



## **Meat mimicry: the neoliberal challenge to meat consumption**

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Fake or faux, meat substitutes are a curious food. Increasingly positioned as a food governance strategy, the meat substitute has captured the imaginations of environmental researchers, food scientists and entrepreneurs as a way to moderate meat consumption. Alongside findings from research into the everyday food practices of 21 meat-reducing households, I interrogate how proponents of this approach suppose the strategy to 'work' (Warde 2005, Shove 2012, Meah and Watson 2011). Positioned within a neoliberal consumer society model of change, I show how the meat substitute maintains the dietary status quo in three ways. First, by transporting and recirculating standards and definitions of what makes a proper meal, what is seen as an acceptable, proper food to take to a barbeque or serve to guests. Second, by sustaining the co-evolution of food practices with their linked material arrangements: the technologies and infrastructures such as freezers, BBQs and systems of provision via energy intensive cold chains, the same material arrangements that current meat-centric meals depend upon. And third, by sustaining collaborations between food and gender practices: just as the meat substitute attempts to mimic every aspect of meat, so too does it aim to be taken up in performances of masculinity.