“PRECARIOUSNESS ON THE MENU”: RESTAURANT WORK AND LABOUR MOBILITY WITHIN THE LOW-WAGE SERVICE INDUSTRY IN KINGSTON, ONTARIO

by

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ABSTRACT

Precarious employment refers to forms of work characterized by limited job security, few employment benefits, lack of control over the labour process and low-wages. Restaurant work demonstrates a range of precarious forms of employment and reveals the complexity of issues that such jobs raise in the context of the regulation of the local labour market. This thesis analyses the nature of precarious employment in the restaurant industry in Kingston, Ontario. In particular, it seeks to understand how precarious employment is shaped by the structure and dynamics of the local labour market. The research highlights the role played by labour mobility, in shaping workers’ experiences of precarious work. Labour mobility refers to the movement of workers between different jobs and between different worksites within a structured local labour market as they seek to better their economic situation and generate a sustainable income for themselves. Through a discussion of labour mobility, this thesis seeks to contribute to a new lens through which the impacts of a precarious and flexible labour market can be better understood as they shape the lives of workers themselves.

The objective of this study is to better understand the factors which shape the lived realities of precarious restaurant workers in one specific local labour market. The empirical analysis draws on data collected by Statistics Canada and interviews conducted with both employers and employees in local restaurants to analyze the structure of the local labour market and the nature of precarious employment.

The research demonstrates that the restaurant industry in Kingston is comprised of three distinct submarkets, each of which appears to operate largely independently of one another. Interviews were conducted with employees and employers in the submarket located in downtown Kingston. Within this submarket the combined processes of labour
market segmentation and labour mobility has a significant impact on workers experiences of precarious employment. By understanding the complex interaction of these two features within the labour market, we can begin to conceive of ways to address the issues associated with the precarious employment in the low-wage service industry.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“Shit! Damn, cheap university crowd, I know I am going to get docked in pay for this” Karen Milman mutters to herself as she struggles to adjust the short skirt she must wear at her next job. She is late and hastily making her way to her evening job at Murray’s, a small restaurant located in the downtown streets of Kingston, Ontario. As she promptly makes her way to the employees’ entrance around back, Brian, a daytime cook, chuckles as he takes another heave on his splif. “So what’s your excuse this time?” Knowing Brian was still at work meant that it was going to be a hectic night. She is not usually late for work but her day job, at another popular local venue with the university crowd, kept her late to handle a last minute Friday rush. It’s not something she would typically complain about, business is business after all, but a table of ten skimmed on their tip and what they had left was not enough to make up for the time she has already lost in pay by being late getting to Murray’s. Normally her evening boss wouldn’t care but a recent tightening of the local labour market has placed pressure on local restaurants to find enough good staff to keep pace with increasing demand from tourists and local residents. She understands that the dynamics within the restaurant require her to be there on time in order to be ready for the evening rush, a time when a restaurant cannot afford to be short staffed.

Her bosses, reluctant to hire individuals laid off by local manufacturers and presented with a dwindling qualified labour pool, have resorted to hiring more university students and at the same time lowering their expectations for qualified workers. “Students

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1 While the people and events portrayed in this opening vignette are fictitious, they are reflective of the experiences of real restaurant workers and employers interviewed during the course of my research.
are O.K. in small numbers” one of her bosses hesitantly admits, “but they do not provide a stable workforce and usually are not much good in the kitchen”. She knows for now that her two jobs are secure since she has years of experience working in restaurants. It was her good looks that got her into the industry, but now it’s her knowledge of the job that keeps her there. However, she knows this will not last for long. The long hours and fast pace environment have already begun to take its toll on her body but now she also faces a much more uncertain future. As time goes on, Karen’s age will eventually lead to fewer employment opportunities as employers turn to hire younger, and in some instances, more educated workers. As Karen’s potential job market shrinks to only a few, highly sought after positions, amongst a select number of employers, her ability to respond to and recover from fluctuations in the labour market will grow ever more difficult, leaving her with an increasingly insecure and uncertain future.

Karen is unsure of what the future holds for her but feels her day-to-day life is becoming increasingly precarious. For a mother of two in her mid-thirties with a husband who was laid-off last week, the future in this small city looks bleak. For now she can pay the bills but her part-time waitressing jobs will not permit this for long. What’s to happen now? Karen is unsure, all she knows for certain is she is late for work.

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Work experiences similar to that of Karen’s are quickly becoming the norm in many small to midsized urban centers across Canada. Processes of political and economic restructuring across North America and Europe have led to the reinvention and restructuring of their respective economic landscapes (Allen, 1996a.; Amin, 1995; Esser and Hirsch, 1995; Harvey, 1989; Munck, 2002; Sassen, 1990; Shalla, 2007; Vallas, 1999). As a result, many North American and European cities have experienced the loss
of conventional, full-time manufacturing jobs and the appearance of less traditional jobs in the service sector. Precarious forms of employment have become a prominent feature in this emerging economy; yet their impact on the structure and functioning of the local labour market is poorly understood. Precariousness or precarious employment refers to an array or continuum of different employment situations. Leah Vosko (2006: 11) comments that precarious employment has come to “encompass forms of work characterized by limited social benefits and statutory entitlements, job insecurity, low wages, and high risks of ill-health”. She goes on to state that precarious employment is best understood as process-oriented, focused on social relations and workers’ experiences, which exist in a continuum defined by multiple dimensions sensitive to both social location and social context (Vosko, 2006). The increase in precarious employment has reshaped the contours of the labour market and taken its toll on workers. The rise in importance of service and knowledge based industries in particular have become key for many locales which face the consequences of deindustrialization and state restructuring (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Sassen, 1990; Shaw, 2004). Despite the claims of many neoliberal proponents that rising tides will raise all boats, they neglected to ensure that all boats in the harbour were sea worthy. The combined forces of globalization and neoliberalism have placed significant pressure on the capabilities of many cities, firms and individuals, world wide, to remain prosperous in this new era (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Munck, 2002). One result has been the increasing social and income polarization of society and the emergence of new socio-spatial divisions of labour in which the vast majority sink or, at best, tread water, while a select few cruise by on their luxury yachts.

However, the mechanisms needed to sustain this new capital-labour relationship have yet to materialize. While harbour masters and the state continue to debate over
where to put the lighthouse, seeming chaos unfolds. Fractured labour markets, increased insecurity, heightened mobility of capital and, more recently, labour, long-term and stagnant unemployment\(^2\), new industrial organizational arrangements and volatile financial markets are but a few of the characteristics which reflect this chaos. In the midst of all this confusion, three trends standout: the rise in precarious forms of employment, the importance of segmentation within the labour market and the increased circulation of individual workers between jobs as they navigate this new environment. The movement of workers between jobs within a local labour market remains largely unexplored within the literature. By incorporating the notion of labour mobility into the analysis of flexible and segmented labour markets, this thesis provides new insights into the lived experiences of the precariously employed and the functioning of local labour markets. The widespread use of flexible labour practices within the low-wage service economy has resulted in the increased movement of workers between jobs within local labour markets. However, the movement of workers is constrained by forms of labour market segmentation. In turn, constrained labour market mobility augments the precariousness experienced by workers. This is particularly the case for the increasing number of workers, such as Karen, in the lower echelons of the service industry. It is these individuals who now experience the greatest degrees of exploitation, structured mobility and discrimination in urban labour markets.

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\(^2\) Unemployment rates in Canada are currently at their lowest levels in decades, 6% as of September 2007 (Statistics Canada). However, it is debatable as to whether or not this translates into real progress and sustainable forms of employment. The presence of ‘discouraged workers’ has the affect that it can create the appearance that unemployment rates have fallen despite the fact that no new jobs have been created. At the same time, the implementation of Workfare programs may temporarily lower levels of unemployment, creating a false sense of prosperity and growth. Also, though employment may have increased, we have to consider the fact that many of these jobs are in the new service economy and largely associated with low-wage and precarious forms of employment.
Restaurant work provides an excellent litmus test to assess the impacts of the rise of precarious employment on workers in a service driven economy. Restaurants, like the canary deep inside the mine, are extremely responsive to slight changes in their local economic environment. The fact that they are tightly embedded in the fabric of the local labour market, are relatively small in size and highly dependent on their customer’s levels of disposable income, makes them sensitive to fluctuations in both demand and supply. Due to striking variations in skill requirements and gender differences between ‘front’ and ‘back-of-house’ positions, restaurants provide an opportunity to observe the intricate nature of labour segmentation within a single workplace. The objective of this thesis is to demonstrate how, through an analysis of the nature of work and employment in the restaurant industry, we can gain a better understanding of precarious employment and the emerging regulatory framework of a segmented local labour market in the service economy. By presenting this analysis I hope to ignite discussion and recognition of the nature of precarious employment and how it is impacted by various actors involved in the regulation of local labour markets.

It is important to understand what is meant by the regulation of a local labour market. This refers to the various processes and actors involved in shaping the structure of the labour market and how it functions (Jonas, 1996). In addition to individual workers and employers these actors include such labour market intermediaries as both state and

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The terms “front-of-house” and “back-of-house” refer to the two main working areas that make-up a restaurant. ‘Front-of-house’ refers to the dining area within the restaurant, where customers are served their meals and are exposed to the experience of dining out. Work in the ‘front-of-house’ includes jobs such as restaurant manager, servers, bartenders and the maître d’hôtel or maître d’. Conversely, the ‘back-of-house’ refers to the kitchen area within the restaurant, where food preparation takes place. This area is usually off limits to customers and is usually hidden in the back of the restaurant. However, in some restaurants, most notably Japanese restaurants, the ‘art’ of food preparation is part of the dining out experience and the kitchen is in full view of customers. Work in the ‘back-of-house’ includes such jobs as dishwasher, prep cook, line cook and chef.
non-state organizations such as different levels of formal government, local elites, training institutions, un/employment centers, business organizations, unions and other groups in civil society that operate at various scales. In other words, the regulation and governance of the local labour market refers to all actors and individuals that influence the matching of labour demand with supply and other labour market characteristics such as wages, benefits and working conditions. Recent literature in economic geography stresses the importance that local and regional spaces now play in the broader competitive market system (Storper, 1999; Swyngedouw, 1997). This is in part because the local and regional act as containers for the majority of our day-to-day activities.

The general premise behind this thesis is that if we wish to fully understand the changing regulation of local labour markets due to restructuring, we must address the impacts that an increasingly flexible and precarious work environment has on the circulation of workers within a given local labour market. We must recognize that employment opportunities are not only socially conditioned through processes of segmentation, which restrict workers movement between jobs, but at the same time such segmentation inhibits a worker’s ability to develop a sustainable, lifelong career. In this sense, workers are actively shaped by the local economic landscape as they attempt to better their economic position through career progression and new employment arrangements in a flexible and precarious labour market.

Individuals possess widely different experiences of the impacts of precarious employment relationships. Precariousness, then, exists in various states and can not be broken down into simple dichotomies, such as between primary and secondary sectors of the labour market (Edwards, Reich and Gordon, 1973; Wilkinson, 1981) or standard and non-standard forms of employment (Kalleberg, 2000; Vosko, 2003; 2006). At one end of
the spectrum, precariousness can be associated with highly paid individuals who experience some social benefits but high job insecurity, such as contract workers performing professional or technical work. At the other end of the spectrum, precariousness is also experienced by individuals who receive low wages, few social benefits and experience extreme levels of job insecurity, such as day-workers supplied by temporary employment agencies. These two examples represent opposite ends of the continuum, with varying degrees of precariousness in-between (Vosko, 2003). It is important to recognize that a variety of individuals in a range of employment conditions may experience precarious employment.

Precarious employment in Canada is steadily becoming a more common phenomenon. Data collected by Statistics Canada, between 1976 and 2006, reveals a steady increase in the number of individuals working part-time (Table 1.1 and Table 1.2)\(^4\). These tables along with the work of numerous authors (Cranford, Vosko and Zukewich, 2003a; b; Vosko, 2000; 2003; 2006) illustrates the importance that precarious forms of employment now play in the economy. Despite various fluctuations in the broader economic and political-economic environment, the prevalence of precarious forms of employment continues to increase. Leah Vosko (2006) attributes precariousness in the employment relationship as a major outcome of the overall trend towards the feminization of the labour market. According to Leah Vosko (2006:46) the feminization of the labour market encompasses:

\(^4\) These data are limited in that they do not include all individuals involved in contract, temporary work and other forms of contingent work that are also defined as precarious in nature. When these other forms of employment are also taken into consideration, the overall growth of precarious employment becomes strikingly more evident and concrete.
Table 1.1: Presence of “Full-time” and “Part-time” Employment in Canada of the Working Age Population (ages 15-65), 1976-2006

![Graph showing the presence of full-time and part-time employment in Canada from 1976 to 2006.]

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (LFS) – Table: 282-0002

Table 1.2: Change in “Full-time” and “Part-time” Employment in Canada of the Working Age Population (ages 15-65), 1976-2006 (1976=100)

![Graph showing the change in full-time and part-time employment in Canada from 1976 to 2006.]

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (LFS) – Table: 282-0002
“four facets of racialized and gendered labour market trends: high levels of formal labour force participation among women; continuing industrial and occupational segregation; income and occupational polarization both between women and men and among the sexes by social locations such as race, ethnicity, and immigrant status; and the gendering of jobs to resemble more precarious work associated with women and other marginalized groups assumed to have access to alternative sources of subsistence beyond the wage”.

There is no dispute that precarious forms of work are significantly impacting the structure and regulation of Canada’s labour markets, especially at the local level (Vosko, 2000; 2006).

The focus in this thesis is on individuals who experience relatively moderate to high degrees of precariousness in the service driven economy and as a result find themselves located in the lower reaches of an increasingly polarized society\(^5\). These are the individuals whom Richard Florida (2002) largely neglects in his creative cities thesis and considers of little relevance, despite their obvious role in serving the needs and supporting the existence of his creative class\(^6\). Restaurant workers are exemplary of these kinds of individuals. Though some may argue that some restaurant workers, such as so-called celebrity chefs, belong in the creative class, at the end of the day most restaurant

\(^5\) The recent explosion of interest, by many individuals, in the knowledge and innovative aspects of the new economy has largely left unexplored the less ‘sexy’ topics of the lives of low wage and highly precarious service and manufacturing workers.

\(^6\) According to Richard Florida (2002: 8) the Creative Class includes “people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment, whose economic function is to create new ideas, new technology and/or new creative content”. Florida argues that the retention of Creative Class individuals is the key to a city’s future growth and success. However, his thesis focuses solely on the contributions of these individual’s at the expense of other forms of work in a city. His contribution is part of a larger movement which has glorified parts of the ‘new’ economy such as culture, innovation, advanced technology and computer systems, business and creativity. This is not to mention the difficulty in determining who creative class individuals are due to the vagueness of his definition. This has led to the argument that his thesis is elitist and serves to forward the framework of a neoliberal agenda (Peck, 2005).
workers exist in precarious and not so creative lines of work (Zukin, 1997). A crucial difference between the precariousness experienced by Florida’s creative class workers compared to the many low-wage service sector workers he neglects is the power they have to control their position in the labour market. Creative class workers tend to possess high levels of human capital and to be well compensated for their work. This allows them to more easily respond and adapt to minor economic shocks and fluctuations. Conversely, these same economic shocks and fluctuations tend to be amplified among low-wage service and manufacturing workers who do not possess the same degree of human capital and income, and instead limits their employment opportunities. More importantly, because these workers tend to lack the ability to significantly change their situation and are tied to a specific place, issues of precariousness become inherently localized and contained within a given local labour market. This is a crucial point and helps explain why many writers focus on the regulation of the local labour market (Jonas, 1996; Martin, 2000; Peck, 1996; Rutherford, 1998; 2006).

Local and regional labour markets evolve out of the combined actions of a variety of individuals and groups who act in relation to one another within an existing structured environment. This dialectical relationship between the structures of a local labour market and how individuals navigate them is what shapes the socio-spatial divisions of labour and the regulatory framework needed to manage them. As will be demonstrated in the case of restaurant workers, the complex interaction between precarious workers and their

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7 It is disputable as to whether or not restaurant work, as it exists in the service industry, can be classified as creative. Walker (2004) questions the nature of certain occupations, such as restaurants, as they are considered part of the so-called emerging service industry. In doing so, he also brings into question the creative aspect of such work, given much of it is relatively standardized.
environment produce specific spatial configurations that have the potential to inform the processes of local labour market regulation in the new service driven economy.

The local labour market is an important unit of study given that it is a container for both economic activity and worker’s individual lived experiences. Conceptually, it makes the most sense to think about the local labour market as an area where local state and institutional configurations, workplace cultures, spatial and information networks in the capital-labour relation and labour traditions coincide and overlap to create an institutional thickness which governs and directs local labour configurations (adapted from Martin, 2000). It is within the local labour market that workers live their daily lives, the production of goods and services is undertaken, wealth is created and circulated, and the seeds of social reproduction are sown. The changing geography of the local labour market in recent years reflects the growing presence of precarious employment under contemporary capitalism. These changing geographies also impact the mobility of workers within the local labour market.

The influence of segmented labour markets on the movement of workers is important in understanding the (re)regulation of the local labour market with the rise of precarious employment. There is a very rich literature dating back to the 1960s which examines the origins of segmentation and its influence in shaping the labour market. More recently, our understanding of segmented labour markets has extended to include cultural influences (Bauder, 2001); influences that are particularly evident in the growing service economy. However, understanding the regulatory mechanisms shaping social reproduction in a local labour market requires that this literature be brought together with discussions of labour mobility in a flexible, precarious and structured local environment. As Iversen (2006), citing Bernhardt and colleagues (2001) suggests:
“Mobility is key to a definitive assessment of the emerging postindustrial economy, for mobility is where the link between labour market structure and individual life history is made, where we gain insight into the dynamic processes that actually generate inequality, and where we assess how well America is meeting its meritocratic ideal.” (Iversen, 2006: 23: emphasis added)

This becomes a point of departure for this thesis as it seeks to examine the working lives of restaurant workers in Kingston, Ontario and especially the movement of these workers between jobs as they navigate the vagaries of the local labour market.

Kingston, Ontario provides an appropriate case study to examine the relationship between precarious employment and the regulation of a local labour market within a midsized urban center. Kingston is one of many cities that has experienced a significant loss of manufacturing jobs and the subsequent growth of a service driven economy. Primarily an institutional town, Kingston now relies heavily on tourism to support its continued prosperity. The University and Colleges, along with the tourists in the summer, generate significant demand for local restaurants and tourism related activities. As a result, in 2007 Kingston was home to close to 300 restaurants (Bell Canada, 2007). Added to this, the restaurants were heavily concentrated within four main hubs in the city.

Data were collected using a combination of both primary and secondary sources. A mixed methodological approach is appropriate to fully address the nature of precarious employment within the restaurant industry of Kingston. Quantitative data, collected from a number of secondary sources, provided a context to establish an overview of Kingston’s employment structure and restaurant industry.

In addition to library-based research and the collection of statistical data, this study also made use of semi structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with employers, employees and labour market intermediaries involved with the restaurant
industry in Kingston. A total of 23 interviews were conducted including 14 with employers, 6 with employees and 3 with labour market intermediaries. These interviews provided information regarding the structure of the restaurant industry and the nature of its associated labour market. Many of the questions posed to respondents (Appendix A) were open-ended and designed to stimulate a dialogue around work and employment practices in the industry. Most interviews lasted between forty-five minutes and an hour.

The interviews began with questions regarding respondents past experience in working within the restaurant industry. This was followed by questions that explored their perceptions and experiences of the industry and their role in it. The interviews are key because the quantitative data alone does not sufficiently address the dynamics which shape employment within the local labour market.

The scope of this project was constrained due to a lack openness of certain restaurant employers and employees to be interviewed and the time allotted to conduct such a study. With regard to the latter, the research focused on only those restaurants located within the downtown area of Kingston (Figure 1.1). The research involved limited engagement with ethnic restaurants and restaurants located within hotels. Such employers and owners were very hesitant to grant me an interview. Aside from this caveat, the interviews were representative of the diversity of restaurants in downtown Kingston. Interviews with employees, and cooks in particular, were difficult to get due to the closed nature of this subculture which I only discovered after my research had begun. However, despite this, the interviews conducted are representative of the different individuals employed in the downtown. Also, several owners and employers discussed

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8 The research area is defined by Division Street at one end, which then followed Princess Street all the way down to the water front and was boarded on either side by Queen Street and Johnson Street.
their experiences as previous workers in the downtown, providing further information from an employee’s perspective. All interviews were digitally audio recorded and transcribed for the purpose of analysis.

**Figure 1.1: Map of Kingston, Ontario**

Interview participants were coded according to their role in the industry as employer, worker or local institutional employee, gender and whether they were a local Kingston resident or a student at one of the local post-secondary institutions. Workers were further identified by their occupation and employers were further identified by the type of restaurant they operated. Interview participants from local institutions were identified on the basis of whether they represented a public or private institution, and whether they were an educator or general employee. In the subsequent text, when
quoting, for example, a male worker who is a cook and local resident of Kingston, the following citation is used “Name (W/M/‘Local’/Cook)” while a female worker who is a server and student at a post-secondary institution is cited as “Name (W/F/Student/Server). A female employer in a fine dining restaurant, on the other hand, would be cited as “Name (E/F/Fine Dinning)”. Interview participants and restaurants are identified using pseudonyms to protect their identities. This was done to protect not only individual workers and businesses but also the relationship between the two.

The remainder of the thesis is structured as follows. Chapter Two begins by briefly discussing the nature of precarious employment and its prevalence in the service economy, and especially within the restaurant industry. Chapter Three focuses on the nature of a local labour market as it is shaped not only by precarious employment but also by processes of labour market segmentation and worker mobility. Chapter Four provides an economic overview of Kingston, Ontario and the characteristics of the restaurant industry in the city. It examines workers’ experiences of restaurant work and the ways in which employers shape the labour market experiences of such workers and the overall structure of the local labour market. Chapter Five examines the nature of precarious employment amongst restaurant workers in the city of Kingston, drawing on the data collected during the research. In particular, this chapter draws out the connections between the structure of the labour market within Kingston’s restaurant industry and workers’ experiences of precarious employment. It is here that the thesis focuses on the relationship between precarious employment and the impacts of labour mobility on the regulation of the local labour market. Chapter Six concludes by providing an overview of the main research findings and their implications for our understanding of how

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9 A full list of different occupations and types of restaurants can be found in Appendix B.
contemporary local labour markets for service-related activities such as restaurants operate and give rise to precarious forms of employment.
CHAPTER II
THE GROWTH OF PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT

This chapter begins with an examination of the changes which have occurred over the past several decades in the transition from Fordism to ‘After’-Fordism and the associated rise of neoliberalism. It then turns its attention to the changes that have occurred in employment relationships and the labour market as a result of this transition. This helps us to understand the factors that have made precarious employment such a prominent feature of the local labour market. A more detailed discussion of precarious employment in the Canadian context then follows. From here, attention focuses on the growth of the low-wage service sector which exhibits a high incidence of precarious employment. In particular, the negative impacts of precarious employment on workers in low-wage service industries are explored. Finally, the case study of the restaurant industry is introduced as an example of a low-wage service industry characterized by significant levels of precarious employment.

2.1 The Rise of Neoliberalism – A Recipe in the Making

Significant political and economic restructuring is a prominent feature of contemporary capitalism. This current period often gets referred to as an ‘After’-Fordist, postmodern or post-industrial environment\(^1\). As the economy began to slow in the early 1970s, the institutional structures which underpinned Fordism began to unravel. The economic stability previously attained through Keynesian demand management policies was no longer capable of being maintained (Allen, 1996b; Harvey, 1989) Instead, the

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\(^1\) Despite uncertainty and dispute over the actual degree to which our current society demonstrates a shift to some kind of ‘after’-fordist, postmodern or post-industrial environment, there most certainly has been a significant qualitative change when compared with the previous three decades immediately following WW II (Harvey, 1989).
transition from Fordism to an ‘After’-fordist environment produced a jagged and often uneven economic landscape (Harvey, 1989; Munck, 2002; Rupert, 2000; Tickell and Peck, 2003; Vallas, 1999; Wai-chung Yeung and Peck, 2003). The so-called ‘new’ economy which began to emerge was characterized by a steady rise in service and knowledge driven work, enhanced flexibility, global relationships, the importance of culture and the widespread introduction of new information and communication technologies. More importantly, this ‘new’ economy was characterized by the appearance of what some have labeled a new regime of flexible accumulation (Harvey, 1987). In the case of the labour market, the pressures created by this transition were accommodated through the incorporation of more flexible labour practices (Allen, 1996a; Harvey, 1987; Peck, 1996; Peck and Tickell, 2002; Standing, 1999).

Neoliberalism provided a regulatory framework that supported renewed capital accumulation under a regime of flexible accumulation. The conditions required to support this regime were achieved through a set of new political, economic, social and institutional arrangements (Allen, 1996a; Figure 2.1). The latter proved adept at facilitating flexibility and stabilizing the emerging ‘new’ economy (ibid). The initial success of neoliberalism was based on its ability to introduce new institutional arrangements to manage the growing uncertainty of an ‘after’-fordist environment (Peck and Tickell, 2002). However, the implementation of neoliberalism came in two stages (ibid). The first stage, referred to as “roll-back” neoliberalism, was oriented around the dismantling of the regulatory frameworks that had underpinned Fordism and Keynesianism. The second stage, referred to as “roll-out” neoliberalism, was concerned with the development of new forms of regulatory control better suited to the ‘new’ economy. This was achieved through a number of supply-side strategies that were more
responsive to the changing conditions of the market economy. These strategies promoted the greater use of short term production horizons; quicker turnover in product markets; increased mobility of capital globally and labour locally; greater control over labour inputs; reduction in the power of unions; increased entrepreneurial incentives and an emphasis on the sovereignty of the individual consumer (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002). This allowed firms to more readily adjust their labour inputs and production processes to match the rapidly changing demands of global markets and shifting consumer preferences, and contributed to the emergence of an increasingly flexible economic landscape (ibid; Allen, 1996a). As a result, neoliberalism quickly
became established as the hegemonic political project of contemporary, free-market capitalism (Harvey, 2005; Peck and Tickell, 2002).

A prominent feature of this emerging economic landscape has been the growing presence of a cultural and service driven economy. Zukin (1995) probably said it best, in that culture is increasingly becoming the business of cities. Culture has become the platform upon which many cities promote themselves as desirable places to live, work and play. This has become progressively more important in an environment where attractive locations are viewed as essential to draw investment from the more lucrative yet highly mobile firms and workers (ibid; Clark and Gaile, 1998). Added to this has been the withdrawal of upper-tier governmental support for activities such as economic development and social welfare provision. This has pitted cities against other cities in a struggle to attract new sources of investment (Clark and Gaile, 1998; Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002). As a result, city boosters now compete for tourism dollars and financial investments by bolstering the city’s image as a center of cultural innovation, including restaurants, avant garde performances and architectural design (Clark and Gaile, 1998; Zukin, 1995). Such strategies became popular in many cities following the publication of Richard Florida’s ‘The Creative Class’ (2002). The book promoted the idea that concentrations of individuals from the creative class attract desirable business investment from the ‘new’ knowledge based economy. These creative class individuals, in turn, are attracted to places that are rich in culture and related activities, making them attractive places to live. As a result, investment in and promotion of the cultural economy became the new competitive strategy for intercity competition.

In turn, the emergence of a culturally driven economy has propelled the growth of the service sector. What separates contemporary capitalism from previous periods is that
the economic is no longer merely embedded in the cultural. Instead, the cultural increasingly has become a commodified product which is both produced and consumed (Scott, 2001). The cultural economy is often reflected in such activities as entertainment, museums, media, restaurants and festivals and such goods as designer furniture, fashion clothing and jewelry, each of which produce both tangible and intangible commodities (Scott, 2001; 2004; Shaw, 2004; Zukin, 1995). The increased demand for these goods has been driven by the changing tastes and rising incomes of the postmodern consumer. Such consumers are often in search of nonstandard goods that provide opportunities for individual expression. However, the postmodern consumer does not refer to all consumers. Such consumers are often considered to be elite and employed in many of the emerging new high-tech and knowledge based industries (Frank, 1999; Schor 1999). These jobs provide them with levels of disposable income which afford them the luxury of consuming the goods produced by the cultural economy. On the other hand, those individuals employed directly within the cultural economy itself, and other similar low-wage, service industry jobs, do not earn enough to consume the very goods which they produce. In other words, the cultural economy provides the postmodern consumer with the opportunity to choose from an array of personalized, nonstandardized goods and services, but often at the expense of those producing them. However, the increase in demand for such goods and services by the postmodern consumer is what fuels the expansion of a cultural and service driven economy.

In order to provide such an array of nonstandardized goods and services and remain competitive, enterprises in the cultural economy are forced to continually reinvent themselves and their products. These pressures result in short product cycles in the service sector in order to provide the consumer with an ever changing array of products or
experiences. This constant need for reinvention has driven the demand for and growth of a flexible labour market in the service sector. This need for flexibility combined with the low pay and lack of workplace representation that characterize many of these jobs, have a tremendous impact upon the local labour market. In order to understand fully the changes in local labour markets, we must turn our attention to the forms of precarious employment which dominate low-wage industries, such as in the growing consumer service sector. People who occupy these jobs tend to be locked into particular locales and this has significant implications for the operation of the local labour market.

2.2 A Divided Labour Market: The Core and the Periphery

The increasing flexibility of contemporary capitalism has deepened the divide within the labour market between the core and periphery (Figure 2.2). The core of the labour market encompasses forms of work associated with the Standard Employment Relationship (SER)\(^2\). This form of employment dominated the economic landscape of Fordism and helped establish the conditions for mass consumption (Allen, 1996b; Brenner, 2004; Jessop, 2002). Labour markets characterized by standard forms of employment tend to demonstrate well-developed internal career ladders that often emphasize and reward functional forms of worker flexibility. Functional flexibility, through the multiskilling and networking of individuals, provides firms with greater internal responsiveness to changing market demands (Christopherson, 2002). In North

\(^2\) The Standard Employment Relationship (SER) refers to traditional patterns of employment that provide full-time work under a single employer, that is unlimited in its duration; security from unjustified dismissal; a rising real wage sufficient to support a family, tied to increases in productivity and the cost of living; and enjoyed extensive statutory benefit packages (Cranford 2003a; b and International Labour Organization). This became the reality experienced primarily by ‘white’ men in unionized manufacturing industries during the post war boom. The characteristics of the SER defined the broader social arrangements of the time. It was not until the late 1970s that women began to enter these forms of employment relationships in significant numbers. The SER, still today, acts as the foundation on which labour law, employment legislation and policy rest (Cranford 2003a; b)
America, these forms of employment are found most often among highly skilled individuals in the ‘new’ knowledge based economy and individuals employed in highly unionized manufacturing facilities and industries, such as warehousing, which are often difficult to offshore (Christopherson, 2002). Conversely, employment opportunities in the peripheral labour market encompass all those forms of work which do not fit the definition of a SER. Instead, they are grouped together and classified as nonstandard, or better yet ‘atypical’, forms of employment (Cranford, 2003a; b; International Labour Organization). These include part-time, contract and seasonal employment relationships that vary greatly across the labour market. In North America and Europe, the widespread growth of nonstandard employment is a key component behind the enhanced flexibility sought by firms under contemporary capitalism. These forms of employment provide firms with numerical flexibility. This form of flexibility allows firms to quickly adjust their labour inputs in response to changes in market demand (Christopherson, 2002). In Figure 2.2, the peripheral labour market appears fragmented due to the diverse forms of nonstandard employment which it encompasses. Combined, these forms of nonstandard employment now enable a great deal of the flexibility throughout the labour market. The overall shift towards a more flexible labour market has been accompanied by diminished employment conditions for many workers (Klien, 2000; Rutherford, 1998; 2006; Shalla, 2007; Standing, 1999; Vosko; 2000; 2006) including exclusion from benefits such as health insurance and pensions.

There are two reasons why numerical flexibility has taken such a strong hold in both North America and parts of Western Europe. First, many large companies are publicly traded. As a result, shareholders have a vested interest in seeing firms turn quarterly profits. Under these circumstances the quickest way to maintain profitability,
and in so doing the confidence of share holders, is through reducing labour costs. Labour is often a firm’s most expensive input, especially in the labour intensive consumer service sector, and as a result its reduced use can boost profit margins. Second, the numerous privately owned small firms that dominate the low-wage service sector also use numerical forms of flexibility but for very different reasons. These firms tend to operate on very tight profit margins and without the backing of shareholders this makes them highly susceptible to business failure. Approximately two-thirds of all retail and service businesses fail within their first five years of operation (English, Josiam, Upchurch and Willems, 1996). They also tend to be highly labour intensive, more so than other larger industries and this makes labour a significant cost (Shaw, 2004). The only option for these firms to maintain profitability and respond to the fluctuations in the market is to
adjust their labour inputs. Numerical flexibility allows these firms to make rapid changes in response to the uncertainty of the environment in which they exist. This is a primary reason for the presence of precarious employment within low-wage, service driven sectors, such as in restaurants.

2.3 Precarious Employment: A Canadian Take

The Canadian labour market has experienced a significant increase in precarious employment since the mid 1970s (Cranford, Vosko and Zukewich, 2003a; b; Vosko, 2006). For example, part-time employment, a common indicator of both the feminization of the labour market and precarious employment\(^3\), increased by almost 60 percent between 1976 and 2006 (Table 1.1). This was in comparison to full-time employment which only increased by 36 percent (ibid). Despite these trends, the incidence of part-time employment in Canada is concentrated primarily among four distinct groups: women, youth (ages 15-24), the elderly (ages 55 and over) and visible minorities (Feldman, 1990; Vosko, 2000; 2006). The prevalence of precarious employment within these four groups becomes even more pronounced among recent immigrants into Canada (Vosko, 2006). However, gender remains the most highly sensitive indicator in determining the incidence of precarious employment (Vosko, 2006).

Women dominate precarious forms of employment across the labour market. Trends in part-time employment demonstrate the overwhelming presence of women in such employment relationships since the mid 1970s (Figure 2.3; Table 2.1). Historically, there existed the perception that women preferred part-time employment because the

\(^3\) “Full-time” and “Part-time” employment will be initially used in the discussion of precarious employment in Canada because they are commonly used statistical indicators of such trends. “Part-time” work is a suitable indicator of precarious employment at a broad level because it encompasses a wide spectrum of characteristics demonstrated by precarious employment. Because of this, “Part-time” employment will always provide an indication of the changes which are occurring to precarious employment as a whole.
hours were better suited to their domestic responsibilities and allowed them to develop and retain their skills in order to rejoin the labour market at a later date (Feldman, 1990). However, recent trends also demonstrate a notable increase among men in part-time work (Figure 2.3; Table 2.1). Since the mid 1970s, the number of men employed part-time increased by close to 62 percent (Table 2.1); although women are still more likely to be employed part-time than men (Cranford et al., 2003b; Vosko, 2006; Table 2.1). Added to this is the fact that women, “as an undifferentiated group, are more concentrated in the most precarious forms of employment than are men, as an undifferentiated group” (Vosko, 2006:59). In other words, women, compared to men, remain more likely to be found within the most permanently precarious of part-time positions.

Age also plays an important role in shaping precarious employment in Canada. Figure 2.3 demonstrates that there are not only larger percentages of women in part-time employment then men in all age cohorts, but also that much larger proportions of both men and women aged 15 to 24 and over 55 work part-time (Feldman, 1990; Vosko, 2006). Youth are of particular interest because they experience a significant degree of precariousness in the labour market and are most often employed within the service industry (Feldman, 1990; Lucas, 1997). They are often hired into part-time jobs that provide low wages and minimal or no job security (Feldman, 1990; Holloway, 1998). They also face a significant degree of labour market discrimination when compared to other marginalized groups (Bauder, 2001a; Bauder and Sharpe, 2000; Holloway, 1998). Youth employed in part-time jobs tend to be located in the peripheral margins of the labour market and are most often “the last to be hired and first to be fired” (Holloway, 1998, p.32). According to Lucas (1997) employers see the flexibility that part-time youth
Figure 2.3: Forms of Employment by Age and Sex

Table 2.1: Presence of “Full-time” and “Part-time” Employment in Canada for both Men and Women of the Working Age Population (ages 15-65) from 1976-2006

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (LFS) – Table: 282-0002
provide as a benefit, while others hire youth due to their sheer availability or simply because youth seek out these forms of employment.

Men and women workers of colour are also more likely to experience contingent forms of precarious employment because they are less likely to be covered by a union (Vosko, 2006). At the same time, the degree of precariousness experienced by men of colour is greater than for women of colour (ibid). Finally, women of colour are more likely than white women to work full-time and longer hours but for less pay (ibid).

The industrial and occupational structure of the labour market provides another dimension along which workers experience varying degrees of precariousness (Vosko, 2006). The most precarious forms of employment, both permanent and temporarily employed part-time individuals, are concentrated in industries related to the service sector (Figure 2.4). For instance, the highest incidences of precarious employment are in occupations related to “sales and service”, “art, culture, recreation and sport” and “health care”. Workers within these industries tend to receive very low wages and relatively few are covered by a union or receive benefits packages (Kumar and Schenk, 2006; Tufts, 1998; Figure 2.5). Not only are rates of unionization low in the private sector as a whole but for those employed in the “Accommodation and Food” industry the rates are as low as 7.6% (Figure 2.5). As a result, cities that have fostered the growth of the service sector as an economic development strategy demonstrate a significant presence of nonstandard and precarious employment. Despite this, many policy makers focus their attention on the more attractive and lucrative nonstandard forms of employment within the ‘new’ knowledge based economy. This focus, however, comes at the expense of those who work in the lower-paid end of the labour market and experience some of the most precarious forms of employment.
Figure 2.4: Forms of Wage Work by Occupation


Figure 2.5: Union Density by Education, Sector, and Industry, Canada

2.4 Bridging the Gap: From Nonstandard to Precarious Employment

There is an overwhelming tendency in society to equate precarious employment with nonstandard work and with part-time work in particular. This tendency has been fueled by the use of part-time work as a primary and sole indicator of precarious employment. However, this distinction is not always so simple. The traditional distinctions made between standard and nonstandard forms of employment have become blurred as flexible labour markets and changing economic conditions have distorted many of the traditional markers of such employment categories. As a result, the turn to a more flexible labour market has resulted in an increasing number of full-time employment opportunities exhibiting characteristics typically associated with part-time and precarious employment. Because the distinctions between full-time and part-time employment are defined simply on the basis of hours worked in a week (Statistics Canada), this simple dichotomy masks the true extent of precarious employment (Kahne, 1992). For example, short-order or line cooks, employed in a local restaurant, may work well in excess of the 30 hours a week required to be categorized as “full-time” by Statistics Canada. However, they commonly experience a high degree of precariousness due to the low pay, lack of workplace representation and the chronic insecurity associated with their jobs. In contrast to this, a skilled graphics designer may receive a wage that provides much more economic security and a higher standard of living but be classified as part-time because their employment contract provides for less than a thirty-hour work week. They may even experience greater employment insecurity then the cook because they have to continually search for their next contract.

4 The distinction between “full-time” and “part-time” employment in Canada is based on a 30 hour work week in an individual’s primary job (Statistics Canada). An individual’s primary job is the job that provides them with the greatest number of hours a week.
As a result, both full-time and part-time forms of employment have experienced growing precariousness. The types of precarious employment which are masked by a simple full-time and part-time distinction include temporary, contract, seasonal, and casual work along with self-employment. All of these forms of employment have been documented to be on the rise in North America (Peck, 1996; Castree, Coe, Ward and Samers, 2004). Even on their own, such nonstandard forms of employment exhibit variations in the degree of precariousness they represent. As a result, the rise in precarious forms of employment is much greater than the increase in part-time employment alone would lead us to believe (Tables 1.1 and 2.1). For these reasons it is important that we broaden our understanding of what precarious employment is and who it impacts.

2.5 Understanding Precariousness

Due to its growing prevalence, precarious employment has become a focus of interest within academic research (Cranford, 2003a; 2003b; Vosko, 2000; 2006). Current studies of precarious employment attempt to “interrogate, deepen, and rethink what have come to be normalized descriptive concepts – terms such as “standard,” “nonstandard,” and “contingent”” (Vosko, 2006: 11). These last two concepts dominate the discourse surrounding flexible labour markets and have long been used to define labour market insecurity and precarious employment in North America (Castree et al, 2004; Kalleberg, 2000; Krahn, 1995; Peck, 1996; Rutherford, 1998). However, the sole use of these concepts limits our ability to fully address the issue of precarious employment as a whole. To provide a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of labour market insecurity we must examine the relationship between concepts such as ‘standard’ and ‘nonstandard’ work and precarious employment, a task best accomplished by Cranford, Vosko and Zukewich (2003a).
At its broadest, precarious employment encompasses forms of work which involve some expression of insecurity and/or uncertainty within the employment relationship. However, rather than focusing on the form of employment, such as part-time and temporary employment, and work arrangement, such as shift-work, as is customary in North America, researchers in Europe examine other dimensions that signify a precarious employment relationship. To begin, Cranford, Vosko and Zukewich (2003a) first turn to Gerry Rodgers (1989) who identified four key dimensions to classifying a job as precarious; namely, the degree of certainty of continuing employment; the degree of control exercised by the worker over the labour process; the degree of regulatory protection; and the income level of a particular job. Rodgers’ first dimension relates to the time horizons which characterize a particular employment relationship and the risk of job loss. The more likely one is to loose their job the more precarious is their employment situation. The second condition measures the control a worker has over the labour process itself and their employment contract. This refers to their ability to effectively exercise voice over matters such as wages, hours worked and pace of work. The third condition addresses the degree of legal or regulatory protection an individual enjoys through workplace representation and labour law. Rodgers’ last dimension of precarious employment is a measure of an individual’s total level of employment income including benefits. An individual’s income provides them with a certain degree of economic security in their life and ability to support themselves and their dependents. Regardless of the total number of hours worked, low income is arguably the most important indicator of

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5 This dimension of precariousness is distinct from Rodgers’ earlier reference to an individual’s ability to have a say over their wages. This is outlined by their control over the labour process. Despite whether they have a say or not in their wages, their final income, including benefits, is a major indicator of precarious employment.
a precarious employment relationship. Low income presents the greatest barrier to an individual’s ability to socially reproduce themselves and their dependents. Different combinations of these four dimensions produce variations in the degree of precariousness associated with a particular job. The more of these dimensions displayed by a particular job, combined with the intensity expressed along each dimension, the more precarious that job is likely to be.

Cranford, Vosko and Zukewich (2003a: 10) then produce a typology that breaks down total employment into mutually exclusive classifications in order to provide a bridge between the concepts of ‘nonstandard work’, as described earlier, and ‘precarious employment’ (Figure 2.6). This typology provides a means to better comprehend the various forms of standard and nonstandard employment which exist. It also helps us to see which forms of employment are driving the growth of the workforce. Cranford et al. state that, in general, those who are self-employed are more precarious than those who are in paid employment. This is because the self-employed do not enjoy the same regulatory protection as a paid employee and are excluded from collective bargaining coverage and employment standards legislation. Next, they further differentiate the self-employed by those with and those without employees. They state that those without employees, the own account self-employed, are arguably more precarious than those with employees. The rest of the decomposition addresses the degree of certainty of continuing employment. This categorizes employees based upon job permanency (permanent vs. temporary). The final step breaks down each employment type based upon whether employees are full-time or part-time (Figure 2.6). The categories in the bottom row are then organized in ascending order, from left to right, based on the level of precariousness they demonstrate. When the dimensions of precarious employment are layered on top of
these categories, it is revealed that precarious employment is best conceived as a complex continuum (Cranford et al. 2003a).

**Figure 2.6: Mutually Exclusive Typology of Employment**

![Diagram of Mutually Exclusive Typology of Employment]


In a more recent book, Vosko (2006) considers precarious employment as forms of employment that provide workers with limited access to social benefits and statutory entitlements, job insecurity, low wages and risks of ill-health. She also suggests that precarious employment is further shaped by an individual’s location within the labour market; for example, their employment status (self-employed or paid work), form of employment (full-time or part-time), experience of labour market instability by social context (industry, occupation and geography) and social location (gender, age, and ethnicity). At the same time, precarious employment is also shaped by an individual’s ability to make their own decisions with regard to their position within the labour market (Vosko, 2006).

**2.6 Pushed to the Margin – Precarious Beyond the Job**

For many individuals, the emergence of a flexible labour market in the aftermath of restructuring has resulted in an unfavourable outcome. The labour market is becoming
increasingly polarized, not only at the international level but also at the local and regional level (Elson, 1981; 1984). For the growing number of workers who find themselves at the bottom of the labour market, the uncertainty and insecurity of precarious employment is a formidable reality. These individuals experience low levels in pay, uncertain and irregular working hours, few or no benefits, and little job security. As a result, they often suffer from bouts of unemployment and at times chronic underemployment. Many of these individuals regularly circulate within the local labour market seeking new and better employment opportunities. In order to generate a sustainable income for themselves and their dependents, many work more than one job. The number of documented individuals working in excess of one job, also referred to as moonlighting, has steadily risen since 1987 (Table 2.2 and Table 2.3). Moonlighting is especially prevalent among the most marginalized individuals in society: women, youth, legal and illegal immigrants and people of different ethnic backgrounds (Bauder, 2000; 2001; Feldman, 1990; Lowe, 2000; Lucas 1997; O’Regan, 1991).

One of the most telling aspects of holding a precarious job is the impact it has on an individual’s life as a whole. What really distinguishes between the cook and the graphics designer is how the characteristics of each job impact their lives as a whole. Each of these jobs has a very different impact on the individual’s ability to sustain their labour market position and reproduce themselves and their dependents. This is the essence of precarious employment.


Between 1976 and 2006, employment in the service-producing sector in Canada grew by close to 50%: more than double that experienced by the goods producing-sector
Table 2.2: Labour Force Survey Estimates of Multiple Jobholders by National Occupational Classification System for both sexes, 15 years and over, in the Canadian Labour Market

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Multiple Job Holders (x1000)</th>
<th>Total Occupations</th>
<th>Management Occupations</th>
<th>Business, Finance and Administrative Occupations</th>
<th>Health Occupations</th>
<th>Occupations in social science, education, government and religion</th>
<th>Sales and Service Occupations</th>
<th>Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators</th>
<th>Occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities</th>
</tr>
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<td>600</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>500</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>720</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>520</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>730</td>
<td>630</td>
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<td>340</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>540</td>
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<tr>
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<td>250</td>
<td>350</td>
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<td>550</td>
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<td>600</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>810</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>410</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
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<td>650</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>860</td>
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<td>360</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>760</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>770</td>
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<td>370</td>
<td>470</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>880</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>890</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>290</td>
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<td>490</td>
<td>590</td>
<td>690</td>
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<td>890</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

Table 2.3: Change in Estimated Number of Multiple Job Holders Compared to Total Number of Job Holders, Selected Occupations, 1987-2006 (1987=100)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Change in Number of (Multiple) Job Holders (1987=100)</th>
<th>Multiple Job Holders for All Occupations</th>
<th>Total Number of Job Holders for All Occupations</th>
<th>Multiple Job Holders for Sales and Service Occupations</th>
<th>Total Number of Job Holders in Sales and Service Occupations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>2002</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>2005</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001
over the same period (Table 2.3). The employment patterns produced by the service industry are highly sensitive to the changing demographics of the labour market. Restaurants in particular are characterized by a high degree of occupational segregation by gender, age and ethnicity, increasing wage polarization and the gendering of jobs to resemble precarious and nonstandard forms of employment (Bills, 1999; Erickson, 2004; Fine, 1992; 1996; Hall, 1993; Neumark, 2004; Petersen and Togstad, 2006; Zukin, 1995). In particular, restaurant work tends to be dominated by women, ethnic minorities and youth (Bills, 1999; Fine, 1992; 1996; Shaw, 2004; Zukin; 1995).

Table 2.4: Employment in Canada (Seasonally Unadjusted) by Type of Industry using the National American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), Annual Statistics from 1976 to 2006

Gender and age tend to produce the largest occupational divides within restaurants. The gendered division of labour within restaurants occurs first between front- and back-of-house jobs and then by the perceived skill demanded by each job (Bills, 1999; Fine 1996). Individuals employed in the kitchen tend to be predominantly male.
whereas women predominate in the dining areas (ibid). An exception to this is found in high-end, fine dining restaurants where male waiters are often the norm because being a server in this type of restaurant is considered a highly skilled job (Erikson, 2004). Age also plays an important role in restaurants. Similar to the rest of the service industry, the majority of individuals who work in restaurants are youth between the ages of 15 and 25 (Bills, 1999; Erikson, 2004; Shaw, 2004; Zukin, 1995). Many of the jobs among restaurants tend to be associated with heightened job insecurity as increasingly they become characterized by forms of nonstandard employment and numerical forms of flexibility.

Precarious employment is particularly evident within the restaurant industry where there are seemingly low barriers to entry and significant competition among local businesses. Restaurant work, for the most part, tends to demonstrate all four characteristics of a precarious employment relationship as outlined by Rodgers (1989), and restaurants make frequent use of nonstandard forms of employment. Aside from owners and a select few professional chefs, few jobs in the restaurant industry demonstrate the degree of security usually associated with the standard employment relationship. Figure 2.7 and Table 2.5 attempt to characterize the nature of precarious employment in the restaurant industry. In reality, many restaurant workers experience significant degrees of precariousness. This is particularly evident among those occupations that tend to be low skilled, require little formal education and take only a short time to learn. These jobs include all entry level positions, such as dishwasher and maître d’hôtel and most server, bartender and line cook positions. These jobs tend to be easily filled and replaced.
Uncertainty, in all of its dimensions, is a daily part of the lives for many restaurant workers. First, restaurant work tends to be characterized by irregular and unsocial working hours and low levels of job security, particularly for those employed part-time (Bills, 1999; Fine, 1992; 1996; Hall, 1993; Neumark, 2004). Most restaurants are not-unionized which can make them an even more precarious place to work (Kumar, 2006; Vosko, 2006). As a result, most restaurant workers have little control over the nature of their work, and only limited regulatory protection. Most of all, many restaurant jobs are characterized by the same low-wages found throughout the consumer service sector of the economy (Neumark, 2004). This is particularly true for those employed on a part-time or casual basis, especially in entry level positions and as servers and prep cooks (Bills, 1999; Neumark 2004; Table 2.5). There also exists a large wage gap between a very few highly paid individuals, such as restaurant owners, chefs, restaurant managers and some cooks, and a large number of low paid workers (Neumark, 2004; Interviews: Jim (W/M/‘Local’/Head Chef) and Steve (Instructor/M/Local Training Institution/ Executive Chef)).

2.8 Competitiveness and Career Advancement in the Restaurant Industry

The competitive market structure of the restaurant industry is very complex. Restaurants exist in a highly fragmented and differentiated market. The restaurant industry tends to be characterized by small and medium sized firms that operate under near perfectly competitive market conditions. The small profit margins enjoyed by restaurants leaves them vulnerable to slight changes in consumers’ disposable incomes and other market fluctuations. These competitive pressures are further engrained by the whims of the postmodern consumer who seeks ever changing, new and ‘authentic’ dining experiences. As a result, restaurants are continually going in and out of business or
Figure 2.7: Occupational Hierarchy within the Restaurant Industry by Level of Precariousness

Table 2.5: Occupational Characteristics of Restaurant Jobs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Occupational Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>High pay, most likely to receive benefits, secure employment, lots of control over the nature of their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>High pay, likely to receive benefits, secure employment, lots of control over the nature of their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line Cook</td>
<td>High pay, may receive benefits, some employment security, some control over the nature of their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartender</td>
<td>Decent pay, some job security, minimal control over the nature of their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-order and Prep-cook</td>
<td>Low pay, little job security, no control over the nature of their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servers</td>
<td>Low pay (heavily reliant on tips), very little job security, no control over the nature of their work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishwasher/Maître D’</td>
<td>Low pay, no job security, no control over the nature of their work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
reinventing themselves to appeal to shifting market trends. From a staffing perspective, numerical flexibility plays a critical role in the restaurants ability to adjust to rapid changes. However, different restaurants experience the same market fluctuations unevenly and in different ways. Restaurants provide such a wide range of different culinary experiences that they attract different clienteles and for different reasons. For example, most corporately owned and/or franchise operated restaurants provide a relatively standardized menu and dining experience that is regulated by a distant head corporate office. Such restaurants, though they are subject to the same market fluctuations as independently owned restaurants, do not experience the same pressure to reinvent themselves as often and tend to attract a narrowly defined target audience in search of a ‘known’ experience. On the other hand, independently owned restaurants provide a less standardized experience that is determined by the owner and chef. Because these restaurants do not enjoy the “brand” identification and support of a large corporate office, they have to compete on their own. Also, because people go to such restaurants in search of a unique experience, these restaurants must continually reinvent themselves or at least their menus in order to remain competitive. Another big difference between corporate and independent restaurants is the nature of changes that are made. Changes in corporate restaurants occur mainly with regard to the menu and are made by a chef at the head office who outlines the exact methods and ingredients that are to be used in the food. These changes are often small and do not significantly change the experience of eating at the restaurant or the continuity of employment for the staff. Independent restaurants, on the other hand, regularly update their menus and at times are completely reinvented. This sometimes means the loss of jobs for individuals employed in such restaurants if they do
not ‘fit’ the new atmosphere which is being created, or at least for the period that the restaurant is being remodeled.

However, dispersed amongst this mix of independently and corporately owned restaurants, that operate under the competitive structures as just outlined, are a small number of restaurants that operate under very different market conditions. For instance, ethnic restaurants and small independently owned ‘greasy spoons’, donut shops and small diners, do not experience, at least to the same degree, the market pressures that other restaurants face. Ethnic restaurants, by there very nature, provide unique dining experiences in and of themselves and tend to attract a specific audience that seeks the kind of products that they provide. On the other hand, such restaurants as coffee shops, ‘greasy’ spoons, donut shops and independently owned small diners tend to provide relatively standardized experiences and products. Many of these restaurants tend to have a very loyal clientele that provides them a steady flow of business. Even though some of these restaurants serve seemingly standardized products, there remains an attraction to these places. For instance, it is not the coffee at Tim Horton’s, Star Bucks or Coffee and Co. that sets these shops apart from other standard coffee shops, all are relatively the same, but it is the act of buying a coffee at these stores and the feeling the consumer receives from doing so that sets them apart. Some customers may not go to the ‘greasy’ spoon down the street very often but on occasion the act of going to these places and the products they serve are an attraction in and of themselves. Secondly, small diners, greasy spoons and donut shops are not as sensitive to downturns in the economy because the products they provide are cheap and not necessarily seen as an extra expense. As a result, the core clientele who frequent these restaurants continue to do so during difficult economic times. As such, these restaurants tend to maintain very stable employment
relationships with their workforces and, in some instances, employ older and more mature workers.

In summary, this chapter has provided an overview of the changing political and economic conditions leading to the emergence of precarious employment in the low-wage service sector. It has presented a way of conceptualizing precariousness within the labour market and described the range of employment relationships which it tends to encompass. Precarious employment has largely been neglected in policy circles in favour of employment in the emerging ‘new’ knowledge based economy. Jobs that exhibit high degrees of precariousness tend to be located in low-wage service industries such as restaurants. The growth in restaurants is deeply embedded in the changing nature of society and the emergence of a cultural economy. The localized nature of these precarious forms of employment has had a significant impact on the urban labour market.
CHAPTER III

LOCAL LABOUR MARKETS AND PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT

The regulation of the local labour market plays a crucial role in shaping precarious employment in the low-wage service sector. In the new millennium, the growing complexity of the local labour market commands our attention as it struggles to adjust to the pressures of political, economic and social change. The latter have significantly altered the grounds upon which the capital-labour relationship unfolds. In the contemporary economic landscape, local economies increasingly are becoming the focal point of political and economic activity. The growing complexity of relationships at this scale has made it much more difficult to delimit the boundaries of the local labour market. Enhanced flexibility and the ‘new’ economy have further fragmented the local labour market. This has been compounded by an evolving urban and economic landscape that has produced new relationships between geography and labour. Nowhere else have these issues become more evident than in the case of precarious employment in the low-wage service sector. It is important that we understand the forces which regulate work within this sector if we are to fully comprehend the nature and impacts of precarious employment.

This chapter discusses the nature of the local labour market as it relates to the regulatory mechanisms which shape precarious employment in the low-wage service sector. To begin, we examine the forces that have shaped the local labour market as a space of increasing economic importance within a global economy. We then move on to a more detailed conceptualization and description of the structure of the local labour market itself and a discussion of the importance of local labour regimes in regulating the local labour market. A detailed discussion then follows that examines the nature of work
systems and processes of labour market segmentation that shape the local labour market. More importantly, this discussion helps us to understand the complexities of the local labour market and occupational structure within the restaurant industry.

3.1 Shifting Scales: The Rise of Local Economies

Over the past several decades, local economies increasingly have become the focal point of political and economic activity. Advances in information, communication and transportation technologies have allowed individual firms and local economies across the globe to directly interact with one another (Dicken, 2003; Swyngedouw, 1997). As a consequence, the role of the nation-state as a facilitator of both political and economic activity has slowly been eroded. Since the late 1970s, neoliberal restructuring has aided in the displacement of a variety of activities previously undertaken by the nation-state to a variety of new scales. One aspect of this redistribution saw the downloading of activities to local regimes involved in the governance of the local economy. This provided support to local economies to compete globally for capital investment and market share. The logic behind such restructuring suggests that the success of local economies in a global market is greater if they have control over their own development (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Peck and Tickell 2002; Shalla, 2007). This is because actors at this scale are considered to be more attuned to the needs of their own specific economies. The processes of rescaling which have stretched political and economic activity between local and global scales are encapsulated in the term ‘glocalization’ (Swyngedouw, 1997). These changes have resulted in the proliferation of actors involved in the governance of local economies (Cox, 1998; Isin, 2000; Stoker, 1998; Swyngedouw, 1997). In particular, they have led to the fragmentation of the urban regimes involved in the governance of the local labour market.
These developments highlight the importance of understanding the regulation of the local labour market. As Martin (2000: 456) stresses:

“…the labour market has an *intrinsically local level of operation and regulation*,...the creation and destruction of jobs, and the processes of employment, unemployment, and wage setting, and the institutional and social regulation of these processes, to some extent at least, are locally constituted. It is within specific spatial settings and contexts – ‘local labour markets’ – that workers seek employment and employers hire and fire workers, that particular forms of employment structures evolve, that specific employment practices, work cultures, and labour relations become established, and particular institutionalized modes of labour regulation emerge or are imposed.” (emphasis in original)

### 3.2 Locating the Local Labour Market: Putting Labour in its Place

Conceptualizing the local labour market has grown increasingly difficult due to the range of forces shaping it. Orthodox notions of the local labour market as ‘aspatial’ and ‘ahistorical’ no longer apply in the current political and economic environment. Local labour markets are more than simple containers, defined by commuting labour sheds (Martin, 2000; Peck, 1996). Today, the local labour market is conceived as the space in which the processes of production, reproduction and social regulation simultaneously unfold (Peck, 1996). Specifically, this space is defined by the area where these three processes overlap to shape the interactions between employers and employees (Martin, 2000; Peck, 1996). For that reason, “the more that the ‘employment field’ of workers and the ‘labour supply shed’ of employers spatially coincide, the more easily defined and more self-contained the local labour market will be” (Martin, 2000: 461).

The actors and institutions which dictate the regulation of the local labour market form what Jonas (1996) refers to as a ‘local labour control regime’. The internal structures of such regimes are governed by power dynamics that shape which actors or institutions dominate the regulation of the local labour market (Jonas, 1996; Peck, 1996).
In recent decades, the redistribution of political and economic activity has increased the number actors and institutions which comprise such local labour regimes (Brenner, 2004; Cox, 1998; Isin, 2000; Stoker, 1998). Taken together, the fragmentation of such regimes and the uneven distribution of power reinforce the assertion that the government or state is best conceived as a complex set of social relations (Jessop, 2002; Macleod and Goodwin 1999). Bob Jessop’s (2002) strategic relational approach to urban governance suggests that the actors involved in such local labour regimes each seek to strategically further their own agenda given the actions of the other actors and institutions. The power balance between these actors and institutions (demand-side, supply-side and state) influences the regulation and spatial organization of the local labour market (Jessop, 2002; Jonas, 1996; Peck, 1996). The overlapping areas of production, reproduction and social regulation, combined with the power dynamics of the actors which shape them, ‘produce’ the local labour market.

The local labour market does not exist as a single entity but rather is composed of a number of individual submarkets. This further complicates the regulation of the local labour market as some actors’ and institutions’ influence stretches across submarkets while others operate only in specific segments. In some cases submarkets are based around one or two specific occupations; for example professions that require significant upfront investments in human capital, such as physicians and/or doctorates. In other cases, a particular submarket may act as a common labour pool, shared by a number of firms in the local economy. Such submarkets tend to provide pools of low-skilled workers employable within a variety of firms. This interchangeability of low-skilled workers is particularly evident in the low-wage service sector, such as in restaurants. Together, these submarkets cover all employment in a local economy between different firms. However,
differences between firms in the skills they demand limit the movement of workers between submarkets (Arulampalam and Booth, 1998; Jonas, 1996; Peck, 1996; Rutherford, 1998; 2006). As Martin (2000:461) describes it:

“The local labour market is thus itself a complex assemblage of segmented submarkets, each having its own geographies, its own employment and wage process, and its own specific modes of social regulation, an assemblage of non-competing submarkets which, nevertheless, are linked together to varying extents via direct and indirect webs of local economic dependency and exchange.”

As a result, processes of labour market segmentation have become more complex with the rise of the ‘new’ economy and the coexistence of an increasing number of distinct submarkets (Bauder, 2001; Martin, 2000; Peck, 1996). Evidence of this can be seen in the growing divide in local economies between employment opportunities in the knowledge-based economy and the low-wage service sector.

3.3 Work Systems

Work systems play an important role in helping us to distinguish between subsectors and different occupations within a local labour market. Such work systems also help us to understand precarious employment and occupational differences within the local service sector. Work systems refer to the basic approaches employers take to the organization of production and the motivation and control of how hard and well people work (Herzenberg, Alic and Wial 1998). Herzenberg et al (1998), identify four broad types of work system in the contemporary service sector: tightly constrained work systems; unrationa lized and labour intensive work systems; semiautonomous work systems; and high-skill autonomous work systems. In tightly constrained work systems, jobs are narrowly defined and each task is paced by technological and organizational constraints and customer demand (Herzenberg et al, 1998). In unrationa lized and labour
intensive work systems, such as those that tree planters, truckers, clerical homeworkers, child care workers, low-level retail sales clerks and uncredentialed short-order cooks belong to, employers can either regulate the pace of work by linking pay to output or provide low pay in instances where the market does not reward quality (Herzenberg et al, 1998). For nurses and other similar occupations, employers may count on their social sense of obligation to serve to regulate work and pay (Herzenberg et al, 1998). In semiautonomous work systems, workers perform tasks that can not be technologically controlled or monitored and so managers use internal promotion ladders, along with organizational culture and peer pressure, to achieve efficient worker behaviour (Herzenberg et al, 1998). Finally, in high-skill work systems, employers rely upon self-motivation which reflects professional commitment and craft pride, reinforced by financial and career incentives (Herzenberg et al, 1998). As the economy has transitioned in response to political and economic restructuring, so too have the characteristics of these works systems. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 provide a description of each of these work systems and how they have changed. The importance of such work systems is that they help us to understand the characteristics of employment opportunities within the local labour market for service sector work.

All four work systems defined by Herzenberg et al (1998) can be seen within restaurants. Chefs and restaurant owners are the only occupations which belong to high-skill work systems. The routinized and standardized nature of work in fast food and corporately run restaurants positions them firmly within the confines of tightly constrained work systems. The vast majority of workers in these jobs are highly controlled in all aspects of their work. Only the work of senior managers in these restaurants might be characterized by a semiautonomous work system. Other restaurants,
such as small independents and non-corporately owned restaurants reflect work across all three work systems. In these restaurants, entry level jobs, such as hostess, dishwasher and some prep cooks, are characterized by tightly constrained work systems. Most line cooks, servers and bartenders are characterized by unrationalized and labour intensive work systems. More highly skilled line-cooks and servers, some chefs and restaurant managers are found within the semiautonomous work system category. Examples of precarious employment within each work system and their more detailed characteristics within the restaurant industry can be seen in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.1: A Typology of Work Systems in the Service Sector**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work systems and examples</th>
<th>Defining Characteristics</th>
<th>Major changes, 1960s-1990s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tightly constrained (telephone Operators, fast food workers)</td>
<td>Jobs narrowly defined, undemanding in terms of skills. Production paced by machine technology, customer pressure, or flow of work.</td>
<td>Some tasks and jobs automated out of existence, while automation and rationalization move other tasks and jobs into this work system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrationalized labour-intensive (janitors, security guards)</td>
<td>Low wages. Work not susceptible to machine pacing or quality monitoring.</td>
<td>Declining pay at the bottom of the labour market makes this work system more attractive to employers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semiautonomous (supervisors, flight attendants, office managers)</td>
<td>Usually firm-specific skills. Bureaucratic incentives (pay, promotion, corporate culture) motivate workers.</td>
<td>Information technology reduces demand for some firm-specific skills. Downsizing, wage-based competition undermine bureaucratic incentives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-skill autonomous (physicians, electricians, teachers)</td>
<td>Workers responsible for own performance.</td>
<td>More jobs moving into this category.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Reproduced from Herzenberg et al., 1998: Table 1, p.10*
## Table 3.2: Changes in Wages, Mobility, and Employment, By Work System, 1979-1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work System</th>
<th>Relative size (as a share of economy wide employment)</th>
<th>Real median Wage</th>
<th>Prospects for individual advancement</th>
<th>Job security</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tightly Constrained</td>
<td>Slight decline (from 6 to 5 percent)</td>
<td>Down 18 Percent</td>
<td>Poorer: more dead-end jobs with no prospect of internal advancement.</td>
<td>Poorer: more outsourcing, permanent Layoffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrationalized labour-Intensive</td>
<td>Stable, at about 25 percent</td>
<td>Down 11-12 Percent</td>
<td>Still poor: low-wage jobs unconnected to better ones</td>
<td>Little change: Some dead-end jobs are secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-autonomous</td>
<td>Down, from about 35 to 30 percent</td>
<td>Down roughly 6 percent</td>
<td>Worse: many skills of value only to current employer but firm-specific job ladders breaking down</td>
<td>Worse: more reengineering, permanent layoffs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High-skill Autonomous</td>
<td>Up, from 34 to about 40 percent</td>
<td>Down 6 percent</td>
<td>Still good in most cases</td>
<td>Little change: skills widely recognized and valued by many employers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Reproduced from Herzenberg, 1998: Table 2, p.13
Table 3.3: Work Systems Summarized for Restaurant Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Tightly constrained</th>
<th>Unrationalized labour-intensive</th>
<th>Semiautonomous</th>
<th>High-skil autonomous</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workers in fast-food and corporately owned restaurants; dishwashers &amp; Hostesses</td>
<td>Most line cooks and servers but also includes bartenders</td>
<td>More experienced line cooks and some chefs and servers; also includes managers</td>
<td>Head Chefs and owners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Work</td>
<td>High volume, low cost; standardized quality</td>
<td>Low cost, low volume; often uneven quality</td>
<td>Volume and quality vary</td>
<td>Low volume; quality is in the eye of the beholder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of organizational rationalization</td>
<td>High (jobs designed by management)</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low to moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Supervision</td>
<td>Tight</td>
<td>Loose</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Little</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Education/ Credentials</td>
<td>Low to moderate</td>
<td>Low to moderate (skill often unrecognized)</td>
<td>Moderate to high particularly for cooks</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal, Firm specific training</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
<td>Significant for those who seek advancement</td>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-the-job training</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Some informal</td>
<td>Limited to moderate</td>
<td>Substantial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay</td>
<td>Flat hourly, low-wages; bonuses linked to output or profits</td>
<td>Flat hourly rate, usually low-wages and tips collected by servers</td>
<td>Often flat hourly; low to moderate wages (depending on size of industry and market)</td>
<td>Usually salary or high wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening of job applicants</td>
<td>Limited</td>
<td>Little</td>
<td>Careful</td>
<td>Very Careful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal job ladders</td>
<td>Well defined but short and limited</td>
<td>Minimal to none depending on size of industry</td>
<td>Important</td>
<td>Important for some workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility across firms</td>
<td>Lateral Mobility in some cases</td>
<td>Lateral, little upward mobility</td>
<td>Limited portable experience</td>
<td>Lateral mobility, and some upward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Herzenberg 1998, Table 6, pp. 42-43
Employers’ hiring practices are the most important aspect in further understanding the nature of each of these work systems as they organize production within the service and restaurant industry. The choices employers make in who they hire shapes the structure of the local labour market and the opportunities available to different individuals. These decisions play an important role in shaping precarious employment in the low-wage service sector since they influence the segmentation of the local labour market which has a significant impact in determining who experiences precarious employment.

3.4 Segmented Labour Markets

Segmentation theory argues that the labour market is fractured and that the existence of institutional structures outside of the market economy, primarily social and cultural institutions, guides the processes of segmentation (Peck, 1996; Wilkinson, 1981). These processes form the initial structures which give shape to the local labour market and its multitude of submarkets. These structures divide workers into groups according to social as well as economic characteristics. The first generation of segmentation theorists, also known as dual labour market theorists, used these ideas to construct simple core and periphery models to describe divisions within the labour market (Doeringer and Piore, 1971). The differences between core and periphery are similar to the characteristics which distinguish between standard and nonstandard forms of employment. The differences between core and periphery were also caused by increases in demand for skilled labour derived from technological change (Peck, 1996). However, this perspective was quickly replaced by more sophisticated models.

Second generation approaches to labour market segmentation are influenced by more Marxist and Radical labour market theorists. These individuals emphasize the role
of capitalist control strategies necessary with the advent of routinized production techniques in which the workforce is increasingly deskilled and homogenized (Reich, Gordon & Edwards, 1973). Contradictory class relations lay at the heart of the second generations approach to dual labour markets. These individuals argued that monopolists sought to segment the labour market through the development of extended hierarchies and exploitation of racial and gender differences to counteract tendencies towards solidarity (Peck, 1996). These theories were built upon first generation approaches and therefore remained true to the existence of dual labour markets and a primary/secondary labour market structure.

Third generation segmentation theorists moved even further away from the problems with orthodox neoclassical economic theories of the labour market identified by the dualists. The critique offered by third generation segmentation theorists focuses on the primacy of the demand for labour in shaping labour market outcomes; the assumption that markets exist on their own prior to any institutional arrangement; and finally the tendency towards convergence in employment organization. Instead these theorists break down the concept of labour market segmentation in to three categories: demand-side, supply-side and the state (Peck, 1996). The third generation theorists attribute the different technical requirements of the labour process, the stability of product markets and strategies of employers hiring practices to the demand-side forces which shape the segmentation of the labour market. The supply-side on the other hand is associated with the role of the household in the division of labour in shaping participation in the labour market, the stigmatization of certain social groups, processes of occupational socialization and union influences. Finally, they recognize the role of the state in shaping segmentation through their ability to structure welfare provision, influence industrial relations and labour law
and education and training organizations. The important contribution that third generation segmentationalists make is the recognition of the complexity and intricate nature of how individuals are matched with particular jobs in the labour market.

3.5 Culture, Space and Contemporary Labour Market Segmentation Theories

Fourth generation segmentation theories address specifically the linkage between society, space and the structure of the labour market, a crucial step in understanding the regulation of the labour market. The current political-economic environment and processes of industrial restructuring have placed significant and increased importance on the role of the local (Brenner et al., 2002; Swyngedouw, 1997). Fourth generation segmentation theorists’ begin from the assertion that if labour market structures vary within national spaces and these spaces are shaped by local and regional cultural and institutional contexts, then the geographical variability in these factors are likely to be associated with the spatial unevenness of labour markets (Peck, 1996). Given that it is the local and regional cultural and institutional differences which feed into the variation experienced between labour markets, it can be claimed that the local labour market provides an important scale at which to understand the impact of labour market segmentation. (Bauder, 2001; Peck, 1996) In other words, geographical spaces or places are not simply containers in which labour processes unfold but are instead produced themselves by the cultural and institutional complexities which exist in them. The claims made by these theorists have been significant in describing the nature of local labour market restructuring and uneven development due to the loss of manufacturing and the rise of service driven economies.

These variations, resulting in uneven development, show that the labour market is not tending towards some optimal efficient form but that social and institutional
coherence may be established at levels other than the nation-state (Peck, 1996; Wilkinson, 1981). At the same time, it is important to recognize that the local labour market is also not simply a reflection of national or even regional processes but is part of an interlinked system of locales which give rise to regional and national characteristics (Peck, 1996, Martin, 2000). In this sense, it becomes difficult to assign a single definition as to what constitutes a local labour market. What matters is the social and institutional context at the local level which defines its labour market (Jonas, 1996; Peck, 1996; Martin, 2000). Segmentation is not an all encompassing process which is undifferentiated from place to place but instead is intertwined at the finest level with local variations in place. “Places, then, are internally ‘balkanized’ with workers differentiated in terms of where they live” (Castree et al., 2004: 73).

The cultural dimension of labour market segmentation has become more important to segmentation theorists in describing the processes and impacts of present day economic restructuring. According to Bauder (2001) a cultural perspective provides “micro-level insights into how labour market identities are produced through experiences and representation of place” (38). Culture, then, becomes important in understanding the various forms of ‘pre-market’ segmentation (Bauder, 2001; Leontaridi, 1998). Pre-market segmentation refers to the processes whereby individuals enter the labour market with either distinct advantages and/or disadvantages strongly influenced by their family background, schooling, social class, gender and ethnicity (Wilkinson, 1981). Such forms of segmentation occur prior to, yet feed into, the processes of ‘in-market’ segmentation which shape the structure of the labour market. In-market segmentation represents the extension of such pre-market decisions into the labour market itself such that individuals
with similar productivity levels receive markedly different pay rates and opportunities for career advancement and training (Wilkinson, 1981).

The cultural segmentation of the labour market builds on the idea that employers hold certain preconceived perspectives and perceptions of the employability of different individuals. “The link between cultural geography and segmentation theory is established when local structures of feeling shape labour market identities” (Bauder, 2001:43). The recognition of the importance of culture, moves segmentation theory a step further away from the views and assumptions of orthodox economics that ignore the importance of social differences between places and people in the employment process. Both Harald Bauder (2001) and Linda McDowell (1997; 2000; 2002; 2003) demonstrate the impacts that cultural segmentation can have on the local labour market. Cultural institutions serve as symbolic markers in the local labour market (Bauder, 2001) and the danger of such markers is that they can be reinforcing and contribute to continued socio-economic cleavages in society. This is particularly evident in many low-wage service jobs associated with high levels of precariousness and the working poor.

3.6 Segmentation and the Restaurant Industry

The different theories of labour market segmentation presented in the previous section all provide insight into the structure of the restaurant industry. However, the cultural segmentation theory of the labour market is especially relevant. As discussed earlier, restaurants are involved in the production of both a tangible commodity, a meal, prepared by workers in the kitchen (back-of-house) and an intangible commodity, the experience of eating out shaped largely by the ambiance of the public area of the restaurant and the service received from servers in the front-of-house. The different requirements between front- and back-of-house positions reflect a variety of labour
market segmentation processes at work. Jobs in the front-of-house bring the worker into direct contact with customers. As a result, the physical and social attributes of an individual play an important role in an employer’s hiring decisions. According to Linda McDowell (1997: 121) “workers with specific social attributes…produce an embodied performance that conforms to idealized notions of the appropriate ‘server’. Firms or organizations have explicit and implicit rules of conduct and these inform ‘the desirable embodied attributes of workers’.” Thus, the embodied nature of front-of-house work plays an important role in how spaces of work are organized and segmented such that “employers have expectations of how these employees should look (in terms of gender, age, clothes, etc.) and how they act (in terms of their voices, bodily movements, etc.)” (Shaw, 2004, p.80). As a result, only individuals with certain characteristics will find themselves employed as a server within a restaurant. However, though there is variation in which characteristics are held as more important between different restaurant employers, certain characteristics such as age, physical appearance and education open up more employment opportunities to workers who are young, attractive and educated. On the other hand, back-of-house jobs tend to be hidden from the customer’s view and, thus, the physical or social characteristics of the worker are less important than their food preparation and cooking ability. The cultural segmentation of the labour market suggests that employers’ hiring decisions are also based upon their preconceived notions of particular types of individuals within the local labour market; such as, inner-city youth being associated with crime or women being more even-tempered than men in dealing with customers (Bauder, 2001). As a result, labour market segmentation is a highly

1 Only recently, and in certain restaurants, have cooks become part of the experience. The latter is the case in restaurants where the preparation of the food takes place as a performance in front of the customer: for example, in a restaurant serving sushi.
visible process within the restaurant industry and has become more evident in recent years with the growth of the so-called cultural economy.

Labour market segmentation within the restaurant industry tends to occur along the lines of gender, age, experience, and physical appearance. All of these factors play an important role in employers’ hiring practices (Bill, 1998). These practices are the result of employers’ understandings of the demands of particular jobs for which they hire, their perceptions of different workers within the labour market and the employee attributes they seek in order to create a particular atmosphere within their restaurant (Fine, 1992; Erickson, 2004). Most often this reproduces traditional gender roles as they would appear in the home. Though women may not be directly involved in the production of food in the restaurant, the customer only sees them bring their dinner to their table. It is also suggested that women predominate in server positions within restaurants due to employers’ perceptions of their abilities to deal with a variety of customers, their physical appearance and ability to navigate, with finesse, the spaces between tables in the dining area (Erickson, 2004; Hall, 1993; Petersen et al., 2005). However, in some fine dining restaurants, men may fill the roles of both cook and server. In these cases, men are employed as waiters, a job considered to be skilled and holding prestige, whereas in other restaurants women tend to be employed as waitresses, a job considered to be low-skilled, low-status and low-paid (Hall, 1993).

In direct contrast to this, back of house jobs tend to be dominated by men. Work within the kitchen is often considered to be tough and dangerous and highly structured with a distinct line of command and movement between jobs (Fine, 1996). The hierarchy of different jobs in the kitchen, from top to bottom in terms of command and skill, include: chef, sous chef, line cook, prep cook and dishwasher. Job promotion within the
kitchen is determined by an individual’s capabilities and skills as a worker. Skill development within the kitchen is gained in part through formal education and in part through apprenticeships and just working in different areas of the kitchen. The least desirable and dirtiest job within the restaurant is that of the dishwasher. It is also the entry level position for individuals seeking a career in the kitchen with no prior training or experience as a cook. The dishwasher must put up with the heat of the hot water and deal with left over food and garbage. Because the job does not require finesse or an attractive personal appearance and requires no interaction with customers, it is often considered a job for young men (Fine, 1996). Since cooking historically has been a male dominated occupation and training has been gained through apprenticeships, it has remained, for the most part, male dominated (Fine, 1996; Interview: Steve (Instructor/M/Local Training Institution/ Executive Chef)). At the same time, the importance of maintaining social cohesion among workers within the kitchen, who have historically been male, has made it difficult for women to gain acceptance (Fine, 1996; Interview: Interview: Steve (Instructor/M/Local Training Institution/ Executive Chef)). Cooking in a restaurant kitchen is dangerous work, often in a hot environment, and is characterized by long hours, that are both physically and mentally demanding. The combination of an overly male dominated environment with demanding working conditions may be part of the reason why women have been deterred from the occupation:

“Traditionally women were in the pastry kitchen and now coming into the line kitchen is actually creating a bit of stability in the kitchen and lowers some of the testosterone in the kitchen. You know in a male dominated environment it can get pretty tight in there, especially in a pressure cooker situation. But as we tell a lot of the female students, you got to give as good as you get…you got to be able to do just as much as everyone else does.”

Steve (Instructor/M/Local Training Institution/ Executive Chef)
Work in both the front-of-house or back-of-house is subject to processes of labour market segmentation which shape both the nature of the labour market and the types of individuals who work in each of these areas. However, given the current economic environment and the increasingly widespread use of atypical forms of employment, these processes of labour market segmentation also play an integral role in the formation and regulation of flexible labour markets.

3.7 From One Job to the Next

The rise in flexibility and increased levels of precarious employment has led to the increased movement of workers between jobs and employers. Though the literature on labour market segmentation is well developed in economic geography, the literature on career paths, labour mobility and economic mobility is much more limited. Labour mobility refers to the movement of workers between jobs within a particular local labour market, whereas economic mobility refers to the movement of workers up or down financially through changes in job status and wages (Herzenberg, 1998; Iversen and Armstrong, 2006). A career path is the series of jobs which an individual moves between as they attempt to improve their economic status, further develop their skills or are simply forced, for various reasons, to search for new employment opportunities (ibid). Though there is a detailed literature that exists on the subject of job shifts and labour mobility in economic sociology (Golan, Lane and McEntarfer, 2007; Rosenfeld, 1992; Rubery, 2005; Sicherman and Galor, 1990), there is little discussion of how they shape precarious employment and impact the regulation of the local labour market. The literature on segmented labour markets provides insight into the obstacles and hurdles workers face in making job transitions, particularly in attempting to move from employment opportunities in the periphery to the core (Edwards, Michael and Gordon 1973; Fischer & Nijkamp
1987). More recently, it has begun to address how employers’ perceptions of individuals shape hiring practices and the structure of the local labour market (Bauder, 2001). However, labour market segmentation theory says little with regard to how segmentation shapes the movement of individuals between employers within each segment of the labour market.

The low-wages that characterize the restaurant industry, the lack of opportunities for upward progression under a single employer and the fickle nature of employment within restaurants results in relatively high levels of labour mobility within the industry. As Iversen suggests:

“Mobility is key to a definitive assessment of the emerging postindustrial economy, for mobility is where the link between labour market structure and individual life history is made, where we gain insight into the dynamic processes that actually generate inequality, and where we assess how well America is meeting its meritocratic ideal.” (Iversen (2006) citing Bernhardt et al. (2001): 23: emphasis added)

The idea of a secure job and defined career path under a single employer appears to have evaporated with the spread of flexible labour markets under contemporary capitalism. This seems especially true for the masses of people employed in the low-wage service sector who face some of the most insecure and precarious forms of employment. With the emergence of flexible labour markets “…we find the apparent move towards boundaryless careers [and] away from the bounded career [provided by] an internal labour market” (Rubery, 2005; 271). Bounded careers are primarily associated with well-defined internal labour markets and standard forms of employment. Under these conditions, workers are provided with stable and well-defined career paths and the prospect of steady upward economic mobility under a single employer. These forms of

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2 Recently, Statistics Canada reported that there are now more people employed in retail, like restaurants another low-wage and precarious sector, than in manufacturing.
employment still exist today but are primarily limited to large manufacturing employers and some workers employed in the knowledge economy. On the other hand, boundaryless careers are associated with the rise in ‘atypical’ forms of employment and the spread of flexible labour markets. These flexible labour markets and ‘atypical’ forms of employment have caused increased labour mobility and the rise in dual job holders as individuals search for career progression and upward economic mobility amongst several employers or simply attempt to piece together a sustainable income (Iverson, 2006; Paxson and Sicherman, 1996). This is particularly the case in the low-wage service sector, where there is little opportunity for upward economic mobility, short career ladders and highly unstable business climates caused by widespread economic uncertainty (Rosefeld, 1992).

Such mobility consists of the movement of workers between employers within the same broad economic sector and sometimes within the same sub-sector (Rubery, 2005; Rosenfeld, 1992). This tends to be the case for two reasons. First, segmentation theory suggests that movement between peripheral, low-skilled, low-waged, service sector jobs, and core, high-skilled, high wage, knowledge intensive jobs, is difficult if not restricted. Instead, job shifts tend to remain within the same industry, or at least the same, or similar, occupation, due to differences in educational and skill requirements between jobs. For instance, it is highly unlikely that a cook will take a job as a welder, due to skill differences, but that same cook may take a job as a janitor, or a server may transition to a job as a retail sales clerk. Secondly, career paths tend to be constructed within the same segment of the industry. In other words, to become a chef one must start out as a cook or to become a restaurant manager one must start out as a server or a cook. However, the barriers to such shifts may be very rigorous and therefore limited to only certain workers.
This is because chef and manager level positions tend to require well developed skills and educational requirements that not all cooks or servers may have or be able to obtain. Furthermore, as in many other industries, the employment structure within the restaurant industry is shaped like a pyramid, where there are fewer and fewer opportunities for job promotion the higher up the job ladder and occupational structure one progresses. In other words, there are only a very limited number of employment opportunities to become a manager or a chef within a particular local labour market and this presents a significant barrier to individuals who wish to further their career within the same local labour market.

Continually being thrust into a position where they must seek new employment opportunities in a constricted and highly structured local labour market, which offers limited opportunity for career progression and upward economic mobility, increases the precariousness of restaurant workers. Workers within restaurants not only face unstable jobs due to market fluctuations and low wages but when they are faced with having to search for their next employment opportunity there is little room for upward movement. Consequently, most shifts occur within the same industry and into the same kind of low wage job. Added to this is the fact that the use of skills acquired at a previous employer as a signifier for job advancement has declined in many low-wage flexible labour markets (Rosenfeld, 1992). Instead, easily “observed markers such as education, race or sex [are] more important for mobility across firms, while less easily observed or transferred resources and skills are more important for moves up within a firm or internal labour market” (Rosenfeld, 1992: 46). As a result, the informal skills workers in the restaurant industry gain through work experience are seen by employers as largely non-transferable between workplace. This presents further barriers to career paths that provide upward
economic mobility. As a result, formal training and acquiring credentials becomes more important the longer one remains in the industry and the further up the job ladder and occupational structure one wants to progress. The prevalence of such boundaryless careers is often criticized for the decline in career progression and the deterioration of employment relations and skill formation in the new economy (Herzenberg et al., 1998; Jonas, 1996; Peck; 1996; Rubery, 2005; Rutherford 1998; 2001).

In summary, this chapter has provided an overview of the structure and dynamics of local labour markets and the shaping of precarious employment in the low-wage service sector. In particular, it has discussed the importance of understanding work systems and the processes of labour market segmentation as they shape precarious employment within the local restaurant industry. It has also served to focus attention on the relationship between labour market mobility and precarious employment since there is considerable fluidity and churning of workers in the restaurant industry as workers frequently move between workplaces within the same local labour market.
CHAPTER IV

RESTAURANT WORK AND RESTAURANT WORKERS: A CASE STUDY OF

KINGSTON, ONTARIO

Restaurant work in Kingston, Ontario provides an appropriate setting in which to investigate the impacts of precarious employment in the low-wage service sector. Located in Eastern Ontario, midway between the cities of Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa, Kingston rests on the shores of both the St. Lawrence River and Lake Ontario. Once the Capital of Canada, the city’s historical role was that of a military post and commercial centre for the staples trade and related manufacturing industries. However, today, the city has lost much of its manufacturing and is no longer a centre for trade. Instead, the city’s primary economic activities now lie in the public and private service sector. Public sector employment has formed the backbone of Kingston’s economy for decades. These public sector jobs are highly unionized and sought after due to the relatively good wages and benefits they provide (Interview: Steve (Instructor/M/Local Training Institution/Executive Chef)). More recently, the private service sector has emerged as Kingston’s second largest employer. Work in this sector is heavily concentrated in low-skilled and low wage occupations. The growth of the private service sector has been propelled by demand from the large seasonal influxes of tourists and students along with the relatively large number of well-paid professionals, employed in the public sector. Students are an important economic driver of restaurants between September and May each year while tourists are the main economic driver between May and September. Locals and well-paid professionals are present all year round and provide a more consistent clientele base. As a result, the city hosts a vibrant tourism industry and consumer service sector and has experienced a continuous increase in the number of restaurants within the city (Table 66).
4.1). The importance of this low-wage service industry is magnified in Kingston as a result of the city’s small size, growing demand for the products of the cultural economy, and the diminishing presence of alternative private sector employment in the area.

**Table 4.1: Total Number of Restaurants in Kingston, Ontario, 1970-2007**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>273</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This chapter begins with a brief description of Kingston’s current economic structure, followed by a more in-depth examination of the restaurant sector, a major component of the broader tourism and service industry. Particular reference is made to how the structure of the restaurant industry shapes the local labour market, particularly in the chosen downtown study area.

### 4.1 Kingston, Ontario

The city of Kingston, Ontario has undergone numerous transformations in both its urban and economic landscape. Historically a port city, managing flows of goods along the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes, many of the city’s early functions were geared towards trade-related activities. Its waterfront location also meant that the city played an important strategic role as a military post, and the military presence has continued to this very day. Early on the city was configured centrally around the ports and the waterfront, providing a mixture of blue collar and white collar housing (Osborne, 1988). Within this area, many of the cities early manufacturing activities were also located and revolved around ship building and primary goods processing and storage (Osborne, 1988). Over time these functions were lost, for various reasons. However, as the city expanded it was actively shaped by the location of these early activities. As the city began to engulf the surrounding townships, the location of new manufacturing in
these outer areas, the location of rail transportation and the shape of the waterfront moulded the social and economic landscape of the city (Osborne, 1988). Growth to the west included the development of two major manufacturing companies associated with the war efforts, that of DuPont and Alcan. Also, to the west, development included the establishment of Queen’s University and later on St. Lawrence College. As a result, development to the west included several rounds of suburban expansion during and after World War Two. More recently, the west-end of the city has seen development of large commercial and retail facilities. However, growth directly north from the downtown core was never as prosperous and was characterized predominantly by low-income housing.

In the early 1970s, Kingston went through a number of changes which was to transform the city, giving rise to the current urban and economic landscape. In the early 1970s, suburban development and economic growth began to slow and overtime the city began to experience a decline in manufacturing jobs due to layoffs and closures at a number of large manufacturing employers. As this occurred, Kingston turned its attention to focus on revitalization initiatives in the downtown core and the development of a culturally driven economy. Over the years Kingston’s downtown was transformed into a tourist destination and place of vibrancy in the city as fashionable retail stores, hotels, restaurants, and condominiums reclaimed the space surrounding the old ports and along the waterfront towards Queen’s University. Much of this growth was supported by the significant expansion that had taken place at the Universities and College during the 1960s. Aside from the large student population which moved into this area, having a significant impact on the business environment in the downtown, affluent professionals moved into this area, attracted to the aesthetically pleasing older homes and the ambiance and convenience of living downtown (Osborne, 1988). However, despite this
redevelopment and growth in the downtown core, the upgrading and gentrification of the area north of the old inner city has been a much slower process. This reworked urban landscape has significantly impacted the shape of Kingston’s local labour market and the incidence and nature of precarious employment in the city.

4.2 Kingston’s Economy

Kingston is a small sized urban centre characterized by a very distinct labour force. As a whole, Kingston’s labour market participation and unemployment rates are not that dissimilar from the rest of Ontario (Table 4.2). However, the overwhelming presence of public sector employment in the city has a significant impact on the economic landscape of the city. In 2001, each of the top six public sector employers employed more individuals than did the leading private sector employer (Table 4.3). It is important to also note that the top private sector employer in 2001, StarTek, is a large call center and such call centers usually provide highly unstable and low-paying jobs (Breathnach, 2000; Taylor, Mulvey, Hyman and Bain, 2002; Zapf, Isic, Bechtoldt and Blau, 2003). The top ten occupations in Kingston, by employment size, were all located in the service industry and the top two are specific to employment linked to the tourism sector (Table 4.4). What makes Kingston’s labour force distinctive, relative to its size and to other comparably sized cities, is the proportion of individuals with a post-secondary education (Table 4.5). This is primarily due to the presence of such large public sector employers as the universities, college, hospitals and military base (Table 4.3). Compared to other cities across Ontario, Kingston demonstrates relatively high concentrations of employment in occupations related to the service and tourism industry (Table 4.6). For individuals employed as chefs and food and beverage servers, Kingston ranks as number one compared to other cities in Ontario (Table 4.6).
Table 4.2: Labour Force Indicators for Kingston CMA 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Ontario</th>
<th>Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation Rate</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>61.0%</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Rate</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>62.3%</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>63.0%</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4.3: Top Ten Public and Private Sector Employers for Kingston CMA 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Public Number of Employees</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Private Number of Employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Forces Base, Kingston</td>
<td>5,277</td>
<td>StarTek</td>
<td>1,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen's University</td>
<td>4,200</td>
<td>Invista Canada</td>
<td>1,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston General Hospital</td>
<td>3,085</td>
<td>Bell Canada</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limestone District School Board</td>
<td>2,794</td>
<td>Assurant Group</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correctional Services Canada</td>
<td>2,670</td>
<td>Alcan (Rolled products and R&amp;D)</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Kingston</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>Empire Financial Group</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Dieu Hospital</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>Dupont Canada Inc R&amp;D</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence Continuing Care Centre</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Military College</td>
<td>769</td>
<td>Bombardier</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario Ministry of Transportation</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>Bosal Canada</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total 22,717</td>
<td>Total 4,756</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour Force Profile, Kingston Economic Development Corporation 2004

Table 4.4: Top Ten Occupations by Employment for Kingston CMA 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Total Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail salespersons &amp; sales clerks</td>
<td>3,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related</td>
<td>2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered nurses</td>
<td>1,180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade managers</td>
<td>1,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General office clerks</td>
<td>1,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer &amp; information systems occupations</td>
<td>1,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commissioned officers, armed forces</td>
<td>1,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cashiers</td>
<td>1,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other ranks, armed forces</td>
<td>1,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light duty cleaners</td>
<td>1,345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Labour Force Profile, Kingston Economic Development Corporation 2004
### Table 4.5: Concentration of Individuals with a Post-secondary Education as Compared to Ontario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CMA</th>
<th>Education Quotient</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barrie</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belleville</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guelph</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa - Hull (Part of Ont.)</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarnia</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Catharines - Niagara</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Education Quotient =**

\[
\frac{\% \text{ of Population with Post Secondary Education in a Given CMA}}{\% \text{ of Population with Post Secondary Education in Ontario}}
\]

**Source:** Statistics Canada, Census 2001

### Table 4.6: Location Quotients for selected occupations within selected CMAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location Quotient for Category 6 Occupations</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Location Quotient for Category 6 Occupations</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retail and Other Related Services</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chats and Food and Beverage services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>0.731874130 5</td>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>0.7265242 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>0.877347537 5</td>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>0.80895848 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Catharines - Niagara</td>
<td>0.557964109 10</td>
<td>St. Catharines - Niagara</td>
<td>0.72742689 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>0.653470431 4</td>
<td>Kingston</td>
<td>0.51905673 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guelph</td>
<td>0.653470431 6</td>
<td>Guelph</td>
<td>0.51905673 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>0.654725492 9</td>
<td>London</td>
<td>0.4364522 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kitchener</td>
<td>0.654725492 8</td>
<td>Kitchener</td>
<td>0.2683967 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>1.270975633 1</td>
<td>Toronto</td>
<td>0.60133582 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ottawa</td>
<td>1.136750863 2</td>
<td>Ottawa</td>
<td>0.57596172 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarnia</td>
<td>0.466712969 11</td>
<td>Sarnia</td>
<td>0.54699699 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>0.56578302 13</td>
<td>Windsor</td>
<td>0.47796998 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>0.74999973 1</td>
<td>Peterborough</td>
<td>0.68941993 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** 70 - Occupation - 1991 Standard Occupational Classification (Historical) (511), Age Groups (11A) and Sex (3) for Labour Force 15 Years and Over, for Canada, Provinces, Territories, Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations, 1991 to 2001 Censuses
4.3 Kingston’s Restaurant Industry

Restaurants play an important role as part of the tourism industry and the low-wage service sector in the city of Kingston. The growth of the restaurant industry in the city was traced using phone books dating back to the 1970s. Table 4.1 shows the growth in the number of restaurants between 1970 and 2007. In 1970, Kingston supported a total of 78 restaurants. Of these restaurants more than half were locally owned and operated and the majority of these, 35 restaurants, provided casual dining (Figure 4.7). During the 1970s corporately owned restaurants had yet to make a major impact in Kingston and there were only 8 ethnic restaurants. Between 1980 and 1990, the restaurant industry exploded in the city (Table 4.7 & Figures 4.1 through 4.5). During this period the city’s west end was developed and revitalization projects underway in the downtown began to take hold. This involved major growth and development west of Sir John A. Macdonald and within the old inner city limits. Though some restaurants had started to appear in the west end prior to its development in 1980, these were small locally owned, casual dining restaurants and not the corporately owned restaurants we see today. From 1990 onward, the number of corporately owned restaurants increased in the city. Growth in the west end and the overall increase in the number of restaurants in Kingston are in line with the shift that occurred in many cities in response to restructuring in favour of the cultural and service driven economy. Kingston was one of those cities which found itself turning to related activities in the cultural and service economy as a driver of economic growth. In fact, at a Public meeting held by Kingston Employment and Youth Services in November of 2007 the Kingston Economic Development Corporation commented that Kingston has

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1 Restaurant addresses were geocoded to 2001 census street network shapefiles. In some cases the shapefiles are incomplete causing a few of the addresses to “mismatch” or not show. A small number of mismatched addresses were removed and missing addresses added.
the largest number of restaurants per capita in Ontario. Over time the restaurant industry in Kingston has not only grown but has become increasingly diverse as more restaurants have opened in the city. From 1980 onward Kingston saw a large increase in the number of restaurants considered as ethnic, such as Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese etc. In fact, in the span of 30 years, ethnic restaurants in the city increased from 10 to 42 (Table 4.7).

Table 4.7: Total Number of Restaurants by Type of Restaurant Mapped within the City of Kingston

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast Food/Take-out - Corporate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Food/Take-out Local</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine Dinning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Dinning - Local</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Dinning - Corporate</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual Dinning - Ethnic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – Coffee Shops, Delicatessens, etc.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bell Canada Telephone Directory for selected years, Kingston Vicinity

As the city has grown the restaurant industry has become concentrated in three distinct areas of the city: in the city’s downtown core; at a main exit from Highway 401 and along retail and commercial strip development in the western suburbs (Figures 4.1 through 4.5). Each area is characterized by particular types of restaurants. The concentration of restaurants located next to the big box stores in the suburbs and the Division Street exit from Highway 401 consist of a mixture of large franchised restaurants and fast food chains such as Burger King, McDonalds, Wendy’s, Eastside Mario’s, Montanas, Kelsey’s and Moxies. The Division Street cluster serves mostly travelers on their way past or through Kingston, whereas restaurants along the retail and commercial strip in the west-end serve mostly local Kingston residents, particularly those
Figure 4.1: Map of Restaurant Locations within Kingston, Ontario 1970

Source: Author, Based on Bell Canada Telephone Directory Listings for Kingston, Ontario and Vicinity, 1970
Figure 4.2: Map of Restaurant Locations within Kingston, Ontario 1980

Source: Author, Based on Bell Canada Telephone Directory Listings for Kingston, Ontario and Vicinity, 1980
Figure 4.3: Map of Restaurant Locations within Kingston, Ontario 1990

Source: Author, Based on Bell Canada Telephone Directory Listings for Kingston, Ontario and Vicinity, 1990
Figure 4.4: Map of Restaurant Locations within Kingston, Ontario 2001

Source: Author, Based on Bell Canada Telephone Directory Listings for Kingston, Ontario and Vicinity, 2001
Figure 4.5: Map of Restaurant Locations within Kingston, Ontario 2007

Source: Author, Based on Bell Canada Telephone Directory Listings for Kingston, Ontario and Vicinity, 2007
who live in the western suburbs. Conversely, the downtown is an eclectic mixture of smaller, independently owned restaurants serving primarily tourists, the post-secondary institutions and more affluent city residents. The downtown concentration of restaurants lies primarily within an area bounded by Queen Street between Division Street and the waterfront. Restaurants stretching north-west along of Princess Street from Division Street to Bath Road are a mixture of fast food, pizza places, coffee shops and some ethnic restaurants. These restaurants I consider not part of the downtown because they are primarily only accessible by car and most city functions and other related retail stores are located east of Division Street. The ethnic restaurants located where Princess Street and Division Street intersect, do receive some business from the downtown but mostly it is from locals and students as opposed to tourists.

Each of these areas corresponds to a distinct local labour market from which employers draw their employees (Interview: Geoff (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local) and Elliott (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)). Furthermore, the movement of workers between these labour markets is limited and restricted due to the differences in the hiring practices of restaurants in the three areas and their geographical separation (Interview: Elliott (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)). As a result, the restaurant industry in Kingston comprises three primary local labour markets which function largely independently of one another. As one restaurant owner, who has been in the business all of this life in Kingston, described:

“The restaurant business in Kingston is divided into two areas, Division Street south, [along Princess Street] which encompasses downtown, and Division Street north, [along Princess and Bath out towards Gardiners Road], which is the rest of the city. It seems that there are different rules for different markets that you are going to attract to. What can happen out in the township or the west-end can’t happen down here, the expectations of restaurants downtown are much greater. That is for two reasons: you have the University downtown which brings in a lot of people from out of town that expect better service, better products, better quality and bigger trends. Because you have such an
influx of students that are coming in, the university, and out of town people and the hotels that is what you find is driving the downtown. Chains won’t be successful downtown. Independents will be because they will adapt very quickly to what the market wants…Division Street west, different animal…[Interviewer: What about along the 401?]…[Interviewee response] Different animal. The people there, they are stopping and they are going, they aren’t coming downtown” 

*Geoff (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)*

Restaurant owners and managers acknowledged the divide within Kingston and the fact that it both shapes their hiring practices and how they position their restaurant within the industry. The comment made by the interviewee of the fact that restaurant chains will not be successful in the downtown was supported by other restaurant owners in the downtown.²

In this study, I focus on just one of these markets, the downtown area. Within this area the industry is segmented once again. The division occurs where Princess Street and Bagot Street intersect. Restaurants located along Princess Street, between Bagot and Division, are geared towards serving local residents and the University and College student crowd in particular. On the other hand, restaurants located between Bagot Street and the waterfront serve not only local residents and University and College students but also the tourists during the summer.

“In the summer time, Division Street south is even broken into two parts where you can even say Bagot Street is as far as the tourists are going to go. You know you are competing against the weather; you’re competing against the patios; you are competing against the barbeques. So unless you have a patio and you have the water and scenery or a hotel…you know…we get through the summers no problem” 

*Geoff (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)*

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² During the study period, Shoeless Joe’s, a large corporately owned chain restaurant in the downtown, went out of business. I later heard from an employee I interviewed that they were slowly going out of business due to a lack of clientele. Since then they have relocated out to the west-end, along Gardiners Road, with the other chain restaurants.
The interviews with employers revealed that restaurants in these two areas appear to experience fluctuations in labour supply and labour demand independently of one another. At the time of the interviews, a number of restaurant owners located between Bagot and the waterfront commented that they were currently experiencing difficulties in hiring servers due to a labour shortage. At the same time, restaurants above Bagot Street were experiencing a surplus of labour.

The restaurant industry in downtown Kingston is constructed around two very different labour markets, one for servers and one for kitchen staff. Employers, despite the location of their restaurant within the downtown, expressed concern over the availability of skilled cooks and chefs capable of supporting the restaurant industry as a whole. They did not suggest that there was great turnover in cooks, aside from the norm, driving the labour shortage but that there appears to be an absolute shortage of cooks in Kingston. In-part this was explained by people interviewed at the training institutions for cooks in Kingston who commented on the fact that a number of their graduates and cooks who want to become chefs and make cooking their profession leave Kingston in order to gain experience in larger cities such as Toronto, Montreal or Ottawa. At the same time, the skill and experience levels demanded of senior level cooks and chefs by local employers are beyond the reach of many individuals for whom these professional training institutions are unaffordable. This means that without such professional training they will only be able to progress so far in the industry before they plateau and never go any further. The shortage of skilled cooks is exacerbated by the reluctance and inability expressed by many employers to train cooks internally due to the cost and time involved in such a task. This is particularly true for some larger restaurants and more popular, smaller restaurants in the downtown. A number of employers commented on how they
would not hire cooks who had been trained or worked in large corporately owned restaurants because many can not make the transition to the fast pace, high pressure atmosphere found in the kitchens of restaurants in the downtown. However, this was not the case for all employers. The difference appeared to revolve around the popularity of the restaurant and therefore demand placed upon workers in the kitchen. The more popular restaurants did not have the time to train cooks from scratch, unless the chef personally took on a person. A couple of employers stated that for the first time they were considering reducing their expectations with regard to skills and training internally to address the shortage of cooks. The following quotes are reflective of the preceding discussion.

“The calibre of cooks that we hire are the cooks that don’t want to work in restaurants, and they are the franchise ones…they are all the same…there is no room for creativity ‘cause it is all there for you”
*Geoff (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)*

*What kind of restaurants will you hire from? (Interviewer)*

“It has to be the same sort of background where they have had the freedom to be creative, they all have the books, they all have the programs…they have to know what they are doing back there. *You don’t hire too much from Kelsey’s and such?* No, they would never fit in [here], they would never fit in. We had one person actually and they had no clue, they had no idea [how to work back there in the kitchen]. I mean if a cook comes from McDonalds, I am sorry, its not about cooking burgers”
*Anne (E/F/ Fine Dinning – Local)*

“This was the first time I was wondering if I should lower my standards for staff. But I waited it out and found some people”
*Geoff (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)*

*Has it been easy to hire? (Interviewer)*

“Its very tough right now actually, front of the house is not as much of an issue, its kitchen staff where we feel the squeeze. We have never had a problem…but the last couple months have been difficult to find kitchen staff, it seems to be a big demand and little supply. I think it is also the demographic, there is not as many under 25s in the workforce. Basic kitchen help is a problem now but skilled cooks have always been a problem. It’s a brain drain, it happens in the cooking field to.” *[Have you had to adapt your hiring practices much in response to this?]* “Yeah, be more willing to train,
increase what we are willing to pay. We also have a benefit package for kitchen staff which helps to retain staff I believe. You really have to put more out there then you did before”

Mike (E/M/ Fine Dinning – Local)

“[In the] kitchen I think we try to look for experience. If there is no experience and the person seems like a motivated and hard working individual they will start at the dishwasher, and that you don’t need experience for, and that is the entry level job in the kitchen. And if they do really well at that then they will move up to a prep station and line cook. And that is where you would start with no experience. We tend to try to avoid it in general but like I said right now it is such a tight squeeze that the right candidates…we will just train them”

Mike (E/M/ Fine Dinning – Local)

“In house, yeah I have two guys that use to be dishwashers here, you always want to keep it inside… you don’t want to break the chemistry you know… in all my years I have found it harder now to hire people because not a lot of people are going into this trade. Right now I am lucky ‘cause I have people who have been here for awhile, it’s not easy to be hiring…someone who is motivated, loyal, sometimes people don’t have a lot of skill but you want someone who has that potential to teach them those skills”

Tiago (E/M/Casual Dinning – Local)

 Conversely, employers expressed no difficulty in hiring qualified servers in Kingston. In fact, they regularly stated that they receive an overabundance of resumes from interested job seekers, some of whom are qualified while others they would either not hire or not have the time to train. This is in large part due to the college and university students who seek employment in the downtown and employers’ interest in hiring these individuals in particular. As one employer commented:

“…the reason why I prefer students is because they are young, they are smart, polite, they are not professional, but they can catch up [and learn the job quickly]”

Ivan (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)

Also, there tends to be some movement of employees within restaurants from the kitchen to the floor since servers tend to make more then some cooks due to tips. This is because tips are not always pooled in restaurants and is part of the reason why cooks receive a
higher wage than servers. However, this wage difference is only marginal and does not reflect the challenging and high stressed working conditions kitchen staff face.

Although individuals could achieve the initial training they required to become a cook or server in some of the large corporately owned chain restaurants out on Gardiners Road, a number of interviewed workers remarked on the difficulty in accessing these jobs from the downtown due to the monetary costs and time involved of physically getting there relative to their pay. Those who did not see distance as a barrier were either students or had access to other means of income which reduced the relative costs of working so far away from their place of residence. As a result, many interview participants commented that many workers who worked in the downtown core also lived within its vicinity (Dorothy (E/F/ Casual Dinning – Local); Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server); John (W/M/‘Local’ Server)).

“Without the car it would be more difficult but if the opportunity did arise it wouldn’t be a barrier”
Samara (W/F/Student/Server)

“You know I thought of it but if you think of the travel time it would take me…I got a job out at Value Mart in the meat department, slicing meat…I just absolutely loved it, I really did and it was something different, totally different from what I was used to. The only problem was that I wasn’t getting enough hours and to travel out there. Summer time wasn’t bad ‘cause I would walk home, it only took an hour and ten minutes to walk home from Portsmouth road but the problem was come winter time for two shifts a week, it was not worth it…Yeah, you pretty much have to have a vehicle because the bus service sucks, its bad, for a city this large and growing its pretty spread out now. It’s a sprawling community and the bus service sucks”
Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server)

Restaurants in Kingston are also subject to the processes of labour market segmentation which shape employment within the industry for both front-of-house and back-of-house staff. Not only is there a strong divide in the industry between ‘good’ well-paying jobs and ‘bad’ low-paying jobs but cultural attributes play an even more important
role in the shape of the industry. As reported in the restaurant literature, these two groups are dominated by one gender over the other demonstrating the presence of labour market segmentation within the industry (Figure 4.6). Women tend to dominate server jobs within the front-of-house and men are employed in jobs in the back-of-house, as dishwashers, cooks and chefs. This was supported throughout the interviews and through personal observation. Though most employers were unwilling to comment on gender discrimination within the restaurant industry, two employers were frank about it and this was later supported in the employee interviews.

“I think a place like [City Lights], you would pick out right away that they want slim, very attractive girls. So a place like that would definitely be looking for someone like that”
Matt (E/M/Casual Dinning – Local)

“I mean we try not to, I realize some places do try to hire guys for certain positions and girls for certain positions, again it goes to attitude, it goes to personality, there is no written rule anywhere with us anyway.”
Trevor (E/M/Casual Dinning – Local)

Employees, on the other hand, were much more upfront about the presence of gender discrimination within the restaurant industry.

Do you face any employment barriers here in Kingston? (Interviewer)
“Just one [barrier]… [interviewee gestured to indicate he lacks female breasts]. Females tend to get hired in some establishments, this place has never been guilty of that, I could name several who are, they tend to want good looking, young women.”
John (W/M/’Local’/Server)

Do physical characteristics play a role [in response to hiring practices]? (Interviewer)
“I think that the majority of servers in this city are female, I would give you probably 80%. Depends on where you are going and what you are going for. If you are going to do the big bars, Stages, Ale House, looks definitely. ‘Cause I think in places like that, if you are good you are going to make some tips, if you suck but you are cute you are going to make some tips. But you are
eventually going to learn that if you are cute and you hustle your butt you are going to make more. Looks, yeah, definitely in places like that but if you go to places that are basically food … I have seen some pathetically looking servers in there, they want a little more skill”

Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server)

*Are you in competition with girls more then with guys? [when it comes to getting a job] (Interviewer)*

“Probably in competition more with girls then with guys, probably…maybe the same maybe not….with Smijies they hire your average looking, preppy, skinny, good looking bartenders and doesn’t matter if you are guy or girl that is the image that they are trying to portray, along with any other service you have your bouncers who are your big huge guys and you can definitely pick them apart, who works in what area.”

Samara (W/F/Student/Server)

The above quotes illustrate that importance of gender varies depending on the size and nature of the establishment in relation to the other restaurants in the city. However, age is also an important variable which was raised throughout the interviews by both employers and employees.

**Figure 4.6: Total Number of Chefs and Cooks and Servers by Sex in Kingston**

![Bar chart showing the total number of chefs and cooks and servers by sex in Kingston.](chart)

*Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001*
Age and social class were also highlighted during interviews with both employers and employees as having a significant influence in shaping the local labour market. Younger workers, between the ages of 20 and 30, and particularly students play an important role in the restaurant industry.

“A few of the upper scale places will only hire older people, professional servers type deal. You don’t get a lot of it in Kingston…and those people are certainly coveted”
Matt (E/M/Casual Dinning – Local)

Is it difficult to find work? (Interviewer)
“In my age category, yes. It is hard to find people [employers] with such a large university population, they tend to want younger and there is so many of them they don’t care if they only work two or three weeks or two or three months and get tired and move on because there is always somebody there to fill in. They are not looking for somebody to be there for years who is going to have a hangover. So very hard” Does that influence where you will look for work? (Interviewer) “Well I think you kinda know where you can go. OK. as a bartender there is no way I will walk my resume into the Brass or the Ale House or Stages or any of the ‘kiddy pubs’. They are just going to look at me and say “no”. And justifiably so, they don’t want somebody’s mother…and its true, you don’t want somebody old behind the bar cause we are going to say no, you have had too much [to drink]” Are there places that will hire someone like you? (Interviewer) “Oh yeah sure, like [Bob’s] Pub or they will hire you over on [the Canadian Forces] Base, they do not particularly care for the younger, ‘cause they want more reliability. Places like down at Holiday Inn the lounge part, where more mature people go, even the boat lines. They tend to look for younger servers but older staff as well so they [kind of] got a balance. I looked into that too but that was a little too sporadic for me.”
Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server)

Do you have many older people looking for work in their 30s and 40s? (Interviewer)
“Not many … professional servers, they are good till they are 40 or 45 then they can not hold a plate. After that at 45 they have to find a different career. Some, they may stay a bit longer but after 45 I think….”
Ivan (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)

“The average age of a chef in the province of Ontario is 51 but most of us by the time we are 60 our bodies just don’t want to do this anymore.”
Steve (Instructor/M/Local Training Institution/ Executive Chef)
Employers also tended to distinguish between potential employees based upon whether they were students or local Kingston residents. The majority of employers do not hire students into the kitchen unless they are either a very small business or the student is part of one of the local training institutions for cooks. Instead, employers hired locals in the kitchen because they were a more stable and reliable workforce. University and college students, on the other hand, were found to be employed as servers and hostesses in the front of house and acted as the ‘face’ of the restaurant. High school students were only found to be employed and accepted as workers in fast food restaurants. The large number of student workers in the front-of-house has made work in these very same jobs unstable for locals employed in the industry because they are so easily replaced.

“…the reason why I prefer [post-secondary] students is cause they are young, they are smart, polite, they are not professional, but they can catch up but recently I don’t need someone to be a professional, I need someone to be smart nice with their smile, pleasant. I would rather have those at this particular place then a professional”

*Ivan (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)*

“I find the front of house is more students, cooks like I said I have one St. Lawrence college student, one guy who does one course at Queen’s and the rest are all locals who again that kind of job get sucked in and don’t have anywhere go and nothing to do in life and you know they come to this place and we treat them with a level of respect”

*Jim (W/M/‘Local’/Head Chef)*

“Locals here all year round, they tend not to be recognized because of the students. It’s almost a shame that we favour the students so much we can’t remember the locals”

*Mallory (W/F/‘Local’/Sever-Manager)*

“With Smijies I think it’s definitely an advantage of being a student for certain nights of the week…where as townies might not necessarily be looked at as the type of people they want working there at that moment…within the restaurants the local people are the cooks and the cleaners and definitely interact with one another, the managers who are Queen’s students interacting with the full-time temp employees and the students who stay by themselves. They may not be accepted by the full-time people; there maybe some
resentment that they are taking there jobs. There are cliques in restaurants
between different people”
*Samara* (W/F/Student/Server)

However, the way in which this plays out in the labour market is far from random. It
depends upon the atmosphere which the particular establishment is trying to create and
the type of clientele they hope to attract. Restaurants that cater to the student population,
younger individuals and some tourists have a greater tendency to demonstrate levels of
gender discrimination than restaurants that cater to local residents and an older, more
professional clientele. This was apparent through both the interviews and personal
observations where it was blatantly observable

The processes of labour market segmentation within the industry also became
apparent in the interviews in two highly unexpected forms. Both revolved around the
practices employers used in searching for potential employees. The first was based on
employers’ decisions to use newspapers and public institutions and the second was based
upon their perceptions of other restaurants ability to train employees.

“Yeah, there [are] only certain [other restaurants] I will [hire from]. I won’t
hire people who have just been in bars, because it’s a different setting…we
don’t want cocktail waitresses or cocktail guys, we want people who are
working in the service business. You know in a casual setting, I know my
peers. If I know if they have stayed in a place for a year or two years I am
fortunate to get them. I also know where not to hire from based on, well, they
don’t have strong management team or strong focus on details or training or
selling, so we tend to stay away from certain places”
*Geoff* (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)

“I don’t usually do it [hiring] through the Whig-Standard [a local news paper]
because I don’t find it that effective.”
*Dorothy* (E/F/ Casual Dinning – Local)

“It typically, and this is through doing this a couple of times, it gets a lot of
people that don’t have a ton of experience. Experienced servers will sit back,
be interested, wait and see how you are doing after a couple of months and if
they think they can do better then they will apply”
*Trevor* (E/M/Casual Dinning – Local)
The evidence presented to this point has begun to construct a portrait of the restaurant industry and its labour market in Kingston. What becomes apparent is that the labour-shed of restaurants in the downtown of Kingston is highly structured and includes only a few groups of individuals. Students and locals within the vicinity of the downtown area compose the labour supply for restaurants in the downtown. The labour market is even further skewed as a result of the hiring practices of firms, which exclude certain individuals as a result firms go about finding workers, which industries and other restaurants they discriminate against and their biased hiring practices based on people’s physical appearance and social characteristics. As people grow old in the industry their potential employment opportunities diminish and this is accelerated based on their ability to have developed networks within the industry and gain experience to achieve professional server status. The limited opportunities to develop career paths and progress through the industry, the large body of student workers and the minimum levels of skill or experience required to gain entrance into it, combine to exert a significant downward pressure on wages and stultify the potential for career development. In the case of servers, hiring practices favour university and college students and young attractive locals. This scenario contrasts with the contemporary belief held by some academics and policy makers that work in the low-wage service industry, such as in restaurants, is open and easily accessible to and individual seeking employment. As we show in the next chapter, this structured labour market plays an important role in shaping the lives of precarious workers within the Kingston restaurant industry.
CHAPTER V

PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT ON THE MENU: THE CASE OF RESTAURANT WORKERS IN KINGSTON

This chapter focuses on the precarious nature of employment in the restaurant industry in downtown Kingston. By analyzing the nature of work within the restaurant industry, as well as the characteristics of the workforce, through interviews with both employers and employees, we develop a picture of the nature of precarious employment within the industry. As the chapter unfolds, it is important to reflect back on the findings of the previous chapter as we observe the relationship between labour mobility and the nature of precarious employment amongst restaurant workers.

Precarious employment is a defining characteristic of the restaurant industry in Kingston. Work within the industry demonstrates all the characteristics of a precarious employment relationship as outlined by Rodgers (1989). Evidence suggests that such characteristics are magnified in Kingston due to the presence of such a large and highly concentrated student population. Of the characteristics which define precarious employment, the most prevalent and strongly felt amongst restaurant workers in Kingston were the presence of low wages, the uncertainty of their employment situation, and their limited ability to voice concerns over the labour process and their employment situation. People were less concerned with the lack of a union, despite the significant potential impact unions could have in giving ‘voice’ to workers concerns and ameliorating precarious employment amongst restaurant workers.

Low wages were the most frequently criticized aspect of the restaurant industry cited by workers and were seen to be the root cause of the precarious existence many of the workers experienced both within and beyond the workplace. Statistics Canada data
reveal that there are large wage disparities within the Kingston restaurant industry even between individuals within the same occupation (Table 5.1). For each occupation, the average wage is much closer to the low end of the wage range. This suggests that low wages are more prevalent in the industry. The interviews provided further support to these findings and suggested that wages are also highly polarized.

*How would you describe the wage structure in the restaurant industry? (Interviewer)*

“I would say chefs and sous chefs and then there is a big gap then cooks, [servers] and dishwashers…my [cooks] range from 8 dollars, which is minimum wage, to 10”

*Jim (W/M/‘Local’/Head Chef)*

**Table 5.1: Hourly Wage Structure of Restaurant Occupations, Kingston, 2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NOC</th>
<th>Occupation Title</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>631</td>
<td>Restaurant and Food Service Managers</td>
<td>$8.17</td>
<td>$17.89</td>
<td>$11.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6241</td>
<td>Chefs</td>
<td>$9.89</td>
<td>$20.38</td>
<td>$14.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6242</td>
<td>Cooks</td>
<td>$7.44</td>
<td>$13.97</td>
<td>$9.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6451</td>
<td>Maitres d’Hotel and Hostess/Hostesses</td>
<td>$6.85</td>
<td>$10.92</td>
<td>$7.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6452</td>
<td>Bartenders</td>
<td>$5.95</td>
<td>$10.52</td>
<td>$7.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6453</td>
<td>Food and Beverage Servers</td>
<td>$5.95</td>
<td>$10.01</td>
<td>$7.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, the pattern in the wage structure alluded to in the interviews is obscured in Table 5.1 due to two characteristics which shape the restaurant industry. The first has to do with Statistics Canada’s limited ability to capture the full range of occupational nuances in the restaurant industry. When it comes to identifying oneself as a chef or manager, there are no set criteria. In small restaurants, managers are often either the owner themselves or the server with the most seniority. In the latter case, it is not automatic that seniority will result in a significantly higher wage than fellow servers. The same is true of chefs. The term chef is French for chief and as a result in a small restaurant, with only two or three cooks, the cook with the most seniority may go by the title of chef, and yet his or her position will not necessarily be reflected by a significantly higher wage. As a
result, the average wages in Table 5.1 for managers and chefs is heavily skewed towards the low end of the wage range and misleading for these two occupations. The table does not demonstrate the subtle nuances which exist in how these two occupations are actually classified and also rewarded within the industry. Second, given the industry’s structure, high wages, for all occupations, are augmented by local public institutions, which provide the only unionized employment opportunities for restaurant workers in Kingston. Restaurants located within hotels, though not unionized, because of their size also offer slightly better wages than smaller independent restaurants.

“Working conditions have been difficult for a lot of people and there is a very strong divide in this region between being in the institutional sector, which is the hospitals, prisons, nursing homes and things of that nature, and what we call private businesses, which are hotels, restaurants, things of that nature. There has been a very large cleavage between the two and the two really don’t get along...because [of] huge disparities in the wage ranges...When you work in the public sector there is union protection, the money is much, much better then it is in private sector…”

Steve (Instructor/M/Local Training Institution/ Executive Chef)

Low wages are even more prevalent among workers other than managers or chefs within the restaurant industry. This is particularly the case for servers and bartenders for whom the legislated minimum wage is lower than that set for other occupations. This is because it is recognized that the hourly wage of these individuals will be augmented by tips. However, the benefits of tips are not always recognized by the employee. As one server commented:

“When you are in the service industry you make a dollar less an hour then minimum wage. You are actually 95 cents less an hour because you supposedly make up for it in your tips. That’s the law. Some employers will pay you more but they do not have to pay you minimum wage, they pay you 95 cents less... I know when I worked at [Bob’s] we supposedly served alcohol but you can’t serve alcohol before 11am. My shift was 7 in the morning so, umm, working 4 hours and I am making less than minimum wage”

Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server)
When comparing the data collected from Statistics Canada in tables 5.2 and 5.3 we begin to see the extent to which low wages impact restaurant workers in Kingston. The data suggest that, irrespective of their occupation, all workers at the lower end of the wage range in the restaurant industry are below the low income cut off levels for a single individual (Tables 5.2 & 5.3). The estimated annual income is even based upon an assumed 35 hour work week for 50 weeks a year, an unlikely scenario given that most workers in this industry are employed part-time and are not necessarily working 35 hours a week at a single job. Those who do work 35 hours a week are often working multiple jobs, adding another dimension of precariousness to their employment situation. Even when the average wage is considered, everyone except chefs and managers are below the low income cut off level for a single individual. This does not even take into account that these individuals may have families to support. For individuals who do have a partner, it is most likely that the partner is also employed in restaurant work, a characteristic of the industry repeated throughout the interviews. This is because of the unsocial working hours of the industry which take a high toll on relationships.

“…80% of culinary professionals are in committed relationships but are in committed relationships with people in the same industry. This industry has some severe problems, drug and alcohol abuse is very strong, failed relationships are remarkably high but it goes back to that whole thing of the pressure cooker situation number one. Number two it’s hard on the family environment when you are working every night all the time, you are working weekends all the time, you can’t take summer vacation, you just simply can’t if you are working in a seasonal area and you have to make an entire year’s income in 12 to 15 weeks…you can’t afford to close for a weekend, you can’t afford to go away…It can be difficult for people moving into [the industry] later on [in life], to understand what they have to give up. But many mature students know what they are getting into ‘cause they have done the research; but its all about competency.
Steve (Instructor/M/Local Training Institution/ Executive Chef)
As a result, it is likely that both partners will generate an income below the low-income level cut off point for a single individual. However, together, as long as both are not employed as a bartender or food and beverage server at a low wage, they would make just above the low income cut off level for a two-person household. Again this does not take into account that the couple may have children or other dependents. For example, as a single mother with two children working as a server in two jobs states:

“For myself, when I make tips…I am suppose to write down everyday, what I make, every cent of it, so I can claim it at the end of the year and they [the government] take something like 60 percent…and I make a dollar less an hour. What is [the] poverty line? $16 000, I think it is or something. I don’t make that. I don’t even hit [the] poverty line and they are taking my money…Look at what we make. I am lucky on a Tuesday night at [Bob’s] pub to bring home 20 dollars [in tips]. You know, that is a good night.”

Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server)

A common practice amongst servers is to withhold a portion of their tips from their claims on tax forms so they can make more money.

The low wages did not appear to concern student restaurant workers as much because not only do most students see the job as temporary but they are most often only looking for a job to provide them with spending money. As a result, they do not share the same attachment to the job as ‘locals’ who see the industry as a source of ongoing primary income. As such, the large presence of a temporary student workforce also places significant strain and downward pressure on wages throughout the industry. The detachment of most students from the industry, as a source of primary income, increases the uncertainty all individuals face in their employment circumstances.

Employers admitted to taking advantage of this sizable student workforce to place downward pressure on wages across the industry. Just as in any competitive labour market, and especially in low-skilled industries, large pools of potential labour place
significant downwards pressure on the wage rate. Thus, the large student population in
Kingston and their transient and part-time nature results in low wages experienced by the
non-student population working in the same industry. Tight profit margins and the labour
intensive nature of the restaurant industry also puts pressure on employers to keep wage
rates as low as possible.

Is it difficult to find a job at your age? [Interviewer]
“Yes, very difficult. Like I say there is always somebody like students to fill
that gap. And they [restaurant employers] don’t have to pay them a lot. They
could hire one [person] full-time [but] then they are paying benefits and
stuff…why not hire 3 students or 4 students and split the shifts up. Students
are happy because they are making money, employers happy because he is not
doling out a lot of cash for this thing and that thing. And ok that one [worker
is] not happy and they quit, then next”
Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server)

“…in Kingston the students, and not to blame it on you students, but because
there is such a student base that is in and out you can hire these guys [locals
and students] for eight or nine dollars an hour. So that’s where it creates a bit of a problem. There is always somebody there willing to take the job. Another student you got to train who really doesn’t care because in two years he is going to be an engineer. A disservice to all people in the industry. That has got to change.”

Jim (W/M/’Local’/Head Chef)

Low wages were blamed for the need of some workers to take on second or even third jobs in order to generate a sustainable income. This characteristic of the industry was identified by both employees and employers and played an important role in how some employers structured work schedules. The use of part-time employment in the industry permitted, and at the same time drove, individuals to seek a second job.

“There are very few full-time jobs out there anymore. So, in order to survive you have to have two part-time jobs and if you can get into a full-time job, all the more power to you”

Marge (W/F/’Local’/Server)

This also highlights again the uncertainty workers experience in the stability of their jobs, a topic we will return to shortly. In an informal discussion with a cook from Queen’s University, he mentioned having to work up to three jobs during the summers in order to generate an income to support just himself and afford his monthly rent. He also mentioned how none of his jobs paid him at the same time, so he routinely found himself in a position where he had to tell his landlord to wait a week for the rent or not grocery shop one week to afford rent and wait until his next pay cheque. He blamed the student population for creating upward pressure on housing rents in the downtown and also for the reduced number of shifts he received in the summer when the students were not in school.

Low wages then are a primary driver of the precariousness experienced by many individuals in the restaurant industry. The low wages were a source of great uncertainty for many individuals and created difficulty for them in supporting themselves and their
dependents. The uncertainty of being able to generate a sustainable income due to low wages was only one aspect of their job contributing to their precarious employment relationship. Low wages forced individuals who worked in the industry to seek second or even third jobs and work excessively long hours. The ability to work more then one job was a partial answer to low wages but only because jobs in the industry are often part-time. Problems in generating an income and sustaining themselves and their dependents were further complicated due to the uncertainty of their employment relationships.

The instability of their employment situation is a factor which bears heavily on workers with respect to the labour market in the restaurant industry in Kingston. The instability is primarily driven by the widespread use of part-time and temporary employment, the industries dependence on low-wage, low-skilled work and the large student base which dominates the industry. This uncertainty and lack of regular hours made it difficult for workers to achieve some degree of work-life balance. One interviewee, a server in his early 50’s, commented that there were many times that he would receive far less then 40 hours a week while another interviewee, a cook, commented there were weeks he would work close to, if not in excess of, 70 hours. While cooks tended to achieve their hours through just a single employer, many servers tended to have to piece together a full week’s worth of work from several employers:

“I would literally go to all three jobs in one day. At one point I worked six months solid without one day off, everyday. I have done that pretty consistently. This is actually the first job, because this place is closed on Sundays, I get a whole day off…. [I work] casual mostly at my other job because I only work two nights a week and every other Saturday. So that’s more of a casual [job] because I am working 16 hours one week and 20 the next. One night, one afternoon and then every other Saturday, so that is pretty much casual…Do you get 40 hours a week typical of a standard job between those two jobs? Oh yeah. See I was here at 8:30 this morning, it is now 5:30, and that is no breaks, straight through”

*Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server)*
“A lot of people have no concept of how difficult of a trade it is...during the busy season a chef can easily work 75 hours a week, cooks can easily work 4 or 5 12 hour shifts in a row.... It’s the type of career where they are busy when everyone else is partying....”

Steve (Instructor/M/Local Training Institution/ Executive Chef)

The nature of the restaurant industry itself also significantly influences the uncertainty individuals face in their jobs. First, the continuous ‘churning’ of restaurants as they go in and out of business and reinvent themselves always adds to the uncertainty workers experience in their jobs. This is compounded by the fact that restaurants already are subject to tight profit margins and high rates of failure. As one interviewee expressed:

“When a restaurant goes through a being put up for sale process [and sold to a new owner], which I have gone through once, [or] when an establishment is going to change its theme or focus you don’t know if you are going to fit into the new theme or focus”

John (W/M/‘Local’/Server)

Secondly, the presence of a highly mobile labour force within Kingston between employers, due to the presence of a flexible labour market, adds to the uncertainty many workers face, particularly non-students, in their jobs. This is largely driven by the presence of a temporary student workforce and the perception that restaurant work is largely low-skilled and therefore positions are easily filled. We have already seen that within the restaurant industry “there is always somebody there willing to take the job” (Interview: Jim (W/M/‘Local’/Head Chef)). This overabundance of labour combined with the transient nature of those individuals who work in the industry increases the uncertainty many workers experience in their jobs, particularly amongst servers. Also, because individuals are discriminated against based on their age, uncertainty tends to rise among individuals who remain in this industry and for whom it is a primary source of income. As one interviewee commented in response to the question of whether it was difficult for her to find work:
“In my age category, yes. It is hard to find people [employers] with such a large university population, they tend to want younger and there is so many of them they don’t care if they only work two or three weeks or two or three months and get tired and move on ’cause there is always somebody to fill that in. They are not looking at somebody who is going to be there for years or who is going to call in sick because they have a hangover. So, very hard.”

Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server)

The precarious nature of much restaurant employment was also apparent in the general lack of ability of workers to effectively exercise ‘voice’ with regards to control of the labour process. The structure of the restaurant industry lends itself to a situation where workers have little ability to control their working environments. This is particularly the case for servers. However, the shortage of chefs has become so great that in some cases employers have begun to offer benefits to their full-time cooks and chefs. As a result, cooks and chefs, particularly ones that have recognizable skills and have accumulated experience, do have some ability to influence employers and their own employment situations. The industry’s tendency for employment to be concentrated amongst low-skilled workers as opposed to managers, chefs, and owners, is a primary contributor to the inability for workers to effectively exercise their voice. As two interviewees explained:

“I don’t think it’s an industry that requires a lot of Chiefs and Indians. Usually you got the one chief and everybody else…doesn’t matter…With two jobs right now I am quite comfortable; you know bills are paid, a little extra. I can’t complain…[pause]…well I could but nobody would listen”

Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server)

“Locals here all year round, they tend not to be recognized because of the students…It’s almost a shame that we favour the students so much we can’t remember the locals”

Mallory (W/F/‘Local’/Sever-Manager)

At the same time, both student employees and employers acknowledged that a much more mutual worker/employer relationship existed between them than between non-student employees and employers. Employers recognized the need to listen to students and provide them with time off to complete their education in order to retain their best staff.
Students recognized their leverage and demanded that employers recognize their need to balance school and work. Thus, the evidence suggests that students are less precarious than non-students when it comes to having their voices heard by employers and their demands met in regards to their employment situation. The lack of voice was expressed more often by non-students then by students. Through the interviews student workers appeared to be ‘detached’ from non-student workers despite their interactions with them at work. Though they saw them as equals, they seemed unaware that for many non-students this is their long-term job and primary source of income.

“I don’t know if there is competition with ‘locals’ I don’t know if they look to fill the same jobs in the same ways. I am sure businesses have certain people they are looking to work there. None of the people who work at Smijies with me are locals. But I am pretty sure during the day its all local people who are bartenders but then during the night its all students ‘cause it’s students who go in there”
Samara (W/F/Student/Server)

“That’s the education they [the locals she now suddenly works with] have but definitely older. It’s the only employment they could get or second-hand job. I wouldn’t say it’s necessarily a career you would choose, it’s more of a job you fall into when you have a high school education. I don’t think that they show any remorse or regret for that, they like their jobs, they are treated well”
Samara (W/F/Student/Server)

Workplace representation through organized labour plays an interesting role in shaping the labour market and precarious employment within the restaurant industry in Kingston. As mentioned earlier, the only unionized food service jobs in Kingston are at the large institutions, such as Queen’s University, the Canadian Forces Base and the Hospital. The hotels were even seen as providing more secure job opportunities, similar to that of unionized work places, because they provide higher wages and more stability. Many locals aspire to the jobs at the institutions because of the good pay and regular hours.
“I don’t know. To tell you the truth, I don’t know. It would probably be smarter, coming up to the half century mark and you know, it might be smarter to look for a job that has some union coverage. And coming up to that mark things are probably going to start to fall apart and I need a drug plan of some sort”

_Marge_ (W/F/‘Local’/Server)

Although workers perceive that there may be benefits to a greater union presence in the industry, they do not see unions as a viable solution to the particular problems they encounter in the downtown restaurant labour market. All interview participants saw unions as unable to adapt to the peculiarities of their work. For example:

“Unions are a nightmare for culinary and that is because unions are very structured and people are not…so what we run into, we do have unions in some of the hotels, but here you have a manger who’s not allowed to make a drink or serve a meal and yet 50 people walk in the last 5 minutes or Mabel has to go on her break at 7:15 ‘cause the union says but that is the dinner hour. I think unions don’t belong in this industry”

_Lacey_ (Instructor/F/Local Training Institution/Chef)

This was a common thread running through interviews with employers, employees and representatives in the local training institutions. They believe that higher wages and the structure unions traditionally provide would put them out of a job since higher wages would result in higher food prices and less demand for restaurants. As one server commented, “unions would be the totally wrong thing to do” (Interviewee: _Marge_ (W/F/‘Local’/Server)). However, workers do see a need for improved job conditions especially to alleviate the uncertainty which characterizes their employment situations. Interviewees wished access to slightly better wages and stable and reliable working hours that would allow them to balance work between different employers and their life outside of work. Interviewees see improvement within the industry needing to be driven by government, employers and the industry as a whole.
In summary, precarious employment characterizes restaurant work in downtown Kingston in ways similar to those described by Rodgers (1989). Within the downtown, workers experience such characteristics of precarious employment as low wages, caused by the overwhelming presence of low-skilled workers and student workers; uncertainty in their employment situation, due to part-time and temporary forms of employment; the inability to voice their concerns over the labour process; and no form of worker representation through organized labour in the downtown. However, there remains a fifth characteristic which helps us to further understand the nature of precarious employment within the local labour market.

Labour mobility, as it relates to an individuals career path and ability to move through a flexible and highly capricious labour market, adds to our understanding of precarious work in the restaurant industry. This is primarily the result of the impacts that the processes of labour market segmentation have in shaping the structure of the local labour market. As discussed in the previous two chapters, processes of labour market segmentation act as a set of barriers to potential employment opportunities, effectively excluding certain workers from certain job openings and promotions. This in turn limits a workers ability to move through the labour market, from one job to the next; achieve upward economic mobility, through job promotions and increases in their real wage; and develop a sustainable, lifelong career. The cultural segmentation of the labour market is of particular interest in helping us better understand the nature of such mobility as it impacts workers experiences of precarious employment within the restaurant industry.

As discussed in the previous chapter, such characteristics of a worker as their age, physical appearance and social location shape the potential employment opportunities available to them within the Kingston restaurant industry. However, as became apparent
through the course of the interviews, the fewer of these characteristics a worker experienced as a barrier to potential employment opportunities, the more freely they could move through the labour market and the less precariousness they associated with their job. This is why perceptions of the degree of precariousness experienced varied between workers, particularly between older and younger workers. For example, Marge, a server in her late 40s, frequently commented on the growing precariousness she experienced and felt as she has gotten older while working in the restaurant industry. Marge expressed throughout the interview that as she has gotten older, and continues to do so, the industry as a whole has increasingly presented her with fewer and fewer potential employment opportunities for continuing and sustainable employment. She was particularly concerned with the lack of potential future employment opportunities available to her that could provide her with greater stability through employment benefits, higher wages, a pension and more reliable working hours. Conversely, younger workers that were interviewed expressed far less concern or recognition of the precarious nature of their work. As one student worker commented on her ability to find work: “I could probably pick and choose where I want to go” (Samara (W/F/Student/Server)). Another young worker also made the comment that: “there is always a [way to] fit back in…If I wanted to leave, I know there are thousands of places for me to work…” (Mallory (W/F/‘Local’/Server-Manager)). This was just one example of the potential impacts labour mobility has on a workers experience of precarious employment in the restaurant industry.

In a similar fashion, the industry’s tendency to favour formal training over experience has had a significant impact on the nature of labour mobility and workers experiences of precarious employment. This was particularly the case for all non-student
workers in the industry who, with no post-secondary education, found it very difficult to move through the labour market and improve their employment situation. This was less the case for student workers because most employers actively sought to employ them. As one employer commented, he prefers to hire students because they are smart and for that reason they learn the job quickly (Ivan (E/M/Casual Dinning – Local)). Though all employers stressed the importance to which experience played in making their hiring decisions, the way in which that experience was treated and used to make those decisions had significant impacts on the movement of workers through the labour market and their experiences of precarious employment. For instance, when making decisions regarding the hiring of servers, the experience employers were tending to look for was simply the basic knowledge and ability to serve a table. Such experience was more of a signifier of the amount of training each worker required, and hence would cost, before they could serve tables on their own. As one manager commented: “Experience is the biggest asset because time is so limited…It all come down to dollars and cents” (Mike (E/M/Fine Dinning – Local). However, such experience did not easily translate into increased wages when workers moved between establishments. In fact, one manager commented that if she were to leave, though her experience would land her a job quickly, it would result in a demotion and reduced wages.

“I do think that because of the high turnover, because of the students, there is always a [way to] fit back in but not always on the level you want to be in. If I wanted to leave, I know there are thousands of places for me to work but not necessarily as a supervisor”

Mallory (W/F/‘Local’/Server-Manager)

“Generally for front of house we can be picky because we have stacks of resumes at any given time. If they don’t have restaurant experience I won’t really go forward and the more [experience] the better, and the better the [previous] establishment the better. We do give the opportunity in the summer time for people to get their foot in the door because we hire hostesses and they learn that is the entry level job, essential bussing tables, and them having an
interest in the business and getting a good feeling for their ability to communicate with customers and an experienced person is not going to bus tables”

Mike (E/M/Fine Dinning - Local)

Because there exists no set criteria for regulating the profession of serving within the restaurant industry, servers tend not to get rewarded for their previous experience gained at other employers, making it difficult for workers to forge careers as a restaurant server. Added to this, as discussed earlier, the industry’s tendency to favour young workers limits the job opportunities available to older workers, at increased levels of pay, and their ability to fashion a career over time. This is fueled by the presence of an ever churning student labour market, feeding the restaurant industry with cheap, easily trained labour that develops no strong ties to the industry. The impact of this student workforce on the labour market is further embedded by the fact that it is continually renewable, restocked each year and completely replenished every four years with new and eager student workers.

For cooks and chefs, formal training versus experience plays an even more important and complex role in progressing in the industry, despite the limited opportunity for them to do so. As one chef at a downtown restaurant remarked, comparing the city to larger urban centres such as Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa, the lack of employment opportunities in the downtown for young chefs significantly inhibits their ability to gain knowledge of the profession.

“I mean in Montreal, cooking is a profession. I mean even dishwashers and waiters they are doing it for life, it’s their profession and they work really hard at it and they are very progressive and it’s very competitive…. Here [in Kingston] it is not. Here I mean, there [are] very few good chef jobs… There are [positions] but the chefs have been there forever. I mean you look around town, the chefs that are here in town work at Wooden Heads, Donald Gordon Center, … the guys have been there for 10 or 20 years…Its stable but there is also not a lot of opportunity. Its not like Montreal where you can be a chef in a
place but there is 40 other places that are looking for qualified chefs…”

Kingston is very, very limited…”

Jim (W/M/‘Local’/Head Chef)

Unlike servers, the cooking profession is far less transient and the movement of workers between employers, every three to five years, is considered normal. This movement between employers is important in order for a cook to broaden their experience and eventually become a successful chef. However, despite the fact that it is accepted that cooks will move between different restaurant establishments in order to gain experience, they are also required to receive formal training in order to attain job promotions and eventually become a certified chef.

At most restaurants, chefs are responsible for hiring the cooks that will work in the kitchen. Many chefs will make these decisions based upon both the experience of the potential applicant with their formal training and balancing that decision with the current needs of the restaurant. As a result, in the early stages of a cook’s career, a lack of formal training may not present a significant barrier to their ability to find work. However, this lack of formal training quickly becomes limiting to aspiring cooks without formal training and recognized cooking credentials. This substantially inhibits a cook’s ability, without training, to move up in the industry and receive better wages and achieve promotions. Instead, they are limited to a small number of restaurants or at least specific, low paying, low-skilled jobs within the kitchen. Though they may see incremental improvements in their job status over time at a single employer, who recognizes the skills they have attained while there, such improvements in job status will only go so far and will not translate into similar working conditions at other employers. This is particularly the case when a worker attempts to move to a higher scale restaurant.
“I tend to let the chefs look after the kitchen. On an upper level, if we are looking for a chef they have to have experience and skill and be trained.”
Mike (E/M/Fine Dinning - Local)

“Kitchen, I think we try to look for experience, if there is no experience and the person seems like a motivated and hard working individual they will start at the dishwasher and that you don’t need experience for and that is the entry level job in the kitchen. And if they do really well at that, then they will move up to a prep station and line cook and that is where you would start with no experience. We tend to try to avoid it in general but like I said right now it is such a tight squeeze that the right candidates…we will just train them”
Trevor (E/M/Casual Dinning – Local)

“Yeah, I definitely take into account the calibre of the restaurants they come from before. If it’s just been sort of pubs and fried foods than compared to someone who has worked in a higher calibre restaurant, [the person from the higher calibre restaurant] will have sort of an edge”
Geoff (E/M/ Casual Dinning – Local)

A significant reason behind this is that chefs are hired by the restaurant owner, and owners look for credentials and formal training over job experience. This also applies to chefs who look to hire highly skilled cooks/chefs. What appeared to be the case throughout the course of the interviews, and as one employer more explicitly eluded to, was that in the cooking profession there has been a shift over time from what was once a profession you could progress in as an apprentice, and achieve economic mobility based upon previous experience, to today where there is more emphasis placed on education and immediate credentialization. Some chefs would take on individuals without education if they had the time to train them and showed dedication to learning the trade. Though this would only occur if there was no other suitable individual to hire. However, these individuals who are taken on by a chef as a kind of apprentice really only benefit from the experience they gain if they remain at that same employer. This is because, similar to the case for restaurant servers, there exists no set criteria or industry accepted practices for how experience, particularly for individuals without formal training, is to be treated and should translate into improvements in job status when workers move between employers.
As a result, cooks without formal training still face significant barriers in the industry as they attempt to move through it and improve their employment situation.

*Will you take people who walk in off the street who want to work in the Kitchen and put them in the Kitchen for an hour to test them in lieu of a resume like some chefs use to do?*

“I am like that to and I am old school. If you asked me to make a resume, I would probably be lost cause I have never used a resume, I just walked in and said this is what I can do and here let me show you. It’s very rare today, there are not a lot of old people anymore. A lot more people today they go to cooking school and they think they know how to do it. But I come from a generation where experience is your best feature and experience is your chef’s skill not a paper”

*Tiago (E/M/Casual Dinning – Local)*

As already discussed, students have a tremendous impact on the labour market experiences of precariously employed non-students in the Kingston restaurant industry. However, their impact on the industry is even more detrimental in that they severely limit the ability of non-student workers to gain access to even the most basic and entry level of positions. As one labour market intermediary commented:

“For those entry level positions where one can get into [the restaurant industry] the competition with the students presents another barrier. So get an employer who has a restaurant downtown and has applications from young college and university students and some of our folks who may be older, barriered [i.e. little to no education, problems which impact their ability to socialize in the workplace, criminal backgrounds, excessive needs and special requirements that need to be met, etc.] and [therefore] may not present as well, it puts our folks at a disadvantage because here are the types of jobs they can access because they are entry level but are screened out of”

*Helen (Public Employee/F/Employment Service Provider)*

As such, student workers also significantly inhibit the ability of non-student workers to maintain regular employment and develop a stable career. The seasonal shifts within the industry coincide with the students’ school year and the tourist season. As a result, the continuous movement of students in and out of the restaurant industry, combined with employers’ desires to employ students, for various reasons, shapes the windows of
opportunities available to non-students to gain entrance into the industry. Starting from around the middle of April through till the middle of November it is more difficult for non-students to get a job in a restaurant. This is largely because these are the times when masses of university and college students flood the streets of Kingston applying for jobs. Even then once they are in the industry, as shown in previous quotes, non-student workers are largely ignored compared to the students. The truncated nature of the industry combined with the barriers ‘locals’ face sheds new light onto how such a labour market is being regulated. Instead of individuals being able to move up in the industry once in it, they are subject to a highly structured labour market in which the ability to achieve upward economic mobility through career progression is very limited.

As a result of these truncated career trajectories, many workers within the restaurant industry plateau very quickly in their career. Once this happens, workers simply move laterally from one restaurant establishment to another without improvements to their employment status. They may see a slight increase in real wages over time but this will never bring them up to par with the kind of wages and security professional servers and chefs receive. Instead, workers with no formal training will continue to do the same kind of job, just at a different place with a different menu. As one employee commented on the nature of labour mobility within the restaurant industry: “There is a lot of rotation [within the restaurant industry itself] from one establishment to another” (John (W/M/ ‘Local’/Server). This appears to be the case for two reasons. First, workers expressed that they remain within the industry because they know the demands of the job and it is what they are familiar with. Secondly, it is the only way for them to develop careers and gain experience that helps them move up in the industry.
Why do you stay in the industry? [Interviewer]
“I think it is mostly because this is what I know, I would like to do something else but I don’t know… [I would like to] get a little more security, ‘cause lets face it there is no security in this job… when I retire I get nothing, doesn’t matter how long I work, not that there is going to be a whole lot for many people anyway”
Marge (W/F/‘Local’/Server)

“As far as young cooks that are trying to progress in their career, staying in a place too long doesn’t do anything ‘cause you are doing the same thing everyday, you aren’t learning anything.”
Jim (W/M/‘Local’/Head Chef)

What labour mobility tells us about the nature of precarious employment within the restaurant industry in downtown Kingston is that there is the potential for workers to get caught in a cycle of precarious job after precarious job. The lack of opportunity for upward economic mobility through promotions and career development, as workers move between employers within the labour market, acts as a kind of trap that does not allow workers to better their own lives. The widespread use of post-secondary students to fill many of the jobs leaves little opportunity for non-students to gain access to decent wages and regular hours or even entry level jobs.

This chapter has demonstrated the existence of precarious forms of employment in the restaurant industry of Kingston, Ontario. It has confirmed that restaurant work exhibits all the characteristics of a precarious employment relationship as outlined by Rodgers (1989). Restaurant workers in Kingston receive low-wages, experience highly uncertain employment conditions, limited ability to voice their concerns over their conditions of employment and little access to job protection through organized forms of labour. In addition, this chapter has demonstrated how our understanding of the degree of precariousness is enhanced through an examination of labour mobility. The nature of how labour mobility interacts with processes of labour market segmentation in the Kingston
restaurant industry was seen to shape the ability of the industry to provide sustainable career paths for workers, limiting them to a life of precariousness. As a result, and as it became apparent in this chapter, our understanding of the regulation of the local labour market is also shaped by our understandings of labour mobility, labour market segmentation and precarious employment.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It’s 3:30 a.m. on a Friday morning. Soaking up the last bit of beer from the bar with a rag, Karen has finally finished closing up and she can now clock-out and head home. Exhausted from working all day and all night and with her body aching, she can finally go home and begin to look forward to the weekend. This will be the first Saturday Karen has had off in over four months since her husband was laid off and she had to pick up the slack with a third job. Working seven days a week, sometimes at two or three jobs a day, has taken its toll on her. With her husband finally securing a job in Napanee, as a carpenter with a small contracting company, she has been able to quit one of her jobs and take fewer shifts. With only two short shifts remaining she is looking forward to some time off with her family. Although her next shift starts at 10 a.m.; at least her husband can get the kids off to school so she can get some sleep.

Happy to have regained some small measure of renewed stability in her hectic life, the experience of being the sole provider for her family has made her realize just how precarious her life actually is. As a consequence, Karen has begun to consider her own future and what opportunities lie ahead for her in this small city. It has prompted her to look for new employment opportunities that offer more stability and a little higher wages. However, promotions and career advancement are limited because of the city’s size. Most jobs available that her high school diploma qualifies her for are not much better than her current position. She recently applied for a job at an upscale restaurant in the downtown, one that would provide her with higher wages and the ability to finally cut back to only one job. However, she did not get it and the job was given instead to the owner’s friend, a woman who Karen knows, that has been working in the downtown for a number of years.
At least she still has a chance at the Hospital. She received a call to come in for an interview next week having recently met the woman who will be doing the hiring who told her to put in a resume. Feeling good that things may be looking up, she is about to leave when her boss tells her he needs her to work Saturday night as two students have called in saying they have exams to write. It is this uncertainty that Karen really despises. She cringes but willingly accepts to work. Until she has secured a better job, she knows that she can not afford now to say no as it could result in the loss of future shifts. The most difficult aspect of the job for her is not the low-wages or lack of union representation but the short and irregular shifts that make it difficult for her to generate a reliable income and some stability. It is this aspect of restaurant work that makes her life difficult as well as the lives of most of the 1480 other servers and 940 kitchen staff in the city who experience varying levels of precarious employment.

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The arguments presented within this thesis suggest that in order to fully understand the nature of precarious employment in the low-wage service sector, it must be situated within the context of the structure and regulation of the local labour market. We have explored these issues through an analysis of the restaurant industry in Kingston, Ontario. Within Kingston the restaurant industry is composed of three submarkets, each of which function and operate largely independently of one another and constitute their own labour submarket. Through interviews with employers and employees of restaurants in the downtown area of Kingston, we were able to construct an understanding of the processes which shape precarious employment within this particular submarket. The interviews revealed that workers in the downtown restaurants are highly segmented along a number of dimensions: cooks and servers; post-secondary students and non-students;
men and women and youth and older workers. The data collected demonstrate not only that precarious employment is a dominant characteristic of work for individuals in downtown restaurants but that each segment of the labour market experiences precarious employment independently yet in relation to one another. Although downtown restaurant work exhibits all four dimensions of a precarious employment relationship, the interviews revealed that irregular and uncertain working hours and low-wages were of the most concern to workers. These two aspects were cited as the primary cause behind the reason why workers were forced to seek out second or even third jobs in order to generate an adequate income.

One issue that became apparent during the course of the research, and one which has been largely neglected in other studies of precarious employment in the low-wage service sector, is the impact that labour mobility has on precarious work. Thus, the thesis has demonstrated how a better understanding of workers’ experiences of precarious employment can be achieved through the incorporation of a consideration of the constrained labour mobility faced by many low-wage workers. Constraints on labour mobility are a result of processes of labour market segmentation. Contrary to approaches rooted in orthodox economics which see the low-wage, low-skilled labour market as a catch-all basin within which labour moves relatively freely, a number of complex internal institutional and structural arrangements exist which challenge this characterization. As discussed, the location of economic activity within the urban landscape combined with the processes of labour market segmentation act as barriers which not only shape the local labour market but also the ability of workers to move between employers within it. As the interviews demonstrated, the combination of variations in employers’ hiring practices within the downtown and the location of alternative employment opportunities in
relatively similar but distant and distinct submarkets elsewhere in the city had significant impacts on workers’ employment experiences. For instance, such characteristics as a worker’s age, gender, physical appearance, social class and education all contributed to not only the ability of that worker to be hired at any one particular restaurant but also the overall total number of potential employment opportunities open to that individual. Interviews with employees demonstrated that such institutional and structural arrangements within the local labour market had considerable influence over their ability not only to move between employers but also develop sustainable career paths and achieve upward economic mobility through higher wages and job promotions. Taken together, the more barriers to employment a worker faces, and the more difficult it is for them to move through the labour market, develop a career and achieve upward economic mobility, the more precarious is their employment situation. As was seen in the interviews, the more difficult it was for a worker to move through the labour market and gain access to better wages and working conditions, the more precarious they felt their job and employment situation to be. Although the way in which labour mobility shaped workers’ employment experiences was slightly different for kitchen staff than it was for front-of-house staff, it none-the-less had a significant impact on their experiences of precarious employment.

However, the impacts of labour mobility were not limited to individual worker’s experiences of precarious employment alone but also bore heavily upon the ability of the labour market to reproduce a skilled workforce. This became apparent in interviews with employers who commented on the difficulty in recruiting and retaining skilled workers and their experiences with recent skilled worker shortages. The tendency of employers to favour young workers for front-of-house positions, particularly post-secondary students,
and individuals with recognized culinary credentials for back-of-house positions has weakened the industry’s ability to reproduce a skilled workforce. This is a result of the industry’s inability to retain trained chefs and cooks from local training institutions and develop a core staff of trained workers in the front-of-house.

Traditional workforce development approaches to lowering unemployment and addressing precarious employment are centered on promoting human capital development and the creation of new jobs. However, given the nature of work in the expanding low-wage, low-skilled service sector and the individuals who work in this sector, traditional approaches to workforce development are not enough. Simply stimulating employment growth within certain industries, such as tourism, a focus of many cities in the new, culturally driven economy, does not change the fact that these low-wage service jobs are precarious; a point echoed by Iverson (2006) in the title of his book Jobs Aren’t Enough. Despite the rapid growth of employment in the service sector, many of the jobs generated do not provide stable and sustainable employment for many individuals and, in particular, for the working poor. This was reflected in my interviews with employers and employees in the restaurant industry. Many considered their jobs to be ‘dead-end’ since many of the jobs had highly truncated job ladders. With very little opportunity for promotion, particularly in a smaller city such as Kingston, these jobs not only lead nowhere but also offer few opportunities for increased wages. What happens instead is that workers are simply cycled through the local labour market moving between employers but holding similar jobs. There are few opportunities that offer career advancement through promotion or higher wages based on previous experience and seniority. This is largely the result of the tendency for employers to favour workers drawn from the large pool of current post-secondary students seeking part-time employment in Kingston. This works
against local residents who possess only a high school diploma and who must compete with local college and university students for the available jobs. Individuals responsible for workforce development and/or concerned with the welfare of the precariously employed and working poor in the low-wage service sector need to turn their attention to forming more stable career paths for core workers in the service sector.

Unions present a potential solution to addressing the issues of precarious employment in the low-wage service industry. Despite the sporadic success of unions to organize in the low-wage service sector throughout history (Cobble, 1991; Kumar, 2006; Wial, 1992) new potential to successfully unionize the current workforce lies in reexamining the relationship between the nature of labour market mobility and union organizing strategies. Some variation and/or combination of historical organizing strategies such as craft\(^1\), federated and amalgamated\(^2\), geographical\(^3\) and community-

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1. **Craft Unionism** is a form of worker organization based around a particular craft or occupation such as a server or a cook. Workers tend to organize around a shared occupational identity and a sense of loyalty to the traditions of that occupation. In this case, workers’ rights and benefits are tied to their employment in an occupation rather than a particular worksite. Workers experience no job security at a particular worksite but the union provides them with employment, effectively controlling the supply of labour. Because the union controls the supply of labour, there are strict rules against employers hiring from outside of the union or union members soliciting work independently of the union. Health benefits and other benefits would also be covered by the union under these conditions. Finally, the union also takes responsibility for service quality by regulating performance standards, training workers and disciplining members who violate such standards (Cobble, 1991; Wial, 1992).

2. **Federated and Amalgamated Craft Unionism** is a form of worker organization, similar to that of Craft Unionism, except that the distinctions between occupations are less clearly drawn. In a federated structure, workers of distinct crafts unite with similar crafts for limited purposes (e.g., organizing or collective bargaining) while maintaining their organizational autonomy. In an amalgamated structure, workers in similar occupations merge their separate craft unions into a single union. Such organizing structures are well suited to address the issues of low-wage service workers who “remain within a loosely defined occupation or group of occupations for an extended period of time but who lack the strong occupational consciousness that the pure craft model requires” (Wial, 1992: 688).

3. **Geographical Unionism** is a form of union organization where workers are organized according to geography, without regard to the kinds of jobs they hold. Such an organizational strategy is appropriate in cases where workers are highly mobile across employers and occupations within a confined geographical space. Such an organizational arrangement is potentially very beneficial to low-wage service workers who demonstrate loose ties to any one particular craft but are highly dependent upon a range of occupations found within a particular sub-market of the local labour market (Wial, 1992).
based unionism (Cobble, 1991; Kumar, 2006; Tufts, 1998; Wial, 1992) may prove useful to unions attempting to organize low-wage service workers. For instance, targeting particular relatively self-contained subsections of the larger local labour market through a geography-based unionism may be an initial step in the right direction. This holds merit in that, as was demonstrated in this research, the labour market for restaurants in Kingston is geographically subdivided, with workers moving between employers but remaining within the same sub-area of the labour market, the downtown core. In light of this, it is important that unions rethink their approaches to organizing the low-wage service sector.

The prevailing industrial model of union organizing has proven successful in organizing hotel workers; however, hotels are relatively large worksites and therefore suitable to an industrial based organizing model unlike the rest of the tourism and hospitality industry which tends to be composed of much smaller worksites such as restaurants, retail stores, certain attractions and so on. Since many jobs within the broader tourism industry require similar soft-based skill sets, workers are able to move between and within the different segments of the industry relatively easily. However, to address certain internal occupational specificities, due to differences in the hard skill sets required by a particular occupation and internal promotional ladders, a craft based approach is appropriate. Craft

Community Unionism is an organizational strategy that makes use of local, non-union actors within the community to help promote worker unionization efforts and achieve broader social objectives within the labour movement for the organizing workers (Kumar, 2006; Tufts, 1998). Such an organizing strategy is beneficial in working with low-wage service workers who have proven to be difficult to organize due to the precarious and flexible nature of their work. The added support of community based groups is also beneficial because they provide support in campaigns to improve working conditions for workers who have little power or say over their employment situation and who may not have the financial security to sustain themselves during an organizing drive.

Industrial Unionism is a form of organizing where unions organize workers at the level of the worksite. Under this form of union organizing, workers pledge allegiance to a particular worksite as opposed to a particular occupation. Such forms of organizing are usually present where occupational based divisions are absent but clear divisions between industries exist. Industrial Unionism is associated with the large mass-production industries which dominated the economic landscape from 1950 to 1980 (Wial, 1992).
based approaches also allow for unions to establish regulatory mechanisms that are more specific to certain occupations to ensure workers perform tasks properly and do not cheat other workers. From here, unions could implement aspects of craft based amalgamated and federated forms of unionism in which the different occupations in the local labour market form allegiances not only with their particular craft, similar to strictly craft based forms of unionization, but work together with other similar crafts for the common cause within the local labour market. To deal with the issues of worker mobility and the social reproduction of skilled labour within the restaurant and broader tourism industry, unions may look to the advantages of developing multiemployer institutional arrangements.

Multiemployer institutions, as described by Herzenberg et al. (1998), have the ability to address a number of the issues raised in this thesis regarding precarious work and a highly mobile labour market. Such institutions establish a set of institutional practices, linkages, employment networks and partnerships amongst local employers in order to address the social reproduction of skilled labour and reestablish traditional career paths in a flexible and highly mobile labour market. An historical example of such a multiemployer institution, which has become far less common in today’s work world, is that of the apprenticeship. Though apprenticeships still exist in some construction and manufacturing related trades, they are virtually nonexistent in other industries where they would prove valuable in developing a more highly skilled workforce and addressing some of the issues that arise due to instability in flexible labour markets. Apprenticeships also have the ability to address the growing population of low-wage service workers who can not afford to take the time off to achieve the education and training employers are looking for. However, such apprenticeships would have to be tailored so that they provide general skill sets for workers who may remain in the same occupation or may shift occupations
but remain in the same industry. This would entail establishing training periods for workers between a number of different employers to gain skill sets amongst different service sector occupations. More importantly, such apprenticeships offer the potential to establish career paths for workers and upward economic mobility within a multiemployer environment.

Alongside apprenticeships, a number of more general industry-wide accepted practices, such as experience recognition and stable working hours, allowing for workers to balance multiple jobs and their life outside of work, would significantly improve working conditions in the industry. This may mean establishing a set of guidelines for employers that allow them to more readily recognize the previous experience workers have attained and translate that into a wage rate. At the same time, if employers provide work schedules which remain the same from week to week, even though they may only offer a worker 20 hours of work a week, it allows that worker to more easily balance a second or even third job while maintaining a work-life balance. Such multiemployer institutional arrangements also possess the ability to provide workers access to benefits and pensions by pooling employers together. A union or a union-like body that includes other local actors, such as employers, employees, and workforce development boards would have the greatest potential in successfully developing and implementing such multiemployer institutions.

Figure 6.1 provides a graphical depiction of a potential union structure based upon the previous discussion and the findings to come out of the research for this thesis. To begin, the low-wage service industry in Kingston appears to be divided into three, largely independent, sub-markets, suggesting the possibility of implementing a geography based form of union organizing. Thus, the Kingston Tourism and Consumer Services Union
could be comprised of three units, pertaining to each submarket. Within each of these submarkets there exist a number of different occupations, each with their own defined career paths, suggesting the need to include some elements of craft unionism. The latter would help to establish regulatory mechanisms which define the crafts and the skills developed in it and the ability to regulate the quality of work and labour supply. However, though the research suggested that workers movements from job to job tend to remain within the restaurant industry, there is also movement of workers in and out of the industry and across occupational lines. This is primarily the result of the similarities and close occupational lines that exist between certain occupations such as servers and retail sales workers. However, despite each occupation’s similarities and differences, both have a shared interest in improving working conditions in general, suggesting the need for implementing forms of federated and amalgamated craft unionism. Finally, the shared interest in reestablishing career paths and institutional practices surrounding skill development suggests the need for institutional arrangements which support these. Given that the industry is composed of a number of employers, and workers tend to move between these employers to develop careers, this suggests the need for unions to turn to multiemployer institutions in order to address these issues related to labour mobility, career paths, pensions and benefits and the social reproduction of labour.

Issues of precarious employment are only likely to grow given the current heightened levels of economic uncertainty in the North American and broader global economies. Rising gas prices, the recent crash of the U.S. housing market, the growing costs of living in the inner-city, growing tuition rates, rising food prices and the onset of a widespread economic recession all point to the uncertain and difficult times ahead for
many workers, but most of all for the hard working people in the low-wage, low-skilled service economy.
Figure 6.1: Proposed Union Organizing Structure

Kingston Tourism and Consumer Services Union

Unit 1
Downtown Workers Tourism Association

Unit 2
Gardiners Road Commercial Association

Unit 3
401 Exits Service Association

Occupational Groupings According to Craft

Union Organized Multiemployer Institutions

Labour Market Entry Points

Occupational Shifts (both within and between sub industries)

Occupational Career Paths

Job Shifts between Units
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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule A – Employers

The purpose of interviewing employers is to construct from their perspective a picture of their business, the nature of their industry, and the labour market from which they draw their employees. These interviews will be used to identify the corresponding labour markets and the competitive nature within the industry for the different types of restaurants. These interviews will establish some preliminary characteristics of what the movement of workers between restaurants looks like from the employer’s perspective and how they might influence such movement. The following are sample questions that will guide the overall interview with employers. These questions are broken down into four distinct sections.

Section A – Business Characteristics -10min

This section will focus specifically on identifying the nature of each restaurant and the market it serves in Kingston. Who are its target customers?

Q.1 Describe your Restaurant.
Q.2 Who are your target clientele?
Q.3 How many full-time and part-time individuals do you employ?
Q.4 What type of jobs do you hire for?
Q.5 What is the demographic breakdown of the employees you hire?
Q.6 What is the wage structure of the different jobs that you hire for?

Section B – Industry Characteristics – 10min

This section will address the competitive nature of the restaurant industry in Kingston and how employers respond to such competitive pressures.

Q.1 How would you characterize the structure of the restaurant industry in Kingston? Not only by type of restaurant but the typical target customer each draws on and location?
Q.2 How would you describe the nature of the restaurant industry in Kingston and its competitiveness?
Q.3 Where does your restaurant fit in comparison to the other restaurants in Kingston, in terms of what it provides and doesn’t provide a customer?
Q.4 How does your restaurant compete with and respond to the competitive pressures posed by other restaurants in order to remain profitable?
Q.5 Which other restaurants here in Kingston do you feel you are in competition with, not only for customers, but also for recruiting employees? What other local industries do you feel you are in competition with for employees?
Section C – Labour Market – 20min

This portion of the interview addresses the labour market in Kingston from the employer’s perspective as it relates to their industry. This section will develop a picture of the degree of stability or instability in Kingston’s labour market. This section will also address the issues of turnover in the industry and how much circulation of employees and restaurant owners actually experience.

Q.1 How much employee turnover do you experience in your business?
Q.2 Which positions in your restaurant experience the greatest degree of turnover and the least degree of turnover?
Q.3 Do you find there is much movement of workers between restaurants?
Q.4 Is there a seasonal movement of employees between the summer tourism season and the fall and winter when the university and college students are in Kingston?
Q.5 What is the skill requirements for the positions here that you hire for?
Q.6 Which of these jobs do you find the easiest and most difficult to fill?
Q.7 How have you had to adjust your hiring practices in response to skill shortages?
Q.8 How do you see the labour market in Kingston as fulfilling your needs?
Q.9 Where within Kingston do you find your employees live, in general?
Q.10 Do any of your employees hold multiple jobs that you know of?
Q.11 Would you say there is an informal or formal community in the labour market from which the restaurants draw on?

Section D – Hiring Practices – 20min

This final section will address the issues of employer hiring practices. These questions will develop an understanding of who employers seek in the labour market and the continual fluctuation of labour in the labour market. This section also hopes to understand the demographic composition of each employer’s employees.

Q.1 Do you find that most of the employees you hire have had experience before in the restaurant industry?
Q.2 What are the characteristics you look for in an individual when you hire them?
Q.3 How do these characteristics differ depending upon which specific job you are looking to fill?
Q.4 What do you look for when you are hiring a full-time as opposed to a part-time employee?
Q.5 What are the characteristics you look for when hiring an individual? Why?
Q.6 What characteristics of potential employees do you look for that would make it unlikely for you to hire them? Why these characteristics?
Q.7 How do you find your employees and other potential employees?
Q.8 Do you employee Queen’s University and St. Lawrence College students? – If so, why do you prefer these individuals and if not, why not?
Interview Schedule B – Employees

These interviews will examine the mobility, and movement of restaurant workers in the Kingston labour market from the workers perspective. This will address workers past, present and future job prospects, where they find work, in what industry, how often and how long they hold jobs and how many jobs they hold. This portion of the interviews will also seek to understand the obstacles that workers face in a precarious labour market and as a result how this influences how they move through the labour market. These questions will also address the characteristics of these individuals, what education and skill training they have. This section will also to explore relationships between where these workers live, where they work and whether or not this impacts their mobility in the labour market.

These interviews will be divided into three sections:

Section A – Worker Characteristics

Q.1 Describe your educational and skill background?
Q.2 What is your current job description?
Q.3 What other jobs (if any) you have held in the last three to five years?
Q.4 Have most of these jobs been part-time or full-time?
Q.5 What kind of wage do you expect to receive for the kind of work you are doing now?
Q.6 Where in general do you live in Kingston?
Q.7 Is Kingston an affordable place for you to live?

Section B – Worker Experience of the Labour Market

Q.1 How easy have you found it to find work in Kingston?
Q.2 How would you characterize the Kingston labour market?
Q.3 Do you find there to be a lot of circulation within the Kingston labour market?
Q.4 Do you find the Kingston labour market competitive in attaining work? – Who do you find you have to compete with for jobs?
Q.5 How stable do you feel your current job is and other jobs you have held in Kingston?
Q.6 Do you find there are barriers that prevent you from moving into certain jobs even when you are fully qualified?
Q.7 Do you feel that there is a informal community that exists between restaurant workers within Kingston?
Q.8 Have you ever been unemployed while in Kingston? If so, for how long?
Q.9 How difficult is it to move from being unemployed to employed here in Kingston?

Section C – Worker Experience Within the Labour Market

Q.1 Do you enjoy the work you do and the current job you have?
Q.2 What are your future career plans? – Will you continue to work in the restaurant sector?
Q.3 Why did you leave your last job?
Q.4 How often do you change jobs or attend an interview for another job?
Q.5 How do you find work here in Kingston?
Q.6 What type of jobs do you look for when you are in a position to find work?
Q.7 Do you feel comfortable in certain kinds of jobs more than others? – Does this shape the types of jobs you look for and will take in Kingston?
Q.8 Do you prefer working part-time or full-time and do you actively seek out either one?
Q.9 Do you feel that you experience discrimination in hiring by employers?
Q.10 Do you currently or have you ever held multiple jobs? – If so, what occupations have these jobs been in and how did you come across these jobs? – If so, why have you had to hold multiple jobs?
APPENDIX B

Position in Labour Force
W – Worker
E – Employer

Gender:
M – Male
F – Female

Social Class
L – Local
St – Student

Occupations:
Maître D’Hôtel/ Hostess
Server
Manager
Prep Cook
Line Cook
Chef
Owner

Types of Restaurant Ownership
Local/Independent
Franchise/Corporate

Types of Restaurants
Fast Food
Diner
Coffee Shops
Family
Pubs
Ethnic
Fine Dining
August 30, 2007

Mr. Mark J. Dentstedt
Master’s Student
Geography Department
Queen’s University

GREB Ref # G-GEO-070-07
Title: “The Dynamics of Labour Market Mobility Amongst Precarious Workers: The Case of Restaurant Workers in Kingston, Ontario”

Dear Mr. Dentstedt:

The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) has given expedited approval to your proposal titled “The Dynamics of Labour Market Mobility Amongst Precarious Workers: The Case of Restaurant Workers in Kingston, Ontario.” In accordance with the Tri-Council Guidelines (article D.1.6) and Senate Terms of Reference (article G), your project has been approved for one year. At the end of each year, GREB will ask if your project has been completed and if not, what changes have occurred or will occur in the next year.

You are reminded of your obligation to advise the GREB, with a copy to your unit REB, of any adverse event(s) that occur during this approval period (details available on webpage www.queensu.ca/vpr/greblabforms.htm#Adverse). An adverse event includes, but is not limited to, a complaint, a change or unexpected event that alters the level of risk for the researcher or participants or situation that requires a substantial change in approach to a participant(s). You are also advised that any adverse events must be reported to the GREB within 48 hours.

You are also reminded that all changes that might affect human participants must be approved by the GREB. Examples of required approvals are: changes in study procedures or implementations of new aspects into the study procedures that affect human subjects. These changes must be sent to Linda Frid at the Office of Research Services or FRED@queensu.ca prior to implementation. Ms. Frid will seek the approval of the GREB reviewer(s) who originally assessed your application or the GREB Chair.

On behalf of the General Research Ethics Board, I wish you continued success in your research.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Julie Buchan
Member
General Research Ethics Board

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