Food, Foodways and Immigrant Experience

Paper written for the Multiculturalism Program, Department of Canadian Heritage
at the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association Conference,
November 2001, Halifax
Not to be used without the permission of the authors

Mustafa Koc and Jennifer Welsh[1]

Centre for Studies in Food Security
Ryerson University, Toronto, Canada
2002

Abstract:

Food is more than a basic source of nutrients; it is also a key component of our culture, central to our sense of identity. Identities, however, are not fixed social constructs, but constructed and reconstructed within given social formations reflecting the existing and imagined structural constraints and lived experiences of subjects. This paper examines the dynamic relationships among food, social identity and the immigrant experience. As a culturally and spatially transitional stage, the immigration process introduces possibilities for change, as well as resistance to new habits, new behaviours, and new cultural experiences. These changes, in turn affect our physical and mental health, our perceptions of self, and our relations with others. This paper offers some analytical insights into this cultural transition and its impacts on identity drawn from the literature on food and identity. It also examines the impacts of the social constraints of food security among a group of immigrants in Toronto in order to evaluate the complex dynamics of identity reconstruction. It is argued that both the politics of equality and the politics of recognition are relevant to immigrant food security.

Food, Culture and Identity:

To survive we need to eat. Yet, food is more than a source of energy and nutrients essential for human health and well being. What we eat, how we eat, and when we eat reflect the complexity of wide cultural arrangements around food and foodways, the unique organization of food systems, and existing social policies.

Food plays a key role in human socialization, in developing an awareness of body and self, language acquisition, and personality development. As Barthes (1975: 510) argues "[s]ubstances, techniques of preparation, habits, all become part of a system of differences in signification" and we communicate by way of food. As we learn what to eat, how to eat, when to eat, we learn "our" culture, "our" norms and "our" values and through this process we learn who "we" are. Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin wrote in the early 19th Century, "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are." There exists a rich body of literature examining the socioeconomic and cultural variations in foodways, expressions of ethnocentrism through food habits, impacts of food taboos, and identification of "otherness" through food (Avakian, 1997; Bell and Valentine, 1997; Bordo, 1993; Caplan, 1997; Fieldhouse, 1996; Gabaccia, 1998; Lupton, 1996;Mennell et al, 1992; Warde, 1997). These studies examine how our food choices are shaped by various individual, cultural, historical, social, and economic influences. From a sociological perspective, patterns of change and resistance in food preferences also offer us insights about tendencies for acculturation, assimilation, adaptation, social distancing, integration and consequent improvements or risks to quality of life (Capella, 1993).

Fluidity of Cultural identity:

As an essential component of our culture, food is also central to our sense of identity (Fischler, 1988). In their daily activities, people assume various identities, defining who they are, and how they can live their lives. The construction of these identities are not left completely to the choice of their carriers; They are subject also to the social and historical conditions that create and define these identities and their social limits. Recognition of the structural conditions to identity however, does not imply that identity can be conceptualized in abstraction from the

lived experiences of the subjects. For this reason we need to see identity as a process rather than a fixed form, through which belonging is reconstructed in relation to the “Others” throughout the daily experiences of the subjects. “All identities, ... are forms of identifications and necessarily precarious and unstable. This precludes any possibility of reaching their ‘essence’ ” (Mouffe, 1992:10).

Identity needs to be viewed as split and ambivalent, defining the relationship of the “Other” to oneself (Hall, 1991:16). As a dialogic relationship, it is constantly constructed in the process of defining difference. This interpretation of identity criticizes essentialism as well as the artificial separation of the objective and subjective membership in communities. Although there are always conditions to identity which the subject cannot construct, identity is more than a straight-jacket binding its carrier. Identity is tied to belonging, and to membership in various communities (including class, gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, age etc.).

As Scott argues “...identities are historically conferred, [and]... this conferral is ambiguous”; “subjects are produced through multiple identifications, some of which become politically salient for a time in certain contexts, and .... the project of history is not to reify identity but to understand its production as an ongoing process of differentiation, relentless in its repetition, but also ... subject to redefinition, resistance and change”(1995:11). Through this symbolic process of identification, social actors define their membership as well as that of others in a dynamic and articulated way.

Cultural identity is expressed in various everyday practices such as religious observations, rights of passage, language, leisure activities, clothing, art, literature and music (Bramadat 2001; Bhugra et al, 1999). By observing cultural practices and preferences, such as food choice, we may gain valuable insights into the levels of individual or collective tendencies for:

adaptation: whether or to what extent individuals or social groups adapt to new patterns of cultural conduct, and willingly include different forms of behaviour into their everyday practices.

diversity: whether or to what extent society at large adopts new patterns of cultural conduct, and willingly include different forms of behaviour into everyday practices.

identification: how individuals and ethnic groups self-identify, or are identified by others as members of an ethnic group through certain cultural practices, such as clothing, music, food, religious observations.

distancing: the extent to which individuals are willing to interact and establish relationships with members of social groups other than their own.

integration: the ability of an individual or a social group to utilize and contribute to every dimension of economic, social, cultural and political activities in the society.

Immigrant Identity and Foodways:

The fluid nature of identity can best be observed in the immigrant behaviour. Moving

between the boundaries of cultural and geographical space, the immigrant experience offers a rare glimpse to the fluidity of identity, and the cultural boundaries of resistance and change. As a transitional status, the immigrant cultural experience also offers us insights into the complexity of patterns of relationships between dominant and minority groups, change and resistance, and patterns of "ethnic" experience, racism, and identities. The literature on enculturation, identity retention, and identity incorporation offers us the complex arrangements of ethnicity often resulting from the immigrant experience (Breton et al., 1990; Isajiw, 1999; Driedger, 1996 Modood and Werbner, 1997). The fluid nature of the immigrant identity has even led some to argue the hybrid, or creolised identities reflecting the complexity of multicultural experience (Pieterse, 1995; Hannerz, 1987).

Yet, we should also beware of an equally essentialist assumption of "authentic" cultures separate from their social and historical contexts (Friedman, 1995). Immigrant diets and foodways need to be contextualized within a global framework where food choices are no longer limited to the social and cultural contexts of the country of immigration, or country of origin (Bouchet, 1995; Cook and Crank, 1996)). Modernity and globalization have been functioning as homegenizing influences, transforming not only the conditions of production and consumption, but also many cultural signifiers which have been used to demarcate ethnic identities and authenticities (Franke, 1987). However, adaptation and incorporation of these homogenizing influences have also presented a selective and fragmented form (Harbottle, 1996 and 1997). Resulting creolized identities include a bit of everything: local and global, traditional and modern, old and new (Hall, 1992:31-14).

In the global system, cultural meanings attached to food are often based on conflicting notions of physical health, aesthetics, tastes, and social prestige, reflecting the contradictions between the private and public sphere and often contradictory messages in the marketplace. Like food, identities are also creolised globally, and the immigrant experience reflects this complexity. One can never be certain to what extent changes in consumer behaviour reflect cultural incorporation, or global diffusion. Offering insights from consumer studies, Caglar (1995 and 1997) argues that examining person-object relations and focussing on commodities and consumption could help us to avoid predefining collectivities as cultures in isolation:

> "A multiculturalism of consumption is a multiculturalism of the market, in which consumers are left to define for themselves who they are, away from top-down constructions by the state or by fictive 'communities'"(Caglar, 1997: 182).

Caglar's analysis offers us insights into the relationship between consumption patterns and identity construction in multicultural societies.

Yet, identity formation is not just a subjective evaluation of membership at any given time isolated from the everyday lived experiences and realities of subjects. How one defines self and membership depends not only on the accumulation of unique cultural experiences and consumption patterns, but also on how others view the membership, entitlements, and rights of personhood/citizenship of a particular individual or group. Membership, in the modern nation state involves experiences of inclusion, empowerment, entitlement, rights, comforts or quality of life. In this sense, integration, the ability of an individual or a social group to utilize and contribute free of systemic barriers to every dimension of economic, social, cultural and political activities in the society, becomes an equally important component of identity formation.

For immigrants who go through a dramatic cultural and spatial transition, not only the familiarity of cultural experiences and consumption patterns, but also rights, entitlements, choices and quality of life make comparison points, as these will have immediate effects on the health and well being of immigrants and their families. When we talk about food and foodways we need to examine not only familiarity but also accessibility as an issue of identity formation. The feeling of belonging, or identification with the host society, cannot be achieved without full membership, or integration (the ability of an individual or a social group to utilize and contribute free of systemic barriers to every dimension of economic, social, cultural and political activities in the society.) For this reason food security, like other basic rights, needs to be conceived as an important analytical tool in evaluating how immigrants perceive their membership, and reconstruct their identity, and integrate successfully.

Food Security and the Immigrant Experience:

Food security is defined as access by all people, at all times, to food that is safe, nutritionally adequate and personally acceptable and which is obtained in a manner that respects human dignity (Campbell, Katamay and Connely, 1988). Food security has long been a problem for the most vulnerable segments of the population.

According to the National Population Health Survey (NPHS), released in 2001 by Statistics Canada, about 8% of Canadians, or just under 2.5 million people, had to compromise the quality or the quantity of their diet at least once in 1998/99 because of a lack of money. In the same period, an additional 0.5 million people worried that they would not have enough to eat because they were short on cash. In total, the survey found that an estimated 3 million Canadians, about 10%, were considered to be living in what is known as a "food-insecure" household at some point during 1998/99.

The report indicated that children aged 0 to 17 were the age group most likely to live in a food-insecure household (14%), and seniors aged 65 or older, least likely (4%). But children in such households were not necessarily undernourished. Adult caregivers tend to sacrifice their own diet so that children will not be hungry, the report claimed. One-third (32%) of all single-mother households were food insecure to some extent, and 28% reported their diet had been compromised.

The report proclaims that food insecurity in Canada is strongly associated with household income. More than one-third (35%) of people in low-income households reported some form of food insecurity in 1998/99. About 30% felt that their diet had been compromised.

The NPHS found that food insecurity was not limited to low-income households. About 14% of residents of middle-income households reported some form of food insecurity, and nearly 12% reported that their diet had been compromised. The existence of food insecurity at higher income levels, according to the report, may have to do with the calculation of annual income as a static measure which may not be sensitive to sudden economic changes that contribute to temporary bouts of food insecurity.

Upon arrival to Canada, new immigrants are faced with a myriad of circumstances and experiences which may impact on their food security. Unavailability or high costs of foods used in traditional diets, changes in lifestyle and working conditions, and pressures for integration to a new culture result in dietary modifications, often with negative impacts on health (Hung, 1995; Hrboticky and Krondl, 1984; Sudha et al, 1999; Yi Ling, 1999).

Using a nutrition screening tool (see Appendix), the Centre Medico-Social Communautaire found that people living in Canada for less than ten years were at significantly greater nutritional risk than people born in Canada or people that immigrated more than 10 years ago. Research findings in this study indicated that recent immigrants ate less than two meals per day; consumed fewer fruits, vegetables and dairy products; occasionally lacked money to purchase food; and reported unplanned weight change (Gauthier, 1996). Gauthier (1996) also pointed out that among new immigrants, Francophone Africans were the highest risk group.

These findings support similar data from the USA. A study conducted by the Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) in 1998 reported an alarmingly high prevalence of food insecurity and hunger among legal immigrants in the United States. Interviews with Latino and Asian legal immigrants in clinics and community centers in California, Texas, and Illinois indicated that, of the 682 households represented in the interviews, 79% were found to be food insecure, with varying degrees of hunger severity. These figures reported to be nearly 7 times worse than that of the general U.S. citizen population. More than one in three of the immigrant households surveyed reported suffering from moderate or severe hunger, with adults and children experiencing hunger caused by a lack of resources. In addition, 8.5% of the legal immigrant households interviewed suffered from severe hunger - more than 10 times the prevalence in the general population (based on 1995 data). This group is of special concern because children in these households are forced to skip meals or go without food for an entire day due to the lack of resources to obtain food. The study was initiated following concerns over the health implications of the changes in the United States which temporarily left close to one million legal immigrants without federal food stamp benefits. In response to vocal criticisms, in 1998 Congress voted to restore federal food stamp eligibility to immigrants who are elderly, disabled, or under 18 and were in the United States when the law passed.

While comparative data is lacking in Canada, reports by the Canadian Association of Food Banks indicate considerable increases in food banks, especially in Ontario following an almost 22 percent cut in welfare payments in 1992. Food bank use in Canada doubled in the decade of the 1990s. It is estimated that in Canada more than 2.5 million meals a year are served through food banks. Since the opening of the first food bank in Canada in 1981 there has been an alarming increase in the number of people using food banks. In fact, the number of individuals requiring emergency food from food banks has risen by 92% to 726,902 between the March of 1989 and 2000. Currently, at least 615 food banks and 2213 additional food assistance agencies/programs are operating in Canada to try and meet the increasing demand (Wilson and Steinman 2000).

NPHS data for 1998/99 in Canada show that about 11% of recent immigrants reported at least one episode of food insecurity in the past year (Che and Chen, 2001:16-18). Interestingly, the data suggests that when other factors were taken into consideration, recent immigrants had actually lower odds of living in a food-insecure household than did the Canadian born (13%), especially Aboriginal peoples (27%).

Access to food has been identified as an important health issue, and nutrition has been linked to several chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, some cancers and osteoporosis (Gundy, 1990; Kibayanshi et al, 1999; McGinnis and Foege, 1993). As immigrants pick up mainstream “North-American” ways of eating while retaining certain features of their traditional diets, they are plagued by overconsumption, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, and the

chronic diseases associated with the Western diets (Lang, 1992; Pan and Huffman, 1999; Raj et al, 1999). Studies in the United States reported that adolescent obesity was increasing significantly among second- and third-generation immigrants. Results of a study conducted by a University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill indicated that all Asian immigrant groups, except Chinese and Filipinos, doubled their proportion of obese children during the transition from first-generation to second-generation residency. Those born overseas were half as likely to be overweight as those born in the U.S. The level of increase between first- and second-generation Hispanics was almost as great. Researchers pointed out the impact of adapting to the American lifestyle of diet and activity as the main source of this shift. While earlier studies allow us to gain insights on impacts of dietary change among first generation immigrants (Bradby,1997; Dewey et al1984; Gundy, 1990; Gupta 1975; Williamson, 1995), a long-term study evaluating the health consequences of adaptation or vice versa in food choices among "new Canadians" is needed.

Food Security, and Immigrant Experience:

A research project conducted by Welsh and associates (1998)[2] examined changing patterns of food choice and concerns of food security among three different ethnic groups in Toronto. The project examined changing food practices among francophone African, Somalian and Vietnamese immigrant populations in Toronto; and an exploration of the policies and services which would support the development of community programs, entrepreneurial initiatives, and household practices to enhance the food security, health and wellbeing of immigrant populations in Toronto.

The conclusions of the Toronto research are based on seventeen semi-structured in-depth interviews with key informants and focus group interviews with members of three immigrant communities. Key informants were selected from organizations serving immigrants, food programs, and nutrition professionals working with immigrant populations. These interviews gathered information on: 1) the main food and nutrition problems and needs of immigrants; 2) information sources, data and tools which organizations use and/or require to assess immigrant food needs; 3) possible differences in cultural perception immigrant groups may have toward food programs; 4) the barriers to delivering food programs to immigrants; and 5) non-program strategies used by immigrant communities to meet their food needs.

Focus group interviews with three communities were conducted through the Centre Medico-Social Communautaire (with a francophone African group from Algeria and Zaire), and through the Regent Park Community Health Centre (with Somalian and Vietnamese groups). Using participatory principles, the community nutrition researchers aimed to develop appropriate facilitation processes based on the needs and feedback of each group. A potluck setting was used to create an informal atmosphere in which to discuss food related experiences and issues. Although a standardized set of questions was used to ensure that each group examined similar issues, principles of participatory action research, where a certain level of spontaneity established by group dynamics, guided these sessions. The sessions were planned as a series of 4 or 5 meetings, with the goals of a) orienting the group and exploring dietary practices/patterns prior to immigration; b)exploring changing food practices (shopping, meal preparation, diets, eating habits, meal patterns, timing of meals), feelings, challenges and experiences with respect to food upon arrival to Canada; c) identifying issues that people face with respect to food acquisition and provisioning in Canada and exploring coping strategies to deal with food issues;

and d) identifying current workable strategies, ideas for future programming, and carrying out the Nutrition Screening Initiative (with the goal of evolving it for use with immigrants).

While this project focused specifically on three communities, information was received on a wider range in varying depth: African (including immigrants from Algeria, Somalia, West Africa, Zaire; South Asians from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda); Caribbean; Central and South American; Chinese; and Vietnamese. To a much smaller extent the project touched on the experience of immigrants from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Eastern Europe. The dominant food programs discussed were community gardens, community kitchens and food banks.

Research Findings:

Finding familiar, culturally acceptable, and fresh foods was reported as important by most participants in our sample. Often, local ethnic-retail outlets, and in certain neighbourhoods (where there is a significant concentration in ethnic populations) supermarket chains were found to offer access to some of the unique specialty items. Access to certain food items, such as banana leaves, are still reported to be a problem. Community-based groups, such as the Afri-Can Food Basket (which serves African and Caribbean populations) are finding ways to either grow or import some of the desired foods. Certain ethnic specialty food items (such as halal foods) were recognized as costlier and not always easy to access.

Major supermarket chains carry increasingly larger volumes of food items depending on their perceptions of the market demand. This means quite a significant variation in stock identified as "ethnic foods" from store to store. Nevertheless, these would be basic items and for more specialized foods immigrants have to rely on "ethnic" retailers who are often first generation immigrants (De Vita, 1994). Historically, food retailing, catering or restaurant businesses have constituted a typical entry level economic activity in Canada. Requiring limited capital investment, these labour intensive businesses offered alternatives to those who preferred to be "their own bosses." "Ethnic enclave enterprises" are "businesses that are owned and operated by self-employed persons who are members of an ethnic group" (Isajiw, 1999:119; Wang, 1999). From credit to supply, from access to labour to consumers, ethnic networks become vital for the success of these enterprises. This in return creates a tendency for ethnic occupational concentration. Reitz (1990) for example, found that Chinese men were 5.2 times more likely than the average male in Canada to work as cooks .

Ethnic business networks also lead to and benefit from "institutional completeness" (Breton, 1964) where the ethnic community contains within it a full range of organizational arrangements (economic, social, cultural, educational etc.). However, institutional completeness does not reflect the realities of many ethnic communities in Canada, especially those that were established in recent years. For these groups, available social programs are essential for their successful integration.

Another common complaint among immigrants in relation to food was the quality of the food items they find in Canada. Especially for those who are used to shopping for fresh produce, baked goods, and meat on a daily basis, the typical supermarket is not considered ideal despite the wider selection of products it offers. High fat content, difficulty in getting fresh and ripe fruits and vegetables, and quality of meat, poultry, and fish were major sources of complaint. Participants in the focus group interviews generally reported eating more meat in Canada while complaining about the higher fat content. Where income was a factor, meat intake was lower and

fast-food meats (such as burgers) were often a special treat. Freshness was a recurring theme among many different groups. It ranged from an unfamiliarity with frozen foods, a longing for the tastier and fresher fruits and vegetables of their home country, and the desire to have freshly caught fish. Lack of clear, comparable and easily interpretable information on food items was also mentioned as a challenge for new immigrants who are not familiar with Canadian food items.

Nutritional concerns were reflected in terms of high risk groups such as children, seniors, and men living alone. Weight gain was often expressed as a problem, especially for women, who may not feel as freely able, in Canada, to go outside (because of weather), or to socialize (because of isolation). Even shopping was different in Canada, as it moved from a daily ritual that involved activity and interaction, to a chore that was done on a less regular basis, often with their husbands. Other health issues expressed included high blood pressure, diabetes, and anemia. Health risks associated with fresh water fishing in Ontario (especially Toronto), and fear of chemical contamination of fruits and vegetables were among the food related concerns.
The Nutrition Screening tool used during the focus group interviews identified a number of factors such as low vegetable consumption, low intakes of milk products eating alone, and inadequate income as elements that contributed to nutritional risk

The findings of this project do not indicate a significant problem in terms of availability of food for members of the immigrant community. With some exceptions, participants reported that they were able to find foods similar to those in their country of origin. What seemed to be a common concern was the distance, time, and price paid for accessing these food items. While the former two may require examination of the current marketing structures and retail practices, the latter may require examining whether local production of some of the popular food items would be feasible in order to improve supply and consequently to lower retail prices. Research findings indicate that rather than availability, it is the accessibility which is the major concern for food security among immigrant groups. The concerns focused around three dimensions: distance to travel, time spent for shopping, and affordability of food items.

Lack of sufficient income was reported as a problem for new immigrants who had difficulty in entering into the labour market that would match their professional skills. Where income was reported to be the central concern, access to jobs and affordable housing became the key policy areas. Reports indicate that new immigrants may pay up to 37 percent of their income on rent (Isajiw, 1999: 100). However, for many, even for those who reported income related problems, food banks were not considered as an ideal means of accessing food. In some cases (such as Chinese or West African) they were even viewed as stigmatizing, intrusive (in terms of screening), and inappropriate in terms of the foods provided. It is important to note that food banks are increasingly housing their service within a framework of support to the community, which could be both geographic and/or ethnically defined. Expanded programming was observed to reduce the negative experience of using the food bank. The change in the name of the telephone referral service in Toronto from the "Hunger Hotline" to "Food Link" reflects the diversification of services offered by food banks themselves, as well as the expansion of community-based food programs.

Among public access programs, community gardens and communal kitchens had been available for various communities in Toronto. Community gardens were often cited as important means of accessing foods (especially vegetables) that were familiar from their home country.

Somalian groups reported success in exchanging produce. Several groups saw the benefits of community gardens in reducing isolation, practicing English, doing physical work, and being "in nature." For some groups, the experience of nature was preferred on a larger scale outside of the city. Community gardens were also found to provide an opportunity for training in food preservation, although it was commonly reported that new immigrants really do not like frozen food. Community kitchens were reported to be more familiar to Central American populations and less readily accepted by those from the Caribbean. Some examples were cited where community kitchens helped to generate income for community-based organizations.

Belonging in a Multicultural Society:

Various individual, cultural, historical, social, and economic influences shape our food choices. Our food choices, like various other cultural expressions and practices, offer insights on how we present ourselves, shape our identities, define our membership, and express our distance from others. Changes in food preferences may also reflect changes in broader cultural perceptions and practices.

Food is more than a basic source of nutrients; it is also a key component of our culture, central to our sense of identity. Identities, however, are not fixed social constructs, but they are constructed and reconstructed within given social formations reflecting the existing and imagined structural constraints and lived experiences of subjects.

As a culturally and spatially transitional stage, the immigration process introduces possibilities of change and resistance to new habits, new behaviours, and new cultural experiences. Especially in the case of new immigrants who deal with tensions of adaptation or resistance to changes in life style, consumption patterns and forms of cultural expression would have consequences on their physical and mental health, their perceptions of self and relations with the others, and their potential for successful settlement and integration.

In its broadest definition, food security includes not only availability of food at all times but also accessibility to all. Equality of access, notions of entitlements, and the basic rights of citizenship create public obligations for food security. This makes both the politics of equality and the politics of recognition relevant to food security concerns of new immigrants.

Food security for new immigrants implies first of all, access to sufficient, nutritious, and quality food at all times. Food security is part of "feeling at home" - a comfort that is not only limited to or defined by access to food, but also access to the basic essentials of life offered to citizens in a modern state, such as an equitable and accessible work environment, housing, healthcare, public education and social services. The feeling of belonging, or identification with the host society, requires a subjective interpretation of inclusion and entitlement. Food security, as part of other aspects of a modern society, ensures that comfort.

"Feeling at home" is not simply limited to having access to nutritionally sufficient but also to culturally appropriate diets. Belonging also requires "feeling welcome" in policy, in practice and in everyday symbolism. Both food security policy and citizenship policy need to be informed by the concerns and politics of "equality" as well as concerns and politics of "recognition." Others sharing "our" taste, offer us that symbolic welcome. Some dismiss the new cosmopolitan cuisine that is emerging in the global cities such as Toronto as a form of rhetorical folkloric multiculturalism with no positive structural impacts to our everyday realities. While there is an element of truth in this dismissal, we believe that such an approach underestimates the

significance of cosmopolitan diets in introducing a symbolic awareness of diversity, in challenging ethnocentrism, and for many in creating a feeling of home away from home. If we learn and define who we are through what we eat, the multicultural cuisine may offer us a glimpse of widening notions of identity, self, and belonging in Canada. It is through sharing seemingly mundane everyday acts such as eating, dressing, listening to music, that the cultural boundaries of membership become permeable.

REFERENCES

Avakian, A.V. 1997, ed. *Through the Kitchen: Women Explore the Intimate Meanings of Food and Cooking*, Boston: Beacon Press.

Barthes, Roland, 1989. *Mythologies*. London: Paladin.

Bell, David and Gill Valentine. 1997. *Consuming Geographies: We are where we eat*. London and New York: Routledge.

Bhugra, D.(1999). Cultural identity and its measurement: a questionnaire for Asians. International Review of Psychiatry, 11 (2/3), 244-250.

Bouchet, Dominique.1995. "Marketing and the Redefinition of Ethnicity", in J. Costa & G. Bamossy, eds., Marketing in a Multicultural World, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp 68-104.

Bordo, Susan. Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

Bradby, Hannah. 1997. "Health, eating and heart attacks: Glaswegian Punjabi women's thinking about everyday food." in *Food, Health and Identity*, edited by Pat Caplan. London: Routledge pp. 213-233.

Breton, R. WW. Isajiw, W.E. Kalbach and J.G. Reitz, *Ethnic Identity and Equality: Varieties of Experience in a Canadian City*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Breton, Raymond, 1964. "Institutional Completeness of Ethic Communities and the Personal Relations of Immigrants." *The American Journal of Sociology*. 70:193-205.

Caglar, Ayse, 1997. "Hyphenated Identities and the Limits of "Culture", in T. Modood and P. Werbner, eds. *The politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe*. London and New York: Zed Books. pp. 169-185.

Caglar, Ayse. 1995. "McDoner: Doner Kebap and the Social Positioning Struggle of German Turks." in *Marketing in a Multicultural World: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Cultural Identity*, edited by Arnold Costa and Gary J. Bamossy Janeen. Thousand Oaks, London and New Delhi: Sage Publications pp. 209-239

Capella, Louis M. and Arnold, Danny R. 1993 "Acculturation, Ethnic Consumers, and Food Consumption Patterns", *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 1, (4): 61-79.

Caplan, Pat. 1997. "Approaches to the study of food, health and identity." in *Food, Health and Identity*, edited by Pat Caplan. London: Routledge pp. 1-31.

Campbell, C. S. Katamay, and C. Connely, 1988, "The role of nutrition professionals in the hunger debate," *Journal of Canadian Dietetic Association*. 49:230-235.

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

De Vita, F. 1994. "The ethnic food business: an overview on the growth of ethnic food market", *Local Economic Quarterly*, 3: 90-108.

Dewey, Kathryn, Margaret Stroke, and Yolanda Ruiz Fitch. 1984. Dietary change among migrant Mexican-American families in northern California. Ecology of food and nutrition. 14:11-24.

Driedger, Leo 1996. Multi-Ethnic Canada: Identities and Inequalities. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Fieldhouse, Paul. 1996. *Food and Nutrition: Customs and culture*. Cheltenham: Stanley Thornes (Publishers) Ltd.

Fischler, Claude. 1988. "Food, Self and Identity." *Social Science Information* 27:275-292.

Franke, Richard. 1987. The effects of colonialism and neocolonialism on the gastronomic patterns of the third world. Marvin Harris and Eric Ross (eds). *Food and Evolution*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. pp. 455-480.

Friedman, Jonathan. 1990. "Global System, Globalisation and the Parameters of Modernity", in M. Featherstone and S. Lash (eds.) *Global Modernities*. Sage: London.

Gabaccia, Donna R. 1998. *We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of the Americans*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Gauthier, Alain, 1996, *Evaluation of the Nutritional Status of the French Community of Metropolitan* Toronto," Unpublished research report prepared for the Centre-Medico-Social Communautaire.

Gundy, S.M., 1990, "Cholesterol and Coronary Heart Disease - Future Directions," *Journal pf the American Medical Association*. 264 (23) 3053-3059.

Gupta, Santish.P. 1975. Changes in the food habits of Asian Indians in the United States: a case study. Sociology and social research. 60:87-99.

Hall, Stuart. 1990. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in Jonathan Rutherford, ed. Identity: Community, Culture, Difference. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

Hannerz, Ulf, 1987, “The World in Creolisation.” *Africa*, 57:546-59.

Harbottle, Lynn, 1996, "'Bastard' chicken or ghormeh-sabzi?: Iranian women guarding the health of the migrant family." in *Consumption Matters*, edited by Kevin Hetherington Stephen Edgell, and Alan Warde. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers pp. 204-226.

—. 1997. "Fast food/spoiled identity: Iranian migrants in the British catering trade." in *Food, Health and Identity*, edited by Pat Caplan. London: Routledge, pp. 87-110.

Hrboticky, N. and M. Krondl, 1984, “Acculturation to Canadian Foods by Chinese Immigrant Boys: Changes in the Perceived Flavor, Health Values and Prestige Foods,” *Appetite*. 5:117-126.

Hung, S.H. Et al., 1995, “Dietary Patterns of Vietnamese in California,” *Journal of Nutrition Education,* 27(2):63-68.

Iacovetta, Franca, 2000, "Recipes for Democracy/Gender, family, and the Making of Female Citizens in Cold War Canada" *Canadian Woman Studies* 20(8):12-21.

Isajiw, W. Wsevolod, 1999. *Understanding Diversity*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing.

Kingston, Anne, 1994, *The Edible Man: Dave Nichol, President's Choice and the Making of Popular Taste.* Toronto: McFarlane, Walter & Ross.

Lang, Susan S., 1992. Understanding Hispanic Diets. *Human Ecology Forum*, 20(3): 6-11.

Levenstein, Harvey, 1988, *Revolution at the Table: The Transformation of the American Diet*. New York: Oxford UP.

Lupton, Deborah, 1996, *Food, the Body and the Self*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Mennell, Stephen, Anne Murcott, and Anneke H. van Otterloo'. 1992. The sociology of Food: Eating, Diet and Culture. London: Sage Publications.

Modood, Tariq and Pnina Werbner, eds. *The politics of Multiculturalism in the New Europe*. London and New York: Zed Books.

Mouffe, Chantal (ed.), 1992. Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship and Community. London: Routledge.

Pan, Yi-Ling, Zisca Dixon, and Fatma Huffman. 1999. Asian students change their eating patterns after living in the United States. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 99(1):54-57.

Pieterse Jan N., 1995. "Globalisation as Hybridisation," M. Featherstone and S. Lash (eds.) *Global Modernities*. Sage: London.

Raj, Sudha, Prema Ganganna, and Jean Bowering. 1999. Dietary habits of Asian Indians in relation to length of residence in the United States. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 99(9):1106-1108.

Reitz, Jeffrey G. 1990. "Ethnic Concentrations in Labour Markets and Their Implications fro Ethnic Inequality." In Breton, R. WW. Isajiw, W.E. Kalbach and J.G. Reitz, *Ethnic Identity and Equality: Varieties of Experience in a Canadian City*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, pp. 135-195.

Scott, Joan, 1995. "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity." in J. Rajchman ed. *The Identity in Question*. New York and London: Routledge. pp. 3-14.

Sobal, J. (1998). Cultural comparison research designs in food, eating and nutrition. Food Quality and Preference, 9(6), 385-392.

Valentine, G. (1999). Eating in: home, consumption and identity. The Sociological Review 47(3), 491-524.

Wang, Shuguang 1999. Chinese Commercial Activity in the Toronto CMA: New Development Patterns and Impacts. *The Canadian Geographer* 43(1):19-35.

Warde, Alan. 1997. *Consumption, Food and Taste: Cultural Antinomies and Commodity Culture*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Welsh, Jennifer et al, 1998, *Food Security, Health and the Immigrant Experience*. Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement, Research Report. http://ceris.metropolis.net/frameset_e.html

Williamson, David, 1998, *New Study Shows Second Generation Immigrant Children Gaining Weight*. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. News Release, UNC-CH News Services.

Wilson, Beth and Carly Steinman, 2000, Hunger Count 2000, Canada's Annual Survey of Emergency Food Programs, Canadian Association of Food Banks.

http://www.icomm.ca/cafb/hc-2000.pdf

1.We would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their valuable suggestions.

2.Centre of Excellence on Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS) funded research project on food security, health and immigration was carried out by a team of researchers associated with the Centre for Studies in Food Security at Ryerson Polytechnic University, the Centre for Health Studies at York University, the Centre Medico-Social Communautaire and the Regent Park Community Health Centre.