Culturally Appropriate Foods for Somali Refugee Path Immigrants (RPF) in the Greater Toronto Area: planning lessons for integrating RPF
A Research Paper for RPD, University of Guelph

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Abstract

This paper examines the connection between food sovereignty and the food accessibility of Somali refugee path immigrants in the GTA. The analysis highlights the challenges and implications for Somalis as they search for culturally appropriate foods. With reference to focus groups and in-depth interviews by a research team that I was a member of on behalf of Dr. Bamidele Adekunle, in addition to secondary literature available on Somali Canadians, this major research paper provides an assessment of how food sovereignty for these refugee path immigrants could be improved such that they may be able to access more of their culturally appropriate foods in the Greater Toronto Area. As a member of this team, I have also administered questionnaires which will be analyzed later by Dr. Adekunle and his team. With his permission, this paper will present some qualitative findings from this study. The challenges which Somalis have faced are also related to the struggles many of which will likely affect newer and incoming Syrian refugees. Somalis have adjusted to life in Canada by shopping at ethnic stores, using substitutes for foods, and changing their consumption patterns to reflect typical Canadian lifestyles.

Acknowledgements

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willing to take me on and work with me on this project and my previous advisor Nonita Yap for helping me get started in the RPD program.
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1. Introduction

Food sovereignty movements typically focus on food accessibility at the global scale however there has been little research regarding the specific food accessibility of individual local groups. Somali immigrants in Canada are concentrated largely within the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and represent one of the country’s largest African ethnic groups in Canada. Many Somali families immigrated as refugees due to political turmoil in Somalia. This paper will explore the experiences of Somalis in the GTA as they search for culturally appropriate food. This paper will look at food sovereignty and how it applies to the food accessibility of Somali refugee path immigrants. The experiences of Somalis will provide valuable context for other Canadian refugee populations such as Ugandans, Ethiopians, Kosovars, and especially Syrians (Immigration Canada: A History of Refugee, 2015). Barriers to Somali food accessibility are similar to those of other African refugee populations due to the cultural overlap of East African diet and religious practices.

Somalis in the GTA have been asked about their experiences coming to Canada as refugees in order to help Syrian refugees with the transitioning process (Gee & Sengupta, 2015). Somalis share many similarities to Syrians which makes them good candidates to offer advice to new arrivals. Both countries are predominantly Muslim, have suffered through long periods of war and sent waves of refugees to other countries such as Canada in masse (Gee & Sengupta, 2015).

1.1 Research Question and Scope of MRP

This paper will attempt to address the planning implications of food sovereignty on refugee path immigrants. Specifically, this paper will focus on the food sovereignty of Somali
refugees, mostly in the GTA. Somali refugees are an appropriate group to analyze as they share many similarities with more recent refugee populations such as Syrian refugees. The food sovereignty movement is gaining momentum in Canada and is changing the way that agriculturalists and planners view food production and distribution both globally and locally. By addressing the food sovereignty of one of Canada’s most vulnerable groups (refugee path immigrants), planners can gain a greater understanding of the barriers to accessing culturally appropriate food.

1.2 Goals/Objectives

The goal of this research is to analyze the food sovereignty of Somali refugee-path immigrants in the GTA. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to determine the demand for traditional Somali foods, understand the barriers which prevent Somalis from accessing their traditional foods and explore planning solutions to the improve food accessibility. This paper will also review food sovereignty literature and assess its influence on the discussion of food accessibility.

1.3 Dialogue on Food Sovereignty

Food sovereignty concerns people’s access to culturally appropriate foods. The concept differs from food security as it stresses the right of people to define their own food choices and agricultural food systems. Food security is defined by people’s access to safe and nutritious food. Food security is not concerned with how or where food is produced as long as it can satisfy people’s nutritional requirements. International food security movements are therefore taking an apolitical stance on food systems. The food sovereignty movement challenges this stance and stresses the cultural and political connection between people and their food (Shawki, 2015).
Food sovereignty started from discussions among farmers who were members of Via Campesina, the global peasant movement (Akram-Lodhi, 2015). The concept was then expanded to include six main principles at the 2007 Nyéléni Forum for Food Sovereignty (Akram-Lodhi, 2015). The six principles outline the foundation upon which the food sovereignty movement is built. The principles are as follows: 1) A focus on food for people, 2) the valuing of food providers, 3) localisation of food systems, 4) the building of knowledge and skills, 5) working with nature, 6) places control locally (Akram-Lodhi, 2015). A seventh principle has recently been proposed by indigenous groups in Canada: food is sacred (Shawki, 2015). This principle is somewhat in line with the first principle which alludes to culturally appropriate food.

One way that the food sovereignty movement differs from food security movements aimed purely at addressing world hunger is by challenging the control of food systems. Food sovereignty aims to take social control of food systems. By focusing only on hunger and neglecting social control over food systems, food security movements may overlook the conditions which led to hunger in the first place. For example, it is possible for a nation to be food secure in a dictatorship (Patel, 2009). Political conditions which lead to hunger can manifest themselves rapidly. Long-term sustainability of food security requires a deeper, political understanding of the causes of hunger and food systems. According to Holt-Gimenez and Shattuck, the challenge for food movements is to address immediate problems of hunger, malnutrition and food security while also moving toward food systems which are democratic, environmentally sustainable and equitable (Robbins, 2015).

Challenging global food systems means moving past the understanding of food as a commodity and citizens as consumers (Welsh and MacRae, 1992). Food accessibility and food quality are diminished in systems organized around capital because food production and
distribution are designed around profit margins. Transnational food corporations are mass producing food as cheaply as possible and transporting food across the globe (McMichael, 2009). The commodification of food affects availability and choice. Corporate control over the food chain provides consumers with limited information about the products they buy, emphasizes processed foods over non-processed foods which are easier to produce and sell, and manipulates the supermarket environment (Welsh and MacRae, 1992).

The localisation of food systems has been cited as an antidote to the industrialized agricultural model which devalues both the producers and consumers of food (Robbins, 2015). Completely transitioning food production into local agricultural models may not be enough to truly achieve food sovereignty. Robbins (2015) argues that in order for local food systems to provide a viable alternative to industrialized agricultural models and not fall into the same pitfalls which reduce social control of food production, local food systems need to be differentiated. This is to say that local food systems need to differentiate themselves from the way that industrialized food systems operate. Local food production does not guarantee food sovereignty for capitalistic exploitation, and environmental degradation as well as undemocratic control over food can still exist at the local level of food production (Robbins, 2015).

Robbins cites three major ways in which local food systems must differentiate themselves from industrialist food systems: character, method, and scale (Robbins, 2015). Firstly, local production must differentiate itself from the character of industrialized agriculture which is capitalist production. Industrialized agriculture seeks to produce as much food as possible in the cheapest possible way. Local production needs an alternative character. Agrarian food production is often prescribed by food sovereignty movements as the appropriate alternative to industrialized production. While industrialized agriculture is based on monetary capital and
technology, agrarianism is based on land (Robbins, 2015) though large scale agriculture also requires land.

It is difficult to conceptualize what is distinct about agrarianism. Small scale agriculture can still be profit driven and work to produce surpluses in food production. Generally, the difference between industrialism and agrarianism is the emphasis on agroecological principles which are more apparent in agrarian systems (Altieri & Nichols, 2012). Local, small scale agriculture is dependent on long term ecological sustainability. Industrialized food producers rely heavily on transporting food globally and are therefore less directly tied to the land where their food is being produced. Local food producers who deliver directly to local markets cannot as easily relocate if natural resources are depleted. Agroecology emphasizes “natural processes and beneficial on-farm interactions in order to reduce off-farm input use and to improve the efficiency of farming systems,” (Alteiri & Nichols, 2012, p9). Altieri and Nichols outline 6 principles of agroecology:

Table 1

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<tr>
<th>Principles of Agroecology</th>
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<tr>
<td>1) <em>Enhance the recycling of biomass</em> with a view of optimizing organic matter decomposition and nutrient cycling over time</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) <em>Strengthen the ‘immune system’ of agricultural systems</em> through enhancement of functional biodiversity- natural enemies, antagonists, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) <em>Provide the most favorable soil conditions</em> for plant growth, particularly by managing organic matter and by enhancing soil biological activity</td>
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<td>4) <em>Minimize the loss of energy, water, nutrients and genetic resources</em> by enhancing</td>
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Aside from adopting agrarianism and agroecological principles, the second way that local food systems must differentiate themselves from industrial food systems is by method of production. Industrial farming relies on the use of chemicals, fertilizers, and genetically modified organisms. These technologies are used to control the growth of weeds and other harmful pests as well as improve crop productivity (Robbins, 2015). In the global south where such technologies are not as available, small-scale farmers rely on traditional methods of agriculture. These methods range from organic to agroecological farming in nature (Robbins, 2015). Industrial methods can be less ecologically friendly. Mono-cropping is used by large scale food producers to improve the durability of crops and allow the use of more mechanization (Robbins, 2015). Mono-cropping allows for larger scale operations with greater use of mechanization. Because monocultures are more susceptible to crop loss (one pest can wipe out an entire crop), industrial agriculture relies heavily on the use of pesticides in order to protect crops (Altieri & Nichols, 2012).

In contrast, traditional farming methods use more crop diversification as well as mixed use farming systems (Altieri & Nichols, 2012). By using mixed use farming systems, small-scale farming can be more ecologically efficient than industrial agriculture. Mixed-use methods can
provide more natural protections from pests as well increase complementary effects between crops and livestock. A more balanced farming approach which allows for polycultures, biodiversity, and livestock integration naturally produces more ecologically reusable and sustainable agriculture (Altieri & Nicholds, 2012).

The final way in which Robbins cites that small-scale farming must differentiate itself from industrial farming is scale. Scale does not simply refer to the area of a farm but more specifically the intensity of capital. Bernstein (2014), however, is very skeptical of the claims made by food sovereigntists and argues that organic and small scale agriculture use much more labour while producing far less marketable food than does most conventional farming. Though industrial farms may not produce as much economic value per acre as small-scale, they are less labour intensive.

Scale also partially determines food variety and uniqueness. Growing a specific type of food in mass quantities allows industrial farming to control for processing technology, harvesting, standardized equipment, taste, crop health, crop size etc. While industrial agriculture can efficiently grow specific crops they tend to reduce the variety of foods grown and the uniqueness of foods. For example, the town and immediate region of Leamington, Ontario mass produces vegetables with a staggering 2000 acres of greenhouses (Richie, 2005). Among these vegetables, tomatoes (produced out of greenhouses) and potatoes are by far the most mass produced. Tomatoes account for more than half of Canada’s vegetable greenhouse industry (Richie, 2005). The enormous concentration of agriculture near towns like Leamington affects the variety of produce grown. Most tomatoes grown in Canada are grown in the vicinity of a handful of towns like Leamington and Simcoe. This also means that most Canadian tomatoes are
grown the same way often by only a handful of agribusinesses. Consumers lack variety when purchasing vegetables from supermarkets due to the oligopolistic nature of Canada’s agribusiness sector.

Concentration of food production also affects taste. Interviews with Somali Canadians will show that taste and even size is affected by where the food is produced. For example, Somalis can easily tell the difference between a Canadian tomato and a Somali tomato. The amount of sun a vegetable receives, the seeds used, and the soil all affect how the vegetable will grow and taste. In Canada, concentration of agriculture means that consumers are receiving a limited variety of foods because they are all being grown in the same locations under standardized conditions.

Bernstein (2014) argues that some interpretations of food sovereignty such as the notion of “the peasant way” as the way to achieve sustainability may be so idealized that the advocates of small, low input sustainable agriculture fail to take account of how to feed the world’s rising population. They cannot possibly meet the shortfall in food needed to meet poor, non-farmers’ requirements. Bernstein also feels that it is naïve to suggest that genuine peasants really still exist to any degree given the extent of global capital penetration in the developing world, so going back to the peasant way is just not feasible. Bernstein (2014:1024) does acknowledge that much of the shortfall in food availability is due to unequal existing capitalist relations of distribution, not simply the aggregate amount of food production. In other words, even when there is a surplus of food, many non-farmers cannot afford to buy it.

Bernstein (2014) argues that the food sovereignty movement is built on the romantic idea of small scale ‘peasant’ farming feeding the world. A one-size-fits-all approach to food
sovereignty may well be unrealistic. While this conception of food sovereignty does prioritize local family farming as opposed to large industrial-scale capital farming, it acknowledges that “the peasant way” is not a feasible conception for Canada. Borras, Franco, & Suárez (2015) contend that the actually existing food sovereignty movement is polycentric. There are many centers of power within the movement, with different political contexts and implementations. The movement began as a small-scale farmer centric movement but has evolved into a multiclass coalition (Borras, Franco, & Suárez, 2015). Food sovereignty movements can still include forms of contemporary agriculture. Altieri (2010) recognises that some small-scale and medium-scale farmers use conventional methods of agriculture.

Bernstein questions whether it is possible for peasant farming to meet the world’s food supply. The types of farming systems which are promoted by food sovereignty movements (traditional, polycultures, agroecological) are often used in small-scale subsistence agriculture. Most of the world’s marketed surplus food comes from a small fraction of all farmers (Bernstein, 2014).

Bernstein also questions whether ‘peasant’ farmers truly want to farm the way that they do. The food sovereignty movement assumes farmers want more autonomy from markets and disciplines (Bernstein, 2014). If given the chance to use more mechanization with reduced labour intensity, would small-scale farmers still use monocultures and agroecological principles? Bernstein believes that in many cases, polyculture subsistence farming is not a kind of righteous/political choice, but rather a necessity for small-scale farmers. “Virtuous farming is practised mainly by the poorest farmers who confront major ecological and social constraints rather than ‘choosing’ to farm how they do and ‘choosing’ to remain poor” (Bernstein, 2014, pg 1049).
Food sovereignty movements condemn the use of modern agriculture technologies whenever alternative, traditional farming practices can be used instead. Genetically modified organisms and genetically modified seeds are particularly discouraged. Animosity toward biotechnology stems from the rejection of corporate influence over farming. Jack Kloppenburg (2010) believes this rejectionist view of biotechnology is naïve. Part of the problem is that too often, food sovereignty does not make the distinction between biotechnology and corporate biotechnology (Bernstein, 2014).

Bernstein is clear to point out that he is not rejecting everything about the food sovereignty movement. He recognizes the crucial role it plays in challenging corporate totalitarian control over the world food system. Skepticism arises in its massive overarching agenda. It covers so many different types of oppression (against farmers, consumers, the environment etc.) that it tends to become disjointed in its solutions. Bernstein points out that such a multi-class movement requires, “concrete analysis of a concrete situation” (2014: 1057). Food sovereignty is admirable in its cause but needs a more grounded, realistic approach.

1.5 Cultural connection to food

One aspect of food sovereignty which this paper will focus on is the cultural connection to food. This represents the first principle of food sovereignty: a focus on food for people. Food advocacy is deeper than social injustice. Food advocacy must include a conversation on food citizenship, health and sustainability (Welsh & MacRae, 1998). The concept of food citizenship is important because it assumes that food is connected to cultural identity. This is opposed to the notion that consumption habits determine food identity.
“In focusing on the distinction between the notions of consumer and citizen, we suggest that the concept of consumer is far too limited in that it acknowledges a person's interests and power primarily in terms of his or her ability to buy or reject products and services.” (Welsh & MacRae, 1998, pg 240).

In the case of Somalis living in the GTA, their food citizenship is compromised because they cannot fully access the foods which they are culturally accustomed to. Naturally, they make do with substitutes, yoghurt instead of camel’s milk for example. This is part of the acculturation process. However Adekunle et al (2011) reference Hamlett et al (2008) in arguing that acculturation is not a linear process. Acculturation is bi-directional, moving back and forth between assimilation and separation.

Acculturation levels can affect what foods consumers buy. Somalis with higher levels of integration may buy more foods which are alien to their culture (Adekunle et al, 2011). Younger Somalis and second-generation Somalis may be more accommodating to non-traditional Somali foods than Somalis who immigrated recently to Canada. Sometimes demand for traditional foods can increase for immigrants the longer that they have lived in Canada. Many Somalis in our focus groups reported a longing for foods that they have not been able to access since they have arrived in Canada. Being able to access ethnocultural foods1 more readily in the GTA could spur Somalis to seek more foods that are difficult to access. It is possible that as ethnocultural foods increase in availability, demand for these ethnocultural foods will rise even higher. Many second-generation Somalis are just starting to be introduced to traditional Somali foods now that more shops in the GTA are specializing in cultural foods. Second-generation Somalis also have

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1 Adekunle et al (2011) refer to ethnocultural foods similarly to what Vineland Research and Innovation Centre calls world crops. These are largely of non-European origin which are popular with relatively recent immigrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America.
higher levels of acculturation and tend to socialize with more non-Somalis than their parents do. Demand for traditional Somali foods among second-generation Somalis could introduce Somali cuisine to broader GTA populations.
1.6 Somalia Background: Demographic Overview

Figure 1 Political Map of Somalia (Map based on a UN map. Source: UN Cartographic Section)

The vast majority of Somalis are Muslim and their spoken language is Somali. Somalia is fairly ethnically homogenous however there are distinct clan divisions and subdivisions based on
lineage. The main clans which traditionally made up Somalia are Darod, Dir, Issaq, Hawiye, and Rahanweyn. Clan lineage is complicated however and there are many minority clans, subclans, sub-subclans which further divide the society (Wam & Sardesai, 2005).

The population is difficult to determine exactly since there has not been a census in Somalia since 1975. A 2003 estimate by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) posits the country’s population to be 6.8 million while 350,000 are internally displaced (Wam, P. E., & Sardesai, S. (2005). Since this estimation, reports by recent regional documents estimate the number is much lower. Somaliland’s population is estimated to be 3 million, Puntland is 1.5 million, and South Central Somalia is 5 million (Wam & Sardesai, 2005). Somalia is mostly made up of pastoralists, nomadic groups, and agricultural groups (Menkhaus & Lyons, 1993).

1.7 History of Somalia: Siad Barre Government

Somalia was colonized by Britain in the north and Italy in the central and southern regions. It gained independence in 1960 after the Italian Somalia united with the British Protectorate Somaliland and formed the Somali Republic (Greenfield, 1995). Shortly after, Mohammed Siad Barre took power in Somalia and started a brutal 22 year regime (Menkhaus & Lyons, 1993).

Siad Barre initiated war with Ethiopia over Somalia’s claim of the Ogaden region (Nkaiserry, 1997).
The war resulted in a brutal defeat for Somalia with over 25,000 causalities (Wam & Sardesai, 2005).

In 1989 and 1990, several strong clan-based liberation groups waged war against the Siad Barre government. The most notable of these groups were the United Somali Congress (USC), the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), and the Somali Salvation Democratic Movement (SSDM) (Wam & Sardesai, 2005). In 1991 Siad Barre was ousted but replaced by no government (Omaar, 1992). Instead, armed clan-based militias battled for control of key towns, ports, and neighborhoods. During this time, predatory looting and banditry swept the nation (Wam & Sardesai, 2005). Caught in the middle of the carnage were agricultural communities and minority groups. The conflict prompted international relief and aid but unfortunately, food aid became controlled by warlords and clan militias (Wam & Sardesai, 2005). War and famine killed more than 250,000 Somalis during this time (Wam & Sardesai, 2005).

1.8 Refugee Path to Canada

Immigration from Somalia and Ethiopia occurred mainly after 1980. More than 70,000 Somali refugees found asylum in Canada during the 1990s (Spitzer, 2006). At this time, Canada’s immigration policy opened up to be more inclusive of non-white immigrants. Canada previously did not encourage immigration from African countries (Danso, 2002). Somali immigration to Canada through the refugee program is still ongoing and wait times to be accepted are usually very long. Over a million Somali refugees are living in refugee camps in Kenya and Ethiopia, many of them waiting to get into Canada (Goetz, 2015).

Somalis represent some of the largest groups of African immigrants in the GTA. Due to political turmoil in Somalia, most Somali immigrants are refugees (Danso, 2002). In the GTA,
there is an official population of almost 50,000 Canadians of Somali origin. Unofficially it is estimated that the number of Somalis is much higher (Gee & Sengupta, 2015).

Those who arrived in Canada after 2002 have been able to cope better with their transitioning process. Part of the problem initially was that Somalis arriving during the 1980s had no Somali community to welcome them. The large number of Somalis in the GTA now allows new immigrants to enter into existing Somali social networks (Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants, 2016).

Social networks have helped to build a strong Somali community in the GTA. Interestingly, these social networks are strongly linked to food culture. Somali populations in the GTA are in close proximity to ethnic stores and other cultural amenities. The map below illustrates the locations of ethnic stores in the GTA which Somalis are known to frequent.2

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2 Personal communication with Bamidele Adekunle and Warsame Warsame. See the GIS map below.
Figure 3: Map of Somali restaurants and other services in the GTA. Personally created using the Geographical Information System (GIS) program

This map illustrates restaurants, community services and other organizations that provide assistance to Somalian residents of the Toronto area. These services include a charity organization, not-for-profit organizations, professional organization, and youth organization, among others. There are numerous restaurants that serve Somalian food also illustrated. Many of these locations are concentrated in areas in which there are a higher number of Somali residents. Many of these are within close proximity to other similar businesses in the Etobicoke area. With
such a high number of services aimed for Somalian people, it is likely that there is a significant number of Somalians residing nearby to these locations.
2. Somali Food Sovereignty in the GTA

2.1 Methods

Secondary research for this paper is based on a review of food sovereignty literature and refugee integration in Canada. There is a wealth of food sovereignty literature however literature regarding refugee integration in Canada is very slim. Literature specifically about Somali food sovereignty in the GTA is non-existent and so this paper relies solely on first-hand research.

All of the first-hand research undertaken in this study was completed by a research team led by Dr. Bamidele Adekunle, Adjunct Professor at the University of Guelph for the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development during the fall of 2015 through the spring of 2016. The author of this paper was part of this research team and was present at each stage of the data collection process. The project is titled Food Sovereignty and Refugee Path Immigrants and is funded by a Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant. Research approval for conducting the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Board in September, 2015.

The purpose of the project is to examine the consumption patterns of ethnocultural foods by Somali refugee-path immigrants in the GTA, assess the relationship between food security and socio-economic characteristics such as age, education, income, occupation and to identify the factors that define what is culturally appropriate for refugee-path immigrants. This multidisciplinary research employs mixed data collection methods including focus groups, in-depth interviews, survey administration and secondary analysis.

Focus groups
Three focus groups were held with Somalis living in the GTA on the dates of September 5th, 12th and October 30th, 2015. The first focus group consisted of 8 middle-aged women. The women were responsible for most of their families’ food shopping and thus were knowledgeable about Somali food accessibility. The second focus group consisted of 7 participants: 3 middle-aged men, 1 young-adult man, 2 middle-aged women and 1 young-adult woman. The third focus group consisted of 9 young-adult, university women. The research team consisted of 3-5 members. I was hired as one of several graduate and undergraduate research assistants (RA) in September and have continued as an RA on the project ever since. Two researchers facilitated discussion while the remaining members took notes. Due to difficulty in finding willing participants from all over the GTA, some of the participants were from the same families and thus held similar views and reported similar findings. The focus groups each lasted roughly two and a half hours and the participants were compensated for their time. The research assistants who could speak Arabic and English facilitated the focus groups. The first focus group which took place on September 5th, 2015 consisted of all women while the second and third focus groups comprised an equal ratio of men and women. At each of the three focus groups, Somali cultural food was prepared by some of the participants and discussion took place while everyone ate food together. This process helped to relax the environment and promote open discussion among participants. It also gave the research team a chance to be introduced to traditional Somali foods. The research team wanted to get a sense of the Somalis’ knowledge of ethnocultural foods and food sovereignty. The focus groups were exploratory and descriptive. The research team also wanted the participants to help determine the barriers and constraints they faced accessing their cultural foods. Finally, the focus groups were a chance for Somalis to speak their minds about cultural foods and food sovereignty and to bring attention to any topics which the research team
might not have been aware of. The information gathered in the focus groups was then used to flesh out the interviews and questionnaires which followed (see appendix).

**Guest speakers**

The research team regularly met to discuss findings and listen to guest speakers invited to address the research team. On September 25th the research team met a Nigerian refugee to learn about the Canadian refugee process. For the purposes of confidentiality, this guest speaker will remain anonymous and will hereby be referred to as Femi. Femi described his experiences coming to Canada as a refugee and the difficulties he has faced along the way. On October 30th, 2015 the research team met with Warsame Warsame, a Somali Refugee Assistance Program coordinator (RAP) of the Immigration Reception and Information Services (IRIS) at the Toronto Pearson International Airport. The purpose of these guest speakers was to invite discussion about refugee path immigration in Canada and allow the research team to familiarize themselves with the refugee process as well as the Canadian organizations relevant to refugee resettlement.

On October 2nd, 2015 the research team met with Sridharan Sethuratnam who works for Farm Start and is a PhD student in Geography at the University of Guelph. At the meeting the research team discussed food sovereignty and relating topics. The meeting gave the research team a chance to discuss the theoretical background of food sovereignty and alternative agriculture.

**Eid al-Adha**

On September 23rd, 2015 the research team participated in the celebration of the Muslim holiday, Eid al-Adha with the Somali community. The purpose of the site visit was to gain a
better understanding of community practices, build trust and make observations to assist in the completion of the Food Sovereignty and Refugee Path Immigrant project.

**In-depth Interviews**

Several in-depth interviews were conducted with Somalis. The first set was conducted December 13th, 2015 and the second set on February 4th. Each time, two women were interviewed about food sovereignty, their connection to traditional Somali food and their accessibility to ethnocultural food.

**Surveys/questionnaires**

Based on feedback from focus groups and in-depth interviews, questionnaires were prepared and administered each weekend from February 26th to April 2nd, 2016. The second and third administration of the questionnaire continues over the next couple of months. Dr. Adekunle is gathering information within such Somali neighbourhoods as Etobicoke and Scarborough to try to determine the approximate numbers of Somalis living in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) because Statistics Canada is presently unable to determine that number. In any case, our team hopes to acquire a sample with a sampling error of +/-5% so that descriptive and inferential statistics can be employed to test hypotheses about Somali access to food sovereignty and security in the hope that generalizations can be made about the Somali population living in the GTA.\(^3\) So far more than 200 questionnaires have been completed. The questionnaires were administered at several prominent Somali restaurants and ethnic grocery outlets in the GTA. Participants were then randomly selected within these locations and asked to complete the questionnaires. Those who stated that they were not Somali or currently were not

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\(^3\) If there are 100,000 Somalis in Toronto, a sample of 383 would be adequate.
living in the GTA were not asked to complete the questionnaire. Though the preliminary results have not yet been inputted into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), the qualitative research is complete and provides important context for the discussion.

**Quantitative Analysis of the Focus Groups and Interviews**

A detailed analysis of the focus groups and interviews are being conducted to group the results into the themes within the general categories of food sovereignty, security and preferred culturally appropriate foods like camel milk and sorghum. This analysis is ongoing and will be finished by Dr. Adekunle’s team later this year.

**2.2 Findings: What is Somali food?**

Somali cuisine is somewhat difficult to determine as it has been heavily influenced by Italian colonialism as well as neighboring African cuisines. There is some confusion even among Somalis as to what specifically are cultural foods. One interviewee for example, only classified certain spices and halal products as being cultural foods. Another interviewee considers typical Canadian foods as her cultural foods now because she now identifies as Canadian. It can be difficult to classify what foods are Somali since Somali foods have changed so much over time. Italian colonialism has heavily influenced Somali diet. What was eaten by Somalis 100 years ago is completely different than what is consumed today. Modern Somali food somewhat resembles a fusion between European and East African diets. Somalis still consume a lot of rice, goat, chicken, and fish with African spices but they also consume a lot of pastas and European breads.

Somalis have a meat dominant diet. They do not consume vegetables as often as most Europeans. Although a meat dominant diet can cause obesity, those living in Somalia live an active lifestyle and so by and large they have relatively few health problems. Obesity is generally
considered a sign of wealth in Somalia. Those who can afford to become obese often do not see it as a health concern though of course it is. This does create some health problems for Somalis living in the GTA. Several Somalis interviewed indicated that they have gained considerable weight since moving to Canada. They believe that their weight gains are mostly linked to Canadian lifestyles, sitting for long periods of time at work and not walking as much as when they were living in Somalia.

Fruits are very popular in Somali cuisine. Bananas and plantains are eaten in large quantities particularly in the South (Somalia), not so much in the north (Somaliland). Interestingly, Somalis will often eat bananas placed over rice and meat. For example, a common dish would have goat meat over rice with a banana on top of the meat.

Some of the most sought after foods that are scarcely accessible in Canada include camel meat and camel milk (caano geel). Cow’s milk and yogurt are often used as substitutes. There is great demand for camel milk consumption in Canada. Camel milk was consistently listed in focus groups and interviews as a food which Somalis greatly missed and desired. One Somali went as far as asking the Toronto Zoo if they would consider selling him the milk produced by the zoo’s camels (focus group: Sept12, 2015).
**Sorghum** - described as a grain used to make pancake-like bread.


**Adhi** - goat, sheep eaten in variety of ways often with rice or laxoox

![Adhi](http://xawaash.com/?p=1996#sthash.8iCIFkez.dpbs)

**Digaag** - chicken usually spicy, often used in stews

![Digaag](http://xawaash.com/?p=1996#sthash.8iCIFkez.dpbs)
**Kallum** - fish, also often prepared spicy

**Laxoox or Lahoh** - pancake made from *Sorghum*; eaten with many meals
Figure 8: Lahoh, Somali bread retrieved from http://www.mysomalifood.com/kaluun-ijo-bariis-spicy-fish-sauce-with-rice/

*Caano geel*- Camel’s milk, consumed enormously by many Somalis, often as a stand alone meal

Figure 9: Caano geel, camel’s milk retrieved from http://www.xidig.com/2014/06/xiriirka-ay-soomaalidu-la-leedahay-geela.html
Somalis regularly consume spinach, celery, broccoli, onion, watermelon, mango, pomegranate, grapes, apples, and papaya. Bananas are consumed in large quantities often on top of rice and meat. Several vegetables have been cited as being available in Canada but are of lesser quality. Tomatoes, eggplant, garlic, coriander, okra, eggplant, and green peppers are described as tasting different than the same vegetables in Somalia. Sometimes the difference does not indicate reduced but quality but more specifically familiarity of taste. Somalis are used to certain foods tasting a certain way. These foods are accessible in Canada but the taste is not the same. Some fruits in Somalia are considered to be sweeter. Mangos, papaya, and oranges are said to be sweeter in Somalia (interview, Dec 13, 2015).

Somali cuisine is often spicy. Traditional spices used by Somalis are not completely accessible in the GTA but Somalis reported being able to find a variety of spices in Asian markets and ethnic stores. Ethiopian spice is highly sought after, so much so that many Somalis bring it back to Canada if visiting Somalia.

Milk was reported as being difficult to access. Somalis consume homo milk in Somalia and Somaliland which is much less fatty than in Canada. The milk is not pasteurized in Somalia/Somaliland. Aside from the taste, Somalis consume milk for its health benefits. It is considered a full meal. Homo milk and camel’s milk are treated as delicacies.

Sesame oil was also cited as being very important and hard to access cheaply in Canada. Somalis consume sesame oil for taste and for health benefits. Focus groups reported disliking that the only sesame oil they could find was imported. This affected the quality of the oil.

**Culturally Appropriate Food**
Somalis indicated that the availability of culturally appropriate foods was very important to them. Each Somali participant in focus group 2 rated the importance of the availability of culturally appropriate foods as 5 on a scale of 1 to 5. They described Somali culture as being connected to food and meals as being social events. Many indicated that they would get together with friends and family weekly to enjoy barbeques outside when it is warm.

There seemed to be less desire from younger Somalis to improve accessibility of traditional, culturally appropriate foods. They also enjoyed Somali cuisine but had not been raised with the same cultural traditions as their parents. Younger Somalis who have lived in Canada for the majority of their lives have grown more accustomed to Canadian foods, especially fast foods. Several younger Somalis indicated that when they went to University they just ate whatever anyone else ate. They did not restrict their diet to Somali food, with the exception that the majority of younger Somalis still eat halal food.

**Health Factors**

Health was one of the strongest reasons cited by Somalis in focus groups and interviews to eat traditional cultural foods. Camel’s milk is cited by Somalis as being low in fat. One man reported that the lack of camel milk in Canada has even affected his mood. He believes his mental health is affected by the food that he eats.

One Somali reflected on the impact that moving to Canada has had on her overall health. She said she has become overweight since moving to Canada. She wishes that Canada did not use so many hormones in its meat products. She also wishes that Canada ensured that all animals were grass-fed. She also admitted that she is tempted by sweets and junk food in Canada (interview, Dec 13, 2015). When cultural foods are not available, Somalis often turn to Canadian
substitutes. Because Somalis sometimes lack the knowledge of Canadian foods and how to prepare them, they eat out or purchase convenience foods which are less healthy (focus group, Sept 12, 2015).

Transitioning to a Canadian lifestyle and culture shock were frequently mentioned as reasons why Somalis experience reduced health in Canada. The Somali traditional diet and lifestyle sees low rates of obesity and diabetes. Somalis are used to being outdoors and walking a lot. Several women described a typical week in Somalia involving daily walks to the market and preparing food fresh every day. In Somalia, they had more time to do chores, cook, and get groceries. In Canada, they work full-time jobs and feel they do not have enough time to cook fresh food every day. They are forced to buy food in bulk and store it. Now these women say they get groceries maybe once a week or once every other week. They are forced to eat out more and eat more processed food which does not perish quickly like fresh food. Somalis also reported that because they work longer hours, they are not as active and do not exercise as much. In Canada’s climate, Somalis are doing less walking and more driving and travelling on public transit.

The cumulative effects of family disintegration and stress have serious health consequences. Many Somali immigrants in Toronto, Ottawa and Edmonton have reported health deterioration since they have arrived in Canada (Spitzer, 2006). Health deterioration often includes increased cholesterol levels, hypertension, cardiac problems, and type 2 diabetes as a result from stress due to uprooting and resettlement (Spitzer, 2006).
2.3 Barriers to Food Sovereignty facing Somali Refugee Path Immigrants

A significant barrier to food sovereignty for Somalis is the uncertainty surrounding halal products in Canada. Somalis are predominately Muslim and so they eat halal meats which are slaughtered in accordance with Islamic practices. In the past, halal accessibility was a problem for Muslims in the GTA however the number of stores which sell halal have grown drastically. The GIS map of Somali stores and services above illustrates only a fraction of the locations which sell halal. Many mainstream grocery stores are also selling halal now, recognizing the great demand and growing numbers of Muslim consumers.

Issues with halal stem from uncertainty of authenticity, high costs, and lack of certification. Somalis have indicated their distrust in the authenticity of halal products in the GTA. They believe that there is not enough being done to regulate the sale of halal meats. Prices can fluctuate wildly especially during holidays such as Eid. Somalis and other Muslims in the GTA are often forced to pay exorbitant prices as shops and groceries selling halal foods are limited in number.

Halal products are expensive. One Somali reported that Halal prices are on the rise. She says that although halal products are more accessible, prices are much higher than they were when she arrived in Canada 25 years ago (Interview, Dec 13, 2015). Prices also fluctuate wildly depending on the day. During holidays, halal meat will often go up in price which can be frustrating to Somali consumers. Somalis’ lack options as consumers because they need to eat halal. There are a limited number of vendors who sell halal so Somalis often pay exorbitant prices, sometimes as much as double the price of non halal meat according to Somalis in our focus groups.
Somalis indicated that they are frustrated with the certification of halal. The slaughter of halal meats must be performed by a Muslim. Somalis indicated that they are sometimes hesitant when buying halal from non-Muslim vendors because of this. One man in our focus group said that he believes some Asian vendors lie about the authenticity of their halal products. More is being done on this issue however. Recently new labelling regulations came into effect across Canada. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency now requires that any food which is labelled halal must be certified by an organization which ensures that the food meets the requirements for Muslim consumption including being hung to allow the blood to drain from the meat and being blessed by an Imam (Charles, 2016). This is a significant improvement over prior practices of certification which did not need to specify the certifying organization (Charles, 2016).

Another barrier to Somali food sovereignty in the GTA is the transition into Canadian culture and food systems. Somalis living in Canada must get used to a different lifestyle. In Somalia, women often get up early to go out to get the food that will be eaten that day. This is difficult to do in Canada as many Somali women work fulltime jobs and do not have time to get fresh food every day. This requires Somalis to adjust to buying food in bulk and freezing or storing that food for the week. The result is that Somalis may find their food to be of lesser quality as it is not as fresh (focus group, sept 12. 2015). One Somali commented that she is only able to prepare culturally appropriate foods during the weekend. It takes too much time to prepare cultural foods during the week due to her heavy work schedule. She eats typical western foods during the week and prepares cultural foods during the weekend (Interview, Dec 13, 2015).

Somalis must also adjust to a different food chain in Canada. Canadian food systems usually have longer food chains and require most Canadians to purchase the bulk of their food in
grocery stores and commercial outlets. Some Somalis have found creative ways to access more fresh food. One Somali said the cheapest way to get fresh food was to buy it directly from the farmer who trucks the fresh produce out to a market set up next to a mosque (Interview, February 3, 2016).

The quality and variety of foods accessible in the GTA has been criticized by Somalis. Food is often grown in other countries and shipped to Canada which reduces the quality of the food during this process especially if it is a perishable meat, fruit or vegetable. Fruits, vegetables and meat are less fresh which means they have reduced nutritional content and taste (Adekunle et al, 2011). Some meat such as goat would be slaughtered and eaten right away where as it is frozen and stored in Canada. Somalis have criticized the fish selection in Canada as being far below that in Somalia (focus group, Sept 12, 2015). Naturally, Canadians may not consume some foods to the same degree that other countries do. This results in a reduced selection of some desired foods.
3. Planning Vision and Recommendations: Improving access to culturally appropriate foods

3.1 Promotion of Alternative Agriculture

Some proponents of the Food sovereignty movement believe that Canada’s current excessive reliance on industrial agriculture is unsustainable. Several factors threaten the viability of the industrial agriculture model long-term. Firstly, intensified agriculture is reliant on an abundant supply of water and cheap energy (Altieri & Nichols, 2012). This supply is likely to decrease over time. The fuel-based operation of machines, agrochemicals and irrigation operations are reliant on the fossil fuels which exacerbate climate changing effects. Industrial agriculture contributes to roughly 25-30% of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Altieri & Nichols, 2012). Urban intensification means that people are increasingly becoming separated from rural-based food production. Urban forms of agriculture are growing in response to this separation (Borras Jr, Franco & Suárez, 2015).

Promoting alternative forms of agriculture such as small-scale farming will help to improve the variety and quality of local food. Food sovereignty concepts can be integrated directly into policy. In many South American countries where food sovereignty originated, this integration has already begun (Borras Jr, Franco & Suárez, 2015). However there are gaps in the food sovereignty movement that need to be addressed before they can be implemented effectively in Canada. Firstly, what does food sovereignty look like in Canada and how can it be manifested? In the 1980s and 1990s community supported agriculture programs rose in popularity. These programs include community gardens, community kitchens, food banks, public health initiatives, and farmers’ markets (Shawki, 2015).
Community supported programs can be very effective but they remain informally organized and beneficial to select communities and individuals. For example, there has been some literature documenting the exclusiveness of farmers’ markets. Alkon and McCullen (2010) argue that the farmers markets as well as other food movements hold notions of what vendors and consumers should be which reflect a “literal habitus of whiteness”. Many Somali-Canadians do not have access to farmers’ markets and may not be able to afford organic local food. Most Somalis are concentrated in the GTA and in urban areas where farmers’ markets are less prevalent. Some informal food movements may be more appealing to Somalis. Organizations such as Farm Start and Toronto Urban Growers would allow Somalis to grow their own vegetables and get in touch with growers to improve accessibility to ethnocultural foods. Somalis were asked in our focus groups if they grew their own foods. Very few have tried however some expressed interest. One man tried to grow vegetables in his garden one season but gave up after he felt it was too much work.

Encouraging Somalis to participate in alternative forms of agriculture may help to integrate them more into food networks. Some Somali culturally appropriate foods can already be found in ethnic stores. Fortunately, Somalis enjoy a wide variety of foods and are fairly adaptable. Not all ethnic stores need to be specifically labelled Somali in order to satisfy the demand for Somali ethnic foods. Chinese supermarkets for example, are frequented often by Somalis in the GTA due to the availability of some East-African and Asian foods as well as lower prices on foods. In the case of Somalis, most culturally appropriate foods are already being produced more aggressively due to the influence of demand from South Asians, Afro Caribbean’s, and other groups in the GTA. Adekunle et al. (2012) have documented this in their study of the demand for ethnocultural vegetables in the GTA.
Increasingly, the growth of ethnic fruits and vegetables are being explored by Ontario farmers. Somalis are gaining access to foods because of this demand. Several specific foods to Somali culture may need documentation to prove demand enough that it would be economically viable for local farmers to explore. The results of our questionnaires hope to provide this evidence. Certainly, they should demonstrate the demand for foods like Camel’s milk enough to entice growers or distributors to explore this niche market based on our early findings.

3.2 Location of cultural stores

Somali ethnic stores are often concentrated near mosques in the GTA. As evident in figure 3, most restaurants and services such as mosques are closely clustered. Somalis reported that they often shopped at stores nearby after attending their mosques on Saturdays. Because most Somalis in the GTA are Muslim, the locations of mosques are a good indicator of where Somalis live. Somali cultural stores are naturally located near Somali mosques to improve accessibility for Somalis. This is important to consider for Syrian refugees as well. Food purchasing is often a weekend activity. Somali mothers reported that they did most of their shopping on the weekend as many were too busy during the week. Culturally, Sunday is also a day for Somalis to get together with friends and family. It is common for Somalis to get together at restaurants after Muslim Prayer. Recognizing that the locations of cultural stores are linked to the locations of other cultural amenities is important when considering the arrival of Syrian refugees. Shopping for food after prayer is not exclusive to Somalis. While completing surveys the research team noticed that many other ethnic groups were frequenting these cultural stores, not just Somalis. Ethnic stores which are known to sell halal foods will attract many different groups.
For Syrian refugees entering into Canada, it is important for them to be able to locate ethnic stores. The GTA has developed cultural networks fairly efficiently for groups such as Somalis to access their traditional foods. Most Somalis reported being satisfied with their ability to find their traditional foods. Somali cultural stores are almost always close by to Mosques and other amenities. With so many Somalis concentrated in the GTA for over 30 years since arriving in Canada, this pattern is natural. Syrians refugees are being housed in much more diverse locations across Canada (Government of Canada Immigration and Citizenship, 2016). It may be more difficult for Syrians to access halal foods because of this. Particularly in rural communities with smaller Muslim populations, access to traditional Syrian food could be challenging. Further research into accessibility of cultural foods in rural communities will be helpful down the road.
4. Conclusion

The Canadian food sovereignty movement has focused on the promotion of alternative and small scale agriculture. In the case of Somalis living in the GTA, participating in the food sovereignty movement might look different than that of non-immigrants. Many Somali fruits and vegetables are already being grown in Canada. The food sovereignty principle which states that food is sacred most applies to Somali perceptions about food culture. For Somalis, food is their culture. They treat meals as social events. They often eat outside in the summer. The way that Somalis prepare food is also sacred. They only eat halal which means that they require all of their meat to be slaughtered in a specific way which adheres to the Islamic faith. Somali participation in food sovereignty could mean increased demands for proper halal certification.

Food sovereignty movements also tend to favor ‘peasant’ style farming methods. This advocates for reduced reliance on industrial agriculture and more use of small-scale traditional agriculture systems. Promotion of peasant farming reflects the pseudo-Marxist narrative of food sovereignty which seeks to revolutionize global food systems and overthrow ‘big agriculture’. This aspect of food sovereignty should be viewed skeptically. In many ways, technological and scientific advancement in industrial agriculture has been greatly beneficial and it is doubtful that food production could match the world’s rising population without some form of industrialized agriculture. It is also difficult to determine how peasant farming would affect Somali food accessibility. Currently, Somalis are able to access many of their preferred fruits and vegetables even though they are sometimes grown through industrialized methods. There lacks a Canadian business model to raise animals (such as goat) for cultural groups such as Somalis however this could change with significant demand.
The accessibility of culturally appropriate Somali foods in the GTA is improving. Early Somali immigrants in the 1980s and 1990s struggled to find many of their traditional foods. Due to the influx of immigrants and ethnic diversity in the GTA, most Somali food is now accessible. Some special items remain incredibly difficult if not impossible to obtain. Camel’s milk, camel meat, and some specific spices and oils are frequently cited as being high demand items which are difficult to find. Somalis are fairly adaptable in their diet. They have adjusted to life in the GTA by shopping at ethnic stores, using substitutes for certain foods, and changing their purchasing patterns to fit more typical Canadian lifestyles. Although they are able to locate many of their traditional foods, they often are disappointed with the quality of these foods. Many of their favourite fruits and vegetables taste distinctly different than they did when they were grown in Somalia. Difference in taste could be attributed to the difference in soils and the amount of sun in Canada as well as the prevalence of ethnic foods being imported which affects quality. Many Somalis indicate dissatisfaction with halal certification but this issue is increasingly gaining government attention and some policy changes have already been made. The experiences of Somalis provide valuable insight into the challenges of refugee path immigrants finding accessible foods. These experiences should be used as references to help improve the integration of new Syrian refugees as they should experience similar challenges.

**Policy Implications**

The results of our research into Somali food sovereignty in the GTA reveal several issues which could have policy implications. Firstly, there is a strong feeling from the Somali community that halal certification is not sufficient in order to ensure authenticity. Recently new regulations have come into effect through the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to improve the certification process. The results of these new regulations need to be carefully monitored and
evaluated in order to ensure that the changes are effective. A second concern with halal products is the pricing. Pricing is usually under the discretion of each respective vendor however halal is a unique case. It is essential to the Islamic faith that Muslims consume halal which means that they have limited agency as consumers to reject prices which they feel are too high. The selling of halal food in mainstream commercial outlets is still a somewhat recent phenomenon in Canada. Recent policy changes regarding halal certification should help to standardize pricing for halal meats in Canada. All food labelled halal now requires an accompanying label that identifies the name of the person or organization that certified the food as halal (Charles, 2016). The problem is that there is still no policy which regulates accreditation for a becoming halal certifier. This means that essentially anyone can become a certifier (Charles, 2016). Further regulation policy is needed to strengthen the halal certification process in Canada.

The results of our qualitative research also provide important information regarding the food sovereignty of other Muslim groups and refugees in Canada. On April 25th, 2016, I met with Lloyd Longfield, Guelph’s Member of Parliament in the Canadian House of Commons to discuss how our team’s research could benefit Syrian refugees to access culturally appropriate food in Canada. Our research team will continue to be in touch with Longfield in order to share any information we can about how to impact food accessibility for Syrian refugees. The Liberal government is currently working to create food policy with local food as a focus. The provincial government is also interested in both encouraging more production and consumption of local food as well as improving the integration of refugees and immigrants. They feel that these things are all related to each other. They are therefore interested in food sovereignty and accessibility of culturally appropriate food (conversation with Longfield, 2016).

Rural Impact
The experiences of Somali refugees are valuable when considering the challenges that Syrian refugees will face in Canada. There are at least 25,000 Syrian refugees arriving in Canada. Many Syrian families are slated to resettle in rural areas (Government of Canada, Immigration and Citizenship, 2016). The city of Guelph is noteworthy, as local CEO Jim Estill is sponsoring 50 Syrian families, with some Syrians resettling in Guelph (O, Flannagan, 2015). Rural resettlement will provide unique challenges for these Syrian refugees. Learning from the experiences of Somalis will help to prepare Syrians for what they will face once they arrive. Syria is predominantly Muslim like Somalia, and has also experienced political turmoil leading to the displacement of millions. Somalia is the ideal case to draw references from. Particularly when considering the purchase of halal, information regarding which stores are best for buying halal, where halal can be accessed, where Syrians can find information on certification is valuable to know. This connection has already been documented. Somalis in the GTA have been contacted by government outlets to help provide any information which could help Syrians become adjusted to life in Canada (Goetz, 2015).

With the arrival of at least 25,000 Syrian refugees and increased demand for non-traditional food, there is an opportunity for local farmers to grow ethnocultural foods. This growing market could provide economic incentives for Ontario agriculture and local farmers. With organizations like Farm Start, it is possible that Somali immigrants and others could start to grow their own foods as well.
5. References


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Menkhaus, K., & Lyons, T. (1993). What are the lessons to be learned from Somalia. CSIS Africa Notes, 144.


6. Appendix

**Focus Group Notes**

*School of Environmental Design and Rural Development*  
*University of Guelph*  
*Food Sovereignty and Refugee Path Immigrants*

Focus Group lead by: Rana Telfahand Morgan Sage  
Notes Taken by: Sam Dent, with note additions from Morgan Sage.

Date: November 20/2015

Focus group time: 17:11-18:22

Location: Ryerson Library room 860

Group: Focus group three

**Legend:**

N: Means the note was added in on a later day than the day of the focus group.

N1: Means this was a note from the day of focus group.

DN: Means this is a group dynamic note of something occurring at this time of the focus group.

LN: Means a logistics note, which is referring to something happening in the room.

I have bolded a person's name if the comment was said by them, or if I am referring to them. Otherwise, if it is under someone’s name in question one then it means they are saying it. Otherwise, throughout the document, if I do not specify who said something it was said by one of the participants. All bullet points
Time Before Starting of Focus Group

On November 20th, 2015, Rana Telhaf, Sam Dent, and Morgan Sage travelled to Toronto from Guelph to conduct the third focus group for the project, “Food Sovereignty and Refugee Path Immigrants.” We left Guelph on the 12:20 bus, arriving at the Greyhound Bus terminal in Downtown Toronto at approximately 14:05. As we had a little while to wait before we needed to go to Ryerson Library, we spent some time at the Eaton Centre. We then walked to the Ryerson Library, and arrived slightly before 15:00. On the elevator to the floor where the focus group was being held, we ran into three of the participants. The participants were friendly. The three participants had the impression that the focus group began at 15:30, though they had no problem waiting until 16:30. When we arrived at our room, room 860 in the Ryerson Library, it was occupied as the previous group had the room until 16:00. The two Community Research Assistants (RAs) arrived before we went into room 860.

We entered room 860 at approximately 16:03. At this time, it was Rana, Sam, Morgan, the two community RAs as well as the three participants mentioned earlier who were; Sahra Nup, Amal Arab, and Samera. The three participants as well as the two Community RAs were all having pleasant conversation at this time in the room, and were all happy and chatty. Another participant, Edil also showed up on time (before 16:30). At 16:41 one of the Community RAs was on the phone with one of the participants who was running late. Everyone remained happily chatting away.

Edil did not know about this focus group beforehand as she was brought along last minute. Though she at first did not know what the focus group was about, someone explained to her a little bit while we were waiting for the focus group to start.

At 16:51 a Community RA and Sahra went to get the participants, as they did not know where they were going. At 17:02 the remainder of the participants arrived in a group with a community RA and Sahra who had gone to get them. These other participants were from other schools, all from UofT (N: I am pretty sure all of these participants were from UofT) except for Yasmin who was from Seneca.
Rana began an introduction at 17:08, and the participants read and signed the consent forms. No introductions were done at this time. Part of the reason we skipped introductions was because the participants were late so we wanted to move forward with the questions. However, below I have a list of the participants and things I know about them that I found out through the focus group. We were able to ask some questions regarding biography at the end of the focus group as well to add to this. The actual focus group began at 17:11.

Everyone sat at one big table in the room, except Rana and Morgan who stood due to limited space. We brought a few more chairs into the room so everyone had a place to sit.

At 17:43, someone else came in. She was female, wearing a head covering, and a friend of someone in the focus group. She stayed for the rest of the focus group, but never said anything. I did not get her name, and as she said nothing, she was not a participant.

The focus group finished at 18:22, and at this time the participants and the RAs left. Morgan, Rana, and Sam stayed around for a little bit and then went for dinner before catching an 20:00 bus back to Guelph.

**Participants:**

Participants all wrote their names on a piece of paper in front of them. All participants were born in Canada, except for Amal who was born in Ethiopia. Edil and Yasmin lived in India for a period of time. The participants were all female and were all were wearing some sort of head covering. Two of the participants were sisters. All of the participants were students of either Ryerson or UofT (N: I believe this is true, but am not 100% sure), except Yasmin who goes to Seneca. Following is some information about the participants:

1. Samera
   - Her studies are through a collaboration with George Brown Collage and another school. I did not catch what school the other school was.
2. Amal Arab
   - She travelled to Somalia a few years ago.
   - She was born in Ethiopia and came to Canada when she was six.
   - She studies Nursing at Ryerson University.
3. Sahra Nup
• She is a third year University student.

4. Sumaya Weydow

• She studies nursing.

5. Edil

• She lived in India for four years. She thought the food was great in India.
• She is a business administration University student.

6. Asha

• She is a fourth year student at U of T studying human biology

7. Hafso

• She is a third year student at U of T. She studies English and History.

8. Ladan

• I do not have any additional specific information about Ladan.

9. Yasmin

• She mentioned that she speaks a mixture of Somali and English at home.
• She spent time living in India.
• She goes to Seneca Collage.

Group Dynamics:

Asha and Hafso had quieter personalities. Sahra was very dominant in the conversations. One of the community RAs and Amil were having their own private conversation for a large majority of the focus group, which was frustrating to the facilitators.

Question 1: What foods do you eat?

Sahra

• For breakfast, Sahra eats oatmeal or (N: missed note of other thing she said). If she does not time for breakfast in the morning, she will eat lunch around 10:30.
• When she eats lunch eaten at home, she usually eats Soor (a cornmeal). Soor is similar to fufu, and to cook you put it in a pot and stir it.
• Laden mentioned that you eat Soor with a meat sauce, so it is like a substitute for rice.

Asha

• Asha eats bananas for breakfast.
• She eats pasta four times per week.
• Around this time, someone mentioned that they call pasta served with meat Basta. (N: due to mishearing, throughout these notes, sometimes when pasta was written down, it is possible Basta was said.)

Amal
• She eats yogurt.
• She eats bananas.
• For lunch, she eats a lot of rice.
• She likes chicken.
• Her family has camel milk (N: I believe she was referring to in Somalia, that they got Camel milk on a regular basis).
• In Canada, camel milk is really hard to find. When they do find it, it is expensive. They can sometimes find it in halal stores.
• In Somalia, they have camels so it is easier to have camel milk.
• Someone mentioned that camel milk is good for the digestive system.
• RA- mentions how camel milk is very popular.
• In Canada, she (N: her family?) might buy camel milk once in awhile.
• “Even the meat, nothing is as best as Africa.”
• In Africa, she said everyday you go to buy your stuff for the day from the supermarket.
• Everything tastes good there [in Africa]. Food is not as fresh here in Canada as it is in Africa. Food has a much lower quality here in Canada compared to in Africa.

Sumaya
• She said she really likes angero.
  ◦ Somali angero is more sweet than Ethiopian injera.
• You eat Angero with sugar, olive oil and tea. You pour the tea on the angero. Or you can roll up your Angero and put it in tea.
• Amal- eats angero everyday with tea. Yasmin as well.
• DN: lots of laughing around this time of talking about tea with angera. They may have been laughing because the practice sounded strange to outsiders, which was probably realized upon our questioning. However, when some of the other women spoke up saying they had done that too, or heard of it, there seemed to be a feeling of excitement and possibly relief.
• She eats muufo. (N: our notes differ in terms of if this was for dinner or for lunch).
• There was a discussion eating one of either kidney OR liver (N: our notes differ as to whether this was for lunch or dinner) (others weighed in on this point of having either kidney or liver) (N1: They seemed very excited when talking about this).

Q2: Participants Asked to write down three Somali Foods
At first a complete list of Somali foods was created through asking participants. Then everyone was asked to write down three preferred Somali foods. Cards were passed around for writing down the three foods. Morgan and a Community RA then asked people what they wrote down, and Morgan or the RA put the stickers on chart paper that was taped to the wall. Three stickers are given for each person’s most preferred foods, two stickers for second most preferred food, one sticker for third most preferred food.

- For many of the foods written on the parchment paper, there seemed to be a lot of agreement around the room when a food was written down.
- A few participants were discussing how to write the Somali food names. They were not sure how to spell some of the Somali foods. (N: Thinking that most of the time they say the food, but they don’t often write them down, so they were trying to spell them the same way Somalis living in Canada would. There are no English names for their foods, so they were using our alphabet.)

**Foods that were written on the Board:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food:</th>
<th>Amount of Stars on Chart paper.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- see parchment paper for these numbers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canjeero (alternative spelling Angero)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caamboola/dijir</td>
<td>• Different words mean the same thing/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabayaot</td>
<td>• Participants were not sure of spelling, but said the spelling was close enough.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Malawax              | • Participants were jumping into this conversation, so Malawax seems popular.  
• You eat tMalawax the same way as Anjera (N: I think this was what was said, but I am not completely sure). |
| Suqaar               |                                   |
| Outkac               | • Is a dried meat  
• some participants say like Jerky, some participants disagree (N1: I think this what was said)  
• Dates and Outkac can be eaten together. |
One participant said this is made when a girl is getting married (though Samara disagrees). An RA and Amil said the bride's side of the family makes this for a wedding. They would make a lot of it, dry it out for days, and add lots of oil. One participant mentioned that it is “So unhealthy”. It is really dried, and you put dates on top of them and eat them together.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geeh</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mufo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samboos</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fool/fluul</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halwo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bageya</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- A few participants said everything in their list of most preferred foods was already on the chart paper, so no more foods were needed to be added to the chart paper.
- There was a discussion of some of the things on board and was said that some are breads, some are meats, and some are something else (N1: I didn't catch what the last thing was that was said.) (N1: There is a mark on the parchment paper beside all the breads).
- N1: As was the case throughout the focus group, lots of discussion, hard to get everything down in notes. Throughout the focus group it seemed like there were many conversations going on at once.
• Some discussion on whether to put down their favourite food, or one they most preferred. We emphasized to write their most preferred food, though it is possible someone put up their most commonly eaten food.
• All (or at least many, it seemed the general consensus) said they eat Somali food everyday.

Q3: Affordability of Somali Food

• When asked if Somali food is affordable, Saahra said a passionate “NOOO.” She says you can walk out of a store having spent $100 and having gotten 6 things. You usually leave the store with flour, a kind of oil, and a lot of meat. Sahra buys halal meat. She mentioned having 3 or 4 different types of meat (N: assuming this means when she leaves the grocery store). A bit of discussion happened here, lamp chops and ground beef were mentioned.
• Sahra says Flour is really expensive. She said it is a different type of flour, it’s self rising. She said beans for this are more expensive than regular beans.
• There are three stores in all of Toronto that sell this stuff. Sahra knows people that drive from Regent to Sef’s, a Somali halal food store close to the corner of Weston road and Royal York Road.
• There is a discussion about different places….if options other than Sef’s and in range.
• Sahra – mentions one store in particular (N: referring to Sef’s?). She also mentioned that there are maybe three or four other ones she doesn't know about.
• Someone said that prices change all the time for the price of food. Someone mentioned how something that costs $5 may go up to $5.50 the next time she was in the store. The last time she was there the meat went up in price (N: I am pretty sure this is all Sahra talking)
• Sahra said Halal is harder to find and more expensive
• In terms of buying halal at a high price, someone says that obviously you have too. Their meat is expensive, but they still need to buy it. Their meat is expensive, but they still need to buy it.
• Someone mentioned coffee.
• Hafso – says that if her mom goes to price chopper, she will spend less than she would at a Somali store and would come home with more food.
• Asha - when mother buys meat it will be like $200.
• As these comments were being made, one of the girls told Morgan that we shouldn't really completely believe what the other girls were saying about the price of food. Their mothers are the ones who do the shopping, not them. In addition to that, at this time, quite a few of the girls actually said they don't know the answer for price of food.
• Yasmin mentioned that when get the chicken, it's cut for you and bagged.
• Amal said it is really hard for finding Somali food, as nothing is around campus.
• DN: Sahra is talking a lot and dominating the conversation.
• In terms of cuisine (N: finding Somali food around), Amal says the closest thing we have is middle eastern and Arab food. Amal says Somali is cuisine pretty similar. Some people say they like Arab food.
• Someone/or multiple people said that if they go to a Somali restuarant it is with their families, and not by themselves or with friends.
• There are a lot of Somalis in the Rexdale Neighbourhood.
• Someone said all the Somali restaurants are clustered together.
• Xawaash was mentioned, and someone mentioned that they have never had it before.
• When talking about Xawaash someone said it is modern, diverse, and appealing to non-Somalis. It was said Xawaash is more appealing that most other Somali restaurants.
• Someone said our restaurants are not the cleanest.
• **Amal** - Not very appealing for non-Somalis (N: discussion here, not appealing due to things like cleanliness and overall atomosphere). **Amal** is a family friend with people (N: owners?) at Xawaash. She says Xawaash is really nice because other are trying their food, and it is not a dirty store.
• **Edil**- people going just with Somalis to the Somali stores. Awkward if only one there (N: only non-Somali?). She mentioned when going to an Ethiopian restaurant, a culture that is not know, that you would usually go with people of that ethnicity. Said that it would be nice to innovate to integrate people to get to that culture (N: I am not sure what this point was referring too, maybe to integrate people to Somali cuisine?). (N: I am not completely sure what she meant, hence my notes are a little scattered). She said that she felt stranged going into ethnic restaurants that are not Somali. This is because she felt that she stood out, and part of this is due to her head covering.
• **Ladan** said some a little more expensive (N: I think she was referring to restaurants), because of meat. (N: my notes made me not quite understand her point, but her main point was the expensiveness of meat).
• **Amal**- Somali places are getting more expensive for sitting down at a restaurant. Food prices have gone from $11 to $15-$17. Somali restaurants are still cheaper than other restaurants.
• Quantity given at Somali restaurants is higher than what is given at other restaurants.

**Q4: Discussion locality**

• **Amal** said a lot of Somalis have large families, so they spend a lot of money on groceries. She said at family events, all you do is eat food (others agree).
• **Samara** said that if there were more Somali restaurants around downtown, she would go.
• **Sahra** said if she could, she would eat all day. She said she eats Somali food all the time (everything other than bagels).
• N: nothing mentioned in terms of localness of produce or environmental component. I believe participants took localness to mean in terms of localness of restaurants/shops or they understand the question that way.
• If there were more Somali restaurants, they said they would eat more Somali food. They would eat more if it was less expensive also. They said that they spend more on their cultural food than other cultures do.

**Q5: Participants were asked to rank the importance of Somali Food.**
• Participants were asked to rank the importance of Somali food on a scale of 1-5.
  • Sahra (5)
  • Somaya (4.5)
  • Edil (4) - if she were to eat Somali food all the time. More options are better (N1: is she referring to options of having Somali food, or having Somali food as well as other food?). She said her mother cooks lots of Somali food. options sometimes stuff leftover in food, eats (?) more (N: not sure what she meant here),
  • Everything is surrounded by food.
  • They may only eat Somali food at home
  • Pasta and rice in particular were mentioned as very important
  • Asha- 5. Because here area has no Somali food, she doesn't eat that much. At home she eats pasta and rice, but nothing like some of the other ones. don't have time to go get it etc.
  • Amal- Rexdale, kipling is like a little Somalia. There is lots of Somali culture etc, lots of stuff
  • Someone said that their family is 'fat'.
  • Hafso- 5
  • Laden- 5
  • Yasmin- 5
  • Samera- 5

Q6: Is Somali Food healthy?

• When this was said, many voices said a resounding “NOO”.
• Someone said, it could be healthy.
• Portions given are very big.
• Sahra rhetorically asked, if Somali food was available all the time, would we eat like that?
• Someone says there are very big portions with lots of leftovers
• Amal's mother told Amal that in Somalia, there's not a lot of produce, there is just salad. There is just carbs and meat and a little bit of salad, which is why it is so unhealthy. The cooking process too is unhealthy.
• Amal mentioned her mom has diabetes and discusses health concerns. She said how the way Somali food and Somali cooking in general adds to it.
• Yasmin said there is lots of stuff with oil, and lots of stuff with sugar.
• Asha said she is changing and trying to be more healthy. (N1: she was born here in Canada).
• Discussion of the food Halvah, which is 'all sugar'. Asha can't even eat it, she might eat a little bit of it.
• Asha said you have to give big portions to people. Discussion of respect occurs here- it’s respectful to give big portions.
• Hafso- Out of everyone, her dad is supposed to be served the most amount of meat. Otherwise it is disrespectful. (N: it is a show of respect to give men more food, particularly meat)
• In Somalia, people exercise, people walk everywhere. Here in Canada, there is not as much walking, people are more stationary.
• There are comment(s) of Somalis (N: older Somalis?) having arthritis, hypertension, and diabetes concerns.
• Hafso said her mom and such people are changing to be more healthy
• Hafso- said she eats less, but health wise changes, that's about it.
• In Africa, people do more exercise than here.
• Discussion of walking. If walking by yourself, it is harder to do.
• Someone mentioned that the people here are more aware of their health- they purposely walk more more and eat less.
• In a discussion of walking by yourself, Sahra said she feels unsafe. Edil disagrees and feels safe. Participants discussed feeling more comfortable in a group.

Q7: Health Benefits of Somali Food.

• Someone mentioned bananas.
• Someone mentioned that there is protein and iron in meat. Someone said meat is good for you (N: may have been same comment)
• Someone said Somali food has a lot of sugar and oil (which was perceived by the group to be unhealthy).
• Gathered that there was a general consensus that could be summed up as a 'no' it is not healthy.

Q8: Discussion of importance of Somali food having everyday.

• Discussion of if they don't eat their cultural food, then their children will lose it. It's culture! Eating this food is important for keeping of their culture from dying off.
• Someone said it is nice to have a piece of 'home' here by having Somali food

Q9: Where do you go shopping for getting all your Groceries?

• During this question, they said that their parents are the ones who buy food. They also said that there is no one store where they buy their food.
• No Frills was mentioned
• Sumaya said Sunny food mart. They have a halal place at Sunny food mart. Her mom makes Somali food she can make. Sumoya does not help with shopping, her mom buys the food.
• Edil buys food No Frills and some other places.
• Discussion of having to go to many different places to get food.
• Someone said you can get all Somali food at Kabool farm ( I think it was said by Yasmin). Sahra disagrees and says you can only get meat at Kabool farm.
• **Samara** - No Frills for bread, bananas and juice, Kabool Farm, Seff (meat, and some other things), Kabool farms because closer to house and can get meat and other stuff. But if want beans and what not, you must go to Sef's.
• Discussion of Costco.
• **Asha** - said price choppers, Vietnamese stores for vegetables, Kabool farms (mentioned meat, and mentioned it is expensive at Kabool farms).
• **Hafso** - said they get a big chunk of meat because it is not easy to find
• People resoundingly say they do not trust halal meat at No Frills.
• **Yasmin** - Comment regarding turkey breast and halal (N: I missed the comment what there relevance was, or if it was or was not halal).
• **Edil** - discussing about trusting the halal if it's from another Muslim.
• At Sef's, the owner is typically at the store. (N: I believe this tied into halal and trust. Having someone to talk about the meat may have helped to build trust.)

**Q10: How do you feel if you cannot find Somali Food?**

• If didn't get it, someone said a feeling of disappointment.
• Someone said, If there is a McDonalds on every corner, why shouldn't there also be Somali food?
• **Yasmin** said that it affects parents more than us in terms of if can't find Somali food. She also said that they are more 'modern' than their parents.
• Someone said that they would miss Somali food, but that there would be other foods to eat instead.
• Some people say they are not bothered if they can’t find Somali food.
• **Samara** said that if her intention is to go out to eat Somali food at a restaurant, she would be disappointed if she cannot find it.
Key Informant Interview Questions

School of Environmental Design and Rural Development

University of Guelph

Food Sovereignty and Refugee Path Immigrants

Key Informant Interview Questions

Interviewer:

Date:

Time:

Location:

ID:

A. Expenditure on Cultural Foods
   1. Do you eat a significant amount of cultural foods in your household?
   2. If Yes, why?
   3. Where do you get these cultural foods consumed in your household?
   4. List the qualities that you like in your cultural foods, if any?
   5. Are you satisfied with the quality of cultural foods supplied in your area? Please explain your answer.
   6. What quality improvements would you like to see in the various cultural foods supplied in your area?
   7. In your preferred order of priority list the cultural foods that you purchased often (1= most preferred, 4 = least preferred):
      1.   2.   3.   4.

B. Consumption of Culturally Appropriate Foods
   1. Have you eaten any of your cultural food in the last 12 months?
   2. If no, why didn’t eat your preferred cultural food?
   3. How much do you spend on your cultural foods in a month?
   4. Where do you purchase your cultural foods? Why?
   5. Which attributes are important to you when you decide to purchase cultural foods?
   6. Are you willing to pay more for your cultural foods?
7. Do you grow cultural foods for your own consumption? Please give examples.

C. Health Implications
1. Rate your own general health according to these categories.
   a. Poor; b. Fair; c. Good; d. Very good; e. Excellent
2. Do you have any long term disabilities, physical, mental or health problems that limit the amount of activity you participate in?
3. Do you have any other long term health conditions?
4. Do you think eating your cultural foods has health implications?
5. If Yes, what are the implications?

D. Background Information
1. Residential Area:
2. Ethnicity
3. Time spent in Canada
4. Country of Birth:
5. Other countries of residence (with years spent) before Canada:

E. Personal Characteristics of Respondent:
1. Age of respondent:
2. Sex:
3. Marital status:
4. Highest educational attainment
5. Occupation:
6. Number of people in the household:
7. Annual Household income
8. Mode of entry to the country (resettlement, refugee claimant, family sponsorship, etc)
Questionnaire Questions

School of Environmental Design and Rural Development
Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph

Questionnaire Schedule on Food Sovereignty and Refugee Path Immigrants

A. Expenditure

1. Do you consume a significant amount of culturally appropriate food in your household (please check one)?
   - Yes
   - No

2. If Yes, why?

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

3. What is the source of the food consumed in your household? Please check any box that applies below.
   - My farm
   - Farmers’ market
   - Supermarket
   - Ethnic grocery store

4. Out of the household monthly income, what approximate percentage do you devote to purchasing food in general? Please check one box below.
   - more than 25%
   - 15% -24%
   - Less than 14%
5. Out of the total amount spent on food what approximate percentage do you spend on your cultural foods?


6. List the qualities that you appreciate in your cultural foods, if any?


7. Are you satisfied with the quality of your foods supplied in your area (check one)?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don’t Know

8. If No, why are you not satisfied?


9. What quality improvements would you like to see in the various foods supplied to your area?


10. In your preferred order of priority list the foods that you purchased often (please circle 1 = most preferred, 4 = least preferred): 1.  2.  3.  4.


11. Name a few cultural foods that you like but are very difficult to get in the area where you live?


12. Do you think eating cultural foods has health implications (please check one)?

☐ Yes
☐ No
13. If Yes, what are the implications?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

B. Consumption of Ethno-Cultural (CULTURAL FOODS) Foods

1. Have you purchased any of your CULTURAL FOODS in the last 12 months (please check one)?
   - Yes
   - No

2. If No, why didn’t you purchase your preferred ethnic food?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. How much do you spend on your CULTURAL FOODS in a month?

________________________________________________________________________

4. Where do you purchase your CULTURAL FOODS?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5. Why do you purchase your CULTURAL FOODS from the place(s) indicated above?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6. What portion of your CULTURAL FOODS are purchased in a typical Canadian grocery store? Please check one box below.
   - more than 50%
   - 25% -49%
   - Less than 24%
7. List 10 CULTURAL FOODS that you usually purchase and the amount you pay per week/month:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amount (CAD)/Week</th>
<th>Amount (CAD)/Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

8. How important are the following attributes in deciding to purchase CULTURAL FOODS:
(Circle one option for each attribute)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attributes</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Neither important nor unimportant</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Very unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Store Availability</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection of cultural foods</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Origin of food</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of production</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taste</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preservation method</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grown in Ontario</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to cook</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Versatility</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicinal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9. Are you willing to pay more for CULTURAL FOODS?

☐ Yes
☐ No

10. If yes, why are you willing to pay more for CULTURAL FOODS?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

11. How important is the place of purchase of cultural foods in your expenditure decisions?
   (circle one option for each location)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Neither important nor unimportant</th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Very unimportant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic outlets</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grown in local farms</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organically grown</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetically modified</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labelled according to country of origin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supermarkets</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imported from home</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Do you think advertisement can play a role in your decision to purchase cultural foods?

☐ Yes
☐ No
13. If Yes, which type of advertisement will affect your decision to purchase an ethno cultural foods?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

14. Do you grow cultural foods for your consumption?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

15. If Yes, which foods do you grow?

_____________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________

16. Are you a vegetarian?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

**C. Acculturation**

Please indicate whether you strongly agree (5) or disagree (1) with these statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy speaking English</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of my friends are Canadians</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy English language movies and TV programmes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t identify</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
D. Background Information

1. Residential Area:

2. Somali identity:

3. Years spent in Canada:

4. Country of Birth:

5. Other countries of residence:

6. Number of years spent outside Somali (as a refugee):

E. Personal Characteristics of Respondent

1. Age of respondent:

2. Sex:
3. Marital Status (Please check one box below):

- [ ] Married
- [ ] Single
- [ ] Divorced
- [ ] Widowed

4. Highest Educational Attainment (Please check one box below):

- [ ] No formal Education
- [ ] Primary School
- [ ] High School
- [ ] College Diploma
- [ ] University Degree

5. Occupation (Please indicate your occupation and income):
   (a) Full-time:   Monthly Income:
   (b) Part-time:   Monthly Income:

6. Number of People in the Household:

Q11: in terms of policies and practices, what would you change?

- More places need to be opened.
- These places need to be governed, for certain standards of what they give as well as their prices. (N: referring to Somali owned venues). Someone mentions that if the Somalis serving is not from your tribe, they can lack trust, about if this is really the price of the food and the right portions. Majority of people disagreed about this comment, there was one strong voice on this, and one person backing it up.
- **Ladan** says tribe does not affect portions of size given.
- There is then a disagreement between participants, about weather tribe matters for this. Just one participant, **Sahra**, said that tribe does matter for this.
- **Asha** said she thinks that “we” should teach more people about Somali food. If everyone knew about it, more stores could be opened, such as is the case with Indian food.
- Someone said taste depends all on how you cook the food.
- Someone said you cannot really import meat (N1: said while discussing locality)
- Someone said the brand of rice is important.
• N1: doesn't seem like local produced food is as important, or at least it's not discussed.
• In terms of shopping, Samara said goes once a week on Sunday for all her Somali food (N: likely referring to her family going once a week).
• Others say, they/their families buy food in big amounts, often less often than once a week.
• Amal said she doesn't know what policies suggest...more things that are appealing to youth...if we could could have just on Somali restaurant here in neighbourhood of Ryerson it would be nice.
• N1: Everyone seems to love Somali food.
• Edil said we should open more stores. If we open a bunch of stores, we have to teach them how to cook it. Ex, for meat with Somali food there are not different types of how to cook it, it is all fully cooked.
• In preparing the meat, it has to be fully cooked
• Samara- if could have delivery could be nice to get it, for convenience
• Ladan mentions that there is a Somali food truck on wheels in Toronto. None of the participants seem to have tried this food truck

Q12: Discussion of cooking Somali food

• Edil- says some things she knows how to cook, and some she does not know how to cook.
• Some of the participants at the focus group get taught recipes, mostly mothers make the food.
• Only when they get married do they learn how to really cook.
• Generally everyone knows how to make rice and pasta (the participant who told Morgan this also mentioned the influence of the Italian colonization when talking about the pasta).

Notes:

• At some point in focus group (or before it had started), there was a discussion of Kumba, which is a coconut bar. This is possibly similar to coconut flakes (N: not sure for sure if this is what was said). You buy it from a sweet store. Lots of the participants seem to like it. Ladan was not familiar with it.