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Resilience and Self-Reliance in Canadian Food Charter Discourse

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Abstract: This article interrogates the rhetoric of "self-reliance" as a common feature of discourses about individual and community resilience by examining Canadian food charters in the context of regional food systems aimed at improving community food security. Despite the association of food charters with alternative food systems and progressive politics, we find that their ambiguous and shifting appeals to self-reliance largely conflict with their stated social justice goals of community food security, particularly the goal of alleviating the distress of food *in*security for vulnerable community members. Overall, we argue that the rhetoric of self-reliance in Canadian food charters primarily perpetuates a neoliberal ideology of resilience that promotes an active, enterprising *ethos* of responsibility for one's own well-being, whether at the level of individuals, communities, or food systems. Our study thus contributes to critical scholarship that contextualizes and problematizes specific sites and practices of resilience discourse.

Keywords: food activism, food security, resilience, rhetoric, self-reliance, social justice

As critiques of large-scale industrial food and consequent valorizations of local food continue to grow across North America, the genre of the food charter has become an increasingly prevalent way for communities to outline a guiding vision for their local food systems. Since Toronto developed the first Canadian food charter in 2001, at least 50 communities and regions in four provinces and

one territory have adopted or are developing their own.[1] The food charter genre is typically a short (1-2 page), non-binding meta-policy document that charts a vision for a region's food system (Spoel & Derkatch, 2016). According to Jaquith, "A Food Charter is a statement of values, principles, and priorities for a just and sustainable food system that will promote health and food security for all" (2011, p. 6). These non-binding vision statements are produced by community stakeholder groups such as food policy councils or food action networks to guide, though not regulate, the development and implementation of local food policies and programs (Jaquith, 2011, p. 6).

While some variation exists among food charters as a genre, they generally envision food systems that advance the core values of health, education, economy, environment, culture and community, and social justice (Spoel & Derkatch, 2016; see Figure 1). These core values together address different dimensions of the concept of "Community Food Security" (Jaquith, 2011, p. 6), or CFS, which is identified implicitly or explicitly as an overall goal within the majority of food charters.[2] According to Hamm and Bellows' (2003) foundational definition, CFS is achieved when "all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice" (p. 37). Re-articulated (with some modification) in Dietitians of Canada's (2007) *Position Statement on Community Food Security*,[3] this definition aims to merge an

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[1] To date, most Canadian food charters have been developed in BC, Ontario, and Saskatchewan (see Appendix A for a complete list of extant and drafted charters). These charters form our corpus for the analysis that follows. Manitoba has created a provincial-level charter, which we have excluded from our corpus because, unlike the other Canadian charters, its scope exceeds the community or regional level.

[2] Thirty-nine of the 50 Canadian charters we have examined refer to "food security," while 26 of these specifically use the phrase "community food security" or variations such as "regional food security" and "food-secure community" (see Appendix A).

[3] While Hamm and Bellows situate collective action as the core of community food security, the Dietitians of Canada (2007) statement shifts toward a more individualistic model of CFS by placing "healthy choices" and "equal access for everyone" alongside and equal to the principle of "community self-reliance." A fuller discussion of these differences is beyond the scope of this paper but would be worth

anti-hunger frame focused on alleviating individual and household food insecurity with a sustainable agriculture frame through a food systems approach (pp. 38-39). As indicated by Jaquith (2011), Hamm and Bellows' (2003) definition functions as the primary, though not necessarily explicitly acknowledged, conceptual source for Canadian food charters.

Thunder Bay Food Charter

Given that the Government of Canada has formally endorsed the right of every individual to have food security, which means that everyone has access to enough safe and nutritious food to stay healthy and have energy for daily life;

And that governments at all levels have recognized the need for food systems planning, and the need to establish principles to govern decisions regarding food production, distribution, access, consumption and waste management;

And that Community Food Security is a comprehensive approach that integrates all components of the food system, from producers to consumers, which emphasizes the health of both the environment and local economies and promotes regional food self-reliance;

And that a sustainable local food system promotes social justice, population health, and reflects and sustains local culture and environment;

Therefore, the City of Thunder Bay endorses the following principles as the foundation of a comprehensive food security framework for research, planning and policy and program development:

Build Community Economic Development

- Prioritize production, preparation, storage, distribution and consumption of local food as an integral part of the Thunder Bay economy.
- Develop collaborative urban and rural food security initiatives to sustain local agriculture and rural communities.
- Support a regionally-based food system to enhance food security and self-reliance.

Ensure Social Justice

- Recognize that food is a basic right, not a commodity.
- Design or amend income, education, employment, housing and transportation policies to facilitate access to nutritious, affordable and safe food in a healthy and dignified way.

Foster Population Health

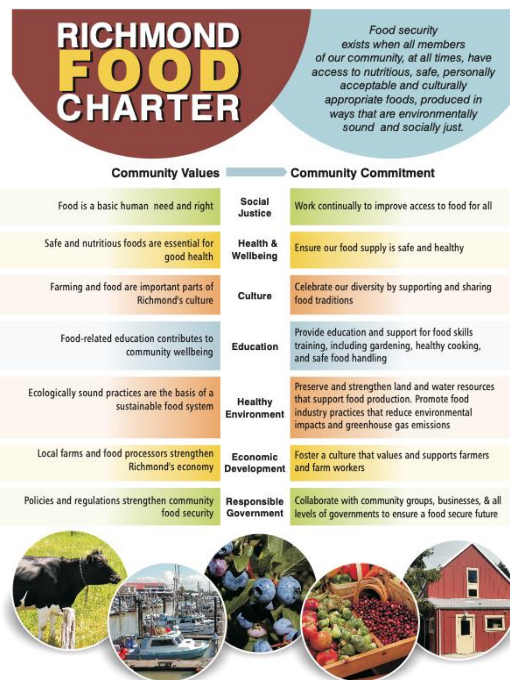
- Recognize in public policy that a healthy diet contributes to the physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being of all residents.
- Provide access to information and skills development regarding nutrition in order to improve individual food security.
- Incorporate basic elements of food security into strategies to reduce and treat chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer.
- Incorporate food security, the provision and the distribution of food, into local emergency planning.

Celebrate Culture and Collaboration

- Acknowledge that food represents our diverse cultures and sharing traditions is a key strategy for community connection and collaboration.
- Protect and encourage access to wild foods obtained by fishing, hunting and gathering as they are an important part of northern culture.
- Support efforts to raise awareness and promote respect for traditional and cultural food history and diversity.

Preserve Environmental Integrity

- Encourage regional and local food self-reliance in order to reduce the use of fossil fuels and build sustainable communities.
- Encourage food production methods that sustain or enhance natural environments and biological diversity, and that make effective and sustainable use of local resources.
- Preserve and maintain local waters and agricultural lands and designate land and support for urban and community-based agriculture.
- Preserve and sustain Boreal forests and watersheds in order to maintain local traditions of hunting, fishing and gathering.
- Introduce environmentally sound methods of food waste management such as composting and reclamation programs.
- Recognize that access to a safe and sustainable



RICHMOND FOOD CHARTER

Food security exists when all members of our community, at all times, have access to nutritious, safe, personally acceptable and culturally appropriate foods, produced in ways that are environmentally sound and socially just.

Community Values		Community Commitment
Food is a basic human need and right	Social Justice	Work continually to improve access to food for all
Safe and nutritious foods are essential for good health	Health & Wellbeing	Ensure our food supply is safe and healthy
Farming and food are important parts of Richmond's culture	Culture	Celebrate our diversity by supporting and sharing food traditions
Food-related education contributes to community wellbeing	Education	Provide education and support for food skills training, including gardening, healthy cooking, and safe food handling
Ecologically sound practices are the basis of a sustainable food system	Healthy Environment	Preserve and strengthen land and water resources that support food production. Promote food industry practices that reduce environmental impacts and greenhouse gas emissions
Local farms and food processors strengthen Richmond's economy	Economic Development	Foster a culture that values and supports farmers and farm workers
Policies and regulations strengthen community food security	Responsible Government	Collaborate with community groups, businesses, & all levels of governments to ensure a food secure future

Figure 1: Thunder Bay, ON and Richmond, BC food charters. See alt-text for details.

Following McGreavy (2016), we approach food charters as a "site and practice" of resilience discourse, aiming to understand what resilience *is* in a given time and place by tracing how it is rhetorically enacted through the language and ideology of self-reliance (p. 104). However, unlike McGreavy (2016) who apprehends different, generative ways of becoming resilient through the material-rhetorical context of her study, our study indicates that—despite the strong association of food charters with *alternative* food systems and progressive politics—their enactment of resilience as self-reliance largely re-inscribes a static hegemonic discourse of resilience rather than generating dynamic new

exploring in future work vis-à-vis the range of political-ideological inflections inherent in the concept of CFS.

pathways to becoming resilient. In this sense, like Opel and Rodriguez (2019), our research contributes to critical scholarship that problematizes and contextualizes resilience discourse (McGreavy, 2016, p. 105). Overall, we find that the rhetoric of "self-reliance" in Canadian food charters perpetuates a neoliberal ideology of resilience that, as political theorist Reid (2012) argues in relation to international sustainable development and disaster management discourses, "shifts the burden of security from states to people" within contemporary contexts of risk and uncertainty by valorizing a mode of governance "in which everyone is demanded to 'prove themselves by bettering their individual and collective self reliance' (Duffield 2008: 69)" (qtd. in Reid, 2012, p. 170). Paradoxically, and problematically, the embedded value of "self" in "self-reliance" promotes an active, enterprising *ethos* of responsibility for one's own well-being regardless of whether the phrase is used to characterize a person, a community, or a food system. In this way, the rhetoric of "self-reliance" in community food security discourse expands and complicates the ways in which mainstream resilience discourse "encourages the idea of active citizenship, whereby people, rather than relying on the state, take responsibility for their own social and economic well-being" (Joseph, 2013, p. 42).

Although the trait of self-reliance is not explicitly linked with the goal of resilience in Hamm and Bellows' definition, the terms "self-reliance" (or "self-reliant") and "resilience" (or "resilient') co-occur within six of the 19 charters in our corpus and resilience is explicitly named as a motivating principle in some 30% of all Canadian charters (see Appendix A). Because these value-terms are co-referential and entangled, we begin our analysis by explaining briefly how self-reliance figures within broader discourses of individual psychological resilience and of community resilience to show how appeals to self-reliance in the food charter genre intersect with a wider rhetoric of resilience that is logically and ideologically troubling. We then illustrate how the valued trait of *self-reliance*, as articulated in Hamm and Bellows' definition of CFS, is recontextualized within 19 food charters.[4] Following Linell (1998), we define recontextualization as "the dynamic transfer-and-transformation of something from one discourse/text-in-context …

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[4] In addition to the 19 charters that use the term "self-reliance" or "self-reliant," several others use closely allied terms such as "self-sufficient" and "self-sustaining," but for the sake of precision, we have excluded these from our analysis.

to another" (p. 144). We focus particularly on CFS' shifting and ambiguous associations with some of the core values evinced in Canadian food charters. Based on this analysis, we reflect, in our final section, on the potentially problematic implications of resilience-as-self-reliance for the social justice goals of community food security.

Resilience and Self-Reliance: Discursive Context

Within the broader literature on resilience, "self-reliance" figures as an attribute of resilient individuals and communities. In its most common manifestation, "self-reliance" is theorized as a key component of individual psychological resilience and has been affiliated with concepts such as autonomy, flexibility, independence, self-regulation, and self-sufficiency that support an individual's ability to adapt successfully to adversity (e.g., Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2009; Jacelon, 1997; O'Donnell, Schwab-Stone, & Muyeed, 2002; Polk, 1997; Samuels & Pryce, 2008; Sinclair & Wallston, 2004; Wagnild & Young, 1990, 1993; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012). Recently, "self-reliance" has increasingly been linked to *community* resilience, rather than simply to individual resilience, particularly in the field of disaster management (Faulkner, Brown, & Quinn, 2018; Masten & Obradovic, 2008). The emerging concept of community resilience stems both from research on human psychology, in which resilience is understood as a personal ability to respond to disturbances and uncertainties through intentional, active agency (Magis, 2010, p. 404; see also Buikstra *et al.*, 2010), and from socio-ecological-systems research and theory, in which resilience is an adaptive capacity of (more-than-human) systems (Magis, 2010; see also McGreavy, 2016; Stormer & McGreavy, 2017). Theories of community resilience thus merge individual, psychology-based attributes such as self-reliance into the conceptualization and validation of community-based systems. This includes how community-based *food* systems discourse foregrounds, in diverse ways, the value of self-reliance to the development of local (or community) resilience.

As Samuels and Pryce (2008) caution, though, although self-reliance has been identified as an important dimension of resilience or "adaptive success" for children who have experienced trauma (O'Donnell *et al.*, 2002; see also Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2009; Zolkoski & Bullock, 2012), the ideology of "rugged individualism and personal autonomy" that underpins self-reliance may have negative repercussions (p. 1206). Valorizing self-sufficiency, for

instance, may “pathologize relational notions of healthy adulthood and asking for support” (Samuels & Pryce, p. 1208). In our own analysis, we illustrate how the value of self-reliance as part of community resilience in local-sustainable food systems discourse may have a similar effect, indirectly reinforcing an individualist model of resilience over one that fosters mutual interdependence, collective welfare, and systemic change to social and economic equalities.

Through their emphases on self-reliance, even food charters that do not explicitly mention resilience nonetheless imply and, especially in earlier charters, pre-figure the growing dominance of resilience rhetoric within local-sustainable food systems discourse more generally. Significantly, however, within this broader discourse, the meanings of both concepts—self-reliance and resilience—are ambiguous and inconsistent. Lamine (2015), for instance, links alternative rural agrifood systems that support local or regional “food self-reliance” with socio-ecological sustainability and resilience, while Grewal and Grewal (2012) and Dubbeling (2013) call for increased self-reliance through urban food production to support the resilience of cities. Other instantiations of resilience and self-reliance in this discourse figure local self-sufficiency as insulation against global shifts (Barr and Devine-Wright, 2012; Kennedy, Hunter, Garrett, & Padulosi, 2017).

As in this broader discourse about local and sustainable food, how the food charters we examined take up and reconfigure Hamm and Bellows’ inclusion of “self-reliance” as a key component of community food security varies considerably. In the next section, we draw on Linell’s (1998) concept of recontextualization to trace these diverse re-renderings of self-reliance to better understand the ideological implications of resilience in the context of Canadian food charter discourse.

Recontextualizing “Self-Reliance” in Food Charters

Consider again Hamm and Bellows’ (2003) definition of Community Food Security: “Community food security (CFS) is defined as a situation in which all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice” (p. 37). In this definition, “self-reliance” is

articulated as a property of a community and it is identified alongside social justice as a desirable feature of a "sustainable food system." However, achieving a sustainable food system is not itself the ultimate goal; rather, it is positioned as a means to achieving the overall goal of food security for a community as a whole—for *all* community residents. As we demonstrate below, however, the recontextualization of "self-reliance" in Canadian food charters significantly alters and recomposes Hamm and Bellows' original articulation[5] in ways that import into food charter visions an individual psychology-based ideology of community resilience that may conflict with the social justice goals of community food security. To trace these re-renderings, we begin by identifying the specific terminological occurrences of "self-reliance" in food charters, focusing especially on the kinds of "self" that appear to be referenced within them. We then examine how self-reliance is associated with and situated in relation to some of the core food charter values we have identified in previous research (Spoel & Derkatch, 2016).

Terminological Forms and Frequency

The terms and phrases that refer to self-reliance vary considerably in the 19 food charters we analyzed. The nominal phrase "self-reliance" occurs 28 times in total, often paired with classifiers (Halliday, 2014) such as "*regional* self-reliance" or "*food* self-reliance" (emphasis added), whereas the adjectival form "self-reliant" occurs twice. Most notably for our analysis, the variation in terminological forms and frequency of self-reliance within the corpus calls upon several different kinds of "self" for whom the trait of self-reliance is desirable. To illustrate the range of selves invoked by our corpus, the table below organizes each reference to self-reliance by its overarching classifier. These classifiers specify the particular subclass (Halliday, 2014) to which a form of self-reliance belongs. For instance, "community self-reliance" is a subclass of self-reliance that is held by or is a property of a community; the "self" implied here is a community. References to self-reliance that do not include a classifier have been included under the heading "no classifier." Phrases that include more than one classifier have been categorized under each (e.g., "individual and communal self-

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[5] We use the term "original" cautiously – Hamm and Bellows were certainly not the first to define CFS (see Winne, Joseph, & Fisher, 2000) but, to our knowledge, their 2003 definition was the first (published) definition to include "self-reliance."

reliance" fits under both "individual" and "community").

Classifier (in bold) and Terminological Form	Frequency
[no classifier]	
self-reliance	2
total	*2*
individual[s]	
individual and communal self-reliance	1
self-reliance of all members of the population	1
food self-reliance of residents	1
self-reliant – residents . . . themselves	1
total	*4*
community	
community self-reliance	6
communities' self-reliance	1
regional self-reliance	1
regional food self-reliance	2
regional and local food self-reliance	1
individual and communal self-reliance	1
Total	*12*
Food	
food self-reliance	10
food self-reliance of residents	1
food sector's self-reliance	2
regional food self-reliance	2
regional and local food self-reliance	1
self-reliant food system	1
self-reliance in food security	1
total	*17*

The frequency of phrases that situate the "self" of self-reliance as "community" (or "region") align with Hamm and Bellows' definition but the presence of other classifiers indicates the alterations that have occurred during the recontextualization

process. The occurrence of references to what we classify as "individual" selves foregrounds "self-reliance" as a psychosocial attribute of individual community members rather than of the community as a collective. The phrase "individual and communal self-reliance" is especially significant because it implies that while both forms of self-reliance are desirable, they are not the same, suggesting ambivalence or uncertainty about the kinds of self-reliance that community food security promotes. That is, self-reliance in this phrase seems to refer simultaneously both to the ability of individual community members (including food-insecure individuals) to act as enterprising citizens by taking responsibility for their personal food security and also to the ability of the community as a collective to ensure communal food security. While these two senses of self-reliance are not necessarily opposed, they indicate a confusing ambiguity in food charter discourse about what community food security means and how the concept of self-reliance contributes to it.

Most strikingly, however, the classifier "food" radically changes the nature of the "self" to which self-reliance refers: rather than being an attribute of human capacity and intentional, active agency (Magis, 2010), whether communal or individual, self-reliance is figured most frequently in Canadian charters as a desirable attribute of food or food systems. The rhetorical effect of this phrasing is to potentially displace community, or individuals within a community, as the charters' central beneficiary, making the food system itself the ultimate priority. This implicitly inverts the relationship posited by Hamm and Bellows in which fostering a sustainable food system is not itself the end goal but is instead a means to achieving the overall goal of food security for the community.

Self-Reliance and Food Charter Values

To further illustrate how the concept of self-reliance functions rhetorically in food charters, we turn now from attending to its various terminological forms to how it is recontextualized in relation to some of the core values typically invoked by the genre (Spoel & Derkatch, 2016). Occurring within charter subsections ranging from "Nutritious Food Is Essential for a Healthy Population" (Victoria) and "Health and Well Being – Education" (Durham) to "Environmental Responsibility" (North Shore), "Sustaining Local Agriculture" (Durham), and "Community Economic Development" (Thunder Bay), self-reliance appears to

be associated in fluid and inconsistent ways with the core values of social justice, health, education, environment, and economy. These shifting and polyvalent associations further extend and ambiguate the ideological reach of self-reliance in food charter discourse.

Self-reliance and social justice: In Hamm and Bellows' definition of community food security, "community self-reliance" occurs in paratactic proximity to the value of "social justice," linked by the coordinating conjunction "and". Some charters in our corpus similarly link self-reliance with social justice, although they primarily frame social justice as concerned with promoting equitable access to food rather than with political action aimed at reducing systemic social and economic equalities. For example, the Kaslo charter equates community self-reliance with "everyone having access to nutritional resources," while the Sarnia-Lambton and Victoria charters both assert that social justice goals can be met in part by promoting "food self-reliance" through food programs such as community gardens and collective kitchens, which they assert in turn reduce dependence on emergency food providers such as food banks. All of these examples associate self-reliance with the goal of ensuring that all community members—and particularly food-insecure members—have access to "nutritional resources" which will lead to a reduced dependence on so-called "emergency" food provision. However, as we elaborate in our Discussion, the assumption that growing and preparing one's own food through community-based activities meaningfully supports the "food self-reliance" of food-insecure residents lacks sound supporting evidence and is therefore ideologically problematic from a social justice perspective.

Self-reliance and health: The association of self-reliance with "access to nutritional resources" also indicates its connection with the food charter value of health, as signaled in the Victoria charter's heading "Nutritious Food Is Essential to a Healthy Population." There are two key dimensions of health embedded in the notion of self-reliance: the first is the implicit claim that self- or locally-produced food is more nutritious than food produced elsewhere (which the Revelstoke charter calls "imported food") or available from food banks. The charters we examined collectively suggest that because local food is healthier food, greater reliance on local food, as a form of self-reliance, will produce a healthier population. The second dimension of health embedded in self-reliance within the charters is the assumption that participating in growing and preparing one's own food provides social benefits by fostering

community health and well-being. For example, the Sudbury charter organizes its goal of enhancing "Food self-reliance through community-based food programs" in a subsection entitled "Community Development" alongside calls for "Multi-cultural food festivals and cultural events." As we discuss below, these implied health claims with which self-reliance is associated lack sound evidence and may do little to support food-insecure community members.

Self-reliance and education: Linking the values of health and education, several charters associate the self-reliance gained through the promotion of food literacy with an increase in community food security and public health. This association is most pronounced in the Victoria charter, which situates "nutritional education and skills training programs" as integral to "shifting from emergency food provision to food self-reliance," a shift that the charter notes is, in turn, integral to "increasing the health of . . . residents." The Sarnia-Lambton and Durham charters similarly cite nutrition education as important to "encourage and improve the health and food self-reliance of residents" (Sarnia-Lambton). Importantly, framing the association between self-reliance and health as simply a matter of increasing the community's food literacy recasts the systemic problem of insufficient access to healthy food for all community members—and, most importantly, for food-insecure community members—as an individual problem of insufficient knowledge and skills about healthy eating.

Self-reliance and environment: Self-reliance also is associated in Canadian food charters with the value of environmental health and sustainability. For instance, under the heading "Preserve Environmental Integrity," Thunder Bay's charter presents "regional and local food self-reliance" as a way "to reduce the use of fossil fuels and build sustainable communities." BC's North Shore Community charter likewise connects "community self-reliance" with the value of "Environmental Responsibility," but does not explain how these principles are connected. Other charters associate self-reliance with sustainable agriculture, as in the North Okanagan charter, which links the goal of being "self-reliant" with protecting local land and food production capacity "for future needs." The association between self-reliance and environmental health relies on a common but problematic presumption that local agriculture is inherently more environmentally sustainable than food produced further away (Born & Purcell, 2006; Desrochers, 2016; Edwards-Jones, 2010). Similarly, Revelstoke's charter argues

that "reliance on food sources outside our area . . . increases our impact on the environment and our vulnerability to food shortages from natural disasters or economic-setbacks." Here, the unstated conclusion is that encouraging self-reliance through local food has the interconnected benefits of protecting the local environment and increasing community resilience.

Self-reliance and economy: Finally, in Canadian food charters, the attribute of self-reliance is strongly associated with the value of "Community Economic Development" (Thunder Bay), a view that coincides with a wider discourse about sustainable food systems enhancing socio-economic as well as ecological resilience by supporting "the self-reliance of local economies" (Kennedy *et al.*, 2017, p. 24). That is, the desirable trait of self-reliance is conceived in terms of the degree to which the local or regional food economy is supported and strengthened through increased community reliance on food produced, processed, and sold locally, such as through farmers' markets and community supported agriculture groups (CSAs). For example, under the heading "Sustaining Local Agriculture," the Durham charter aims to "Produce foods locally to support regional self-reliance." In contrast to the social justice goal of self-reliance as ensuring every community member "has access to nutritious food," this framing configures self-reliance as an indicator of the degree to which the local food sector is economically sustainable and prosperous. For example, the Saskatoon charter asserts that because "food is an integral part of the [area's] economy," "building . . . bridges between urban and rural communities" is crucial for increasing the regional food sector's "self-reliance, growth, and development." The Northeast Saskatchewan charter similarly calls for stronger links between "the consumer and the producer" to strengthen "our communities' self-reliance, growth, and development." These associations between self-reliance and economic strength focus less on food security for the whole community and more narrowly on market concerns and opportunities for food-sector workers and entrepreneurs. As we discuss next, this slippage in the meaning of "self-reliance" in Canadian food charters reflects and re-enacts tensions among competing values and goals within the broader discourse of local food systems and community food security.

Discussion

As the foregoing analysis shows, the "selves" to which self-reliance refers in our corpus are diverse, ambiguous, and not necessarily

compatible with each other or the core values of the food charter genre. Further, the multiple ways that charters recontextualize the concept of self-reliance obfuscates and multiplies the meaning and value of "community self-reliance" articulated in Hamm and Bellows' (2003) definition of community food security, a definition which itself lacks clarity particularly in terms of whether and how self-reliance aligns with social justice goals. By analyzing appeals to self-reliance in Canadian food charters through the wider lens of resilience discourse, specifically as it comes from developmental psychology and emerging concepts of community resilience, we gain an opportunity to crystalize some problematic political-ideological implications of self-reliance for what community food security means and how it can be achieved. Despite being associated in some charters with the value of social justice, we find that the rhetoric of self-reliance primarily invokes and reinforces a neoliberal politics of individual and community resilience that privileges an entrepreneurial ethos of personal responsibility for one's own well-being, particularly in the face of threats to that well-being posed by conditions of adversity and uncertainty (Duffield, 2008; Reid, 2012; Joseph, 2013).

Given that the majority of Canadian food charters are produced by community groups, often under the auspices of public agencies such as public health units (Derkatch & Spoel, 2017), it is particularly concerning that these documents may unwittingly legitimate increased withdrawals of state support for community welfare by calling upon individuals and local groups to become self-reliant. A corollary may be found in critiques of international sustainable development and resilience discourse, where Reid (2012) notes that encouraging people "to practise the virtue of community-based self-reliance" enacts "a neoliberal agenda that shifts the burden of security [for their well-being] from states to people" (pp. 169-70). Within this framework, what looks like resilience or "bouncing-back" may represent not dignified independence and self-sufficiency but scrambling and improvisation as citizens are increasingly burdened with responsibilities that formerly belonged to the state. Accordingly, the rhetoric of self-reliance in Canadian food charters invokes a local self-help imperative that may undermine rather than support state responsibility for the wellbeing of all citizens—including, most fundamentally, its insecure citizens. In this regard, the value of "community self-reliance" coincides with the growth of "roll-out neoliberalism," wherein small, resource-poor community groups

and other civil society actors attempt "to fill the holes in services left by a shrinking state" (Alkon & Guthman, 2017, p. 13).

We also note that individual solutions for systemic problems disproportionately affect vulnerable citizens because such solutions assume that all people have the time, ability, and resources to ensure their own self-reliance. For instance, food charters' promotion of initiatives such as community gardens, collective kitchens, and nutrition education sponsors an entrepreneurial ideology of resilience as taking responsibility for securing one's own well-being that may well not be feasible for those most at risk of food insecurity, which in Canada includes children, female lone parents (including homeless women), people suffering from chronic physical and mental health problems, as well as First Nation, Inuit, and Métis peoples, especially those living in remote or northern communities (PROOF, 2018; Dietitians of Canada, 2015). Rosol's (2014) study of food security and urban micro-agriculture in Toronto reveals that many community gardens function primarily as "individual self-help strategies for dealing with socio-economic inequality, which requires a tremendous amount of work, time, and social skills" (p. 224) and she cautions that because community gardens do not and cannot address the fundamental causes of hunger and poverty, they should not be considered "a substitute for basic social security" (p. 224; see also Tarasuk, 2001).

This last point, that food insecurity is largely a product of financial insecurity (see also Huisken, Orr, & Tarasuk, 2016), is key to our analysis because it shows that despite the best intentions of the individual and group stakeholders who produce food charters, these documents, at best, address only symptoms of problems that underlie the food system and do little to solve their precipitating causes. For those who currently depend on emergency food providers such as food banks, for instance, the core charter value of education and its underlying assumption that self-reliance can be increased through enhancing food literacy is particularly disconcerting because it substitutes the material good of actual food with the immaterial good of knowledge about food.

Additionally, the framing of community members as needing improved food literacy to enhance their self-reliance reinforces a healthist ideology of personal responsibility for making informed "healthy choices," especially because this framing assumes that food-insecure community members (i.e., the most socio-economically vulnerable residents) are those who most lack the

kind of self-reliance that can be improved by education. Not only is this commonplace assumption erroneous (Huisken *et al.*, 2016),[6] it deflects attention from the only truly effective way to support "food self-reliance" for food-insecure community members, which is to increase their financial self-reliance–in other words, to ensure all individuals and households "have sufficient income for secure access to nutritious food after paying for other basic necessities" (Dietitians of Canada, 2016, p.3; see also Huisken *et al.*, 2016; Kirkpatrick & Tarasuk, 2009).

The principle of "food self-reliance" in food charters is also problematic, as we have noted, because it reconfigures self-reliance as a desirable trait of resilient local food systems rather than a trait of individual or collective community members, thereby further indicating the (ideo)logical misalignment between the value of "self-reliance" and the claimed social justice dimensions of community food security. Aligning self-reliance with the local food sector repositions community members primarily as consumers who are responsible for increasing the resilience of local economies by supporting local food producers and other food businesses. While this alignment potentially addresses the important social justice goal of ensuring greater economic security for local farmers and food workers, it does not address the goal of ensuring greater food security for all vulnerable community members and may indeed be at odds with it. Within the logic of the market, farm security requires higher food prices while food security requires lower ones but, as Alkon (2013) has pointed out, "community food security advocates have generally privileged the economic needs of farmers over low-income consumers" (p. 4).

Most importantly, the recontextualization of "self-reliance" as a desirable characteristic of the local food sector and economy risks deflecting attention and resources from food-insecure people who, in socio-economic and health terms, are the most vulnerable members of any community. The association of self-reliance with

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[6] For example, Huisken *et al.* (2016) note that "Our examination of the relation between household food insecurity and adults' food skills, assessed across multiple domains in a large, population-based survey, provides absolutely no indication of a skills deficit among food-insecure households. . . Provincial and federal government actions to address food insecurity should be informed by the growing body of evidence demonstrating the sensitivity of this problem to policy interventions that improve the material circumstances of at-risk groups" (531).

local economic development, both in Canadian food charters and the broader literature on sustainable local food systems, reinforces the commodification of food and individualized, market-based solutions to the social justice problem of food insecurity. Indeed, in its guide to implementing CFS programs, the Community Food Security Coalition (Winne *et al*., 2000) specifically identifies "marketplace food supply," "community economic development," "entrepreneurship," "private-sector partnerships," and linking "low-income consumers with local farmers" as distinguishing features of a CFS approach, in contrast to an "anti-hunger" approach that works to alleviate individual and household food insecurity primarily through state-funded social services and food assistance programs as well as charitable institutions (pp. 6-7). Without denying the importance of CFS approaches for countering the socio-economic and environmental problems of global agri-business and the industrial food system, this characterization foregrounds the centrality of a neoliberal reliance within the discourse of CFS "on markets rather than the state to pursue change" (Alkon & Guthman, 2017, p. 6). This reliance, we argue, conflicts with the social justice goal to tackle the problem of food insecurity by addressing systemic social and economic inequities.

Conclusion

As we have argued in this article, the meanings and associations of self-reliance are as diverse and potentially incompatible as both the values inherent in the food charter genre and the interests of the multiple community stakeholders involved in local-sustainable food activism and policy. Hamm and Bellows' (2003) foundational framing of community food security that underlies the food charter genre emphasizes the collective goal of "maximiz[ing] community self-reliance and social justice" to ensure that "*all* community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system" (p. 37; emphasis added). However, as we have shown, the multiple, incongruous ways in which the principle of self-reliance is recontextualized within food charters reveal the (ideo)logical tensions between the goals of "self-reliance" and "social justice" within community food security discourse and its uptake within Canadian charters. Most problematically in our view, the valorization of resilience-as-self-reliance—whether that be for individual residents, the community as a whole, or the local food sector—risks exacerbating rather than alleviating the distress of food insecurity for the most vulnerable members of a community. Stormer and McGreavy's (2017)

ecological re-conceptualization of rhetorical resilience as emerging from—rather than being opposed to—the entangled, interdependent vulnerabilities of diverse entities suggests it could be possible for community food security discourse “to do resilience differently” too (McGreavy, 2016, p. 177), in ways that more tangibly recognize and meaningfully address the socio-economic, material inequities that produce food vulnerability. However, within current Canadian food charter discourse, food insecurity remains an incapacitating source of vulnerability—a de-vitalizing mode of suffering—that is both opposed to, yet perpetuated by, the entrepreneurial, autonomous-agency logic of self-reliance as a source of resilience.

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Appendix A: Canadian Regional Food Charters

Community or Region	Uses terms "food security" [or "insecurity"], "community food security," "regional food security," and/or "food secure community"	Uses term "self-reliance" or "self-reliant"	Uses term "resilience" or "resilient"
Alberni Valley, BC (2012)	✔	✔	✔
Brant, ON (2018)			✔
Bruce Grey, ON (2014)	✔		
Central Okanagan, BC (2007)	✔	✔	
Cowichan, BC (2009)	✔		
Durham Region, ON (2009)	✔	✔	✔
Elgin St-Thomas, ON (2012)	✔	✔	
Gabriola, BC (2010)			
Guelph-Wellington, ON (2011)	✔		
Halifax, NS (2018)	✔	✔	✔
Halton, ON (2010)			
Hamilton, ON (2013)	✔		
Headwaters, ON (2017)	✔		
Huron County, ON (2015)			✔
Island Region, BC (2014)	✔		✔
Kaslo, BC (2008)	✔	✔	
Kawartha Lakes, ON (2011)	✔		
Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington, ON (2012)	✔	✔	

Medicine Hat, SK (2008)	✔		
Leeds, Grenville & Lanark County, ON (2014)			✔
London, ON (2010)	✔		
Markham, ON (2013)			✔
Moose Jaw – South Central, SK (2008)	✔	✔	
Nippissing and Area, ON (2015)	✔		
North Okanagan, BC (n.d.)		✔	✔
North Shore Community (Vancouver), BC (2013)	✔	✔	
Northeast Saskatchewan, SK (2005)	✔	✔	
Northumberland County, ON (2013)	✔		
Northwestern Ontario, ON (2017, draft)	✔		✔
Oxford County, ON (2010)	✔		
Parry Sound and Area, ON (2015)	✔		
Peel, ON (2017)	✔		
Peterborough, ON (2017)	✔	✔	
Prince Albert, SK (2002)	✔	✔	
Revelstoke, BC (2013)	✔	✔	✔
Richmond, BC (2016)	✔		
Sarnia-Lambton, ON (2011)		✔	
Saskatoon, SK (2002)	✔	✔	
Shuswap, BC (2008)	✔		
Simcoe County, ON (2012)	✔		✔
Squamish, BC (2012)	✔		✔

Sudbury, ON (2004)	✔	✔	
Thunder Bay, ON (2008)	✔	✔	
Toronto, ON (2001)	✔	✔	
Vancouver, BC (2007)	✔		
Capital Region (Victoria), BC (2008)			
Waterloo Region, ON (2013)			
Windsor Essex County, ON (2014)			
Yellowknife, NWT (2015)	✔		
York Region, ON (2013)			✔

Food Charter Links
Alberni Valley, BC (2012) https://www.acrd.bc.ca/cms/wpattachments/wpID398atID2900.pdf
Brant, ON (2018) https://feedbrant.ca/brant-food-charter#328e0f51-c85b-4536-ae56-ea6651646a04
Bruce Grey, ON (2014) https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/Portals/0/Topics/Eating%20Well/GB%20Food%20Charter.pdf
Central Okanagan, BC (2007) http://tfpc.to/municipal-food-policy/countydistrictregional-fpcs/central-okanagan-food-policy-council-cofpc
Cowichan, BC (2009) https://cowichangreencommunity.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/CowichanFoodCharter.pdf
Durham Region, ON (2009) https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/967f11_096eb886d6ad467da5e2e91874aa23b1.pdf
Elgin St-Thomas, ON (2012) https://www.swpublichealth.ca/sites/default/files/file-attachments/basic-page/elgin_st._thomas_food_charter.pdf
Gabriola, BC (2010) https://agihall.com/

Guelph-Wellington, ON (2011) https://povertytaskforce.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/gwfrt_toolkit_final_2013.pdf
Halifax, NS (2018) https://halifaxfoodpolicy.ca/food-charter/read-the-hrm-food-charter/
Halton, ON (2010) http://haltonfoodcouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Charter_LRoblin_2013-05-15_final.pdf
Hamilton, ON (2013) https://hamiltonfoodcharter.wordpress.com/the-food-charter/
Headwaters, ON (2017) http://headwatersfoodandfarming.ca/food-charter-food-policy/
Huron County, ON (2015) https://cfhuron.ca/content/huron-county-food-charter.pdf
Island Region, BC (2014) http://www.islandfoodhubs.ca/docs/Island%20Food%20Security%20Hub%20Collective%20-%20Food%20Charter.pdf
Kaslo, BC (2008) http://nklcss.org/documents/food/foodcharter.pdf
Kawartha Lakes, ON (2011) https://www.kawarthalakes.ca/en/business-growth/resources/Kawartha-Lakes-Food-Charter.pdf
Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington, ON (2012) http://foodpolicykfla.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/KFLA-Food-Charter-1.pdf
Medicine Hat, SK (2008) https://foodconnections.ca/charter
Leeds, Grenville & Lanark County, ON (2014) http://www.foodcorelgl.ca/__resources/food-charter.pdf
London, ON (2010) https://www.london.ca/residents/children-youth/child-care/Documents/London's%20Food%20Charter.pdf
Markham, ON (2013) https://pub-markham.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?documentid=7633
Moose Jaw – South Central, SK (2008) https://southcentralfood.s3.amazonaws.com/docs/SCFSN%20Food%20Charter%20with%20endorsements.14855319971805.pdf
Nippissing and Area, ON (2015) https://nipissingareafood.ca/about-the-nipissing-area-food-charter/
North Okanagan, BC (n.d.) http://foodaction.ca/fasno-food-charter/

North Shore Community (Vancouver), BC (2013) https://nipissingareafood.ca/about-the-nipissing-area-food-charter/
Northeast Saskatchewan, SK (2005) https://www.kelseytrailhealth.ca/Publications/ProvincialPublications/Documents/North%20East%20Food%20Charter.pdf
Northumberland County, ON (2013) https://northumberlandfpc.com/food-charter/
Northwestern Ontario, ON (2017, draft) https://www.cloverbeltlocalfoodcoop.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Draft-NWO-Regional-Food-Charter-PDF.pdf
Oxford County, ON (2010) http://www.foodsecureoxford.ca/Food_Charter.aspx
Parry Sound and Area, ON (2015) https://parrysoundareafood.com/the-food-charter/
Peel, ON (2017) http://www.povertyinpeel.ca/_include/peel-food-charter.pdf
Peterborough, ON (2017) http://www.foodinpeterborough.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/170508-PTBO-Food-Charter.pdf
Prince Albert, SK (2002) https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/PrinceAlbertcharter.pdf
Revelstoke, BC (2013) http://www.cityofrevelstoke.com/DocumentCenter/View/1702/food-charter-final-copy?bidId=
Richmond, BC (2016) https://www.richmondfoodsecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Richmond-Food-Charter-final.pdf
Sarnia-Lambton, ON (2011) http://www.sarnialambtonfoodcharter.com/sarnia-lambton-food-charter.php
Saskatoon, SK (2002) https://foodsecurecanada.org/sites/foodsecurecanada.org/files/SaskatoonFoodCharter.pdf
Shuswap, BC (2008) [no URL available]
Simcoe County, ON (2012) https://fpa.simcoe.ca/Shared%20Documents/PDF_Charter_Printable.pdf
Squamish, BC (2012) http://squamishcan.net/squamish-food-charter/
Sudbury, ON (2004) https://sudburyfoodpolicy.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/13_05_foodcharter_eng_and_french.pdf

Thunder Bay, ON (2008) http://www.ecosuperior.org/upload/documents/food_charter_sm.pdf
Toronto, ON (2001) https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2018/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-118057.pdf
Vancouver, BC (2007) https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/Van_Food_Charter.pdf
Capital Region (Victoria), BC (2008) http://www.communitycouncil.ca/sites/default/files/CR_Food_Charter_Final-2008-06-10.pdf
Waterloo Region, ON (2013) https://povertytaskforce.files.wordpress.com/2013/11/waterloo_region_food_charter_final_apr8.pdf
Windsor Essex County, ON (2014) https://www.wechu.org/healthy-eating/food-charter-windsor-and-essex-county
Yellowknife, NWT (2015) https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54f63126e4b0f229542c7d95/t/5694045ea12f44b2eb069f5c/1452541030352/Food+Charter+2015_V6.pdf
York Region, ON (2013) https://yrfn.ca/food-policy/york-region-food-charter/