canada also has a board of directors with ties to many different corporations. For example, the board of directors at Food Banks Canada currently includes individuals with ties to PepsiCo. and Farm Credit Canada (Food Banks Canada, 2014). Food Banks Canada rewards corporations for their support of food banks with decision-making power, which reflects the strong bonds between corporations and Food Banks Canada now. These developments indicate how the interests of charity and business mutually reinforce each other in a way These close relationships drive the growth of food banking in Canada and help corporations ensure the successful execution of business strategies.

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Food Banks Canada helps corporations with their campaigns, which help corporations achieve their business goals, and encourages more donations to food banks. This makes Food Banks Canada what Einstein calls a "hyper-charity" (Einstein, 2012: p. 71). However, those corporations help create the problem Food Banks Canada is trying to solve. According to a study conducted for the CCPA, "The concentration of power in the corporate sector is perpetuating income inequality trends in Canada" (CCPA, 2012). Corporations help produce a social context in which people are likely to need food assistance. Corporations help create the kind of society in which food banks are necessary. Food banking will not work because of, not despite, corporate involvement. The solution is simple: give people enough money to eat and hunger will be eliminated. Hunger as a matter of social relations necessitates our understanding of hunger as being caused by poverty. Corporate food bank philanthropy may be less effective than if those participating corporations did nothing but pay the old corporate tax rate that was in place before the Harper government enacted legislation to reduce it.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This study looked at the social construction of hunger by corporate claims-makers specifically regarding the relationship between typification of hunger and institutionalization of food banks. By looking the social significance of certain kinds of claims-making, this study explored how a corporate construction of hunger tends to narrow the scope of the debate and define the conceptual realm of possibility in way that reproduces and reinforces an ineffective food banking paradigm. This study is situated in a vast gap in the academic discourse on corporate philanthropy related to hunger, the culture of charity, and the political economy of structured programs of giving. Further research needs to be done, and the potential direction of that research will be discussed last.

6.1 So What?

As Poppendieck showed in her essay "Hunger in America: Typification & Response" (1995), the problem of hunger was "discovered and rediscovered" (p. 11) by prominent claims-makers in three distinct eras of history in the United States. She relied on a theory of social constructionism to show how the available remedies to the expression of hunger in each era framed how the problem was thought about and then acted upon. The societal response to hunger during each era was conceived in direct relation to the kind of society that already existed, and so narrowed the conceptual realm of possible solutions. The last era that Poppendieck identified, the one characterized as "an emergency" (p. 26) by small community-based *ad hoc* organizations, was shown in

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this study to have begun as a consequence of the downscaling of the Canadian welfare state amid the rise of neoliberalism. It has been almost twenty years since Poppendieck wrote her article, and almost thirty-five years since the first food bank opened in Canada in 1981. Has anything new developed since then?

This study shows that the notion of hunger as an emergency, which was exported along with the food banking model from the United States to Canada, has given way to the emergence of a new era of rediscovery of hunger as a social problem by corporations. This new corporate era of rediscovery of hunger is related to the currently available remedies to hunger, the way hunger is typified by prominent claims-makers today, and how that typification of hunger frames the kind of societal response that is mobilized to then acted upon that problem. The new era of rediscovery of hunger in Canada is related to the upsurge in popularity of claims-making about hunger and food banking by corporations who characterize the problem of hunger and the solution as food banks in certain ways.

The corporate era of rediscovery of hunger is distinct from the era of hunger as an emergency in several ways. The available remedies to hunger today have emerged from the legacy left by the neoliberalization of Canadian political economy over the last several decades. While the rise of food banking as an emergency response is linked to the emergence of neoliberalism in Canada in the early-1980s, the new corporate rediscovery of hunger has developed through decades of political and economic changes guided by neoliberalism. What makes the corporate era distinct from the emergency era is not neoliberalism, since neoliberalization of Canada has only intensified since then. Rather, the dominance of corporate claims in the discourse about hunger and food banking is

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what makes this era new. The neoliberalization of Canadian political economy has

created a social context characterized by the power dominance of large corporations.

Corporations have since become the most prominent claims-makers about hunger in

Canada today, and their typification of the problem is defined in direct response to, and

because of, their prominent positions of power.

Corporations and food banks now work together in mutually beneficial

relationships. This study explains how and why a corporate social construction of hunger

influences the institutionalization of food banks. The way corporations involve

themselves in the hunger discourse and the practice of food banking has important

implications how the ongoing development of social responses to hunger. These

implications can be analyzed based on how these issues are represented and what is

evident in the claims corporations make in the marketing media for their philanthropy

campaigns. The corporate social construction of hunger as complementary to business

interests has important implications for how the issues are thought about and acted upon.

If corporations characterize the issues in accordance with their own business interests,

then there will likely be a corresponding response to that characterization of the problem.

A solution to hunger that attempts to align with corporate business interests are unlikely

to produce the kind of response that penetrates to the root causes of the problem. Instead,

the corporatization of food banking is more likely to lead to the reproduction of a deeply

problematic food banking paradigm, and thus the continuation of an inadequate long-term

response.

How corporations typify hunger and influence the institutionalization of food

banks has also been shown in this study to have a tendency to obscure, marginalize, or

otherwise foreclose the possibility of, alternate perspectives. The new corporate era of rediscovery of hunger complements business interests and insulates corporations from the implication that perhaps there should be an increase to rates of corporate taxation, except these are implications about hunger that may harm their business interests. In particular, the corporate typification of hunger as a social problem deflects from the social implications of hunger as poverty-related even though there is significant evidence to support an equalization of socioeconomic relations as a more effective long-term approach to hunger.

The relevance of bullshit claims are discussed in relation to how corporations can prevent the emergence of multiple visible responses to hunger to insulate themselves from the socioeconomic implication of poverty-related hunger, which therefore replicates *ad hoc* food banking institutions based on a charity model. The current state of food banking in Canada has been demonstrated in academic literature to be an inadequate long-term solution to hunger because it does not penetrate to the root social dynamics that lead to the expression of hunger in the first place. If, despite their philanthropic efforts, corporations prevent critical public debate about the effectiveness of food banking at addressing hunger, then their involvement in food banking and anti-hunger campaigns may actually be less desirable than it appears in their marketing media. In short, the corporate era of rediscovery of hunger promotes a charity model over a social justice model for the provision of social welfare as an integral part of the ongoing neoliberalization of Canadian political economy. But what kind of remedies are newly available now that could change how we think about, and then act upon, hunger? What

evidence is there to perhaps take an alternate view of the problem, and therefore also an alternate view of the possible solutions?

Perhaps we are witnessing the emergence of food banking as integrated into a neoliberal socioeconomic order in which social welfare is integrated into the business practices of corporations and aided by support from hyper-charities like Food Banks Canada. Or perhaps we could be witnessing the beginnings of the emergence of brand new order. Corporate claims-making about hunger dominates the discourse and could prevent the emergence of a better, more effective long-term solution to hunger that emancipates people from the social conditions that lead to the expression of hunger in the first place. There is significant evidence to suggest that sufficient income supports for the poorest Canadians will be a more effective solution to hunger because it is a solution that addresses the social underpinnings of hunger. However, corporate claims-making about hunger may prevent the emergence of possible solution that appreciates the value of evidence-based change. This study illustrates the need for social change based on evidence, as well as how ignoring the evidence may be problematic for the fight against hunger. That social, political and economic changes may not be informed by evidence, but claims instead, is why these issues matter.

6.2 Direction of Future Research

This study built on the work of Jan Poppendieck who used social constructionism to look at hunger and trace the theoretical relationship between the available remedies, the typification of the problem, and the likely societal response. This study accounts for a new corporate era of rediscovery of the notion of hunger as a social problem and speculates about how a corporate typification of hunger may affect the institutionalization

of food banks. This study used marketing media from corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns as evidence to analyze how the typification of hunger is related to the kind of society Canada is today, and how that typification influences the institutionalization of food banks as a particularly corporatized societal institution of social welfare. This study took marketing media from corporate food bank philanthropy campaigns and analyzed them as important junctures that provided an evidence base to speculate about the specific dynamics of the relationship between corporation and food banking organizations in a era of neoliberalism.

What is needed now is critical research into the institutionalization process to understand the relationships between corporations and food banks in detail. While this study focused on the social implications of the production of meaning through certain types of claims-making, the political and economic implications of the relationships between corporations and food banks need to be drawn out. This study speculated about the general social significance and cultural appeal of these issues, which involved political and economic consideration, but the specifically political and economic significance of corporate food bank philanthropy needs to be analyzed in more detail. Future studies should look at the effect of policy on the political and economic relationships between corporations and food banking organizations. Corporations and food banks benefit from the cultural significance of hunger but future studies should explore how both parties benefit politically in the realm of policy and economically as part of growth strategy. How exactly does this relationship between corporations and food banks lead to political and economic benefits for both kinds of institutions?

It is apparent that these relationships will continue to evolve so future studies must stay current with these changes. One main topic of study, but also a problem that will be confronted, will be the tensions that result from the overlap between the public and private spheres. While corporations involve themselves with food banking organizations in the context of neoliberalism, their private enterprises overlap the public sphere, which produces interesting questions about transparency, accountability, and democracy. Barriers to future studies in this area will be the inaccessibility of information, a lack of regulatory oversight, and public deliberation or consultation. Future studies should attempt to exercise these tensions to reaffirm a more transparent, accountable, and democratic food banking system that recognizes the social underpinnings of hunger as poverty and the institutional shortcomings of food-focused, community-based and volunteer-run organizations that cannot address the root causes of an issue like hunger. Since these relationships between corporations and food banks are in their infancy, we can expect robust developments in this area. Are these relationships likely to evolve into an adequate response to hunger, or can we expect the emergence of a new way for corporations to benefit their own business strategies at the expense of an adequate solution to hunger?

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Appendix A

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Appendix B

Coding

Help Hunger Disappear and Nourish by Campbell Company of Canada

Problem: food-based, family-based, seasonal, can happen to anyone

Solution: consumerism, corporately sponsored public events, marketed via new products, community-based, volunteer-run, charity-funded, online via social media

Extra Helping Spring & Holiday Food Drive by Loblaw Companies Limited

Problem: food-based, family-based, seasonal, can happen to anyone

Solution: donations of food to food banks, donations of funds to food banks, seasonal food drives, consumer-funded, charity-based

Food For Families by Kraft Canada

Problem: capacity, lack of funds

Solution: donations of funds to food banks, petition-based, online via company website

Fill The Food Banks by Shaw Communications

Problem: food-based, family-based, can happen to anyone

Solution: community-based, volunteer-based, charity-based, online via social media

Tackle Hunger by Purolator Inc. with the CFL

Problem: lack of money for food, community-based

Solution: more food, corporately sponsored public events

Drive Away Hunger by Farm Credit Canada

Problem: lack of money for food, community-based

Solution: more food

Figure 1

Figure 2