

**“Processing” Sushi / Cooked Japan: Why Sushi Became Canadian**

by

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A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS**

in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies

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University of Victoria

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ABSTRACT

Sushi is a widely consumed food in North America. Along with other ethnic cuisine and food items it is subject to fusion and localization. This thesis explores the transformation of sushi in Victoria, BC, on the basis of an extensive survey, participant observation, and interviews with producers and consumers. The physical and symbolic transformation of sushi is analyzed both from the vantage point of business and cultural trends. It is shown that sushi became a food item different to what is known as sushi in Japan. This makes Victoria as one of the North American markets which threatens the Japanese national identity. This study thus not only reveals the local process of transformation of sushi but also shows how a food item becomes a multi-vocal symbol. While consumed by North Americans as healthy and exotic in its transformed style, it becomes a politically significant concern of national identity in Japan.

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## *Acknowledgements*

I am deeply thankful to the people who brought me to this stage of an intellectual endeavour.

First of all, I am most grateful to my co-supervisors, Dr. Timothy Craig and Dr. Hülya Demirdirek. Dr. Demirdirek's input was always inspiring, just like the atmosphere in her office, and helped to situate my study in a deeper and broader anthropological context. I was fortunate to be able to have her as a supervisor. Craig-sensei always kept my course steady with his insight into both North American and Japanese cultures and with his love for Japan. I could never have done this much work without their kind and professional support.

I am also grateful to Dr. Margot Wilson, who led my research from the beginning and gave warm advice to me on academia and on work management, when I struggled with health issues. I also extend my appreciation to my external examiner, Dr. Tim Iles, who gave me constructive criticism. I also served as his teaching assistant on Japanese culture classes, which provided me with insight into the Canadian perspective of Japanese culture in general.

In addition, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my friends: Yuji, Jiro, Atsuko, Ethan, Masa, Hu, Naoko, Leo, Toru, Kyoko, Ai, Moey, Xiaolong, Simon, Mikako, Judy, Steve, Kyle, Hayuki, Yoko, Izumi, Brian, and Rosemary. I also deeply value my anthropology friends, Matt, Kyle and Susannah, who proofread my thesis for last minute revisions. I am

grateful to my family in Japan, who sent books for research and warmly waited for me through to the end of my accomplishment. The presence of friends and family always encouraged me to start a new day for study and work.

Last but not least, I am truly grateful to the people in the Japanese restaurant industry in Victoria. Many of them spared me time despite their busy schedules, which often allow them less than one day a week to rest. I hope that my study may play some small part in the further success and prosperity of Victoria's Japanese restaurant business, as it continues to provide innovative and novel food to its customers.

## 1. *Introduction*

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,  
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat,  
But there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth,  
When two strong men stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth!

Rudyard Kipling (Beecroft 1956:425)

One hundred years after Kipling's poem, today more than the hearts of mighty men merge between the East and the West. The expansion of the world economic activity and the advance of technology have enabled people to more frequently engage in contact beyond cultural and national boundaries than ever before. The compression of time and space enabled by globalization makes our world smaller. The demand for bluefin tuna in Japan brings a flow of capital to a village in Maine, United States (Bestor 2000). More than half of the content of television programs in Nigeria were occupied by American programs in 1997 (Nye 2004). The Japanese animation, Draemon has been broadcasted in Italy, China, Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Russia, Spain, Brazil and other Latin American countries, and the Middle East (Shiraishi 2000) and Pokémon is in 65 countries (Nye 2004). Ina and Rosaldo define the world of globalization as "a world of motion, of complex interconnections" (2002:3).

Spices, animal species, seeds, and other food items, all moved along long distances in our history. The movement of food items is not specific to the 20th and 21st centuries; such relocation and diffusion of food started long before the recent discourse concerning globalization. However, today food and our dietary habits are changing more quickly in the midst of an expanding process of globalization. The ethnic food boom in North America (Heldke 2003; Restaurant Business 1985) shows that “[O]ne man’s food is another man’s poison” (Mintz 2002:xiii) is no longer applicable to many consumers in North America. Beyond simply enjoying foreign tastes, the birth of new style cuisines is witnessed around the world, owing to the intensified exchange of human resources, materials, and information. Pacific Rim cuisine, which incorporated culinary styles and ingredients of the Pacific Rim countries to that of the traditional tenets of French and Italian cuisines, is one of the newly emerging fusion cuisines (Cutforth 2000).

As noted by Cowen (2004:4), “[a]ll food is fusion cuisine,” the history of foods and cuisines are filled with the episodes of their displacement and deterritorialization; for example, the dynamic of cross cultural and inter-geographical food exchange has been breeding and incorporating new food items for centuries (Anderson 2005). Today, supported by technological advances, the speed of the displacement and deterritorialization increases, and this increase is changing our diet more rapidly. An anthropologist, Naomichi Ishige recounted that there are

concerns in Japan that the Japanese dietary life is expressed as having a lack of national identity when compared in the context of the past (Kewpie 2003). The North American diet is also becoming more cross-cultural and international; the three major ethnic cuisines in the United States — Italian, Mexican, and Chinese (Cantonese) — are deeply rooted in American food culture and are not considered as “ethnic” any longer (Wakabayashi 2003). New ethnic foods are considered to be Japanese (sushi), Thai, Caribbean, and Middle Eastern (Wakabayashi 2003). A statistics report shows that Italian is the most popular ethnic cuisine in Canada, followed by Chinese, Mexican, Greek, Japanese, and Indian (David 1998). The popularity of Japanese cuisine, in particular sushi can also be observed by the increasing number of Canadian newspaper articles which include the word, “sushi.” Although the number of times “sushi” appeared was only 8 in 1980, it became 290 in 1990, and reached 1457 in 2007<sup>1</sup>. These changes in our diet are promoted by globalized commercial activities, which are enhanced by the shift of our food preferences.

The Japanese cuisine, which traveled across the oceans along with Japanese immigrants and Japanese business people (Tsurumi 1963; Yoshida 2003), is incorporating hints of local taste and uniquely developing at every corner of the world (MAFF 2006). Sushi represents a

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<sup>1</sup> The result is based on a search through the Canadian Newsstand which covers more than 150 Canadian newspapers, including *The Globe and Mail National Post*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Toronto Star*, *Regina Leader Post*, *Edmonton Journal*, *Vancouver Sun* and the *Victoria Times Colonist*.

localization and diversification of the Japanese cuisine in the world of motion and interconnections. Here in Victoria, sushi restaurants are located on almost every block in the downtown. When opening the door of one of those restaurants, an Asian chef greets you “Irasshaimase!” behind a sushi bar counter. Sitting at the bar before you, is a low flat glass refrigerator containing various colors of seafood. “Excuse me, may I have the California Rolls?” You enjoy the conversation with the chef over the flavour of creamy avocado and crab meat in the sushi. Now you feel like you are in Japan. But you think for a moment, “This sushi is called California Roll. Is this really Japanese?”

What I present in this thesis is the transformation of a food item, sushi, as a cultural artefact. Sushi represents “tradition and identity” of Japan like many other somehow arbitrary and at times reconstructed national and ethnic markers. Sushi is displaced, modified, and embedded in a different culture through globalized economic activity. In North America, sushi is frequently regarded as an indicative of Japanese tradition and identity, yet it is developing in a different way and away from what is assumed to be the “original Japanese style.” The alteration of sushi as a cultural property raises a sense of danger to Japanese national identity, which seeks a landing point in the current of globalization.

A food item is not only a material to satisfy our hunger, but is also an object which is entangled in cultural meanings and the process of identity building. Sushi as it is introduced in

this thesis, is dislocated from Japanese geographical and cultural landscapes, is placed in various cultural settings, and given various meanings, roles, and forms which might differ from the original Japanese attributions. Confronted with such a disparate variety of sushi, what does the Japanese nation opine in regards to their cultural tradition and identity? For Japan, the globalization of sushi is an issue beyond the common saying “you are what you eat,” but rather is “what you eat is who we are.” As mentioned in a later chapter, the sense of difference is created based on where we put the boundary between us and others; in the case of sushi, it depends where the state of Japan places the boundary between its own culture and other cultures. Recent deterritorialization of sushi in the context of the processes of globalization, illuminates the process of boundary placement and loss, and which may eventually turn to a matter of national identity and power. Hence, deterritorialization, displacement, or disembedding of sushi in the globalized economic activity is an issue of economy, politics, and culture.

### **It is Not Just about the Food: Significance of Research on Sushi**

Sushi is exclusively associated with Japan, and its transformation overseas is a fusion that illustrates a blurring of boundaries of food cultures. These boundaries and their dissolution are one of the major dimensions of debates concerned with globalization (Harrison 1999). The aim of this thesis is to examine how sushi has been moving from one food culture to another and how

it is transformed in this process. By identifying the agents which promote this transformation, I illustrate an example of the transformation of a cultural product and its relation to economic activities. Such an examination allows the observation of the relationship between the transformation and the deterritorialization of a cultural object which has been attributed to new arrays of meaning in a cross-cultural context.

The Canadian West coast culinary scene enjoys the presence and taste of a variety of sushi. Yam Rolls provide us refreshment with the combination of the natural sweetness of deep-fried yam and the sour flavour of vinegared rice. Fresh raw tuna in Spicy Tuna Rolls melt in our mouths together with a chilli mayonnaise sauce. However, they are a fusion of cuisines and are neither typical nor traditional Japanese sushi. They are clear examples of the transformation of a deterritorialized cultural object.

Why does the transformation of sushi matter? Sushi has more power than simply satisfying one's stomach; the transformation of sushi is not only a transformation of Japanese cultural material but also has implications for the transformation of Japanese national identity influenced by the interests of business. Food and our dietary habits are one of the driving forces to strengthen the sense of ethnic unity and nationalism, which is expressed through the concept of "imagined communities" suggested by Benedict Anderson (1989), and serve as effective ethnic and national markers. Nation states in the world therefore create 'national cuisines' around

particular traits of a food culture (Bestor 2004). French cuisine, for instance, “became an emblem of the country, representative of a way of life, a configuration of values, and a set of social practices that were identified by French and foreign alike as French” (Ferguson 2000:1054).

Sushi, as one of Japan’s national signature foods and a food consumed around the world by various ethnic groups, maintains Japanese cultural identity in the minds of Japanese and foreigners alike (Bestor 2000). However, while reacting and being integrated in a globally wider market, some newly emerged versions of sushi started to be incompatible with the idea of what sushi is for some in Japan. Irritation over the transformed Japanese food was expressed in November 2006 under the initiative of Toshikatsu Matsuoka, then the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. The Japanese government organized a board to ask opinions regarding how they could handle the situation of Japanese food produced and consumed outside of Japan (MAFF 2006). Since tradition is “the accumulation of systematic orders” and the guideline for people to release themselves from the stress of deciding their actions (Oguma 1997:401), the transformation of sushi as a symbol of Japanese tradition suggests the partial loss of the guideline for the Japanese. Regarding the sense of insecurity spreading in Japan, Douglas McGray suggests the following in his article, *Japan’s Gross National Cool* :

Today, a decade of globalization has made Japan somewhat less inward looking, but a decade of recession and political turmoil has made many Japanese seem less secure in some of their fundamental values, undermining traditional ideas in

everything from business culture to family life. Those values may rebound with the economy, or they may transform into something new – a national uncertainty infused with even more anxiety by the demographic changes that will accompany the graying of Japan’s population. (2002:53)

There is a lack of overlap between the Japaneseness expressed through some Japanese foods in foreign countries and the notion of Japaneseness held by the Japanese. This gap threatens the sense of Japanese tradition and thereby their sense of stability.

The consumption of cultural objects which link with national identity, such as the case with sushi, is implemented beyond the level of national sentiments today since such cultural properties are active “ingredients” of commercial activities. For example, an anthropologist Harumi Befu explains the economic values of Japanese identity as follows:

The globalization of Japanese cuisine provides a useful illustration. Sushi needs to retain its distinct Japanese quality as an identifying marker, but it allows many variations. The name ‘sushi’ itself will probably never be replaced by a term in any local language. The name has to remain as a signature term to identify the product and its origin. The same may be said of the names of Japanese restaurants, which usually involve Japanese terms such as Azuma, Yakko, or Moshi-moshi Sushi. To capitalize on the value attached to their supposed authenticity, some restaurants try to retain or recreate Japanese atmosphere. This includes their exterior architecture and atmosphere. [...] These restaurants emphasize ‘authenticity’ here defined in terms of the exotic, and cater to high-spending customers, whether Japanese expatriate businessmen or their local clients. The Japanese features are a value-added factor and increase the price. (2003:6)

Japanese identity creates positive economic values and power overseas, and thereby the identity

of Japanese cultural materials is proactively preserved as “Japanese” by businesses. Both Japanese and foreign businesses engaging in selling Japanese products and cultural objects are benefiting directly by the Japanese identity. As such, the Japanese identity recognized in Japanese cultural properties, including sushi, in other countries contributes to parts of Japan’s economical power. Accordingly, sushi’s transformation might entail the risk of the “loss” of Japanese identity attached to it and thereby the nation’s economical power.

Besides the economical power, Japanese culture and its identity can be seen as a source of political power. A political scientist and a former United States Assistant Secretary of Defence, Joseph S. Nye Jr. (2004) advocates the significance of ‘soft power,’ which can co-opt people along with the presence of hard power, such as military force and economic sanctions, in the international political arena. Nye argues that soft power is “the indirect way to get what you want” in international politics (2004:5). Culture is one of the four resources of soft power along with values, policies, and institutions (Nye 2004). Nye suggests that “[w]hen a country’s culture includes universal values and its policies promote values and interests that others share, it increases the probability of obtaining its desired outcomes because of the relationships of attraction and duty that it creates” (2004:11). Hence, Nye conveys a persuasive and humorous point as follows:

... in explaining a new movement toward using lawsuits to assert rights in China,

a young Chinese activist explained, “We’ve seen a lot of Hollywood movies – they feature weddings, funerals and going to court. So now we think it’s only natural to go to court a few times in your life.” If American objectives include the strengthening of the legal system in China, such films may be more effective than speeches by the American ambassador about the importance of the rule of law. (2004:12)

Arts, fashion, and cuisine of Asian nations, rooted in their traditions, form soft power and have had a strong impact on other parts of the world (Nye 2004). Besides Toyota, Honda, and Sony, which are three of the top twenty-five multinational brand names, Japan’s soft power includes its music, consumer electronics, architecture, fashion, cuisine, popular art (including animation and films), and traditional arts such as Zen Buddhism and martial arts (McGray 2002; Nye 2004). These Japanese cultural materials contain political values in the form of soft power when utilized timely and properly.

The soft power theory, however, is vulnerable to deterritorialization of the cultural material. Peter Spiro, a law professor has commented on the relation between Nye’s soft power and the identity of American material culture and argues: “[b]ut once a culture becomes universal, in what sense does it remain American, other than as a historical matter?” (2002:734) The “loss” of the identity of deterritorialized and universalized cultural objects invites the reduction of political power of a nation.

I would like to highlight three concerns, which would be raised around a

deterritorialized and transformed cultural object, in regards to the formation of national power and identity. First, whether the attraction of the product could be upheld and thereby already gained power could be maintained after the transformation; second, whether the identity of the material, which brings the power to the nation, is maintained after the transformation; and third, whether a sense of discomfort is generated in the modified cultural material, in that it is associated with the original ethnic identity despite the fact that the original form, meaning, and concept of the object has already been lost. Sushi, which generates international economic and political values as one of the symbols of Japanese identity, is exposed to these concerns when it is transformed because its transformation represents the transformation of a power source. Apparently, Japan needs to protect its symbols of identity, yet it has to share its identity with those in the broader global circulation while keeping the ownership and the right of authentication. Thus this process is imbued with political, economical, cultural and emotive conflicts and contradiction.

Despite its significance, the transformation of Japanese culinary arts overseas is not sufficiently studied. This thesis therefore examines and analyzes the transformation of sushi and shows the interaction between national power, identity and the deterritorialized and transformed cultural object. I approach this issue by examining the process of sushi's transformation and the underlying agents of the transformation, looking for the answer in the perspectives of sushi

producers and customers who interact within the supply-demand network.

### **Sweet Relation: Business, Culture and Transformation**

The transformation of tangible and intangible cultural objects enhanced by economic activities is not a unique phenomenon for sushi. For example, the Balinese created a new tradition of art through their tourism business, motivated by the visits of Western tourists after the 1930s (Yamashita 1999). Chinese dishes developed in restaurant business in North America become “improvised foreign inventions rather than imitation of authentic Cantonese traditional cuisine” (Wu and Cheung 2002:7). Both tangible and intangible cultural objects, which possess economic value, become the subject of economic consumption and are modified in order to increase their economic values around the world.

The economic value of a product emerges through the combination of quality, service, and price (Kotler 2003) and can be expressed with the formula below:

$$\text{VALUE} = \frac{\text{Benefit}}{\text{Cost}} = \frac{\text{Practical benefits} + \text{Emotional benefits}}{\text{Monetary cost} + \text{Temporal cost} + \text{Energy cost} + \text{Mental cost}}$$

(Kotler 2001)

Every consumer has a different value for a product since emotional benefits and mental costs of a

product vary for each person. Seen from a business perspective, it is presumed that the transformation of sushi occurs in order to increase the customers' benefit factors and decrease the cost factors. Culture (when approached simply as multiplicity of ideas, values, and their expression) is one of the influencers of creating individual emotional benefits and mental cost. For example, dining at a prestigious, high-end restaurant provides a great emotional benefit for some people. The consumers' buying behaviours are influenced by cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors (Kotler 2001). Kotler (2001) further argues that culture is the most fundamental decision-making factor for human wants and deeds, which is segmented into smaller units of nationality, religion, ethnicity, and geographic location. The culturally embedded behaviours are significant since consumers are likely to automatically maintain such behaviours because the behaviour is recognized as a lifestyle (Riley 1994). It is considered that the transformation of sushi took place as a result of a complicated relationship between these socio-cultural factors and the actions of highly motivated sushi producers who try to increase their products' value.

The transformation of sushi is only one of the examples of the material transformation occurring in different cultural contexts promoted by economic activities. In modern industrialized societies our consumption of a food item often goes through five steps: production, distribution, preparation, consumption, and disposal (Cwiertka 1999). In addition, all businesses,

including the food industry, are affected by key environments: economic, technological, governmental, cultural, natural, legal, social, demographical, and internal environments (Steiner and Steiner 2000; Kotler 2001). Sushi's production, distribution, and consumption are influenced by economic factors (such as purchasing and transporting of fish) as well as technological possibilities (such as the freezing technology for fish). The political and legal aspects (such as the regulations on imports and exports of marine and agricultural products) also affect sushi business. Moreover, cultural aspects such as the food preferences of consumers restrain the production and consumption of sushi with its additional physiological dimension as a food to provide calories to sustain life.

Among these factors influencing the production, distribution, and consumption of a food product, I explore the significance of the cultural behaviours and thoughts through the transformation of sushi.. Except for a few authors discussing the Japanese cuisine in regards to globalization and documenting the sushi served in North America and Europe (Bestor 2000, 2004; Cwiertka 2001a, 2001b, 2005; Issenberg 2007; Kato 2002; Matsumoto 2002; Tamamura 2004), no detailed study has yet been done to analyze the cultural and business dimensions which are decisive for the newly emerging form of sushi. A journalist Hiroko Kato (2002) who interviewed sushi producers in the United States describes how sushi is produced, consumed, and perceived in the United States and illustrates the perplexities found among the Japanese people in

what they regard as the untraditional style of production and consumption of sushi in the United States. While her work vividly reproduces the scenes of the transformation of sushi in the United States, it is more descriptive than analytical. I intend to introduce analytical perspectives while approaching the process of the transformation of sushi.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Before starting the discussion of how and why sushi is transformed in the Canadian market and its cultural context, I would like to convey the theoretical perspectives which have been helpful in developing my analytical approach to the transformation of sushi.

Sushi in this research is recognized not simply as something tasty to fulfill our appetite, but as an object which conveys meanings to fulfill our minds. If I situate sushi in a context of the “webs of significance” (Geertz 1973:5), it plays two different meaningful roles as a cultural artefact and a food item. Sushi as a cultural artefact is symbolically used as an identity marker for the Japanese state while sushi as a food item is recognized under broader and more general perspectives in regards to how peoples’ activities and thoughts are constructed around food. Considering these two roles which lie behind the consumption of sushi, I believe sushi is perceived and utilized differently in the North American system of meanings (that is to say, the aggregate of cultural streams that we commonly refer to as “North American culture”) than that

of the Japanese system of meaning. A globalization, which includes the intensification of transnational interconnectedness, should be recognized as an enabler of sushi's entrance into a new cultural setting.

Therefore, I approach the transformation of sushi from two theoretical angles. When approached as a food item, the theoretical point to be considered is that sushi is embedded in a system of meanings shared in a society and plays a certain role based on the assigned meanings (Appadurai 1986, 1988, 2002; Counihan 1999; Douglas 2008; Goody 1982, 1998; Heldke 2003; Lévi-Strauss 2008; Mintz 1985, 2002; Ohnuki-Tierney 1993). In addition, when I consider sushi as a cultural object, a theoretical issue raised is the process of globalization, which accompanies the process of sushi's deterritorialization with this transformation and the flow of culture which is defined and utilized by a nation and market (Eriksen 2007; Gupta and Ferguson 2002; Hannerz 1996). In this section I first introduce the theoretical achievements in the anthropological studies of food and then follow with the process of globalization, which includes the flow of culture and the introduction of cultural deterritorialization. This will be followed by a brief description of an essentialist perspective that is observable in the interactions related to the transformation of sushi.

### **Food for Eating, Food for Thought, Food for Company**

The consumers' food consumption trend is constructed around the number of social, economic, political, environmental, and cultural factors. For example, obesity in Canada is recognized as associated with food consumption behaviours which are affected by "food prices and prices of other consumer goods; disposable income, age, gender, ethnicity, and education; time available for cooking and food preparation, nutrition knowledge, and the ability to combine foods and other resources to produce a nutritious diet; and the person's weight, height, and physical activity levels, etc." (Alberta 2008). Consumption of food is a multi-dimensional activity and thereby Canadian consumers recognize food from multi-dimensional perspectives. Anthropological studies of food analyze our food-related behaviours and illuminate socio-cultural reasons underlying the consumption of food, which some people themselves are conscious of yet others are not..

Many anthropological works recognize some social functions of food and describe culture-oriented human behaviours and thoughts through the analyses of our dietary habits and the consumption patterns of food. Anthropologists Sidney Mintz and Christine Du Bois (2002:101) classified the anthropological record of human dietary habits, which has been accumulated for more than one hundred years, into the following subcategories: classic food ethnographies (Gabaccia 2003), single commodities and substances (Bestor 2000; Mintz 1985;

Ohnuki-Tierney 1993), food and social change (Mintz 1985), food insecurity, eating and ritual (Bynum 2008), eating and identities (Appadurai 1988; Counihan 1999; Heldke 2008; Ohnuki-Tierney 1993; Wilk 2008), instructional materials, food in prehistory, biological aspects of eating (nutritional anthropology and food in medical anthropology) (Mead 2008), infant feeding and weaning, cannibalism (Harris 1977), and substances causing major psychoactive changes.

Food is a vehicle to convey human emotions and helps facilitate communication between individuals in society (Goody 1982). Consumption, preparation, and production patterns of foods indicate the life cycle, interpersonal relationships, the structure of social group, and the symbolic meanings of food (Goody 1982). Also, social values, human relationships, ethnic identities, religion, and mental hunger are expressed through the production, preparation and consumption of food (Goody 1982). This observation indicates that food serves to maintain the social system, and the transaction of food is an indicator of social relations (Goody 1982).

One of the aspects of the socio-cultural function of food that illuminates human relationships and illustrates how intimacy and enmity are constructed around food is the sharing and exchange of food. Meals and the exchange of foods often reduce the distance between people and strengthen and renew social relationships (Counihan 1999; Mintz 2002). Therefore, the sharing of food is “a sign of kinship, trust, friendship, and in some cultures, of sexual

intimacy,” while the refusal of sharing food implies enmity and hostilities (Counihan 1999:13). The sociocultural anthropologist Arjun Appadurai’s study (1988) about middle-class Indian housewives shows one of these socio-cultural aspects of food consumption – the sharing of social values among the middle-class Indian women – through the analysis of the diversification of food consumption patterns and the spread of culinary information.

Another aspect is that food is used to show social hierarchy and order. In Japan, for example, dining is an occasion to express the family order and the hierarchy within the family (Ishige et al. 1982). In India, people carefully choose with whom they will eat because it expresses a certain level of intimacy; in other words, the exclusion of persons from the eating circle indicates distance, difference of rank, or enmity (Appadurai 1988; Counihan 1999). Also, food serves symbolic purposes in the form of the expression of identity and differentiation of people while also influencing group dynamics. Some food items successfully signify group identities because they contain cultural meanings which change spatially and temporally based on: the primary qualities of the food (colour, taste, texture, smell, etc); the methods of preparation, presentation, and consumption manners; the producer; and the meaning of health in societies (Counihan 1999). Wu and Cheung (2002) show the significance of food in relation to ethnic identity through the case of Chinese culinary traditions abroad that are accepted as the representative of Chinese culture or an authentic Chinese cultural marker.

In addition to contributing to the communication and relations among people, food often serves as a communication channel from which to connect humans with gods (Counihan 1999; Umesao 1982). In many cultures, food habits and religion have a strong connection. Mintz (2002) notes that the history of food in Western nations has been influenced by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and food practices are often used to define these beliefs in the West. As a communication enhancer, food represents pleasure and celebration to satisfy our souls (Counihan 1999). Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin says in his book, *The Physiology of Taste*, written in the early nineteenth century that “the pleasure of the table belongs to all ages, to all conditions, to all countries, and to all areas; it mingles with all other pleasures, and remains at last to console us for their departure” (Corigliano and Baggio 2002). A food philosopher and writer, Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher mentions that Americans are interested in home-made cuisine not because of physical starvation but rather because of mental starvation, an interest which comes from their concern over food safety (Ishige et al. 1982).

Some anthropological works utilize these socio-cultural aspects of food and dietary habits to analyze the movement and deterritorialization of a food item. Den Hartog (1986) analyzes the dissemination of milk to Indonesia from the perspective of the socio-economic function of a food item. He observes the adaptation of a new food item which occurs when a food fits the host’s diet pattern, the preparation techniques at household level, the economic

needs, and whether the food successfully contributes to enhancing the prestige of the adopter (Den Hartog 1986). Also, the acceptability of a food item depends “on the cultural acceptability of the food, its taste, its suitability as a staple food or complement to the staple, its suitability as a snack, or for special occasions, its suitability for special categories such as infants, children” (Den Hartog 1986:21-22). This study of the dissemination of a food item within a colonial relationship, shows how food consumption patterns are influenced and transformed by the socio-cultural functions and meanings of a food item.

This section described anthropological food studies, which recognize a food item as a mediator of human relationships and thoughts in general. It will enhance the understanding of the meaning of sushi as a food item in the context of Canadian food culture, which is presumed to be influenced by different system of meanings from that of Japan. Such understanding will be beneficial for the study of the transformation of sushi because the difference of meaning will assign different roles to Canadian sushi as a food item and will eventually pressure sushi to change its form in order to fit in the newly assigned role. In addition, sushi in Canada has another face as a cultural artefact, in which different theoretical aspects can be observed. The next section will introduce globalization and its dimensions, which is a key concept when analyzing the transformation of sushi as a particular cultural artefact.

### **Globalization as a Cultural Theory**

Today, sushi is located outside of the Japanese market, is transformed in various ways, and fulfills the newly assigned roles and meanings embedded in the non-Japanese system of meanings. As mentioned earlier, the displacement of food items and cultural artefacts is not a new phenomenon in human history; however, the frequency and velocity of displacement has dramatically increased for the last few decades due to increased trade and transnational economic activities, technological advancement, and the intensification of awareness between cultural groups (Eriksen 2007). Norwegian anthropologist, Thomas Hylland Eriksen (2007) describes globalization as a tighter global integration after the Cold War in terms of politics, transnational communication and international trade. He further states that the dimensions of globalization do “not suggest that the world has been fundamentally transformed after the late 1980s, but that the driving forces of both economic, political and cultural dynamics are transnational...” (Eriksen 2007). Globalization is characterized by the following dimensions: disembedding of objects and ideas from its place of origin, acceleration, standardization, interconnectedness which represents an aspect of denser, faster and wider human networks, movement of people and objects, mixing, vulnerability of territorial and cultural boundaries, and reembedding of disembedded objects and powers (Eriksen 2007).

While sushi is recognized as a Japanese cultural item (Befu 2003; Bestor 2000), it is

becoming deterritorialized from its “land and people” and situated in an “aimless” flow of culture. Deterritorialization in globalization is often explained with a conventional idea about the culture and its relationship with space. For a long time, the distinctiveness of societies, nations, and cultures has been a seemingly unproblematic conceptualization (Gupta and Ferguson 2002). It is therefore “so taken for granted that each country embodies its own distinctive culture and society that the term ‘society’ and ‘culture’ are routinely simply appended to the names of nation-states...” (Gupta and Ferguson 2002:66). With this notion of the existence of clear cultural boundaries, the identity of sushi as a Japanese culinary product has been formed historically (see Chapter 3), politically and economically as well as recognized internally (within Japan) (MAFF 2006) and externally (Bestor 2000). This conventional idea of culture however is challenged since culture is becoming more and more disconnected from its place of origin due to the intensified interconnectedness, movement, standardization, and the mixing between cultures in globalization. In addition, the notion of culture itself is becoming unstable and problematic recently. Ulf Hannerz observes the flow of culture in globalization and raises a question to the conventional view of culture as “an organic relationship between a population, a territory, a form as well as a unit of political organization, and one of those organized packages of meanings and meaningful forms” (1996 Hannerz:20). Instead, he propounds culture as habitats of meaning and meaningful forms, which are expandable and “can overlap entirely, partially or just possibly not

at all [... thereby] be identified with either individuals or collectivities” (1996 Hannerz:22-23).

In my thesis from an anthropological vantage point culture needs to be recognized not as a rigid entity but a dynamic landscape of relations, ideas and forms with ambiguous boundaries.

Deterritorialization is a dimension of globalization propounded with this notion of the flexibility of culture. Globalization rapidly displaces culture from place. Coca-Cola and McDonald's are examples of American material culture diffused to the world. As a result, hamburgers and cola are not exclusively associated with the geographical territory of the United States any longer. Marianne E. Lien (2007) describes the deterritorialization of knowledge through the shared and globalized knowledge of salmon aquaculture, which opposes local knowledge. These examples suggest that in globalization both cultural objects and knowledge easily jump out of the specific territorial boundaries defined by nation-states. Deterritorialization therefore refers to the “general weakening of the ties between culture and place, to the dislodging of cultural subjects and objects from particular or fixed locations in space and time” (Inda and Rosaldo 2002:11). It should also be noted however that the notion of deterritorialization is challenged by the awareness that the influence of globalization does not evenly spread to every corner of the world (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003). “Global flows bypass some poor residents without access to capital, entrapping them in disintegrating communities while entangling others” (Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003:26). Deterritorialization of objects and

knowledge becomes an issue between people and places which have accesses to cultural resources which circulate in the global economic market.

Another dimension, the mixing (Eriksen 2007) or the creolization of culture (Hannerz 1996) is an inevitable aspect in the discussion of the globalization of sushi. Creolized culture is an opposing image of conventional understanding of culture as pure, homogeneous, and a bounded entity, and Hannerz suggests it is “a combination of diversity, interconnectedness, and innovation, in the context of global center-periphery relationships” (1996:67). He conceptualizes that the centre is the place exercising “standard” or “superstratum” culture with greater prestige while the culture of the periphery has greater parochial variety (Hannerz 1996:67). With the frames of creolization, the form of life, the state, the market, and the movement, culture is creolized at the centre and the periphery due to the asymmetries of the frames in cultural flow (Hannerz 1996).

The creolist perspective can connect another important argument of homogenization and heterogenization of culture in globalization (Appadurai 2002; Goody 1998; Hannerz 1996), in that creolization of culture contributes to the production of new forms of culture or the reduction of existing cultures (Hannerz 1996). For the purpose of this thesis I concentrate on the deterritorialization without engaging in the larger discussion of the globalization perspective.

However, I would like to clarify my theoretical position that although creolization is a

critical and interesting dimension for analyzing the flow of culture in the 21st century, I will refrain from observing sushi in the global market with this perspective. If my discussion of sushi in Canada had centred around creolization, this thesis would have likely discussed the transformation in that direction: i.e. how the two cultures are mixing in the entity of sushi. This positioning however cannot be very productive because the argument is likely to focus on the result of creolization and on capturing the static moment of sushi as an end product. It is also likely to fail to observe the flow of culture in globalization. Yet, when my study observes the transformation of sushi from a perspective of deterritorialization in the flow of culture, it has a potential of greater scholarly contribution since it approaches the transformation as a *process* which can be applied to transformations of other cultural materials.

As an approach to examine ongoing socio-economic and political change, how is sushi situated in the process of globalization as well as in the analytical landscape of globalization? A prominent study which placed sushi in a globalization framework was conducted by an anthropologist at Harvard, named Theodore Bestor. His study (2000, 2004) delineates the dimensions of interconnectedness, acceleration, disembeddedness, and the movement of globalization by linking sushi with the globalized fish market economy. In *How Sushi Went Global*, Bestor describes the global appetite for bluefin tuna which is stimulated by a sushi boom that then created a lucrative transnational business opportunity for a regional industry in the

North Eastern coast of the United States and triggered the international action of regulating bluefin tuna fishing (Bestor 2000). Also introduced in this study, is the interconnectedness between Tokyo's fish market and a local Spanish aquaculture industry, which both suffered from an odd and sudden environmental change which suffocated their commercial product: tuna (Bestor 2000). Furthermore, the awareness about Japanese products and culture as a result of globalization provides a cachet with sushi as a Japanese cultural property (Bestor 2000). Bestor's ethnographic work at the Tsukiji Market in Tokyo (2004) situates the local but gigantic fish market in the international network of fish distribution and integrates the scenes of global fish trade in Japan with the Japanese commercial institutions and culture exercised in the market. His research shows the compression of time and space and the intensified interconnectedness between localities in the world through the consumption of fish enhanced by the popularity of sushi.

Bestor's approach, which centres on fish and the fish market and traces its distribution, successfully delineates the dimensions of globalization. This approach is particularly efficient to show the intensified interconnectedness of the world. The international presence and popularity of sushi is a piece of evidence supporting the growth of transnational commercial interaction of fish in Bestor's work.

My study focuses on sushi itself as an illustration of cultural change. By situating sushi

in the context of cultural flow and observing its process of transformation, I attempt to describe the deterritorialization of a Japanese cultural item from its place of origin. While both researchers introduce cultural deterritorialization and interconnectedness in globalization with sushi, I believe that the different approaches serve to reveal different processes of cultural flow and diversify our understanding regarding the phenomena.

The above section introduced globalization and its dimensions as one theoretical approach of this research, which recognizes the role sushi plays as a cultural artefact. Globalization is a critical concept for this research since globalization promotes the deterritorialization of Japanese cuisine and the deterritorialized Japanese cultural property is perceived as a threat against the power and identity of the Japanese nation. In this view the notion of culture is tightly attached to a geographical territory. This notion of the culture as geographically and ethnically bounded, and as a pure and homogeneous entity (Hannerz 1996) seems to help the development of an essentialist understanding of the Japanese nation. The next section briefly discusses the essentialism observed in the reaction of the Japanese government to transformed sushi abroad.

### **On Transformation: Essentialism and Japanese Cultural Identification**

Jean-Paul Sartre (1975) explains in his *Existentialism is a Humanism* that a human is different

from other objects because its existence is determined before its essence. By contrast the other objects exist because of the essence; for example, a letter opener exists because it is created under the purpose of cutting sheets of paper (Sartre 1975). Seen from this perspective, the existence of sushi has a purpose and is supported by its essence. Traditionalists, who criticize the transformation of sushi and/or other Japanese food, are likely to follow the essentialist perspective that a certain essence exists in the Japanese cuisine which makes a Japanese food Japanese. Accordingly when the transformed sushi does not include the expected essence, they feel discomfort, as expressed by the Japanese government in the fall of 2006.

In overseas, many restaurant businesses purport themselves as “Japanese restaurant” while they provide the dishes which are dramatically different from the original Japanese cuisine in terms of its materials, cooking methods, or some such. Therefore, in order to increase the degree of credence of Japanese restaurants overseas, to encourage the export of Japanese agricultural and marine products, and to support the dissemination of correct Japanese food culture and the expansion of Japanese food businesses in overseas countries, a council (hereinafter called the Council) is established by intellectuals to establish the system to certify the Japanese restaurant overseas.<sup>2</sup> (MAFF 2006)

They claim that “correct” Japanese food should be disseminated without clarifying what the “correct” Japanese food is. Here the “correctness” is the essence of Japan, and also can be

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<sup>2</sup> Original Japanese sentences: 海外においては、日本食レストランと称しつつも、食材や調理方法など本来の日本食とかけ離れた食事を提供しているレストランも数多く見られる。このため、海外日本食レストランへの信頼度を高め、農林水産物の輸出促進を図るとともに、日本の正しい食文化の普及や我が国食品産業の海外進出を後押し すること等を目的として、海外における日本食レストランの認証制度を創設するための有識者会議(以下、「会議」という。)を設置する。

recognized as the internally-constructed identity of Japan.

Identity is critical to the existence of individuals and nation states. The differentiation of self allows a nation to access certain types of power (Eriksen 1995), and an individual can accept such established national identity as parts of an individual identity. Essentialism of Japanese identity therefore brings the sense of cultural security for the nation of Japan and Japanese nationals. However, contrary to the insecurities expressed by the Japanese official sources, as it is explored in this thesis transformation of sushi abroad does not diminish its Japanese essence in the eyes of the Canadian customers.

The notion of essentialism, which is likely to recognize Japanese culture based on the conventional pure and homogeneous image of a culture, is challenged due to the deterritorialization of globalization. Today, the interconnectedness of the world is intensified, and the deterritorialization promoted by the interconnectedness partly drives the transformation of sushi associated with its consumption, production, and preparation in a different system of meanings. Such transformation however becomes an issue when one considers sushi as a symbol of Japanese identity, whether it be economic, political, or cultural.

This research examines the process of the transformation of sushi as a deterritorialized cultural artefact and its role embedded in social interaction as a food item. Upon inspection,

sushi in Canada differs from that in Japan. This can be explained by the drive for business and the inextricable link between the market and culture.

## **Structure and Organization of This Thesis**

This thesis is composed of six chapters including this introduction. The second chapter, *Studying Sushi: Eating, Working, Asking...* describes the data collection methods of this research, which consists of interviews, a survey, and participant observation. The third chapter, *Sushi in Japan and Sushi à la North America* examines the background of the present transformation and deterritorialization of sushi in the accounts of its historical development in two geographic locations, Japan and North America. The description of the historical transformation of sushi in Japan leads us to understand the flexible nature of sushi and the change of its role in Japanese food culture. Japanese food history in North America brings an understanding that immigrants and commercial activities paved the way for sushi to acquire its current popularity. By looking at history of sushi in Japan as well as in North America, I illustrate in a later chapter how the notions of “authenticity” and claims to originality are constructed. The fourth chapter, *The International Stage of Transformation: Sushi Producers and Customers in Victoria* describes the data gathered through interviews and a survey for sushi producers and customers. It reveals the demographic data of producers and customers, and the reasons why the customers in Victoria eat

sushi. The fifth chapter, *Cross-cultural Transformation of Sushi: Why Sushi Changed in Canada* provides the analyses of the data presented in the previous chapter. This chapter identifies the cultural and business factors which create the preference and aversion for sushi, and how sushi transforms with these factors. Finally the last chapter, *Conclusion* will illustrate the process of the deterritorialization and transformation of sushi in the Canadian cultural context.

## *2. Studying sushi: Eating, working, asking...*

The anthropological study of foods and dietary habits utilizes various approaches, such as constructing arguments based on historical data (Gabaccia 2003; Mintz 1985), cookbook analyses (Appadurai 1988), food-centered journals analyses (Cwiertka 2001b; Counihan 1999), surveys (Cwiertka 2001b), and interviews (Cwiertka 2001b; Yano n.d.). The production, distribution, and consumption of food involves the natural environment, health conditions and consciousness, consumers' work dynamics, family and family/work dynamics, economics, politics, religions, social status and roles, fads and styles, and finally permanent taste change (Anderson 2005). Accordingly, a variety of methodological approaches become necessary to understand the elements of our dietary habits, which are presumed to be parts of the underlying motivation of the transformation of sushi. I chose to use a combination of personal interviews, an anonymous questionnaire survey, and participant observations in order to study the transformation of sushi since, as parts of Canadian dietary habits, the process of transformation is likely to involve a wide range of businesses and cultural activities, beliefs, customs, and structures. Table 2.1 shows the methods used in this research with the type and number of data and the data collection periods. This short chapter describes the field site of this research,

followed by the explanations on methodology.

**Table 2.1 Methods Adopted in This Research**

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Subjects or Types</i>	<i>Conducted Period</i>	<i># of Data</i>
Interviews	Producers	July to November 2006	33
	Customers	March 2007	4
Survey	Customers	February and March 2007	61
Participant Observations	Eating sushi	July to November 2006	49 visits to 32 restaurants
	Work with producers	Summer 2005, and August 2006 to the present	2

## **The Research Site**

The area of this research is the Capital Regional District (CRD) of British Columbia, Canada.

The CRD is located on the southern end of Vancouver Island and is surrounded by oceans. The

West coast business centre of Canada is Vancouver; it is located 64 kilometres from Victoria, and

accessed by a one and a half hour ferry trip or by short flights. The CRD has an international

airport, however, freight from Japan is landed at Vancouver first and then sent to Victoria.

Among the fourteen municipalities constituting the CRD, this research covers Victoria, Langford,

Oak Bay, Saanich, and Esquimalt since these municipalities include the majority of Japanese

restaurants located in this region. The exclusion of a few restaurants in the other municipalities will not result in serious difference in terms of conclusion.

The location of this research is limited to the CRD region because of two reasons. First, the scale of the Japanese food business in Victoria is relatively small and accessible by one researcher, yet it is still large enough for one researcher to gain information for constructing a reasonable analyses and arguments about the transformation of sushi. Second, Victoria is located on the Pacific coast and embraces openness to various Asian cultural elements, including the Japanese. The 2006 Census distinguished two Asian ethnic groups, Chinese and Japanese who make up 4.5 percent of the population for Victoria in total (Statistics Canada 2007b). However, the presence of other Asian groups such as Koreans and short-term residents including Asian students who come to learn English, are easily recognizable in town. Since the presence of an Asian population is considered as one of the reasons for the popularity of sushi (Skelton 2004), I chose this region with an expectation to observe the dynamic movement of the transformation of sushi.

## **Interviews**

My interviews centred around two sources: sushi producers and customers. The interviews were conducted mainly with sushi producers in order to gather detailed information about their

customers' behaviours regarding the consumption of sushi. The customer behaviour will explain the reason why, what kind, when, and how people eat sushi, which provided the elements to identify the cultural codes which are promoting the transformation of sushi. In addition, the interviews with producers gave me the opportunity to learn the ethnic background of others who are engaged in the production of sushi. Since sushi producers are considered as one of the players promoting the transformation and deterritorialization of sushi, listening to their colourful stories flavoured with the ethnic particularities is important for this research. Consumer interviews were also conducted to clarify the questions which emerged through the analysis of the consumer survey, and to hear the consumers' views through their own narratives.

### **Producer Interviews**

The interview with sushi producers was conducted from July until November 2006. I conducted interviews with 84 percent of the 38 possible interview subjects that served sushi in the municipalities defined above (the number is as of November 31, 2006, based on the phonebook and my personally acquired information for newly opened businesses). This involved 33 interviews with owners, managers and a chef of Japanese restaurants, the owners of sushi catering businesses, the owner of a Japanese grocery store, and the managers of university cafeterias. In order to avoid sampling bias, all the producers whose business names which appear

in the Greater Victoria's 2006 phonebook were contacted for the interview.

The producer's interview contains 22 questions (see Appendix A). Most of the questions drafted for the producers and consumers were similar so that the possible perception gap between two groups could be recognized. The form of a semi-structured interview is chosen to maintain consistency between interviews, while giving space for the interviewees to expand on subjects (Bernard 2002).

Either English or Japanese was used for the interviews, depending upon the interviewee's request, and the interviews were recorded on audio tapes. To ease the pressure of recording, the tape recorder was placed close to the hand of the interviewee, and the interviewees were informed before starting the interview that they could stop the recording anytime they wanted. Eight interviewees declined to have their dialogues recorded, and a few wanted to occasionally stop recording.

### **Consumer Interviews**

Since sushi, as a commercial product in the Canadian market, exists within the balance between the demands (consumers) and supply (producers), I also listened to the consumers stories along with the customer survey explained below. Two interviews with four sushi consumers were conducted in March 2007. Despite the small sample size, the consumer interview significantly

contributed to the result of this research helping to close the discrepancy observed in the answers in the customer survey.

The customer interview was initially planned to be conducted with some participants of the customer survey. However, since none of the survey participants responded to my requests for interviews, I found other interviewees, two Euro-Canadian couples, whom were known to eat sushi. The interviewees were asked to answer the same questions as the self-administered questionnaire and also requested to clarify the details of their answers. The interviews were conducted in English and recorded in the same manner as the producer interviews.

### **Self-Administered Customer Survey**

The self-administered anonymous customer survey was implemented to obtain the consumer behaviour and demographic information directly from the customers. It was conducted in order to identify a potential gap between the producers' perceptions about their customers and the customer themselves. Understanding customers' demography and cultural-oriented behaviours is also critical for analyzing deterritorialization of sushi. The survey included questions to learn customer perceptions about the "authenticity of sushi," which provided an insight into how the notions of authenticity functions in the transformation of sushi. The survey allowed access to a larger number of samples than the interviews do, although this method involves a few

methodological risks explained later. Despite the risk, the customer survey enabled me to generalize and describe certain trends of sushi consumption which are promoting the transformation of sushi.

Since 70 to 80 percent of a mailing survey is usually not responded to (Bernard 2002), I distributed the questionnaire in person with a brief introduction of the research and myself. Sixty-one questionnaires in total were collected in February and March 2007 at a take-out-oriented Japanese food business and a full-service Japanese restaurant. Seven questionnaires were collected by the restaurant owner with his kind offer of help. The participants were provided the information sheet (see Appendix B) for detailed information of the survey. The questionnaire, which contains 24 questions (see Appendix B), is prepared in English since I learned through my work experience at a Japanese food provider and with interviews with the sushi producers that the English-speaking population makes up the majority of the sushi customers.

A few sampling biases are unavoidable for this self-administered survey and are: the limitation that the researcher incurs when choosing an available sampling location; the response effect by the researcher's direct contact with the survey participants; and the misinterpretation of questions by the participants as it is self-administered (Bernard 2002). The risk of misinterpretation of survey questions were minimized through repeated processes of testing and

revising the questionnaire. One response effect was observed in the process of collecting questionnaires as a participant asked whether what he ate in Canada was real sushi or not. I explained to the participant that there was no correct answer for this survey and what he thought about Canadian sushi was one of the research interests. Different types of businesses, a full-service restaurant and a grocery store, were chosen to gain access to different types of consumers. Both businesses were operated by Japanese owners. Since the majority of the consumer survey participants answered in the survey that the ethnicity of the sushi business operator does not affect their choice of sushi (for details, refer to Chapter 4), I judged that omitting non-Japanese-operated businesses would not cause significant bias on the research result.

### **Participant Observation: Eating and Working for Research**

Participant observation is an anthropological research method to observe research subjects on site. I implemented two different types of participant observations. First, I ate sushi, recorded data, and collected menus at Japanese restaurants in order to recognize the difference between Canadian and Japanese sushi. I had 49 recorded visits to 32 restaurants and delis providing sushi in CRD between July and November 2006. The subjective data (taste, smell of their products, atmosphere, congestion, service, and observation of the other customers) and objective data (the

time and date of the visit, ingredients of what I ate, the number of seats, price, and menu) were gathered through this participant observation. The trends of the Canadian sushi I recorded through this participant observation contributed to my recognition of the incredible variety of Canadian sushi and its dynamic transformation in CRD.

Second, I worked at two different types of Japanese food providers during two separate occasions. My working experiences with providers provided pre- and off-research observations about the transformation of sushi. Because of the regulation of the Ethics Approval obtained for this research, the conversation and information I obtained through these work experiences are not recorded in this thesis. However, the involvement in the daily operation of sushi businesses increased my general understanding of the sushi customers and producers and supported my data analyses.

This thesis describes the transformation of sushi based on the data collected through the methods explained in this chapter. Besides the contemporary data about the development of sushi in Canada, I also recognize the significance of historical data in order to understand the factors of the transformation and deterritorialization of sushi since the historical data reveal that what may be seen as a recent process is only part of a continuing process. The current transformation of sushi is just one example of its transformation in a particular setting in its history. The next

chapter will introduce the ever-changing history of sushi in Japan and North America.

### *3. Sushi in Japan and Sushi à la North America*

This chapter describes two sushi histories, the development of sushi in Japan and in North America. Besides the contemporary study, the historical study is also significant to understand the nature of sushi, which influences its transformation, since the meaning, function, and the form of this food item has been constructed throughout its history. The Japanese sushi history is compiled from a few key books, and in particular from the work of Toru Shinoda, the founder of sushi study in Japan. The North American sushi history described in this section is elucidated on the basis of research of newspaper articles and books about Japanese food and Japanese immigrants in North America. Particular attention is paid to the Canadian part of the history.

#### **History of Sushi in Japan**

The geographic and historical transformation of food shows us that what we eat continuously changes depending upon its surrounding political, economic, and natural environments. Looking at these changes, I believe that North American sushi is one of the new forms that are constantly emerging in the history of sushi evolving within the environments mentioned above. This section introduces the chronological change of Japanese sushi, which simultaneously shows the diversity

of the food categorized as “sushi.” I will illustrate the wide range of food called “sushi” and how it reveals the ambiguity of the definition of what sushi is. I also show that such an ambiguity provides the basis that leads to the variation of sushi in the world today.

### **Origin of Japanese Sushi**

No one knows the exact time when sushi started to be eaten in the Japanese archipelago. Originally sushi was a preserved food of animal protein made in South East Asia. Among the etymological theories of origin of the word, sushi (Shinoda 2002; Yoshino 1990). One recounts that sushi was originally pronounced as *Sashi*, which meant pickled fish in salt and rice in ancient China around 200 C.E. (Yoshino 1990). This indicates a probability that sushi was brought to Japan from Eurasian Continent via China. Anthropologists, Naomichi Ishige and Kenneth Ruddle (1990), suggest a strong connection between the distribution of wet paddy rice cultures and ancient sushi, particularly centred in the plateau area of northern Thai, Myanmar, and Laos. Toru Shinoda (2002), the pioneering Japanese sushi scholar, however, mentions that sushi was invented by mountain people in South East Asia who faced the scarcity of animal protein. Either way, both theories agree that there was a symbiotic relationship between sushi and rice, the former being used as a cooking technique to preserve animal protein by the fermentation of rice.

This proto-type sushi is called *nare-zushi* in Japan and still made in some regions. The famous example of this type of sushi is *funa-zushi* (fermented sushi of crucian carp) still made in the regions around Lake Biwa in Shiga Prefecture. *Nare-zushi* is a fermented preserved food, which does not use vinegar but rather rice to promote lactic fermentation (Shinoda 2002). The fish is disembowelled, salted, and then pickled with cooked rice in the range of several months to one year or even longer (Shinoda 2002). The main food item preserved here is fish. Rice in this sushi is thrown away and not eaten because after pickling the rice becomes like a sloppy porridge soaked in fishy water (Shinoda 2002).

The oldest evidence of the consumption of this *nare-zushi* in Japan is described in *Yōrō Ritsuryō* in the 8th century as a tax to the imperial court (Shinoda 2002). Another book written in 930 C.E. tells of 14 different types of *nare-zushi* from 29 provinces. Some of these include shellfish, salmon, crucian carp, deer, and wild boar (Shinoda 2002). Wild meat sushi was made in mountains, the sushi of sweetfish was mostly made near big rivers, and shellfish sushi was common in coastal areas (Shinoda 2002). By the end of the 13th century, *nare-zushi* was widely eaten in Japan even by peasants in rural areas. The book, *Saseki-shū* introduces the story that a peasant in northern Japan who refused to share *nare-zushi* with his little son was divorced by his angry wife because she worried about her husband's extreme stinginess (Shinoda 2002). This episode indicates that sushi was commonly eaten across all of Japan among a wide range of

social classes.

### **Emergence of New Type of Sushi**

By the 15th century, the food production technology was improved in Japan, and accordingly with the unprecedented wealth of food the importance of sushi as preserved food was reduced. People's interest shifted from the shelf life of sushi to its flavour and taste, which eventually created a new style of sushi called *namanare* (Hibino 1999; Shinoda 2002; Yoshino 1990). This was a semi-fermented sushi which had a shortened fermentation period. Fermented sour rice is eaten with semi-raw fish in the case of *namanare* sushi (Yoshino 1990). After the emergence of *namanare* people became more impatient in regards to waiting for sushi to be fully fermented. Some sushi used *sake* (rice wine) or rice malt to increase the speed of fermentation (Hibino 1999). Eventually, by the 17th century, a style of sushi called *haya-zushi*, which means "speed sushi," appeared (Shinoda 2002). Most of *haya-zushi* used vinegar on rice to make it sour, instead of creating sourness by fermentation. Although such vinegared sushi was considered inauthentic in the middle of 18th century, it fitted the consumers' needs and eventually became the main stream of sushi (Hibino 1999). One of the examples of *haya-zushi* is *saba-zushi* (mackerel sushi) in Kyoto, which is still popular today. This sushi uses vinegar to make sushi sour sooner; however, the rice is still fermented for one night (Shinoda 2002).

### ***Nigiri-zushi and Maki-zushi: Birth of Fast-food Sushi***

In the early 19th century, a form of fast food sushi, *nigiri-zushi*, finally appeared in Tokyo, which was called Edo at that time.

The city of Edo accommodated many male workers from rural villages who came to

Edo to look for work. Since they ate out at cheap restaurants or food stalls, the



Figure 3.1 *Nigiri-zushi* (egg wrapped with a strip of nori; raw salmon), photographed by the author

restaurant industry, including sushi restaurants<sup>3</sup>, flourished in Edo (Hibino 1999). *Nigiri-zushi* – the style of sushi which puts a slice of fish or cooked egg on a small boat-shaped, vinegared rice ball – appeared as a commoners’ food in the 1820s. Hanaya Yohei, a sushi restaurant owner in Edo, is often credited as the inventor of the *nigiri-zushi*. However, scholars recognize him as the person who improved the style of sushi that already existed into *nigiri* style (Hibino 1999; Shinoda 2002; Yoshino 1990).

As Yohei’s *nigiri-zushi* became so popular in Edo, other sushi shops took advantage of the boom and served *nigiri-zushi* (Yoshino 1990). Eventually, the commercial dominance of *nigiri-zushi* made it a specialty of Edo (Tokyo). Later in Tokyo, sushi producers’ business

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<sup>3</sup> Sushi restaurants here are the food service establishment which serves sushi exclusively or dominantly in menu.

strategy has dichotomized *nigiri-zushi* into two different business lines: one dealing with sushi as *haute cuisine* delivered to customers' homes, and another as a fast food sold at food stalls (Hibino 1999; Yoshino 1990). The fast-food line however was forced to end in 1939 due to the public health policy and traffic law (Hibino 1999; Yoshino 1990).

Another new type of sushi that appeared by the 19th century is *maki-zushi* (sushi rolls), which is the style of sushi commonly consumed in North America today. Although the history of the development of *maki-zushi* is still mostly unknown, it is considered that original-*maki-zushi* started at least by the late 18th century and originated from *sugata-zushi*, or the sushi in the shape of a whole fish (Hibino 1999). Shinoda (2002) mentions that *maki-zushi* was basically a vegetarian sushi. He assumes that the fish-lovers and



Figure 3.2 *Maki-zushi* 1 (*tekka-maki*, or raw tuna roll, small rolls in the conventional Japanese style), photographed by the author



Figure 3.3 *Maki-zushi* 2 (BC Rolls, thick roll in the inside-out style), photographed by the author

sushi-lovers might create *maki-zushi* for the feast after Buddhist ceremonies or as a fast-food sometime before the mid Edo era (Shinoda 2002). All types of sushi that exist in Japan today came into existence by the 19th century.

### **Standardization of Japanese Sushi**

In 1868, the Shogunate regime ended in Japan, and a new government was established. The new government moved the capital city to Tokyo and tried to create united a ‘national’ culture based on the culture in Tokyo (Hibino 1999). This policy provided an advantage for Tokyo sushi, represented by *nigiri-zushi*, over other local-style sushi (Hibino 1999). Furthermore, the Great Kanto Earthquake struck Tokyo in 1923 and resulted in many sushi chefs avoiding Tokyo and returning to their rural homes. These chefs brought the art of *nigiri-zushi* to all areas of Japan (Hibino 1999). Finally, and the most importantly, the food control enacted after the Second World War strongly influenced the standardization of sushi in the Tokyo-style (Shinoda 2002). To elaborate on this, facing severe shortage of food, the government banned the operation of restaurant businesses except coffee shops after the War (Hibino 1999; Kokkai 1947). A serious threat to their business, the sushi producers in Tokyo propositioned and lobbied the government to continue their restaurant business as the contract manufacturer, who exchanges 180cc of rice with ten pieces of sushi including *nigiri* and rolls (Hibino 1999; Shinoda 2002). As this set of

*nigiri* and rolls became the only way for sushi restaurants to continue their business, sushi producers in other regions followed this style and started to make Tokyo-style sushi. As a result, this bylaw standardized sushi all over Japan to the Tokyo-style *nigiri-zushi* (Hibino 1999; Shinoda 2002). In addition, the tradition of local sushi was abated because of the continuing food shortage during the War (Shinoda 2002). The people who were born in the middle or after the Second World War therefore became more familiar with *nigiri-zushi*, rather than the local, traditional sushi of their hometowns (Shinoda 2002). The political environment in the 19th and 20th centuries pushed *nigiri-zushi* from a local cuisine to that of the national cuisine.

Also, the development of freezing technology helped the standardization of sushi. Before the Second World War, fresh fish was only eaten in coastal areas. However, the development of transporting and freezing technologies makes fresh fish available all over Japan (Shinoda 2002). Therefore, even after the period of food control ended, people could keep eating *nigiri-zushi*. Today, this *nigiri-zushi* is a well-known sushi that represents Japan in North America. The popular sushi-bar in North America was also a unique characteristic of the Tokyo-style sushi business (Yoshino 1990).

Currently in Japan, sushi businesses must continually develop to stay competitive. *Kaiten-zushi* or the rotating sushi bar was developed in the 1960s to cut labour cost and provide low-cost sushi (Watanabe 2002). The introduction of this technology contributed to a popularized

sushi and expanded the range of sushi customers from exclusively high-end to that which included more commoners. Although no exact number is available due to the lack of an organized institute of the rotating sushi bar industry, it is estimated that the rotating sushi bar occupies 12 to 13 percent of restaurants in the entire sushi industry and 40 percent of the sales of the industry in Japan (Watanabe 2002). The author of *Kaiten-zushi no Keizaigaku* (Economics of Rotating Sushi Bar) recalls that when he saw a rotating sushi bar for the first time, it reminded him of innovative-style *kabuki* which was newly emerged after the Second World War (Watanabe 2002). The rise of the rotating sushi bar will contribute to transform the “traditional” image of sushi in Japanese food culture.

## **History of Japanese Food in North America**

### **Introduction of Japanese Food to North America and Japanese Immigrants**

The history of Japanese food in North America begins with the history of Japanese immigrants. The United States Census in 1880 recorded one Japanese person in the Washington State (Ito 1969). The number of Japanese immigrants in North America started to increase after 1887 due to the political state in Japan (Ito 1969). In the early twentieth century, the “Japanese towns” – the quarters where the Japanese population concentrated – flourished and were established in Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland in the United States, and Vancouver in Canada (Ito 1969).

Such Japanese towns became the first place to develop Japanese food on North American soil. In 1887, the first Japanese restaurant was opened in San Francisco (Cwiertka 2001a). Since then, a number of Japanese restaurants and Japanese food manufacturers, such as tofu and *konnyaku*<sup>4</sup> stores, ran their businesses in each Japanese town (Ito 1969). For example in the early 20th century, in “Little Tokyo,” which was the Japanese town on Powell Street in Vancouver, there were 42 grocery stores, six rice shops, 14 Japanese restaurants, four *tofu*-makers, three fish stores, one *kamaboko*<sup>5</sup> store, three milk delivery services, and 29 fruit and sweets stores (Ito 1969). In Seattle and Vancouver, Japanese noodles and sushi were also provided exclusively for the Japanese immigrants (Cwiertka 2001a; Ito 1969). A Japanese man in the first generation recalled that the Japanese town in Vancouver had more goods and services than rural villages in Japan. A woman of the first generation recalled that their diet in those days was “pure Japanese style,” which meant to say the diets were identical (Ito 1969:932).

The atmosphere of the areas where the Japanese population concentrated appeared to be slum-like for a Japanese diplomat; many businesses in town were operated for the working class Japanese and appeared unhealthy and primitive (Ito 1969). The majority of immigrants were single males, who dreamed of earning money and making a triumphant journey back to their homelands (Yoshida 2003). With these young males, Japanese towns were likely to be places for

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<sup>4</sup> *Konnyaku* is a jelly-like food made of powder from a type of potato.

<sup>5</sup> *Kamaboko* is steamed or baked white fish paste.

drinking, fighting, and prostitution (Yoshida 2003). Together with the language barrier and the differing customs, Japanese immigrants were therefore likely to be isolated from the other ethnic groups and thereby kept their Japanese lifestyle brought from the homeland (Ito 1969; Yoshida 2003).

### **The Second World War and the Change of the Diet of Japanese Immigrants**

The Japanese population in Canada kept growing in the early 20th century. According to the Canadian Census in 1941, 23,224 Japanese and Canada-born Japanese lived in Canada, and of those 95.6 percent of them lived in British Columbia (Yoshida 2003). However, after the Pacific War started in December 1941, the Canadian government decided to remove the Japanese and Japanese Canadians from the Pacific coast to the interior and eventually sent them to land east of the Rocky Mountains (Gamou 1962; Yoshida 2003). Due to the relocation, the Japanese food stores in Vancouver were closed (Yoshida 2003) and the war stunted the development of Japanese food in Canada. Although the Japanese and Japanese Canadians were allowed to come back to the west coast of Canada in 1949, the Japanese town in Vancouver was not reconstructed after World War II (Gamou 1962; Yoshida 2003).

The Second World War also changed the diet of the Japanese people in Canada. Before the war, the Japanese in Canada ate Japanese-style meals three times a day, although they had

started to gradually incorporate non-Japanese foods, such as chop suey and chow mein, which were common in Chinese-American dishes (Ishige et al. 1985; Ito 1969). However, since rice was not imported from Japan anymore after the war, they started to regularly incorporate Western food into their diets (Turumi 1962). Particularly, the second generation of Japanese immigrants preferred the combination of Canadian and Japanese food (Turumi 1962). Some people grew Japanese vegetables in their gardens and bought canned *tofu* and *konnyaku* because the fresh ones were not easily available after the war (Turumi 1962). During this transitional era, the dietary habits of the Japanese population in North America were diversified.

### **1960s: Discovery of a New Taste for Canadians**

The first recorded indication that Japanese food began to be eaten by the non-Japanese Canadian population actually appeared before the war in a newspaper article of the Toronto *Globe and Mail* on March 25, 1935. The article in the Homemaker section described a party held at a house of a wealthy Japanese banker, who served foreign and Japanese food for his guests (Toronto *Globe and Mail* 1935). This suggests that before World War II, business communications between Canadians and the upper-class Japanese promoted by Japan's diplomatic and economic expansion, contributed to the dissemination of Japanese food in Canada. However, further evidence is necessary to determine the precise timing of the introduction of Japanese food to

non-Japanese Canadians.

In the late 1950s, Japanese food started to be eaten by some Euro-Canadians. When Turumi implemented a participant observation study in Steveston, BC, from September 1958 to September 1959, she observed that one Euro-Canadian man and one Euro-Canadian woman separately came into a restaurant operated by a Japanese Canadian, who ordered chop suey and rice from the menu, and ate them with a lot of soy sauce on top (Turumi 1962). The Japanese chef of the restaurant said to her that “Caucasians recently started to prefer rice” (Turumi 1962:87). Also, some Japanese wives invited Euro-Canadian friends to their homes and offered them Japanese cuisine; these dishes were well-accepted (Turumi 1962). After World War II, the Japanese population did not assemble into large communities as in the pre-war time, and the second generations, who spoke English more fluently, made efforts to integrate into the activities outside of the Japanese communities (Turumi 1962; Yoshida 2003). The early diffusion of Japanese food to the non-Japanese population in Canada might have been encouraged through such associations after World War II.

In the 1960s, the prevalence of the articles about Japan and the Japanese food in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* (1963, 1967) suggests the increasing interest of Canadians towards this ethnic cuisine. For example, an article discussed the aesthetic beauty of *sashimi* (raw fish) and seaweed, which were not familiar for “the many Canadians [who think that] Japanese food is

either *sukiyaki*<sup>6</sup> or *tempura*<sup>7</sup>” (Toronto Globe and Mail 1967:W3).

The influences from the United States are widely considered as contributing reasons to this popularity. Many American soldiers, who experienced Japanese food during the US occupation of Japan between 1945 and 1952, became the customers of Japanese restaurants in the US which used to exclusively serve the Japanese population (Cwiertka 2006). Also, the openness of the hippies in the US to a diversity of food, including that of Japanese food, helped it to reach to a larger population in the late 1960s (Cwiertka 2001a). Furthermore, the Japanese economic growth in the 1950s and 60s increased the exchange of commodities and human interactions between North America and Japan. For example, in the 1960s, Japan was an important importer of Canadian wheat (Toronto Globe and Mail 1967). The intensified economic relationship likely helped to attract more attention to Japanese culture and thus also to Japanese food.

### **1970s: Teppanyaki and the Juggling Japanese Chef**

In the 1970s, not only the returning American soldiers but also celebrities began to express their preference for Japanese food because it was simple, artistic, healthy, and natural (Toronto Globe and Mail 1974). A great contributor to the rising popularity of North American Japanese food in

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<sup>6</sup> *Sukiyaki* is a Japanese beef hotpot with vegetables.

<sup>7</sup> *Tempura* is deep-fried vegetables, meat, and fish with coating.

the 1970s was *teppanyaki*. *Teppanyaki* is a dinner of cooked meat, seafood, and vegetables on a griddle plate. It was invented in the late 1940s through the interaction between American “GI” soldiers in Japan and a Japanese chef (Cwiertka 2005, 2006). This combination of the American and Japanese food cultures created *teppanyaki*.

In 1964, Hiroaki Aoki, who is known as Rocky Aoki, opened a *teppanyaki* restaurant called “Benihana,” in New York (Cwiertka 2005, 2006). The restaurant became successful because it offered the mixed experiences of the traditional Japanese atmosphere with non-traditional Japanese food and entertainment (Cwiertka 2005). Americans found that eating Japanese cuisine for the first time was an adventure (Ishige 1982). In order to satisfy the spirit of adventure, Japanese restaurants in the United States established a “stage set,” such as Japanese-style décor and staff in Japanese dress (Ishige 1982). Benihana provided a nice introductory step for the North American population which was not yet familiar with Japanese cuisine. By the late 1970s, Benihana established more than thirty restaurants all over the United States (Cwiertka 2005). *Teppanyaki* also contributed to the development of Japanese food in Canada. A few sushi restaurant owners interviewed in this research expressed that they came to Canada in the 1970s and 80s for work in the *teppanyaki* businesses. As these owners were the pioneers of Japanese food business in Victoria, it is not unreasonable to state that *teppanyaki* provided the foundation to create the present Japanese food business in Victoria.

### **1980s and 1990s: Sushi Boom – Emergence of Hybrid Japanese Cuisine**

By the 1980s, supported by the diversification and rapid change of North American dietary habits, ethnic food businesses expanded (Ishige et al. 1982; Restaurant Business 1985). This shift of the population's food preference was encouraged by the availability of various animal proteins and the spread of consciousness and information regarding health (Ishige et al. 1982). In 1977 Senator George McGovern and his group issued Dietary Goals for the United States (the McGovern Report) in order to warn the Americans to incorporate more vegetables and grains into their diet (Watanabe 2006). Another element that contributed to the diversification of people's food preferences was the increase of overseas travelers. The Americans who took advantage of the strong US dollar to travel abroad brought back new tastes to North America (Restaurant Business 1985). In the 1980s, the establishment of Japanese factories in North America, such as those of auto makers, enticed large companies to become involved in the Japanese food business. The American Restaurant Association (ARA) started its connection with a Japanese company, Mitsui, in 1976 for breaking into the Japanese food market (Blake 1988). Although they did not first exchange menus or food with their Japanese partner, this engagement eventually developed into the ARA Japanese Food Festival in 1985 (Blake 1988). As a result, contract companies became interested in incorporating authentic Japanese menus and in learning

more about preparation methods (Blake 1988). Major companies and organizations, such as IBM, Xerox, the Pentagon, and Smith Kline, offered Japanese food in their cafeterias, which served 55,000 employees in total (Blake 1988). For the Japanese Food Festival in 1988, Japanese chefs invited by ARA taught American chefs to serve appropriate Japanese food for the workers of Japanese factories, which were being built more and more in the late 1980s (Blake 1988). These implementations were fuelled by the rapid expansion of Japanese businesses in North America.

Sushi began to become very popular in the early 1990s in Canada, although its name had already been recognized in the 1980s (Restaurant Business 1985; Skelton 2004). During the 1980s and 90s in the United States, sushi became popular as an exotic, ethnic *haute cuisine*, then eventually “became a hip and trendy food for the young,” and finally became so popular that it was sold at supermarkets and take-out corners (Cwiertka 2005:256). Today in Vancouver there are twice as many Japanese restaurants than there are Starbucks coffee houses and three times more than that of McDonald’s fast food restaurants (Skelton 2004). These numbers indicate that Japanese food became widely accepted by non-Japanese populations in Vancouver. The presumed reasons for this sushi boom in Vancouver is considered to be the healthiness of sushi, the availability of fresh, high-quality, and low-priced seafood, a large Asian immigrant population, and the ease with which sushi could be obtained and consumed (David 1998; Kochilas 1991; Skelton 2004).

Along with the popularity of sushi, traditional sushi chefs faced increasing demands to accommodate local tastes in the 1990s (David 1998). Some sushi chefs are positive about this localization. Hidekazu Tojo, a leading sushi chef in Vancouver, recognizes that the key difference between Japanese sushi and his sushi is that “[his] is a regional style based on Pacific and West Coast seafood and products” (LaRivière 1999:28). Others however, disagree with such localization or hybridization of sushi. Hiro Yoshida, the owner-chef of Hiro Sushi in Toronto says, “I believe my first responsibility is to provide genuine Japanese sushi” (LaRivière 1999:26). Tyler Cowen (2004) analyzes that the innovative power of hybrid cuisine is composed of three elements: competition, experiments, and pride. The pride in being a Japanese cultural successor of some Japanese sushi chefs conflicts with the pressure of localization in order to survive the business competition.

Today the sushi boom still continues. However, Tojo says sushi restaurants in Vancouver are reaching a saturation point (Skelton 2004). Due to the rapid growth of sushi consumption, a number of people preparing sushi in North America might lack appropriate knowledge to handle raw fish (Skelton 2004). Since the Japanese custom of apprenticeship was not disseminated with sushi, the lack of proper knowledge among some sushi chefs exposes the Canadian sushi eaters to a certain level of health risk. The departure of North American sushi from the traditional Japanese style brings the health issue into question and creates a series of authenticity

discussions about the future of Japanese cuisine in Canada.

The history of sushi reveals how and why it became the style we enjoy today in Japan and North America. The historical transformation of Japanese sushi shows its flexible nature, which can accommodate a wide range of food items. In addition, it gives us background information why sushi can transform in North America. Moreover, it also tells us that sushi, in particular *nigiri-zushi*, is strongly associated with commercial activities from the beginning of its history. The development of sushi today is not unrelated to its historical development as a commercial product. Furthermore, in the North American history of sushi it is shown how the deterritorialization of sushi started in the political and economic interactions between North America and Japan. It shows the process of the localization of sushi as a food product outside of the Japanese cultural context. The next chapter will describe the production and consumption of sushi in the North American city of Victoria, in order to clarify the cross-cultural transformation of sushi in business scenes and the background of its deterritorialization.

#### *4. The International Stage of Transformation: the Sushi Producers and Customers in Victoria*

Just as the production of food products were commercialized in the 20th century, today the production of sushi is no different and is highly commercialized in Canada. This chapter observes Canadian sushi in the commercial context and describes the field of sushi transformation – the consumer market in Victoria – from the perspectives of two different players in the market: producers and customers. Sushi producers are presumed to be responsible for parts of the process of the transformation of sushi through their business decisions. It is also an interesting topic to pursue how ethnic diversity of the sushi production in Victoria represents and influences the deterritorialization and transformation of sushi. Understanding producers will therefore provide critical information for the examination of the process of the transformation of sushi. Customers are also considered to be significant in the transformation process. As a food product, the existence of sushi relies on the balance between the demand and supply in the market. Considering the business environment in which the Canadian sushi is placed, the examining of customers' demography, behaviours and thoughts which might be relevant to the consumption of sushi, is also vital for this study.

This chapter first describes Victoria's sushi producers based on the result of semi-structured interviews conducted with them. Then, the sushi customers are analyzed through the customer survey results and interviews.

## **Producers**

### **Overall View of the Victoria's Japanese Restaurant Business**

Victoria's hospitality business, that encompasses the restaurant business, hosts more than 3.5 million visitors each year (City of Victoria 2007). Tourism is one of the major economic forces in the Capital Regional District of British Columbia (CRD), and accordingly Victoria is a city with one of the most restaurants<sup>8</sup> per capita in North America (Fields 2006). The official number of restaurants operating in Victoria is not available. I requested information from the City of Victoria on the total number but was informed that it fluctuates frequently. However, it is said that 265 restaurants operated in 2006 (Fields 2006).

The Greater Victoria area has more Japanese restaurants than that of McDonald's restaurants. As of November 2006, a total of 37 Japanese restaurants and sushi manufacturer ran businesses in the areas of Victoria, Oak Bay, Saanich, Langford, and Esquimalt. (In the autumn

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<sup>8</sup> Restaurant is defined as "any public place that specializes in the sale of prepared food for consumption on or off premise" (Powers 1995:28), and includes the following types of food service establishments: full service, theme, coffee shop, cafeteria, smorgasbord, and fast food (Brymer 1991).

of 2008, the number was 39 according to the phonebook.) Twenty five of them are located in Victoria, mostly in downtown area, and the others are scattered in the neighbouring regions. Since the first Japanese restaurant in Victoria opened in the late 1970s, the number of the Japanese restaurant in town has increased. According to Ryan and Karen, a Euro-Canadian couple who participated in the sushi consumer interview, the number particularly increased dramatically in the last five years. Attesting their comments, the number of newspaper articles using the word “sushi” increased in 55 percent in Canada from 2001 to 2007<sup>9</sup>. The size of the Japanese restaurants<sup>10</sup> varies in Victoria. The largest restaurant has about 140 seats while nearly half of the Japanese restaurants in Victoria have less than 40 seats. Most of the Japanese restaurants welcome both eat-in and take-out customers, while a few businesses extensively or exclusively focus on sushi catering. The majority of the restaurants provides food in a Japanese atmosphere which is staged by the décor, by using things such as *tatami* mats (straw mat), bamboo sticks, paper lanterns, and other Japanese artefacts.

The informants from the sushi producers’ side include the Japanese restaurant owners, managers and chefs, a Japanese grocery store owner, sushi catering business owners, a manager of Chinese buffet restaurant which serves some sushi, and university cafeteria managers. The

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<sup>9</sup> The result is based on a search through the Canadian Newsstand which covers more than 150 Canadian newspapers, including *The Globe and Mail National Post*, *Montreal Gazette*, *Ottawa Citizen*, *Toronto Star*, *Regina Leader Post*, *Edmonton Journal*, *Vancouver Sun* and the *Victoria Times Colonist*.

<sup>10</sup> Excluding the sushi producers in food courts or oriented to take-out businesses.

term “Japanese food industry/business” includes the above mentioned businesses but excludes whole sale sellers of Japanese food with whom I had no contact. Out of 39 potential interviewees including the university cafeterias, 38 were contacted for an interview and five of them declined the request. The rejection rate of 13 percent is significantly lower than the rate I assumed. This may be due to the kindness of local business owners and managers in supporting a student of a local university.

### **Demography of Sushi Producers**

The following section is the results of the sushi producers’ interviews. The questions used for the interview is available in Appendix A. Twenty-four males and nine females represented their businesses and answered interviews. The gender ratio of interviewees does not necessary imply that Victoria’s Japanese food industry is male-dominant because female partners often work with male chefs and owners although most of these females were not present in the interviews as the speaker of the businesses. However, based on my dining experiences, I can still state that a male chef is more common than a female chef in Victoria’s Japanese restaurant industry. It is probably related to the Japanese occupational tradition that the sushi chef is an occupation exclusively occupied by males. The average age of the interviewees is forty years old. Income is a sensitive question for some interviewees and many of them declined to provide the data. Based on the data

available from nine interviewees, the average annual income of the Japanese restaurant owners and chefs are approximately 47,000 dollars, which is higher than the average annual income of restaurant and food services manager and cook, which was 27,279 dollars and was 17,451 dollars respectively in Greater Victoria in 2003 (City of Victoria 2007). However, it is anticipated that this data excludes the tip income.

The ethnic background of sushi producers is significant in analyzing the deterritorialization and transformation of sushi. Based on my dining experiences at all of the Japanese restaurants which run business in the researched regions in 2006, it was revealed that the Japanese food is fused not only with the culinary preferences originating from Europe but also with other ethnic culinary traditions depending on the chef's ethnicity. Since sushi is likely to be recognized as a Japanese cultural property (Bestor 2000), I paid particular attention when classifying the Japanese food businesses in Victoria into the group operated by the Japanese (including Japanese Canadians) and the group operated by the non-Japanese. However, it is difficult to clearly distinguish the businesses by ethnicity because some stores are co-owned by multiple ethnic groups (e.g. Japanese and Chinese) or the owner and the manager or chef are from different ethnic groups (e.g. Euro-Canadian owner with a Japanese manager). Also, I recognize the problem of arbitrarily creating boundaries for categorizing a person into a particular ethnic group, especially in a country like Canada where many people possess multiple

ethnic origins. However, due to the connection of sushi with Japanese identity, it is reasonable for this research to categorize the Japanese food producers, at least, into Japanese and non-Japanese groups. Furthermore, the ethnic categorization might reveal the possible network of people within the industry, which influences the balance of power within the industry.

The ethnicity of the Japanese food producers in Victoria includes Japanese, Koreans, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Chinese Cambodian. This classification follows their own claims and the information within the industry. Because Victoria's sushi industry is small, describing each informant's ethnic background will make it easy to identify the person. In order to avoid the risk of individual identification, I avoid describing details and defining each ethnicity but simply use the ethnicity titles mentioned by the producer themselves. English pseudonyms were also assigned to each interviewed sushi producer regardless of ethnicity. Producer's ethnic origin is revealed only when it is significant.

The number of businesses operated by each ethnic group in the Japanese food industry in Victoria and the number of interviewees from each ethnic group are counted in Table 4.1. The total number of business in Table 4.1 is larger than the actual number of business because multiple ethnicities are involved in the operation of some restaurants.

**Table 4.1 Numbers of Business Establishments in the Entire Japanese Food Business in Victoria and of Interviewees Categorized by Ethnicity (as of November 2006)**

Ethnicity of Producer	# of business in the Entire J. Food Industry in Vic. (%) <sup>11</sup>	The number of interviewee (%)	Notes
Japanese	18 (47)	15 (45.5)	including one Japanese Canadian
Chinese	10 (26)	5 (15.1)	including one Chinese Cambodian
Vietnamese	8 (21)	4 (12.1)	
Korean	6 (16)	5 (15.1)	
Euro-Canadians	2 (5)	3 (9.0)	
Unknown	1 (2)	1 (3.0)	Non-Japanese owner and manager
TOTAL	---	33 (100)	

Ninety percent of the interviewees are Asian-Canadians, who are first generation immigrants to Canada from Asian countries, except two interviewees who were born in Canada. It was mentioned in interviews that they chose Canada as it was an attractive land for those who yearned to live overseas and as the Canadian government issued visas more readily than the United States. All the Euro-Canadian interviewees are managers of university cafeterias; they engage in the selling of sushi but do not produce it. Within the 38 Japanese restaurants and sushi catering businesses, 13 restaurants (34 percent) are owned or co-owned by the Japanese. Through interviews and dining experiences, it is confirmed that at least five more restaurants have hired Japanese or Japanese Canadians as their manager or chef. Therefore, about half of the Japanese

<sup>11</sup> The businesses involving multi-ethnic operation are counted for each ethnic group.

restaurants in Victoria have the involvement of ethnic Japanese in their operation. The Chinese are the second largest operator group (26 percent), followed by the Vietnamese (21 percent) and Koreans (16 percent). If the Japanese working-holiday workers<sup>12</sup> serving or cooking in Japanese food businesses are counted, the number of businesses involving ethnic Japanese increases dramatically. However, this research does not include the working holiday workers because the turnover rate of this group seems quite high, according to my participant observation at Japanese restaurants. As a result their involvement in the Japanese food business is inconsistent and thereby their impact on the process of the transformation of sushi as the producer is considered minor.

It was recognized through the interviews that 60 to 70 percent of the businesses are independently operated by families. For example, the core operations at Albert's restaurant are carried out by the owner/chef and his wife who serves and carries out other aspects of the business. They do hire other employees but the husband and wife represent the core of the business. Their children are occasionally involved in the operation upon necessity.

In Victoria, probably similar to that of the other regions in Canada, the ownership and operation of the Japanese restaurants have been shifting from the hands of the Japanese to that of

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<sup>12</sup> Working holiday is the system to allow Japanese nationals between 18 and 30 years old to stay in designated countries at the maximum of one year while working in order to financially support their stay in the country. Canada and Japan signed the agreement to accept youth each other under this system (JAWHM 2001).

the non-Japanese. The ethnic group which initially started the Japanese restaurant businesses in Victoria was the Japanese, who came to Canada in the 1970s and 1980s. Today some of these earliest members, who have engaged in the Japanese restaurant business over twenty years, are near retirement age. Since 2005, I overheard four cases of ownership change in Victoria, and three of them were bought by the non-Japanese owners, and were further confirmed by interviews. A few other cases in which the operation of Japanese restaurants shifted from the Japanese to the other ethnicities prior to 2005 were also confirmed in interviews.

Since sushi is a cultural product, the transformation of sushi could be influenced by the degree of producers' exposure to the Japanese culture. I therefore asked producers about their visiting experience to Japan. Nineteen out of 33 informants have been to Japan and 15 of the 19 are Japanese. Eleven did not have a chance to visit the country; however, many of them experienced apprenticeship under Japanese chefs or learned skills when they bought their business from Japanese owners.

In order to understand the authenticity seeking attitude of sushi customers as a potential influencer of the transformation of sushi, I asked sushi producers' opinions regarding whether the ethnicity of the person making sushi affects their customers' decision to buy sushi. The opinions of the producers were evenly split. Fifteen out of 33 answered that Japanese ethnicity matters or somehow matters for their customers, and another 15 answered that it does not

strongly matter or not matter at all (three had no answer). Analyzing this data by ethnicity, 73 percent of producers with Japanese origin think that the ethnicity of sushi chef matters for their customers, while only 22 percent of non-Japanese producers think so. Many producers who do not think the chef's ethnicity affect their customers' attitude mentioned that the taste is the most important decision-making element for the customers. On the other hand, some interviewees, especially those who think that ethnicity is important, mentioned that they think the Japanese origin matters because their customers often ask the producers' ethnicity.

## **Customers**

As one of the driving-forces of transformation, I studied the demography of the customers of Japanese restaurant businesses through the self-administered customer survey and interviews (see Appendix B). Forty-one questionnaires were collected at a take-out focused Japanese restaurant, and twenty were gathered from a full-service sushi restaurant by the author and through the kind cooperation of the restaurant's owner-chef. In order to supplement the survey data, two Euro-Canadian couples who are sushi customers were interviewed. This section will describe the whole image of the sushi market, and based on the survey and interview data, the significant elements that affect sushi choice will be explained. These elements are important to understand the process of sushi transformation.

### **Description of the Market: Overall Picture of the Sushi Customers**

According to the 2006 Census, the CRD region has a population of about 330,000 whose average age is 43. The ratio of male versus female in the population is about 9:10 (157,000 male, 172,000 female) (Statistics Canada 2007a). The five most common ethnic origins in Victoria are English, Canadian, Scottish, Irish, and German (Statistics Canada 2007b). The number of the people who claimed Japanese origin in Victoria was 2,160, including those who claimed their multiple ethnic origins (955 out of 2160) (Statistics Canada 2007b). This is only 0.7 percent of the total population in CRD.

A number of residents in CRD are engaged in public administration, the health care industry, education, trade, and tourism. In 2003 the average family income in the CRD was 66,594 Canadian dollars and a household used 6,446 dollars annually for food on average. The food and transportation are the second largest segment of expenditure, after the expense for shelter (City of Victoria 2007).

Residents of Victoria are one of the most health-conscious people in Canada. The Victoria residents marked the second highest score in the category of “Eating Fruits and Vegetables<sup>13</sup>” and got the highest average in ten key health indicators compiled by the Vancouver

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<sup>13</sup> Category of “Eating Fruits and Vegetable” is defined as the percentage of population who eat fruit and vegetables five or more times a day.

Sun (Vancouver Sun 2006). Among the British Columbia residents, who have the lowest smoking rate and the longest average life expectancy, the residents in the Lower Mainland and Victoria are slimmer than the residents in other parts of British Columbia (Vancouver Sun 2006). People in British Columbia are the healthiest in Canada, and South Vancouver Island is the healthiest region in British Columbia (Vancouver Sun 2006).

### **Demographics of the Sushi Customer**

Since customers' purchasing power and behaviour would be collectively characterized by groups (Kotler 2001), it is significant to understand the demographics of sushi customers in order to identify the consuming behaviours which are integral to the transformation of sushi. How, then, do sushi customers compare to the demographics of the CRD? The customers' demography is similar to the producers' observation.

**Table 4.2 Demographic and Cultural Variety of Sushi Customers in Victoria 1**

		Venue (%)		Ethnicity (%)			Gender (%)		Age	Income	Japan Visit (%)		Japanese Friends (%)	
		Full-Service	Take-Out	Euro-origin	Asian-origin	African-origin	Male	Female	Average	Average (\$)	Yes	No	Yes	No
Venue	Full-Service			100	0	0	62	49	40.8	71,578	15	85	30	70
	Take-Out			79	17	3	48	52	36.1	56,250	39	61	56	44
Ethnicity	Euro-origin	34	66				51	49	37.9	69,032	31	69	46	54
	Asian-origin	0	100				60	40	22.5	23,333	80	20	80	20
	African-orgn	0	100				0	100	45	60,000	0	100	100	0
Gender	Male	36	64	86	14	0			38.2	71,842	50	50	45	55
	Female	25	75	85	10	5			35.0	55,000	20	80	55	45
Japan Visit	Yes	16	84	73	27	0	73	27	33.8	57,353			63	37
	No	41	59	92	4	4	41	59	39.4	63,421			41	59
Japanese Friends	Yes	21	79	76	19	5	48	52	35.4	55,178	41	59		
	No	44	56	95	5	0	57	43	39.0	68,148	22	78		

**Table 4.3 Demographic and Cultural Variety of Sushi Customers in Victoria 2**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Segments in Category</b>	<b>Number (valid percent)</b>
Residency (n=56, N of no answer=5)	Residents of Victoria	49 (87.5)
	Non-residents of Victoria	7 (12.5)
Vegetarianism / Veganism (n=61, N of no answer=0)	Yes	3 (4.9)
	No	58 (95.1)
Years of Eating Sushi (n=61, N of no answer=0)	Average: 15.2 years (longest: 66 years, shortest: 0.5 year)	
Frequency of Eating Sushi (n=61, N of no answer=0)	Twice to four times a week	17 (27.9)
	Once a week	17 (27.9)
	More than once a month	17 (27.9)
	Once a month	4 (6.6)
	More than once a year	6 (9.8)
	Once a year	0 (0.0)
	Less than once a year	0 (0.0)

The ethnicity and gender of the survey participants were not asked in the questionnaire, considering the sensitivity of these questions. Instead, I distributed 54 questionnaires directly to the participants and recorded for 41 survey participants about their observed gender and whether the customers have a Euro-origin, Asian-origin or African-origin. The result of this casual observation was listed in Table 4.2 with other demographic data provided by participants themselves. The result of the ethnicity coincides with the producers' observation that the majority of their customers are "Canadians," which, in this case, indicates the Euro-origin population. While the gender ratio of the two surveyed venues is about fifty-fifty, according to

the restaurants' owners, Hugh and Isabella, their restaurants have more female customers than males since their menus strongly emphasize on vegetables and organic ingredients.

The customers of Japanese restaurant businesses include a wide range of age groups. Average age of the entire group is 38 years old (mean = 37.67), which is slightly younger than the entire Victoria population. Among 56 participants who answered the age question, the largest age group was in their twenties (27.8 percent). The people in their forties, who were most often claimed by sushi producers as their largest segment of customers, come to the second largest group (21.3 percent). No age group is found as dominant sushi consumers, but rather sushi is widely consumed by the population whose ages are between 20 and 60.

The overall customers' average income is 61,545 dollars. This number is close to the average annual household income of 66,594 dollars in Victoria (City of Victoria 2007). Segmenting by store type, the customers' average annual household income of the take-out restaurant is 56,250 dollars while that of full-service sushi restaurant is 71,578 dollars. Forty-seven point four percent of the survey participants at the full-service sushi restaurant have more than \$90,000 annual household income, and 57.9 percent of its customers earn more than the average Victorians. On the other hand, only 5.6 percent of the take-out restaurant customers fall into the \$90,000 income segment. The largest income segment of this restaurant is \$50-70,000, occupying 41.7 percent of the customers who provided their income. This result

shows that overall sushi customers are spread around a wide range of income groups, while full-service restaurant are likely to attract a higher income group ( $p=.058$ ).

Both blue-collar and white-collar workers come to eat sushi. Eighty-seven point five percent of participants are the residents of Victoria. This survey is likely to undervalue the number of tourist since it was conducted in an off-season of tourism and at the local resident-oriented venues. However, considering the result with the statements of the majority of sushi producers that the number of tourist is not significantly large in their businesses, it is reasonable to say that the Victoria's sushi business is supported by local residents' consumption, although Victoria is a tourist town. The owners of the restaurants which are closer to the tourist centre mentioned having a higher percentage of tourist customers than those located in other parts of town.

One of the interests in my research was whether vegetarianism and veganism is a driving force of the current popularity of sushi. The answer is no. Less than five percent of the survey participants claimed themselves as vegetarian or vegan. Sushi is not a food for the people with a particular dietary habit but is rather consumed by customers with various dietary habits.

According to their own claims, 56 percent of participants eat sushi at least once a week. On average, customers started to eat sushi about 15 years ago. It means that they have been eating sushi since the early 1990s. Their claims match with the time when sushi became more

widely consumed in North America (Skelton 2004). This result indicates that like pizza, sushi has been consistently eaten in the food market in Victoria.

Thirty point one percent of survey participants have been to Japan. Although there is no data available at hand, it is highly unlikely that 30 percent of the entire population in Victoria have been to Japan before. It therefore reveals that people who have traveled to Japan are more likely to become the customer of Japanese restaurants; tourism experiences influences the dietary habits of people. However, it should also be noted that 40 percent of the all survey participants neither have been to Japan nor have a Japanese partner, friends, or acquaintances. This number shows on-going deterritorialization of the consumption of sushi that the country of Japan and the Japanese people do not necessarily associate with sushi's consumption anymore.

### **The Reason Why Victorians Eat Sushi**

Reasons for eating sushi, which are embedded in customers' cultural behaviours, are clearly important dimensions in the analyses of the deterritorialization and transformation of sushi. Six elements – service, taste, price, health, readiness to eat, and belief – which are considered to affect the people's decision-making (Wakabayashi 2003), were included in the consumer survey and the consumer was asked to place them in the order of priority (Question 9). Averages of each element were calculated to understand which element people are likely to give higher priority to

(see Table 4.4 for the result). The most important element for the participating individual was given a 1, and the least important element was given a 6; hence, smaller average signifies higher significance.

**Table 4.4 Average Value of Each Element in Significance of Choosing Sushi**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Taste</b>	<b>Health</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Readiness</b>	<b>Belief</b>
<b>Average</b> (all participants)	1.30	2.47	3.11	3.30	3.36	5.00

(1 = the most significant, 6 = the least significant)

According to the data, 81 percent of the participants ranked the taste as the most or the second most important element in choosing sushi. Preference of taste therefore becomes the most important criterion affecting customers' choice to eat sushi and their choice of a particular food establishment. This result follows the research result on Japanese food conducted by Naomichi Ishige and his group in the early 1980s in the United States, which concluded that the American people ate Japanese food because it was tasty (Ishige et al 1985).

Health is the second most important element for Victorians to choose sushi. The significance of a health reason has been suggested by magazine articles and scholars (David 1998; Ishige et al 1985; Skelton 2004). Also, 24 out of the 33 interviewed producers commented that health is a leading motivation for people in Victoria eating sushi. The total number of the

participants who ranked health as the most or the second most important reason in choosing sushi was 22 (36.0 percent), which is less than the half of that of “taste.” This result shows the consumers’ attitude that “I am health conscious but do not want to eat anything unsavoury.” Significance of health differs by gender but not strongly ( $p=.088$ ). Women tend to rank the significance of health higher than men. The attitude toward health does not differ much in different age groups ( $p=.746$ ).

Price is ranked as the third most significant element in choosing sushi, yet its overall significance is not remarkably different from those of service and readiness, which are explained below. Price is the element whose significance varies upon the market segment. The statistical analyses shows that when the participants are segmented by income, each group has a different attitude to the significance of price ( $p=.001$ ). The price consciousness is not proportional to the income. The highest income group, who claimed their annual household income over 90,000 dollars, is the least price conscious while the second highest income group (\$70,000-90,000) is the most price conscious. The difference between take-out business and restaurant business in terms of price is also statistically significant ( $p=.003$ ). This resulted because the business type highly relates to the customers’ income level ( $p=.000$ ). The details are explained in the later section.

Service and readiness have a similar significance level for the participants in choosing

sushi. The customers at a full-service restaurant are more likely to emphasize service than the ones of a take-out store. Producers also counted the readiness of sushi as an important reason for eating sushi. Some producers recounted that the customers like sushi for snacking because it can be ordered in small portions. People in different age groups have a moderate possibility to have a different attitude towards the significance of readiness ( $p=.158$ ). The participants in their twenties and over 61 years old were not likely to emphasize the significance of readiness. Difference of income is unlikely to influence the attitude towards readiness ( $p=.848$ ).

The research clarified that beliefs are not important to customers' decision to eat sushi in Victoria. Following the lead of Sidney Mintz, who remarked on the relationship between food consumption and religion in Western Societies (2002), I included Question 23 "One researcher has indicated that religious belief may influence the food choices of people. Would you say that religion has any influence on your choice to eat sushi?" As well, I included "belief" as a factor in Question 9. Among 56 participants who answered the question 23, 92.9 percent ( $n=52$ ) answered that religious belief does not affect their choice to eat sushi. Similarly in Question 9, "belief" is ranked the least significant element for the consumer to choose sushi.

The answer for Question 8 "Why do you choose this restaurant/store" also includes clues to why people eat sushi. The three most frequently mentioned reasons are the quality of the product, which includes its taste and freshness (73.2 percent); the price of products (41.1

percent); and the store location (30.4 percent)<sup>14</sup>. The customers attitude to value the quality of sushi does not significantly differ between take-out and full-service restaurants ( $p=.852$ ). However, the attitude to quality tends to change upon age ( $p=.002$ ). While no participant under twenty years old mentions quality as the reason why they choose the restaurant, the participants in their thirties all related to it. Eighty-four point six percent of the forty-years-old age group and 80.0 percent of the fifty-years-old group mention the quality of sushi in Question 8.

The result of a chi-square test ( $p=.002$ ) shows that the travel experience to Japan is highly likely to relate to people's attitude to seek quality in the sushi product. Eighty-six point five percent of the survey participants who have never been to Japan mentioned quality in Question 8, compared to 47.4 percent of those who have been to Japan. One concern raised with this result is the possible data contamination by the characteristics of research venue. The take-out restaurant where I collected the questionnaires is one of the epicentres of the Japanophiles in Victoria. Accordingly the store embraces more customers who have traveled to Japan than the other restaurant, and the result of a chi-square test shows that the research venue is likely to relate to the result of Question 12, "Have you ever been to Japan?" ( $p=.057$ ). Therefore one might doubt that this research shows a significant relation between the Japan visit and lower significance in quality of sushi product, because the majority (84.2%) of the Japan

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<sup>14</sup> The sum of the percent exceeds 100 percent since one answer includes multiple elements, such as price and quality.

visitors' sample is collected at the take-out restaurant. However, as mentioned above, the customers attitude to value the quality of sushi does not significantly differ by restaurants ( $p=.852$ ). The result that Japan visitors have less demands in quality is therefore confirmed.

Location is one of the elements which were voluntarily raised by customers as a reason why they choose a restaurant. The comments about proximity and convenience are included in the comment regarding location.

To summarize, taste has a consistent significance among the customers who visited sushi restaurants. Health is the second element which is likely to affect the reason for choosing sushi. Price, service, and readiness are considered significant at approximately the same level but the significance differs by demographic segments and experiential elements. The quality is also quite a significant element for choosing sushi; however, the quality-seeking attitude differs by age and the travel experience to Japan. Lastly, the location is also a relatively significant element for customers when choosing a store to eat sushi.

## Comparison of Customer Data and Producers' Observations on Customers

**Table 4.5 Comparison of Customer Data and Producers' Observations**

	<b>Customers</b>	<b>Producers</b>
Who are the Customers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Majority is Euro-Canadians</li> <li>● Local residents</li> <li>● Wide range of age between 20-60 years old</li> <li>● Male : Female = 50:50</li> <li>● People earn about the average income of Victoria</li> <li>● Majority is NOT vegetarian</li> </ul>	They recognize their customers are... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Majority is Euro-Canadians</li> <li>● Mostly local residents</li> <li>● Age: in their 20-50s</li> <li>● Male : Female = 50:50</li> </ul>
What do the Customers Prefer to Eat?	Types of sushi using <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tuna</li> <li>● Salmon</li> <li>● Eels</li> </ul> Types of sushi they like are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● California Rolls</li> <li>● Nigiri-sushi</li> </ul>	Types of sushi the most often eaten at their restaurants are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● California Rolls</li> <li>● Dynamite Rolls</li> <li>● Spicy Tuna Rolls</li> </ul>
When do the Customers Eat Sushi?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Regular lunch, dinner,</li> <li>● At a party</li> <li>● Holiday events (New Years, etc.)</li> <li>● Birthday</li> <li>● Date, anniversary events</li> </ul>	Busy date varies by restaurants. No particular holiday is recognized in which people eat sushi more often. Sushi is eaten for regular lunches, dinners, and various sorts of parties.
Where do the Customers Eat Sushi?	Top 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Restaurants</li> <li>● Home</li> <li>● Friend's Place</li> </ul>	No Answer for this question
Why do the Customers Eat Sushi?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tasty</li> <li>● Healthy</li> <li>● Have Japanese experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Healthy</li> <li>● Trend/Fashion</li> <li>● Delicious</li> <li>● Convenient</li> <li>● Affordable price</li> <li>● Adventurous, exotic</li> </ul>

As is shown in Table 4.5, producer's recognition of their customers is similar to their customers' demography and opinions. Suffice it to say that sushi producers are more likely to consider that the health element brings people to their restaurants while the customers raised that taste and quality are the most significant element. Maintaining the consistency of a restaurant's taste is appreciated by the customers and would be a key of successfully continuing a sushi business in Victoria.

Towards understanding the process of the transformation of sushi in Canadian dietary habits, this chapter described the demography of sushi producers and consumers in Victoria, the behaviours and thoughts which might be relevant to the consumption of sushi, and the significance of elements for the consumers in choosing sushi. The majority of sushi producers are first-generation immigrants from Asian countries, who operate Japanese restaurant businesses usually with their family or with a few partners. The diverse ethnic background of the producers, in which more than a half of them are non-Japanese today in Victoria, provides a stage for sushi to acquire an influence from various cultures. In general, the sushi customers are mostly Euro-Canadians living in Victoria who are neither vegetarians nor vegans and earn about an average income. Both males and females who are between 20 to 60 years old are the main customers. The customers of full-service restaurants are likely to have above-average incomes,

be less price-conscious, and more service-conscious. Those who frequent the take-out restaurant are of a more mixed ethnic origin, are more female, and their income level is slightly lower than the average household income of the Greater Victorian residents. Taste and health is the first and the second most significant factors, respectively, in choosing sushi for the customers, and the income level affects the customers' choice related to the product's price. Based on these data, the next chapter identifies and analyzes cultural and business factors, which synthetically achieve the deterritorialization and transformation of sushi.

## *5. Cross-cultural Transformation of Sushi: Why Sushi Changed in Canada*

In the modern capitalist market, the form and ingredients of a food item change for various reasons. For example, they change when conventional ingredients become unavailable due to a natural environmental change. They change when the economic and political situations limit the food producers access to certain types of ingredients. Or, they change when the customers' preference changes in time and space. At any rate, the physical transformation of a food item reflects the socio-cultural environment and the thoughts of the people who consume the food item. Accordingly, sushi's transformation also represents socio-cultural behaviours and thoughts shared in the Canadian food culture. This chapter therefore will examine the transformation of sushi as a process which a food item acquires and adapts to a new set of meanings in order to fulfill its newly assigned functions. Also, analyzing the process of the transformation of sushi in the cultural setting outside Japan is equivalent to analyzing the deterritorialization of sushi as a Japanese cultural object. First, I discuss the physical transformation of sushi as an embodiment of Canadian values and system of meanings which are relevant to the consumption of sushi. Then, the behaviours and thoughts, which are underlying the consumption of sushi but not

recognized in the analyses of physical transformation, are analyzed in order to illuminate the business and socio-cultural agents of the process of the transformation of sushi.

Before starting to discuss the physical transformation of sushi, it is necessary to clarify the definition of sushi and the difference between Canadian and Japanese ‘versions’ of sushi. It has to be noted that these descriptions are not trivial. For example, some sushi in Canada uses the medium-grain rice rather than the short-grain rice which is common in Japan. Is this a difference between Canadian and Japanese sushi or not? Furthermore, sushi in Canada uses the rice grown outside of Japan rather than the domestically-grown rice which is common in Japan. Should we consider this fact as a difference as well? This judgment will differ from person to person: some might say “rice is rice so the sushi using different types of rice is the same” while others would say “it seriously differs.” For example, an anthropologist, Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney mentions the cultural attitude of the Japanese consumers as follows:

In contrast to other rice that had been imported to Japan, California rice is identical with domestic rice. Unlike long-grain rice from China and other rice-consuming countries, short-grain California rice was cultivated from seeds originally brought from Japan and resembles Japanese rice. Yet symbolically it is just as different as any other food that represents the other because California rice is grown on foreign soil. (1993:109)

As a scholar I am not immune to this subjectivity of the creation of boundaries yet I try to illustrate the multiplicity of the visions. Furthermore, since I focus on sushi, I exclude

elaborating on the variation of rice which is closely tied to Japanese nationalism (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993).

### **Definition of Sushi: Form versus Processing Style**

What is sushi? Although there is a certain image evoked in the minds of Japanese speakers when they hear this word, if they learn more about it, interestingly enough, their definitions become more confusing — more complicated and less certain. Therefore this seemingly ‘simple’ question turns out to be surprisingly difficult for some sushi producers interviewed for this research. Since North American sushi strays away from the tradition of Japanese style of sushi, the range of the food which is called ‘sushi’ varies and expands more. For example, a sushi roll I ate at one restaurant in Victoria did not use rice at all although the food was classified as sushi in the menu. A sushi chef, Kyle<sup>15</sup>, stated that his customers are likely to classify *sashimi* (sliced raw fish) as sushi although it is not recognized as sushi in Japan. One of the upscale restaurants in Victoria offers a sushi recipe titled “modern sushi,” which wraps the foie gras and lobster with a sheet of rice paper but with no grain rice (The Aerie 2008). Facing such a wide variety of sushi, sushi producers with Japanese origin in particular were likely to need a moment to reflect on the

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<sup>15</sup> Pseudonyms are assigned to each sushi producer and interviewed customers. Since Victoria’s sushi producer community is small, English pseudonyms are used for all interviewees regardless of their ethnicity, rather than assigning the names which can determine the interviewees’ ethnicity. Producer’s ethnic origin is clarified upon necessity.

definition of sushi in their interviews.

The common key words used by sushi producers to describe sushi are rice, *nori* (sheet of dried seaweed), vinegar, raw fish, and vegetables. Some producers do not mention vinegar. A sushi producer, Heather and some other producers associate sushi primarily with fish, particularly raw fish. The popular definition of sushi mentioned by producers is that sushi is the food combining the rice with *nori* and raw fish or vegetables. The Japanese definition of sushi provided by an authoritative Japanese dictionary, *Kojien* (fifth edition, electronic) is “Sushi is the combination of vinegared and seasoned rice with fish, vegetable, or other ingredients” (Shinmura 1998). The difference between these two definitions is that producers in Victoria specify *nori*. This indicates that the Canadian version of sushi uses *nori* more frequently than the Japanese, which suggests that the sushi rolled with *nori* is common in Victoria. A sushi chef, Dale, mentioned;

The Food Channel, for example, introduces in the program that anything rolled with *nori* is sushi, although it does not contain any rice. Unconsciously, some people in North America started to consider sushi as anything rolled. Also, some people think whatever they eat at sushi restaurants is sushi. I think it is alright in some sense. This is the reason for the popularity of sushi. For the last twenty-five years, I have observed that the variety of rolled sushi has been changing and increasing. But the sense of Canadian consumers has not been changed. We can consider it [Canadian sushi] not as sushi but as a Japanese-style sandwich, which uses rice instead of bread.

For comparison, Toru Shinoda, a Japanese scholar who studied sushi for over twenty years, defined sushi in Japan as follows;

We collectively defined a wide range of food as sushi; there is no clear definition to sum up those varieties of food. However, certain kinds of vinegar (including both liquid vinegar and lactic acid made by natural fermentation) are common in the making process of all food called sushi<sup>16</sup>. (2002:7)

Traditionally vinegar used for sushi is made of rice or Japanese *sake* lees which are also made of rice (Yoshino 1990) (although Shinoda (2002) says that the dilute solution of acetic acid is used in Japan as a cheaper alternative of rice vinegar). The definition of sushi in Japan therefore depends on the processing of rice rather than the form as it is defined in the case of Canadian sushi. This significant conceptual difference between Canada and Japan reveals a part of the deterritorialization process of sushi and proves to us that the Canadian sushi has developed and will continue to develop in its own way. Because of the definition oriented by its form rather than the ingredient, Canadian sushi can be an entity which does not include any rice or vinegar and thereby can become a significantly different food item from the original Japanese sushi. The variety of the producers' answers for the definition of sushi represents the diversification of sushi in Canadian food culture, which is promoted by the customers who define sushi in various ways

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□ Original Japanese: 結局、非常に幅の広いものをすしと総称してはいるが、それを総括しうる明確な定義はない。まあ、強いていえば、どこかで必ず酢(食酢でも自然発酵による乳酸でも)が関係していることくらいだ。(Shinoda 2002:7)

and the producers who respond to the customers' various requests.

### **Physical Difference of Sushi between Victoria B.C. and Japan**

Below I describe the differences of sushi in Canada and Japan. Based on my innumerable experiences eating sushi in Japan as a native Japanese, and also the information written in the Japanese books about sushi, I would like to focus on the three points to explore the difference of sushi between Victoria and Japan because these differences are remarkable and less subjective than the other elements such as the difference of rice aforementioned. First, Canadian sushi uses more variety of food items for *sushi-neta*, or the food items such as seafood and vegetables combined with rice in making sushi (Shinmura 1998). *Sushi-neta* in Victoria includes more vegetables and less fish while Japanese sushi uses a greater variety of seafood products for *sushi-neta* than in Canada. Second, rolled sushi is more dominant in the Canadian sushi market, while *nigiri-zushi* is more dominant in Japan. Third, Canadian rolled sushi is often rolled *nori* inside and rice outside while the Japanese ones are rolled with *nori* outside and rice inside (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1 Physical Difference between Sushi in Victoria B.C. and Japan**

Victoria, Canada	Japan
More variety of food items used in <i>sushi-neta</i>	More variety use of seafood products for <i>sushi-neta</i>
Rolled sushi is more dominant	<i>Nigiri-zushi</i> is more dominant
Often rolled <i>nori</i> inside and rice outside	Rolled <i>nori</i> outside and rice inside

### **Difference in Kinds and Variety of *Sushi-neta* between Victoria and Japan**

The prevalent sushi styles in Victoria incorporate greater variety and different types of *sushi-neta* (the food items such as seafood and vegetables combined with rice in making sushi) than in Japan. It is not unusual to use items other than seafood, such as beef, chicken, cheese, or fruits, in sushi in Victoria. For example in a Japanese culture class which I observed at the University of Victoria, one student made sushi using banana, chocolate, almond, and cinnamon wrapped with rice and *nori*. The student used his cultural repertoire of sweet combination to create a form that follows a principle he had assumed to be sushi. The Victorians' choice of *sushi-neta* is in particular influenced by their cultural background and surrounding natural environmental and economic conditions.

Before discussing their differences, we must first determine what the *sushi-neta* eaten in Victoria and Japan are. In *Sushi no Jiten (The Encyclopaedia of Sushi)*, long-established sushi

restaurants' owner-chef, Masuo Yoshino (1990) introduces 54 different *sushi-neta*; 45 of these are seafood. On the other hand, when I randomly picked up menus from the three Japanese restaurants in Victoria which serve sushi and counted the number of *sushi-neta* used, out of 40 different kinds of items in total, 28 were types of fish or shellfish; ten were types of vegetables; and two were types of egg or dairy products. The portion of vegetable and non-seafood sushi increased in Canadian sushi.

This shift of the kinds of *sushi-neta* to include more vegetables is affected by Euro-Canadian food preferences dominant in Victoria since the majority of the customers are Euro-Canadians (see Chapter 4). The popular fish used in Victoria's sushi are tuna and salmon, which are the kinds of fish already well accepted in Canadian food culture before sushi acquired its current popularity. Furthermore, both producers and customers mentioned that many sushi eaters in Victoria avoid such 'chewy' *sushi-neta* as octopus and squid. They dislike these items because they cannot easily bite them — a sushi chef, Dale, said in the interview, "More than half of my customers do not eat a piece of sushi in one bite even if it is a small piece like *tekka-maki* (raw tuna rolls). Many of them cannot bite through *nori*." Another chef, Simon, also mentioned,

My [Euro-]Canadian customers always bite a piece of sushi into half and see what's in it. Ninety percent of them do it. The octopus and squid cannot be bitten. So, they don't eat hard *sushi-neta*. It is the sense of cutting food with knives and forks. They cut and check inside [of the food].

Victorians have apparently adopted a sort of ‘knife and fork’ culture into their manner of eating sushi, and the difference of table manner influences their choice of *sushi-neta*. This is one cultural aspect — the preference of *sushi-neta* — which is responsible for the process of the transformation of sushi.

Second, sushi in Victoria has developed for a different purpose and in accordance with a different cultural logic. While sushi in Japan originally developed as a means to preserve protein and later on as a food item with a unique (and particularly enjoyable) taste, sushi in Victoria is consumed for health objectives as well as for its flavour. Teresa, a sushi producer, had vegetarian and vegan customers who requested an increase in the variety of vegetable sushi in the menu. She said, “Sushi has the image of health food. So (they claimed that) it is strange that my place does not accommodate vegetarians and vegans.” This anecdote shows us that the new concept of sushi as a health food results in Canadian sushi introducing unorthodox or less-usual types of ingredients, such as vegetables, and further enhances the difference of the items between Canada and Japan.

Third, the ethnicity of the sushi restaurant owners and chefs also encourages an increase in the diversity of *sushi-neta*. Today more than half of the Japanese restaurants in Victoria are operated by non-Japanese Asian owners and chefs. Since most of them are first generation immigrants, they sometimes incorporate the tastes of their home countries into their

sushi products to differentiate them commercially from their competitors. For example, a Chinese-Canadian sushi restaurant owner, Susan, mixed a type of oil with soy sauce to create a special dipping sauce for her sushi. A restaurant owned by a Korean chef, Georgia, has *pulgogi* sushi on her menu. A Vietnamese owner at Larry's restaurant serves Vietnamese spring rolls with sushi.

Why has the ethnicity of the Japanese restaurant operators become so diverse? Jennifer, owner-chef of a sushi restaurant, said,

It was difficult for me to find an office job in Canada [because I did not go to school in Canada]. Then, the job available for [Japanese] immigrants was either tour guide or Japanese restaurants. So, many [Japanese] people work for jobs related to restaurants although they did not have working experience at restaurants in Japan. ... English was a barrier.

Another owner-chef, Mike, also stated, "Because of my language disadvantage, I thought food-related job would be good for me." David Wu, an anthropologist, (2002) reported about Chinese restaurants in the United States, which demonstrate similar operational trends to the Japanese restaurants in Victoria. The similarities are that first the Chinese restaurants are rather small scale (the seating capacity is as many as a few dozen) and are operated by a family or a few immigrant partners. Second, the restaurants play "the roles of cultural ambassador" thereby emphasizing stereotypical Chinese culture and trying to sell authenticity. Third, the majority of

the Japanese restaurants in Victoria are operated by non-Japanese Asian immigrants. These owner-operators open their own restaurants based on their working experiences as servers or chefs at Japanese restaurants. This pattern is also similar to the pattern of Chinese restaurant openings. It is difficult to verify a suggestion based on these three similarities that the Japanese restaurants in Victoria are operated by the producers who share the Chinese cultural view that owning a restaurant is a way for immigrants to survive. However, it is true that some social disadvantages lead immigrants from Asian countries to engage in the Japanese restaurant business, thus contributing to the expansion of the range of ethnicities engaged in preparing Japanese food.

This ethnically diverse and multicultural environment of the sushi business in Victoria is supported by West coast Canada's rich multicultural environment with a high Asian population density. In such a diverse setting it is difficult to assume that sushi producers share a single, united cultural practice. Multicultural composition of the population in Victoria increases the opportunity for various types of sushi to exist and survive. This is the case in terms of the increase in the variety of *sushi-neta* in Victoria.

### **Dominance of Rolled Sushi in Canada versus *Nigiri-zushi* in Japan**

Another trait of the physical difference of sushi is the dominance of rolled sushi over *nigiri-zushi*

in Victoria. It has already been mentioned in Chapter 3 that *nigiri-zushi*, which used to be only a local variant in Tokyo, became popular nationwide in Japan because of food restrictions after World War II. In Victoria's sushi scene, however, it is not *nigiri* but the rolled sushi that plays the main role.

The variety of rolled sushi in Victoria is vastly greater than that in Japan. While only several kinds of rolls such as *kappa* (cucumber), *shinko* (pickles), *natto* (fermented soy beans), *tekka* (raw tuna), and *futomaki* (thick rolls) are common in Japan, there are more than 91 kinds of rolled sushi found on the menus of the eleven randomly selected Japanese restaurants in Victoria. Furthermore, even though the rolled sushi from different stores is given the same name, they do not always use the same ingredients. For example, California Rolls are recognized as sushi which usually contains crab meat (real or imitation) and avocado. However, some producers use cucumber in it; others put *tobiko* (a kind of fish roe) on top of the rolls; a restaurant offering Vegetarian California Rolls does not use crab meat at all. Lacking the crab, which is supposed to be the basic *sushi-neta* in California Rolls, I wonder what this particular California Roll really is. Sushi rolls in Victoria are bound neither by the standard definition of sushi itself nor by the definition of each type of roll.

Why did rolled sushi overwhelm *nigiri-zushi* in Victoria? *Nigiri-zushi* is a simple combination of seafood and rice and usually (if not always) has only one main ingredient on top

of a rice ball. In order to differentiate the *nigiri-zushi* product, sushi producers in Japan compete over the quality of rice and fish, the blend of rice, the type of vinegar, and their technique to make sushi with a ‘perfect’ firmness so that it seems to melt in the mouth. Whether or not they have a good relationship with reliable fishmongers could be an element of success in the Japanese sushi businesses because they can get a higher quality of fish consistently at a stable price (Issenberg 2007).

However, the situation is different in Victoria. Hugh, a Japanese restaurant owner-chef, mentions,

There are many big companies [which deal with fish]. Not only the Japanese restaurants but most of the restaurants in Victoria use those major fishmongers. Ninety to one hundred percent of Victoria’s restaurants buy fish from the big companies, such as Albion and Neptune. In those big companies, the people who take orders, who process fish, who deliver fish, all of those people are in different departments. So, they do not take responsibility for mistakes made in a given department [even though they brought bad quality of fish].

Another owner-chef, Mike, also mentions, “I buy fish from a fishmonger in Vancouver. Tuna and salmon can be bought locally, but seafood such as the octopus is air-freighted from Japan. The freshness of the Tokyo fish in Tsukiji Market will never be reproduced in the markets of Victoria.”

Other producers mention the limited availability of other food items indispensable for

making sushi. A sushi restaurant owner-chef, Simon, mentioned,

In Japan, there are 50 to 60 different kinds of vinegar available, but in Victoria we have only two. Not many people would buy it even though many types of vinegar become available in Victoria. Vinegar is the same as local *sake*, so there are so many different kinds, such as *kurozu* (dark vinegar), *akazu* (red vinegar), and blended vinegar. So, their tastes vary. The situation is similar in case of the rice.

The difference of distribution and market situations between Victoria and Japan limits the availability and quality of some ingredients and creates challenges for the sushi producers in Victoria to differentiate their *nigiri-zushi* products.

It is also very likely that the taste of *nigiri-zushi* is too subtle and too fishy for many of the Canadian customers who do not share the acquired Japanese taste. They are generally habituated to foods with stronger flavours than *nigiri-zushi*. Therefore *nigiri-zushi*, which Japanese people enjoy because of the taste of fish accentuated by a subtle note of soy sauce, may be too plain for many Canadian consumers until they become familiar with it. Also, Dale assumes that many sushi eaters in Victoria do not like the flavour of fish because they garnish it with excessive amounts of *wasabi* (Japanese horseradish), *gari* (sweet pickled ginger), or with spicy sauce. Even today when most people of the West coast of Canada at least know the word sushi, “only about twenty percent of my customers eat raw fish,” said Simon. Besides, my customer survey shows that California Rolls, which do not use raw fish, are the most popular

sushi in Victoria.

Unlike the *nigiri-zushi*, rolled sushi can include various different food items. Rolled sushi therefore from the outset has the potential to create more complicated flavours compared to *nigiri-zushi*. Rolled sushi has the potential to be accepted by the majority of the Canadian market if it adapts its ingredients. Furthermore, chefs are able to change the contents of rolled sushi flexibly based on the preference of the customer. The flexible nature of rolled sushi allows chefs to fully exercise their creativity by freely combining wide varieties of *sushi-neta*. Since the flexibility of the rolled sushi meets the needs of sushi chefs in Victoria who try to satisfy their customers, rolled sushi has become the mainstream over *nigiri-zushi* in Victoria.

### **Difference in the Manner of Rolling Sushi**

Rolled sushi in Victoria is likely to be rolled differently than in Japan. The rolled sushi normally uses *nori* rolled with the rice. In Japan, sushi is typically rolled with *nori* outside and the rice inside while in Victoria the opposite occurs and, *nori* usually comes inside of the roll. A sushi restaurant owner-chef, Susan, says that some of her customers do not like the taste of *nori*. Another producer, Jack, also mentions “Many of my customers do not like *nori*. If I stick to the Japanese idea of sushi, my business will not go well.” In addition to these producers’ opinions, this can also be explained by the customers’ aversion to chewy food, as Dale mentioned earlier.

When *nori* is rolled on top of cooked rice, it absorbs moisture and becomes chewy. If the roll is made in the inside-out way, “It becomes not chewy,” said a sushi restaurant owner-chef, Charles.

Also, if the sushi is rolled inside out, it is easier for chefs to produce a beautiful presentation by using the white rice like a canvas. Forty-six percent of the participants of the sushi customer survey answered that for them presentation is one of the most important aspects of the authenticity of sushi. As the result of this appearance-oriented preference of the customer, there are sushi rolls such as Rainbow Rolls, which are ostentatious in their color and presentation. It would be difficult to make a colourful sushi if the black *nori* covered up the rolls.

With regard to the differences of sushi between Victoria and Japan, it is clearly seen from these comments of the sushi producers that their motivation for commercial success let them actively accommodate customers’ preferences and greatly promote the physical transformation of sushi. The next section briefly introduces the opinion of sushi producers with respect to the physical differences in sushi between Canada and Japan.

### **Difference between Canadian and Japanese Sushi as Observed by the Producers**

Eighty two percent of sushi producers interviewed said sushi that they provide is different than

the sushi in Japan, and 11 percent said they are the same (7 percent gave no answer). Some of the comments below have already been introduced as data which support my observation of three physical transformations of sushi. Again, the physical differences introduced here are the opinion of producers I interviewed in Victoria, and thereby are subjective rather than being absolute and objective. Every producer has his or her own perception and opinion about the difference in sushi between Canada and Japan. A chef Dale said, that Canadian sushi would be better to go back to a more traditional Japanese style while a restaurant manager, Roland said the difference is the “adaptation of things within a boundary” and the transformation of sushi is an example of the localization of a food based on the principles of food in Canada. Although these sushi producers’ opinions differ, none of them said the sushi in Canada and Japan should be the same. They seem to accept the flexible transformation of sushi being reflective of the reality that, just as they themselves as first generation immigrants from Asian countries moved to a new country, food items too must accept various differences, and adapt.

#### Differences of Sushi in Terms of *Sushi-neta*

- Fewer kinds of seafood are available in Victoria and they are pricy. The freshness of seafood is poorer than in Japan.
- Canadian sushi adapts its flavour to Canadian customers so it can taste stronger and/or sweeter.
- Fewer kinds of vinegar and rice are available in Victoria compared to Japan.

### Differences of Sushi in Style

- Rolled sushi, which is the mainstream sushi in Canada, is not major in Japan.
- Inside-out roll is more popular in Canada while *nori* normally comes outside in Japan.
- The shape of the sushi is different.
- The size of the sushi is different. Two producers said Canadian sushi is larger than the Japanese sushi while one said some sushi in local areas in Japan is larger.

### Differences in Technology

- There is no freezing technology in Victoria to freeze and preserve fish more than ten days in good condition.

### Differences in Production

- Unlike Japan where sushi is often served at specialty sushi restaurants, sushi in Victoria often exists as a part of the menu of Japanese restaurants. In such a case as Victoria, the energy which a chef can expend to make sushi is limited.
- The service style in Japanese restaurant differs from Japan.
- The chefs' knowledge about processing fish is limited in Victoria.
- The chefs' background is different in Victoria and Japan. The proficiency of chefs for sushi differs from that of Japanese chefs.

### Differences in the Customers

- The majority of the customers of the Japanese restaurants are not Japanese in Victoria.

As has been noted, sushi producers highlight the factors of the transformation of sushi not only from the aspect of physical differences but also from that of the technological environment and the culture of their customers and of themselves. Accordingly, many sushi producers in Victoria might agree that sushi is a delicate food, which reflects the differences in producers' and customers' cultural backgrounds, producers' attitude to the food, and their enthusiasm. The

producers, the customers, technology, economy, politics, and culture are all intertwined with each other and configure a single food item, sushi. Therefore, even changes in a single element will change the sushi and create a food item which is different within another country.

### **Driving the Transformation of Sushi: Business and Cultural Factors**

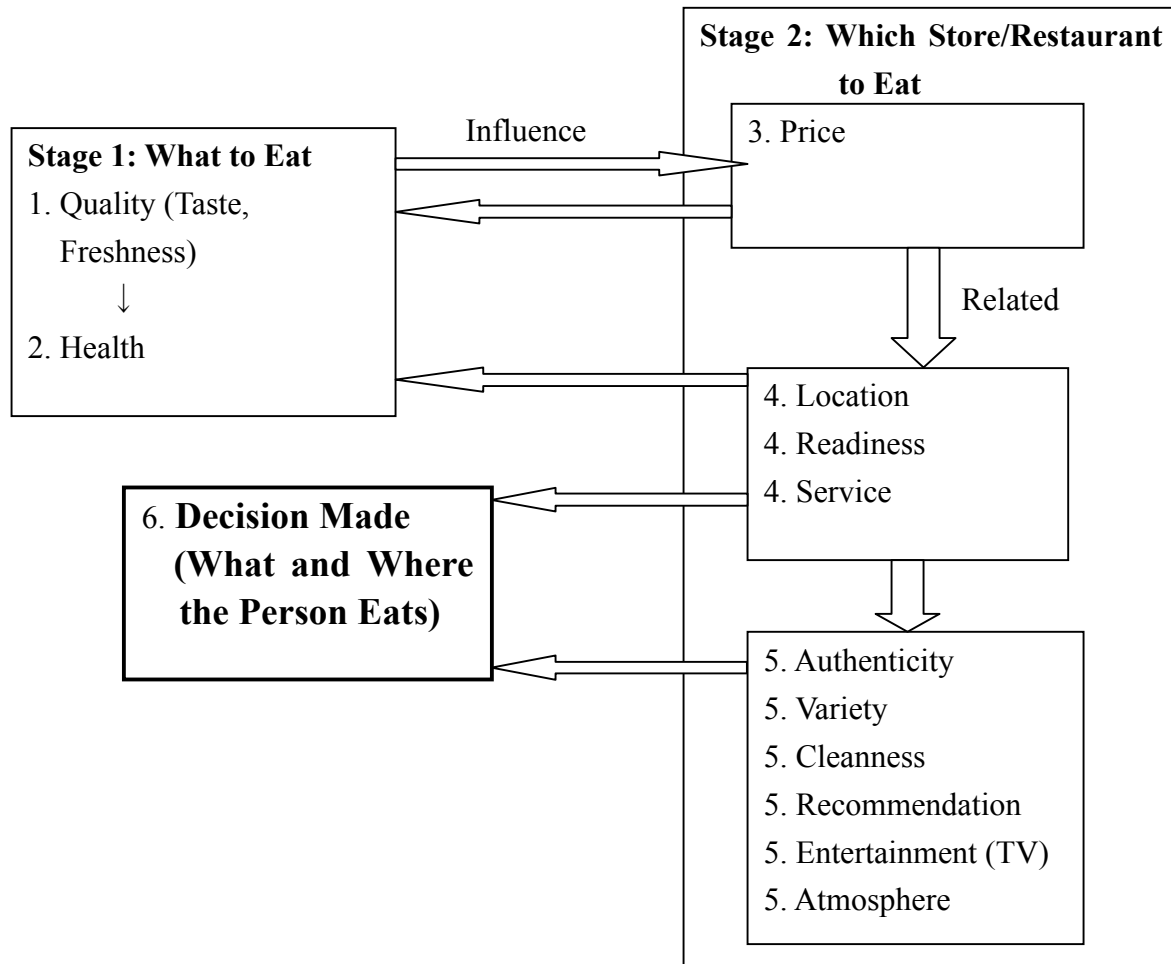
The previous section clarified through my field observations and producers' opinions that the physical difference in sushi between Canada and Japan is a result of not only the availability of food items but also shaped by the different cultural behaviours and thoughts of people who are supporting the production and consumption of sushi. The transformation of sushi embodies these behaviours and thoughts. It is now necessary to analyze the process of the transformation of sushi. In the deterritorialization and transformation of sushi, the customer is more influential than the producer since, based on my interviews with sushi producers, I have discovered that the wide variety of rolled sushi has been invented as a response to the wishes of customers. It is therefore necessary to pay closer attention to the customers' behaviours and thoughts in order to examine the process of the transformation of sushi. The following sections identify and describe the elements of transformation. First, elements which are identified as significant for customers' purchasing behaviours in Chapter 4 are organized as a customer decision-making model. With this model, I clarify the customers' consumption behaviours which are influential to the direction

of the transformational process of sushi. Second, the unique business model of Japanese restaurants is explained as another influencer for the process of the transformation of sushi. Lastly, I introduce the contents of authenticity of sushi perceived by sushi customers in Victoria and suggest that their subjectivity regarding the authenticity and infatuation with exoticism enhance the deterritorialization of sushi and thereby facilitates the transformation of sushi.

### **Sushi Customer Decision-Making Model**

As suggested by Kotler (2003), a product value is a sum of the quality, service, and price; people make a purchase decision of a sushi product through the comparison of various elements. Based on the elements identified the significance in customers' purchasing decision-making process in my sushi customer survey, I created a sushi customer decision-making model, presented in Figure 1 that illustrates the significance of each element. Since the customers are the leading force of the transformation of sushi, analyzing the consumers' purchasing behaviours will help us to understand the strength and weakness of elements in the process of the transformation of sushi. Such analysis will also support that sushi will become a more attractive product for customers in Victoria by altering some elements.

**Figure 5.1 Sushi Customer Decision-Making Model**



Sushi customers' decision-making process is composed of two major stages: in the first stage people decide what to eat and in the second stage people decide where to eat. In a modern, commercialized urban environment such as Victoria, consumers have various choices for food products (pizzas, hamburgers, other ethnic foods, etc.) in addition to sushi. People therefore start

their decision-making from what they would like to eat. Considering the significance of taste and quality suggested in the customer survey, the first decision making step is to screen various food products to judge whether the quality and taste of those food products are acceptable. Taste and quality are the elements which are considered quite significant by 96.7 percent of the sushi customers, although different age group and the experience of visiting Japan affect the customers' attitude toward the quality of sushi (for more details see Chapter 4). If the taste or the quality of sushi product available for a customer is acceptable, the consumer holds sushi as one of his or her meal choices and proceeds to the next step.

The second step on the decision-making process is to judge whether the food product fits the person's health condition at that moment (feeling sick, healthy, etc.) and possibly in the future (on a diet, having chronic disease, preventive health, etc.). This element might have stronger influence on female customers as some sushi producers recognized that female consumers are more likely to be health conscious than males, although statistically the difference is not significant. If the taste/quality and health elements match to the person's demands, the customer can decide what he or she eats for a meal. For instance, a customer might select sushi rather than other ethnic foods because he or she judges "I like the taste of sushi and know good sushi providers who produce quality sushi in town. I prefer a light meal today because of my upset stomach." The religious belief of a customer might affect them at this stage in regards to

other food items; however, since religion is not a significant element when people eat sushi, it is not included in this decision-making model. The first stage is now completed and the decision-making process moves forward to the second stage of deciding where the person eats the food of his or her choice.

The second stage starts at the third filtering step of whether the product price satisfies the customer's condition. If the product price does not match with his or her demand (too expensive or too cheap), the process returns to the first "what to eat" stage and the aforementioned steps starts over again in seeking an alternative meal choice. When the price meets the customer's demand, he or she goes to the fourth step to consider the location and service of the restaurant and the readiness to eat of the product. Significance of location (proximity, the area where the restaurant is located, convenience of location, etc.) does not differ by market segments. However, the significance of service differs by the store type and experience with Japan. The full-service restaurant customer are more likely to place significance on service ( $p=.000$ ). Also, the customers who have not visited Japan and who do not have Japanese acquaintances, friends, or partner, are more likely to place significance on service ( $p=.010$  and  $P=.006$ , respectively)<sup>17</sup>. This element also associates with the store type that the full-service restaurant customers are more likely to seek authenticity in the sushi product they eat

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<sup>17</sup> This statistical relation between service and Japan visiting experience would be affected by the type of customers visited at one of the survey venues of a take-out sushi store because that store attracts more Japanophiles.

and accordingly, readiness is not a highly significant element there. If these three elements in this step satisfy the customer's demand, the decision-making process proceeds to the fifth step.

The fifth step involves six elements, which are suggested in the consumer survey and producers' interview that the authenticity of the product, the variety of products, cleanness of the restaurant, recommendation from others, provision of entertainment such as TV, friendly staff, and the atmosphere of the restaurant. This step activates only when more than one restaurant qualifies for the customer's demand through the previous four steps. It might be skipped if only one restaurant met the customers' demand at the end of the filtering process by Step 4 (which means no other choice for the customer). The customer considers the elements in Step 5 and finally makes a decision when he or she finds a food provider which meets all of his or her requests (the sixth step).

When a person eats by him or herself, the decision-making process includes the conditions of the single person, while when the person eats with others, the process involves multiple people's food preference, health conditions, economic and social situations; therefore, the thresholds applied to each element tends to be more restricted and thereby the decision-making becomes more complicated and difficult.

Although this model is developed for sushi in particular, it is very likely that one finds similar trends in relation to other ethnic cuisines. However, it is dependent on the time and

location, the values attached to each cuisine and food items and the hierarchies among them which vary greatly. *Nigiri-zushi* is an example of such fluctuation of values and the hierarchy of a food item. It first appeared in Japan as a commoners' fast food but became an *haute cuisine* while it has been popularized again by the emergence of new technology (for details see Chapter 3). Chinese cuisine in Japan is likely to be recognized as an *haute cuisine* while its hierarchy in Canada is not limited to the high-end. It should therefore be noted that when this model is applied to sushi and other cuisines, the significance level of each step in this model is not absolute but rather situational, depending on the values and hierarchy of the cuisine and food item. Also, the significance of each element might differ by each decision made because human decisions are not always optimal and often seem unreasonable. For example, we sometimes intentionally make an unhealthy food choice. However, in such occasions we sacrifice the health element (lowering the threshold of health element) for satisfying the demands in other elements (e.g. price; "I will eat this unhealthy meal because I don't have enough money to buy a healthier food today."); therefore, at the end we are still making a choice which physically and emotionally maximizes our benefits. Determining absolute order and significance of decision-making is difficult since those of each element constantly alter. However, this model still contributes to show the general significance of each element in sushi customer's decision-making.

The significant elements illuminated in the sushi customer's decision-making process

lead us to recognize the process of the transformation of sushi, which is influenced by those elements. First, since the taste (food preference) is the strongest demand for customers to choose a food item, Victoria's sushi producers are exposed to strong business pressure of adapting their products' taste to the consumers' preference. Accordingly, when the original Japanese tastes do not fit with the customers' preference, the sushi transforms towards a way to incorporate the new tastes. Second, since the price comes to a higher priority in choosing a sushi provider, providing a competitive price becomes a matter for sushi businesses in Victoria. In order to lower price, Japanese restaurant businesses might need to use more local food items than the items imported from Japan because the Japanese agricultural products are pricier than local products (for example, the rice grown in Japan prices three times more in retail value than the rice grown in California). It will result in the localization of sushi, which is a part of the process of the transformation. Third, authenticity of sushi has lower significance in the customer's decision-making process. The customer survey result reveals that the customers are likely to pursue authenticity visually rather than gustatory. Therefore, as long as the sushi product looks genuine, the conventional Japanese taste and ingredients are likely to be the subject of change based on the customers' food preference and budget. What is sought in authentic sushi therefore indirectly promotes the transformation of sushi. The detail of the authenticity of sushi is explained later in this chapter.

Now, the elements customers emphasize when choosing sushi and their significance in the process of the transformation of sushi are clarified. How do the sushi producers reflect these elements in their products and contribute to the process of the transformation? The next section discusses this from the perspective of the unique business style of sushi restaurants.

### **Unique Business Model of Sushi Restaurants**

One of the unique features of sushi restaurants is the sushi bar counter where sushi chefs can talk directly with their customers. The sushi chefs, Simon and Albert, mentioned, “My customers come to this restaurant to enjoy the conversation with me.” In the interviews, sushi producers mentioned that they observe the reaction of their customers and can change the flavour and items used in rolled sushi. Since the concept of sushi is stretched and vague in Victoria compared to Japan, the range of alterations to accommodate customers’ preferences is greater here. The business model of using a sushi bar counter, which allows a sushi chef to play the roles of marketer, of producer, and of sales representative, is one of the factors which has promoted the process of the transformation and deterritorialization of sushi, and accordingly is a key of the success of sushi in North America today.

The close relationship between chef and customers enhanced by this business model encourages the birth of new sushi rolls in Victoria. There are many sushi rolls which are named

after restaurants' customers, such as Catherine Rolls or Bob's Rolls. The chefs create uniquely named rolls as parts of their service to their regular customers. Roland, a manager of a Japanese restaurant, said

A customer asks our chefs to arrange the sushi in the way she or he likes. Since the customer repeatedly comes back and asks for the same arrangement, the chefs remember the customer's favourite combination of *sushi-neta* and name the combination after the regular customer. There are a few rolls named after particular customers but not listed on the menu. The chefs remember the combination of those special rolls.

His comment shows us that the customers' preference is directly reflected in the process of the transformation of sushi through the communication between the customer and the chef. Considering that the customers' preference determines the direction of the transformation of sushi, what are the shared cultural values and thoughts that leash the customers' behaviours relevant to the consumption of the sushi? In other words, what are the thoughts underlying sushi's deterritorialization and transformation?

### **“Authenticity” of Sushi and Exoticism**

Anthropologist Arjun Appadurai introduces his observation about the transformation of a cultural material and its authenticity as follows;

Authenticity as a criterion seems always to emerge just after its subject matter has

been significantly transformed. How is one to generate stable criteria of authenticity for traditions that are always changing? [...] The idea of authenticity seems to imply a timeless perspective on profoundly historical processes. (1986:25)

Authenticity is one of the elements that consumers seek in the sushi product. In general, ethnic restaurant businesses, including Japanese restaurants in Victoria, advertise the authenticity of their food products. This shows that the producer side recognizes that the authenticity is one of the values of their food product from which to attract customers. In fact in my sushi customer survey, 77.8 percent of the participants who answered the survey at a full-service restaurant expect to eat authentic sushi, and overall a half of the all survey participants answered that authenticity is important. As mentioned by anthropologists (Befu 2003; Bestor 2000), and also from the historical perspective explained in Chapter 3, sushi in North America is recognized as a Japanese cultural property; therefore, the authenticity of sushi is presumed to rely on its expression of Japaneseness. However, 85 percent of the customers who participated in the survey at the full-service restaurant have not visited Japan in the past and 70 percent do not have Japanese friends or partners, and also do not have business relations with Japan. This survey data revealed that there is a statistical significance between an authenticity seeking attitude and the experience of travelling to Japan and of Japanese culture ( $p=.043$ ); the lack of the experience and probably of concrete knowledge about Japanese culture promotes customers' search of

authenticity. What is the underlying explanation for this search of authenticity?

The full-service restaurant customers mentioned in the survey that they value authenticity because they like “originality,” like “to explore other culture,” like “to eat Japanese, not a mixture,” care about the “quality of ingredients” and the “taste, quality, [and] freshness [of sushi],” and think “foods should represent where they originated.” The keywords I identified for these authenticity seekers are “quality,” “origin,” and “no mix.” Their expectation for the pureness of the Japanese culture is expressed in the word “authenticity” and sought through their sushi consuming experiences. These participants consider that authentic sushi represents original Japanese sushi, whose ingredients are of a good quality, is tasty, and fresh. In an interview with sushi consumers, a Euro-Canadian couple, Ellen and Fernando mentioned,

A lot of people here go to the Japanese restaurant because they want a Japanese experience. I think, too, and the atmosphere, I mean, there other thing play into, for sure. And even if you don't know how to use chopsticks, it is nice to have chopsticks put down, because you feel you could use them. It serves you a new experience. It's like going to Japan, but not having a travel.

Their experience of consuming sushi contributes partially to their purpose of experiencing Japan.

Question 19 of the customer survey which asks important criteria to determine the authenticity of sushi provides clues how sushi customers who have limited experiences with Japanese culture judge the authenticity of sushi they eat, i.e. the authenticity of their “Japanese

experience.” The three most frequently selected factors to determine the authenticity of sushi are the subjective experience of taste, presentation, and freshness of sushi. Involvement or the presence of the ethnic Japanese at the business where the customers eat sushi can be more objective criteria to judge whether the sushi provided at the restaurant is more authentic Japanese (although in reality, involvement of the ethnic Japanese in a restaurant business does not guarantee that the restaurant provides more original Japanese sushi). However, only a few customers included the Japanese origin of chefs, restaurant owner, or staff as the elements of judging authenticity of a sushi product. The presence of Japanese customers at a restaurant is also unimportant for judgment of authenticity. Authenticity of sushi is created by neither objective judgment nor association with the presence of ethnic Japanese. Rather, in Victoria’s sushi scenes, “authentic Japanese sushi” is judged in the context detached from Japan and in the daily lives of Victoria’s residents, through their ambiguous “Japanese” image and experience, based on their subjective vision. In short, what is ‘Japanese’ is decided by the customers, not by the sushi producers, by the country of Japan or by the Japanese nationals.

This culturally constructed attitude reveals how notions of authenticity are developed.

Richard Handler describes authenticity as follows:

First, I take ‘authenticity’ to be a cultural construct of the modern Western world. [...] Our search for authentic cultural experience – for the unspoiled, pristine, genuine, untouched and traditional – says more about us than about

others. [...] Second, authenticity is a cultural construct closely tied to Western notions of the individual. [...] ‘The individual’ has a central place in our understanding of reality. (1986:2)

The notion of “true self” or the assertion to situating oneself “against the rest of the world as a locus of ultimate meaning and reality” underlies the shifting nature of authenticity (Handler 1986). Furthermore, authenticity is vulnerably structured based on the judgment affected by the clarity and authority of the message which associates with the object (Riley 1994). In art, authenticity is intentionally created or denied by people (Steiner 1995). The same rule is applicable to the authenticity of a food product; the authenticity of sushi is subjectively defined by a person who consumes sushi and this judgement may be unrelated to the particularities of the food itself. The customers who have limited exposure to the Japanese culture have also limited knowledge about the sushi consumed in Japan. That is, they usually decide the difference between “authentic sushi” and “inauthentic sushi” on the basis of individually attributed criteria for the authenticity of sushi. These attributions are of course informed by the commonly circulated stereotypes and perceptions of what is regarded as Japanese at the time. As a result, what is an authentic sushi product, and what is not, does not relate to how the sushi looks and tastes but rather relates to how people perceive the product. Business helps (or manipulates) the individual perception of a sushi product and often creates the feeling of authenticity for customers. Since authenticity is situational and emotional, business can intentionally prepare and

stage the authenticity for their products by creating a certain environment with chopsticks, staff's costume, or any other Japanese ornaments in their restaurants. Sushi's "authenticity" intensifies its allure thereby having a business value which will enhance the "exotic" excitement of the sushi eating experiences for the customers since a preponderant majority of the sushi customers in Victoria are the non-Japanese, most likely the Euro-Canadians.

A premise of the existence of differences between Euro-Canadian food and Japanese food is also underlying the judgment of authenticity of sushi. The customers' assumption that "Japan is different from Us" provides the foundation of the consumers' behaviour which seeks difference and excitement in the consumption of sushi. A sushi chef, Terry, explained, "[Sushi has] the feeling of richness. [People] feel adventurous [when they eat sushi]. Since it is a new thing and high level (high-end), the image of sushi connects with the image of Japan." Also, in the interview with another chef, Richard, his daughter who listened to the interview mentioned,

People think that Japan is a spiritual country. When customers come to an authentic Japanese restaurant, they feel like becoming a part of such spirituality through the art of sushi chef. Just like celebrities who seek the enlightenment through yoga, cool and exotic images are sought in Japan and the Japanese food.

A philosopher, Lisa Heldke, calls the people who are eager to try ethnic food Food Adventurers, and indicates that "differentness is something [those ethnic food lovers] have come to value and even demand. [They] tend to consider 'novel' and 'ethnic' as somehow synonymous" (2003:13).

She further mentions that what was sought through ethnic food is the delicacy expressed with oddness (Heldke 2003). The word, exotic connotes “not native to the place where found” and therefore, the notion of exoticism is created with the recognition of novelty to a person (Heldke 2003). The exoticism is what is consumed with sushi, and authenticity is one of the elements which strengthen the excitement of exoticism. “Knowledge is incompatible with exoticism, but lack of knowledge is in turn irreconcilable with praise of others; yet praise without knowledge is precisely what exoticism aspires to be. This is its constitutive paradox” (Todorov 1993:265). Accordingly, “what we identify as authentic in that culture is often simply what is new to us – which may or may not represent what insiders to that culture would identify as significant, traditional, or genuine elements of it” (Heldke 2003:27).

Why newness is taken to be authenticity? Novelty is subjectively determined, and in terms of sushi, I recognize the novelty is measured by its entry to the diet of Euro-Canadian customers. Once it is well-incorporated into the regular diet, it becomes “our” food and not exotic anymore, and accordingly, the authenticity which associates with ‘pure’ and ‘original’ Japaneseness is presumed to be diminish. An example of this scenario is pizza in North America. Heldke (2003) introduces her own experience that in northern Wisconsin, pizza was once perceived as exotic at her parents’ age but it was not strongly exotic for her generation since it became to be perceived as a part of her regular diet. This is a process of popularization, and in

the process, novelty is likely to be taken for authenticity when a deterritorialized food is still entangled with the memory of its place of origin and a particular cultural identity. In short, this type of reasoning can be expressed in the following: “sushi is new to us and not a part of our culture. So it must be a part of their culture and therefore must be authentic.” Besides, Japan is recognized more as a “cool” country with its cutting-edge commercial products and popular culture particularly after the 1990s (McGray 2002; Craig 2000). As these products convey the information about the Japanese life and culture only partially, the knowledge and image about Japan constructed with those products are inevitably tantamount to the lack of the whole. As Todorov suggests, the balance between the known parts and the unknown parts of Japan makes the sushi customer enjoy the exoticism. The reason why the customers who have fewer contacts with Japanese people and culture are more likely to seek authenticity is because they enjoy the exotic allure of what is, for them, the unfamiliar world.

Another explanation for the connection between novelty and authenticity is given by Heldke (2003) who introduces an idea of a political theorist, Vine Deloira that alienation from our own lives and hunger for some sort of real life is a cause of this misconception. She analyzes that a search for the “Other’s culture is motivated by our desire to fill an emptiness in ourselves” and therefore in her case, “lacking an authentic relationship to own culinary roots, [she] seek[s] to graft [herself] onto the roots of another cuisine, another culture, one whose authenticity seems

palpably obvious to [her] – at least initially” (Heldke 2003:28). Similarly, Handler (1986) suggests that today the population is suffering from the lack of reality about their lives and their beings. Authenticity is therefore craved when a group or an individual struggles for recognition; for example such desire is represented in an individual’s purchasing behaviour of cheap imitations of luxury items in seeking the appearance of high status (Handler 1986). In either case, sushi is consumed with the perception that it is authentically Japanese although, in actual fact, the construction process and contents of “authentic sushi” reflect the customer’s self, thereby incorporating Euro-Canadian cultural values.

The Japanese restaurant in Victoria and most likely in North America plays a role of a theatre-like space to “perform Japan” and what is consumed in that space is the entertainment which brings people to extraordinary experiences. Just as going to Disney Land, which has been created to take visitors away from ordinary reality, the customers at a Japanese restaurant enjoy the manufactured and defined space which is labelled as “Japan” and enjoy the food provided there. The difference between this Japanese restaurant experience and Disney Land experience is that in the case of the Disney Land, the customers know that it is a world of fiction and “non-real,” but in the case of Japanese restaurant, it is hard for the customers to judge whether it is real or unreal because the “Japan” presented by the restaurants is similar to the real “Japan.”

What is consumed with sushi is the exotic image of Japan and the intention of experiencing and

enjoying the difference. Authenticity is not an indispensable element to enjoy tasty and healthy sushi but is a tasteful addition to enhance the excitement of customers' sushi experience.

### **Gap between How It Looks and What It Is**

This chapter examined the transformation of sushi through the foreground of business and background of culturally constructed behaviours and thoughts. While sushi physically transforms to embody the customers' food preference embedded in Euro-Canadian cultural environment, multicultural social environment, and business conditions in Victoria, this food product still associates with the image of Japan. That is, while its physical deterritorialization progresses, its identity as a cultural product is still territorialized within Japan. The attributed identity of sushi does not shift as fast as its physicality. One of the reasons is that since a number of Asian immigrants engage in the production of sushi, an exotic image associated with Asian cultures has been maintained with sushi in the West coast of Canada. Also, since the exoticism has business values, sushi producers intentionally tried to create a Japanese-like atmosphere in restaurants and maintain the visual distinction, which is psychologically enjoyable for the customers. These factors contribute to keeping sushi attached to the Japanese identity while promoting a physical transformation process.

Just as in the case of the improvisation of Chinese cuisine (Wu 2002), the process of the

transformation of sushi is triggered neither due to the direct flow of cultural tradition from its cultural centre (which is Japan) to the periphery nor due to the flow of capital of large corporations. The process is exercised by nonexclusive individuals and thereby makes the transformation of sushi uncontrollable. The deterritorialization of sushi as a cultural product partially relies on this uncontrollability. This uncontrollability promotes the deterritorialization process, and simultaneously grows to be a concern for the Japanese state in regards to the discrepancy between the “Japaneseness” perceived by the state itself and the “Japaneseness” expressed in the transformed sushi and in regards to the nation’s economical and political power. The concern was externalized as Japanese government’s action to regulate the Japanese restaurants overseas by providing certificates. The discrepancy between physicality and identity of sushi might be increased in the future due to this uncontrollability, which sustains the different speed of transformation. The process of the transformation of sushi reveals to us that the velocity of the change of people’s thoughts has not caught up with the velocity of globalization that has been increased by intensified global trade and the interaction of people, accompanying the deterritorialization of a cultural object.

## 6. *Conclusion*

I analyzed in this thesis a Japanese food product, sushi, which transgresses national boundaries in the globalized commercial and cultural flows and is transformed in the process. I described the flow of culture through the transnational transformation of sushi, embedded in its historical and contemporary development as a food item and a cultural product. What is observed here is the deterritorialization of a Japanese cultural product and its transformation which is closely connected to the deterritorialization. In this conclusion, I will summarize this process of transformation through the agents of the transformation and analyze the deterritorialization of a Japanese cultural product, sushi.

### **Summary: Process of Transformation and Deterritorialization of Sushi**

#### **Process of Transformation of Sushi**

The origin of sushi consumed in Canada today is recognized in Japan. For over one thousand years after being disseminated from South East Asia to Japan, sushi diversified in form, ingredients, and in cooking method. In the diversification process, its role as a food item has changed from a preservable food to a perishable fast food, responding to the availability of

technology and preference of the people in each historical period (Ishige and Ruddle 1990; Shinoda 2002; Yoshino 1990). Currently, among 13 different kinds of sushi existing in Japan, *nigiri-sushi* and rolled sushi became commercially popular as a result of the food control policies enacted after the Second World War (Shinoda 2002). The commercialized *nigiri-zushi* and rolled sushi were introduced along with the expansion of Japanese international businesses and led to the present sushi boom in North America. Americans found that eating Japanese food for the first time was an adventure (Ishige 1982). The increase of health consciousness after the 1970s however brought Japanese cuisine further popularity, in particular in regards to sushi as a representative of Japanese cuisine. While successfully satisfying the adventurous spirit of the customers by providing a Japan-like atmosphere (Ishige 1982), the Japanese restaurants provided sushi created with more familiar ingredients for North American customers. The flexible nature of sushi acquired through its historical development has been contributing to the on-going transformation process of sushi.

In order to extract some agents of transformation, I observed three physical differences between Japanese and Canadian sushi. First, Canadian sushi uses a greater variety of food items for *sushi-neta*, which includes more vegetables and less seafood, while Japanese sushi has a larger variety of seafood for *sushi-neta* than in Canada. Second, rolled sushi is more dominant in the Canadian sushi market, while *nigiri-sushi* is more dominant in Japan. Third, Canadian rolled

sushi is often rolled *nori* inside and rice on the outside, while the Japanese ones are rolled with *nori* outside and the rice inside. The following ten agents are identified as the elements composing the process of the transformation of sushi;

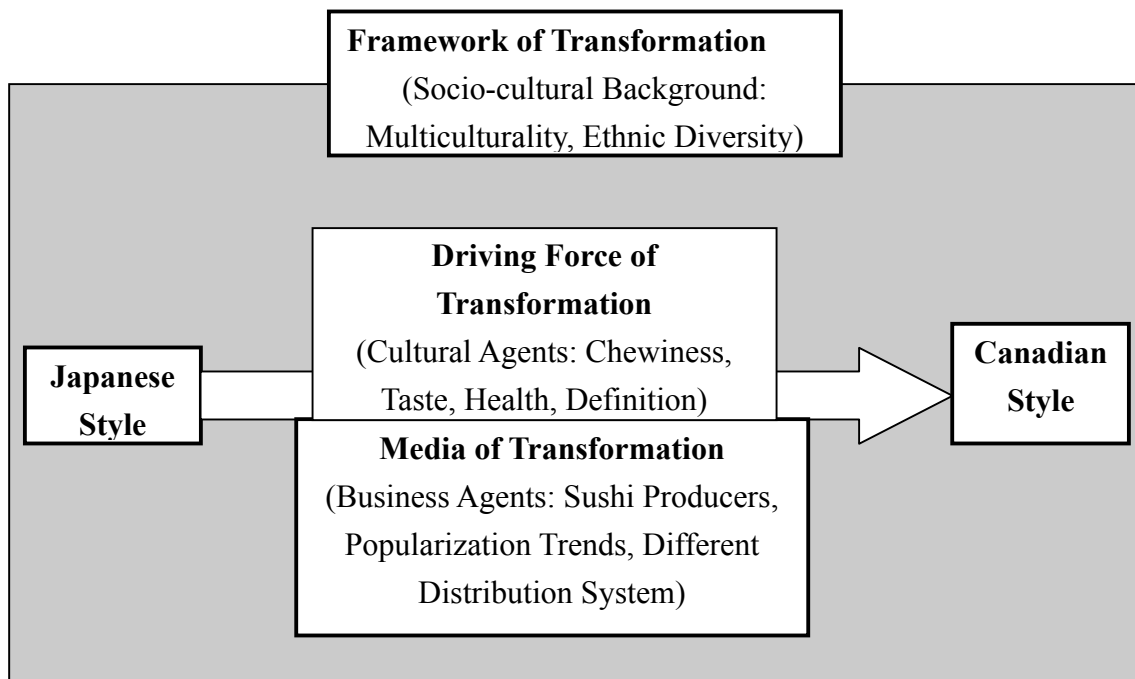
1. *Unique business model*: The unique business model in which chefs directly and daily communicate with customers behind the sushi bar counter facilitates the incorporation of customers' preferences and promotes the transformation of sushi.
2. *Popularization for business success*: The popularization of sushi to increase the customer base develops not toward protecting Japanese style of sushi but toward the direction of localization, i.e. a North-Americanization as the majority of the customers have Euro-Canadian cultural behaviours and thoughts.
3. *Difference in seafood distribution system*: The difference of the distribution system of seafood between Canada and Japan creates the difference in the quality and availability of *sushi-neta*.
4. *Multiculturalism of Society*: While the majority of sushi customers are familiar with Euro-Canadian cultural behaviours and thoughts, the multicultural composition of the population in Victoria and their openness to the experience of particular cultural differences increase the opportunity for various types of sushi to exist and survive.
5. *Multiculturalism of sushi producers*: Sushi chefs who are mainly first generation

immigrants from Asian countries have brought other cultural influences to Japanese sushi.

6. *Table manner of sushi customers:* The majority of sushi customers belong to the knife-and-fork-using food traditions. Although most of the customers do not use a knife and fork while eating sushi, they still make use of their “knife and fork culture”; in that they bite a piece of sushi out to make sure that they see what is inside. The sushi customers are likely to avoid chewy food items included in traditional Japanese *sushi-neta*.
7. *Preference in taste:* The Canadian sushi customers prefer stronger tastes, such as sweeter and spicier than the Japanese and they dislike some distinct Japanese flavours, such as the *nori*.
8. *Difference in expected roles:* Increasing health consciousness among the population is coupled with the widespread idea that sushi is a healthy food. This expected role as a health food is not strongly recognized in the role of sushi in Japanese society. The process of transformation of sushi is enhanced by this newly assigned role. .
9. *Difference in definition:* While the definition of sushi associates with the processing of rice in Japan, in Canada it is associated with the form (something rolled). The broader definition in Canada allows sushi to transform in a variety of directions.

10. *Subjectivity of the contents of authenticity*: The authenticity of the sushi product in Victoria is likely to be defined by its taste, presentation, and freshness which are subjectively perceived by customers. Also, the authenticity seekers are likely to enjoy the difference and exoticism through the consumption of sushi in a Japanese-like atmosphere, which is based on the ambiguous imaginary image of Japan. This subjectivity along with the consumption of sushi disconnects the sushi product from the traditional Japanese style and promotes the process of the transformation of sushi.

**Figure 6.1 Process of the Transformation of Sushi**



These agents are divided into three categories, business-oriented agents which are the media of the transformation, the socio-cultural background which are the framework of the transformation, and the cultural agents which are the elements which determine the direction of the transformation. Business agents are the tool and media of the transformation. The first agent is a unique business model which enables sushi chefs to play the roles of a marketer, producer, and seller and becomes a vehicle to transmit their customers' preferences into the creation of sushi. The second agent of popularization and localization of sushi is also the reflection of the customers' demands. The third agent, the distribution system is constructed based on the historical and contemporary customer demands for goods and services. All business agents contribute to the process of the transformation of sushi as the media of realizing the customer demands.

The socio-cultural background (agents four and five) provides a framework for the transformation of sushi. The embracement of the multiculturalism of society by customers and the ethnic diversity of sushi producers encourage Canadian sushi to leave the Japanese "monocultural" context. Finally, the process of the transformation is directed by the cultural agents (agents six to ten) or culturally constructed food consumption behaviours. Aversion to chewiness, preference in specific tastes, and newly assigned roles and definitions in a different cultural setting result in widening the concept of sushi itself and introducing new kinds of spice

and ingredients to sushi while causing the avoidance of certain types of food items for *sushi-neta*.

These business and cultural agents all together compose the process of the transformation of sushi. In this process, its direction is shaped by cultural agents and put into work by business agents within the framework (social background) (see Figure 6.1).

### **Transformation and Deterritorialization**

Naomichi Ishige analyzes the transformation of Japanese food within Japan and suggests that Japanese people alter the Western cuisine brought to Japan in a way which fits their system of “chopstick culture” (Kewpie 2003). There are concerns in Japan that the incorporation of foreign culinary traditions into the Japanese traditional dietary habits will cause the loss of the identity of Japanese food, which will contribute to the reduction of Japanese national identity. Against such a social concern about the current situation of Japanese dietary habit which is sometimes expressed as a “cuisine without nationality” or put another way “a loss of national self,” Ishige observes that the system of “chopstick culture” is well-established and has been preserved as the foundation of Japanese food culture although the modern Japanese food has been incorporating the ingredients and cooking methods originated in Western, Chinese and other cultures (Cwiertka 2006; Kewpie 2003).

His observation on the contemporary Japanese food culture represents an example of the transformation of the dietary habits promoted by the deterritorialization of cooking methods and culturally-identified food items. I will apply the same logic to the relation between the transformation of sushi and its deterritorialization as a Japanese cultural object. Sushi introduced a Japanese cooking method of seafood – eating it raw – to Canadian food culture; however, it is not equivalent that Canadian food culture is Japanized or approaching an identity-less condition. As it is observed in this research that the system of knife-and-fork culture is still applied when people eat sushi, the structure of Canadian food culture is preserved while incorporating new cooking methods and ingredients. Transformation of sushi therefore serves as a part of the process of maintaining the system of the Canadian food culture by making an extraordinary food item (sushi) fit into it. Transformation is a simultaneous process of the appropriation and deterritorialization of a cultural object.

On deterritorialization of a cultural object, I suggested, based on the Nye's Soft Power theory (2004) in the introduction, three concerns which would be raised around the national economical and political powers and identity along with the transformation of a cultural object which is commercially produced. First, whether the attraction of the product could be upheld and thereby already gained power could be maintained after the transformation; second, whether the identity of the material, which brings the power to the nation, is maintained after the

transformation; and third, whether a sense of discomfort is generated in the modified cultural material, in that it is associated with the original ethnic identity despite the fact that the original form, meaning, and concept of the object has already been lost. How does the transformation of sushi in Victoria represent these three concerns? The first and second concerns seem not serious in this case. The attraction of sushi seems even enhanced by its transformation since the process of transformation represents a collaborative work between sushi producers and customers to realize the customers' needs. Besides, since the Japanese restaurants in Victoria create a Japan-like atmosphere in their interiors, it is considered that the Japanese identity is still consumed with sushi. As sushi is successfully adapting to the Canadian cultural context while maintaining its identity as a Japanese cultural property, transformed sushi is successfully serving as a source of soft power for Japan.

Seen from the other side, the gap between the transformed sushi and its attached Japanese identity likely to be a source of discomfort for the state of Japan. For the Japanese traditionalists and nationalists, the uniqueness of Japanese cuisine represents the uniqueness of Japanese culture and consequently the distinctiveness of the Japanese identity. That is, the transformation of Japanese cuisine means the transformation of the identity of the Japanese self. At the same time, the transformed sushi also represents the culture, identity and the pride in the culinary practice for the residents and sushi producers of the West coast of Canada as well as

North America. Therefore, when the Japanese government announced their intent to promote the “correct” Japanese cuisine (MAFF 2006), the overseas media reacted negatively to this initiative as “Japan Prepares to Send 'Sushi Police' on Worldwide Crusade to Improve Japanese Cuisine” (Herman 2006). Voice of America, for example, sarcastically criticizes that the Japanese are “open minded in modifying the cuisine of other nations” but intolerant “for what, of late, is passing for their native cuisine overseas” (Herman 2006). Also in interviews, sushi producers in Victoria, regardless of their ethnicity, negatively reacted to the Japanese government’s initiative; they said “It’s impossible” and “It’s like intruding on someone’s house with muddy shoes.”

Sushi has acquired customers by flexibly changing its form with customers’ requests. Hence, the Japanese initiative for the certification exposed each restaurant to the risk of limiting the flexibility and thereby losing their competency to realize culturally-embedded needs of the customers.. From the Japanese vantage point, sushi as a part of Japanese identity is manipulated under different cultural rules. It is a threat for Japan whose “monocultural” identity sways in the global shifts. From the Canadian vantage point, transformation of sushi represents yet another way of contributing to their multicultural identity and their food tradition. While the East and the West merge here in sushi, there is a crash of identities and of national prides.

This discrepancy of feeling shows the underlying issue of the deterritorialization of a cultural object. Sushi is deterritorialized, adapted, and embedded into the Canadian habitat of

meanings through its transformation. The process of the deterritorialization of sushi historically and presently progresses under the following path; first, sushi has been geographically dislocated and introduced to the new cultural context in history by immigrants and business persons; second, it is further deterritorialized by being produced and consumed by non-Japanese ethnic groups; third, under the multi-ethnic production and consumption, it is embedded in the different systems of meanings and starts to be transformed. In this process, globalized business activities mediate and promote the deterritorialization. Transformation and deterritorialization is a paired process; deterritorialization causes and promotes the transformation of sushi, and then the transformation enhances its disembedding and further deterritorialization.

Deterritorialization of sushi is also enhanced by the discrepancy existing within the notion of authenticity with sushi customers. With a customers' expectation that a culture is something pure and bounded, authenticity of sushi (a cultural object) is attached with Japan (a place) while the contents of authenticity is deterritorialized by their subjectivity (preference to taste, presentation, and freshness). As the result, the subjectivity pushes sushi to physically transform.

It is ironic that deterritorialization is enabling sushi to spread globally and strengthen the soft power for the state of Japan while it also promotes sushi's transformation, which exposes the cultural property to a risk that it might eventually lose its Japanese identity. The

detrterritorialization of sushi shows a difficulty in exercising the soft power in globalized context. The Japanese government resisted the phenomenon and intended to handle this difficulty by reappropriating sushi through providing certifications. Although this new attempt has not reached a success yet, we should open our eyes to the detrterritorialization and reappropriation encouraged by detrterritorialization.

### **What the Transformation of Sushi Illustrates**

The process of the transformation of sushi is an example of how a cultural object is transformed and adapted into a different cultural and commercial environment. Is there any common factor shared between elements of the transformation of sushi and other cross-cultural transformations of a cultural material? A few Japanese popular cultural items such as animation and television shows are accepted in North America by providing consumer with the moments of enjoying difference (Craig 2000). For example, Japanese animation films directed by Hayao Miyazaki, such as *Totoro* and *Spirited Away*, attract the North American audience by depicting universal values such as love, adventure, and courage in an exotic Japanese context. Many Japanese cultural items however have not become commercially more viable without adapting them to North American system of meanings. The transformation of sushi introduced in this thesis is one

of those examples. Philip Kotler (2003) suggests that marketing is not the way to find the distribution route to work off products but the technique to produce a true customer value and support the customers' lives. From business perspective, the transformation of a Japanese cultural item represents this consumer-oriented marketing attitude.

One example of the transformation of a Japanese cultural item adapting to North American culture is Hollywood's remake of Japanese horror films. Since producing *Ring* in 2002, Hollywood's film industry created several horror movies based on the Japanese originals (Lovgren 2004). The monotheism commonly shared in American audience provides a fundamental difference for the concept of ghosts and the sense of fear between the Japanese and North Americans (Kateigaho 2005). Also, Japanese horror movies feature a subtle, ambiguous, and psychologically disturbing sense of fear with surreal and twisty plotlines combined with the masterful use of silence (Lovgren 2004). Hollywood film makers therefore need to convert the Japanese sense of fear to that of the American sense of fear by recreating the film. In the conversion, the subtlety is lost as follows;

When something like *The Grudge* is adapted for the U.S. audience, there is a tendency to fill in the blanks, and those original subtleties are lost," Ryfle<sup>18</sup> said.

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<sup>18</sup> Steve Ryfle, an author of *Japan's Favourite Mon-Star: The Unauthorized Biography of Godzilla*

"What you end up with is just another horror movie, with spooks jumping out of the shadows." (Lovgren 2004)

It is the adaptation toward the American style horror, which dichotomizes the world between good and evil, and human and monster, and increasingly resembles action movies (Lovgren 2004).

The transformation of sushi and that of Japanese horror films share a common feature, the loss of subtlety. The subtlety of sushi, such as the combination of the flavours of fish and rice and the sense of seasons, is not (or not yet) appreciated in the Canadian consumer market. Subtlety and ambiguity of a Japanese sushi is diminished by the transformation, and the clarity and distinctiveness of the factors which compose the sushi, such as taste, is increased. In order to become commercially viable in North America, Japanese cultural items should decrease the ambiguity which is intrinsic to Japanese culture.

### **Future Research Topics**

As eating is life, our dietary habits involve a wide variety of human activities. Accordingly, the study of the process of the transformation of sushi involves a variety of academic areas and research subjects, which wait to be studied. First, the relation between the transformation of Japanese food and the social network of Asian immigrants is an interesting topic to be pursued.

This research revealed that the majority of sushi producers in Victoria are immigrants from Asian nations, particularly from Vietnam, Korea, and China. One of the sushi producers told that in Vancouver, Japanese restaurants are successively sold from a Korean owner to another Korean owner, who is newly immigrated to Canada. I also overheard a case that one restaurant owned by the Vietnamese was sold to another Vietnamese owner. This suggests that the social network of particular ethnic groups might have a stronger influence on the process of the transformation of a cultural object. The study about the social bonds, including kinship networks, of immigrants will contribute to further understand the complicated process of the transformation of a cultural product.

Also, the relation between the creolization of a Japanese cuisine, the Japanese ethnic identity and boundary, and the proprietary of a culinary tradition could be another issue of discussion. This is an interdisciplinary topic involving business, law, and anthropology. While the restaurant industry earns over \$500 billion a year in the United States, the copyrightability of recipes is not supported by recent court decisions (Buccafusco 2006). An anthropologist, Marilyn Strathern (1999) suggests that intellectual property rights cannot ordinarily be applicable to general knowledge. She mentions that

[t]he difficulty of identifying cultural ownership must include the fact that cultures are not discrete bodies; it is 'societies' that set up boundaries. Social communities may claim common cultural identity, and claim rights in corporate

images, but it does not of course follow that cultures reproduce as populations do. Recent diaspora for instance, not to speak of global spread, have familiarised anthropologists with the notion of dispersed cultures. (Strathern 1999:168)

Furthermore, Priscilla Ferguson refers to Bessière's idea and mentions that:

Today as in the nineteenth century, authenticity remains a highly problematic concept, given the virtual impossibility of saying what, exactly, is authentic or even what "authenticity" might mean. [...] Given the mobility of people and foodstuffs, which precludes culinary isolation, the cultivation of "authentic" or native or indigenous products has to be seen as a move in a collective strategy of distinction designed to valorize or market local identity. (2000:1059)

The boundary of the Japanese cuisine and of the Japanese identity is socially constructed as the sum of the recognition of anyone involved in the production, distribution, and consumption of Japanese food. Just as any cuisine, the flexible nature of Japanese dishes makes it difficult to define the boundary, identity, and belongingness of the culinary tradition. Further study will help a national and cultural entity to explore its self identity with (or without) its boundary.

## **Closing Words**

On the one hand, transformation of sushi is the transformation of cultural identity, which can be connected to the economical and political power of the nation of Japan. On the other hand, its transformation as a cultural material or product may constitute the very basis of economic sustenance of a group. In the 21st century such transformation of a cultural product would likely

to occur more often as a part of an ordinary process of change. The deterritorialization of sushi as a cultural product seems to show the movement in the direction of cultural homogenization in globalization; however, the process of the transformation of sushi indicates that the difference would be preserved to serve as the resource of business and national and ethnic identity.

Transformation indicates the existence of distance between cultures distinguished by the difference. This research showed the intensified interconnectedness in globalization. The ethnic diversity of sushi chefs for example shows that Japan and Asian countries are more and more connected through the production of sushi. Meanwhile, this research also shows that disconnectedness or distance still exists as an agent of promoting transformation. The transformation of sushi shows that between Canada and Japan consumers' food consumption behaviours are based on different cultural behaviours (or systems of meanings). The balance between geographical and cultural disconnectedness and interconnectedness allows people to have room to provoke imaginations and exercise their creativity, which is the process toward transformation.

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## Appendix A

### Interview Questions for Producers

Questions for Businesses	
1	<p>Why did you start to run a Japanese restaurant? OR Why did you start to sell sushi in your store? なぜ日本食レストランを経営しはじめたのですか? OR なぜお店で寿司を販売しはじめたのですか?</p>
2	<p>How many years have you run a Japanese restaurant business? OR How many years have you sold sushi in your store? OR How many years have you worked as a sushi chef? 何年日本食レストランビジネスをされているのですか? OR 何年お店で寿司を販売なさっているのですか? OR 何年寿司職人として働いていらっしゃるのですか?</p>
3	<p>If somebody ask you “what is sushi?” how do you describe sushi for the person? もし『寿司って何?』と聞かれたら、どのように寿司を説明しますか?</p>
4	<p>How do you characterize your customer? Who are your customers? どんなお客様が一番多いですか?</p>
5	<p>Which ethnic group do you think the most of your customers are from? お客様はどここの国の人が一番多いと感じられますか?</p>
6	<p>Why do you think customers come to eat sushi? OR Why do you think customers buy sushi?</p>

	<p>お客様はなぜ寿司を食べに来ると思いますか？</p> <p>OR</p> <p>お客様はなぜ寿司を買うのだと思いますか？</p>
7	<p>Which items on the menu is the most popular?</p> <p>どの寿司が一番人気がありますか？</p>
8	<p>Why do you think this type of sushi is the most popular?</p> <p>その寿司が人気があるのはどうしてだと思いますか？</p>
9	<p>Which item on the menu is the least popular? Why?</p> <p>どの寿司が一番人気がありませんか？なぜですか？</p>
10	<p>Do you have any request that you do not have in the menu? Have you added a new type of sushi to your menu lately? Would you explain which and why did you add it?</p> <p>お客様からメニューにない寿司をリクエストされたことは？最近新しくメニューに加えた寿司がありますか？もしあれば、どれか教えていただけませんか？どうしてそれをメニューに加えたのですか？</p>
11	<p>One research studies that religious belief may influence the food choices of people. Have you ever asked for special arrangement of sushi based on religious reasons?</p> <p>宗教は、人々の食べ物の選択に影響するというリサーチ結果があります。宗教的理由から、寿司を特別にアレンジしてくれるように依頼されたことはありますか？</p>
12	<p>How often do you receive a request for vegetarian or vegan sushi?</p> <p>どのくらいの頻度でベジタリアンやビーガン用のアレンジメントを依頼されますか？</p>
13	<p>When do you sell sushi the most often?</p> <p>寿司が一番売れるのは、いつですか？</p> <p>If the seasonality, time of a day, and weekday/weekend is not clarified, ask “Which season or month is sushi the most often sold?” “Which days of week is sushi the most often sold?” “Which time of a day is sushi the most often sold?”</p>
14	<p>What do you think is the reason that the people eat sushi at the particular times?</p> <p>その時間や時期に人がよく寿司を食べる理由は、何だとおもいますか？</p>

15	<p>Do you have more regular customers or one-time customers? Why do you think your customers choose your store?</p> <p>お客様は、常連さんと一見さんのどちらが多いですか？お客さんはなぜこの店を選ぶと思いますか？</p>
16	<p>What percentage of your customers do you assume are tourists?</p> <p>お客様の中で観光客と見受けられる人の割合は、どのくらいですか？</p>
17	<p>Have you ever been to Japan before?</p> <p>以前日本に行ったことがありますか？</p>
18	<p>Do you think the sushi in Japan and sushi you provide are the same or different? If so, how?</p> <p>日本の寿司とここの寿司は、同じだと思いますか、違うと思いますか？違うとするどどのように違うと思いますか？</p>
19	<p>Do you think whether the person who makes the sushi is Japanese or not affect your customers' decision making to buy sushi?</p> <p>すしを作っている人が日本人かどうかは、寿司を買うお客様の判断に影響すると思いますか？</p>
20	<p>Why?</p> <p>なぜそう思いますか？</p>
21	<p>Do you think there are other things besides the quality of the food that attract your customers?</p> <p>料理の質以外に、何かお客様が惹かれると思うことはありますか？</p>
22	<p>Can you think any of things to make sushi more popular among the wider type of people?</p> <p>寿司をさらにいろいろなお客様に食べてもらうために、何をすればよいと思いますか？</p>

## *Appendix B*

### **Questionnaire for the Sushi Consumer in West Coast Canada**

This project is conducted by a Master's degree candidate of University of Victoria as part of her requirements for Master's degree. [PROVIDER'S NAME] kindly provides an opportunity to conduct this survey at their store; however, this survey does NOT relate to any business of this store. The results of this study will be used in the MA thesis of the researcher and any additional publications based on the thesis.

Purpose of this research is to reveal the connection between globalization and local food consumption and to understand the incorporation and rejection of new food culture in West Coast Canada. This research is important for understanding local trends of Japanese food consumption, which will help local food businesses to consider their business strategies, and also for academia because such cross-cultural food research is rarely attempted.

It will take 5-10 minutes to complete a questionnaire. Except the consumption of your time, there are no known or anticipated risks to you by participating in this survey.

This is a completely anonymous survey, and your participation must be completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation.

#### Your participation in this survey includes

- To fill in a questionnaire provided by the researcher; and
- To clarify your agreement or disagreement to use the data for research on the consumption of Japanese food.

For questions regarding this survey, please contact the researcher: [rumikot@uvic.ca](mailto:rumikot@uvic.ca).

You may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Associate Vice-President, Research at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545).

### Sushi consumer survey

Prepared and conducted by Rumiko Tachibana  
M.A. candidate, interdisciplinary, university of Victoria

1. When did you first eat sushi? \_\_\_\_\_year(s) ago
  2. How often do you eat sushi?
    - A) More than once a week → how often? \_\_\_\_\_times
    - B) Once a week
    - C) More than once a month
    - D) Once a month
    - E) More than once a year
    - F) Once a year
    - G) Less than once a year
  3. Are you a vegetarian or vegan? Yes / No
  4. Would you say you eat sushi on special occasions? Yes / No
  5. If yes, what type of special occasion(s) do you eat sushi?
- 

6. Where do you normally eat sushi? Please select the **3 most frequent** places.

a) home	e) outdoor
b) office	f) friend's place
c) school	g) in a car / vehicle
d) restaurants	h) others_____

7. Do you come to a particular place to eat or buy sushi? Yes / No

8. Why do you choose this restaurant / store?

---

---

9. When you chose sushi, what are significant reasons for you? Please **rank the following reasons from 1 to 6.** (the most important = 1; the least important = 6).

\_\_\_\_ good service

\_\_\_\_ taste

\_\_\_\_ price

\_\_\_\_ health

\_\_\_\_ ready to eat

\_\_\_\_ belief

If you have any additional reasons for choosing sushi, please list them.

---

10. What kind of sushi do you like the most?

---

11. Why do you prefer this type of sushi the most, other than the taste?

---

12. Have you ever been to Japan before?    Yes    /    No

13. Do you have Japanese friend(s), partner, or have business relationship with Japan, or have Japanese student(s) staying/stayed at your house?

Yes    /    No

14. Do you think the sushi in Japan and sushi you eat here is the same?

Yes    /    No

15. Do you think the sushi made by Japanese chefs is more authentic than the sushi made by chefs of other ethnicities?    Yes    /    No

16. Why do you think so?

---

---

17. Is the authenticity of sushi important for you? Yes / no

18. Why?

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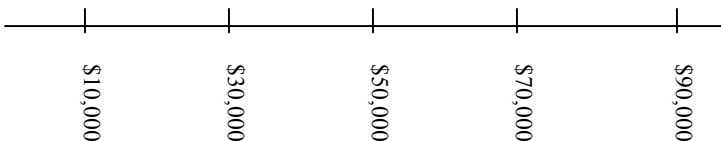
19. For you, what are the most important criteria to determine the authenticity of sushi? Please select **three most important** elements for you.

- A) Taste of the sushi
- B) Smell of the sushi
- C) Texture of the sushi
- D) Presentation of the sushi
- E) Ingredients of the sushi
- F) Freshness of the sushi
- G) Ethnicity of the sushi chef
- H) Ethnicity of the store owner
- I) Ethnicity of the customers
- J) Ethnicity of the staff
- K) How sushi is prepared (procedure, tools, kitchen facility)
- L) Career (experience) of the chef
- M) Career (experience) of the owner
- N) Interior decoration of the place
- O) Music in the store/restaurant
- P) Service of the store/restaurant
- Q) Others \_\_\_\_\_

20. Please indicate which age category you fall into?

Under 20 / 21-30 / 31- 40 / 41-50 / 51-60 / 61-70 / over 70

21. Which category of income reflects your annual household income? Please circle an appropriate place on the bar below. (purpose of this question is to understand if there is any particular income group which eats sushi more often.)



22. What is your occupation? [optional] \_\_\_\_\_

23. One research has indicated that religious belief may influence the food choices of people. Would you say that religion has any influence on your choice to eat sushi? Yes / No

24. Are you a resident of greater Victoria? Yes / No

25. I am looking for participants to interview to learn more about sushi consumers. If you are willing to participate in a one hour interview, please provide your telephone number or e-mail address.

Tel or e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please be aware that after the investigator collects this anonymous survey and includes it with others, it will be impossible to remove the data.**

**I agree that the data I have provided may be used for research on the consumption of Japanese food in Victoria.**

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you so much for your help. Have a nice day!**