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**Learning from the past? An exploratory study of familial food socialization processes using the lens of emotional reflexivity**

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## Learning from the past? An exploratory study of familial food socialization processes using the lens of emotional reflexivity

### Abstract

**Purpose:** This paper aims to explore the parental role in children's food socialization. More specifically, it explores how the legacy of the past (i.e. experiences from the participant's own childhood) work to inform how they, in turn, socialize their own children within the context of food, drawing on theories of consumer socialization, intergenerational influence and emotional reflexivity.

**Design/methodology/approach:** To seek further understanding of how temporal elements of intergenerational influence persist (through the lens of emotional reflexivity), the authors collected qualitative, interpretative data from thirty parents from the UK using a combination of existential-phenomenological interviews, photo-elicitation techniques and accompanied grocery shopping trips (observational interviews).

**Findings:** Through intergenerational reflexivity, parents are found to make a conscious effort to either 'sustain' or 'disregard' particular food practices learnt from the previous generation with their children (abandoning or mimicking the behaviours of their own parents within the context of food socialization). The factors contributing to the disregarding of food behaviours (new influencer, self-learning and resistance to parental power) emerge. A continuum of parents is identified, ranging from the 'traditionalist' to 'improver' and the 'revisionist'.

**Originality/value:** By adopting a unique approach in exploring the dynamic of intergenerational influence through the lens of emotional reflexivity, this study highlights the importance of the parental role in socializing children about food; and how intergenerational reflexivity helps inform parental food socialization practices. The intergenerational reflexivity of parents is, thus, deemed to be crucial in the socialization process.

**Keywords** Family, Food Socialization, Intergenerational Influence, Emotional Reflexivity, Parents, Children

**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

Given that ‘the family’ is considered to be *the* primary consumption and socialization unit (O’Malley and Prothero, 2006) with early familial socialization influences shaping consumption patterns throughout our lifetime (Marshall and O’Donohoe, 2010; Kerrane *et al.*, 2014), understanding how the family influences children’s socialization into particular patterns of consumption remains a significant topic of interest. Several studies highlight that parents play a major role in developing children’s eating behaviours because parents are the most powerful socialization agents for young children, especially surrounding food practices (Dotson and Hyatt, 2005; Marshall *et al.*, 2007; Peters *et al.*, 2014). As food consumption is considered to be the very first consumer skill that parents develop in their children (Hughner and Maher, 2006), understanding how parents shape children’s food consumption is an important topic that needs further exploration (Marshall *et al.*, 2007; Grier and Moore, 2012; Russell and Worsley, 2013).

This paper draws on the concept of emotional reflexivity (Holmes, 2010; 2015) to forge a deeper understanding of how parents shape the food socialization of their children within the family setting. Emotional reflexivity “refers to the intersubjective interpretation of one’s own and others’ emotions and how they are enacted” (Holmes, 2015, p. 61) and offers useful guidelines to parents to either *continue* or *discontinue* their own parents’ food practices with their children (through intergenerational influence). Emotional reflexivity, thus, allows individuals to navigate a “new path”, representing a useful theoretical lens through which to explore how the actions and legacy of the *previous* generation work to inform *current* food socialization processes, as played out by parents.

Although intergenerational influence and the transfer of consumption practices from one generation to the next have been explored within the context of consumer socialization, signifying its importance for the consumer market, (Carlson *et al.*, 1994; Moore *et al.*, 2001; Epp and Price, 2008), calls have been made for further research which explores *how* such intergenerational influence is conveyed (Moore *et al.*, 2002). Drawing on the recent work of Moore *et al.* (2017), who highlight the relative scarcity of studies which explore how temporal elements (*‘persistence vs. change’*) of intergenerational influence shape food consumption decisions, we seek to answer the

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3 following research question: “*are today’s parents drawing from what they learned as*  
4 *children from their parents*” (Moore *et al.*, 2017, p. 846) within their own food  
5 socialization practices?  
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### 10 **Food socialization and parents**

11 Introduced by Ward (1974), consumer socialization represents processes by which  
12 children acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes relevant to their functioning as  
13 consumers in the marketplace. *Food socialization* specifically refers to how  
14 consumers learn to consume food and its cultural role regarding food well-being  
15 (Block *et al.*, 2011), with family food socialization “the process by which parents’  
16 preferences, beliefs, and attitudes toward food shape their children’s food-related  
17 beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, preferences, and consumption, which in turn influence  
18 eating behaviours” (Nicklas *et al.*, 2009, p. 227). Studies highlight that food  
19 socialization begins during our childhood years, fostering the formation of  
20 consumption practices which endure throughout our lifetime (Ward, 1974; Moschis  
21 and Churchill, 1978; Birch and Fisher, 1998; Ekström, 2006; Block *et al.*, 2011).  
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30 Although children might obtain food consumption skills from several  
31 socialization agents (i.e. family, peers, school, and mass media), *parents* are the most  
32 powerful socialization agent and play the most significant role regarding the  
33 formation of children’s food consumption skills (Moschis and Churchill, 1978;  
34 Moschis and Moore, 1979; Dotson and Hyatt, 2005; Hughner and Maher, 2006).  
35 Parents assume the role of teacher when interacting with their offspring (Lawlor and  
36 Prothero, 2011) and act as the policymakers of the home (Hughner and Maher, 2006)  
37 and gatekeepers of their children’s purchasing (White and Davis, 2006); controlling  
38 and making specific food available to them (Hughner and Maher, 2006; Marshall *et*  
39 *al.*, 2007).  
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47 Attitudes of parents regarding food consumption subtly influence children’s  
48 food exposure and their diet preferences through parental food practices and role  
49 modelling behaviours (Wardle, 1995). Parents’ attitudes and practices affect not only  
50 the food available in the household, but also the food portions, timing, and emotions  
51 associated with the social context of mealtime experiences (Birch *et al.*, 2001). As  
52 such, parents are likely to play a crucial role in forming food consumption practices,  
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3 as well as food preferences, of their children (Hughner and Maher, 2006; Ayadi and  
4 Bree, 2010; Judd *et al.*, 2014). However, studies regarding parental influence on  
5 children's knowledge and attitudes relating to food consumption remain somewhat  
6 limited (Marshall *et al.*, 2007; Grier and Moore, 2012; Pedersen *et al.*, 2012; Russell  
7 and Worsley, 2013).  
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### 11 12 13 ***Intergenerational influence and food socialization***

14 Intergenerational influence can be primarily defined as the information, beliefs, and  
15 resources that are transmitted from one generation to another within the family unit  
16 (Moore *et al.*, 2001, 2002). Embedded within consumer socialization,  
17 intergenerational influence/transfer is an interesting and important topic to study  
18 (Carlson *et al.*, 1994; Moore *et al.*, 2001; Epp and Price, 2008), with socialization  
19 theories suggesting that familial consumption attitudes and beliefs endure and stay  
20 with children as they grow older (Birch and Fisher, 1998; Birch *et al.*, 2007; Marshall  
21 and O'Donohoe, 2010). The effects of intergenerational influence tend to erode,  
22 however, after the first few years one leaves home when faced with new consumption  
23 settings, posing an interesting question in the dynamic of intergenerational influence  
24 when ones move away from our first family setting (Moore *et al.*, 2002, 2017).  
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34 Whilst previous studies have explored intergenerational influence in the  
35 context of consumption, including studies of the intergenerational transfer of brand  
36 preferences (Moore *et al.*, 2002), shopping habits of mothers/daughters (Grønhøj and  
37 Thøgersen, 2009), and transfers of pro-environmental behaviors (Minahan and  
38 Huddleston, 2010), *further* exploration of intergenerational influence within consumer  
39 research has been called for as several questions (such as *are today's parents drawing*  
40 *from what they learned as children from their parents in their own familial*  
41 *socialization behaviours?*) remain unaddressed (Moore *et al.*, 2002, 2017).  
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48 It is proposed that the forces that shape familial food socialization practices  
49 can be contemporaneous whilst simultaneously having historical links (Judd *et al.*,  
50 2014). That is, current consumption practices and behaviours can be drawn from the  
51 practices employed by previous generations. Recognising the importance of the  
52 family's legacy within early family experiences, studies are needed that explore the  
53 intergenerational influence on food socialization practices (Judd *et al.*, 2014; Kerrane  
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3 *et al.*, 2014). Within the discipline of nutrition, the transfer of food taste and food  
4 preferences from parents to children has been examined (see, for example, Kral and  
5 Rauh, 2010), signifying that the transfer of food preferences is valuable and  
6 considered as part of the socialization process. However, relatively little consumer  
7 research has given attention to exploring intergenerational influence in the context of  
8 food consumption, with the work of Gram, Hogg, Blichfeldt, and MacLaran (2015)  
9 and Moore *et al.* (2017) notable exceptions. In their recent work exploring the links  
10 between parental role and childhood obesity, Moore *et al.* (2017) highlight dynamic  
11 aspects of intergenerational transfer as representing promising opportunities for future  
12 research. They discuss temporal elements (*persistence* or *change* in familial food  
13 consumption) within the dynamic of intergenerational influence as an important  
14 future research area that can help expand our understanding of intergenerational  
15 influence processes (Moore *et al.*, 2017).

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Within consumer research, knowledge of intergenerational influence often focuses on whether the intergenerational influences exists (Moore, 2010); but studies that explore whether intergenerational influence endures throughout adulthood, especially the temporal dimensions of intergenerational influence (i.e. whether parents draw from the practices they learned when they were children), are limited and represent an essential direction for further study (Moore *et al.*, 2001, 2017).

### ***Intergenerational/emotional reflexivity***

Theories of reflexivity relate to the process in which one acts or alters one's practices in response to existing knowledge of the situation one finds himself/herself in (Holmes, 2010, 2015). Emotional reflexivity is suggested to evolve from traditional reflexivity in that self-reflection and feelings are thought to be encapsulated in a reflexive process (Holmes, 2010, 2015), constituted in interactive relations with others. As Holmes (2010) argues, reflection and emotion are at the heart of the reflexive process, which governs how an individual thinks, feels and performs (as influenced, in our context, by the generation before). Emotion entangles the ways we monitor our behaviours and informs how we make life choices - and as such, cannot be detached from the process of reflexivity (Burkitt, 2012).

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3 Tradition impacts the way people make sense of their lives (Adkins, 2000;  
4 Gross, 2005). Previously, theories of reflexivity have predominantly focused on the  
5 ways people monitor and make changes to their lives using their knowledge about  
6 new circumstances, in which people often deal with unknown circumstances through  
7 which they are not able to rely on past routines, customs and traditions (Giddens,  
8 1990). Theories of reflexivity, therefore, focus primarily on de-traditionalisation and  
9 risk as a result of the difficulty in making decisions within an uncertain modern world  
10 (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1990, 1992). However, traditional reflexivity theorists have  
11 largely ignored the roles other people play in shaping (one's own) reflexivity (Burkitt,  
12 2012); and have detached the concept of self-reflection from reflexivity, particularly  
13 when one comes to understand one's self, the meaning of one's actions and one's  
14 biographical narrative. Traditional theories of reflexivity are thus too 'individualistic'  
15 and 'rationalistic' as they set aside emotion from the process of reflexivity (Burkitt,  
16 2012, p.464). Holmes (2010, 2015) stresses that emotional reflexivity is vital in the  
17 process of social reproduction, yet little direct research attention has been paid to  
18 emotional reflexivity. Similarly, Mason (2004, p. 167) suggests that studies of how  
19 individuals "reflect in distinctive ways upon their experiences ... with others, as well  
20 as their sense of self" through emotional reflexivity are missing from the existing  
21 literature.  
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34 In relation to parenting, emotional reflexivity has been used (implicitly) to  
35 explain how parents draw on "emotions to navigate their path, especially when facing  
36 new situations or ways of living" (Holmes, 2015, p. 61). Reflection on the past (i.e.  
37 the roles/actions of their own parents) infuse actions and behaviours of the present.  
38 Support exists, for example, to suggest that the parental style an individual adopts is  
39 likely shaped and influenced by the role played by his/her own parent(s) (see, for  
40 example, Carlson *et al.*, 1994). A recent study of new fatherhood, as one illustration  
41 of this, shows how men actively reject the outdated breadwinner model of fatherhood  
42 enacted by their own fathers (described as emotionally stoic and detached) in their  
43 pursuit of the more emotionally present, 'involved father' role (Bettany *et al.*, 2014).  
44 Emotion is thus entangled in how we behave and must be studied from within  
45 consciousness (Denzin, 1984). Reflecting on thoughts and feelings can lead to  
46 changes in behaviours, such as the propensity for parents to reflect on how their own  
47 parents parented – using this as a temporal and emotional barometer to inform how  
48 they would like to parent their offspring.  
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3 Our understanding of the parental role as the most influential socialization  
4 agent for young children in forming consumption practices (e.g. Moschis and  
5 Churchill, 1978; Dotson and Hyatt, 2005; Hughner and Maher, 2006), combined with  
6 the knowledge that intergenerational influence exists and permeates life decisions  
7 (Moore *et al.*, 2002), provides us with the initial point to explore how parents teach  
8 their children about food through the impact of intergenerational influence (i.e.  
9 whether food patterns parents learned as children from their parents endure, and are  
10 subsequently enacted or disregarded by parents with their own children).

11 We highlight the following research gaps; first, there is a lack of  
12 understanding of how parents form/shape the food practices of their children  
13 (Marshall *et al.*, 2007; Grier and Moore, 2012; Russell and Worsley, 2013), especially  
14 in terms of how parents inform children's healthy eating behaviours (Ayadi and Bree,  
15 2010; Pedersen *et al.*, 2012); second, there is a need to study temporal dimensions  
16 within the process of intergenerational influence in terms of understanding how  
17 parents draw from their past learning experiences about food in connection to their  
18 current consumer socialization of their own children (Moore *et al.*, 2017); and,  
19 finally, there is a lack of studies that directly utilise emotional reflexivity to help  
20 understand food choice and preferences (Holmes, 2010, 2015; Burkitt, 2012). This  
21 study, thus, seeks to further explore the parental role in shaping the process of  
22 children's food socialization, exploring the legacy of intergenerational influence  
23 through the lens of emotional reflexivity.

## 40 **Methodology**

41 We adopt a qualitative, interpretative approach to data collection and draw on data  
42 collected through *existential phenomenological interviews*, *photo elicitation*  
43 *techniques/a (food) diary keeping task* as well as *accompanied grocery-shopping trips*  
44 with parents to understand their food socialization behaviours and motivations. Such  
45 an approach to data collection aligns with Moore *et al.*'s (2002) proposition that  
46 studies of intergenerational influence are best explored through qualitative  
47 methodologies, with Holmes (2015) advocating the use of interviewing to obtain  
48 greater insight into emotional reflexivity.

49 Thirty parents who self-identified as the primary food preparer for their family,  
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3 following Judd *et al.* (2014), took part in this study (see Table 1). Consistent with  
4 other studies of food socialization the majority of our participants are female/mothers  
5 (n=22), although a relatively small number of men/fathers opted in (n=8). We feel this  
6 reflects the growing presence of men in family life, food preparation and grocery  
7 shopping (see, for example, Cabrera *et al.*, 2000; Gram, 2015). It should be noted,  
8 however, that we refer to ‘parent-child’ relationships within our findings/discussion  
9 section (rather than mother-child/father-child in particular) despite the majority of our  
10 participants being mothers. Identifying gender differences between mothers/fathers is  
11 not the central focus of our study, which instead explores food socialization  
12 behaviours at a general level. However, we recognise that others (see Del Bucchia and  
13 Penaloza, 2016) have identified differences between mothers/fathers in the context of  
14 feeding the family, a theme that we return to within our directions for future research  
15 section.

24 Thus, parents (mothers *or* fathers) of younger children (less than 12 years old)  
25 were purposively recruited from the North West region of the United Kingdom.  
26 Parents of younger children were specifically recruited because parents exert the  
27 greatest influence on children until adolescence (where peers start to become more  
28 influential) (Moore and Moschis, 1980). At this age (up to 12 years old) influences on  
29 child consumption are largely contained to the family unit (John, 1999), with children  
30 likely to be closely supervised and food consumption dictated by parents (Birch *et al.*,  
31 2007). The participants were recruited through social media, nurseries and primary  
32 schools (places where young children were present). As parents are considered the  
33 gatekeepers of their child’s consumption, they can speak from their child’s point of  
34 view through their experiences of being closest to them (Marshall *et al.*, 2007)  
35 (although again, we recognise the need for future research which actively seeks the  
36 voice of children in studies of food consumption).

**Table 1:** Participant Profile Table

Name pseudonym	Gender	Number of children	Age of children	Occupation	Marital status	Emotions associated with intergenerational reflexivity
Abigail	Female	3	10, 12, & 21 years	Housewife	Married	Positive
Amy	Female	1	3 years	Administrator	Married	Positive/Negative
Claudia	Female	1	7 months	Lecturer	Married	Positive/Negative
Daisy	Female	1	1.5 years	High school teacher	Married	Positive/Negative
Ellie	Female	2	5 years - twins	Sales Assistant	Single	Positive/Negative
Fran	Female	2	9 & 6 years	Lecturer	Married	Positive/Negative
Fiona	Female	2	6 & 8 years	Housewife	Married	Positive
George	Male	1	20 months	Lecturer	Living with Partner	Positive
Ian	Male	3	12, 16, & 21 years	Lecturer	Divorced	Positive
Isabella	Female	2	4 & 7 years	Musician	Married	Positive
Jane	Female	2	9 & 15 years	Sabbatical	Married	Positive/Negative
Jennifer	Female	2	1 & 3 years	Housewife	Married	Positive/Negative
Jonathan	Male	2	5 & 7 years	Student	Married	Positive/Negative
Joy	Female	2	7 & 11 years	NHS Officer	Married	Positive/Negative
Kate	Female	1	12 years	Counsellor/Therapist	Single	Positive
Kayla	Female	1	4 years	HR Advisor	Married	Positive/Negative
Mary	Female	3	7, 12, & 15 years	Lecturer	Married	Positive/Negative
Max	Male	2	2 & 6 years	Lecturer	Married	Positive
Natalia	Female	2	4 & 6 years	Sales Assistant	Living with Partner	Positive/Negative
Natasha	Female	2	9 & 10 years	Student	Married	Negative
Nick	Male	1	2 years	Economist	Married	Positive/Negative
Naomi	Female	1	5 years	Housewife	Married	Positive
Olivia	Female	2	2 & 9 years	Housewife	Married	Positive/Negative
Pete	Male	1	4 years	Student	Married	Positive/Negative
Rachel	Female	1	4 years	Software Professional	Married	Positive
Ray	Male	1	4 years	Banker	Married	Positive/Negative
Rebecca	Female	1	3.5 years	Artist	Married	Negative
Sandra	Female	2	9 & 11 years	Cleaner	Married	Positive
Tony	Male	3	12, 21, & 26 years	Local Government Worker	Living with Partner	Negative
Wendy	Female	1	2 years	Housewife	Married	Positive/Negative

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3 Data collection comprised two main stages. The first stage consisted of *an*  
4 *existential-phenomenological interview*, best used when participants possess rich  
5 detail of a given topic (Thompson *et al.*, 1990), capable of capturing their emotions,  
6 knowledge, and thoughts (Belk *et al.*, 2013). The interview was conducted alongside  
7 a *photo-elicitation* technique using participant *photo diaries* which help bring out  
8 deeper human emotions than words/interview alone (Harper, 2002). Parents were  
9 asked to keep a photo diary (using their smartphones) of the food they prepared for  
10 their children, the food inside their kitchen cabinets, and the food inside their  
11 refrigerator over a one-week period. Parents were then asked to discuss the photos  
12 that they had taken at the beginning of their in-depth interview. Broad, open-ended  
13 questions were posed, exploring how parents thought they formed the food practices  
14 of their children and whether parents practised any food-related customs/behaviours  
15 with their children that they had learned as a child (through the policies of their own  
16 parents).

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28 The photo-elicitation interview holds great potential for food research due to  
29 its ability to elicit particular information that may be difficult to capture from other  
30 methods (Alm and Olsen, 2016). Clark-Ibáñez (2004) suggests that photo-elicitation  
31 helps the researcher gain access to the participant's home and life without the  
32 researcher physically being present, and, thus, creates a more intimate setting than a  
33 typical interview. The photographs from the photo diaries were used to help stimulate  
34 discussion during the in-depth interviews, a technique successfully utilised by others  
35 in the study of food consumption (Harman and Cappellini, 2014, 2015).

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41 The second stage of data collection involved *accompanied grocery-shopping*  
42 *trips*, which shed greater light on understanding the first-hand experiences of  
43 participants in their natural setting (Belk *et al.*, 2013). The participants were  
44 accompanied on one of their grocery-shopping trips after the first in-depth interview  
45 had taken place. Sunderland and Denny (2007) suggest that people feel more  
46 comfortable expressing their feelings in the appropriate setting (in this case, local  
47 supermarkets).

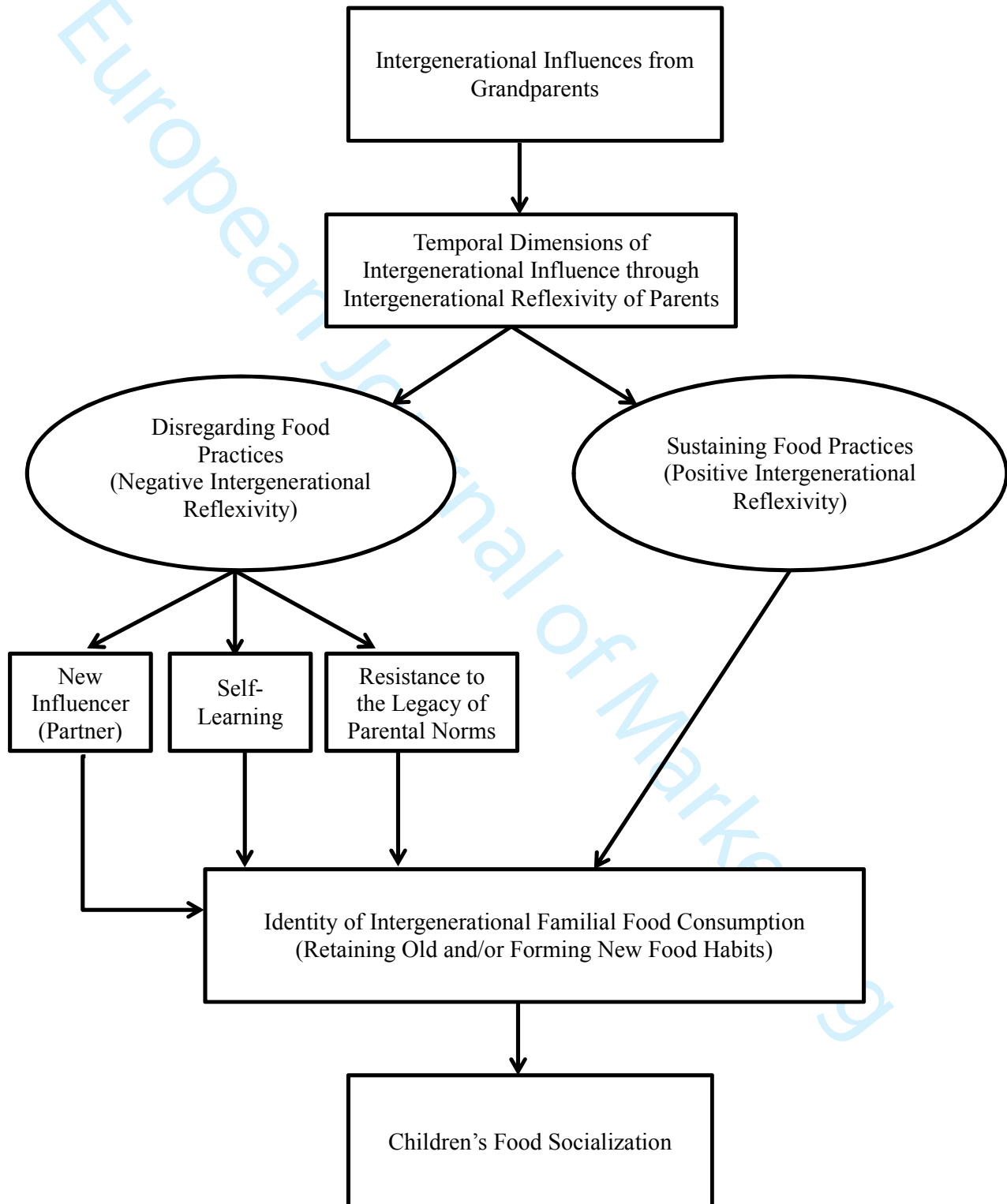
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53 The interviews were audio recorded with the consent of participants, and  
54 procedures were taken to ensure the ethical credibility of the research project.  
55 Interviews were transcribed verbatim, coded and analysed using Interpretative  
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3 Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), with IPA allowing the researcher to interpret the  
4 person's experience in a given phenomenon/context (Palmer *et al.*, 2010). IPA helps  
5 to explain the phenomenological stance on how people make sense of their lived  
6 experiences (Smith *et al.*, 2009; Braun and Clark, 2013). The food socialization  
7 stories we recount emerge from thirty participants, in which the development of  
8 emergent themes was completed for each participant before considering that of the  
9 next participant (Braun and Clark, 2013). Such a process ensures the idiographic  
10 focus of IPA (Smith *et al.*, 2009). The common patterns of distinct emergent themes  
11 across each participant were then compared, connected and mapped (Smith *et al.*,  
12 2009) to enhance a greater understanding of the parental role in children's food  
13 socialization processes.  
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## 24 Findings

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26 Strong intergenerational reflexivity regarding previous food practices among parents  
27 emerged within the family stories (i.e. participants strongly reflected on the food  
28 practices that their parents performed when they were a child (and associated  
29 emotions) and carefully considered whether these were appropriate behaviours to  
30 enact with their children/their eating habits). Through intergenerational reflexivity,  
31 parents drew on emotions, ranging from love, respect and nostalgia, through to  
32 resentment, as associated/recalled from past experiences of food socialization as a  
33 child (during their primary socialization). Figure 1 depicts the emerging framework  
34 that highlights how parents experience intergenerational influence(s) in food  
35 consumption, guided by their intergenerational reflexivity. Parents are influenced by  
36 their own childhood food consumption experiences, acquiring values or norms in food  
37 consumption in the forms of habits that they reproduce or disregard with their  
38 children (Knight *et al.*, 2014). While participants tend to follow certain food habits  
39 ('*sustaining*' or '*reproducing patterns of behaviour*') as informed by their parents,  
40 they also tend to make conscious efforts not to practice other food habits  
41 ('*disregarding*' or '*dismissing patterns of behaviour*') that they have learned from  
42 their mother/father (with emotion strongly influencing whether such food  
43 practices/patterns are retained or abandoned).  
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**Figure 1:** The components of intergenerational reflexivity in familial food consumption



### **Disregarding food practices**

The food practices that participants recalled from their past (i.e. those performed by their parents when they were a child) worked to inform current food socialization practices with their own family/children. Participant's memories and past experiences as a child often provoked negative reflection which led to a different food socialization style being performed (in comparison with their parents). Our participants spoke with great animosity about some of the actions/food socialization behaviours undertaken by their own parents (e.g. the enforcement of overly strict table manners; the punitive role of cleaning their plates; being forced to eat food they did not like, or food now viewed as being unhealthy), with several participants actively rejecting their parent's food socialization style. Similarly, other factors (e.g. the presence of a new influencer (their spouse) or self-learning) also led to disregarding the food practices of the previous generation.

### ***Resistance to the legacy of parental norms***

Many participants recalled that they did not like being forced by their parents to eat food that they disliked as a child. Participants who recall such experiences (which resonates with Lupton, 1994) do not want to perform the same patterns/food socialization styles with their own children ("*Why would I like to be so Victorian, so strict, like them?*"). In a study of intergenerational relations, Knight, Connell, and Brannen (2014) propose that the struggling of power between parents' attempts to control the child's consumption, and the child's resistance to that power through refusing to eat food, has a lasting effect from the past to the current intergenerational relationship ("*I look back and think my God, no! They forced me to eat that muck? I'll never be like that with my kids ... I can never forgive them for doing that?*").

The reflections of the past of being forced to eat food they did not like has not only triggered a feeling of dislike, but also reminds participants of having less-power status at that (childhood) time ("*It makes me feel so passive; my children are a lot more involved in the food choices I offer them*" and "*It stirs up feelings of being sick, of feeling sick, and pretty much being force-fed food that made me vomit*"). Thus, such relationships create negative feelings associated with intergenerational influence

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3 in this context of food consumption. Natalia, for example, recalls that her mother was  
4 “quite strict” and would make her “sit there to eat everything ... but with these two  
5 [children], I don’t wanna be like that. I want to make it different”. Similarly, Jennifer  
6 equally recalls that there were lots of food that she disliked as a child, yet she was  
7 forced to clean her plate: “I absolutely hate them for doing that to me”. Thus, Jennifer  
8 does not force her own children to finish any food that they dislike. Similarly, Fran  
9 also shares that when she was growing up meal times were “very formal”,  
10 commenting that she is much more relaxed with her own children as a consequence:  
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17 *“Oh God, no, my parents were quite Victorian. ... When I was growing up in*  
18 *the 1970s dinner was very formalised. You know, it was that whole kind of you*  
19 *don’t put your elbows on the table, you don’t do this, and you don’t do that.*  
20 *And the role of children in our society was far more strongly controlled in*  
21 *terms of behaviour whereas I’m oh for God’s sake, if you want to put your*  
22 *elbows on the table, you go ahead. I’m much more relaxed”.*  
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26 The examples above demonstrate that emotional reflexivity opens the space to  
27 challenge the restrictive table manners and unpleasant food rituals/rules of the past, in  
28 which reflexivity goes beyond mere self-reflection. The participants alter their  
29 previous practices according to their own reasoning, based on recalled emotions and  
30 the emotions of others (i.e. their own children’s welfare and emotional wellbeing).  
31 Thus, they are taking the conscious choice of not forcing their children to eat what  
32 they dislike/to clean their plates even when they hate the taste of the food offered to  
33 them (“It was like some kind of prison; eat this, and eat it all, or there would be  
34 punishments”). Parents clearly treated certain habits of the previous generation as a  
35 past mistakes, derived from the negative feelings associated with intergenerational  
36 influence during the reflexive process.  
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44 As a final example to this section of our findings, Rebecca’s father would  
45 allow her to eat “whatever you want in the trolley” during grocery-shopping trips  
46 (often sweets, chocolates and fizzy drinks); and he would put sweets in a cupboard  
47 underneath the stairs that were freely available to her, using what he labelled a  
48 “naughty box”. The negative connotation associated with the word “naughty” implies  
49 that her father knew that those sweets were bad/were unhealthy for her – and Rebecca  
50 now has great feelings of guilt in consuming such unhealthy products as a child.  
51 Whereas it could be argued that contemporary parents are more literate in terms of the  
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3 ideal nutritional intake of their children than the previous generation (see Hart *et al.*,  
4 2015), depicting a recent trend towards “healthism” which encourages personal  
5 responsibility for health through the rise of a healthy eating agenda (Delaney and  
6 McCarthy, 2014), here Rebecca’s father openly acknowledges the unhealthy traits of  
7 the food in the “naughty” box yet does not restrict her access to them. Rebecca, then,  
8 perceives this as a bad, guilty habit - and she is clear that she does not want to emulate  
9 such a practice with her own child: “*My dad was terrible ... don’t do what my dad*  
10 *did*”.

### 19 ***Self-learning***

21 Participants who disregard their parent’s “negative” food practices/teaching seek  
22 *new* food practices, which are more attractive and rewarding in their parenting role.  
23 The significant alterations/disruption in daily consumption routines come from  
24 learning that there are *other* eating habits beyond the norms learned from home as a  
25 young child (Moore *et al.*, 2002). Tony, for example, is highly critical of the poor  
26 feeding style of his parents – particularly his mother, who he describes as an  
27 “*appalling cook*” - who would frequently offer him “*chips and convenience food*”,  
28 fostering a “*very poor attitude to food*”. Tony has made it his priority to enact a  
29 ‘better’ style of parenting with his own children, taking charge of the family’s meal  
30 preparations and embracing vegetarianism to ensure that his children eat good,  
31 nutritious meals:  
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40 “*My mother ... she just can’t cook. She was from an Irish family, and so you*  
41 *boiled potatoes, or you chipped potatoes, that’s all you did. But my children*  
42 *now have experienced a whole wide variety of food and loved all food, and we*  
43 *eat anything so long as it’s not lived ... And then once I started eating food I*  
44 *just loved it, and then I had kids, I started to enjoy food more and more*  
45 *because I had kids and I had to feed them ... I’ve been cooking a long time.*  
46 *The food of my childhood is non-existent in my life now”.*  
47

48 Tony highlights the heightened connection between “*eating properly*” (almost having  
49 a culinary epiphany since moving away from his parent’s influence) and becoming a  
50 father, and “*having*” to feed his children in a “*proper*” way. Articulating strong  
51 intensive parenting ideology (Hays, 1996) – of ‘caring about’ his children through  
52 ‘caring for’ them (DeVault, 1991) - Tony scorns the lacklustre food socialization style  
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3 of his parents, particularly his mother.

4 Similarly, Natasha recalls that she had to teach herself how to eat healthily  
5 when she left home, with literature suggesting that the most significant erosion of  
6 intergenerational influences occurs when one leaves home (Beck and Jennings, 1991;  
7 Moore *et al.*, 2001; Gram *et al.*, 2015). Natasha negatively expressed that she does not  
8 want to pass on the “*strange food habits*” of her parents to her own children. Natasha  
9 chooses “*not to carry on*” her mother’s routine of baking cakes and providing  
10 unhealthy, sugar-laden desserts after every meal to her children (because she has  
11 learned that sweet food is not good for the body):

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19 *“This’s gonna sound really awful. But, I guess I was quite critical when I was*  
20 *a teenager. My mum, she’s not slim. She’s quite heavy, and I must have looked*  
21 *at her as a teenager and thought if I continue eating like you, then my body is*  
22 *the same ... I started to cut down on certain things. So, I learned what works*  
23 *with my body, and I know that I need to exercise and I now know that I need to*  
24 *eat healthily”.*  
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28 Natasha wants to make a positive change in her eating routines and those of  
29 her children. Many participants questioned the actions of their parents (“*What on*  
30 *earth were they thinking, feeding us all that? They were hardly good parents*”) and  
31 recalled with remorse perceived deficiencies in their parent’s parental style (“*It was*  
32 *like they couldn’t care less about us and what we ate*”). Natasha purchased many  
33 books when her children were babies because she wanted to make sure that they had  
34 “*the right food*” and did not consume “*all the sweet fruits early on*”. Equally, Olivia  
35 comments that she ate lots of fatty meat as a child because her mother thought fat was  
36 nutritious; and Olivia has since changed her own family’s diet to consume less fat  
37 because of her new food knowledge.  
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45 Such examples signify how emotion is at the core of the process of reflexivity,  
46 in which reasoning (i.e. the need to establish healthier eating practices to develop  
47 greater wellbeing for their own children) is highly valued during the interpretation of  
48 emotions – with participants highlighting feelings of being “*uncared for*” during (in  
49 their eyes) deficient childhood eating experiences. The above examples help  
50 demonstrate that *self-learning* can be one potential force of disruption within the  
51 process of intergenerational influence (Moore *et al.*, 2002), facilitated through the  
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3 greater social capital, increased travel and greater availability of food products to the  
4 younger generation of parents recruited (a point we later develop).  
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### 8 9 *New influencer*

10 Intergenerational consumption practices, as discussed, tend to alter when there is a  
11 change in family structure, such as when a family member joins/departs the family  
12 (Moore *et al.*, 2001). This leaves some potential for the legacy of intergenerational  
13 influence to change and new behaviours to emerge/be introduced. The most  
14 powerful new influencer in intergenerational food consumption patterns is the  
15 presence of a *spouse* or *partner*. Moore *et al.* (2002) consider new influencer as a  
16 significant potential force for the interruption of intergenerational influence.  
17 Participants expressed that changes in food consumption habits also came about  
18 through discussion with their partner (where present) in respect to how to alter or  
19 adjust their previous food practices (at a combined level).  
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28 Our participants acknowledge that when their partner/spouse joins their  
29 family, the partner/spouse brings with him/her a different set of food consumption  
30 patterns. Claudia, for example, shows that she has adjusted her diet from being a  
31 meat-eater to eating vegetarian meals because her husband is vegetarian; however,  
32 the legacy of her parent's primary socialization actions (as carnivores) does endure,  
33 and Claudia occasionally offers her daughter meat when her husband is away from  
34 the family home:  
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40 *“If I am on my own, I do it the way my parents would do it. If my husband is*  
41 *there, because he's out during the day, we do have the main meal in the*  
42 *evening. My partner is vegetarian. So, we don't normally cook with meat. But,*  
43 *she [daughter] does get it now and then when we are out just the two of us.*  
44 *And, I have the meal with meat, for example”.*  
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48 We recognise, however, that we are reliant on the voice of the primary food preparer  
49 captured within our study. Whereas our data highlights the dynamic at play between  
50 parent-child, the dynamic between parents in terms of which childhood eating  
51 practices are to become “household policy” in adulthood need further exploration.  
52 With Claudia's case, for example, she likes the food she ate as a child, yet the legacy  
53 of her husband's family/beliefs dominate. Although others show that mothers often  
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3 assume a subservient position in feeding the family (DeVault, 1991), we interpret  
4 Claudia's example as part labour-saving practice. Although Claudia admits she would  
5 rather cook meat-based meals, providing vegetarian dishes for her family (which they  
6 will all eat) avoids preparing two separate meal choices.  
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9 Likewise, Tony, who became a vegetarian when he was twenty-four years old,  
10 shares that he started to learn about eating a healthy variety of vegetables because of  
11 his partner's influence (coupled with his dissatisfaction with his own parent's eating  
12 habits, recalled earlier):  
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18 *"I accepted that it was reasonable for me to eat just chips, beans and*  
19 *something or other all the way through my life until I met people, especially*  
20 *my other half, from outside where I was born and realised, hmm, I have*  
21 *never eaten a red pepper before in my life. And so it was – my expectations*  
22 *changed".*  
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26 Disruption in the intergenerational influence of socialization transfer can be attributed  
27 to the presence of a new influencer. But disruption can also be attributed to changes in  
28 the social context, with the younger generation of parents exposed to what has been  
29 termed heightened "*market focussed health activism*" (Cronin and Hopkinson, 2017,  
30 p. 2) and significant changes in the food landscape (e.g. in terms of food availability,  
31 the cost of healthy ingredients and recent public policy/social marketing campaigns  
32 that highlight issues relating to food consumption/literacy) (see, for example, Cronin  
33 *et al.*, 2013) and heightened concerns for animal welfare (Beverland, 2014).  
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### 42 **Sustaining food practices**

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44 Not all food socialization behaviours were abandoned. Positive emotions led to the  
45 reproduction of food practices within the participant's own family, and in such  
46 situations *food choices were sustained; food recipes, preferences, and other food-*  
47 *related values or behaviours* were reproduced/mimicked with their own young  
48 family, often creating warm feelings of nostalgia and fostering connection with absent  
49 family members. Frequently, parents reflect back to those consumption patterns in the  
50 forms of behavioural norms. In this section of our findings, the elicited stories focus  
51 on the motivation to *continue* the family's perceived style of eating. Kate, for  
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3 example, enthusiastically continues her father's ways of preparing and consuming  
4 "healthy" food with her children:  
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7 *"I learned a lot from my parents. So I learned a lot because they were*  
8 *interested in healthy eating, healthy food, organic and ... I think we got many*  
9 *recipes actually and much healthy eating from my dad. He was a really big*  
10 *cook, and he used to do much vegetarian food. He was very sort of into*  
11 *cooking, and he passed on many of his recipes then".*  
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15 The transference and inheritance of recipes from generation to generation fostered  
16 positive reflection and offered participants a way to keep family stories - and  
17 members - alive (*"I often cook this and say 'this is how your grandad would do it',*  
18 *and inevitably that would lead to stories of what he was like before he died"* (Jane)).  
19 Rather than being macabre, participants celebrated such instances and traditions,  
20 reflecting an affectively charged route to intergenerational influence (Price *et al.*,  
21 2000).  
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28 Similarly, Sandra also feels that she would like to continue socializing her  
29 children to eat healthily in the same manner her parents adopted. Sandra adds that her  
30 mum is *"the most important role model"* for her regarding eating/establishing food  
31 consumption patterns, and Sandra reports that she is trying her *"best"* to be as good a  
32 mother:  
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37 *"My parents cooked. And yes, I use the same techniques my parents used when*  
38 *I was young with them [my children]. Everything that I learned from 'clear up*  
39 *your plate' to consume many vegetables and avoid fat".*  
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44 Whereas other participants (c.f. Olivia and Jennifer) were dismissive of such food  
45 rules, Sandra favourably reminisced about time spent cooking with her mother and  
46 her food socialization style. Other participants also strongly reminisced about  
47 *"cooking food from scratch"*, just as their parents did, reporting that they want to  
48 sustain such practices with their own families (Moisio *et al.*, 2004). Many parents  
49 made the link between 'healthy food' as that which involves cooking *"from scratch"*;  
50 using ingredients freshly produced, often grown at home, as one of the practices that  
51 they have sustained, as Fran comments:  
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3 *“Well you would go by what you have been taught by your parents like we*  
4 *don’t eat this. We never have. You know what is going in to you because*  
5 *you’ve cooked it yourself. So those are the values that you’ve been brought up*  
6 *with. Their gran - she grows far more than we do - and she will cook her own*  
7 *food as well, as does my mum. So I think we come from two generations of*  
8 *families that always cook their own stuff, so we have not changed that habit”.*  
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13 Such practices align with studies of intergenerational influence (see Moore *et al.*,  
14 2002) that suggest children tend to purchase familiar brands that they have been  
15 socialized with by their parents because it simplifies their decision-making process in  
16 a complex marketplace. These findings also suggest that preparing food *‘from scratch’*  
17 is one way to describe healthy food, because such cooking requires much effort and  
18 time to prepare; and it supports the highly emotionally charged norms of intensive  
19 parenting which represents the food preparer's self-sacrifice (Harman and Cappellini,  
20 2015).  
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27 Feelings of nostalgia also supported intergenerational transfer. For example,  
28 Jane discussed that she performs her father’s *“fixed menu every Friday”* as a  
29 *“throwback to her childhood”* commenting that her *“kids love that on a Friday night”*,  
30 eating together around the dining table. Although Jane has expanded her repertoire of  
31 tastes/cooking with time, she still returns to the food that she was brought up with in  
32 the 1970s - food steeped with nostalgic feelings of happy, content family life:  
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38 *“My tastes have changed over the years and become much more sophisticated*  
39 *because there is more accessible [food] now in Britain to a broader range of*  
40 *international foods. However, I think that the basic things that you eat when*  
41 *you are a child are those foods that you go back to in times of illness or the*  
42 *comfort level in them is something that is sort of inherent in you from being a*  
43 *child”.*  
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47 *Spending time together during the meal* (as Jane did/does every Friday evening) is  
48 reported to have significant meaning for the families recruited. Participants reflect  
49 that they like to *follow the family’s tradition of eating together* (as encouraged by  
50 their parents). Claudia, for example, recalls sitting and eating together with her  
51 family as a child, which she thoroughly enjoyed. She adds that she is *‘pleased’* that  
52 her own family do the same, despite the time constraints both Claudia and her  
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3 husband face. Maintaining collective family meals, offering family members sacred  
4 time to share each other's stories, was seen as essential to several participants, as  
5  
6 Isabella explains:  
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8 *“When I was young, I was happy with what we eat. And it's also time we spent*  
9 *together. And I think to have a pleasant atmosphere is another important thing*  
10 *for eating. We usually eat together. For me, this is everything that you have*  
11 *the nice atmosphere at home and that you talk to each other and you sit*  
12 *together. With my family, we try to do that as often as we can”.*  
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16 The majority of participants in this study brought their children along on  
17 grocery shopping trips as another way to *sustain* intergenerational influences.  
18 Participating in the family shopping is considered a dominant force in maintaining  
19 intergenerational transfers (Moore *et al.*, 2001) within the context of food. According  
20 to the brand equity study of Moore *et al.* (2002), shopping styles, including shopping  
21 preferences, the mood to go shopping, and the way an individual makes decisions, are  
22 passed on between generations and are treated as a force of intergenerational  
23 influence. Hill (1970) illustrates that daughters learn how to be consumers in the  
24 marketplace by shopping with their mothers. Rachel, for example, recalls that she  
25 used to go grocery shopping with her mother as a child, pointing out that she is  
26 *'treating'* her son the same (note the diluted gender norms). Rachel adds that this was  
27 how she learned to buy food in the supermarket and Fran likewise discusses that she  
28 grew up buying produce from the fresh food market in Wolverhampton with her  
29 mother, commenting that she has never *“lost the habit, really”*.  
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39 This section of our findings highlights the positive, reminisced memories  
40 associated with food socialization that the parents reflect on from when they were  
41 young. The emotionally charged rituals of family mealtimes, accompanied grocery  
42 shopping trips and maintaining food practices handed down between generations  
43 (e.g. recipes) were laden with positive, nostalgic feelings that participants wanted to  
44 recreate with their own children.  
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### 51 **Identity of familial intergenerational food consumption**

52 From the parental behaviours outlined above we develop a continuum of parental  
53 food socialization styles, ranging from 'Traditionalists' to 'Improvers' to those  
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3 labelled 'Revisionists', who exhibit differences in emotional responses to  
4 intergenerational influence and concomitant consumption behaviours (either  
5 sustaining inherited behaviours of their own parents, or disregarding such actions,  
6 forming new food socialization pathways). Reflecting on actions of the past informed  
7 how our participants socialized their own children within the context of food.  
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11 *Traditionalists* continue the food consumption routines of their parents with  
12 their own families without changing any food practices. There is a great deal of  
13 positive reflection and emotional nostalgia exhibited amongst such parents who are  
14 keen to emulate the parental food socialization style performed by their own parents.  
15 Recall from Kate's story her pride that her father had passed on lots of his vegetarian  
16 recipes to his children; Kate highlights that both she and her brother are now cooking  
17 using these recipes for their own families which affords them positive ways to  
18 reminisce about their own enjoyable childhood. Their food patterns remain the same  
19 since they were young. Similarly, Isabella's story of having a pleasant atmosphere  
20 during mealtime demonstrates her strong sense of positive intergenerational  
21 reflexivity: "*When I was young, I was happy with what we eat. And it's also time we*  
22 *spent together*". Such stories illustrate that traditionalists exhibit positive emotional  
23 intergenerational reflexivity and that they are happy with the food practices the  
24 previous generation established. Thus, they would like to sustain such practices with  
25 their own families (which offers an emotional connection and bond to family  
26 members, particularly those who are now deceased).  
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39 The majority of our participants are labelled *Improvers*. Improvers have  
40 chosen to sustain the food practices from the previous generation, whilst also  
41 changing or adapting specific food practices as they see appropriate. Recall Fran's  
42 experience that although she does not want to be a strict 'Victorian' parent, she would  
43 still "*go by what you have been taught*" from her parents and retains elements of her  
44 mother's ways of cooking food from scratch. Likewise, Claudia's experience also  
45 shows that she is trying to balance cooking vegetarian food for her husband and  
46 following some of her mother's (non-vegetarian) recipes, providing meat meals for  
47 her daughter from time to time. Equally, Kayla mentions that she is more relaxed  
48 about her daughter eating snacks than her parents would have been (implying that her  
49 parents advocated more restrictive ways). Although Jane was pleased with her  
50 upbringing and has not lost the habits of eating "*without added sugar*" products, she  
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3 still wants her children to be able to cook after they leave home, which is the only  
4 thing her mother did not teach her (something which creates a degree of sadness on  
5 Jane's part). While certain food practices from the previous generation persist, the  
6 improvers altered others – changing as a result of learning new things about food  
7 (often bringing their parent's food styles up to date given the rise of the healthy-eating  
8 agenda) or from the presence of a new influencer. Although the improvers are largely  
9 happy and exhibit positive intergenerational reflexivity, they want to improve certain  
10 food habits that they think are better for their children to learn (*improving* from the  
11 past).

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18 Our final category of parents, 'Revisionists', however, recall "*shocking*" food  
19 socialization experiences from their childhood (Moore *et al.*, 2002). Revisionists  
20 appear to have made radical changes to their food consumption due to their negative  
21 intergenerational reflexivity towards the previous generation's food consumption  
22 styles/practices. They believe that these are changes for the better, similar to the  
23 intention of improvers, as participants are trying to align themselves with the notion  
24 of good parenting (Hays, 1996; Harman and Cappellini, 2014, 2015). Unlike  
25 improvers, revisionists do not retain or sustain *any* food practices as established by  
26 the previous generation. Tony, for example, is a revisionist parent, highlighting that  
27 he grew up as a child with poor attitudes surrounding food; and he has since become  
28 a vegetarian because of the influence from his partner and his newfound interest in  
29 food (following his move away from the family home and what he labels a "*food*  
30 *awakening*"). Rebecca has also changed her childhood food habits because she did  
31 not like how her father socialized her (recall the naughty box story and her feelings  
32 of guilt at eating hidden, unhealthy products) and as a result of her husband's  
33 healthy eating influence. Thus, Rebecca has changed her food practices in the hope  
34 of encouraging her son to establish healthy eating habits: "*I didn't want him to have*  
35 *to worry about his weight ... I just want him to be happy*". Similarly, Natasha  
36 mentions that she does not want to follow her mother's style of eating because she,  
37 as a parent, is more concerned with the health and well-being of her family (unlike  
38 her mother reportedly was when Natasha was a child). Such stories show that  
39 revisionists want to adjust or change food habits because they have "*better intentions*  
40 *for children*".

## Discussion

This study adopts a rather different approach in exploring temporal dimensions of intergenerational influence using the lens of emotional reflexivity within the context of food socialization. The findings suggest that the intergenerational reflexivity of parents, as the most powerful socialization agent of children (Hughner and Maher, 2006; Marshall *et al.*, 2007), plays a crucial role in shaping children's food socialization processes. We posed one central research question: "*are today's parents drawing from what they learned as children from their parents within their own food socialization practices?*" We find that parents reflexively enact the legacy of the past to guide their current food practices. Intergenerational reflexivity informs how participants (re-)produce their current food socialization practices, as informed, in turn, by how their parents socialized them during their childhood. The findings, therefore, contribute to socialization theory in relation to the classical model of socialization offered by Moschis and Churchill (1978) in that *intergenerational reflexivity* on the part of the *socialization agent* (family or parents) is another valuable factor that should be included in future studies of consumer socialization.

Our findings demonstrate support for Moore *et al.* (2001) and Moore *et al.* (2002) in that intergenerational influences appear to persist well into adulthood (in terms of familial food socialization practices, at least). Where participants recall positive emotional reflexivity associated with childhood food consumption, intergenerational influence endures. The impact of intergenerational influence tends to be fluid over time, which can either maintain or dismiss certain habits in consumption experiences (Moore *et al.*, 2002). The findings extend our understanding of the temporal dimensions of intergenerational influence within families, suggesting that parents take inspiration (in both positive and also dismissive ways) from what they learned about food as a child from their parents to inform their own actions and behaviours. We offer a continuum of parental food socialization tendencies which reflect behaviour that sustains and reproduces behavioural patterns of the past to behaviours which are radically different from those performed by the previous generation of parents. We respond to calls for further research that investigates the dynamics of intergenerational transfers amid the context of family food socialization (Moore *et al.*, 2017).

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3 The stories of our participants reveal the important role emotional reflexivity  
4 plays in this process, whereby participants either retain or alter their food socialization  
5 practices in response to feelings and interpretations of themselves (i.e. whether they  
6 are happy with their previous food practices or perceive that previous food practices  
7 are out-dated and unhealthy) as well as their interpretations of how others feel about  
8 their circumstances (i.e. the relationships with their parents or how they think society  
9 would look to them as a 'good' parent in providing healthy food for their children).  
10 Holmes (2010) suggests that emotional reflexivity tends to be recognisable when it  
11 comes to love and care, as our findings illustrate. Such elicited stories respond to the  
12 calls made for research which extends the use of emotional reflexivity within  
13 consumer research (in forming children's food socialization practices) (Holmes,  
14 2015), and demonstrates that participants use intergenerational reflexivity to "*reflect*  
15 *in distinctive ways upon their experiences ... with others, as well as their sense of*  
16 *self*" (Mason, 2004, p.167).  
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25 Stories of intergenerational reflexivity on food consumption show that  
26 intergenerational reflexivity plays a vital role in the continuance of a family's food  
27 consumption practices from one generational to the next. As Holmes (2015)  
28 highlights, emotional reflexivity is vital in the process of *social reproduction*, and the  
29 emotional connection of the participant's childhood food practices leads to the  
30 reproduction of such habits with their children. Sandra is an obvious example to  
31 illustrate the '*sustaining*' of food practices from her parents as she follows her  
32 mother's ways of cooking for her children. Sandra's elicited story has shown that she  
33 has *positive emotional intergenerational reflexivity* (love and respect for her mother)  
34 with a strong intention to emulate her mother's food consumption practices with her  
35 offspring. It is clear that she is *happy* with her familial food upbringing/socialization.  
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44 This is not to say that emotional reflexivity only revolves around social  
45 reproduction or retaining food habits/patterns. Although traditional reflexivity tends  
46 to focus on changes rather than maintaining habits, our findings illustrate that not only  
47 do parents '*sustain*' their previous food practices with their children, but that parents  
48 can also '*disregard*' certain food habits. When parents display *negative emotional*  
49 *reflexivity* associated with the previous generation's food practices, they choose to  
50 *disregard* such food practices with their children. During dialogue parents have about  
51 their food practices with their children, parents highlight that they are deliberately  
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3 making decisions to abandon their childhood food practices, as shown in the case of  
4 Tony who expresses great bitterness towards his mother's (poor) food practices and  
5 has chosen to '*disregard*' such behaviours with his children. Interestingly, Finch  
6 (2007) highlights that parents often portray legacy stories as in opposition/to help  
7 explain how they now behave. This supports Tony's case in that he perceives he was  
8 "*uncared for*" as a child by his mother (mainly as a result of the poor food she  
9 prepared for him), fuelling anger towards the way he was raised. Thus, Tony  
10 consciously moves away from what he perceives as negative food practices performed  
11 by his mother, fuelled by his interest in vegetarian food and by the presence of a *new*  
12 *influencer* (his partner). Tony's example clearly illustrates that emotion (i.e. a feeling  
13 of being uncared for) is at the core of reflexivity, in which cognitive reasoning (i.e. to  
14 have healthier eating patterns) is high and rises above the automation of emotional  
15 responses.

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17 As suggested by Moore *et al.* (2002), intergenerational influences can be  
18 disrupted due to the presence of a new influencer; and in this study, the spouse or  
19 partner (c.f. the example of Tony, above) emerged as a primary influencer to  
20 restructure/blend familial food practices. Other stories of '*disrupting*' the previous  
21 generation's food practices include *resistance to the legacy of parental norms*  
22 (Jonathan, for example, recounted stories of being forced to eat food he disliked as a  
23 child, and Fran does not want to emulate her '*Victorian*' parents). We also identify  
24 how other social factors – such as changes in food literacy and heightened awareness  
25 of nutrition (Cronin and Hopkinson, 2017) work to encourage participants to redress  
26 perceived deficiencies in the parental food socialization styles performed by their  
27 parents: "each generation's perception of eating well is developed through evolving  
28 schema for making food choices learnt through changing social and cultural processes  
29 over time" (Delaney and McCarthy, 2014, p. 106). Although social factors are  
30 acknowledged to help explain possible intergenerational shifts, the legacy of  
31 childhood socialization remains strong (recall Jane's story that even though she has  
32 the luxury of a wider variety of food to offer her own children, she often returns to the  
33 food of her childhood).

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35 The stories of parental aspirations to socialize their children to eat healthily  
36 demonstrates that parents are trying to align themselves with the ideology of intensive  
37 parenting discourse, involving parental displays of "good parenthood" (Finch, 2007;  
38 Harman and Cappellini, 2015). It is possible that such an ideology/sense of parents

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3 “on display” (Harman and Cappellini, 2015) is heightened among our participant’s  
4 generation, and we recognise that this is a pertinent area for future research. Family  
5 identity can, however, be passed on and reinforced through cultural transmission, in  
6 which each generation tries to differentiate itself from another generation by  
7 designing its own identity (Epp and Price, 2008; Knight *et al.*, 2014).  
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11 Other opportunities for further research exist. Future research would benefit  
12 from more closely examining differences between gender, with others (see Del  
13 Bucchia and Penaloza, 2016) highlighting differences amongst mothers and fathers in  
14 food provision. The recent study of Chowbey (2017), as a second example, shows that  
15 mothers tend to resist their submissive gender position within the household by  
16 conveying their controlling position through the food they provide; this represents a  
17 ripe area for closer exploration in future research. Similarly, we capture the voice of  
18 the main food preparer in her/his family. We recognize that it would be fruitful to  
19 capture and represent the multiple voices within the family unit (including those of  
20 children) in order to capture the dynamics at play between which parent’s (in the  
21 context of two-parent families) primary socialization dominates/is regarded as family  
22 food policy (and how this is established – and possibly blurred given the rise of  
23 family disruption and fluidity of family membership within and between sites of  
24 consumption).  
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35 The findings from this research carry important implications for public health  
36 interventions, social initiatives and marketing campaigns that aim to encourage  
37 parents to model healthy eating behaviours. Our participants are largely aware that  
38 certain food socialization tendencies performed by the generation before them are not  
39 healthy for their own children. However, equally our research highlights the need to  
40 explore the family as a complex and dynamic nexus of influences and histories.  
41 Healthy eating campaigns are likely to be received differently by either parent, taken  
42 onboard or disregarded by individuals in different ways within the family setting.  
43 Granted, our data points towards a distancing of parental practices from the past, but  
44 where there is spousal conflict (see Chowbey, 2017) – not explored within this study -  
45 making healthier food choices between spouses/co-parents may be harder to achieve  
46 (or encourage). Accordingly, research is called for that explores such issues within the  
47 complex family setting.  
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3 Establishing healthy eating patterns through socialization within families  
4 could help children move away from the obesity epidemic (Moore *et al.*, 2017) and  
5 might, hopefully, transfer to the next generation. We note that positively charged  
6 emotional behaviours (e.g. cooking food from scratch, growing one's own produce)  
7 resonated and endured most with our participants (representing a possible theme for  
8 future healthy-eating campaigns). This helps add support to the notion that healthy  
9 eating campaigns linked to constraint prove ineffective (Poulain, 2009), so links to the  
10 social dimensions of food (e.g. the positive triggered feelings of nostalgia/family  
11 connections and caring for your family through appropriate nutritional intake) may  
12 prove beneficial in the promotion of healthy-eating campaigns.  
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## 22 **Conclusion**

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24 As parents are the most powerful socialization agents for children, children have  
25 limitless learning opportunities surrounding food that stems from parental food  
26 socialization and actions. The legacy of such learning suggests food  
27 preferences/behaviours can endure and inform food consumption in adult life. This  
28 study provides a deeper insight into to how emotional reflexivity (Holmes, 2015) and  
29 temporal elements of intergenerational influence (Moore *et al.*, 2002, 2017) impact  
30 familial food socialization, much lacking in the existing literature. In this study,  
31 emotional reflexivity is utilised among participants to make sense of their parental  
32 role in providing food to their own family. The participants draw on their emotional  
33 reflexivity in recalling previous food practices (learned/experienced as a child by their  
34 parents), which informs whether they would enact – or disregard - the same patterns  
35 of food practices/socialization with their own children. The study contributes to our  
36 understanding of the role intergenerational influence plays within the process of food  
37 socialization, exploring how practices from the past (experienced during primary  
38 socialization) could be repeated or discontinued in the present (Knight *et al.*, 2014).  
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## **Learning from the past? An exploratory study of familial food socialization processes using the lens of emotional reflexivity**

### **Response to reviewer comments**

We would like to sincerely thank both reviewers for their comments and suggestions to help improve our manuscript. We believe that such constructive comments have identified important areas to be strengthened in our paper. We now respond to the minor comments both reviewers have highlighted. We present, below, a point-by-point account of how each comment was addressed in our manuscript. By addressing the issues the reviewers highlight, we feel that our paper is much stronger; and we would like to thank both reviewers again for their time and thought that has been given to our manuscript. We also appreciate the opportunity that has been given to us to present our revised manuscript to you again.

<b>Reviewer 1 Comments (Recommendation: Minor Revision)</b>
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#### **1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?**

##### **Yes this is an interesting discussion of food habits**

Thank you very much for the compliment. We hope that our paper will contribute to the existing knowledge on parental roles in socializing children within the context of food choice/preferences, and in terms of understanding how the legacy of the past helps inform parental food socialization practices through the lens of intergenerational reflexivity.

#### **2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?**

##### **A better acknowledgement that we know parents parent how they were parented would be appropriate.**

Thank you for highlighting this shortcoming in our manuscript. We have added coverage of this all-important point within our revised literature review section. Specifically, we add the following comment in order to address your recommendation:

*“In relation to parenting, emotional reflexivity has been used (implicitly) to explain how parents draw on “emotions to navigate their path, especially when facing new situations or ways of living” (Holmes, 2015, p. 61). Reflection on the past (i.e. the roles/actions of their own parents) infuse actions and behaviours of the present. Support exists, for example, to suggest that the parental style an individual adopts is likely shaped and influenced by the role played by his/her own parent(s), in both positive and negative ways (see, for example, Carlson et al., 1994; Bettany et al., 2014)”*

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3 Thank you for highlighting this; in wanting to show the need for this research context we  
4 were a little naïve in how we demonstrated the significance of our study in the earlier draft.  
5

6 **3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory,**  
7 **concepts or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the**  
8 **paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?**  
9

10 **Method was interesting and thorough**

11 Thank you.  
12

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14  
15 **4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the**  
16 **conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?**  
17

18 **For the most part yes - see my comments**  
19

20 Thank you for your valuable comments (please see our responses to your comments, below).  
21

22 **5. Practicality and/or Research implications: Does the paper identify clearly any**  
23 **implications for practice and/or further research? Are these implications consistent**  
24 **with the findings and conclusions of the paper?**  
25

26 **Practical policy implications from this research topic seem a little stretched; perhaps**  
27 **there can be papers with a contribution elsewhere.**  
28

29  
30 Thank you for your comment. We have re-worked the section, which covers the practical  
31 significance of our work – although we acknowledge your comment that practical  
32 contributions may be offered elsewhere/beyond this paper. We draw on the guidance offered  
33 by Reviewer 2 and her/his suggestion of brining spousal conflict in to discussions of practical  
34 value to this work.  
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37 **6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against**  
38 **the technical language of the fields and the expected knowledge of the journal's**  
39 **readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such**  
40 **as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.**  
41

42 **Well written and expressed.**  
43

44 Thank you for your compliment on our paper's presentation.  
45

46  
47 **Reviewer 1 Comments for the authors of European Journal of Marketing manuscript**  
48 **ID EJM-10-2017-0694 entitled “How do parents teach their children about food? An**  
49 **exploratory study of food socialization processes using the lens of intergenerational**  
50 **reflexivity”**  
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52 Thank you for the opportunity to review “How do parents teach their children about  
53 food?” This is an interesting and well-written study that relates how parents can have  
54 positive or negative recollections of their childhood eating patterns and how they  
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3 **reproduce the more positive elements and re-configure the negative aspects. This study**  
4 **would make a good contribution to the special issue on food.**  
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6 Thank you very much for your compliment. This means a lot to us.  
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8 **The following comments are made in the spirit of honing the contribution that this**  
9 **study makes and clarifying some of the key ideas herein.**  
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11 **In the introduction intergenerational emotional reflexivity begins the 3rd paragraph,**  
12 **however, the specific use of emotional reflexivity has not been properly introduced to**  
13 **the reader. It would be easier on the reader if you introduce the concept of emotional**  
14 **reflexivity and then expand to its relevant to intergenerational transmission.**  
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17 We agree. We have now responded to this comment by rearranging the order of the concepts  
18 presented within the introduction part; and we define the concept of emotional reflexivity  
19 when it is first used:  
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21 *“Emotional reflexivity “refers to the intersubjective interpretation of one’s own and*  
22 *others’ emotions and how they are enacted” (Holmes, 2015, p. 61) and offers useful*  
23 *guidelines to parents to either continue or discontinue their own parents’ food*  
24 *practices with their children (through intergenerational influence). Emotional*  
25 *reflexivity, thus, allows individuals to navigate a ‘new path’, representing a useful*  
26 *theoretical lens through which to explore how the actions of the previous generation*  
27 *work to inform current food socialization processes”.*  
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31 We have also reworked our coverage of emotional reflexivity within the section of the  
32 literature review that covers intergenerational influence/emotional reflexivity. Thank you for  
33 bringing this to our attention.  
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36 **Later in the literature review p5/6 I would like to see more explanation of how emotion**  
37 **is “at the heart of the reflexive process” because while emotion is entangled in how we**  
38 **behave, it is our propensity for reflection that allows us to engage with behaviour**  
39 **change and to “rise above” the automaton of emotional responses that is immaturity or**  
40 **childishness (although parental “impulsivity” is suggested in the introduction (p3)). For**  
41 **example, to be able to review the recent evidence on the pernicious role of sugar in the**  
42 **modern diet and avoid finishing meals with sugary deserts, which were common**  
43 **practice in other British generations.**  
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46 **If emotional reflexivity goes beyond self-reflection to include practices bodies and**  
47 **emotions (p6) then these elements are neglected in this study and not in the evidence**  
48 **presented. Perhaps the connection made was around table manners and the punitive**  
49 **role of cleaning plates, and emotional reflexivity opened a space to challenge the table**  
50 **manners of the past. Rather than doubting the value of the theory I think the order of**  
51 **presentation and the weight of explanation could be altered to better reflect the thinking**  
52 **of the authors.**  
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3 Thank you for your comments which highlight the need for (1) a greater  
4 explanation/articulation of emotional reflexivity within the literature review; and (2) a  
5 stronger articulation of how emotion informs our findings section. We have now re-worked  
6 our coverage of emotional reflexivity within the relevant section of our literature review –  
7 illustrating how emotional reflexivity goes beyond self-reflection in which people try to  
8 understand their lives according to their situations. We highlight a recent study on fathering  
9 by Bettany, Kerrane and Hogg (2014) which demonstrates this theory in use. In their study,  
10 Bettany et al. (2014) show that the new fathers involved in their study reflect heavily on the  
11 role played by their own fathers and worked this reflection in to their performance of  
12 fatherhood (albeit with minimal success). We hope that this better communicates how  
13 emotional reflexivity is tied up in reflection – as you rightly signal – but that such reflection  
14 can lead to practical change in behaviour (in our case that given parents were unhappy with  
15 the style of parenting performed by their own parents, they modified their own parenting as a  
16 consequence).

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21 We now also work such notions more explicitly within/across our findings section. The  
22 section of our findings that you allude to – on the “Victorian” style of parenting (e.g. the need  
23 to clean their plates, eat food they did not like) that many of our participants often recalled  
24 with dismay and negative emotion – was the perfect place to highlight such emotional  
25 baggage. Within the findings section, we illustrate that emotional reflexivity has opened the  
26 space to challenge the table manners of the past (as you suggest), in which reflexivity goes  
27 beyond mere self-reflection (leading to action/change). The participants have altered their  
28 previous practices according to their reasoning based on their emotions and emotions of  
29 others (their own children). Thus, they seem to be taking conscious steps towards not forcing  
30 their children to clean their plates/eat food they dislike (in ways they did not have the luxury  
31 of). Thank you so much for pointing this out to us.

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36 Again, following your insightful comment we have re-ordered our findings section in order to  
37 better communicate the role emotion plays within our findings. We have placed more data  
38 within the finding section itself to stress the emotional reflections that were uncovered. Given  
39 the focus on emotional reflexivity this seems a very sensible course of action – so thank you  
40 for suggesting this revision to us!

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43 **Finally, I wonder if we really do lack understanding of how parents form/shape food**  
44 **practices. Seems to me the parents shop and cook and then most often demand the food**  
45 **is eaten, particularly in the under 12 age group, as related by your participants. It is**  
46 **acknowledged that moving away from parental control to live separately is a source of**  
47 **change.**

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50 We now see that the word choice we used for claiming the gap (i.e. ‘great deal’) was too  
51 strong. In our revisions we have toned our expression down, and we use softer  
52 words/expression to help highlight our points throughout our manuscript.

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54 **The method is particularly interesting and diverse; however, I am wondering how 8**  
55 **men and 22 women makes “parenting”. With more than 2 thirds of the sample women,**



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3 **and of those 6 are housewives (I assume you mean full time and unpaid – there are no**  
4 **men in that position), there is an overlooked narrative here about mothering that is**  
5 **being neutralised to “parenting”. I would like a much stronger defence of this**  
6 **oversight.**  
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8 We feel that you raise a very important and sensitive issue, which we, too, have grappled  
9 with for some time. Our intention was to principally recruit the primary food preparers of  
10 each family – following the approach taken by Judd *et al.* (2014). Like Judd *et al.* (2014), and  
11 others who have explored issues relating to food/food socialization within the family setting,  
12 our sample is relatively skewed to include more mothers (n=22) than fathers (n=8). Although  
13 exploring gendered food practices is not the main focus of our work, like you, we did feel  
14 uneasy at ‘neutralising’ the strong motherhood role/voice to ‘parenting’ alone. That said, we  
15 also feel uneasy with ignoring/disregarding the voices of the fathers we have recruited (and  
16 we recognise the growing role that fathers play within contemporary family life – see, for  
17 example, Wall and Arnould, 2007; Harrison and Gentry, 2007; Gentry and Harrison, 2010;  
18 Banister and Kerrane, 2017). As such, ‘parenting’ appears to be the most applicable label to  
19 use here, despite the majority female sample. We thank you for highlighting this all-  
20 important point. In our methodology section we signal the above – and that here we capture  
21 the actions of the self-identified primary food preparer of the family (regardless of gender).  
22 We also acknowledge that others have identified gender differences between mothers/fathers  
23 in the context of food, which is beyond the scope of the current manuscript. We again return  
24 to this all-important point within the directions for future research section.  
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30 **On this tack, another shortcoming is the lack of discussion or acknowledgement of the**  
31 **dynamic between parents over whose childhood eating patterns are to be the “household**  
32 **policy”. To be fair, the new influencer as partner is a section, but the inter-personal**  
33 **power dynamics are underplayed (Claudia’s betrayal of her partner’s values by having**  
34 **meat meals with her daughter). Or perhaps the “intensive” parent is in actuality the**  
35 **intensive mother. Only the power plays between parents and children over food are**  
36 **noted.**  
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40 This is a very pertinent point to recognise. Clearly, we are grounded by the data that was  
41 offered by our participants, the primary food preparers of their family. We recognise this  
42 potential shortcoming of our work, recommend that this be considered in future research, but  
43 also offer a little more commentary where we can within the ‘new influencer’ section of our  
44 findings. At this point we show the triggers for potential disruption – the presence of a new  
45 partner/spouse, which also offers a neat way to offer other potential causes for disruption (e.g.  
46 changes in the food landscape/literacy). We embed this discussion within the vegetarian food  
47 choices of one of our participants, Claudia, yet this vegetarian food preference seems to  
48 endure from her husband’s family. Thank you for bringing this to our attention, and we hope  
49 we have now responded to your comment.  
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53 **Through the findings there is a quite neutral unacknowledged stance towards the social**  
54 **context. However, there are important contextual elements at play here. Food**  
55 **production, food availability, food accessibility, cost of healthy options as against food**  
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3 **fads, food shortages, and then more recent developments such as public policy and**  
4 **social marketing around obesity, food quality, and food quantity. Much of the findings**  
5 **and discussion overlook potential shifts in the context between generations, or perhaps**  
6 **more importantly the lack of shifts in parental food choices across generations despite**  
7 **contextual changes (i.e. nostalgia and taste p14, or healthy eating p11 & 13). Other**  
8 **impacts could have influenced ‘self-learning’ such as social capital, travelling, increased**  
9 **food varieties due to better logistics and a global marketplace and migration. Some**  
10 **explanation of how or why these are not in play would be useful. This is relevant to the**  
11 **discussion section too.**  
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15 Thank you for pointing this out to us. Within our revised findings section, we now explicitly  
16 highlight that disruption in the transfer of intergenerational food socialization behaviours  
17 could also be triggered by the increased exposure of the younger generation of parents to  
18 specifically the factors that you highlight (e.g. heightened concerns surrounding obesity,  
19 healthy eating and a potentially privileged position of the younger parents, in comparison to  
20 the older generation). We also refer to such factors within the ‘self-learning’ section of our  
21 findings, which you suggest; and within the ‘new influencer’ category.  
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24 We now also allude to potential differences within the social context between/across the  
25 generations within our discussion section. Thank you for suggesting this revision.  
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28 **There are some ideas that I find difficult to sustain – for example “finishing off” the 2 x**  
29 **2 model with a section that has “no participants”, ‘neglecters’ seems superfluous and**  
30 **quite judgemental. A typology that has 3 positions on a continuum from Traditional**  
31 **through Improvers to Revisionists seems adequate, and describes the data as presented.**  
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34 Thank you very much for your comment on this. With reflection, we completely agree. The  
35 matrix does offer a neat sense of how our data ‘fits’ within a given category, but clearly our  
36 work (as with other qualitative studies) does not always fit with neatness. Following your  
37 sensible suggestion, we have removed coverage of the matrix, and instead present a  
38 continuum of parental food types following your guidance. Thank you for making this  
39 suggestion to us.  
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42 **The discussion returns to reflexivity citing Giddens who identified the increased need**  
43 **for social actors to be reflexive due to the increase in rapidity of change and the increase**  
44 **in social expectations for self-reliance (in contrast to the lack of change and reliance on**  
45 **community approval of previous eras). I am not convinced that Giddens has been used**  
46 **appropriately here but perhaps some further detail can develop the distinctions.**  
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49 We have removed coverage of Giddens from within the discussion section.  
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3 **The label of ‘self-dislike’ does not seem to apply to the disrupting stories (p26). The**  
4 **participants are not disliking their ‘self’ – they were rejecting the application of**  
5 **parental power that demanded compliance with either finishing plates of food or table**  
6 **manners.**  
7

8 Thank you so much for pointing this out. We now revise the label to *resistance to the legacy*  
9 *of parental norms*, which best reflects the findings as well as the comment you have pointed  
10 out. Thank you for bringing this to our attention.  
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13 **Lastly, the public health implications seem to be quite limited – these parents care about**  
14 **their children’s healthy eating and are sustaining good habits and revising bad**  
15 **habits. This paragraph does not seem to tie into the narrative of the paper up to this**  
16 **point.**  
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19 Thank you for your comment. We have now reworked the sentence and incorporated the  
20 implication of the research based on your suggestion to include the power plays between  
21 parents and co-parents within the food socialization practices. We also draw on the  
22 recommendations of Reviewer 2 who offers advice – below – in terms of this element of our  
23 work.  
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26 **A couple of quibbles over expression – really (?) a “great deal” is unknown about the**  
27 **role parents play in forming family food socialization? (p2) that seems to be over-**  
28 **statement especially if nutrition and sociology are to be considered. Also, is it really**  
29 **that much of a stretch for common sense to realise that parents draw on how they were**  
30 **parented, and that might also encompass food preparation. To reveal the lack of**  
31 **astonishment would be to reverse the idea (deconstruct if you will). Why would you**  
32 **expect anything else?**  
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35 Thank you for this comment we have reworked the gap we claim and take out the expression  
36 ‘great deal’. In our eagerness to show the importance of this topic we may have been too  
37 grand with our claims. We have now toned-down the expressions we use within the  
38 introduction section, whilst simultaneously recognising gaps in understanding within this  
39 field. Clearly, we feel that such a gap exists (and we offer examples from the literature that  
40 suggests that we need to know more about food socialization, and in particular how current  
41 parents use insight from their own parents in their parental socialization style). This is a  
42 theme that we also address within the literature review section. Thank you for signalling our  
43 over-zealous expression (now rectified).  
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47 **Overall, though, this paper makes an interesting contribution and I wish you well with**  
48 **its progress.**  
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50 We sincerely thank you for the highly constructive nature of your comments. We have  
51 attended to each of these, and the manuscript is now much stronger as a result of your points.  
52 We thank you for your time – and for your good wishes.  
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**Reviewer 2 Comments**  
**(Recommendation: Minor Revision)**

**1. Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication?**

**This paper explores how participants' food experiences in their own childhood influences their current practices and ways of thinking about food as parents. This is a much-needed contribution. The paper is original in its employment of emotional reflexivity and the typology generated (figure 2).**

Thank you very much for your compliment. This means a lot to us.

**2. Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored?**

**The paper demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the existing literature and makes good use of relevant sources.**

Thank you. Clearly the context of families, food and consumer socialization are vast topics – and areas which have been extensively studied for decades. We are enthused by your comments that we have demonstrated a comprehensive coverage of such issues, albeit within the confines of a tight word count.

**3. Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate?**

**The methodological approach was appropriate and clearly explained.**

Thank you. We wanted to do our best to capture the food practices of a range of families. Conducting research with families is time consuming and complex, although we thoroughly enjoyed our research encounters. Thanks again for agreeing that the method was appropriate and clearly explained.

**4. Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper?**

**The results were clearly presented and analysed appropriately. However, I would like to know if there were any gender differences discernible within the emerging findings. This is both in terms of emotional reflexivity regarding one's own childhood food and their current practices (e.g. whether they employ a revisionist/ improver stance etc).**

Thank you for highlighting that our results are presented clearly and appropriately. It was incredibly problematic to cover key issues in adequate depth and detail, as there is a lot to be addressed in the current manuscript. We feel that you raise an important issue though in

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3 relation to your comment about gender. Clearly the main focus of our manuscript was in  
4 capturing the general food socialization practices enacted by the primary food preparer in a  
5 family. As such, issues which specifically relate to gender fall somewhat outside the scope of  
6 our current work. Indeed, similar work that has represented gender issues as central focus to  
7 their studies (see, for example, Del Bucchia and Penaloza, 2016; Coskuner-Balli and  
8 Thompson, 2013) have used entire journal articles to adequately explore such differences  
9 between parents/parenting.  
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12 However, in order to respond to this issue – which we, too, have grappled with – we  
13 recognise that others have uncovered gender issues within family/food research, and we  
14 return to this issue within the directions for future research section. Coskuner-Balli and  
15 Thompson (2013) found that fathers delegate meal preparation to the marketplace, and Del  
16 Bucchia and Penaloza (2016) – now cited in our revised work - find that fathers do not  
17 express as negative feelings when a child refuses to eat – with fathers seen as less vulnerable  
18 to the discourse of good parenting than mothers. In our study, however, and again we need to  
19 recognise that our participants self-identified as being the main/primary food preparer for  
20 their family, the fathers didn't delegate meal preparation to the marketplace (contrasting with  
21 Coskuner-Balli and Thompson's work) and also reflected on intensive parenting ideology (in  
22 contrast to Del Bucchia and Penaloza's study). But again, this could be explained by the  
23 notion that these were highly active fathers within their families, who were responsible for  
24 the meals that their children ate. We comment on this – and call for further research in this  
25 area – in our revised manuscript/directions for future research section.  
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30 Thank you for highlighting this to us, and we hope we offer the reader some extra clarity in  
31 this regard. Your comments will inform our future research in this field.  
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34 **5. Practicality and/or Research implications: Does the paper identify clearly any**  
35 **implications for practice and/or further research? Are these implications consistent**  
36 **with the findings and conclusions of the paper?**  
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38 **The paper identified practical implications for healthy eating campaigns and marketing**  
39 **communications. These are in line with the conclusions of the paper although they did**  
40 **appear a little simplistic. I wonder whether the research drawn upon in the paper also**  
41 **has the possibility to shed light on the complex way that campaigns might be received,**  
42 **taken on board or disregarded by individuals within a social and familial/ relationship**  
43 **context. It could be argued that although distancing oneself from parents' practices in**  
44 **the past may be realistic, alongside those where there is spousal conflict (see Chowbey**  
45 **2017), however making healthier food choices than spouses and co-parents might be**  
46 **harder to achieve.**  
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50 Thank you for your comment. You rightly pointed us in the direction of spousal conflict and  
51 the work of Chowbey (2017); now reflected in this section of our manuscript. We have now  
52 added the potential conflict between parents and co-parents into our discussion section and  
53 revised the section on how such notions could contribute to the practical implications of our  
54 paper, following your guidance. Thank you again for pointing this out.  
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4 **6. Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against**  
5 **the technical language of the fields and the expected knowledge of the journal's**  
6 **readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such**  
7 **as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.**  
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10 **The paper is clearly expressed and readable. I was impressed by its level of**  
11 **presentation.**  
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13 Thank you for your compliment!  
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16 **However, I would suggest changing the title of the paper as I don't think the article**  
17 **answers 'How do parents teach their children about food?' It is more about how adults**  
18 **utilise/ avoid/ modify the family food memories from their childhood within their**  
19 **current practices.**  
20

21 **This was an interesting paper to read and it has the potential to extend current**  
22 **understandings of how food work interacts with participants own childhood memories**  
23 **and emotions. The paper puts forward some practical implications but it would be**  
24 **useful to show more nuance in relation to how these may be interpreted in practice.**  
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27 Following your above suggestion, we have amended coverage of the practical value of our  
28 work.  
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31 **I would suggest changing the title of the paper as the article is not so much about 'How**  
32 **do parents teach their children about food?' as how adults reflect on the food in their**  
33 **own childhoods and continue or disregard certain approaches.**  
34

35 Thank you for highlighting this to us. With reflection, we agree. We have now revised our  
36 title to “Learning from the past? An exploratory study of familial food socialization processes  
37 using the lens of emotional reflexivity”. The revised title takes in to consideration your point  
38 that the paper is actually about how adults reflect on the food in their own childhood –  
39 “learning from the past” – and how this is continued/discontinued in their own parental style.  
40 Thank you for making this pertinent suggestion, and for all of your helpful and insightful  
41 comments (we are much obliged).  
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