Carleton University

Reconnecting with the Food that Feeds the Soul: Considerations on Alienation, Craft
Skills and Emancipatory Possibilities through the Intersection of a Professional
Restaurant Setting and Small-Scale Artisanal Food Supply Networks

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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
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by

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Abstract

This thesis is an examination of how a particular type of restaurant setting fits into and makes sense of the ways in which global food system is structured, and in what ways this type of restaurant might be considered as part of an alternative local food movement resisting dominant global forces within those structures. The research has been conducted as an ethnography of a professional restaurant environment that sources its products from relatively local suppliers, and exclusively from suppliers who practice environmentally sustainable methods in the growing of produce, or in the raising of animals and fish. I examine such an approach through Marxist, political ecology and actor-network theoretical lenses that consider how levels of worker alienation might be reduced through the incorporation of both direct relationships between suppliers and practitioners, as well as the role that craft knowledge plays in bringing meaning to the work within this setting.

Acknowledgments

The writing of this thesis was akin to combining the pressures of an intense restaurant dinner service, when trying to meet draft submission deadlines, along with the patience required when waiting for the slow simmering braise to finally become tender and deep in flavour after its long cooking phase. One never feels like they have quite captured everything that they have wanted to, not unlike the preparation of a dish where the cook thinks that something more, or less, might have enhanced the final outcome. To the cooks, servers and other staff members of the restaurant organization I explored to gather field data for this thesis, my sincere gratitude goes out to all of you. Although I am not permitted to name names due to institutional research ethics requirements, you all know who you are and it was a very enriching experience to be able to actively participate in your professional world for the short period that I did. A special thanks to the chef-owner of this operation for giving me permission to gain access to the site in the first place, and for never placing any pressure or expectation on me about how the paper should read. To my academic advisor, Professor Fran Klodawsky, many thanks for your honest and demanding standards in helping me through the process of trying to make this work flow logically, and for thinking of different ways of sorting through the data I had collected. To my second reader, Professor Peter Andree, similar gratitude with respect to your clear and helpful observations on the various drafts I presented, and on helping to sort through some of theoretical aspects I struggled with at times. To Donna Coghill, thanks for your administrative help in figuring the logistics of formatting the work, and for your generally fun disposition that allowed for relief in stressful moments, even if I didn't show it that much. Finally, thanks to my brother, Greg, for his invaluable help in the graphics work that rendered the maps of the various sites of the organization I examined (Appendices A-D) and other technical support issues.

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Introduction

The last two decades have witnessed a rise in the influence of many chefs and restaurants on food trends and food consumption patterns in North America and England, two regions that have not traditionally been known for having rich culinary and gastronomic cultures and traditions. These influences have often been media-driven with chefs gaining celebrity status that had not previously been associated with the cooking profession. Food programs have become a popular outlet for many hobby cooks, as well as for some professionals who may want to keep up on who the latest 'hot' chef is, or what the latest 'hot' food trend might be. With a popular Food Network dedicated to airing programs related solely to various aspects of how food is prepared and how it might be experienced, the general public has had increased exposure to what happens in some restaurant settings as well. Much of the content contained in these programs, however, also feeds an appetite for facile titillation and food pornography as much as it depicts how the activities that take place in restaurants might relate to social issues beyond the simple pleasures of eating very good food (Bell, 2002), although the pleasure of experiencing good food is something that does have significant social value.

Whether one is an avid watcher of these kinds of food/cooking programs or not, it is difficult to ignore completely the impact that they, along with various food-based magazines and the internet, have had on the shaping of a sector of society that is commonly referred to as 'foodies' within food-centric, or gastro-centric circles. The results of this heightened awareness about how food is prepared, about various 'new' ingredients, and about where food comes from, seems to have struck a chord with different sectors of society for different reasons. Some people are fanatical about

knowing every fine detail about the latest ‘hip’ ingredient, or piece of cooking equipment being used by professional chefs. Some people see food as an extension of a lifestyle and view it in a broader context of entertaining and hosting elaborate dinner parties, for example. Others are more concerned about health-related issues and are interested in knowing how their food was grown or raised, and the source from where it comes. None of these reasons are necessarily mutually exclusive.

Related to this last trend has been a move toward eating locally and sustainably produced foods, particularly those of organic origins. In many ways this shift can be linked to a resistance on the part of some chefs to associate with powerful actors and corporations within the global food system, who control many of the production and supply chains, in favour of developing direct relationships with local farmers and artisanal suppliers. Local food movements have surfaced in increasing numbers across North America over this period (Klonsky, 2000; Vos, 2000; Gutham, 2003 and 2006) and many local and organic, or naturally-raised foods more commonly available today in retail outlets have been a part of the repertoire of some restaurants for several years.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how a restaurant of this kind exemplifies a form of grass-roots resistance to hegemonic forces within the global food system, and how that resistance might result in the possibility of reduced levels of alienation for the restaurant workers and those who supply them with their product. Having an extensive amount of professional cooking experience, which has exposed me to many different kinds of kitchen and restaurant settings, I initially entered this research trying to explore the Marxian concept of worker alienation from the perspective of cooks and the service staff of the restaurants I chose to research. By alienation, I refer Marx’s notion that as

work becomes increasingly industrialized, labour is increasingly divided and specialized with the worker being separated from the meaning and purpose of what they are doing, and for whom they are doing what they do (Marx, 1976).

Research Questions

Professional kitchen environments can be quite varied (e.g., their size and the amount of space available to work in, how much natural lighting there might be, the quality of the air as well as the heat level of the kitchen, and the quality of the food being prepared). Because of this, I attempted to find an operation that had more than one kitchen and restaurant setting in order to be able to get a fairly interesting cross-section of environments from which I could consider the research questions I was interested in trying to answer. Would having direct relationships between small-scale local suppliers and artisanal producers bring an increased connection to the work for those working in the restaurants I explored? Did these relationships bring some kind of meaning to their work that otherwise would be difficult to find? Did it make their work environment more satisfying than other places they had worked previously? If there was an increased sense of connection, did this translate equally across different settings? And, as a form of resistance, how did such an approach play out in the actual spaces of the different restaurants? In what ways might it be said that these spaces provided potentials for some form of emancipatory expression of difference from dominant discourses of the food system which views food primarily as a disembedded economic commodity at the exclusion of the social relations of production and aspects of community that are a part of

that production in many cases? What limits to such emancipatory possibilities might still remain within the various restaurant settings?

I have explored these questions and issues by conducting an ethnographic study of a restaurant organization, *Soffritto Food and Wine (Soffritto from hereon)*¹, located in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. *Soffritto* makes it a central part of its mantra to purchase its food products exclusively from suppliers who incorporate environmentally and ecologically sustainable practices in the growing of produce, as well as humane, non-intensive practices of animal husbandry in the raising of animals that are purchased by the restaurant. That is, no chemical processing, animal growth hormones, genetically modified ingredients, industrially-raised meats, or endangered fish species would be used by the various kitchens of the operation (there are three restaurants as well as a production kitchen/catering division that make up the organization – see Appendices A-D, pp. 190-3). A very strong emphasis is placed on these ideals in terms of sourcing the products used by the organization, as well as the adherence to very sound, largely French-based cooking methods and techniques used in their preparation. The organization also prepares everything it makes on its own premises completely from scratch. This entails the need for skilled, experienced cooks, which is complimented by an apprenticeship program the restaurant has for training young cooks as well. On the service side of the operation, an equally high attention to detail and knowledge exists, which also includes ongoing training sessions of various sorts. In short, *Soffritto's* approach to the dining

¹ For the purpose of research ethics approval and subject anonymity, the names *Soffritto* and *Allium*, as well as the names given to people who have been quoted from interviews I conducted, the questionnaire I distributed for this research, or any news articles that quote employees of *Soffritto* are all fictitious. The names of all other people quoted within the paper not associated with *Soffritto* or *Allium*, and of other restaurants referred to, have not been changed.

experience is that food is something that can be a very pleasurable for both the eater and those preparing and serving it, but it also entails a high level of social awareness and an emphasis on a responsibility on the part of the organization to consider the environmental and ecological impact of what they do as seriously as that of the quality of the product they produce. With this in mind, I was interested in exploring how such motivations interrelate with aspects of macro forces of the global food system that might at least in part be the cause for such a strong commitment to these ideals to begin with.

I chose *Soffritto* as the site of my research because I was relatively familiar with its approach to sourcing and preparing food and I thought it would fit as a very interesting case study to explore the issues related to alienation, emancipatory possibilities, and food politics that I was interested in. As I had also worked with the proprietor of *Soffritto*, Antoine, in another restaurant, *Allium*, early in my culinary career, I had a contact which potentially allowed me to gain access to a research site that might have otherwise been somewhat more complicated. This undoubtedly meant that I began my research with some of my own biases about food politics and about what I might find, but I did my best to leave them behind. The findings, as much as possible, are presented from the perspective of the workers whose world is depicted within these pages. This stated, however, all researchers enter their work with certain standpoints and my own is that there are many positive and hopeful elements to local food movements but they can also associate themselves with a romanticized past linked to the family farm where family meals were happily shared and hard work was appreciated, while widely ignoring the gendered forms of work, as well as issues of race and class that historically existed on such farms (Freidmann, 1993b).

My intent here is not to romanticize or overly criticize any one particular model of the global food system, but rather to consider why the approaches taken by *Soffritto* described above might be considered a form of resistance to the broader food system, and why this approach is indeed considered somewhat different, and even radical, by some. But rather than a radical change, I argue that what is going on here is more of a reintroduction of traditions that were marginalized through the commoditization of food with the onset of industrial agricultural policies, as well as the application of reductionist science in the formation of the North American diet, which in turn have had powerful influence on creating a fairly bland food palate in North America.

Because restaurants of the type I have studied for this thesis are not readily accessible to all socio-economic groups, I also consider how such discrepancies are being addressed by those within this industry, if at all. That is, if this type of restaurant might be considered to be politically activist in terms of the statement it makes with its product purchasing habits, as well as other events that have political implications associated with them that are hosted by the organization, or which the organization participates in, is such activism inclusive of all social groups, or still somewhat selective? The reason for asking such questions is to address two of the key issues that tend to hang over local, restaurant-driven food movements that in some way strive to change eating, purchasing and food consumption patterns of the public - those of food education and food security. There is a general sentiment within this movement that a better educated public with respect to what real whole foods are, and on food-related issues more generally, would go a long way to altering consumption patterns away from industrially produced and highly processed foods, which in turn would help to support small-scale producers and local food

economies (Petrini, 2003; Pollan, 2007; Klonsky, 2000; Waters in McNeil, 2007).

Examining whether restaurants like *Soffritto* are reaching a wide enough public that crosses socio-economic levels is important for at least two reasons. Within the alternative food movement, the sentiment that the farmer needs to be paid more for their product is common (e.g., Petrini, 2003, Patel, 2007). This sentiment is based on the argument that food should be more expensive than it is because the industrial agrifood system, through overproduction and dumping policies that took shape in North America post-World War II, have been responsible for driving down food prices globally and consequently creating an expectation on the part of the consumer that food should be cheap (Weiss, 2007). If the expectation for the price of food were changed from something that should be cheap to something more expensive that should reflect a fair return for the work that has been put into it, the argument goes, the farmer would begin to realize a better return for their efforts by being paid a true price for their work. Restaurants that choose to deal with small-scale suppliers and pay a fairer or truer price for the goods they use face challenges because the costs of operating in this fashion can be prohibitively expensive. Partly because of this approach, many of these same restaurants have traditionally required the use of cheap, and at times free labour, in order to be able to afford to produce the product they do for often fairly affluent customers. This creates a potential danger of replicating social relations of production that feed into patterns of worker exploitation in order to survive in the capitalist system. It is not uncommon for young cooks to work for free in kitchens where the chef has a very highly respected reputation in order to gain access to the style of food and knowledge about the trade. Most cooks who do this would argue it is just the way it is and it is necessary if they want to get ahead. Rarely, and perhaps

surprisingly, are the concepts of worker exploitation on the part of the restaurant, or self-exploitation on the part of the cook, ever a part of the discourse. Well known chefs can become mythologized to a point that can distort the nature of the free labour for knowledge exchange for the sake of producing a purer, more integrity-based product. Such co-op situations are common in many professions where students are trying to gain experience and make inroads into their respective fields but kitchens can be particularly exploitative in this area. An example is someone I know personally who has worked for different well-known chefs for free and had one particular experience in England where they simply tried to ‘break’ the cooks and make life as difficult as possible for them, even when working for free. In the context of this study, I argue that all cooks, no matter what their experience level, should be paid for the time they work and given the opportunity to meet their material needs.

The approach I take in this thesis is to first examine the global food system in a broad way to introduce many of the problematic issues that drive some restaurant professionals to reject its dominant control over the agricultural production, food distribution, and product availability sectors across many parts of the globe that in one form or another impact the choices they have available to them on some level. This background will make it apparent how concentrated corporate dominance of the global food system results in many troubling injustices, particularly for farmers and the less affluent, as well as detrimental environmental, ecological and health issues that it plays a part in creating or contributing to. I then provide a background as to how restaurants that choose to source their products seasonally and in a socially responsible manner began in North America. This background helps to provide the context for where *Soffritto* fits into

this picture, or paradigm. From the global context to the more local, the paper then explores the impact of local supply networks and relationships on the meaning of work by examining the labour process and the significance of the role of craft skills in both the production and cooking processes, as well as on the service side of the restaurant operation in the dining rooms of *Soffritto*. The way in which the product supplied to *Soffritto* is grown or raised, and the way it is cooked once it arrives on the premises, involve significant attention to the small details of locally shared knowledges and skills that have been developed over several years. Because of this, I dedicate a good portion of the paper to the relationship between such a detailed approach requiring skilled labour, and how the enabling of the use of that knowledge relates to potentially reduced levels of alienation for both the farmer and the food service professional.

Finally, I examine the *Soffritto* environment in the context of its potential for being an emancipatory space of significant resistance and creative change to the global powers that have so much control over many facets of the food system as we know it. I do this by considering how the actual spaces of the organization have been designed in terms of being concrete or abstract spaces, and how those designs enable, or not, the counter-hegemonic discourse (vis-à-vis the global food system) that predominates the *Soffritto* environment to be expressed by the people who work there.

Soffritto is a combination of several elements that do not necessarily always easily mesh. The food purchased and cooked by the different restaurants and the production kitchen that form the organization is, on the one hand, meant to be an expression of local, seasonal bounty that is intended to be matched with interesting wines and provide the diner with a pleasurable gastronomic experience. At the same time, the food in particular,

is very much a political expression filled with an ideology based on the importance of the social responsibility for farmers, cooks, and clients to be participating in a process that has made environmental and ecological sustainability a central tenet of its operational mantra. The organization has participated in many events, or held press conferences on its premises, related to issues of food politics, such as an ongoing legal battle over the production and selling of raw cow's milk in Ontario. Signs in the production kitchen during the first phase of my visit promoted the consumption of raw milk as a personal choice issue that government regulatory bodies were negatively impacting by forcing an Ontario farmer who produces this milk, in rather pristine and safe conditions, to cease the sale of it to the general public. Other ways in which the organizational ideology is expressed is through literature such as *Canada's Seafood Guide*, which categorizes fish species according to the risk of their consumption (i.e., Best Choice, Some Concerns, Avoid) that is placed at table settings in the dining rooms so the customer is introduced to the overarching ideology of how the restaurant approaches its food purchasing almost immediately upon arrival. Fish tasting events where the politics and negative implications of the consumption of endangered species of fish have been the focus have also been held on the premises (Reichert, 2008: 10-11). While the end product is always of an exceptionally high quality, it is less clear as to how these messages are perceived by the clientele, and/or whether they are received only by a somewhat select, and relatively small, segment of the general public. In other words, is it a message that reaches the masses, or is it some type of exclusive knowledge being shared by a relatively small segment of society? If so, how is that message then articulated beyond the premises of the restaurant space?

The thesis of the paper is that operating a restaurant with an approach such as the one taken by *Soffritto* does result in reduced levels of alienation for the worker but these levels of reduced alienation are uneven across the organization. By this I imply that the nature of the relationships between the restaurant and its suppliers is very much based on high levels of commitment to being socially responsible in terms of environmental and ecological footprints the organization leaves behind, as well as an equally strong commitment to the development of craft skills, and a place for those skills to be expressed - craft skills of both the farmers and the restaurant workers. Without such a forum for expression, it would be difficult to envision a connection to the meaning of work to the extent that I found for the most part in this research. At the same time, however, it is quite difficult to ascertain to what degree alienation is reduced. It is also something that is reduced for some people more than others, depending on where within the organization they work, and what position they hold. A secondary argument is that a restaurant organization such as *Soffritto* can also have emancipatory possibilities for those who work in them when considered alongside other restaurants that are far more disconnected from issues of skill development, food politics and social responsibility. That is, by having an awareness of how food has been commoditized and fetishized, the restaurant makes it a specific part of its mission to challenge this dynamic to a great extent. By fetishized I refer the Marxian concept that the importance or awareness of who made a particular good, and how it was made, are disregarded by the person consuming it (Marx, 1976). The challenge to fetishization, along with the way some of the spaces within the organization are produced to enable a discursive exchange between workers and clients does allow for an expression of difference on the part of some staff that

reflects a discourse that can be considered counter-hegemonic vis-à-vis the powers of the global food system, as well as other models of operating a restaurant.

This claim also needs to be qualified with another caveat, however. The restaurant does indeed partake in certain purchasing practices that might be considered as alternatives to dominant supply chains, and it does have an extensive set of training programs which provide the employee with deep knowledge about their profession that provide them with spaces to explore and express this knowledge in different ways. Alongside these approaches, however, the organization is also deeply involved in a marketing program that might be labeled as ‘artisanal capitalism,’ where the focus on the quality of the local artisanal producer and product, in conjunction with a high degree of brand recognition of the organization’s name (which in reality includes the name of the chef-owner) combine to create an external perception of the organization. This approach is partially a challenge to fetishization in terms of the organization’s conscious association of being associated with sustainably responsible suppliers and featuring those small-scale growers on its menus, and who are promoted by the workers to the client. At the same time, the association with these local growers, and the land (terroir) from which their products come, is also marketed in various ways as a value-added draw to clients in order to grow the business and accumulate the required capital to remain economically healthy. The focus on the local alters spatial perception with respect to food that reintroduces nature and local geographies back into the food consumption discourse. In this framing, nature is linked to the local, which is associated with integrity and quality. In the discourse of the artisanal local food movement, local geography is then linked to terroir and provenance (the land and origin from which some item was grown or raised).

Terroir in turn becomes linked to marketing strategies when associated with food or beverage products that help to define culinary regions, which in turn link to tourist attractions and are often promoted with pleasurable consumption in mind. All of this can result in positive gastronomic experiences. It can also, however, just as easily result in a second type of fetish, or a re-fetishization of the food being served; that of a fetish for the quality that is associated with the local and artisanal. While there is nothing inherently negative about promoting a quality product produced with integrity, the fetish that can accompany it can make other issues such as the working conditions of the farm worker, race, and gender invisible in this discourse – a discourse which tends to lift the farmer to a celebrity status that has recently been experienced by chefs themselves. These tensions do not necessarily always represent the same ideals, although they are also not so radically at odds with each other as to entail a contradiction of irreconcilable differences. What these potential contradictions highlight, it is argued, is one form, or type, of capitalism that exists under what Gibson-Graham (1996: 258-60) referred to as the “blanket of Capitalism.” Capitalism, for Gibson-Graham, “has no outside” when considered in these blanket terms, but if it were to be conceived of as not something that was all-embracing but as “something that was partial, one social constituent among many,” what is happening at *Soffritto* can be theorized as a social construction that incorporates largely socialist community values into one interpretation, or version of a type of capitalism that is taking place underneath the hegemonic blanket of “Capitalism.”

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters, followed by a conclusion with suggestions for further ideas for research in issues related to this area. In chapter one, I provide an overview of different paradigms that make up the global food system in order to help locate *Soffritto*, and operations like it, within that broader complex. The purpose for doing so is to help explain what *Soffritto* is an alternative to, as well as an alternative for whom. I also provide a brief history of how restaurants of this type have surfaced in North America over the past thirty years. This section explains how local supply networks between farmers and chefs began to develop and it also provides context to the craft nature and knowledge required in the type of cooking that takes place within these kinds of restaurant kitchens. I complete the chapter with a description of the different sites that make up *Soffritto* to help the reader develop a visual idea of the scope and scale of the organization.

In chapter two I provide the theoretical constructs I have used to help explain my findings. Karl Marx's concepts of alienation and estrangement are introduced, as well as his concepts of concrete (use-value) and abstract (exchange-value) forms of labour. Marx's concepts of commodification and its fetishization are also explored in order to demonstrate where within the food system these ideas fit, and why *Soffritto* reduces the level of both by being quite connected to the sources of the products it uses in its food preparation and its wine service. This is followed by the incorporation of Karl Polanyi's ideas of 'fictitious commodities,' 'embeddedness' and the 'double movement.' Polanyi's (1944) distinction between real and fictitious commodities is helpful in gaining a better understanding of the fetishized commodity. Embeddedness helps as a reminder that

economic relations have not always been separated into their own category linked to unfettered free markets apart from the social impacts of those relations. This allows nature – particularly the negative impact certain types of agricultural methods have had on it – to be brought into the discussion. As well, the ‘double-movement’ helps introduce the concept of forms of resistance to dominant forces that would ignore the negative externalities they cause if left to operate simply under free market conditions if they were not challenged by other forces, both governmental and non-governmental, whose concerns extend beyond the concept of simple economic efficiency and the neoclassical economic concept of the ‘rational’ decision maker (1944: 71-80).

The concept of worker satisfaction is considered through an exploration of the labour process. This is first examined by how it was defined by Karl Marx, and then interpreted by later writers such as Harry Braverman and David Harvey. The inclusion of this material links directly to the idea of the role and place of craft skills within the capitalist workplace, and how those skills are at times threatened by technological innovations which can make them obsolete, or at least much less needed and relevant in many settings. These writings also lead to some of the work of Richard Sennett, whose writings on post-Fordist workplaces that practice a form of ‘new’ or ‘flexible’ capitalism is helpful in locating the place and importance of craft skills in the contemporary workplace, as well as in considering the impact that flexible capitalism has had on how many workplaces are organized today. No longer, Sennett argues, is long-term commitment to the organization necessarily considered an asset for many organizations. Constant change, often related to the rapid flows of capital, as well as to an increasingly mobile labour force and changing technologies have altered how work is perceived for

many organizations (2006: 115-118). *Soffritto's* emphasis on craft skills and knowledge, in conjunction with the reality that the organization has gone through several structural changes over the past two years, make it an interesting case study to explore Sennett's ideas in some detail. Sennett's work is also useful in considering craft as an intellectual or mental concept alongside its traditional conception of being a physical skill. For example, Sennett notes how writing well requires significant mental skill (2006: 104) as does restaurant service. In the setting of the restaurant, where servers are translating the message of the operation to the client, craft skill in terms of product knowledge, performative/social ability and communication style are also very important skills which take time to develop, and which should not be overlooked in terms of how the organization as a whole functions, and how it is perceived by its clientele.

This material is followed by the introduction of writings on political ecology and actor-network theory (ANT). These two streams further help with the inclusion of nature and human activity into the discussion on the politics of food consumption. Both streams view nature and human activity as parallels rather than one being superior or subordinate to the other. ANT further helps in identifying the actors who form the networks that make up the local movements of resistance being considered here. The theoretical chapter then concludes by considering 'the production of space' largely through the writings of Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre expanded upon Marx's concepts of concrete and abstract labour by applying them to space. For him, space was something that could only be produced by humans and that production process explained much about social power relations, as well as the potential for marginalized people and ideas to come together in the production of a space of difference that brought with it possibilities for creative and emancipatory

expression (Lefebvre, 1991c). Applying these concepts to the spaces that make up the *Soffritto* organization, I attempt to tease out where and how some spaces of the organization might be more emancipatory than others.

Chapter three explains the methodological approaches I have used (interpretive and institutional ethnography) for my study. This explanation follows the description of how I accessed the research site, some of the techniques I used to gather data, and a description of some of the tasks I did in the kitchens during the participant-observation phase of my research in order to provide the reader with an introduction to the ethnographic method more generally. This is followed by a more detailed description of both interpretive and institutional ethnographic methods, and how they apply to this research.

Chapter four presents the analysis of the data I collected. In this chapter, I use direct quotes obtained from interviews I conducted, as well as responses gathered from a questionnaire I distributed to many workers at *Soffritto*, some email and phone exchanges with farmers, as well as quotes from a recent newspaper article on the organization. Using the content of this material, I incorporate my analytical interpretation of it, linking the theory covered earlier to the day-to-day praxis. The paper concludes with a brief review of the research questions examined and the conclusions I have drawn to those questions. The limitations of my conclusions are then considered, along with suggestions for further research in this area.

Chapter 1: How We Think About Food

Introduction

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the global food system, and its varying and competing paradigms, with the intent of identifying tensions within this system that have led to the rise of various forms of alternative food movements, and where *Soffritto* fits within that framework. I begin by explaining different typologies or models under which restaurants operate and follow this with a brief discussion of how the culinary palate in North America has been shaped. The overview of the global food system is followed by an overview of the development of the chef-local farmer movement in North America to help explain where *Soffritto* fits into this framework, and how it has been influential in helping others within the industry to explore that approach in their own ways. A final section then provides a description of the actual *Soffritto* site in order to provide the reader with some context to the scope of the *Soffritto* operation.

Restaurant Paradigms

Over the past several decades, various movements of opposition and resistance to some of the ways in which the industrial food and agricultural system functions, as well as to food production methods associated with biotechnology and the use of genetically modified seeds and foods, have surfaced on several fronts. Specific factors that have triggered these resistances vary according to different circumstances in different spaces and geographic locations. Health scares, for example, such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and the H5N1 strain of avian influenza that is capable of jumping

the species barrier into humans, have raised awareness of the potential negative impacts of high-intensity, industrial animal farming (Weiss, 2007). Both issues have been linked to farming methods known as concentrated confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs), also known as factory farming (McMichael, 2004; Weiss, 2007). Such heightened awareness has resulted in an increased demand for organically grown foods (both fresh and processed), as well as for animals that have been raised and processed using methods of responsible animal husbandry, in many areas of the developed North (Murdoch et al., 2000; Klonsky, 2000). These methods entail providing ample space for animals to roam, rather than raising them in close proximity to other animals in caged quarters where they are under much more stress, and where they are more vulnerable to health risks and injury. Another example of this awareness is the increased importance placed on how animals are brought from the farm to the table. For example, humane treatment of animals extends to the conditions under which they are brought from the farm to an abbatoir; how clean the abbatoir is; how the abbatoir treats animals; and how close the abbatoir is to the farm on which an animal was raised to be sure the animal has not traveled long distances in often confined and hot quarters before reaching the abbatoir. Also, the diet the animal is fed is of increasing importance to many chefs and consumers. Diets heavy in grains are not easy for most animals to digest, placing increased stress on the bladders of cows, for example. Nor is the use of grains necessarily the best environmental solution, as they are often grown using monoculture farming practices, which can have negative impacts on issues such as soil erosion through tilling practices that are destructive to the soil (Weiss, 2007). Despite the raised awareness of such issues

on a general level, however, the interrelationship between food, nature, safety, flavour, pleasure and humans remains quite complex and contested on many fronts.

Movements of resistance require a level of awareness and education about such issues to begin with. An environment where this can exist, but which has been rarely explored in academic research, is the professional restaurant kitchen. Apart from various retail food outlets (e.g., supermarkets and farmers' markets), the range of interaction between food systems and humans is perhaps greater in some restaurant kitchen environments than in almost any other setting. The nature and depth of this interaction, however, is very much dependent upon the particular business model a particular operation chooses to apply.

The majority of the interactions between the food system, in a broad sense, and the restaurant industry come through some association between corporate-based food product suppliers and franchised fast food restaurants. Lang and Heasman (2004: 167-170) note that "89 publicly traded US restaurant companies had sales of just under \$1 billion in 2002. This accounted for 36 percent of total industry sales in 121,000 outlets." In this type of publicly traded restaurant (i.e., franchised restaurants of the fast food nature), the corporate transnational organization has very little direct connection to a particular community or place. The business model is based on a formula where quantity dictates the purchasing relationships between the franchise and the supplier, and there is very limited actual cooking knowledge involved in the final phase of preparation. In this setting, the most important factor is purchasing power in order to buy cheap and sell cheap, as profit is realized only through high sales of inexpensive items. This world is focused on capturing an audience that is busy and tends to have little time to prepare

food, might not be interested in doing so, or simply doesn't know how to cook very well. This clientele is not particularly interested in the origin, or provenance, of where their food comes from, nor how the flavours that have gone in to the food might have been developed. Schlosser (2001: 120), for example, provides useful insight into the workings of the artificial food flavouring industry in the United States. That many of these additives have addictive qualities and are not really food at all (Pollan, 2007) does not seem to be of importance to some, while others may simply not have the financial resources and know-how to consume a better balanced diet. Corporate restaurant chains also tend to be reactive in terms of purchasing habits related to issues of corporate social responsibility (e.g., public pressures from issues such as BSE and H5N1 noted above tend to be the drivers of change in food purchasing patterns in this sector in terms of beef and egg purchasing (Schlosser, 2001), not voluntary choice on the part of the franchise (Klonsky, 2000). Finally, as these restaurants are publicly owned, there is no telling of how many people who can afford to eat in more high-end restaurants own profitable shares in the very places they may never frequent.

In the non-franchised sector of the restaurant industry, there can still exist a very strong relationship between corporate supply chains and the restaurant in many cases. One-stop shopping suppliers are quite common and often more cost-effective to the restaurateur than taking the time to source everything from a range of smaller independent suppliers. This is especially so in markets where labour supply may be quite scarce and the time available to find various suppliers is limited. As well, even if a chef were to want to seek out a more local supply base, s/he may not have the authority to do

so if they are working under purchasing conditions dictated by a proprietor who is not so inclined.

Such supply chains tend to be a mixed bag in terms of the quality of the product they supply. One can access relatively decent quality beef (e.g., Black Angus), while at the same time purchasing pre-peeled garlic and shallots, which often seem like they have been sitting in their containers for weeks – not particularly fresh nor pleasant smelling for the user, nor particularly enhancing for the food preparation they go into. Such suppliers also tend to be reactive to the demands and trends of the moment. If there is a strong demand, either within the industry or from the public for a certain product (e.g., Black Angus beef suddenly became very popular about ten years ago), these all-in-one suppliers tend to establish contractual agreements with producers of such items in order to capture that market, which again often drives down prices making it difficult for the small-scale producer to compete with them. These kinds of supply relationships result in an uneven quality of product that comes with relatively reliable delivery times which fill a need in this sector of the market. Relations of power, however, in terms of the dictates of transnational corporations to farmers, as well as environmental and ecological issues, are not part of the typical discourse between sales representatives and chefs in this kind of supply relationship. Within this type of system, the growers are rarely ever known by those who purchase their goods. As well, environmental stewardship and responsible animal husbandry are not typically associated with such suppliers, although they are very adept at appropriating such trends and marketing them in order to be perceived as socially aware and responsible.

A third type of restaurant exists that seeks to purchase the products they use based on a dual criteria. The first is that the food should be of very good quality and freshness. Alongside this, there is an equally important commitment that such products should be produced under conditions that are environmentally and ecologically sustainable. Farmers and artisans who provide such goods tend to be of the smaller-scale variety and within generally close geographic proximity to the restaurants they supply, although this is not always the case. That such relationships should be considered a form of resistance to the more dominant transnational corporate model is reflective in many ways of how the idea of food has been framed over the past century, in North America in particular.

Government policies based on reductionist, positivist science in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, were highly influential in shaping what was considered to be a 'normal diet' (Mudry, 2006: 56). This formulation was a somewhat complex use of data gathered from the application of the calorimeter and then utilized by nutritionists responsible for assembling and publishing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Guide of that period. The Guide, and photos in the brochures and pamphlets that accompanied it, concentrated largely on foods familiar to caucasians (read North Americans of British ancestry), while foods traditionally associated with the immigrant populations of that time were often stigmatized as being 'strange' (e.g., olive oil, garlic, cured meats, and homemade bread) (Mudry: 57). The use of the calorimeter by USDA dieticians and nutritionists dictated the number of calories one should ideally consume based on criteria such as profession, age and sex, but had little interest in, or inclusion of foods and ingredients of 'difference.' Food, and by extension immigrants, were 'normalized' to some extent with the ingredients and flavours

common to minority populations being pushed to the margins (Mudry: 59). The pleasure of eating, as well as the idea of including variety in that practice, were not considered of much importance to policy makers of the day and the development of a diverse food culture in North America was significantly impeded by “a discourse of quantification” where “enumerated food made gastronomic knowledge impersonal, and devoid of any social, cultural, or geographic influences” (Mudry: 64). In many ways, the food that is being prepared today in restaurants such as *Soffritto*’s is not so much ground-breaking as it is an incorporation of traditional techniques and methods that have existed in many cultures for centuries but which have been largely hidden from the mainstream in North America over the past century.

More recently, Pollan (2007), notes (as one of several examples) how government policies in the United States based on more reductionist, nutritional science, such as the scare about cholesterol levels in the 1970s, led to the introduction of trans fats into the North American diet. The high consumption levels of processed and fast foods that contained trans fats has subsequently been linked to several negative health issues (e.g., obesity and type-2 diabetes) in part due to the high number of people who choose to eat processed foods over whole foods. This, as well as its counterpoint (the search for the thin body and the hard-body enhanced by dietary and muscle-building supplements respectively) have spawned industries ranging from weight-loss clinics, to vitamin and nutritional supplement companies, to dietary replacement products for people who seem to have no awareness of what real food actually is, and how it might play a vital role in social relations (Pollan, 2007).

As a result of these policies, along with, it could be argued, other contributing factors, a growing portion of the population rarely cook anything fresh, and the idea of a shared family meal, as well as food and cooking knowledge passed down through generations, has become rarer and rarer (MacNeil, 2007; Petrini, 2003; Patel, 2007; Pollan, 2007). This paper does not have enough room to explore some of those other factors in detail but quickly, the introduction of the television in the 1950s in conjunction with the frozen dinner, the massive success of fast food chain restaurants and the current technological culture that feeds on speed and instant gratification have all had their impact on the idea of what food and cooking are (Pollan, 2007; Weiss, 2007). Thus, exploring a specific kind of restaurant setting seems an apt site in which to examine how various aspects of the world food system play out within it. That the search for actual real food becomes something that is considered to be alternative, or a form of resistance of some kind, says much about the way in which food has become commoditized and fetishized over the past century.

A Brief Overview of the Global Food System

People confuse me. Food doesn't.
-Anthony Bourdain-

The global food system has gone through different transformations over the past two centuries that in many ways mirror the development of capitalism and the process of industrialization in general. Once a system based largely on the family farm in which crop rotation was a natural process and where pesticides, chemicals and genetically modified seeds were non-existent, the reverse is now true for the majority of people

living in the developed global North (Lang and Heasman, 2004). This was made possible post-World War II in large part by the development and rising use of synthetic fertilizers, agro-chemicals, enhanced seed varieties, automated farm machinery, concentrated feedstuffs, animal antibiotics and hormones, and the expansion of irrigation systems, which allowed industrial techniques to override previous ecological constraints (Lang and Heasman, 2004; Weiss, 2007).

Historically, the long-term viability of farm landscapes has depended upon the maintenance of functional diversity in soils, crop species (and seed germ plasm within species), trees, animals and insects to maintain ecological balance and nutrient cycles. Thus, agro-ecosystems were managed with a variety of different techniques, such as multi-cropping, crop covering, rotational patterns, green manures, fallowing land, agro-forestry, careful seed selection and the integration of small animal populations (Lang and Heasman, 2004; Weiss, 2004; Goodman, 1999). This was a relatively complex system that entailed a good deal of shared knowledge amongst farmers, which tended to enrich community ties and cooperation (Jarosz, 2000; Patel, 2007; Roff, 2007). With the onset of capitalism and industrialization, much, but not all, of this complex system began to be subsumed by transnational agro-food corporations (TNCs) whose vertically integrated structures often have the same companies owning fertilizers, pesticides, seeds and the final product (Weiss, 2007; Goodman, 1999). Such concentration of ownership exists in relatively few hands and brings with it a great deal of power in terms of dictating what farmers should grow, for whom, and where it is eventually located within the supermarket setting (Patel, 2007; Lang and Heasman, 2004; McMichael, 2004).

Furthering this complicated web have been debt reduction programs that were introduced to developing countries over the past thirty years through organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (McMichael, 2004). These programs have largely resulted in policies that have dictated to debtor countries what form of agricultural policy they should be pursuing, and who the goods they produce should be sold to (Patel, 2007; McMichael, 2004). The outcome of these policies has been that most countries in need of a local agricultural economy are producing goods for export and little food security or sovereignty exists within their own communities. Such food insecurity is further threatened by issues of drought and soil erosion that often force farmers to sell land they once owned and become commoditized farm labourers because they can no longer realize consistent yields that provide them with their livelihood (Patel, 2007). One significant and troubling outcome of these realities has been an increase in the number of farmer poisonings from the use of fertilizers and pesticides, and especially troubling are the increased number of farmer suicides (often pesticide-induced) that have occurred over the past several years in places like India, several African countries and in the developed North as well, largely related to feelings of hopelessness brought on by the difficult conditions under which many farmers are expected to operate (Weiss, 2007; Patel, 2007; Lang and Heasman, 2004).

The capitalization and industrialization of the agricultural sector resulted in a transformation, in an integrated way, between farmers, chemical and fertilizer producers, seed suppliers, and food marketers, which has simplified the natural ecological order in many locations (Klonsky, 2000; McMichael, 2004). Such simplification of biodiversity was greatly helped along by the introduction of fertilizers to the agricultural industry, in

conjunction with an increasing domination of the agro-industry in general by transnational corporations after World War II (Goodman and Redclift, 1991; Friedmann, 1993a). Tightly linked to this transformation was the increased reliance upon fossil fuels in the twentieth century, in the increased distance food was traveling from farm to table, the need to fuel farm machinery, as well as the fuel and other energy inputs that were required to produce and transport chemical fertilizers that were being used (Weiss, 2007).

The average distance food travels from farm to table in North America, for example, is between 2,000 and 2,500 kilometers (Weiss, 2007: 14). The choices of what is made available and where it is located on supermarket shelves is also controlled by a small number of powerful TNCs who in turn are often connected to modes of high worker exploitation (e.g., Nestlé in the coffee production sector) (Patel, 2007: 11-14). The result is that for many people in poorer countries, despite food surpluses globally, there is not enough to eat. Thus, as Patel (2007) notes, the world is both “stuffed and starved” and very few people come face-to-face with real whole foods much of the time, often without having a great deal of choice in what they can access and consume. The distance that food travels, and the fact that much of it is so processed as to have no identifiable place of origin, has resulted in what McMichael (2004: 11) refers to as a “food from nowhere” that reshapes consumers’ culinary “maps of meaning” (Cook and Crang, 1996: 236). Places such as *Soffritto* are examples of an attempt to respond to, and resist, the reshaping of these culinary maps.

Food System Paradigms

While the focus of this thesis is based largely upon the relationships between local food producers and the users of their goods, these relationships clearly do not exist exclusive of the global food system. The canon of literature on various aspects of the global food system is quite substantial and far too comprehensive to capture in a brief overview. With this in mind, I attempt to provide some useful broad frameworks under which this system can be classified in order to help identify how what *Soffritto* attempts to do is a form of resistance to many facets of that system. The purpose of this is to demonstrate how actions beyond the local environment have direct impacts on actors within it, and how those impacts often become the inspiration for forms of resistance and alternative approaches

Borrowing a framework typology from Lang and Heasman (2004), broadly speaking, the global food system as it exists currently can be placed into three macro paradigms: the Productionist/Global paradigm, the Life Sciences Integrated paradigm, and the Ecologically Integrated paradigm. These paradigms are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The Productionist paradigm represents aspects of food policy choices made by governments and big business that most obviously infiltrate our lives in the developed North through the supermarket chain, via brand recognition advertising campaigns, and in the fast food industry. This paradigm is characterized by its commitment to raising the output of agricultural production, often by way of the intensification and industrialization of agricultural processes. It treats food as a commodity and is directly linked to commodity markets, high-input agriculture and the pursuit of quantity over quality (Lang and Heasman, 2004). It is very much reliant on the chemical industry in terms of its high

use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides in order to attain consistently high yields. It also focuses on the cheapness of the cost of the product, a consistently ‘appealing’ appearance of the food that is brought to market, high levels of processing and food additives, and it has historically been supported by government agricultural ministries, although this support is beginning to weaken in some areas (Weiss, 2007).

Particularly noteworthy about this paradigm are the successes it has had in terms of high levels of productivity in conjunction with an almost symmetrical relationship to the degree of environmental and ecological degradation it has caused, as well as various food-borne diseases, such as BSE and H5N1 bird flu noted earlier (Lang and Heasman; 2004; Patel, 2007). Despite great success in terms of productivity, this paradigm has not been successful in alleviating world hunger issues. While the solution to this issue is a complex and multi-faceted geo-political quagmire that encompasses much more than the simple quantity of food production, this paradigm does place some weight on its ability to resolve that global crisis (Allen, 2004). The negative externalities that it produces, however, are often more prevalent than successes it has had in addressing the hunger issue it purports to want to alleviate.

The Life Sciences Integrated paradigm is not completely distinct from the Productionist paradigm in that it is still reliant on intensive agricultural methods to realize economies of scale, but it does so through a science-led integration of the food system, using biological fertilizers rather than chemical, leading to the claim that it is less environmentally and ecologically destructive than the Productionist paradigm. This paradigm is most closely associated with genetically modified seeds, and biotechnology more generally. It combines genetics, biology, engineering, and nutrition, and it tends to

retain control of the whole process from laboratory-to-field, and indirectly from field-to-plate, through vertically-integrated ties with various organizations providing input and output technologies to farmers - e.g., research institutions linked with funding money from genetically modified seed companies, such as Monsanto (Lang and Heasman, 2004). Its supporters claim that much of the work being done in this area can lead to the development of seeds that are resistant to drought conditions, as well as to soil that has high levels of salinity in regions of the globe where little fresh water is available, thus helping to reduce hunger by providing the possibility for the development of local agricultural economies in areas where this has not been possible (Lang and Heasman, 2004). This paradigm also promotes its ability to yield products that have a consistent size, shape and visual appeal to them due to the fact that all seeds used contain the same genetic characteristics, in theory providing the prospective grower with the assurance that their harvests will be highly marketable.

Critics of this approach note that the knowledge within this paradigm is very tightly controlled at the management level, whether private sector, or as some form of government-private sector partnership. This control ultimately makes the farmer dependent upon knowledge that is coming from a laboratory without their participation in the process, reducing their agency as growers as well as eliminating the tradition of sharing local knowledge between farmers at the community scale, as much of that knowledge now comes in a top-down form from scientific labs the local growers have very little connection with (Jarosz, 2000; Murdoch et al., 2000). Both the Productionist and the Life Sciences Integrated paradigms are also very much based on monoculture forms of agriculture, and high productivity levels (Lang and Heasman, 2004), which can

have negative impacts on soil erosion, increasing the likelihood of drought conditions in many areas. For example, when rows between crops are barren and automated tillage techniques are used, soil is exposed and tends to erode at faster rates than if mixed cropping methods were used that filled those gaps (Weiss, 2007).

Monoculture farming also has the tendency of reducing the range of variety in what is grown and by extension, the range of choice of what is available for consumers to choose from. The Life Sciences Integrated paradigm is still relatively young and in a period where it is still too early to tell whether it can achieve the goals it aspires to. Up to this point, however, results are fairly limited. Saskatchewan farmer, Terry Beam, for example, has stated that “the promises (of GMOs) are more hype than reality. The only real promise that came through was that it simplified production, which allowed farmers to cover more acres. But it has had little to do with increased yield or revenue returns” (Beam on *The Current: Diet for a Hungry Planet Podcast*, 5/8/08; www.cbc.ca/podcasting [news and current affairs]).

The Ecologically Integrated paradigm (which *Soffritto* would be most closely associated with) is largely driven by traditional methods of farming that include crop rotation, mixed growing techniques, high levels of biodiversity, the use of natural fertilizers and a high degree of shared knowledge between farmers, resulting in minimal negative environmental impact on the land and water systems (Vos, 2000, Allen, 2004). This paradigm is very much linked to the organic farming sector and generally speaking, it is more community-oriented than the other two paradigms. In its purist form, it doesn't look at food as being simply a commodity, but as something that is part of a broader social right. It has a regional and local focus, and it assumes that environmental resources

are finite and that responsible land use and animal husbandry are crucial ways in which to remain in balance with those limited resources (Jarosz, 2000; Guthman, 2003; Clark, 2007). This system of farming views nature as something to be worked with, rather than conquered and controlled by humans. As well, the Ecologically Integrated paradigm is traditionally not associated with a separation of the economic from the social and natural. In its most idyllic form, the small-scale farmer is able to remain small and adhere to a reality of crop diversity and the implementation of sustainable methods of growing where social, environmental and economic realities are all in a relatively balanced state. With increased demand for this kind of product, both from restaurants and the public at large, being able to meet that demand has become difficult. Restaurants who wish to source items in an almost exclusively local way are required to have multiple small-scale suppliers to do so. The up side of such an approach is that it theoretically allows more farmers to see this method as being a viable way to make a living as demand increases for the number and range of products or animals farmers might viably grow or raise. The potential downside is that the small-scale farmer shifts to a mono-culture approach, as is quite common now in the mixed baby organic lettuces sector (Guthman, 2003), for example, to meet increased demand. Corporations such as WalMart, for example, have entered the organics produce market in a big way over the past several years and the label 'organic' no longer has any kind of automatic association with the product being 'local.' Organizations like WalMart enter into contractual agreements with organic producers to become monoculture producers in order to meet higher demands and realize higher economies of scale (Guthman, 2003). Clark (2007: 66) refers to this as the "corporatization" of the organic produce industry that "demonstrates how the

transnationalization of organic production processes privileges the product-over-process discourse” that predominates this part of the organic sector. With this in mind, it becomes imperative to consider organics in a critical way and ask whether traditional methods of knowledge-sharing and community focus still exist.

Another aspect of the Ecologically Integrated paradigm that needs to be considered is that it is often associated with a romanticized idea of what the ‘family farm’ once was. Not all family-run farms have produced exclusively for local markets. Many also produce for export markets and small-scale farmers who attempt practice natural methods of farming are not always met with open arms by other established small-scale, family-run farms in their region (Qazi and Selfa, 2005). As well, when the family farm is romanticized as some idyllic past treasure that has been usurped by industrialized processes and powers, gender and racial issues are largely ignored (Goertzen, 2003; Guthman, 2006; Allen, 2004; Freidmann, 1993b) in favour of the ‘common sense’ of simply buying locally in favour of a better quality product and support of a local agricultural economy. Within the local and organic agricultural movement, several offshoots exist and it is important to avoid reifying the concept of local as something that automatically equates to quality and integrity. Within the organic agricultural movement, for example, there are many examples of inconsistency in terms of monoculture growing methods and worker exploitation (Petrini, 2003; Clark, 2007). As well, there has been a significant growth in the number of farmers’ markets in many urban centers that have mirrored the growth of local food movements but it is also important not to reify the concept of the local farmers’ market too greatly. For example, Carlo Petrini, the founder

of The Slow Food Movement notes how the prices at a gentrified San Francisco farmers' market were extremely prohibitive for most people:

One could have easily spent a fortune there. The prices were astronomical, twice or even three times as high as those of "conventional" products...I am convinced that the farmers' intelligent, productive efforts deserve to be paid for generously, though the prices were those of a boutique.
(2003: 130)

Another example of the focus on quality that excludes many from being able to afford such products was an organic olive oil purveyor promoting his product at the same market. He had turned to monoculture over biodiversity, perhaps in the name of realizing a handsome profit by satisfying a rather select, and affluent customer base,

He wore a tie, extolled the beauties of his farm: it consisted of hundreds of hectares of olive trees, stretching as far as the eye could see, and nothing else. While I was tasting his excellent organic oil on a slice of bread which reminded me of Tuscan bread – absolutely delicious – I was thinking of what he must have uprooted and cleared away in order to grow all those plants, each one of them impeccably organic. (Petrini, 2003: 130)

. With these caveats in mind, the concept of trust between producers and buyers becomes quite important when trying to remain true to the ideals of sustainable and ecological responsibility. Jarosz (2000) notes that theories based on the vitality of local food networks require trust and cooperation in order for them to remain viable. To this end, "exploring and detailing these relationships among the suppliers, producers, workers, processors, brokers, wholesalers, and retailers within specific regional geographies of these networks are critical for furthering cooperation and trust" (Jarosz: 279). With these criteria in mind, I now turn to a discussion of how the local producer-restaurant chef relationship developed in North America.

The Genesis of the Local Restaurant Movement in North America

In Berkley, California, in 1971, a restaurant was conceived that would become the ember that stoked the fire for a revolution of sorts in the way food was sourced and cooked in many restaurants in North America. The restaurant's name is *Chez Panisse* and its owner- 'chef,' Alice Waters, never really had any prior significant restaurant experience. What she did have was some sense of social and political awareness from having attended the University of California at Berkley during the Free Speech Movement period of the 1960s, and memories of great food she had eaten in France in subsequent studies abroad (McNeil, 20007: xii). Those food memories would lead her to try to find a way to recreate those experiences through the creation of a restaurant and the eventual development of a regional food supply system that was based largely on natural organic growing methods. This shift to the use of local and seasonal ingredients was inspired by French traditions of sourcing food supplies from local markets, and utilizing ingredients that were in-season and at the peak of their flavour (McNeil: 14). Many regions in North America have subsequently adopted this approach in various forms to the point where 'local' has become a standard feature of many restaurant menus and philosophies. Canadian situation.

Chez Panisse quickly gained critical acclaim and as it evolved, the development of connections with small-scale farmers who grew produce organically, and who raised animals in natural environments where they were not confined to small cages and living spaces, were gradually established. Such relationships grew to the point where farmers would show up at the kitchen door with fresh product in a very informal way, and a system of collecting compost material generated by the restaurant would be developed to

deliver it back to the farmer in order to operate in a more sustainable manner (McNeil.: 222-226).

Not long after the birth of *Chez Panisse*, and the positive critical reputation it was garnering, chefs in other regions were beginning to explore similar approaches to accessing the products they worked with. When I first worked with the proprietor of *Soffritto*, Antoine, at a restaurant called *Allium*, two decades prior to this research, daily trips to the local market were a standard part of the job for either the chef-owner, or one of the other cooks, including myself. This meant that as the cook, you were able to develop a personal relationship with the vendors from whom you were buying your product. These types of outings would result in the vendors getting to know what the cooks were looking for, as well as the cooks becoming more exposed to fresh, seasonal ingredients. Even when buying dry goods, such as nuts, we could go to the spice and nut shop, run by Sandra, a Romanian immigrant, who would grind walnuts in her nut grinder for the chocolate-walnut cake to be made that day. This is also where we would buy our poppy seeds when we had poppy seed strudel on the dessert menu, which required the delicate pulling of the strudel dough to a transparent thinness over one of the dining room tables, covered with a table cloth, late in the afternoon before painting on a layer of melted butter, placing the filling on the dough, rolling it and then baking it..

At that time, daily trips to the market were quite unique for a Canadian restaurant (and they still are in many cases). The method was considered to be a radical rejection of being reliant on the corporate food establishment to supply the restaurant with its food items. Purchasing directly from market vendors and then preparing everything in-house from scratch on a daily basis was not the common restaurant experience at the time. No

additives were used and no short-cuts were taken. Stocks and consommés were made daily, as were ice creams and sorbets. The bread was baked daily from a sourdough starter that was ‘fed’ a diet of water and organic flour on a regular basis to keep it alive as the source of the distinctive flavour of the restaurant’s bread. Dark sauces were slowly reduced from stocks that had been made with roasted bones that were by-products from the butchery of beef, lamb, veal, chickens and ducks. Meats that were tougher cuts were slowly braised in those stocks to render them tender. Fish stocks and sauces were made from the bones and shells of the fresh fish and seafood being used on any particular day. Every ingredient was used and every dish on the menu had a different vegetable and starch accompaniment.

Soups, such as fresh pea in late spring and early summer, were made to order. Shallots and black forest ham were gently sautéed in sweet butter, and then fresh shucked peas were added to them. That was covered with freshly made tomato consommé and brought to a boil before being transferred into a very hot, high cylindrical pot in which it would continue to cook before being puréed with a hand blender, and then poured directly into the heated soup bowl and topped with cream and fresh mint before being brought to the table. It was similar during fresh tomato season as well, where tomatoes replaced the peas, and garlic and fresh basil replaced the ham and mint. In these small confines, the cook was exposed to all of the cooking techniques and methods taking place, whatever station/position they might be working. Desserts and pastries were being made within feet of the other action so everyone had exposure to all facets of the cooking repertoire, which resulted in a remarkable food and cooking education, as well as a strong connection to what was taking place. The small four person kitchen, including the dish

washer – an invaluable part of any kitchen team - was a very dynamic and stimulating environment in which to learn a craft.

At that time in Canada, there were also other chefs who were on the cutting edge. Michael Stadlander used a very similar approach at his restaurants, *Stadlander's* and *Nekah* in the 1980s, before moving to a large farm in Singhampton, Ontario where he serves dinners three nights a week with product almost exclusively grown and raised on his land. He is regarded as one of the top chefs in the world and will also soon be opening another location in the Singhampton area. Sinclair Phillips was running *The Sooke Harbour House* in Sooke, B.C the early 1980s and establishing a very strong reputation for rotating and seasonal menus that largely drew upon produce grown in the gardens, and fresh seafood from local fishers. Micheal Smith established a similar reputation at *The Inn at Bay Fortune* on Prince Edward Island a few years later. In Quebec, chefs such as Serge Bruyere were early trailblazers in the 1970s and early 1980s, who would be followed by the likes of Anne Desjardins of *L'eau a la Bouche* in the Laurentians, Normand Laprise of *Toqué* in Montreal, and Martin Picard of *Au Pied de Cochon*. All have all left a significant stamp on the way food is eaten in restaurants in Canada, as well as how it is sourced from local and artisanal suppliers

Allium was quite a bit smaller than is *Soffritto*, but the focus on the local that exists within the *Soffritto* organization was essentially established at that time. The *Allium* period did have several local suppliers coming to the back kitchen door as well, but the development of a local farmer-to-kitchen supply system was very much in its nascent stages. It was not always clear when a supplier would arrive, and how much product they would have available. As was the case in California, the development of a

local supply system would be one that took many years to realize and was part of an evolutionary process. In California, Waters and her various chefs-de-cuisine evolved from basing the restaurant menus on classic, and often obscure, French recipes, to a gradual exploration of the California countryside in an attempt to establish a local cuisine and supply system. This would lead to the discovery of small-scale artisanal cheese makers, fish mongers who could provide them with obscure species to try, and produce growers who had a wide array of different items from which to choose (McNamee: 160). Along with the eventual establishment of the rather unique system of compost collection, the foundations for the increased levels of connection between cooks and farmers were being established and along with them, aspects food politics were beginning to enter the kitchen environment. As Waters notes:

My sense of the ethics and politics of food was coming to the surface. I mean, those values were instilled in me during the Free Speech Movement and my early travels in France. But it didn't really start to come together till the early eighties. It had to do with becoming friends with the farmers and understanding deeply that the food at the restaurant was as good as it was because the produce and the ingredients were as good as they were. The farmers were the people who really got it, about the ethics of food. (Waters in McNeil, 2007: 184)

Small-scale organic producers tend to practice growing methods that have high levels of biodiversity and crop rotations, which naturally helps to replenish nutrients back into the soil, as well as producing a wide range of different fruits and vegetables. Exemplifying what such biodiversity can produce, the following was available from the Chino Ranch Farm to *Chez Panisse* one January:

...beets (yellow, golden, red, white with red stripes), carrots (white, orange, yellow, golden, red, long-and-tapered, thumb size), turnips (white, golden, red, black, white-and-purple, round, long), radishes (white, red, red-and-white, purple, pink, daikon, red-fleshed Chinese, green-fleshed

Chinese), celeriac, fennel, escarole, white endive, red endive, white cauliflower, Romanesque cauliflower, mibuna, mizuna, bok choy, choi sum, cilantro, French thyme, winter savoury, lemon balm, rapini, nasturtiums, multiple types of basil, French green beans, and much more. (McNamee: 192-3)

In Ontario in the late 1980s, people like David Cohlmeier, of *Cookstown Greens*, just north of Toronto, were becoming some of the first reliable small-scale growers and suppliers of mixed organic greens for salads, as well as supplying many of the types of vegetables listed above. The costs of these items were significantly higher than was non-organic produce. Thus, for both the producer and consumer, economic risks were involved. While exceptionally high in quality and flavour, the growers were not completely sure buyers existed who would support them if they grew these vegetables. For the chef, the high costs naturally impacted the food costs of the operation and required certain financial sacrifices to be made in terms of profit, or the raising of menu prices. Many of these challenges still exist today and many farmers are still cautious about fully committing to altering growing strategies to focus more specifically on the restaurant industry (Mandarano, 2008; John, 2008). Approaches such as those taken by these restaurants are examples of where profit is not the only purpose for being in business - the recognition of a sustainable type of process was beginning to take shape. A view and grasp of a larger interrelated set of social issues and ecological systems was being developed that brought with them meaning that went beyond simply the cooking process itself. It also took time for cooks to become educated about what the farmers were doing, to become aware of the range of products that were actually available to them. Sibella Kraus, once a line-cook at *Chez Panisse* who also did some foraging for the

restaurant, and who went on to study agricultural economics at the University of California, elaborates:

There was the joy of discovery, but most of the time I had no idea what I was doing... Then I went to study agriculture. I started meeting farmers who were passionate about what they were growing. I'd meet people who were growing eight kinds of heirloom Japanese eggplant. These were products nobody had ever seen or heard of.

I went to Alice and a couple of other restaurateurs and said, "Hey, I'm meeting these farmers, and don't you think you would want me to try to hook you up?" So that summer, 1983, we set up *The Farm Restaurant Project*, to bring local farmers and chefs together. We produced a weekly distribution of produce available by direct order – that is, straight from the farmer to the restaurant. Nobody had ever done that... For the first time, the farmers and the chefs were talking to one another about their particular needs. It opened up a whole world. (in McNamee, 2007: 192)

In Canada, the first gathering between chefs and farmers of a kind that mirrored that of *The Tasting of Summer Produce* was *The Feast of Fields*, which first took place north of Toronto in September 1989. It was an outdoor walking feast whose idea was conceived by chefs, where chefs and organic farmers would match up with each other, and the chefs would prepare a food item for the event using products supplied by the farmers. The annual Toronto event is held on an organic farm where people go from station-to-station to sample the various preparations. Organic wines and locally produced beers, freshly made apple cider, and organic coffee were also part of the annual gathering. The event would quickly gain popularity and ticket sales would have to be capped at roughly 500 people. Although the ticket price was and is not cheap for this event (\$100 per person for the event this year), there has never been much of an issue selling it out. Similar events now take place all over North America.

An underlying issue remains, however. The purity of the ideals of this food movement were also not something that was necessarily widely accessible, either in the

quantity of the product itself, nor to people below a certain income bracket. Noting this issue, one critic in California (referring to various events put on by *Chez Panisse*) saw the movement toward using local ingredients as being appropriated by ‘Lamborghini leftists’ who had once been active in the Free Speech Movement but who were now deeply entrenched in the contradictions of capitalism (McNamee: 250). The event in Canada and others like it were on the expensive side to attend for many people. Inevitably these events have had a tendency to be frequented by the more affluent and knowledgeable consumers of the food scene. One of the more challenging issues with respect to alternative food movements that are driven by ideas or movements that have been introduced by restaurant chefs is that they are only accessible to a very select part of the population who can afford to frequent such places. Offshoots of the most popular ideas do eventually find their way into the mainstream but often after they have gone out of vogue. There is always the possibility of such movements being appropriated by the very powers they attempt to resist, highlighting capitalism’s great ability to adapt to whatever circumstances that challenge it (Gibson-Graham, 1996: 258). Retaining the integrity with which the origins of the movement began is a complicated process, not least of which is making such movements affordable and accessible to a wider audience than the demographic who can afford to dine in fine restaurants. This includes the cooks themselves, who are often taking part in a process of consumption that sees an intersection of classes with mixed ideological perspectives coming together, and who themselves often can’t afford to eat in the kind of establishments they work for..

Chez Panisse had evolved from a simple late-1960s Free Speech Movement-influenced restaurant in Berkley to a more complicated entity. It was originally conceived

of as a place where good simple food would be prepared and Waters could discuss politics with friends. Over the years, it had become an entity that was positively acclaimed critically - to the point of having a clientele that was as much tourist-based and somewhat celebrity-driven with a 'prove it to me attitude', as it was made up of locals there simply to enjoy good food (McNeil: 174). Such tensions and possible contradictions can also be observed in the context of *Soffritto*, where the owner-chef gained celebrity status in Canada in the early 1980s somewhat on a parallel to what Waters had garnered in the United States. Many different factors draw people into particular restaurants. The ideals about the food, its flavour, and the integrity with which it is made are certainly important, but what aspect of those ideals are completely understood by, or important to, the diner is never entirely clear. This makes claims of change of difference quite difficult to quantify. In other words, how much of the success of establishments like *Chez Pannisse* and *Soffritto* is based strictly on the food philosophy versus a certain celebrity association can never be determined definitively.

What is important for the moment, however, is to note that both of these chefs fit the label of chef-celebrity better than that of celebrity-chef. For the sake of this thesis, the former refers to a cook/chef whose notoriety is based on the fact that they have executed their craft with sound fundamentals at a very high level of technical skill, along with integrity towards environmental and ecological responsibility, and their recognition is based largely on those criteria. Both were also revolutionaries or radicals of sorts in their fields. They were concerned with the purity, integrity and technique of the cooking process itself, and refused to compromise or give in to powerful business and social structures that were quite influential in determining what products were made available to

most chefs. By essentially refusing to participate in the corporate element of the food system, they have been significantly instrumental in helping to strengthen local agricultural and food supply systems in their respective geographical locations and such actions have made it easier for others to apply their own interpretations of a local food movement and cuisine. By no means does this imply that all power relations issues that exist within the food system have been resolved – not even close - but it is important to recognize what once was, and what currently is. Both have been relatively reluctant public figures in terms of overtly attempting to attain high profile media coverage. However, both have also been able to use that notoriety to raise the awareness of issues they are passionate about to their immediate clientele, the food service industry more generally, and even at a societal level, that were not often previously associated with their profession and industry. With this background in mind, I now turn to a physical description of the *Soffritto* organization to provide the reader with some context to its scale and complexity.

Soffritto

At the time of the first phase of my research, the core location of *Soffritto* consisted of a Wine Bistro and a fine dining room that was located right beside the bistro but within the same space with a division between the two dining areas.² There was also a catering division that conducted its preparation in the main kitchen of this location, which was also used for the Wine Bistro food production and as the service kitchen for the fine dining room in the evenings (see ‘Stoves and Grill’ of Main Kitchen of appendix B). The

² See Appendix A for a topographical reference of the three locations that form the *Soffritto* organization. Appendices B, C and D provide detailed renderings of the physical layout of the Wine Bistro, the Museum Restaurant, and the Production Kitchen/Café respectively (pp. 190-193).

Wine Bistro and fine dining room were located in the space that can be considered the core location of the operation, in a fairly affluent and high traffic area of the city close to the waterfront, with some theaters nearby, as well as the financial district not too far away.

The food served at the Wine Bistro comes in smaller portions than the typical restaurant would serve (i.e., tapas-like portions), and has a lower price point than the accompanying fine dining restaurant did. In both settings, the integrity of the food preparation was of the same level, with the fine dining operation producing items that were often more intricate to make, and which entailed the cooking of most items only when orders came into the kitchen. The Wine Bistro, on the other hand, has menu items that combine elements that have been prepared somewhat in advance (e.g., charcuterie, the curing and smoking of fish and meats, and braises of various meats and octopus, for example), which lend themselves to less manipulation and cooking time at the last minute. The idea in this part of the operation is that all orders can be ready relatively soon after they have been ordered. Food is still cooked to order in the wine bistro (e.g., pan fried wild mushrooms, sautéed sweetbreads, seared fresh fish, grilled lamb and beef) but the different stages of the pre-preparation of some items allow for a high volume of orders to be absorbed by the kitchen while still retaining a high quality level and not getting backed-up with too many orders at one time.

The food presentation is quite simple with little manipulation of the food beyond the basic seasoning, cooking and simple plating. The food preparations in all of the restaurants are also very ‘wine-friendly,’ as a complete gastronomic experience of having wine choices that match well with the food is another focal point of the overall

philosophy of the establishment. The Wine Bistro was also much busier on average than the fine dining room. Since this first phase of the research, the fine dining room has closed and the Wine Bistro has expanded into that space. This coming autumn, another change to this space will take place with its conversion into a lower price point café/take-out food outlet. This space has seemingly been a puzzle for the organization to solve in terms of making it work as a draw for customers. The current change is intended to cater to people on the go in need of an affordable and flavourful fast food fix of a quality variety and this change will once more create the need for some staff to adjust to more structural changes.

Another restaurant owned and run by the organization is located in a museum further uptown (Appendix C, p. 192) in an area which is also quite affluent and has a mixture of other large museums, hotels, high end boutiques and a university nearby. The museum location is approximately seven minutes away from the Wine Bistro location by vehicle and serves lunches daily, with a fixed-menu dinner service on Friday evening, with the price point of lunch menu being closer to the range of the Wine Bistro than of the fine dining restaurant. The space is also used for many catering functions on other evenings when the restaurant is not open to the public.

A new Production Kitchen in a third location has recently opened, along with a small café adjacent to it (Appendix D, p. 193). The café is open daily serving breakfast pastries and coffee early in the day, and then lunches later on. This space also prepares food to take-out and it has the lowest price point of any food outlet run by the organization, with nothing costing more than nine dollars on the menu. The Production Kitchen location is approximately half the distance from the Wine Bistro than is the

Museum, in a warehouse district of the city that is less tourist-based and which is also located close to a bustling creative design and advertising part of the city that generally draws a fairly young demographic.

At the core Wine Bistro location, there is an open service kitchen space, or cooking line, with seats around the cooking area (similar to a bar) for customers who want a first-hand look at the food being cooked and plated. This set-up tends to result in a high level of interaction between cooks and customers, where questions about the preparations are asked to the cooks, and where the cooks have a forum to explain how various dishes were prepared, as well as to elaborate on the sources from where the food they are preparing has come. Those working cooking positions in this area have a much higher level of interaction with the public than other cooks within the organization, where cooking spaces are physically separated from the dining area. There are also several tables throughout the dining room, and a seating area around the wine bar portion of the room, opposite the food line about fifteen feet away. The air quality and temperature of the Wine Bistro cooking environment was much more comfortable than in the production area. Temperatures on many restaurant cooking lines during the peak of a typical service can easily reach between 120F-140F degrees on humid summer days. The Wine Bistro service kitchen (which benefits from the high ceilings and air conditioning in the dining area – another interesting contrast of the typical dual worlds of the cook and the diner) is an anomaly in this respect.

The space can be configured in different ways via mobile sliding walls and dividers in order to accommodate private functions at the same time that the Wine Bistro is operating. The floors are wooden and the high ceilings tend to make the room less

noisy than it would be otherwise, and the restaurant does a very steady business during peak lunch hours, as well as between five and eleven o'clock most evenings. The nature of the Wine Bistro menu, which changes to some degree daily, is that it is ideally intended for clients to try two or three of the items. Because portions are on the smaller side, with a relatively low price point, the intent is for the customer to experience several different flavours, textures and cooking methods, along with interesting matching wines.

At the Museum location, the menu is designed in a more standard appetizer/main course format with portion sizes larger than those served in the Wine Bistro. There, a more service-oriented kitchen exists, which produces the final products for the restaurant's menu items – dishes which are also somewhat less complex in terms of some aspects of last minute finesse work, but which still uphold the values of integrity of the product and respect for its preparation and quality. The 'less complex' aspect is simply due to physical and equipment limitations that exist within the kitchen at that location, and not to any skill level deficiency on the part of the staff. The production capacity of this kitchen space is limited in terms of the type of equipment available (it is all electric), and the limited capacity for output (little oven space). Other limitations the site faces are minimal storage space, and the fact that, due to the security situation in the museum, all employees have to be out of the building by 6:00 PM most days. This impacts the time available for preparing more time consuming menu items. Therefore, much of the base food stock required by this location is prepared at the production kitchen and delivered by the restaurant's delivery driver. The dining space is quite contemporary with very high ceilings on an upper floor location. Floor to ceiling windows on one side of the dining room provide for excellent lighting and a great view for the diners. Also, an attaching

outdoor terrace is a very nice feature and location for al fresco dining, or outdoor cocktails and hors d'oeuvres for group functions in the warmer months.

The structure of the kitchen staff of the overall organization is somewhat hierarchical with the chef-proprietor being the visionary and several chefs (Wine Bistro, Museum, Catering, Production and Pastry) overseeing specific areas of the operation. Under those positions, sous-chefs, line cooks, apprentices and school co-op students fill out the cooking staff. The service staff is made up of floor managers, a sommelier, an assistant sommelier and several servers. The organization also has a general manager, a special functions coordinator and other administrative staff who update the restaurant's website regularly, take bookings, book-keep and attend to other administrative duties. The administrative offices are located in the same building as the production kitchen.

The gender mix of the staff is fairly even: the Wine Bistro, Museum and Production Kitchen chefs are all currently male³ while the Catering, Pastry and Bread Making chefs are all female. The remaining kitchen staff is a fairly even split of both genders but males tend to hold the more senior positions among them currently. The floor staff is a fairly even mix between female and male workers, while the office/administrative staff appeared to be a fairly even mix as well, although I had little in-depth contact with them generally speaking. The dishwashing staff is made up of male Sri Lankan immigrants, some of whom have moved up through the ranks over years of being with the organization into positions of prep and line cooks. There are also influences from the Sri Lankan culture on some of the restaurant menus (e.g., curries of

³ During the first three quarter of the time I researched the *Soffritto* organization, Tamara had been the Wine Bistro chef. She took a leave of absence this past summer to get married and travel. Her replacement is a male cook who has been with the organization for several years and who had previously been the catering chef.

various types served in a Sri Lankan ‘Hopper’ - a rice-based crepe-like item - are a feature on some of the rotating menus), as well as the seeming proprietary rights for the streudel dough recipe on the part of one of these workers. This person, who after being with the organization for fifteen years, now holds the role of ‘tournant,’ which is the French kitchen term for the person who knows how to do everything the way the chef desires it to be done. He is very integral in upholding the quality control aspect of many of the more time consuming cooking tasks in the production kitchen. There is also a distinct cultural divide that existed between the dishwashing crew and some of the cooking staff at the Wine Bistro location, with some comments (from female cooks especially) claiming that the dishwashing crew essentially worked by their own rules, one of which was paying little heed to requests made by female workers (at least those who do not hold positions of authority within the chain of command) for certain pots, pans or pieces of equipment to be washed for them. Such cultural ‘norms’ did not, however, appear to be a disturbance of any great proportion that resulted in a Burawoyan-likeshop floor disruption on the part of the workers, as things were still cleaned in a generally quick and orderly fashion.

I did not interview any of the dishwashers formally but I did have the opportunity to work and chat with the ‘tournant’ cook and his brother, the delivery driver for the organization, on different occasions throughout the research phases. Both held feelings of deep loyalty to the organization and this was in large part due to the way they had been well treated by it. Life for them in Canada was much better than life in their homeland had been. There, it was not uncommon for one of them, who was an electrical engineer, to be arrested and detained by the police as a terrorist suspect because he was Tamil and

he faced race and class discriminations from the Senhalese governing powers trying to intimidate him, and others like him, based largely on their skin colour. Life at *Soffritto* was much, much better.

For the most part, the cooks and dishwashers are paid competitive rates for the industry, according to one senior cook who provided this information to me. Dishwashers are paid \$10-12/hour; apprentices, \$10-11/hour; \$15/hour for line cooks, and more substantial salaries for the more experienced and skilled cooks (all figures are generalized and may vary throughout the organization). While these rates may be competitive within the industry, they can still be very trying for people who do not have some other kind of financial support or income to help out. Dishwashers often take on second jobs to supplement their incomes but this practice is discouraged for the cooks as it is considered to have negative impacts on their performances. The kitchen had suffered from a small exodus (three people in the last year) of staff to the front of the house, where “twice the money can be made in half the time,” as the Wine Bistro chef, Tamara, had put it. The organization also has a health plan that can be accessed by the worker after being with the company for one year. Partial contributions are made by both the employer and the employee to begin with, with the company increasingly covering more of the cost over time. This is a plan generally more conducive to those with a family, and single employees tend not to opt-in (Source: Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef).

Conclusion

This chapter has considered a particular type of professional restaurant setting in terms of how it interrelates with the global food system more broadly. An overview of the global food system, sub-dividing it into three paradigms: the Productionist/global, the Life Sciences Integrated, and the Ecologically Integrated was given to help locate where a restaurant such as *Soffritto* fits into that framework. Locating such an operation within the Ecologically Integrated paradigm juxtaposes this approach to more common corporate supplier-restaurant connection that tend to ignore issues of locality, environment, ecology and labour relations to demonstrate what some of the causes for resisting dominant global structures are. A further purpose of presenting the issue in this way has been to highlight how different levels of separation or connectedness from, or to, the product being produced come with each paradigm and with those, different levels of alienation. Those very degrees of separation, however, are also the source that has caused some practitioners within the cooking profession to react to the limitations that have been imposed upon them by various aspects of the food system. Responses to these issues that have often been led and driven by professional chefs have enabled many cooks and consumers to realize an increased variety and quality of product with which to choose from and work with, while simultaneously gaining an increased awareness and connection to political issues related to environmental and ecological responsibility which are also an important aspect of purchasing and consuming of food for many people. With these positives stated about restaurants linked to the Ecologically Integrated paradigm noted, however, the articulation of issues of class, race and gender within the agricultural system is still quite silent. It remains very important for the food service

professional to avoid falling into a fetishization over locality and quality at the expense of the social relations of production that go into the making of the various foodstuffs they work with. There is no certain evidence that this will be the case over time as current food media tends to fetishize food as much if not more than it provides context as to how food has been raised and grown, and the social relations that underlie this process.

Chapter Two: Theorizing a Local Food-Restaurant Relationship

Introduction

This chapter provides an outline of the theoretical constructs I use to explain why the approach that *Soffritto* takes toward creating its food experience reduce levels of alienation for many working within the organization, and how this approach has emancipatory possibilities of change from the everyday world of commoditized capitalism. I begin with an exploration of the nature of the disconnection between social and economic relations, as well as the disconnection between the social and nature which arose largely with the onset of capitalism and the industrialized world that has enabled it to flourish ever since. The aim is to demonstrate how that disconnection, or ‘disembedding,’ has resulted in various types of alienations within various interpretations of capitalism (e.g., fetishizations, reifications, and estrangements) (Marx, 1976). To do this, I begin by drawing on Karl Marx’s dual concepts of the commodity form: its use-value and its exchange-value, in order to lead into his explanation of how alienations take hold within the capitalist mode of production. This alienating process also links to Karl Polanyi’s concepts of ‘real’ and ‘fictitious’ commodities. Polanyi’s distinction between the two is useful in explaining the Marxist notion of commodity fetishization. Polanyi is also helpful in explaining movements of resistance with his depiction of the ‘double-movement,’ which refers to social forms of resistance to the destructive forces of unimpeded free markets. This concept is particularly useful in capturing aspects of local alternative food movements that place great emphasis on the role and place of nature within social and economic relations. Following a similar line of theorization, Polanyi’s

concepts of ‘embeddedness’ and ‘disembeddedness’ help in bridging nature with economic relations. Writings on political ecology and actor network theory (ANT) further aid in elaborating on the interrelationship between nature and human relations. The former does so by incorporating nature directly into the framework of the power relations that exist within a more traditional political economy framework, while ANT extends this by considering social relations at various different scales, which are often not global in size. Thus, ANT identifies actors and networks on micro and regional scales who may very well be responding to some form of global force on their world, but who do not directly participate in many of those global types of relations directly or on a regular basis.

Related to the work environment, I return to Marx to incorporate his notion of the labour process in order to bring the role of craftsmanship into the discussion. The labour process is also considered through its interpretation by more contemporary writers such as David Harvey, Harry Braverman and Michael Burawoy. This overview helps to define the important distinction between monopolizable and non-monopolizable skills of the worker within the capitalist system. Such skills have a strong connection to the concept of craftsmanship, which is quite a predominant characteristic of the approach to both cooking and the food production of the farmers, and farm workers, who intersect within the *Soffritto* environment, and others like it.

Craftsmanship here will refer to a skill learned over time and practiced in an environment that allows the knowledge and skill inherent in the craft to be featured (Sennett, 2006). This could be a physical craft, or an intellectual craft. Craftsmanship, using Sennett’s definition, refers to having an interest in the detail of the work. Shortcuts

are generally not taken and the concrete labour that has gone into producing something is visible to everyone. The place of craftsmanship in the *Soffritto* organization is considerable in terms of the various training programs they have for their immediate staff members, as well as the methods of growing produce and raising animals that are used by those who supply the restaurant. Sennett's writings on craftsmanship help to highlight how its inclusion is a key element in bringing purpose to work for many people, which in turn is rather crucial to aiding in reducing levels of alienation.

Finally, because the activity of the organization takes place within various spaces located in an urban setting (although very much linked to a rural, and generally local, supply chain or network), Henri Lefebvre's work, and some interpretations of it, on the production of space and the meaning of the 'everyday' will be drawn upon to consider how the space of *Soffritto* is produced, and how that production may have elements of emancipatory expressions of resistance to dominant powers within the food system, as well as to various government related policies. The use of Lefebvre also builds on Marx's concept of alienation in that it considers the concept not simply in terms of the concrete and abstract labour, but as an idea that can not be separate from space, which he also categorizes into concrete and abstract forms (citation).

Alienations from the Self, Others and Nature

When food consumption patterns are discussed and articulated in different ways, the idea that those living in urban environments do not know who grows the food they eat is a common sentiment. Most people in urban settings do not know what kind of agricultural system has produced and distributed this food. Nor have many people even been to a

farm to meet those who work on farms in their regions. This alienated condition of consuming “a food from nowhere” (McMichael, 2004) is more common than not for most urban dwellers, although there is an increasing demand for such knowledge.

Before the emergence of the factory system in the latter part of the nineteenth-century in Europe and North America, work was, in many cases, perceived differently than it is currently. In this pre-factory, pre-capitalist period, the concept of wage-labour was essentially non-existent (Marx, 1988; Cowan, 2002; Laurie, 1989) and work was conducted largely at the community scale, either directly in the home, on the land where a family resided, or in close proximity to that land (Cowan, 2002: 39). The nature of such work was that it required a relatively high skill level at the core, with hired help of somewhat less skill needed during harvest periods, for example (Cowan, 40-42). This form of labour was what Marx called “concrete labour” based on its “use-value,” as opposed to “abstract labour,” which was based on its commodified “exchange-value” (Marx, 1988: 64). In *Capital* (1867, 1976: 46), Marx theorized the dual character of a commodity as a concrete abstraction – a “sensual-suprasensual thing.” Concrete (“useful”) labour produces the use-value of a commodity, while its exchange-value is determined by the abstract labour socially necessary for its production. Although humankind has always been working, the emergence of the concept of labour is an historical fact: Marx noted in *Grundrisse* that labour could have been conceptualized only when the general features conveyed by this concept became decisive in social practices, most notably in economic reality (Grundrisse, 1971: 25).

Along with exchange-values in commodities came different forms of alienation for the worker. The overarching argument of Marx’s writing on “Estranged Labour,” from

The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 (1988: 61-74) is that before the onset of the factory system, work was generally conducted with a specific connection between what was being produced by the worker, and how that item would be used (its use-value). Goods produced in this way were often made with a high degree of craft and artisanal skill as well (Bitterman, 2006; Cowan, 2002). Although a division of labour existed in this form of production, as it also does with the factory system, the difference between the two forms is captured by Braverman with his interpretation of the Marxist typologies of a “social division of labour” (use-value based) and a “manufacturing division of labour” (exchange-value based) :

The division of labor in capitalist industry is not at all identical with the phenomenon of the distribution of tasks, crafts, or specialties of production throughout society, for while all known societies have divided their work into productive specialties, no society before capitalism systematically subdivided the work of each productive specialty into limited operations. This form of the division of labor becomes generalized only with capitalism.
(Braverman, 1974: 49)

Braverman also noted that it was the capitalist who broke the worker down into a detailed worker, which they would not voluntarily have done on their own. That is, through the detailed division of labour the worker in the capitalist system is often assigned to a specific work detail (particularly in the factory setting) that is repetitive and not something that necessarily requires a great deal of skill to execute.

Marx also noted that once the shift was made to the factory, or wage-labour system, the connection to the use-value of the good being produced was essentially eliminated in most cases, for several reasons. First, the increased division of labour that would lead to the ability to produce goods in large quantities, and thus realize economies of scale for the capitalist owners, was also a system that would in many ways reduce the

worker to a more deskilled producer - than had previously been the case - of a good to which s/he had no association (Marx, 1988: 62-64). Within this new structural framework, the commodity supplants the individual as the most important element of social relations. While previously, commodities were also being produced to satisfy some kind of human need, that need was more or less directly known by the producer of the good. With the factory system, this kind of association becomes much rarer and in turn leads to forms of social relations of production that increasingly bring power to the capitalist and take power away from the producer of the good (Marx, 1988.: 71).

How this happens, according to Marx, is that as the worker continues to produce more and more commodities in this environment, her/his power is reduced by the fact that “the product of labour is labour,” and this labour then becomes “objectified” as it becomes “embodied” in the object being produced (Marx, 1988.: 63). The consumer who goes on to purchase these commodities is participating in a form of an “appropriation of estrangement” and the more of the good that is purchased, the “more powerful becomes the alien world.” The more powerful the alien world becomes (i.e., the commodity world, or the world of exchange-values), the less powerful and consequently relevant, the world of social relations based on use-values is. This process results in what Marx called an “estrangement” from the labour process itself. The product being produced is something that is foreign to the worker in that it has no direct relation to her/his own needs, but it is also alien in that it is being produced for someone (the capitalist owner of the production process) who often has no direct interaction with the worker in any substantive way (1988.: 69). This structure, for Marx, ultimately results in an “estrangement of man, from man.” Because man is estranged from the product that is produced, the product

necessarily must be produced for someone who is an “other” estranged being. Thus, when the alienated worker “confronts” her/himself, s/he is confronting an “other” from whom s/he must necessarily be estranged. Such a world, for Marx, results in a hostile and torment-filled reality for the worker. The production of such commodities by the worker equates to a loss of their “reality” (and by extension, the creation of a fiction) because that reality in the pre-wage economy would not include estrangement from what they produced. .

Embeddedness, Fictitious Commodities and Transformation

Karl Polanyi (1944) builds on this view by noting how, only with the onset of capitalism, does a market society come into being. A market society, according to Polanyi, is one that is based on a set of relationships where all things that are produced are in essence produced in order to be exchanged within a marketplace that in theory establishes the selling price of the produced good based on the dictates of supply and demand (1944: 71). Key to this type of social arrangement is that the marketplace itself should not be impeded by external forces that might limit the transactions which take place within it. Thus, any form of government regulation in theory would render the marketplace less efficient than it would otherwise be. The logic behind this is that a market economy comes into existence based on the expectation that “human beings behave in such a way as to achieve maximum money gains” (Polanyi, 1944: 71)

Prior to the onset of capitalism, both feudal and mercantilist systems of social relations entailed high levels of government control with production and trade aspects of economic relations still embedded within social relations. Even with its drive for

commercial trade, Polanyi notes, mercantilism never attacked the safeguards which protected labour and land from becoming the objects of commerce (1944.: 74).

Mercantilism's emphasis on commercialization and its vast extension of state intervention in industry demonstrated, Polanyi noted, how it viewed markets quite differently from the way capitalism does. What the self-regulating market requires, according to Polanyi, is the institutional separation of society into an economic and a political sphere. A separate economic system did not exist under tribal, feudal, nor mercantile conditions and can only exist within a market society (1944, 74). And crucial to the functioning of a market society, is the use of labour and land in the production process. Including them in the market system entails the subordination of society to the laws of the market, which means to the nature and law of the commodity form.

Polanyi defines a commodity as an object that is produced for sale on the market, and markets as actual contacts between buyers and sellers (1944: 74). This leads to the outcome that every aspect of industry is seen as having been produced for sale, and will ideally only be subject to the supply-and-demand mechanism interacting with the price. Polanyi notes that industry is reliant on three crucial elements, however: labour, land, and money, which also have to be organized within markets in this market society. But the definition of a commodity is something that has been produced for sale in the market and this can't happen naturally for any of these three elements. Labour is simply another name for a human activity that goes along with life itself. Land is another name for nature, and this is not naturally produced by man. Money, finally, determines purchasing power but this too is not so much produced by man as it is through the mechanisms of

banking and state finance. The result of these tensions, for Polanyi, is that the concept of labour, land and money as commodities are fictitious (1944: 76).

This fiction in turn has rather significant impacts on how the social is perceived within the market system. The fiction of the commodity provides a crucial organizing principle with respect to the whole of society where “no arrangement of behavior should be allowed to exist that might prevent the actual functioning of the market mechanism on the lines of commodity fiction” (Polanyi, 1944: 76). Enabling the market mechanism to become the dominant driver of the fate of human beings and their natural environment would, according to Polanyi, result in the demolition of society (1944: 76-77). These ideas are particularly relevant with respect to the environmental damage that high-intensity industrial agriculture has caused in many parts of the globe, for example. Polanyi argued that natural destruction would occur with the separation of the economic from the political with “neighborhoods being defiled, rivers polluted...and the power to produce food and raw material destroyed” (1944: 77). The perception of land as a commodity in the Productionist agricultural paradigm resulted in the introduction of chemical agricultural inputs in the form of chemical pesticides and fertilizers that greatly increased production capacities while simultaneously causing damage to land and ground water systems in the process (Lang and Heasman, 2004; Weiss, 2007).

The concept of the fictitious commodity is very much linked to the Marxist idea of the fetishization of commodities. This is the notion that the origin of the commodity (entailed in the person who has produced it, or the land on which it was produced) is not taken into consideration by the user or consumer of a particular commodity (Marx, 1976). When land and labour are fictionalized, they no longer play a central role in the

consideration of the consumption of the commodities they produce. When not considered as central to social relations, humans become increasingly distanced or alienated from the origins of the commodity, and the social relations of production that have gone into producing the, and land becomes increasingly mistreated. Linking this concept to food, David Harvey observes:

We can in practice consume our meal without the slightest knowledge of the intricate geography of production and the myriad social relations embedded in the system that puts it on our table... we cannot see the fingerprints of exploitation on them or tell immediately what part of the world they come from. (1990: 422-23)

Polanyi describes this process as the ‘disembedding’ of the economy from social and natural relations and these concepts become important in the context of this thesis specifically because it is such a disembedding that has arguably resulted in the alienation of people from themselves and from nature, which is reflected particularly in the Productionist paradigm of the global food system outlined in the previous chapter. At the same time, however, this ‘disembedding’ is the very source of alienation for some people, and the motivating force to make a difference by resisting forces that may be powerful, but that have no guarantee of remaining so indefinitely.

Such resistance was a response to the destructive consequences of unimpeded market forces dictating the way in which society was run. The extension of the market organization with respect to genuine commodities (according to the definition) was met with its restriction with respect to fictitious commodities. A series of measures and policies were established into powerful institutions that were designed to check the action of the market relative to labour, land and money, what Polanyi called the ‘double-movement’ (1944: 79, 138). The ‘double-movement was, according to Polanyi:

...the principle of social protection aiming at the conservation of man and nature as well as productive organization, relying on the varying support of those most immediately affected by the deleterious action of the market – primarily, but not exclusively, the working and the landed classes – and using protective legislation, restrictive associations, and other instruments of intervention as its methods. (1944: 138-9)

While the resistance of the ‘double-movement’ is important in attempting to identify the links of resistance to the global food system on the part of alternative food movements, such resistance often takes place outside of formal governmental institutional settings. In fact, some resistance comes as a reaction to government policies that impact personal choice (e.g., the raw milk situation), as well as those that have allowed over-fishing of many now endangered species. This makes the general concepts Polanyi raised useful, but they do need to be contextualized and applied beyond a facile solution of simple government regulatory bodies designed to control the dangers of an unimpeded free market to more local expressions of resistance that often act at a much faster pace than that of the bureaucracy of government, which often results in slow incremental change.

The very regulation that Polanyi argues will help save society from the destruction of an unimpeded free-market can be seen as having destructive outcomes of its own in the wrong sets of policies. The Productionist paradigm provides multiple examples of this, as does the Life Sciences integrated paradigm to a yet less known extent. Both paradigms have had strong links with either direct or indirect government subsidy programs and such subsidies, beginning with The Marshall Plan policies of post-World War II in the United States and continuing on to the Common Agriculture Policy of the European Union, these programs have had negative outcomes for many people

(Wess, 2007; Lang and Heasman, 2004). Those policies have yielded aid plans that have ranged from the dumping of US grain surpluses on to developing countries (e.g., The Marshall Plan), to the high subsidization of both European and US agriculture industries on the part of national, and transnational (e.g., European Union government) governments (Weiss, 2007). These policies have also had the effect of not only being environmentally and ecology inefficient, but also leading to highly dependent agriculture sectors in the developing world, most profoundly demonstrated through structural adjustment programs (SAPs) imposed by institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (Weiss, 2007; Patel, 2007). With these limits of the call for government regulation as the answer to reembedding economic relations with both social and natural relations in mind, the form of resistance practiced by organizations such as *Soffritto* appear to be what might be considered a double-movement outside of the institutional structures of government, something more akin to a double-movement from below, or a civil society-based double-movement, where government institutions might be a part of the process, but they may just as easily be the source for these forms of resistance.

Political Ecology and Actor-Network Theory (ANT)

The outline of the world food system in chapter one discussed three broad paradigms which provide a heuristic to the way the world food system has developed over the past century, and how it has become increasingly dominated by a concentration of ownership and power within the agro-industrial and agri-business sectors. Such powers paint a picture that appears to be so dominant in many respects that those on

the margins seem to have little choice: either become a part of a combination of the Productionist and/or Life Sciences paradigms, or face the reality of having to give up their vocations. Patel (2007: 7) notes that the crops that farmers (especially in the global South) grow for sale as cash crops are largely dictated by the responses of large corporate powers with high concentration of ownership across several sectors of the food system responding to market demands (e.g., Table 1, pp. 187-88. provides an overview of the corporate concentration of ownership in the food processing sector in the United States). As the choice of what they grow is further defined by the kind of land and terrain they have at their disposal, farmers become vulnerable to the ebbs and flows of a particular commodity's selling price. Thus, if a coffee grower in sub-Saharan Africa, for example, is located on a hilly, high altitude piece of land and world coffee purchasers choose to go elsewhere in order to purchase a cheaper product, it is very difficult for this farmer to simply grow a different crop in order to survive. And if the farmer is eventually forced to sell her or his land in order to survive, they will likely enter some form of contract farming, or land rental arrangement, and simply become a form of raw labour (Patel: 7-12), most likely as a "real subjection to labour" (Harvey, 1982: 119) where they have relatively little agency. These outcomes pose a threat for food security and food sovereignty.⁴ While such global structures play a significant role in marginalizing many rural farmers and workers, and also in contributing greatly to inequities, such forces are not simply met with passive acceptance. Local food movements, such as the one

⁴ Food sovereignty, as defined by the Via Campesina, is "the peoples', Countries', or State Unions's right to define their agricultural and food policy, without any dumping... {of food from other countries. It includes] the right of farmers and peasants to produce food, and the right of consumers to be able to decide what they consume, and how and by whom it is produced." (Via Campesina 2003, in Patel, 2007: 302).

being examined in this thesis, may not always be aware of the broader global impacts of the forces within the food system they choose not to associate with, but there is a general sentiment that by improving local food supply networks, a greater level of food security and environmental stewardship can be realized and through such approaches, perhaps successes might be realized beyond immediate local geographies in a broader way. That is, by not participating in the global system, local food systems do not contribute to the type of labour exploitation described above. It is important not to reify such an approach into something that automatically equates to better working conditions and it is important to continually question each situation and movement in its own contexts and complexities.

While much critical attention in agro-food studies has been focused on processes of globalization, industrialization and standardization, there are good reasons for thinking of an “alternative geography of food” (Whatmore and Thorne, 1997). Local ecologies of quality food production can often be found in the very areas that have been marginalized by the agro-industrial complex (Ilbery and Kneafsey, 1998). In the global North, such spaces are often associated with traditional organic farming methods. Some of those methods have values such as reverence and respect for the land (Vos, 2000), which has links to the sacred (Hecht, 1995) within which all of human society is embedded. Whatmore (1997) terms this “an intersubjective relational ethics of care,” which informs the total praxis of the organic farming way of life. This degree of reverence, as Whatmore notes, has an “ethical compass that frequently relies on the evocation of a spiritual dimension to ‘being in the world’ which resonates uneasily with the intellectual register of the

academy” (1997: 45; see also Bartlett, 1997; and Clancy, 1997). Another way of interpreting these sentiments is that food movements that are in some way closely connected to nature often have some element of almost undefinable intrinsic spiritual aspect to them that is not easily quantifiable. That it ‘makes sense’ to be connected to aspects of local culture and knowledge seems obvious enough for many people without having to delve deep into complex analytical analysis about those feelings.

Organic farming can, but does not always, include multiple vernacular knowledge systems and/or traditional ecological knowledges, as they are applied to diverse agro-ecosystems, and this place-based ‘alternative’ knowledge often becomes the foundation of the grass roots social dimensions that lead to the involvement and engagement of civil society (Vos, 2000: 108). Such knowledges represent the work of multiple small scale producers who engage in an ongoing process of hands-on learning, information-sharing, and cooperation in refining growing principles and practices in order to establish rigorous growing standards. This has traditionally very much been done outside of the standard government regulatory framework where vernacular knowledge is not typically incorporated into standard policy discourses (Vos, 2000; Klonsky, 2000). Reasons for this are, in large part, because such knowledges tend to originate outside of the standard paradigms used by government policy makers to begin with, as the reference to such movements coming from the margins would indicate.

While not all local small-scale farming might be certified as organic through formal certification processes, many non-certified small scale producers also follow a similar path in terms of their relationship with the land and to quality, and have simply

never applied for a certification which they see as intrinsic (Vos, 2000). There are also costs to becoming organically certified that are prohibitive for many smaller scale farmers and established trust relationships between them and their customers can be sufficient in determining the integrity of their product. A common thread to these types of growing and knowledge-sharing approaches is that nature plays a central role in how food and people interrelate. To encompass this relationship theoretically, I draw upon some writings in political ecology that help to place nature and the environment back into the complexes that political economy addresses on a global scale (Blakie and Brookfield, 1996: 5).

Political economy's overarching concern with corporate power, and the surmounting of biological constraints on that power, causes it to see nature as essentially 'passive' in the face of unfolding socioeconomic processes. As Busch and Juska (1997: 691) put it, nature is seen as a "backdrop behind the stage on which the human drama is conducted" (quoted in Murdoch et al., 2000: 111). Political ecology, on the other hand, incorporates nature – specifically environmental and ecological degradations of it – into its analytical framework. As Watts notes, "political ecology is never represented by a coherent theoretical position for the good reason that the meanings of ecology, political economy, and indeed, politics, were often in question" (unpublished, in Goertzen, 2003: 32). Political ecology's focus is on land degradation as "both a cause and result of social marginalization" (Blakie and Brookfield, 1997: 23)). There is also an acknowledgment within political ecology that the pressures on farmers to produce food commodities in order to survive places significant strain on the environment when such practices do not fit into the natural cycles of the seasons, along with crop rotations and biodiversity-

protecting practices. Finally, land and environmental degradation are often contested terrains that can be articulated through various discourses of power and spin on the part various interested parties and actors (Goertzen, 2003: 33). Within these frameworks there is the risk of creating a perception that implies little agency at the local level is available for different forms of resistance (Peet and Watts, 1996; in Goertzen, 2003: 33).

Goertzen (2003) addresses the knowledge-making issue at the local scale from a slightly different angle than it is being considered here.

The production of knowledge about a particular space increases the ability to ascribe authority over that space. By creating a space of intervention by constructing “national agriculture,” for example, certain types of operations are made desirable while others are not. (Goertzen, 2003: 38)

The context in which the production of knowledge is being considered in this case is how a “national agriculture” branding strategy was presented to residents of Hambiota, Manitoba in terms of the economic ‘benefits’ high-intensity, industrial hog farms that were being proposed for the area would bring the town. Here, the “discourses of power” were being dictated by private business interests and local government officials who had been faced with the dilemma of the adoption of a mainstream agricultural process with the promise of increased employment, versus further economic struggles for the community. The other negative externalities such hog farms would yield (e.g., air pollution, questionable animal husbandry issues, labour that was repetitive and required low skill sets and thus paid only modestly) were reduced in emphasis in terms of the dominant discourses within the town, which resulted in ‘quiet’ forms of resistance from citizens who had little formal power (Goertzen, 2003: 2).

A potential reversal of this type of ‘quiet resistance’ to power relationships that dominate a discourse is also a possibility, however, in terms of degrees of the agency those resisting might have. In the context of the relationship between small-scale producers and farmers with each other, and with cooks, various types of vernacular knowledges have resulted in the establishment of local food movements around the globe (Petrini, 2003; Patel, 2007; McNeil, 2007). A partial theorizing of these relationships is considered through some of the core concepts of actor-network theory (ANT).

Murdoch et al. (2000: 111) note how the apparent ubiquity of industrialization has often led researchers to overlook countertendencies. Examples of such perspectives are found in the increasing demand on the part of consumers to know the origins (or provenance) of the food they consume, as well as how it has been produced and/or raised. In an attempt to incorporate both the role of nature in social relations, as well as the people involved in such new forms of demand for food, some researchers have begun to consider other theoretical approaches to describe what is happening. Goodman (1999), for example, seek out a ‘symmetrical’ perspective that does not subordinate nature to capitalist domination, but rather, considers different ways in which nature-society hybrids are being produced (Murdoch et al., 2000: 112)

The characteristics of ANT are that networks are built through associations and relations where agency is conferred between component parts, as opposed to any particular (natural or social) characteristic held by a particular person or place (Murdoch et al., 2000: 113). Agency is understood as the collective capacity of

heterogeneous networks, in which the activities of non-humans may count for as much, if not more, as the activities of humans. These characteristics allow for the natural setting to be brought into the analysis in a 'symmetrical' context, as Goodman suggests. ANT differs from political economy in that it "problematizes global reach, conceiving of it as a laboured, uncertain, and contested process of 'acting at a distance' (Whatmore and Thorne, 1997: 290), rather than the political economy of globalization, which evokes "images of an irresistible and unimpeded enclosure by the relentless mass of the capitalist machine" (Whatmore and Thorne: 291). The theory tends to assume that the power of a particular network is related to its length, or depth of network reach (Murdoch, 1995) and it attempts to demonstrate the work involved in establishing various alliances, associations and other forms of relations. In so doing, the intent is to try to remind us that powerful organizations and networks are also in a constant struggle or tension in terms of retaining the alliances upon which that power is based and thus are always open to potential forms of resistance to it. This is also true for resistance movements that may become part of the mainstream over time, rather than holding true to the values upon which they originally began.

As food production and consumption are a combination of the organic (nature) and the inorganic (social) (Murdoch et al., 2000), paying attention to how natural and social elements combine in the processes of production, and with the commodity itself, become important considerations. Thus, ANT allows nature to become a central part of the analytical focus. Combined with political ecology, ANT allows for a focus on the importance of local knowledge-making and sharing

systems, as well as the ethics involved in the production and consumption processes in the agricultural environment. This combination then allows the analysis to consider how and why various groups of people, or networks, at the local level might express particular forms of resistance to dominant powers, and how those expressions might be interpreted as a form of the production of an emancipatory space of “creative difference” (Harvey, 1996; Lefebvre, 1974).

The Labour Process and the Importance of Craft Skills

The restaurants and catering division that make up the *Soffritto* organization produce everything they use and serve to their clients on their own premises, which entails tasks such as butchering large parts of animal carcasses, making sausages, processing whole fishes, preserving fruits and vegetables, curing meats and fishes, the making of stocks, soups and sauces, the making of breads, and all of the desserts and pastries. In order to be able to do this, a great deal of knowledge and craft skill is required. Marx perceived the introduction of the factory system, and its incorporation of technology through the use of machinery that would increase the output capacity of labour, as something that would continually lead to a reduction in skills of the workers themselves (Marx, 1976). This idea is formulated by Marx’s concepts of a “*formal subjection*” and “*real subjection*” of labour to capital. A formal subjection of labour to capital occurs through the simple fact that the worker is forced to sell her/his labour in order to survive in a wage-labour environment, if they do not own the land or the means of production (Harvey, 1982: 107). The capitalist’s need to yield a profit in turn results in their need to obtain a surplus value out of the hired labour. The labour process continues very much like it did previously

with the exception that a situation of supremacy and subordination between the capitalist owner of the means of production and the worker now exists. The reduction of skilled to simple labour does not yet occur, but simply the need for the capitalist to hire only as much socially necessary labour as is needed in order to make the required product. The 'real subjection of labour to capital' arises when capitalists begin to reorganize the labour process itself in order to acquire relative surplus value. With this, the entire mode of production "is altered and a specifically capitalist form of production comes into being" together with the corresponding relations of production (Marx, 1971). This shift means that the class relations that previously existed between capitalist and owner, now penetrate the labour process itself (Harvey, 1982: 107). This leads to higher levels of specialization on the part of the worker, which eventually will allow some tasks to become so simplified that they can be performed by people with relatively little skill. "In order to make the collective labourer, and through him capital, rich in productive power, each labourer must be made poor in individual productive powers" (Mars, 1976: 361).

Braverman (1974: 50) elaborates on how this actually takes place. "As against this general or social division of labor, there stands the division of labor in detail, the manufacturing division of labor. This is the breakdown of the processes involved in the making of the product into manifold operations performed by different workers". Braverman also noted how the "social division of labour" divided society among occupations while a "detailed division of labour" tended toward destroying occupations by rendering the worker inadequate to carry through any complete production process:

While the social division of labor subdivides society, the detailed division of labor subdivides humans, and while the subdivision of society may enhance the individual and the species, the subdivision of the individual, when carried out without regard to human capabilities and needs, is a crime against the person. (Braverman, 1974: 51)

This detailed division of labour is something that the worker would not voluntarily move toward, even though they might break down certain functions of a particular job into specific details in a given situation. Thus, the creation of the detailed worker is the contribution of the capitalist with the ultimate outcome being able to break labour (which has already been fictitiously commodified, according to Polanyi), down into fragments that can be valued in accordance to the difficulty of the particular task required by the worker. The simpler tasks can be made, the less skill that is required to do them through the detailed division of labour and thus, the less the capitalist is required to pay for those tasks.

This concept is known as *The Babbage Principle*, which Braverman notes, gives expression not to the technical aspect of the division of labour, but to the social aspect. "The labour power capable of performing the process may be purchased more cheaply as dissociated elements, or commodity forms, than as a capacity integrated in a single worker" (1974: 57). Thus, through the commodification of labour and by extension humans, people are now in direct competition with each other in the estranged world of the commodified form. One of the determinants of purchasing power for the commodified worker is the degree of skill they have, which will determine how much they might expect to earn in the labour market. The degree to which those skills are, or are not, monopolizable might also impact the degree of alienation the individual worker experiences.

Friedmann (1991) notes that in agriculture, a detailed division of labour was not something that could completely penetrate the sector, as the operation of farm equipment and other capital inputs did still require a good deal of skill, although the Productionist paradigm also reduced the skills of the shared knowldges of local communities with the skills required in the application of pesticides, fertilizers, and the use of large farm equipment. Where such detailed, skill-removing work has surfaced in the food sector has been in the industrial food processing industries (e.g., in meat-packing plants) and the fast food industry (Lang and Heasman, 2004; Schlosser, 2001; Patel, 2007; Pollan, 2007). The impacts that intensified manufacturing methods and concentrations of ownership have had on the food service industry are well documented⁵ The fast-food restaurants that have come to dominate revenues in the restaurant t industry over the last half-century (Lang and Heasman: 170-173) are in no small way also responsible for a great deal of deskilling and worker alienation within the restaurant sector.

Picking up on the concepts of aspects of deskilling and the detail worker, David Harvey explores Braverman's take on the labour process in a more contemporary setting, examining various controversies that both Marx and Braverman have stirred with the often technological deterministic view of how the worker is deskilled (Harvey: 1982: 112-116). Exemplars of such critiques are writers such as Michael Burawoy (1979) and Patricia Wells (1996), who provide some context with respect to the agency of the individual worker in being able to put up various forms of resistance to the capitalist owner or manager. This is where actions

⁵ See Table 1, pp. 187-88 for an overview of the concentration of ownership in various food processing sectors in the U.S., as well as Schlosser, 2001: 120-170 for a detailed account of the meat and ranching industries in the U.S. Patel, 2007:99-110 provides more on ownership concentration, as well as corporate food lobby groups' expenditures on marketing their respective interests to governments in the U.S..

such as “making out” on the shop floor (Burawoy, 1979: 51-61) can often take the form of individual or group protests (in the form of slacking-off, putting out, or sabotage against the organization, for example) that both Marx and Braverman tended to overlook (Harvey, 1982: 112). Wells (1996), in her work on labourers in the Strawberry industry in California (depicting the plight of mostly Mexican migrant workers), notes how the results across different regions are uneven and that some workers have been able to mobilize to attain recognition for their skills and work in an area where it is particularly difficult to automate the harvesting process due to the delicate nature of the strawberry itself. As well, both Marx and Braverman have been criticized for placing a great deal of weight in the argument that technology would simply reduce the skills of the worker without requiring any new skills to do the job. This one-way trip into deskilling, it is argued by the critics, overlooked individual capacity for innovation and creativity on the part of the worker that can often only come from an individual who knows their work intimately, and all of the quirks and nuances required to navigate their specific environment in order to perform their duties. This is particularly the case in many modern workplaces where management is stretched due to staff shortages and staff is often left to their own means to solve various problems that arise, if indeed they have the required capacity to do so (Juravich, 1985).

Addressing these issues, Harvey observes that, “such criticisms are potentially devastating” because “they challenge the basic lines of historical and theoretical interpretation which Marx laid down, but they also challenge the very basis of Marx’s revolutionary politics.” Harvey also notes that such criticisms force

advocates of Marx's basic position to "sharpen and in some respect correct our interpretation of what it was that Marx was driving at" (1982: 112). Key to such a reconsideration, according to Harvey, is that Marx was not stating that deskilling occurred in a linear form, or that a homogenization of work would result in a situation that left no need whatsoever for certain skills. Rather, the core issue of importance here is that the skills were reduced to the non-monopolizable level, "and the creation of a flexible skill pattern, which allowed for relatively easy substitutions. The skills then remaining could reasonably be accounted for as so many multiples of simple abstract labour" (1982: 119). In terms of the alienation issue, then, the skills developed within the *Soffritto* environment need to be considered in this 'non-monopolizable' context. As noted in the introduction, however, there can be a downside to such skills. Chefs who expect young cooks to work for free in order to gain access to this knowledge wield a great deal of power over those cooks. Even when many cooks in search of such knowledge are willing to enter into these potentially exploitative relationships unquestioningly, a personal metric I apply to this paper is whether such skills are transferred to the worker while still providing the worker with the material means to survive, at a very basic level at a minimum.

Richard Sennett (2006) discusses how work, once based upon learning a craft that often brought a form of stability to the worker in the sense that the worker would remain with a firm for an extended period of time over the course of their career is becoming less and less common. Firms operating under the paradigm of flexible capitalism consider the present potential of a worker, rather than what they have done in the past, as the primary criteria of their value to the organization (2006: 84-91). Technological changes over the

past quarter century have brought with them rapid changes to many work places, and frequent retraining over the life of a career is becoming much more the norm than it once was. The capitalist owner is often more interested in a young worker with ‘potential’ (who is also cheaper to pay) than in retraining an older established worker, who may also carry with them various baggage and cynicism toward the goals of the firm. Remaining with a firm for too long becomes more of a detriment than a merit for the worker. The worker can be perceived as being stagnant, or lacking ambition, and become irrelevant or useless in the eyes of potential employers (Sennett: 97-8).

Sennett’s work explores what cultural values and practices might hold people together in a world where institutions are becoming increasingly fragmented. Fragmented institutions require flexible personality traits on the part of the worker that many people simply do not have. The ability to stay detached emotionally from what one does is one way of surviving in a world where little long-term stability exists but this only moves increasingly to a lack of fulfillment in terms of personal relationships and the meaning of what one is doing – a “feeling of uselessness” as Sennett calls it (2006: 100). For many people, Sennett argues, there is a need to build a life narrative based upon a prolonged association with what they do, both professionally and privately. Flexible capitalism makes this difficult to realize. Skilled workers often become expendable to outsourced workers in other geographical locations. They, as well as those outsourced workers (e.g., workers in foreign call centers), face a reality of having to work in jobs where they are unable to use skills they have trained for. Age factors also come in to play in certain professions (e.g., advertising) where social networks based on a certain cool factor are central to tapping into the latest trends. Educational institutions turn out people who are

not employable for what they have trained for and many people end up with a feeling of uselessness that is difficult to overcome professionally (2006: 94).

Craftsmanship does not fit easily into this world. That is, the idea of doing something well for its own sake where the values of self-discipline and self-criticism, and standards matter is not a common feature of many contemporary workplaces. The post-Fordist “flexible capitalism” model, as Ronneberger (2007: 140-1) notes, has actually strengthened the capitalist approach by taking up oppositional claims for “autonomy” and “creativity” and instrumentalizing them for its own purposes. Concepts such as “subjectivity” and “creativity,” which were once mobilized against capitalism have become new resources in economic valorization (particularly with the capacity for mass-customization rather than mass-production, which technological and telecommunications changes over the past quarter century have enabled). As an example, one might consider the place of the recently released iPhone in Canada within the broader social fabric. Large line-ups were closely covered by the media, implying that if one didn’t get one, they were out of the loop. The seeming ability for the capitalist to provide products people demand in increasingly customized ways would indicate that Marx’s ideas of alienation might have been in large part addressed by the capitalist model (Ronneberger, 2008: 143). Or might this simply be another expression of the fetishization of the commodity? If the masses are satisfied, why should anyone be concerned? Put another way, why does, or should, craftsmanship matter?

It matters, as Sennett notes, because most people have a desire to feel like they are doing something well and worthwhile at some level. Yet, flexible capitalism makes it increasingly difficult to achieve this desire. The individual of new/flexible capitalism is

characterized as being responsive, open to new experiences, capable of growth (2006: 115-118), which are not in any way necessarily negative. The craftsperson, on the other hand, can often be seen as somewhat obsessive about having to know everything and inverting this monopolizable knowledge into something negatively competitive, rather than something to be shared. These potential negatives, however, are balanced by what Sennett claims the new idealized worker does not have, and that is commitment – a belief in the objective value of the good being produced. This is about doing, or getting, something right even though it may bring little economic gain. The value is simply in the doing of a task itself. It is about the connection to what is being done, not about going through the motions of having to do a job simply for the sake of survival. This is not an easy thing to find and its relevance comes into play in this thesis in the form of the role that craft plays within the *Soffritto* organization, which will be elaborated upon in the analysis chapter below.

The ‘Everyday’ and ‘The Production of Space’

Not unlike elements of various local food movements that seek some form of alternative way of operating within the capitalist system, and alternative ways of addressing how that system often profoundly impacts the environments in which those relationships exist, Henri Lefebvre devoted much of his work to a consideration of what the ‘everyday’ meant, especially within the urban capitalist environment. As *Soffritto* is located in a large urban center, Lefebvre’s ideas of the ‘everyday’ and ‘creative spaces of difference’ are helpful in trying to describe how the organization fits within a broader capitalist picture.

In modern industrial societies, the everyday is molded in fundamental ways by economic-technological imperatives that colonize space and time (Ronneberger, 2008: 135). Despite this, as noted above, collective social praxis cannot be subsumed totally under the logic of this system (e.g., Polanyi's double-movement). This reality then sets up a tension between 'everydayness' and 'creative difference.' For Lefebvre, the reproduction of modern everydayness entailed a "totalization of society," which was accompanied by a "bureaucratic society of controlled consumption" that was based upon the compartmentalization of social praxis and the diminishing of social contexts:

What are the shared features of these realms that have been separated from one another through an inexorable analytical praxis? In the realm of work, it is passivity, the unavoidable acceptance of decisions made elsewhere; in the realm of private life, there are the many forces which manufacture the consumer through the manufacture of objects; in the realm of leisure, it is the transformation of the "world" into images and spectacles. In short, everywhere one finds passivity, non-participation. (1991: 340)

Lefebvre thought that counter movements that rejected the banality of the homogeneity of the functional city would rise up against an alienation process that was defined no longer only by the realm of work, but also other areas of everyday life as well.

Lefebvre also considered space as something that was produced, something that was the result of a concrete production process – space was, for him, a social product that revealed social relations (Ronneberger, 2008:136). For him, capitalist space (abstract space) is characterized by homogeneity and fragmentation, something that is based on the separation and reconnection of spaces. Space, for Lefebvre, was analogous to Marx's concept of labour: there are concrete and abstract forms. Abstract space is the space of capital accumulation (i.e., exchange-value space), while concrete space is the space which is lived-in everyday and where potentials for creative differences and resistance to

the dictates of capital accumulation exist (i.e., use-value space) (Stanek, 2008: 69). While there may be spaces of resistance to aspects of the global food system within the *Soffritto* environs, there is little question the organization is reliant upon some form of capital return in order to remain functional. The ways in which this is accomplished are what become of interest in terms of labeling it concrete or abstract, or how much of one tends to predominate the other.

John Roberts (2006: 33) notes how orthodox Marxism doesn't provide a framework to account for the mechanisms of capitalism's power over science and ethics, class consciousness and ideology, reason and the everyday. The discovery of the Paris Manuscripts in 1931, however, enabled a shift under Western Marxism to cultural questions and questions of methodology. While Georg Lukacs thought the issue of mediation between the banal and the creative could be resolved through an ideal level of political Party consciousness, Lefebvre was adamant that such a consciousness had to be mediated in a concrete way between people directly. In other words, the political process was not one that would yield the desired emancipatory conditions but rather some form of cultural politics could (Roberts, 2006: 38). Alienation, Lefebvre notes, is a productive and conflicting force out of which revolutionary consciousness emerges:

Alienation is not a fixed and permanent illusion. The individual is alienated, but as part of his development. Alienation is the objectification, at once real and illusory, of an activity which itself exists objectively. It is a moment in the development of this activity in the increasing power and consciousness of man. (1968: 100)

Alienation is not something to be considered as debilitating but potentially as a creative force that leads to change (Roberts, 2008: 39). This reading opens up a space not only for a renewed extension of politics into cultural politics, but for the formation of a new kind

of Marxist sociology, in which the meanings of the object of study are accorded a relative autonomy. Thus, assigning relative autonomy to various objects of study allows for the concept of alienation to be brought out of the state, political party, or work contexts and into the context of the everyday (Roberts, 2008).

Considering what it was that Marx wanted from his initial project, Lefebvre noted that the initial project consisted in the transformation of everyday life as a total revolutionary praxis, which consisted of two substantive and interrelated projects. The first was the formation of a new set of ethical relations between the 'private' and 'public' or 'civic' realms, which would only happen through the dissolution of the state. The second project is the necessary aesthetic character of this dissolution. Ultimately, art, as the socially divided expression of the technical and bureaucratic conditions of culture, would disappear, and be replaced by a generalized and non-heteronomous experience of creativity (Lefebvre, 1991b: 37). Thus, once art is superseded as an autonomous technical category, it would be reabsorbed into the everyday, which itself would then be transformed by what previously had been suppressed by the reign of the commodity relations (Lefebvre, 1991b: 23).

Considering cooking as an art form that is glamorized by some media and public, this reading can be useful in terms of how *Soffritto* is perceived, both internally and externally. The very craft techniques that I argue are responsible for reducing worker alienation are often glamorized by the media as creative artistic expressions of a visionary chef. The chef tends to gain some level of recognition as a special artist while those involved in the day-to-day activities of the operation are very much invisible.

When the media takes note of how a new ‘old’ product or technique is becoming more common and bringing something to the dining public they have been missing (e.g., the increased incorporation of charcuterie skills and items in many restaurant settings), this is in reality highlighting the fact that these items are unique because food itself has been so fetishized over the past half century. What Lefebvre argues is that such a reading of these approaches potentially further commoditizes them, rather than allowing them to be perceived as something that is only one of many possible positive social and cultural contributions. In essence, what Lefebvre is getting at when referring to art as becoming an autonomous technical category is that the element of celebrity is eliminated from the conception of it and its contents are then made available for a more broadly informed audience that does not place its contents in socially hierarchical and elitist categories, but simply understands and respects its quality for what it is.

If, on the other hand, all aspects of celebrity (and the status of art in terms of Lefebvre’s argument) were to be superseded by an autonomous technical category, the organization could be absorbed back into the everyday and no longer be perceived in the form of a commodity, but as a new form that had previously been repressed by the commodified interpretation of it (Lefebvre, 1991b: 123). This would, of course, entail a radical reshaping of society as it currently exists and in no way is an argument being made that this is happening, or that it will happen. *Soffritto* does have some spaces of difference but it also is very much entrenched in a form of artisanal capitalism that plays on the brand recognition of its owner and its cooking style and this does create some interesting tensions with respect to the extent to which it might be considered a space of difference in the way Lefebvre had envisioned.

Conclusion

Beginning with the Writings of Marx on alienation, estrangement and the commodity fetish, this chapter attempted to theorize *Soffritto's* approach to developing relationships with the local agricultural and artisanal community as a form of reduced alienation in the sense that the practitioner has a strong idea of where the product s/he is working with has come from, and who has made it. These ideas were further considered by placing the commodity fetish in a similar light to that of Polanyi's fictitious commodity in order to emphasize how the approach applied by *Soffritto* very much is a reembedding of economic with the natural and the social, and not as something strictly exclusive of those relationships. Further enhancing the idea that nature is not something to be considered as subservient to economic and/or social relations, but as something in parallel with them, political ecology was introduced. In conjunction with the reintroduction of the natural into the dialogue, the small, local networks that tend to exist outside of the global economy in many ways was theorized through ANT, which sidesteps the macro-oriented perspectives of political economy in favour of focusing on smaller networks and nodes where associations of shared knowledge and innovation have potentially powerful impacts in terms of shaping resistances to large global forces. Finally, the writings of Henri Lefebvre were introduced in order to consider how different spaces that constitute *Soffritto* have been perceived, conceived, produced and lived in, and which of those spaces might have emancipatory potentials. The possibility for such emancipatory possibility is juxtaposed against an existing reality that celebrity recognition does come into play in terms of public association of the *Soffritto* brand and claims of emancipatory

difference are tempered by an alternate reading that the organization is simultaneously participating in a form of artisanal capitalism that encompasses a complicated mix of sameness and difference.

Chapter 3: Restaurant Vignettes and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter provides background on the ethnographic methodologies I have used to gather data for this thesis project. I begin by presenting the professional restaurant kitchen through various vignettes that provide a range of different possible worlds the professional cook might experience. These are by no means comprehensive but rather they are intended to provide a fairly good idea of situations and circumstances that will likely occur at some point in a kitchen that prepares food of high quality, and in high volume. I have also incorporated these exemplars to demonstrate how unique each professional setting can be in order to demonstrate why conducting an ethnography in such a setting is a useful methodology in terms of finding out how the actors within that particular setting make sense of their working world. The methods of interpretive and institutional ethnography that I have incorporated are used to show that by initially teasing out how individuals made sense of, or interpreted their work worlds on a micro level (the interpretive part), I could then apply the data I had accumulated to an institutional level in order to help explain what Smith (1999) refers to as ‘translocal’ relations, and how forces and interests outside of the *Soffritto* environment influence what takes place within it.

In applying these methodologies, I realize the importance of retaining a self-reflexive perspective that the conclusions I come to from this research will be limited in their universal application. Each restaurant will have unique nuances that can make

generalizable claims somewhat difficult. However, the intent is that the findings reflect as accurately as possible what was happening at *Soffritto* at the time of my research.

Professional Restaurant Kitchens

A professional restaurant environment is generally one where a good deal of activity takes place between multiple actors, and often in multiple sites simultaneously. This activity is a combination of stationary, and often repetitive tasks along with a rather constant flow of bodies coming and going throughout the kitchen spaces that might exist in a particular place. Ethnographic research, especially institutional ethnography, often explores textual content within workplaces in an attempt to understand how knowledge is made and shared within a workplace setting (Smith, 1987; 2005). That content can be rich in terms of understanding the discourse of a particular workplace, who shapes that discourse, and various signifiers within it that might explain power relationships that exist (e.g., Smart, 1998; Devault and McCoy, 2007; Smith, 2005). Textual content within a restaurant kitchen is generally fairly limited, however. It may come in the form of a prep list that might be hand-written on a sheet of paper, on a formal prep sheet for a particular department, or in a booklet at the end of the day for the cooks of the following shift to refer to have an idea of what needs to be done. Menus and catering function sheets would be other examples of textual content. As well, various notices and signs might be posted on bulletin boards, and department of health and workers' compensation regulation pamphlets or booklets might be seen in many kitchens. Generally, however, cooks do not deal with a great deal of textual content on a regular basis. Verbal communication is the standard form of interaction and aside from office staff using

computers for various administrative tasks, orders coming into the kitchen through a computerized chit machine, or the reading of a recipe or article from a cook book or magazine, there is still relatively little computer work or textual content that the average working cook comes across in the workplace. Therefore, in order to capture the world of a kitchen, it is necessary to have an understanding of how products and bodies flow through the kitchen space, and how the people working within it negotiate their way in often tight quarters under situations that can be filled with intense pressure.

Cooking professionally often resembles many of the performance art forms, such as live theater, music, or dance, in the sense that the results and feedback on one's concrete labour can be seen almost immediately. This is especially so, perhaps, in the case of an open kitchen setting such as the one in the Wine Bistro, where clients are sitting directly across from the cooking line. But it is also the case on the production side of most operations in terms of workers positioned in close proximity to each other where the results of their work are completely exposed. The content of such work is not something that can be discreetly hidden within a computer system while working at a cubicle in an office. There is always an audience of some type, and always a certain level of performance involved, whether conscious or not. A beautiful soufflé is as exposed as a burnt tray of cookies, although there are still ways in which one tries to hide errors if possible. The senses, however, playing the role they do in cooking, ensure that the work of the cook is generally pretty evident, as aroma can be as much of an indicator as the visual can be as to how something has turned out.

While most popular and established restaurants will usually have some sort of reputation associated with their food and service style, as well as from press exposure

they may have received, these reputations may not reveal the depth of what goes on within that restaurant environment on a day-to-day basis. Critiques might provide some information about a general style but they don't normally explore how the workers feel about their work; about how they are treated; what kinds of career opportunities they might have; what their own aspirations are; or how they see external issues relating to their work. A celebrity-mad media is often quick to latch on to the latest food trend, or celebrity-chef, while not usually taking the time to explore somewhat less sexy issues that would not be of interest to most of the consuming public.

Within food literature, however, several examples do exist of the actual workings of a professional kitchen. Marco Pierre White (2006) provides a glimpse into one version of this world. White, who is British, was the first non-French person, and the youngest chef, to ever garner three Michelin stars from the Michelin Guide, whose restaurant rating system is followed closely by many diners and chefs, for better or for worse. He accomplished this in 1989 after years of 'slaving' at the stove in search of a level of perfection that still would ultimately leave him "unfulfilled" (2006: 129). Speaking of his time spent learning his craft under the tutelage of French chef, Albert Roux,, White captures how the immediacy of one's work being visible and exposed can be rather intimidating for many cooks:

Albert may not have wanted any of his team to suffer from a fear of the stove but the *Gavroche* brigade was driven by fear nonetheless. We were driven by a fear of failing, a fear of fucking up, a fear of upsetting the boss. (White, 2006: 69)

Whether explicit or not, this is not an uncommon feeling for many cooks in professional kitchens, but such fears typically reflect the personality of the person in charge. Not all

chefs are brutish. Many of those feelings, however, can also be forms of self-regulation where people have personal standards they expect to uphold and negative reactions from others are not necessarily required when something doesn't turn out quite the way it was intended.

Another common feature in many professional kitchens is the 'rush' of a typical busy dinner service, and the potential to get somewhat addicted to it. Cooks often work very long hours and the immediacy of seeing the results of one's work, especially when it is successfully executed under high pressure situations, can be quite rewarding and satisfying. Surviving the pressure of a dinner service rush is also akin to conquering a certain type of mental, physical and artistic challenge all at once. The addictive aspects of the 'dinner rush' and other parts of the profession often trap cooks into unquestioningly working long hours that other professions would never tolerate. Burnout is a very common occurrence within the profession and the challenges of attaining a life balance while actively involved in a busy restaurant life is not particularly easy to realize. White, speaking of his tenure at the critically acclaimed Harvey's in the 1980s, provides an extreme, but not uncommon example:

I suppose I was trying to kill myself but sacrificing your health for your career was all the rage. Harvey's opened amidst the backdrop of Thatcher's greed culture. My obsession was Michelin Stars. I always wanted more. I found my adrenaline heaven at Harvey's, a pain paradise. Customers may well have gone there to fill their stomachs, but I went to feed my addiction to work, my addiction to adrenaline, and to pain.
(2006: 123)

Describing the actual intensity of a dinner service rush in his book *Heat*, Bill Buford, who transforms himself from magazine editor of *The New Yorker* to apprentice cook

at *Babbo*, a renowned New York City restaurant, captures the mental and physical demands of this pressure, along with the ‘strange’ pleasure it can bring for some:

I had been on the grill for two months when, in the kitchen’s phrasing, I was “hammered.”...It was ninety-three degrees outside. Inside, who knew? Hotter. Once the service started, the air-conditioning over the grill was shut down. I was told to line up pitchers of water. “Get ready,” Frankie said, “when it gets hot, everyone orders from the grill.” And then the dinner rush begins.

“Ordering!” Andy sang out. “Two lamb medium, squab, tender, rib-eye.”

“Ordering! Three branzino and two lamb medium.”

“Ordering, Three lamb medium, branzino, rabbit.” More? I stopped what I was doing – I had to get the new orders on the raw tray to season them, at least that, because otherwise I was going to forget them with the next batch of orders. If I fell behind, I’d throw the whole kitchen into chaos.

Again, the ticker-tape. This was starting to feel like a sporting event. Sweat was running off my nose, and I was moving fast, as fast as my concentration allowed; flipping, turning, poking, being burned. My mind was at full capacity, with only one stray thought, a question, repeated over and over again: What happens if I fall behind? And still there was more lamb medium, lamb medium-rare. What’s wrong with these people? I was surrounded by meat; meat on the grill; meat on the seasoning tray; meat on the resting tray, in big heaps. So much meat that it no longer seemed like meat. Or maybe it seemed exactly like meat.

“This is the buzz,” Memo whispered, still behind me. “This is what you live for,” Andy said, picking up plates from the pass, adding, mysteriously, “it feels really fucking good.” And the remark remained in my head for the rest of the night, and I thought hard about what I was feeling: exhilaration, fear, weirdness, some physical-endorphin-performance thing. But good? It was, I concluded, my first glimpse of what Mario had described as “the reality of the kitchen” – a roomful of adrenaline addicts. (Buford, 2006: 85)

Yet another element about professional kitchens that would be difficult to detect without conducting an ethnographic study is the role the actual space people are working in plays in their psychological happiness. Some environments can feel quite industrial and institutional with no natural lighting or fresh air. Other spaces can be much more pleasing to be in and the calming effect that this can have on the cook is not something to

be overlooked – something that did indeed have a significant impact on many of the staff at *Soffritto*. Marcus Waring, another British chef who trained in his early years at the Savoy Hotel in London, England, also went on to work at *Le Gavroche*, the restaurant White refers to above when discussing the fear of the stove. Waring's perspective captures the difference between cooking at an industrial scale and that of a more intimate, locally-connected setting:

At that time the Savoy kitchens were operating on an industrial scale with well over a hundred chefs employed. The atmosphere was that of a manufacturing shop floor, noisy, boisterous and with a necessary emphasis on speed of production. Entering the kitchen at *Le Gavroche* was like walking through a door that somehow transports you from the clatter of a city centre to a shady spot by the river. (Wright, 2005:162-3)

Although chefs of White's ilk do still exist, it is just as common today to find people running kitchens who do have a less self-abusive nature, if still not completely able to eliminate the addictive aspects of the craft. For many, it is no longer about being a slave to one's work in order to gain Michelin stars, but rather to finding some kind of deeper meaning within the relationships between food and craft and attempting to share that with both the staff and the client. This does not diminish the creative search for quality but enables it to take place in an atmosphere that is somewhat less destructive, whether personally inflicted or otherwise. Thomas Keller's kitchen at *The French Laundry* in Yountville, California, for example, is quite the opposite of what Buford describes. There (a kitchen I spent a day in while doing a series of cooking stages in the 1990s in California), Keller barely speaks louder than a whisper when calling the orders during a service, and none of the cooks see the actual order chits. All of the orders called out to the cooks are memorized and

focus and execution are played out in a very calm, almost spiritual manner. This ambience is described in the following way in the French Laundry Cookbook:

The kitchen is clean, cool, and bright. The pans are a uniform brushed silver. The air is calm and quiet, the brigade gliding across the carpet below their feet, bending at right angles over white china to construct dish after perfect dish. Visitors stand to the side and watch. A mother and son wander down the breezeway after dinner and halt at the kitchen's entrance. The young man is grinning hard, his eyes wide. He is a cook himself at a well-known San Francisco restaurant. "It's so quiet," he whispers. The mother whispers, "It's like a watchmaker's shop."
(Ruhlman in Keller, 1999: 305)

While there is no telling of how much fear the cooks might have had of the stove in this kitchen, the elements of self-discipline and an attention to detail and standards – characteristics of which Sennett (2006) identifies as being central to craftsmanship – certainly stand out in this description.

With these diverse elements of the professional kitchen in mind, it becomes apparent that any type of study of such an environment would require spending time in the location being researched. Clearly, each kitchen will have its own unique personality. Simple knowledge of what the proprietor of *Soffritto* had done at one stage of his career would not be sufficient in writing a paper on the current operation. Reading articles about what had transpired since that earlier period might be somewhat enlightening but there would be little content within such material that would provide a depth of understanding that was required in order to find out what being a part of this operation meant for people who worked there. Thus my field research began to take shape by reconnecting with a colleague with whom I had some contact over the past several years, and who was graciously very open to making his operation available for me to observe.

Accessing the Research Site

As noted in the introduction, I was seeking a specific type of restaurant setting for this research. Knowing of the general cooking philosophy that is practiced at *Soffritto*, and how it potentially related to the issues of alienation and ‘spaces of difference’ I was interested in, I then approached the proprietor with a proposal for my research and I was able to gain approval to access the site relatively quickly. This part of the process, which took place in the summer of 2007, while clearly crucial to any merit the research might have, was also perhaps the easiest part of the whole project. The project began as work for a course I was taking on ethnographic research methods in the summer of 2007. My purpose for taking that course was to gain insight into a methodology I thought might be useful in a final thesis project and once I had gained access to the *Soffritto* location, ideas about a more in-depth exploration of the organization that could be encompassed in a thesis began to take hold.⁶ It must be noted here that the cooperation from those who worked at the various locations I visited was extremely open and helpful. While my personal knowledge of the proprietor enabled access to the site, and I had an understanding of it on many levels that I would not likely have had without my cooking background, I also purposely kept a distance from him during and after the time I had spent at *Soffritto* in order to keep the focus of my findings on the people who worked for the restaurant without undue influence from him. It must also be said that never did I feel any pressure from him, or anyone else, that I had to portray the organization in any

⁶ In the fall of 2007 I audited another course on The Labour Process, which also incorporated ethnographic research methods. The purpose was to continue building background on the methodology I would use in my thesis project while at the same time considering theoretical links that might apply to it. The second phase of the research took place after this course had finished and the research subjects interviewed in this phase and beyond were all informed that my work was related to this thesis material. With respect to the course-related consent forms used (see samples at the back of this thesis), they were approved after consultation with the Carleton University Research Ethics administrator in the early winter of 2008.

particular way. The fact that this operation is as large as it is was a positive aspect in this respect. I did not know any of the other employees on a personal level and thus I was required to establish a trust level with those I would become reliant upon as informants if I was to gain significant insight into the organization.

Spending enough time within the community being studied is important in ethnographic research in terms of being able to gather and process data that will yield findings that provide the researcher with material of some depth that hopefully accurately reflects the group being studied. Logically, the more time the researcher has to spend observing her/his subjects, the greater the chances are of establishing trust among them and thus being able to establish strong informant relationships. The nature of this particular thesis did not allow me to spend extensively long periods of time observing the sites and groups that constitute *Soffritto*. Because of the time limitations I knew I would face, I focused on exploring an area in which I was interested in, in terms of conducting research, as well as an area I had some previous knowledge of in order to hopefully be able to fit in with the group I was observing rather quickly. Such previous knowledge of a group or environment being studied, however, can potentially have both positive and negative aspects to it. There is an 'insider-outsider' problematic the researcher needs to keep in mind to ideally remain as neutral as they possibly can. While the familiarity of the environment can in some ways make it rather easy to fit in on some levels, it is also important for the researcher to retain an emotional distance. As Smart (1998: 118) notes, the researcher needs to balance engagement with detachment: "...researchers need to identify the ideology of the community without identifying with that ideology and losing sight of its contingency as a social construction." The familiarity that I have of the

restaurant industry, and with the kind of food philosophy that generally existed at *Soffritto*, naturally meant that I began the project with some preconceived biases about what I might find. There was, however, still the need to “make the familiar strange” (Moss, 1992: 161) in order not to enter into the environment in some sort of a complacent way, where I could have had a sense that I knew so much that I would actually miss subtle nuances that were important to the make-up of this environment (Moss, 1992.: 167).

Research Strategy

As there is always work to be done in a kitchen, most people can quickly make a helping contribution. As most cooks have many tasks to complete and a limited time in which to get them done, good help is usually appreciated. With this in mind, my basic participant-observer strategy was to await the directive as to where the restaurant chef thought I would be best located, and how I could contribute at a particular time, and then to gradually strike up conversations with people I was working beside. My cooking experience was also particularly helpful in terms of being able to work in a small, cramped space. During the first phase of the research, space constraints in the main kitchen were always an issue and thus it could have been very easy to be in someone’s way and become more of a nuisance than be any kind of useful help.

Being able to read situations of various needs the cooks might have had, or time constraints they might have been under, I was generally able to establish a positive rapport with most people I was working with, and to make a useful contribution. Such contributions might come in the form of removing the flesh of poached lobsters from

their shells, trimming lamb racks for the grill cook, preparing various vegetables for the vegetable cook, or washing lettuces. By doing this, I was able to provide the cooks I was working beside with a more detailed explanation as to why I was conducting my research. Although I had been formally introduced by the restaurant chef, most cooks were quite busy and the specifics of the research were communicated in more detail when talking with them in a face-to-face situation. This generally proved to be helpful in terms of ‘breaking the ice’ But there also some people who I did not get to know that well and who likely wondered what exactly the details of my research project were. As things became more familiar to some of them, however, I began to strike up conversations with the cooks about various issues concerning their work and the work environment in general, and began to get a sense of the overall feel and dynamic of the operation. Thus, the time spent in the kitchens was a combination of being an active participant-observer, as well as being the conductor of informal interviews while I worked; and a note-taker, when taking notes was practical. I would usually go to a nearby coffee shop after I finished working to jot down any observations I thought important from the days events, or to organize notes I had taken. These would then be transferred to a file I kept for this on my laptop.

The participant-observation experience ranged from helping with an outdoor ‘street food’ event; to working at an off-site private catering function with the proprietor (the only significant time we spent together over the period of my research); helping the production chefs with preparations for various catering functions; helping the restaurant cooking team during their preparation for dinner services, doing some butchery; spending a day in the kitchen of the Museum restaurant noted above, again helping with various

prep needs and the lunch service; visiting the future production kitchen and helping to transport some equipment to it; to helping in the preparation of fruit and vegetables for pickling and preserving. One full day was spent cutting many cases of local cauliflower into florettes of a rather small size, which would then go on to be pickled and preserved for future use. Another day was spent with the pastry department examining what their production methods were, and being exposed to the limitations that the kitchen was placing on those methods due to a high demand for the use of very limited oven space. This time was also spent plucking several flats of fresh red currants, which would then be processed into various preserved states (e.g., purée, jelly, and marinated in rum) for future uses when local produce was no longer so abundant. The red currant picking and cauliflower cutting were tasks that were extremely repetitive and this provided the opportunity to watch quite a bit of what was going on around me. One interesting aspect of what was happening in the kitchen was that while many of these repetitive tasks naturally were assigned to less experienced apprentices, it was not beyond anyone to give help, no matter what title they held. This would extend as far as the preparation of the staff meal, which I was to discover during the second phase of my research, was a very important issue for many people.

These experiences also provided the opportunity to work with a wide range of the kitchen staff in terms of their positions of seniority, from working with apprentices doing the cauliflower, to line and pastry cooks, to several sous-chefs, and the chef-proprietor on the two off-site events I helped out with. By making useful and helpful contributions to the workload of the kitchen during the participant-observer phase, I was able to build-up a trust level with some people that seemed to be quite positive. This approach was not

unlike that which Van Maanen (1988:3, 13) speaks of when noting that “experience” underlies all understanding of social life. “To write an ethnography requires at a minimum some understanding of the language, concepts, categories, practices, rules, beliefs, and so forth, used by members of the written-about group.” Choosing the place of study I did for this research very much reflected a clear comfort and knowledge level of it before I began. The challenge then became how well the culture under study would be “adequately displayed” (Van Maanen, 1988: 13). I also distributed a questionnaire at the end of the first phase of the research to attempt to get a better sense of how many of the cooks who I had only had minimal exposure to felt about various issues I was interested in pursuing. It was difficult to conduct extensive individual interviews at that time because the operation was quite busy and people generally had little time available.

A second phase of the research was conducted in December of 2007 when I returned to the Wine Bistro location and the new Production Kitchen location to conduct one-on-one interviews with six people who worked for the operation in various capacities. These interviews were tape recorded and then later transcribed. Once the transcription had taken place, the content was read and re-read in order to begin to find distinctive topics or patterns in what had been said by the interviewees. The Wine Bistro chef, Tamara, was very helpful in organizing a day and time when business would not be too hectic, and when an interesting cross-section of employees would be available to sit down to answer questions, or simply discuss their views of the industry and what it meant for them to work for this organization. Aside from interviewing Tamara, I also interviewed a fairly new junior line-cook, a dining room manager, a server, an assistant sommelier, and the Production Kitchen chef. Time constraints were once more somewhat

limiting in terms of the number of people I was able to talk to, but the degree to which they expounded on some of their answers was quite extensive. This was extremely helpful in being able to begin to discern various patterns in terms of how people felt about the organization generally, and about some of the other issues I was interested in, such as alienation' the role that community played in the life of the restaurant, and the importance of environmental and ecological sustainability issues in the way the organization sourced its food products.

The way in which I went about working with the interview and questionnaire data I had accumulated was to first transcribe all of the material from both data sets onto my computer. With the questionnaire material, I grouped similar answers to the different questions together and considered how similar of different responses were to those questions. Responses with similar feedback were placed in one grouping and those with differences in the responses were placed in a second. From there, I then reexamined my own questions to consider whether they were actually relevant to the research. For example, a question on how much food television people watched didn't yield any information I thought significant to use in the overall analysis. From these initial questions, I then formed other questions for the second phase of the research when I conducted the one-on-one interviews. These questions were a combination of expanding on some of the questions I had asked earlier, such what the significance of working for *Soffritto* was for these workers. I also asked other questions I hadn't put on the questionnaires that were of interest at that stage of the research, particularly related to the nature of the connections to local suppliers and aspects of food politics. Once the interview tapes were transcribed onto my computer, which I tediously did over several

days, I began to go over it by reviewing individual feedback at first. Things I thought important were highlighted. I then began to break each person's responses down into topics (many of which crossed-over into more than one) to try and begin to connect various similarities between respondents to make intersubjective links. With this content I was able to substantively begin to link the methodological approaches of interpretive and institutional ethnography to the theoretical tools I was drawing upon to help explain the actual praxis within the research site. There was far more very interesting material to draw from than I have been able to include in the analysis chapter. Editing this content was quite challenging, as was deciding the location in which to put it within the text. While some excellent quotes have not made the final cut, I have tried to include quotes that were representative in one form or another of sentiments and thoughts that were expressed by those I interviewed and conversed with via email.

Interpretive Ethnography

In terms of ethnographic methods, I have utilized two approaches. The first is that of interpretive ethnography, commonly associated with Clifford Geertz, which takes as its basis a need to find shared meaning that reflects the world of a particular group or community being researched (Geertz, 1973: 13). The process entails "gaining access to the conceptual world" that is inhabited by those of the community of interest. Geertz never made any claim that the ethnographer would be able to know everything about the subjects under study and that the most that might be hoped for would be to gain access to the "symbolic forms" that constitute the subjects' discourse. This method is very much qualitative in nature, which fits quite well with a kitchen environment where there is not a

multitude of quantitative textual data to draw upon (although sales and labour cost data, which I was not privy to, would indeed be of interest in terms of accurately stating the financial health of the organization, which does appear to be quite good). All kitchens will have basic similarities but the unique nuances of each would be hard to capture with only statistical data. This notion of the qualitative, as well as of networks that were noted in the theory chapter, is captured here by Geertz:

Believing ...that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning...to aid us in gaining access to the conceptual world in which our subjects live. (1973: 5, 24)

The goal of interpretive ethnography, for Geertz, is to work towards obtaining a “thick description” (1973: 6) of a community’s “interworked systems of construable signs” (1983: 14), its “structures of meaning...and system of symbols” (1983: 182). To do this, Geertz notes, the ethnographer needs to link two types of concepts. The “experience near” – what the group under observation would generally consider to be a reflection of their local world – is linked to the “experience-distant” – broader social structures and theories that the experience-near reading might fit into. The idea is to place or locate the experience-near with disciplinary theory, the “concepts theorists have fashioned to capture the general features of social life” (Geertz, 1983: 57).

What the researcher seeks to find by using this method are “convergent perspectives – commonalities across informants’ first-order constructs” – that point to significant areas of “intersubjectivity” between “multiply connected individuals” (Geertz, 1983: 157). The researcher is seeking to connect these intersubjective links into a larger pattern that can map out features of the group’s or community’s ideology. To obtain these

types of commonalities, the researcher needs to use various techniques. Common in this type of research are the taking of field notes; the conducting of informal interviews with members of the group being observed (any conversation could be potential material); conducting formal interviews in a one-on-one format, often with the use of a tape recorder; and the distribution of questionnaires or surveys, although surveys of a quantitative nature are not generally a common technique that is applied (Smart, 2007).

While the interpretive ethnographic method is quite useful in terms of gaining insight to the meaning-making process of a group or culture, it has limitations in terms of incorporating external forces and factors that might be instrumental in shaping those views. For example, many of the issues that are responsible for the rise of alternative food movements have links to broader national, transnational and global structures and institutions beyond the immediate workplace, or networks that make up the core of the movement. To account for this gap, the incorporation of institutional ethnography, taken in the context of how Dorothy E. Smith views it, allows me to be able to introduce broader societal structures into my analysis.

Institutional Ethnography

Smith (2005: 132, 160-66) proposes institutional ethnography as part of an 'alternative sociology,' an approach she describes as combining Marx's materialist method and Garfinkel's ethnomethodology with insights from the feminist practice of consciousness-raising. This approach considers social relations, as in Marx, as the "coordinating of people's activities on a large scale, as this occurs in and across multiple sites, involving the activities of people who are not known to each other and who do not meet face-to-

face” (Smith, 1999: 132). Such an approach is useful in terms of the current set-up of *Soffritto*, which consists of the three separate locations where people within those locations often do not come into contact on a daily basis, if at all in some cases.

Smith (1999: 5) notes that, in a “global capitalist society, the ‘everyday world’ (the material context of each embodied subject) is organized in powerful ways by translocal social relations that pass through local settings.” Those relations often “shape” social relationships in ways that are outside of the local context and control. An example would be the African farmer whose livelihood is controlled largely by the dictates of international structural adjustment programs that force her/him to grow specific crops, and determine who those crops can be sold to. Thus, this farmer’s reality will be largely impacted by power relations beyond the immediate community. Smith refers to such translocal social relations as “relations of ruling”:

They are those forms that we know as bureaucracy, administration, management, organization, and the media. They include also the complex of discourses, scientific, technical, and cultural, that intersect, interpenetrate, and coordinate the multiple sites of ruling. (1999: 6)

This reading helps to bring institutions of government and the global food system, as well as smaller groups at the local level, into the analysis.

Institutional ethnography takes for its entry point the experiences of specific individuals whose everyday activities are in some way hooked into, shaped by, and constituent of the institutional relations under exploration. Interviews used in this method are not so much used to reveal individual subjective states, but “to locate and trace the points of connection among individuals working in different parts of institutional complexes of activity” (Devault and McCoy, 2007: 18). Using this method allows me to consider the feedback from my observations in relation to the different physical locations

that make up *Soffritto*, as well as to consider the ‘translocal’ institutions that are either directly, or indirectly involved in the global-local problematic.

For example, while ‘translocal social relations of ruling’ have the potential to impact people in locations unconnected to where power originates, as in the limited number of transnational organizations that control much of the world food system, sites of resistance to such power exist within various urban and rural centers and spaces. As *Soffritto* is being considered as a potential site of a form of resistance, the institutional method provides useful tools from which to analyze these issues. Devault and McCoy (2007: 18) go on to note that, “the researcher’s purpose in an institutional ethnography is not to generalize about the group of people interviewed, but to find and describe social processes that have generalizing effects.” With this in mind, I can consider my observations from the perspective of how the world that exists within the *Soffritto* organization might more broadly be related to “ideological and social processes that produce experiences of subordination” (Devault and McCoy: 19). Such experiences of subordination, as outlined in the overview of the world food system, for example, can be considered as the drivers of the resistance found within parts of the local food movement. Put another way, in Lefebvrian terms, experiences of subordination would equate to a fairly high level of alienation for the subordinated but it is exactly this subordination, created by people to begin with, that drives other people to strive for a different and better reality. Alienation breeds resistance and only with it do alternative perspectives begin to surface. And once such movements of resistance take shape, they too need to be examined as to how well they hold up to the ideals they are resisting against.

Conclusion

In presenting examples of various realities the cook faces within the professional kitchen environment, this chapter began by demonstrating why the application of ethnographic research to explore the world of the professional restaurant is an appropriate method that helps to capture a world that is in some form of continual evolution and change, while at the same time consisting of often extremely repetitive tasks. While similarities do exist across restaurant settings in terms of some work processes, each operation will also be somewhat unique in terms of the personalities who shape it. In the case of *Soffritto*, the application of two forms of ethnographic methodology have been applied in order to help understand this world from a local perspective (interpretive ethnography), as well as to help bring ‘translocal relations of power’ into the analysis (institutional ethnography). The internal reality of the micro/local scale is juxtaposed against external structures and institutions that are often the source of unequal relations of power that can leave some people feeling somewhat powerless, while at the same time being drivers of change for others. Only very late in my research, when it was past the point of adding more to this particular work, was I made aware of Michael Burawoy’s work on Global Ethnography, which would also help to add more depth to the work of Smith. This is material I plan on exploring with the intent of adding on to this work if it is expanded upon at a future date. With this foundation outlined, I now move to the actual site of research and my analysis of it.

Chapter 4

The Intersection of the Craft of Cooking, Food Politics and a Local Agricultural System

Introduction

This chapter incorporates material I gathered through the various stages of my research. This consists of responses to the questionnaire I distributed during the first phase of my research, interview content from the interviews I conducted during the second part of my project, quotes taken from newspaper articles on the organization, along with input from email exchanges I had with various people within the organization, and with farmer/suppliers to the organization over the duration of this study. Predominant themes to emerge from this data were the importance of the way in which the food and animals used by *Soffritto* are grown or raised, as well as the relationships that are developed between the producers and the restaurant staff. Also, the craft skill involved in the cooking techniques used in the process of transforming the raw product into a finished dish, as well as the craft of high quality service, were topics that continually surfaced in different ways.

While the idea of food items coming from as local a location as possible predominate the food purchasing philosophy of the organization, there is not an exclusive geographical distance that defines the ‘local.’ Many cheeses (all of which are artisanally produced and often of the raw milk variety) come from Quebec, which is well known for its artisanal cheese industry, as well as from New Brunswick, for example. In such cases, it is the integrity of how the product has been produced, along with its high quality and good taste that are the deciding factors of whether they are purchased. Thus, the ‘how’ is

as important as the 'where' with respect to this philosophy, although the closer the geographical location, generally the higher the priority that product will have. Antoine, the *Soffritto* proprietor-chef, put it this way when discussing the artisanal cheese industry:

I wouldn't have been able to put together a really good artisan Canadian cheese plate in a restaurant ten years ago but now, that is all I sell. I have a beautiful selection, and it is not always the same, it is changing all the time. There are some amazing local cheese factories but I consider Quebec to be local, and New Brunswick, because they are Canadian, but even more emphasis in Ontario is coming down the pipe...Purchasing this way seems obvious to someone like me who has been practicing this for so many years but it is also a relief to witness that now there is more of a popular acceptance of this.

(Ontario Craft Brewers Podcast,

<http://www.ontariocraftbrewers.com/blog/15/4/08>)

Although many of the wines served in the different restaurants the organization runs come from Ontario, others also come from more distant parts of the globe. The focus in this area, however, is also on the way in which the wine maker has created a unique artisanal and tasty product, while still adhering to the criteria of being environmentally and ecologically responsible in the way the grapes are grown and processed, and in how the wine itself is produced. .

Complimenting the theme of the role of craft knowledge and skill was the way in which the organization provided the opportunity for the staff to continue to grow professionally through various daily meetings about the food and wine menus, as well as through weekly wine seminars given primarily for the floor staff, external field trips to wineries and farms that are organized for all staff, through external events the organization participated in, and through the apprenticeship program the organization has for young cooks. These programs seem to have resulted in an environment where the divisions between the front- and back-of-the-house - typical in many restaurant

environments - had been greatly reduced. A sub-theme to this was a 'family feel' to the workplace, where trust levels between employees were quite high, and support for each other in terms of having relatively balanced lives was also strong.

The theme of space was also quite prevalent. Space issues were very much a cause of stress for many of the kitchen staff during the first phase of my research as most of the production took place in the main kitchen of the Wine Bistro location. This made the work environment challenging for many and the alleviation of many of these problems with the opening of the Production Kitchen seemed to have led to an increased level of happiness for many of the staff. Ironically, this solution also meant that many of the staff who had previously been working in the same location, and within close vicinity to each other, were now physically separated, which added its own new dimension to the overall dynamic of the organization, posing challenges in terms of being able to keep employees as connected to the operation, and to each other, as they once were.

I begin the chapter, however, by examining the nature of the local supply network *Soffritto* draws upon for its food products because without that network there clearly would not be much of a deeply defined local cuisine. I then discuss how the discourse within the organization is shaped, and how various symbols that are part of the dining room décor reflect this discourse, providing the workers the opportunity to expound on it in different ways, and how it might be interpreted by people working in different spaces of the organization, as well as the clientele. This theme is linked very closely to the importance placed on product knowledge and staff learning, which enables them to interact with the clients in very informed ways. The chapter concludes with an examination of the implications of how the alleviation of the aforementioned space issues

have also coincided with a continual growth of the organization. This growth is also considered in the context of how the organization is in a seeming continual state of change of some kind, serving its loyal clientele while also in many ways making its product more accessible to a wider market in terms of socio-economic range. These changes also require a great deal of flexibility on the part of the worker in order to adapt to different work environments.

The Local Supply Network

As noted in chapter one, the development of the local small-scale organic farmer/artisanal supply network was quite uneven in its early days with various people showing up at the back kitchen door with things like wild leeks, fresh morels and chanterelles, Ontario white asparagus (which was not commonly available at the time), various organic vegetables and other items. Remarkably in many ways, things have not changed a great deal two decades down the road. While the number of small-scale suppliers is constantly increasing, the rather informal network still functions in a similar way, as Antoine, the *Soffritto* proprietor, noted via an email exchange:

In many ways it hasn't changed at all. There are still characters showing up, unbidden, to hawk their wares. There are certainly more of them now, but it is still the same in terms of most of these suppliers being "niche" suppliers; a mushroom guy, a salad guy, a cheese guy, a wild foraged guy. There is an emerging new artisan cheese culture in Ontario that is pretty exciting, though. Finally, there are more entrepreneurs on the supply side that are tackling the distribution challenge - *100km Foods* comes to mind. They drive all around the countryside bringing food from growers to restaurants in the city, leaving the farmers on the farm and out of the distribution side. Smart. Lots more room for that.
(Antoine, *Soffritto* proprietor)

Although there are now a greater number of small-scale farmers/producers, there are still significant limits to the scope and scale of what can be supplied, and how that supply is distributed. Answering a question specifically related to the issue of the small-scale farmers being able to meet the demand, especially if it continues to increase, Tamara, the Wine Bistro chef, noted that:

They (the farmers) are not able to supply everyone. There are a lot of issues and there is an ongoing debate. I am involved in this debate a lot outside of the restaurant, actually. There are so many layers to this problem. One layer is that a lot of farmers don't want to grow things unless they know they have a market for it, which is completely valid...It is difficult. There is a lot of leg work, and phone calls, and restaurants often don't have the manpower to make these multiple phone calls that entail a lot of back-and-forth conversation between the two sides in order to coordinate things. The advantage with this restaurant is that the menus are so flexible (i.e., changing daily in some way).

These sentiments were echoed in an email exchange with one of the vegetable suppliers used by *Soffritto*:

The supply network at present, for small-scale producers, is the weak link. It is a somewhat cobbled-together individual approach, with many half full trucks coming from the same area delivering to the same restaurants. We piggyback our delivery to Toronto with a large scale organic producer, who drops off the produce for us at a courier. The courier then delivers to the restaurants for us, and the restaurant pays the courier fee. (John, July 2007)

Some of these network inefficiencies tend to highlight an irony of one of the central tenets of the relationships between the local supplier and cooks. The positive aspects of using the sustainably grown and raised products in terms of ethical issues, as well as leaving a minimal carbon footprint, are negated to some degree by the fact that more fuel and energy than is required to deliver these goods is being used. Companies such as *100 Kilometer Foods* and *Kawartha Ecological Growers*, who work at gathering the harvests

from different farms and delivering it to different restaurants throughout the southern Ontario region, are helping to improve the situation. Beginning this past April, for example, *100 KM Foods* started picking up fresh produce from farmers and delivering directly to restaurants three to four days per week. This means that produce that is freshly picked is collected by them and delivered directly to their clients with no warehouse storage involved. The demand for this service has been very positive on the chef/restaurant side but farmers are still somewhat reluctant to commit (reflective of Tamara's comment above). Restaurants that have flexible menus, such as *Soffritto*, where things can be added to the menu at the last moment as they become available, are the most common customers of such a supply system. The approach is, however, even penetrating some more progressive chain-style restaurants who have a special 'local' section they add on to their regular menus. This approach is interesting in that it adds some flexibility to what would otherwise be a rigid corporate menu structure, as well as significantly increasing demand for the local product from an operation that does high volumes of business in several locations. Exemplifying how ad hoc these supply networks currently are, Tamara noted how one such relationship developed for her at the Wine Bistro:

One of our farmers started his business here after having dinner. We struck a deal on supplying potatoes for the winter after someone else who had struck a deal with us bailed on us and didn't return our calls... A couple of months later he came back and he had formulated this business plan. He has a farm out in the Kawartha Lakes and... What he does is he assembles a list for all the growers and sends it to restaurants, gives a single invoice, which for restaurants is paradise; that is all they want. He deals with the deliveries and it works out well for everybody. I feel that is going to be the best way of doing it because small restaurants don't find it easy to incorporate. (Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

One of the proprietors of *100 KM Foods*, Grace Mandarano, noted that the gas costs of driving around to different farms and delivering to different restaurants was high, as well as something that didn't fit well with their ecological outlook. To address this issue, they have begun the steps of purchasing bio-diesel conversion equipment where they will transform oil used in restaurants and other parts of the industry into bio-diesel fuel for their bio-diesel vehicle next year. This has a double positive of reducing their fuel costs, and being able to do it with byproducts from local sources, further reducing the overall bio-footprint left by the process (Mandarano telephone interview, July 2008).

One of the core tenets of both political ecology and ANT is the way in which nature and social relations are viewed equally (Murdoch and Miele, 1999; Vos, 2000). Trust is a big part of such relationships where local is often associated with quality. Ilbery and Kneafsey (1998) note that alternative geographies of food often emerge because the local ecologies of quality food production are frequently to be found in areas that have escaped the underpinnings of globalization. Those who are currently small have in many cases always been this way and now an increased demand for this product places some farmers in territory they are not always familiar with, or trustful of, in terms of entering into relationships with restaurants. The reach and length of the network, as ANT notes (Murdoch, 1995), also usually indicates its strength. While the supply network broadly speaking is still somewhat fragmented, the network that *Soffritto* has established for itself (in no small part due to extremely time consuming ground work on the part of people like Tamara and Andrew – the Wine Bistro and Production Kitchen chefs) is quite extensive and strong. Mandarano (2008) also noted how it was very important to the movement to try to promote agricultural growth within local networks in ways that retain biodiversity

on the farm, and to avoid a repetition of the neoliberalizing model corporations like WalMart apply (Clark, 2007: 60-70) in terms of forging contractual agreements with organic farmers to become monoculture growers.

The California Baby Lettuce Example

Julie Guthman (2003: 45-58) provides a provocative overview of the California baby lettuce industry that began as a small-scale sector in 1981 when Warren Weber, of *Star Route Farms* began his association with Alice Waters of *Chez Panisse*. The unintended consequences of the popularity of baby greens, which was driven by high-end restaurants, many of which had chefs running their kitchens who were *Chez Panisse* diaspora (Guthman, 2003: 50) was that their production quickly shifted to traditional high intensity patterns where individual farmers were contracted out to grow single lettuces rather than the multiple varieties they had originally begun with. The big shift in this sector took place when baby lettuces became available in washed, spun-dried and bagged form in retail outlets in what became known in many organic farming circles as ‘yuppie chow’ (Guthman, 2003: 50-2). The price point for the lettuces was originally quite high and its popularity brought more farmers into the market. Unfortunately, the original growing methods began to be altered over time with non-organic mixes that looked very similar to the bagged organic products being made available on supermarket shelves. More producers began to drive down prices (not necessarily a bad thing for some but no so good for the growers) but increasing demand also led to the shift toward monoculture production that could be rotated over several farms and geographical territories. Thus, baby lettuces were soon available year round via component contracting and were

traveling long distances from farm to table (Guthman, 2003: 50). Not only had the idealist original concept been altered, but the working conditions on many of these farms were not any less exploitative than on traditional farms. The wages for many workers were kept low as many were hired through labour contractors, “a system that keeps wages low through structural over-supply and attempts to remove grower responsibility for ensuring the workers are documented” (Martin 1989, in Guthman 2003: 51).

Some of Guthman’s later work (2006: 387-97) explores issues such as the price of goods at farmers’ markets in California, as well as the demographic and race mixes that attend these markets. She notes that such places are often heralded as ideal spaces for alternative food advocates but that many of these spaces are predominantly white spaces that are not inclusive, even if in quiet ways, of all people from different socio-economic and racial backgrounds (Guthman, 2006: 389-91). These are issues that the Ontario situation, and others like it, need to keep in mind when thinking of how the local/alternative food movement might evolve as it grows.

Time constraints for both the farmers and the cooks make it difficult for them to meet face-to-face as often as they might like, which means that trust between supply and user is extremely important in the farmer-chef relationship, particularly when a chef is paying more for a product than they otherwise could. If the product is advertised as organic, for example, the trust between supplier and user needs to be solid. That things have moved so slowly in this area over the past two decades is very much reflective of how difficult it is to alter entrenched perceptions of the two worlds and how important being true to one’s word is in beginning to build increased trust levels within the network of suppliers.

Another way of addressing the issue of the small-scale supply network not being able to meet the demand of all of the cooks interested in using their products, as well as working at developing those trust relationships, is to seek other suppliers who still fit within the local philosophy fairly closely. *Soffritto* is somewhat fortunate in this respect as they can make trips to a wholesale Food Terminal (which is fairly close by) when the local farmers come in and set up simple stands to sell their goods. Trips of this kind allow the cooks to meet with the farmers directly and gain a sense of their world as Andrew, the Production Kitchen chef, noted:

These aren't specialized farmers who supply the restaurant market but for me it is almost more important to connect with these people... You really do become in tune with what is available from a local standpoint and that is something as a company that we are trying to build on... Next summer we hope to have someone going down everyday and buying our own produce. I'd say we only use one supplier that is a secondary veg supplier who isn't recognized as some sort of small, artisan local producer.
(Andrew, Production Kitchen Chef)

In the past month, several chefs and farmers have begun a chefs only farmers market where the intent is for restaurant chefs to come directly to the market one day a week and buy things in wholesale quantities from the local growers. Antoine, the *Soffritto* chef-proprietor, is one of the driving forces behind this initiative.

Local Supplier Relations and the Restaurant Worker

Because *Soffritto* places so much emphasis on the acquisition of its food from small-scale/artisanal suppliers, one of the first questions posed on the questionnaire I distributed to cooks working in the main Wine Bistro location, and at the Museum⁷ asked how

⁷ During the first phase of my research eighteen questionnaires were handed out to cooks at the Wine Bistro and Museum locations (fifteen at the Wine Bistro and three at the Museum). None of the Museum

important it was for them to have products to work with that were provided by such suppliers. How did having these local and artisanal relationships translate to the workers? Was it something they thought about? If so, how, and in what ways did this reflect on their work and on their views of food more generally? Nine of the eleven respondents considered these relationships ‘quite important,’ while the other two responses considered them ‘somewhat important.’ The questionnaire encouraged people to elaborate on their responses if they wished. Although there was not a lot of additional explanation on this particular question, aspects of the issues of ethics in animal husbandry, food politics and the environment did surface:

I have invested a lot of time fighting to change buying practices here. We need to change the way we value food – not compare factory meat to natural, but to consider it as a totally different product.
(Wine Bistro Cook)

This comment implies that naturally-raised meat might be considered as a product that has not been fetishized, as an item whose concrete labour is recognized. Considering the product in this way allows for the notion of the ‘reembedding’ of natural relations (the way in which the meat has been raised) with the social relations with the social and the economic. The naturally-raised item is not, according to this interpretation, something that is simply just another commodity, but something that has incorporated the political ecology values of sustainability and ethics into the framework through which cooking and the consumption of food need to be considered for this person.

questionnaires were responded to, while eleven of the fifteen from the Wine Bistro were filled out for a total response rate of 61%. I was only able to spend a short amount of time in the Museum location and this may not have allowed for the development of trust, nor of an understanding of the research, to the point where those given the questionnaire felt motivated to return them.

The statement is also quite normative in its political implications. The message seems to be that by changing the way we value food, which we are told we “need” to do, other positive outcomes will also be realized. This may very well be the case as it is highlighting the impacts that the ‘meatification’ of the human diet, by way of industrial-style farming, have left an ‘ecological hoofprint’ of troubling proportions (Weiss, 2007: 43-44) Weiss also notes,

As a result of the additional grain and the resource budgets of these industrial systems it has been estimated that an edible unit of protein from factory-farmed meat requires 100 times more fresh water and more than eight times the fossil-fuel energy than does an edible unit of protein from grain. (2007, 43)

What the statement fails to capture, however, is the increased global demand for meat itself, partially caused by increased wealth and demand in certain parts of formerly poor regions in countries such as China and India. This demand is no less relevant than our demand for meat but it is also something that has been a major driver in the increase in CAFO-type animal farms as well. If we do change the way we value our food, is there enough supply available of the kinds of foods those values desire? Put another way, for whom is this kind of sustainable product being produced? Not every socio-economic group can afford to buy these products. The notion also has the tendency of demonizing the production of the factory produced meats without clearly considering the fact that those producing those products are themselves quite alienated and often exploited in the process. There is a strong emphasis placed on the ethical side of the issue without the inclusion of the human exploitation that is an equally disturbing aspect of the process (Allen, 2004; Guthman, 2006; Patel, 2007). While the elimination of rather inhumane animal husbandry practices, so well captured by Upton Sinclair (1906) in *The Jungle* a

century ago (as well as Schlosser, 2001; and Lang and Heasman, 2004, among others), would theoretically also benefit those working in such conditions, this aspect of the issue does not always come out in the articulation of the perspectives of alternative food movements. As well, although workers in meat packing plants are exploited in many cases, and certainly alienated from the product they are producing, they may have few other work options available to them and this is an issue that can be fetishized by alternative food movements at times, as much as the commodified form of food is fetishized by the general public. It is implied that by changing consumption patterns everyone would benefit and the local, small-scale farmer tends to be a heroic figure in this framing, but the work conditions of the farm worker is often not a central part of the framing. There is often an intrinsic assumption that all aspects of the labour process are treated equally by such farms, which may be the case in many situations, but little critical thought is given to this issue much of the time. The same can be said for gender and race issues, which have historically been deeply linked to agricultural development in North America with women's contributions, particularly on the family farm, as well as those of racial minorities, often invisible in the discussion (Freidmann, 1993; Allen, 2004; Guthman, 2006).

As for the meaning of the local supplier relationships for the cooks, Tamara expressed the positive impact they have for her:

Those connections are really important to me and I learn so much from them. With each new grower I am exposed to, it is a personal learning experience. We are very lucky because the people we work with are incredible! They are breaking so much ground with how they interact with restaurants here, so there is a lot of good stuff happening right now.
(Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

There does appear to be a definite correlation between these connections and high levels of stimulation and meaning they bring to the work for Tamara. The opportunity to continually be able to learn and grow through the exposure to what many farmers are doing, in terms of growing methods and the product they provide, for example, gives her a great deal of confidence about the food she is working with. When conversing with diners sitting across from the cooking line in the Wine Bistro, this knowledge and engagement in the process comes out in her interactions with the clients. The names of suppliers are mentioned to the diners when referring to a specific item (e.g., wild mushrooms, cheeses, meats and fish). This discursive exchange is an interesting example of reduced alienation on two fronts. First, the knowledge gained through the connections with the suppliers is quite significant in bringing meaning to the work as it is a link of sorts between two craft forms; farming and cooking. That link, when translated to the client directly by the cook, potentially further entrenches the connectedness they have to their work. The sense of a community connection is quite strong in this setting. It harkens back to the pre-industrial period Marx referred to when the use-value of the good, produced by concrete labour, was as, if not more important, than the exchange-value of the good.

The Wine Bistro, however, is the only part of the organization that provides this platform for the cooks to converse with clients on a regular basis, and those working in other parts of the organization seem to find that level of connection a bit more difficult to make. In terms of how this particular space has been designed, there is a clear intent for an interaction between the cooks and clients to take place at the bar area. It is a space that provides the cooks the possibility of articulating what it is they do, and to project what

this means to them in some form. Someone with an outgoing personality who is very passionate about what they do and who has a good deal of experience, such as Tamara, has the opportunity to engage with the client in a significant way. In Tamara's case, the passion about the product and about the suppliers was a constant part of the discourse. In this way, it was a space where she was able to express her views about issues of food quality, taste, integrity and politics that were certainly different than would be the case in most cooking settings. Individual personality very much had a lot to do with how emancipatory this space could be. Christian, a young apprentice cook I interviewed who was working in the Wine Bistro, spoke of the chance that working there provided him to improve as a cook:

I have definitely been able to grow so far, especially working in front of the customers, who sit directly in front of you, watching you cook. You can see them enjoying their food and ask them why. You can change things to make customers happy that way; continue to grow and learn what customers want. (Christian, Wine Bistro Cook)

In contrast, Andrew, the Production Kitchen chef, who had worked in the Wine Bistro at one time, reflected on the difference between the production environment and the Wine Bistro line in this way:

Without the direct contact to the clients, the end user, there are not as many opportunities to say directly... I mean, I used to work at the Wine Bistro and there are great opportunities there to say, "Hey, this is Monforte Dairy's cheese and it is a great product." It is really rewarding to have that direct contact and people really love it, you know! The public's opinion seems to be that it is something they want now, which I think is a really important food trend, for sure. (Andrew, Production Kitchen Chef)

I also sensed this gap, or void, in terms of the connection with the end user, during the time I spent in the Museum kitchen. It was not that there was a lower standard of integrity

or cooking skill, but it is simply a reality that most people are going to feel much more purpose in what they do when they have someone to discuss that work with, who is also interested in that work.

The discussion of food-related issues is quite common among cooks who work in an environment where the food is taken as seriously as it is at *Soffritto*. Beyond the premises of the restaurant, however, these issues are not always on the top of people's minds. It can be difficult to incorporate them into discussions, or to relate with people about what it is one does for a living for some, while others found little difficulty in being able to fit the topic of food into other social settings. Comments from the questionnaire on this issue reflect these divergent realities:

Sometimes I find it difficult to have discussions with civilians. I find I use almost a different language, as well as feeling that the things I feel are important - most simply food and dining - aren't important to others. When I do find someone I can talk to about the things that matter to me, I love it!" (Wine Bistro Cook)

Food is a hot topic these days, so it is easy for people outside the industry to participate in discussions about it. I have such discussions occasionally. (Wine Bistro Cook)

I find it difficult to talk about local farmers, endangered fish, naturally raised meats, etc. People are so sheltered and sometimes ignorant of the issues and what is available. (Wine Bistro Cook)

It seems that the subject of food, its provenance, and the culinary profession in general seem to be of interest to many people nowadays. It does not seem difficult at all to draw the topic into many social settings. If anything, it seems difficult to avoid talking about it in some form. (Wine Bistro Cook)

Not often. I find that those who don't work in restaurants have trouble understanding my life. (Wine Bistro Cook)

The need to use a 'different language' to discuss a 'hot topic' with people who are 'sheltered and sometimes ignorant of the issues' tends to reflect in many ways the uneven impact of media outlets such as The Food Network, and the many programs it airs, as well as different periodicals and the internet, have had on how food is perceived and understood outside of the professional environment. For the cooks speaking here, their awareness of certain issues and products is directly related to the exposure they are getting to them in their professional setting. And in this setting, that form of information transfer reflects the ideologies of the local, artisanal and sustainable, which are predominant throughout the organization. This may or may not include nuanced understandings of different perspectives that shape the culinary networks and discourse communities (Bazerman, 1994; Lang and Heasman, 2004) the cooks belong to, but it will most certainly provide them with a depth of knowledge about local sources and products that the average person will not likely have. Access to, and inclusion in, any discourse community always makes it easier for those on the inside to converse with each other and the comprehension of issues of importance to those communities from outside members is likely to be less complete, or understood unless clearly articulated by them. Such articulation usually comes with some degree of bias and, in the case of alternative food movements, often selective framing of issues of food politics and aesthetic tastes. The counter-hegemonic discourse of the local food movement, vis-à-vis the global system of food production and distribution, within the space of the restaurants becomes the hegemonic discourse that is normalized within this environment. Thus, as a space of potential change, the Wine Bistro space in particular, it could be argued, is a space that has not been produced in its abstract form, or solely for the purposes of capital

accumulation. While this undoubtedly does happen, it happens as a form of what Gibson-Graham (1996: 262) would call “diverse economic and class processes” taking place underneath “the blanket of Capitalism.” The question that needs asking, Gibson-Graham tells us is, “not whether the market obscures differences, but how we want to characterize the differences under the blanket” (1996: 261)?

Within the different settings of the organization, aspects of difference surface in somewhat uneven ways. While the spaces are not produced solely for capital accumulation (as the product itself obviously requires a great deal of effort, time and cost to source and process), the clientele for which it is produced is very much mixed in terms of political ideologies and socio-economic classes they might belong to, and how they might interpret the message. Who knows, they may even hold shares in some of the publicly owned and franchised fast food restaurants that are so highly profitable. A strong draw for the public to the different restaurant’s of the organization in the first place is the reputation the organization has that is linked to the reputation and a certain celebrity element it has that is associated to its owner-chef. That notoriety is played out in terms of a branding of the organization that enables the tourist portion of the clientele in particular, but locals as well, to make an association with the organization that is based on the integrity of the way in which product is sourced and prepared – the connection to the sustainable and artisanal elements that have become increasingly important and popular in many restaurant circles. While these values can provide reduced levels of alienation for the worker in the form of a greater sense of where the product they use comes from, and how it has been grown or raised, this reduced alienation exists alongside

the organization's participation in an artisanal capitalist model that markets these values to different market sectors, particularly through the organization's web site.

One particular example of this is an association *Soffritto* recently established with a spring water supplier it has used for some time. While all menu items have traditionally named the particular supplier of a product being used on them (e.g., the mushroom forager, the cheese maker, the meat supplier), this water now bears the name of the organization (i.e., the name of the chef-proprietor) on the bottled water it serves when the source of this water is not from land the organization owns. The perception of this to the unknowing consumer is confusing. I was not able to get a completely clear answer as to why this approach had been adopted, rather than simply listing the source of the water (which is in small print on the back of the bottle), but the aspect of this strategy that truly fit into the artisanal capitalist model was that it was also being marketed, on the organization's web site, as a product that was available to be purchased at other local food retail outlets that incorporated similar philosophies about the local into their business model. This mix of some levels of resistance to the dominant food system with the incorporation of similar marketing techniques that have helped provide the global system with that dominant position can be read in different ways. One interpretation could be that as the organization grows, the need for it to remain visible and to realize the production capacity it needs to in order to remain financially strong requires its incorporation of multiple approaches that do not alienate potential clients. At the same time, there is the danger of the message becoming somewhat cloudy, which can also impact its external perception in unintended ways. If the water bottle bears the name of the organization but is not drawn from a land source directly owned by the organization,

does this not result in the creation of a fictional/fetishized commodity of its own? This does not take away from the integrity of the organization in many of the other areas that are being discussed here, but such contradictions do need to be noted.

The Preserve Walls – Concrete Labour as Symbolic Discourse

Well, there's a root cellar, fruit cellar down below,
 Watch you head now, and down you go.
 Maybe you're weary and you don't give a damn,
 I bet you never tasted her blackberry jam.
 Ah, she's got magic in her hands- you know what I mean,
 She puts the sun and rain in with her green beans.
 When I go down to see my grandma I gain a lot of weight,
 With her dear hands she gives me plate after plate.
 She cans the pickles, sweet & dill,
 She cans the songs of the whippoorwill,
 And the morning dew, and the evening moon,
 'N' I really got to go down to see her soon.
 'Cause these canned goods I buy at the store,
 They ain't got the summer in them anymore.
 Peaches in the jar, potatoes in the bin,
 Everybody come on in and taste a little of the summer,
 Grandma put it all in jars

(*Canned Goods*: Greg Brown, 1982 - Brown Street Music)

The discourses of local, seasonal and sustainable are also reflected in a symbolic way throughout the organization as much as they are verbally. These inaudible “utterances” (Voloshinov and Bakhtin in Morris, 1994) show their face in the form of *Canada's Seafood Guide* on endangered fish species that is placed at the table settings in the dining room of the restaurants. It is also expressed in the form of the preserves I had noted working on during the initial phase of my research. The preserving of fruits and vegetables when they are in season for use at later times of the year is something the organization takes a great deal of pride in. This work is featured as components on menu

items, as well as in the jars in which various fruits and vegetables are preserved. In the Wine Bistro dining room, as well as in the Production Kitchen Café (see Appendices B and D, pp. 191, 193 for locations within the respective dining areas), large walls with shelves stocked with an array of strikingly colourful preserve jars are central features of the ambience. The symbolic messages these walls convey are multi-layered. They reflect an obvious commitment to the use of food that is seasonal and as locally-sourced as possible, but also to another aspect of craft skills, those of preserving itself. The range of what gets preserved is quite extensive: different varieties of beets, green beans, cauliflower, wild mushrooms, eggplant, roasted peppers, tomato sauces, pears, peaches, plums, apricots, berries and currants are examples of what is featured on the preserve walls. The end result is rather visually striking and can be a true pleasure for the diner when consumed in a dish prepared by the cooks. This does not come without a great deal of effort, much of which is repetitive and mundane. This effort is not something that is overlooked by the workers, either on the cooking side or the service side of the operation. Exemplifying how this work, and its expression in the form of the preserve walls, penetrates the discourse of the *Soffritto* environment, Isabelle, a floor manager, put it this way:

You know, the preserve wall is really iconic in terms of our commitment to working with the farmers and people who are local. It is iconic not only for the customers but also for the staff. I'd say that one of our top priorities with the staff, and anybody who works on the floor, is just that they have some passion for the food side of things. Most of our staff on the floor are doing other things - they are going to school - but all of them feel a real commitment, and I would argue, a real pride in what we do here.
(Isabelle, Floor Manager)

The effort of making the preserves is not something that is simply taken for granted by the staff but it appears to actually bring people closer together in many ways, in terms of how they view their work environment. This perspective is not related only to craft skills but also to the network of farmers and artisanal producers who come together as a type of agricultural/culinary community. Their absence would entail the preserve walls being empty. Mandanaro (2008) noted that many farmers are still cautious about committing to entering into specific agreements to grow produce for restaurants largely because such agreements have often fallen apart in the past where the restaurant does not hold up its end of the bargain and the farmer loses sales. The opposite situation can also happen where a farmer has committed to growing something and then they do not produce, but for those who have made the commitment, there is often a sentiment that there is something very important about being able to share food in a social way. Some of the farmers within these networks feel there is still a need for farmers to better understand what it is chefs are looking for in order to make the local culinary networks even stronger. One of *Soffritto's* vegetable suppliers elaborates:

As a farmer, it is essential, if one is interested in supplying the culinary industry (as opposed to the processed food industry), to develop a thorough understanding and appreciation of what food can both be, and do. Producers need to think their growing process through to its end point, and the end is not a grain car headed for a high fructose corn syrup plant. Producers need a paradigm shift in their vision, if the local food initiative is to succeed. Farmers must switch their attitudes from one of a homogeneous group of raw material suppliers, to one of an individual intimately committed to the life enrichment business. Food nourishes not only the body's metabolic processes, but when produced properly, confers health benefits. But beyond that, through the social act of sitting down to a thoughtfully prepared meal, food enhances the quality of life, probably in direct proportion to the quality of ingredients.
(John, essay via email, 2008)

Whether the preserve walls are ‘iconic’ for the customers, as Isabelle noted above, is harder to determine - it is something that is difficult to quantify, only having interviewed staff members. It would seem obvious enough that some connection would be made between the concrete labour that had gone into the preparation of the preserves, as well as that of the farm worker who has grown and harvested the items within the jars, but a functioning dining room is not a place where a researcher just happens to intrude upon the clientele in search of possible feedback on their experience and perspective of the place (although having a substantial budget that allowed hanging out at the Wine Bistro cooking bar over a prolonged period might be useful in gaining insight to customer perceptions). Discussing this topic of client perception, Alison noted that:

We get a lot of regular clientele that are reading-up on what Antoine (the chef-proprietor) is doing in terms of being out at the farm now. They know what the situation is. And then we have a lot of people who have no idea about what is going on. All they know is that someone told them to come here, or they read about us on one of the in-flight magazines on the airplane when traveling here to Toronto. So they arrive with the outlook that, ‘we’re here, show us what you are all about.’
(Alison, Wine Bistro Server)

Even if the diner doesn’t make the link to the concrete labour, and/or the networks of small-scale suppliers that have been established in order to produce the preserves and the other menu items being served, there is still the verbal part of the message that will be communicated to them by the cooks on the open cooking line of the Wine Bistro, as well as the servers in the two dining rooms. The knowledge about the fine details of where the product has come from, and who has produced it, are deeply ingrained into the mindset of both the cooks and the service staff and the attention to this detail is to what I now turn.

Learning Socially

One of the bigger challenges in most forms of work is for the worker to find a level of stimulation and meaning that is ongoing and that will hold her or his interest over time. The restaurant industry is known for being particularly transient. Retaining staff for prolonged periods is typically an ongoing struggle for many operations. Reasons for this usually differ between the service staff and the cooking staff. Servers, for example, often have other interests or career goals outside of the industry and take on serving jobs with the intent that they will hold them over financially until they finish school, or get the solid acting or performance gig/contract they are seeking. For cooks, the transient nature of the work tends to be more related to building a portfolio of knowledge through exposure to the styles of different chefs. While cooking schools can provide a good foundation of basic knowledge, it is very much a profession where the nuances of the work can only be learned on the job. Along with the reality that most operations have relatively few positions to be promoted into in terms of upward mobility (e.g., becoming a sous-chef, or chef for the cook), the path many cooks take is to work in as many operations as possible early in their career before graduating to their first chef position. The intent is to develop an extensive culinary repertoire, as well as hopefully some reasonably strong administrative skills before taking on the challenges of an actual chef position.

Another common characteristic of many restaurant environments is that a division between the front-of-house (dining room staff) and the back-of-house (cooking and dish washing staff) typically exists. These differences relate a great deal to the ways in which the work itself is designed. Very often the cook who is passionate about her/his craft does

not understand why a server may not feel the same way. Time restrictions too often prevent strong communication between the two sides of the operation to help them better understand each other. Sharon Zukin (1995) provides a very interesting portrayal of restaurant workers in four New York City restaurants where the cultural and class divisions between the front- and back-of-the-house staff are much more prevalent (and typical of the industry more generally) than they seemed to be at *Soffritto*. In Zukin's study, the common division between the front and back is apparent with those who are 'prettier' and more 'visually appealing' tending to work in the dining room, while the kitchen staffs, apart from chefs, were largely made up of people who were immigrants and who had difficulty speaking English well:

With the exception of high-status chefs, the division of labor in restaurants along ethnic and national lines generally parallels the division into "front" and "back" regions with higher social status in the front and lower in the back. (Zukin, 1995: 157)

At *Soffritto*, these typical differences between cooks (interested in the craft and the origins of where the product come from) and the servers (often performative in nature and naturally comfortable in social settings) do exist, but the barriers one often finds between the two sides of the operation are virtually non-perceptible. There were always discussions between the two areas that were very open and genuinely cooperative, as this sentiment reflects:

Unlike many restaurants I have worked at, there is no apartheid between the front and the back of the house. Everybody spends time together and there is a great deal of respect for what everybody does.
(Isabelle, Dining Room Manager)

While the profession can be very transient, there are also operations that do retain their staff fairly well. Money is always an obvious pull for floor staff especially, who typically make much more per hour than do the cooking staff. Aside from the money, however, one of the primary ways of retaining staff is by providing an opportunity for them to grow in ways beyond the basic work processes required to do a job. *Soffritto*, for example, provides opportunities for both servers and cooks, often in the form of various wine seminars, visiting speakers, and external community events the restaurant is involved in. These events allow staff to spend time together in settings where their respective cooking and serving roles are linked to other aspects of the profession. The most common way this occurs is through various meetings they have related to product and menu knowledge. These meetings take the form of a daily menu review between the Wine Bistro or Museum chefs, and the service staff to discuss what new items have been added to the menu. These meetings cover information about the suppliers themselves, how a particular item was raised and harvested, or why a particular item may not be available (for example, warm weather during the first phase of my research meant that fresh Ontario lake fish – a common menu item - were not being caught at that time and were not available). These menu meetings,

...go through really in-depth details about what we are doing with our food, why we are doing it, and stories about the suppliers. For example, one supplier getting this reputation for stealing quinces from his neighbor's yard, so when they are poached, they are 'double-poached.' Just knowing those things, knowing why it is important to have soil-raised greens as opposed to hydroponic, or whatever, and just knowing the stories about these people, and having a real connection to it, makes it fun and exciting, and it certainly leaves a major impression on our guests. (Caroline, Assistant Sommelier)

The knowledge about the provenance of the food, and about the person who has supplied it, appear to provide an increased level of connection to the work for Caroline in a similar way that the connection to the suppliers did for Tamara. This in turn plays out in how it is passed on to the guests. The knowledge about the product becomes a predominant feature in the work of the servers – it provides them with a confidence about what they are serving that enables them to remain in control of what could otherwise be situations where clients might attempt to show them up, or possibly be degrading toward them in some way.. Caroline elaborated:

People are just astonished at the degree of knowledge of the product we are serving on the part of the staff across the board. People comment on it everyday. It is really, really a special aspect of what we do and it makes it fun to come to work everyday. (Caroline, Assistant Sommelier)

Another large part of the servers' tool kit is the knowledge they have about the wine they serve, and how it matches with particular menu items. The focus on the wine aspect of the operation is quite extensive with strong emphasis on providing the diner with the opportunity to have a complete gastronomic experience (i.e., being able to match interesting, and often obscure, wines with their food choices). This focus extends to the separate glass washing area in the Wine Bistro, where wine glasses are washed by hand in order to prevent them from being exposed to harsher chemicals in the regular dishwasher that would potentially leave the glasses with a chemical aftertaste and interfere with the flavour of the wine. Weekly wine seminars given by the restaurant's sommelier are one of the primary ways in which this information is communicated to the service staff, and to the cooking staff to a lesser extent, as they rarely have the free time to attend these sessions.

Every Tuesday our sommelier will sit us down and there is no formal style of how we will do things but we simply go through special things that are going to be on the list. We learn about different aspects of wine-making, from different regions; regional specialties, personalities, stories, all the things that make it fun and special and interesting. It really shows in the sales. (Caroline, Assistant Sommelier)

Alison, a Wine Bistro server, recounted the weekly wine seminars in this way:

It's an opportunity for all of us to sit down together and discuss, review and learn. There are quite a few things as well about the vinification process and viniculture...Brendan (the sommelier) does an incredible job! We have a rotating wine list all the time. People are always impressed with our wine list and I am so happy with what I have learned since I have been here. Sometimes customers come in and they don't recognize one varietal on our wine list, and I love that! I love that! We make it approachable, though – we don't use terms that people will get confused by. This is about enjoying wine; let's find something that matches your food properly and let's make it a good evening.
(Alison, Wine Bistro Server)

In addition to these seminars, where the ideas of the enjoyment and pleasure of experiencing gastronomy are central to the discussions, trips to farms and vineyards are also organized for the staff, which further helps in connecting the restaurant workers with the network of suppliers. Wine tasting dinners are also a regular occurrence, which usually have the wine-maker(s) from the featured vineyard(s) speaking about their growing methods and other nuances of their craft. Brendan, the sommelier of *Soffritto*, is largely the driving force behind these events, as Alison observed:

His networking is amazing, you know. I know he travels quite a bit and goes to the wine houses himself, and meets the wine-makers, and makes the contacts. As far as I know, those are personal/business contacts for him and I assume he invites them to visit us whenever they are in town.

Sennett (2006: 103-115, 185-205) talks of craftsmanship as something that can be of a physical nature, but also of an intellectual or mental nature; the ability to process

information in certain ways that might include multi-tasking (e.g., a pilot of a larger aircraft working the controls of the airplane), or the ability to write well,. The multiple ways in which information and knowledge are made available to the staff of the organization exemplifies how both the cooking and the service sides of the operation are considered with equal importance and respect – the environment is not only food-centric, with the service side of the operation an afterthought, which is common in many chef-run restaurant environments. While the concept of strong product knowledge is not uncommon to many operations within the industry, the degree to which the attention to details on an ongoing basis is a part of the everyday aspect of the *Soffritto* environment is not something that is as common. In this sense, there is a craftsmanship to the service as much as there is to the cooking. When both are provided an appropriate level of respect and stimulation, the nuanced qualities of the respective skills have the chance to be developed and expressed, ideally in a complimentary form. This requires a considerable amount of thought and commitment toward the process. In terms of a difference in a Lefebvrian sense of the everyday, the changing products provide the ability to produce the space in a way that has continuity to it, but which is also never stagnant – there is a continual dialogue taking place between producer and worker, and between worker and client. The concrete is always close by, as this is the force that provides the opportunity for a creative outlet, or expression, for different people within the organization.

This approach results in a rather stimulating environment in terms of new products and preparations to discover, learn about and serve for the cooks and servers, as well as a rather significant time and cost investment in terms of printing new menus

daily.⁸ Because matching wine suggestions are printed alongside each menu item, the process requires a good deal of coordination between the chefs, the sommelier and his assistants, and the people working in the offices who will print the menus. The approach is not one whose first concern is cutting corners in order to realize a better bottom line, but rather one that requires significant time going over small details in order to provide a package to the client that is comprehensive. Noting the importance of this combined effort in making the whole system function well, Caroline stated:

It really is a team environment and then because there is such support, we attract a very skilled staff. I mean, the demands on the staff are high - the level of knowledge and degree of professionalism that is required to work here is significant...The money is OK for the front-of-the-house but it is not what we would be making in a busy pub. There are a lot of other reasons why we are here: the integrity, the familial aspect, and friendships are really important. (Caroline, Assistant Sommelier)

Echoing those sentiments of team work, which also reflects why the typical division between the front- and back-of-house staff is essentially non-existent here, Alison added:

We work as a team. The front-of-house pools the tips and that is how we work together. This reduces competition by a huge amount. It instills in us that we are meant to work as a team; not just as a front of house team, but also with the kitchen in the back.
(Alison, Wine Bistro Server)

This team, or family feel, was always prevalent on some level during the time I spent conducting the research, yet it was also made easier for many of the staff when the structural changes were made with the opening of the Production Kitchen location in the

⁸ All menus are printed on recycled paper and water-based inks are used. This is an area the organization continually explores for more environmentally friendly options. As well, the urban location in which the organization exists has a fairly sophisticated waste removal system that incorporates compostable materials into the pick-up meaning that much of the food by-product created by the organization goes into a compost system rather than into land-fill sites as regular waste.

autumn of 2007. Prior to that change, space issues in the main kitchen part of the Wine Bistro location had been the cause of much stress and frustration for many.

Space, I Need Space!

During the first phase of my research, the Production location was not yet functional and, as previously noted, the majority of the food production done for the Museum location, and for all of the catering functions, took place in the main kitchen area of the Wine Bistro location (see Appendix B, p.191). Originally, when *Sofritto* had opened five years ago, only the Wine Bistro location existed. The year prior to my research, the Museum location had opened, which added a very different dynamic to the operation. Because of the Museum kitchen's limited production capacity in terms of the equipment it had, as well as the time limitations of having to vacate the building by six o'clock each day, the Museum restaurant's opening added a significant production burden on to the Wine Bistro premises. This seemed to be a cause of greater alienation for many people in both locations. For the cooks at the Museum, the limitations of their situation prevented them from doing what they may have wanted to do in terms of the complexity and finesse of their work. They had to rely on others to produce many of their core menu items, others who they might not know very well and this led to some misunderstandings between staff members. As the quotes below indicate, most cooks prefer to be able to prepare things from beginning to end. The following question was posed on the questionnaire and garnered some rather candid responses.

If much of the production is being done by someone else (for example, being done off site and delivered), does this impact your connection to the food you work with, positively or negatively?

Yes, negatively...it is tough to not see a thing through from fridge to plate.
(Wine Bistro Cook)

I think negatively. Why be in a kitchen if things are being made for you?
That's what it is all about. (Wine Bistro Cook)

It greatly impacts the morale and attitudes. The Museum gets all of their food delivered. Many cooks are envious of this and feel the cooks there are not doing enough. (Wine Bistro Cook)

Most definitely impacts the connection with the food – I would assume one loses touch with the raw products and the skills to transform them, perhaps manifesting in a lack of care with the product, and a lack of understanding of certain nuances. (Wine Bistro Cook)

The challenges of the expansion of the operation come out in these comments. The aspect of team work that Caroline and Alison had emphasized no longer seems as strong. Many of these issues, however, also seemed to be related to the fact that those working at the Wine Bistro location in the production area (which is the location source of these questionnaire quotes) had very little space to work in and after more than a year of this situation, most people were very much looking forward to the changes that the opening of the Production Kitchen would bring. These feelings are captured in questionnaire responses to how people felt about the space congestion issue.

Do you see the eventual introduction of the production kitchen as a benefit to your work environment? Please explain.

It will be like 'heaven on earth.' It will relieve the congestion that has been physically and mentally challenging at this location.
(Wine Bistro Cook)

Hell, yeah! It is so hard to work as a production kitchen, restaurant, and Wine Bistro in an already poorly designed kitchen. With that many people trying to do their own things, it fucking sucks! It literally feels like you have to climb over people (5 to 10) just to get to the stoves.
(Wine Bistro Cook)

It is a space issue - we don't have enough of it. And that in turn slows us down. All of the pastry production is done at this location, so some days it gets very hectic. (Wine Bistro Cook)

Yes! It will make everyone not go crazy. It will increase efficiency and quality overall. (Wine Bistro Cook)

When I returned to *Soffritto* to conduct interviews for the second phase of my research, the alleviation of the space issues did seem to have transformed many of the frustrations people had been feeling. The staff at the Wine Bistro now had much more room in which to operate, as did the staff that had moved to the Production Kitchen. Andrew, the Production Kitchen chef, commented on the comparative luxury the space he now worked in provided:

Certainly the space and facility here are top notch. There is plenty of space in terms of refrigeration, the freezer, and elbow room, and there is plenty of equipment, I'd say we are spoiled for equipment right now. The mandate of the GM is to, you know, build up the business. Now we are ready to grow where for the last year and a half we had grown to our carrying capacity and we were really stressed-out on all fronts.
(Andrew, Production Kitchen Chef)

The comments above related to having other people prepare things and deliver them, however, only became enhanced with these changes. More institutional separation was taking place while at the same time creating a saner environment in which to work.

During this second phase of the research, I asked Andrew about the issues of division that seemed to have existed between the Wine Bistro and Museum locations, and whether they had improved with the changes? His perspective very much reflects the difference

between an experienced cook who understands the scope of the operation, and someone whose immediate workspace and situation might not allow for such insight:

Yeah, well, I'd be lying if I didn't agree with you that there have been times where, and again, my statement is that it is a maturity thing too, just looking at the realities of the situation. Not everyone has been up to the Museum and stood in those people's shoes, and experienced things from a different perspective, and considered the reality of the situation... A lot of it comes down to the chef of the kitchen at any given time and what their preference is, and what is on their plate, and how much time they are going to be able to give to all that extra work that you can take on. Or, you can run with the existing system. I think there has been a bit of a balancing out, and I also think that since people are under a lot less stress here, that tension has died down a lot. (Andrew, Production Kitchen Chef)

Despite the high levels of stress and frustration the space issues had caused, however, very few people actually left the organization because of them. And some didn't to have a big problem with the prep being done by others in another location:

Production being done off site is of the highest quality (both of ingredients and skill level). Therefore, the final product being served is impacted in a positive way. (Wine Bistro Cook)

One could speculate as to why so few people had left with all of the space issues and stresses they had caused in the previous year. Perhaps it would not be much better in other places but a significant factor is the proprietor, Antoine, who is quite open and approachable, if not always on the premises on a regular basis. Ultimately the ways in which craft on both sides of the operation was nurtured came from his directives. Many staff noted this point in explaining why they were drawn to work there in the first place, or why they had stayed. Alison recalled that her experience in restaurants typically involved working with chefs who were on the temperamental side:

The close relationship that he has kept with the front of house staff; I feel he is very present and of course, he is very relaxed, and he is always very approachable. That was very important for me because most of the chefs I have worked with are not that way and that reflects a great deal about how the front and back of house are expected to work with one another, so that was wonderful. (Alison, Wine Bistro Server)

Tamara's previous cooking experiences had also involved working with people who were quite intense and not particularly easy to handle. Coming to *Soffritto* was a bit of a revelation for her:

In the restaurant I had been working at, if someone used the wrong olive oil there would be screaming and tears, it was the complete opposite of here. You know, you couldn't forget the right salt, or the right vinegar, or the right piece of china and it was, you know, like you were walking on egg shells all the time... When I came for my initial interview with Antoine, he was looking to hire me as a sous-chef. I came in to observe the service at night on my initial stage, it was just completely alien - you know, the respect he had for his staff and the way he interacted with them. He was under extreme stress and it was very busy. They ran out of a couple of things that night and it was the disorganization of a restaurant that had just opened, but he was completely unflappable and laughing. (Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

These comments highlight that not only is the operation unique in its approach in terms of providing intellectual and craft stimulation to the workers, but those elements can only be as successful as is the sincerity the message behind them. The fact that Antoine is a very well known chef is helpful in attracting customers to be sure, as well as prospective cooks, but his ability to convey his message in a way that carries legitimacy for the staff seems to be crucial for the success of the operation. This is perhaps especially the case for the service side of the operation, which, as noted above, can be an afterthought for many chef-owners who are overly self-indulgent. Providing the servers with the knowledge base *Soffritto* does clearly helps articulate the ideological view of the

organization to the customers, but it also plays a significant role in bringing dignity to a job that is often socially looked down upon. Alison noted the importance of feeling a dignity in the work she did, and not simply going through the motions:

Personally, I think that something happened in our industry where family was taken out of the equation and business, and profit, and greed was what it was replaced by... So in those environments that are not nurturing, they are degrading and workers who are spoken down to can lose their confidence... I think a lot of people still struggle with this dignity issue – I still do everyday. I am a server and at the end of the day I am a waitress and I have issues, personal issues, with dealing with that sometimes because it is a position that fits into a particular social class, and I have to remind myself about what is going on here, and why it is important to me, and why I have nothing to be ashamed of. (Alison, Wine Bistro Server)

And In the Absence of All This?

When asked how she would view her work if the relationships between local suppliers and the organization did not exist, Tamara replied:

It would drive me back to an office job – I wouldn't be cooking. I used to produce children's television but I think what attracts people to this business is a creative ideal, which you have to make for yourself. I mean, you have to work until you can get to a point where you can get that from somewhere.

I interpreted her comment that, without the creative outlet to apply the craft skills and high level of stimulation she got from doing this, there would be little point in remaining in a place that would simply be quite alienating and meaningless to her. But it is also rather difficult to “make it for yourself” if you don't have a mentor, or a place where you are enabled to develop the required skills to do so. One still needed to “get that (the creative outlet) from somewhere” and *Soffritto* was providing her with that opportunity. She is a dynamic and passionate cook who loved the interaction with the clientele but if

this were not available, might she still be “getting that” stimulation in the same way? A magazine article featuring Tamara in the winter of 2007 was somewhat revealing in this sense, as well as in the sense of how the profession, despite many women working in the *Soffritto* kitchens, is still very much dominated by men:

This is a world where women are still very much in the minority, a world of immense – and necessary – egos, volatile artists, workaholic junkies, relentless competition, and drama. And we are addicts – particularly for the adulation. For anyone who has ever hosted a dinner party, imagine one multiplied by hundreds of guests a night. No one is ever more popular than the cook! (www.edibletoronto.com, Winter, 2007)

The Production Kitchen chef, Andrew, put it this way when talking about the importance of such connections to what he does, and to the suppliers he uses:

As far as how does that connect back into the kitchen, I think it is a huge focus here. It starts with the suppliers, and making those networks, and it starts also with the staff and trying to get them to take a moment and appreciate what they have in front of them. And that is probably the part that still has to be developed in some regards, with the new people coming in and stuff, and making them aware of that connection.
(Andrew, Production Kitchen Chef)

Without those products and the establishment of the network of suppliers and relationships they are a part of, the operation would simply be just another restaurant environment for Tamara and Andrew. But why are these particular local sources so important for them and many other workers? It might be argued that the client wouldn't be able to tell the difference between something made from naturally-raised products and something that was made from an industrially-raised item. It would certainly be cheaper for the most part to source items from fewer suppliers than the organization has to use presently.

To answer such questions, the importance of the incorporation of craft skills into the work experience is something that can't be overstated. Sennett (2006: 203) defines craftsmanship as "doing something for the sake of doing it." By this, he meant that the point was not necessarily an expectation of some kind of reward for what was being done, but more that there is an intrinsic desire for many people to feel that what they do has a concrete meaning that can't be explained by some search for profit alone. Sennett also noted that the skills of the craftsperson, the monopolizable skills, always have the potential to be used in competitive and exclusionary ways, which can be counterproductive. The best example of such exclusions are the entrenched expectations that many kitchens operate from that young cooks should be grateful for being able to enter certain kitchens. If they are not working completely for free, many are paid only for a certain number of hours (e.g., forty hours of pay for sixty plus hours of work is not uncommon). This problem however, for Sennett, could be mitigated by the aspect of craftsmanship that is missing from flexible capitalist environments, that of a commitment to the organization and the profession or industry (of which the preserves are one significant symbol at *Soffritto*). Such a commitment, however, still needs to be accompanied by a non-bullying material subsistence for the worker, which is very much the case in the *Soffritto* environment.

Sennett (2006: 104-119) also writes of the dual worlds of the traditional workplace setting, where the worker is able to create a personal life narrative based largely on the fact that they know they would remain with a particular organization over a long period of their professional life, and the workplace of the 'flexible' organization, where long-term commitment on the part of the worker has much less importance than

the immediate short-term potential they bring to the organization. Craftsmanship, according to Sennett, entails the worker being given enough time to learn her/his craft in order to become expert in it. The elimination of craftsmanship, as Marx, Braverman and Harvey noted, often results in the elimination of monopolizable skills on the part of the worker. The flexible organization tends to discourage craft knowledge gained over long periods of commitment on the part of the worker in favour of the potential the worker brings with them for being self-driven and ideas-oriented. *Soffritto* seems to be something of a middle ground between these two approaches. The craft is certainly a core element of the work experience, as noted, but the workers are also required to have intellectual and creative flexibility with new menu items being added daily, as well as with the structural changes that have taken place over the past year and a half with the growth of the organization. A fragmentation from the original space has taken place which has resulted in cooks working at scales larger than many have previously been exposed to. Adjusting to these changes has been a major aspect of the work reality for many people over this period.

The organization is also fortunate in the sense that many experienced cooks and servers work for it. One of the benefits of having skilled people on staff, and the room available for them to work, is that these skills can be potentially shared and transferred. For example, *Soffritto* recently started purchasing large whole animal carcasses which they butcher themselves and turn into various meat preparations for their menu items. In purchasing a whole animal, costs incurred on the labour side of the food preparation can be balanced to some extent by the lower cost of purchasing the whole animal. This

approach has gradually been incorporated over the years in a more comprehensive way and people with specific butchery skills are quite valuable with this kind of approach.

One such example is a young French chef, Olivier, who has a specialty in charcuterie (the making of patés, terrines, sausages, rillettes, and head cheese, for example) and butchery, and who began working at the Wine Bar location in the past year. As Tamara was already incorporating a great deal of these kinds of items in her menu preparations, and as she had a strong passion for these skills, the addition to the staff of someone who was able to focus on them, and who could train others, was a great help. Olivier's skills, along with another cook who also had extensive butchery knowledge, made the purchasing of the larger animal carcasses a more regular part of the process. This purchasing method also makes it much easier for the small-scale farmer to supply restaurants of this kind, and at the same time, highlights one of the difficulties small-scale suppliers face when trying to sell to restaurants:

A lot of small-scale farmers with livestock have clients who only want to buy prime cuts and it doesn't work out very well for them to do that because they get stuck with all the off cuts. So they are very happy when someone like us wants to buy the whole animal.
(Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

If the skill level is available to process these items, it allows the cook to become creative in how they might be able to incorporate parts of an animal they wouldn't normally use into new dishes that will be created. Such creativity leads to an increased form of dynamism in the work itself, where the practitioner is presented with various options, and where things are rarely simply locked-in to a formulaic routine. Also, because of the shift to purchasing these whole, naturally-raised animals, the cook is more likely to become aware of the provenance of the product itself, as this is another aspect of acquiring the

animals in the first place. Things are less routinized and require skills that are not used or practiced in most kitchens in an extensive way. That approach is a big attraction to many of the cooks who come to work for the organization, as Tamara noted:

I think it is one of the biggest things that draws people to work here and I am surprised often by how much they expect, or the ideal they have in their head about what happens here, which is nice. I mean, often that is definitely what we are striving for, and I hope we fulfill their desire for that most of the time...From our bread, to our bacon, to our preserves, we make everything ourselves... When you are in that environment you forget that is actually not common in other places. Sometimes I'm startled by big suppliers that approach us and don't understand why we are not interested in buying their product. (Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

The Apprenticeship Program

The experienced kitchen staff at *Soffritto* is also quite integral to making the apprenticeship program that the organization has for young cooks work well. This program provides young cooks the opportunity to be exposed to things they are not likely to see in many restaurant environments, as well as the chance to work on a farm for part of their three year training period. The butchery experience of some Wine Bistro staff, for example, was quite invaluable in demonstrating to younger cooks how the large cuts from animal carcasses can be broken down into usable portion sizes:

They (the cooks) all stay late after work and watch the cow being broken down (butchered) on their own time. It is just a different attitude, you know. The cow came in quarters and one of the cooks had previously worked in a butcher shop and he was doing the instructional part of the process. He knew how to do it and it is nice that we have people here with the knowledge base to show other people. It is the best way for the apprentices to practice. (Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

An interesting contrast between what is 'unique' for a North American environment to what is rather 'normal' in a European setting (which also captures the exposure Alice

Waters got to food in France that she hadn't had in the United States) is captured by Olivier in a recent newspaper article on the increased prevalence of charcuterie items on restaurant menus:

She (Tamara) asked if he would like a whole pig each week to work with. 'I said, "Yes, no problem," and then every week after that, I've had a whole pig' ... 'Chefs do not make charcuterie in France,' Olivier said. 'It is a full-time job, like making bread... There are more opportunities for me here,' he shrugs. 'In France, a lot of people know how to make charcuterie.' (Cuthbert, 2008)

The craft of charcuterie is treated in the press as something rather exotic and as stated earlier, much of this exoticism has to do with the way in which many immigrant foods were marginalized in North America in the early part of the twentieth century. The attention such skills currently receive in the food media make it more or less *de rigueur* for any serious restaurant to be featuring such products that are made in-house. Charcuterie is treated as a cultural art form that raises the establishment to another level in the eyes of some of the dining public. And the quality of these products does deserve fair recognition. Lefebvre, however, would have argued that with this kind of recognition comes the potential for another type of fetishization that needed to be toned down so that all forms of quality might be considered in a useful, pleasureable and positive, yet non-hierarchical ways.

For Andrew, the importance of skill and craft echoes the perspective of Braverman with respect to the importance of skills for the worker:

It is the pre-prepared foods; that is the biggest, best example of how that (de-skilling) can infiltrate the cooking industry. People don't butcher a side of a cow now, they get everything in smaller cuts, or on some levels they get everything portioned, and that is the real risk of these skills disappearing over time. That is something that we have really worked

towards going in the opposite direction of, maintaining the traditions, making sure that knowledge is passed on, and I think it is even becoming more valuable because less and less people have it.

On my last visit to *Soffritto*, in the summer of 2008, the Production Kitchen was in full swing and Olivier had moved from the Wine Bistro location to the Production space and his skills were being utilized to their full potential. A section of the kitchen had been designated to him (see Charcuterie/Butchery section of Appendix D, p. 193). Here, he was training an apprentice who worked with him exclusively. They were producing the aforementioned terrines, patés, head cheese, sausages and other items; not only for the new café that had opened at the Production Kitchen site, but also for the other restaurants. Here was an interesting marriage of someone with a particular skill being given the opportunity to apply it in an environment that saw it as a value, both in craft terms, but also in how it fit with the organization's overall philosophy, as Antoine explains:

Olivier gets to take what he needs for charcuterie, then the Wine Bistro and the Museum inherit the rest. We achieve this critical mass of working with whole animals, which is economically viable and also feeds into a philosophy of no waste. (Antoine, *Soffritto* proprietor in Cuthbert, 2008)

If, as Marx, and later Harvey, argued, the labour process was a battleground of sorts where it is in the interest of the capitalist owner to strip the labourer of monopolizable skills in order to be able to hire labour much more cheaply, *Soffritto* is an environment that would appear to be operating in opposition to that philosophy. We have here something that is much more a reflection of the craftsmanship ideas that Sennett notes are rarer and rarer within the workplace. The environment is promoting the development of skill sets, rather than the elimination of them, as Braverman had predicted would happen to the labour process with technological advances. This does not, however, deflate

Braverman's central argument that deskilling would occur in many parts of the workplace, as it clearly has in many restaurant environments (as the quote from Alex above on deskilling observed). *Soffritto* is a rare example of an organization that actually places values in skill, which is, of course, part of the reason for its difference.

Such an approach provides the worker with the opportunity to begin to develop some form of a perhaps more concrete life/career narrative based on the fact that they are provided time to develop into a craftsperson. How they might be able to use those skills in the future is reliant on there being a demand for them, or for them creating such a demand. If one has the resources, opening their own operation is a possibility. Not everyone will have that option, however. For those who do not, finding as stimulating an environment in the future could be a challenge. One of the ironies of working in an environment such as *Soffritto* is that for all that it provides the worker it may be difficult to replicate. Tamara once more captured this idea:

There is an expectation (on the part of the cooks) of experiencing the craft and the art of this, which is often not the case. You have to work many years before it is the case and often you have to have your own restaurant before you can do that. I think that, for me, that creative sensibility is entwined in all of this. It is not just about creating food, it is about everything. It is about being involved with all these things, you know, having a dynamic job and all of that, and I think...who knows where I'd be if I hadn't ended up in this restaurant. (Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

Or where some of the other cooks might be, or might end up. The intersection of where the ideals of being able to learn and practice a craft come up against the realities of other external forces that might resist or limit such ambitions is one that would be difficult for anyone to have to face. Few people want to feel like they are regressing in terms of their personal or professional growth and many responses on the questionnaire asking about

what people hoped to be doing in their careers in the future very much encompassed aspects of being able to ply their craft on their own terms.

What career goals do you have with respect to cooking? How do you see working here helping in achieving those goals?

Moving to the countryside, market gardening/small-scale farming and opening a small 'table d'hôte,' or bed and breakfast with great dinners! (Wine Bistro Cook)

I want to have a restaurant of my own. I want to learn many aspects of cooking (e.g., bread and pastry) and *Soffritto* offers room to move around different departments. (Wine Bistro Cook)

I see myself having some sort of small establishment, in a small town where people just want good food prepared with care, and from the growers surrounding the town. (Wine Bistro Cook)

I hope to have a food store; learning how to make items from scratch, being exposed to great product to use in cooking; making a connection with people who have the same thoughts. (Wine Bistro Cook)

The predominance of the ideal of owning something in the country in an idyllic setting is very much reflective of the ideals of the local supplier/practitioner relationship that exists within the *Soffritto* environment. It highlights the degree to which that approach has seeped down into the mindset of many of the staff members, or perhaps attracted them to work there in the first place. The connection to nature and the rural setting also evokes an awareness of the inclusion of nature alongside economic relations, an aspect that political ecology encompasses. Such environments would naturally be reliant upon local networks of suppliers and other foodservice professionals. The sharing of local knowledges would likely be a central aspect of the types of relationships developed in such settings. ANT, as noted in chapter two, incorporates these types of relationships and notes how they are problematized within a particular network itself,

rather than as necessarily a globally influenced idea. The strength of such networks tend to be related to their length (Murdoch, 1995). Cooks coming from an urban setting would likely have their own networks already on some level, while being able to build upon them at the local level where knowledges from both environs can be exchanged. What happens at the local level, however, as Goertzen (2003) notes, is rarely completely separated from external political and corporate forces of some type or another. The raw milk issue in Ontario is an example of a local issue being impacted by a provincial government regulating body. In the case of Goertzen's work, the local was being impacted by corporate forces trying to penetrate a small town to set up industrial hog farming plants in order to bring a renewed economic vitality to the area, or so it was argued.

Of interest in the responses above about future career possibilities is that none of them directly consider external institutions, or the 'translocal relations of ruling' (Smith, 1999; 2005) that are so much a part of the development and shaping of the dominant global agro-industrialized food system, and to which they adamantly do not want to be reliant upon, or a part of. There is most likely an intrinsic understanding of those relations hidden within the replies but it does not come out as blatantly as the earlier comment about the need to consider naturally-raised beef as something completely different than its industrially-raised counterpart. There is often a romanticized association with the rural, especially amongst people who have been a part of busy and often chaotic urban settings that makes it easy to overlook some of those external issues that may still play out in some rural settings. As well, where a rural setting is located will very much impact how accessible certain products may be. In Ontario, for example, the Niagara region has

developed from a well known wine region into a region with a strong local food culture over the past several years. This trend is also beginning to play out in the Prince Edward County area of the province, as well as in the Chelsea and Wakefield areas of west Quebec, close to Ottawa. These different culinary geographies are providing opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs in this field and yet over time, with increased growth, the feel of those places may also become more crowded than was desired pushing the movement into ever new territories.

Political Passions and Other Challenges

Only through the interviews I conducted during the second phase of the research did I become aware of some divergent views, or priorities, among different staff members related to some issues of food politics. Much of this divergence seems to have been related to the different purchasing practices the Wine Bistro had for the menu items it produced, as opposed to the food that was cooked for staff meals. Only when the Production Kitchen became functional and Tamara took over the duties of cooking staff meals at the Wine Bistro did these issues come to the surface in a significant way.

Tamara explained the situation by elaborating on how she first began to become aware of issues related to food ethics and food politics:

Over time there were a few books that were turning points. One was called *Pig Perfect*, by Peter Kaminsky. It is about industrial hog farming in the U. S., and the loss of the craft of curing meats, and they go to Spain and examine similar industries there. What the industrial hog farming approach has done has become a big catalyst for me for doing some of my own research into some of these ideas, and certainly in this restaurant, although it took a few months to succeed, it resulted in us stopping from buying factory-farmed meats. Now I can say that 100 percent across the board, we don't buy any in this restaurant. (Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

The emphasis placed on the importance of sustainable farming practices in this case is addressing the issue of the use of animal growth hormones and antibiotics that are a common feature in CAFO-type, factory animal farms, as well as the type of abbatoir the animal is brought to for slaughter, the distance it has to travel to get there, and the general conditions by which it has lived its life. In Polanyian terms, Tamara's stance is reflective of a double-movement that is based on a desire for quality that is encompassing compassion in terms of animal rights, while rejecting the fetishized product about which she is not sure who produced it, or how it was treated. The factory-produced item, as has been outlined previously, is a food product that has been commodified through the process of how industrial production leads to the disembedding of the produced good from the social relations that produce it. The "translocal relations of power" and structures beyond the organization that shape the global food system are recognized here in some way as catalysts for change. Not only was Tamara insistent on knowing the origins of the product being purchased by the restaurant she was running, however, she was equally insistent that all staff should be able to experience that food as part of their staff meals. She continued:

I had never been involved in staff meal until the kitchens were divided. That was always someone else's department and there was a lot of chafing at times between me and the people that made staff meal because I felt that the hypocrisy of buying this product for staff meals that we wouldn't serve to customers really offensive, and I got into a lot of polite battles that went on for months actually. And again, the fact that we are buying all this beautiful produce from local farmers for extremely reasonable prices, but we were still buying bulk items from California that actually cost more, and the fact that the so called 'cheaper stuff' wasn't actually cheaper, really bothered me. (Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

A Lefebvrian interpretation of this view would see these sentiments as the very alienations that have been created by humans as the motivators for emancipatory possibilities through a search for difference. Tamara had exhibited a great deal of agency in implementing the changes she did. She was applying her knowledge of the food supply network she had to draw upon, linked very closely with ecological and ethical issues of food politics, and making a significant change to the everyday experience of the staff. She wasn't passively accepting the status quo but rather continually questioning and challenging it in ways that made some kind of consistent sense to her. If the discursive message she was conveying to the customer sitting across from her in the Wine Bistro was to hold sway, and have legitimacy, it had to be as true for the workers as it was for the client:

If you buy a whole pig for \$2/lb, you can't tell me that buying these nasty sausages for \$2/lb makes any sense. So there were a lot of battles about that and I always hated the question from staff when they would ask where the meat was from, because there is a time of enlightenment when we are talking about meat. You know, what is factory farming? Or, what is the difference between a cow raised in confinement and one raised naturally? What does that mean? When the staff would ask, "Where is this from?" I would just avoid the question.

The 'enlightenment' element highlights the clear recognition of the industrial forces the organization fights to resist by purchasing locally and naturally. By extending the process to the experience of the workers, it seemed to have only strengthened the closeness of some of the staff in terms of being part of an environment that was not simply tolerant of an unquestioning acceptance of the everyday, but very much active in shaping it, and trying to make it fit with a certain set of beliefs that were not based on apathy and

passivity, but rather on taking the time to make a difference of some kind for everybody who worked there.

Different people and personalities show their passions and commitments to issues in different ways, of course. Tamara was a fairly strong personality who expressed her desire for integrity in more direct ways than others within the organization with the same values might. This is not about judging one approach as superior to another, but simply an attempt to capture one outcome of the structural changes that had taken place, and to which I was exposed. The staff did appear to be quite positive toward the staff meal change, however:

It (staff meal) is a big issue because of, well, we work in a place that is known for its quality of food and service, and we personally appreciate that, and we would like to be able to eat food for staff meals that is of the base standard. It is a big issue because we would like to sit down and experience the food together as a 'family.' A part of closer relationships is sitting down and eating together, and that hasn't always been the case... The quality of the staff meal has definitely improved since that change happened. What we are offered comes from the same suppliers, the same sources that our clients are given and we are very, very happy about that (big laugh)! (Alison, Wine Bistro Server)

Prior to the opening of the Production Kitchen, when there were so many bodies and so much congestion at the Wine Bar location, time and space limitations were in no way as conducive to considering the staff meal in the depth Tamara was now able to do so, with fewer bodies to cook for, and more room in which to prepare things. The staff meals I had while at the different locations were always quite good.

And What Now?

The general approach taken toward cooking by the organization is largely based on classic French methods and techniques, with various contemporary takes on certain preparations. Rich, long-cooked stocks, for example, are a required element of making soups and sauces. The bones rendered from the butchery are used for this purpose. Similarly, bones and shells from fish and seafood will be used for fish stocks and sauces. Long, slow cooking of meats that are tougher cuts are commonplace. The curing and smoking of both meats and fishes are also very common. Slow cooking and then smoking the pork shoulder for pulled pork is one example. The brining and then the smoking of the pork belly for bacon is another. Items such as pastrami and salt-cured meats for sandwiches and the charcuterie plates are also common. The breads for the whole operation, as well as for the retail element of the Production Kitchen Café are all baked at the Production Kitchen. When I asked Tamara what her approach to cooking was, she replied:

I just want to make things that are really delicious...I want people to experience the love that goes into the food we make, and the love our growers put into the food that they bring us. That is a lot more important to me than being impressive, or cerebral, or complex.
(Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

I found this statement intriguing as it appears to almost contradict the actual complexities involved in producing something that would be so memorably tasty. The comment seems to infer that cerebral work is to be avoided in the cooking process, but this is in fact one of the most important qualities of a strong chef. I think what Tamara was getting at was that for her, it is not about pretense and overly tampered-with food that was being manipulated by too many hands, but rather about allowing the components and flavours

of the food to make the statement of quality. For this to happen, however, several things need to come together. The quality of the product obviously has to be very good, but the execution on the part of the cook needs to be of an equally high level. It is here that the years of learning the craft have the opportunity to be expressed in the final product. This can come in a very subtle form but it will usually entail an amalgam of various components of experience and instinct meshing in some way. In his book *Heat*, Bill Buford recalls sharing a meal of grouse with British chef, Marco Pierre White.

Explaining why he is not overly impressed with what he has eaten, White states:

It's all about good eating. Good smells and good eating - very straightforward, very English. Nothing fancy, except that *it's very hard to get the simple things right*. What do I want? The pure taste of grouse. Not too strong. I want the gamey flavour without its being overpowering: I want to taste it here, in the back of my palate, a secondary flavour, evocative of the moors...Nature is the artist.
(White, in Buford, 2006: 100; italics added)

In normal life, Buford observes, “simplicity” is synonymous with “easy to do,” but when a chef uses the word, it means it “takes a lifetime to learn.” This is what I interpreted Tamara saying when she spoke of not being overly “cerebral” or “complex.”

The way the *Soffritto* organization is set up currently is in many ways the polar opposite of the way *Allium* functioned twenty years earlier, while still retaining the same attention to the quality of the final product. That is, where everything was prepared on a daily basis by only the three cooks and the dish washers working in the *Allium* kitchen, those tasks have been much more divided amongst the various components of the *Soffritto* operation. There is a much greater division of labour. This requires a different understanding of the cooking process on the part of the cook than would be the case in many restaurants, as Tamara explained:

In the past, sometimes, it has been a struggle for people to get used to the style of the Wine Bistro. It is very different creating a dish in your imagination, or in a restaurant, than it is here because of the style of service, the limitations of cost, the limitations of ingredients. You know, it is a very different way of thinking. The finesse all has to be done in the prep, not in the finish. It is completely backwards from most restaurants. A lot of cooks weren't very good at it, they really struggled with it. (Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

What the cooks were struggling with was essentially the disconnection they felt between the production process they had very little to do with, and the finishing of the final items at either the Wine Bistro or the Museum. This is particularly problematic for younger cooks who might come into the situation expecting to partake in both processes. There is a big difference between the often long, slow cooking methods *Soffritto* uses, and that of cooking everything to order as is the case in most restaurant environments (as in the Buford quote from chapter three recollecting his experience on the grill station at *Babbo*, p. 162). This difference wouldn't matter much to the dispassionate cook but as noted earlier, it is important to most people to feel that they are actively involved in as much of the process as possible. An interesting contradiction of the Wine Bistro space is that it might be quite emancipatory for someone in control of the production process, like Tamara was, while being simultaneously alienating for others, as a line cook working on the Wine Bistro expressed in a questionnaire answer:

Yes, it even feels that way in the Wine Bistro. As a line cook, all you do is scoop and serve (with a smile)! There is a huge disconnect that is so frustrating when you want to learn. This is a large reason for my decision to move on. I don't feel negatively toward the organization, it's just not for me anymore – it is what it is. (Wine Bistro Cook)

In terms of reduced levels of alienation, it becomes apparent how important being involved in the process from beginning to end is for many people, especially younger

cooks who are very eager to learn as much as they can. The feeling of being held back, or not knowing how something is prepared, is somewhat unsettling for many and it is a significant challenge for the chefs within the organization to be able to satisfy everyone's desires. Tamara had addressed this issue by changing the schedules of the line cooks in the Wine Bistro so they all had one day of production prep where they could get exposure to things like soup making and butchery practice, which seemed to have a positive impact:

With the prep shift, which is on Friday...I get to do more actual cooking. I get to make stews, or soups. I have a good deal of free reign, after running things by Tamara first, to be sure the idea fits with the overall style of the place. (Christian, Wine Bistro Line Cook)

Soffritto has been open for just under five years and over this period, the proprietor has increasingly moved away from being on the premises on a full-time basis. This presents interesting challenges and possibilities for the operation due to his notoriety within the restaurant industry and in particular the association of his name with the operation. Living a fair distance outside of the city where he is developing a farm where he has begun to grow some produce and raise animals that are being used by the kitchens, he has in many ways handed over the day-to-day responsibilities and opportunities of running the various kitchens to chefs like Tamara and Andrew, as well as others who run the Museum restaurant, and the catering and pastry departments. As the organization has grown, not only have different physical elements been added, but with those, the nature of the chef's position also has evolved to more of an administrative/facilitator role, rather than one of being a hands-on cook, day-in and day-out. After interviewing Tamara in December, I wondered if the distancing from the cooking that had occurred with the

structural changes was one reason she had become so involved in the staff meal preparations. Noting how the structural changes had impacted her work she stated that:

I think on a personal level, it is a lot more work for me. There were tasks that were shared more amongst the senior staff before and it was really nice that there was always someone to give a hand, even if it was something as simple as doing a produce order... My job continues to move away from cooking, which is really hard for me. I am getting better at it...I think, you know, at any time it is difficult to step away.
(Tamara, Wine Bistro Chef)

In a similar vein, the increased space and efficiency that the Production Kitchen provided was not only intended to address the space issue problem, but to also help grow the scale of the operation. When I spoke with Andrew in December, he was not doing a great deal of cooking, and this is still the case:

Yes, I am definitely doing more administrative work. I am still hoping that over time there will be more of a balanced shift into the kitchen. Today I often think I will find my way into the kitchen but in fact there is a lot of stuff to address... You define yourself as a cook. I guess a chef is all those things but sometimes I wouldn't mind going back to being a cook, but this is a great opportunity and it is a massive learning curve, and there is always something more to learn. (Andrew, Production Kitchen Chef)

The *Café* adjacent to the Production Kitchen opened in the spring of 2008 and, along with the general production and the catering business, more bodies are required to handle the increased volume. When I visited the kitchen recently, which is indeed a very nice space, there were already some issues of space constraints surfacing once more for some people. The increased number of bodies required to service the *Café* business, along with the catering preparations (I counted seventeen cooks and dishwashers one day, but things were still functioning very well), seemed to have reduced what had initially been a very comfortable situation. It was much better, however, than it had been when

everything was being done out of the Wine Bistro location and the attention to detail and quality had not appeared to have diminished in any way. Standing at one of the prep tables preparing some wild mushrooms to be sautéed for a ragout, a dark chicken stock was reducing behind me in one of the tilt fryers and the aroma brought me back to the days of *Allium* when the stocks were reducing on the stove in much smaller quantities. The aroma of the stock was exactly the same as it was when I worked in the *Allium* kitchen and it was clear that the stocks were still being made in the same way, with the same attention, as were the streudels and all of the other items being produced. The scope and range of what was being produced in this kitchen also far surpassed what we were able to do at *Allium*. I wondered how the young cooks who do not have much contact with the chef-owner, Antoine, were interpreting this environment. Did the depth of what was happening have the connection with them that it seems to have had for people who have been working with the organization for longer periods, and who know Antoine much more than they do? The growth of the organization seemed to be creating an inevitable challenge, not with respect to the quality of the product, but with the closeness and connection of the people working within the organization. Speaking to this, Andrew commented:

You know, I think it almost comes down to the individual. Some people have reacted (to the structural changes) like it is kind of us and them, where nobody has come over (to the Production Kitchen) to visit, but I don't personally feel that way. I think it is very much a team and for the most part, I think that is still the attitude. There is no doubt about a disconnection. There are many people who have not seen this kitchen yet, from within the company, and you know, that alone is a reality.
(Andrew, Production Kitchen Chef)

From the service side, Caroline commented that the changes had indeed been significant and yet the overall cohesion was still pretty strong:

It grew from a small company into having a fine dining area, and then on to the Museum, and then major catering contracts, and then the production kitchen. That took place over about a year and a half. It required demands on staff to learn how to do things differently in terms of having a production kitchen and things like that. Very few places engage in that kind of expansion gracefully without compromising their values and it is really difficult to have made that leap logistically using really small producers, but it has worked really, really well. There have been bumps along the way but nothing too extreme.

(Caroline, Assistant Sommelier)

I quietly pondered the skill levels of these senior cooks. Did they realize how rare it is to have so much talent in one kitchen? How rare it is to be able to work with this kind of product? How rare it is for so many people to taste real food prepared from all natural methods? Likely they did but as Tamara had noted, “When you are in this environment you forget that it is actually not common in other places.”

Conclusion

This chapter has described the *Soffritto* organization at a particular point in its evolution. I gained access to conduct research in the various spaces that make up the organization at a time when it was going through a significant period of structural change, which provided a unique opportunity to observe a professional restaurant environment that applies a philosophy of locality and sustainability in the way it sources the product it works with in several different settings and contexts. This exposure allowed me to consider the professional cooking process through multiple lenses.

A strong commitment on the part of the organization to developing staff skills and knowledge provides a rather stimulating environment in which to work

for many people. This approach was in many ways responsible for enabling a fairly successful period of expansion with relatively minimal staff upheaval, as loyalty to the organization is quite strong across the different spaces and locations that it occupies. Such expansion has also fragmented to some degree a family feel that was once much more intimate and which now has spawned offspring with different families forming different dynamics, in different locations – families who come together infrequently, if at all in some cases. The organization has been able to grow significantly while still retaining the quality of the product it has become known for. As time passes, it will be interesting to see how those working for the organization connect to and with it, particularly as the capitalist owner is increasingly not a part of the everyday aspects of the organization in a physical sense. Harvey noted, however, that:

For Marx, the impoverishment of the labourer under capitalism had as much if not more to do with the degradation forced upon the worker in the labour process, than with low wages and high rates of exploitation.
(1982: 108)

Soffritto's commitment to the development of skills and knowledge of its employees is a central strength of the organization that prevents degradation from being forced upon the worker. Wages paid to the employees are fair, if not exceptionally high, especially for young cooks. Even though the capitalist owner is no longer around as much as he once was, his presence is well represented by a loyal staff who clearly impart the values toward the cooking process, and the idea of finding pleasure in well prepared food, that he has instilled upon them. Nothing is without complexity and contradiction and the fact that the organization is an example of a type of resistance to certain global forces on the one hand, while a

participant in what I have called artisanal capitalism on the other hand is a reflection of such complexities. Gibson-Graham (1996: 262) noted that it was important to lift the blanket of Capitalism to find out what was happening underneath it. At *Soffritto*, one type of capitalism is being played out which incorporates a sense of difference and alternative while not being so radical as to alienate a client base that is mixed in terms of its own political views and reading of the organization.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to examine aspects of food politics through the intersection of local alternative food movements and a professional restaurant that applies a philosophy of social responsibility with respect to the product it purchases, as well as a high level of integrity in the cooking process itself. The intent of using a restaurant setting for this work was to bring awareness in the academic setting to an area that has been historically under researched.

Professional restaurant kitchens have had increasing influence on dietary patterns and food trends in North America and other locations over the past quarter century, not least because of the fact that more and more people continue to eat their food away from the home environment. Restaurants of all types, from the franchised fast food chain outlets to more intimate operations connected to a local food movement or system are inevitably linked to issues of food politics and ethics on some level. That so few operations address issues of food fetishization directly is not surprising as it is such fetishization that provides them with their client base.

As an organization that does very much address such issues, *Soffritto* is still in a minority in terms of the overall industry. My aim with this research has been to attempt to highlight how creating an awareness of how food has been fetishized and commoditized over time, a corresponding degree of alienation from the origins of where food comes from has taken place. When restaurant organizations make the choice to revisit this lost knowledge, the approach inevitably becomes one that is different from the hegemonic norm. By taking such

an approach, I have argued, the beginnings for the possibility of reduced levels of alienation from the labour process on the part of the worker have been made possible. The possibilities for these reduced levels, however, are also linked to other factors, such as the way in which workers are treated and how consistent and legitimate the overarching message of the organization is.

This ethnography of the *Soffritto* organization is tightly linked to the local organic and artisanal agriculture community in southern Ontario and it was an exploration that attempted to find out what these types of locally-based relationships meant to those actively involved in them, and how they might bring an increased level of meaning to the work itself. Although the use of multiple small-scale suppliers producing in sustainable ways is not something new to the proprietor of *Soffritto*, it is still a method of operating that is more rare than common, although quickly gaining in popularity amongst chefs in particular. Such a method of sourcing food products eliminates the corporate food system to a large degree in favour of a focus of the development of a local gastronomy and food economy which is filled with political expressions of resistance, some loud and some quieter, to the dominant forces within the global food system, but something that simultaneously feeds an audience that is as much cutting a business deal within the confines of the restaurants run by the organization as it is there to adhere to a certain type of food consumption philosophy.

An example of a fragmented type of capitalism within a broader Capitalist structure (Gibson-Graham, 1996), *Soffritto* provides spaces of emancipatory possibility from abstract forms of capital accumulation by allowing the spaces in which the workers apply their skills to be lived-in in ways that are significantly more creative and open to

personal expression than most restaurant work environments are. While providing the workers with the professional knowledge and skills required to become seriously skilled and accomplished at what they do, there are openings for exchanges between suppliers/farmers and workers, as well as workers and clients, that bring a significant connection and meaning to the work for many of the employees within the organization.

At the same time, however, the growth of the operation over the past two years has increased the division of labour while addressing the stress issues caused by space constraints within the kitchen spaces of the organization in particular. The connections that some spaces have provided workers for expressions of personal creativity, such as the Wine Bistro cooking line, are increasingly rare. Each different location of the organization functions largely separate from the others with interactions between workers in these different locations becoming less frequent, potentially leading to a greater sense of an abstract concept of the whole of the organization than existed previously when it was only one physical space. This separation may also potentially result in an increased sense of alienation for some workers, particularly those who are newer to the organization and who do not have the historical connections to it that more senior employees do.

Lefebvre noted how alienation was what motivated change, however, and if the institutional scale of the operation does result in some people moving further away from the close relationships they once had, there is also the potential for unique expressions within the different locations that reflect the personalities of the people within them that still allow for the everyday to be something much more than simply going through the motions of a formulaic organizational paradigm. The constantly changing food and wine

menu items provide a level of stimulation and dynamism that many places do not have. In this context, there is a very strong component for personal growth and an opportunity for workers to find significant meaning in their work that continues to connect them to shared knowledges that continually develop and evolve through the development of local supply networks and food systems.

As an expression of resistance and possible difference, the approach to the local that is applied by *Soffritto* also addresses broader social issues of environmental and ecological responsibility, as well as the ethics of animal husbandry. These values are closely linked to the health of the community more broadly, which is a very important part of the organizational mantra. Providing the worker with strong craft skills while simultaneously remaining socially responsible and providing spaces for creative expression is something that should be acknowledged as an unqualified positive. Yet the focus on the health of the community in terms of the environmental and ecological impact doesn't often include issues of class, race and gender into the discussion or discourse in a prominent way. A complete realization of an emancipatory possibility would have all of these components included as equal parts of the discourse community. This is not in any way saying these values are not of importance to those who work for the organization or to local food movements more broadly, but it would be enlightening to know as much about the situation of the farm workers and the women who work on farms, for example, as the products the farmers are producing. It is important not to reify situations so much that the farmer is elevated to cult-like status when there is no clear idea of what happens beyond the growing and harvesting processes. As this movement is

in a constant state of evolution, perhaps this is an area that will become more central to the values of the movement as it goes forward.

Limits to the Research and Future Research Directions

While I was able to gain access to a very interesting professional restaurant setting to conduct my research, there are limits to this research project that need to be identified.

Soffritto is only one example of how a restaurant intersects with local food systems and attempts to resist larger global forces shaping the food production and distribution system more broadly. Located in a large urban center where a strong restaurant and dining culture exists, the reality here is something that is very much unique to its geographic location. Although the supply network of small-scale local suppliers is still developing in this region, it is also much stronger and more diverse than is the case in many other regions of Canada. More isolated locations would naturally have a harder time trying to establish a supply system such as that which exists within this region.

As well, *Soffritto*'s model of how they operate their organization is only one of many that could have been examined for a study such as this one. More time and money would have allowed for a deeper comparative study of different regions across the country to explore how different cultural pockets might be applying some form of locally-based resistances to the industrial food system. Quebec, for example, particularly in Montreal and Quebec City, has a long tradition of a strong culinary culture that is not known to many other parts of the country. There is currently a movement afoot on the part of some Quebec chefs to get the provincial government to allow chefs to hunt their own wild game meat to be served in their restaurants. On the coasts of Canada, there are

opportunities for more direct connections with fishers who might be able to supply a variety of species to chefs that are not available in other regions, as well as opportunities for chefs to see first hand how and why certain species are endangered. In Ontario, where this research was conducted, there are an increasing number of artisanal food producers making their products available to consumers, building on a growing food culture throughout the province. None of these areas have been explored in any significant depth within this particular research, largely due to time constraints and budgetary limitations.

Speaking with one Ontario artisanal cheese maker recently at the Canadian Chefs' Congress held in southern Ontario in September, 2008, I was discussing my research with her. She asked if I was hopeful in terms of the findings I had come up with regarding reduced levels of alienation? She then noted that the ideals that these local movements are based upon are always vulnerable to aspects of human nature with respect to becoming complacent. "It takes only a half generation for it all to slip back into what it was," she noted, when we were discussing the pressures increased demand for local products will put on the supply system, and the hope for many that it will not simply revert to a system of monoculture producers to meet the increased demand, but rather to an ever increasing number of small-scale suppliers who are able to find a balance between livelihood and their world views.

Some future research ideas in this area would be to explore the labour conditions on small-scale farms in comparison to industrial settings and to examine to what degree restaurants purchasing local ingredients based on an idea of social responsibility also consider such issues. Another stream of research would be to explore what a farmer can be realistically expected to pay a farm worker in terms of what they get in return for their

product. Some writers, such as Patel (2007: 315), note that few in the Global North have not profited from those in the Global South. The inference of many local food movements is that by purchasing locally, they are not participating in exploitation of workers on such farms. It is imperative, however, that the farms that are used are equally considered in terms of issues of exploitation and opportunities to meet their material needs. Simply choosing a model of sourcing and eating ethically doesn't necessarily address the reality that such an approach is still not affordable for many people. Research into wage rates, the type of clients that frequent farmers' markets that might build on Guthman's work in this area in California (e.g., Guthman, 2006), and how various issues related to the ethical consumption of food are playing out across different locations need to be explored to help further dissect how organizations such as *Soffritto* ultimately make an impact as a form of resisting the food system that has created poverty at the same time as it has produced an abundance of food throughout the globe. Bon appétit!

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Carleton University
School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
Learning Project Participant's Informed Consent Form

Please read carefully. This informed consent form is to ensure that you understand the purpose of this learning project and the nature of your participation. This form must provide sufficient information so that you are in an informed position to decide whether you wish to participate in this learning project. There are no penalties of any sort, regardless of your decision.

Course (name and number) learning project is associated with:	LALS 5904S: Using Ethnographic Approaches to Study Writing in School, Workplace, and Community (Summer 2007)	
Name, affiliation, and means of contacting the course professor:	Graham Smart, School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Carleton University. Office phone: (613) 520-2600 (ext. 2000) E-mail: gsmart@connect.carleton.ca	
Student Conducting Learning Project		
Name (Please Print)	Contact Information	Signature
Wenli Zhu		
Title of the learning project:	A quasi-ethnographic study of writing in a social setting	
Purpose of the learning project:	The purpose of the learning project is to give the students practical experience in designing, implementing, and writing up a quasi-ethnographic study of writing in a particular setting.	
Procedures:	Once you have signed this consent form, you will be interviewed. This data will be analyzed, with the analysis presented in a written report.	
Duration and location:	This will depend on the nature of the research project.	
Anonymity/Confidentiality:	Confidentiality regarding your identity and that of your institution will be maintained; pseudonyms will be used in the written report on the research. The data collected from you will be kept in a secure location and destroyed upon completion of the project.	
Potential benefits/potential discomfort/Probable risks (if any):	There are no expected risks or discomforts for you as a participant in this research project.	
Right to withdraw:	You have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time, and if you wish, the data provided by you will be destroyed.	
Debriefing:	You will be offered the chance to read the report on this research if you wish.	

Consent

I have read the above description of the learning project and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this learning project.

Participant's Name (Please print)

Participant's Signature

Date

Kitchen Research Questionnaire

Here is a quick background explanation of why I have been visiting the kitchens for the past couple of weeks and the purpose of this questionnaire. I am currently in the middle of an MA program in Political Economy at Carleton University and I am taking a summer class on ethnographic research methods (see below). My research paper for this course is a study of restaurant kitchen environments with the aim of trying to determine some of the key factors (e.g., ideological, philosophical, political, social, and economic) that lead people to work in kitchen environments, and further, what some of the key aspects of these environments might be in terms of 'feeding the soul' - that kitchen/cooking work might bring to those doing it that other forms of work might not.

Ethnography is a form of qualitative research that doesn't necessarily reject the use of scientific facts, or statistical numbers, but it attempts to study groups or cultures to find various common threads within the nuances of those particular cultures in order to attempt to make sense of how social relations are mediated and understood. While there is no guarantee of being able to relate the findings from one study into a general form of knowledge or theory, a strong ethnographic study can often link elements of the local (the emic) to a more global or universal (etic) type of knowledge, or understanding, of how certain forms of discourse are shaped and shared.

This particular course is only one term in length and the nature and expectation for the term paper is to conduct a 'quasi ethnography.' That is, for the standard ethnographic study, a timeframe of six months to a year would be fairly standard in order for the researcher to enter an environment and be able to establish levels of trust within the community/group being studied, as well as to develop a strong understanding of how many of the seemingly 'small and insignificant' daily patterns and details may actually play important roles in the way in which the culture/group functions and understands their environment.

Because of the time limitations I have in terms of research at this stage of my MA thesis, it is impossible to conduct many comprehensive interviews with many of the people working at the restaurant, not least because of the reality that few people have much free time during working hours. In light of that fact, I have put together a questionnaire that you are welcome to fill out if you wish. It would be of great help to me in formulating a reasonably accurate interpretation of the cultural and knowledge-making processes that exist within the organization. There is no obligation to complete this questionnaire but if you do, please do not write your name on it and rest assured that all details are kept completely confidential and anonymity is assured. Thanks for your time!

Rob MacDonald

On Aspects of Work

- 1) What general level of position do you hold in the kitchen?
 - 2) What were the motivations, or inspirations, for you wanting to become involved in the cooking profession?
 - 3) In what ways have those initial motivations been similar, or not, with what your experience in the industry has been?
 - 4) What career goals do you have with respect to cooking? How do you see working here helping in achieving those goals?
 - 5) How much time per week do you spend watching cooking shows (for example The Food Network etc.)? What type of show do you find most appealing/interesting (e.g., historical/documentary, or something more reflective of the restaurant environment)?
 - 6) How much time of your work day do you spend discussing food ideas and issues with work colleagues (for example social issues such as the raw milk, or street food policies; or things like what is happening within the industry in Toronto, i.e., new restaurant openings etc)?
 - 7) If you have such discussions, do you find them useful and stimulating?
 - 8) Do you have such discussions with people outside of the cooking/restaurant profession? Do you find it difficult, or relatively easy, to integrate such topics into other social settings?
 - 9) How important is the philosophy towards the acquisition of food products - and the preparation of them - to you in terms of choosing an ideal cooking environment to work in? For example, how important is the approach to accessing local, unadulterated products compared to one that might focus more on the bottom line of the price point of the product at the expense of some level of product quality loss?
- Very important () Somewhat Important () Not important ()
- 10) How much input do you personally have in cooking or menu decisions in your work place? Please circle one.
- None () A little () A great deal ()
- 11) Is having such input important to you, or do you prefer to follow someone else's lead?

12) How much contact do you have with the Chef in your day-to-day experience at the restaurant?

Much ()

Moderate ()

Little ()

13) Is having the Chef's visible presence important to you in terms of your motivation towards the work, or do you find the approach toward the acquisition of food products and preparation is understood and implemented in a way that fulfils your current culinary ambitions and goals, even if contact is somewhat limited?

14) If you have a question about something related to food issues or preparation, do you feel there are enough knowledgeable people in the kitchen environment to draw upon for a satisfactory answer?

Yes ()

No ()

Do you feel comfortable approaching these people?

Yes ()

No ()

15) On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 representing a more regimented environment, and 5 representing a more familial/supportive environment, how would you rate the kitchen environment you currently work in? Do you have a preference for either approach? Please explain.

1 () 2 () 3 () 4 () 5 ()

The Production Kitchen

16) With production for much of the operation being done out of the Wine Bistro location, (if you work at that location location) how does that production, related to space constraints, impact the quality of your work environment?

Much ()

Moderate ()

Little ()

17) Do you see the eventual introduction of the production kitchen as a benefit to your work environment? Please explain

18) If much of the production is being done by someone else (for example, being done off site and delivered), does this impact your connection to the food you work with, positively or negatively?

19) If you were using food items prepared off site by another part of the organization, would you want to have some kind of communication and input on how and what things are prepared?

20) As with many professions, there are aspects of cooking and food preparation that can be very repetitive and seemingly not particularly creative. Simone Weil, a Christian philosopher who lived in the first half of the 20th-century, once noted about work that, “the worker needs poetry more than he needs bread.” Poetry, in this context, can be interpreted in finding some level of deeper meaning or significance in what one is doing in their work. In what ways, if any, are you able to find “poetry” in your work? How closely related to the philosophical approach to the respect for ingredients, and how they are used and prepared, would such “poetry” be to you?

Education and Industry Experience

21) What is your educational background, both culinary and otherwise?

22) How long have you worked in the industry?

23) How long have you worked in the Soffrotto kitchens?

24) Have you taken part in a co-op or apprenticeship program through the JK organization?

25) If yes, please explain in your own words how this experience has impacted your attitude and perception toward food and cooking? Has working in different parts of the organization been important in your growth as a cook? Please explain.

36) How many hours per week on average do you work?

27) How do these hours compare with other places you have worked in the food service industry?

29) Many positions in the food service profession and in restaurants especially, do not have significant dental/health benefits plan. Is such a benefit plan an important factor in your employment choices?

Consent form used for interview/second phase

CONSENT FORM

I am a graduate student at Carlton University and currently enrolled in Sociology 5302F: Work and the Labour Process, taught by Professor Thomas Juravich. For our final term paper, we are interviewing workers in a variety of occupations to better understand how work is changing in Canada.

We would like to ask you permission to participate in our study. By signing below, you are giving us your consent to take notes tape record our interview with you and to quote from that interview in our term paper. Your name will not be used. Pseudonyms will be used for identification purposes.

At any time during the interview, you may request to end the session.

Student name _____
Student contact information _____

Thomas Juravich, Instructor
Phone 613-520-7566
cell 413-348-4553 fax 413-545-0110
e-mail juravich@lrrc.umass.edu

Signature

Date

Name _____
Address _____

Phone _____
E-mail _____

Table 1: Concentration in the U.S. Food Processing Sectors

Sector	Concentration Ratio	Companies Involved
Beef Packers	81%	Tyson [IBP] ConAgra Beef Cos Cargill [Excel] Farmland National Beef Pkg. Co
Pork Packers	59%	Smithfield, Tyson [IBP] Conagra [Swift] Cargill [Excel]
Pork Production	46%	Smithfield Foods Premium Standard Farms [Conti Group] Seaboard Corp. Triumph Prok Group [Farmland Managed]
Broilers	50%	Tyson Foods Gold Kist Pilgrim's Pride ConAgra
Turkeys	45%	Hormel [Jennie-O Turkeys Butterball [ConAgra} Cargill's Turkeys Pilgrim's Pride
Animal Feed Plants	25%	Land O'Lakes Farmland Feed LLC/Purina Mills Cargill Animal Nutrition [Nutrena] ADM [Morrman's] JD Heskell & Co
Terminal Grain Handling Facilities	60%	Cargill Cenex Harvest States ADM General Mills

Corn Exports	81%	Cargill-Continental Grain ADM Zen Noh
Soybean Exports	65%	Cargill-Continental Grain ADM Zen Noh
Four Milling	61%	ADM Milling ConAgra Cargill General Mills
Soybean Crushing	80%	ADM Cargill Bunge AGP
Ethanol Production	49%	ADM Minnesota Corn Producers [ADM has 50% equity stake] Williams Energy Services Cargill
Dairy Processors	n/a	Dean Foods [Suiza Foods Corp.] Kraft Foods [Phillip Morris] Dairy Farmers of America Land O'Lakes
Food Retailing	38%	Kroeger Co. Albertson's, Safeway Wal-Mart Ahold

Note: The percentage figure is the concentration ration, relative to 100 percent of the top four firms in specific food industries.

(Heffernan, Hendrickson, and Howard (2001). Department of Rural Sociology University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri)

APPENDIX A