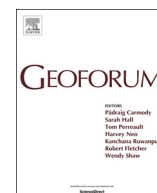




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Urban food sharing: Emerging geographies of production, consumption and exchange

Anna Davies^{a,*}, David Evans^b

^a Department of Geography, School of Natural Sciences, Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin, Dublin 2, Ireland

^b Faculty of Social Sciences, Sheffield Sustainable Food Futures (SheFF), University of Sheffield, S10 2TN, UK

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ABSTRACT

The role of urban areas in shaping global futures has never been clearer. However, their complex socio-technical systems are under stress and unlikely to experience any respite as populations grow and as patterns of production and consumption resist transition to more sustainable pathways. Urban food systems are not exempt from these pressures, however they are the subject of ongoing experimentation and innovation, particularly around the use of information and communication technologies (ICT). Urban food sharing is one such arena of experimentation. It includes collective and collaborative practices around food, from shared growing, cooking and eating and the redistribution of surplus food, to the sharing of spaces and devices. This themed issue brings together cutting-edge scholarship on what it means to share food in contemporary cities around the globe. All papers contribute to debates about how things become food, whether that is in relation to the rules and governing systems that shape and discipline these becoming, or the practices of exchange and consumption that follow. Together they develop geographically-sensitive approaches to sharing that better comprehend the relations between scale, space and place. This paper maps the terrain of urban food sharing, introduces key conceptual approaches, identifies common themes, and proposes an agenda for future studies.

1. Introduction

There is increasing clarity that cities, as complex urban socio-technical systems, are ecologically and socially unsustainable, not least with respect to their food systems, which form the focus of this themed issue. Already accounting for more than half the world's population, cities are significant sites of resource consumption; territorial nodes where goods, services and wastes collide, with inhabitants consuming more than three quarters of all global natural resources while producing a similar proportion of carbon emissions (UNEP, 2013). Of the billion tonnes of solid waste produced by cities annually, it is estimated that between 47 and 61% is organic and mostly food waste (Hoorweg and Bhada-Tata, 2012). Annual food waste production is projected to double again within the next 15 years. While between a third and a half of all food produced becomes waste (FAO, 2013), it is estimated that around one in ten of the global population remains unable to meet their daily dietary needs, with the majority of these living in lower income nations (FAO, 2016). The current food system then not only fails to feed those who are hungry, it also wastes significant resources – including water, energy and labour – used in the production, storage and distribution of food that goes uneaten.

To date, evaluations of food systems at the city scale have tended to focus on how cities might become more self-sufficient in meeting their food needs through increasing the scale and intensity of urban agriculture, for example through vertical farming (Despommier, 2010). Similarly, significant research and policy effort has focused on (re) connecting urban citizens more effectively and efficiently with local and alternative food suppliers (Goodman et al., 2012) to shorten food chains and reduce food miles. These studies of urban agriculture and short food supply chains are increasingly being linked to debates around food justice, security and resilience in urban settings (Barthel and Isendhah, 2013). While much of this work was initially concentrated in low income countries and predominantly seen through a health and welfare lens (Weiler et al., 2015), this is beginning to change with greater attention to wider dynamic material and emotional dimensions of food (cf. Carolan, 2011; Goodman, 2016).

Meanwhile, examining eating in cities has a long tradition in relation to cultures of consumption. Previous research has focused on an array of issues including eating out (Warde and Martens, 2000), gourmet foodscapes (Johnston and Baumann, 2014), ethnic cuisines and restaurants (Ray, 2016), gentrification (Burnett, 2014), eating together (Julier, 2013), and conviviality (Pink, 2008). There have also

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: daviesa@tcd.ie (A. Davies), d.m.evans@sheffield.ac.uk (D. Evans).

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been efforts to link urban consumption more closely to issues of food justice (Heynen, 2006; Checker, 2011; Agyeman and McEntee, 2014; Davies, 2019). This work has tended to remain isolated from often technical analyses of the environmental impacts associated with food production and food waste management in cities (Papargyropoulou et al., 2014). Taken together, this recalls long-standing tendencies to treat food production and food consumption as analytically separate (cf. Goodman and DuPuis, 2002). There are however urban food activities that transcend production and consumption silos, albeit not without controversy. Food redistribution initiatives, for example, connect sites of surplus (production) with those in need of food (consumption). Initiatives facilitating the recirculation of food – which might be wild or cultivated, processed or unprocessed – include not only the redistribution of edible food from retailers to charities, but also the endeavours of gleaners, foragers and freegans (sometimes known as skip surfers or dumpster divers), as well as ‘pay-as-you-feel’ cafes and public fridges, that seek to disrupt notions of food as a commercial commodity. Other grassroots initiatives are reconnecting urban residents with the practices of growing, cooking and eating food together within the city, often using cultivation and the food that results as a means to build skills, foster social cohesion and promote consumption of locally grown crops. Likewise, community kitchens of various configurations operate as sites for cultural and knowledge exchange around food preparation, nutrition and the social dimensions of eating together. The contributions to this themed issue both document and analyze these integrative activities.

Importantly, recent developments in information and communications technologies (ICT) are facilitating connections and interactions between participants involved in these endeavours [re]shaping, sometimes longstanding, ways of doing things and also generating novel collective or collaborative activities through a plethora of websites, social media, platforms and apps. Some research has been conducted on these diverse and emergent food sharing activities, often leading to rich case studies of individual initiatives (Davies and Legg, 2018). Less attention has been paid to their performance within wider urban foodscapes (Morgan and Sonnino, 2010), and whether, ultimately, they have the potential to help reorient urban food systems onto more sustainable trajectories

2. Why food sharing?

Food is a familiar and growing feature of geographical enquiry (Goodman, 2016; Cook et al., 2006, 2008, 2010), with research that ranges from examination of global agri-food trends (see Goodman and Watts, 1997, Marsden and Morley, 2014; Horton et al., 2017) to the microgeographies of embodied food experiences (see Carolan, 2011; Turner, 2011); from alternative food networks (see Guthman, 2008; Kneafsey et al., 2008) to commercial engagement in the politics of eating (see Evans et al., 2017). This work has not adopted a sharing lens for its analysis. In contrast, attention to the sharing of food, through analyses of cooperative, gifting or lending behavior, has instead been a matter of concern for anthropologists, psychologists, sociologists and evolutionary biologists as a way in which sustenance has been secured, shelter constructed, and familial and friendship relations cemented (see Kaplan and Gurven, 2005; Jones, 2007). Food sharing is often depicted as the bedrock of civilization (Davies et al., 2017b, 2017c). However, the cultural diversity and evolutionary dynamism of sharing (in relation to food and otherwise) is also well-documented (Belk, 2010), with a decline in sharing within western societies linked to the emergence of mass consumerism, privatisation and greater disposable income (Gabriel, 2013). More recently, attention to new and often technology-enabled sharing economies has emerged (Botsman and Rogers, 2010), sparking calls for more nuanced attention to the implications of those activities for sustainability, in particular within urban systems (Agyeman et al., 2013; Davies et al., 2017a). Claims abound that sharing economies have the capacity to disrupt mainstream business

models (Gold, 2004), forge new social relationships (Schor, 2010) and redefine human relations with materials (Simms and Potts, 2012). Presently, however, these claims are weakly theorized and empirically thin. Essentially, understanding is lagging behind the practical actions of innovative actors, technological developments and those engaged in sharing.

As what counts as sharing is contested (see Belk, 2014; Davies et al., 2017b), the Cambridge English Dictionary (2017) dictionary definition of sharing is used here as a point of departure. It defines sharing as:

“Having or using something at the same time as someone else; dividing something (e.g. food, money, goods etc.) and giving part of it to someone else; undertaking some part of an activity with others; experiencing a similar feeling, quality or experience; telling others about your thoughts, feelings, or ideas; or putting something on social media so that others can see it.”

(Cambridge University Press, 2017)

In relation to food, this means food sharing can involve: eating a portion of food with others (shared consumption and commensality); giving a portion of food to others (redistribution); using, occupying or enjoying food and food-related activities, devices and sites jointly (shared use of spaces for growing, preparing and cooking; shared utensils and gardening tools; shared growing, cooking and eating experiences); possessing a common fascination with food (shared interest); telling someone about food (shared skills and knowledge). As this dictionary definition of sharing is open and broad rather than narrow and precise ongoing contestation about its meaning is unsurprising, but the primacy of acting or using something *together* or experiencing things or feelings *with others* is clear. As such sharing is a social process. However drawing on contemporary social scientific engagement with sharing (Ede, 2014), we stress that it does not presuppose sociality or positive social relations, nor is it automatically conducive to a more just [re]distribution of resources. This is in contrast to more normative readings of sharing employed in everyday use, such as in relation to childhood development and socialisation which draw upon notions of fairness, equity and supportive group dynamics. While developmental psychologists observe prosocial sharing even in very young children across cultures (Gurven, 2004; Brownell et al., 2009; Olson and Spelke, 2008; Sigelman and Waitzman, 1991; Rochat et al., 2009), a key point is that sharing is not by definition *only* related to such interactions.

The definitional openness of ‘sharing’ generates questions about the boundaries of the concept and what might reasonably be considered part of the so-called sharing economy. For example, despite ongoing discussions around whether for-profit market exchanges can be counted as sharing (Belk, 2014), these are not necessarily barred from our definition of sharing. Side-stepping the ‘in-out’ definitional debate, Ede (2014) suggests a more appropriate stance is to consider whether the sharing is transactional or transformational. Here transactional refers to activities which are typically (but not necessarily) commodified, profit-oriented and focused on achieving efficiencies in *existing* systems but do not alter power structures. Transformational sharing, in contrast, may also incorporate efficiency-seeking practices, but crucially also seeks to change power and social relations. These include changes around who benefits, who owns and controls the processes through which sharing takes place and whether or not it leads to greater development of social capital, relational bonding and resilience.

These nuances gesture to foundational anthropological theories of exchange (cf. Mauss, 1925), which stress that exchanges are never simply economic and transactional nor socially embedded and relational. Rather exchanges have ramifications across all spheres of society – economic, political, institutional, moral and so on. A focus on urban food sharing invites a focus on the nature of exchange in contemporary societies. Sharing is typically theorised as something akin to gift exchange and contrasted with – even presented as an antidote to – commodity exchange. The trouble with this approach is that it reduces

processes of gift exchange to a colloquial understandings of gifts as ‘presents’ or ‘donations’. It is perhaps more useful to think of persons, things and relationships as an interlocking whole that is re-created and experienced in different ways through different relations of exchange (cf. Strathern, 1991). In this view, commodities are not excluded from the analysis of sharing. More importantly, it invites attention to different configurations of sharing relations, their dynamics, and their consequences.

Moving back to the urban focus of this themed issue, McLaren and Agyeman (2015) demonstrate in their book *Sharing Cities*, how urban sites have always embodied shared spaces. These shared spaces afford possibilities for interaction, connection and the exchange of goods, services and experiences across different territories – individual, collective and public. Indeed back in the 1970s, Castells (1977) developed the concept of collective consumption to distinguish those goods and services in an urban area that require collective provision (such as public transportation, public housing, and mass public education) and those that are individually consumed. He argued that the ways in which these services are managed and governed is important for understanding local urban politics in advanced capitalist societies. More recently, information and communication technologies (ICT) have further stretched the spaces over which such sharing can take place beyond kinship, familial and geographically bounded settings (Davies and Legg, 2018). The evolution of these extended spaces and practices of sharing deserve broader and more concerted attention. This requires a dismantling of binary frames that cast sharing as only a social/relational or an economic/transactional activity (Davies et al., 2017a). The point is that all forms of sharing are always already both economic/transactional and social/relational. This also necessitates a wider perspective of sharing as a livelihood activity, with socio-cultural, and sometimes political, dimensions in addition to having economic, environmental and social components.

Employing a sharing frame around food is productive because it provides a mechanism to explore the complexities of, and inter-connections between, non-mainstream food initiatives from across the urban food system. This invites a focus on production, consumption, redistribution and disposal practices, and how they place themselves within wider territories of sharing (Agyeman et al., 2013), both within and across urban areas. It enables a novel system level perspective to explore in the round these activities that might be dismissed as niche demonstrations of alternatives (Seyfang and Smith, 2007) rather than credible forces for meaningful and widespread change. Still, questions remain about whether existing conceptual frames are able to fully capture the new contexts and consequences of urban food sharing.

3. Conceptual perspectives on urban food sharing

Given how sharing, and more recently ICT-mediated sharing, is embroiled in shaping societies, economies and environments, it is inevitable that new geographies of sharing will emerge in different places and across time. It is already well-established that there are diverse cultural (Gabriel, 2013), developmental (Smith et al., 2013; Tomasello and Warken, 2008) and historical geographies of sharing (Ivanova, 2011), as well as territorial geographies which relate to the spaces over which sharing takes place (McLaren and Agyeman, 2015). Within analyses of sharing economies however, there is space to develop more geographically-sensitive approaches to better comprehend the relations between scale, space and place. Notably, the new food geographies created between on- and off-line worlds (David, 2017) and between localities around the globe (Davies et al., 2017c). Specifically, more attention to the spatial assemblages and multi-layered ecosystems of sharing would better indicate the interactions and interdependencies between the skills, spaces, and stuff that are stimulated through sharing (Edwards and Davies, 2018). Such work could help to bridge the gaps in knowledge between the global or supranational trend analysis of commercial sharing (commodity exchange) (PWC, 2016) and the

plethora of individual and grassroots sharing enterprise case studies (gift and barter) (Cohen and Muñoz, 2015).

A variety of conceptual perspectives are necessary to holistically make sense of how food sharing is unfolding across urban contexts. Some of the authors in this issue situate their work within a specific intellectual tradition even if they are critical of it, as with socio-technical transitions thinking in the paper on collective growing practices in Singapore by Rut and Davies (2018). Others bring together ideas and concepts in new ways, for example combining urban political ecology and solidarity economies as in Loh and Agyeman's (2018) paper on the dynamic solidarity food movement within Boston. The collection combines conceptual insights from across urban studies, human geography, anthropology, sociology, and science and technology studies to critically analyse and theorise the extent to which urban food sharing is reshaping food systems through space and over time. The papers examine the processes and meanings of, and values attributed to, sharing food in diverse urban settings and the implications of that sharing for societies, economies and environments within and beyond the city. Some papers attend to discursive engagements and material processes, in turn unearthing unintended consequences (for example, rebound effects) of efforts to reorient food systems through sharing practices. In doing so, they shed light on how dominant actors, ideas and assumptions about sharing are enmeshed in cross-scalar policies such as food safety and trade, labour and land regulations. This reveals how power is manifest in discursive and material struggles over the allocation and exchange of food, signaling wider issues of access to and control over resources within cities. Meanwhile, approaches that elevate the significance of acknowledging multiple subjectivities, situated knowledges and experiences of sharing help create dialogue across multiple and heterogeneous visions of urban sharing (see Nyman, 2018; Midgely, 2018). Radical political ecology, activist and social movement perspectives in particular are productive in teasing out the tools and strategies that are employed by actors and institutions involved in shaping urban food sharing practices.

Ultimately, a common goal across the papers is to open up and critically analyse current framings of sharing – from the narrow and colloquial ‘sharing is caring’ narrative, to the claims made by platform capitalism of the value to be created in a technologically-augmented sharing economy – in order to better understand what it means to share food in cities. Taken together, the contributions to this themed issue initiate important discussions about whether food sharing practices disrupt currently unsustainable configurations of access and excess in relation to food. This collection explores practices of urban food sharing in relation to five interrelated themes: disruptions and continuities; tools, technologies and devices; ontologies of food; rules, governance and discipline; webs, ecosystems and relational geographies of sharing. These are further elaborated below.

3.1. Theme 1: Disruptions and continuities

This theme traces the histories and evolution of food sharing across its current urban incarnations. These range from business-as-usual activities to those seen as radical alternatives. In particular it locates these diverse contemporary sharing practices within urban debates ranging from smart city narratives to contemporary articulations of rights to the city (Agyeman et al., 2015). Contributions look at the discourses seeking to legitimize particular forms of sharing and what these might mean for the livelihoods of urban citizens (Marrovelli, 2018). It is argued that the relative invisibility of noncapitalist formations of food sharing to date is limiting the potentialities for radical systemic change through sharing (Morrow, 2018; Loh and Agyeman, 2018). While certain forms of urban food sharing may have sustainability potential (see Davies et al., 2018), there are also dangers that highly ICT-mediated forms of food sharing could lead to new forms of commodification and financialisation of food and the work that goes into producing, preparing, consuming and disposing of it. These processes focus more on

efficiency and convenience than on (re)distribution, justice and the empowerment of vulnerable and marginalised populations in relation to food. In particular, contributions explore how urban food sharing might respond to calls for urban sustainability, or foster food systems resilience and environmental impact minimisation through reducing food waste, shortening food supply chains, and building new economic and socio-spatial relations.

3.2. Theme 2: Tools, technologies and devices

Many of the papers are concerned with the material and socio-technical dimensions of contemporary urban food sharing. While digital divides continue to exist within and between cities, internet penetration and the use of personal computers and smartphones have increased dramatically in cities around the globe. Within the Global North such ICT technologies are increasingly integrated into the everyday lives and choices of urban residents. They are being adopted and adapted by food sharing initiatives, from crowd-mapping sources of publicly available wild foods in a city to the algorithmic governance of when food is designated as food, surplus or waste (Davies et al., 2017c). Contributions in this themed issue extend existing scholarship focused on the food-technology nexus (Choi et al., 2014). They illustrate how technologies of sharing are emerging in parallel with advancements in social networking that facilitate the exchange of information and the forging of connections across previously disconnected and even distant social and geographical spaces. Such mediation (and intermediation) has begun to facilitate sharing between strangers and sharing at scales previously unseen. As a result, papers explore the ways in which ICT and other socio-technical devices construct new sites, moments and experiences of food sharing. Such technologies can be viewed as not only creating unprecedented visibility of sharing for distant strangers, but also enabling or constraining new ways of producing, consuming and (re) distributing food. How technologies are used in particular to anticipate issues around sharing is exemplified in the work of Midgely (2018) where she examines how they assist in the process of designating food as surplus in a UK supermarket environment, while Weymes and Davies (2018) focus on the logistical benefits that heightened use of ICT brings to redistributing surplus prepared food in San Francisco.

3.3. Theme 3: Ontologies of food

Looking beyond tools and technologies, the papers gathered here direct attention to the materiality of food itself. By focusing on the movement and sharing of food, a number of issues are brought into focus. The question of where to draw the line between ‘food’ and ‘non-food’ is a key challenge both for the actors involved in urban food sharing initiatives and for social scientists. Contributions in this themed issue explore the conditions under which things become food (Nyman, 2018) and edibility is maintained (Weymes and Davies, 2018; Morrow, 2018). Rather than essentialising the category of ‘food’, they illustrate that edibility is a relational process, shaped by the interactions between heterogenous (human and non-human) actors (see Roe, 2006; Sexton, 2016; House, 2018). These include the individuals and organisations involved in sharing and consuming food, preservation devices, rules and regulations that uphold food standards and safety, and microbial life that manifests itself in patterns of deterioration and decay. Additionally, the distinctions between different qualities of food are shown to be performative of social divisions and controversies related to access (Marrovelli, 2018; Morrow, 2018), as exemplified by the maxim that food redistribution should never work on the assumption of what is colloquially referred to as second class food for second class people. The qualification and categorization of food is intimately related to the qualification and categorization of people and places (Evans, 2018a). The papers in this themed issue illustrate how the dynamic interplay between these processes are key to understanding the contemporary geographies of urban food sharing (Davies et al., 2017a,

2017b).

3.4. Theme 4: Rules, governance and discipline

This theme explores the internal and external governance of contemporary food sharing across diverse urban territories. It interrogates the differentiated roles of supranational (e.g. EU), national and urban governments and policies, particularly in relation to land use and food safety, in identifying, codifying and regulating both food sharing and the urban spaces in which they operate. In addition to the important multilevel geographies of food sharing governance, the ways in which public, private and civil society actors engage (or do not engage) with food sharing is integral to establishing what are considered to be appropriate exchanges around food. It also reflects on the internal politics of diverse food sharing initiatives and the evolution of social as well as organisational rules that govern their everyday practices (Morrow, 2018). This theme draws out issues related to the collation and construction of data around food sharing in the city and the ways in which such data might be used to discipline urban sharing and the material territories within which it is located. Contributions trace how particular food sharing practices, such as urban growing (Rut and Davies, 2018), food surplus redistribution (Weymes and Davies, 2018), or public gifting (Morrow, 2018), can come into tension with and resist (through collective action and commoning for example) or reinforce these governing frameworks and associated processes of neoliberalization, privatization, gentrification and enclosure.

3.5. Theme 5: Webs, ecosystems and relational geographies of sharing

As many of the other themes suggest, the geographies of urban food sharing are relational. Focusing particularly on the complex webs of actors and actants that are formed and reformed over time and space, contributions draw on assemblage thinking, political ecology, diverse economies and social/solidarity economy frameworks to explore the extent to which food sharing initiatives are generating social and economic capital and environmental resource efficiencies by working together, sharing skills, knowledge and resources to achieve their goals (Loh and Agyeman, 2018). Conceived of as relational ecosystems (see Edwards and Davies, 2018), urban food sharing initiatives become active sites for practicing new social relations and new political, environmental and economic subjectivities (Marovelli, 2018). It is argued that drawing such diverse initiatives and capabilities together under a relational umbrella in this way provides insight into how urban food sharing futures and ultimately new socio-economies of urban food may evolve.

4. Conclusion

Collectively, the papers curated here critically explore food sharing activities and their geographies, practices and disruptions at the urban scale. The heuristic framing of food sharing offers a means to collectively consider a range of activities beyond the mainstream in terms of provision, consumption and redistribution of food. They progress a number of established debates, for example around commons and commoning, into new issue arenas (e.g. Loh and Agyeman, 2018) and spaces (e.g. Morrow, 2018). They also bring emerging conceptual frames, for example transitions thinking, into play in new territorial contexts (Rut and Davies, 2018) and in relation to new substantive topics (Weymes and Davies, 2018). Across the papers, the concept of place emerges as a key factor in the performance of sharing, from the spaces of commensality and goals of conviviality in Marovelli’s (2018) discussion of collective eating activities in London, to Loh and Agyeman’s (2018) careful analysis of Boston’s food solidarity as a local social movement. Related to this significance of place are the complex choreographies that food sharing brings to established rules of food production and consumption, pushing the boundaries of what might be

considered acceptable practice. There are elements of this in Nyman's (2018) discussion of the blurry edges of what counts as food and also in the on-going debates regarding whether it is appropriate to treat all food practices the same with respect to food risk (Morrow, 2018; Midgely, 2018; Weymes and Davies, 2018). These ambiguities are particularly visible in the case of surplus food redistribution which is commonly considered to be a business practice irrespective of the organisational goals and practices of those who facilitate it. This has knock-on impacts for regulations which are then designed in such a way that works for the institutional and organisational structures and capacities of businesses rather than other institutional forms which have been demonstrated to dominate urban food sharing (Davies et al., 2017b). As Morrow (2018) suggests, a pinch point for governing surplus food redistribution in many locations, particularly across Europe, is that while food may be shared, responsibility for risk related to that food is commonly individualised. It is not surprising then that a key question raised by many papers is whether existing governing arrangements are fit for purpose as we move into a new era of ICT-mediated food sharing.

The contributions to this special issue shed new light on the nature of exchange in contemporary societies. Some of the papers emphasise the idea that sharing represents an alternative to commodity exchange (see Morrow, 2018), while others highlight the continued commodification of food (Midgely, 2018). Here we note that the distinction between gifts and commodities is problematized by barter, which is an undertheorized model of exchange (cf. Humphrey and Hugh-Jones, 1992) and not a mode examined in this themed issue. Looking across a broad spectrum of urban food sharing activities, it is hard to find examples that could be readily identified as bartering. Indeed in the SHARECITY100 Database (see Davies et al., 2017a, 2017b) which mapped ICT-mediated urban food sharing initiatives across 100 cities in 43 countries and six continents found that bartering accounts for less than 10% of food sharing activities. Further research is required to examine the trajectory of this mode of food sharing, the role that ICT is having on its practice and the processes of valuing and revaluation that it creates. For, while bartering – like many forms of urban food sharing – does not presuppose or reproduce a relationship between the parties involved (as is the case with gifting), value is the temporary outcome rather than the starting point (i.e. there is no external measure as is the case with commodity exchange).

The papers assembled here do not explicitly concern themselves with consumption, however we note that eating is an example *par excellence* of consumption. A substantive focus on urban food sharing has significant potential to animate contemporary debates in the geographies and sociology of consumption. Indeed, the current vogue in consumption scholarship, particular as it relates to questions of sustainability, is to focus on the dynamics of *social* practices (following Warde, 2005) rather than the choices of individual consumers. It is noteworthy that these developments have historical roots in urban studies such as Castells' emphasis on collective provision and Peter Saunders' discussion of 'consumption cleavages' between those who pay for private provision and those who rely on state provision (following Warde, 1990, see Evans, 2018b). The contributions in this themed issue take seriously the invocation to explore the links between consumption and acquisition, disrupting the assumption that food is always a commodity that is provisioned through market exchanges (see Loh and Agyeman, 2018). They also recognize the relationships between consumption and disposal, highlighting that 'getting rid' of food does not necessitate its wastage but also that there are a great many practical and ethical issues associated with the recirculation of 'surplus'. Finally, practices of urban food sharing provide a way of thinking across activities that might be thought of as 'production' and those that might be thought of as 'consumption'. Taken together, these contributions emphasise that consumption is a process that cuts across the entire life-cycle of any given product (which is likely to move between being and not being a commodity). Certainly, we hope that this issue will be the first in a series of critical advancements to progress our understanding

of contemporary food sharing, informing debates and issues in the geographies of food, urban geographies and beyond.

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