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Food Studies and Sociology: A Review Focusing on Japan

By Rossella Ceccarini

Abstract: Despite the fundamental role played in society by food and eating, sociological interest in the area is quite recent and is investigated through the sociology of food. The threefold aims of this review include 1) giving an overview of the relation between food studies and sociology; 2) giving an overview of the relation between food studies, culture and globalization issues; and finally 3) summarizing the literature on food and globalization focusing on research primarily on Japan and Asia. The first section (food and sociology) looks at the path that slowly turned food into a proper object of sociological investigation. The second section (food and globalization) looks at food as a particular display of culture capable of shedding light on globalization. The third section (food going global) offers an overview of the studies focusing on food, consumers, restaurants, and food producers respectively in the realm of global processes. The review is structured on the cultural diamond elements proposed by Griswold (2007). The three sections illuminate the interdisciplinary nature of food sociology and globalization studies, the suitability of food as a topic for globalization issues, and the need for more research on the production side of food going global.

Keywords: cultural diamond, food studies, globalization, sociology of food, Japan

1. Introduction

Food studies is an interdisciplinary field that in the last decade has produced a vast body of literature. Scholars from different backgrounds have undertaken the difficult task of summarizing and/or reviewing the growing works. For instance, Grew (2000) and Super (2002) analyzed studies on food and (global) history; Mintz and Du Bois (2002) considered works on food and anthropology after the mid-1980s; Phillips (2006) reviewed works addressing food and globalization; Mendez (2006) looked at the sociology of food in Europe—though with a focus on Spain. Since every discipline has its own literature, which is only partially cross-listed, Duran and MacDonald (2006) have written about the strategies and the indexes to be consulted while doing food research across disciplines.

In a similar vein, this paper has three goals: 1) to give an overview of the relation between food studies and sociology; 2) to give an overview of the relation between food studies, culture and globalization issues; and 3) to summarize the literature on food and globalization research interests in Asia and Japan. The first section (food and sociology) looks at the processes that slowly turned food into a proper object of sociological investigation. The second section (food and globalization) looks at food as a particular display of culture capable of shedding light on globalization, especially through a commodities network approach. The third section (food going global) gives an overview of the studies that have paid attention to food, consumers, restaurants, and food producers respectively in the realm of global processes. The review is structured on the elements of the cultural diamond proposed by Griswold ([1994] 2007). The three sections provide insights into the interdisciplinary nature of the sociology of food and globalization studies, the suitability of food as a topic for globalization issues, and the need for more research on the production side of food going global.

2. Food and Sociology

Despite the fundamental role played in society by food and eating, investigating food is quite a recent sociological interest:

The sociology of food and nutrition, or food sociology, concentrates on the myriad of socio-cultural, political, economic, and philosophical factors that influence our food habits—what we eat, when we eat, how we eat, and why we eat. ... Food sociology focuses on the social patterning of food production, distribution, and consumption—which can be conceptualized as the social appetite (Germov and Williams 2004, 5).

As noted by Sassatelli (2004) sociologists did not miss the point that food, cuisine, and eating are important in the making and remaking of social identities (e.g. Simmel's *Sociology of the Meal*, Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*). However, they did not turn food and nutrition into a definite and proper object of research itself. There are various reasons for this lack of attention. The “taken for granted” nature of eating, for instance, has made it almost invisible to sociologists (Beardsworth and Keil 1997). Food as a topic has often been considered frivolous along with leisure and culture (Mennel 2004). Food has also been considered the terrain of other social disciplines. In particular, psychology has studied food with respect to eating disorders. Anthropology has studied the food and eating habits of non-Western (and Western) peoples. In fact, while sociology has recently developed its food field, anthropology has a long tradition: “The anthropology of food and eating” (Mintz, Du Bois 2002) reviews the great contribution given by anthropology to the study of food. To be fair, the topic of food has been a central element of rural sociology as testified already in 1991 by *Agricultural Economic and Rural Sociology* (Wallace) a full book devoted to the core literature.

Reviewing a chronology of scholarly volumes about food and sociology helps to understand when food and eating issues became part of the sociological agenda. Among the first to highlight the centrality of food was the volume *Sociology of Food and Eating: Essays on the Sociological Significance of Food* published by Murcott in 1982. A collection of sixteen short articles by scholars belonging to different disciplines, the work attracted scholarly attention. Mennel's *All Manners of Food*, first published in 1985 and tracing the culinary culture of England and France, is also considered a milestone in the field. The rising interest in the sociology of food and nutrition can be traced to the 1990s, as testified by anthologies and handbooks published in those years. In 1992, Mennell, Murcott and Otterlo published *The Sociology of Food*. In the mid 1990s, numerous works illustrated the path and interests of the field, notably, *The Sociology of the Meal* (Wood 1995), *Food and Society: A Sociological Approach* (Whit 1995), *Sociologies of Food and Nutrition* (McIntosh 1996), and *Sociology on the Menu* (Beardsworth and Keil 1997). A handy textbook, *A Sociology of Food and Nutrition* (Germov and Williams 1999), though it focused on Australia had particular success—a second revised edition was published in 2004 and a third revised edition in 2008.

The list above shows that publications related to the sociology of food proliferated during 1995-2000, but does not tell us why food leapt from obscurity to becoming an important part of the sociological agenda. Scholars proposed looking at changes in the sociological research agenda itself for an answer. Shifts in the sociological research agenda into consumption, gender, and policy issues positively influenced a rising interest in the sociology of food (Beardsworth and Keil 1997, Mennel et al. 1992). Indeed, the sociological interest in globalization favors the sociological interest in food. As a matter of fact, in explicating the increased scale of food literature, Mintz and Du Bois point out that:

Three major trends this last quarter century or so have influenced this growth: globalization; the general affluence of Western societies and their growing cosmopolitanism; and the inclusivist tendencies of U.S. society, which spurs even disciplines (and professions, such as journalism and business) without anthropology's strong inclusivist ethic to consider cross-cultural variations in foodways. A vast literature on food and globalization has appeared (2002, 111).

Thus, the sociology of food as well as related manuals and introductory books flourished in the 1990s, as globalization concurrently became a major topic in the sociological debate. Food slowly became a way to look at global issues (and vice versa) (Locher 2003, Warde 2000).

While, in comparison with anthropology, there are few sociological works on food, it is worth noting that the gap narrows slightly when we look at studies of food and globalization. For instance, in 1993, a sociological work entitled *The McDonaldization of Society* used the fast food industry as a lens to examine the Weberian processes of rationalization for globalizing, and apparently, homogenizing the world. Ritzer's book proved to be so successful and popular that many scholars engaged in research challenging the global homogenization theory through studies of fast food enterprises (Watson et al. 1997, 2006). As noted in a recent anthropological review of food and globalization:

The exchange of food across regions, nations, and continents has occurred for centuries, although the study of the relationship between food and globalization is relatively new to anthropology. Anthropologists have long been interested in food and its production, consumption, and exchange ... , but food issues have largely been examined within the context of relatively closed systems of production—in households, in local communities, and in ethnic groups. The focus, historically, was on how food may reinforce, and at times create, distinct cultural worlds (Phillips 2006, 38).

(Global) history and food is also a relatively new field for historical sciences. According to Super, “The transformation of food from a marginal subject of interest to a few agricultural

historians to one recognized for its potential for exploring new dimensions of the past is almost complete” (2002, 1). Meanwhile, looking at the potentiality of food and globalization duo, Grew has pointed out that

... concern with globalization today has obviously stimulated interest in global history. As a field of study that uses historical methods to analyze global connections and processes of historical change, global history has other intellectual roots as well As a distinctive field, however, global history can be said to be new ... (Grew 2000, 5).

The recent interest in food and globalization encouraged sociology, anthropology, history and other social sciences, such as cultural geography, political and cultural studies, to gather together and produce a vast literature on “food studies.” A high level of interdisciplinarity characterizes edited volumes on food, which call for multidisciplinary approaches and present essays written by scholars belonging to diverse social sciences (Watson and Caldwell 2005, Grew 2000, MacClancy and Macbeth 2004). The multidisciplinary approach is a feature of forthcoming food research. For instance, the book *The Globalization of Food* (Inglis and Gimlin, February 2010) is edited by two sociologists but brings together scholars of different backgrounds investigating food and globalization.

3. Food and Globalization

As an academic term, globalization developed in the economics and sociology disciplines during the late 1980s and enjoyed great favor since the 1990s. Clearly there are different types of globalization, including economic, political, and finally cultural. However, the exact nature of globalization remains a matter of debate among scholars (Ray 2007). Various attempts to summarize and explain the types of globalization (Appadurai 2001, Lechner and Boli 2004) led over time to newly minted terms such as glocalization (Robertson 1995) and grobalization (Ritzer 2004), themselves possessing multiple meanings.

As the theory grows, the abstract and complex nature of globalization makes an empirical definition difficult. In the last decade, the spread of food and cuisines across the globe—although not a new phenomenon (Kiple 2007)—is now understood as a way to clarify economic and cultural processes of globalization (Walraven 2002, Locher 2003). Studies tackle globalization through Mexican cuisine and tacos (Pilcher 2008), King’s Christmas pudding (O’Connor 2009), Thai cuisine (Sunanta 2005), sushi (Bestor 2000, 2001) and French-African beans (Freidberg [2003] 2005), among others. These studies not only have in common food and globalization as research interests, but also a commodity network approach to unfold the phenomena of food going global:

Following a single commodity from the soil to the table and beyond provides a comprehensive view of the interrelations between technologies of production, social relations of labor, and diverse cultures of consumption (Pilcher 2008, 532).

Such an approach, largely grounded on the works of Appadurai and Kopytoff (1986), recognizes the fact that in order to follow commodities and value in motion, we have to pay attention to culture and how commodities are symbolically constructed.¹

What is culture and how can we analyze the symbolic construction of a commodity? The cultural object and the cultural diamond (Griswold [1994] 2008) are helpful in addressing

¹ For an overview of the commodity chain approach see Foster (2006). He distinguishes between three techniques for tracking globalization: 1) commodity or value chains, 2) circuits of culture or commoditiescapes, and 3) hybrid actor networks. Foster quotes research on fast food, the sushi and tuna trade, Coca-Cola and other soft drinks in the commoditiescapes/circuits of culture category (Watson 1997, Miller 1998, Bestor 2001, Foster 2002).

such questions. Given the ambiguity and abstraction of the term culture, Wendy Griswold proposed approaching the cultural field focusing on the more tangible cultural object, i.e. shared meaning embodied in form:

... a socially meaningful expression that is audible, visible, tangible or can be articulated. A cultural object, moreover tells a story and that story may be sung, told, set in stone, enacted, or painted on the body (2006, 12).

When we look at an object in terms of its history, it becomes a meaningful cultural object. The nature of the cultural object is in the eye of the beholder, even an everyday staple as bread, for instance, can be considered a cultural object if we look at its history. In order to understand the cultural object, attention needs to be given to its creators, receivers, its social world, and to the connections among those elements. Griswold displays these elements according to a diamond shape (Figure 1).

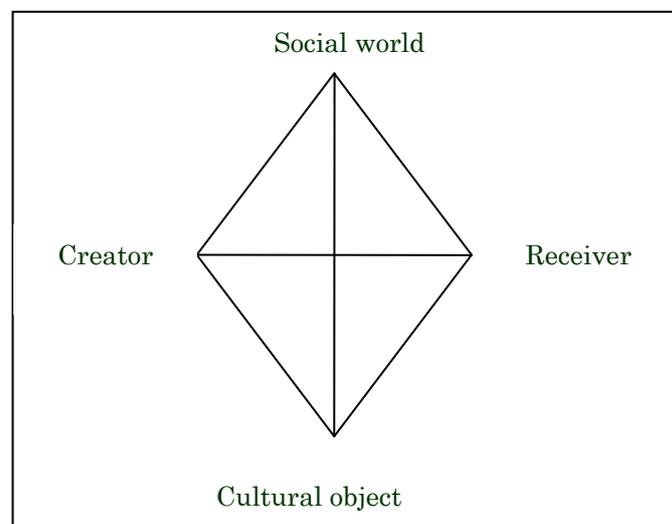


Figure 1: Cultural Diamond (Griswold 2007, 16)

The cultural object, the creator, the receiver and the social world represent the vertexes of the diamond. The diamond's sides and diagonals connect the vertexes. Connections are multidirectional. As Griswold points out, the cultural diamond is not a theory: there are connections among the vertexes but it gives no explanation about the nature of the connections, and there is no indication of cause and effect. Nevertheless, the cultural diamond is an analytical tool that encourages a deeper understanding of the social world in which the cultural objects are located. The analyst will determine the cultural object, the social world and the rest of the elements depending on the research questions. For instance, looking at Piedmont cuisine:

... one may set the cultural object—shared meaning embodied in form—at any level, from Piemonte cuisine in general to some specific food in particular, or one might identify the cultural object as an individual recipe, a book of recipes, a memoir, a travel guide, a city promotion, a restaurant, a television cooking program, and so forth. ... we could regard the creators of the cuisine as chefs, housewives, travel writers, editors, farmers, people in the food business; the receivers would be cooks, diners, family members, readers, television viewers, or travelers (Griswold 2008, 155).

Thus, as we follow food and cuisines going global (commodity network approach), we can

look at the way the new society receives them by paying attention to the four cultural diamond elements. The global path of a foreign cuisine or of a single dish (cultural object) can be investigated by looking at the social world (restaurant industry), at the receiver (consumer), and at the creator (food worker²).

4. Food Going Global

In this section, I examine the literature of food studies using Griswold's cultural diamond as an analytical template. I pay particular attention to studies using Japan as a research field. In fact, Asia has been a fertile research site for scholars interested in issues of food and cultural globalization (Ashkenazi and Jacob 2000, Ohnuki-Tierney 1999, Tobin et al. 1992, Watson et al. 1997). The review shows that studies of food and globalization often lean towards issues of consumption (i.e. the focus is mostly on food consumers, on the right side of the cultural diamond), in spite of the recent interest in food workers.

4.1 The Cultural Object: Food and Cuisines

What happens to food and cuisine when they travel and enter a new country? Mintz argues that we have to make a distinction between innovation sent and innovation received:

Whether we have in mind an ingredient, a plant, an animal, a cooking method, or some other concrete culinary borrowing, when such things spread and they come into the hands of the receiving farmers, processors or cooks, they have been detached from some particular cultural system; and when they are taken up, they become reintegrated into another usually quite different one (2007, 207).

It is true, McDonald's seems to be the same everywhere, but according to Watson and colleagues (1997), the locals of Beijing, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong, among other Asian cities, changed the famous burger company, its food and its menu. McDonald's in Japan offers rice and shrimp. Fast food is now an integral part of the Japanese life, but in addition to the usual fare, teriyaki hamburgers, umeboshi plums, Korean kimchi and other "local" specialties are available (Dwyer and Risako 2004). The sent (fast) food is different from the one received.

In order to enter a Japan successfully, Western fast food is tailored to local tastes. Moreover, Western fast food entering Japan has not cast out local fast food such as the *ekiben*—a special *bento* lunch box sold at train stations (Nouguchi 1994). However, it is true that the *bento* has undergone transformation throughout its history, not least adapting to better cope with the advent of Western fast food. One way to survive included adding hamburgers and similar fare to the lunchbox. By including Western food in the bento box, Japanese:

... recreate their own tradition and, at the same time they reassure themselves as members of the global community, reasserting their membership both in Japan and in the rest of the world. Foreign food culture is reinvented and adapted to the lunch box and then domesticated and made intimate and accessible (Rodriguez del Alisal 2000, 72).

The domestication of foreign goods in Japan was at the center of "Re-Made in Japan" (1992), a collection of articles devoted to the study of Western foreign goods (popular culture objects) entering Japan. Tobin's introduction to the book is largely devoted to food as cultural objects, showing photos of drinks, hamburgers and pizza domesticated in Japan.

² In this paper I use "food worker" as an umbrella term to indicate jobs in the service industry dealing with industrial or artisanal production, creation, and supply of food and beverage to customers (e.g. chefs, cooks, bakers, bartenders, etc.).

Is the flow of foreign food entering and domesticated in Japan a novelty? Is only Western food making its way into Japan? Scholarly works give a negative answer to both questions. Even rice, the symbol of Japanese identity came from abroad. Wet rice agriculture was introduced into Japan around 400 B.C. and appropriated into the local culture through historical myths. Over time, Japanese used rice to distinguish themselves from the meat-eating Westerners. Moreover, they constructed the myth of first-rate domestic rice (*naichimai*) in order to make a distinction between eminently Japanese versus not so excellent foreign rice (*gaimai*) and by extension, other rice-eating Asian countries. Literature from the 1980s often depicted Chinese rice as inferior (Ohnuki-Tierney 1994, 1999).

The influence of China in developing Japanese cuisine cannot be overlooked. As a matter of fact, modern Japanese cuisine is the outcome of a tripod of Chinese, Western, and Japanese cuisine constructed in the early 20th century (Cwierka 2003, 2006). Local cuisine domesticated and sometimes completely assimilated Chinese food entering Japan. Cantonese *dim sum*, a kind of style of popular breakfast in South China, is a case of the domestication of Chinese food in Japan that became an upscale cuisine (Cheung 2002). Ramen is among the food completely assimilated into local cuisine. According to Tamotsu (2001) *ramen* has become native, a representation of the postwar Japanese culture, and a national dish deserving a museum of its own in Yokohama.

Japan is not only a food receiver but is also a food sender. Academic works of sushi going global are not hard to find. According to Bestor (2000), the tuna-sushi trade involves actors on a global scale. And even if sushi is perceived as being Japanese, it is not exempt from changes when reaching a different country. In Singapore, for example, sushi is considered a courier of Japanese popular culture, but is localized in order to fit Singaporean tastes (Wai-Ming Ng 2001). Among the remarkable differences pointed out by Wai-Ming, we have: sushi as a snack and not a meal; sushi made using long grain Thai rice because Japanese rice is not exported; additions of salt, spices and oils to suit local taste; creation of deep-fried sushi, burger sushi, cheese sushi and other local variants. However, not all the Japanese food maintains its “nationality”, as in the case of *surimi* (imitation crab made from white fish). According to Mansfield (2003), multiple processes of material and symbolic production have detached *surimi* in the west from both its main component (fish) and its home country (Japan).

Food sent abroad can successfully travel back home, as in the case of the California *tofu* with herbs (White 2002). *Tofu* itself is an element of Japanese cuisine that originated abroad, introduced in the eighth century from China (Buckley 2002, 526). Interestingly, not only sushi but other “traditional” food and ingredients (e.g. wasabi, miso soup, shitake mushrooms) have also spread abroad, and are available in European and North American supermarkets (Buckley 2002, 155). Nowadays, new Japanese food concepts are disseminating globally, as in the case of functional food. Again, the perception and reaction to them depends on the specific local context (Labrecque et al. 2006). Today, the journey might be faster and more complicated than in the past; however, food traveling around the world in itself is not a new phenomenon. Food leaving its “home country” to reach a new one is noteworthy in that it can demonstrate how globalization is “a process that stimulates a surprising richness of local responses” (Walraven 2002, 173).

4.2 The Receiver: The Food Consumer

Food entering a new country is changed and domesticated by local culture. However, there are no unilateral processes; new food might in turn change consumer culture. According to Ohnuki-Tierney (1997), McDonald’s and fast food restaurants have contributed to changes in

table manners, particularly helping make acceptable the impoliteness of eating while standing or using hands instead of fork and chopsticks. Smith (1992) argued that the introduction of foreign alcohol, especially beer, contributed to changing the drinking habits of Japanese, introducing:

... more drinking contexts and more ways to drink, making drinking a more individualized, less ritualized experience; new beverages (such as dirty beer) and new packaging (the One Cup) discourage the old etiquette of mutual pouring and reciprocation (Smith 1992, 156).

However, these changes did not occur in a cultural vacuum, according to Traphagan and Brown:

McDonald's and some other new styles of fast food in Japan express long-standing Japanese cultural patterns, and facilitate human intimacy and warmth not possible with some other, more traditional styles of inexpensive and rapidly served food in Japan (2002, 119).

Moreover, consumers are not passively accepting new food and cuisine. Looking at female magazines, cooking schools and restaurants among others sites, White (2002) pointed out that Japanese women both receive and reshape the food culture in which they participate. Negotiating choice among different cuisines and awareness of food trends and fashionable restaurants can be a way to boost one's own status. Consumers might also strongly express their disagreement against introduced food such as genetically modified food (GM). MacLachlan (2006) analyzed consumer perceptions and reactions to GM in the United States, Japan and Britain. Through her work, we learn how consumers from different countries perceive GM and engage in citizen groups and organizations challenging GM uses, regulations and imports. Various groups embedded in the three respective countries advanced different requests and goals. Despite the differences in national consumer power, movements against GM achieved important goals, such as labeling standards and EU moratoriums. MacLachlan showed that food consumers are active agents in global processes. She also shows that consumers cope with multinational corporations as well as state regulations while fighting their battles.

The role of the state in the food-global process receives respectable attention in the academic literature. Among other problematic situations, scholars scrutinize how the state paved the way for new food to be accepted by citizens-consumers. For instance, Cwiertka (2004) looked at the role of the state in first building strong and healthy soldiers, and secondly, strong and healthy citizens. Among the initiatives taken to reach such goals, the introduction of Western food into the military diet played an important role. The Meiji Emperor set an important symbolic trend by introducing beef and mutton into his royal menu. Foreign inspired dishes found their way into the military menu, side by side with rice, which remained the staple. Not only new dishes but also new ways of serving food were introduced to the soldiers. For instance, they learned to eat everything on the same plate. When the soldiers came back home, they had attained military skills but also new culinary knowledge, helping in their turn diffuse newly acquired tastes. Later on, the system used in the military sector was introduced into the school cafeteria. Then, through a long process starting with the Meiji reform (1868-1912), the state strongly contributed to the homogenization of tastes and the building of a national and modern Japanese cuisine (Cwiertka 2006).

Other scholars (Takeda 2008) show that as soon as Western food became an integral part of the Japanese diet its presence seems to be intrusive and sometimes dangerous, such as in the case of meat imports and BSE problems. Therefore, the state takes a paternalistic role of again encouraging the citizens towards healthy Japanese cuisine, for example through the 2005 Basic Law for *Shokuiku* (nurturing through eating campaign). Citizens are invited to

fully understand the importance and healthiness of Japanese cuisine through cooking and nutrition classes, and school and community events. Emphasis is given to the ‘Japanese element’ of Japanese food (especially rice). The health of the citizens is not the only reason behind state measures:

Overall, the food discourses contribute to reproducing the bodies of the nation and, in so doing, the national body is reproduced, whilst incorporating dissident voices, despite the intrinsically hybrid nature of Japanese food culture. At the same time, the progress of globalisation tends to call for more emphasis on the ‘Japanese’ element of hybridity to reinforce national coherence and integrity” (Takeda 2008, 25).

In sum, the above-mentioned works show the increasing exposure of consumers to new food and ways of eating through messages from mass media and the state. However, consumers do not have a passive role. They are the local force involved in the process of choosing, adapting and reinventing new food.

4.3 The Social World: The Restaurant Industry

Once upon a time, the *restaurant* used to be a soup, a broth intended to *restore* one’s strength. Small shops sold the *restaurant* in Paris around the 1760s. We have to wait until 1835 for the term to acquire today’s meaning. In that year the dictionary of the *Academie Française* referred to the *restaurant* as the establishment of a *restaurateur* (Pitte 1999, Spang 2000). The restaurant has come a long way from a modest soup, and attracts not only the attention of customers but also academic consideration. There are reviews of scholarly restaurant literature by Warde and Martens (2000) and more recently in a collection of restaurant ethnographies edited by Berris and Sutton (2007).

In 1948, Whyte addressed the restaurant as a proper place to study work and organizational dynamics, but studies of restaurants only took off in the 1980s (Berris and Sutton 2007). Most restaurant literature focuses on the restaurant management, the waiters, and their relationship with customers. The literature pays particular attention to fast food chains. The term McJobs now popularly applies outside the restaurant sector to indicate routinized jobs with low wages and low satisfaction (Reiter 1991, Leidner 1993, Gatta 2001, Tannok 2001, Royle and Towers 2002).

However, working dynamics inside the restaurant go beyond traditional organizational and human resource studies; they also concern global flows of people and, of course, things. As noted in a study of New York City eating places:

In a curious way, restaurants also synthesize the global and the local. They receive culinary styles of preparation and trends from other parts of the country and the world and institutionalize them in their menus. Yet, they also adapt strange food to local tastes and eating patterns. Moreover, they form agglomerations by restaurant type, which then become neighborhood institutions (Little Italy, Chinatown). In New York restaurant cuisine, the local reterritorializes the global. Restaurants similarly bring together a global and local labor force and clientele (Zukin et al. 1992, 110).

In a similar vein, Berris and Sutton consider restaurants “ideal post modern institutions”. They are a “total social phenomena” where global homogenization and reassertion of the local, definitions of urban landscapes, exchange of culture and/or practices of social distinctions take place, among other dynamics (2007).

Warde (2000) gives a look inside the world of independent and ethnic restaurants. He focused on ethnic restaurants in the United Kingdom as providers of ethnic cuisines in western society. He also looked at the way customers received ethnic food. He noted that

knowledge and commodities circulate along with ethnic cuisine. The knowledge is not exiled to the realm of ethnic cooks in restaurant kitchens, but for example spreads beyond through domestic cooking books. He also delineated four basic attitudes towards ethnic food and their diffusion: 1) preservation, which rejects everything that is not traditional; 2) naturalization, which adapts recipes in a way that makes familiar unknown tastes; 3) improvisation, which restyles: to restyle local recipes by adding foreign elements; and 4) authentication, to seek the authentic replication of dishes from foreign cuisines. When the ethnic cuisine market grows, there is a niche for authentic food (2000, 312-14).

Barbas' article (2003) looking at Chinese restaurants in the United States (especially California) between the 1870s and 1930s accounts for the processes as outlined by Warde. Those were years of hostility against Asian immigrants. Nevertheless, non-Chinese customers patronized the restaurants of Chinatown. According to the author, the restaurants functioned as agents of culinary and cultural change. The long process also included the creation of new dishes, particularly the invention of *chop suey*. Restaurants also attracted outsiders by cleaning up and refurbishing with the oriental taste of food and decor that, in the American imagination, belonged to China. Americans were familiar with going to Chinatown for chop suey by the 1920s. That was a great achievement in the time when only the temerarious and *bohemiennes* ventured inside Chinatown. Second generation Chinese Americans opened restaurants outside the walls of Chinatown and in 1929 the first American-managed Chinese restaurant opened in San Francisco. Finally, cooking magazines and books featuring easy recipes and canned soups available at the supermarket helped the soup find its place inside the American home. According to Barbas:

What this case study of Chinese restaurants and Chinese American food may suggest is that culinary preferences do not always correlate with racial and social attitudes—that cultural minorities, for example, may seem far less threatening to dominant social groups when placed in the context of food and dining. For that reason, restaurants, particularly ethnic restaurants, may be more interesting and lively sites of cross-cultural exchange and interaction than scholars have traditionally assumed (2003, 684).

Chinese eateries are a place of cross-cultural exchange in Japan as well. In the article of Yun Hui Tsu (1999) about the Chinatown of Kobe, we find similarities with the California Chinatown experience. Kobe's Chinatown used to be an ethnic ghetto, but is now perceived as a "Gourmet Republic" and an important cultural landmark. Established in the 1880s, Kobe's Chinatown was considered an ill-famed place before achieving better status. However, it was also the place where the best market for stock, could be found. Shops and stalls offered fresh goods, fish, and meat to local Chinese, Japanese customers and other Chinese who worked as servants for the Westerners. Chinatown also supplied food for foreign ships, restaurants and hotels in town. However, anti-Chinese sentiments negatively affected the overall image of the neighborhood, especially during the Sino-Japanese wars. The negative association did not fade away with the end of the Pacific War; Chinatown became a base for the black market. Moreover, during the Vietnam War, bars and other establishments catering to American soldiers replaced local shops, causing the neighborhood to nearly lose its Chinese identity.

As noted by Berris and Sutton (2007), restaurants can define the urban landscape. Chinese restaurants and shops had a central role in defining the ethnicity of the neighborhood. In the late 1970s, with the end of the Vietnam War, local shops, groceries and restaurants replaced the bars. The neighborhood reacquired a Chinese identity, slowly becoming a cultural and touristic landmark of Kobe. The Kobe earthquake in 1995 proved an important milestone in the process of raising Kobe's Chinatown image as Chinatown's restaurants and

shops were among the first to reopen after the disaster. They served food and drinks for free or at greatly discounted rates. It seems that restaurants have an important role in raising the spirit of communities hit by natural disasters. For instance, Berris and Sutton (2007) have pointed out the important role of restaurants and restaurateurs in remaking New Orleans after the 2005 hurricane.

As in America, Chinese restaurants and food shops in Japan make possible for conflicting cultures to come into contact. They form a sort of neutral zone, a place to find a temporary armistice. Nowadays, along with myriads of other Asian and Western restaurants, Chinese eateries are places to experience an immersion into the exotic (Hendry 2005).

4.4 The Creator: The Food Worker

The restaurant is not only a dining hall, it is also a kitchen where the food must be crafted and prepared before being eaten. Chefs and kitchen workers are considered central to the spread of cuisine (Mennel 1985). Though attention seems to be growing, the occupation has received little consideration from scholars in the field of work and occupational studies (Wood 1997, Cameron 2001, Johnson et al. 2005). The inclination to pay little attention to the food worker is also noticeable in studies of work and occupation in Japan. For instance, out of more than three hundred pages, *A Sociology of Work in Japan* (2005) addresses food workers with only a few lines:

... [The National Federation of Food Industry Worker's Unions] estimated that its members performed huge amounts of unaccounted and unpaid labor in 1993: an average of 500 hours annually on top of the 2,400 hours officially reported by the industry (Mouer and Kawanishi, 2005, 81).

The book is mainly devoted to the study of white and blue-collar occupations, as in the Western tradition of the sociology of work and occupation.

The first important study of chefs and cooks belongs to Chivers (1973). He saw in the category a tendency towards deskilling and proletarianization. He could not foresee kitchen workers becoming TV personalities and best-selling book writers. Of course, not all kitchen workers have the opportunity to make it to the level of celebrity chefs. Gabriel (1988) studied the catering service of England:

... to present an accurate picture of the working lives and outlooks of some of these people [catering workers], who, while working around the clock, have become invisible to virtually everyone, the media, the trade unions, politicians, academic researchers and even the public they serve (1988, 153).

However, Gabriel's work has not attracted many academic proselytes. We have to wait for Fine (1996) for a complete ethnography of restaurant kitchens in Midwest America. The chefs studied by Fine are not working in hip and chic New York restaurants. Nevertheless, they take pride in what they do and are committed to their job. Ten years later, Mériot (2006) studied the cooks of the institutional food service industry in France. She showed that cooks working in public service catering, such as hospitals and school cafeterias, have better working hours and conditions than their restaurant colleagues. However, they do not see their work as fulfilling or as romantic as do restaurant chefs. They will never receive a Michelin star. Recently, hospitality studies journals in particular run articles about chefs. For instance, Johnson and colleagues (2005) relied on the opinion of chefs to draw a typology of Michelin restaurant stars in Europe. Cameron (2001) looked at the chefs of Forte Crest Hotel in London. She studied the reactions of chefs to the constraints imposed by companies coping with economic problems.

Lately, the topic of chefs has caught the attention of scholars interested in cultural production and creation (Trubek 2000, Leschziner 2007 and 2009, Fung 2007). This propensity might be driven by the fact that, among disciplines which regard culture as a manufactured product, popular culture is regarded with a “production of culture” approach. Using the analytical tools developed by the sociology of occupations and organization, the production of culture approach looks at the way social cultural creators mobilize resources in order to make cultural production possible (Harrington and Bielby 2001). As cultural intermediaries, chefs have a central role in disseminating cuisine and food relationships, both locally (Inwood et al. 2008, Jordan 2007) and globally (Fung 2007, Locher 2003, Pilcher 2008). Not only their cultural role, but also their career paths and occupational concerns have raised some attention. For instance, Trubek (2000) looked at the way French chefs not only raised their occupational status, but made French cuisine a matter of cultural imperialism. Parkhurst Ferguson and Zukin (1998) looked at chefs’ training abroad in a global world, while describing the career patterns of French and American chefs. Terrio stressed additional aspects of the culinary occupation in the field of chocolate (2000). She looked into the world of French *chocolatiers* trying to (re) construct their artisanal occupation and product as more authentic, genuine and traditional vis-à-vis other European chocolate and *chocolatiers*. The artisanal food workers recently caught the attention of Paxon (2006) who is looking at the New England artisanal cheese makers and how their work adds cultural value to their products.

All in all, chefs and cooks receive scant attention in the field of work and occupational studies, but lately they have come under the scrutiny of scholars interested in cultural production and food globalization. Food and globalization studies now recognize the role of cultural creation, but the literature is in the nascent stage. As for studies focusing on Japan, the first bricks of the scholarly literature are still waiting to be laid.³

5. Conclusion

This review bears witness to the interdisciplinary nature of food studies. Interdisciplinarity is not only observed across different disciplines but also among the subfields of a same discipline. For instance, urban sociologists have paid attention to the restaurant world, organizational and work sociologists to the restaurant workers (especially waiters), and cultural sociologists to food and cuisine as a cultural object. Thus, in this review I quoted research that was not initially conceived to be part of food studies but is nevertheless important for the field. For example, Fine’s oft-quoted ethnography of kitchen workers is considered part of the sociology of work-studies (1996).

Keeping in mind the interdisciplinary nature of the field, the first and second section of this review show how the sociology of food grew in popularity during the 1990s, alongside research in globalization. In fact, scholars agree that food and globalization are a good match:

The manifold meanings and universal significance of food, and also its concrete presence in human life afford a vantage point to explore globalisation, which is pervasive by its very nature, yet at the same time abstract and elusive. Wherever globalisation spreads its tentacles, food and foodways are major local concerns, providing a basis for the comparative study of globalisation (Walraven 2002, 167-68).

³ Here I refer to academic works available in English. Also, books available in every Japanese bookstore on chefs or sushi chefs, but are popular works.

The third section, organized around the cultural diamond (Griswold [1994] 2008) looked at issues of food globalization in Japan. The cultural object (i.e. a foreign food) can change in shape and meaning upon arrival to a new country. Food is adapted, accepted or rejected into the new environment. Agents of change and adaptation include consumers, sites of production (restaurants), and the producers themselves—chefs and cooks (food workers), although the role played by the latter is understudied. By comparing the literature on cultural objects, receivers, creators, and the social world, it becomes clear that scholarly attention is mostly on consumers. Scholars start by looking at hamburgers and drinks, but they end up focusing on customers. Academic research pays attention to the restaurants, but devote the final conclusions to the patrons. The creator side is understudied in two ways:

1) there is not enough attention to the role the food worker plays in glocalizing and making food acceptable into a new context. For instance, in section 3.2 we saw how new drinking habits in Japan related to the introduction of foreign drinks (Smith 1992). However, we don't know how bartenders might or might not have influenced the customer's choice by, for example, forefronting new drinks or proposing another manner of drinking;

2) there is scant attention to the changes wrought by the globalization of food and cuisine in the occupational choices and culture of the food worker as well as the occupation itself. Do chefs, cooks, *chocolatiers* and food workers alike find benefit or disadvantage from the globalization of food, and if so, how and to what extent? How does the globalization of food and cuisine influence their particular working culture? The lives of consumers and workers affect and are affected by the globalization of food. These production side aspects remain understudied in the field of food studies.

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