

# **The Promotion of Overconsumption and Food Waste: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Supermarket Flyers**

by

**Nicole Tanya Chow**

B.A., Simon Fraser University, 2015

Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

in the

School of Communication (Dual Degree Program in Global Communication)  
Faculty of Communication, Art & Technology

© **Nicole Tanya Chow 2016**

**SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

**Summer 2016**

All rights reserved.

However, in accordance with the *Copyright Act of Canada*, this work may be reproduced, without authorization, under the conditions for Fair Dealing. Therefore, limited reproduction of this work for the purposes of private study, research, education, satire, parody, criticism, review and news reporting is likely to be in accordance with the law, particularly if cited appropriately.

## Approval

**Name:** Nicole Tanya Chow  
**Degree:** Master of Arts (Communication)  
**Title:** *The Promotion of Excess Buying and Food Waste: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Supermarket Flyers*  
**Examining Committee:** Chair: Alison Beale  
Program Director

**Yuezhi Zhao**  
Senior Supervisor  
Professor

---

**Date Approved:** August 19, 2016

## **Abstract**

In the late 1800s, major shifts in manufacturing, media, and marketing began to take place. During this time, advertisements in the food industry boomed as mass-produced goods were readily available to the public. With the technology that we have today, mass-produced food items are even more abundant, and so are the advertisements for them. Many popular food advertisements that we see today revolve around concepts such as abundance, convenience and affordability, concepts that we value in Western society. This article attempts to uncover the reasons why food waste is so abundant in Canada by using content analysis and critical discourse analysis on nine different Canadian supermarkets' flyers. This research led to two conclusions: 1) that different supermarkets use different marketing strategies to encourage people to consume in specific ways and 2) the supermarkets that advertise themselves as being the most cost-effective use more marketing strategies, most which include bundle purchasing.

**Keywords:** food advertising, food waste, marketing strategies

*I want to dedicate this paper to my parents, who have always pushed me to do my very best. Thank you both for your unconditional love and support. I also want to dedicate this paper to the fight for global food security and the elimination of food waste.*

## **Acknowledgements**

I want to thank my supervisor, Yuezhi Zhao, and teaching assistant, Byron Hauck for their constant support and guidance. This paper would not have been possible without you both.

# Table of Contents

Approval.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Dedicati.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vii
<b>Chapter 1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter 2. A Review of Literature in the Advertising and Food Advertising Industry .....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1. History of the Advertising and Food Advertising Industry .....	5
2.2. Decoding Advertisements.....	6
2.3. Culture and Advertising .....	8
2.4. Ideology and Advertising .....	10
2.5. Marketing Strategies and Food Flyers .....	11
<b>Chapter 3. Methodology .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Chapter 4. Content and Critical Discourse Analysis .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Chapter 5. Analysis and Interpretation of Findings.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>35</b>

## List of Figures

Figure 1	.....	13
Figure 2	.....	14
Figure 3	.....	14
Figure 4	.....	16
Figure 5	.....	17
Figure 6	.....	17
Figure 7	.....	18
Figure 8	.....	20
Figure 9	.....	23

# Chapter 1.

## Introduction

Food waste has always been a pet peeve of mine. For as long as I can remember, every time I saw someone throw away perfectly good food—from mouthfuls to platefuls—I’ve always felt this disgust in the pit of my stomach. Growing up near the Downtown Eastside in Vancouver, I’ve had plenty of encounters with people begging for food, so to me, it begs the question of how people can be so wasteful with it. Thinking back to how this pet peeve of mine started however, it brings me back to a childhood memory of my parents lecturing me when I didn’t want to finish everything off my plate at dinner. They scolded me about how I shouldn’t waste food because there are people in countries who have none. As cliché as it may be, what they said had a profound effect on me ever since. And from that time on, my hatred around food waste grew into a type of obsession, which was constantly being reinforced by my experiences growing up in the neighbourhood that I lived in. Ironically however, as an adult, I’ve become acutely aware that food waste still happens, more prevalently than I’d like to admit in the house that I live in with my parents. The food that we were wasting however, doesn’t take shape in what is left behind on our plates at the end of the meal, but rather what has been left sitting in the fridge or in our cabinets that we simply forgot about or could not eat in time before expiration. This realization prompted me to be extremely diligent around what food items we were buying and how much of it to reduce the likelihood of food waste. My experience around food waste and my interest in trying to understand the societal and economic forces that lead to food waste has been the driving force of my research. According to David Takacs, positionality is important in working toward a just world because it starts with “opening up heart and mind to the perspectives of others” (Takacs, 2002, p. 169). Because each individual has their own story based on their unique experiences that shape the way they process information, it is fundamental to understand and accept people’s biases and to value our differences. Positionality

plays an important role in research as well because it shapes how the research will be conducted and the trajectory of the study. It takes in consideration the history of the researcher and how she or he views themselves, as well as how others view and situate them in society. By taking my own position and positionality around the issue of food waste, I understand that I do have a motivated bias, but it is legitimate basis for conducting my research.

Upon doing further research into the effects of food waste, I learned that it is a pressing issue around the globe. Not only did I realize that my obsession was shared among many, but I learned that the problem around food waste extends much greater than I had imagined. In 2011, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) published a report on the impacts of food waste on natural resources around the world. In this report, it is stated that about 1/3 of all food produced for human consumption is 'lost' or 'wasted'. Food loss happens during the agricultural production, postharvest handling and storage, and processing shipping stages whereas food waste takes place at the end of the value chain either by food retailers or after being purchased by consumers. Both food loss and food waste specifically only include all foods that were meant for human consumption and not animal feed, fertilizers, or otherwise (FAO, 2011). In Canada, there is a higher percentage of food that is lost or wasted along the agri-food value chain. The agri-food chain includes the entire range of different operations from production, processors, distributor, retailers and consumers. According to the Value Chain Management Centre, roughly 40% of the food we produce for human consumption ends up in landfills (\$27 billion) in Canada, and the most significant amount of that waste is produced at the household level. It is estimated that the home domain is responsible for 51% of the total food that gets thrown away. Gooch, Sparling, et al., explain that the majority of this waste is caused by a mix of the consumer's concern for safety and a misunderstanding of food labels (Gooch, Sparling, et al., 2014).

Although these factors may account to some of the food waste that happens at the household level, Filho & Kovalera argue that excess buying is the key reason why food waste happens. They note that through their research, the main reason why households waste food is simply because they are buying too much food and cannot eat everything before spoilage. A reason for this overconsumption of food is due to peoples'

purchasing behaviour that is often influenced by marketing strategies used by food retailers. Food retailers often use techniques such as promotions, deals, and bundle buying as incentives for customer's to purchase more with the belief that they are saving money (Filho, Kovaleva, 2015).

The aim of this research is to uncover the various marketing strategies Canadian supermarkets use in their flyers in order to sell their products to maximize profitability. Aligned with Filho & Kovalera's argument, I intend on focusing my research on grocery stores' print advertisements (flyers) in Canada and how these advertisements use certain marketing strategies through the use of images and symbols to present food in ways that encourage people to buy excessively. Furthermore, using various scholars' critique of advertising, I argue that these strategies reproduce the hegemonic ideology of capitalism that helps legitimize overbuying food items that in turn creates waste. This paper will explore the advertising industry as well as the food advertising industry and its effects throughout the century.

For my empirical research, I will collect flyers from nine different supermarkets and conduct content analysis. I suspect that the grocery stores that target lower-income customers will encourage bulk/bundle-buying by using marketing strategies that give the consumer an incentive to buy more for a greater value. In contrast, I suspect that the grocery stores targeting customers with more affluence will use less marketing strategies to sell their products and in turn not encourage bulk/bundle-buying. Rather, these supermarkets will use different marketing strategies, ones that use a different set of cultural values to help market their products.

H1: Grocery stores who target lower-income customers will encourage bulk/bundle-buying.

H2: Grocery stores targeting customers with more affluence will use less marketing tactics to encourage bulk/bundle-buying.

## **Chapter 2.**

### **A Review of Literature in the Advertising and Food Advertising Industry**

The literature used to comprise this section of the paper includes a variety of different sources regarding advertising and the media. Not only is the advertising industry addressed, but the food advertising industry is also addressed in relation to their similarities. It is important to understand the development and criticism of the advertising industry to understand how the food advertising industry works as well, as they are very similar in how they affect consumers. Furthermore, the food advertising industry uses similar marketing strategies and techniques to help market their products like other advertising industries. Although there is extensive research on different marketing strategies and their effect on consumer behaviour in many different industries, there is little research specifically on the effect of grocery store flyers on consumer behaviour. Moreover, there are even less studies on semiotics and grocery store flyers and its impact on consumer behaviour through the use of symbols and cultural values. A further limitation of this literature review is the fact that there has not been any research conducted in the scope of Canadian supermarket flyers' and their correlation to food waste via marketing strategies used by food retailers. Although there is little research specifically on the semiotics of grocery store flyers, the use of literature included in this review include theoretical frameworks around advertising and the media, which I believe is sufficient in understanding both the advertising and food advertising industry.

## **2.1. History of the Advertising and Food Advertising Industry**

Before we can delve into the current advertising industry or the food advertising industry, we must look at the history of advertising and explore how it has developed over the years. The history of advertising can be traced back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when the industry of mass-produced goods started flourishing. During this time, cities became a hub for shopping and a fashion hotspot where department stores began to open and the concept of 'window shopping' emerged (Leiss, Kline, et al., 2005). As described by Leiss, Kline et al. (2005), the history of advertising can be mapped out into five different stages.

In the First Stage, advertisements appealed to the rational and reasonable person and attempts to persuade people to buy a product based on its use-value. These types of ads are based on the functions or attributes of the product and how it can benefit the consumer.

In the Second Stage, ads shifted toward a use of symbols rather than simply indicating the use-value of a product. The attributes of the product aren't highlighted during this stage, but rather the products are portrayed to "resonate with qualities desired by the consumers" (Leiss, et al., 2005, pp. 155). This technique uses social motivations to help with consumption; examples of such qualities are status, reduction of anxiety, and glamour.

During the Third Stage, advertisers are able to use mass media to their benefits to help sell products. With the concept of mass media, the notion of the mass consumer becomes realistic. Advertisers are now trying to tap into the psyche of the average and ordinary consumer to understand how to sell to the masses. The advertisements during this time are highly personal.

In the Fourth Stage, one can see a shift towards a segmentation of the masses, and a focus on people's different subgroup activities. Peoples' use of media, their lifestyle, attitudes, and preference are all taken into account in creating tailored advertisements.

The last stage takes us to the present. Leiss, et al. indicate that advertisements from 1985 to today showcase a variety of themes such as authenticity, originality, diversity, creativity, and play. These themes have flourished with the help of the internet because the internet has shaped the way we interact with media. Humans became more than just recipients of the media, we were now creating it, and therefore advertisements during this stage are tailored around such concepts and values (Leiss, et al., 2005, pp. 295).

Food advertising has been one of the fastest growing industries within this past century. In 1877, food advertising only took up 1% of the advertising agency N. W. Ayer's revenues because at the time food was regarded as being a necessity rather than a luxury. Therefore, it made no sense to advertise something people needed to buy anyways. However, 24 years later, food advertisements accounted for 15% of the revenue for the largest advertising agency in America, and in 1920's, the food industry spent over \$14 million on advertising (Parkin, 2006). The growth in food ads is correlated with the growing concept of the 'brand'. Since the 1920's, the food industry showed no signs of slowing down either. It is estimated that U.S. consumers spend an average of 12.5% of their income on food (Gallo, 1997), and according to Statista, just the U.S grocery store industry alone spent \$2.79 billion USD on advertisements in 2012 (Statista, 2016). If we look around the globe, the UK's food sector spent the most money on advertising in 2013 (Lang & Heasman, 2015), and the food and beverage industry in China is worth \$350 billion USD annually ('Industry sectors', 2009). Over the decades, food advertisements have developed like any other industry. As advertisements moved away from merely being descriptive to incorporating values, ideals, and norms through the use of symbols, food ads too began to showcase certain lifestyles, habits, body image and even gender roles (Parkin, 2006).

## **2.2. Decoding Advertisements**

Communication occurs constantly around us, whether we are speaking, listening, reading or observing. Our communication usually takes place with a sender and a receiver, but sometimes the act of communication is not as obvious as it seems or what is being communicated isn't exactly easily interpreted. The communication between

people consists of sending signals to others to showcase one's values, attitudes, self-identity, and class, just to name a few. This can be done verbally of course, but non-verbal communication is also just as effective, if not *more* effective at conveying a signal. The encoding and decoding model of communication developed by Stuart Hall explained how messages and symbols in the media are interpreted differently by the audience depending on the individual's background, culture, ethnicity, and so forth (Hall, 1980). "From the perspective of decoding, or how messages are received by audiences, the text is complicated again: while advertising text fix symbols or images they do not fix meaning, which requires reader's active interpretation (Leiss, et al., 2005, pp.161-162)." Over the decades, advertisers have become acutely aware of how commodities can come to signify certain values and identity, and are using it to their advantage. Throughout the century, advertisements have been created to target certain demographics in hopes to boost sales. As the development of advertisements moved away from just being descriptive, images and meanings began to be incorporated with either the commodity or corporation. Many advertisements, from automobiles to furniture are often given humanly traits and according to Williamson, "instead of being identified by what [people] produce, people are made to identify themselves with what they consume" (Williamson, 1978, p. 13). Thorstein Veblen, an economist and sociologist that coined the term "conspicuous consumer" addressed this very notion of ideology and consumption (Veblen, 1899). Conspicuous consumption is the way in which consumers purchase luxury commodities or brands in order to showcase their economic and social status. Through Veblen's concept of the conspicuous consumption, one can understand the importance of conveying certain ideologies through advertisements because in turn, those products will come to mean something to people. According to Leiss, et al. (2005),

Two fundamental purposes of all advertising and marketing research: (1) to understand how consumers experience the meaning of products and how they formulate the intention to purchase; and (2) to construct persuasive communications strategies on the basis of that understanding that will reach the inner experiences of persons. (pp. 147)

By understanding how food advertising contains many different layers of meanings to be decoded, it can help uncover the different cultural frames advertisers use to help sell their products. Such marketing strategies include the invocation of cultural values, norms, lifestyles and identities.

### **2.3. Culture and Advertising**

Ads are embedded with many different symbols to be decoded and it is clear that the use of these symbols is to align the company and their products with similar interests and values of their customers. Many advertisements contain certain values, norms, and identities to help sell products. According to Leiss, et al. (2005), “A cultural frame is the predominant set of images, values, and forms of communication in a particular period that arises out of the interplay between marketing and advertising strategies, the mass media, and popular culture” (pp. 91). Thus, advertising can be seen as being a “carrier of cultural values” in which advertisers attempt to draw consumers in by placing inherent values in products (Pollay & Gallagher, 1990).

According to Andrew Wernick’s concept of promotional culture, “advertising thus comes to serve as a major transmission belt for ideology (Wernick, 1991, pp. 267).” Wernick, who is a social theorist most interested in promotional culture and ideology argues that the North American culture is present through an endless stream of promotional messages via advertisements. In other words, advertisements are constantly promoting the American culture such as the importance of freedom, individualization, and consumption. Large corporations’ are only interested in their bottom line, meaning they want to maximize any means of profit. To do this, corporations use advertisements to portray themselves and their products as being aligned with the dominant Western culture. One of Wernick’s main arguments is that advertisements are so successful because the ads themselves are representing the “product as the embodiment of some existing cultural or psychological value” (Wernick, 1991, pp. 266). By constantly representing the American culture through advertisements, the masses are then influenced to act, think, and behave a certain way that re-establishes these dominant ideologies.

Food advertisements are very similar to the other advertisements that we see on a daily basis. They too contain many symbols to attract customers to the products that they are trying to sell. Food ads often include themes of convenience, quickness, and cheapness—ideas that the Western culture value. In a content analysis of food advertisements appearing in parenting magazines, Manganello, Smith et al., identified 476 food ads and found that frequent themes used in these ads included ‘convenience’, ‘economical’, ‘fun’ and ‘helping families spend time together’ (Manganello, Smith, et al., 2012). These themes are quite often seen in advertisements for fast food or instant foods, often promoting quantity over quality, taste over health and the concept of quick and convenience. In regards to the way food is often advertised today—being cheap and convenient—it can be damaging to foods’ overall integrity. For instance, if an item is sold cheaply and it is easy to obtain (easy to replace), the item would have very little intrinsic value. However, if an item is very exotic and expensive, people will inherently value it more. Thus, if food is often advertised as being something with little value, it is easy to understand why food waste happens so often. As the Rubbish Theory suggests, waste—or rubbish—is something with absolutely zero value (Thompson, 1979). By reducing the value in certain food items, it helps legitimize the action of wasting food.

In a cross-cultural analysis of food advertising in China and the U.S., Cheong, Kim and Zheng found vast differences in how food is advertised in each country. By using Hofstede’s framework of cultural dimensions, Cheong, Kim and Zheng were able to conduct their analysis. Hofstede’s framework consists of using five different dimensions: individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity and long-term orientation. “Hofstede’s *Cultural Dimensions* was developed to gauge the cultural influence on values in an organization setting and was later adopted in broader cross-cultural analyses” (Cheong, Kim & Zheng, 2010, pp. 4). For the sake of my paper, understanding the American culture around advertising is paramount, and it is explained through Cheong, Kim and Zheng’s work. This particular study found that the United States scored high on advertisements that valued concepts such as independence, distinctiveness, and health benefits, which showcase the importance of cultural values and norms in food advertising. Having food advertised in a particular way that reflects the lifestyles of people is a good example of how advertising in the food industry can be a true reflection of cultural values and norms.

## 2.4. Ideology and Advertising

Ideology and culture cannot be easily distinguished according to Althusser, who claims that “all of culture was equated with ideology, endlessly ‘reproduced’ by the institutional ‘apparatuses’ (Sinclair, 1987, pp. 11). Advertising thus is a perfect ‘apparatus’ that sustains the dominant ideology of capitalist societies. Stuart Ewen also takes a Marxist stance on advertising as he views ads as being this ‘cultural apparatus’ developed by ‘captains of consciousness’ to blanket the minds of the working class and persuade them of the virtues of capitalism and consumerism (Ewen, 1976). Ewen is critical of how the interests, fantasies and problems of the average American are being manipulated by these captains of consciousness (corporations and their use of advertising). Ewen suggests that the introduction of mass-production and the assembly line created the need for mass-consumption and advertisements which were typically directed to the more affluent began to start targeting the masses. Furthermore, the idea of the worker started to shift and instead of thinking of themselves as producers or workers, people started to view themselves as consumers. The use of psychology was infused in advertisements to make consumers identify with products and even reproduce values such as freedom, democracy and patriotism. The ideology of mass-consumption and capitalism was so strong that to think otherwise would be abnormal.

Another notable thinker in the study of advertisements and mass media is C. Wright Mills. The chapter “The Mass Society” in his book *The Power Elite* describes how the ‘power elite’ in society have control over the masses through the use of mass media. Mills argues that the power elite consists of a coalition of the corporate rich, military warlords, and servile political directorate, who ultimately holds the power in society. Mills goes on to argue that “with the increased means of mass persuasion that are available, the public of public opinion has become the object of intensive efforts to control, manage, manipulate, and increasingly intimidate” (Mills, 1956, pp. 4). Aligned with Ewen, Mills suggests the same, that the power elites exercise a type of control and power over the masses via media and advertising. Mills argues,

Manipulation becomes a problem wherever men have power that is concentrated and willful but do not have authority, or when, for any reason, they do not wish to

use their power openly. Then the powerful seek to rule without showing their powerfulness. They want to rule, as it were, secretly, without publicized legitimation. (Mills, 1956, pp.6)

Each of these scholars convey a concern about the amount of control that the elites have over regular consumers via media and advertisements, and how ideology is used to reproduce capitalism and the dominance of the ruling class. Advertisements in any field can be seen as a vessel to help transmit ideology and to help the elite maintain dominance in society, and it is especially true in regards to the food industry.

Food advertisements too are riddled with the ideology of capitalism through the use of values, ideas, and cultural norms such as convenience, quickness, abundance, and even freshness. Kim Humphery argues that the excess in consumer spending has simply become a way of life in the twenty-first century. Spending, she notes, is influenced by social, cultural, economic, and political reasons (Humphery, 2010). The reason why we buy in excess is mainly because it is constantly encouraged to us. We are bombarded by adverts that promote up-sizing and BOGO's and make decisions based on the notion that having more is always better. Interestingly enough, we always make the comparison of having too much rather than having too little, but we rarely compare having too much to having just the right amount. All of these techniques that food advertisers promote to us are to reproduce the dominant ideology of capitalism.

## **2.5. Marketing Strategies and Food Flyers**

The development of marketing strategies had become essential, as the competitiveness between companies and products grew. Marketing strategies were developed to help distinguish products and companies from each other by highlighting unique selling points and incentives for customers to become attracted. E. Jerome McCarthy coined the 4 Ps of Marketing Model which is widely used by advertising, branding and marketing companies worldwide. The 4 Ps stands for: product, price, promotion and place (Cleveland Web Design and Development, 2016). Not only is the product important in terms of trying to sell to the public, but the price in which that product is being sold, the promotion of the product and place are all important factors.

According to Luceri, et al., store flyers play an extremely important strategic role in helping to appeal to consumers and are considered to be one of the most important media outlets for retailers (Luceri, Tania, et al., 2013). Sales promotions can be divided into monetary promotions and non-monetary promotions. Non-monetary promotions is a technique meant for long-term sales that include loyalty programs whereas monetary promotions are meant for short-term sales that aim to 'benefit' consumers' in terms of helping them save money (Santini, Sampaio, et al., 2014). Although there have been extensive research on advertising and their effects on consumer behaviour through other means of ads, there have not been a lot of studies specifically around grocery store flyers and their effects (Ailawadi et al., 2009). One of the few studies that were conducted around the effectiveness of supermarkets' flyers indicated that 77% of single-store shoppers read flyers which make this form of advertising a vital role in boosting sales.

Popular marketing strategies used in flyers are the use of coupons, bundling strategy, tie-in-promotions and BOGOs. Coupons offer a discounted price for an item, bundling strategies offer the customer cheaper per item if purchased in multiples, tie-in-promotions are two non-competitive corporations joining together to help each other, and lastly, BOGO (buy-on-get-one) products where products are sold cheaper or even free on certain purchases. Scarcity tactics are also frequently used as it taps into the psychology of the consumer. By putting a limit on how much the customer can buy, it often creates a desire to buy as much as possible because the intrinsic value heightens (Rogers, 2001). In the case of supermarket purchasing limitations, customers have the desire to buy the maximum amount of there is a cap on purchasing because it usually means that product is selling for at a very cheap price.

## Chapter 3. Methodology

Two forms of analyses have been chosen to conduct my research. The first analysis includes conducting a content analysis of nine different Canadian grocery stores' flyers to indicate the different marketing strategies that are used to help sell their products. The second analysis includes a critical discourse analysis of what these flyers mean.

This paper uses nine different grocery stores for my research. I have further broken down these nine grocery stores into three categories: Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3. Each tier is divided based on the customers' income level that the grocery store is trying to target.

TIER 1	TIER 2	TIER 3
Buy-low Foods	The Real Canadian Superstore	Whole Foods
No Frills	Safeway	Choices Market
Walmart	Save-On-Foods	Nesters Market

**Figure 1**

I have selected these grocery stores into their respective tiers based on their slogans and my personal experience. Since I am a local here in Vancouver, I have experience buying foods from all of these different food retailers. In the beginning of this project, I roughly mapped out which grocery stores I personally thought fit in each category. After, I looked for each of these grocery stores' slogans to justify my selections. For instance, Buy-low foods, No Frills, and Walmart all have slogans that refer to saving money. The second tier grocery stores' slogans are mixed with both quality and being cost-effective, and lastly, Tier 3 grocery stores' slogans do not refer to price, but rather the quality, locality and health benefits of the food items they are selling.

Grocery Store	Slogan
Buy-Low Foods	Low <u>low</u> food prices
No frills	Lower food prices
Walmart	Save money. Live better.
Real Canadian Superstore	Big on fresh, low on price
Safeway	Better food starts here
Save-on-Foods	So much more in store
Whole Foods	America's healthiest grocery store
Choices Market	100% BC owned and operated
Nesters Market	Where the locals shop!

**Figure 2**

### Content Analysis

This paper collected data from the nine different grocery store flyers in order to conduct content analysis. Content analysis is a research method that is used for either qualitative or quantitative research. It is a systematization of text analysis that is used to gather data and reveal possible underlying meaning through patterns (Yang, 2008). For my research, I have included seven different variables to help collect the data.

Variable 1	Date
Variable 2	Most frequent words, symbols used
Variable 3	Number of products in the flyer
Variable 4	Number of limited/minimum items
Variable 5	Number of bundle items
Variable 6	Number of free bonus items
Variable 7	Number of items with price comparison
Variable 8	Number of products advertised as oversized

**Figure 3**

### Discourse Analysis

This paper also subjects the flyers to critical discourse analysis. CDA is a methodology often used in the social sciences to critically study language and society. CDA consists of a 'three-dimensional' framework: an analysis of language texts, either spoken or written, an analysis of discourse practice in terms of production, distribution and consumption, and lastly, an analysis of "discursive events as instances of sociocultural practice" (Fowler, 1997, pp. 421). CDA is distinctive of other types of

methodologies as it looks to uncover the socio-political linkage of text. The main reason behind this type of analysis is to engage in critical thinking around issues of hegemony and power. It is said that performing critical discourse analysis may be more difficult to those who share similar cultural values and ideologies of the text that is being observed because the text can come off as being normal to them. Rather, to gain a different perspective of the text, individuals who do not share the same codes as the texts are extremely beneficial in performing CDA. Because either they do not share the same cultural values or are lacking the “literacy” to comprehend and reproduce the codes of the text, they do not identify with the text, and can be rather critical of them (Janks, n.d.). I understand that my position as a middle class urban dweller poses a possible disadvantage at performing critical discourse analysis on supermarket flyers; however, I am confident that my education and training will allow me to perform such a task.

As this paper is interested in exploring the ways in which flyers encourage an unnatural way of consuming groceries, all for the benefits of corporations, and how these ads embody the ideology of capitalism, I believe using CDA is most beneficial.

## Chapter 4. Content and Critical Discourse Analysis

I collected and analyzed two weeks' worth of flyers from the nine different Canadian supermarkets. The results show that all nine supermarkets use different marketing strategies to encourage people to consume.

### Content Analysis Results

TIER 1								
Buy-Low			No Frills (West)			Walmart (West)		
# of products	111		# of products	58.5		# of products	112	
Min/Max Items	0.5	0.45%	Min/Max Items			Min/Max Items		
Package	27.5	25.00%	Package	5	8.55%	Package	6	5.36%
Free Bonus			Free Bonus			Free Bonus		
Save Comparison			Save Comparison	14	23.93%	Save Comparison	7	6.25%
Supersize	5	4.50%	Supersize	1.5	2.56%	Supersize		

Figure 4

**TIER 2**

Safeway (BC)			<u>SaveOnFoods</u> (BC)			RC Superstore (West)		
# of products	167.5		# of products	180.5		# of products	100	
Min/Max Items	18.5	11%	Min/Max Items			Min/Max Items	35.5	35.50%
Package	7	4.18%	Package	68.5	37.95%	Package	12	12%
Free Bonus	23	13.73%	Free Bonus	2.5	1.39%	Free Bonus	7	7%
Save Comparison	6.5	3.88%	Save Comparison	7	3.88%	Save Comparison	0.5	0.50%
Supersize			Supersize			Supersize	15.5	15.50%

**Figure 5**

**TIER 3**

Whole Foods (West)			Choices			Nesters		
# of products	18		# of products	50		# of products	101.5	
Min/Max Items			Min/Max Items			Min/Max Items		
Package	4	22.22%	Package	8.5	17%	Package	22.5	22.17%
Free Bonus			Free Bonus			Free Bonus		
Save Comparison	18	100%	SaveComparison	13	26%	Save Comparison		
Supersize			Supersize			Supersize		

**Figure 6**

The information gathered indicates that Tier 3 supermarkets rely less on different marketing strategies than the other two Tiers, Tier 1 & 2 uses a variety of marketing techniques to encourage shoppers to purchase items, many of which include bulk buying or a free rewards system. Safeway uses the free reward technique the most frequent which encourages people to purchase an excess amount of items in order to collect Airmiles, which as mentioned before, companies often join forces with other companies in order to promote or sell items.

## Critical Discourse Analysis

### Tier 1



Figure 7

### Buy-Low Foods

The first thing that one sees on the front cover of the Buy-Low Foods flyer is “Happy Canada Day” which invites the consumer to celebrate this very special day with the food retailer. The use of celebrating Canada day suggests that this particular food retailer is a proud Canadian company that shares Canadian values—just like their customers. The next “thing” that draws the attention of the customer are the prices in red, which indicate that these could be potentially special prices for the particular items. The prices are the largest text on the flyer which suggests that pricing is the most important factor for Buy-Low foods. They want the consumers to be drawn in by the price rather than other qualities such as product information like brand, description, size, or origin. Although they do use symbols such as the Canadian flag and “Project Play” (a Heinz campaign to help build better futures by building better places to play), they put

more emphasis on pricing, which suggests that people who shop here value their monetary savings more, and these other qualities are secondary. Interestingly, they put the retail store logo on the very bottom of the flyer in very small font in comparison to the price which suggests that even the store or brand is not as important.

### No Frills

The front page of the No Frills flyers showcases the retail store at the very top, indicating that the retail store/brand is an important factor that the consumer should identify with. The next text that the audience reads in sequence (from top to bottom) says “WON’T BE BEAT” which creates a sense of ambiguity. Are they referring to the prices that can’t be beat, or the quality, or the service? At first it is unknown until the reader continues to read “if you find a cheaper price, simply show us and we will match.” This clarifies the text and the audience is able to understand that this particular food retailer is trying to appeal to them by guaranteeing the lowest price possible. Continuing from top to bottom the prices are the next noticeable symbols as they are the largest text around the image of the product. These prices are also coupled with the text “WOW” and “ONLY” which indicates that these prices are extremely low and a great deal for the consumer. The text that describes the product and the size are very small in comparison to the price which means these are secondary factors that should be important to the type of consumers that No Frills is advertising to. Their only one other symbol used in the front page describes the origin of a single product, which suggests that product origin is not important to this food retailer.

### Walmart

The Walmart flyer showcases their logo on the top left corner, suggesting that their brand/company is the most important factor as the audience in the West typically read from top to bottom and left to right. By going in this sequence, the next thing that the reader reads is “Guaranteed Unbeatable” which is also ambiguous as it is not clear if Walmart is indicating their quality, price, or service is unbeatable. The next largest symbol/text on the flyer are the prices which indicates that pricing is a dominant attraction for the audience. However, some of the prices are flat prices, without any text suggesting that they are on sale, so does this mean these prices are good? They

assume that the consumer will automatically come to a conclusion that these prices are good just based on having them enlarged and in a big red box. One item does have the text “Limited Time Offer, Save 66¢” which implies that this is the best saving for this product. On the very bottom of the flyer it reads “Happy Canada Day” suggesting that this particular holiday is not as important to this company, probably because it isn’t a Canadian company.

TIER 2



Figure 8

Safeway

The Safeway logo is situated at the very top of the flyer in the largest text, indicating that brand/company recognition is very important to them. They want their audience to recognize the retailer. The flyer also has the text “Celebrate Canada Day” at

the very top in big bold letters along with the maple leaf which suggests that they have Canadian values. In big bold text, the price of the items (surrounded by a bright yellow box) is the third noticeable symbol which indicates that their pricing is what entices their audiences. However, not only are the prices highlighted, but the Canadian maple leaf is also situated very largely alongside the price. This indicates that all of the items on this page originate from Canada and that they are selling Canadian products. This suggests that they pride themselves on using Canadian products and hope to attract consumers who value Canadian products and want to support the Canadian food industry. By using Canadian products it suggests that they are using better quality products because of the stigma around using products from other certain countries, and that they also support the Canadian economy by not using the exports from other nations.

### Save-On-Foods

On the top of this flyer, the text “Celebrate Canada Day” indicates that this company is inviting customers to celebrate Canada day with them. By shopping with them, they too have Canadian values and value this national holiday. Next, reading from top to bottom, the logo is in bolded green letters which suggests that they want customers to be able to identify and recognize this brand and perhaps associate their shopping behaviour with going to this particular retailer. In bright yellow boxes, the prices of the groceries are the next noticeable symbols as they are a significant size besides the pictures of the product they are referring to. On this flyer, below each price reads the text “SALE” which indicates that the price shown is a reduced price, suggesting that buying these items is in the benefit for the consumer. The description of the text is in very fine print, suggesting that the quality, brand, and size of the product are not as important as the prices on this flyer. On the bottom of the flyer, the text reads “2000” which captures the audiences’ attention as it is a large number, possibly referring to a dollar amount. Reading the smaller text “2000” the audience understands that one has a chance to collect 2000 points by spending over a hundred dollars, which suggests that this retailer wants customers to spend over what’s necessary by providing an incentive to over-buying. Lastly, one of the texts on the bottom reads “MORE” which further strengthens their push for consumers to over-purchase to buy “more”.

## The Real Canadian Superstore

On the top of this flyer, the store logo is the first thing one sees, which indicates that they want their consumers to recognize this particular retailer and recognize this is where they should be shopping. On the logo, the Canadian flag is included, which indicates that this is a Canadian company, also suggesting that they have Canadian values. The next large text to be seen reads “ALL” and “OPEN”, which are inviting words that are usually associated with being inclusivity, welcoming, and accommodating. However, when reading the smaller texts around those two words, the reader learns that they are referring to all checkout lanes being open, which suggests that this retailer is identifying with consumers and understands that peoples’ lives are extremely busy. Therefore, they are providing a service as efficient as possible for their customers. Pricing is the next noticeable symbol as they are in bright bolded red font, which implies that pricing is a very important factor to the consumers they are trying to attract. On three of the five products shown, there are large texts that read “CLUB SIZE” which implies that these items are a great deal for the price because of their enlarged size, which suggests that consumers value quantity over quality. The Canadian maple leaf is also present on two of the products which indicate that they use Canadian products at this retailer and this retailer is supporting Canadian economy and businesses. On the very bottom right of the flyer, there is a large text on a coupon that reads “FREE” which is enticing because people desire free items because there is a great value upon money and the ability to save it as much as possible. With further reading of the entire text (which is in significantly smaller) the audience understands that in order to receive the free Tupperware item, one needs to spend over \$250. This suggests that this retailer wants consumers to significantly over-consume by putting a free incentive to do so.

TIER 3



Figure 9

Nesters Market

This is a very colourful flyer, showing the vibrancy in the blueberries that they are trying to sell, and using enlarged photos of the other products, showcasing the importance of the brands they are selling in this particular retailer. The logo of this retailer is situated at the very top of the page, suggesting that they want people to be able to recognize their store. The next most noticeable symbols are the pricing, in big red text, suggesting that these are good prices for the items. However, since there are no other texts indicating that these are reduced prices, one cannot know for sure if they are being presented a good value without comparing to other retailers. This suggests that the reduction in price for marketing purposes is not important to this particular retailer, or that the consumers they want to attract don't shop at this retailer for lower prices. It can be inferred in combination with the enlarged photos of the products, and

the absence of the reduction in cost on these flyers, that this retailer promotes the quality and brand of the products over any other factor. Near their logo and throughout the flyer, the Canadian maple leaf is present, indicating that they use Canadian products, and are helping the Canadian economy and supporting Canadian businesses.

### Choices Market

The first thing that is noticeable on this flyer is the big bold text on the top that reads “WEEKLY SPECIALS”. Most people understand that flyers are produced weekly, it’s almost a given, but the fact that this flyer chooses to highlight the fact that it’s a weekly special to create the incentive for people to shop there because these items will probably not be “on special” next week. The logo is situated at the top, which suggests that they want customers to be able to recognize this particular retailer, and there is a text that indicates that this retailer is “100% BC owned and operated”. This infers that this retailer is helping the local community of British Columbia by employing citizens in this area, and hopefully using local products. The pricing of each product is situated in a big red circle, indicates that these are the “special prices” however without any other text indicating how much the consumer is saving, it is unclear if these are really good bargains. The descriptions of the products are in fonts quite small in comparison to the price, however the descriptions of the products are in great detail. The description includes where the product originates from and uses adjectives such as “organic, hand-picked, fair-trade, and free run”.

### Whole Foods

The two most noticeable texts on this flyer are situated at the very top and it reads “SALE” and “\$50”. This showcases the fact that customers have the potential to save more than \$50 this week by shopping at this particular retailer, suggesting that Whole Foods understands that consumers have a desire to save money. The store’s logo is quite small in comparison to the sale banner, which implies that brand recognition may not be as important to this retailer. The product listed in this flyer are in black bolded letters, suggesting that the item itself is the most important factor in this flyer, and that consumers are more concerned with the product itself rather than the pricing of them. The next most noticeable texts are the pricings, which are in red bolded font, indicated

that these are the sale prices for each item. These sale prices are reinforced by little texts for each item that indicates exactly how much the customer is saving. In fonts just as large as the fonts that indicate how much one is saving, four products are indicated as being “local” or “made right here”, indicating the freshness and quality of the products. These qualities can be seen as being equally as important to the customers they are trying to attract. In the smallest font is the description of the product which includes the origin. Interestingly, this flyer uses animation drawing for two of their products listed in this flyer out of six. The other four products do not even have a picture, which suggests that this flyer is targeting consumers who are educated and literate. One must be able to read in order to know what products are on sale, otherwise they will not be able to understand without any other visual aids.

In the form of text and images, supermarkets in Tier 3 refer to the quality of the products more frequently rather than referring to the price of the items. The value of quality is paramount over the price value, which coincides with H2, that higher end supermarkets put more value in quality over quantity.

## Chapter 5. Analysis and Interpretation of Findings

Upon reviewing the data that I have collected, I have come to the conclusion that food advertisements act as a vessel that helps reproduce the dominant ideology of capitalism that encourages people to buy excessively. By encouraging excess purchasing behaviour, large food corporations and retailers are able to capitalize on the high purchase rate of the average consumer.

### Advertising to Serve the Elite

Lower Tier supermarkets rely on many different marketing strategies in order to sell their products (aside from Walmart). These supermarkets and many other retail stores use a variety of different marketing strategies to sell their products such as teaming up with other companies (Airmiles) or having a rewards system (Save-on-Foods). The idea of giving the consumers the incentive to buy in bundles or in bulk can be explained by these retailers having on overstock of commodities which they need to sell. In conclusion, the reason for this overstock is because of overproduction creating an excess amount of commodities. Discussed in *The Consequence of Modernity*, Giddens notes that it was from the Industrial Revolution that we began to see the overproduction of surplus of items (Giddens, 1990). From the Industrial Revolution we have continually shown heavy reliance on machinery and our need for efficacy. The amount of surplus and excess could mean an economic loss for retailers or manufacturers if they cannot sell everything. To counter overproduction, corporations have developed methods to sell the surplus. This can be seen in the form of advertisements. Advertising promotes products and creates the desire for consumers to purchase them. Also, promotions are coupled with ads to help sell more of the surplus. As food production is also a major industry like any other manufacturing industry in North America, the overproduction of food is prevalent.

The marketing technique to advertise food products in bulk to lower income citizens can be compared to something that happened in China in regards to electronic devices. Taking a political economy approach, the reason why lower tier supermarkets advertise their products as being cheap is because these customers are their last resort. Most of the products in Tier 3 are advertised as organic, healthy, and local, meaning that they value these attributes over cheapness. The products that are being sold are actually harder to obtain and not likely mass produced (if local) hence the production cost is higher. This is why they do not need to use as many marketing strategies to lure in their customers, or risk lowering their products' standards. On the other hand however, the supermarkets that belong in the lower tiers usually have mass produced food items. Since these items are mass-produced, they are a result of overproduction. In order to sell these items to get rid of their backlog, retailers need techniques to help sell the surplus. That is why many different marketing strategies are being used, many of which call for the consumer to buy in bulk or multiples in order to "get the deal" to save money.

During the 2008 economic crisis, the Chinese government launched a four year program to help kick start the economy by offering subsidies for those to buy electronics in rural areas (Magni & Atsmon, 2010). Not only was this to penetrate a new market, but there was a backlog of electronic commodities that needed to be sold. People who already owned electronic commodities at the time probably already owned all there was to buy, and when the financial crisis hit, those customers probably did not want to buy any more. On the other hand, the rural market was greatly untouched, and to stimulate the market, and to sell what was already produced, the government needed to come up with tactics to help sell these products. The rural customers can be seen as being a last resort, being sold items worth less than standard and probably sold as being cheap and necessary. Similarly here in the West, Tier 1 and 2 supermarkets sell their items at a lower price and advertise their products as being much cheaper than Tier 3 supermarkets. Furthermore, the foods being sold at Tier 1 and 2 supermarkets are usually mass-produced, which are likely to be highly processed and unhealthy. That is why these items can be sold at such a cheap price. Take fast-food restaurants as an example of this. It is often much cheaper to purchase an entire meal at a fast-food restaurant than it is to buy local, organic produce to cook a meal at home. In conclusion,

unhealthy, mass produced, processed foods are advertised as being cheap and affordable whereas organic and local items are often not advertised as being cheap, but rather advertised for other qualities such as freshness, local, and/or organic. These products are usually a luxury that only the rich can afford to buy.

A huge problem with the overproduction of food is because it is simply not necessary. Over the decades there have been threats of food scarcity, and even till this day people are misinformed about the lack of food in the world. It's not hard to see how there could be a shortage of food as millions of people are starving around the world and even in our own city. However, this food shortage can be seen as nothing but a myth by looking at the prevalence of obesity in the United States. Furthermore, the areas where food shortages are abundant—mostly third world nations—the shortage is ironically due to the overproduction of food for the developed nations. For instance, about 1/3-1/2 of all grain around the world is used for livestock in the developed nations rather than to feed human beings who need it (Lappe, 2003).

Although it seems that Whole Foods and other grocery stores that pride themselves on values such as health, quality and fairness are putting their customers' needs before all else, it can just be seen as another marketing technique. As all corporations are, corporations like Whole Foods, want to seem like they have the same values as their consumers, often times selling fair trade or environmentally friendly products. An example of this marketing strategy is called greenwashing and green marketing. This is when corporations present themselves to be environmentally friendly or credible for selling healthy products and promote food sovereignty (Laurfer, 2003).

The second part of my analysis has brought me to the realization that because the ideology of capitalism is so prevalent in the West, advertisements and the notion of excess-buying in terms of buying food becomes a 'way of life'. According to Sinclair, advertising is reinforcement of the ideology of capitalism through which class structure is disillusioned through the creation of false needs. Although food is a necessity, bulk purchasing is not. Many articles have linked food advertisements to rates of obesity, especially in childhood obesity, and have claimed the dangers around junk-food and fast-food advertisements to children (Halford, 2004). With the ideology of capitalism,

comes the value of abundance and being the most cost-effective as possible. In Western society, the concept of bigger always being better is very prevalent, and it can be seen in the food industry as well. Furthermore, it seems that larger amounts of food (especially processed, packaged, and fast foods) tend to be cheaper. Combine bigger with a minimal price increase most likely always equates to a purchase. What is especially interesting in regards to the food industry is that since food is a necessity to our survival, we don't think twice about purchasing items like we would a luxury good. For example, people contemplate buying luxury goods because they realize that is not a necessity, however buying groceries is often not contemplated as much because we legitimize it because food keeps us alive. Put it simply, buying food is just a way of life to the point that we don't even question our methods and rationale of purchasing. Coupled with our value for money, we feel like we need to be as cost-efficient as possible. Therefore, it is safe to say that people would rather get the best bang for their buck.

Along with the other scholars mentioned in this paper, Ronald Barthes also claims a similar notion that advertisements are used to naturalize the dominance the elite has over regular citizens. His claim is that because advertisements make citizens want to buy things for the sake of our own desires, we are not really critical of our own consumer behaviours or who it really benefits. Although we are aware our consumer behaviours may possibly have a negative impact, and that we are the targets for these large corporations to make money off of, we generally don't care and the power that these large corporations have becomes naturalized to us. In a sense, Ewen, Mills, Wernick, and Barthes all have an aspect in their criticism against advertising that addresses the 'naturalization' of the elites' dominance. I too agree with their arguments and critics against advertising, but interestingly, I find the food and the food advertising industry to be especially applicable to this 'naturalizing' phenomenon. The constant advertising to buy in excess in regards to food is not natural, and our perception of food is not natural. With food items constantly being marketed to us at 'discounted' 'low price' that prioritize quantity and cheapness over quality, it is not hard to conclude that the inherent value of food has lessened. In my own experience, people do not value food here in the West because it is so abundant and cheap, therefore something that can be easily wasted. The degradation of food therefore has become natural.

Going back to Ewen and ideology, his concept of “captains of consciousness” is extremely relevant in the food advertising industry. Many ads only market perfect looking fruit, creating a standard to which we should follow when selecting our food items. Ads make us think that we can only consume perfect looking fruit, creating a standard which we accept as the norm. This is a huge contributing factor as to why food is wasted at the retail level, especially at grocery stores that promote their products as being of the highest quality. Not only does this aesthetic factor have an impact on the waste that happens at the food retail level, but it also has a significant impact on how much food is being wasted at the household level. According to Evans, food wasted at home can be blamed from consumers’ new fascination for trying out new ingredients. Within the past several decades, cooking shows and blogs have emerged and have inspired many people to continually try making new dishes at home. With constantly trying out new recipes comes buying all of the necessary ingredients, and oftentimes not using everything up. This often creates a backlog of ingredients in the pantry which can lead to waste if it’s not used up in time.

Antonio Gramsci, an Italian theorist who spent a significant time in Mussolini’s prisons, understood capitalism through a Marxist perspective. However, he questioned the traditional concept of power and how the ruling class exuded their dominance over others in society. Through his questioning, Gramsci theorized the concept of hegemony. His theory is based on the notion that humans are ruled by ideas and values that contain ideology. Therefore, hegemony comes to mean a process whereby a society’s dominant power bloc win the “consent” of the subordinate classes in the realm of values, beliefs, and attitudes that shape the way humans think and behave. In other words, Gramsci argues that the dominant power bloc maintains its control over society not primarily through coercion and force, but rather through the more subtle ways of exercising soft power over the people. However, hegemony is never total, and there are always ongoing struggles between dominant and oppositional ideas. In particular, Gramsci emphasizes the importance of the organic intellectual to challenge the hegemony of the ruling bloc. These organic intellectuals create counter-hegemonic subgroups that challenge and try to change the dominant ideology (Burke, 2005). In today’s time, the dominant powers in society still come from the dominant power bloc, and the elite do not threaten the public per se, but they maintain their dominance by instilling beliefs and values upon the rest of

society in which the public can legitimize as being normal (Cox, 1983). This can be reflected in the food industry and the food advertising industry as well, as the food industry constantly promotes certain ideals and values (freshness, quantity and cheapness) in order to keep people consuming at an excessive level. I argue that the Lower Tier grocery stores are most guilty of ideological domination in terms of promoting abundant, cheap and processed foods which are the leading cause of waste. On the other hand, the grocery stores in Tier 3 promote quality and the value of food rather than the value of price which helps the consumer appreciate the food that they are buying.

## Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

During my research I have learned a lot about how supermarkets use a variety of different marketing strategies to encourage consumers to buy their products. In line with my hypothesis, Tier 1 and 2 supermarkets place economic value over Tier 3 supermarkets and encourage customers to purchase in bundles. It seems that Tier 3 supermarkets sell the high quality products that they have because they can. They cater toward the more affluent citizens who value quality, freshness, health over cheapness because they have the resources to. The lowering of price for food items, coupled with advertising them as such—cheap, budget foods—will lower the intrinsic value of food, oftentimes creating waste. As someone who lives in a developed nation and an urban city, I feel like it is my duty to challenge and question people's way of purchasing food items and to fight for the appreciation of food. Through my research, I believe that there are several ways to tackle the food industry and food waste and they are in the form of consumer demand and government intervention.

### Consumer Demand:

Companies rely heavily on consumers' feedbacks in order to supply the demand. In the fashion industry, designers may influence what people want to wear based on a certain style that may be in trend at the moment, but many designers also capitalize on new emerging trends from subcultures. A recent example of this is the 'hipster' look, where it derived from an anti-capitalist movement where people wanted to buy clothes from thrift shops, but now the style and even lifestyle itself is heavily capitalized on. The same example can also be applied with food. In the (50s) where TV dinners and instant foods were desired in order to make the lives of people more convenient because families now had both parents working, food corporations were pressured into making food that fits peoples' new lifestyles. Now, within the past decade, there has been a new push for healthier, quality food. People are demanding organic, free-range, GMO free

foods to now fit a new trending lifestyle of the health consciousness individual. Nowadays with peoples' new interest in fair-trade and various other concerns about where their food is coming from, corporations have no choice but to react to the consumers' demand. While this is not simply to promote the problematic idea of consumer sovereignty, which runs against my above critique about the hegemonic role of capitalist consumerist ideology and the advertising industry that promotes this ideology, I can't stress enough the importance of alternative ideas and lifestyles, as well as the role of active citizen-consumers in their struggles for a more just and fair food industry. The ideological dominance of the food industry through constant promotion of abundance, excess, cheapness, and devaluing food is what has been seen in the past and can still be seen today. However, by understanding and spreading awareness of food waste, and challenging the food industry, it can help shape the way the food industry will be in our future.

The Food Network in my opinion—although they have their own slew of criticism for the capitalization of food—is actually helping people appreciate food. When food was thought of as being cheap and convenient, people in a sense lost respect for food. Making home cooked food in a sense, was seem as a waste of precious time when people could be using that time to work or spend time with family. However, the Food Network and other various cooking channels are encouraging people to cook more at home, using fresh, quality ingredients. Not only are these TV shows educational in teaching new recipes and techniques to cook, but they are also showcasing the work it takes into planting, growing, raising, the necessities in order to create a dish. For me, understanding where different ingredients come from and the time it takes for me to buy it gives me a greater appreciation for the ingredients that I choose to buy and cook with.

#### Government Intervention:

The power of large food corporations cannot be controlled without government intervention. A recent ban of food waste at the retail level in France is a good example of how the government can step in to reduce food waste. This ban indicates that all good food that would otherwise be thrown away in the trash must be donated to those who need it. If other countries were to adopt this regulation, food waste on a global scale

would decrease, and rather than ending up in a landfill, it would actually feed the people who need it the most. I would also suggest that PSAs should be placed around grocery stores to let consumers become aware of the effects of food waste and just how prevalent it is. I argue through my own experience, that most people are unaware of just how much food waste actually takes place and how detrimental it is to our environment.

#### Becoming an Organic Intellectual:

Furthermore, using Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectual forming resistance against hegemony, there are groups or resistance in regards to challenging food waste around the world. There are many NGOs and campaigns that aim to tackle this issue, and to bring about awareness and call for government intervention to create global food security. For an example, my involvement with the NGO, One Starfish, is a form of resistance to challenge the dominant ideology of capitalism and food waste. One Starfish is an NGO that is concerned with rescuing food that would otherwise be thrown away and divert it to those who need it. During my involvement with this particular organization I was able to meet many great people who share the same passion, concerns and values around food as I did. We were determined to tackle the food waste issue at the retail level, targeting grocery stores that throw away near expiring or ugly fruit rather than donating it. Not only were we trying to gather this otherwise to be thrown away food, we started a petition to help gain awareness, and demand government intervention. The fact that a small group of people who all share the same interests can make differences in peoples' lives is truly empowering, and an example of how resistance against dominant ideology and hegemony is possible.

## References

- 'Industry sectors: food, China'. (2009). AgrifoodAsia. Retrieved from [http://www.agrifoodasia.com/English/ind\\_sectors/food.htm](http://www.agrifoodasia.com/English/ind_sectors/food.htm)
- Ailawadi, K. L., Beauchamp, J. P., Donthu, N., Gauri, D. K., & Shankar, V. (2009). Communication and promotion decisions in retailing: a review and directions for future research. *Journal of Retailing*, 85(1), 42-55. doi: 10.1016/j.jretai.2008.11.002.
- Burke, B. (1999, 2005) 'Antonio Gramsci, schooling and education', the encyclopedia of informal education, <http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-gram.htm>.
- Cheong, Y., Kim, K., Zheng, L. (2010). Advertising appeals as a reflection of culture: a cross-cultural analysis of food advertising appeals in China and the US. *Asian Journal of Communication*. Vol. 20, No. 1. March 2010, 1-16
- Cleveland Web Design and Development. (2016.) Retrieved from <http://www.purelybranded.com/insights/the-four-ps-of-marketing/>
- Cox, R. (1983). Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method. *Millennium – Journal of International Studies* 12: 162.
- Critical Discourse Analysis as a Research Tool Hilary Janks University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa
- Culler, J. (1986). Ferdinand de Saussure. Cornell University Press.
- D. Takacs (2002). Positionality, Epistemology and Social Justice in the Classroom. *Social Justice*, 29 (4), 168-181.
- Ewen, S. (1976). *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture*. New York: McCraw-Hill.
- Filho, W. & Kovaleva, M. (2015). Food waste and sustainable food waste management in the Baltic sea region. Springer.

- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. (2011) Global Food Losses and Food Waste. Retrieved from [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/sustainability/pdf/Global\\_Food\\_Losses\\_and\\_Food\\_Waste.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/user_upload/sustainability/pdf/Global_Food_Losses_and_Food_Waste.pdf)
- Fowler, R. (1997). *Language in Society*, 26(3), 421-423. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4168779>
- Gallo, A.E. (1997). First major drop in food product introductions in over 20 years. *Food Review*, 20(3), 3335.
- Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Polity Press.
- Gooch, M., Felfel, A., & Marenick, N. (2010). Food waste in Canada: opportunities to increase the competitiveness of Canada's agri-food sector, while simultaneously improving the environment. Guelph, Ont.: Value Chain Management Centre, George Morris Centre.
- Halford, J. C., Gillespie, J., Brown, V., Pontin, E. E., & Dovey, T. M. (2004). Effect of television advertisements for foods on food consumption in children. *Appetite*, 42(2), 221-225.
- Hall, S. (1980). Encoding/decoding. *Culture, media, language*, 128-138.
- Holsti, O.R. (1969) *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*, Addison-Wesley Pub. Co.
- Humphery, Kim. (2010) *Excess: anti-consumerism in the west*. Polity Press.
- Magni, M., Atsmon, Y. (Dec 2010) *Marketing to Rural China*. Harvard Business Review. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2010/12/marketing-to-rural-china>
- Manganello, J., Smith, K., Sudakow, K., Summers, A. (2012). A content analysis of food advertisements appearing in parenting magazines. *Public Health Nutrition*: 16(12), 2188-2196.
- Mills, C.W. (1956). *The Power Elite*. Oxford University Press.
- Lang, T., Heasman, M. (2015). *Food Wars: The Global Battle for Mouths, Minds and Markets*. Routledge.
- Lappe, M. (2003). The scarcity myth. *Ecologist*, 33(2), 54.
- Laufer, W. S. (2003). Social accountability and corporate greenwashing. *Journal of business ethics*, 43(3), 253-261.

- Leiss, W., Kline, S., Jhally, S., Botterill, J. (2005). *Social Communication in Advertising: Consumption in the Mediated Marketplace*. Routledge.
- Luceri, B., Latusi, S., Vergura, D.T., Lugli, G. (2014). The impact of store flyers on store performance: a format and customer related approach. *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, Vol. 42 Iss 3 pp. 219 – 234.
- Parkin, K. (2006). *Food is Love: Food Advertising and Gender Roles In Modern America*. University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Pollay, R.W., & Gallagher, K. (1990). Advertising and cultural values: Reflections in the distorted mirror. *International Journal of Advertising*, 9(4), 359-372.
- Rogers, S. (2001) *Marketing Strategies, Tactics, and Techniques: A Handbook for Practitioners*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Santini, F., Sampaio, C., Perin, M., Espartel, L., Ladeira, W. (2014). Moderating Effects of Sales Promotion Types. *Brazilian Administration Review* Vol. 12, N. 2, Art. 3, pp. 169-189, Apr./June 2015.
- Saveland. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.saveland.ca/>
- Sinclair, J. (1987). *Images Incorporated*. British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data//Croom Helm London & New York
- Smartcanucks. (2016). Retrieved from <http://flyers.smartcanucks.ca/>
- Statista. (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.statista.com/statistics/470604/grocery-stores-industry-ad-spend-usa/>
- Thompson, M. (1979). *Rubbish theory: the creation and destruction of value*. Oxford University.
- Veblen, T. (1899), *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Macmillan.
- Wernick, A. (1991). *Promotional Culture: Advertising, Ideology and Symbolic Expression*. SAGE Publications.
- Williamson, J. (1978). *Decoding Advertisements*. Boyars.
- Yang, K. & Miller, G.J. (2008). *Handbook of research methods in public administration* (2nd edition). New York: M. Dekker.