Dine Local: Analyzing the Practices of "Locavore" Chefs in Alberta

by

Paul Andrew Nelson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

in

RURAL SOCIOLOGY

Department of Resource Economics and Environmental Sociology

University of Alberta

Abstract

Social science researchers have largely overlooked chefs and the role they play in supporting small-scale farmers, even though chefs are often cited as instigating the local food movement. Chefs occupy a unique role in alternative food networks. Their culinary skills and food knowledge position chefs as ideal marketers and advocates for the quality ingredients being produced in their foodsheds, thus providing a nexus for studying the linkages between rural agricultural production practices and urban consumption practices. This study examined the daily practices of chefs in Alberta who procure and promote locally grown and raised food products within their restaurants or food-service establishments. Twenty-three chefs from the Calgary and Edmonton regions were interviewed using open-ended questions to elicit detailed information about the material conditions, the skills and knowledge, and the values and meanings that encompass the "culture" of being a "locavore" chef. This thesis documents the stories and insights of these chefs to highlight the daily practices that these chefs adopt and the challenges they face in sourcing ingredients through non-conventional means. Their daily routines reveal the integral importance of building social relationships with other people within alternative food networks, indicating that building a strong local foodshed requires finding synergy between social and economic goals. By fostering inter-personal relationships with farmers and customers, by sharing financial risks with farmers, and by supporting the scaling-up of their local foodsheds these chefs are helping to build more sustainable and resilient local food supply chains across Alberta.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Paul Nelson. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, "Chefs and the Re-localization of Food Production in Alberta", No. Pro00040690, Aug. 6, 2014. No part of this thesis has been previously published

Acknowledgements

This research project was funded in part by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Master's Scholarship and by a Master's Thesis Award from the Rural Sociological Society.

I would also like to acknowledge the dedicated support, input and feedback that I received throughout the duration of this research project from my supervisors, Dr. Naomi Krogman and Dr. Mary Beckie, and for the advice of Dr. Jerrold Kachur during the design phase of this study. Andrew Hewson also provided invaluable support by helping to identify the sample population for this project.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Imagine a warm fall evening, sun setting as you look out over a picturesque landscape of vineyards winding down towards a shimmering lake. You are seated in the courtyard of a monastery-turned winery enjoying a multi-course fall harvest meal with a group of one hundred other passionate foodies. The chef enters from the kitchen, clad in his pristine white jacket, and begins to describe the salad that was just placed in front of you. It appears to be like any regular salad until he begins to describe a story about the three baby red and yellow tomatoes nestled on top of leafy-greens. He begins by telling you that these tomatoes are a prized possession. In fact, they are in such high demand that the farmer who grows them carefully rations them out to chefs around the region and is actually known for cutting off chefs who do not treat the tomatoes with the respect that he believes they deserve. Intrigued, you bite into one of the tomatoes and flavour explodes in your mouth! Its sweetness and the depth of its nuanced flavours is like nothing you have tasted for a very long time, if ever. You do not realize it at the time, but years later you will recognize that this experience will forever change how you think about food.

This pivotal moment was a personal experience in my own food journey. As an aspiring chef and culinary student, I had the opportunity to attend a culinary conference where I enjoyed this spectacular meal. As a matter of fact, I cannot even remember if those tomatoes were actually on a salad or composed in the other appetizer we were served, but I will always remember that flavour! The memory of this experience remains embedded in the back of mind as a reminder of how food can and should taste. After finishing culinary school, I apprenticed at a top-notch hotel with a premier fine-dining restaurant. I was inspired to prepare and present high quality culinary creations that would hopefully live up to the level of this meal. As I progressed towards achieving my Red Seal Certification, however, I became disheartened by what I was seeing and living as a culinary professional working in a premier kitchen. More and more prepared, pre-cooked, par-baked and processed food products were entering the kitchen, filling our freezers and refrigerators. We eventually lost our in-house butcher, our bakery was downsized and the quality of the menu in our fine-dining restaurant was significantly downgraded. I was struggling with coming to grips with what was going on. Why had I trained rigorously to learn the skills and knowledge needed for cooking from scratch and for evaluating the quality of ingredients that entered the kitchen when now I was using a pair of scissors to open

bags of soup or mashed potatoes and serving tasteless, pale strawberries in the middle of the winter. At the time, I did not fully understand the dynamics of the global food system that was precipitating this trend towards the deskilling of workers and the downgrading of food quality due to standardization and the requirements of long-distance transportation. Eventually I returned to university to gain a better understanding of the larger, systemic processes that were driving this evolution in the culinary world. This thesis project is largely the result of my desire to better understand how certain chefs contentiously and actively resist this dominant food system by seeking to recreate and strengthen local food systems, systems that engender the production of tasty, high-quality ingredients such as that infamous tomato.

Over the past ten to fifteen years there is a growing number of chefs in Alberta that are seeking alternative, local food supply chains to source a greater percentage of the ingredients that they are using in their restaurants. I have dubbed these chefs "locavores" because of their desire to increase the consumption of local food by supporting the expansion and diversification of their local food systems. These chefs represent one group of many that are creating alternative food networks, as opposed to the globalized, conventional food systems. These alternative networks comprise part of a larger social movement that seeks to shorten, re-localize and re-socialize food production supply chains. Chefs, while part of this larger local food movement, remain embedded within a market system that is dominated by the cheap prices, convenience and mediocre quality that the global food supply chains provide. As a result, chefs offer a unique perspective for scholars of the local food movement as they must continually negotiate the impact these factors have on diner's preferences with their own desire to utilize locally grown and raised foods. With this context in mind, this project was designed to develop a greater understanding of how "locavore" chefs balance these often competing factors and why they decide to go against the flow by seeking alternative, non-conventional food distribution. To get to the essence of being a "locavore" chef in Alberta, the following broad research questions were used to guide the development of this project:

1. How do "locavore" chefs in Alberta perceive the roles they play in alternative food networks?
2. What barriers and opportunities do these chefs face when trying to locate and purchase locally grown and raised ingredients?
3. Why do these chefs decide to "buy locally" instead of using conventional sources?

The following sections outline the development of this research project by providing the rationale behind: selecting Alberta as the context for the study, adopting a cultural theoretical lens to analyze and frame this social phenomenon, and using a qualitative methodology for collecting and analyzing data.

Historical Context of Alberta as Site of Inquiry

Similar to most jurisdictions across North America, Alberta is not immune to the productivist paradigm that has shaped modern, industrial agriculture since the 1950's. This shift in thinking about food production and food policy emphasized production yields over production quality (Pollan 2006; Gross 2011) in order to increase supplies, to decrease prices for consumers and food processors and to accommodate increasing consumer desire for convenience (Long 2011). As food quality and the nutritional content of foods declined, governments also took a more hands-off approach, allowing additives and supplements to replace the natural nutritional components of whole foods (Nestle 2002) and increased reliance on private-public food standardization and certification programs (Marsden and Sonnino 2012). Additionally, new processing and storage technologies such as freeze-drying, preserving, and concentrating increased the shelf-life of foods allowing increased distance between producers and consumers, where consumers are increasingly disconnected from farmers and retailers (Halweil 2002; Richards *et al*. 2011). The main goal of these technological improvements and philosophical shifts was to place greater emphasis on increased productivity and profitability via commodity, export-oriented food production rather than localized and regional food supply chains. Canadian federal and provincial governments have long promoted the productivist paradigm that valorizes the continual increase in production yields, in part to secure cost-efficient "inputs" for the Canadian food-processing industry (Epp and Whitson 2011). In addition, agribusiness and agrichemical companies (i.e., Cargill, ADM, ConAgra, Monsanto) have consolidated their control over food production, while giant retailers (i.e., Walmart, Loblaws) increasingly dominate the consumption end of the food chains (Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002; Gross 2011). By vertically integrating within the major agricultural and industrial sectors (agrichemical, seeds, commodities, meat and retail) (see Halweil 2002: 25; Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002) these companies essentially control supply and demand from seed to plate

allowing them to maximize profits while threatening the viability of small to medium scale agricultural production (Lobao and Meyer 2001; Gross 2011).

Social movements, such as "Local Food" have emerged primarily as a contentious stand against negative economic, environmental and social impacts that are attributed to the globalized, industrialized agricultural and food distribution systems (Hinrichs 2000; Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002; Donald 2009; Gross 2011; Richards *et al*. 2011). In response to these concerns, alternative food networks, consisting of farmers' markets, community supported agriculture, or direct farm-gate sales have become the primary unconventional food purchasing options for consumers. The first paper in this thesis, "The Locavore Chef in Alberta: A Case of Situated Social Practice" outlines how chefs play a key role in the local food movement by using their culinary skills to showcase the food products that are being produced locally. Their practices, in turn, spur increased consumption of local foods by providing more options to consumers who seek to circumvent the conventional food supply system or want to support the local economy. Building on this idea, the second paper, "Seeking a Sustainable Food System: Chefs and Alternative Food Networks in Alberta," argues that these alternative food networks can improve the sustainability of agricultural food production. By emphasizing the synergy between social and economic elements within these networks, chefs act as catalysts to improve the productive capacity and productive diversity of the local foodshed. Similar to a watershed, the term foodshed provides a unique visual description of food supply chains by referring to the "flow" of food products from their sources of production to their various destinations for consumption (Kloppenburg *et al*. 1996). Within these foodsheds, chefs are engaged with farmers and numerous other "locavores." By sharing risk with farmers, by promoting local products and others' services and by strengthening their relationships with others in local alternative food networks Albertan chefs are helping to scale-up and create a stronger, more resilient and sustainable food system in Alberta.

Alberta was an ideal case study location for this research project. While Alberta's agricultural history is largely commodity-driven and export-oriented, there are a significant and growing number of smaller-scale farmers who are committed to producing food that is consumed locally. The surge of interest in "buying Albertan" over the past two decades has created an economic environment that encourages more farmers and businesses to pursue alternative forms of food distribution. The culinary world is no exception with more chefs taking up the

"locavore" mantle, purchasing and promoting locally grown and raised ingredients through their businesses. This increased popularity of local foods provided a unique opportunity to explore the emergence and development of alternative food systems in Alberta. As more chefs adopt "locavore" practices across the province, the diversity of perspectives that could be analyzed increases. For example, just ten years ago in Calgary, there were only several food establishments that specialized in purchasing and promoting local/regional ingredients. Today there are dozens. While still a small proportion in terms of the entire food service industry, the diversity of types of businesses promoting local foods has grown thus permitting a broader examination of the practices that encompass being a "locavore" chef.

Social Practice Theory: A cultural lens for understanding social phenomenon

Previous studies of chefs utilizing local foodsheds have largely been economically and quantitatively focused (Starr *et al*. 2003; Curtis and Cowee 2009; Inwood *et al*. 2009). Taking a different approach, this study used a cultural social theory lens to analyze the roles that chefs play within local food systems. Social practice theory, one strain of cultural theory, provided a novel perspective for examining the daily rituals of "locavore" chefs and for interpreting and framing their insights. While the first paper in this thesis briefly outlines social practice theory, the following section provides a more detailed explanation of the theoretical underpinnings of this cultural approach.

Social scientists of various disciplines have grappled with the idea of where the realm of "the social" is situated and how individual behaviours are enabled or constrained within this realm. Classically, two bodies of social theory have placed "the social" at different levels. The position taken by the *Homo Economicus* model places "the social on the level of the intended or unintended product of subjective interests," or as the distribution of values in markets (Reckwitz 2002: 246). In contrast, the *Homo Sociologicus* model emphasizes the norms and roles within a given society that are created through collective consensus (Reckwitz 2002). Both of these classical models fall short in their explanatory power because they treat the human actor as separate from the structures (i.e., markets) or the functions (roles and norms) of society rather than being integrally and recursively related to the enactment and the reproduction of these structures and functions (see Giddens 1984). As a result, cultural social theories emerged to

account for the role that members of a society continuously play creating and recreating daily social life.

In contrast to the two classical social models, cultural theories connect "the social" with "symbolic and cognitive structures of knowledge" that enable or constrain individuals' actions by affecting how they perceive the world around them (Reckwitz 2002: 247). Variations on this cultural model situate these symbolic structures in different locales: culturalist mentalism (in the mind); culturalist textualism (in signs, symbols, discourse, communication and texts); culturalist intersubjectivism (in interpersonal interaction through verbal and non-verbal language); practice (in routinized types of behaviour) (Reckwitz 2002). Each theoretical trajectory offers a unique approach for analyzing how individual and collective contentious actions are enabled or constrained.

Social practice theory emerged largely out of the theoretical and empirical work of Bourdieu (1977; 1984), which emphasized that human knowledge of the world is constructed through practices and is governed by structural dispositions (habitus), and from Giddens' (1984) theory of structuration that viewed practices as a mediator between action and structure. According to Giddens (1984), "all competent members of society are vastly skilled in the practical accomplishments of social life and are expert 'sociologists," in that their knowledge about what constitutes "social life" is not supplementary but rather integrated into their daily patterns of behaviour (26). Cultural theories connect "the social" with "symbolic and cognitive structures of knowledge" that enable or constrain individuals' actions by affecting how they perceive the world around them (Reckwitz 2002: 247). Practice theorists argue that social life "transpires as part of nexuses of practices and material arrangements," (Schatzki 2010; 129) providing visible evidence of human co-production of knowledge through practices such as cooking, child rearing, farming or recreational activities (Schatzki 2001a: 48). This knowledge or "practical understanding" is articulated in routinized practices and it is through these practices that humans find meaning in life (Schatzki 1997: 284). In turn, practice theorists view routinized bodily performances as "the site of the social" in that they provide "visible orderliness" to the social world (Reckwitz 2002: 251).

Practice theory also provides a departure point from the methodology of classical sociology that sought to create grand theories about societal structures (institutions, norms and rules) or societal functions (ideal types). Bourdieu (1977) developed his theory of practice to

escape "the realism of the structure," by reducing emphasis on methodologies that prioritize statistical regularity and the creation of algebraic formulas to explain social order and increasing the emphasis placed on understanding how this order is created through social practice (72). Drawing on Hegelian method, this involved creating a new experimental science to analyze "the dialectic of the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality," or the analysis of the recursive nature of agency and structure (Bourdieu 1977: 72). This is akin to Giddens' (1984) idea that human agents are constrained or enabled by their historical actions while simultaneously creating future opportunities or barriers by their current actions. Thus by analyzing the practices instead of social structures or functions, practice theorists are able to evaluate factors largely overlooked by classical grand theories, the underlying values, human judgments and embodied experience that simultaneously allow unseen societal structures to be simultaneously created and dismantled (Flyvbjerg 2001).

Flyvbjerg (2001) identifies three intellectual virtues - *episteme* (scientific knowledge), *techne* (craft/art), and *phronesis* (practical value-rationality) - the latter of which focuses on variable factors, judgements, choices and embodied experience, rather than on universal rules. Social practice theorists view the phronetic approach as being more empirically satisfying than passive actor theories that prioritize social structures because they claim that elements like human judgment or embodied knowledge cannot be described formulaically (Flyvbjerg 2001; Barnes 2001). By providing thick descriptions of visible symbolic or ritualistic practices, contextualized by the historically and socially conditioned environment of an observed social group, analysis and interpretation of the values and interests that shape and guide these practices can be made, without prioritizing either agency or structure (Flyvbjerg 2001; Swidler 2001; Shove *et al*. 2012). Therefore, social practice theorists shy away from grand, universalistic, explanations of social change but rather treat the practice methodology as a heuristic device for seeing and analyzing social phenomenon (Reckwitz 2002; Schatzki 2001). The phronetic method also employs a subject-centered, dialogical approach, since it's goal "is to produce input to the ongoing social dialogue and praxis in a society, rather than to generate ultimate, unequivocal verified knowledge" (Flyvberg 2001: 139). Ultimately, the goal of social practice theory is to explain how social practices lead to societal change.

In social theory, primacy is often given to the abstract "system" of society that somehow constrains and enables individuals to go about their daily activities. The social practice theory

approach, however, emphasizes the need to understand how "the system" is produced and reproduced and how power relationships within this system work and change (Ortner 1984; Flyvbjerg 2001). Through practices, individual practitioners position themselves politically within the social system by reproducing specific schemas, structures of meaning and social order that have intentional and often unintentional political consequences (Ortner 1984; Barnes 2001; Shove *et al*. 2012). Rules and available resources continually evolve as the result of daily practices, allowing groups of people to use the system for their own advantage or to favour particular practices and define societal norms according to their "culture." Practitioners adopt practices that conform with how they understand the world and themselves, whether these practices adhere to imposed societal norms or are positioned in opposition to those norms (Reckwitz 2002). In this way, cultures constrain action through the imposition of frameworks that define "what is normal" and enable action by providing external systems of meaning that empower people, allowing them to think, to communicate and to organize themselves politically (Ortner 2006).

Understanding how and why particular practices are chosen and how these practices are put into action involves an examination of the embodied knowledge and practical understanding that practitioners attain through practice. Inspired by the philosophical work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Theodore Schatzki (1997) developed a social practice framework for understanding the simultaneous organization and governing of practices involving three components: practical understanding, explicit rules, and teleoaffectivity (300). First, as individuals adopt a practice, learning the skills and knowledge required for performance and its underlying meanings and values, they develop a practical understanding of that practice. In other words, they acquire embodied knowledge through experience because "a social practice is the product of training the body," in which they "learn to be bodies in a certain way" (Reckwitz 2002). Over time, this practical/embodied knowledge becomes so engrained that they no longer consciously think about the activities they are doing but rather their performances of practices reflect who they are as human beings. As practices are embodied, explicit rules may become implicit or invisible to practitioners because they now reflect how practitioners view the world and understand external events, objects and persons (Schatzki 1997). These rules become normalized because they adhere to "past regularities of action," specify how "correct" actions should turn out, and influence future courses of action (Schatzki 1997: 301-302). Akin to

Bourdieu's concept of habitus, practices involve an element that Schatzki (1997) borrows from Wittgenstein called teleoaffectivity, or "orientations towards ends and how things matter" (302). As a practice evolves, it determines what actions are acceptable based on whether they adhere to the understandings, observe the rules, and express "the range of right and acceptable orders of life conditions" that comprise that practice (Schatzki 1997: 304). These cultural "norms" or habitus evolve under specific social and historical contexts and thus localized or situated practices are usually examined to understand how and why particular practices take hold while others do not.

Practices cannot exist as passive entities. They must be enacted but this enactment occurs under localized, situated conditions meaning that practices can emerge and evolve in slightly different ways depending on the local context (Røpke 2009). For example, although driving motorized vehicles has largely been adopted around the world, there are many variations to this practice such as which side of the road to drive on, or who has right of way in traffic. As new technologies (i.e. seatbelts, signal lights, GPS) and knowledge (i.e. impact of distractions or alcohol on driving performance) develop, the practice of driving continues to evolve but also retains situational differences (See Shove *et al*. 2012 for detailed discussion of the evolution of driving as a social practice). Local struggles over what practices are adopted and how they evolve also occur as people position themselves within the larger historical, cultural and political-economic context of their society (Holland and Lave 2009). Collective local practices and contentious struggles occur as people respond to each others' enactment of cultural activities, providing the opportunity to examine local micropractices that may reveal "the Great within the Small and vice versa" (Holland and Lave 2009; Flyvbjerg 2001: 134). For instance, observing shopping behaviours at a local farmers' market can reveal detailed, specific information about how particular behaviours evolved in those local conditions while at the same time provide a more general picture of shopping practices at any farmers' market. Under the context of economic globalization, many current collective struggles surround the impact of late modern capitalism on practices involving the production and consumption of goods, on traditional or indigenous practices, on gendered practices, or on practices that run counter to the pursuits of corporate capitalism (Ortner 2006; Dupuis *et al*. 2006). In turn, practice theory offers an ideal framework for analyzing these collective actions.

Collective action and practice theory infer that contentious action and social practices are not done in isolation but rather by groups or communities of people. As such, a parallel theoretical approach to social practice theory is actor-network theory (ANT). Many academics studying alternative and localized food networks have used ANT to inform their understanding of how these networks are established and evolve (see Beckie *et al*. 2012; Lockie 2002; Goodman 2002 for examples). Actor-network theory adds to the breadth of analysis that social practice theory provides because it emphasizes the importance of the relationships or links between different nodes (actors) within these networks (Lockie 2002). While sometimes ANT's inclusion of non-human elements (i.e., other material entities like food) in network analysis becomes a key focus of debate (Latour 2005; Passoth and Roland 2010), a key benefit for using the ANT approach lies in its definition of the social. It takes a "radically relational" view, entailing that it is the relationships between entities within networks that actually allow humans to act (Lockie 2002). So while social practice theory provides a framework for understanding individual behaviours that are shared by a collective, ANT forces the researcher to examine how these practices are adopted and how they evolve through interactions within interpersonal, social networks.

Rationale for Adopting a Social Practice Approach

During the design phase of this research project, it was evident early on that a cultural angle would be an appropriate and unique approach for answering questions about how and why certain chefs decide to procure and promote local foods as an alternative to using conventional food supply chains. There are many cultural elements such as values, meanings, situated ways of behaving, discourses and symbolic rituals that are tied to how we eat, so adopting a cultural lens to study the ways that chefs understand and enact their culinary skills was a natural fit. As the design stage progressed it became clear that one particular cultural-social theory approach was well suited for this project, social practice theory. In particular, I adopted a social practice analytical framework that had just recently been published by Elizabeth Shove and her colleagues.

Elizabeth Shove, Mika Pantzar and Matt Watson (2012) wrote about their framework for analyzing social practices in their book *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and How It Changes*. Building primarily on the theoretical works of Schatzki and Reckwitz, they

argue that any social practice in comprised of three foundational elements: materials, competence and meaning. First, the material elements ("*what*") are the "objects, infrastructures, tools, hardware and the body itself that constrain or enable practitioners to act (Shove *et al*. 2012: 23). Second, competence ("*how*") refers to the mental understandings and practical skills that are required to be able to perform a practice (Shove *et al*. 2012). Finally, meaning ("*why*") is comprised of "the social and symbolic significance of participation [in a practice] at any one moment" (Shove *et al*. 2012: 23).

This framework was essential for guiding all stages of this project. In creating and revising interview questions, this simple approach to understanding a situated practice like cooking focused my attention on the material constraints of the local food system, the skills and background knowledge that chefs need to navigate that system and the underlying values that motivate them to adopt "locavore" practices. During the interviews, this framework guided how I would probe and direct participants to delve deeper into the *what's*, *how's*, and *why's* of their daily culinary lives. While transcribing and analyzing the interviews, this framework also guided how I thematically coded the interviews, beginning with Shove *et al.*'s three elements as broad categories and then "coding-on" into more narrow sub-categories. Finally, the first paper of this thesis, "The Locavore Chef in Alberta: Situated Social Practice," follows this framework using rich description to illustrate what it is like to be a chef who has adopted a particular set of practices that push the normative boundaries of our current globalized food system.

This project offers a unique and original perspective for analyzing local food movements for several reasons. First, and foremost, few other studies have actually analyzed the roles that chefs play in local food movements. As will be demonstrated in this thesis, chefs not only participate in these social movements but play a prominent role in expanding social networks and pushing innovations that are necessary to increase the economic and social sustainability of local food systems. Second, the cultural approach of this research offers unique, detailed insight about how and why chefs adopt "locavore" practices. Previous studies conducted in the United States (Starr *et al*. 2003; Curtis and Cowee 2009; Inwood *et al*. 2009) primarily used quantitative methods and economic foci to understand the amount of local foods that chefs were purchasing and the barriers to those purchasing decisions. In contrast, while the information gathered in this study compliments the findings of these previous studies, it goes further by offering a much more detailed picture of what is involved in adopting a local mindset while sourcing and cooking food

commercially. This is largely the result of using a cultural lens to guide this project, a lens that emphasizes the collective, symbolic and cognitive structures of knowledge that influence behaviour rather than an economic lens that tends to emphasize individualistic, rational action.

The second paper in this thesis, "Seeking a Sustainable Food System: Chefs and Alternative Food Networks in Alberta," compliments the first paper by using literature on alternative food networks along with an actor-network-theory approach to explain how social elements work in synergy with economic elements to build a more resilient, sustainable food system. While economic sustainability is still a foundational concern for both chefs and farmers, by harnessing the power of their social networks, they are able to improve their economic security. The synergy that appears to exist between the social and economic elements of these alternative food networks was revealed largely through the cultural analysis of the social practices of chefs. Farmers and other food producers and processors were not interviewed for this project so these findings are exclusively the chefs' perceptions of how these networks function. This does not, however, invalidate the importance of their perspectives. The choice to use qualitative interviews to record these perspectives resulted in detailed, rich descriptions of the lives of "locavore" chefs, a perspective that augments the more quantitative findings of previous studies.

A Qualitative Approach to Understanding the Culinary World

My cultural theoretical framework to examine the social practices of chefs was well suited for adopting a qualitative methodology, using interviews as the primary method of data collection. In hindsight, Bent Flyvbjerg's (2001) phronetic approach to social science research captures the essence of what this study attempted to accomplish, which was to uncover the "ongoing social dialogue and praxis" that is informing and reforming the food supply chains in Alberta (139). In-depth, conversational interviews were an appropriate choice as the primary data collection method because the goal of this study was to discover the *how's* and *why's* behind chefs' "locavore" practices (Denzin and Lincoln 2005). Unlike quantitative methods, such as surveys, that usually provide aggregate statistics of the *what's* behind a social phenomenon, qualitative interviews offer research participants the opportunity to express the stories of their own experiences with that phenomenon (Merriam 2002). In turn, this project was designed to give voice to the chefs involved, allowing them to share their own perspectives and stories of how

they saw the local food system evolving and how they positioned themselves within that larger system.

As the primary investigator in this study, my former life as a cook also gave me an "insider" perspective while conducting these interviews. Gaining an insider's position is common with ethnographic and anthropologic studies, often entailing that fieldworkers spend months or years "infiltrating a group" to gain that perspective (Findlay 2002). Already having worked for years in the industry prior to conducting this study was beneficial for several reasons. First, I understood the jargon, behavioural nuances and challenges of working in the hectic environment of commercial kitchens. During interviews, this gave me an advantage over "outsiders" because I did not need particular terms or behaviours explained but rather could use my understanding of these elements to probe for deeper meanings and perspectives. For example, using secondary cuts, primals, or whole animals is a common practice in "locavore" kitchens so having professional culinary training and experience butchering was beneficial for engaging in discussions about how these chefs deal with the added costs associated with locally raised livestock. Second, my "insider" position helped me to create an atmosphere for the interviews that was conversational by drawing on similar shared experiences to engage and allow the chefs to feel at ease sharing their stories.

One of the drawbacks of having an insider position is reliability and the apparent lack of objectivity it engenders. Reflexivity is cited as a key way to allow researchers adopting "subjectivist" and "constructivist" theoretical research methods to increase the "objective" validity of their findings (Gubrium and Holstein 2002; Findlay 2002). These "constructivist" approaches assume that research is never truly objective but rather the "data" found within interviews is co-constructed between the researcher and the research participants (Gubrium and Holstein 2002). To maintain reliability, the researcher must then be reflexive by recognizing his or her biases and critically evaluating his or her position as a researcher throughout the various stages of the research process (Findlay 2002). For this project, this reflexive process was recorded in a field journal where research decisions and changes of trajectory were documented during the interview design stage, following the initial interviews as the interview guide was adjusted, and during the analysis stage as key themes emerged to become the foci for the final thesis.

Both papers in this thesis "The Locavore Chef in Alberta: Situated Social Practice" and "Seeking a Sustainable Food System: Chefs and Alternative Food Networks in Alberta" outline the logistics of the methods used and the demographics of those chefs involved in the project. Overall, 23 chefs participated in this project representing seven types of food service businesses (see Appendix A). They were purposively selected to participate based on their visible adoption of "locavore" practices (i.e. menus that promote local, public reputation of serving local foods) or by referral from other chefs. One former chef, and current culinary instructor in Calgary, acted as an industry insider to help identify and contact potential participants. A snowball approach was used following the initial selection of participants by asking each participant to refer other chefs who exemplified "locavore" practices. All of the interviews were conducted between September 2013 and November 2013, limiting the possibility of interviewing every chef selected as ideal candidates for the project. This sample, however, is representative of the "locavore" chef community in Alberta and spans many of the types of food service outlets that regularly incorporate "locavore" practices in their businesses. Finally, an interview question guide (Appendix B) was used as a flexible framework for each interview, allowing the chefs to elaborate in different areas depending on their interests and on the context of their own businesses.

Summary of Findings

The core findings of this research project are documented in the two following papers that were purposively written to be submitted for publication in academic, peer-reviewed journals. "The Locavore Chef in Alberta: Situated Social Practice," explores the social practices of chefs by highlighting the *what's*, *how's*, and *why's* of being a "locavore" chef in Alberta. This paper analyzes the material conditions that constrain and enable these chefs to procure and utilize locally produced ingredients, the skills and knowledge that are needed to competently run a locally-focused kitchen, and the values and meanings that underlie their choice to become "locavores." The key intent of this paper is to provide an "insider's" perspective on what it is like to be within this "sub-culture" of the culinary world and to illustrate how chefs are re-envisioning and reorganizing the local foodsheds in Alberta. Building on this idea, the second paper "Seeking a Sustainable Food System: Chefs and Alternative Food Networks in Alberta" presents the argument that the social nature and relational elements of alternative food networks

augment economic factors to increase the capacity, resilience and sustainability of local food systems. Through the fostering of inter-personal relationships with farmers and customers, by sharing financial risks with farmers, and in pushing and supporting the scaling-up of local food production, chefs are working alongside many other Albertans to create a local food system for the benefit of all Albertans now and into the future.

Chapter 2: The "Locavore" Chef in Alberta: A Situated Social Practice Analysis

Alternative food movements, such as "Local Food," and "Slow Food," have emerged in recent decades in response to problems associated with the industrial, conventional agriculture and food provisioning systems including, food safety issues, declining nutritional and sensual qualities of industrially produced foods, and the environmental and ethical externalities associated with industrialized food production (Hinrichs 2000; Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002; Donald 2009; Gross 2011; Richards *et al*. 2011). Not unlike other North American jurisdictions, small and medium-scale farmers in Alberta have suffered as the result of the prevalence of the productivist ideology. Over the past 50 years, the number of farms in Alberta dropped from 73,212 to 43,234 (40.9% decrease) while average farm sizes increased from 261 hectares to 473 hectares (81.1% increase) (ARD 2013: 130). Although 63% of the farms in Alberta are small to medium sized (20 to 453 ha), nearly 20% of farms in Alberta are now over 648 ha (~ 10 quarter sections) (ARD 2013: 130). These large farms in Alberta include a percentage (10.3% of total farms in Alberta) that reported gross farm receipts of $500,000 Cdn. or greater in 2011, which comprised 70.6% of the total farm receipts reported in Alberta for that year (Statistics Canada 2012). This disparity between large and small operators aside, debt levels across all farming families in Alberta have increased three fold over the past 30 years, largely due to equipment and input costs (ARD 2013: 31-32). Although farm bankruptcies have significantly dropped since the 1990's (avg. of 67/yr, 1993-1999; avg of 16/yr, 2000-2012), 52% of farm operators supplement their incomes with off-farm work (ARD 2013: 129).

Similar to the United States, agriculture policy in Canada has taken a productivist approach, focusing on securing cost-efficient "inputs" for the Canadian food-processing industry by promoting export-oriented commodity crop production (Epp and Whitson, 2001). As neo-liberal economic ideology took hold in Canadian politics, the abandonment of producer subsidies, the privatization of grain-handling facilities, and the dismantling of certain supply-management programs occurred in favour of allowing the "market" to decide (Lawrence *et al*. 2001). Driving through rural Alberta, it is now commonplace to see signboards for agribusiness and agrichemical companies advertising the seed, fertilizer, herbicide and pesticide inputs that allow intensive, commodity production to occur (Epp 2001). In addition, government policies such as the "Alberta Advantage," which encourages foreign investment with low taxation rates

and decreased public expenditures (Epp 2001), and the Alberta Industrial Heartland (AIH) proposal, which favors Oil and Gas development and urban expansion over preserving farmland, illustrate the dominance of neo-liberal thinking in Alberta politics, to the detriment of small and medium-scale agriculture (Epp 2001; Masuda and Garvin 2008).

Contrary to the productivist approach of large scale, export-oriented agriculture, there has been a surge of interest in Alberta for locally grown and raised products over the past few decades. This increased demand spawned a resurgence of farmers' markets across the province, encouraging increased production of fruits and vegetables in suitable growing "belts" of land across the province and in greenhouse operations (Beckie *et al*. 2012). A study conducted by Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) in 2013, reported that average household expenditures at farmers markets increased from $317/yr (Can.) in 2004 to $617/yr (Can.) in 2012, and that the economic value of farmers' markets across the province was $724M (Can.) from Sept. 2011 to Aug. 2012 (ARD 2013a).

Studies analyzing the "local" turn in public perceptions and behaviours towards purchasing food products tend to focus on the two end points of food supply chains, the farmer and the individual consumer. Few studies have analyzed the role that chefs played and continue to play in these "local" movements and alternative food supply chains, even though the emergence of the "local food" movement in North America is largely credited to the pioneering culinary exploits of Californian chefs Alice Waters and Jeremiah Tower in the early 1970's (Guthman 2003; Starr et al. 2003). These studies revealed, however, that chefs' knowledge of food production practices influences their decisions to purchase locally (Curtis and Cowee 2009) and that although chefs generally value the high quality food products that local farmers can produce, they are often at odds with farmers in terms of the volume and consistency of these products (Starr *et al*. 2003). Additionally, Inwood *et al*.'s (2009) study found that the "participation of chefs in the larger local food movement does not necessarily alight them with the ecological and social justice themes of the broader agri-food movement" (190).

In response, this study was designed to analyze the "local" focused practices of chefs in Alberta from a cultural perspective. The increasing public interest for purchasing "local," coupled with an influx of a more cosmopolitan population and the robust economy of Alberta driven by oil and gas and other resource-based industries, has increased the possibility of success for "locally" focused restaurants in Alberta's two largest cities, Calgary (population of 1.2M in

2011) and Edmonton (1.16M) (Statistics Canada 2012a). Complimenting the other studies focused on chefs and local food, this project qualitatively analyzes the social practices of chefs who dedicate themselves to utilizing and promoting locally sourced ingredients in their kitchens. This cultural approach is unique in that it gives a more detailed picture of *what* enables and constrains chefs' abilities to use local products daily, *how* they negotiate this alternative approach to cooking, and ultimately *why* they choose to be "locavore" chefs. The consumptive "turn" towards buying local food in Alberta provided an ideal case study for analyzing the role of chefs in alternative food movements because they are forced to continually negotiate a local food system that while having significantly improved over the past ten years is still fledgling.

This paper outlines the key findings of this project through a social practice lens. My intent is to provide a detailed description of what it is like to be a "locavore" chef in Alberta. The methodology and methods section explains the rationale behind the selection of certain chefs to participate in this project while the results and discussion sections are combined into a narrative exposé that gives voice to these chefs' perspectives on the local food system in Alberta. I begin, however, with an explanation of the cultural framework employed in this analysis: social practice theory.

A Cultural Approach to Analyzing Social Movements

Social movements, such as the local food movement, are generally viewed as a form of "contentious politics" in which groups of people collectively challenge any aspect of the status quo in their society (Staggenborg 2008). In other words, these movements must involve multiple episodes of collective action or continual collective action against an opponent's position. At the heart of this contention lies one of the classic dichotomies in social theory: agency/structure. Classical social theory examined "the social" either through rationalistic behaviours in markets, or through the norms and roles within society (Reckwitz 2002). In contrast, cultural social theories emerged to account for the role that members of a society continuously play in creating and recreating daily social life.

One strain of cultural theory, practice theory, views "the social" as a "field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings" rather than other cultural accounts that emphasize the individual, language, interactions or structural social systems (Schatzki 2001: 3). Social practice theorists define practices as

"routinized way[s] in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood" (Reckwitz 2002: 250). Routines are viewed as collective, not individual, as they must be shared, emphasizing the "collective accomplishment" of a group where these routines become the visible signs of what is considered culture (Barnes 2001: 23). Unlike shared habits where independent individuals are oriented towards a collective object, with routinized practices individuals are oriented towards each other, collectively coordinating and aligning their behaviours (Barnes 2001). In doing so, these routine bodily activities evolve to become unconscious and automatic, where practices become performances of actions that reflect a particular culture and follow a more or less visible logic (Swidler 2001; Shove *et al*. 2012). Over time, this logic structures a given practices' actions according to sets of rules and resources, defining what actions are considered appropriate or inappropriate for that practice (Schatzki 1997: 291).

During the performance of practice, internal "monitoring" occurs to provide practitioners with instant or delayed feedback about their performance (Shove *et al*. 2013: 99). Practices often involve extensive coordination between individuals, such as playing a team sport, where practitioners provide various verbal or non-verbal cues to monitor each others' performances. This also occurs within an individual when feedback from the senses (taste, smell, sight, touch) combined with knowledge of the practice allow a practitioner to evaluate if they are enacting the practice properly (Shove *et al*. 2013). In turn, a practice is reproduced, can evolve, or even devolve based on how monitoring reinforces certain behaviours over others. Technologies also play a key role in stabilizing or transforming a practice (Shove *et al*. 2013). The development of a new technology or borrowing a technology or technique from another practice can also lead to the evolution of a practice. For instance, the gastronomic turn in cooking occurred when chefs borrowed technologies from the science laboratory such as, liquid nitrogen, immersion circulators, and various chemical stabilizers to revolutionize how food could be prepared for and presented to diners.

Building on the work of Bourdieu, Giddens, Schatzki and Reckwitz, Elizabeth Shove and her colleagues Mika Pantzar and Matt Watson (2012) developed a framework for analyzing social practices. This framework breaks down practices into three compositional elements: materials, competence and meaning. First, materials and things, such as other humans, human artifacts, other organisms and inorganic things of nature all play constitutive roles in the

everyday activities of people (Schatzki 2010; Shove *et al*. 2012). Every moment of every day involves interaction with other people, organisms and things, which are the "*what's"* that constrains or enables practitioners. Second, particular understandings, knowledge, ways of wanting and feeling, skills and abilities are needed to enact practices (Reckwitz 2003; Schatzki 2001a). Shove and colleagues (2012) combine these into one category called competence which involves all the internal mental and physical capabilities, or the "*how's*" that are needed to perform a practice. Finally, they define the last element, meaning, as "the social and symbolic significance of participation [in a practice] at any one moment" (Shove *et al*. 2012: 23). These are the more intangible values and beliefs that help explain the "*why's*" behind any practice.

This framework provided an ideal method for approaching and analyzing various practices that comprise the daily life of the "locavore" chef. Food is one of the material entities that metabolically connects humans with the natural environment through appropriation (production and harvesting), transformation (processing and ingestion) and discarding waste back into the environment (Goodman 1999; Røpke 2009). All humans first encounter food as a consumer but by adopting various practices over time some become producers and/or processors of food. For chefs, as primarily processors of food, these practices evolve through formal or informal education, experiences inside and outside the kitchen, interactions with other chefs, and developing their own culinary philosophies. In addition, *what* materials and conditions they encounter on a daily basis, *how* they use various competencies to be successful and *why* they choose to cook for a living all impact whether or not they decide to adopt "locavore" practices.

Choosing to source food locally often involves increased time commitments, negotiating directly with farmers and competing with other chefs, and the consuming public, for the limited amounts of ingredients available in the local food supply chains. Although several supply chain studies were conducted recently in Alberta, Canada (Faye 2011; Lipton and Spyce 2011; Frick *et al*. 2012), they tended towards economic analyses or were specific to certain food product sectors. In contrast, the use of a cultural lens to analyze and present the data collected in this study is intended to provide a deeper understanding of how the decisions and actions of "locavore" chefs in Alberta reach beyond pure economic rationality. Rather, quality ingredients, social connectedness and shared values lie at the heart of their choice to source food through local, alternative food networks. As such, this study was designed to get to the core of what it means to be a "locavore" chef.

Methodology and Methods

Due to the fact that very few studies have looked at the role that chefs play in the local food movement, this study used qualitative, in-depth interviews to gather rich, detailed descriptions about the daily practices of chefs. The two major cities in Alberta, Calgary and Edmonton were chosen for this study as their population levels (1.21M and 1.16M respectively, 2011 census) make them the most conducive for supporting a wide range of food service businesses (Statistics Canada 2012a). A total of twenty-three chefs participated in this study, twelve from Calgary, nine from Edmonton and two from communities proximal to Edmonton. Chefs were contacted purposively for this study based on the criteria that they promoted their restaurants as "local food" focused (ie. website, menu, advertising), or were referred as ideal candidates by other chefs. In Calgary, an industry insider was approached prior to initiating the project to act as a consultant for designing the interview questions and to help locate ideal participants. In Edmonton, the first chefs that agreed to be interviewed were identified via their promotional material, as mentioned above, and then snowball techniques were used to identify the others. Chefs were also purposively selected based on the types of food service businesses they operate in order to provide as wide a variance of business environments as possible. The spectrum of environments included low volume (below 75 seats) to high volume (75 or more seats), casual/family to fine dining atmosphere, and independently run to corporately operated. The types of food service businesses included restaurants, private clubs, catering companies, food trucks, and institutional operations. Nine of the twenty-three chefs owned their businesses, seven were employed as executive chefs in their respective restaurants, and one was a corporate chef overseeing multiple restaurants. The remaining six chefs were culinary instructors, all of whom were former executive chefs in Alberta prior to being employed at educational institutions. Each of these culinary instructors were identified as ideal participants because they exemplified using "local food" practices while running their own restaurants and continue to promote these practices in their current roles mentoring and training new cooks.

Qualitative interview techniques were used to elicit in-depth descriptions of the daily practices, challenges, and philosophies of these "locavore" chefs. The interviews were semi-structured and designed to be conversational, allowing flexibility for the participants to voice their stories. The primary focus of the interviews was to gather varying personal perspectives and details so the interview process was organic allowing certain chefs to elaborate more on

particular topics than others. Being an industry insider (the interviewer and primary investigator for this project is a Red Seal Certified cook who worked in hotels and restaurants in Calgary prior to returning to university) helped with the creation of appropriate questions and guiding the conversation during the interviews. Interviews ranged in length but on average were completed in 90 minutes; every interview was audio recorded and later transcribed verbatim. To ensure anonymity, the names of the chefs were changed during the transcription process so pseudonyms will be used when presenting their perspectives, insights and narratives.

The Daily Life and Practices of "Locavore" Chefs

Material Constraints

The first material constraint for chefs, oft cited by the participants in this project, was the increased costs of using locally produced ingredients. Even though increased supply has improved prices for local products over the years, most chefs still indicated that one of their biggest challenges was maximizing the amount of local ingredients in a dish while maintaining a reasonable food cost and menu price. For instance, Edward, a corporate chef from Calgary, explained his rationale behind creating a new menu item: "We're not going to obviously compromise the dish and the guest's satisfaction and our price point because we are strictly local. So I'm not going to say 'Ok we are 100% local but this salad is now going to cost you 35 bucks." (Sept. 18, 2014) Every chef recognized first and foremost that they were running a business. Even the most avid "locavores" interviewed related the struggles they faced when wanting to use a particular product they "loved" but that they could not justify using it from a business standpoint. In their view, there is a threshold price that customers are willing to pay for a dish regardless if it's local, organic, or a specialty product. Dean, the chef and owner of a small fine dining restaurant in Calgary relayed the challenges in choosing between different beef suppliers:

> We use... a pasture raised Angus. So their striploin is $40 a kilogram... I can turn it into a six ounce steak maybe but I've got to charge upwards of 30 to 40 dollars. If it's an eight ounce it's $40 minimum... no matter how many verbs and how you explain it and how great your server is and how much you believe in it, for some people a steak is a steak is a steak. (Oct 23, 2014)

Not only are the ingredient costs higher for "locavore" chefs, but they are also competing for customers that are embedded in a culture where quantity and price are prioritized over quality or other values.

The food service industry in Canada and the United States has evolved in conjunction with the productivist agriculture paradigm to produce, process and retail food as cheap as possible. In this system, the perceived "value" of food is now related to consumer choice and low price, "consumer values" that are constantly marketed to the public by giant retailers in advertising campaigns such as Walmart's "Roll-back" pricing (Johnston and Baker 2005). Individuals have been socially constructed as "consumers," motivated to consume by perceptions of unlimited choice and rock bottom prices (Watts, Ilbery and Maye 2005; Jaffe and Gertler 2006). In the food service industry, this construction of consumers is exemplified by corporate chain restaurants whose marketing emphasizes huge portion sizes and cheap prices. One of the biggest challenges expressed by several of the Albertan chefs was Albertan's appetite for chain restaurants. Jason, an executive chef in Calgary explained the average Calgarian diner as follows:

> Yeah Calgary is a slave to chain restaurants... people will go there because there's so much value. You get so much food and drink for such a cheap price... I look at the price and I'm like 'Wow, my chicken breasts alone would just cost that much themselves!' (Sept 24, 2014)

It is challenging for the "locavore" chefs to compete with chain restaurants for customers since their prices reflect the unsubsidized, "true" production costs of the local ingredients they use.

A second material constraint that affects the operation of a "local food" restaurant is distribution. This is a common issue for any chef who attempts to source ingredients outside of the convention distribution streams (Starr *et al*. 2003; Inwood *et al*. 2006). This is largely the result of consolidation in the conventional food supply chains that allows a few large companies to manage food products from seed to plate (Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002) and the disappearance of small-scale abattoirs, butcher shops, delis and bakeries (Ilbery *et al*. 2004). Large food wholesalers in Alberta, such as Sysco and GFS, are efficient at sourcing and distributing food products at a global scale and provide a convenient supply of ingredients for chefs to readily access. The chefs interviewed were somewhat split in their perceptions of these large retailers, with some chefs indicating that the efficiency and capacity of these companies could help support local distribution while others highlighted perceived dangers associated with farmers distributing their products through these corporate entities. This reflects the cautious approach that others have taken towards scaling up local food systems via companies like Sysco, GFS or Walmart where unequal positions of power can lead to the distributor dictating

production standards, quantities, growing practices and price points that undermine the purpose of re-localizing food systems (Donald 2008; DeLind 2011). Most of the "locavore" chefs interviewed indicated that they still purchased a percentage of their grocery staples, produce and proteins from Sysco or GFS because they could not locate a particular ingredient, guarantee enough supply or find an adequate price point in the local system.

In a direct marketing system, distribution is challenging for a chef and for a farmer as they may farm several hundred kilometers away from the city where the chef work. For instance, Blake, a chef from Edmonton, explained that:

> One of the hardest things for producers is distribution. We are a big province. There are three million people here. I look at some of the farmers I know who go to the farmers' market and it's an hour and a half drive every Saturday morning. (Nov. 7, 2014)

Farmers usually travel to the city to sell goods at farmers' markets or to deliver directly to the restaurants, although occasionally a chef will travel out to a farm to pick up meat or produce. Sandra, chef/owner of a small fine dining restaurant in Edmonton explains the challenge that this type of distribution creates due to the variable diner demands at her restaurant:

> I like to order small... ordering four times per week for example. But a lot of farmers only come into town once a week so you know you are purchasing for the whole week. And you are hoping you are busy enough that you can utilize that product. (Sept. 12, 2014)

In addition to timing deliveries, product consistency must be maintained to ensure that diners are satisfied with their meals. Standardization is a key element that was introduced to the food system via industrialization. As industrial food production and processing practices have replaced traditional practices, a shift occurred towards desiring foods with standardized colours, textures, sizes, shapes and tastes (Murdoch and Meile 1999; Goodman and Redclift 1991). In restaurants, this is reflected by diners' preconceived expectations of how a menu item should look and taste and the economic value that they will then place on their experience. Industrial agriculture has essentially perfected the consistency that the food industry desires by growing plants and raising livestock to exacting standards. For chefs using the conventional distribution system maintaining consistency is fairly simple as the product they order is standardized, however, local foods that are produced at small scales are generally not standardized. This creates complications for chefs as illustrated by the following story related by Blake from Edmonton:

> I think the hardest obstacle for producers is to have a consistent inventory or a consistent volume... Like one time we had these beautiful striploins, nice and big and the next day they were small. You can't do that in a restaurant... it just doesn't look pleasing. (Nov. 7, 2014)

Additionally, ensuring a consistent, local supply is a challenge for chefs in Alberta. As the local food trend has evolved in Alberta, more chefs are eager to find local products but variable consumer demand can create a gap in supply between the types and quantity of food that is being produced and what chefs need to maintain a viable customer base. One Edmonton-based chef, Brian, stated that "the biggest challenge is typically just getting enough supply... typically because farmers don't know how much they should grow or raise." (Nov. 18, 2014) Maintaining a consistent supply is further impacted by the short growing season in Alberta and inclement summer weather such as hail that can wipe out a farmer's entire crop of vegetables. The climatic variability that Albertan "locavore" chefs face was explained candidly by John, an executive chef and co-owner of a restaurant in Calgary, "We had a hail storm on Sunday. There's no local broccolini today. It's all in the compost unfortunately." (Sept. 17, 2014) Although there are many situational constraints (costs, distribution barriers, consistency of supply and quality) the chefs who adopt "local food" culinary practices must use their skills, knowledge and competence as culinary professionals to deal with the challenges that these material conditions create.

Competence / "Know-how"

Although price is key constraining factor for "locavore" chefs, their training and experience as culinary professionals provide them with the skills sets and knowledge needed to balance costs and revenue. A gradual erosion of skills and knowledge, or deskilling, has occurred in the food service industry over the past several decades, however, as "machine-minder," assembly-line oriented cooks continue to replace trained chefs (Jaffe and Gertler 2006). Cooking from scratch, working with whole foods, and understanding classical cooking techniques have largely been replaced with par-cooked, pre-cut, and processed foods. In many food service establishments, scissors or box cutters have replaced chef knives, while recipes are followed without properly understanding the cooking techniques being employed. This standardized, pre-packaged, assembly-line food system devalues forms of embodied and situated knowledge that are "sensitive to local conditions, individual desires and communities, and which encourage people to shift toward a different model of pleasure, value and ethics" (Mikulak 2013: 76). "Locavore"

chefs have discovered that by reskilling and relearning techniques, they can find ways to make more expensive, local foods economically viable in their restaurants. Techniques like canning, preserving, creating sauces, and learning to utilize the less popular, secondary cuts of meat have regained popularity and can significantly improve a chef's bottom-line.

Prior to the emergence of industrial food processing, everything had to be cooked from scratch, and chefs are rediscovering the cost savings that can often be achieved by foregoing processed foods. The traditional culinary arts of pickling, making preserves, rendering fat, and making charcuterie (curing, smoking and preserving sausage, ham, bacon, etc.) are returning to restaurant kitchens. Lori, an executive chef in Calgary explained how she evaluated practices in her kitchen to find where she could reduce waste and save money:

> We make orange juice every day... we now take the oranges that we used to throw away after we juiced them and we sugar brine them. We make a syrup and from that syrup we make our house dressing. So we just saved ourselves $5000 a year just on that alone! (Sept. 23, 2014)

Similarly, Stuart, an executive chef turned culinary instructor in Calgary explained how he recently was teaching his apprentice trainees how to render beef fat:

> For me now it's showing [apprentices] how to render beef fat and then collect that beautiful, white fat and use that as an alternative for cooking. It still has the same value as butter in terms of saturated fat... It has a tremendous flavour. (Oct. 24, 2014)

For some chefs this reskilling involves going back and finding older, traditional cooking techniques. For example, Sam, an executive chef in Edmonton, draws on his Aboriginal roots to look for creative, new approaches for presenting modern, Aboriginal cuisine that is prepared using traditional tools and methods.

The use of secondary or less-popular cuts of meat is another way that most "locavore" chefs cut costs. Secondary cuts are generally less expensive allowing chefs to reduce their food costs while providing innovative, novel menu items for their diners. While these cuts are often difficult for farmers or retailers to sell directly to consumers, chefs can use their experience, creativity and skills to transform them into delectable dishes. The chefs described many different techniques including: using pig tails to create pork cakes, turning the hump of bison into rouladen, and creating numerous preparations of offal (organ meats like heart and liver). Brian described how he dealt with utilizing a whole cow in his restaurant. The cow was slaughtered and the heart, tongue and liver were delivered to Brian's restaurant by noon the next

day. That evening he put heart tartar on the menu and it completely sold out. "So it wasn't even out the animal for 24 hours and we had it completely sold!," he exclaimed. (Nov. 18, 2014) He described how he then systematically sold each section (striploin, tenderloin, etc.) by creating specials that run on his menu. Once one section was gone he moved onto the next. Although this is feasible because Brian owns a small, low volume restaurant, almost every chef described different ways that they used secondary cuts to help reduce waste and food costs. They also recognize how this practice is helping to make the local food system more sustainable as illustrated by Patrick's (corporate chef in Calgary) sentiment:

> We want to see you grow. We want you to be a sustainable business. You can't be a sustainable cattle rancher if you only sell tenderloins and ribeyes. It's just not feasible. So we've tried to find ways to utilize everything. (Sept. 25, 2014)

Relationships with farmers and with customers were another prominent topic of discussion during the interviews for this project. Good communication is a key skill that is utilized by chefs to deal with distribution issues. The first distribution challenge for "locavore" chefs involves finding the ingredients that they want from their local foodshed. As the local system in Alberta has evolved it is becoming easier for chefs to locate products, relying on existing social networks or small distributors that have started to link local farmers with chefs in Calgary, Edmonton and other urban communities across the province. However, for chefs like Marius who were attempting to source local product in the early 90's, these networks did not exist. Marius explained how he would use the media to get the word out that he wanted local products and "if you've got something that you've got to sell come see me and I'll buy it." (Sept. 27, 2014) With the more recent advent of smart phones and other technologies, most of these locavore chefs now use social media to communicate with producers, with consumers and with each other. In particular, several chefs talked about using Twitter to announce when they received fresh product like rabbit or lamb from a farmer and expressed that they would have customers show up for dinner asking for those products. A second distribution challenge for chefs is establishing a good supply chain with the farmers. Henry, a culinary instructor in Edmonton, described the supply chain problem as follows:

> Unless the chef goes to the farmer and says 'This is what I want from you,' how is the farmer to know this is what I need to grow for the chef because this is what the demand is... the farmer grows what he or she can... the chef will sell what he or she can get from the market. So there's that disconnect. (Nov 13, 2014)

One of the ways that many chefs try to bridge this gap is to visit the farms when possible. This allows them to try and understand the production constraints of the farmer and to balance their needs with the farmer's needs. Arthur, a culinary instructor in Calgary described how visiting farms changed his perspective about his relationship with producers: "Before it was just the delivery at the back door and being able to meet the person. But when you get to go and walk the land and see what they do and how they do it, it changes the relationship." (Oct 29, 2014) Visiting farms strengthens their understanding of production practices and constraints in turn helping these chefs to understand and rectify issues with inconsistencies in the quality, volume or size of ingredients.

Several key skills and understandings were highlighted as essential for dealing with inconsistent food products. Most chefs pointed to the importance of establishing good dialogue with the farmers, clearly indicating the specifications and quality that they were looking for when buying particular products. When an inconsistency issue arose most chefs attempted to work with the farmer to correct the supply problem. For most chefs, maintaining a standard product specification is paramount for keeping costs in line and maintaining customer satisfaction, but some chef's, like Curtis, view product inconsistency as a new culinary opportunity:

> I would say local's almost less consistent because all the farmers are trying to figure it out themselves. It's not a big machine and I like that. You know my lamb might be a bit smaller than the one last week... So our food evolves here. It may not look the same as it did last week. (Oct. 28, 2014)

This approach involves flexibility, which many of the chefs identified as a key to their success in the industry. Being flexible and creative allows them to adapt to the surprises they face on a daily basis: being shorted on a delivery, dealing with weather damaging crops, or handling a customer's unusual request. For the larger restaurants it is not always possible, but one administrative technique for dealing with sudden changes is the ability to print menus in house. As Marius explained, "Every place I've worked we do in house printing and I think that's the key... If you're stuck in the old school way of sending menus off to printers... you just don't have the flexibility and the speed to adapt and to change as quickly." (Sept. 27, 2014) Finally, having an expert knowledge of products and a repertoire of diverse skills allows a chef to be creative with whatever products arrive at their restaurant's back door. In the same way that reskilling allows chefs to control food costs, it also provides them with more techniques and ideas that can

be utilized to deal with product surprises. For instance, Jason talked about the multiple ways that he and his staff prepared sun chokes for diners in his restaurant and how they enjoy the challenge that new products present. Jason's sentiment echoes the following imperative for being a "locavore" chef:

> I think that's probably one of the biggest things with working with local [food] is flexibility. If you don't have any flexibility you're going to fail very quickly... You need to know your products... If you don't understand all the different cuts of the animal and [the farmer's] only got secondary cuts and you can't utilize it then it's not going to work. (Sept. 24, 2014)

Meaning/Values

Although material entities explain *what* constrains or enables a practice and competence explains *how* a practice is enacted, it is meaning that aids our understanding of *why* a practitioner may adopt a practice. In the case of culinary professionals there are three main underlying value systems that help to explain why certain chefs may choose to adopt "local food" practices. First, all these chefs emphasized the importance of "quality" ingredients, an attribute they connected with the distance a product has to travel. During the interviews, there was an abundance of stories told that related the chefs' comparisons between the quality of local products versus "global" products:

> We can pick lettuce in the garden, wash it and put it in the fridge. That will last for two weeks. The California stuff? The day you are using it you are picking through the rotten stuff. (Arthur, Oct. 28, 2014)

> Our greens are typically a half hour old when we get them. Like they literally snip them and they are here. So on that side of things I think our quality is way better! (Brian, Nov. 18, 2014)

> I see a massive change in using Mexican and Californian broccolini in the winter months as opposed to the local. Like just how vibrant and flavourful the local vegetable is. (John, Sept. 17, 2014)

> A carrot pulled out of the ground and locally has more flavour and sweetness than one that comes from Mexico and it has been in a truck plus in a warehouse. (Lori, Sept. 23, 2014)

Some chefs also referred to the quality control that local farmers can maintain with their products. Marius explained this "quality control" in relation to a tomato farmer he knows in Kelowna, BC:

> I've yet to meet a small producer that just didn't live, breath and was all consumed... in their products. Most of the time they will not pass on something that they do not approve of. Milan destroys tomatoes that he feels are not worthy to give to you... He understands a little like chefs that he's only as good as his last delivery the same way a cook is only as good as his last plate. (Sept. 27, 2014)

This is not to say that other farmers do not care for their products but rather that somewhere in the conventional distribution chains a product's quality is altered.

While these comments could be construed as reflecting what some call the "local trap" (see Born and Purcell 2006), where "locavores" often equate local with always being better, these chefs attribute the difference they find in the quality of local ingredients not only to the distance the food travels but more importantly to relationships. Alternative forms of agricultural production allow the farmer to maintain control over their production practices and according to these chefs, their connections with farmers and with the land has an intangible affect on the taste of the food. Shawn, a chef instructor in Calgary, attempted to explain this intangible quality while referring to local carrots that had been in cold storage for six months: "It's not about freshness. It's something else. It's that relationship. It's that growing it for flavour as opposed to growing it to travel... It's not fresher but man is it better." (Oct 23, 2014) Similarly, Arthur attributed this quality difference to the relationship between himself and the farmer:

> I think there's a perception of the taste because you know it's local and maybe you met the farmer and there is that intangible... there's a certain energy about the food and you want to believe it's better because it is for this person. (Oct. 29, 2014)

Quality is a subjective perception and for these chefs those perceptions often lead them to select locally produced ingredients.

The importance of fostering relationships with others in their networks was another important value that each of these chefs inferred as an underlying motive for why they choose to source products locally. In alternative food networks there many different links between different people and for chefs these include relationships with farmers, distributors, processors, staff, diners, and other chefs. Many of the chefs talked about how they were not just running a restaurant but rather attempting to build community both within and outside of their restaurant. For these chefs, building community begins by supporting the local farmers. Jason explained it this way, "You support your community... We have to eat their food. The more we support a

farmer the more people are going to want to do it and the more agriculture growth you get." (Sept. 24, 2014)

There is a recognition by these chefs that they play a role in increasing local demand and subsequently encouraging more supply. For them this growth is needed for the local food system to become more economically sustainable. Part of the path to sustainability is creating a culture within the community that engenders residents to support independent restaurants and local farmers. For many chefs this also involves giving back to their communities in various ways, from supporting charity events, to providing meals for families with sick children in the hospital, to organizing events that showcase local farmers and engender pride in the community. Giving back to the community further contributes to the economic sustainability of the local food system: "It's cyclical. It comes down to you support your community and in turn your community will support you." (Edward, Sept. 18, 2014)

The communities of "locavore" chefs in Calgary and in Edmonton are relatively small and so there is a lot of camaraderie and support that they offer to each other that also contributes to a sense of community among themselves. Although the food service world can have a cutthroat, competitive environment, these chefs recognize the importance supporting each other, their communities, and the local farmers if they are going to be able to create a sustainable alternative food system. For instance, Sandra described the local food scene in Edmonton as follows: "I think it really hammers home a sense of community for us. The community in Edmonton is fairly small... [local food] brings us all together for a common cause and we are all doing our best to showcase what Alberta has to offer." (Sept. 12, 2014)

A third motivation that underlies being a "locavore" chef, is a commitment to supporting farmers who share similar values. For many of the participating chefs this referred to supporting farmers who adopt environmental and ethical production practices that align with the chefs' belief systems. For some chefs their passion for seeing transformation in the food production system and in people's thinking about food was very evident in their responses:

> I guess what bothers me is I run my restaurant on social feasibility. I want to make money but I want to do it with an eye on the community, on the planet... This is the problem, everybody, all we talk about is the economy and the economy should support the environment not the environment supporting the economy!... What's good for us in the long term? (Dean, Oct. 23, 2014)

> I see it as my duty to inoculate the next generation with the challenges that they have because our food system is very broken. There's a lot of problems with it and I think moving forward the mark of a good cook is having a very clear and educated understanding of the food system and the problems and the challenges. (Marius, Sept. 27, 2014)

Even chefs who shunned the thought of being called an environmentalist demonstrated their commitment to supporting local farmers that used less chemicals or less intensive livestock practices because they believed that these practices improved the nutritional and sensual quality of foods. Supporting ethical production practices that align with the chefs' own belief systems was an integral part of their cooking philosophies and often played a role in their food procuring practices. For example, Sam, a chef in Edmonton, narrated his discovery of a new product demonstrating this aligning of values:

> Another product I just discovered is Skuna Bay Salmon out of northern Vancouver... the way they raise that salmon... and from the way it came in and the way it was handled and everything, I can't help but be addicted to the way they treated that fish. The sustainability of it all... it was just too easy for me to like! (Nov 22, 2013)

The food production concerns of chefs were not just limited to animal treatment or industrialized farming practices, however, as various chefs also indicated their social concerns about the conventional, globalized food system. Mark, the chef and co-owner of a food truck in Edmonton, displayed these sentiments when he expressed his perception that:

> People are being taken advantage of. The food industry is a massive cornerstone of people being taken advantage of and the lack of cost that goes to the consumer... Someone pays for it by going to bed hungry or sending their kids into a field. It's not a non-paid price and we need to as leaders in this business say 'Enough!' There has to be a better way where the real price is what you pay. (Nov. 12, 2013)

Ultimately, all of these "locavore" chefs in Alberta view themselves as playing key roles in the evolution of the food system in Alberta or even on a larger scale. One key role these chefs play is acting as spokespersons in their communities who push for the development of a stronger local food system. This advocacy role allows them to present a vision for their local foodsheds that aligns with the key values that underlie their choice to support the local food system in the first place: demanding high quality, nutritious ingredients, emphasizing the importance of supporting their local communities and supporting production practices that align with their own social, environmental and ethical beliefs.

Conclusion

The key purpose of this paper was to examine the role that chefs play in envisioning and reorganizing food systems to promote and support localized food production. The social practice theory approach utilized here compliments previous studies of chefs and local food systems but adds a richness to understanding the *what's*, *how's*, and *why's* behind being a "locavore" chef. For example, Curtis and Cowee (2009) found that "chefs who were more concerned with production issues such as certified organic and knowledge of the farmer were more likely to purchase local foods" (31). This paper qualitatively expands on these and related findings, indicating that a chef's understanding of production issues plays into their concern over the quality of ingredients they are purchasing and their belief systems. In addition, while knowledge of the farmer is important, for the chefs in this study, garnering this knowledge by developing and fostering relationships with farmers was a key competence that allowed them to find and sustain their supply of ingredients. Starr *et al*. (2003) also found that there was not a significant difference between chefs who sourced locally produced foods and those who did not for the following factors: "price, dependability, freshness, the importance of quality in purchasing decisions, and seasonal menus" (306-307). Statistically, this lack of significant difference could be because these are key factors that influence the purchasing decisions of any well-trained chef, regardless if they are purchasing locally or not. To augment these findings, however, this study not only demonstrates how price, consistency, freshness, and quality all affect a chef's daily culinary practices, but also how chefs actively work within these constraints. Analyzing how chefs reskill and utilize secondary cuts to augment higher prices, exploring how they develop strong relationships with farmers and use flexibility and creativity to deal with consistency issues, and investigating the perceptions of quality all provide a better understanding of why these factors matter. Finally, Inwood *et al.*'s (2009) study indicated surprise over the fact that few interviewees expressed concern about food miles, specific production practices for growing local food, or social justice. In contrast, food miles did play a role in the purchasing decisions of the chefs in this study, who also invested a lot of time figuring out how the food they were purchasing was grown or raised. This may indicate that increased media attention (i.e. documentaries such as *Food Inc.* 2008; *Food Matters* 2008) over the past few years has increased the salience of concepts like food miles or concerns over industrialized food practices.

While this study provides an introductory gaze into the daily culinary practices of "locavore" chefs, more work needs to be done to better understand how these practices are adopted and how they are evolving as the economic and political environments fluctuate in local foodsheds. Examining how related communities of practice overlap and influence the evolution of the practices in different groups will be important for developing a greater understanding of how the various "cultural" groups within the local food movement are working towards creating a viable alternative to the mainstream food system. For example, while this study highlights chefs' perspectives on how their interactions with farmers influence how they think about food and how they prepare food in their kitchens, farmers may relate a completely different picture about how chefs are influencing their daily practices on the farm. This also applies to chefs' interactions with distributors, processors, and customers, indicating that an obvious next step is to expand the cultural analysis performed here with chefs to these other groups. In addition, the comparison of social practice analyses in different foodsheds may reveal indicators of why certain jurisdictions are more successful at creating viable alternative food systems, beyond the more obvious material constraints such as geographic climates or economic conditions.

Chefs may often be overlooked in studies on alternative food networks because they are embedded in a market-based system that appears to be following the productivist logic that prevails in the global food supply chains. As this study shows, however, there is a group of chefs, restaurateurs and diners who are collectively contending that this system should not be the only food provisioning option available. Chefs are reskilling and innovating ways to reduce the increased costs of ingredients, devising creative ways to deal with non-standardized production and distribution practices, and building networks of relationships with farmers, independent distributors, artisanal processors and their customers to push the local food system forward. In addition, non-economic values like food quality, the importance of social connections, and shared environmental and ethical standards drive these chefs to remain committed to being "locavores" regardless of the material challenges they face. This commitment by chefs to support and push the limits of food production and distribution will hopefully continue to help the local food system in Alberta evolve into a more readily accessible and affordable alternative food supply for Albertans in the future. Understanding how chefs' skills, knowledge and political positioning in society can be used to further the various social, economic and

environmental goals of other food-related social movements will be important for future social changes and food sustainability scholarship.

References

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. 2013. *Agriculture Statistics Yearbook 2012*. Edmonton, AB: ARD.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. 2013a. *Local Market Expansion Project: Alternative Agricultural Markets in Alberta 2012*. Edmonton, AB: ARD.

Barnes, B. 2001. Practice as Collective Action. In *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin K. Cetina and Eike Von Savigny, 17-28. New York: Routledge.

Beckie, M., E. Huddart Kennedy, and H. Wittman. 2012. Scaling up alternative food networks: farmers' markets and the role of clustering in western Canada. *Agriculture and Human Values* 29(3): 333-345.

Born, B., and M. Purcell. 2006. Avoiding the Local Trap: Scale and Food Systems in Planning Research. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26(2): 195-207.

Curtis, K., and M. Cowee. 2009. Direct Marketing Local Food to Chefs: Chef Preferences and Perceived Obstacles. *Journal of Food Distribution Research*. 40(2): 26-36.

DeLind, L. 2011. Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? Or are we hitching our wagons to the wrong stars?. *Agriculture and Human Values* 28(1): 273-283.

Donald, B. 2008. Food Systems Planning and Sustainable Cities and Regions: The Role of the Firm in Sustainable Food Capitalism. *Regional Studies* 42(9): 1251-1262.

Donald, B. 2009. Contested Notions of Quality in a Buyer-Driven Commodity Cluster: The Case of Food and Wine in Canada. *European Planning Studies* 17(2): 263-280.

Epp, R. 2001. The Political De-skilling of Rural Communities. In *Writing Off the Rural West*, eds. Roger Epp and Dave Whitson, 301-324. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press.

Epp, R., and D. Whitson. 2001. Introduction: Writing off Rural Communities?. In *Writing Off the Rural West*, eds. Roger Epp and Dave Whitson, xiii-xxxv. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press.

Faye, S. 2011. *Distribution of Local Food: Best Practices - A pilot project in Alberta's Central Region*. Edmonton, AB: ARD.

Frick, B., G. Vitins, R. Eisen, M. Oleschuk, and B. Lipton. 2012. *Local Food Supply Chains in Alberta: Case Studies from the Saskatoon, Potato and Lamb Sectors*. Resilient Solutions Consulting.

Goodman, D. 1999. Agro-Food Studies in the 'Age of Ecology': Nature, Corporeality, Bio-Politics. *Sociologia Ruralis* 39(1):17-38.

Goodman, D., and M. Redclift. 1991. *Refashioning Nature: Food, Ecology and Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Gross, J. 2011. Constructing a Community Food Economy. *Food and Foodways* 19(1): 181-200.

Guthman, J. 2003. Fast food/organic food: Reflexive tastes and the making of 'yuppie chow'. *Social and Cultural Geography* 4(1): 45-58.

Hendrickson, M., and W. Heffernan. 2002. Opening Spaces through Relocalization: Locating Potential Resistance in the Weaknesses of the Global Food System. *Sociologia Ruralis* 42(4): 347-369.

Hinrichs, C. 2000. Embeddedness and local food systems: notes on two types of direct agricultural market. *Journal of Rural Studies* 16: 295-303.

Ilbery, B., D. Maye, M. Kneafsey, T. Jenkins, and C. Walkley. 2004. Forecasting food supply chain developments in lagging rural regions: evidence from the UK. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 20: 331-344.

Inwood, S., J. Sharp, R. Moore, and D. Stinner. 2009. Restaurants, chefs and local foods: insights drawn from application of a diffusion of innovation framework. *Agriculture and Human Values*. 26: 177-191.

Jaffe, J., and M. Gertler. 2006. Victual vicissitudes: Consumer deskilling and the (gendered) transformation of food systems. *Agriculture and Human Values* 23: 143-162.

Johnston, J., and L. Baker. 2005. Eating Outside the Box: FoodShare's Good Food Box and the Challenge of Scale. *Agriculture and Human Values* 22: 313–325.

Lawrence, G., M. Knuttila, and I. Gray. 2001. Globalization, Neo-liberalism, and Rural Decline. In *Writing Off the Rural West*, eds. Roger Epp and Dave Whitson, 89-109. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press.

Lipton, B., and T. Spyce. 2011. *Local Food Supply Chains in Alberta: Case Studies from the Differentiated Beef Sector*. Becky Lipton Research and Consulting Ltd.

Masuda, J., and T. Garvin. 2008. Whose Heartland? The politics of place in a rural-urban interface. *Journal of Rural Studies* 24(1): 112-123.

Mikulak, M. 2013. *The Politics of the Pantry: Stories, Food, and Social Change*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Murdoch, J., and M. Miele. 1999. 'Back to Nature': Changing 'Worlds of Production' in the Food Sector. *Sociologia Ruralis* 39(4): 465-483.

Reckwitz, A. 2002. Toward a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist Theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(2): 243-263.

Richards, C., G. Lawrence, and D. Burch. 2011. Supermarkets and Agro-industrial Foods: The Strategic Manufacturing of Consumer Trust. *Food, Culture and Society* 14(1): 29-47.

Røpke, I. 2009. Theories of Practice - New Inspiration for ecological economic studies on consumption. *Ecological Economics* 68(10): 2490-2497.

Schatzki, T. 1997. Practices and Actions: A Wittgensteinian Critique of Bourdieu and Giddens. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 27(3): 283-308.

Schatzki, T. 2001. Introduction: Practice Theory. In *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin K. Cetina and Eike Von Savigny, 1-14. New York: Routledge.

Schatzki, T. 2001a. Practice mind-ed orders. In *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin K. Cetina and Eike Von Savigny, 42-55. New York: Routledge.

Schatzki, T. 2010. Materiality and Social Life. *Nature and Culture* 5(2): 123-149.

Shove, E., M. Pantzar, and M. Watson. 2012. *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and How it Changes*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Staggenborg, S. 2008. *Social Movements*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press Canada.

Starr, A., A. Card, C. Benepe, G. Auld, D. Lamm, K. Smith, and K. Wilken. 2003. Sustaining local agriculture: Barriers and opportunities to direct marketing between farms and restaurants in Colorado. *Agriculture and Human Values* 20: 301-321.

Statistics Canada. 2012. "Canola area surpassed spring wheat area in Alberta," last modified May 23, 2012. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95-640-x/2012002/prov/48-eng.htm [accessed June 6, 2014]

Statistics Canada. 2012a. "Population and dwelling counts, for census metropolitan areas, 2011 and 2006 censuses," last modified Jan. 13, 2014. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement /2011/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/Table-Tableau.cfm?T=205&S=3&RPP=50 [accessed May 27, 2014].

Swidler, A. 2001. In *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin K. Cetina and Eike Von Savigny, 74-92. New York: Routledge.

Watts, D.C.H., B. Ilbery, and D. Maye. 2005. Making reconnections in agro-food geography: alternative systems of food provision. *Progress in Human Geography*. 29(1): 22-40.

Chapter 3: Seeking a Sustainable Food System: Chefs and Alternative Food Networks in Alberta

With its efficiency, convenience, capacity and technological prowess, why not utilize the industrial, conventional food supply chain? While this appears to be a simple question with an obvious rational response, increasing numbers of people in North America and Europe are balking at this industrialized system in favour of alternative food networks (AFN's) featuring localized, short-supply chains. Partially in response to environmental and ethical concerns about agricultural production practices and partially in search of social elements that have been eroded in the conventional system, people are seeking out alternative methods for purchasing food be it at farmers' markets, through food box delivery programs or directly from farmers. This movement towards supporting more localized food supply chains is growing in popularity in Alberta, Canada. In the food service sector, there are more and more restaurants that are purchasing and promoting locally grown and raised food products on their menus. Although the rapid increase of localism in this sector may be seen as short lived, findings from this study indicate that "locavore" chefs in this province have been engaged in the practice of sourcing products locally for over twenty years. The recent surge in consumers and chefs supporting local agriculture in the past ten years, however, reflects growth in the capacity and success of alternative food networks in Alberta.

One aspect of AFN's that sets them apart from conventional networks is their focus on proximity and the supposed transparency that results from closer social ties. They have emerged largely in response to the productivist paradigm of agriculture that emphasizes economic growth via export-oriented, commodity crop production and which increasingly alienates consumers from the origins of food products and their methods of production (Gross 2011). This disconnect from the food production process has long been recognized as an inherent problem with the capitalist mode of production as markets conceal the social, environmental, and geographical information and relations involved in growing crops and raising livestock (Harvey 1990). Known as "commodity fetishism," the obscuring of non-economic relations in food supply chains is exacerbated through a "double commodity fetishism" in which marketing "re-enchants" commodities using labels and campaigns that reconnect the product with these non-economic values (Cook and Crang 1996: 132). For example, food product labels will often contain

pastoral imagery, such as a traditional red barn and livestock grazing on lush, green pastures, to convey a naturalistic, nostalgic message about a good's production, even though the product may have originated in a CAFO (concentrated animal feeding operation) or been harvested by migrants labouring under abusive working conditions. In contrast, AFN's attempt to increase the transparency within the food production system, primarily by shortening the supply chain and reinstituting the importance of non-economic values. According to Michael Mikulak (2013), "the ability of alternative/local food movements to effect real and lasting change is dependent on the influence of non-economic values in steering the course of the future of food" (47). Akin to the concept of a watershed, the term *foodshed* is increasingly used to characterize localized food systems because it creates the imagery of food "flowing" from its source of production to its destination of consumption, while re-embedding the food system within a moral economy (Kloppenburg *et al.* 1996; Starr *et al*. 2003).

Although the Alberta government has made significant strides in promoting a provincial foodshed, particularly focused on strengthening farmers' markets and attempting to connect producers with consumers and chefs, it has primarily adhered to the productivist paradigm, emphasizing export-oriented agriculture. Commodity grains such as wheat (2.64 M hectares planted in 2012) and oil seeds such as canola (2.63 M hectares planted in 2012) dominate the agricultural landscape (ARD 2013). In addition, the dominance of the energy sector in Alberta's economy (just over $8 bil. Cdn. in non-renewable resource royalty revenues for 2011) often allows oil and gas and other industrial and urban growth demands to override citizen concerns about the degradation and loss of valuable farmland (Alberta Energy 2014; Masuda and Garvin 2008; Beckie *et al*. 2013). That being said, several different chefs discussed being involved in various initiatives put forward by the Alberta government in which they organized meetings between chefs and farmers to help facilitate purchasing of locally grown ingredients. Despite this effort, each chef indicated that these meetings were largely ineffective, resulting in little to no increase in sales between farmers and chefs. The chefs in this study agreed more widespread communication was needed on a grand scale between chefs, distributors and farmers in Alberta to help facilitate growth in the local food system. This indicates that top-down approaches to reconfigure social systems may be less effective than bottom-up approaches. As the results of this study will show, it is the grassroots efforts of chefs, farmers and many other actors within

alternative food networks within Alberta that have helped the local food system evolve to where it is currently.

This article will argue that the growth, and future sustainability, of alternative food networks in Alberta, Canada is largely due to social interactions between farmers, chefs and the consuming public that seek to strengthen inter-personal commitments, drive innovation, and build community. The selection of chefs to participate in this study and the choice of qualitative interviews will be explained, followed by a detailed discussion of how chefs fit into these AFN's in Alberta using their stories from those interviews. We begin, however, with a brief outline of actor-network theory and how it contributes to our understanding of the evolution of the foodsheds in Alberta.

Actor-Network Theory as a Premise for Understanding AFN's

Building on the idea that the conventional agricultural system obscures non-economic relations involved in the production of commodities, the processes of industrialization and urbanization have also ecologically alienated consumers from the sites of food production. In his observations of the industrialization of agriculture in Europe, Marx recognized that as people moved to cities and were separated from the means of food production they were estranged from their metabolic relations with the land, a relation that was and still is essential to their very existence (Foster 2000). This "metabolic rift" is essentially the product of an economic system that prioritizes economic growth, forcing "organic nature and biocultural systems" such as the entire agricultural system into an economic derangement that is not sustainable (Mikulak 2013: 64). While green capitalism seeks to create a more environmentally "sustainable" agricultural system via technologies or new practices, the growth imperative of the capitalist system engenders increasing levels of consumption of manufactured food while precluding the development of public goods or collective initiatives that could reduce consumption or lead to a more sustainable system (Jones 2011). As such, AFN's seek to reconfigure the system by recognizing "corporeality," or the ecological metabolic relations and eco-social processes that are embedded in agriculture, by providing alternative patterns of production and consumption (Goodman 1999: 17). Actor-network theory asserts that by analyzing the interaction between human and non-human entities within these networks "the social becomes visible," as nature is essentially a co-construction between the material world and the social world (Latour 2005: 194).

In contrast to paradigms that assert human domination over nature, this approach valorizes the influence that the natural, material world has over the evolution of the human sphere. Although this co-construction of society is captured within the metabolic metaphor, analyzing the actual agency that non-human entities have in influencing the evolution of human societies is difficult if not untenable, a critique that is commonly levied against actor-network theory (Lockie 2002; Passoth and Roland 2010). That being said, the emphasis that actor-network theory places on the inclusion of material entities offers a resolution to the nature/society dualism by introducing a "relational materialism" where the social is "radically relational" in that action, intentionality, consciousness, subjectivity and morality all result from relations between entities within networks (Lockie 2002: 281).

Networks, as "hybrid collectives" of people, nature and technology provide insight into ways that humans negotiate socio-cultural, political and natural spheres (Lockie 2002: 281-282). Borrowing again from actor-network theory, networks are essentially assemblages of power relations, where the power exists not within individual actors but rather within the relations that bind them together (Murdoch 2000). By focusing on the relationships between actors rather than the actors themselves, dichotomies like agency/structure, nature/society and global/local become less significant as they are emergent products of relationships rather than deterministic properties of social phenomenon (Murdoch 2001; Hinrichs 2003). This is particularly insightful for AFN's where groups of individuals manage to negotiate the complex, powerful and seemingly impenetrable economic and political spaces of the industrial food complex. By using food as a focus for political, social and ecological contentions, actors struggle to redefine numerous aspects of the food system including quality, choice, access, affordability, and sustainability, elements that have been defined and enforced by an increasingly corporate-controlled food system (Nygård and Storstad 1998; Goodman 1999). Numerous, heterogeneous groups, from proponents for organic production to "locavores" are engaged in contentious struggles against this hegemonic system. Food has become a signifier for resistance against the commodification of objects and people, where political choices about what food to purchase and where to purchase it signifies a shift towards embedding thinking about food in the sphere of interpersonal relationships and relationships with nature rather than in the economic sphere dominated by power and money (Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002).

The emergence of AFN's is largely a reaction to perceptions about the sustainability of the dominant food system. The "unsustainable" nature of the conventional agriculture and food distribution system is attributed to various factors including: increased concerns about environmental degradation, farm indebtedness, and food safety scares (Ilbery *et al*. 2004); resource intensive scale of food production and length of transportation lines (Starr *et al*. 2003; Aiking and Deboer 2004); and undemocratic, international governance systems that prioritize monoculture, export-oriented commodity production (Aiking and Deboer 2004; McMichael 2011). Many concerns also stem from the increasing control that multinational agribusiness and retail corporations exert over food production, marketing and distribution from intellectual property rights over seeds to the choice of products available in the supermarket (Hendrickson and Heffernan 2002; Halweil 2002). Rather than merely "greening" agricultural practices, AFNs call for a more sustainable agricultural system advocate the need for a paradigm shift in thinking about human mastery over nature, an assumption that undergirds capitalist modernity (McMichael 2001). In turn, creative, localized networks of farmers, processors, artisans, distributors, chefs and other individuals have emerged seeking to expand market access to locally produced foods as well as rebuilding the infrastructure that is needed to scale-up the existing local supply chains while providing options for more sustainable food consumption practices (Connelly *et al*. 2011).

Building towards a more sustainable agricultural system begins with looking at ways to encourage more sustainable food consumption and to scale up localized production to increase access and affordability. First, advocates for more sustainable food consumption argue that there is a key difference between *weak sustainable consumption* and *strong sustainable consumption*. Weak approaches remain rooted in utilizing market mechanisms and technological innovations to change individualistic consumption patterns, whereas strong approaches emphasize utilizing social innovation as a starting point for change (Lorek and Fuchs 2011). Rather than treating people as consumers who must be forced to change their consumption behaviours, *strong sustainable consumption* approaches view people as citizens, embedded in a socially constructed food environment, who must be politically engaged at a community level for change to occur (Lorek and Fuchs 2011). Likewise, if changes in consumption behaviour need to start at a community level, then changes in production behaviour must also start at the community level.

One of the key concerns is whether localized agricultural production has the capacity to

significantly change consumption behaviours by being able to offer an alternative source of food that is adequate and affordable. The real question, however, is not *if* it has the capacity but rather *how* to increase capacity? Again this involves a shift in thinking about agriculture by looking at the multifunctional benefits that smaller-scale, localized food production offers, benefits which are not always realized within conventional agriculture. For instance, sustainable, locally-focused farming practices contribute to ecosystem management, landscape protection, fostering and preservation of farming knowledge, maintenance of regional cuisines and cultural heritages, provide labour opportunities, and first and foremost contributes to the public good of the community (McMichael 2011: 805). In addition, shifts in thinking about urban agriculture and urban-proximate farming provides the opportunity for agriculturally-disconnected urban publics to experience how their food is being produced while offering the chance to be involved in some aspect of the food chain: growing, harvesting, storing, transporting, processing, packaging, marketing, retailing, consuming and waste management (Donald 2008). Key infrastructure elements, such as abattoirs, distribution hubs, and an array of retail outlets from restaurants to butcher shops to grocers are needed to support the food chain, providing opportunities for people to be involved in the system all the way from producing food to eating food. AFN's that attempt to shorten food supply chains by emphasizing local production and distribution view proximity as a chance for urban publics to reconnect with largely rural agricultural practitioners. Food localization movements stress the significance of relationships both within the urban community and between the urban and the rural (Dupuis *et al*. 2006). The emphasis placed on the links between all actors within an AFN forces researchers to reflect on the power differentials that exist between urban and rural areas and that food systems should be based on "trust and care" within and between communities rather than on competition and profit (Jarosz 2000; Dupuis *et al*. 2006: 250). It is this relational aspect of community-focused AFN's that separates their view of localism from a protectionist localism that primarily focuses on the economic aspects of "buying local."

While the recent global economic recession has increased protectionist localism, AFN's that envision a more sustainable food system realize that supporting the local economy is only one benefit of purchasing food from local farms. In Alberta, there is an increasing number of chefs who are adopting the practice of procuring and promoting local farms in their food service businesses. Although there are certain chefs, and companies, that have capitalized on the "buy

local" trend merely to increase profits, there are a significant number of chefs that "buy into" other non-economic values that undergird a more community-focused food system.

Following other studies that have examined food relocalization movements in situated contexts such as the U.K. (Ilbery *et al*. 2004), Oregon (Gross 2011); and Edmonton and Vancouver (Connelly *et al*. 2011; Beckie *et al*. 2013), this paper articulates the findings from a study that was conducted to better understand the role that chefs play in local food networks in Alberta. During the analysis of the in-depth interviews from that study, I discovered that chefs' social practices and the networks that they are immersed within contribute significantly to increasing the sustainability and capacity of localized food supply chains within the province and across the western region of Canada. The main emphasis placed here is on the "radical relationality" that occurs within these alternative networks of economic exchange. This paper will introduce how "locavore" chefs' willingness to share risks with farmers, their commitment to social values through building community, and their pushing for innovation in production and distribution practices all contribute towards building more resilient and sustainable foodsheds in Alberta.

It must be noted that I am not downplaying economic factors. The food industry is one of the most competitive, cutthroat business environments that thrives on economies of scale, as illustrated by the continual demise of small family farms and independent restaurants. All of the chefs involved in this study recognized and asserted that they had to be business oriented otherwise they would end up going out of business. As this paper will argue, however, the inclusion of non-economic principles and practices within various alternative food networks contribute to the overall economic sustainability of local foodsheds.

Methodology and Methods

This study was designed to gather detailed information about the daily practices of "locavore" chefs in Calgary and Edmonton, Alberta, the two largest cities in the province (1.21M and 1.16M respectively) and the two fastest growing cities nationally (12.6% and 12.1% increase in population between 2006 and 2011 respectively) (Statistics Canada 2012a). The development of this project drew on the culinary experiences of the primary investigator, whose background as a Red Seal Certified cook in the hotel and restaurant industry in Calgary provided insight into a rarely investigated element of local food studies - the role of chefs. In addition, a chef

instructor in Calgary aided in the development of the interview guide and in helping to locate and select potential chefs to participate in the project. Chefs were selected purposively based on their utilization and promotion of locally sourced ingredients in their restaurants and on the type of food establishment they owned and/or operated. Some chefs were also selected based on referrals from other chefs who believed that they would provide valuable information for the project. The selection process also attempted to involve chefs from as wide a range of food service establishments as possible. In total, twenty-three chefs participated in the study, twelve from Calgary, nine from Edmonton and two from communities proximal to Edmonton. Of these chefs, nine owned their business, seven were employed as executive chefs and one was a corporate chef overseeing multiple restaurants. The types of businesses represented include: independent low (75 seat or lower) and high volume independently owned restaurants, catering businesses, private clubs, food trucks, and institutional operations. The remaining six chefs were former executive chefs in Alberta who at the time of the interviews were culinary instructors in Calgary or Edmonton. These chefs were selected because of their wealth of experience in working to build up the local food system in Alberta over the past two decades.

The interviews were designed to elicit detailed, qualitative data about the everyday lives of being a locally-focused chef. The questions were open-ended and dialogical in nature, allowing the chefs to discuss areas of interest about their local food experiences in more detail. The interviews averaged approximately ninety minutes and ranged from just under one hour to just over two hours in length. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed later by the primary investigator. The remainder of this paper will share their stories, narratives and insights into the local food scene in Alberta, but to ensure anonymity, they have been given pseudonyms and their specific businesses will not be identified.

Discussion of the Local Foodsheds in Alberta

Commitment and Sharing Economic Risks

One of the key ways that chefs contribute to this local food system is through their commitment to source from local producers and to some extent by sharing the inherent risks in food production and distribution with farmers. First and foremost, this involves entering into verbal and contractual commitments with farmers that help to alleviate farmers' worries about being able to sell their products. Unlike selling food at farmers' markets, where vast amounts of time

are consumed selling single units of product, restaurants are a point of sale that can utilize significant quantities of product. For example, higher volume restaurants can purchase and sell entire fields of produce, illustrated by John, a chef-owner of a busy restaurant in Calgary as follows: "I'm going to use 12000 pounds of carrots in the next ten months from one farmer, when probably four years ago he only grew 12000 pounds." (Sept 17, 2013) Although some farmers are reluctant to sell to chefs because it often involves selling their products at reduced prices rather than retail prices, some farmers see the time savings and guaranteed sales as outweighing this price differential. For these direct farmer to chef transactions to be sustainable, however, chefs must demonstrate a commitment to continue purchasing products while the farmer commits to producing agreed upon quantities and to maintaining a quality product. Two of the biggest drawbacks for purchasing local, as indicated by all of the chefs in this study, were ensuring that they could find enough product and that the quality of that product was consistently high. Although not possible for all of these chefs, one way that some chefs worked to ensure quantity and quality was by sharing some of the risk involved in producing the food that they wanted to purchase.

The risks that farmers face when producing food are vast ranging from debt accumulated from production costs, to crop failure, due to the precarious nature of weather, to the uncertainty of being able to sell the finished foods. One way that some chefs have been able to help alleviate this burden is to share some of the risk by paying upfront for ingredients before they are planted or raised, or by sharing the input and production expenses by paying for seed or feed costs and agreeing to purchase finished products. Although this is not feasible for all of the chefs interviewed, the chefs who have entered into these contractual agreements indicated that it was a win-win situation for themselves and the farmers involved. For example, Brian, a chef-owner of a low volume restaurant in Edmonton, described the benefits of this type of arrangement in his restaurant:

> This year I paid for my garden before it was ever planted... the consistent quality and even the phone calls we got from her saying, "Here's what we've got this week!" were phenomenal... I probably put out $10000 in food before we even opened the doors here just because I wanted them to grow this and to raise this and not have to wonder 'Is he going to take this? What's he going to do?'... I won't change my philosophy on that because when you take that burden off of people it kind of shows what they can do with products on their land. (Nov. 18, 2013)

This type of arrangement is similar to the community supported agriculture (CSA) initiatives where individuals pay up front for production costs in exchange for receiving harvested foods throughout a contracted period. One chef, Arthur, indicated that this type of economic model is being adopted by chefs, particularly in cities such as Chicago and New York, with the creation of restaurant supported agriculture (RSA) where one or more restaurants support a farm by providing a percentage of production costs upfront and agreeing to purchase and utilize all the ingredients produced on that farm.

In order for these types of contractual commitments to work, chefs and farmers need to understand the dynamics of each other's businesses. For the chef, this often includes taking time to visit farms or talking with farmers to explain their expectations and the farmers' constraints. Many of the chefs described instances where they visited farms but Andy, an executive chef from Edmonton, shared a story about sitting in the farmhouse kitchen of a local farmer, plucking roosters with the farmer's family for a Coq au Vin dinner he had planned for his restaurant. He indicated how this was a "light bulb" moment, highlighting both the culinary possibilities available when sourcing local products (obtaining roosters in the conventional system is very difficult), while also teaching him about the immense amount of work that farmers (and their spouses and children) endure to provision customers with food. These "locavore" chefs also take the time to investigate and ensure that investing in establishing a contractual relationship with a farmer is right for their restaurant. This careful consideration was indicated by Sandra, a chef-owner in Edmonton, when she described how she would source new products:

> I sort of check out the business history. Check out the owners. I like to speak with the owners. Take a visit to the farm or the plant. Try the product and have my staff try the product. What do you think of this? Let's have an honest feedback discussion about it. Is this something we can incorporate into our menu? (Sept 12, 2013)

Once relationships are established, the networks between chefs and farmers expand as they understand each other's needs and co-promote products and services across their inter-linking social networks. Due to their culinary knowledge and professional skills working with food, chefs can act as a liaison between farmers and the public, supporting sustainable production practices through marketing and showcasing those farmers' products. Several chefs asserted that while local farmers are experts at producing great quality products, few are great at marketing their products, a task which they believed chefs fulfill by showcasing products on their menus and promoting farmers to other chefs and to their diners. Henry, a chef instructor in

Edmonton, indicated that within the "locavore" chef community in Alberta "there was a general interest towards helping farmers to showcase their products because while they are good at what they grow... they don't have the media savvy or the distribution network to showcase the products." (Nov 13, 2013) Often this showcasing of products includes highlighting values that are difficult for farmers to promote, or production practices that are too expensive for the farmer to market. For instance Lori, an executive chef in Calgary, noted that local farmers "have all the right stuff but sometimes they don't have the marketing ability to get it out. A lot of times they have no idea how valuable they are." (Sept. 23, 2013) Similarly, as Brian pointed out:

> Some of these young farmers or small farmers can't afford to do their own marketing... or say how organic they are because they don't want to pay for the [certification]. So I think as soon as you build that relationship with them and you understand where they are coming from and you see their practices then you can really grasp what they are doing as a whole." (Nov. 18, 2014)

For many chefs, like Matt and Rob who operate a food truck in Edmonton, interaction with their diners is an essential part of being a "locavore":

> We get into the reeducation of what food is and where it's coming from and that's why we love being there because we are able to talk to people... We like to spread the word. We like to show people what [food] is and where it's coming from. (Rob, Nov. 12, 2013)

In the same way that showcasing promotes local farmers and their products to the general public, information about farmers, processors and small-scale distributors also spreads within the networks between chefs. Scott, a chef in a community near Edmonton, talked about how using a local butcher actually expanded their business with other chefs in the community: "I'm the first restaurant to use them as a supplier... and because of my involvement with them other places are actually going to use them as well. So it's not only the farmer I'm supporting it's the butcher as well!" (Nov. 20, 2013) The networks within the chef community not only promote local food products and services but also strengthen these chefs' commitment to utilizing local product. For instance, Stanley, a young catering chef in Edmonton described how these networks were extremely important for him while establishing his own company:

> It's huge that I can pick up the phone and call a friend with a question that I have whether it's trying to source something local or trying to figure out a technique... being able to see what my friends are doing, what kind of products they are using... it makes you want to push yourself. (Nov. 26, 2013).

Finally, farmers also promote what chefs are doing within their own social networks. Curtis, a chef-proprietor in Calgary, shared the story of how a new farmer just recently showed up at his backdoor because he learned that Curtis was looking for rabbit from another farmer. Curtis explained his perspective on how the networking between farmers works to promote what chefs are doing and the local products they are looking for:

> Lethbridge [a city south of Calgary] is a big community and they all have the little co-op where the lamb farmer will pick up the pork belly and the tomatoes and deliver all of them at once. They all talk to each other and say 'Hey if you haven't talked to this [chef] why don't you go see him. He might need your stuff. So all the farmers are talking and trying to help each other out too. (Oct. 28, 2013)

Surprisingly, even though chefs work in one of the most competitive, cutthroat business environments, few chefs indicated any hesitation to share information about products and their origins with other chefs and diners. If anything, they recognized that sharing supplier information was a vital step in expanding the local food networks in Alberta and for scaling up local production. While some chefs noted their wariness of more competition for the food products they had taken time to source, they pointed back to the importance of establishing relationships based trust and on remaining commitment to each other as business "partners." Marius, a former executive chef and current chef instructor related the imperative of building relationships while sharing his own experience of putting farm names on his menus:

> It's like putting your products right out there. Which is frustrating because you find this great gem and then three of your buddies come and scoop them up? But it boils down to just having good relationships. That was something that was really important for me. (Sept. 27, 2013)

This relational focus speaks to the importance of "reciprocity, trust, transparency and accountability" as critical components for a healthy, local food system (Connelly *et al*. 2011: 313). By developing personal and business relationships with farmers, other chefs and their customer base, chefs are engendering a sense of community within the local foodshed. In the same way that fostering social ties within municipal communities increases the resilience of those communities to withstand crises, building "communities" within the local food system can improve the ability of that system to handle economic or natural shocks.

Building Community

Time and time again, the chefs who participated in this project emphasized the importance of fostering relationships and building community. "Local" as a label itself engenders thoughts of connection to place, but what it fails to capture is connections with other people that truly lie at the heart of the local food movement. Many of these "locavore" chefs recognized their interdependency with other people within their networks. In particular, several chefs pointed out how they were really in the same position as the farmers they were supporting, just trying to survive. Both smaller-scale farmers and independent restaurateurs face the same economic challenges of trying to compete with economies of scale. For independent restaurateurs in Alberta, there is constant competition from existing and new high volume, low food-cost chain restaurants entering the local market. The primary challenge for many of the chefs running independent restaurants is attracting new and return customers. Dean, an independent chef-owner in Calgary explained this predicament while also recognizing the interdependence of farmers, chefs and diners:

> Customers need to be willing to pay more. Chefs have to be willing to choose the products. Farmers have to look and see the value and the marketability of chefs because it keeps people coming to the farmers' market right? Everyone's got to work together... If chefs can't make the prices happen and if customers aren't willing to pay eventually you've got to stay in business because... if I close my restaurant and I stop producing local food... somebody will just come in here and do what they want to anyway. (Oct 23, 2013)

While staying in business is the bottom line, there is also a recognition amongst these chefs that they are in the same "game" as the farmers; they need to support the farmers as much as the farmers and customers need to support them. Henry, a culinary instructor in Edmonton, explained this eloquently:

> From the farmer to the chef to the server, I think it is a complete circle... I think this [involves] co-dependency where the farmers need the chefs to showcase the product. The chefs need the farmers to keep supplying the local product. And from a consumer standpoint, they're the ones who keep challenging the chefs to come up with more local products. (Nov 13, 2014)

In turn, all of these chefs try to give back to those communities by supporting events outside their own businesses and by fostering an extension of the local community within their own restaurants.

The obvious way that chefs and diners who "buy local" give back to their own communities is economically through the support of independent, locally owned restaurants and businesses and by buying food products directly from local farmers. Supporting the local economy was a common reason given by the chefs in this study for why they decided to purchase ingredients locally rather than through conventional supply chains. Sometimes this rationale was purely monetary in nature, as in Dean's sentiment, "Buy Alberta! It's good for the economy... Everybody buys our oil. Let's buy our own produce. I mean do something positive!" (Oct. 23, 2014). In addition, while sharing his ideas about the term "local," Stanley, a caterer in Edmonton, indicated that "it's vendors and suppliers that are trying to build community in Edmonton and area... or as far as around Alberta. They are trying to build a solid group with products that chefs can go and use." (Nov. 26, 2014) Focusing purely on the economic benefits of "buying local," however, is not enough to create a sustainable local foodshed. According to DeLind (2011),

> As we pursue and define local so wholeheartedly through the creation of new markets, new products for consumption, and a new consumer consciousness, we tend to... dismiss the behavioural, particular, and democratic - the community building relationships and processes that hold people to place and to shared responsibility (275).

DeLind speaks to the need for local food movements to think beyond the purely economic rationales for supporting local farmers, buying local products and dining at local restaurants. I would argue that the community-embedded practices of Dean, Stanley and the other chefs in this study indicate that they are thinking beyond the mere economic benefits of "buying local."

These chefs give back to their communities in a number of ways, from supporting local charities and community events outside of their restaurants to extending the local "sense of community" within their restaurants. It is not uncommon for chefs to be actively involved with charity events, especially because many charity fundraisers involve spectacular dinners prepared by chefs that can raise thousands of dollars for charitable causes. So it goes without saying that most if not all of the chefs interviewed for this project have and continue to be involved in events that support local, national, and international initiatives. For example, many of these chefs participate in Gold Medal Plates, Easter Seals, or Slow Food's Feast of Fields (Calgary) and Indulgence (Edmonton), events that are focused on improving the social and environmental fabric of their respective communities. These chefs are also involved with individual local initiatives, such as providing free meals to families with children experiencing long-term stays in

the hospital. Supporting and building social connections not only allow chefs, farmers and the local community to handle economic challenges but can also help them cope with natural shocks to the local foodshed.

Several months before the interviews for this project began, Calgary and many other communities across Alberta experienced unprecedented flooding as inclement weather caused rivers and streams to overflow. Downtown Calgary and other areas along the two main rivers that run through Calgary were flooded, resulting in moderate to extensive damages to many restaurants in the affected areas. In addition, thousands of dollars of foodstuffs were lost even in restaurants not directly impacted by flood waters due to electrical outages (CBC News 2013). Regardless, mere days after the disaster struck, chefs were arranging BBQ's and providing food for volunteers helping with the cleanup or providing meals for families displaced by the floods. Explaining the rationale behind this response, Edward, an executive chef whose restaurant is located in downtown Calgary, said "It's cyclical... It comes down to you support your community and in turn they will support you." (Sept. 18, 2013)

For some of these chefs, supporting their community does not only involve activities outside of their restaurants but also extending the local community within their restaurant. Many different culinary trends have great synergy with the local food movement from head-to-tail cuisine to the return of simple, hearty, rustic, "slow" preparations and presentations of food. One such trend, the communal space or communal table, is seeing a resurgence in Alberta restaurants with some restaurateurs installing large "community tables" that can seat ten or more people or designating areas where diners are encouraged to share their eating space with strangers. This movement harkens back to notions of the "public house" where members of a community commonly gathered together in public spaces to interact and converse surrounded by food and drink. In his seminal work *Distinction*, Bourdieu (1984) noted the difference between the working-class cafés as sites of companionship between strangers and the bourgeois or petit-bourgeois cafés where each table is separated into appropriate territories, an arrangement that is characteristic of most restaurants today (183). As such, the return to communal spaces within restaurants speaks to a realization by some restaurateurs about the importance of community, even within public spaces that have become "private" as a norm (i.e. separated tables and booths). This communal aspect that some chefs are trying to re-instill within their restaurants is highlighted in John's description of his restaurant in Calgary:

> Geographically we're in a community... So that natural draw is the people in the community... You build that community and you build the relationships with the people within your neighbourhood... Families come in and sit at the rotisserie and they ask questions and they interact and they are part of it. (Sept. 17, 2014).

As chefs shift their focus to building community and their community in turn supports their businesses, the local foodshed benefits. Not only does the local production and distribution system become more resilient to handle economic and natural crises, it becomes more economically sustainable as more people purchase locally-produced foods. This increased demand for local foods, however, necessitates a scaling-up of food production and distribution networks in order to increase the capacity of the local foodshed.

Scaling-up the Local Foodshed

In addition to their commitment to purchasing and promoting local foods, sharing risk with farmers, and showcasing farmers and their products within their social networks, chefs also drive innovation within the local food system by catalyzing changes in production and consumption behaviours. While often not receiving attention by academics studying food localization movements or alternative food networks, chefs play a crucial role in directing food industry practices and in influencing consumption patterns. Diners' appetites are often tied to the latest culinary trends in restaurants, providing chefs with the opportunity to direct these appetites towards foods that are more environmentally and socially sustainable. For example, celebrity chefs such as Gordon Ramsay and Eric Rapare have put their names behind campaigns to harvest seafood more sustainably (Rosenthal 2011; Seafood Choices Alliance 2006). Across North America, chefs have played a key role promoting seafood governance initiatives such as Ocean Wise in their restaurants, educating thousands of diners about endangered fish species. In addition, although cooking shows are now primarily entertainment oriented rather than educationally focused, television media provided celebrity chefs, such as Jamie Oliver, a tremendous platform for promoting healthier lifestyles based on cooking and eating fresh, organic, and even local ingredients (de Solier 2006; Mikulak 2013).

While most chefs in Alberta do not have that same level of platform to influence public appetites, they do recognize the influence they have to shift both consumption and production practices by choosing what products to use in their restaurants. One of the ways this occurs is when chefs increase their expectations of what can and should be served in a restaurant. John

expressed how increased expectations have not only changed the nature of dining out in Calgary but also influenced the nature of farming in the province:

> We are starting to grow up a lot... there are a lot more chefs coming to Calgary that are not from here... they have a higher expectation of what they want to serve... they know what's out there... they know what they believe in. And they are the one's pushing these vendors and pushing their growers to do more and to grow up and to run a business. This is not a hobby! (Sept. 17, 2014)

Certain chefs also work with farmers to develop food products that expand the diversity and quality of what they can supply to chefs and to the larger public market. Blake, a caterer and research chef in Edmonton, works with farmers in the province to research the impact of various feed regimens with different livestock breeds on the taste, texture and overall quality of meat. He hopes that this research will lead to value-added meat products (ie. cured products like bacons, hams and sausages) that might someday rival the great terroir products from Europe.

This passion for developing a greater diversity of locally available foods is a commonality amongst all the chefs involved in this project, however, many of them also recognized the importance of diversification in farming practices for the system to become more sustainable. Patrick, a corporate chef in Calgary, shared his perspective as follows:

> An individual small producer who does one thing is not sustainable... if you can grow one product and find two ways to utilize it or take something else and find another way to apply it you sort of become a more sustainable business. If we can find a way to help a supplier to have the time to broaden their horizons or to bring another component into their business it's just going to make them more sustainable. (Sept 25, 2013)

He went on to describe his visit with a hog farmer who realized that it was not sustainable to only raise pigs. Over several years, the farmer diversified his production by starting a blueberry operation and began composting hog manure into soil that he sold to local landscape companies. This evolution in farming practices is similar to the economic concept of "economies of scope" where competitive advantage is attained by seeking opportunities to utilize excess capacity, or in other words by diversifying production (Panzar and Willig 1981). Many of these chefs recognized that they could support this type of diversification and the scaling up of local food production by supporting these farmers' initiatives and by sharing their own perspectives with these farmers about what the local "market" wants.

Scaling up, without sacrificing the values and practices that set alternative food supply chains apart from the conventional food system is a huge challenge (Wittman *et al.* 2012; Beckie

et al. 2013). For chefs in Alberta, there is a recognition that the local food system needs to expand in scale and scope if it is to become more sustainable, particularly due to the growing demands of restaurants. Chefs like Jason, pointed to the example of Chicago, where chefs like Charlie Trotter, Grant Achatz and Paul Kahan have transformed that city into a destination for great food, but in turn have also invested time and money into the local food system in order to build it to the point where it can sustain their continual demand for ingredients. Although this investment takes time, Curtis illustrated how chefs can influence the scaling up and diversification of production within the local foodshed: "I can give [farmers] a little bit of demand and give them insight. 'If you can't do this can you do this instead or can you start producing something else? Can you get me duck eggs?' And they are challenging it and always getting me new things." (Oct. 28, 2014) Having the impetus to expand or diversify production is not enough for farmers, however, because one of their main obstacles is having the time to investigate new practices, to develop the skills and knowledge needed to adopt that practice and finally to actually implement that practice. Spending time at farmers' markets and delivering food to chefs in cities can take up time that might otherwise be spent on these other pursuits.

One improvement in the local food supply chains in Alberta, over the past five to ten years, is the emergence of small-scale distributors that act as collection hubs for farmers' products and then distribute those goods to chefs in the urban centres. For example, Rudy and Faye Knitel began Galimax Trading in 2001 and currently distribute local and organic food products from a number of farms in Southern Alberta to Calgary, Canmore, Banff and Lake Louise. Many of the Calgary chefs interviewed have developed solid business and personal relationships with Rudy and his business partners, allowing Galimax to expand its distribution capacity. In a similar way, small distributors and processors in Edmonton provide access to Alberta products to chefs in that city, allowing farmers to remain on the farm, doing what they do best. While the scale and scope of the local food system in Alberta has a long way to go, several of the more veteran chefs involved in this study related their perceptions of the growth in the local food system over the years. For instance, Shawn, a former executive chef and current chef instructor in Calgary, emphatically expressed his pleasure of being able to help this system evolve as follows:

> There's so many more farmers that are selling to restaurants now than there was ten years ago. It's been a massive change... because of the support of just a handful of restaurants. I can't tell you how many farmers thanked me personally when I left the

> restaurant for keeping their family on the farm. And that's huge! Talk about a fulfilling career! (Oct. 23, 2013)

As Shawn's elation over this accomplishment indicates, not only do these "locavore" chefs value the increased supply and diversity of products that scaling up the local food system can provide, they also place important emphasis on giving back to the communities of farmers and patrons that allow them to pursue their careers of cooking food in the first place.

Conclusion

This examination of chefs' active participation in alternative food networks provides valuable insight into how local food supply chains can grow in capacity to become more resilient and sustainable. In this case study of "locavore" chefs in Alberta, chefs demonstrate how they are working to expand these networks, providing opportunities for farmers and distributors to diversify their practices. By focusing on this importance of relationships in harmony with running their businesses, these chefs are capitalizing on the synergy that exists between social and economic goals. They adopt various practices such as sharing financial risk with producers, promoting farmers products on their menus and within their social networks and providing their market insight to farmers to drive innovation in production practices and diversification of vegetables being grown and livestock being raised within the local foodshed.

This study was first and foremost an analysis of the social practice community of "locavore" chefs, thus it lacks the explanatory value of a more comprehensive network analysis. Understanding how chefs work together with many other groups of actors within local foodsheds to build viable alternative food systems necessitates a broader analysis of the practices of various actors that interact with chefs on a daily basis: farmers, distributors, processors, customers and even government officials. While only interviewing chefs has provided new and unique insights into the roles that they are playing in strengthening their own local food systems, interviewing these other groups of actors may provide different perspectives on the roles of each group and how they influence each others' positioning within their alternative food networks. Developing this type of comprehensive network analysis was not possible for this project but my future intent is to expand the research in this direction, hopefully providing more explanatory evidence of how alternative food systems can expand and become more sustainable.

In order for local food sheds to scale-up in capacity, to become more resilient to economic and natural crises, and ultimately to become more sustainable, they require more diversified marketplaces and methods of economic exchange. Remaining distinct and "alternative" to the conventional food marketplace, however, also requires investing in non-economic factors. In his recent book, *The Politics of the Pantry: Stories, Food, and Social Change,* Michael Mikulak (2013) captures this imperative perfectly:

> Ultimately, alternative food systems cannot avoid the economic turn. The price to pay is too great in the sense of not being heard by the powers that be... the struggle must always exceed the economic, even while using it. It must always be about the excess, about those things that cannot be counted (130).

"Locavore" chefs represent one such group that is straddling the economic boundaries of the marketplace, a group that is finding a way to make those "excesses" work not just for their own economic advantage but also for the many other "locavores" striving to build stronger local foodsheds.

References

Aiking, H., and J. de Boer. 2004. Food sustainability Diverging interpretations. *British Food Journal* 106(5): 359-365.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. 2013. *Agriculture Statistics Yearbook 2012*. Edmonton, AB: ARD.

Alberta Energy. 2014. Alberta Non-Renewable Resource Revenues. Website. http://www.energy.alberta.ca/About_Us/2564.asp [Accessed May 23, 2014].

Beckie, M., L. Hanson, and D. Schrader. 2013. Farms or freeways? Citizen engagement and municipal governance in Edmonton's food and agriculture strategy development. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 4(1): 15-31.

Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

CBC News. 2013. "Calgary Floods to Cost Economy Billions: Businesses, workers both take a hit from the disaster," June 25, 2013, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-floods-to-cost-economy-billions-1.1365207 [accessed May 24, 2014].

Connelly, S., S. Markey and M. Roseland. 2011. Bridging sustainability and the social economy: Achieving community transformation through local food initiatives. *Critical Social Policy* 31: 308-324.

Cook, I., and P. Crang. 1996. The World on a Plate: Culinary Culture, Displacement and Geographical Knowledges. *Journal of Material Culture* 1(2): 131-153.

de Solier, I. 2006. TV Dinners: Culinary Television, Education and Distinction. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 19(4): 465-481.

DeLind, L. 2011. Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? Or are we hitching our wagons to the wrong stars? *Agriculture and Human Values* 28(1): 273-283.

Donald, B. 2008. Food Systems Planning and Sustainable Cities and Regions: The Role of the Firm in Sustainable Food Capitalism. *Regional Studies* 42(9); 1251-1262.

DuPuis, E. M., D. Goodman, and J. Harrison. 2006. Just Values or Just Value? Remaking the Local in Agro-Food Studies. *Research in Rural Sociology and Development* 12(06): 241-268.

Foster, J.B., 2000. *Marx's Ecology: materialism and nature*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Goodman, D. 1999. Agro-Food Studies in the 'Age of Ecology': Nature, Corporeality, Bio-Politics. *Sociologia Ruralis* 39(1):17-38.

Gross, J. 2011. Constructing a Community Food Economy. *Food and Foodways* 19(1): 181-200.

Halweil, B. 2002. Home Grown: The Case for Local food in a Global Market. Danvers, MA: Worldwatch Institute.

Harvey, D. 1990. Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80(3): 418-434.

Hendrickson, M., and W. Heffernan. 2002. Opening Spaces through Relocalization: Locating Potential Resistance in the Weaknesses of the Global Food System. *Sociologia Ruralis* 42(4): 347-369.

Hinrichs, C. 2003. The practice and politics of food system localization. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19: 33-45.

Ilbery, B., D. Maye, M. Kneafsey, T. Jenkins, and C. Walkley. 2004. Forecasting food supply chain developments in lagging rural regions: evidence from the UK. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 20: 331-344.

Jarosz, L. 2000. Understanding agri-food networks as social relations. *Agriculture and Human Values* 17: 279-283.

Jones, A. 2011. Solving the Ecological Problems of Capitalism: Capitalist and Socialist Possibilities. *Organization and Environment* 24: 54-73.

Kloppenburg, J., J. Hendrickson, and G. Stevenson. 1996. Coming in to the Foodshed. *Agriculture and Human Values* 13(3): 33-42.

Latour, B. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press.

Lockie, S. 2002. 'The Invisible Mouth': Mobilizing 'the Consumer' in Food Production-Consumption Networks. *Sociologia Ruralis* 42(4): 278-294.

Lorek, S. and D. Fuchs. 2011. Strong sustainable consumption governance - precondition for a degrowth path?. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 1: 1-8.

Masuda, J., and T. Garvin. 2008. Whose Heartland? The politics of place in a rural-urban interface. *Journal of Rural Studies* 24(1): 112-123.

McMichael, P. 2011. Food system sustainability: Questions of environmental governance in the new world (dis)order. *Global Environmental Change* 21: 804-812.

Mikulak, M. 2013. *The Politics of the Pantry: Stories, Food, and Social Change*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Murdoch, J. 2000. Networks - a new paradigm of rural development? *Journal of Rural Studies* 16: 407-419.

Murdoch, J. 2001. Ecologising Sociology: Actor-Network Theory, Co-construction and the Problem of Human Exemptionalism. *Sociology* 35(1): 111-133.

Nygård, B., and O. Storstad. 1998. De-globalization of Food Markets? Consumer Perceptions of Safe Food: The Case of Norway. *Sociologia Ruralis* 38: 35-53.

Panzar, J. and R. Willig. 1981. Economies of Scope. *The American Economic Review* 71(2): 268-272.

Passoth, J., and N. Rowland. 2010. Actor-Network State: Integrating Actor-Network Theory and State Theory. *International Sociology* 25: 818-841.

Rosenthal, E. 2011. "Making Headway in the Movement to Protect the World's Sharks." *New York Times*, Sept. 10. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/11/science/earth/11shark.html?_r=0 [accessed May 31, 2014].

Seafood Choices Alliance. 2006. Profiles: Eric Ripert. Seafood Choices Alliance. http://www.seafoodchoices.com/whatwedo/profile-ericripert.php [accessed May 31, 2014]

Starr, A., A. Card, C. Benepe, G. Auld, D. Lamm, K. Smith, and K. Wilken. 2003. Sustaining local agriculture: Barriers and opportunities to direct marketing between farms and restaurants in Colorado. *Agriculture and Human Values* 20: 301-321.

Statistics Canada. 2012a. "Population and dwelling counts, for census metropolitan areas, 2011 and 2006 censuses," last modified Jan. 13, 2014. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement /2011/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/Table-Tableau.cfm?T=205&S=3&RPP=50 [accessed May 27, 2014].

Wittman, H., M. Beckie., and C. Hergesheimer. 2012. Linking Local Food Systems and the Social Economy? Future Roles for Farmers' Markets in Alberta and British Columbia. *Rural Sociology* 77(1): 36-61.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The seed that inspired this project began to germinate years ago following a memorable encounter with a humble tomato. It began with a story delivered by a chef with a passion for great quality ingredients. This personal story is but one of thousands of stories from people whose experiences have led them to look for alternative ways to nourish themselves. Upset with the declining quality of foods being offered by the conventional food production system, or in search of ingredients that are grown or raised with high environmental or ethical standards, they are looking towards localized, short food chains as an alternative. In some cases, it is the loss of human connection in our anonymous, globalized food system that drives them to establish direct links with farmers. For the "locavore" chefs in Alberta, all of these concerns play varying roles in their decision to procure and promote food products that are grown or raised "closer to home". Understanding their stories can, in turn, allow us to better understand how these alternative food networks work and what needs to be done to improve the capacity, resilience and sustainability of local foodsheds.

Cultural social theory offered a unique and novel approach for investigating the involvement of chefs in alternative food networks by treating the "locavore" chefs of Alberta as a cultural community with particular routines of behaviour that could be described and analyzed. By breaking down these routines into three categories of elements, material constraints, competencies, and meanings, a detailed description of the lives of "locavore" chefs emerged. The increased costs of doing business, the riskiness associated with weather and climate, the inconsistency of product in terms of volume and availability, and the challenges associated with the lack of distribution channels all impact these chefs daily lives. Remarkably, however, not only do these chefs sometimes revel in the opportunities that these challenges present but they often use them to their advantage by finding innovative and flexible ways of accommodating this variability in their kitchens. Drawing on their culinary expertise and reskilling when necessary, they find ways to work with inconsistent products or around geographical and logistical challenges. For instance, they are able to transform secondary, less expensive cuts of meat into appealing and tasteful dishes, dealing with costs and inconsistent sizes of ingredients at the same time. Additionally, by networking with farmers, chefs, diners and others, they are able to share knowledge and skills that improve the functionality of the local food supply chain. Finally, by tapping into deeply held values related to the use of high quality ingredients, to the importance of

fostering relationships with others along the food chain, and to the support of production practices that are deemed ethical and respect the environment, these chefs remain committed to utilizing local foods and supporting the future growth of their local foodsheds.

Using the framework of social practices as a basis for understanding the lived experience of these "locavore" chefs, a greater understanding of how they utilize both the social and economic elements of alternative food networks emerged. Strong social relationships are the foundation on which these more personal, less anonymous networks exist. These social bonds can act to increase a chef's commitment to purchasing from the farmers in their network. In some cases chefs will actually share financial risk with farmers by investing part or all of the expenses related to producing a crop or raising the livestock that they intend to use in their kitchens. This level of commitment between chefs and farmers also engenders a sense of community and co-dependency where they sometimes appear to be operating a joint business rather than independent businesses. In addition, the various roles that chefs are playing in these networks are pushing the boundaries of the local foodshed by encouraging innovations in production and distribution that are in turn scaling-up food production for the local markets. In the same way that a couple of chefs in California spurred the emergence of the local food movement over forty years ago, the "locavore" chefs in Alberta continue to envision and work towards a more sustainable, local foodshed that can supply the high quality ingredients that they need to keep their diners satiated now and in the future. The Alberta case indicates how the situational and embedded nature of local food movements within specific historical, cultural and geographic contexts influences the evolution of local food related practices and alternative food networks within particular foodsheds.

This research offers a new and original contribution to the existing literature on social practice theory and on alternative food networks. From an academic point of view, more studies need to be conducted on chefs' involvement in alternative food movements, using various methodological and theoretical perspectives. Very little research has analyzed the role that chefs play in expanding these networks and encouraging the consumption of locally produced foods. This study is first and foremost an introduction to the daily practices of these chefs and only included their perspectives on local food systems in Alberta. Examining the stories and experiences of other people within these networks (i.e. farmers, small-scale distributors, diners)

in future studies may reveal a deeper understanding of how alternative food networks operate and the potential for scaling-up their capacity in the future.

Pushing Alberta's Local Foodsheds Forward

While this project provides a unique perspective into the culinary lives of chefs and the role they play in supporting and building their local foodsheds, the local food chains in Alberta are still fledgling. Time and again, the chefs who participated in this study indicated that the greatest needs for their particular local foodsheds were increasing the volume of production and the variety of foods being produced. The local foodsheds continue to struggle to keep up with the increased demands from retail customers and from the increasing numbers of chefs and restaurateurs that desire to utilize locally produced ingredients. Additionally, these chefs pointed out that one of the main factors that hinders the movement of available food from Alberta's rural farmers to its urban populations is the lack of distribution links or channels. Several chefs offered suggestions based on past experience that present possibilities to scale up local supply chains.

Multiple chefs discussed being involved in meetings that were organized to facilitate networking between chefs and farmers. Unfortunately, however, they all suggested that the outcome of these meetings was rather disappointing with few relationships being established or orders for food being placed. Perhaps this speaks to the organic nature of social relationships and the difficulty that top-down initiatives have trying to will communities of practice into existence or design them from afar (Shove *et al*. 2012). Social communities and related practices take time to evolve. Interpersonal interactions and experiences are needed to engender the commitment required for solid business relationships that go beyond the mere transaction of a commodity. This cannot take place during a single encounter between a chef and a farmer. That being said, these chefs did not believe that these meetings were completely ineffective in that they do see value in chefs and farmers getting together to discuss the needs of the production and the consumption ends of the local food supply chains. One of the key issues with these meetings in the past is that they have been scheduled at inconvenient times or were usually located in urban centres making it difficult for remotely-located rural farmers to attend. Part of the challenge in organizing these meetings is understanding the logistical constraints that chefs and

farmers face having work hours and workplace demands that are very different from most nine-to-five jobs.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) has a role to play in strengthening the local food networks in Alberta, but I believe that they need to help facilitate the grassroots, bottom-up, community-based approach that appears to be pushing most of the expansion of these networks (see Steiner and Ali 2011). While the local division of the ARD has many hard working individuals working to build a stronger local system, more could be done to help farmers and chefs connect. I believe that the government's main contribution should be to create the conditions and supply resources that would allow small-scale farmers to continue to grow and raise high quality products and that would allow chefs easier access to local products. Time is one of the primary constraints for both farmers and chefs. This problem is multiplied in alternative food networks because of the amount of time that sourcing products and distributing products adds to both chefs' and farmers' workweeks. Unlike many other North American and most European jurisdictions, Alberta lacks an alternative, local marketplace that is open every day of the week. Food hubs are one solution that can improve the consistency and availability of local foods in urban centres. Recent consultations between government, food producers and vendors show promise that sustainable food hubs may begin to emerge across the province (ARD 2013b).

In addition, the centralization of food processing and inspection facilities has created more challenges for farmers who raise small numbers of livestock by forcing them to ship their animals further afield for slaughter and processing. This provides regional business opportunities for the reestablishment of food supply chain infrastructure (i.e. abattoirs like Sangudo Custom Meat Packers) that has been lost over the years and for small-scale distributors (i.e. Galimax Trading) that can help facilitate various food processing tasks such as egg grading. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development needs to continue to support these types of initiatives but should also work to create a regulatory environment that supports the scaling-up of local food production chains without compromising the values that set these alternative food networks apart from the conventional food system.

In order to realize an agricultural system that is sustainable throughout all stages of production, distribution and consumption, changes in mindset and behaviour also need to occur with individuals acting at these levels. "Locavore" chefs provide insight into the complex

cultural systems of practices that gradually evolve to create new ways of "doing" and "being." For policy makers, gaining a better understanding of the practices of the various complex cultures within the local food movement may prove beneficial to create and support sustainability initiatives (Shove *et al*. 2012).

Working Towards an Accessible, Equitable Local Foodshed

One criticism that is oft levied at the local food movement is its elitist nature (Dupuis *et al*. 2006; DeLind 2011; and others). The productivist trajectory of industrial agriculture, bolstered by subsidies from the public purse, has created an abundance of inexpensive commodities but at the expense of the environment and public health. While numerous policies, aimed at economic growth, continue to support agribusiness and large-scale agriculture, policies are needed that support and encourage the production of healthy, whole foods that are accessible and affordable to everyone (Gross 2011). This begins by reforming a food supply system that fails to support the people and communities actually responsible for producing this food. There should be a moral imperative to economically, socially and politically support farmers and farm workers but the fetishistic dynamics of the marketplace obscure the realities of farm bankruptcy, rural poverty and labour abuses that underlie food production for the global marketplace (Harvey 1990; Dupuis *et al*. 2006). Similarly, "local food" can experience the same fetishistic effects when it becomes a fad or a trendy status symbol enjoyed only by those who can afford it and lacks the complex underlying community values that sparked the local food movement in the first place (Connelly *et al*. 2011).

As a result, critics of the apparent elitist nature of "local food" indicate that a sustainable food system must be ecologically and culturally oriented towards communities rather than predominantly economically focused (DeLind 2006; Connelly *et al*. 2011). Although the spatial proximity of localized food production permits better transparency of production practices, it does not remove the power inequities that exist in any social relationship (Hinrichs 2003). Thus, issues of trust, integrity, and regard for others still need to be rigorously and reflexively monitored by actors within local food systems (Hinrichs 2003; Dupuis *et al*. 2006). This entails an active food citizenry, people who are daily engaged in making political choices that will affect the equity and sustainability of food production, distribution and consumption in their communities (Johnston and Baker 2005). The tendency to fall into the "local trap" of assuming

that "local is inherently good" needs to be rigorously avoided (Born and Purcell 2006). Being conscientious about the issues of inclusion and access to food for all groups and individuals within the community, lies at the heart of this approach to envision an equitable and just local food system.

So where do chefs and the marketplace-rooted food service establishments that they operate fit into this picture? These allegations of elitism are often well-founded but first and foremost, criticism should be levied towards the commodity-driven and export-oriented agricultural systems and supporting ideologues that have allowed food to become a commodity that can be controlled by the politically and financially powerful (Gross 2011). After all, local food movements are a reaction to this productivist trajectory by the conventional food system in the first place. I believe that a more meaningful approach to this food justice issue is to look at the positive contributions that all the various actors in alternative food networks are making towards the realization of a strong, vibrant, and healthy community-based food system. Akin to Starr (2010), I believe that progress towards this type of food system needs to take place within the marketplace because the seeming "elite interests" provide economic and social resources that can be used to strengthen these localized food systems. Chefs, as food business owners and operators, are embedded in a deeply entrenched, hierarchical industry where economies of scale dominate. Adopting practices that support shorter, localized supply chains and creating alternative networks to navigate around that hegemonic system is one way that chefs are politically resisting the evolution of a food system that has downgraded the quality of food, siphoned profits away from farmers, and reduced the accessibility and affordability of nutritious, whole foods. Their continued work to expand Alberta's alternative food networks, both in terms of scale and of scope, will help ensure that there are viable alternative sources of food provisions across the province and potentially lead to a more affordable food supply for all Albertans in the future.

Chefs continue to play a crucial role in re-envisioning how we produce, distribute, prepare and think about food that is important for our overall understanding of how the local food movement continues to progress towards its ideals. The North American local food movement began with two chefs inspired by the stories and embodied experience of the farmers in their local foodshed. Now, chefs' own stories and embodied experiences can shed light on the various skills and knowledge that are needed to navigate the challenges of expanding this

movement. Insight from their stories can, in turn, be used to further the various social, economic, environmental and equity goals of the many other groups of people working to create "alternative," local foodsheds.

A Tasty Future...

This journey began with a humble tomato that inspired thoughts of how food could and ultimately should still taste. "Locavore" chefs across the province of Alberta daily strive to find ingredients that live up to this standard of quality. As conventionally available options often disappoint, these chefs are turning to local, alternative food supply chains to find the high-quality ingredients they desire, transforming them into mouth-watering delights that tantalize their diners' appetites. In his inspiring Ted Talk delivered a few years ago, chef, foodie, and scholar Dan Barber (2010) described a vision for a sustainable food system that strikes at the core of what social movements related to food are ultimately striving for:

> What we need now is a radically new conception of agriculture. One in which the food actually tastes good... Don't look at the agribusiness model for the future. It's really old and it's tired. It's high on capital, chemistry and machines, and it's never produced anything good to eat. Instead look to the ecological model... Farms that restore instead of deplete.... Farmers that are not just producers but experts in relationships cause they are the ones who are experts in flavour too. And if I'm going to be really honest they are a better chef than I'll ever be. You know I'm ok with that because if that's the future of good food, it's going to be delicious.

Envisioning and striving towards this type of food system often stems from personal, tangible experiences that awaken the mind to the possibilities that exist outside of what appears to be the normal way of things. The experiences and stories of "locavore" chefs, in turn, can awaken the local community to the high-quality, flavourful foods that are being grown and raised just outside their own backyard and to the importance of supporting their local foodshed.

Bibliography

Aiking, H. and J. de Boer. 2004. Food sustainability Diverging interpretations. *British Food Journal* 106(5): 359-365.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. 2013. *Agriculture Statistics Yearbook 2012*. Edmonton, AB: ARD.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. 2013a. *Local Market Expansion Project: Alternative Agricultural Markets in Alberta 2012*. Edmonton, AB: ARD.

Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. 2013b. Food Hub Resources. Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development. http://www1.agric.gov.ab.ca/$Department/deptdocs.nsf/all/explore14625 [accessed May 31, 2014].

Alberta Energy. 2014. Alberta Non-Renewable Resource Revenues. Website. http://www.energy.alberta.ca/About_Us/2564.asp [Accessed May 23, 2014].

Barber, Dan. 2010. "How I fell in love with a fish." TED website. MPEG-4 media file. https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_barber_how_i_fell_in_love_with_a_fish [accessed May 31, 2014]

Barnes, B. 2001. Practice as Collective Action. In *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin K. Cetina and Eike Von Savigny, 17-28. New York: Routledge.

Beckie, M., E. Huddart Kennedy, and H. Wittman. 2012. Scaling up alternative food networks: farmers' markets and the role of clustering in western Canada. *Agriculture and Human Values* 29(3): 333-345.

Beckie, M., L. Hanson, and D. Schrader. 2013. Farms or freeways? Citizen engagement and municipal governance in Edmonton's food and agriculture strategy development. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 4(1): 15-31.

Bourdieu, P. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Born, B., and M. Purcell. 2006. Avoiding the Local Trap: Scale and Food Systems in Planning Research. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 26(2): 195-207.

CBC News. 2013. "Calgary Floods to Cost Economy Billions: Businesses, workers both take a hit from the disaster," June 25, 2013, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/calgary-floods-to-cost-economy-billions-1.1365207 [accessed May 24, 2014].

Connelly, S., S. Markey and M. Roseland. 2011. Bridging sustainability and the social economy: Achieving community transformation through local food initiatives. *Critical Social Policy* 31: 308-324.

Cook, I., and P. Crang. 1996. The World on a Plate: Culinary Culture, Displacement and Geographical Knowledges. *Journal of Material Culture* 1(2): 131-153.

Curtis, K., and M. Cowee. 2009. Direct Marketing Local Food to Chefs: Chef Preferences and Perceived Obstacles. *Journal of Food Distribution Research*. 40(2): 26-36.

DeLind, L. 2006. Of Bodies, Place, and Culture: Re-situating Local Food. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 19(2): 121-146.

DeLind, L. 2011. Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? Or are we hitching our wagons to the wrong stars? *Agriculture and Human Values* 28(1): 273-283.

de Solier, I. 2006. TV Dinners: Culinary Television, Education and Distinction. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies* 19(4): 465-481.

Denzin, N.K., and Y.S. Lincoln. 2005. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Donald, B. 2008. Food Systems Planning and Sustainable Cities and Regions: The Role of the Firm in Sustainable Food Capitalism. *Regional Studies* 42(9): 1251-1262.

Donald, B. 2009. Contested Notions of Quality in a Buyer-Driven Commodity Cluster: The Case of Food and Wine in Canada. *European Planning Studies* 17(2): 263-280.

DuPuis, E. M., D. Goodman, and J. Harrison. 2006. Just Values or Just Value? Remaking the Local in Agro-Food Studies. *Research in Rural Sociology and Development* 12(06): 241-268.

Epp, R. 2001. The Political De-skilling of Rural Communities. In *Writing Off the Rural West*, eds. Roger Epp and Dave Whitson, 301-324. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press.

Epp, R., and D. Whitson. 2001. Introduction: Writing off Rural Communities?. In *Writing Off the Rural West*, eds. Roger Epp and Dave Whitson, xiii-xxxv. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press.

Faye, S. 2011. *Distribution of Local Food: Best Practices - A pilot project in Alberta's Central Region*. Edmonton, AB: ARD.

Finlay, L. 2002. Negotiating the swamp: the opportunity and challenge of reflexivity in research practice. *Qualitative Research* 2(2): 209-230.

Flyvbjerg, B. 2001. *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Frick, B., G. Vitins, R. Eisen, M. Oleschuk, and B. Lipton. 2012. *Local Food Supply Chains in Alberta: Case Studies from the Saskatoon, Potato and Lamb Sectors*. Resilient Solutions Consulting.

Foster, J.B., 2000. *Marx's Ecology: materialism and nature*. New York: Monthly Review Press.

Giddens, A. 1984. *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Goodman, D. 1999. Agro-Food Studies in the 'Age of Ecology': Nature, Corporeality, Bio-Politics. *Sociologia Ruralis* 39(1):17-38.

Goodman, D. 2002. Rethinking Food Production-Consumption: Integrative Perspectives. *Sociologia Ruralis* 42(4): 271-277.

Goodman, D., and M. Redclift. 1991. *Refashioning Nature: Food, Ecology and Culture*. New York: Routledge.

Gross, J. 2011. Constructing a Community Food Economy. *Food and Foodways* 19(1): 181-200.

Gubrium, J., and J. Holstein. 2002. *Handbook for Interview Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Guthman, J. 2003. Fast food/organic food: Reflexive tastes and the making of 'yuppie chow'. *Social and Cultural Geography* 4(1): 45-58.

Halweil, B. 2002. Home Grown: The Case for Local food in a Global Market. Danvers, MA: Worldwatch Institute.

Harvey, D. 1990. Between Space and Time: Reflections on the Geographical Imagination. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 80(3): 418-434.

Hendrickson, M., and W. Heffernan. 2002. Opening Spaces through Relocalization: Locating Potential Resistance in the Weaknesses of the Global Food System. *Sociologia Ruralis* 42(4): 347-369.

Hinrichs, C. 2000. Embeddedness and local food systems: notes on two types of direct agricultural market. *Journal of Rural Studies* 16: 295-303.

Hinrichs, C. 2003. The practice and politics of food system localization. *Journal of Rural Studies* 19: 33-45.

Holland, D. and J. Lave. 2009. Social Practice Theory and the Historical Production of Persons. *Actio: An International Journal of Human Activity Theory* 1(2): 1-15.

Ilbery, B., D. Maye, M. Kneafsey, T. Jenkins, and C. Walkley. 2004. Forecasting food supply chain developments in lagging rural regions: evidence from the UK. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 20: 331-344.

Inwood, S., J. Sharp, R. Moore, and D. Stinner. 2009. Restaurants, chefs and local foods: insights drawn from application of a diffusion of innovation framework. *Agriculture and Human Values*. 26: 177-191.

Jaffe, J., and M. Gertler. 2006. Victual vicissitudes: Consumer deskilling and the (gendered) transformation of food systems. *Agriculture and Human Values* 23: 143-162.

Jarosz, L. 2000. Understanding agri-food networks as social relations. *Agriculture and Human Values* 17: 279-283.

Johnston, J., and L. Baker. 2005. Eating Outside the Box: FoodShare's Good Food Box and the Challenge of Scale. *Agriculture and Human Values* 22: 313–325.

Jones, A. 2011. Solving the Ecological Problems of Capitalism: Capitalist and Socialist Possibilities. *Organization and Environment* 24: 54-73.

Kloppenburg, J., J. Hendrickson, and G. Stevenson. 1996. Coming in to the Foodshed. *Agriculture and Human Values* 13(3): 33-42.

Latour, B. 2005. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Cambridge: Oxford University Press.

Lawrence, G., M. Knuttila, and I. Gray. 2001. Globalization, Neo-liberalism, and Rural Decline. In *Writing Off the Rural West*, eds. Roger Epp and Dave Whitson, 89-109. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press.

Lipton, B., and T. Spyce. 2011. *Local Food Supply Chains in Alberta: Case Studies from the Differentiated Beef Sector*. Becky Lipton Research and Consulting Ltd.

Lobao, L., and K. Meyer. 2001. The Great Agricultural Transition: Crisis, Change and Social Consequences of Twentieth Century US Farming. *Annual Review of Sociology* 27: 103-124.

Lockie, S. 2002. 'The Invisible Mouth': Mobilizing 'the Consumer' in Food Production-Consumption Networks. *Sociologia Ruralis* 42(4): 278-294.

Long, J. 2011. Entering the New Conversational Marketplace: Narratives of Sustainability and the Success of Farm Direct Markets. *Food, Culture and Society* 14(1): 49-69.

Lorek, S. and D. Fuchs. 2011. Strong sustainable consumption governance - precondition for a degrowth path?. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 1: 1-8.

Marsden, T., and R. Sonnino. 2012. Human health and wellbeing and the sustainability of urban-regional food systems. *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* 4: 427-430.

Masuda, J., and T. Garvin. 2008. Whose Heartland? The politics of place in a rural-urban interface. *Journal of Rural Studies* 24(1): 112-123.

McMichael, P. 2011. Food system sustainability: Questions of environmental governance in the new world (dis)order. *Global Environmental Change* 21: 804-812.

Merriam, S. 2002. *Qualitative Research in Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mikulak, M. 2013. *The Politics of the Pantry: Stories, Food, and Social Change*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.

Murdoch, J. 2000. Networks - a new paradigm of rural development? *Journal of Rural Studies* 16: 407-419.

Murdoch, J. 2001. Ecologising Sociology: Actor-Network Theory, Co-construction and the Problem of Human Exemptionalism. *Sociology* 35(1): 111-133.

Murdoch, J., and M. Miele. 1999. 'Back to Nature': Changing 'Worlds of Production' in the Food Sector. *Sociologia Ruralis* 39(4): 465-483.

Nestle, M. 2002. *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*. Berkley, CA: University of California Press.

Nygård, B., and O. Storstad. 1998. De-globalization of Food Markets? Consumer Perceptions of Safe Food: The Case of Norway. *Sociologia Ruralis* 38: 35-53.

Ortner, S. 1984. Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26(1): 126-166.

Ortner, S. 2006. *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Panzar, J. and R. Willig. 1981. Economies of Scope. *The American Economic Review* 71(2): 268-272.

Passoth, J., and N. Rowland. 2010. Actor-Network State: Integrating Actor-Network Theory and State Theory. *International Sociology* 25: 818-841.

Pollan, M. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin.

Reckwitz, A. 2002. Toward a Theory of Social Practices: A Development in Culturalist Theorizing. *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(2): 243-263.

Richards, C., G. Lawrence, and D. Burch. 2011. Supermarkets and Agro-industrial Foods: The Strategic Manufacturing of Consumer Trust. *Food, Culture and Society* 14(1): 29-47.

Røpke, I. 2009. Theories of Practice - New Inspiration for ecological economic studies on consumption. *Ecological Economics* 68(10): 2490-2497.

Rosenthal, E. 2011. "Making Headway in the Movement to Protect the World's Sharks." *New York Times*, Sept. 10. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/11/science/earth/11shark.html?_r=0 [accessed May 31, 2014].

Schatzki, T. 1997. Practices and Actions: A Wittgensteinian Critique of Bourdieu and Giddens. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 27(3): 283-308.

Schatzki, T. 2001. Introduction: Practice Theory. In *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin K. Cetina and Eike Von Savigny, 1-14. New York: Routledge.

Schatzki, T. 2001a. Practice mind-ed orders. In *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin K. Cetina and Eike Von Savigny, 42-55. New York: Routledge.

Schatzki, T. 2010. Materiality and Social Life. *Nature and Culture* 5(2): 123-149.

Seafood Choices Alliance. 2006. Profiles: Eric Ripert. Seafood Choices Alliance. http://www.seafoodchoices.com/whatwedo/profile-ericripert.php [accessed May 31, 2014]

Shove, E., M. Pantzar, and M. Watson. 2012. *The Dynamics of Social Practice: Everyday Life and How it Changes*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Staggenborg, S. 2008. *Social Movements*. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press Canada.

Starr, A. 2010. Local Food: A Social Movement? *Cutural Studies<->Critical Methodologies* (Online First SAGE): 1-12.

Starr, A., A. Card, C. Benepe, G. Auld, D. Lamm, K. Smith, and K. Wilken. 2003. Sustaining local agriculture: Barriers and opportunities to direct marketing between farms and restaurants in Colorado. *Agriculture and Human Values* 20: 301-321.

Statistics Canada. 2012. "Canola area surpassed spring wheat area in Alberta," last modified May 23, 2012. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/95-640-x/2012002/prov/48-eng.htm [accessed June 6, 2014]

Statistics Canada. 2012a. "Population and dwelling counts, for census metropolitan areas, 2011 and 2006 censuses," last modified Jan. 13, 2014. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement /2011/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/Table-Tableau.cfm?T=205&S=3&RPP=50 [accessed May 27, 2014].

Steiner, B., and J. Ali. 2011. Government support for the development of regional food clusters: Evidence from Alberta, Canada. *International Journal of Innovation and Regional Development* 3(2): 186-216.

Swidler, A. 2001. In *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*, eds. Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin K. Cetina and Eike Von Savigny, 74-92. New York: Routledge.

Watts, D.C.H., B. Ilbery, and D. Maye. 2005. Making reconnections in agro-food geography: alternative systems of food provision. *Progress in Human Geography*. 29(1): 22-40.

Wittman, H., M. Beckie., and C. Hergesheimer. 2012. Linking Local Food Systems and the Social Economy? Future Roles for Farmers' Markets in Alberta and British Columbia. *Rural Sociology* 77(1): 36-61.

Appendix A: Matrix of Study Participants

"Locavore" Chefs' Location of Business and Position

Type of Food Establishment	Chef *	Urban Region	Position
Fine Dining (Low Volume)	Brian	Edmonton	Chef/Owner
	Curtis	Calgary	Chef/Owner
	Dean	Calgary	Chef/Owner
	Sandra	Edmonton	Chef/Owner
Fine Dining (High Volume)	Andy	Edmonton	Executive Chef
	Jason	Calgary	Executive Chef
	John	Calgary	Chef/Owner
	Sam	Edmonton	Executive Chef
	Scott	Edmonton	Executive Chef
Private Club	Lori	Calgary	Executive Chef
Corporate (multiple locations)	Edward	Calgary	Executive Chef
	Patrick	Calgary	Corporate Chef
Food Truck	Matt	Edmonton	Chef/Owner
	Rob	Edmonton	Chef/Owner
Catering	Blake	Edmonton	Chef/Owner
	Jeff	Edmonton	Chef/Owner
	Stanley	Edmonton	Chef/Owner
Institutional	Arthur	Calgary	Chef Instructor
	Henry	Edmonton	Chef Instructor
	Manuel	Calgary	Chef Instructor
	Marius	Calgary	Chef Instructor
	Shawn	Calgary	Chef Instructor
	Stuart	Calgary	Chef Instructor

* All names are pseudonyms to allow for anonymity

Appendix B: Interview Guide

1. In terms of the phrase "local food", how do you define "local"?

2. Describe your cooking philosophy? (how you envision yourself as a cook and the food you want to serve)

- Why are these elements of your philosophy important to you?
- Do you feel that you are able to achieve or maintain that philosophy in your current kitchen?
- In what ways do you feel empowered to achieve this in your business?
- In what ways do you feel constrained? (control over decision-making?)
- Why "local food?"

3. What experiences inspired you or helped you to develop your philosophy of cooking?

- Places you worked in the past?
- Who you worked with or under?
- Experiences inside your kitchen or that you observed in others' kitchens
- Experiences outside the kitchen (travels, reading, etc.)
- Why was "X" experience or "Y" person influential in formulating your own philosophy of cooking?

4. How do you perceive "quality" in your cooking?

- How do you try to achieve this notion of "quality" in your restaurant?
- Why is this important to you?
- Does your perception of quality affect how you source and purchase ingredients?
- Do you see "locally produced" ingredients as a way to achieve your desired level of quality?
    - Why or why not?

5. Describe how you incorporate locally produced ingredients into your menus.

- What are the key challenges that you have faced in trying to source locally?
    - How has this changed over the time that you have been cooking with locally sourced ingredients?
- Describe the processes that you go through to acquire these products.
    - Are you buying direct from farmers?
        - Which farms do you purchase from? (tie into menu research)
    - Are there distribution networks in place that help you to source products (conventional – Sysco/GFS and/or non-conventional)?
    - How does the legwork required to source locally differ from ordering food through the conventional channels?
- Are there social networks in place (supply chain from producer to your restaurant [in city where the chef works] that helps facilitate this sourcing?
    - Do these networks help to connect you to farmers/producers that you are unaware of or are you locating these producers yourself?
    - How have these networks (if existent) changed during your time cooking in [name of city]?

- How does locally sourcing products translate onto your menu?
    - Is seasonality important in your restaurant? How does this affect your menu throughout the year?
    - Is access to local products an issue? How does this affect what you decide to put on your menu?
    - Do you have issues with quality control when purchasing from local farmers? How do you deal with these issues?
    - How does sourcing local products affect your role as a chef? Do you feel you are more constrained for time than if you only sourced conventionally?

6. Explain the emphasis you place on informing your customers about where/how their food is being produced?

- How do you promote Alberta farmers' in your restaurant?
    - Staff training? Menu design? Website?
- Do you find that your guests want to know where the food is being produced / who is producing the ingredients in their meal?
    - Has this changed in the time you have been cooking in [name of city]?
    - Do you think the culinary appetite of customers changed? Why?
- How does promoting farmers affect a diners' experience in your restaurant?
- Is understanding where food is being produced and how it is being produced important for you as a consumer? Why is it important?

7. How do you see yourself and your restaurant fitting into the "local food" scene in your community?

- How do you perceive your role in the "local food" scene?
    - Educator? Promoter? Mediator? Activist?
- Does your restaurant / staff participate in "local food" activities/events outside of the restaurant?
- Are you personally involved in "local food" activities in ways outside of your role as chef of this restaurant? Is this important for you? Why?
- Do chefs play an important role in the "local food" movement? In your opinion, what are the objectives of this movement? Why is promoting the objectives of this movement important for you?

8. Do you think that chefs are having an impact on how the global, conventional, food production system is evolving?

- How do you envision food production/distribution changing in Alberta in the future?
- Ideally, how would you change the system to make it easier for you to achieve your cooking philosophy in your restaurant?