

Mother and Daughter – Commentary

Heather Shipley

Project Manager, *Religion and Diversity Project*, University of Ottawa

The sharing of food, and the transmission of family practice through the sharing of food, is emblematic of intergenerational religious and cultural practices. Women's role in carrying the embodied traditions of family, faith and food is evidenced in the Mother and Daughter photo essay – where the sharing of traditional recipes for religious holidays is also a space where mothers and daughters share: time, laughter, silence and stories.

Mother-Daughter relationships are impossible to generalize, however mothers often are responsible for feeding the family and in teaching recipes and techniques. Correspondingly, daughters experience and perform a particular gendered norm related to food, faith and cultural practice. In this essay, and the interview with the mother and daughter, the challenges of maintaining cultural and familial practices are intertwined with migration and the experience of living in a new country.

Feminist articulations of sameness and difference in defining women's roles beyond 'different from men' also evidences itself the ways mother and daughter relationships are about sameness and difference; generational change, maintaining family practices and the ways old traditions are made new through transmission. We see this in a visible way looking to the women's appearances: purple tops, black pants but skirt versus pants. As the daughter seeks to define herself, in a new country and yet within family history, the mother seeks to understand and ensure continuity of practice for future generations.

Covered in flour, on two sides of the same work space, mother and daughter portray to us the negotiation of living religious practices within the particularity of their family and their relationship.