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The Art of the Resistance: Participation in the Slipstream and Acts of Resistance in a Culinary Re-Entry Program

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THE ART OF THE RESISTANCE: PARTICIPATION IN THE *SLIPSTREAM* AND ACTS

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ABSTRACT

Social policies since 1996 require that low income people participate in job training programs in order to receive social benefits under the "New Welfare State." Many scholars have argued that job training programs aim to produce docile workers, who carry out only highly routinized work where little discretion is needed. Through ethnographic observation and interviews, I identify three means by which trainees manage the dual expectations of docility and the creativity demanded in a kitchen setting. First, they operate in a routine fashion, as if in a *slipstream*; second, they *bank confidence* by disregarding rules because of skill or favor by the chef; and third, workers take *liberties and use resistance* when not under surveillance. These findings suggest previous scholarship has overstated the extent to which the New Welfare State produces docile subjects, and implies that there are indeed a variety of outcomes of dignity and creativity for these workers.

SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary government-sponsored job training programs for low-income

people are increasingly organized around the development of a particular emotional

disposition: calm, submissive to authority, and competent without asserting too much

independent thought. Acceptable "job ready" participants are those who adopt

languages and practices of personal responsibility and submission to authority (Bowie

et al. 2007). Such qualities are aimed, in theory, to prepare them to fit into jobs with

plenty of routine: jobs that are likely to be low-wage and physically demanding,

including jobs such as factory work, janitorial positions, cashier positions, and drivers

(Bowie et al. 2007). They allow for little possibility of autonomy, decision-making,

creativity, or emotional expression (Ellis 2005). This type of *docile subject* (Foucault 1977)

comes to work on time, does what they are told, accepts all responsibility for problems,

and then leaves (Sandoff and Widell 2009). Yet paradoxically, the very sites where job

training—an essential component of contemporary "workforce" policy-- takes place

may be antithetical to docility, and indeed require quite a bit of creativity. And of

course, even the most routine jobs require some creativity, and often teamwork and cooperation, to accomplish a goal.

While most scholarship in this area has focused on jobs and training that are highly routinized, there are low wage jobs that require considerable creativity and problem solving abilities, such as kitchen work. As many popular and scholarly works have shown, the kitchen atmosphere requires people to not only to fulfill particular roles, but to be flexible in various ways, with respect to the duration of shift, being able to handle a "slammed" night of reservations, and demanding diners (Fine 1990). There is considerable allowance for cursing, complaint, withholding participation, and even physical aggressiveness—activities that are discouraged in many job types. There is space for idiosyncrasy too: as television shows like "Chopped"," and "Top Chef," or books like Anthony Bourdain's, Kitchen Confidential reveal, the eccentric and crass chef is an archetype to which kitchen trainees might aim to aspire, and under whose charismatic leadership they may expect to work.

The kind of flexibility, creativity and rule-breaking may be overt and flaunted by the Chef of a restaurant, but many low-income kitchen job trainees are not likely be given identical freedoms. Many of these participants are trained to be docile subjects through their participation in "job readiness" programs and are unlikely to attain the title and status that allows for, and indeed expects, a certain exciting roughness and

level of creativity. Moreover, participation in job-training programs is unlikely to prepare them for the changing demands of a fast-paced kitchen. They will be confronted with settings that expect very different affects and actions from them. In situations where trainees are black, and the teachers, white, these already existing tensions may be further exacerbated by racial tensions. Moreover, while many of these students will eventually get jobs in non-restaurant work, they are being introduced to kitchen behaviors and affects which may not be acceptable for other workplaces. Trainees thus face contradictory informal and formal rules through participation in a kitchen culture, which prizes both precision and creativity. The often racialized culture insists that trainees follow rules and take responsibility for their actions—that is, that black workers directed by white chefs are supposed to learn to be submissive as both a worker and a black person. How they manage these tensions is important for our understandings of how food work gets done in an era of surplus labor and neoliberal discipline and how workers themselves manage to maintain human dignity in such a setting.

This study is to understand how projects like the contemporary job-training programs that are meant to produce docility are navigated by low-income job trainees. The answer to this question is critical for understanding how class relations are produced in work worlds, particularly for the low-income people who are required and expected, since the instantiation of the "New Welfare" post-1996, to not only labor, but to conform to specific affects of docility and appreciation. How trainees navigate these multiple directives —of individual responsibility, docility, and both formal and informal job-specific skills—is the subject of this study.

I set out to understand how these tensions would be managed by workers, through a three month ethnographic study at a kitchen job training program called Inspiration Corporation, located in Chicago. In contrast to what I thought I would find on the outset—that participants' resistance would be overt—I instead found that participants move into what I call a *slipstream*, which allows them to get by in this subjugating environment. I use the concept of the *slipstream* to illustrate how participants in this program enter into a flow of compliance, much like a slipstream moves air and water quickly and with ease. Entering into this *slipstream* in the job-training program reduces friction with trainers, administration, and other outside sources like case managers and family. To simply "get by" and complete the program is an easier and better alternative, for many, than resisting even the harshest authority. I also illuminate

how some workers are able to *bank confidence*, by way of completing tasks satisfactorily,

not asking too many questions, or showing that they belong to the "club," so that they

might be able to break rules even when supervisors are around. And finally, I show that

in contrast to the expectations of Foucault, Mbembe, and scholars of New Welfare State

job training programs, trainees engage in overt *acts of resistance* and *take liberties.* In doing

so, the management of workplace affects is disrupted.

SECTION II

PARADOX IN PRACTICE

Introduction

To understand the origins of racialized job training programs under neoliberal

workfare, and the key affects they aim to produce in specific organizational settings, I

draw from scholarship on race, crime and punishment, labor, and organizational theory.

One key aim is to show how different institutional forms are combined at this site to

create new forms of social control that form the matrix of emotional domination. First, I

draw from race scholarship to show how governance and systemic oppression have led

to conditions by which low-income, and people of color become a part of post-1996

government job training programs and the growing low-wage labor force. While not

always explicit, I show how this longstanding system implicitly affects the role of the

laborer in ways that magnify subordination for an already subjugated population. Next, I

will draw upon work that examines the unique role of a kitchen worker as a subordinate

to a charismatic leader. I do so to elucidate the unique features of a kitchen training

center, which forces an already subjugated group into further subordination. These

changes are brought about by increasing (and shifting) forms of governance at the macro

level. Because my focus is resistance, I next critically examine scholarship on ways in

which people have resisted authority through individual and collective action in order to

better understand precedents for such actions that might take place in kitchens. Lastly I

show that these paradoxes are produced in part by a particular flow of the labor market

through capitalism, in which easier accessible jobs lead to lower enrollment in re-entry

programs because of perceived equal or better opportunity in low-wage entry level

positions.

Managing Surplus (Black) Populations in the Contemporary Kitchen

To understand the importance of new forms that subjugation takes—through

kitchen work and within a re-entry program—it is critical to understand its origins in the

role of states in managing populations. Organizational control comes in many forms—

and is likely to come as a result of sever stratification and subjugation because of race. For

those who are Black in America, these controls are compounded through systemic

oppressions that influence job opportunities, over-incarceration, educational possibilities,

and neighborhood options (Garland 2001; Alexander 2012). Wacquant sheds important

light on how the state shapes struggles of poor black men in the United States through

disinvestment through opportunity and an over-investment in carceral punishment. He

demonstrates that "this emerging government of poverty wedding the 'invisible hand' of

the deregulated labor market to the 'iron fist' of an intrusive and omnipresent punitive

apparatus is anchored…by a *carceral-assistential* complex which carries out its mission to

surveil, train and neutralize" (Wacquant 2010). Similarly, Alexander argues that while

Jim Crow Laws are no longer in place, social and institutional regulations still serve

exclude black people from fully participating in social life (Alexander 2012). These groups

must navigate daily life in a gray area where they are not necessarily lawfully lesser-than,

but by all accounts they are not given the same opportunities and mechanisms to

succeed. For those who are part of this subordinated class, the rules and regulations of

daily life can be demanding yet do not often lead to rewards. These rules determine what

one can and cannot do, and what one may or may not be. For those who are Black,

governance and social control has dictated life in every form: work, location, social status,

and mobility (Wacquant 2010).

Both Alexander and Waquant provide overarching and broad images of how

black poverty is experienced. There are other scholars, however, who write about this

totalizing experience of the black person, without the fetishization for which Wacquant is

often criticized. Mbembe speaks to the fetishizing views of the black body. He suggests,

"an unequal relationship is established along with the inequality of the power over life.

The power over the life of another takes the form of commerce" (Mbembe 2003). For

Mbembe, commerce, or the commodification of the human as a laborer, is the ultimate

form of power. He refers to this enslavement as "death in life." While black Americans are not technically in a slave state or under colonial rule, the residual effects are still manifest in the institutions that control them. Mbembe distances himself from scholars like Wacquant by considering a possibility for deviation from this social control, first by post-colonialist thinkers like Frantz Fanon (1963): one that allows for resistances on the part of the subordinated class.

McKittrick also offers a much more relational approach to the oft-written damning effects of institutional racism, incarceration, and poverty through feminist theory. Like traditional race and urban scholars, she understands the ways that incredible systemic injustices have formed poor urban communities of color. However, the offers a "sense of place" as a way for black Americans to re-claim power (McKittrick 2011). This reframing of a traditional ideology allows for the empowerment and movement of those who are poor and of color. She addresses the rich sense of community and relationships that have formed in these communities as a form of resistance. Rather than focusing on the "suffering black body" as has been previously written about, she offers that within this framework there is something much richer happening. She offers that by continuing to write simply about the effects of racism, we are thereby excluding the contributions to society that black people have and continue to have in shaping American society and knowledge production. She states,

"With this in mind, a black sense of place can be understood as the process of materially and imaginatively situating historical and contemporary struggles against practices of domination and the difficult entanglements of racial encounter, racism and resistance to racism are therefore not the sole defining features of a black sense of place, but rather indicate how the relational violences of modernity produce a condition of being black in the Americas that is predicated on struggle" (949).

By reframing our understanding of the black experience, and re-situating our thinking about what black Americans have offered to vast areas of knowledge, we must necessarily shift our thinking from the "totalizing" language of structural injustices to a more holistic conceptualization of relationships and contributions by a subordinated group (McKittrick 2011). To shift our thinking, then, allows us to better understand how everyday resistances might occur.

Kitchens and the Organization of Labor

Another macro-level theory that is important to consider in the examination of a culinary re-entry program is that of kitchens and the organization of labor. While the re-entry program is increasingly written about in sociology and other fields, there is little that has been said about the unique features of the food-industry re-entry program (Krienart 2005). It is a site in which the aspects of centralized governance, social control, strict adherence to rules, expectations for creativity, and possibilities for resistance exist in contradiction, but also in co-habitance (Garland 2001). Food-industry training programs suggest that participants will be ready for a life in the food industry—but what does this

mean? For most, a life in the food industry will be the continuation of their experience of subjugation, including work on ready-to-eat food assembly lines and fast-food service, rather than the excitement that they have seen in popular media (Johnston and Baumann 2010).

To understand the working assumptions of the chef and the expectations for meeting standards while also exhibiting creativity, it is useful to examine The Professional Chef (2011)—the most-up-to-date "bible" used by culinary schools in the USA, which explains how to achieve and maintain the highest standards of cooking, professionalism, and general nutritional and foundational recipe guidelines. The instructions in this book reinforce Steven Shapin's conceptualization of three types of control that may be observed in laboratories and kitchens alike: material goods like utensils and the very food itself, spatial in the way that a kitchen is organized specifically to produce hierarchy, and literary control through menu creation and implementation (Shapin 1988). The Professional Chef is continuously updated and is the mandatory schoolbook required by schools accredited by the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), widely recognized as one of the foremost culinary training schools. This private institution is known for its strict dress code, stringent attendance policies, and graduating some of the most well-respected chefs of the day. The Professional Chef and the CIA serve as critical foundations for culinary education in the U.S.

The training and instruction at these schools, in turn, is born out of Auguste Escoffier's kitchen brigade system. Escoffier, a cook in the French military during the Franco-Prussian war, returned to civilian life and applied the strict authoritarian rule of military life to every area of the kitchen, including the titles given to each work station and position (New York Escoffier Society, 31 January 2017). This development helped to shape the "chef" profession—workers needed to have military-level discipline, to see themselves as part of a team, to execute the chefs' orders, but also to exhibit flexibility and creativity *when called for*. Similarly, in Kitchens: The Culture of Restaurant Work (1996), Fine describes what is experienced by most cooks: low-pay, and a demanding environment that does not create a sense of creativity, but rather demands docility and repetition. While a few may achieve the autonomy and creativity allowed the cooking elite, most will become a surveilled and regulated worker through the material, spatial, and literary forms of power that exist in most kitchens today and were developed by Escoffier. These depictions of the kitchen as a military system, however, stand in contrast to other scholarship.

William Foot Whyte, writing in 1949, contends that there is an increasing contrast between the role of factory workers and kitchen workers. This is because there is a component to restaurant work that is often forgotten by analysts: the customer. Whyte contends that the immediacy with which food is created and consumed changes the

nature of this workplace (Whyte, 1949). Rather than factory goods like brake pads or nails—or even manufactured food products like packaged cookies or candies—food is being made to order and for immediate consumption. The social organization of the restaurant and the kitchen therefore cannot be purely autocratic, like the organization of a factory floor, but the kitchen worker must necessarily be given some autonomy to complete tasks. Most kitchen workers, during meal service, have direct access to the consumer through access to various aspects of the meal that are being made. Although chef has ultimate control over what is sent to customers and what is not, he does not inspect every aspect of the meal with a certain amount of trust that the person working the grill stations has cooked the steak correctly. Therefore, these aspects of food production and bypasses the Chef or other superiors in this process (1949).

These two depictions of kitchen work are at odds. One reason for this is that scholars are looking at different components of the organization structure of kitchens. Given these tensions, it seems that perhaps one set of writers might be wrong the other right; on the other hand, I contend that kitchens are highly complex workplaces, and therefore allow for this seeming disjuncture in organizational theory. Both a highly regimented and regulated environment and a creative autonomous space are able to coexist.

Kitchens are inherently fast-paced environments that are creating goods to be consumed almost immediately. Therefore, working in a kitchen is obviously different than working in mechanized or standardized position like driving, assembly line, cashier where there is a clear set of rules and standards to follow, or where machines control the pace and quality of work, and where the delivery of goods is distant from their production (Levy 2016). It is also different than a workplace that calls upon employees to only follow the instructions of a boss. Failure or success in a kitchen is imminent and contingent upon an employee's ability to create something that is to the immediate satisfaction of the consumer (diner) and other kitchen staff who are co-producing the food and the eating experience (Whyte 1949). There is considerable variation in kitchen jobs, however: the line cook and prep cook, in almost all circumstances, are preparing food to the exact specification of the menu creator. Normally, that job is reserved for the chef. The responsibility of the line cook is to follow the orders of the chef, and while they may be expected to deviate from this, for reasons like being unprepared, or unexpected busyness, or some malfunction of equipment, the chef is credited with these changes— none of the autonomy or credit for quick thinking is given to those beneath the chef.

To lead this constantly evolving and high-stress environment is challenging. As I previously suggested, the "chef persona" is a combination of a military and artistic form, in which the chef rules over a "boy's club" where brash attitudes, flippant behavior, and

ill-temperedness are completely acceptable—within limits (Johnston and Baumann 2007).

What makes it a boy's club is the "locker room talk," overt sexism, and hyper-masculinity

that might be expected in other places like a football locker-room, a stock trading floor,

and other-male dominated industries (Johnston and Baumann 2007). Pushing the limits is

part and parcel of what happens among some employees in a kitchen. Employees

understand this and are often willing (and expected) to dish out (to other employees) and

accept this rude behavior and demeaning criticism from the chef in particular.

Complaining or fighting back to the Chef, however, is rarely—if ever— acceptable: the

response is always "Yes, Chef." But they also challenge each other and tease and banter.

Only in the rarest of moments do arguments break out-- often in the heat of a Saturday

night rush when all has "gone to hell" due to under-preparation, unexpected walk-in

diners, the pressure of cooking something that must be made to very specific

specifications in a timely manner, and the ever-present high-maintenance customer. This

combination of unknown and unpredictable factors and the intolerable heat has a

mercurial effect: a quick flare-up of tension that is almost immediately gone. Only during

these high pressure and high stakes moments, when one cannot keep up with the orders

flooding in or chef feels that someone has over-cooked the fish, do arguments or outburst

arise. Then as quickly as they begin, the rising tempers are again regulated. This behavior

of the Chef is consistent across many types of kitchens and restaurants, as is the same

subservient behavior from the subordinates to be expected (Hyman 2008). In a training program such as the one at Inspiration Corporation, this expectation still holds true, if not even more in favor of the ultimate authority of the chef.

When these particular kitchen behaviors and norms are within the confines of a training center, there promises to be deviations from standard kitchen processes and behaviors. There are rarely those tense moments which allow for those brief moments of conflict. The pace is slower, and the skill of cooking has not yet been acquired, and yet the Chef it still king, and it is to the Chef's wishes the staff and trainees must bow.

The Chef has the most prominent and identifiable power position in a kitchen, and likely a restaurant. They ultimately control who is served, what is served, and when it is served (Johnston et. al 2014). Especially in high-end kitchens, chefs also cultivate a distinctive persona, in part because that persona is what "brands" their food, and their restaurant. Because personal qualities of the chef are critical for the success of high end restaurants, in addition to *bureaucratic control*—that is, rule that is generated by referring to rules and specifications—they also rely on *charismatic control* (2014). This type of control demands that the chef demonstrate that she or he is an innovator, one whose authority, as Weber argues is, "resting on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him" (Weber 1921). To gain such devotion, the chef seeks to

embody and perform these qualities, to create an environment whereby those around

him or her believe that he or she has truly exceptional qualities. The chef is able to capture

diner's attentions and worker's favor, alike. Because the chef seems to exude and

embody exceptionalism, the workers come to see the chef's discretion as law in the

kitchen (Johnston and Baumann 2010). The sense of creative genius and elusive greatness

that a chef evokes is thus maintained in this way. It is a reifying concept, whereby any

action—brash or brazen—is part of the charming and expected characteristics of an

eccentric artist and leader—a sort of "self-seeking verification" for a specific type of ego

(Hendley 2016).

Charismatic authority is not the only type of control that has been exhibited in a

kitchen. If we return to the scene of the busy Saturday night, in just a matter of moments

all forms of organizational control predicted by organizational theory have been

exhibited: technical control, and bureaucratic control, in addition to the ever-present

charismatic control. Charismatic control has already been identified by the authority that

is embodied by chef, and which exists through a very specific type of social control and

normative behavior within a kitchen. Technical control is a type of control that dictates

norms within a kitchen—how to cook a steak, prepare a sauce, or cut the vegetables.

Technical skills are learned and regulated and generally recognized throughout the

restaurant industry. Bureaucratic control is much more elusive in the day-to-day function

of a kitchen. It is the kind of control that comes from above—from general managers, restaurant owners, and health and sanitation compliance. This type of organizational control is the only authority to which a chef is held accountable. They must within the certain confines of budgets set by accountants, and regulations for pasteurized cheese. The relationship between chefs and these types of organizational control—and often chefs will disregard or subvert this bureaucratic control. This type of polyphonic (Andersen 2003) understanding of organizational theory was first conceptualized by Niklas Luhmann, who presented an evolutionary understanding of systems in the early 1900's. This theory suggests that in a global age of production, more than one type of organizational construction is possible at one organization—if not concurrently, then in close succession—in order to adapt to the changing environment (Mattheis 2012). This synergistic type of organizational control is suggestive of Whyte's theory; it suggests that kitchen workers are never free and autonomous, but are governed by charismatic, technical, and bureaucratic systems. Only in the briefest of moments, when rules are insufficient (such as during a busy dinner shift) are the kitchen workers allowed—and expected—to think like chef and embody charisma.

The complexity that a kitchen environment presents is further complicated when we consider that those in a culinary training facility do not have full employee rights. They are subject to much more scrutiny than employees, and do not get paid, do not have

employer-sponsored benefits, or have legal recourse if they are injured at the training

program (Gilbert 2008). Therefore, they may be even further subject to charismatic,

bureaucratic, and technical forms of control, as compared to employees.

The Re-Entry Program

The literature on race—and the governance of black bodies—and scholarship on

the organization of labor helps us to better understand how the re-entry program was

born. Most low income people, especially people of color, who seek social benefits must

be enrolled in a job, at school, or in a work training program (Bowie et al. 2007).

However, these requirements are not solely for those who are released from prison, but

increasingly, re-entry programs are designed for homeless and "long-term unemployed"

people (Ellis 2005). Inspiration Kitchens serves as a site for all three groups. Re-entry

programs, for poor, and people of color, have sprung up to meet increasing demands of

social control in low income neighborhoods, in order to re-integrate homeless, displaced,

or recently incarcerated back into "normal society" (Galster 2012). This type of obsession

with work is something that has plagued American culture and influenced the public

policy. From its inception, the United States has adopted the policies of the early

economists, like Adam Smith, who support that a person's worth is integrally connected

to their ability to produce (Schwartz 2000; Schwartz 2015). Furthermore, without the

incentive of wages, a person will not voluntarily work, and thereby does not benefit

society. This production mentality, heightened by the onset of the industrial revolution has colored modern American policies and influenced the way that a person's worth and productive capacity is thought of: if one is not working, one is not contributing meaningfully to society. Therefore, the concept of the modern job-training program is developed to meet political and social criteria.

For those who want to "re-enter the market" as players in a capitalist economy, this is called a "re-entry program." This is a form of what some have called, the "New Welfare State" (Galster 2012). Rather than providing for the poor unconditionally, the New Welfare State is undergirded by the idea of "social investment:" placing the impetus on singular people to *create a new life for themselves* (Pintelon et. al 2013). Rather than the more traditional models of the post-war era, which gave out "free" money to those in need, and governed through scorn and stigma, the new welfare state calls upon the person to design their own trajectory, reinforcing the ideology that they are responsible for their past and future fate (Bowie et al 2007). New Welfare State programs are meant to train people for life after incarceration, whether it is physical and metaphorical imprisonment. These welfare reforms are a result of the passage of the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act* of 1996, by President Bill Clinton. This new construction for welfare was a fulfillment of his promise to "End welfare as we have come to know it" (Clinton 1991).

One of the critical means by which this legislation works is to deem people worthy of assistance only via the demonstration of "responsibility" by being willing to work, and to perform a role as a docile and compliant work whose fate is individual, not collective. This idea of individualization is not new, but rather scholars like Harvey, who are deeply rooted in furthering Marxian theory (through discussions of Neoliberalism), suggest that the fate of capitalism, especially manifested in the urban context, is individualization (Harvey 1985). This individualization lauds personal victories but also punishes personal failures. And those who have "failed" socially must find a way to restart. Thus, the key goal of these programs is to create a compliant worker. Inspiration Corporation views the organization as a "catalyst for self-reliance." Organizations such as this tout themselves as creating individuals who are "job-ready." However, what few have spoken to is the groups that inhabit such job-training programs, and how shifting forms of governance and welfare states have led them in this direction, and how those who enter re-entry programs might resist this system of the New Welfare State.

Forms of Worker Resistance

Despite the grim realities that are portrayed in the macro-level research on "black populations," and a funneling for many low-income, people of color into re-entry programs, a few scholars offer a more hopeful outcome. Mbembe offers a fresher perspective that looks at an alternative outcome for poor-urban dwellers: governance

does not mean complete subjugation. Resistances parallel efforts at social control. Fanon and Mbembe specifically address the embodiment of a person's own independence and how to take back freedom, through embodiment or collective resistance (Fanon 1965, Mbembe 2003). Translated to modern capitalist culture, these forms of broad resistances may be through collective action: unionizing is a way to resist authority. There are also personal mechanisms by which a person can resist or subvert authority: by their action, and sometimes their inaction. While the very large-scale movements that allow for revolution may never be realized or available to the urban poor, there are means by which to resist authority by way of everyday relationships and small-scale community efforts.

The type of repressive controls that may take place at sites like a re-entry program—specifically one situated within a kitchen— creates the possibilities for discontents to rise up. While most resistances that occur will not be large-scale like those that Mbembe and Fanon speak to, resistances may also occur through small-scale movements, like: a person's non-compliance through word or action. That these forms of resistance exist to the extent that they concern bosses is evidenced by an article published by the Wall Street Journal. It sends out a warning to executives, telling them to beware of "subversive subordinates." It places blame on "open door policies and decreased loyalty" for the rise in demands for clearer employee rights. The executive claims that these new

forms of knowledge "blurs the line of authority" and causes potential job-insecurity (WSJ 2013). The article notes the interesting phenomenon that these sorts of complaints go mostly unnoticed by the public.

This article fails to acknowledge some of the underlying social and political issues that give rise to these "subversions" Because of the inability for employees to seek out legal action, scholarship on forms of resistance has begun to shift from studies of legal disputes (which are unlikely in many work environments) to less formal considerations of resistance. Tucker describes them as "nonaggressive…gossip, toleration, and resignation are popular, while occasionally grievances are expressed by theft, sabotage, or noncooperation" (Tucker 1993). These nonaggressive and very common forms are the small ways in which a person may express displeasure while removing much of the personal risk associated with filing formal grievances. Tucker describes this as a new form of social control—one that move from "subordinates to superiors" (1993). Since this work was published, there have been an increasing number of scholars who have written about everyday forms of resistance: from the workplace to transnational rural societies, to an increasing informal economy in urban environments which may have direct application to this study.

Rather than to view those who are, by many accounts, totally subordinate to a governing body, a new bottom-up approach allows these groups to re-claim power and

exert a certain level of freedom. In <u>Weapons of the Weak </u>Scott presents the legitimate and

effective forms of peasant rebellion through collective and community action (Scott 2008).

Additionally, other research that examines the informal labor economy in less developed

countries has shown ways in which urban dwellers have resisted power. This approach

allows for a paradigm shift from "oppressed workers" (Bayat 2014) to considering the

"complexity of power relations in society, in general, and the politics of the subaltern, in

particular" (2014). Highlighting this "complexity of power" allows for a broader

understanding and interpretation of what may be happening beneath the formal legal

code. By expanding on these forms of everyday forms of resistances that the subaltern

can, and do, exhibit allows for slight changes in everyday action that may have great

impact for change. This work may be translated to the poor, black urban environments in

the United States, where re-entry programs are located, and where the work environment

of the subordinated class might easily mimic that of conditions in less formalized areas.

The authors Mukhija and Loukaitou-Sideris point out that there are underlying systemic

issues which affect this movement (Mukhija and Loukaitou-Sideris 2014). For those who

are on the fringes of formal society— those who are homeless, recently incarcerated, or

have large gaps in their work history—the difficulties of gaining formal employment in

the United States can be difficult or impossible to obtain.

Requirements must be met to meet approval standards for housing and social services. This process has written been about in "Baldwin's Mill." Miller et al. apply this concept to the mass incarceration and re-entry system in America (Miller 2015). This means that the types of organizational theory outlined in previous pages may be compounded as means for subjugation because of the precarious position of these program participants: they do not have the rights of employees, yet are subject to the same forms of control.

Conclusion

The combination of the bodies of literature—one that speaks to the role of a largely black, surveilled and governed (subordinated) worker in poor, urban populations, and the other the role of the kitchen worker, as compliant yet creative worker—helps me to understand the complexity of the daily experiences of participants in culinary re-entry program. While the overarching theories of organizational control and the black experience, these theories cannot explain how subjugated people experience life in the re-entry program, and more specifically, a culinary re-entry program. Kitchens are governed by very specific forms of charismatic and rational control, which dictates how chefs are perceived, and how kitchen workers are treated, but because Inspiration Corporation operates as both a re-entry program and a restaurant, there are government programmatic controls over very specific groups of subordinated people to consider. The

current literature speaks to the very specific the role of new forms of capitalism in shaping worker affects and training as a form of work that affords more capacity to direct workers. The literature is not able to tell us very much about the daily experiences of those who must navigate the matrix of subjugations and unclear neoliberal agendas that confront participants of a culinary re-entry program. In order to better understand the experiences of these participants, I aim to describe the various ways that people within these types of programs may resist authority and subjugation through small-scale attempts at non-compliance. These bodies of literature help to round out my study at a unique site.

SECTION III

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE KITCHEN

Methods

To investigate participants' worker affects, I carried out 50 hours of ethnographic observation at Inspiration Kitchen. I spent 12 weeks at Inspiration Corporation-Garfield Park, attending various trainings and meal services each week. Over the course of my time, I observed two different cohorts entering the program. I regularly attended training and preparation time on Tuesday. Additionally, I frequently went to the location for Sunday brunch. These times allowed me to observe the teaching and preparation in the kitchen and classroom training. I was able to spend time talking with participants of the program during daily "family meals" that happen in between lunch and dinner service, or as a break from training. This meal break provided me with more and freer time to engage in conversation without being a distraction from tasks. On Sundays, I was able to observe former and current students working together to create meals for paying customers. This variance in observation days and times allowed me to meet all participants in the program, as well as much of the paid laborers.

The Setting

Inspiration Corporation is a job training program that receives funding through both private and public grants. Specifically, I did my ethnographic observations at Inspiration Kitchens, which is on the west side of Chicago. This location does training in the food industry for people who have been formerly incarcerated, homeless, or long-term unemployed. In addition to being a state-of-the-art training facility, it also operates as a functioning restaurant. The modern brick building is nestled under an "L" stop, and stands in stark contrast to the dilapidated buildings around it. Once inside there are high ceilings, an open layout, and comfortable seating. The dining room is light and airy. The 50-seat dining room is rarely, if ever, full. The restaurant is open Wednesdays to Saturday for both lunch and dinner, and Sunday for lunch only. Sunday brunch is generally the busiest meal service of the week. Lunches can sometimes be busy, and dinner is almost a ghost-town.

The kitchen itself is large, clean, and better well-kept than many kitchens. It is divided between a front-line, where all of the to-order food is prepared by paid staff, and the prep kitchen where the preparation for service and training is done. When it opened in the mid 2000's, all of the appliances were brand new and expensive. However, over years of use, they have begun to show age. Because these appliances were given as a gift,

as recognized by the placards carefully placed throughout the building, Inspiration Kitchens cannot necessarily afford to have them replaced. The Kitchen Staff are at the restaurant 7 days a week. Although the head chef is only there during business hours, another chef trainer is there to watch over service and to guide students through various tasks. In contrast to professional kitchens, which are hot and cramped, kitchens, this kitchen operates at a slow and comfortable pace. There are usually no more than two workers "on the line," and prep cooks and students continue to work behind the scenes, unhindered by whatever might be happening on the other side of the separating wall.

Class trainings happen on Monday and Tuesday mornings and afternoons. There is both classroom and practical portions of classes—I focused mainly on the trainings that take place within the kitchen, but also sat in on many classroom sessions. Additionally, I generally observed one meal service throughout the week. On the outset, I was given an open-ended invitation to come in when I was available. However, over halfway through my time there, I was notified that one of the chefs "felt uncomfortable" by my being in the kitchen with him as he was instructing students, and I was asked to no longer come on Tuesdays.

My intention was to actively participate. However, depending on the chef, day, and activities, I was ready to either be active or to stand out of the way. My seven years

spent working in professional kitchens lent itself to this dual role. This opportunity to

actively participate was a way in which I could "prove my credibility" to students—and

also to staff.

Additionally, I conducted six interviews: four with current and former

participants in the program, one with a chef-trainer and one with an administrative staff

member. These interviews allowed me to delve deeper into some of the situations that I

have witnessed and speak to some of the issues that had been raised in casual

conversations. They were semi-structured interviews, which lasted between 30-75

minutes (see Appendix D for proposed interview script). I gave every person I

interviewed an option for where to meet.

The purpose of the observations was to witness interactions between participants

and authority figures. I sought to study the navigation of relationships, in terms of

compliance and docility, as well as the tensions that may exist between worker and

employer, tensions that may include race between the white authority and black student.

Additionally, I also carried out observations of interactions between peers. I sought to

discover the emotional valences and expressions that were produced, and to follow how

the existence of other workers shaped interactions with authority and workers'

experiences of such interaction. I was also looking for two forms of resistance 1) *denial of*

authority, which I define as hostile resistance and general non-compliance; and r 2)

expansive actions, which are creative liberties and actions. I observed these general forms

of resistances by identifying:

- Hostile questions and looks
- Not completing tasks given
- Disregarding instructions
- Creating alternative methods/completion of tasks
- Misusing materials
- Personal appearance noncompliance
- Tardiness and absenteeism

To further determine what the nature of the affects of resistances were, and if they were

present at all, I became a participant researcher. The purpose of active participant

research was to better discover how these workers understand their roles in employment.

While observation did provide some insight into this, becoming more than an observer

allowed for pointed questions as to the individual's felt possession of creativity and

autonomy, and more nuanced suppositions of the meaning behind observed resistances.

Active participation enabled me to distinguish between the two types of resistances. It

also created a situation, in many cases, where I was a peer, and subject to the same rules

and demands of the superior. Because there was a racial difference between the worker

and authority, I also wanted to determine if the students navigated this, how they

navigated this, and how they felt like this racial difference has affected their overall

participation in this training program. I wanted to know how they felt about their future

employment, and what aspect of this training did they think was and will be most useful

for them. If they thought that creativity has been a cultivated part of this experience, and

how it may be translated into skills for future employment. Additionally, participation

allowed me to ask students about past interactions that I have witnessed, to determine if

my original analysis of the emotional disposition was correct, but also to allow for

participants l to expound on how they felt and perceived their own prior interactions.

The Program

The training program provides formal classroom and hands on training.[1] The

students spend 13 weeks in the program. Four are spent in employment preparation, and

nine weeks are spent in kitchen training. An informational session is held about once a

month. According to staff, at one point in time up to 30 people may have attended these

meetings, now it is closer to 10. Participants are admitted after a series of interviews that

screen—but not using a licensed therapist or behavioral expert--for those who are

mentally and physically able, those who are willing to do the work, and those who

looking to make a serious transition in their life. They must also express an interest in the

food industry. After this initial interview, they meet with chefs in order to assess

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[1] Program details learned through an interview with a staff person.

compatibility, and then as a cohort they do a test run in the kitchen to test for existing

kitchen acumen. They were to be given a test for basic Math and English competency but

staff members felt as though this was an obstacle for some students, and not teachable

within the frame of the program. Upon completion of these steps, they may then be

admitted to the program. A cohort may vary in size. However, they usually begin at

around 10 people. They are given weekly bus fare, and are provided with resources for

shelter and social services if needed. They are given 3 absences or "tardy" allowances for

the 520 hours that they are at Inspiration Corporation and Inspiration Kitchens (13 weeks,

at 40 hrs per week). Students then complete four weeks of EPT (Employment Preparation

Training) where they are taught interview and basic resume-building skills at the

corporate offices. After they have satisfactorily completed this, they then begin kitchen

training. In my experience, and based on estimates that I was given, only around 50% of

participants complete this stage.

Kitchen training happens on Mondays and Tuesdays. Because cohorts are

admitted every four weeks, there are almost always two stages of learning happening. On

Monday, everyone is in the kitchen together practicing skills. On Tuesdays, the day is

divided: more experienced students begin in the kitchen, prepping for meal service on

Wednesday, and then spend the afternoon in the classroom. Newer students will be in

the classroom during the morning, and then are given tasks to complete in the afternoon. Students are almost immediately placed on prep work schedules throughout the remainder of the week. The restaurant is open Wednesday through Sunday. They can be scheduled at any time throughout the week, and are expected to be available to work. They are given no compensation for this.

The Participants

Throughout my observation period (end of June-mid-September), I interacted with three different cohorts. Of the 30 participants (10 from each cohort) who started at EPT, five students completed the entire program and received a certificate of "graduation." Only 11-12 remained after EPT (week four). I only had interactions with 10 of the program participants: four were women, six were men. Of those who graduated while I was there, two were women, two were men, and all were African American. I only encountered one White student, and met one Latino former student who had emigrated from Puerto Rico.

SECTION IV

LIFE INSIDE THE WALLS OF A KITCHEN

A First Glimpse

It was a hot day in June. I had carefully packed my bag, double-checking it for all of the necessary tools, in order to be a successful ethnographer. I had been to this place before: the last time was five years previous. As I set out on my bike, I was confident that I would remember the familiar scenery. There was no need for directions. I remember a beautiful, new building with a carefully manicured garden on the premises.

However, as I was riding down as West-side street in Chicago, I felt as if I had no idea where I was. As it turned out, I had not remembered my directions. After stopping to check my phone, sweating and out of breath, I realized that I had passed it nearly a mile ago. I turned to return in the direction from which I had come. I passed it again. Where was it? Had it somehow closed? I had, after all, only had email correspondence with the site coordinator. The third time, it seems, is charmed. I saw it: tucked away, there is the beautiful brick building with lattice and greenery around and on the building that completely shields it from the park across the street, where squatters, homeless, and few others are scattered amongst the litter-filled landscape. The "L" runs noisily

overhead. I dismount. There is a tall man standing outside, smoking, wearing a kitchen uniform. The parking lot is empty. I glance around—the garden is completely overrun. He asks me If I am looking for the restaurant, because they're closed today. They have reduced their hours since I was there last. I tell him no, that I am looking for the chef. He points me in the right direction. Once inside, the noise from outside is completely gone. This building is set apart—different from the surrounding community. The airy and modern interior is light from carefully placed skylights, but the high windows make it near-impossible for diners to see the world just outside the doors. Furthermore, this once immaculate, new space is beginning to show its age. Things that were once pristine have not been replaced since I was last there. I walk into a classroom where the chef is introducing a new cohort of students to life in a kitchen, sharing his history and accolades before joining this program. I sit down and he introduces me. They resume, and he commences a lecture about food safety.

This first experience serves as a metaphor for the site itself. It is set apart---clearly not a part of the community into which it was intentionally placed. Although the mission and intention of this organization was to train members of the local community and to feed them accessible and nutritious food, as one staff member says, "I think that our menu is great if we were in Wicker Park or Bucktown or wherever. I don't know if it's that appealing to the people of this community I think we could make it a little more

friendly for them and then the price points as well. I mean we sell a chicken biscuit sandwich for $13 (interview, 8/19). Although trying to play with traditional soul food to please the mostly African American community, is expensive, as another staff member expresses: "Why buy this when you can go get a box of chicken down the street for five dollars (9.11). Clearly, those within the organization are aware of a mismatch of mission and practice: those in the community cannot afford and do not choose to come here.

Because the community has not embraced this organization and restaurant in the way that was originally intended, and because of state budget cuts (interview 8.19), this building and the amenities within it have not been easily replaced. There are kitchen appliances that are in disrepair. The new ones are locked in the office so that "the students don't ruin them" (9.19). This clear expression of fear that new appliances would be "ruined by students" clearly signifies that not only are those in management fearful of the cost to replace kitchen wares, but the mental and physical separation between students and chefs: the students are allowed to participate, in so far as they remember that they are not full participants, but must remain beneath their superiors. And even though they are in a training program, clearly they cannot be trusted to develop the skills needed to care for the appliances.

Let's start in the darkened classroom where chef is giving a lecture about sanitation. There are five students in the room, and chef. He is flipping through slide-

after-slide of "best practices" and showing grotesque picture of pathogens and molds on poorly managed food—this lesson is required in every cooking school to induce fear into the hearts and minds of students, so that they do not make patrons sick, and cause potential legal or reputational harm. While he continues, I look around and notice: students are split. While some listen intently, others look at their (forbidden) phones, while others slouch, with glazed looks. I look to my left. A woman digs around the pocket of her newly-acquired chef pants and pulls out a folded up tissue. She sets it on the table, unfolds it. There are large hoop earrings. She places them back in her ears. Resistance: small but present. This small gesture to maintain some semblance of personality and autonomy exists. How does this fit into the navigation of roles for these participants? How will they attempt to show their resistance to authority—if they do at all? The sections that follow are a way to make sense of these complex roles.

Getting by in the *Slipstream*

Although on the outset, I aimed to observe explicit resistance. But the ethnographic material suggested a different pattern, in which there were few overt acts of resistance, and but many more expressions of "getting by." How it is that participants in this program made as little of a ripple as possible to reach the end result of the program—a job? Rather than cause issues, or to raise concerns (as I might have done or expected if I were treated disrespectfully), I observed that students rarely challenged authority but

instead would change their outward actions by remaining silent, putting their head down, or maybe shaking their head in frustration after chef had reprimanded them—rather than to experience humiliation. Workers, as I illustrate, more often than not, operated in a *slipstream*, where they did tasks and obeyed rules in a way that minimized any kind of friction. Especially in a place where race and class struggles are a factor, participants did not seem want attention, but simply aimed move through the shift with little friction. Charismatic authority, which the chef embodied and workers readily expressed and seemed to follow, led to a situation whereby what the chef said was generally treated as the major source of authority, and his rules were followed. However, as I show below, the confusing attitudes and behaviors by the chefs created unclear ripple effects that produced rough edges and difficulties for the workers. Moreover, this unclear messaging generally did not produce acts of overt resistance, but only in key moments, through what I call *banked confidence* did people feel safe to take liberties through resistance and non-compliance. To my surprise, most acts of resistance were not blatant, but were small, and took place when Chef was not around. Only people who had built up considerable rapport with Chef could get away with these small resistances. Otherwise, the consequences could be deleterious. In the following sections I outline how what I call the *slipstream behavior* was undertaken in response to charismatic leadership by chef that was characterized by mixed and unclear messaging.

I Am the Chef: Ruling with Charisma

"They all have their moments, but Chef Ralph is the chillest. He has his own ways of doing things, shortcuts. He doesn't usually raise his voice but just laughs and shakes his head. But, he doesn't necessarily do things the way that the others do them. He is a caterer, so he thinks about the quickest ways to [complete the task]. The others are more by the book. When Chef Paul gets pissed you know it. And Chef Felicia, well she is a clean freak, she's usually alright though. Today is unusual, Chef Aaron is chill…yeah he's real relaxed today...Once you learn how to communicate with each one it's easy. You have to learn how to navigate. The new students don't know this so you have to teach them to just complete the task the way that each chef wants it done" (Cecile, 9.19)

As in traditional kitchens, the chef at Inspiration Kitchens was the ultimate authority over participants in the program: they decided who stayed and who went, punishment, and work duties. The chef embodied unique forms of charismatic leadership in order to maintain control of the kitchen. Everyone seemed to know that it takes time to figure out how to act around each one, and which way to do things in front of each chef. Rather than have standardized procedures, each chef had their own protocol and ego which had to be carefully tended to. Chefs commanded the room, and workers and trainees embodied submissive affects, with very little disruption. In many ways, this navigation and complexity of relationships took away from the practical benefits of the training program. Instead of focusing on learning and training, students were instead asked to do things that should not have been required of them: catering to the chefs' unclear demands. Because they were interacting with the participants most frequently,

chefs became a source of much of the "mixed messaging" that happens at this site. They rarely offered the complete tools necessary to progress and grow in skills like when students were expected to complete a recipe unaccompanied on their first day (8.2). Like Cecile's opening quote illustrated, discerning how interact with each chef took time and careful navigation. Often the chefs offered fragmented tips, and demonstrated unhelpful increases in anger, such as when one participant, Caroline, was making lemonade, and unsure of the steps, and receiving conflicting ideas about how to cook. The chefs were often the cause the complex dual roles that were expected of participants,—calling upon participants to simultaneously be a part of the rough and ragged kitchen, and also to attend to the orderly and mindless tasks of food production work. The chef trainers taught in a similar fashion to the instructors of the culinary school they suffered through—they were authoritarian, rule-abiding, crisp, and clean, yet in other ways behaved as though they were babysitting children: they were watching over the participants with no clear instruction or constructive time until the day's tasks had been completed.

During observations, the complexity of rules and expectations became apparent. There were four salaried chefs in the kitchen working with participants on various tasks. There was a head chef, two chef-trainers (at this time), and a chef who primarily did food preparation and catering logistics (although it was often to work with and side-by-side

the participants). All four chefs had different styles, mannerisms and expectations for the participants with whom they were working. Chef Aaron and Chef Paul were the highest positioned in the kitchen. They were complicated—more so than the other chefs. They are both white men (although Chef Aaron is ethnically Korean) who dressed casually, and appeared to work casually. On the first day that I met Chef Paul (7.19) he was wearing long khaki shorts, tennis shoes, brightly colored crew socks, a short-sleeved industrial shirt, and a sweat band around his wrist. He had an apron folded down and casually tied around his hips. Aaron, who was frequently in and out of the office and kitchen, wore similar clothing to Chef Paul. However, this casual appearance and work style was not transferred to program participants. Rather, it was reserved only for themselves, as evidenced by a program participant being given a harsh lecture on his first day for wearing his own shorts, rather than the chef's pants they were given—pants that he had not yet been told where they could be found (8.2). Although the chefs presented themselves in ways that did not demand extreme adherence to rules, their expectations caused confusing messages to participants—a "do as I say, not as I do" method. This allowed for them to be in communication with participants, but never fully be a part of what is happening. Their authority as creative and charismatic leaders was evidenced by their demonstration, on a regular basis, that they were above the rules that they had set. As a result, participants had to be vigilant about following the directions of the chef they

were working with that day. As Cecile underscores in the opening quote, each had a particular attitude, which demanded certain responses. She was able to learn this quickly, while others, like Caroline had much more trouble.

Reinforcing Distinctions Between the Powerful and those in Need of Charity:

Chefs and the Attitude of Altruism

Beyond providing instruction to participants, and aiding in meal preparation for the restaurant, chefs and staff members occupied a unique and sometimes difficult role: they were responsible for operating a functioning restaurant and simultaneously a training program for participants. In addition to the problems that workers faced in trying to work with chefs who gave idiosyncratic directions, and who did not model what they taught, workers were also faced with staff who depicted their role not as that of a boss, but as a benefactor. The chefs, in other words, treated their role as trainers as if it were altruistic. Rather than being professional chefs who were doing professional training, some chefs said that they were doing an act of good for the unfortunate and untrainable. This attitude furthered charismatic control, whereby participants were expected to accept their subordination by understanding a clear separation between themselves and the chefs not only in terms of particular cooking skills--but also in terms of their inferiority as people who were in need of charitable intervention and by their role as regulated trainees. This was in contrast to the Chef's basis of authority, which

was not only formal training, but the cultivation of the idea that they had special

personal qualities and gifts that were not available to the trainees. The chefs had little

expectation for students' success, seeing them as bad workers:

> "after they got their money from the government on the 1st [of the month] or
> their paycheck that a lot of times they don't show up the next day and that was
> all new to me…and they'd be in next week when they need to start working
> again so there was a big learning curve that I had to learn, uhh, working down
> there and understanding the cultural aspects of working in…I saw a lot of bad
> habits and I tried to get rid of them as soon as I can" (Aaron interview, 8.19).

The way that Chef Aaron describes these people is first as a very specific

"demographic" that is only using the system, and second as unlearned. This enables

him to heighten the contrast between the chef and the trainees. The chefs never

mentioned the students as potential peers—and even more damming—they saw them

as people who might not even be worthy of help. There was a lack of respect for

program participants, as evidenced by the way that he talked about them just taking

from the system, and his lack of confidence in future job prospects. Throughout my

observations, I noted that instead of training students in skills like proper knife usage or

how to think critically about food and ingredients, which might enable them to succeed

in future culinary aspirations, the chefs only asked participants to complete tasks.

In particular, this attitude was most present with those in authority who had the

most to lose: those who had left some other career or position elsewhere in order to

work at Inspiration Kitchens. Most notably, the three people for whom this subject of altruism surfaced were white, and in the highest positions of authority at this location. This idea was first presented to me as I came to know one of the head chefs, Aaron. In conversations that I had with Aaron he mentioned the accolades he had received, and the prestige of former positions that he held. He talked freely about his high-end restaurant work elsewhere and his career as a radio producer. All of this has been with slight nods to the fact that he has "given up this other life" out of his own beneficence (6.21). He mentioned to me in an off-hand comment that he did not think that students appreciated being there, and he offered up to program participants the comment that they were being offered a free education, whereas he had paid $60,000 to attend culinary school (8.2/56). He seemed unwilling to let these figures and accolades fade. They snuck into conversation and became a part of his rhetoric when we would talk about the program. Again, he did not talk about program participants as potential peers, but about them in the way that indicated he felt superior to them—they offered no status threat to him, and in fact enhanced his sense of importance.

While staff saw that they were providing a necessary service to people (Kathleen and Aaron interviews), students expressed that they were being overworked, not trained with any particular, transferrable skills, and not being compensated (Willie interview, 8.6/110-125). This sort of dichotomy between the way that administration felt

about the work that they were doing and the services they were providing and the real experiences of students as they navigated their daily lives and monetary needs added real and tangible strain to the functioning of the program and restaurant. The chefs' embodied the exceptionalism of charismatic authority and demanded that they be seen as better than the participants. They dictated the rules of the kitchen and demanded a certain amount of "respect" which influenced the outcomes of students. However, because the chefs themselves did not live by the rules that they had set, this often resulted in unclear work directives.

What Did You Want Me To Do? How Unclear Messages Result in Unclear Work

Unclear messaging became apparent through my observations, and caused apparent issues for participants in how to accomplish tasks. In their desire to stay within the *slipstream*, participants sought to follow guidelines—yet chefs and administrators were unclear about their expectations and directions. While most of the time, this meant following directions, sometimes they were called upon to think creatively or autonomously. But they were not taught to be, think, or act in this way. However, in a desire to not be in trouble they would attempt a task. While sometimes this type of free-thinking would go in their favor, more likely than not, participants attempts to think creatively would cause correction, mocking, and punishment, like when Caroline was forced to pick through her "wrongly cut onions" piece-by-piece until Chef Felicia decided

that she had done enough (interview), or when Ariel did not know how to cut

watermelon, and the chefs simply shook their heads and laughed (8.2). This unclear

messaging also became a factor concerning expectations for future employment: while

students had one set of expectations for job prospects upon completion, those in authority

told them differently or challenged the "unrealistic goals."

The Chefs' unclear attitudes and affects often left students unclear about their

daily schedule, about their role in the program, and unclear about their future in the food

industry. On the one hand this program was designed to train students in the food

industry, which is notorious for misfits and crass characters. It demands a certain amount

of creativity through improvisation, quickness of mind and feet, and endurance through

long shifts. However, on the other hand, the program recognized that many students

would not enter into the glamorous life of chef-dom, but instead may only aspire to entry

level cooking jobs, if they are given the chance to cook at all. When students would raise

considerations for what types of jobs they wanted to have—as with Caroline wanting to

work at the Marriott as a line cook, or as with Thomas and Willie expressing a desire to

run food trucks—they were shut down by the chefs—given the message that these were

unrealistic goals. Because this site must churn out workers to maintain grants and

governments funding[2], and because many participants had backgrounds that may be less

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[2] Conversation with the director of human services.

than ideal for potential employers, the organization sought to make relationships with

hiring companies. As a result, program graduates were likely to be placed in just a few

types of positions: seasonal positions, small-scale restaurants, or organizations that are

willing to or "have the time to deal with that" (Aaron interview, 8.19/333-334). The types

of jobs that the participants received were unlikely to be the fast-paced kitchen

atmosphere on which the program was at least partially modeled. Instead the training

tended toward a compliant worker that needed very little autonomy or particular skills.

Program participants were taught how to follow rules and recipes without putting too

much thought into it, and only occasionally were they (confusingly) called upon to be

creative. The confusion arose when chefs needed participants to be creative, and they

were not able to do so, on command. Thus, when a student would take initiative Chef

might say, "No one told you to do that did they? You need to ask. Don't take that sort of

initiative" (8.23/68-69), which would result in a participant reluctantly scrapping their

work in order to begin again. On the other hand, when students refrained from taking

initiative, Chef might act surprised and say something like "Be creative! Don't use the

same method that we use here [in the restaurant]. This is your chance to make it the way

you would want to eat it" (9.19/137-138)[3]. However, this supposition that the participants

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[3] Interestingly, this conversation happened after Chef had forgotten to prepare family meal (a meal usually served in between lunch and dinner service for staff. Served "family style" and relaxed. The students were being asked to cook for themselves. Therefore, creativity, as was suggested was only allowed in so long as students were consuming, not the public.

were able to be creative and to think quickly is unfounded, because the chefs, themselves, are the ones who instilled compliance into the minds and actions of the participants through demanding that rules and recipes be followed without deviation. Therefore, in response to such a command, program participants would simply stand still, unsure of what this sudden call to creativity might entail (9.19). And, rather than resist the subjugation through future job options, participants like Chris or Caroline might decide that the best way to "get by" was to and simply accept the first (and often unpleasant) dishwashing or prep cook position offered to them.

Falling Into the *Slipstream*

This juxtaposition of unclear directives and mixed messaging created confusion for many participants. One day, while making a recipe for waffles, Caroline noticed that there was not enough buttermilk to complete the requirements (8.19). Chef Paul told her that buttermilk could be made from whole milk and vinegar. He told her the ratios quickly, and she did not remember them. He said it again, without stopping or looking up. Instead his voice became louder in his mounting frustration. Caroline went to gather the vinegar and milk and a measuring cup. She stood there unsure. She said to me "I don't want to be the one responsible for messing this up" (179). She timidly added the ingredients. She had never done this, and she did not know what it was supposed to look like. Unconcerned, Chef Paul paid no more attention. She set the time to calculate exactly

how many minutes it should be before the milk had properly coagulated. She stared at it.

Caroline did not intuitively understand what was happening. She had never been taught

this task, and had never been given the freedom to explore this type of improvisation.

Yet, Chef Paul demanded that she be able to complete this improvisational task, and then

immediately return to her recipe, which required her to "not overmix the batter, lumps

are ok," but she was unable to decide exactly what number of lumps were acceptable.

Caroline was good at following rules. In an interview she said, "I'm good at following

rules. Even from when I worked, started my first job at 17 and stayed there 20 years, at a

dry cleaner. Oh he was a very hard boss…But I can take it" (Caroline interview, 8.6/230-

234). This type of attitude was both desired and mocked in a kitchen environment, by

superiors. She was wholly ready to follow the rules, no matter what, but was totally

unprepared to think creatively because she was never taught that creativity was an

option. Rather than to take chances or risks, Caroline desired to fall into the "slipstream"

and follow rules even if it meant being demeaned by the chef for her lack of creative

thinking.

Other students struggled with this unclear type of instruction as well. For many

participants, this was their first experience in a professional kitchen, or at least cooking

(some had washed dishes before). When on her first day, Belle was handed a recipe that

she was unfamiliar with, she could not, understandably, come up with a clear plan with

how to start. She had never been in a walk-in refrigerator, let alone known where the ingredients were to make the corn relish. She was unfamiliar with, and did not know how to pronounce jalapeños. When she finally did understand what was expected of her, she sheepishly walked into the cooler, and walked out with an odd assortment of ingredients. She had no sense of direction, and no idea what to do with them. Rather than to provide clear instruction, Chef Felicia stood there, and laughed. She shook her head in disbelief. It was not until Willie, who had now been there for 10 weeks, stepped in reluctantly to help her that Belle was able to make any sense of what she was meant to do.

For a participant like Caroline and Belle, or for a slow-moving older man, Daniel, this setting was difficult. They were meant to think quickly and autonomously, yet given no skills to make that a reality. There was both too much structure, and yet not enough. I observed that in these confusing circumstances, these students would fall into a slipstream in which they sought to slip through the day, and to avoid moving out of this state. However, others, who were more confident, were able to adapt more quickly. They might be able to *bank* certain types of confidence and accomplishment, thereby earning more flexibility in terms of noncompliance. Chefs and administrators pointed to these students as the exemplars of the program, thereby excusing themselves from taking the proper time to train those for whom cooking did not come as easily. It became a case in

which the speed of the class and instruction was dictated by the best student, not by the average, and certainly not on an individual basis. Caroline and Daniel were fortunate to have other students who felt that it was their duty to help them, but for a student like Belle who did not make the same connection with students, the program proved to be impossible to complete. Failure to keep pace with the rest of the class could result in a continuing lack of instruction, punishment and correction, dismissal, and even assigned work duties outside of the kitchen.

Chris, a program graduate, was assigned work duties that had nothing to do with kitchen work while he was still enrolled in the program. He was given a minimum wage job washing dishes. He began to realize that there might be few other options for him. Chris realized that job was assigned to him because he was slow in the kitchen. He said about the position, "[it is] the lowest of the low positions…even though I am washing dishes that is not all that I am or all that I want to obtain" (7.24/128-132). He knew that although he was given this job, and that it paid him a wage, it was a disingenuous move on the part of the chefs: the chefs did not know how to assist him in his learning so relegated him to washing dishes. Rather than to confront the fact that Chris was a slower learner and choose to have patience with him, it was easier to simply put him on this duty to be "separated from the class" (Chris interview, 9.4/111). Chris, who was homeless, did not have the resources to say no to a job, so simply took it with the hopes

that he would be given other opportunities. He has worked as a part-time dishwasher for over a year, and rather than fighting for certain employment rights, his position led him to remain in the slipstream instead of potentially causing issue for himself.

Others were also worn down through constant messaging of inadequacy. While participants had a variety of feelings about what they might do after the program, administration only had one bar set: low. Some participants just wanted the possibility of a job at all, but most resisted: Cecile wanted to have the satisfaction of people eating her food, Caroline wanted to be a caterer, Barry wanted to be a head chef some day, and Willie, Josiah, and Frederick, and Thomas[4] aspired to owning their own business. The idea of being in charge—being one's own boss held quite a bit of appeal for these people. In particular, the idea of owning a food truck was a commonly cited as a desirable position. This could be partly due to the rise in trendiness of this type of small business, but also the idea of being able to control one's own life, career, hours, and menu seemed to be what interested them most.

Although participants desired to reach these goals, and thought that the program was the best way to get there, chefs and administration had different ideas about the what they say as realistic expectations upon completion at the program. On two specific occasions, it became quite clear that chefs did not want to inspire students to aim high,

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[4] He was only at the site one day. New to the program on my last day of observations

but rather to aim for settling for any position. At the outset of the program, Caroline was

asked what type of position she would most like. She said that she would like to work as

a line cook for the Marriott downtown (7.19/123-124). I heard this from Caroline several

times throughout the program. However, as the weeks went by, Caroline began to think

differently. By the end of the program she was worn down, she was beginning to believe

the messages. Rather than aspiring to be a line cook and resist what the chefs had told

her, she thought that catering would better suit her—shorter hours, less standing, and not

as hot or as quick-paced (interview/429-440). She simply did not want to disrupt the

slipstream. This came about because she realized at her age how hard it was for her to

stand for 8 to 12 hours a day, sometimes without breaks. But she was also fed the idea

that she ought to aim low, through the chefs' attitudes and action. When she was having

difficulty following a recipe, for example, Chef Paul became frustrated and told her that

she would never be able to keep up in a kitchen (7.26/147-154). This message was fed to

her constantly. Eventually she was offered a position as a prep cook at Inspiration. While

she did not want to take it, Caroline begrudgingly accepted. Hearing that she could not

attain the position that she desired, and given her precarious living situation[5], Caroline

became discouraged. She did not want to disrupt the status quo, and question authority

so she remained in the slipstream of compliance. Inspiration did not help her look for a

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[5] Living in a long-term women's shelter.

job outside of the company. It may be that they offered her one there believing that she could not get hired on her own[6].

Banking Confidence **and** *Taking Liberties*

Banking confidence is an idea that the more one stays within the *slipstream* and completes tasks satisfactorily, the more one builds or banks their accomplishments, using them to take liberties in specific ways. This buildup of confidence through attitude or action might actually be the thing that leads them to not comply, or to begin thinking creatively. *Banking confidence* means that the person believes that they have done enough "good" that they are willing to take a risk. Even if they are caught, or the liberty that they decide to take does not turn in their favor, they are willing to bet that the good favor they have earned will be strong enough to stand against the act they have just committed, or are going to commit. Students were expected to maintain order by understanding a strict set of guidelines. They were not to drink the lemonade from the cooler, have their phone out, and not take too long a break. They were to wear the proper uniform and make the recipes in the correct order and with precise measurements. Yet, when Chef was not watching, the rules were often forgotten—by those who could afford to take a risk. Drinks were taken illegally, breaks went over, earrings were worn though strictly

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[6] Speculation, based on conversations. Gerald, too was offered a position, and was not given the proper help with finding an outside job. He complained that they never held up their end of the bargain. Maybe in part because of understaffing of case workers.

forbidden, and phones were ever present when the man in charge was not around. These acts of "liberty," or in some cases "resistance" are taken by participants. These small actions are taken when they feel free—under less of the pressure of these strict rules and regulations that guide them in the workplace. Specifically, for those who have *banked confidence* this strategy of non-compliance may be effective. However, for those who had not won the favor of Chef, the results would likely be bad.

For some in the program, *banking confidence* came through their cooking ability. Confidence in tasks and speed to complete them seemed to be a mark of making a chef satisfied. Therefore a few of the program participants learned that quickness would keep them from getting in trouble, throwing perfection to the wind. When a new round of students came in early August, it was easy to see who would be favored and who would become an annoyance to instructors. This class had two clear groups, and three students were confident. They picked up the challenge and began to work quickly. Cecile, Frederick, and Josiah were assigned to various tasks and despite being given no direction about where their necessary materials were, they somehow managed to be calm, confident, and competent.

Cecile, as it turned out, worked an early morning shift in the kitchen of a recovery house. She handled this new situation with ease, never letting any sort of uncertainty show to Chef. When she needed direction, she boldly asked. When others needed help,

she was the first to step in. She became a 'mother' figure, acting in part, as an instructor

should. As it was pointed out, "it's not hands on teaching. It's just like they're not

teaching nothing, it's like go do this and then you gotta do it…they don't help. Like my

first time doing a couple things I didn't need no help, but like a couple of the students,

they be needing help…and they [the instructors] don't talk to people a certain way. They

be kinda rude…And it's gonna discourage them [students" (Willie interview, 8.6/136-

144). These participants, for which cooking came more naturally, were able to *bank*

confidence that led to more opportunities to resist the subjugation that was all around

them.

Learning the Rules of Resistance

The best students in the class—those who *banked confidence*—quickly learned to

accept the charismatic affects of chefs. Despite these continual dampened expectations,

and the sense that participants did not have control over their own lives, the food

industry, and more specifically, creative roles and authoritative positions within the

industry, were seen as means by which people thought they might be able to have control

over their careers, and maybe even their circumstances and lives. In certain ways, they

were able to resist the social controls of a re-entry program, and instead adopt the

charismatic authority of the chefs. On the one hand, the participants tended to say that

they did not want to act in the way that the chefs around them did, but on the other hand

when faced with circumstances in which they were "in charge" and the "expert" a few

acted in very similar ways to what they thought the chef should act. The message of

compliance and docility was lost on a few students when it came to aspirations: the top

students mimicked the attitudes and action of their superiors. They became more relaxed

out of the eyes of chef, and let loose— to lazily complete tasks and to 'talk shit' about

everyone else. Barry, for example, was the king of Sunday brunch. He was in the kitchen

first in the morning. He was responsible for training the "new cooks." He completed the

program over a year ago, and also held another job elsewhere (one that was more

challenging and more rewarding). He felt superior to other cooks, and it showed. He set

the example for the day, and either cooks followed his improvisational—lazy—style, or

they suffered not belonging to this club. On a particular Sunday, Jackie realized that there

is not going to be enough "Nashville Sauce" that went on the chicken and waffles for

service. So he got to making it. He did not bother to measure, and realized that they did

not have the proper amounts of ingredients to make it correctly. So, he improvised. Upon

tasting this already spicy sauce, he shook his head and says, "[whoever eats it] is a

glutton for punishment"(7.31/43-44). He knew that the concoction he made was too spicy,

but no one was there to demand that he make it again, or to reprimand him. His non-

compliance with the recipe went totally unnoticed. Jackie learned that while the chef is

not watching, certain behaviors are easy to get away with. He knew that if he were to ask,

it would create more work for himself, and potentially cause conflict. Therefore, he created his own rules to manage. He taught others to do the same.

Juan was the first trainee I observed with Barry (7.24). Juan was a short Puerto Rican man—he was the only non-black student that I observed in the kitchen, and stuck out for his sharp accent and personal flare. He was a misfit almost immediately. He was awkward and unsure of himself, and often panicked. In the beginning, Juan did not know what to do when the pancake batter was not right. He could not flip pancakes and messed up an order. He plated wrong. But Barry did not correct or offer help. Instead he only helped when absolutely necessary and allowed all of the mistakes to go un-corrected. Rather than to offer suggestions, Barry stepped in to take over. He did not provide correction for how Juan might improve, but seemed only to care about getting through service quickly. Burnt toast, bad plating, and wrongly assembled dishes made their way to diners in the half-filled dining room. Although Juan kept looking to a pictured menu with ingredient lists and plating configurations for help, Barry's desire to quickly move through services set the tone. Barry had embodied the charismatic qualities that he knew from chefs, and moved about the kitchen, and offered instruction in the same way that he had learned. The idea was to normalize this behavior, and to have Juan adopt similar characteristics.

In just a few weeks there was a shift in Juan's attitude and actions, when I observed Barry and Juan again in the kitchen. This time, Juan was more calm and confident. And when macaroni and cheese for a child came up on the ticket, and they realized that there was only some frozen solid in the freezer, they turned to quick and sloppy techniques just to get it onto the plate (8.21/88-95), led by Jackie. They haphazardly put the container in the microwave and chipped away at it. They did not properly take the temperature, but just threw cheese on top and melted it, again using a microwave. As he was working, Juan said to me, "As soon as I realized that everything did not have to be so neat, then I was able to move faster instead of worrying" (8.21/80). Juan never quite fit in, and he and Barry never seemed to talk much, maybe in part because Juan was concerned with music and dancing, and could not hold his own in conversations about sports statistics. But, at the very least, Juan had learned how to survive in the rules of the kitchen that he had learned from Barry—to complete the task as quickly as possible.

Others, however, learned more quickly than Juan, to adopt other attitudes and actions in the kitchen. They were able to bank a certain type of confidence that might lead to acceptable resistance. Willie and Cecile were probably two of the best students throughout my time there. They were put on work duties earlier than students. Once they were out of the watchful eye of Chef Felicia (up on the front line, which was separated

from the rest of the prep kitchen by a wall), they felt free to act and talk like their new

peers—the line cooks. These two students followed the queues of the more senior

positions, and they learned how to fit into the "club" of the front services line. On one

particular Sunday, they were working and observing Sunday brunch production. When I

walked up to the front, Willie was huddled in the corner, resting his arms on the low-boy

table top, looking at his phone. Cecile came up to the line to melt butter for cookies. She

stayed to talk. She walked over to the same corner where Willie was, and she, Willie,

Barry, and Leonard began to talk and laugh. Cecile and Leonard flirted. Barry mimicked

and made fun of Caroline who was in the prep area. Leonard and Barry continued to

work and Willie observed but paid no particular attention to what was being done. A

plate went into the window to be taken out to service, and a server, Alicia, came to pick it

up. They all shared a joke about just how ridiculous the new French Toast, created by

Chef Paul, was—so many ingredients. Then the conversation switched to Chris, the

dishwasher. They knew that I did an interview with him, and asked how the interview

with the "crazy guy" went. They all laugh. Leonard chimed in, "Man he was weird and

made me turn my phone" because "he thinks the waves are gonna mess him up" (180-

185). This continued. It seemed as though no one was safe. Although Willie and Cecile,

not too long ago, were members of another group and compassionate towards their

fellow students, they have realized a status change. They have now been accepted and

indoctrinated into a new club. They have reached a new status and realize that they are able to get away with the same non-compliance and liberties as the guys "on the line." Although Chef Felicia came over to tell them they needed to get back to work, the words held little meaning. She did not demand that they complete their tasks, and so Willie and Cecile continued in their transformation of roles. Importantly, learning from Chef, they understood that making fun of others is how people with status behave. They have learned that one important aspect of "moving up" is to belittle and demean those in lower positions.

Willie and Cecile had achieved a new level, whereby they were able to "bank confidence" through being good participants. They recognized they could hedge their bets—even if they got in trouble for slacking off, they knew that they had good favor with Chef Felicia and it would likely overlooked. This confidence was learned early. In another instance, Willie and Caroline, were told they could go on their lunch break. So, they grabbed the lunches that had been made and then had to start class immediately. Willie announced to me and Jeanette that he was going to get a glass of lemonade, and asked if I, or Caroline, would like one. Lemonade was strictly off-limits to students, made clear by a large sign on the cooler door. Caroline refused the offer and stated that she did not want to risk getting in trouble. Undeterred, Willie got a full glass and headed into the classroom where Chef Aaron—an authority figure—was waiting for them to start class.

Perhaps, Willie was willing to take that risk, perhaps in part because he felt confident in his abilities and knew he could take certain liberties that Caroline felt as though she would not, and probably could not, get away with. While we do not know with certainty what drove these two to make their respective decisions, we know that they each occupied a different membership in the program—Willie belonged and Caroline did not.

As evidenced by the clear difference between Willie and Caroline, not all of the students were as lucky to have banked confidence." While Willie and Cecile enjoyed the "luxury" of taking liberties of non-compliance, Caroline and Chris were under the watchful eye of Chef. They struggled, and with every slip-up, they were reprimanded. On this particular day, Caroline was in the kitchen, on the first week of her 30 day trial employment period[7]. She was miserable—under the scrutiny of a chef with whom she did not get along. Because the end of the program "happened so fast" she did not have time or energy to look for other positions. Now, she felt "like I can't quite breathe" (9.4/94-100). She was deeply unhappy. Throughout my time there, students like Caroline and Chris were never free from a watchful eye. As weaker students, they were subject to the most scrutiny. Chris was constantly being corrected. He was told how to put away the dishes better, that he needed to focus, that he needed to stop helping in the kitchen and go back to his position (even though he had been asked to help). Students that were

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[7] Inspiration has funding that offers incentives for employers to hire the graduates. The funding pays for 30 days of employment, as a trial period, during which time the employer can either decide to keep or let the employee go.

less "strong" in their cooking abilities or easier to control got in trouble more frequently.

Phones were strictly forbidden but some ignored that rule. While Cecile and Willie were

on their phones and did not get in trouble, a student like Belle who was not comfortable

in the kitchen, would. She was publicly rebuked and told it had to be put away (8.9/118-

122).

<div align="center">Resistance Through Food</div>

It became apparent turned out throughout my time there that food was not the

central focus of the program. However, there were particular instances whereby small

resistances could be made through the food that was being cooked and served. For some

it was a disenchantment because of the program itself, and for others cooking was

becoming laborious. Leonard and Barry, two men who had completed the program,

already seemingly did not care for the industry. They both worked two jobs, often going

from one to the other several days out of the week. When I watched them cook together

on Sunday mornings they often bemoaned customers. They wished that it was slow, so

that they could take it easy, and would complain about the various dishes that people

would order, often serving them with sloppy plating or unfinished. Others, who did not

have the chance to cook for customers, would resist in ways that they were able.

Others were not given the same opportunities to cook freely like Leonard and

Barry. Willie, Caroline, Cecile, and Chris, and all the others, were only given the chance to

create in so far as it was for family meal—which was highly regulated and highly budgeted. When Chef would say "be creative, cook what you want" these statements were reserved only for when students were to be eating the food. Some were proud of the food that they made. However, resistances through food had to be made in other ways. Most saw past the cheap ingredients and quickly thrown together food that was provided them. Except for Chris, who would eat anything that was set before him, students rarely ate all of the components to a meal. Jeanette would snag yesterday's lunch from the walk-in to eat, Cecile brought her own snack, and in a conversation with Frederick, he said, "with the shit that they feed us, no wonder we're getting fat."[8] He said that he knew they were getting served second-rate food, and did not buy into the "creativity" aspect that was being sold to them for meal time preparation. This idea that they could only be creative in so far as it did not directly affect customers or appearances was used more broadly. However, the participants would resist the food, through whatever means they were able—even if it meant not eating. These small acts of resistance, although small, helped me to understand how participants viewed the program and their time here. They made attempts to hold creative control, regardless of the broader outcome. While some participants were more free to take larger liberties and resist subjugation, others acted in ways that they could—by refusing the food that they saw as "second class."

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[8] The conversation was more broadly about race and class, but he used the food (and the program more generally) as an example of second-rate food.

Conclusion

Instances like the stories recounted, and countless others that I observed during my time at Inspiration Corporation were the norm. Constant uncertainty and being always subject to rebuke meant that many students did not take liberties and did not feel comfortable moving outside of the *slipstream*. Through constant monitoring and rebuke, students were taught that it was better to maintain the status quo than to ever question authority or to think creatively. Because of these messages that the Chef was the charismatic leader, unclear messages, and a felt ambivalence (from the organization) about their future, students desired to simply make it through to the end of the program with little conflict. These constant messages contributed to their inability to think creatively, even when asked. They referred to Chef for everything, never doubting that he was in charge. Program participants felt the other bureaucratic and social controls, which dictated their every move. This is not to say that all participants expressed negative feelings about the program, or that all even had a bad experience. However, my observations and interaction at Inspiration Kitchens has led me to understand that many systems of simultaneous control have contributed to the goings' on in this place, which I have recorded

SECTION V

DISCUSSION

Moving Forward

The kitchen environment is traditionally hierarchical with little input from those in inferior positions. Chefs, who are predominantly male, do not ask for opinions but rather demand obedience. This type of top-down approach is heightened when those beneath the head chef are people of poor, people of color, with criminal backgrounds. The type of behaviors that are bred in kitchens—behaviors that are often crass and without empathy for the other—are things that I witnessed and also, to some extent experienced. The type of acceptable crass kitchen behaviors were present at this site—and were, perhaps, more noticeable because of the greater inequality that existed between chef and student, than between a traditional chef and kitchen worker relationship. The chefs were able to set themselves apart by teaching proper workplace etiquette, and demanding it from students, but they were able to disregard those standards and act as if they were in a normal kitchen. These separations between chef and student highlighted the issues for "surplus black populations," by race scholars Wacquant, Mbembe, and Alexander. I was able to see how class and race might play into the inferior treatment from superiors to

their subordinates. Furthermore, this training program illustrated many of the confusing

expectation, focus on individual responsibility, and low expectations for future

employment that critics of the "New Welfare State" have written about (Ellis 2005). The

literature on re-entry and job training programs that speaks to the expectations for the

poor, and people of color, to participate in workforce training in order to receive social

benefits helps us to understand the crux of the issue—state mandated work-for-benefits

(Bowie et al. 2007). For those who are called upon to participate in these workforce

training programs, there is an expectation for personal responsibility, but also that a

particular set of skill will be learned. While there were definitely expectations for

regulating one's self at Inspiration Kitchens, it is less clear that any particular culinary

skills were trained and learned. Rather, participants were expected to follow rules, follow

recipes, and be satisfied with low-wage jobs. This understanding of the failures of job

training programs, along with the race scholarship, helped me to understand the

subjugating environment into which I might be entering. However, these observations

and experiences were not the sum of my time at Inspiration Kitchens.

Rather than to look simply at the totalizing and fetishizing views of poor, urban,

and black experiences, I did observe many forms of resistance. Despite constant forms of

subjugation that might be expected at a job-training facility like Inspiration Kitchens,

students were sometimes able to resist neoliberal workplace affects that are brought

about by the commands for personal workplace responsibility. My experiences with participants, and connections that were made transcended the negativity brought about by those in authority. Participants taught me how to cherish opportunities, regardless of circumstances, and brought vibrancy to the kitchen, despite oftentimes feeling very discouraged. Through their ability to maintain this positivity, through small actions of non-compliance, and by maintaining hope for their future, participants were able to show that they could rise above the subjugating environment. My time spent at Inspiration Kitchens, both positive and negative, serves as a reminder of those who have entered this program through necessity and for whom this experience is their reality. My negative experiences with some of the chefs and administration pale in comparison to the daily experiences of participants in this program, and my positive experiences are likely a result of my status there and because of the incredible generosity of the participants at this program who allowed me into their world—both good and bad.

Beyond the confines of kitchen and labor, however, lies the broader discussion of training programs like Inspiration Kitchens in the United States. Although race was never an explicit component to the research I conducted at Inspiration Corporation, it undergirded much of what I understood during my observations and interviews, and also what I understand training program to be about more broadly. This site is located on the west side of Chicago—a predominantly poor and black area. The restaurant was

constructed with the intention that the people within the community would be served through delicious, affordable food. But the organization that is there looks quite different from the proposed vision. So what happened?

While at this site, I sought to make relationships, and to build trust and I hope, and believe that I was able to have genuine conversations with people about their experiences at Inspiration and their lives, more broadly. By having an attitude of approachability, I was able to joke around with students about my "gang" (flower) tattoos, open up political discussions, having someone cry while talking to me about their deceased grandmother, and another light up while talking about the birthday party they threw for their daughter. I was constantly aware of the stark juxtaposition between my own attitude and the attitudes of the chefs with whom participants worked for up to 40 hours per week, for free. It seemed that for any number of reasons, chefs did not want to become personally involved with students, and never spoke to them as co-workers and peers, but rather took on an attitude of absolute authority. This attitude translated into lack of genuine kitchen training.

In just brief conversations with participants, I realized that I knew information that no one in administration did, which could have been necessary for understanding the incredibly difficult circumstances under which the people entered the program. In one particular case, Willie was working around 16 hours a day. He worked overnight at

McDonalds to make money and then came to the program for training, where he worked

for free. He and Chef Aaron got into arguments frequently and Willie was cited for

having a particularly bad attitude. However, if anyone on staff had known about his

current life situation, they might have realized that incredible sleep deprivation,

impending court dates, and a dependent child were all contributing to a perceived lack of

motivation. This type of knowledge, and also the world in which he came from

everyday—one where two of his friends had been shot within three months of each other

because of gang violence—(8.9) and rampant poverty and unemployment was enough to

understand that maybe he needed some extra grace, or should have been provided with

services to make this training experience easier, as opposed to another hurdle in his life.

In another situation, when Frederick had not shown up for several weeks, and no one

was able to get hold of him, I had to suggest that maybe it was because this friend, and

fellow participant, Josiah had died suddenly that he was not showing up. I had to

provide that information because no one on staff seemed to know that they knew each

other, let alone that Josiah was the football coach for their kids' mutual football team.

These recounts are but mere samples of the worlds that participants navigated—from

friends and neighbors being shot in gang violence, to on-going legal disputes for custody

and parole. It was impossible for participants to merely leave the myriad factors of

disenfranchisement at home—disenfranchisement through income, race, criminal record,

gender, housing situations, and others.[9] Participants were merely expected to be

responsible as individuals for showing up to the program and participating, but

personalized care was not reciprocated. The effects of the intersections of stratification

spoken about by race scholars, and a society that systematically and systemically

excludes these groups of people should have provided context for administrators as to

how simply coming to the program and learning, while leaving life troubles at the door,

may not be possible—but it rarely, if ever, was considered.

It is difficult to say that this lack of empathy which translated into lack of training

or proper preparation for the workforce was about race, but a particular discussion with

Frederick and Josiah helped me to understand some of the despair of the local, black,

community which leads many to these types of programs. The other two, Frederick and

Josiah recognized that this was the only way to succeed in this program. They were

constantly aware that their success in the program might be the only chance for them to

have opportunity. On their first day of the program, I sat down to talk with them and

realized the impossible situation that they felt. They did not want to be here: they

understood that this program was unlikely to be any sort of major culinary undertaking,

but Frederick had hope that maybe it would provide him some of the basic business skills

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[9] What is important to note here is that the individualization and demands for personal responsibility mandated by workforce initiatives (like the *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act* of 1996) are not translated into the individualization of care. When personal care was needed, as a result of illness, family troubles, or court dates, Inspiration Kitchens denied participants that side of individual attention.

to take bake to his neighborhood and invest. Isaiah was more skeptical. He believed

efforts to be useless, but rather "the best thing we can do is just try to have the best

quality of life possible" (8.2/229-230). They did not see this training program as a catalyst

into the food industry, like so many, but were merely looking for options to better

themselves and their communities. They felt that the best way to do this was to put their

heads down and put in the work: do not ask questions, do not cause trouble. Because

many in the program were poor, black, and with some sort of criminal background, they

sensed that this made them undesirable for hiring, and believe that this program might

open doors for becoming employed: "because of my record I can't be the face of my

company. I'm not white people friendly" (8.2/241-242). The food industry is likely their

best option, because of relaxed background checks and quick hiring practices (Willie

interview, 8.6/54-57). They try to just "blow them [chefs' attitudes toward them] off,"

regardless of issues that they may have with the way that they are being treated, in order

to just finish the program and receive a certificate (172). There was a clear understanding

that being non-white, and having a background was a disadvantage, but they expressed

no real hope in the program, just a last-ditch attempt.

More broadly, the effectiveness of these types of programs, and their place in

society may be brought into question. While some programs of this kind, with proper

visions and execution, might be able to operate effectively. However, private-public

partnerships in such an environment should be called into question. This incentivizes

market-based rationale which, as was seen at Inspiration Kitchens, turns out under-

prepared workers with little support. Moreover, a predominantly white staff created an

attempt at "soul food" which was not well-received and entirely unaffordable. The failed

attempt, on the part of Inspiration Corporation to interact with the community in the way

that was intended (and desired) has led me to understand the underlying race

contestations that exist in this place. I believe that this ethnography serves as an example

of the issues that arise when the class ideals of the white-upper middle class are placed,

with little thought, on those who are poor and predominantly black.

Broader Impacts

I believe that future research is needed on best practices for training facilities like

Inspiration Kitchens. My research serves as an example of how conversations can

bridge cultural and class divides. Learning how to build a better community can help

greatly in this process. It is my understanding that true relationships have to be built in

order to understand the best practices for a community; what is beneficial and normal

for middle-class white suburban neighborhoods will likely not be desirable or beneficial

for low-income, minority, urban neighborhoods. Food can have a great impact toward

affecting change. While it has oft been the goal of middle-class activists to force changes

through the introduction of community gardens, farmers-markets, and other "local

movements" they rarely work as intended (Block 2012, Alkon 2013) Only through

better understanding the wants and needs of a community, and through empowerment,

can sustainable and desirable changes occur. These types of movements are inherently a

luxury of the middle and upper classes; it has become attractive for social movements

because of its visibility, and has thus been attempted on areas, without respect for their

needs or wants, and largely without enduring success (Block 2010). Food plays an

important part in cultural construction, and structural discrimination, and this fact

should not be neglected, nor over glorified (Levkoe 2006). Rather, when discussing

"food justice," or "racial inequality," or even "food insecurity," the discussion must

include new ideologies and understandings of the modern urban landscape; a diverse

and engaging conglomeration (Levkoe 2006, Block 2010; 2012).

Additionally, the discussion must be about the treatment of labors in

subordinated positions. ROC (Restaurant Opportunities Center) of New York has

developed a system to better the working conditions of "immigrants and other workers

of color" (Brady 2014). The organization brings together various components of the

restaurant sector in New York. They have utilized grassroots campaigns and close

partnerships with community members and low-wage workers to develop strategies for

best-practices. This type of broad approach is holistic by addressing sustainability

issues of business, environment and workers (2014).

Because of the possibility for such rich interaction and information gathering, this project has the potential for great impact. I believe that my ethnographic work has served as a small scale example of how re-entry programs, and "justice movements" more broadly are operating in our urban centers. It is my hope that this work may serve as a catalyst for further research at different sites and be useful in developing new ways of conceptualizing race as it relates to labor and food in the modern urban United States.

APPENDIX A
SITE APPROVAL LETTER

inspiration corporation | CATALYST FOR SELF-RELIANCE

June 17, 2016

Anna Wilcoxson, Masters Student
Sociology Department, Loyola University
1032 W. Sheridan Rd.
Chicago, IL 60660
574.453.7918

Dear Ms. Wilcoxson:

Per our previous discussions, you have our permission to conduct your study "The Art of Resistance: Meaning-Making of Denial of Authority and Creative Activities for Participants in a Culinary Re-Entry Program" at Inspiration Kitchens-Garfield Park. We are happy to hear you are interested in learning about the experiences of workers in our program and how it is that authority is expressed and interpreted in a worker training setting through interactions in social settings that make conflicting demands, asking participants to be both creative and to strictly adhere to rules.

We understand that you plan to conduct around 7 interviews with participants in the program and 3 with staff members at Inspiration Kitchens. Interview are confidential, voluntary, and participants will sign informed consent forms prior to starting the interview.

We understand you will introduce yourself as a researcher the first time that you observe and you will provide a flyer with more information about your study. We welcome you to observe interactions and take notes and record at trainings, meetings, and other events as prudent. Additionally, we understand that you will be acting as a "participant," and may actively engage in training and work activities, in so far as it does not distract trainees or trainers from daily work obligations. You are welcome to review information that has been previously gathered from Inspiration Corporation that may benefit your research.

As discussed, although you may describe Inspiration Kitchens, it may not be mentioned by name. Furthermore, the identity of participants in your study will not be disclosed in any publications and you will use pseudonyms to safeguard participants' confidentiality.

We look forward to your research findings. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns, and we will do the same.

Sincerely,

Margaret Haywood,
Director of Workforce Development

www.InspirationCorp.org

APPENDIX B
RECRUITMENT INFORMATION

Inspiration Kitchens-Garfield Park participant Recruitment Script
[to be read to potential research participants]

Hi I'm Anna Wilcoxson, a master's student at Loyola University. I am reaching out to you because you are a participant in Inspiration Kitchens' job-training program. I am conducting a study of labor in the food industry. I am interested in studying how it is that authority is expressed and interpreted in a worker training setting through interactions in social settings that make conflicting demands, asking participants to be both creative and to strictly adhere to rules. I will be observing here for several months and may participate in various activities and occasionally ask questions. I may ask you about your family, your background, your interest in food, and things you like/dislike about working in a kitchen. Participation in this study is optional. If you wish not to be a part of the any part or all of this study, please contact me and I will respect those wishes. Please contact me or my faculty sponsor if you have any questions.

TO STAFF OF INSPIRATION KITCHENS-GARFIELD PARK

RESEARCH STUDY INFORMATION

Observations and participation for a research study will be conducted at IK-GP

Purpose of Research:

The purpose of this study is to learn about how it is that

authority is expressed and interpreted in a worker

training setting through interactions in social settings that

make conflicting demands, asking participants to be both

creative and to strictly adhere to rules.

Research Activities:

I will be observing activities including trainings, meal

service, and meetings (both staff and participant meetings)

Your Participation:

Participation is completely voluntary. There are no direct benefits to participating, but your

input helps inform the study and practice of labor.

Observations and informal interviews are confidential. Please let me know if you do not wish to

participate.

If you have questions, please contact

Anna Wilcoxson at 574.453.7918 or awilcoxson@luc.edu

APPENDIX C
CONSENT FORMS

Participant at Inspiration Corporation
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: The Art of Resistance: Meaning-Making of Denial of Authority and Creative Activities for Participants in a Culinary Re-Entry Program
Researcher(s): Anna Wilcoxson
Faculty Sponsor: Kelly Moore, Ph.D.

Introduction:
You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Anna Wilcoxson for a Master's thesis under the supervision of Kelly Moore, Ph.D., in the Department of Sociology at Loyola University of Chicago.

You are being asked to participate in my study because you are a participant in the job training program at Inspiration Kitchens-Garfield Park. I will be asking you questions concerning your involvement with the program, and the way in which your participation has influenced your life. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in this study.

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to learn more about labor relations within the food industry, and especially within a job-training program. Specifically, I am interested in how it is that authority is expressed and interpreted in a worker training setting through interactions in social settings that make conflicting demands, asking participants to be both creative and to strictly adhere to rules. Inspiration Kitchens is selected as a site in this study because it is a job-training program that has successfully trained people for the food industry workforce.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in the study, the following are the procedures.
- You are agreeing to participate in an interview. Interviews may be audio-recorded.
- Interviews will last around one hour, but may take more or less time depending on the amount of information that you are willing to provide.

- Interviews will be conducted in a private office at Inspiration Kitchens, unless you would prefer to conduct interview at a location of your choosing.

Risks/Benefits:

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

There are no direct benefits to you from participation. However, the potential benefits to society may include a better understanding of the importance of labor-related social justice issues.

Compensation:

There is a $10 compensation for participating in an interview. Even if you decide to not complete the interview, or that you would rather the interview not be used in the published study, the gift card will be given to you.

Confidentiality:

- Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.
- Audio files will be transcribed and then destroyed. Transcripts will be stored on a password protected computer. To protect your confidentiality each participant will be assigned a pseudonym of your choosing and this name will be used during the interview and in transcripts. Participants' real names will not be connected to their responses in any way.
- The principal investigator (or a research assistants) will transcribe the interview audio and at the end of the research study audio files and transcripts will remain stored in a password protected computer for possible further analysis by the researcher.
- When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any

question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Your decision to participate in this study, or to withdraw from this study, will not impact your training at Inspiration Kitchens nor will it impact your future options for employment.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact:
Anna Wilcoxson, Principal Investigator
Master's Student
Department of Sociology
Loyola University
1032 W. Sheridan Rd
Chicago, IL 60660
(574) 453-7918
awilcoxson@luc.edu

Dr. Kelly Moore, Ph.D. Faculty Sponsor
Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director
Department of Sociology Loyola University Chicago
1032 W. Sheridan Rd.
Chicago, IL 60660
(773) 508-3459
kmoore11@luc.edu
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent:
Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided in this consent form, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

☐ Yes, I agree to be audio-recorded

Participant's Signature

                                                                         Date

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Researcher's Signature

                                                                         Date

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Staff at Inspiration Corporation
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Project Title: The Art of Resistance: Meaning-Making of Denial of Authority and Creative Activities for Participants in a Culinary Re-Entry Program
Researcher(s): Anna Wilcoxson
Faculty Sponsor: Kelly Moore, Ph.D.

Introduction:
You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Anna Wilcoxson for a Master's thesis under the supervision of Kelly Moore, Ph.D., in the Department of Sociology at Loyola University of Chicago.

You are being asked to participate in my study because you are an employee at Inspiration Kitchens-Garfield Park. I will be asking you questions concerning your involvement with the program, and the way in which your participation has influenced your life. Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in this study.

Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to learn more about labor relations within the food industry, and especially within a job-training program. Specifically, I am interested in how it is that authority is expressed and interpreted in a worker training setting through interactions in social settings that make conflicting demands, asking participants to be both creative and to strictly adhere to rules. Inspiration Kitchens is selected as a site in this study because it is a job-training program that has successfully trained individuals for the food industry workforce.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in the study, the following are the procedures.
- You are agreeing to participate in an interview. These interviews may be audio-recorded.
- Interviews will last around one hour, but may take more or less time depending on the amount of information that you are willing to provide.

- Interviews will be conducted in a private office at Inspiration Kitchens, unless you would prefer to conduct interview at a location of your choosing.

Risks/Benefits:

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

There are no direct benefits to you from participation. However, the potential benefits to society may include a better understanding of the importance of community organizing for labor-related social justice issues.

Compensation:

There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

Confidentiality:

- Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.
- Audio files will be transcribed and then destroyed. Transcripts will be stored on a password protected computer. To protect your confidentiality each participant will be assigned a pseudonym of your choosing and this name will be used during the interview and in transcripts. Participants' real names will not be connected to their responses in any way.
- The principal investigator (or a research assistants) will transcribe the interview audio and at the end of the research study audio files and transcripts will remain stored in a password protected computer for possible further analysis by the researcher.
- When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity.

Voluntary Participation:

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Your decision

to participate in this study, or to withdraw from this study, will not impact your employment at Inspiration Kitchens.

Contacts and Questions:
If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact:
Anna Wilcoxson, Principal Investigator
Master's Student
Department of Sociology
Loyola University
1032 W. Sheridan Rd
Chicago, IL 60660
(574) 453-7918
awilcoxson@luc.edu

Dr. Kelly Moore, Ph.D. Faculty Sponsor
Associate Professor and Graduate Program Director
Department of Sociology Loyola University Chicago
1032 W. Sheridan Rd.
Chicago, IL 60660
(773) 508-3459
kmoore11@luc.edu
If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

Statement of Consent:
Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided in this consent form, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

☐ Yes, I agree to be audio-recorded

Participant's Signature

                                                           Date

--   -----------------------------------

Researcher's Signature

                                                           Date

--   ---------------------------------

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Question Prompts for Participant Observation
Potential Questions Prompts for those Administrators

PRE-PROGRAM

- Tell me about how you got to work in the program?
- What is your background/Did you have an interest in cooking before, or did this seem like a good opportunity?

PROGRAM GOALS/TASKS

- Tell me about the way that this program is structured. How has it changed? How have you implemented change?
- What is your role here?
- What is one of the biggest struggles that you have with students? How do you handle that conflict?
- Tell me about one policy that you think works, and tell me about one that does not.

- What is your goal for the program overall?
- Where do you see it going?
- Has the program been different than you thought it would be?

- How has your perspective changed about social work/job-training since beginning here? Better or worse?

JOB-READINESS

- What are some of the skills that are developed in this program?
- Do you think that this philosophy of job-training is the most effective?
- Do you think that kitchens/restaurants are stricter than other types of work places?

FOOD (Specifically for chefs)

- What do you enjoy most about cooking and food creation?
- Do you like following the recipe? Do you think it's necessary?

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VITA

Anna Wilcoxson was born in Winona Lake, Indiana on November 29, 1990. Wilcoxson attended Wheaton College and completed her B.A. in Business in Economics. She spent several years in the food industry as a chef before deciding to attend Loyola University Chicago. Wilcoxson completed her M.A. in Sociology in May 2017. Her current research interests center on food, labor, and economic Sociology.