Ballymaloe Cookery School: A Study of the Business and its Local Impact

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Ballymaloe Cookery School: A Study of the Business and its Local Impact

KEELIN TOBIN

Cork Institute of Technology 2016
Ballymaloe Cookery School:

A Study of the Business and its Local Impact

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MA Thesis

Department of Tourism and Hospitality
Supervisors: Dr Margaret Linehan and Breda Hickey

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Declaration

The author hereby declares that, except where duly acknowledged, this thesis is entirely her own work and has not been submitted for any degree in any University or Institute of Technology.

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List of Abbreviations

AFN Alternative Food Network
ASI Annual Services Inquiry
CAP Common Agricultural Policy
CERT Council for Education Recruitment and Training
CIA Culinary Institute of America
CIT Cork Institute of Technology
CSA Community Supported Agriculture
CSO Central Statistics Office
DAFM Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
DIT Dublin Institute of Technology
EEC European Economic Community
EU European Union
FSAI Food Safety Authority of Ireland
GM Genetically Modified
HEI Higher Education Institute
ICT Information and Communications Technology
IFA Irish Farmers’ Association
IOFGA Irish Organic Food Growers Association
IRT Integrated Rural Tourism
LEADER Liaisons Entre Actions de Developpment de l’Economie Rurale
RAI Restaurant Association of Ireland
RTE Raidió Teilifís Éireann
SEW Socioemotional Wealth
SFSC Short Food Supply Chain
SME Small and Medium Enterprise
TD Teachta Dála
TV Television
UCC University College Cork
UK United Kingdom
UNWTO United Nations World Tourism Organisation
USA United States of America
WTO World Trade Association
Abstract

The focus of this research is Ballymaloe Cookery School situated in East Cork, Ireland. This study seeks to understand the emergence of the cookery school, how this business has evolved over time and to investigate the impact it has had on the local area. Ballymaloe Cookery School was officially founded by brother and sister, Darina Allen (née O’ Connell) and Rory O’ Connell in Shanagarry, Co. Cork in 1983. The findings examine the establishment of the cookery school as a family business and its attributes. Set amongst a rural landscape, close to the sea and surrounded by agricultural land, the school is well served by its organic gardens, farm, orchards and greenhouses. This is central to the defining ethos of Ballymaloe and sets it apart from sites of culinary learning elsewhere. In order to analyse the success and impact at Ballymaloe Cookery School in light of its values and early motivations, a qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews was chosen. Analysis of the interviews resulted in a number of key findings.

The results from this study indicate that, although the values underpinning Ballymaloe Cookery School and the fundamentals of cooking taught there remain constant, the school has undergone change, and innovation has been critical to its success. An aim of the empirical research was to explore the thoughts and perceptions of respondents regarding Ballymaloe Cookery School, in order to make conclusions about its impact and influence. Though the achievements of Ballymaloe Cookery School have resonance nationally and internationally, the impact of the cookery school in the region of East Cork is the focus of this study. Employment, support of local tourism, and support for local food producers were found to constitute the impact the school has locally. Additionally, the embeddedness of Ballymaloe Cookery School in the local community is considered significant for the region.

The study also highlights the educational outreach conducted at Ballymaloe Cookery School, specifically The East Cork Slow Food Educational ‘Grow and Cook’ Project. Co-founder Darina Allen has been an activist in relation to specific issues of food justice, and a strong tradition of training and advocacy prevails at Ballymaloe Cookery School. The career paths of past students at the school are further evidence of this. In summary, this research discusses how Ballymaloe Cookery School, with Darina Allen at the helm, has benefited the local region of East Cork.
View of Ballycotton from a Barley Field near Ballynamona Beach, by East Cork artist Niall McCarthy (with permission).
Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction and Background to the Study

This chapter provides an introduction and background to this study of Ballymaloe Cookery School: the business and its local impact. This chapter presents an introduction to the topic, the central research objectives, the rationale for the study, and an outline of the thesis. Ballymaloe Cookery School first opened its doors thirty three years ago, in 1983. Though many will be familiar with a neat narrative around the school’s pathway to success, there is much scope to consider challenges faced, study its achievements, and assess its impact. The popularity and reputation of Ballymaloe Cookery School has been highly influential in the context of Irish food and history. Thus, a full account of its genesis and wider impact merits further attention.

A number of concepts are introduced in this chapter to contextualise the study. As concern regarding the decline of home cooking skills across Western countries grows (Pollan, 2013), a proliferation in available culinary programmes has taken place (Kramer, 2007). This study aims to identify and understand the factors influencing such changes and the place of Ballymaloe Cookery School in this context. The extant literature on culinary education provides a background to the study, though a dearth of such literature can also be observed. The literature review in Chapter Two elaborates on developments of how a culinary education can now be attained, and the current discordance that exists in Ireland between the demands of industry, education providers, students and other stakeholders, with regard to such training and education. Other developments in the sector reflect changes in the student populations of culinary programmes, an extension of the scope of culinary education, and an increase in the number and diversity of institutions offering culinary education. A clear distinction can be made between privately owned and run cookery schools and higher education institutions which are usually, though not exclusively, publicly funded. It is more difficult to demarcate between culinary programmes offering professional instruction for chefs and those offering tuition to home cooks. Other tensions exist between cooking as a career, a leisure pursuit, a gendered activity, and a necessary skill.
Changes in food practices generally, are pertinent to this study. As food and cooking related topics pervade television listings, newspaper and magazine features, and festivals (Allen, 2015), a simultaneous deterioration in cooking skills, which were once commonplace, is taking place (Caraher, 2012). This raises questions regarding the dissemination of cooking skills, the value placed on specific skills, and the prevalent relationship with food in society overall. Related issues around health, food quality, how food is produced, and changes in the food system contribute to the discussion. Increased attention drawn to the ethics of food reflects changes in the production of food at global level and food preparation and practices at household level in the private sphere. Many of these topics are critical to the values rooted in and promoted at Ballymaloe Cookery School. Chefs increasingly have a role that is outside the boundaries of the kitchen, unlike what was traditionally the norm. Celebrity chefs and food celebrities today hold power and influence beyond the confines of the plate (Johnston, Rodney and Chong, 2014). Though much of their influence has been shown to be market oriented (Scholes, 2011), increasingly, chefs have been deemed to possess agency to make change as activists and leaders of ‘food movements’, much as Handler (1995, p. 134) describes USA chef, restaurateur and writer Alice Waters as: a revolutionary. Darina Allen, co-founder of Ballymaloe Cookery School has been likened to Waters on many occasions (e.g. Durran and Cawley, 2012). The literature supports a comparison between their career paths as chefs, educators and activists.

It is against this backdrop of change that the concept of Alternative Food Networks (AFNs) can be introduced. The literature on AFNs is a site of active discourse. A high level of interrogation in the literature serves to further knowledge on the topic. Though a lack of consensus is observable in the literature, AFNs are generally recognised as activities which set out to challenge the practices of the prevailing industrial food system (Tregear, 2011). Industrialisation of agriculture and food is characterised by the processes of specialisation, intensification, mechanisation, and economies of scale (Goldschmidt, 1978). The industrialisation of the dominant agri-food system has caused negative impacts on human health, the environment, livelihoods and developing world communities. Factors in the industrialisation of food have affected food systems and food provisioning in Ireland and globally. Organic food can be considered one example of an alternative food network. The organic food movement is of particular relevance to this study as Ballymaloe Cookery School is located on an organic farm. Such alternative food networks are receiving growing academic and political interest as the implications of the dominant food system for health, social justice and the environment become apparent. Sage (2012) highlights the separation between food
producers and consumers at opposite ends of the supply chain. Some AFNs have been considered elitist and contrary to the ethics they promote (e.g. Guthman, 2008). Though this has also been refuted (e.g. Hinrichs, 2000), it is clear that the ethics of food are bound up in concepts of taste, social distinction and authenticity. Shani, Helhassen and Soskolne (2013) observe a general lack of incorporation of food ethics into culinary education and practice. They argue in favour of its teaching in culinary schools, and consider its addition a positive impact on the credibility of the chef profession, and the potential of culinary professionals to bring about change. These issues are of relevance for this study and will be dealt with in greater depth in Chapter Two.

Ballymaloe Cookery School is located in a rural region in East Cork, Ireland. There is increasing emphasis on innovation and economic diversification in Irish rural development policy. The contemporary rural development agenda has experienced three major paradigm shifts. The first paradigm was one associated with productivism where the emphasis of policy was on the production of primary commodities. Ill-effects of productivist policies as experienced in 1980s rural Ireland, included a reduction in the numbers of people employed in agriculture, subsequent rural underemployment, a decline in rural populations, and evidence of the unsustainable nature of intensive agriculture for the environment (CEC, 1988). From this followed a move away from productivist models and towards a paradigm influenced by globalisation, though this influence was not specific to rural regions. Subsequently, a third shift towards a more grassroots approach where rural development stakeholders are considered the drivers of change makes up ‘new paradigm’ rural development (Van der Ploeg, Renting, Brunori, Knickel, Mannion, Marsden, de Roest, Sevilla-Guzman, and Ventura, 2000). The rural development agenda is evident via its main economic activities identified by Tovey (2006) as: ‘alternative’ food, cultural tourism, and the management of local resources.

Tourism can be considered a central element of rural development. In the rural economy, tourism plays a significant role in providing alternatives to declining traditional activities such as farming (Oppermann, 1997). Farm-based tourism and hospitality businesses are predominantly family businesses (Getz, Carl sen and Morrison, 2004). Additionally, Ballymaloe Cookery School is an example of a family business. Family business research is a small but growing body of work. Disquiet around definition of family businesses is apparent in the literature. Though ample diversity exists between family businesses, common analysis of family businesses focuses on the family, the business, and its ownership, and their varied interactions, as first put forward
by Davis and Tagiuri (1982). Family business is increasingly considered a distinct form of entrepreneurship (Getz et al., 2004). Hoffman, Hoelscher and Sorenson (2006) consider family capital and its potential to bring about competitive advantage, a unique characteristic of family businesses. Though family businesses tend to be small or medium enterprises (SMEs), they should be looked at as unique in literature on SMEs more generally (Goffee, 1996). A small business, as defined by the Irish Central Statistics Office is one made up of less than 50 employees, a medium enterprise is one where between 50 and 249 people are employed and a large enterprise employs over 250 people (CSO, 2008). Little research has been conducted on family businesses in Ireland (Birdthistle and Fleming, 2007), nor their role in the tourism and hospitality sector (Getz et al., 2004).

The concepts introduced in this section evidence a dynamic background to Ballymaloe Cookery School, its emergence, activities and local impact. As Chapter Two will outline further, there are gaps in the current knowledge and this thesis aims to address some of these. The following section provides further rationale for this study.

1.2 Rationale for the Study

A strong rationale, comprising a number of factors, has been the driving force for this study. This research relates to several topical research areas such as culinary education, alternative food networks (AFNs), family business studies, food studies, rural development, and tourism. This study aims to complement on-going work in these fields. This examination of Ballymaloe Cookery School sits within the wider knowledge base of the social sciences, and while it does not employ the tools of the pure sciences, it does aspire to a ‘scientific’ level of objectivity. As mentioned, there are significant gaps in the research and academic literature on culinary education and cookery schools. Limited research in the field of family business in Ireland is further justification for this research as family businesses are significant in the Irish economy and worthy of attention. Though Ballymaloe Cookery School has attracted much media attention and interest internationally, the school has been given negligible attention in academic discourse. It is deemed necessary to document from an academic perspective the evolution and success of Ballymaloe Cookery School. This research holds the potential to enhance not only academic knowledge but also industry knowledge. Ballymaloe Cookery School and other
organisations operating in a similar field can capitalise on this research by using it to reflect on their position in a competitive environment and situate themselves accordingly.

1.3 Research Questions and Research Objectives

A key part of research is defining what the study sets out to discover. Research objectives should set out what the researcher plans to do, why, and how (Liamputong and Ezzy, 2005). This research is rooted in a qualitative perspective and a grounded theory approach. This study examines the responses of study participants with a view to unpacking the factors that define the business at Ballymaloe Cookery School and its local impact. The specific research questions and related sub-questions of this thesis, arising from the purpose of the study are the following:

**What is the business of Ballymaloe Cookery School?**

- How has the business emerged?
- What are its key characteristics?
- How has the school evolved since its inception?

**What has been the impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School on the local East Cork region?**

- What changes have emerged locally as a result of the activities of Ballymaloe Cookery School?
- What type of employment has the cookery school brought about?

To address the research questions, the overarching aim of this research, therefore, is to gain an understanding of the business at Ballymaloe Cookery School, how this has emerged and evolved over time, and to ascertain the impact of the cookery school at local level in East Cork with respect to social, cultural and economic factors. This is worth researching as the school has been successful over a sustained period of time. This thesis considers the cookery school in terms of its awards and reviews, its viability, its incorporation of family members, customer and staff loyalty, and beyond. Ballymaloe Cookery School has significant impact locally in a number of ways. Job creation is a positive outcome of the cookery school’s success. The cookery school also attracts visitors to the area and boosts the region’s profile as both a leisure
and food destination. These developments constitute aspects of the economic impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School. Relationships between local producers and those at Ballymaloe are also worthy of investigation. The influence that Ballymaloe Cookery School has had on policy and 'food movements' has been both local and international in scope. Such outcomes comprise some of the social and cultural aspects of the school's impact. This study seeks to understand the driving factors in the cookery school's success. Measuring the impact is worthwhile to show the local importance a family business can have, and not solely in economic terms. It is also necessary to consider the relationship of the cookery school in light of the other associated enterprises, and what they mean for the locality. In-depth interviews with local people in East Cork are crucial to assessing the local impact of the cookery school and establishing how it is viewed locally. There is merit, therefore, in deepening the understanding of this cookery school in Ireland and its importance and relevance in Ireland and abroad. The research aims to add to the growing body of literature on family business within the tourism and hospitality sector. The following section establishes the content and structure of the thesis.

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

This thesis explores Ballymaloe Cookery School with particular reference to values underpinning the business and its local impact. The structure and content of this research are outlined in this section. Chapter Two comprises an in-depth literature review, covering topics relevant to the research questions and primary research. These topics include: culinary education, alternative food networks (AFNs), rural development and rural tourism, and an introduction to family businesses. A full examination of the methodological considerations, inherent in an interpretive body of research, is provided in Chapter Three. This study is rooted in Phenomenology and Grounded Theory. It is thus, an objective study of the subjective. For the purpose of this study, 20 people participated in the in-depth interview process. Chapter Three presents reasons for the chosen method and the appropriateness of semi-structured interviews. The chapter also explains the sample selection, the data collection process, and data analysis techniques applied in the study. Chapter Four provides a discussion of the key themes and research findings arising from the primary research. The final chapter, Chapter Five, draws on the findings identified in Chapter Four to acknowledge limitations of the study and to make recommendations for practice and future research. A comprehensive
list of references concludes the thesis. A list of external recognition of the cookery school’s success and interview guides used during the data collection phase are included in Appendix 1.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction and background to the study, an outline of the research objectives and research questions, a justification for the research and a brief description of the overall structure of the thesis. In the context of what has been introduced in this section, the necessity to examine the business and the local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School is clear. The following chapter contains a review of existing literature pertinent to the research objectives and questions.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

This chapter comprises a review of existing literature relevant to the research objectives and provides a conceptual background to the chapters which follow. The purpose of the literature review is to explore the relevant field of study, and to understand the current research and theory that exist, in order to position this research within the relevant body of knowledge. This chapter is divided into four key sections, specifically on Culinary Education, Alternative Food Networks, Tourism and Rural Development, and Family Business. The chapter includes identification of gaps in the literature and suggestions for further research. Each topic is introduced with a brief foreword and further discussed with analysis of literature pertaining to the specific area of investigation.

2.2 Culinary Education: An Introduction

Academic study of food has experienced considerable growth in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. This is evidenced by the growing range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered at universities, particularly in the USA and the UK, within the broader discipline of food studies (Weissman, Gantner and Narine, 2012). Messer, Haber, Toomra and Wheaton (2000) state that interest in culinary history and gastronomy has grown over the prior thirty years, while Beardsworth and Keil (1997) highlighted previous neglect. Such academic interest in food reflects growing interest in, and concerns about, food generally. The study of food can act as a lens in analysing other phenomena, such as history (e.g. Mintz, 1985), industrialisation (e.g. Weber, 2009) and memory (Sutton, 2001). Food studies is now an established discipline, but historically it was not always recognised as such (Miller and Deutsch, 2009). A clear research deficit in the area of Culinary Education in general has been acknowledged by Zopiatis (2010) and Berta (2005). Robinson and Beesley (2010) also identify scope for both qualitative and quantitative investigations into culinary education and culinary professions. Zopiatis' (2010) Cypriot focused study suggested that the vocational characteristics associated with the culinary profession have prevented researchers from studying other unique characteristics of the profession, including analysis of the competencies required for the organisation and leadership of culinary operations. While the growing field of food studies
provides some broad insights and background to culinary education and may serve as a catalyst for more, certainly, additional investigation is needed. This study is intended to make a contribution towards filling the gaps identified.

Little of the available literature on Culinary Education looks beyond Western contexts. Historically in the West, everyday culinary knowledge was passed from one generation to the next, while at the professional level young apprentices learned from older masters as part of a formalised guild system (Trubek, 2000). Culinary education emerged from the vocational education movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and the focus has largely since been on student mastery of core techniques (Muller, VanLeeuwen, Mandabach and Harrington, 2009). The techniques rooted in Auguste Escoffier’s *Le Guide Culinaire* (1903), his seminal training guide in hotel cuisine based on his time at The Savoy Hotel in London, remain the classical culinary standard he first set out during the early twentieth century. The emergence of Nouvelle Cuisine in the 1960s was a point of departure for chefs as they created new styles of cooking, and in doing so, began to establish the authority of the chef which has continued to expand since (Barber, 2014). The viewpoint of a chef as a professional rather than a tradesperson came about with the establishment of culinary unions in the early 1900s, according to Kramer (2007). Kramer (2007) also argues that support for vocational learning and a changing view of professional cookery continue to contribute to the growing success of cooking schools worldwide.

The available literature evidences a significant rise internationally in enrolments on professional cookery programmes in recent times (Fabricant, 2003; Mandabach, Harrington and VanLeeuwen, 2001). Increased demand for skilled professionals in the expanding food and hotel business has driven such growth. Formal institutions for culinary learning were established to meet the needs of industry and for the purpose of ensuring student culinary success (Harrington, Mandabach, VanLeeuwen and Thibodeaux, 2005). Similarly, most students approach Culinary Arts as a means to an end, a job in the industry (Berta, 2005). Reports of skills shortages in the industry globally remain common (e.g. Robinson and Beesley, 2010). Similarly, current chef shortages in Ireland have been highlighted in mainstream media (Bolger, 2015; McGuire, 2015).

Through social exchange theories, Kang, Twigg and Hertzman (2010) shed further light on the high turnover of chefs in the industry. Pratten (2003) draws attention to the high dropout rate
among students at catering colleges, a rate that applies to students already equipped with relevant industry experience, in addition to culinary novices. The situation is further compounded by issues relating to wages, the capacity of employers to meet training needs, privatisation of technical and further education colleges and relevant government policies and priorities (Cornford and Gunn, 1998). Speaking at the 2015 ‘Food on the Edge’ Symposium, held in Ireland, young award winning chef and Dublin Institute of Technology Culinary Arts graduate, Mark Moriarty discussed why fewer young people are becoming chefs. He drew attention to the lack of financial rewards, the threat that the work environment can pose to an individual’s health, and the tough atmosphere that predominates in the industry (Moriarty, 2015). He calls for a cultural shift in the industry, stressing the need for good working environments for chefs, but also identifies responsibility that lies with culinary students (Moriarty, 2015). Irish chef Ross Lewis (in Bolger, 2015) cites low salaries, long hours, repetitive work, the need for chefs to make personal sacrifices and false representations of the job in popular media as contributing factors to the present shortage of chefs in Ireland. Lydon (2012) affirms that there is a gap between what education and industry consider the best means of meeting labour needs. As Banks pointed out in her seminal text, *The Sociology of Education* (1968), education can be understood through its relationship to the labour market, and educational skills and qualifications are rewarded in accordance with the social hierarchy.

A broad range of institutions concerned with educating people on the art and science of cooking now exist worldwide. Some focus on educating professional chefs and those wanting to embark on a career in food, while others cater for hobbyists or fall somewhere in between. In Ireland, though private cookery schools such as Ballymaloe Cookery School attract many students, for the majority, formal culinary education is obtained at the larger Institutes of Technology (McGuire, 2015). Culinary education in Ireland has recently undergone change. CERT (Council for Education Recruitment and Training) was established during the early 1960s to coordinate recruitment and employee development for hotel and catering staff in Ireland. CERT worked in cooperation with Ireland’s Tourism Board, Bord Fáilte for many decades, and then merged with Fáilte Ireland in 2003. Third level programmes in the multidisciplinary area of Culinary Arts and Food Technology offered in third level institutes across Ireland today range from certificates (from level 5 in the national framework of qualifications) to postgraduate research degrees (up to level 10). This includes courses of short term duration and those requiring a commitment of many years, and part time, in addition to full time programmes. In his analysis of chef training in Ireland, Lydon (2012) recommends
that culinary education institutions should build stronger links with industry, explore ways in which to make the industry more attractive to students, encourage further collaboration between stakeholders on curriculum design, and invest in staff development. According to Harrington, Mandabach, VanLeeuwen and Rande (2004), most culinary and food service educators move from employment first in industry to one in education. Accreditation for culinary education varies, as does the cost and duration of courses.

Unlike other sectors and professions, training and qualification is not always a prerequisite for employment in the industry but increasingly, it is required (Pratten, 2003). Study in the area of food and cookery differs from work within the industry. The debate regarding the merits of attaining formal culinary education is generally split between those arguing in favour of initial training in classical techniques, and those who deem that learning whilst working in the industry is just as beneficial (Fuhrmeister, 2015). Entry requirements at culinary institutions vary. The CIA (Culinary Institute of America) requires candidates to have a minimum of six months' industry work experience prior to study (Wilson, 2015). The question of whether or not time spent at a culinary institute of some form is valuable for an individual seeking a career in food, and if so, is that value worth the costs, remains pertinent. As the narrative around culinary paths suggests, it remains possible for a person to begin a successful career in the position of kitchen porter before gradually progressing to a position as head chef (Wilson, 2015). The model of apprenticeship associated with the French culinary tradition can and does still exist. Without a clear justification for the need to attain a formal culinary education, the question can be posed, what motivates one to pursue such? Also, how are cookery schools able to compete in a market where prospective students have little formal requirement to attend culinary school? What is the cost/benefit to the student and how is this measured? The cost of attaining a culinary education in higher education against the strong likelihood of working for minimal reward after study is a particular downside to students in the USA where the cost of third level education is far higher than in Ireland (Fuhrmeister, 2015). Tuition fees for third level undergraduate courses in Ireland were abolished in 1996 as a strategy of the Irish government to encourage study in higher education. The National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 (2011) indicates that private higher education institutions will increasingly feature in the country's higher education system. It is important to note that all places of culinary education are not the same. This is fundamental to any question of comparison. A broad range of culinary education institutions are given further consideration in the following section.
A new demographic that is attracted to a career in food can be identified: aside from those of school-leaving age, more experienced professionals from other sectors are drawn to culinary training with a view to work in the sector (Harrington et al., 2005; Fabricant, 2003). According to McGuire (2015), culinary students at Ireland’s Institutes of Technology are largely of school leaving age embarking on their careers, while those attending private cookery schools tend to be over the age of 25 and seeking a change of career. Another change in the sector is the growing proportion of females in culinary education (Robinson and Beesley, 2010; Fabricant, 2003). A 2002 study by White, Jones and James found that a dominant male culture prevails among commercial kitchens and that, despite the promotion of equal opportunities, this culture has not been impacted upon. This suggests scope for research on the place of women in culinary education and professional kitchens.

Internationally, a shift towards the integration of liberal components in culinary education curricula has been observed (Shani et al., 2013; Muller et al., 2009). Fabricant lauds the expansion of culinary education from the total focus on classical French cuisine to the inclusion of issues in marketing, management, the environment and law (2003). It is increasingly commonplace in the Western world for chefs to be expected to have interest and expertise in areas such as food growing, foraging, scientific processes (including aspects of what is dubbed Molecular Gastronomy), in addition to the fundamental techniques of cooking (Shani et al., 2013). Deutsch (2014) proposes transformation in culinary education towards encouragement of creativity, methodological understanding and culinary improvisation. Short (2006) advises that any initiatives or policies engaging in the promotion or improvement of cooking should include aspects of food culture and issues around food provision, in addition to cooking skills. In his analysis of what makes a great chef, Pratten (2003b) identifies the ability to produce food with great flavour as crucial. He laments the large number of chefs who fail to appreciate and understand taste because they are taught how to work mechanically (2003b). Whereas in the past, the volume of chefs being trained was viewed as crucial, nowadays there is more diversity in the level and types of training that those seeking a career in food can choose from.

In summary, from the extent of available literature, recent changes and trends in culinary education can be observed. These include a shift in the typical prospective student profile, the adoption of a broader more holistic approach to culinary education, and an overall increase in the ubiquity and diversity of institutions offering culinary education. It can be concluded that there has been little scholarly investigation into the topic of culinary education at the global
level, and particularly, in Ireland. Research in the field has potential to benefit both academia and industry stakeholders (Zopiatis, 2010). There is scope for both quantitative and qualitative research. The shortage of research in the area and the importance of such research become critical as more privately owned and run cookery schools are established.

2.2.1 Culinary Education Institutions

This section features a discussion on culinary education institutions, recognising the multifarious nature of such establishments across the globe. Reputed institutions, often allied by recognisable branding, are compared and contrasted in order to give some background to the sector. Societal developments that coincide with the emergence and popularity of cookery schools are also given credence.

Europe has a long history of chef training by means of apprenticeship. Historically, in the USA during the 1900s, most trained chefs came from Europe having done their apprenticeship, and during that time restaurateurs frequently experienced shortages of chefs which further intensified during World War II (Kramer, 2007). Driven by such restaurateurs, the New Haven Institute in Connecticut was founded in 1946 as a centre of formal culinary education, with an approach that differed from the French model of apprenticeship (Kramer, 2007). Its method was instruction focused, in a college style setting. The institute was renamed the Culinary Institute of America (CIA) in 1951, as it remains known today (CIA, 2015). The CIA was initially created to train returned World War II veterans in the culinary arts (CIA, 2015). The institute later relocated to Hyde Park, New York in 1970. Since, major expansion has taken place. In 1995, the CIA opened a second campus in Greystone located in California's Napa Valley and a third campus was founded at San Antonio, Texas in 2008. Its first international campus was opened in Singapore in 2010. It is one of the world's most recognised and largest institutes of culinary education. Courses offered by the CIA include short term courses for home cooks, courses in the area of professional development, degree and certificate programmes, wine courses, and postgraduate education (CIA, 2015). Its structure is that of a non-profit organisation (Wilson, 2015).

According to Wilson (2015), the two main culinary schools in the United States of America are both profit-making bodies owned by Fortune-1000 corporations. These are Le Cordon Bleu, a franchise licenced by Career Education Corporation in the USA and the Arts Institutes owned
by *Education Management Corporation*, in which *Goldman Sachs* hold a large stake (Wilson, 2015). The cost of culinary training is highly variable, as is the funding of culinary institutions. According to Harrington *et al.* (2004), it is commonplace for culinary education units to reap a share of revenue from student-run restaurants and special events. The financing and profitability of culinary institutions is important because this influences priorities and strategy of the organisation. *Le Cordon Bleu* is possibly the most world renowned cookery school in operation (Wilson, 2015). Today, it comprises of a network of culinary institutions, in addition to other industry collaborations. *Le Cordon Bleu*’s mission involves a commitment to:

*Innovation and best practice in Gastronomy, Hospitality and Management and honours its commitments through an expanding international network of teaching, learning and research conducted in conjunction with the development of products and services*  


Another well-known cookery school is *Tante Marie Cookery School*. The oldest independent cookery school in operation in the UK (United Kingdom), it was established in Woking, Surrey, in England in 1954 (Woking Borough Council, 2012). Courses offered at *Tante Marie* range from short term one or two day classes to four week programmes in essential skills and more formal training taking place over two terms (*Tante Marie*, 2015). Many culinary education institutions offer courses that have been developed in other reputable institutes. *Tante Marie*, for example, offers a certified *Cordon Bleu* diploma. Similarly, Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) offers a programme linked to the *Culinary Institute of America* (CIA). This makes for widely recognised accreditation. Cookery School reputations are crucial, in addition to the network of alumni that becomes established after years in operation. How this is maintained and harnessed is of importance. *The School of Artisan Food* in Nottinghamshire in the UK is a private cookery school and also a registered charity. *The School of Artisan Food* is similar to Ballymaloe Cookery School as it offers short courses and holds values of healthy eating, sustainability and localism.

At Ballymaloe Cookery School, numerous courses are offered, the most popular being the twelve week certificate programme. Certification for the twelve week course is not accredited by an external body but is awarded internally, dependent on practical, written and wine examinations, and satisfactory participation (Ballymaloe Cookery School, 2016 [online]). This
course offers a foundation for a career in food but also attracts those wishing to improve their home cooking skills, or to pursue cooking as a hobby. Though the first twelve week course offered at Ballymaloe Cookery School in 1983 was made up of eleven students, approximately sixty students attend each twelve week course today, offered three times per year (Allen, 2013). Student numbers have grown significantly since the school was first established, as is demonstrated by the international participation in courses at the school. One twelve week course at the cookery school has included students from fourteen different nationalities (Allen, 2013). The short courses on offer range in duration from afternoon demonstrations to week-long courses (Ballymaloe Cookery School, 2016 online). For example, in October 2016 ten different short courses take place at the school. Courses offered at Ballymaloe vary, depending on the time of year, in addition to culinary trends, guest chefs to the school who also teach classes, and bespoke options.

Another well-known private cookery school is *Leith's School of Food and Wine* which was established in London in 1975. As illustrated, such private independent cookery schools are a relatively recent phenomenon. Most recently, in-store cooking schools operate where retailers attract custom through the incorporation of cooking classes that utilise store goods (Kramer, 2007). An Irish example of this is Brennan’s Cook shop in Cork City. Cookery schools have emerged in Western countries from a variety of impetuses and on several scales. The schools referred to here tend to offer a range of courses, attracting a mixed clientele. The available literature on culinary education and cookery schools is deemed an insufficient body of knowledge which limits the ability to reach conclusions. This research deficit in part justifies the need for further research such as this study. The next section considers the incorporation of ethics in culinary education.

### 2.2.2 The Ethics of Culinary Education

In both culinary education and practice, ethical concerns regarding food frequently remain overlooked. Moral aspects of the food industry largely go unseen (e.g. Ritzer, 2010; Pollan, 2006; Nestle; 2002; Schlosser, 2001). This includes: relevant policymaking, rearing of animals, animal slaughter, food production and preparation. Shani *et al.* (2013) argue that the general inattention to ethical concerns relating to food, which is prevalent in culinary institutions, reflects a widespread belief that culinary professionals lack agency to make major changes to such issues. Culinary professionals who research, consider and take action on such ethical
issues challenge this belief. The dominant culture of culinary environments is not one where questions are encouraged (Muller et al., 2009). It has been highlighted that culinary schools with on-site farm operations enable students to actively partake in growing crops and rearing livestock, thus, considering and understanding sustainability and animal welfare concerns (Shani et al., 2013). Such cookery school models have become more commonplace in Western countries in recent times. This includes: Ballymaloe Cookery School, Shanagarry, Co. Cork, Ireland, The Farm Cooking School, New Jersey, United States and Ballyknocken House, Co. Wicklow, Ireland.

Though the term ‘holistic education’ has only recently been adopted, it has been practiced and debated since the eighteenth century (Taggart, 2001). It is clear that to cook and consume food with ethical considerations to the fore is challenging and requires a broad understanding of food. Relevant considerations include: food sourcing, animal welfare, implications for human health, environmental impacts and more. Shani et al. (2013), however, echo the sentiments of popular author Michael Pollan (2000), who argues that eating with a greater level of consciousness is as rewarding as it is challenging. Providers of culinary education are under increased pressure due to persistent calls for understanding and incorporation of issues in the ethics of food. Many food celebrities and celebrity chefs also draw attention to such concerns. Ways in which this is taking place is examined in the following sections.

2.2.3 Food Celebrities and Celebrity Chefs: Figures of Influence in Culinary Education

In this section, the concept of celebrity chefs and food celebrities is given consideration. This is relevant to the research because there are teachers at Ballymaloe Cookery School who are also celebrity chefs. This section traces the emergence of the celebrity chef and analyses the impact of such public figures. As part of the recent surge in interest in food studies, there is ample research on the topic in question.

The food industry has become dominated by food celebrities and celebrity chefs with considerable cultural influence (Johnston et al., 2014). Schlosser (2016) argues that until recently, chefs were considered servants of the wealthy, and that the predominant attitude towards them bears similarity to traditional attitudes towards women: that they should busy themselves in the kitchen, prepare food and offer little opinion. The modern history of the celebrity chef dates back to the rise of television during the 1950s and 1960s. Barnes (2014)
discusses the manner in which celebrity chefs ardently create and mediate discourses around food, stepping right into the private sphere of the home via television sets. Scholes denotes the first female TV celebrity chefs as Delia Smith in the UK and Julia Child in the USA (2011). Monica Sheridan, best remembered for her TV cookery series of the 1960s, *Home for Tea*, has been attributed the title, 'Ireland’s first celebrity chef' (McSweeney, 2011). Darina Allen of Ballymaloe Cookery School made her first *Simply Delicious* television programme in 1989. This propelled her to celebrity status in Ireland (Purcell, 1989). Her brother and co-founder of Ballymaloe Cookery School, Rory O’Connell now hosts a cookery programme for television on Ireland’s national public service broadcaster, RTE (Raidió Teilifís Éireann), following the publication of his first cookbook *Master It: How to Cook Today* (2013). Family member Rachel Allen also teaches at the cookery school. She has authored several cookery books and her television shows have been broadcast in Ireland and internationally. Ballymaloe House founder and matriarch, Myrtle Allen was first engaged in the media in 1959 through her column in *The Irish Farmer’s Journal*. She produced her first cookbook in 1977. Given the prominence of the Allen family on television internationally and at home, together with their bestselling and award winning cookbooks, and food writing, they have reached celebrity status.

As mentioned, many chefs on television produce accompanying cookbooks. Cookbooks can be considered a dimension of culinary learning. Kramer (2007) identifies the 1961 publication of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* by Julia Child *et al.* and Child’s succeeding television programmes from 1963 onwards as stimulus for a wave of recreational cookery schools in the USA. In her analysis, Shapiro (2007) agrees that *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* was a seminal work that transformed the way in which cookbooks were considered. Following the publication of this text, cookbooks were increasingly viewed as serious publications, reflecting cultural context and therefore worthy of scholarly investigation. Cookbooks are increasingly considered a site for analysis into a society’s food culture and preference (Albala, 2012). In writing about cookbooks Gallegos (2005) emphasises their significance, apart from their recipes, but rather, as a vehicle for the expression of culture. Wheaton (1998, p. 3) considers cookbooks: ‘the exceptional written record of what is largely an oral tradition’. Reticence from some authors exists in the study of cookbooks, given that they do not necessarily reflect actual cooking practices (Warde, 1997). Similarly, Webb (2011) makes the point that cookbooks have become more about lifestyles than recipes. This serves as further indication that for many people, cooking has moved from a regular necessity to a leisure activity. Moskin (2011) suggests that the development of applications for electronic devices and other ways recipes are now
presented visually are a departure from the traditional recipe. As demonstrated, the acquisition of cooking skills and information can now be carried out involving a variety of modes that inhabit both the world of lived experience and the virtual world, though access to either of these modes is a limiting factor. Celebrity chefs and food celebrities have reached audiences audio visually via screens for decades.

Scholes (2011, p. 45) describes the TV celebrity chef as:

*A figure who assimilates within his/her towering persona the authority, charisma and responsibility of the journalist, the activist and the parent all rolled into one.*

It is pointed out by scholars that celebrity and television chefs do more than entertain (Salkin, 2013). Scholes (2011) asserts that cooking as entertainment is bound up with the use of the celebrity chef as a brand. As McSweeney (2011) points out:

*Jamie, Nigella, Darina, Rachel, Nigel, Delia, they're so famous, they don't even need surnames.*

Scholes (2011) similarly makes this assertion. Changes to the roles of celebrity chefs have taken place since the early emergence of the TV celebrity chef. Scholes (2011) describes Delia Smith’s early television cookery shows as a means of communicating basic culinary skills, rather than having any focus on her as a person or her lifestyle. Ashley et al. (2004) argue that what was previously Delia’s guide to her television audience on how to cook, has given way to Jamie Oliver and Nigella Lawson’s lessons in how to live. In his writing, Barber (2011) recognizes the power wielded by well-known chefs to popularize specific foods and ingredients. This is but one example of how celebrity chefs and food celebrities possess power and influence which extends beyond the boundaries of the kitchen.

As the quote from Scholes (2011) above asserts, the role of chefs in the public eye is one of responsibility and one which is increasingly taken seriously by an interested public. Schlosser (2016) argues that given the prominence of chefs in mass culture, they should also be looked to as leaders in social issues. Food celebrities and celebrity chefs have for some time, been engaged in areas such as activism, environmentalism and political discourse. Fergus Henderson, Owner/Chef at the renowned *St John’s Restaurant* and *St John’s Bread and Wine*
in London, for example, is often cited as a key instigator in creating awareness among chefs and
the public about the importance of eating the whole animal (often referred to as nose to tail
cutting), rather than the privileging of reserve prime cuts, and for drawing attention to the
sustainability of such practice (Derven and Banfield, 2005). Regarding economic opportunities
for producers, despite comprehensive literature on short value chains and direct selling to
consumers, particularly at farmers’ markets, less attention has been placed on the role of chefs
and their interactions with producers (Durain and Cawley, 2012).

For Barber (2014), the concept of chef as activist is relatively new. All engagement with food is
inherently political, as the adage goes: eating is a political act. Michael Pollan (2006) is largely
credited with this extension of Wendell Berry’s famous line: eating is inescapably an
agricultural act (1990, p. 149). This phrase asserts that every person takes a stance, makes a
choice, in the activity of eating. The phrase acknowledges the direct and indirect processes that
are involved in putting food on any table. Cooking and eating are such everyday human
activities that they may not always appear complex or worthy of analysis. However, Belasco
(2006) illustrates that food has long been used as a tool for political engagement. Boerboom
(2015) spotlights the political nature of language commonly used with reference to food. Much
reporting in the media relates to food, but as Gehrels (2013) points out, journalists have
predominantly focused on restaurants, their menus and the career paths of well-known chefs in
a descriptive manner, rather than the value systems and driving forces underpinning them, and
the social contexts in which they operate. This study aims to reveal the business activities at
Ballymaloe Cookery School and its local impact, in light of such factors.

It is clear that in recent decades, chefs have moved outside the confines of the professional
kitchen and beyond the boundaries of the television set. More recently, the Internet has
supported a proliferation of celebrity chefs. Though some celebrity chefs welcome or seek such
status, others reject this attention. Fame is not something all chefs set out to achieve and
negative impacts of celebrity status are many. Numerous chefs in the public eye have received
negative publicity regarding their personal lives, such as Gordon Ramsey (Jones, 2009). Hansen
(2008) likens celebrity chefs to film stars and argues that similarly, they are media
products. Hansen goes on to assert that the primary product of food media is the consumer,
rather than the celebrity chef. Based on his UK study on the training and retention of chefs,
Pratten (2003) argues that school leavers embarking on culinary education are frequently
misguided and sold on the perception that it is glamorous and may lead to fame, failing to
recognise the dedication required for a career in food. The media today plays a key role in widespread perceptions of what a culinary career entails (Muller et al., 2009). Fabricant (2003) argues that chefs who have gained celebrity status have done much to promote the status of a career in food. Berta (2005) agrees that the popularity of television cookery shows and celebrity chefs have fuelled the recent surge in culinary programmes and enrolment. Robinson and Beesley (2010) welcome further research that considers the differences between perceptions of occupations in cookery and the realities of work within this domain.

The prevalence of celebrity chefs and food celebrities in the Western world shows no signs of waning (Lyon et al., 2003). Contemporary literature on the topic points to the power such individuals possess, recognising that their influence extends far beyond cooking and entertainment, but to areas such as lifestyle, activism, politics and more. The next section focuses on two relevant celebrity chefs and cookbook authors: Alice Waters and Darina Allen.

2.2.4 Alice Waters and Darina Allen: A Comparison

The philosophy of Alice Waters of Chez Panisse restaurant in Berkeley, California can be compared to that of Darina Allen of Ballymaloe Cookery School in Shanagarry, County Cork. Parallels can be drawn between these two strong public figures who have achieved similar things on two separate continents, with analogous motivations. It is useful to consider the success and paths of these two entrepreneurs too, as their lifeworks reflect an international food movement that has gained traction in recent decades.

The early emergence of Chez Panisse in California can be compared to that of Ballymaloe Cookery School in East Cork (Waters, 2015; Duram and Cawley, 2012). Handler (1995) observed that there was no business plan, no fixed menus, no trained chefs or registered suppliers to Chez Panisse when it first opened in 1971. The cookery school at Ballymaloe emerged in a similar vein. Chez Panisse faced bankruptcy more than once at its beginning (Handler, 1995). Both women are of the same generation. They are well acquainted with one another. Like Darina Allen, Alice Waters has received widespread recognition for her contributions as an advocate for food system reform. According to Handler:

Ms. Waters possesses all the skills of a good revolutionary (1995, p. 134).
The Obama administration in the USA has endorsed home cooking via the First Lady, Michelle Obama and the development of the *Cooking Matters* programme (Caraher, 2012). Alice Waters is accredited with putting pressure on the administration to do this (Savill, 2014). It is believed she has the power and influence to do so and wants to enlist the help of other prominent figures to do likewise (Savill, 2014). In 2014, Waters was listed as one of *TIME Magazine*’s Top 100 Most Influential people worldwide (*TIME*, 2014). Other awards and accolades she has earned include; the *James Beard Humanitarian Award* (1997), *Bon Appetit Magazine*’s *Lifetime Achievement Award* (2000) and a *Global Environmental Citizen Award* from Harvard Medical School (2008). A comprehensive list of Darina Allen’s many accolades and awards can be found in Appendix 1. Alice Waters has often been credited with the establishment of ‘California Cuisine’ (McNamee, 2008; Handler, 1995). Waters’ emphasis has always been on the use of local, organic and seasonal ingredients (McNamee, 2008; Reardon, 1994). She, like Darina Allen, has supported the use of butter, and did so at a time when hydrogenated fats were widely promoted and adopted (McNamee, 2008).

Waters also emphasises the connection between the manner in which food is produced and how it tastes. This is strongly conveyed in her cookbooks. Waters (2007) extolls her philosophy in her carefully titled cookbook, *The Art of Simple Food: Notes, Lessons, and Recipes from a Delicious Revolution*. A similar ethos is central to the books of Darina Allen.

It was Darina Allen’s definite intention to create more than a family business:

*It wasn’t going to be just a cookery school. It was going to show students a sort of ‘way of life’. (in Purcell, 1989, p. 25)*

Handler (1995) attributes the growth in small scale food producers and farmers’ markets in California to Waters’ calls and support for local, high quality ingredients, produced in an environmentally sound manner. Alice Waters has been the public face of Chez Panisse, rather than other key staff (Kamp, 2006), much as Darina Allen, rather than her younger co-founder brother Rory O’Connell has been that of Ballymaloe Cookery School. Dissimilarities between Chez Panisse and Ballymaloe Cookery School exist, most notably that the former is a restaurant and the latter a cookery school. It is possible to consider Alice Waters of Chez Panisse and Darina Allen of Ballymaloe Cookery School celebrity chefs. Their paths and interests share many commonalities which suggest the existence of a wider food movement, one which shares their beliefs and activities. This is useful to look at in order to contextualise
this research internationally. A matter of concern to both women; traditional cooking skills, is the focus of the next section.

2.2.5 Traditional Cooking Skills

Cooking skills among the public in general, rather than those of culinary professionals are the focus of this section. This topic is introduced because some students attend Ballymaloe Cookery School to improve their everyday cooking skills. Like culinary education, cooking skills are taught and learned in a number of ways. Cooking skills are sometimes passed down through generations, shared orally or written down in recipe form. According to Severson (2015), the traditional means through which food is cooked and shared is undergoing major change. To back up this claim, she points to media such as YouTube, food blogs and websites where people nowadays seek culinary information and education, eschewing the norm of the recipe, cookbooks and traditional handing down of food preparation techniques (2015).

Concern about low levels of cooking skills across the UK can be identified as far back as the 1780s, a period that coincides with urbanisation of rural English people (Caraher, 2012). Pratten (2003b) states that in England, rationing during and after the Second World War impacted on culinary skills, creating a generation without adequate culinary skills and experience. Kramer (2007) argues that following World War II, cookbooks, television cookery shows and recreational cookery schools contributed to an increased and widespread interest in home cooking, moving cooking from a domestic duty to a leisure activity during subsequent decades (Kramer, 2007). Much recent literature on the subject of cooking skills focused on the UK pays attention to celebrity chef Jamie Oliver. His recent School Dinners and Ministry of Food campaigns have openly engaged with what children eat at school, and cooking among the general public respectively (Caraher, 2012). Oliver combines public advocacy and education with his own commercial interests, such as his TV programmes and books. Stephanie Alexander in Australia is often mentioned alongside Jamie Oliver and Alice Waters, given her activism on food education (Caraher, 2012). Multiple messages of such culinary individuals in the public eye can become muddled, baffling for the public, as argued by Caraher (2012). On the other hand, Mintz (1996) argues that discussing food helps create and reinforce a shared food community. In Ireland, Darina Allen laments the loss of traditional cooking skills and introduces readers to neglected processes such as smoking, curing, making butter in her book Forgotten Skills of Cooking: The time-honoured ways are the best (2009).
Debate regarding food preparation at the household level and whose role and responsibility it is has been taking place for decades and such debate remains ongoing. Trubek (2000) contends that around the late 1900s professional chefs sought to differentiate themselves and their craft from domestic cooking which they perceived as women’s work and lesser. However, as women have continued to make up an increased proportion of the workforce in paid employment, in tandem with the increased availability of convenience foods, it has been reported that women in the UK spend less time cooking than they did twenty-five years ago, while men are spending more (Lang and Carafer, 2001). Johnston et al. (2014) reinforce the idea that men are increasingly playing a role in food preparation at the household level, while more women are entering the domain of professional cookery. Though, Levy (2015) also agrees that males are increasingly taking responsibility for everyday cooking in homes across the UK, related literature pertaining to Ireland was not found.

A widespread decline in cooking skills since the 1980s in the USA is acknowledged by Pollan (2013). Though efforts during the twentieth century to make food preparation less of a domestic chore have meant developments in food manufacturing and consumption, the outcome has been that, the food industry has simultaneously contributed to the creation of a chasm between the production of food and its consumption (Belasco, 2008). This topic is dealt with to a greater extent in Section 2.3. Such separation has coincided with the development of an ideology of Nutritionism according to Scrinis (2008), which reduces food to its nutrient components, and to the advantage of the food industry, has served to confuse and complicate the conventions of eating and cooking. Across the UK, in addition to these factors, and an attitude that homemade food is inferior to its convenience counterpart, cooking skills have begun to deteriorate (Stead et al., 2004, in Carafer, 2012). Pollan (2013) argues that fundamentally, cooking for ourselves and each other is empowering; in doing so, we take control out of the hands of industry and into our own. It is important to note that the process of home cooking with the aim of feeding a family (often with simple facilities) requires considerable resourcefulness and dedication to the task (Lyon et al., 2003). Whether cooking is perceived as a leisure activity or a domestic chore is of importance in this ongoing debate. In her 1995 book, *Irish Traditional Cooking*, Darina Allen documents traditional foodstuffs, and details their production and preparation. She wrote this book in response to the demise of culinary traditions in Ireland she perceived.
Cookery at the household level is difficult to investigate as it takes place in the private sphere. Two UK government-led public health surveys carried out during the 1990s featured sections which investigated cooking ability and knowledge about food amongst the public. Both studies linked how often people cook and making ‘good food choices’, with confidence and positive attitudes to food and cooking (Lang *et al.*, 1999; Nicolaas, 1995). Mac Con Iomaire and Lydon (2012) found that in contemporary Ireland, cooking skills influence food choices. It is important to note that despite reported decline in cooking skills, Short (2006) acknowledges not a decline in cooking skills but, rather, a drop in confidence regarding the application of such skills. Short (2006) examines the recent inflation in status of professional chefs and suggests that this negatively impacts upon the confidence of home cooks. 11,642 second level students sat the Leaving Certificate examination in Home Economics in Ireland in 2016 (State Examinations Commission, 2016). Caraheer (2012) noted that practical cookery has essentially been removed from school curriculums in the UK. Caraheer (2012) also argues that initiatives instigated by civil society organisations and celebrity chefs have allowed the state to shirk responsibility for the low levels of cooking skills among people in Britain. He invokes the work of Foucault (1972), stating that the process of delivery becomes a smoke screen for the question of governance and who is responsible for delivery. Caraheer also identifies a period of change during 1980s Britain where paradoxically, a decline in cooking skills and preparation can be observed in tandem with promotion of community cookery projects and initiatives (2012). Though the situation across Europe and North America is useful to consider, little related research is focused on the Irish context, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions on the state of cooking skills among Irish people today.

In summary, changes to prevalence of cooking skills can be attributed to a range of factors, including: events such as war, societal changes such as the emergence of television, cultural shifts such as more women in paid employment, and specific initiatives that aim to improve cooking skills. Changes to the way in which cooking skills are acquired have relevance for culinary education institutions. Traditional cooking skills appear to be in decline, though further research on the topic is necessary. This section has provided an introduction to the literature on culinary education, and given attention to cookery schools, food celebrities and celebrity chefs, and traditional cooking skills. The proceeding section explores the phenomenon of alternative food networks.
2.3 Alternative Food Networks

This section is a review of relevant literature on the fundamental concepts of Alternative Food Networks (AFNs), beginning with an analysis of the industrialisation of agriculture. Within the literature, there is widespread agreement that AFNs are activities which attempt to counter the dominant food system produced by the industrialisation of food. Such literature is relevant to this study as Ballymaloe Cookery School's core values can be considered congruous with that of AFNs generally, and the cookery school itself supportive of other AFNs in Ireland and internationally. The findings and analysis in Chapter Four explore this further.

2.3.1 Industrialisation of Agriculture

Considerable literature regarding changes in agriculture across Europe and the wider world has been written over the past fifty years. Ireland has witnessed major changes in recent decades with regard to agriculture and rural life. This reflects wider, world-wide transformation. Although food has been traded internationally for hundreds of years, the activities that transform goods into food across the world are fast becoming homogenous, and embedded within national and international economies and commodity markets, as supported by neoliberal policies (Clapp, 2011). Food provisioning worldwide is considered so integrated in global capitalism that a single food system dominates, as characterised by processes of industrialisation, free trade and corporate control (Lang and Heasman, 2015). In tandem with this, come changes in the gendered work of caring for the family, from one of skills such as growing, preserving, cooking, to one of procurement of food, largely shopping (Harris, 2014; DeVault, 1994). These developments illustrate that food is increasingly a consumer good. Though such changes have taken place with regard to myriad other goods and indeed services worldwide, it is widely acknowledged that food is not like other commodities; food is different (Rosset, 2006). This section focuses on the industrialisation of agriculture and provides a backdrop to the establishment and survival of Ballymaloe Cookery School, as dealt with further in Chapter Four.

Industrialisation, as characterised by specialisation, intensification, use of irrigation and dependence on farm machinery impacts both the visible physical landscape, in addition to the social landscape (Goldschmidt, 1978). In an examination of the consequences of agribusiness in the USA, Goldschmidt, (1978) noted the effect of the industrialisation of agriculture on the
psychological and social attitudes of food producers, and its effect on the people of nearby town centres. He sought to explain that farming in capitalist economies has become a business, rather than a way of life. It is necessary to remember, as Adam Smith famously said:

*It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest* (1776 [1776], p. 18).

The process of industrialisation of agriculture is evidenced by the disappearance of the traditional barnyard; less farm families milking cows, rearing hens, maintaining a kitchen garden. In Goldschmidt’s analysis, ‘the market’ is then expected to provide what the farm household had formerly (1978). Self-sufficiency and on-farm diversity diminishing, farm values move towards a business-like emphasis on productivity and costs. Such separation can give rise to a reduction in quality. On this note, addressing the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery in 1987, Myrtle Allen of Ballymaloe House offered an opinion that market pressures on farmers were a major wider threat:

*I am painfully aware, as a farmer’s wife that almost everything farmers have done in our lifetime for improved production – which also usually means survival on the farm – has resulted in a less excellent food product. It is important for consumers to remember that there must be serious loss in quality when producers are forced to grow food cheaply* (p. 19).

As a horticultural producer, Allen is well placed to make such a statement. Prior to the expansion of farm specialisation and monocultures, crop production was dependent on internal resources and thus the link between agriculture and ecology was strong. Crop rotation was used to safeguard production against the threat posed by weather and pests. Intercropping was carried out to suppress insects, weeds and diseases. Labour incorporated family members rather than heavy duty machinery, and diversity existed above and below the soil. However, it is important not to reflect on such means of production with nostalgia or false appreciation. Historian Rachel Laudan (2001) refuses to accept accounts of the past implied by proponents of fresh, natural, artisanal and local food. She argues that a nostalgic narrative has been created, one that ignores the tyranny and labour for our ancestors in producing and preparing such foods (2001). She states that:
for all, culinary modernism had provided what was wanted: food that was processed, preservable, industrial, novel, and fast, the food of the elite at a price everyone could afford (2001, p. 42).

Without sugar coating the reality of industrialised food, Laudan argues in favour of more high quality industrialised food products (2001).

Since the 1970s and 1980s various weaknesses in industrial food systems including environmental impacts, the decline of the typical ‘family farm’ and concerns regarding health risks have been highlighted by scholars and activists worldwide (e.g. Goodman et al., 2012; Shiva, 1993). Altieri (1998) points to evidence that illustrates that the prevailing policies in capitalist economies which favour large farms, specialised production, mono-cropping and mechanisation have led to the disappearance of global biological diversity as the use of pesticides, fertilisers, and specialisation reaps the rewards of economies of scale. This has led to a concentration of power with the growth of corporate control due to the dominance of larger outfits, the rise of transnational corporations and supermarket chains, and a decline in smaller farms and farming (Pratt, 2007). The industrialisation of food has also led to an increase in the availability of convenience foods (Goody, 1982). Barber (2014) argues that this dominant global food economy has come to erode cultures, cuisines and health, in addition to its environmental implications and other economic and social effects. The increased industrialisation of food growing, preparation, and retailing has led to the control of the food industry by a small number of global corporations.

The phasing out of small abattoirs which has taken place across Europe is one example of how skills in the food industry have also declined as a result. The introduction of stringent legislation regarding the upgrade of such facilities and the cost incurred in doing so has pushed out small abattoirs. Supermarkets which often use meat as a loss-leader have created fierce competition for independent butchers (McSweeney, 2011). This provides one example of the impact of the industrialisation of agriculture. Such an example is useful to bear in mind as this study examines the impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School. Overall, in many ways the literature paints a grim picture of the prevailing industrial-productivist model of global food supply and constitutes a convincing rationale for alternatives. With this in mind, the next section takes a closer look at agriculture and food in the Irish context.
2.3.2 Agriculture and Food in the Irish Context

Given the location of Ballymaloe Cookery School, in rural East Cork, Ireland, and the previous discussion regarding the industrialisation of food at the global level, it is necessary to consider the situation in Ireland. Like other developed economies, Irish farming has significantly shifted away from mixed production regimes for personal consumption and local sale or export, to more specialised, mechanised commodity production for the food industry (Kuentzel, 2008). Farming takes places within a socially and culturally rich context. As acknowledged by Sage (2005), food influences and is influenced by farming, landscape and the environment via its production. Changes to agriculture and food across Ireland have led to wider observable change.

A change in definition of agricultural holding and the adoption of a new area threshold in the 1991 Irish Census make it difficult to precisely trace the decline in farm holdings in Ireland between 1980 and 1991. The report on Irish Farm Statistics 1847-1996, however, reports a dramatic decline in the area under main crops in Ireland during that time. Census figures report that the total number of farms in Cork, Ireland decreased from 17,298 in 1991 to 14,241 in the year 2000, reducing slightly to 14,222 in 2010 (CSO, 2015). As has been the case in many other industrialised countries, Ireland now has a smaller number of larger scale farms than before. Previously, farmers held power in relation to resources and technologies. Increasingly farmers are dependent on commercial providers, as part of the agricultural treadmill (Sage, 2012, p.37), as significant commercial consolidation in the food processing and manufacturing sector has taken place. The increase in production costs has not led to an increase in commodity prices, due to the control of the supply chain by large multiple retailers. In fact, the adoption of more efficient production techniques and the ‘squeeze’ on farmers has led to a rise in farmers and their family members seeking off-farm employment.

Ireland’s membership of the European Union (then European Economic Community EEC) in 1973 paved the way for development but also significant policy changes (Ferriter, 2004). Many of these pertained to Ireland’s agriculture and fisheries. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) introduced during the 1960s imposed a unified European approach to farming that supported larger and more industrialised farms. Changes to the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy during the 1990s and recent reforms have exposed farmers to greater global competition. Ireland’s colonial history meant that for centuries Irish farmers were already
imbedded in international trade where they were incorporated into British colonial and imperial trade relations (Kuentzel, 2008). Irish agriculture today is recognised globally as highly efficient (Coveney, 2015). Irish agriculture is primarily a low cost, grass-based industry due to the temperate climate of Ireland. Irish meat and dairy thus has comparative advantage over many other producers of these products worldwide. However, Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions are a cause for concern, given its volume of livestock production. The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) reports the Irish agri-food sector is worth €24 billion to the national economy (2015). According to DAFM (2015), with the inclusion of employment in inputs, processing and marketing, the agri-food sector accounts for nearly 10% of all employment in Ireland. The Irish agri-food industry is an important element of Ireland's economic portfolio and Ireland is a significant global exporter of commodity foodstuffs such as meat and dairy products. There is a large export market for Irish foodstuffs such as milk powder, cheese, meat, butter, and beverages such as Bailey's Irish Cream and Jameson Whiskey (Mulcahy, 2012). These goods contribute to the creation of a distinct image of Irish food worldwide. On the national level, agri-food and fisheries priorities for government are outlined in the Food Harvest 2020 ten year plan published in 2010. This plan established ambitious targets for the expansion of the beef and dairy sectors. The sustainability of the agri-food system is therefore highly important in the Irish context. As this section demonstrates, Ireland's agriculture and food has undergone change and now sits within the globalised industrial food system. The next section details the rise of alternative food networks which are considered a response to such a system.

2.3.3 Alternative Food Networks (AFNs)

Alternative food networks (AFNs) are driven by a range of motives, ranging from concerns regarding food safety and security, obesity and diet related ill health, climate change and environmental concerns. Literature on AFNs is a feature of this study as the ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School can be considered accordant with that of AFNs generally, and the cookery school itself supportive of other AFNs in Ireland and internationally, as dealt with further in Chapter Four. There is now a large and expanding body of research on alternative food networks as a new mode of agri-food governance (Goodman and Sage, 2014). This research has emerged and expanded over the last fifteen years. However, it is recognised that much of the research on AFNs is confined to settings in the global north, particularly Europe and North America (Ilbery and Maye, 2005). The vast majority of the literature postulates that
AFNs are a response to the increasing industrialisation of food and the subsequent distancing of production from consumption, producer from consumer. Tregear (2011) considers the position of such networks as characteristically different to dominant mainstream food systems. Thus, an ‘alternative’ food sector has emerged (Morgan et al., 2006; Sage, 2003). The literature on alternative food networks includes aspects of short food supply chains (Ilbery and Maye, 2005; Renting, Marsden and Banks, 2003), systems of local food supply (Winter, 2003; Hinrichs, 2000) and local supply chain sourcing (Ilbery and Maye, 2005). Feenstra (1997) provides the following definition for AFNs:

\[
\text{Rooted in particular places, [AFNs] aim to be economically viable for farmers and consumers, use ecologically sound production and distribution practices, and enhance social equity and democracy for all members of the community (p. 28).}
\]

This definition is widely accepted in the literature on alternative food networks. To look closely at this definition, AFNs are positioned within specific locales, attention is cast towards the economic viability of these networks for producers and consumers, there is an emphasis on ecological sustainability, and the potential AFNs hold to balance relations between all actors in food supply chains. AFNs are frequently considered as organised flows of food products between consumers with ethical considerations in mind and those seeking a better price for their output (Little et al., 2010). More recently, alternative food networks have been defined by Valeria and MacKenzie (2013, p. 1) as:

\[
\text{...structures that reconfigure the systems of production, distribution and consumption of food.}
\]

This, too, is a broad definition. Rather than setting out what AFNs are, it rather establishes what they are not. In light of this, it is important to note that under the banner of AFNs are a wide range of responses and initiatives that bear little resemblance to one another. Foods such as organic, Fair Trade, local, regional, and artisan food, sold through channels such as Farmers’ markets, Community Supported Agriculture schemes (CSAs), farm shops, box schemes and food cooperatives are examples of what are generally considered AFNs. Naylor (2012) points out that grouping such diverse activities in this way, homogenises a group of distinct movements which emerge for different reasons and are taken up in different ways and to varying extents, despite their commonalities. Naylor further argues that increased awareness and concern
regarding the industrial-capitalist food system is what attracts people to alternative food networks (2012).

Understood as short food supply chains (SFSCs) by Renting et al. (2003), alternative food networks are viewed as holding potential to ‘short circuit’ the complex and rationally operated industrialised food chains, delivering food to consumers embedded with quality cues and information. Alternative food networks are frequently characterised by notions of local food, authenticity, sustainability and embeddedness (Morgan et al., 2006; Renting et al., 2003). Embeddedness refers to all the non-economic factors that play a role in economic transactions: the values, relationships, politics and social norms that prevent economic activities from being purely rational (Polanyi, 1968). The concept of embeddedness was furthered by Granovetter (1985). For him, it is pertinent to consider the extent to which an institution engages in its local environment, and the economic impact this can have on the institution. The focus of other related literature pertains to culturally embedded food systems (Hinrichs, 2000), direct selling by farmers (Renting et al., 2003), and ‘good food box’ schemes (Sage, 2003). Interest in such networks has been abetted by a growing interest in food quality, food safety, appreciation for socio-cultural aspects of food and efforts to ‘reconnect’ urban settings with local food producing areas (Valeria et al., 2013; Renting et al., 2003). Commonly in the literature on AFNs is recognition of the potential they hold to reconnect food producers and end consumers, in addition to the connection between product and place (Pratt, 2007).

Proponents of AFNs often also promote the development of localised food systems and education about provenance of food (Guthman, 2008). The concept of ‘local’ food sold through ‘alternative’ networks, supporting ‘traditional’ farming, is a contentious and contested one. ‘Local’ food has become ambiguous. The breadth of what is local is changeable (Watts et al., 2005). As Allen and Hinrichs acknowledge:

*the ambiguity about what local means...allows it to be anything and, at the margin, perhaps very little at all* (2007, p. 269).

Local food is perceived as favourable in view of ‘food miles’ and other environmentally unsustainable practices such as transportation, as documented by Delind (2006) and Pretty et al. (2005). Proponents of local food also emphasise the potential for local food to operate in local economies outside of the capitalist system, and to boost farmers’ incomes through direct
sourcing (Pratt, 2007). Despite this, Born and Purcell (2006) caution against the assumption or 'local food trap'; that there really is something inherently good about the local scale, a common assumption among researchers and local food advocates.

The discourse around AFNs tends to emphasise the binary of the conventional and the alternative; the capitalist corporate system of food production and attempts to challenge this prevailing model or paradigm (Pratt, 2007). Numerous scholars dissatisfied with the term alternative and its use have taken the stance that the dualism of conventional versus alternative is too much a simplification (e.g. Holloway et al., 2007). It can be noted that today numerous AFN products are sold in supermarkets. Indeed, AFNs are complex. For example, the sourcing of organic food can be a single concern for some, given its reputation as 'clean' food but the procurement of organic food from afar can overlook the dimension of 'food miles', and the seasonality and freshness of the foodstuff. Further attention is given to organics as an example of an AFN in the next section. Dupuis and Goodman (2005) caution against romanticised notions of the countryside and nature, and highlight the need to carefully examine loaded terms such as 'alternative' and 'local'. Debates in relation to whether alternative food networks are truly alternative (Venn et al., 2006; Goodman, 2004), or indeed networks at all (Bell, 2008), continue to make it a contested term. Despite this, its use continues. More recently, Goodman and Sage (2011) argue that the alternative and the mainstream can coexist and do so, given that food is inherently 'transgressive'; it interrogates boundaries, challenges them and broadens them.

It is clear that the literature on AFNs is divided between celebration of the socio-economic virtues of such networks and a body of work which looks at problems associated with such systems. It has been found that some localised food systems serve to maintain rather than oppose inequalities between participants (Goodman, 2004). Of late, there has been harsh criticism of alternative food movement institutions such as farmers' markets, community supported agriculture (CSA) and organic foods (e.g. Guthman, 2008). Alternative food movements have been criticized as being a white, middle-class phenomenon, appealing to a niche market and neglecting key aspects of food justice such as labour rights (Naylor, 2012; Guthman, 2008). Guthman's analysis of alternative food networks posits that they frequently serve to meet the interests of privileged activists at the helm, rather than gaining traction with the local populations they are often intended to target (2008). She advocates in favour of a move away from the particularities of the food itself, and a move toward activism that tackles
underlying inequalities in access to food. Her widely cited research depicts the paradoxical nature of alternative food networks and the politics of food.

Goodman and Sage (2014) counter Guthman’s claims in the belief that AFNs transgress boundaries of taste that would make them elite or accessible only to the wealthy. Bromberger (2005) states that many of the artisan foods popular today have been re-ascribed their present status. Foods that were once cheap subsistence fare, such as farmhouse cheeses, have been promoted to luxury foodstuffs and are priced accordingly. Moreover, Williams, Germov, Fuller and Freij (2015) demonstrate how Slow Food, another AFN, has frequently been considered an elitist institution, one that promotes the cultivation of ‘good taste’, premium products and social distinction. It has also been found that farmers engaging in AFNs cannot always rely on such activities for a viable livelihood (Brown and Miller, 2008). However, in contrast, Hinrichs (2000) views farmers’ markets positively, as a unique opportunity for reconnecting farmers and consumers. A recent USA based study found that direct selling from farm to customer via farmers’ markets and farm visits do make a difference to that farmer though to what extent depends on their location and the level of community support for such selling (Read, 2014). For Wilk (2006), food has long been symbolic of what afflicts societies the world over and food has been the centre of social and political movements, making sense of abstract issues such as class, taste or exploitation.

Taste, in the context of food has more than one meaning. In his seminal work, Pierre Bourdieu (1984) considers taste as two kinds of distinction: between the physical sensation of eating and the cultural phenomenon of preference. Despite whatever food is available to people, food choices are linked to individual class identity and thus hierarchies of power and control are reproduced (Everett, 2009). Food therefore, becomes a marker of difference and identity. Proficiency in the appreciation of good food is understood as a marker of social class (de Garine, 2001). For Bourdieu, taste is social and not random. Put simply, taste is the work of class, and the dominant classes produce the dominant tastes. Preference is widely seen as a personal matter which reflects taste rather than class. Then, like taste, ethical consumption is a preference. When signalling ethical preferences, people express values that are moulded by their social milieu. Williams et al. (2015) found that increasingly, consumers in western societies make food choices based on an ethical perspective of food production and consumption. Drawing from the work of Bourdieu it could be suggested that consumption, possession and knowledge of particular goods and skills embodies a kind of cultural capital and
can be used to create and reinforce social boundaries. Bell (2002) expanded on the work of Bourdieu, explaining that culinary cultural capital is now often appropriated by people in urban areas who aim to convey this capital, in order to distinguish themselves as gourmards. For Hall et al. (2003), the prevalent preoccupation with food in Western society is indicative of changes in lifestyles and the role of goods and services as markers of identity and status. Critics of Bourdieu's analysis would argue that it is one dimensional, that it fails to recognise the multiplicity in consumer choice decision making. However, academic engagement with the concepts of food and taste are useful to bear in mind when critically analysing issues pertaining to food movements and meanings attached to food.

Responses to the industrialisation of food take place at both an individual and a collective level. Wilson (2013) argues in favour of the term autonomous food spaces rather than alternative food networks. The extent to which AFNs actually oppose and change how our food system operates continues to be contested. In summary, there is vast literature on AFNs and knowledge on the subject is continually furthered, in tandem with the contemporary debate on issues in the food system. Though this system has been heavily criticised, arguments in its favour also exist. The example of organic food is given close examination in the following section. Such analysis is relevant to this research given that Ballymaloe Cookery School is situated on the site of an organic farm and gardens.

2.3.4 Organic Food, an example of an Alternative Food Network

Organic production and consumption comprises a significant strand of scholarship within the literature on AFNs. The organic food movement exemplifies one of the most prominent expressions of opposition to unsustainable industrial modes of food production (Johnston, Biro and MacKendrick, 2009). Though throughout history, food was produced organically, during the early twentieth century with the introduction of new products of industrialised agriculture, the organic food movement emerged. Consequently, organic food as it is now known is a relatively recent phenomenon. Organic agricultural production promotes the use of ‘alternative’ natural and traditional production methods, in lieu of ‘conventional’ methods involving the use of synthetic chemicals, genetically modified (GM) ingredients and irradiation. Methods employed in organic production serve to build the soil and include crop rotation, low stock rates, organic pest controls, and natural fertilisers such as seaweed, manures, nitrogen-fixing plants (Duram, 2005). Organic agriculture is thus often highly labour intensive. By its
nature, it commands human participation. Jorgensen (2006) highlights the tacit knowledge inherent in organic food production, and how industrial agricultural production undermines such knowledge.

Organic food is produced using environmentally and animal friendly farming methods on organic farms that are strictly defined and regulated. Any food labelled as *organic* in Europe is produced in a manner laid out by standards set by the European Union (EU). Organic farming within the EU has evolved considerably since the 1990s, due to reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), which underpins all policies regarding organic food. Internationally, regional variation in what constitutes *organic* and how it is regulated exists. The first formal organisation in the Irish organic movement was set up in 1982, the Irish Organic Growers Association (later IOFGA) (Tovey, 1999). The core principles of organic farming emerged in the late 1930s, drawing from the earlier work of Rudolph Steiner on holistic biodynamic farming. Belasco (2006) sets out the historical basis of the organic food movement. During the late 1960s, in Western Europe and North America, a movement known as the counterculture emerged, championing organic and wholefoods (Belasco, 2006). Belasco explains the subsequent rise of ‘counter cuisine’, where mainstream businesses capitalised on foods such as granola, herbal tea and brown rice to derive profit from the very foodstuffs that were intended as markers of ‘the revolution’, to challenge big business rather than fuel it. This illustrates the movement of organic away from its original ideological basis, its opposition to the industrialisation of food.

Like many advocates of AFNs, McMahon (2001) considers the organic farming movement in Ireland an opportunity to challenge the dominant agri-food business. The sale of organic produce at farmers’ markets and in supermarkets has become ubiquitous. Such widespread sale is indicative of the present interest in organic food. Though many people consider organic food safer or healthier than its non-organic counterpart, there is an insufficient evidence base to support such claims. Ilbery and Kneasfey (2000) posit that food quality itself is socially constructed according to beliefs and circumstances, a complex notion subject to change. Tovey (1999) argues that in Ireland, the state promotes organic farming as an instrument of production and marketing, but suppresses it as a social movement. Labels simplify complex and often context-specific factors for plant and animal growth and sustainability. Delind (2006) identifies a ‘local food movement’ as a subsequent reaction to this codification and corporatisation of organics. According to Dilley (2009), local food is generally considered a
quality natural product, associated with freshness and safety which often commands a premium price.

Globally, organic food production and its distribution have moved towards large scale, long distance and monoculture systems. There is irony in the simultaneous growth in popularity of organic foods as reported by Tovey (1999), and the increased regularisation of same through national standards. Increasingly, it is recognised that labels and farming methods are often used as mere marketing tools (Barber, 2014). Jackson et al. (2007) discuss many ways in which ‘alternatives’ have been appropriated by mainstream food companies. An understanding of organic food can be, essentially, that it has been co-opted by that which it was intended to challenge, this being its conventionalization (Guthman, 2004). There is now a growing appreciation that good food goes beyond meeting the strict criteria of labels (Barber, 2014). Another well-known example of an AFN is The Slow Food Movement, founded in Italy in 1986. The ethos at the cookery school is closely aligned to the philosophy of Slow Food. The Slow Food agenda is based on its original intention to:

Counter the rise of fast food and fast life, the disappearance of local food traditions and peoples diminishing interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect the rest of the world

(Slow Food International, 2015).

Slow Food does not encourage an anti-consumption or anti-capitalism stance, but promotes gastronomic pleasure and conviviality (Williams et al., 2015). The relationship between Ballymaloe Cookery School and Slow Food is further detailed later in Chapter Four. As depicted, organic food presents a useful, though complex example of an alternative food network. Organic food is of particular relevance to the subject of this research, Ballymaloe Cookery School, given its position on an organic farm and, within the discourse around organic food production.

2.3.5 The Irish Foodscape

The term foodscape can be considered a consolidation of the terms food and landscape, emphasising the interconnectedness of the two (Yasmeen, 2008). Until recently, relatively little research in the social sciences had been carried out by researchers in Ireland on the subject of
food, or on the topic of food in Ireland. The history of Ireland’s culinary traditions is as complex as the geographical, social, cultural, political and economic factors that have influenced the country (Sexton, 1998). This section considers some of these factors and how they have shaped food production and dietary practices across Ireland over time, presenting a related context for Ballymaloe Cookery School in East Cork.

The ‘Vision of Mac Conglinee’ or *Aislinge Meic Con Glinne*, a satiric fable most likely from the eleventh century is a source much cited by food historians in Ireland. It details diets and hospitality in Ireland during the early Middle Ages. A historical account of Irish food describes the traditional Irish diet as ‘simple food’ (Sexton, 1998). The potato has maintained prominence in Irish diets since its introduction circa 1600 (D’Arcy, 2010). Dependence on the potato came about due to cultural, political and demographic factors. The crop’s failure led to the Great Famine which began in 1845. However, the potato remains agriculturally and culturally relevant today. The potato is inextricably linked to Irish food identity. Allen (2015) argues that the common perception of Irish food as consisting of little besides bacon and cabbage fails to reflect the current state of food and cooking in Ireland. Darina Allen (2015) attributes the start of a recent renaissance in Irish food to a great extent, to the work of her mother-in-law Myrtle Allen during the 1960s.

Following Ireland’s independence from the UK, in the 1920s, economic stagnation and poverty prevailed. Prior (2015) recently described Ireland’s long-held uncomfortable status as: *England’s Larder* (p. 1) due to the high level of food exports sent to the UK historically. However, the concept of the family farm has long held ideological significance in Irish culture (Crowley, 2006). Despite widespread changes previously discussed, family farming remains an enduring feature of the Irish countryside (Macken-Walsh and Byrne, 2014). Sage (2010) highlights the separation between food producers and consumers in Ireland today. Dietary *delocalization* (Pelto and Pelto, 1983) refers to the increased dependence on foods from outside the region in local diets as a result of commoditisation of food production. This distancing of consumer from producer is not only a physical one, but can be considered mental and conceptual distance too. Food systems in Ireland have undergone major changes, particularly since mechanisation and intensification of agriculture began in the late nineteenth century (D’Arcy, 2010). Much domestic labour has moved to industrial settings and thus diets, eating and meals have changed, alongside the rise of convenience foods (Pratt, 2007).
Essentially, the direction of social and cultural change challenges the view that cooking skills are vital life skills.

Elderly Irish people, featured in a 2011 study by Delaney and McCarthy, recalled a period between the 1930s and 1960s during their early life when food was more basic and simple than nowadays. For rural dwellers, much was home-produced, luxuries a rarity, and Catholic abstinence during Lent and on Fridays was common practice. As traditional values in Ireland have declined, and lifestyles changed, food and eating choices have increased and the significance of the main family meal is diminishing (Delaney and McCarthy, 2011). Food habits are developed during childhood and are influenced by household food practices (Rozin, 2006). According to Albala (2011), the practice of children in Irish households being fed food that differs to the adults in the home is now commonplace. On balance, Historian Bee Wilson (2015) points out that there can be a nostalgia about what our grandparents ate and cooked, which may not reflect the diets of everyone in that generation. She cautions against an assumption that diets were better/worse in the past, or that they can easily be generalised. An estimated 10% of the Irish population suffer from food poverty (Carney and Maitre, 2012). Supermarkets are now the most common place where food is purchased (Delaney and McCarthy, 2011). Dining outside the home has become more commonplace, allied to societal changes previously discussed. According to the Restaurants Association of Ireland (RAI, 2016 [online]), there are over 3,500 restaurants in operation in Ireland, with the restaurant sector employing 72,000 people (1 in 4 tourism jobs), and generating €2 billion for the Irish economy every year. This background to the Irish foodscape provides a backdrop to the work of Ballymaloe Cookery School.

On a more local level, the foodscape of Cork merits consideration. Cork is a leading dairy producer and processor in Ireland. Cork is Ireland’s largest county, with a population of approximately 520,000 people (CSO, 2011). Food has historically played a part in Cork’s identity. Cork city’s trade in foodstuffs across centuries and local food consumption is documented extensively by Sexton (1994). Today, Cork is considered by many to be, ‘the food capital of Ireland’ (Cork Chamber, 2014 [online]). Cork’s coastline is the second largest of any county in Ireland. In the county there is a significant drinks industry, with the presence of a global brewery and distillery and an increasing number of craft beer producers. Cork is a centre of learning and commerce, with highly reputable higher education institutes (HEIs), University College Cork (UCC) and Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) located close to the
city and Cork International Airport. The Research and Development capabilities in Cork are also high, with close proximity to a number of leading agri-research institutions, such as Teagasc at Moorepark. Cork Chamber of Commerce identifies these strengths as key to Cork’s competitive advantage and opportunity to position itself as a place of leading capability in the global agri-food and drinks sector (Cork Chamber, 2014).

The site of the business at Ballymaloe Cookery School is Shanagarry in East Cork. In order to further position the cookery school within the geographical area of Cork, Map A (below) has been included. The map below depicts the electoral areas of Cork as assigned in 2014 and the East Cork region, as defined by electoral boundaries. East Cork is adjacent to Cork, the second largest city in the Republic of Ireland. Shanagarry can be located in the right foreground of the map, close to the coast. The original map has been made available by Ordinance Survey Ireland and accessed via Cork County Council (2014) and has been amended.
Figure 1 Map A Ballymaloe Cookery School in the East Cork Electoral Region (adapted from Ordinance Survey, 2014)
In summary, this section presents an account of discourse around alternative food networks. The topic of AFNs is prefaced with discussion regarding the industrialisation of food and the subsequent dominant global food system. Ireland's position within this system and the implications this has for dietary practices of Irish people is given credence. Alternative food networks aim to create alternatives to the prevailing food system. The scope of AFNs is vast. Certainly, the literature on alternative food networks is developing and expanding at present, as those networks themselves continue to change and transgress. Critiques of the AFN concept consider it too broad, an oversimplification, failing to adequately represent all it seeks to encompass. Though the concept of AFNs has been criticised, an abundance of publications continue to use the term. It is continually reinterpreted and remains useful to the realm of food studies and food justice. Others critique AFNs themselves, arguing that they only meet the needs and objectives of the elite. Much literature also refutes such comment. With this in mind, the meanings of food and taste have also been discussed in this section. Organic food is one example of an AFN. Analysis of organic food demonstrates the complex nature of alternative food networks. Additionally, this section provides a snapshot of the 'Irish foodscape' and its development over time. The related topic of rural development and rural tourism is discussed next.

2.4 Rural Development and Rural Tourism

Rural development and rural tourism form the basis for this section. Literature on food tourism is also given consideration. These topics are relevant to the research subject Ballymaloe Cookery School given its position as a thriving rural tourism hub and its consistent ability to attract visitors from outside East Cork.

2.4.1 An Introduction to Rural Development

Literature on rural development consists of a combination of theory and practice. At the global level, rural development can be linked with urbanisation and economic change which has increasingly taken place due to trade liberalisation, bringing about an increased global economic interdependence, reduced national economic sovereignty and an increase in the gap between rich and poor. As such, the parameters of rural development were set out by Chambers (1983, p. 147) in the following definition:
Rural Development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need.

However, an apparently simple definition of this sort is challenged by Van der Ploeg et al. (2000), who argue that rural development is a more fluid concept which cannot be clearly defined due to its emergence through socio-political struggle and debate. Arnason, Nightingale, Shucksmith and Vergunst (2009) found that among six case studies across Europe, social embeddedness was crucial to the success and sustainability of rural development. Environmental issues have become central to the topic of rural development as climate change poses increasing challenges and it becomes clear that the poorest suffer such consequences most. Tovey (2008) highlights the distinct status of rural areas as the places of natural resources that are critical to the survival of future generations. With an emphasis on the ‘inter’ and ‘intra’-equity among generations as is prevalent in the literature, this reflects the priorities of sustainable development, as laid out in The Brundtland Report (UNCED, 1987, p. 1). This report established sustainable development as:

...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

It is useful to keep this in mind as a backdrop to rural development in Ireland. There is no internationally or EU accepted definition of what is considered rural. Historically, rural has been a spatial concept, indicating all that cannot be considered urban. Ireland’s 2011 census classified everywhere outside of urban areas or towns with a population above 1,500 people as a rural area (CSO, 2011). In Ireland, rural enterprise is now a key tenet of rural development policy. The contemporary rural development agenda has experienced three major paradigm shifts. Traditionally, agriculture played a primary role in the formation and management of the land in the countryside, and has been central to development policies. In the literature, this is referred to as the productivist paradigm where emphasis is on volume of production of agricultural commodities. Agriculture’s significance for rural development has since been in decline (Van der Ploeg et al., 2000). Ill-effects of productivist policies as experienced in 1980s rural Ireland included a reduction in the numbers of people employed in agriculture, subsequent rural underemployment, a decline in rural populations, and evidence of the
unsustainable nature of intensive agriculture for the environment (CEC, 1988). From this followed a move away from productivist models and towards a paradigm influenced by globalisation, though this influence was not specific to rural regions. Subsequently, attention has turned to the importance of non-agriculture activities in preventing the decline of rural communities, as laid out in Ireland’s Rural Development Programme 2007-2013.

Tovey considers rural Ireland as moving from rural society (based on the reproduction of family farming) to rural space (a place available for conservation, urban leisure consumption and entrepreneurship) (2000, p. 71). Restructuring of the agricultural industry is also a priority of the European Union. A 2010 European Commission Report on ‘The Future of Rural Areas’ stated that factors outside of agriculture will increasingly influence the development of rural areas across Europe. Since 1991, Ireland has been apportioned European Rural Development funding using the Liaisons Entre Actions de Developpment de l’Economie Rurale (LEADER) approach. LEADER is the primary EU programme for the foster of innovation and diversification in the rural economy. The EU LEADER initiative has provided support for rural development projects initiated at local level to boost rural areas and stimulate jobs. In tandem with this, Ireland has a long history of collective community driven rural development. Rural regions make up a significant part of Ireland and the county of Cork. Such regions are vital for growth and social cohesion. Ballymaloe Cookery School sits within both the activities of rural agriculture (e.g. as it is situated on a farm) and non-agriculture (e.g. through the sale of other goods and services). Set in a rural location, its local impact is significant for its hinterland and its development. The next section further analyses rural development, looking specifically at rural tourism, which is of particular relevance to this study.

2.4.2 The Concept of Tourism in Rural Development

Tourism is a central element of rural development. Though tourism can be considered part of wider study on migration, diaspora and mobility, its alignment with rural development is of relevance to this study. Tourism, as defined by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) refers to:

The activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes (UNWTO, 1995, p. 2).
Tourism is distinct from travel, though as the World Trade Organisation (WTO) definition depicts, the scope of tourism is vast. Tourism is an internationally traded services sector. Ireland as a tourist destination attracts visitors from across the world. Ireland benefits from a unique and much celebrated cultural identity. Tourists do not visit Ireland expecting hot weather, but rural Ireland’s distinctive \textit{bocage} landscape produced by its temperate climate is an important tourism resource. Fáilte Ireland (previously An Bord Fáilte) was Ireland’s first tourist board, founded during the 1950s. Fáilte Ireland has led a concerted effort towards tourism growth in Ireland. Fáilte Ireland reports 10% growth in the sector between 2013 and 2014, which reflects similar growth in previous years. Whilst this figure refers to tourist expenditure, similar percentage growth was experienced in tourist visits (Fáilte Ireland, 2015).

Rural tourism encompasses all that attracts holidaymakers to rural areas. A simple definition such as this however, neglects the importance of the particularities of a rural tourist experience. Rural tourism can also be defined as:

\textit{...a term used when rural culture is a key component of the product} (UNWTO, 2004, p.9)

This definition suggests a unique experience, one which may involve activities, traditions and participation in the lifestyle and culture of the area. Benefits of rural tourism include job creation (Backman \textit{et al.}, 1995) and improvements in standards of living due to the creation of improved infrastructure, for example, roads (Um and Crompton, 1990). However, tourism also holds the potential to impact negatively on the natural and cultural environment in which it takes place (Holden, 2008). Integrated Rural Tourism (IRT) was developed as a concept to encompass the multifaceted nature of rural tourism and the diversity of its stakeholders (Faulkner and Ryan, 1999; Echtner and Jamal, 1997). Integrated Rural Tourism takes a holistic approach to tourism. Its primary objective is to promote economic, environmental and sociocultural sustainability in tourism through the engagement and empowerment of local people (Cawley and Gilmor, 2008). Rural environments influence enterprise growth in a unique way. Van Horn and Harvey (1998) argue that entrepreneurs in rural settings face greater difficulty in recruiting staff, procuring expertise and finance and broadening networks than their urban counterparts. Additionally, access to quality rural broadband has been identified as a further barrier to rural enterprise (Western Development Commission, 2016).
Business growth is frequently measured in terms of sales, turnover and number of employees (Delmar et al., 2003). These outputs are measurable in quantitative terms. McKelvie and Wiklund (2010) caution against too much emphasis on growth in economic terms, rather than how the business is growing. Without focusing too much on output, it is worthwhile to reflect on process. Anderson (2000) pays particular attention to contextualising entrepreneurship and growth, viewing it as a combination of context and entrepreneurial actions. The concept of ‘multifunctionality’ recognises the widespread benefits of rural development, rather than those only measurable in economic terms. The success of tourism is dependent on the active support of the local community, without which such tourism will not be sustainable (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004). As the rural development agenda increasingly focuses on entrepreneurship, specific opportunities within rural areas are being seized. The unique role played by women in the creation of rural enterprise has been identified by Smith and Jackson (2004). Their research which focused on Shropshire in the UK, found that “non-farm but on-farm” enterprises are largely created and run by women. The next section looks at such opportunities in food tourism in particular.

2.4.3 Food Tourism

This part of the chapter provides a brief review of the literature on food tourism. In academia, food was previously considered merely an aspect of the tourist experience, whilst food is now considered a tourist attraction in its own right and increasingly, literature specifically dealing with food tourism as a form of speciality travel has emerged (Hall and Mitchell, 2001). Food-related tourism has been varyingly named culinary tourism (Wolf, 2006), gastronomy tourism (Hjalager and Richards, 2002), tasting tourism (Boniface, 2003), in addition to the term food tourism (Hall et al., 2003). In recent years, the body of research pertaining to food tourism has evolved (e.g. Hall et al., 2003; Hjalager and Richards, 2002). Food tourism can be linked to rural development and understood as an important contributor to the economy. Food tourism can help stimulate rural economies at risk of decline through the protection of jobs and the creation of employment (Boyne et al., 2003). Food and tourism have practical application in the areas of food production, tourism planning and marketing (Long, 2004). Again, the research tends to focus on destinations and markets in Western contexts.

Expenditure on food and dining among tourists globally make up a large proportion of total tourist spending (UNWTO, 2015). Dining experiences contribute to determining the overall
satisfaction of tourists regarding their travel experience (Neild et al., 2000). Food is an important element of the tourist experience and a key contributor to local economies (Wolf, 2006; Teller and Wall, 2000). Hall et al. (2003) argue that the success of any tourist destination is linked to its gastronomic identity. Fox (2007) affirms that an unclear or banal gastronomic identity can be a serious drawback to any region attempting to attract tourists. However, the pursuit of developing a successful gastronomic identity depends on a number of factors. The focus of the literature favours the potential of food as a tourist attraction, rather than the possibility of food impeding the success of a destination. Cohen and Avieli (2004) cite hygiene standards, health considerations, barriers to communication, and limited knowledge among tourists regarding local cuisine as relevant challenges.

The term culinary tourism was first put forward by Long (2004) to describe travel for the purpose of gaining knowledge about another culture through its food and drink. For Long, food enables the tourist to experience another culture in a sensory manner, rather than a purely intellectual one. In Long’s (2004) analysis, culinary tourism extends to experiences that take place close to home but involve a food experience outside of the usual, such as dining in ethnic restaurants or, experimenting with unfamiliar ingredients. Culinary tourism or food tourism is related to cultural tourism and presupposes that food is an expression of culture, as argued by Douglas (1982) and Barthes (1975). Zuelow (2015) argues that leisure travel is not only of economic importance, but plays an important role in defining who we are, situating us in specific contexts in space and time. Food tourism can be considered a subset of special interest tourism which reflects the increasingly diverse leisure interests of the leisure class in the twenty-first century (Douglas et al., 2001). Sharples (2003) suggests that the growth of food tourism is an outcome of the trend where people pursue their interest in food as part of a leisure experience such as dining out or watching cookery programmes, rather than actively spending time cooking. Hall et al. (2003) also point to the proliferation of magazines, radio shows, television programmes and television channels with a focus on food that unequivocally connect food and tourism.

Though for some tourists food is an area of specific interest, for others, it is simply necessary to source food while away from home. Williams (1997) identifies a significant gap between people’s everyday food practices at home and the deviation from such routine eating when on holidays. Such contrast to convention creates an opportunity for holidaymakers to sample new fare in new places, and to treat one’s self to foods usually avoided or resisted. For Williams,
food on holiday symbolises a separation between work and leisure. Travel and tourism have long been associated with a departure from norms or routine, instead experiencing 'the other', or to use Urry's term to 'gaze' upon new sights and experiences (1990). Urry has developed useful concepts to study tourists and their behaviour. His 'tourist gaze' is the image tourists expect from local populations when they visit a place, the 'authentic' experience they wish to see. This 'tourist gaze' is then reproduced by the local people in response. In food tourism therefore, food becomes reimagined for both visitors and locals.

Concerns regarding the role of tourism in globalisation and the potential for cultural homogenisation, which includes food, have fuelled debates about tourism's role in the *McDonaldization* of culture (Page and Hall, 2003; Ritzer, 1996). This concept is based on the idea that society mimics the efficiency oriented operation of fast food chains, resulting in the rationalisation of culture. In her analysis of globalisation, Hjalager (2007) considers international travel one of its key manifestations. An evident dichotomy occurs whereby, simultaneously, a desire for authentic food experiences coexists alongside the universal standardisation of food, as evidenced by the ubiquity of fast-food chains. Preserving the unique local gastronomic identity of an area requires a balance between these somewhat opposing forces. A clear gastronomic identity and heritage can contribute to the creation of a unique sense of place (Fox, 2007). Local food tourism holds the potential to enrich social capital within host communities and emphasise the value of local places and their traditions (Dougherty *et al.*, 2013).

Authenticity is a frequently cited term in the rhetoric around tourism. However, it remains elusive. Bromberger (2005) draws attention to the problematic nature of claims regarding authenticity in a competitive market. He evokes Hobsbawm and Ranger's (1983) concept of 'the invention of tradition', demonstrating how disguising the current means of producing 'traditional' food products and codifying processes, serve economic priorities and consumer demands for example, in the case of European cheeses (2005). For business and tourism, there is a practical application and benefit through invoking the past. Reynolds (1994) argues that food is one of the last remaining authentic tourist experiences, given the numerous ways that tourists can virtually or otherwise experience new places. Weidenfeld (2010) defines iconic attractions as those which conjure an image of authenticity, symbolizing the cultural heritage of their location for both tourists and locals alike. The Guinness Storehouse in Dublin is a good example of large-scale food tourism in Ireland. It is Ireland's most visited tourist
attraction (Fáilte Ireland, 2014). Such attractions can create public relations value, in addition to the revenue generated on site.

Another related concept is agricultural tourism. Agricultural tourism, also known as agritourism or agri-tourism refers to commercial enterprise that takes place on a working farm to cater for visitors. It is a subdivision of rural tourism and focuses on on-farm activities. Farm-based tourism enterprises are often developed to supplement farm income. In their recent work, Brandth and Haugen (2010) consider the imperative of many farmers to move from traditional farming to diversification into agritourism, and the implications this has on their social identities. Van der Ploeg (2013) examines farming as a way of life and distinguishes family farmers due to their emotional connection with their land, consideration for future generations and concern for the farming community in general. Protection and promotion of family farming is considered a positive response to threats posed by changes in farming across the globe (Van Vliet et al., 2015). Pluriactivity has benefited many farmers in developed countries who would otherwise be forced out of business (Kinsella et al., 2000). Niche markets have emerged via food tourism. These markets buffer small and speciality farms unable to compete at the commodity level. Rather than compete with urban destinations or beach resorts, rural tourism outlets have competitive advantage through their ability to sell something alternative (Cawley and Gilmor, 2008).

Mulcahy (2012) identifies an opportunity in Ireland for enterprises to leverage local cultural capital via food tourism. In an increasingly competitive global marketplace, tourism offers an opportunity for regional differentiation. A study conducted by Henchion and McIntyre (2000) strongly suggests that Ireland is associated with food of high quality, but that the country is frequently viewed as a single region and thus, opportunities in the marketing of regional products are often missed. Mulcahy (2012) further argues that gastronomy in Ireland offers a unique opportunity for local and regional development and national economic development. Fáilte Ireland, Ireland’s national tourism development authority presently features a marketing toolkit for Irish food businesses on their website on how to tell their food story to attract visitors (Fáilte Ireland, 2015 [online]). This shows the importance of narrative in creating an image of place and attracting visitors. Ireland’s vision for food tourism outlined in the National Food Tourism Implementation Framework 2014-2016 is defined as:
Ireland will be recognised by visitors for memorable food experiences which evoke a unique sense of place, culture and hospitality

(Failte Ireland, 2014, p. 43).

This definition demonstrates the growing importance of food in experiential tourism (Mitchell and Hall, 2003). Local producers can add value to their produce by creating an experience based on them. Increasingly, destinations have recognised this potential and utilised it as a marketing tool (Hjalager and Richards, 2002). Tourism benefits a locality due to its multiplier effect, whereby the business of food producers and other industries is boosted by the presence of visitors (Sage, 2003). Tourist demand creates an opportunity for new product and service offerings, and to enlarge local markets. Tourism authorities support events and activities that promote regions as food destinations. According to Long (2007), food tourism is about foodways, the various practices and activities that relate to the production and consumption of food, rather than exotic or gourmet meals. Santich (2004) proposes that food tourism emphasises production, rather than consumption, and that this now extends to museums and historical displays. Food tourism may include: visits to primary and secondary producers, food festivals, restaurants, and locales where unique food experiences are the main motivating reason for travel (Hall et al., 2003). As an industry trend, Canada, Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom are actively placing themselves at the forefront of culinary tourism though historically, Italy and France have been most associated with culinary tourism, given their established cuisines and the prominence food is given culturally in such parts (Long, 2007).

The literature, as outlined above depicts the context of rural development and the importance of rural tourism for the prosperity of rural areas. Tourism can be looked at from multiple angles, such as the significance it has economically, environmentally, socially and culturally. This section references literature that supports a growing interest in food tourism and agricultural tourism, and opportunities for the sector. Recent literature emphasises not only the importance of food in tourism but also the ways in which food has become a tourist attraction itself. Since tourists seek hospitality in the context of travel and tourism, it is imperative that the hospitality industry respond to trends in travel and tourism. As has been pointed out, family farms and other family businesses can avail of such opportunities. Family business is the central topic of the following, and final section of this chapter. Further focus is on family business in Ireland and family business within the Tourism and Hospitality sector. A review of
the literature on family business is pertinent to this study as Ballymaloe Cookery School is firmly recognised as a family business.

2.5 An Introduction to Family Business

Scholarly interest in family business is in its infancy but it is attracting a rising level of attention worldwide (Schulze and Gedajlovic, 2010). This is not limited to the Western world. The significance of family business is far reaching. Until relatively recently, family business was not considered a separate business entity or research topic. No specific definition of family business is universally accepted which indicates the nascent nature of family business research. The definitional deficit is a recurring theme in the literature on family business, becoming a complicating factor when measuring the significance of family business and making comparison across countries. A business, as defined by Alcorn, is any profit-making venture or enterprise (1982). Family businesses broadly defined by Means (2013), are enterprises where the family have the ability to influence decisions around governance, and where at least two family members own a stake in the business or participate in its operation. The Central Statistics Office in Ireland report in 2005 used a wide definition of family business. Family business was defined as:

An enterprise where one family holds more than 50% of the voting shares and/or a family supplies a significant proportion of the enterprises senior management and is effectively controlling the business and/or an enterprise where there is evidence of one or more than one generation working in the business and/or an enterprise that is influenced by a family or a family relationship and that perceives itself to be a family business

(CSO, 2005, p.5).

A broad definition such as this can be useful but can encompass too much. For example, it can be difficult to separate family business from self-employment. Though there remains uncertainty regarding definition of family business, it is generally accepted that family business must incorporate three elements: the family, the business and ownership. This was first proposed and illustrated by Tagiuri and Davis (1982, p. 199) in their ‘3-circle’ model (below).
Their work builds upon earlier research on family businesses underpinned by systems theory, where a two circle model represented the interaction between the family and the business. The Venn diagram above depicts the various roles within a family business, some of which overlap. Sometimes, it can be difficult to distinguish between the family and the business as the two become intertwined. The model sets out seven distinct stakeholders, each with separate interests. As the model depicts: there are family members who are not involved in the business, family employees who are not business owners, family owners who are not employed in the business, family-owner employees, owners who are neither family nor employees, owner-employees who are not family, and non-owner employees from outside the family. This model enables researchers to look at the overlap between family, ownership and management in family businesses, and both the positive and negative implications of such. A limitation of the model is that it does not specify dependent variables (Yu, Lumpkin, Sorenson and Brigham, 2012). Regardless, it remains relevant to the literature and has been foundational for the development of other theories.

It does not suffice to simply insert ‘family’ as a prefix before business without a full exploration and explanation of what distinguishes family businesses (Goffee, 1996). Family businesses will only share commonalities up to the point where families share characteristics. Family businesses deal with unique issues pertaining to tax, governance and succession, as well as
family members past, present and future. For example, the practice of family members occupying positions in family businesses which they are not suitably qualified to hold is an issue specific to family businesses, as highlighted by Kellermanns and Eddleston (2004). Palacios, Martinez and Jimenez (2013) argue that efforts to incorporate family members within the family business can become a priority above business efficiency. In their research, Feltham, Feltham and Barnett (2005) point to a prevalent overdependence on a single decision-maker within family businesses. Family enterprises are extensions of family relationships and their goals and governance are influenced by the nature of these relationships (Means, 2013). Sibling rivalry can have negative repercussions for family businesses, according to Filser, Kraus and Mark (2013). Family cultures are unique and thus the family business reflects this. Family culture refers to the shared web of attitudes, core values, beliefs and assumptions of family members (Goffee, 1996). As families and family relationships are complex, purely rational explanations of business decisions and governance do not stand up to scrutiny. Academic work on characteristics of family businesses continues as researchers continue to seek improvements in various family business constructs and their measurements. The very nature of families can act as an obstacle to family business research. As Dyer and Dyer (2009, p. 218) point out, family businesses are: 'largely unseen patterns created, sustained, and modified by the family'.

Anthropologists affirm that the family is the original economic unit, from which other forms of economic organisation grew. A lack of consensus regarding the makeup of a family further complicates definitional problems around family business (Birdthistle and Fleming, 2007). Some family businesses capitalise on the family aspect, whilst others do not. Family businesses can enjoy competitive advantage (Zahra, Hayton, Neubaum, Dibrell and Craig, 2008; Feltham, et al., 2005). Family capital is the source of such advantage (Hoffman et al., 2006). This concept is rooted in that of social capital; the values that exist in relationships among people (Putnam, 1993). Hoffman et al. (2006), assert that with the pre-existing social structure within a family, family capital is immediately available. Family businesses stand to gain from the personal service they can offer, the family branding they can develop, and the personal relationships they can build and maintain with employees, suppliers and customers (Ward, 1997). The concept of familiness (Sirmon and Hitt, 2003; Habbershon and Williams, 1999) refers to the competitive advantage specific to family businesses because of the long-term perspective, common goals, speed of decision making, and embeddedness in the local community that such businesses commonly demonstrate. The potential of negative familiness too must be noted, in the form of family strife, reluctance to change, nepotism and a failure to
include outside assistance. Gomez-Mejia, Haynes, Nunez-Nickel, Jacobson and Moyano-Fuentes (2007) invoke the concept of socioemotional wealth (SEW) which refers to the unique non-financial benefits family businesses can avail of, such as values, identity, and the capacity to exercise family influence. They argue that socioemotional wealth demarcates family businesses and explains their distinctive behaviour.

Goals of family enterprises tend to be both nonfinancial and financial (Sharma, 2004). Nonfinancial objectives can be in conflict with financial objectives. Family businesses emerge from a desire to meet personal and family needs and preferences. Most businesses operate for the purpose of profit and the owners and their families matter little to the business strategy (Means, 2013). Business is a means to an end and that end is profit. Family businesses differ in this respect. Though family businesses differ to their non-family counterpart, they often operate in the same market and their relationship is worthy of investigation. Chirico (2008) observes that family members stand to gain from skills and experience they develop while working outside the family business. Rather than a focus on profit, Macken-Walsh and Byrne (2014) affirm that decision making on family farms in Ireland is dependent on a variety of other factors. The running of family businesses cannot be irrespective of profit however. In their use of the concept of socioemotional wealth with regard to family businesses, Gomez-Mejia et al. (2007) argue that the loss of such 'wealth' implies a loss of intimacy, a reduction in status, and failure to meet familial expectations. This demonstrates that for family businesses, risk extends beyond financial liability.

Many family businesses thrive and trade on the fact that they are small and do not seek growth and expansion for its own sake. This further sets them apart. Despite a commonly small scale, family businesses combine highly complex interconnections between the family and the business. Family businesses are frequently considered simple, less complex units than typically larger publicly owned operations, in part due to their usually small or medium size (Goffee, 1996). Smyth and Leach (1993) point out that 'firm' and 'company' are generally associated with large, publicly owned concerns while the term 'family business' tends to conjure up images of corner shops and small cottage industries. Family businesses have largely been categorised as part of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), with no recognition of their specific ownership (Getz et al., 2004). In business research family business has not received the attention that SMEs and new business start-ups have.
It is recognised in the literature that the founders of family businesses exert enduring influence over the cultures, values and performance of the business (Collins and Porras, 1994). Family members tend to remain in leadership positions for longer than their nonfamily counterparts (Sharma, 2004). The early entrepreneurs and founders need to possess particular skills to create the business, while subsequent generations must deal with the legacy and long term survival of the business (Cruz and Nordqvist, 2012). Family businesses tend toward long-term planning and reinvestment, with succession in mind. Handler (1994) emphasises that succession is a long-term, multi-phase process, rather than one single act of transfer. The majority of family businesses however, do not survive beyond one generation (Goffee, 1996). Those successful in doing so may ultimately become family dynasties in their own right. According to Birdthistle and Fleming (2007), family business growth correlates with a decline in the influence of the family on management. Van der Merwe, Venter and Ellis (2009) argue that a lack of succession planning is the single greatest threat to family businesses. As discussed, family businesses appear distinct from their non-family counterparts. The literature raises many issues and topics for research, many of which have only recently become the focus of considerable academic attention. The next section gives particular attention to family business in the Irish context.

2.5.1 Family Business in Ireland

Little research on family businesses in Ireland has been undertaken (Birdthistle and Fleming, 2007). Family businesses are dominant in the economic landscape of many countries (Sharma, 2004), and this includes Ireland. Historically, in Ireland many widely known larger companies are family businesses, e.g. The Musgrave Group (Birdthistle and Fleming, 2007). A significant proportion of businesses in Ireland are family businesses which contribute to Gross National Product, and importantly, these enterprises create employment in the private sector (Small Firms Association, 2000). Despite this, the Irish Government has placed foreign direct investment at the top of the political agenda for some time. Job creation initiatives and tax breaks have favoured private limited companies. Historically, companies emerged from small family businesses until the time of the Industrial Revolution which led to the creation of large-scale manufacturing (Schulze and Gedajlovic, 2010) and the subsequent emergence of the multinational corporation.
In Ireland, the most common form of family business ownership is the Private Limited Company. Individual proprietorship is also common (CSO, 2005). In their study which is specific to family business in Ireland, Birdthistle and Fleming (2007) found that the most common form of family business ownership is the husband and wife team. They also found that ownership commonly lies with the family, rarely involving outside shareholders. Boards are frequently made up of family members and represent family interests above business interests. Birdthistle and Fleming (2007) found that family businesses in Ireland are a valuable source of employment for family members and the owner is usually highly involved in the day-to-day running of the business. The scant research on the subject indicates that further research on family business in Ireland is imperative.

2.5.2 Family Business in Tourism and Hospitality

Family businesses can contribute much to community viability and culture, particularly in small and rural locales. Family businesses can bring long-term stability to an area, demonstrating values, commitment and responsibility to the local community. The work environment of family businesses inspires staff care, commitment and loyalty (Ward, 1988). Farm-based tourism and hospitality is largely made up of family businesses (Getz et al., 2004). Though it is well known that small-scale, owner-run businesses dominate the hospitality and tourism sector, little research has been carried out on the family dimension to this (Getz et al., 2004). Getz et al. (2004) highlight some of the pressures of family businesses within tourism and hospitality, including: seasonal factors, time demands, a high level of contact with guests required and encroachment of guests on family time and space. The specific nature of family business in the hospitality and tourism sector has largely been incorporated into the broader area of family business and entrepreneurship. Family businesses are dominant in the hotel and restaurant industry in Ireland (CSO, 2005). Research in the area of tourism and hospitality has tended to ignore the importance of family business as a distinct management structure.

In summary, though its definition varies, three main dimensions of family businesses are the family, the business and its ownership. Family business is attracting more academic interest of late. This is particularly welcome due to the obvious research deficits. It is widely acknowledged in the existing literature that family businesses have unique attributes. Family businesses are not necessarily small enterprises. The prevalence and economic contribution of family businesses is generally underestimated. Specific peculiarities of family businesses, such
as their unique management structure and the role of women present opportunity for further research.

2.6 Conclusion

This literature review provides an overview of pertinent literature on themes relevant to Ballymaloe Cookery School, the focus of this study. Though an abundance of academic literature on the subjects of Alternative Food Networks and Rural Development and Rural Tourism exists, research on the themes of Culinary Education and Family Business forms a less developed body of knowledge. The literature on culinary education evidences a recent and widespread surge in interest in food generally, and changes in how culinary education is viewed, attained, and by whom. The role and importance of chefs and food celebrities is given credence, particularly in light of the recent traction of food movements and wider societal change. The literature demonstrates that food celebrities and celebrity chefs hold power, both in terms of the market through the sale of products and promotion of themselves as brands, but also as lifestyle leaders. These insights provide background to studying the emergence of Ballymaloe Cookery School, key characteristics of the business, and its evolution since inception.

Changes to the production, processing and distribution of food globally, as characterised by the emergence of a dominant industrial food system are also central to this study. Alternative food networks, including the example of organic food are consistently viewed as responses to the industrialisation of food. Changes to factors in the production of food provide a background to the establishment of Ballymaloe Cookery School and its key characteristics. The AFN concept is a useful tool for analysing such changes, and actions taken to counter them. The enterprises at Ballymaloe have a longstanding association with the Slow Food and Organic food movements. AFNs cover an expansive range of responses and activities. However, the use of the term and the effectiveness of AFNs to counter the industrialisation of food are continually subject to critique.

As part of the literature review, Ireland and the county of Cork have been given consideration. An overview of rural development, rural tourism and family business in Ireland provides background to the primary research underpinning this study, and the underlying research questions regarding the local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School in the region of East Cork.
As part of the literature review, Ireland and the county of Cork have been given consideration. An overview of rural development, rural tourism and family business in Ireland provides background to the primary research underpinning this study, and the underlying research questions regarding the local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School in the region of East Cork. The literature involves delving into a variety of academic disciplines. In the context of what has been discussed, it can be concluded that food is indeed a point of conflict where tensions exist regarding the importance of how it is produced, understood, the meanings attached to it, and the role of public and private sector. Reflecting on issues revealed by the literature review enabled the development of a qualitative research instrument for the collection of primary data. Chapter Three details the methodology employed in this study.
Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction to the Research Methodology

This chapter deals with the research methodology selected to address the identified research objectives as presented in Chapter One. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a description of the research methodology approaches that have been used throughout this research project. Gray (2014) describes methodology as a method of inquiry developed within a particular paradigm, with associated assumptions. Thus, data collection methods differ depending on the research objectives and the way in which data analysis is to be carried out. This chapter begins with an outline of qualitative approaches to data collection. A justification for the selected approach is presented. The design of the research is then dealt with, followed by a description of how the data was collected and analysed. The chapter concludes with an outline of challenges encountered during the research process, and details regarding the validity of the study.

3.2 Primary Data Collection: A Qualitative Approach

The research investigates Ballymaloe Cookery School: the business and its local impact. This study is a qualitative inquiry. Qualitative research explores experiences, behaviour and attitudes in order to obtain in-depth opinion from participants (Dawson, 2009). Qualitative research is distinct from quantitative research which largely gathers numerical or statistical data. According to Greenblatt, Dickinson and Simpson (2004), quantitative research methods are suited to research questions requiring analysis of facts and large numbers of people. By contrast, qualitative research methods are most appropriate for analysis of a limited number of situations and cases. Qualitative research can also be used effectively to investigate phenomena that have been under researched. Qualitative research reflects the complexity of the research subject, allowing for a deep insight into the topic of enquiry. Its approach is holistic in terms of the investigation and interpretation of the data. Interview data tends to be the predominant source of information for qualitative researchers (Carson, Gilmore, Perry and Gronhaug, 2001). A qualitative approach reduces the distance between the researcher and the research subject, allowing for a detailed account (Creswell, 2003). For Carson et al. (2001), interviews allow the researcher to obtain information such as feelings, memories, and interpretations, things that
cannot be observed or learnt by other means. Interviews have been the main research method chosen for this study.

Access to people at Ballymaloe Cookery School was granted for the purposes of the research. This access is appreciated, particularly as, according to Goffee (1996), difficulties to attaining research access to family businesses are a major barrier to the establishment of a body of detailed empirical research on the topic of family business. Furthermore, it must be stated that the researcher has no affiliation to the cookery school. Research topics that concern food crosscut many areas, and for this reason this study pertains to many disciplines. Food brings the limitations of academic disciplinary boundaries into question (Wilk, 2012). The researcher has a background in Anthropology of Food, professional cookery and multidisciplinary approaches. With this experience, the researcher was deemed a suitable candidate to carry out the study. Every researcher brings a ‘point of view’ and ‘lived experience’ to bear, despite the best intentions to do the contrary (Silverman, 2004). In the role as researcher, one is an active learner.

This research combines primary and secondary sources of information. Primary research methods include in-depth interviews, focus groups, case studies, field research and direct observation (Hess-Biber and Leavy, 2006; Greenblatt et al., 2004). A comprehensive literature search preceded the primary data collection, as discussed in Chapter Two. McNeill and Chapman (2005) strongly advise researchers to take time to read what others have written on the area of their interest. Relevant literature should reveal what research has already been undertaken on the topic and where the proposed research will fit into that body of work. It may be the case that there is a dearth of knowledge relating to the topic. The secondary data served as background material on the subject matter and was used to inform the interview guides prior to the commencement of primary research. Charmaz (2006) argues in favour of a dual approach where the researcher conducts a preliminary review of the literature before the data collection, but without letting this literature overly influence or direct the development of theory. With this in mind, the literature review process was ongoing for the duration of this research project.

The research style invoked for this study is qualitative; it is naturalistic, interpretive and inductive (Creswell, 2007; Mason, 2002). This allows the meaning to come from the data itself. Though extensive planning is a necessary part of any research, Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005)
argue in favour of flexibility regarding the design and method of all research. Qualitative research uses data to generate new theories and hypotheses, rather than obtaining data in order to test hypotheses, as is the case with quantitative research. Therefore, the overall research style, and underlying epistemology, is phenomenological. Phenomenology gives precedence to direct subjective and lived experience, particularly in everyday settings where hidden meanings can be uncovered (Patton, 1990). Phenomenology assumes a socially constructed reality. Positivism, on the other hand, assumes an external, objective reality. Positivism was the dominant epistemological paradigm during the 1930s through to the 1960s. Over the years, quantitative research has been associated with positivism. Positivism is based on the premise that scientific knowledge is true because every scientist that observes the same phenomena will see the exact same thing (Greenblatt et al., 2004). However, this concept of knowledge being objective can be challenged, given the argument that the observer brings influences and experience that impact on the reality and mean different observers can observe different realities. Gill and Johnson (2010) argue that by its nature, human behaviour is interpretive and thus, positivistic methods are unsuitable for analysis of human behaviour.

Some researchers have looked to interpretivism as a means of addressing the shortcomings of positivism. Interpretivism views the social world as being culturally derived and situated within history (Collins, 2010). Interpretivism does not separate the researcher from the research subject. Interpretivism is distinct from positivism as it holds the view that the values, opinions, prior knowledge and experience of the researcher can influence what he/she observes (Reichardt and Rallis, 1994). Positivism has historically dominated the field of knowledge construction due to its reputation as being an objective scientific method (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). Positivism has been associated with quantitative research whereas, interpretivism or constructivism have been linked to qualitative research. An interpretivist approach focuses more on the personal ways of understanding reality rather than attempting to explain causal relationships via the examination of objective facts, as is the case with a positivist approach. Each respondent interviewed for the purposes of this study has conveyed their own personal experience and interpretations, which contributes to the construction of their own reality. An interpretivist approach was most suitable for this study, as opposed to a positivist one, as it allows for multiple realities, diverse perspectives, and the point of view borne by the researcher, and the circumstantial understanding and analysis of data (Carson et al., 2001). This is in part due to the fact that the researcher has a background in Anthropology and Anthropological methods. Within interpretivism, grounded theory is deemed most appropriate for this study.
Grounded theory was first set out by qualitative researchers Glaser and Strauss during the mid-1960s (Creswell, 2007). Though their original concept of grounded theory was one, their understanding of the approach diverged later. Rather than testing predetermined hypotheses before collecting the data, using the grounded theory approach, theories and/or concepts emerge from the data itself (Carson et al., 2001). Grounded theory is a reflexive process where the literature review, the collection of data, data analysis, and the development of theoretical concepts take place simultaneously, rather than in a linear manner. Each part of the process supports the other, making it a series of iterations (Gray, 2014). The views of the study participants are sought prior to the development of theory or conclusions. The strength of using such an approach is the ease at which the process can be modified by the researcher. The Glaserian model of grounded theory now differs to that of Strauss. The Glaserian version of grounded theory is established in the tradition of critical realism whereby it is assumed that knowledge exists in an objective world and the researcher can be independent of the research. This study is much more closely aligned with the Straussian version of grounded theory which recognises the involvement of the researcher. Charmaz (2006) has developed Straussian grounded theory further, emphasising and the participant’s construction of their own reality. This Charmazian interpretation of grounded theory has been invoked for this study.

The aim of the empirical research was to explore the thoughts and perceptions of respondents regarding Ballymaloe Cookery School, in order to make conclusions about the business and local impact. Consequently, semi-structured interviews were employed, as is the focus of the following section.

3.3 The In-depth Interview

Selecting suitable research methods depends on the nature of the research question and the knowledge that already exists about the subject. In-depth interviews were deemed most appropriate to this study, having considered the study’s breadth and limitations.

In-depth face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed (verbatim) by the researcher and make up the main qualitative data collection technique used in this research. Such interviews allow for emphasis to be put on the views of participants.
Reflecting the grounded theory approach taken, it is understood that: *all interviews are active interviews*; they are not mere extraction of information (Silverman, 2004, p. 140). Interviews see human interaction as central to knowledge production. Structured interviews enable comprehensive comparison. A more structured approach is more suited to studies following a positivist approach. Less structured methods are more useful to researchers pursuing an interpretivist approach (Carson *et al.*, 2001). Semi-structured interviews allow for some deviation from predetermined topics. However, it can be difficult to collate a volume of divergent views and experiences of different people. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to allow alteration in the wording and order of questions in order to suit each situation and individual interviewee. This study aligns with a phenomenological approach and so, the open nature of semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility and probing into study participant’s responses.

First, an interview guide was drawn up with a list of questions to be asked over the course of each interview (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). The guide was created to serve as a checklist of topics to be covered. The interview guide is useful to the researcher as it directs and guides them through the interview (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2011). The interview guide helped to maintain consistency across the interviews. The guide established the wording and order of questions but this was fluid and modified based on the progress of the interview. Additional questions were asked to delve deeper into the responses of interviewees. This is an effective approach for probing and clarification of interviewee answers, allowing the interviewee to elaborate on particular topics. Two separate interview guides were developed. Guide One was used in the interview with a cookery school founder. Guide Two led proceedings in all other interviews. Both can be viewed in Appendix 1. The interview guide was pilot tested prior to the study. A pilot interview was conducted with one participant, after which minor adjustments were made to the guide. One participant requested the guide prior to the interview. This request was granted.

### 3.4 Research Design and Data Collection

The rationale for the method used is based on the fact that evidence from multiple sources is often found to be more compelling than that of a single source. Other factors taken into consideration when choosing the research method were time and financial constraints. The
sample selection was largely drawn from a pool of people residing in Shanagarry, the location of Ballymaloe Cookery School, the wider area of Cork and East Cork, and the neighbouring town of Midleton. This was deemed to be the local area which the school impacts upon directly and indirectly. This area also fits with the recently designated electoral region of East Cork. The core concepts of interest in this study are context specific and occur at a local level. Prior to conducting the interviews, criteria for inclusion in the study sample were established to ensure that all interviewees had (in the past or at present) some association or involvement with Ballymaloe Cookery School, and a unique personal perspective on the school. Inclusion criteria were that potential candidates were over the age of eighteen and ready and able to talk about their perspective on Ballymaloe Cookery School and its place in East Cork. The criteria for inclusion was devised to ensure that the people selected for interview were relevant and could provide the necessary first-hand insight required to meet the aims and objectives of the study. The first requirement was to identify relevant stakeholders. Early on, stakeholders at Ballymaloe Cookery School were identified as suitable candidates for interview as part of the research. Though stakeholders can include people not directly connected with the cookery school, the sampling approach chosen for this study focused only on those with some level of experience of the cookery school. High-profile individuals at Ballymaloe Cookery School are frequently interviewed in the media. For this reason, less prolific stakeholders in the cookery school were not overlooked as they too were viewed as being in a position to offer useful and relevant data as interview candidates and information gatekeepers. Consequently, snowball sampling was used to identify further potential interviewees. This method was useful in identifying individuals that otherwise may have been overlooked. Snowball sampling takes advantage of the social networks of individuals who have been identified or interviewed already early on in the study and using such networks to identify and make contact with other possible participants. A drawback of snowball sampling highlighted by Hennink et al. (2011) is the time it takes to identify participants, one at a time.

Primary research carried out comprises 20 recorded and transcribed semi-structured interviews. With one exception, these were carried out in person and recorded using a voice recorder application on a mobile phone device. This means of recording was considered useful as it was found to be discreet, reliable and inexpensive. Interviewee permission was first sought prior to recording. Quinn Patton (2002) emphasises the importance of capturing fully the true words that interviewees state. The value of this can be observed in Chapter Four which presents many direct quotations from the interviewees. One interview was conducted via email
correspondence to facilitate the interviewee and overcome the practical issue of distance. The interviews took place in a number of locations over a period of months during July, August, September and December 2015. Each interview was carefully transcribed and inputted to a Word document. The level of association and/or involvement of participants at Ballymaloe Cookery School varied. So too did the duration of their association with the school. Thirteen respondents were female, seven male. Diversity in the sample of respondents was sought in order to draw from as wide a range of perspectives as possible. The sample was a heterogeneous one in terms of age profile and level of association with Ballymaloe Cookery School. The respondents include: current and former employees at Ballymaloe Cookery School, Allen family members, food producers, suppliers to the school, food writers/bloggers, a local political representative, and past students at the school. One local county councillor was selected as a study participant. This interviewee was chosen in an effort to gauge the importance attached to Ballymaloe Cookery School within the constituency, from the standpoint of a representative of local government. Many of those interviewed reside in East Cork. The table in Fig. 3 below illustrates details of the study participants.
Figure 3: Interview Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent Code</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Association with the cookery school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1A)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Cookery School Owner, Teacher, Chef, Food Writer</td>
<td>Co-founder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2B)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>Supplier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3C)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>Supplier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4D)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Food Blogger</td>
<td>Past Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5E)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Family member and former employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6F)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Food Producer</td>
<td>Local Resident and occasional supplier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7G)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Cookery School Teacher</td>
<td>Current employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8H)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Food writer and consultant</td>
<td>Former employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9I)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Food producer</td>
<td>Current Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(10J)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Local County Councillor</td>
<td>The school is located within the constituency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(11K)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Food Entrepreneur</td>
<td>Past Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(12L)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>Current Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(13M)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>Current Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(14N)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Semi-skilled worker</td>
<td>Current Employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(15O)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Skilled worker and food entrepreneur</td>
<td>Current employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(16P)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Semi-skilled worker</td>
<td>Current employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(17Q)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Office worker</td>
<td>Current employee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(18R)</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Cookery School Teacher</td>
<td>Current employee and past student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(19S)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Chef</td>
<td>Past Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(20T)</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Manager</td>
<td>Family Member and Current Employee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study participants were recruited in a number of ways. For some, such as local political representatives, their contact details were available online. Respondents were approached in person, via email, and via telephone. Some interviewees suggested conducting the interview at the moment of first contact. This proved possible in some situations. Other interviews were planned weeks in advance. Many interviewees had busy schedules and it was arranged to speak with them at a later time. This meant that they specifically allocated time to do the interview and finding a suitable location was more easily done. One of the two cookery school founders was interviewed as part of the research. The second founder was not interviewed due to the level of representation of current employees in the sample already and difficulty in scheduling an interview. The interviews were carried out in natural settings and on an individual basis.
Rather than inviting participants to an office or lab, the researcher travelled to the participants and conducted the in-person interviews in settings including a farmers' market, in respondent's homes, and at the cookery school. The method used is contextual in nature, meaning, it is collected in a real life setting and incorporates the attitudes and motivations of participants (Gray, 2014). Each participant was informed of the purpose of the study and advised to his/her freedom to withdraw from the study at any time, or to refuse to answer any of the questions asked. Three participants chose not to answer a particular interview question posed to them, on the basis that they did not believe that they could answer it effectively. According to Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005), in qualitative research the quality of the data is of greater importance than the size of the sample. The sample size for this research was deemed sufficient when it was enough to support the desired analysis. A total of twenty respondents participated in the study.

Though in-depth interviews can be conversational in tone, they may bear little resemblance to everyday conversation (Legard, Keegan and Ward, 2003). The ability of the researcher to gain trust and uncover true meaning from respondents is crucial to the fulfilment of the research aims and objectives of this study. Preparation is necessary for successful interviews. The interviewer must be suitably organised. Informed consent was obtained prior to the commencement of each interview. The researcher took heed of interview guidelines from Legard et al. (2003) in recognising the importance of the initial minutes and concluding minutes of the interview process. The introductory minutes are crucial to establishing a rapport between the interviewer and interviewee. The practice of active listening, whereby the interviewer asks appropriate questions to obtain what the interviewee really thinks, produces meaningful data (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005). The researcher should be mindful not to allow their own personal viewpoint influence the interviewee (Carson et al., 2001). The researcher can avoid this by maintaining respectful silence and resisting interruption while the interviewee is speaking. The researcher should be mindful that their behaviour will impact the extent to which the interviewee feels at liberty to speak openly. Leading and/or loaded questions should not be asked because they can contain assumptions and prompts that direct the interviewee to particular responses. Open questions, as noted by Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) are clear and concise, and encourage the interviewee to respond with a detailed answer. Following the recommendation by Carson et al. (2001), the opening question posed to interviewees was general and deemed innocuous. All participants were advised in advance of the interviews as to the broad purpose and form of the study. This was reiterated at the outset.
of recording. At the conclusion of each session, each participant was thanked for their participation. The immediate aftermath of the interview offers an opportunity for the researcher to explain how the respondent’s input aids the research and allows the participant to air any final questions or comments they may have. Key findings and common themes that emerged in early interviews contributed to the identification of topics that required more attention in later interviews. Taking notes before and after interviews helped to inform questions asked during the remaining interviews. This meant that throughout the data collection process, the researcher was able to address subjects outlined by respondents, as they emerged. For Charmaz (2006), memo writing helps the process of transforming the data into theory. Memo writing was a useful tool for the researcher during all stages of the data analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

Each of the interviews conducted in person was recorded, and transcribed shortly after the interview process. Transcribing immediately after the interview was a priority as the interview was at the forefront of the researcher's mind soon after and anything unclear in the recording could be reconciled. Transcribing the data brings the researcher closer to the data, building theoretical sensitivity (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). The process of transcription also aids reflection on and analysis of the interview process. The researcher transcribed all recordings herself. These composite files became the main source for the analysis phase, and the findings, both of which are detailed in the chapter that follows. While quotations from, and details of the participants are provided extensively throughout Chapter Four, care has been taken to maintain confidentiality. Though in-depth interviews are typically over two hours in length (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006), the quality of the interview is not correlated to its duration. The average duration of each interview was 36 minutes. One interview lasted over one hour and thirty minutes. The length of each interview was dependent on a number of factors. The completion of twenty interviews meant that a large volume of data was gathered. Continuously, all recordings were moved to one single computer, and backed up on a mobile phone device. The data collected was then analysed using thematic analysis.

In qualitative research, there is not one approach to the task of data analysis (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2006). Following transcription, the interviews were read closely to look for patterns and recurring themes between participants. Content analysis of the transcriptions first involved
coding groups of words and phrases from the transcripts into categories. This is referred to as axial coding (Neuman, 1994). Coding involves arranging the data into theoretically defined categories to analyse it. The purpose of coding is to arrange primary research data into patterns (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The initial first order coding structure was informed by the research objectives and based on the schedules covered by the interview guides, which map onto the domains of the study. Glaser and Strauss (1967) recommend that the researcher codifies the data in such a way that the reader can understand how theory was developed from the data. Coding highlights issues and subjects that are of importance to the interviewees. Coding supports the researcher in making appropriate linkages between categories, and allowing themes and underlying meaning to emerge. Illustrative interviewee quotations were selected for emphasis and to validate the analysis.

The second stage of content analysis involves comparing and contrasting the coded data. Neuman (1994) refers to this stage of content analysis as selective coding. Following this stage, it becomes possible to make generalisations about what respondents have said, and to outline similarities and differences. For Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006), this is the interpretation stage. Strauss and Corbin (1990) established three main steps in the coding process, which are: open coding, axial coding and, selective coding. For this study, these steps were adopted. Though initially there were many codes, as the process continued, the categories began to merge with one another. The data and its emergent themes were subject to constant revision and reflection, as per the grounded theory approach to this thesis. This process was necessary to ensure that the final findings and analysis were robust.

An example of coding in this study can be seen in the area of local economic impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School. This was a predetermined code as interviewees were directly questioned on what they consider the local economic impact of the school. The array of answers this question solicited was collated in a Word document. Additionally, incidental answering of the question was categorised alongside this material. Once printed, the responses were read and re-read while using a coloured highlighter to indicate significant and common responses in the data. The codes emanating from the data were then structured to form a theme. Chapter Four details and analyses this theme and others that emerged through this process. The use of software such as Nvivo was initially considered for the data analysis phase. Next the validity, transparency and limitations of this study are dealt with.
3.6 Research Validity and Transparency

This is a qualitative study that recognises the perspective of relevant people for understanding the business and local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School. However, data regarding quantitative measures such as economic indicators would be a useful addition for considering the breadth of the local impact of the school, particularly its economic impact. Given a small sample group as is the case with this study, the effects of outliers can be more striking. It can be difficult to say that they are representative, or to make wider generalisations. This restriction limits the external validity of the study findings. Unlike quantitative research, the findings of qualitative research are not intended to be generalised, though they can be related to other contexts and consequently, readers can determine if they are applicable to their own situation or not (Kuper et al., 2008).

Though semi-structured interviews allow for conversation to naturally develop, the possibility of interviewer bias is greater and comparison between interviews more difficult than is the case with structured interviews. With the semi-structured interviews, it proved a challenge to avoid deviation from the interview topic and consequently, some data recorded was not relevant to the study. Despite the effort of the researcher, some interviews were interrupted by unavoidable interjection, though none to an extent that seriously affected the interview. Conducting, transcribing, coding and analysing semi-structured interviews is a time consuming process. Seidman (2012) cautions against using the interview guide to influence the responses of participants. The researcher aimed to find a balance between discussion of topics outside of the scope of the study that were of interest to the interviewee, and focus on the topics specifically relating to the primary research aims and objectives. This was necessary to allow interviewees to express themselves freely and to cover the topics of relevance to the study. To maintain control of the interview, as advised by Patton (1990), it was necessary for the researcher to remember the purpose of the interview, ask questions that would elicit the information required, and give appropriate verbal and non-verbal feedback to the interviewee. This feedback included eye contact, smiling, nodding and other positive body language.

Interview bias has the potential to affect all qualitative research. Steps were taken to limit interviewer bias before, during, and after the interview process to ensure that the study findings reflect the views of the respondents rather than those of the researcher. Supervisors were integral to this process. Input from supervisors was sought to amend the interview guides, as
recommended by Shenton (2004). Regular meetings with supervisors were imperative to the recognition and challenge of interviewer bias, discussion about the data emerging, and to maintain objectivity with respect to the study throughout. To conclude, the researcher is confident that interviewer bias was sufficiently avoided given that such steps were taken. Thus, its validity can be assured.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the methods by which the research for this study was conducted. This investigation addresses the research questions: What is the business of Ballymaloe Cookery School? And, what has been the impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School on the local area? The study is a phenomenological one, situated within a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory studies place emphasis on the role of the researcher in collecting and collating primary data into new theories. Throughout the data analysis process, the researcher has endeavoured to be reflexive and critically examine the strengths and weaknesses of the data. It has been critical for the researcher to examine her interpretive biases and reactions to the data. The interviews conducted are the main source for the findings and analysis phase, which is described in detail in the chapter that follows.
Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a critical discussion of the main findings and analysis from the primary research. The presentation of the study findings are combined with a discussion of the key themes arising from the data sources. This investigation, as outlined in Chapter Three, involved twenty respondents in total. Semi-structured interviews were first coded and then thematically analysed, resulting in eight themes. These themes are categorised according to the initial research questions and objectives regarding the business and local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School. Analysis of each theme highlights the research findings in relation to relevant literature, with a view to adding to existing subject matter. Each thematic area is supported by a range of direct quotations from the interviewees and relevant analysis. As Table 1 demonstrates, each respondent has been allocated a unique number, to respect their identity. Each quotation is accompanied by the respondent’s number and further details about the individual in order to contextualise the quotation. A full transcript of each interview is available from the author. The key themes presented in this chapter are as follows:

The business at Ballymaloe Cookery School:

- The Establishment of Ballymaloe Cookery School
- Ballymaloe Cookery School: A Successful Family Business
- The Ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School
- Business development and innovation at Ballymaloe Cookery School

The Local Impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School:

- Employment generated by Ballymaloe Cookery School
- Educational outreach
- Support for Local Food Producers and the Embeddedness of Ballymaloe Cookery School in the Local Community
- Tourism supported by Ballymaloe Cookery School
4.2 Ballymaloe Cookery School: The Business

This section justifies and explains how Ballymaloe Cookery School creates, delivers and acquires value. As outlined in Chapter One, this study set out to understand the business of Ballymaloe Cookery School, and how it emerged and evolved over time. Based on the responses of study participants, this section outlines how Ballymaloe Cookery School was first established, considers the school in light of its family business model, reflects on its ethos, and reveals the business development and innovation that has taken place since its inception.

4.2.1 The Establishment of Ballymaloe Cookery School

This section sets out the circumstances under which Ballymaloe Cookery School was first established. The findings demonstrate that Darina Allen and her family experienced first-hand, the challenges of making a living as food producers in Kinoith, their farm in Shanagarry, Co. Cork. Ballymaloe Cookery School first came about out of necessity. When interviewed for the purpose of this research, Darina Allen explained that as a couple with a young family, engaging in horticulture in rural Ireland during the early 1980s:

\[ \text{We had to try and look at what talents we had and what resources we had between us, and to earn a living in different ways. It also became quite obvious to me that we were in a very good position to open a cookery school because we had a farm (1A).} \]

This quotation clearly demonstrates the reality faced by the Allen family, in need of a sustainable livelihood. Policies created by the Irish government in response to the international oil shocks of the 1970s had contributed to a debt crisis in Ireland (Barry, 2003). During the 1970s, rising inflation, oil prices and labour costs contributed to a squeeze on Irish horticultural producers (Allen, 2013). It was an economically challenging time when Ireland’s accession into the EU (then the European Communities or EC) took place in 1973. This was at a time before the terms ‘farm diversification’ or ‘on-farm activities’ became commonplace. McDonagh (2001) argues that no specific policy to support farm diversification existed in Ireland prior to the Structural Funds of the late 1980s, though that is not to say that farm diversification was not already taking place. Agriculture in Ireland at the time was continuing on a long-term downward trend. Allen (2015) correlates regulations introduced following Ireland’s accession
into the EU with a decline in small producers, farmers and artisans at that time. Describing her career path to Paul Flynn at the 2015 West Waterford Festival of Food, and with reference to that time, Darina Allen stated:

*I would have done anything to make a few bob (1A).*

This statement implies both an urgency and openness to possibilities. For the Allen family, the imperative to succeed was a motivating factor. Occasional private cookery lessons were first offered by Darina Allen’s mother-in-law at Ballymaloe House during the winter of 1968. When Myrtle Allen began running a restaurant in Paris (*La Ferme Irlandaise*), the teaching of cookery classes was largely taken over by her daughter-in-law, Darina Allen. Gradually, this became a private cookery school business located two miles away founded in 1983 by brother and sister, Darina Allen and Rory O’Connell (Allen, 2013). As argued by Sharma (2004), goals of family businesses are both financial and non-financial. The original primary goal of the cookery school was to generate an income for Darina Allen and her family. This remains at the core of the business. Given the fulfilment of this priority, it is relevant to examine other aspects of the business.

Ballymaloe Cookery School is a widely recognised brand. Branding refers to anything that makes a product or service identifiable and differentiates it from others (Klein, 2000). A successful brand is easily recognisable, affirmative of credibility, motivates potential customers to become customers and reinforces customer loyalty. The restaurant and hotel at Ballymaloe House was already well established when Ballymaloe Cookery School first opened in 1983. Ballymaloe House is a country house situated on a 400 acre estate in East Cork. Set up in 1964 by Myrtle and Ivan Allen, Ballymaloe House was a destination for food lovers who wanted to dine and stay in an idyllic countryside location. Unusually for the time, at Ballymaloe House, Irish farmhouse-style cuisine was served in a fine dining setting. Ivan Allen was a strong proponent of pesticide free food production and people came from afar to learn from him regarding such farming methods (Allen, 2014). Myrtle Allen describes her husband Ivan as: *for the time, a very innovative and forward thinking farmer* (In Mac an Iomaire 2008, p. 94). The reputation of Ballymaloe House for good food and hospitality meant that through adopting the Ballymaloe name, the cookery school stood to gain from the established brand image and target market at the house. Describing her early success at Ballymaloe House, Myrtle Allen in an interview with Mac an Iomaire (2008) said:
We went along and we did very well. We continued to do very well in the food cards. It was interesting actually, I’m digressing a bit now but one year I got top in every prize. Top Michelin, top Good Food Guide, top Egon Ronay, and everybody knew I was serving terribly simple food like rhubarb and nobody else would. I'd serve cabbage and everybody else would be looking for peppers or something, you know, peppers and tomatoes so that it had the funny effects and the chefs, it was sort of nice for me really because suddenly people realised that I was doing something right, this young one, this young farmer’s wife you know, down there in Cork and she was getting the honours. It was a great help to the whole concept of Irish food, I think, the fact that it was appreciated (p.100).

This quotation depicts the surprising recognition that Ballymaloe House was paid at an early stage of its existence. Ballymaloe House was awarded a Michelin Star from 1975 to 1980. The initial establishment of the business at Ballymaloe Cookery School was a significant undertaking, one that required capital which needed to be borrowed. When Darina Allen was first declined a bank loan, her parents-in-law agreed to act as guarantor and the funds were procured (Allen, 2015). The success of Ballymaloe Cookery School with respect to Ballymaloe House is discussed in the following quotation from a family member working at the school:

“A little bit like Ballymaloe House, it’s a little bit like a ‘build it and they will come’ story, you have to have the quality. The reason people came to Ballymaloe House is because it was one of three of the best restaurants in Ireland. At that stage it didn’t matter that it was in the middle of nowhere in East Cork, in the South of Ireland. If it had been a mediocre place to eat, why would you go there? It’s the same with the cookery school. We have to be the very best. Being the very best doesn’t come out of just saying you’re the very best. Though that certainly helps, that’s a good start, saying that you’re the very best. But it has to come from actions. It has to come from being the very best every day and I think, invest for the long term (20 T).”

This quotation explains that the niche market at Ballymaloe House comprised a group of people who sought high quality and were willing to travel, given their desire for an exceptional food experience. Ballymaloe Cookery School set out to attract a similar target market. In her
30 Years at Ballymaloe book (2013), Allen acknowledges the suggestion of her parents-in-law to give the cookery school the Ballymaloe name. During the interview process, it was found that some study respondents had difficulty separating the school from the other Ballymaloe entities. The scope of this research is Ballymaloe Cookery School and so references to Ballymaloe House or other related businesses have only been included where relevant. The school is widely considered part of a consolidation of small enterprises under the ‘Ballymaloe’ banner. As understood by this respondent:

It’s not just the cookery school, but Ballymaloe itself is such a brand (SH).

The collection of these related, though separate Ballymaloe businesses includes: Ballymaloe House and Restaurant, Ballymaloe Country Relish, Ballymaloe Grainstore and Ballymaloe Shop. Other wider family enterprises also exist, and include: Wildside Catering, The Restaurant Manager, Smith and Whelan Wines, Saturday Pizzas, Paddy O Granola, O’Connells Restaurant, Mahon Point Farmers’ Market, Kerrygold Ballymaloe Litfest, Jobs for Cooks, Garden Shop, F. H. Wetlands, and Ballymaloe Poetry Prize (Ballymaloe Cookery School, 2016 [online]). A synopsis of the relationship between Ballymaloe Cookery School and the other related businesses today is described by a family member and cookery school employee in the following quotation:

We’re part of the greater Ballymaloe group of enterprises which are family businesses. The way that it’s been set up is that the three or four Ballymaloe businesses are all 100% separate businesses but we all use the same name. So it’s a shared brand in that we all support the brand and we all support each other but we’re all separate businesses. We all live quite close by and with Ballymaloe House and with Ballymaloe Country Relish we would have a monthly meeting, a kind of communications meeting just to chat about what we’re all doing. Because we’re all so busy in our own businesses (20’T).

During the early stages of business development, another key benefit to the cookery school of its relationship to Ballymaloe House was that food writers staying at Ballymaloe House paid visits to the cookery school and wrote favourably about it in mainstream media. When interviewed, Darina Allen acknowledged their importance early on:
We got a lot of unsolicited write-ups. The best kind of publicity is unsolicited write-ups. These are write-ups you don’t ask for. We’ve never paid a journalist to write anything about us (1A).

This voluntary publicity further aided the establishment of a brand image at the cookery school. It is desirable for a brand to be considered the provider of a unique good/service, rather than simply offering an alternative to its competitors. Brands use advertising, public relations and marketing strategies to create and reinforce the brand and brand image. Darina Allen argues that word of mouth has been the most effective means of reflecting the Ballymaloe Cookery School brand. At the cookery school, little investment has been made in advertising. Eleven of the study respondents emphasised the high standards and high quality at Ballymaloe Cookery School. From its establishment, Ballymaloe Cookery School has been regarded as a premium brand. The high prices of the courses at the school contribute to this perception. As explained by a long term employee at the school:

\[\text{Everything they’re doing is top dollar} \ (12L)\].

Empirical evidence illustrates that consumers frequently infer quality information from prices (Leavett, 1954; Lichtenstein and Burton, 1989). From the beginning, the cost of courses at the cookery school has been high. The price structure as recommended by Darina Allen to her students is as follows:

\[\text{Her advice is ‘charge more and be the best’} \ (14D)\].

More than one respondent who works closely with Darina Allen quoted her:

\[\text{Promise less and deliver more, that’s always been Darina’s motto} \ (5E)\].

This strategy allows for clientele at the cookery school to be pleasantly surprised when they come to visit or attend classes. It is intentional that their expectations be superseded by their experiences at the school. This price strategy also reflects the early ambition of co-founder, Darina Allen. She has said:
I thought if I was to do something, I thought I'd try to do something as good if not better than anywhere that's around the world (1A).

Despite this clear intention, the school was first created without a formal business plan. According to Darina Allen:

I had no business model. I've never done market research. I didn't even know the word market research or feasibility study before I started (1A).

The evidence suggests that the business was established with an experimental approach. Such an approach aligns with the findings of Birdthistle (2006), whose study found that Irish family SMEs tend to prefer an informal learning strategy to a formal one. However, Darina Allen did carry out extensive research and development by way of travel to other private cookery schools overseas. Early on, when establishing Ballymaloe Cookery School, Darina Allen set out to learn lessons from cookery schools overseas she had heard of. She has stated:

I went to them all. And to tell you the truth, I didn't change my ideas about what I wanted after seeing them all. If anything, my ideas became even more fixed (In Purcell, 1989, p. 25).

Darina Allen travelled to Italy to attend a cooking class with Marcella Hazan. She visited Le Cordon Bleu and Prue Leith’s Cookery School in London, a cookery school run by Sabine de Mirbeck in Sussex, and Tante Marie’s La Petite Cuisine, also in the UK. In today’s business terms, this would be considered one dimension of a feasibility study. Later, she visited La Varenne in Paris. Though no longer in operation, La Varenne was an eminent private cookery school at that time. Ireland’s Alix Gardner trained at the Cordon Bleu and Leith’s School of Food and Wine. She opened up her own cookery school over thirty five years ago in Dublin called Alix Gardner’s Cookery School. Darina Allen also visited this school as part of her review of private cookery schools. This was the sole cookery school already in existence in Ireland when Ballymaloe Cookery School was first established in 1983. For this reason, there was not a significant need for product differentiation at that time. Allen (2015) learned that young Irish boys and girls were attending Le Cordon Bleu in London and Paris, and she sought to capture some of this market segment.
In summary, as this section demonstrates, Ballymaloe Cookery School emerged when the Allen family, who were engaged in market gardening, could not afford to continue in this vein. For Darina Allen, establishing a cookery school seemed the obvious remedy. The site of the cookery school on 100 acres of farm and gardens in East Cork has been crucial to the emergence of the cookery school. So too was the nearby Ballymaloe House, support from family, and branding. The extant literature on culinary education and changes to the Irish foodscape, examined in Chapter Two provides further background to the establishment of the cookery school. The literature recognises an increase in the number of institutions offering culinary education, and the range of courses available, and uptake of such programmes in the Western world. The analysis in this section creates a backdrop for the next section on family business, where it is argued that Ballymaloe Cookery School epitomises a distinct model of private culinary education. The reasons for, and implications of this, are also discussed.

4.2.2 Ballymaloe Cookery School: A Successful Family Business

Ballymaloe Cookery School, since its inception has been a family business. At Ballymaloe, generations of one family continue to have direct involvement in the enterprise. The family aspect is considered intrinsic to the business. All twenty study participants indicated how synonymous the Allen family is with the cookery school. Founders of Ballymaloe Cookery School, siblings Darina Allen and Rory O’Connell, remain as involved in the cookery school today as over its thirty years in operation. This familial involvement has a bearing on the atmosphere and operation of the business, both for employees and guests/students at the school. As illustrated by one local interviewee:

"It’s very personal. It’s a family run business and it shows that family run businesses can work (10)."

This respondent is a local county councillor in the East Cork region. She points out the inspiration and encouragement the cookery school provides to others engaged in or embarking on a family run enterprise. For her, the family aspect of the business creates a sense of closeness and illustrates real passion of those involved. As discussed in Chapter Two, family businesses exist to meet family and personal needs and objectives, and reinforce family values, in addition to the pursuit of profits. The continued support from family at the school has been paramount since the beginning. According to Darina Allen:
I was fortunate that my parents-in-law believed in me and that they were willing to support me at a time when I needed support in the beginning, and all through (1A).

This reflects the ‘family capital’ that Hoffman et al. (2006) accord to family businesses. This form of social capital refers to a network of relationships that enables members of that network to access resources unavailable to those outside of it. Again, on this theme, it is pertinent to note that Darina Allen and brother Rory O’ Connell came from an entrepreneurial family background. Growing up, their parents ran a number of businesses in their locale in County Laois. Already, a sense of enterprise and the importance of good wholesome food was a norm they grew up with. Darina Allen explains:

Like many other children I began my cooking career at my mother’s side while she made the daily soda bread (1995, P. 215).

Darina and Rory were interviewed together at The 2015 West Waterford Festival of Food. When Darina Allen was asked by compere, Chef Paul Flynn where her love of food came from, her reply was:

Well, certainly from home...Myrtle reinforced all my mother’s values (Allen, 2015).

These quotations reinforce the idea that food habits are formed from an early age and are influenced by parents, as previously discussed in the literature review (Rozin, 2006). The second quotation also indicates a link between the business at Ballymaloe House and Ballymaloe Cookery School, which is important to bear in mind as the next section deals with another significant relationship between the two: the common ethos. Though the unique nature of management structure within family businesses has largely been neglected in the literature, it is worthwhile to consider. When asked about the overall management at the school, one current long term employee unequivocally stated:
It’s family. It’s family management basically. That’s how it’s done. The family are involved and they manage the place. But we have a say in it. We can suggest things at meetings and things like that (7G).

This suggests that non-family employees can contribute to the decision making process at the school. The same person however, did go on to explain that members of the family in some ways stand to benefit more from the business than their non-family counterparts:

*I mean in one way you’re looking after your own which we all do (7G).*

For this respondent, this is reasonable to expect. The management structure within the cookery school is understood by this long term employee in the following way:

*Well, Tim and Darina, Rory and Toby would be like big bosses (12L).*

Another respondent lauds the work and dedication of the Allens, but includes a remark that shows his opinion regarding their management structure:

*Tim and Darina are a pretty awesome team. They don’t have any middle management structure. That would be my only observation. It means that there’s a lot of pressure on Darina. I always thought that they needed a manager (5E).*

The reservations expressed by the above interviewee are based on a concern relating to the burden of work on one person, an occurrence that has also been observed across family businesses by Feltham et al. (2005). The literature on family business discussed in Chapter Two also highlighted the enduring influence of family members on the business (Collins and Porras, 1994), and the tendency for family to remain in leadership positions for longer than their nonfamily counterparts (Sharma, 2004). Darina Allen and brother Rory O’ Connell are testament to this. When asked general questions about Ballymaloe Cookery School, the majority of respondents frequently employed the use of the pronouns, *she* and *her* making reference to Darina Allen, or using her name directly, rather than that of the cookery school. Their use of such words shows how integral she is to the general image and running of the school. Such use is also indicative of her fame. Some respondents quoted her directly, using phrases such as:
Phrases such as these could also be indicative of the long term nature of some respondents' association with Darina Allen at the school. Contrary to the industry norm that women frequently take a background role in family businesses, as pointed to by Sharma et al. (2004), co-founder Darina Allen remains at the forefront of the cookery school activities and its brand. According to another employee at the school:

_I think we would all have a very deep sense of respect for Darina and we very much support what she does and we, the staff I think from that point of view. Darina very much drives the school. We all come together. I suppose we are like a big family here really. There’s generations of families here that have come through, and will come through in the future hopefully. We all very much respect and admire Darina and everything she has done in her lifetime. We will keep pushing her along and support her decisions_ (18C).

As the above quotation suggests, the cookery school is a family business which affects the staff and has a bearing on the staff that the school attracts. According to co-founder Rory O’Connell:

_You wouldn’t remain there for a long time if you didn’t believe in the ethos...you wouldn’t, perhaps, put up with the eccentricities. It’s a family-run business, family in and out all the time, and that’s very much part of the charm for guests staying there. It wouldn’t be as ‘clean-cut’ as other operations_ (In McNamee, 2014, p. 8).

Here, one respondent and O’Connell acknowledge the unique nature of the family business for staff and visitors alike. A quarter of those interviewed for the study explained that the family dynamic at the cookery school extends to those outside of the Allen family itself. With reference to Darina Allen, one study participant stated the following:

_She is like our mother. She is just brilliant. Let’s say if something happens. She is a woman, a mother, she just understands. She knows that sometimes you will have_
problems, just like life problems. You just ask her something. She is always around (150).

This long term employee sums up her feeling:

We're all one big family at the end of the day (12L).

Another long term employee at the cookery school echoed the sentiment above, stating:

We're like a family. We're actually nearly like a family notwithstanding, we kill each other half the time but we love each other. A long time, we're working here a long time as well. It's a good team (7G).

This current employee identifies the positive and negative implications of this familial sense. As expressed by more than one employee at the school, the family atmosphere contributes to a feeling of belonging amongst the staff. One young former student at the school claimed a similar feeling existed among students doing the twelve week course, based on the family atmosphere at the school:

It was a real family kind of dynamic and that's what I loved about it (19S).

For him, the family dynamic is wholly positive. Family involvement in the management and governance of a business is complex. Family businesses face unique challenges, in addition to those faced by non-family businesses. Business activities must be constantly monitored in order to prevent putting at risk values, traditions and assets of the family. The ethos that underpins Ballymaloe Cookery School will be dealt with in Section 4.2.3. The importance of shared values across the organisation was identified by Allen family members involved in the cookery school. With reference to the family members involved in the 'Ballymaloe' enterprises, Darina Allen states:

Everybody operates to the same philosophy, to the same standard. It's not written down. It's just innate in us. It is part of what we are (1A).
The argument she makes is further developed in the following quotation from another family member at the school:

*I think one of the things that make it easiest is that you all have a shared common kind of goal and a common set of standards. For us, the quality of the food that we produce and that we're providing for people is absolutely fundamental to what we do. That alleviates a lot of the conflict in terms of having an opinion on what someone else's business is doing. At the end of the day you've got to let people run their own businesses but if you are all kind of running them in the same direction, it makes it a lot easier.*

Again, the importance of a collective mission across the various 'Ballymaloe' enterprises is emphasised. Over time, the challenges of new generations within a family business can differ greatly to that of their predecessors, as discussed in Chapter Two with reference to Cruz and Nordqvist (2012). Such divergent challenges may be a barrier to innovation. Business succession is a common priority among family businesses. A supplier to the cookery school runs a well-established family business. He alluded to a long term view of the business in his own family:

*My son is with me and my daughter is with me. So it's a big help. Hopefully things will work out in the long run.*

This quotation acknowledges a hope and expectation that the family business will be handed to the next generation. At Ballymaloe Cookery School, the present involvement of many family members suggests a long term continuation of the school. Co-founder, Darina Allen summed up her feelings on the matter:

*For the moment I hopefully, as long as my health lasts and my energy lasts I'll keep going. I suppose I'll gradually pull back. I'm very fortunate here that Rory, my brother who co-founded the school with me is of course my younger brother and he’s something like twelve years younger than me, and my son, he’s with us here in the school virtually full time. And of course Rachel, my daughter-in-law.*

Though a lack of consensus regarding definition of family business exists in the literature, there is no doubt as to whether or not Ballymaloe Cookery School can be considered a family business. The family and the business are merged. The findings reinforce the idea that family businesses are in many ways distinct from other businesses, as the literature on family business
strongly suggests. Since the beginning, at Ballymaloe Cookery School, family has been paramount. Family support has existed in many forms. Overall, the family connection is viewed in a positive light by those interviewed for this study, contributing to the idea that the business benefits from socioemotional wealth, as understood by Gomez-Mejia et al. (2007), discussed in Chapter Two. The management structure at the school is implicated by the family. The family aspect creates a particular atmosphere for visitors to the school and for those who work there, family and non-family alike.

4.2.3 The Ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School

In this section, the research findings suggest that Ballymaloe Cookery School exemplifies a distinct model of private culinary education and training. A distinguishing feature of Ballymaloe Cookery School is its ethos. Study participants voiced opinions about this ethos that correlates with a cohesive, coordinated system of values supporting operations at the school. This section deals with the origins and implications of such.

The ethos of any culture or community refers to its underpinning guiding principles. The values demonstrated by the cookery school mirror those first established by Myrtle and Ivan Allen at Ballymaloe House. Speaking with particular regard to food and taste at The Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery in 1987, Myrtle Allen declared that in her opinion, the flavour of a cooked dish is dependent on the following factors:

1. The food and climatic conditions the animal, fish or vegetable has been raised on.
2. The strain or variety of the produce.
3. The conditions under which the food is kept before and after cooking.
4. The length of time between gathering or killing, cooking and service.
5. Sympathetic and careful cooking.
6. Artistic and psychological conditions at table.
7. Ingrained traditional prejudice. (p. 17).

In this synthesis, Myrtle Allen acknowledges the complex nature of food and its production, in addition to the importance of taste. These are the principles on which she built her successful business at Ballymaloe House. The cookery school shares this philosophy. For this reason, at
the school, every dimension of food is given consideration. The ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School could be said to be holistic. The ethos incorporates an emphasis on sustainability, and high quality ingredients that are fresh, local and seasonal. Sustainability concerns the environment, but also an ethos of caring for the land, the self and others.

The ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School can also be linked to the Quaker tradition of its owners as members of the Society of Friends. According to a family member working at the school:

"There is a strong Quaker association with the whole thing...I'm probably not the best person to talk to about Quakerism. I embody the Quaker philosophy but I'm not very good at explaining it. To answer your question, it most definitely has. It was kind of part of how we all grew up. It's just part of a feeling more than anything else. There was a sense of community, a sense of helping, which I'm not suggesting other people wouldn't do if they weren't Quakers (20 T)."

The Religious Society of Friends or Quakers was founded in 1652 with similar core beliefs to that of Christianity, but an aspiration towards a simpler faith, without the rites, politics and traditions associated with Christian denominations at that time (Quakers in Ireland, 2016 [online]). Quaker beliefs influence the shared values among family members involved in enterprises at Ballymaloe. Myrtle Allen outlined that the Quakers:

"Were'n't allowed to go to university originally and so the bright ones started businesses and the businesses did very well and they had direct, their ethics were that you had to be fair, and you had to state what you thought your goods were worth...You were supposed to have your solid business, what you were doing, you were serving the community, you were doing it honestly and that meant you had to look after it pretty well (laugh) (in Mac An Iomaire, 2008, p. 116)."

In addition, Darina Allen refers to the relevance of her conversion to Quakerism and the ethos of this faith to her career path, and in setting up the cookery school. She states:

"In the Quaker religion, women were always equal and educated, so in the Allen family, if I wanted to do something as a woman, I was encouraged and all my ideas
were accepted...It was very empowering, as they believed in me so I believed in myself (in Smith, 2014).

The mission statement of the school and farm maintains:

We believe in the sustainable use of resources. We work ceaselessly to avoid waste. We use seasonal produce. We are extremely conscious of 'air miles' (the distance travelled by food between the farmer and the plate) and keep to a minimum the use of imported ingredients. We work hard to make sure that the school is as environmentally sensitive as possible.

(Ballymaloe Cookery School, 2011 [online]).

As part of its ethos, the school enterprise itself can be considered a co-dependent system. The school is dependent on the farm for fresh ingredients and the gardens for fresh produce. Food waste from the school is fed to the chickens. Biodegradable waste is turned into compost to feed the soil. One employee at the school explained that the income derived by the school subsidises the financial outlay involved in running the adjacent farm and gardens. For her, they are one and the same. She argued that:

The school is paying for everything really. We need the whole thing. If you just had the school here and that was it, it wouldn't run like it is running (12L).

This statement demonstrates the necessity of all aspects of the cookery school. While students pay fees to the cookery school, this income essentially funds all other aspects of the business also, such as the dairy, the farm and the gardens. All elements contribute to the overall offering of the school. Study participants showed a clear understanding of the unique ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School and emphasised the importance of this ethos, as the quotations below reveal:

The whole idea is using fresh ingredients that taste good. Don't do too much to them (7G).
A lot of schools have the school and a garden but they don't have the glasshouse and all those facilities (121).

I don’t think that many cookery schools in the world, if any, have their own organic farm on site and onsite accommodation. It’s about cooking but also about the whole ethos behind the food (141).

This respondent highlights the fact that Ballymaloe Cookery School offers a distinct provision of culinary learning. The site of the school is on a 100 acre organic farm, gardens, and greenhouses, complete with cattle, pigs, ducks, chickens, and a small herd of jersey cows. The school has garnered international renown and attracts students and visitors from many countries for this reason. This organic site facilitates the maintenance of its ethos. Though in 1983, when the school first opened, importance was not widely placed on such values with respect to food, nowadays there is a growing appreciation of such ideals. It is relevant to note that the cookery school was not strictly organic until its conversion towards organic certification began in 1996. Inwood, Sharp, Moore and Stinner (2009) acknowledge the potential of chefs to play a central role in the promotion of organic foods. Cork food writer Joe McNamee points out that Darina Allen at Ballymaloe Cookery School and her mother-in-law, Myrtle championed such issues at a time when doing so was truly alternative, rare in fact. For McNamee (2014):

That ethos is the cornerstone of a great, global food movement (p. 6).

He makes the claim that Myrtle Allen “was ahead of her time”, a sentiment also iterated by respondent 3C who has been associated with the Allens for many decades. It has been widely acknowledged that Ballymaloe Cookery School is in large part to thank for Ireland’s culinary reawakening in recent decades (Kit, 1996). Whether Ballymaloe was a root cause or a catalyst of a movement is debatable, but irrespective of this, the ethos there has remained the same. In todays landscape of industrialised agriculture, as dealt with in Chapter Two, the ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School acts as a practical example of what can be done to challenge dominant practices in the food industry and provide alternative means of producing and preparing food. Alice Waters in her foreword to the 30 Years at Ballymaloe book states:
Ballymaloe's great and powerful message is not just about bringing back an appreciation of food and taste, but an understanding of the culture of food, and of Ireland: a culture of stewardship of the land, tradition, hospitality, and, above all, beauty (2013, p. 6).

Study respondents consistently referred to a widespread desire among people they encounter, to reconnect with food, and learn about how food is produced and understood. For example, this respondent who works at Ballymaloe Cookery School spoke of what she notices among visitors to the school:

People are craving the simple things at the end of the day. A chocolate cake would be nothing, compared to that homemade butter (121).

Such sentiments reflect a recent shift in favour of foodstuffs that had been shunned, in lieu of commercial products first introduced and widely embraced in Ireland during the 1970s. Darina Allen recalls their introduction not long ago, and expresses concerns regarding the adoption of such food practices:

I can remember distinctly the day the first packets of Instant Whip and Blancmange came to our village, and we couldn’t wait to try them. These foods had a glamour and a novelty value which made home cooking seem dull by comparison. All over Ireland, within just a few years, people began to prize fancy shop-bought things...With the rush to embrace a new consumer culture of packet and tinned foods in the name of progress, a whole food tradition became jeopardised in an alarmingly short space of time (1995, p.5).

This quotation gives a first-hand perspective of the introduction of processed food in Ireland. She acknowledges their initial appeal, extensive adoption, and the ensuing implications for traditional food practices. In contrast to the widespread acceptance of such industrial food products during that time, a more recent yearning for traditional foods made through traditional processes was observed by eleven study participants. A current teacher at the cookery school emphasised the appetite for practical skills she notices at present. She said:
I've noticed that nowadays, students want to learn. They want to go and milk the cows. They want to make butter. They want to make their own cheese (7G).

This evidences a desire among students to engage with all aspects of what is commonly dubbed 'from farm to fork', and a willingness among prospective chefs and cooks to step outside the kitchen. Michael Ruhlman in Severson (2015) states:

*People are coming to realise it is not about the recipe... They want to know how to think about food.*

This statement is crucial to understanding why people are drawn to places such as Ballymaloe Cookery School. Techniques in cooking can be learned in many sites and situations, but a wider comprehension of the food system, where food comes from and what this means, is frequently absent from such contexts. In Banks’ seminal work (1968), she emphasises the power of education not only to transmit skills, but also values. This is part of Darina Allen’s mission. She has long told the *story* of food production. The purpose of this has been to reinforce the connection between the people and places involved in food production, and those who use and eat their produce. This could be considered part of the Unique Selling Point (USP) of Ballymaloe Cookery School. Food blogger and former student at the school, Ketty Elisabeth (a.k.a. French Foodie in Dublin, 2015) explains:

*It’s more than a cookery school; it’s a lifestyle and a philosophy.*

This supports what Darina Allen initially set out to achieve. In a similar vein, many of those interviewed for the purposes of the research, drew attention to the broad range of topics and skills that the ‘Ballymaloe course’ offers. One female respondent, who works in the food sector, is a former employee at the cookery school. She stated emphatically:

*You learn more in Ballymaloe than just cooking. What Ballymaloe gives you, and if you have an open mind, you will understand what it gives you. It will give you the understanding that food is a living thing. It will give you the understanding that people work hard to produce food and that to treat it with disrespect is a sacrilege* (8H).
Another respondent, currently employed at the school supports this claim. With reference to the cookery school, she says:

*You are going to learn how to garden anyway, and where everything comes from* (12L).

As identified in the literature review, growing food can no longer be considered ‘common knowledge’ in industrialised societies. For students doing the twelve week cookery course at Ballymaloe Cookery School, compost is the first recipe they are taught. Darina Allen explains:

*I have to get them to think about how the food is produced and where it comes from, and then the first recipe they get; these are the aspiring chefs and cooks, is how to make compost and then we go down to the farm and gardens and then after that the first thing they do is plant a little plant into the ground, and they watch that grow for the next three months* (in Holden, 2014).

Such practice can be considered unusual, given that for culinary students generally, the first recipe they are taught is in an indoor kitchen environment using ready food ingredients. When interviewed, Darina Allen stated:

*We use the school as an indoor classroom and the farm and gardens like an outdoor classroom* (1A).

A recent study makes known direct and indirect benefits to learning in natural environments (Dillon, 2013). To supplement this, at Ballymaloe Cookery School, a unique narrative has been created. On the cookery school website (www.cookingslun.ie), the meanings of the places where the school and house are located are explained. The meaning of Ballymaloe in the Irish language is *the townland of sweet honey* and Shanagarry means *old garden*. This helps create a compelling story. It is clear that the space and place where the cookery school is situated facilitates the formation of a correlating image. Figure 4 (below) is a photograph taken in June 2015, depicting the herb garden at the cookery school. This shows the well maintained garden full of herbs.
Tim Allen, interviewed by Patrick Holden (2011) explains further:

*It's to give people a full understanding and experience of where food comes from because I think if chefs understand the work that actually goes into producing food, I think then when they go to use it they've got far more respect for it.*

This perspective is supported by study respondents. One study participant, a past student of the twelve week course, stated that doing the course led to practical personal changes for her, as well as a deeper understanding of food:

*It changed my way of seeing food in general, the way I cook and I shop for food. The way I looked at food completely changed. You're more aware of seasonality, provenance and the importance of growing food if you can (4D).*
With this comment, she demonstrates the holistic nature of the course. To prepare students for industry, in addition to the culinary aspects of the course, food growing, wine appreciation, an introduction to starting a small food business and certified training in hygiene and food safety are incorporated into the twelve week course. Six study respondents demonstrated that the education offered at Ballymaloe is considered quite different to alternative courses in professional cookery at other institutions. Respondents supported a view that at Ballymaloe Cookery School, both a liberal and vocational approach to education is employed. A number of respondents spoke of the manner in which practical skills were traditionally learned and passed on, for example, through apprenticeship. One respondent of an older demographic raised the issue of craft, stating:

*I think this academic bias of colleges is to the detriment of craft skills* (3C).

This quotation relates to the *forgotten skills* Darina Allen promotes. This respondent has noticed changes in culinary education and culinary professions in Ireland, and recommends a greater emphasis on apprenticeship rather than academic based learning. With reference to her own early education, Allen (2015, p. 147) lamented:

*in a funny way this message that academic skills are of greater value than practical skills has permeated our educational system ever since and it’s a big mistake.*

This echoes the acknowledgement of Kaufman (2010) that theoretical knowledge has historically been considered superior to practical and productive knowledge, notwithstanding the benefit of a combination of both (Gustafsson, 2004). Recent literature in mainstream media suggests that the standard of cooking ability of students fresh out of culinary training in Ireland is viewed by restaurateurs and head chefs as deteriorating (e.g. McGuire, 2015). McGuire (2015) describes the current dichotomy as a situation where restaurateurs bemoan the standard to which students are being taught, while third-level institutes claim that the industry is not doing enough to make a career as a chef an attractive career option. Renowned Irish chef Ross Lewis (in Bolger, 2015) aims not to point the finger at educational institutes but too calls for a move towards an apprenticeship model, as had been prevalent in the past. One respondent acknowledged a limited knowledge of other sites of culinary education. At Ballymaloe, students are encouraged to develop technical skill, in addition to comprehension of the intellectual and moral aspects of food and cooking. This is further evidenced by the library of books available
to students at the school. The library includes a wide range of books spanning topics such as food history, food activism, food politics, in addition to practical cookery books. As highlighted in the literature review, increasingly, lessons in the ethics of food are incorporated into culinary education (Shani et al., 2009).

For nine of the study participants, the ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School serves as a model, an example of good practice. The cookery school demonstrates that food can be grown organically, sourced locally and seasonally, and prepared simply to provide tasty food that is nourishing. Holden (2014) describes both the cookery school and related enterprises as: a beacon of inspiration, a spreader of best practice and knowledge, and a place of pilgrimage. Its ethos is more than ideological. At Ballymaloe, it is put into practice. However, accepting that Ballymaloe Cookery School sets a standard, and acts as a working example, one study participant, a former student of the twelve week course, explained that its ethos is not easily transferable:

Their ethos is not everybody else's ethos. I think it's very unrealistic to do what they do, day in day out and a lot of that is because they can grow their own vegetables (19S).

This quotation illustrates that the cookery school may stand alone as something to aspire to but it has an ethos that is not easy to maintain in other milieu. It could be said to hold a symbolic significance in this way. This raises the question as to whether or not students and visitors to Ballymaloe Cookery School believe that what goes on there reflects traditions of old, rather than modern possibilities. Here exists a tension, as the school is intended to exist as more than a prototype or ideal. Consistently maintaining its ethos throughout the business poses a challenge. Ballymaloe Cookery School as a brand is associated with a family, a rural locale and good hospitality. A distinctly non-corporate atmosphere is desired by those at the school. It would be inimical to this impression for Ballymaloe Cookery School to be perceived as a ‘big’ brand. Study participants shared this belief. An anti-corporate sentiment was expressed by half of study respondents. This sense was communicated in a variety of ways, including: disdain regarding loss of traditional skills as large multinationals replace the need for skilled labour, concern regarding food quality as costs are driven downwards to favour profits, reference to a perceived lack of service and knowledge within such companies, fear about the risk posed by large company closures, and references to authenticity. Such sentiments were accompanied
with a sense of distrust towards what were considered corporate interests. This respondent lauds the genuine commitment at the cookery school to investing in the highest quality local ingredients:

*The integrity of the school as well, in terms of their commitment to buying, the produce that they buy is a real testament to that (5E).*

This quotation supports a belief that activities at Ballymaloe Cookery School remain true to the overall vision it promotes. In keeping with this ethos, a level of political engagement is employed. This engagement goes beyond the assertion that all *eating is a political act* (Berry, 1990), as discussed in Chapter Two. Though surprisingly, no explicit reference to political engagement was made by study participants, thirteen respondents made reference to actions at Ballymaloe Cookery School that can be considered involvement in the politics of food. One example is the TTIP. This refers to the proposed Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, an EU and US bilateral trade agreement for which negotiations are ongoing, behind closed doors. The following quotation evidences actions taken by Darina Allen at Ballymaloe Cookery School with respect to food justice issues:

*Now, for example, she is fighting against the TTIP. She is fighting against the GM. She is really trying to keep Ireland’s green status as it is, even better but that it will not be moved backwards. With the TTIP, it would be a bad move for Ireland so she is fighting very openly against that. She is writing letters to Brussels and to all the TDs. She does a lot in the background and people listen when she speaks. If she sends a press release, papers print it. Lots of other producers would like to have the status she has. It is very important to have somebody like her to lead the fight. So, it’s easy for somebody like me sitting at home and giving out but her, she actually gets up and fights the fight. She walks the walk basically. And that is very important (8H).*

This is one example of the advocacy and activism that is conducted at the cookery school, as referred to by study participants. With reference to the TTIP, Darina Allen has stated that, in her opinion:
It is the greatest threat to democracy that I have encountered (Word on the Street Ireland, 2015).

In her foreword to the recent ‘30 Years at Ballymaloe’ publication, Berkeley based chef Alice Waters refers to Darina Allen as:

...One of the most prominent voices of Irish food politics, and a vital leader in the Slow Food movement (2013).

This statement reinforces the idea that from the beginning, the engagement with food at Ballymaloe has been political. When interviewed, Darina Allen expressed concern regarding the image of Ireland and Irish food in Ireland and abroad, and the importance of maintaining that image:

Ireland needs to deliver on this image, the clean, green, fresh image that we have which, occasionally, I'm afraid, we're trading on rather than delivering on. Our future prosperity in Ireland depends on that. It depends on a genuine image (1A).

Darina Allen is a member of The Consultation Council of The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI). She also chairs the Taste Council of Ireland which liaises with the FSAI on matters relating to the artisan and speciality food sector. Now that the provenance of food has become an industry trend, spurious use of the terms artisan, traditional, farmhouse and natural has become widespread. Specific criteria are now laid out by the FSAI and the Taste Council of Ireland regarding food marketing terms. These have been established to ensure that artisan foods refer to those that are produced by skilled craftspeople in limited amounts, farmhouse products must be made on a farm, traditional foods must be made with recipes over 30 years old and that labelled natural must not be interfered with to any extent (FSAI, 2015). These standards have been introduced to ensure consumers are not being misled. With reference to policies that effect artisan and speciality food producers, a local butcher praised Darina Allen for her role in calling for the maintenance of high standards that benefit the producers, as well as the quality of the food they produce:

Darina Allen is one of the few people that will stand up and say this is ridiculous (2B).
Ballymaloe Cookery School is also a working example of a successful alternative food network (AFN), as discussed in Chapter Two. Ballymaloe Cookery School's ethos can be considered accordant with that of many other AFNs, and the cookery school itself supportive of AFNs in Ireland and further afield. Ballymaloe Cookery School offers a rare kind of culinary education. As recognised by this long term employee at the school:

*This is what Darina is actually showing people again, that there's another life out there (12L).*

Increasingly, AFNs such as the Slow Food Movement and the organic food movement have gained traction across the globe in response to changes in how food is produced and perceived. Darina Allen and her team at the cookery school advocate in favour of a food system that differs to the dominant system of industrial food discussed in Chapter Two. The impact of such advocacy extends beyond those who come as visitors or students to the cookery school, to a wider populace including food producers, policymakers, and chefs, at home and abroad. Through her writing, public appearances, and advocacy, Darina Allen, with the ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School, reaches an audience beyond the gates of the school. Multiple affiliations are understood as a feature of contemporary social movements (Jorgensen, 2006). One study participant makes reference to GIY (Grow It Yourself) International and the growing popularity of producing food at home. GIY is a global network of people who grow food, with a widespread network of small groups of growers. He states:

*Now there's the GIY There is a lot more interest in growing in the last ten years, fifteen years than when I started first. Now maybe not even the organics. People are more interested in where their food is coming from. People with any bit of land now are growing, or trying to grow their own. We show people that a raised bed, that's all I have at home myself, a small little raised bed. It can be done small-scale. I had onions all winter...Carrots all winter. That's what people nowadays are into. Anybody who wants to come and ask for advice, we'll help them as much as we can (13M).*

This quotation refers to yet another organisation that has been influenced by the ethos at the cookery school, and benefited from its support in many ways. Ballymaloe Cookery School is
closely involved with developments in the food industry and maintains links with numerous relevant bodies.

Finally, much of the above brings to light some of the ways in which Ballymaloe Cookery School has established a niche model of culinary learning in an uncommon location. The scope of learning at the school and how the students learn exemplifies this. This section has explored the ethos at Ballymaloe Cookery School. This has remained unchanged since the founding of the school in 1983. Such an ethos is not widely found across the food industry (Shani et al., 2013). The family input at the school is part of what is unique about it. Ballymaloe Cookery School has a legacy of appreciation for high quality food, augmented by its location and proximity to the coast and support for local artisan producers. The next section examines developments and changes that have taken place at the school since its foundation, and the implications of these changes.

4.2.4 Business Development and Innovation at Ballymaloe Cookery School

Ballymaloe Cookery School has been in operation for the past 33 years. This demonstrates that the school has remained a viable enterprise over that period. As documented earlier in this chapter, Ballymaloe Cookery School is an example of an on-farm diversification activity that was necessary for the viability and survival of the farm household. The previous section dealt with the ethos of the cookery school. This section focuses on how the school has stayed in business and remained relevant. When asked about changes at the school, study participants generally believed that given the consistency of the ethos throughout the business, changes at the school have been minor. This respondent who has had an enduring association with the school stated:

*I mean, they have it right. Changing it would be like reinventing the wheel because they have it so right* (2B).

With reference to the twelve week certificate course, this study participant explained:

*To a great extent the structure of the course has been the same since we started the cookery school. We’ve obviously added more recipes and we’ve added more things in. We don’t teach people how to cook whatever’s cool this year. We teach people how to cook. The fundamentals of how to cook are still the fundamentals. Some things will change but the foundations of it won’t change* (20 T).
This quotation indicates that the core principles at the school dictate its operations, above industry trends or consumer demand.

Today, many more private cookery schools are in operation in Ireland, over forty according to Allen (2013). A significant impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School is the numerous enterprises and organisations that have been established by past students of the twelve week certificate course. Many former students of the twelve week course at Ballymaloe Cookery School have gone on to set up their own cookery school, some of which use a similar business structure to Ballymaloe Cookery School, offering private culinary education by way of short courses, in addition to certified programmes. Examples include: Dublin Cookery School, established by Lynda Booth, Farmbelle Cookery School, run by Michelle Aronson, and Ballyknochen Cookery School in Wicklow, run by past student Catherine Fulvio. With reference to such new entrants in the industry, this family member who works at the school stated:

> It's a positive to see. I think competition is a positive thing. Not all of them by any means, but many of them are past students of ours. It's great to see. And competition, it keeps you on your toes. I mean, competition ensures that you can't just say ok, we'll do the same courses every year and people will come because they've got no other option. It keeps you on your toes. Otherwise, you might just carry on, doing what you're doing. Competition is good (20 T).

This quotation depicts the existence of many new private cookery schools across Ireland and how they contribute to a now competitive industry. Ballymaloe Cookery School benefits from its experience. Throughout the course of the primary data collection process, immense credit was attributed to Darina Allen directly for the maintenance of consistently high standards at the school. This past student praises Allen and her staff:

> The school is a very well-oiled machine and Darina Allen knows how to manage her team (1D).

An index of external recognition of success at the cookery school can be found in Appendix 1. This list elucidates widespread endorsement of the cookery school and the ongoing work of Darina Allen. In further support, this study participant states:

> The school is widely acclaimed here in Ireland but also internationally (1D).
Ballymaloe Cookery School attracts students from across the globe. Six study participants made direct reference to its international appeal. Despite this big reputation, respondents attested to the small nature of the enterprise and its personal ambience, as follows:

*It’s smaller than you think. It’s actually quite small* (198).

For some respondents, it is considered desirable for enterprises to remain small. As argued by one local SME owner:

*The bigger you go, the more interested you are in profits. The smaller you are, the more interested you are in quality and satisfaction* (2B).

Ballymaloe Cookery School focuses more on product differentiation, rather than market share. Interviewed at The West Waterford Festival of Food (2015), with reference to the cookery school, Darina Allen said:

*We don’t plan to get much bigger.*

This reflects the assertions of Means (2013), who argues that family businesses frequently remain small or medium and do not aspire to growth for its own sake. Overall, it can be deduced that growth and changes at Ballymaloe Cookery School have been gradual. Though the reputation of the school is recognised internationally, the school remains an SME and is likely to remain one.

Past students were chosen to contribute to this study as they have been customers of the cookery school. They were willing to pay for the courses at Ballymaloe and they know first-hand, the benefits and weaknesses of the products/services on offer. The cost of doing the certified twelve week cookery course now stands at approximately €11,000. More than one respondent argued that the cost means that every student takes the twelve week course seriously. This former student of the twelve week certificate course stated:

*You pay a lot of money to go there so it’s not a joke to anyone* (21C).

He considered this advantageous. The same respondent expressed a belief that in other sites of culinary education, not all students would take their learning seriously. Although this represents the opinion of just one respondent, the suggestion serves as a reminder that some students who do the twelve week course at Ballymaloe opt to do it in lieu of pursuing culinary education
elsewhere. Darina Allen has long publicly defended what is widely perceived as high costs for *good* food. She argues that reduced food costs could lead to corners being cut, the production of poor quality food and putting Ireland’s reputation as a good food producer at risk (2002). This, allied to the facts outlined above also provides rationale for the price of the courses on offer. In her 2013 book, Darina Allen asserts:

*We really want everyone who comes to not get value for money, but much, much more* (p. 306).

Though the price point is high, value for money remains desirable by management at the school. Similarly, this is understood by this respondent based at the school in the following way:

*We are substantially more expensive. That’s because we’re a private school. There are all of the things that people love about being here; about the ambiance, about the gardens, about the farm, the flowers on the tables every day. All of those things cost money so all of those things are a large part of the fee that our students pay. And then again, that’s why it’s about the experience. It’s not just about the teaching. It’s not just about the cooking. It’s about the experience. It’s about everything* (2014).

The relatively high cost of doing the course can be considered a barrier to entry for people who would wish to do it, but lack the means. Women form a majority of the school’s student cohort. An employee at the school revealed that many women who are attracted to courses at the school are:

*Women who don’t want to go on a holiday but just want to chill out* (2014).

The opportunity cost of their decision to study at Ballymaloe may be another leisure experience such as a holiday. It is clear that some of those who attend Ballymaloe Cookery School do so in order to attain culinary skill with a view to a career in the food industry. These students commonly consider the twelve week course at Ballymaloe an alternative to a professional cookery course elsewhere. On the other hand, however, Ballymaloe Cookery School draws students who pursue courses purely for pleasure, invoking the concept of
‘recreational cookery school’, as dealt with by Kramer (2007), discussed in Chapter Two. How the expectations and motivations of this spectrum of students are balanced is a challenge.

Though the ethos and standards maintained have been consistent, constant innovation has been part of the business strategy at the school. This means that new and updated offerings are continuously being developed. For example, 2016 courses on the flavours of Burma, Myanmar are included, as inspired by Darina Allen’s international travel. As recognised by Ottenbacher and Gnoth (2005), innovation in hospitality can improve an organisation’s quality and reputation, and can assist growth and survival in a competitive sector. The traditional sites of culinary education in Ireland are confined by the strategic objectives and policies of government because they are part of Ireland’s public sector. Ballymaloe Cookery School’s market position as a private cookery school in the education sector allows it to readily respond to changes in industry demand and market opportunities. The cookery school has undergone some infrastructural developments in terms of the grounds and buildings (Allen, 2013). This has included the recent creation of a micro-scale dairy. One study participant elaborates:

_We’re back into making more; the students milking the cows, making butter and cheese, whereas years ago, the students didn’t do that._ (7G)

Developments of this nature reflect the growth of the school and in its student numbers, a need for more on-site accommodation, changing demands of students and the expansion of the farming and gardening activities. In business, there is a need to continually evolve, adapt and change with the demands of customers, or by creating the demands of customers. Darina Allen, interviewed by Patrick Holden of the Sustainable Food Trust (2014) spoke about changing interest in food amongst the public at large:

_What’s changing is that people are not just wanting to learn how to cook but they want to be introduced to all of these other elements._

This depicts openness to change and recognition that changing consumer demands are important in her line of work. Through innovation, Ballymaloe Cookery School differentiates itself from its competitors. Darina Allen is aware that as a business, she needs to innovate rather than copy or match competition:

_Sameness just doesn’t work. You have to look for your influences elsewhere._ (1A).
Innovation at Ballymaloe Cookery School is apparent in the variety of sources of ideas for classes, events, collaboration and more, as the following statement from a long term employee at the school shows:

They’re coming up with new ideas all the time. There’s something new every month even with the seasons now, see the difference in the colour of the trees and everything. Every season is different (12L).

This respondent is involved with the gardens at the school and for her the diversity in her surroundings offers an environment that is conducive to creativity. The emphasis on seasonality, central to the ethos at the school, ensures a level of dynamism in the courses it offers. Another respondent identified Darina Allen’s passion for travel as a stimulus for her idea generation and a factor in the business’ success:

I think Darina’s so well-travelled and so on the pulse of so many things that she’ll, she absolutely won’t hesitate if she has an idea. She will just get straight on it and for that the school is still in business (5E).

Failure and coping with failure is a feature of innovation (Doss, 2013). Such capacity to innovate and cope with failure has been embraced at the cookery school, as this employee explains:

Things might not go according to plan. They never say good luck and thanks. They’re great try-ers again. They start everything small which is the right way to go about it. If it’s big and it goes belly up, you’ve lost everything (12L).

This quotation explains that controls are in place at Ballymaloe Cookery School to limit risk. Total risk avoidance is a barrier to innovation however. The stable long term staff and management at the school contribute to an experienced team where careful risks can be taken. This former employee explains other benefits:

The farm and gardens have come on massively in fifteen years. They are really up to another level, with a growing interest in that side of the education experience at
the school. There's a lot more people want to know about rearing cattle and growing stuff. The gardens have changed a lot and the range of crops and their growing techniques, and the glasshouses. Everything has benefitted from years of experience there (5E).

This statement refers to business development and change at Ballymaloe Cookery School, which study participants generally considered well managed. Another source of new ideas is guest chefs who come to the cookery school for short periods of collaboration. The now yearly Ballymaloe Literary Festival of Food and Wine, frequently dubbed LitFest, is another example of innovation at the cookery school. Six study participants made reference to the festival. The first was held in 2013. This event is organised and coordinated across several Ballymaloe enterprises. It is the only festival of its kind in Ireland and draws speakers and attendees from across the globe. The Ballymaloe Literary Festival of Food and Wine was recently listed as one of the best festivals around the world in Conde Nast Traveller magazine (2016).

In summary, it can be concluded that Ballymaloe Cookery School is an innovative family business. The findings illustrate that the school has remained small in scale, offers high quality, and can be considered a premium brand. Balancing consistency with innovation, the school creates new offerings to draw previous customers and has the potential to attract new demographics of clientele, such as experienced professionals from other sectors, as referred to by Harrington et al. (2005). The student profile at the school also reflects the growing proportion of women in culinary education in general (Robinson and Beesley, 2010). Ballymaloe Cookery School has inspired a subset of similar cookery schools across Ireland and further afield. For some, the cookery school provides an alternative model of professional culinary education to other establishments. For others, it is a site of particular recreational pursuit. Though it now has significantly more industry competitors, many of which were previously discussed in Chapter Two, Ballymaloe Cookery School maintains its market position and reputation for setting the standard in private culinary education. The annual Ballymaloe Literary Festival is one example of innovation at the school. The festival is considered an important event on the Irish food and drink calendar, attracting a spectrum of food enthusiasts to the East Cork region each year. The next section looks at what study participants consider to be the local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School.
4.3 The Local Impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School

This section considers the local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School in the region of East Cork, based on the responses of those interviewed as part of the primary research. The local impact is discussed under the topics of employment generated by the school, educational outreach at the school, support for local producers and the embeddedness of the school in the local community, and tourism supported by the school.

4.3.1 Employment Generated by Ballymaloe Cookery School

This section presents evidence that demonstrates the significant local employment Ballymaloe Cookery School has brought about in the East Cork area. Study participants consider this the main contribution of the cookery school to the local economy. When questioned on what they consider the local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School, all twenty respondents cited employment. A reported seventy two people work at Ballymaloe Cookery School (Deegan, 2014). Two respondents quoted a more conservative figure of approximately fifty five employees. The discrepancy can be accounted for by the seasonal fluctuation of staff numbers at different times of the year. The school is a significant local employer and thus, a valuable contributor to the local economy. Though all respondents referred to the direct employment of staff at the cookery school, some included the wider indirect employment that the cookery school supports, e.g. via the support of other local businesses, and the ripple effect created by visitors the school attracts to the locality. This will be dealt with in greater depth later in this chapter.

Respondents articulated a wholly positive view of the employment generated by Ballymaloe Cookery School. The following quotations represent such positive sentiments:

*Employment would be the main thing. I know not all the staff is local but the majority of them would be living driving distance from the school. I suppose the economy of the place too; the shops, the restaurants, the pubs, the B & Bs. It means a lot. It's local people working here. There are over fifty people working here. It means a lot to the area (13M).*

*The amount of local employment, between the school and the house; it's huge. You have to say, more than three quarters of the employees are local. There's an*
awful lot of people who have married locally. It's had an enormous impact. If it wasn't here, there would be nothing in Ballycotton/Shanagarry, absolutely nothing. You couldn't underestimate the value of the place economically...It's a great local employer. Now there are other people who aren't local but people have moved here to work here specifically as well (91).

The emphasis of both quotations is on the importance of the school for the locality. Though it is acknowledged that not all of the staff are from the local area, a high level of employees at the cookery school originate from and/or reside locally. This is indicative of the embeddedness of Ballymaloe Cookery School in the area. As has been previously noted, if a business is socially embedded within an area, success experienced by that business may also extend to benefits being experienced by the wider community in that area. Further analysis of the school's embeddedness will be presented later in this chapter. The findings suggest that employment opportunities at Ballymaloe Cookery School have enabled people to remain living and working in the locality. Rural enterprise has become an alternative to agriculture in supporting the economic viability of rural communities, and is a central element of rural development policy in Ireland. The findings suggest that employment at Ballymaloe Cookery School has offered a form of off-farm employment to some local individuals from farm families in the locality. This, in turn, helps sustain agriculture in the local area. As discussed in the literature review, a decline in farming in Ireland has taken place with regard to both the numbers employed in the sector, and the incomes generated by the sector. The incidence of off-farm employment among farm households in Ireland stands at 51% (IFA, 2015). This local employee at the cookery school, who is from a farm household, spoke in positive terms about her recent employment at the cookery school. Here, she highlights the struggles she has experienced at home trying to diversify and maintain viability of the family farm:

We had our own pigs at home and I got the mad notion that we might do our own sausage and whatnot, but then we went into the organics and it was really too much money to feed the pigs and keep them going, to be worth keeping (16P).

For her household, her outside employment at Ballymaloe Cookery School offers a stable income base to supplement the irregular farm income. There is further evidence to suggest that the cookery school helps to sustain employment for others who could be potentially marginalised in the local community. Another local respondent who supplies his produce to
the school on an irregular basis may otherwise encounter difficulty in making such sales. Given
the positive nature of participant responses, an image of a thriving rural community business is
created. One respondent who has had a long association with the cookery school was quick to
highlight the various roles for a large body of employees at the school in the long term:

_Ballymaloe has always been a major economic power in East Cork. Ivan Allen in
the old days, with the farm, he was amazing. And they employed a large number of
people for that. Now they’re employed in different things but as big employers,
Ballymaloe are still there. Fantastic (3C)._}

This local male respondent below reiterates the role that the school plays in employment of
development, and elaborates on the type of employment that it supports:

_People-wise, there’s a number of new families and houses in the area on account of
people getting work at Ballymaloe or as a result of some association with the
cookery school. The impact is enormous for working people in the locality because
I think that they have people there now and more particularly, women there with
small families and they’ve got their families and they’ve worked here and they don’t
have to go up to Cork. They’ve no expenses travelling. And I think there’s a lot to
be said for that as well... The local economic impact has been enormous with the
Allens, both at Ballymaloe and at the cookery school. In both respects, the
complexes are employing an awful lot of local people, all nearly local people
they’re employing. Everybody comes there. Like somebody said to me, it’s the very
same like going to jail. You go into jail, well actually if you go into jail you come out
after a couple of months but if you go in to the Allens, you stay there. There’s no
going out. You just stay there. That’s it. There’s no going out (6F)._}

The above interviewee also points to the fact that employment at the school has attracted
people from outside the locality to the area, and allowed local people to remain in East Cork
for place-based employment. As evidenced by the primary research, the type of employment
that has been generated at the cookery school has been particularly expedient for local women.
The following local female respondent illustrates how she has been offered a generous degree
of job flexibility by the cookery school as its employee. She discusses the nature of employment
at the cookery school in a positive light, giving her own experience as an example:
It's secure employment. They're very fair employers and it's a nice place to work. I worked in Cork for ten years and then I had to take a bit of a break because it didn't suit me to be going up to Cork every day; I had small children at the time  
(91).

The above interviewee mentions changes in her personal circumstances over time and how having young children affected her decisions regarding employment. Job security is also mentioned, expressed as something based on trust. The advantages of local, flexible, part-time employment, particularly for local women, are many. Such advantages relate to significant personal circumstances and changes. Using interviews for data collection, it is important to try to observe the unstated sentiments in addition to what is overtly said. Darina Allen is not on the record saying that she set out to create jobs for local women. However, the statement above from one of the respondents strongly mirrors the situation Myrtle Allen first and later her daughter-in-law, Darina Allen found themselves in as early entrepreneurs and young mothers, trying to support and raise a young family in East Cork. This echoes the work of Smith and Jackson (2004) who draw attention to the unique role of women in the creation of rural enterprise, as dealt with in Chapter Two. With reference to life during the 1960s, Myrtle Allen in Mac An Iomaire (2008) stated:

To look after the children properly, in those days the man would do the work and was meant to bring in the money [laugh] and the woman was meant to mind the house and mind the children and there wasn't, I think it was better really cause there wasn't this awful dashing out trying to hold down a job as well, you know. Putting your child into a crèche or something and having to... You know, what happens when the child gets sick, just go back to the child, do you stay in work and leave it? I think really it was better if you just did the children. That was it. Look after them, we looked after the house, I mean, there was men to feed, you know, a house to keep clean and... (p. 95).

Myrtle Allen here presents a set of personal values that reflect her life experience and the times in Ireland in which she has lived. The increase in women's participation in the workforce is considered a dramatic change in Irish society. Taking place steadily since 1986, the increased proportion of women in the labour force mirrors changes across many other capitalist Western
countries (O’ Sullivan, 2007). The creation of employment at Ballymaloe Cookery School, thus, began at the time when more and more women throughout Ireland were entering the workplace across sectors. The 1980s was a time of significant social change in Ireland in this way. When probed about the employment of women at the school, the issue was clarified by this family member and employee at the school:

In the beginning in the 1980s and 1990s, a lot of chefs Myrtle had (at Ballymaloe House) were brought up from the vegetable prep area, which is a young lad or a young lass aged sixteen or so would show up looking for work. They would go into the vegetable prep area and prep carrots and potatoes all day and then the next summer, they’d be in and they’d be helping to peel the carrots and the vegetables, to chop them up and do everything else. And some of the staff that we now have would be women but would have been girls who came through that process. As the school opened, we can speed up that process slightly because we can put them through the twelve week certificate course which helped them...what it allowed was because of the fact that both the cookery school and the House are seasonal businesses, where you don’t necessarily have full time work all of the time, but, for example in the cookery school, we’re morning heavy, so we do our practical demonstrations in the morning so we need more staff in the morning than we need people in the afternoons because we do demonstrations in the afternoons so you’re talking about four or five staff. Having local ladies who have the training abilities, they can send their kids to school. They can come and do a morning’s cooking and they can be back home at 3 o’clock to pick the kids up from school. So it works for our staff but it works for us too. We would never have had a particular policy of hiring women over men. It just seems to be the case. It’s certainly been very helpful to have part-time staff. They tend to be women because they then try to send their husbands out to find full time jobs. (20 T)

This statement supports the suggestion that Ballymaloe Cookery School has been particularly beneficial to local women seeking employment, and elucidates why. The flexible and part-time working arrangements that has been preferable for many working mothers local to the cookery school has also been advantageous for the kind of human resource requirements at the school. While some study participants discussed changes in women’s place in the workforce generally, a greater proportion of participants singled out ways in which Ballymaloe Cookery School has
supported employment for local women in the East Cork area. Turning attention more specifically to employment in the food and drinks industry, the findings imply that an uncommon workplace environment has been created at Ballymaloe Cookery School. As the following quotation concurs, the aforementioned degree of job flexibility afforded to employees at the cookery school is not typical of the industry. This female employee explains from her own experience:

_"I've done other restaurants, and it's hard to work in a restaurant with a family and kids and things. This is ideal. This suits me. I used to help her years ago and then I moved away then and came back and she kind of built the school and we're here now so it's gotten bigger and bigger the whole time (7G)."

The manner in which staff are treated, for example, with job flexibility as described above, could be considered exceptional, in light of standard industry practice (Moriarty, 2015). Darina Allen, speaking at the West Waterford Festival of Food (2015), explained that at the cookery school: _the staff eat the same food as the guests_. Neither is this the industry norm. A member of staff explains:

_"One thing Darina insists on is that you sit down and you have your lunch. And no matter who comes here, say whether you are in the kitchen or the garden, everybody comes in and has their dinner. She insists that you eat properly (12L)."

As noted by Belasco (2008), the concept of commensality; food offered and shared, holds a unique power to create a sense of community. As discussed previously, the family aspect of the business has a bearing on its operation for family and non-family alike. With reference to the family management in place at the cookery school, this respondent stated:

_"You can talk openly to any one of them. You're listened to all the time and you can discuss what you think or what you don't think or whatever (16P)."

The fairness shown to employees appears justified by a reciprocal loyalty among staff at the school, as demonstrated by respondents. For example, the following respondents highlight:
Their staff are long term staff, long term lecturers (2B).

The group that are here now are here for quite a long time (7G).

The findings indicate that staff turnover at the cookery school is low. High staff turnover is prevalent across the hospitality sector and involves an added cost to businesses (Lashley, 2002). However, staff turnover can sometimes benefit employees as it enables promotion for some people within the organisation, offering them new opportunities, and introduces new people with new perspectives to the business. Observations from respondents about staff at the school were many and largely positive, as is illustrated by the following quotations:

Any people coming in to work at Ballymaloe. They stay in there. They just don’t go away. It says a lot. It must tell its own tale. They go in there today and they’ll be there until retirement. And it says an awful lot for me (6F).

I’d say it would be hard to find an employee who wasn’t happy here (9I).

Me, and my career started here (15O).

Another respondent, formerly an employee at the school praised the idyllic location and environment of Ballymaloe Cookery School as a place of work:

It’s a beautiful setup. It’s a beautiful place to work, just the surroundings. When I looked out of my office, I saw green. It was beautiful. I had fresh bread every day (8H).

These quotations reflect a common acknowledgement among study participants that working conditions at the cookery school are good. It is expected that such conditions positively impact staff morale. It should be noted that ten of the twenty study participants are currently employed at the school. Though assurance of confidentiality was given to them, their status as employees may have influenced the information they provided during interview. Darboe (2003) affirms that job satisfaction is necessary for the individual to meet their personal need for achievement, recognition, and the pleasure of collaboration with others. This study finds that over decades, the enterprises under the Ballymaloe umbrella have developed and maintained a reputation as fair employers. The cookery school owners expressed an understanding of the significance the local employment they create and sustain has locally. It was highlighted that despite the
prevalence of austerity measures in Ireland in recent years, the cookery school managed to sustain its workforce without making such cuts:

During the recession we managed to keep going which was great and we didn’t do any pay cut, we didn’t let any staff off (1A).

Russell and McGinnity’s (2014) investigation into the effects of the recent recession on the labour market in Ireland found that staff reductions, pay cuts, and reorganisation brought on by the recession, resulted in increased work pressure for workers. The findings indicate that staff at Ballymaloe Cookery School are valued and believe that they are valued. Some of the staff at the cookery school were formerly students of the twelve week certificate course. This further suggests a reciprocal loyalty between students and staff at the school, as supported by the following quotations:

Generally, we find that the teachers here, and there have been exceptions, are people who have been through the cookery school already and have gone out and cooked at other places, preferably been at Ballymaloe House for a while, and then cooked in other places and come back again (1A).

Darina employs a lot of people from down Midleton, that area and I think it does create a lot of jobs and a lot of past students have come back and worked there (21C).

Hard work was a recurring acknowledgement made by respondents, citing this as a reason for the success of the school and an admirable attribute of one of its founders; Darina Allen. Over half of all respondents mentioned the immense work that goes on at the cookery school by those involved. Darina Allen acknowledged same:

We all work really hard. There’s an incredibly good work ethic here... You have to believe in something and it has to work. You have to make it work. A lot of people want to be part of this, because they too want to be part of somewhere that has this sort of sustainability vision which is, it’s the way we’ve always been and so they like to be part of this sort of ethos (1A).
This stems from an absolute belief in the underpinning values of the school among those working there, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter. The shared understanding of the common mission at Ballymaloe Cookery School has created an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual respect at the cookery school. Though the immense passion and hard work of Darina Allen was mentioned by half of the respondents with a resounding sense of admiration and respect, some study participants also commended the team of staff at the cookery school overall:

We would all have a very deep level of respect for Darina and we very much support what she does and we, the staff I think from that point of view. Darina very much drives the cookery school. We all come together. We all very much respect and admire Darina and everything she has done in her lifetime. We will keep pushing her along and support her decisions (17Q).

Hard work. Hard work, because it is hard work. Attention to detail and a passion for what you’re doing. Actually that’s the first thing you’d have to have, is a passion for what you’re doing. Knowledge, and hard work. And never stopping. I mean, Darina never stops (91).

I’d say we were lucky but I don’t really think luck has much to do with it. Luck doesn’t really have much to do with it. It’s thirty years of hard work. We work as a team and between us all we keep the place running. It’s a very busy place. Our staff are very good and it keeps going. In order for a business to work, it has to work even when the boss isn’t there because otherwise, it’s not working right (20 T).

If you’ve worked here, you can work anywhere. It’s hard but I mean, it’s good training (7G).

The above quotation hints at the reputation of Ballymaloe Cookery School, and the value of having worked there for people seeking employment elsewhere. The twelve week course offered at Ballymaloe Cookery School for many is part of forging a career in food. Respondents mentioned ways in which they were supported by those in Ballymaloe in this regard:
Anyone who knows Darina will know that after a few weeks you get brought into her office to get your midweeks results and her exam, and the first thing she asks you is have you got a job? She wants to get everyone working so the pressure was on to sort of get jobs and sort your life out (19S).

This quotation comes from a past student of the twelve week certificate course. He goes on to make reference to other past students who have carved out successful careers in food, following their completion of study at Ballymaloe Cookery School, and states:

A lot of good people have come from that school (19S).

This statement demonstrates the value that successful students bring to the appeal of the school. Another respondent highlights the career successes of former students, as well as the support at Ballymaloe Cookery School they have benefited from:

The three months cookery course, if you’ve done it, she supports you 100% People who came out of there include Arun Kapil from Green Saffron, hugely successful. Thomasina Miers in London, Restaurant chain. Hugely successful. She won the first Masterchef in England, and she’s now hugely successful. She has her own TV show and everything. So the influence that Ballymaloe has-not on everyone obviously but-Darina knows the talent when she sees it and she helps them on the way (8H).

The success of past students at the school reinforces the brand and reputation of the school. Students doing the twelve week certificate course are encouraged by those at the cookery school to create a network among themselves, as the following past student of the course describes:

When you enrol there is a Facebook group created for your class. We all used it during the course and we can still use it now to post jobs, questions, or stay in touch (4D).

This depicts one way in which students who do the certificate course can maintain contact with one another, and ultimately create a network of past students. Further to the subject of employment for past students, the Jobs for Cooks website (www.jobsforcoks.ie) was established in 2002 in association with Ballymaloe Cookery School. This can be considered another impact of the cookery school. Though the site advertises jobs to a broad audience of
culinary professionals, it also acts as a platform where past students of the cookery school can access listings for relevant jobs. A key family member and employee at the school describes how it came about:

One of the opportunities that came out was when my father said, 'look, every now and again there's someone and they want to put up a job and we just put it up on one of our pages on our website you know and charge them a minimal administration fee. There's an option there. You could just set up a site and it would be the cookery school job posting site.' I didn't really want to set up an agency because that's a whole different thing but I was quite happy to set up basically, an advertising site for jobs and because I had the technical ability I just set it up and it trundles away. It doesn't get an enormous amount of traffic like the big job sites would get, but it does work quite well for slightly more esoteric jobs, ones that are out of the ordinary. So it trundles away. Anyone can put up a job. Anyone can look at the jobs on it. It's on the internet (20 T).

This illustrates the innovative approach to problem-solving at the cookery school, and how skills within the organisation are utilised to best effect. It is another example of the type of employment that is generated and supported by the cookery school.

To conclude, this section details the employment opportunities created at Ballymaloe Cookery School, and the ways in which respondents consider this a positive local impact of the school. The value of rural enterprises such as Ballymaloe Cookery School, and their ability to socially, culturally and economically preserve the countryside, provides impetus for further encouragement and support for rural enterprise in Ireland. Recent employment growth in Ireland has benefited populations in large urban areas more than those in small rural areas. Foreign direct investment is more likely to locate in or near such urban centres. The following quotation from a family employee at the cookery school outlines his perspective on the need for small and medium enterprise in rural settings in Ireland, again contrasting the role played by large multinational companies:

The more businesses we have in rural areas, the better. The problem is the more people we have in the city, the more pharmaceutical companies and American software companies and huge big multinationals we have to bring in. And that’s great. They produce tens of thousands of jobs. But if we can have indigenous
businesses that are employing ten or twenty people, a hundred of them is getting
two thousand people employed and it's indigenous and it's more sustainable. It
keeps money in the local economy. We all pay taxes, which can't be said for all
large multinational companies. We need to have both...There's better headlines in
bringing in one pharmaceutical company that are going to employ five thousand
people, and in some ways that's easier to do than to create fifty new businesses that
are all going to employ fifty new people. But for the long term sustainability of the
country, you need those small businesses. As we know, companies come in there
for ten years and then they leave. And, so you need to have a base of companies
that are doing lots of different things (20 T).

This quotation indicates that small and medium sized enterprises cannot garner the kind of
media attention that job creation at large multinational companies can, nor can they replace the
jobs created by such companies. This study participant makes reference to the controversial
issue of taxable income of large multinational firms in Ireland (Taylor, 2016). In recent years,
increasing attention has been drawn to the structures multinational companies use to manage
their tax liabilities. It must be noted that the pharmaceutical industry, first established in East
Cork during the 1960s, has since expanded, accompanied by other technology firms (Brunt,
1998). Declining and aging populations in rural areas and a lack of labour and local markets is
another cause for concern. Entrepreneurship is considered central to Ireland's recovery and
crucial 'to rural economic development and wellbeing' (National Policy Statement on

In summary, findings regarding employment at Ballymaloe Cookery School confirm that it is a
significant local employer, one with a good reputation and loyal, long term staff. The overall
contribution of Ballymaloe Cookery School to the local labour market includes the provision
of long term stable employment to local people, showing flexibility regarding working hours
and full-time and part-time working arrangements. Discussion around the topic raises issues of
women in the workplace and the place of women in the food industry, as well as their place in
rural Ireland. Women are now more likely to work outside the home than in the past. This
means there is less available time for food preparation and cooking which in turn influences
food choices, as discussed in Chapter Two. Though home cooking has not become a thing of
the past, the manner in which it is carried out has undergone change. The next section focuses
on the schools outreach at the cookery school, in line with societal changes that provide
background to the project.
4.3.2 Educational outreach at Ballymaloe Cookery School

Discussing what they consider to be the local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School, one of the recurring impacts cited by respondents was the educational outreach that is conducted at the cookery school. This outreach is aside from the range of courses offered to paying students. All respondents were asked for their opinion of what changes have emerged locally as a result of the activities of Ballymaloe Cookery School. This question produced a range of answers. Six respondents made reference to the East Cork Slow Food Educational Project. Respondents working at the cookery school in particular, were familiar with the programme and viewed it as a beneficial intervention for young children. Another three respondents referred to other ways in which the cookery school carries out educational outreach to young students. Each of the references formed positive statements about the educational outreach conducted at Ballymaloe Cookery School. Some statements were accompanied by sentiments regarding changes in family life, the transfer of skills and knowledge, and food practices. These sentiments tended to have a negative bent, expressing concern regarding the direction that such societal practices are going. The findings suggest that on a local level, the educational outreach acts as a counterpoint to such change. This section will outline details of the educational outreach carried out at Ballymaloe Cookery School, and the ways in which study participants consider it an important element of the local impact of the school.

The East Cork Slow Food Educational ‘Grow and Cook’ Project was first launched by Darina Allen in 2005. The schools outreach was for some respondents an obvious impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School. The East Cork Slow Food Educational project is associated with the Slow Food movement and its ideology. Prior to the development of the schools outreach, Darina Allen established the East Cork Slow Food Convivium at Ballymaloe Cookery School in 1999, following the initial launch of Slow Food Ireland by Gianna Ferguson of Gubbeen Cheese in 1998. Slow Food is an international movement which originated in Italy in 1986. Proponents of Slow Food view the widespread decline in cooking and the loss of regional, artisan produce as correspondent to a weakening of family life and tradition, as well as regard for the environment and civic life. The following quotation from an employee at the cookery school illustrates clearly how the project came about and what it entails:

_Slow Food Ireland have different Slow Food convivia around the country so, East Cork Slow Food convivium is based here at the cookery school. We also have the Slow Food East Cork educational project...Darina was keen to get in touch with the_
senior children, say sixth class children and to get them to come here and to get them to learn how to cook and how to grow. So, the East Cork Slow Food project was born. Ever since, East Cork schools come with their children and they have two days here, a day in the autumn and a day in the spring. They love it. In order to join the project through here, they have to have an edible garden and they have to join Slow Food. The edible garden doesn’t have to be something on a big scale. They could be something as simple as window boxes and herbs, a little raised bed with one or two vegetables in it but what we find is that as the schools get involved and go with it, they learn more. They find space to increase their edible garden and the kids love it. At the end of a term or even a year, whatever surplus produce they have, they sell it to the parents. It just goes towards funds for the school. A lot of parents have gotten hens at home or have gotten a raised bed in their own garden.

This quotation provides an outline of the educational project and describes the relationship it has to Slow Food. Nine primary schools now participate in the project and more schools have made an expression of interest. They are currently on a waiting list. As illustrated by the respondent above who is very familiar with the project, a prerequisite to becoming a participating school is the development of an edible school garden and a compost heap on site, and membership of Slow Food. This respondent goes on to explain how Slow Food events held at Ballymaloe Cookery School simultaneously attract people to the school, promote the values of the Slow Food movement, and raise funds for the Slow Food Education Project:

We have monthly events here at the cookery school, monthly Slow Food events, in an effort to raise a bit of money to support the Slow Food Education Project. The monthly events might include guest speakers. Just for example, we had a lady in from Teagasc and she spoke about raw milk. We had Dorothy Cashman. She’s a food historian and she came and did a talk on her manuscripts. It’s not all talks. We also do Slow Food dinners and we do farm walks.

Ballymaloe Cookery School actively tries to promote local action on global environmental issues, such as recycling, composting, use of organic methods and the creation of growing spaces. The range of speakers who give presentations at these monthly events reflect the ethos at the cookery school as well as that of Slow Food. Slow Food was referred to by seven respondents of their own accord during the data collection phase. Study participants
recognised the relevance of Slow Food at Ballymaloe Cookery School and the messages promoted through this association. The following quotation from a former student of the twelve week certificate course captures this sentiment:

*The Slow Food Movement. She’s massively involved in that. She just wants natural good food. You know, like butter, they make their butter from scratch. The cream is from scratch. You know. Nothing is bought in a packet there. It literally has to be made from scratch and I think that’s something that everyone can learn from.* (198)

Respondents expressed a clear understanding of Slow Food principles. The East Cork Educational Project is similar to The Edible Schoolyard Programme in the USA, first established in 1995 by well-known chef Alice Waters, and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Programme in Australia which was first piloted in 2001 by Chef Stephanie Alexander. Blogger Kim McGuire (2013) introduces Darina Allen to an online audience who may not know her, saying: *Darina is to Ireland what Alice Waters is to America.* Alice Waters is Vice-President of Slow Food International. The manner in which Slow Food principles underpin these schools outreach programmes is comparable to the East Cork Educational Project. This similarity indicates the relevance of such projects to different locales internationally. When interviewed as part of this study, Darina Allen outlined her personal motivation and enthusiasm for the project:

*I have a number of hats now but basically one of them is my Slow Food hat and so we link in with nine local schools to teach children how to grow and how to cook. We send a chicken coop and two hens to all of the schools. These are so the children will learn how to keep hens and we compost. So that’s it. Personally, this is something I feel really concerned and committed to and we’ve been getting a tremendous response from the teachers themselves. I think it is very serious that we have dropped practical cookery skills from the curriculum and one of my missions is trying to get this back embedded within the curriculum again.* (1A)

This quotation refers to changes in the Irish education system where practical cookery has essentially been removed from the school curriculum, which has also been observed in the UK (Caraher, 2012), as discussed in Chapter Two. This respondent who works closely with Darina Allen echoes her sentiments:
Really, I suppose, it's a pity that schools don't have more time, or don't commit more time to it. I think, Darina has in the past said that schools should spend more time on food education classes or whatever, within the school curriculum because they carry that through their teenage years and into their adult life (17Q).

This respondent recognises the long term benefits of lessons incorporating food. Recent developments regarding food in the Irish education system include; The Future is Food initiative by the TASTE Council and Bord Bia which aims to educate second level students on the Irish artisan and speciality food sector, and the wider food industry (Real Nation, 2015). Darina Allen points out that, in general, not everybody considers cooking an important or necessary skill to possess:

*I'm in the very fortunate position that I just totally love what I'm doing and I've a very varied life with this skill which a lot of people feel is, cooking is not even an important skill to have* (1A).

Allen has written a cookbook, *The Forgotten Skills of Cooking: The time-honoured ways are the best* (2009), presenting recipes and information about traditional culinary processes. She regards the acquisition of cooking skills as an essential life skill for everyone. Her concern regarding cooking skills relates to the wider industrialisation of food, as considered extensively in Chapter Two. For Banks (1968), in more industrial societies the extent to which skills are taught within formal institutions of education increases. Skills are less likely to be handed down or acquired 'on-the-job'. Here, this quotation outlines the understanding Allen has of the matter:

*The reality is that many restaurants in Ireland would close if the big catering company trucks stopped running. This is quite serious. First off, there is a great sameness about the apple tart you have in one restaurant. It tastes the same as in another. Well, it's not your imagination. It comes straight out of a packet...everything becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. So people will have to buy stuff. So that's quite serious for the industry* (1A).

Her argument here acknowledges the threat posed by industrialised food to chef skills, restaurateurs, and the consumer. As referred to in Chapter Two, ethical concerns regarding food remain overlooked in culinary education and practice, and as highlighted by Shani *et al.* (2013), culinary professionals have not typically been looked to as makers of change in this
regard. Yet, participants in this study expressed a belief that Darina Allen through the East Cork Educational Project was promoting transformation in children's food education. The following quotations illustrate how interviewees laud the efforts of the project and place importance on learning about food from an early age. These observations from participants illustrate a clear understanding of the ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School, and support for it in relation to educational messages:

*She is immensely involved in the local schools in Middleton, amazingly involved in them. She supports children through school gardens so I think for the younger generation she has great impact because she really makes sure that they learn about food from an early age (8I).*

Well, there is a big promotion of organic food. Darina goes to national schools trying to promote chicken rearing, to get the kids interested in food and getting them to know where their food comes from at an early age, as opposed to from a cardboard box and familiarising children with food and explaining to them how beneficial it is to eat the right healthy and wholesome foods, as opposed to a list of preservatives. *She has a list of schools (2B).*

*She's great at supporting vegetable gardens and chicken houses in all the local schools, all of that. It's very important to get young children growing, and to know where their food comes from. The most terrifying programme I ever watched was Jamie Oliver's programme when he was going around America. I think he had chosen the extreme cases. Well, this was deemed to be the unhealthiest city in America. They went into a scene and children didn't know what a tomato was, what a potato was, what an aubergine was. Ok, maybe an aubergine may be slightly more unusual but amazingly they didn't know what they were. It's scary. It's absolutely scary. You know if that's the way our world goes, it's a very frightening place to be. It's so important and you have to start young and there again now is something where Darina has had an input into as well. She's very passionate about it (9I).*

In a similar vein to what this respondent states, Stephanie Wood, founder of School Food Matters in the UK (in Borough Market, 2015), was first motivated to action when she realised that so many schoolchildren could not recognise an onion. Speaking with reference to the schools outreach at Ballymaloe Cookery School, respondents identified resounding benefits of
teaching young children about food, such as implications for their health. Ireland, like many countries, has witnessed a substantial rise in the prevalence of obesity and overweight among children and adolescents in recent decades. Reports from Ireland’s Department of Children and Youth Affairs national longitudinal study of children, *Growing Up in Ireland* found that 30% of girls and 22% of boys aged nine in Ireland are overweight (2011). Schmutz *et al.* (2014) found that the activity of growing food is linked to health benefits including improved nutritional skills and awareness, increased physical activity, improved mental health and wellbeing, and community resilience. Ballymaloe Cookery School reports from the project in 2015 found that in one primary school, following the completion of the project, thirty-five parents established a vegetable garden at home and twenty parents began rearing hens for the first time. This illustrates that by teaching schoolchildren, they take home information to the rest of their households. Though literature specific to Irish contexts is scarce, it can be noted that food growing programmes in schools in the USA were found to have positive impacts on student nutrition and attitudes to healthy eating, specifically including willingness to try new foods and taste preferences, as found by Draper and Freedman in their review of the scholarly literature (2010). Well known educationalists such as John Dewey regard education as an agent of social change. Speaking publically at the Artisan Food Symposium at University College Cork (2015), Darina Allen asserted:

*We need to reconnect children with how their food is produced.*

Wood understands children’s unfamiliarity with basic ingredients as a reflection of a lack of basic knowledge but also a lack of confidence on the part of their parents (2015). As dealt with in Chapter Two, debate about the decline of domestic cooking and cooking skills has intensified in recent years. Some have argued that people have become deskillled when it comes to home cooking as a result of the pervasiveness of industrially produced convenience foods (Mintz, 1985 and 1996; Ritzer, 1996). This is in line with the ideas underpinning Slow Food. Others contend that domestic cooking skills and practices are constantly evolving and that cooking in Western industrialised societies is increasingly a leisure activity as well as a household task (Lang and Caraher, 2001). Studies from the UK show strong evidence to support the fact that women are largely responsible for family food provisioning (Caplan *et al.*, 1998; Murcott, 2000). Lang and Baker (1993) drew attention to the lack of opportunities for children to learn cooking skills from parents and guardians who rely largely on pre-prepared foods. Intergenerational learning was a topic brought up by some study participants. Throughout the interview process respondents continuously acknowledged a perceived decline
in cooking skills and expressed concern about the transfer of such practical knowledge relating to food, as depicted by the following quotation:

*It's a huge loss if skills are lost. The knowledge that our senior citizens have, it needs to be passed on. If it doesn't, they could be lost. People might lose the whole focus of the direction of things...The small skills at the bottom are very important and shouldn't be lost* (21).

The following participant draws attention to the transfer of knowledge from children to their parents, following engagement with the educational outreach project:

*Certainly through the schools being involved, children are going home and saying they want hens, they want their own eggs. They want to know if Mum can they have a little section of the garden where they can grow their own potatoes or carrots* (17).

Another respondent who once worked at the cookery school, considers the transfer of learning between grandparents and their grandchildren an important way of keeping cooking skills and traditions alive. She refers to an annual celebration, again invoking Slow Food principles and spearheaded by Darina Allen in Ireland that encourages the sharing of knowledge between generations:

*Darina implemented the Grandparents' Day in Ireland. It's in April every year, and she goes to the schools. She gets the grandparents and they cook and they bake. They come to Ballymaloe and do the same thing there. So this day is meant so the grandparents can pass on their skills and knowledge to the next generation. She really tries to keep old traditions going, for example how to make your own yoghurt starter, how to make your own things from scratch rather than buying things in* (8).

For respondents who discussed the schools outreach at Ballymaloe Cookery School, changes to family life were at the forefront of their concerns regarding food practices and the passing on of culinary skills and knowledge. Societal change, such as the place of women in the workplace was cited by more than one participant as a reason behind such concern. This respondent speaks about her own upbringing, where her mother did not work outside the home, and demonstrates an understanding of how women’s participation in the workforce has implications for wider family life:
And when we were growing up, everybody had their own jobs so when Mammy was baking you always gave Mammy a hand. Even if it was just vegetables, you know, and you learnt from an early age, this was what it was all about. It was just passed on to the next generation again. It was knowledge but you see when Mammy went out to work, Mammy hadn't the time. She'd be wrecked anyway. I can see where it's coming from as well (12L).

The following respondent identified the lack of knowledge about food among children she comes into contact with via the schools outreach as correspondent with prevalent lifestyle and food practices today:

*Because a lot of kids, they don't cook. Mums and Dads are busy. They just don't have time* (7G).

This quotation can be understood as a reflection of social change in Ireland, and the pace of life today. Employees at the cookery school are well placed to understand the circumstances around cooking and growing skills given their everyday encounters with students and visitors to the school. One employee argues that once a person has practiced food growing themselves, they will more readily recognise the true value of food:

*Maybe when you do buy it or pick it you might appreciate it that little bit more or not throw away half of it because it takes twelve weeks for the little thing to grow* (12L).

Some students of Ballymaloe Cookery School go on to promote their knowledge and skills to younger generations, as Darina Allen points out:

*They certainly leave here wanting to grow things, wanting to find really good quality produce, wanting to teach others how to cook, and many of them are then involved in educating children how to cook and all of that* (1A).

Three respondents, all of whom are non-family employees at the cookery school mentioned educational outreach involvement aside from the East Cork Slow Food Educational Project. This included: ongoing work experience opportunities for second level Transition Year
students and summer placements for French agricultural students in third level education. There is high demand for such places, as this respondent illustrates:

_They do week blocks for the Transition Year students. There’s even a two year waiting period for that now. Students that want to do their work experience, they stay then for the week. They come maybe Sunday night, they start Monday morning and they finish up say Friday afternoon. Well, they’re lovely really the students that they do get (16P)._ 

Visiting French students come to learn at Ballymaloe Cookery School each summer as part of an ongoing relationship with two horticultural colleges in France. These students are deemed useful, as this respondent who works at the school explains:

_In the summer we have a connection with an agricultural college in France. The French students, they come in twos or threes. We had about three lots there which is very handy because they have some bit of gardening knowledge (13M)._ 

This statement evidences a reciprocal relationship between the school and the students. As emphasised by Freire (1970), education is a dialogical process. Thus, the presence of visiting students is considered mutually beneficial by study respondents.

In summary, the findings reveal that the East Cork Slow Food Educational Project has been viewed by many respondents as a positive impact of the cookery school. It is important to note that many primary and secondary schools across the Ireland have programmes around growing food and gardening, independent of Ballymaloe Cookery School. Many of these are linked to the international Green Schools programme and its associated awards. Despite this, the schools outreach at Ballymaloe Cookery School is an important strand of its activities for many people involved.

### 4.3.3 Support for Local Food Producers and the Embeddedness of Ballymaloe Cookery School in the Local Community

As discussed, Ballymaloe Cookery School creates and sustains substantive local employment in East Cork. In this section, the support from Ballymaloe Cookery School for elements of what is local to it, and the extent to which the cookery school is embedded within the local community, is considered another key impact of the school. Ballymaloe Cookery School
demonstrates a high level of embeddedness in the local community, as evidenced by the employment of local people at the school, the sourcing of food locally, its initiation of and involvement in the nearby Midleton Farmers’ Market, and the advocacy carried out in support of local food producers. Despite the complex nature of alternative food networks, at Ballymaloe a strong ethos of fresh, local, seasonal and organic food remains. This ethos underpins the activities at the school, which contribute to the overall impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School.

Cookery school co-founder Darina Allen was instrumental in setting up the Farmers’ market movement in Ireland. Ireland’s first farmers’ market (of the present wave) was set up in the year 2000 in the town of Midleton, Cork approximately 20kms from Ballymaloe. Twelve of the twenty study participants raised the subject of farmers’ markets when interviewed. Respondents consider farmers’ markets central to promoting the identity of locally produced food and consider the Midleton Farmers’ Market an asset to the town. In Moore’s 2006 study of organic food consumers at farmers’ markets in Ireland, it is argued that connecting producers and consumers in this way benefits the local community. Barber (2011) states that the farm-to-table concept has moved from being an outside idea to a mainstream social movement. When asked what changes had emerged locally as a result of the activities at Ballymaloe Cookery School, this former student acknowledged:

Darina is part of the reason behind the Irish Farmers’ Market Movement, so markets such as Midleton and Mahon Point probably wouldn’t exist without her influence (4D).

This respondent gives recognition to the Farmers’ markets in Ireland as a movement and identifies Darina Allen as central to that movement. Solidarity is considered necessary for strengthening movements and their potential to affect change. Farmers’ markets are now ubiquitous across Ireland. There are over 150 in operation at present (Bord Bia, 2014). Many farmers’ markets have an ethos of local food, supporting local food producers, and the consumer buying directly from the producer. As such, they present an opportunity for direct contact between the producer and consumer. One study participant emphasised the role that Darina Allen played in the early days of the Midleton farmers’ market:

She was THE organiser of that market (3C).
Another local respondent highlighted the visible presence Ballymaloe Cookery School continues to maintain at the Midleton Farmers’ Market:

At the Midleton market, there would always be a Ballymaloe stall (10].

Another study participant identified the relationship between Ballymaloe House and Ballymaloe Cookery School, the proliferation of farmers’ markets in Cork, and the food producers who sell via these markets:

There's a whole network then, on top of their suppliers. I mean half of the success of our markets is because we had Myrtle originally when Ballymaloe was starting to look for good ingredients, followed then by the next generation at Ballymaloe House, with Darina at the cookery school. Suddenly, there was the Ahearnes’ organic meat and there was lots of little people starting to set up because there was a bit more of a marketplace. When we started the market here in 2005 we actually had quite a good network of producers, real producers who are hard to find. And then once you start that then, you create the market for it (5E).

The quotation above posits that the support for local food producers at Ballymaloe Cookery School contributes to the generation of widespread demand for such food. A network of local producers was created to supply Ballymaloe enterprises. Now, those producers have become highly regarded and sought after by many other food businesses. The following statement identifies the initial inspiration of Myrtle Allen. At the official opening of Ballymaloe Cookery School in 1983 Myrtle Allen stated the following:

I would like to suggest that the greatest enemy a gourmet has in the 1980s and onwards is the type of shelf life that most foods are now expected to have. That results in some of the emphasis being taken off freshness. That is a great loss.

This statement shows that over thirty years ago, the changes that the food system has undergone, the freshness of food available and the necessity to support local food producers was at the forefront of what the cookery school set out to draw attention to. Ballymaloe Cookery School, and its promotion of local food producers, encourages sustainable agricultural practices, supports other local businesses, and has built a recognised brand that has benefited
the locality, attracting visitors and investment. The presence and success of such producers in one area, or region, reinforces that of other such producers. Cork Chamber of Commerce understands the value of such a business cluster concept. Cork Chamber of Commerce (2014) consider ‘*Telling the Story of Cork*’, as central to capitalising on opportunities in the agri-food and drinks sector. As part of their vision, this would take the form of a co-ordinated regional marketing strategy, identifying Cork as a food hub much in the way ‘Silicon Valley’ in California is known for Information and Communications Technology (ICT), high-tech innovation and development. Previous quotations from study participants suggest that such a food hub has already emerged in East Cork, and that Ballymaloe Cookery School forms its nucleus. Hayden *et al.* (2014) encourage rural entrepreneurs to engage in networking activities in order to reduce isolation, maintain links with their customers, and bolster their businesses. For Hayden *et al.* (2014), farmers’ markets are a unique opportunity for food producers to meet one another and get to know one another’s produce.

Though ambiguity around what exactly constitutes ‘local’ food exists, as discussed in Chapter Two, at Ballymaloe Cookery School high quality produce is sought, from as close to the school as is possible. When interviewed, Darina Allen said:

*We buy from about 150 small suppliers and we buy in local shops, such as The Village Greengrocer and Ballycotton Seafood. That money then goes into the local area (1A).*

By sourcing ingredients in this way, the cookery school buys from numerous small scale producers. For many, supplying the cookery school is a significant strand of their sales portfolio. The photograph below (Fig. 5) of the wall of the Blue Dining Room at the school is referred to as the ‘Wall of Fame’ (in Allen, 2013). This shows some of the local food suppliers to the school.
Another respondent, a past student at the school, highlights the significance of buying local produce, and the consequential gains locally because of this:

*I think that you need to understand too that when you are paying for local produce, you’re employing local people and that’s one of the massive things that I admire about her is that she really does strive for local produce. That’s a massive thing to her (19S).*

Similarly, this study participant reiterated such a belief:

*The whole Ballymaloe umbrella has supported local producers and kept local food producers going (17Q).*

The importance of this is further recognised by Holden (2014) as what he calls, “The Ballymaloe Effect”. This, he tells, is how:
...the combination of the cookery school and the hotel has created a substantial market for a number of local producers who otherwise would have had to trade probably at very poor prices on the commodity markets.

Furthermore, as understood by this male respondent who has significant experience in the food industry:

*There are more craft producers and artisan producers in the Cork area than there are elsewhere because of the support and encouragement that Darina in particular, and Ballymaloe give (3C).*

In this statement, he emphatically correlates the number of craft and artisan food producers in Cork with the support that Darina Allen and others at Ballymaloe have given such enterprises over the years. The following quotations set out that an Irish food narrative does now exist, on account of the work of Darina Allen at Ballymaloe Cookery School. This belief among study participants is illustrated in the following quotations:

*I don’t think Ireland would have the food story if it weren’t for her (8H).*

*You could say Darina invented food, Darina invented Irish food. She put it on the map. In her day, Darina brought it to a whole generation. Rachel is bringing it to her generation now. And it’s very important to have this sort of impact (9I).*

For study participants, the work conducted by Darina Allen at Ballymaloe Cookery School has essentially raised the profile of Irish food, both in Ireland and abroad. Through her active engagement and dialogue with food producers locally, she has been able to use her position to advance the priorities of small food producers. Being engaged in agriculture and horticultural production directly at Ballymaloe, Darina Allen is well placed to speak on behalf of small producers. Drawing from her sociological study of rural development in Ireland, Macken-Walsh (2009) highlights the prevalence of low self-esteem and confidence among disenfranchised farmers and fishers in Ireland and across the EU. Producer organisations such as the Irish Farmers’ Association (IFA) and regional cooperatives in Ireland are also significant in the context of Irish food and agriculture. The following quotations reflect some of the views of respondents who consider Darina Allen a successful advocate for Irish food producers:
I know that Darina has been very vocal and outspoken and partly that’s because she has a lot of power and is in the public eye. I understand she does an awful lot of behind-the-scenes work and banging on doors on behalf of small farmers and small producers (2B).

This study participant acknowledges the advantageous position Darina Allen holds, given her acclaim, but also lauds the hard work that she does on behalf of food producers, away from public attention. Here, another respondent makes a similar commendation:

I can only look on in awe as she fights the corner for small producers, for small butchers, for people who want to kill their own chickens, have their own eggs and sell unpasteurised milk, and all this sort of thing. She fights, all of the time. She’s amazing. She’s the only one going head to head and she has her agenda. She works through it all the time. She has her contacts. She contacts everybody. I’d have thrown my hat in, I’d have thrown something at them a long time ago but she keeps at it, all the time. She is relentless. She pushes and she pushes. Nobody knows anything about this. I know because I’m involved on the day-to-day bones of it but she’s the one who does it. She’s the one who’s kept the push up. She’s the one who’s making the effort and I take my hat off to her. I don’t know anyone else who would give it the time and the effort that she gives it. Myrtle used to in the old days but Myrtle doesn’t do it anymore. That’s where she got it from. I take my hat off to her (3C).

Again, this study participant accredits Myrtle Allen with instigating a campaign in support of local food producers and notes the taxing position held by Darina Allen in continuing to sustain that campaign. As noted in the literature review, the role of chefs in local food chains has not been under extensive academic scrutiny. This study evidences the potential role chefs can play in support of local food producers. Barber (2014) claims that chefs have been influential in strengthening the farm-to-table food movement because the taste of food is inextricably bound up in its production. Durum and Cawley (2012) acknowledge the need for research literature on the role of chefs in the use of local foods and support of producers. The following respondent elaborates on how significant the supporting role of Ballymaloe Cookery
School plays for producers who often struggle to remain true to principles of sustainability, tradition and craft, and follow challenges posed such as policies, market forces and costs:

_You have to give people encouragement. You have to say you’re doing a great job._

_People need that. They really do. And if there isn’t somebody there to say, keep going, you’re doing a grand job, people become discouraged, particularly if they’re coming up against bureaucracy in some shape or form._ (3C).

This quotation illustrates that the cookery school’s support for local suppliers goes beyond the economic gains they make as suppliers to the school. Families are considered to be more involved in local communities than businesses and thus, family businesses stand to contribute more to the social cohesion of their community than non-family businesses. Respondents mentioned numerous means by which Darina Allen showed her support for them personally, in addition to local people, families, businesses, and besides. Examples of such support included: featuring local groups and events in the ‘hot tips’ section of her weekly _Irish Examiner_ column, networking and introducing people, showing support of farmers’ markets and speaking to unsolicited callers on the phone directly. Though some examples provided by respondents may appear minor, these examples were accompanied with a deep meaning attached to them for the people involved. Darina Allen is clearly a linchpin in the community. The following statements from interviewees embody the sentiments of study respondents:

_Darina is hugely supportive. She is a very selfless person with her time._ (9I).

_They’re deeply involved in the community. The family itself would be deep rooted in the community._ (10I).

Another study participant emphasised a feeling of goodwill prevalent in the locality towards the family at Ballymaloe Cookery School:

_I’m very friendly with the Allens and I’ve had an association with the Allens all down the years. They’re tremendous people, very good people and very good neighbours. They’re great employers and they’re good people. Darina Allen is a great person in the locality. The Allens—they can’t do enough for people._ (6F).
Study respondents demonstrated an understanding of the critically important economic and social role played by Ballymaloe Cookery School in the local community. The findings established that this role stems from the support for local food producers at Ballymaloe Cookery School, as part of the Ballymaloe ethos at large, but also the contribution made by those at the school to community vitality and morale, in addition to other economic gains locally. A strong business case can be made for the support of small and medium family businesses. Findings from the 2011 report *Local Heroes: A study of the economic, financial and social significance of the independent grocery retail sector* can be considered accordant with other types of Irish family owned and run SMEs, such as Ballymaloe Cookery School (Power, 2011). The report found that in contrast to foreign owned retailers, Irish owned and run retail grocery shops create a multiplier effect whereby, more jobs are created and sustained, more investment, employment and service provisions are established in the local community, support for Irish suppliers is greater, and a greater return to the Irish economy on every euro spent is generated (Power, 2011). The findings of this study suggest a similar effect of Ballymaloe Cookery School in East Cork.

When asked what other enterprises can learn from Ballymaloe Cookery School, a local business owner stated that:

*The most important thing is that they themselves would have to be able to promote themselves, in order to promote what they do. You would also have to have the pleasant way of doing it, the encouraging way of doing it, the helpful way of doing it. That would be the way to bring them success* (2B).

When asked the same question, another participant not from the locality stated that other enterprises could learn the following:

*Good ingredients and get to know your neighbours, and who your customers are* (7G).

Her sentiments suggest that knowing one’s neighbours is beneficial when doing business in a rural setting. This hints at the importance of hospitality to the day to day activities at Ballymaloe Cookery School. Another local food producer describes the circumstances under which he came to sell his produce at Ballymaloe:
This year I’ve an awful lot of carrots. I just came here on Friday. One conversation led to the other and it led to the carrots and he said look, bring them along and if we can sell them, we’ll sell them, and if you can’t, you can’t. I said grand. Much appreciated (6F).

Again, this quotation supports evidence which suggests a high level of embeddedness in place at Ballymaloe Cookery School. When a business is socially embedded within an area, success experienced by the business may extend to others in the wider community. The high level to which Ballymaloe Cookery School is embedded within the local community implies its integration within the local environment on a social and an economic level. Produce sourced locally, goods sold locally, wages spent locally, all contribute to this effect. In sustaining local businesses, local community is also reinforced. Employees and visitors to Ballymaloe Cookery School utilise local businesses and services, and in doing so create and maintain demand for them, and reduce the risk of their closure. Examples of how rural communities in Ireland have been under stress in recent years include closures of rural post offices and Garda stations. Many rural areas across Ireland have suffered from population decline as outward migration to Dublin and overseas has become commonplace. As discussed, Ballymaloe Cookery School has enabled people to remain living in East Cork. The next section looks at the tourism supported by the cookery school, and the visitors it has attracted to the area.

4.3.4 Tourism supported by Ballymaloe Cookery School

Though Ballymaloe Cookery School is engaged in education, it is, at its core, a hospitality business. As evidenced by the primary research, tourism in the East Cork region is boosted by the presence and profile of Ballymaloe Cookery School. When asked about the local impact of the cookery school, four respondents used the phrase: putting East Cork on the map. According to the following respondents:

You’d associate the cookery school with East Cork (10J).

East Cork is very hard to imagine without Ballymaloe (8H).
I'd say it's undoubtedly put Shanagarry on the map (5E).

It's a kind of infrastructure within East Cork that is purely concentrated in Ballymaloe (121).

These quotations make reference to the centrality of the cookery school to the surrounding area. One respondent considers the area inconceivable without the cookery school, while another respondent points to the abundant local natural resources that support the school's existence and help to create an ideal tourist destination:

In East Cork, you have the seaside. You have agriculture. You have everything there (121).

The above interviewee points to the local natural resources that are for her an obvious local asset, attracting people to the area. The school's location and climate further combine to add to its appeal as a tourist destination. Geographer Denis Cosgrove in his seminal book, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (1984) argues that landscape is an ideological concept. For him, landscape serves as a way in which people distinguish themselves and their world via an imagined relationship with nature. In her analysis of rural development in Ireland, Macken-Walsh (2009) found that Irish farmers and fishers assigned a strong social and cultural attachment to their occupation, and ascribed value to the networks, norms and practices underpinning their livelihoods. Food is traditionally associated with a strong sense of place. Particular landscapes are associated with specific foods and cultural heritage. *Terroir* refers to the relationship between a food or drink and the environment in which it is produced (Coulon *et al.*, 2004). The dynamism of the landscape local to Ballymaloe Cookery School can be observed in the following paintings from local artist Niall McCarthy. They each form a seasonal depiction of the same field which is located close to Ballymaloe Cookery School.
All paintings by East Cork based artist Niall McCarthy (with permission).
Ballymaloe Cookery School capitalises on its environmental, social and cultural distinctiveness. The school has an ethos of good fresh food, prepared simply. Associated with this is knowledge and understanding of good ingredients. Before the current trend in using foraged foods, herbs, seaweeds and fermented foods, these ingredients and methods were taught at the cookery school. As described by Darina Allen (1995, p. 7):

*In Myrtle Allen I found a cook who believed in following the seasons, growing her own herbs - at a time when it was far from fashionable - and using the bounty of her farm and the Cork countryside to the full. She wrote her menus every day, according to what was best in the garden, and what came in from the fishing boats in Ballycotton.*

Historically, wild foods that were relied upon as a vital source of food during the time of the Great Famine became labelled ‘famine foods’ and were negatively associated with hunger and starvation (Sexton in Allen, 1995). According to Bharucha and Pretty (2010), foraged foods are an important source of food for over 300 million people worldwide. They argue that the importance of foraged foods in terms of its relevance for global food supply, as well as food sovereignty and culture is frequently underestimated (2010). An appreciation for Ireland’s culinary tradition and food heritage has prevailed at Ballymaloe Cookery School. While hospitality has long been synonymous with Irish culture, Ireland has not historically been known for its food. Ireland experienced a concerted growth in tourism during the 1950s with the establishment of the Irish Tourism Board, Bord Fáilte. Tourism benefits from the protection of distinctive cultural forms, of which food is a part. Food is thus, a tourism resource (Hjalager and Richards, 2002). Overall, study respondents expressed a difficulty in imagining the local area without the presence of Ballymaloe Cookery School. Shanagarry is a small rural location. Visitors to the area stand to make an impact that is significant. It is clear that Ballymaloe Cookery School attracts short term and longer term students, as well as their relatives and friends, in addition to visitors who travel to visit the cookery school, its shop and gardens. As considered by one respondent (10J), the school is itself a *destination*. One interviewee stated:

*If you read any tourist guide for Ireland, Ballymaloe is in there as a must-see (8H).*
Asker et al. (2010) highlight the potential for tourism rooted in the community to benefit the three pillars of sustainability, bringing about social, environmental and economic gains in the locality. Ballymaloe Cookery School has brought about micro-, meso- and macro-economic benefits to the local rural economy. According to a report by Deegan (2014), the twelve week course at Ballymaloe Cookery School when fully subscribed, typically generates revenues of €1.925 million annually. A family member employed at the cookery school stated that:

For the last few years we have been very close to full and full for most of the courses. With the economy now turning around, those courses seem to be booking up quite early but we’re never quite sure until we start and we have our sixty two students or our sixty four students but thankfully, now for the moment they’re filling up quickly (2011).

A more recent report states that profits during 2015 rose to €2.58 million (Taylor, 2016). Study respondents drew attention to the spin-off tourism activities that the cookery school supports. Many local businesses depend on visitors to the cookery school due to the aforementioned multiplier effect of buying locally and re-spending in the local area. Visitors come to Ballymaloe Cookery School and then take in other sights and pursuits while they are in the area. This is inclusive of services and amenities such as the shops and the petrol station, but also enterprises directly engaging in tourism such as local tour companies. Local people also contribute to this effect. As stated by Darina Allen:

I've mentioned the money that foreign students use, the money they contribute in terms of fees, in terms of accommodation, in terms of the money that they spend in the local area, also the money that students spend when they're here for twelve weeks at a time. It's the money that they spend in the local area, in the local pubs, going out fishing, going out to see Ballycotton Lighthouse, in the local restaurants, etc. I know local people would say also that the school hugely contributes to the economy of the local village (1A).

Similar sentiments are conveyed by this family member and manager at the school:

Aside from employment, we bring quite a lot of money into the local economy. We attract about 2,000 students altogether over the year. That's 2,000 people who just wouldn't be here otherwise. The main thing would be the fact that 180 of those
are here for three months at a time. They spend money in the local shop. They spend money in the local pubs. They spend money in the supermarkets in Midleton. Their friends come and they stay in different hotels. So like any tourist destination, we’re providing. A lot of things have changed in the local area since the school has opened. I’m not sure how many of them I could attribute directly to the cookery school but definitely, for the local shop and the local pub, our students, particularly our twelve week students would be important. They would take into account the fact that they would be assuming that a certain number of students would be showing up and saying, we’re going to go for a drink. They’re going to be different people, but they’re going to be there all the time. It’s like an extra population but they just happen to be different people all the time. And because we’re all year round, that business is all year round. Say with university towns, they’re not there in the summer but our students really are there all year round (201).

This quotation shows the economic benefits that tourism brings to the area with visitors from elsewhere. As a large proportion of tourist expenditure generally is on food and drink, local pubs, restaurants and cafes also benefit from visitors to the area. This combination of tourist offerings makes up a tourist experience and destination. This respondent, a past student at the school synopsises the way she views it:

Shanagarry is tiny and the locals seem delighted when they see the new students arriving, especially in the winter, when there is less tourism. All the students go to the local food markets, pubs and shops so it’s definitely bringing revenue to the local economy. The local taxi driver is so busy with all the students (41).

Again, this respondent highlights the seasonal aspect to tourism in the area and considers the cookery school a draw for visitors when other attractions are not at their peak. When interviewed, Darina Allen referred to: the PR value in what we are doing...at the cookery school. She considers this part of the local economic impact of the school. The school is conveniently located about 38kms from Cork city and served by Cork International Airport. The visitors that the cookery school attracts go far beyond the boundaries of local. Many
respondents made reference to the international appeal of the school. As this male respondent stated:

*There’s a huge amount of overseas students coming over to it. They’re in a great place to promote Ireland* (2B).

The cookery school has attracted students from across the globe. In Holden (2014), Darina Allen described the influx of students at Ballymaloe in positive terms.

*It makes our little village very cosmopolitan.*

This respondent takes a more moderate view, stating that:

*Locals have to adapt and live with the students coming to their businesses* (4D).

Local impacts of the cookery school can be understood in terms such as visitor numbers, but also in the creation of an image of a locale, one now strongly associated with good food. The overwhelming sentiment regarding the school expressed by respondents was positive. This is evident in the remarks of this respondent who has been associated with the school for many years:

*What could I say about the whole Ballymaloe Cookery School, there’s a huge spin-off up there. I mean, there’s a pile of people depending on it for making a living and there’s a lot of goodwill in the locality for it. Yea. And long may it last* (2B).

In summary, Ballymaloe Cookery School therefore, has supported the development of a unique tourist destination in East Cork, one associated with good food, and that attracts visitors from near and far for short visits, as well as longer stays. This creates significant local employment and expenditure in the region. Tourism, therefore, can be considered a positive impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School in the local hinterland.

4.4 Summary
A number of significant findings have been identified, and discussed, in this chapter. The findings reveal that necessity was the dominant circumstance under which the cookery school was established in 1983. Operating as a horticultural producer in East Cork at that time was insufficient to support a household with a young family. Though farm diversification was not supported by government, members of the Allen family looked at their own strengths and resources before establishing Ballymaloe Cookery School. The cookery school's formation as a family business benefitted from the reputation of the well-established Ballymaloe House, and the social capital provided by family members nearby. The family aspect of the business extends to staff and students at the school, creating a unique atmosphere and workplace environment. The pre-existing ethos of Ballymaloe House further lent a foundation to the cookery school. Adopting this ethos, in addition to its provision of culinary learning, on the site of 100 acres of organic gardens and farmland, Ballymaloe Cookery School has carved a niche offering in the context of culinary education worldwide. Though this thesis set out to explore the local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School, the findings point to the enormity of the widespread impact Ballymaloe Cookery School continues to make, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Ballymaloe Cookery School can be considered a unique Alternative Food Network (AFN), engaging with many others making efforts to challenge the dominance of the globalised industrial food system. The findings demonstrate that the school is a site of advocacy and food activism. Rooted in the ethos of the school, small and artisan food producers have been championed for decades. Study respondents identified a recent surge in interest in food growing and issues regarding sustainability, which reflects analysis in the literature review (e.g. Valeria et al., 2013). The literature review also evidenced a widespread increase in enrolments in cookery programmes. Sustaining its ethos and business viability over thirty three years, the school has slowly extended but remains small. It maintains a culture of innovation, and accordingly, it has stayed competitive in an increasingly crowded market for private culinary education. Its reputation means that the school attracts custom from Ireland and internationally. The accolades and awards that the school and its staff have received are further recognition of its far reaching success.

The findings affirm that the local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School in the East Cork region has been significant and varied. Employment generated by the school was found to include both direct employment at the school, in addition to indirect job creation in the local
area. Study participants emphasised the economic benefit that this brings. Ballymaloe Cookery School employs long-term full time staff, in addition to others who work on a part-time basis at the school. Flexible working arrangements have benefitted local women and suit the human resource requirements of the school. The findings support the idea that the cookery school is highly embedded in the local community. It has been crucial to the support of local food producers, and the vitality of the rural hinterland. Other benefits of Ballymaloe Cookery School in the locality have included the development of tourism. The cookery school attracts a resident population of students that benefit service providers in the region, particularly at times when tourist numbers are otherwise low. Finally, educational outreach conducted at the school, in particular, the East Cork Slow Food Educational Project, is viewed as a positive intervention orchestrated by the school. The educational outreach is considered a counterpoint to widespread concerns about the loss of cooking skills, low levels of knowledge regarding how food is produced, and associated concerns surrounding the diet of young children in Ireland at present. Chapter Five concludes the thesis.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to analyse the business at Ballymaloe Cookery School and to ascertain the local impact of the school in the rural sub-county region of East Cork since its inception in 1983. To achieve this, twenty semi-structured interviews were conducted, in addition to a thorough review of existing literature. What has become apparent, through undertaking this research, is that Ballymaloe Cookery School has, and continues to be, a watershed for private culinary education in Ireland. The study addresses business development in a regional setting and demonstrates that the establishment of Ballymaloe Cookery School is a good example of crisis creating opportunity. It is clear that Ballymaloe Cookery School exemplifies a distinct model of private culinary education and operates as a family business with a strong consistent ethos which attracts clientele from across the globe. Overwhelmingly, respondents spoke favourably about Ballymaloe Cookery School and what it means for the locality. This suggests confirmation of the view that community is critical to the success of rural businesses, and that rural businesses are critical to the success of rural communities. Over time, the cookery school has become more complex, structured and diverse. The thesis examines its evolution and the response of its management to competition. Analysis of Ballymaloe Cookery School provides a useful example of the ongoing transformation of food-related media, food culture, and, culture in a broader context. The primary research supports the claim that Ballymaloe Cookery School plays an important role in East Cork by providing employment opportunities for many. Its ability to attract visitors to the East Cork region has been a critical factor in the success of the school to date. The school has for decades supported local producers, and small artisan producers elsewhere. Given the evidence presented, Ballymaloe Cookery School has improved the economic stability of the rural community in East Cork and its surrounding farming enterprises.

In summary, the primary research suggests that the cookery school has a strong local presence in the locality in which it is highly embedded. It can be concluded that Ballymaloe Cookery School is a valuable asset to East Cork, both in terms of its economic contribution, but also the values it promotes across the region, nationally and internationally. The following section will
outline the potential areas and recommendations for future research arising from the study findings.

5.2 Recommendations for Further Research

This section draws on key findings identified in Chapter Four to make a number of recommendations for both practice and future research. A comprehensive economic investigation into the revenue generated by the cookery school directly and indirectly in the East Cork region would be worthwhile. Further research, quantitative in nature would be useful to assess the impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School on the local economy using economic indicators. This would be considered useful to the business itself, in garnering media attention and public interest. Though the findings of this study present a snapshot of the creation and development of a rural SME, quantitative data regarding the economic impact of SMEs would also be useful to inform policy regarding the support of SMEs in rural locations. The qualitative findings of this study would augment such research.

It is further recommended that this type of study be conducted in other sites of culinary education. The findings of this study indicate that further research is required to understand other models of culinary education. Replicating this study in other private and public institutions would provide greater insights into the relationship between them. Implementing this study in other countries would also generate useful comparative data. A similar study into the business and local impacts of other enterprises engaged in culinary education to compare the impact of food tourism on regions elsewhere would also prove useful to our understanding of food heritage development.

This study addressed the dearth of research on culinary education in Ireland. A further recommendation for future research resultant from this study is to further an understanding of the ways knowledge is gained about food. This includes the role the media plays in such learning, emergence of food trends, and how they are driven. Such research could benefit health promotion and policymakers alike. Though this study touched on matters relating to traditional skills of food production, food preparation, cooking, and other forms of knowledge included in what Darina Allen calls forgotten skills, there is scope for further exploration of the topic. Speaking at the Artisan Food Symposium at University College Cork (2015), Darina
Allen put forward a suggestion that an archive of such skills in Ireland be compiled which could be a record of the kinds of skills that can be lost in one generation. This could include mixed media such as video, audio footage, photographs, recipes and more. Her suggestion was that it could serve as a social history, much like the RTE television documentary series *Hands*, a six part series made during the 1970s and 1980s featuring Irish craft workers.

Though the findings of this research suggest that the educational outreach conducted by Ballymaloe Cookery School is a positive intervention and makes a case for food growing activity in schools, there are evidence gaps regarding outcomes of food growing activity in schools more generally. There is an insufficient evidence base to state that food growing activity in schools leads to health benefits of those involved, environmental awareness of those engaged in the activity, continued participation in such activities, and other expected outcomes. Further research to investigate these effects would be worthwhile. Food growing projects that engage young children and/or take place in schools are now commonplace internationally. However, the specific outcomes of such projects have not been extensively researched. Empirical research of this nature would be useful to provide more detailed and accurate data, set baselines against which improvement can be measured, and establish national targets for food growing in schools. This is needed for the development of effective food growing projects for young children, and to demonstrate their benefits to potential funding organisations and supporters.

Finally, there are a number of potential contributions to further research stemming from this thesis, as outlined above. Such research includes economic analysis, research in the field of education and social history, in addition to measuring the impact of food growing projects for young children. A number of recommendations, based on the findings of this research, can also be made for practice. The next section outlines such recommendations.

5.3 Recommendations for Practice

This research should be useful to Ballymaloe Cookery School as it forms an external examination of the business and its local impact. It can be recommended, therefore, that the findings of this thesis be communicated effectively to staff at the cookery school. Given the positive nature of the findings overall, this external snapshot should boost morale. It may also
serve as a starting point for internal analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the business, in addition to its own strategic planning. Changing trends in the hospitality business make it a competitive industry. Though the findings affirm that Ballymaloe Cookery School is a highly innovative business, looking forward, further innovation is deemed necessary.

Much discussion of succession planning exists in the literature on family business. Responses from study participants demonstrated the centrality of one individual, co-founder Darina Allen to the business. Additionally, respondents emphasised the strength of the team of staff at the school. As proffered by study respondents, Darina Allen has been a driving force behind Ballymaloe Cookery School from its outset. Though she herself expressed a positive attitude towards her continued input at the school, and made reference to the fact that her brother and co-founder Rory O'Connell is many years her junior, it is recommended that a clear plan of succession is in place. This holds implications for management, but also branding at the school.

There is strong evidence of positive outcomes to the educational outreach conducted at Ballymaloe Cookery School. This makes a compelling case for food growing activity having a place within schools and communities at large. Expansion of the East Cork Slow Food Educational Project is recommended on this basis. One caveat, however, are the implications for funding and capacity. There is currently a waiting list of schools who wish to become involved in the East Cork Slow Food Educational Project.

These recommendations regarding future practice have emerged from the study. Further dissemination of findings will take the form of publication in peer reviewed journals and presentation at relevant conferences. The next section looks at limitations of this research.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

Some study limitations which relate to the methodological approach taken are discussed in Chapter Three. This section reflects upon the limitations of the entire research process.

In the case of qualitative research, there can be limitations regarding research validity and reliability. A small sample size makes it difficult to make wider generalisations. Thus, the extent
to which the data is applicable in places other than where the study took place, or under the conditions the study took place is limited.

Referencing a sample of twenty interviewees, the central concepts of interest in this study are context specific and occur at a local level. The strong regional focus of the study may limit its impact, though the findings may also have resonance elsewhere. In order to minimise issues regarding validity, input was sought from a diverse sample which included: family members, current and former employees, suppliers to the school, former students, and a local political representative. Ten of the twenty study respondents are current employees at Ballymaloe Cookery School. It is important to note that this may have influenced the information they provided when interviewed. Conducting any kind of research, it is desirable to gain as comprehensive a study as possible. This can require scale. However, the use of semi-structured interviews proved effective in gaining in-depth and meaningful data from the interviewees.

As is the case generally, this study does not exist in a vacuum but in a continuum of other studies. Despite the recognition of limitations to the research, the findings and analysis remain a robust contribution to knowledge. This is discussed further in the next section.

5.5 Overall Contribution to Knowledge

The findings of this study have implications for both practice and future research, as previously discussed in this chapter. It is hoped that the findings of this research will provide new insights for a number of disciplines. The academic fields of food studies, culinary education, and tourism and hospitality span many disciplines. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach is beneficial. This thesis should be considered a welcome addition to the growing field of food studies, which is inherently interdisciplinary. A need for further research on the topics of food and culinary education, and family business was identified in the literature review in Chapter Two. Private cookery schools are a relatively recent phenomenon. Though Ballymaloe Cookery School is well represented in media discourse, the school has not been under scrutiny in academic literature such as peer-reviewed journals. This is broadly true to state of other private cookery schools and models of culinary education also. Consequently, this study represents a way in which Ballymaloe
Cookery School is the subject of academic study and thus makes a contribution to knowledge.

The findings of this research add to knowledge and make a contribution to current debates surrounding alternative food networks (AFNs), as dealt with in the literature review. The findings demonstrate that Ballymaloe Cookery School exemplifies a truly alternative model of culinary education. They are pertinent to the literature, given the level of embeddedness of the cookery school in the East Cork region, and the range of activities conducted at the school which aim to reconfigure the production, distribution, and consumption of food. Many other examples of AFNs in the literature are situated in USA and UK contexts. This study adds an Irish example to this currently active space of academic discourse.

This research comprises a resource for those wanting to learn more about the evolution of Irish food and cooking. As the findings suggest, Ballymaloe Cookery School has been seminal in the context of food and education in Ireland. Its influence and acclaim has also been recognised abroad. The findings demonstrate that the cookery school has been an inspiration to entrepreneurs who have established enterprises with a similar ethos to that of Ballymaloe, and cookery schools with a similar business structure. This original research may be of assistance to tourism and hospitality managers in the development of comprehensive and effective strategic marketing plans. It may also interest those preparing or amending culinary education programmes elsewhere, and for those considering setting up a cookery school/rural enterprise/family business or seeking to exploit relevant opportunities within their existing enterprise. This research can also serve as an encouragement to potential rural food entrepreneurs and activists engaging in matters pertaining to issues of food justice.

Finally, this study contributes to the field of Family Business Studies as it depicts an example of family business within the sector and demonstrates that specific branding opportunities can be availed of. It is clear that in keeping with the findings of previous literature, Ballymaloe Cookery School benefits from its social capital, and other unique characteristics of family businesses. This research further adds to the literature on Tourism and Hospitality Studies, Tourism and Rural Development, and the current canon of food innovation.
5.6 Overall Conclusion

The findings and analysis provide a critical exploration of the business of Ballymaloe Cookery School and its local impact, specifically addressing how the business emerged, its key characteristics, and how the school has evolved since its inception. Additionally, this study establishes what the impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School has been on the local East Cork region, specifically, the changes that have emerged locally as a result of the activities of Ballymaloe Cookery School, and the type of employment the cookery school has brought about.

This qualitative study is based on contributions from twenty semi-structured interviews. Employing grounded theory to analyse the data, the results of this study represent new and significant contributions to academic knowledge in a number of areas. In answering the research question regarding how the business emerged, the findings reveal that the cookery school was first established out of necessity, as Darina Allen and her family sought to make a living on their family farm at a time when deriving income from horticultural production in Ireland was increasingly challenging. In analysing the key characteristics of the business, the findings contend that the cookery school is rooted in its status as a family business and the unique ethos that underpins all activities at the school. An objective of the study was to consider the implications of such a manner of working, and the findings suggest that these attributes have influenced the establishment of Ballymaloe Cookery School as a premium brand, with a reputation for high quality and consistent standards, but also a culture of innovation. The family business aspect of the school is considered central to its everyday activities, including the management of the business and the hospitality offered to its students and guests. Study respondents consider the family business dimension key to the establishment of a pleasant workplace environment for its many employees. Many members of staff who have worked at the cookery school on a long term basis are testament to this.

Furthermore, the ethos of Ballymaloe Cookery School, which corresponds to that of Ballymaloe House, is a holistic approach to food, its production and preparation. High quality ingredients that are fresh, local and seasonal are at the heart of this. The ethos and location of Ballymaloe Cookery School on organic gardens and farmland have set it apart from other private cookery schools, and sites of culinary education. Unusually, the first recipe taught to students on the twelve week certificate course is how to make compost. Though initially, when
the cookery school was first established, these ideals were uncommon for the time, increasingly, an appreciation of such values has become more prevalent. This is a key message of the thesis. Though environmentally sound methods of food production were at the core of its early values, its move towards organic certification in 1996 is one example of how the school has evolved over time. A widespread desire for a reconnection with food, as observed by study participants, correlates with the development of a wider food movement of which Darina Allen is an identifiable leader.

With this in mind, it is timely to acknowledge within academia, the seminal role of Ballymaloe Cookery School. Though Ballymaloe Cookery School was not viewed as outwardly political by study respondents, a nuanced reading of the primary data revealed that numerous activities at the cookery school, as referred to by study participants, engage with issues of food justice, advocacy and activism. Darina Allen has been progressive in seizing the opportunity to reach out to people in ways that would be more difficult to do on more explicitly political platforms. Ballymaloe Cookery School offers an alternative in culinary education, one that provides professional training for industry, but additionally, it creates a space for the critical exploration of alternatives to dominant structures in the food industry. The aforementioned diverse and entrepreneurial career paths of many of its growing body of past students in its thirty three years of existence similarly reflect this. So too does the educational outreach conducted at the school. Both contribute to the suggestion that Ballymaloe Cookery School can be considered an alternative food network and that this is a key characteristic of the school. This finding runs throughout the thesis and represents an important insight into the evolution of Ballymaloe Cookery School over thirty three years in business. The work borne out of the school has been considered in light of the literature on alternative food networks. Though earlier discussion examined the contested concept of AFNs, it is generally accepted that AFNs are united as processes which set out to challenge the dominant practices of the prevailing industrial food system. The problems associated with this system provide an impetus for an understanding of AFNs.

The findings further reveal that the school facilitates a network of former students and supports a thriving network of small scale artisan food producers. Many small-scale food producers in the Cork area continue to be championed by Ballymaloe Cookery School. In this way, the school forms a locus of good food in Ireland. The findings also reveal that the work carried out by Darina Allen at Ballymaloe Cookery School has changed the way Irish food is viewed. This
includes the manner in which Irish people consider Irish food, in addition to the perception of Irish food abroad. This is significant firstly, because the former reputation of Irish food was poor, and secondly, because Ireland is dependent on its agri-food sector, as discussed in Chapter Two. The study analysis considers the relationship between Ballymaloe Cookery School and the Slow Food Movement, another alternative food network. The underpinning ethos at the school is allied to that of Slow Food, and has remained consistent over time. Though constant innovation takes place at the school, as influenced by collaboration, travel, seasonal factors, competition, and market demand, changes at the school overall have been minor and have taken place incrementally. An expressed commitment to innovation at the school overrides concerns regarding risk or failure.

Furthermore, this study set out to assess the local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School, as drawn from the findings of the primary research. The research has shown that the participation of the cookery school in the East Cork region is of major local economic benefit. The findings make reference to the minutiae of what this means as study respondents identified individual cases where local people and businesses gain from its presence in the locality. Employment was the most commonly cited local impact of the school and deemed by study respondents to be its main economic impact. The findings and analysis consider the reasons why employment at the cookery school has been particularly suited to local women. Study participants expressed a belief that employees at the school derive a high level of satisfaction from their work there. This is supported by evident staff loyalty and low staff turnover at the school. Chapter Four highlighted ways in which the work environment at the school differs to norms prevalent in the food industry. Furthermore, it can be concluded that Ballymaloe Cookery School is highly embedded within the local community in the East Cork region. The impact of the support for local food producers at Ballymaloe Cookery School should not be underestimated. Ballymaloe Cookery School has improved the economic stability of its rural community and local farming enterprises. This conclusion is supported by the level of employment of local people at the school, the sourcing of ingredients locally, the centrality of Ballymaloe Cookery School and key members of its staff to Midleton Farmers’ Market, and its ongoing advocacy and support for local food producers.

Additionally, the findings reveal that tourism generated and supported by the cookery school has a positive local impact. Ballymaloe Cookery School is a specific destination for food tourism. This in turn creates a broader ripple effect, leading to further tourism expenditure in
the locality. Educational outreach conducted at the school, the East Cork Slow Food Educational Project, in particular, was deemed a further aspect of the local impact of the cookery school. This particular finding is significant given the expressed concern for children's health, changes to family life, the transfer of cooking skills and the loss of such skills, in addition to the identified link between education and social change. In conclusion, this thesis holds that Ballymaloe Cookery School has made a positive impact not only locally, but also nationally and internationally. It seems certain that the school will continue to be in the vanguard of food production and culinary education in East Cork and beyond for many years to come.
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Appendix 1

External Recognition of Success

2014


2013

*30 Years at Ballymaloe* won the Bord Gais Avonmore Cookbook of the Year 2013. Darina Allen was the 2013 recipient of The Guild of Food Writers (UK) ‘Lifetime Achievement Award’ for her contribution to culinary education. Darina Allen was awarded the 2013 Tia Maria Woman of the Year Award in association with Hi Magazine. The cookery school was awarded the Good Food Ireland Cookery School of the Year for 2012/13. Rory O’ Connell was named Good Food Ireland Ambassador of the Year. His book, *Master It*, won the Simon Andre Award.

2011

Ballymaloe Cookery School was awarded the 2011 Jose Navarro Foundation Award at the Premios Verdes Awards in Valencia in the modality of Business in the Field of Restoration. Forgotten Skills was also a shortlisted finalist for the I.A.C.P. Cookbook Awards 2011.

2010

In 2010 Darina Allen’s book *Forgotten Skills*, won the Andre Simon Food Book of the Year Award and the Listowel Food Fair Book of the Year Award. The Irish Tourism Industry Restaurants Association of Ireland Mike Butt Award 2010 was presented to Darina Allen. This is presented annually to people who have a positive effect on tourism in Ireland.

2008

Darina Allen was awarded the 2008 Cooking for Solutions Conservation Leadership Award Chef of the Year from the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California.

2007

Darina Allen was awarded the Euro-Toques Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Culinary Sector in 2007.

2006

Darina Allen’s cookbook *Easy Entertaining* (published by Kyle Cathie in 2006) won the I.A.C.P. Cookbook Award. The titles Cork Business Person of the Month and Cork Business Woman of the Month were bestowed upon Darina Allen in January 2006.
2005

Ballymaloe Cookery School is accredited by the International Association of Culinary Professionals (I.A.C.P.) and Darina Allen is a certified I.A.C.P. teacher. She was awarded the I.A.C.P. International Cooking Teacher of the Year Award in 2005.

2003

Darina Allen was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Ulster at Coleraine in 2003 for her contribution to Irish Cuisine and Irish Hospitality.

2001

Darina Allen was the Veuve Clicquot Business Woman of the Year 2001.

2000

Darina Allen was the 2000 winner of the Waterford Wedgewood Hospitality Award.

1996

Darina Allen was awarded the SEI (Societa Edictrice Nationale) prize for food and wine culture from the Premio Langhe Ceretto in Italy for the book *Irish Traditional Cooking* and the Langhe Ceretto Prize in 1996.

1993

Darina Allen was pronounced the Laois Person of the Year in 1993.

1992

The 1992 Gilbey’s Gold Medal for Catering Excellence was jointly awarded to Myrtle and Darina Allen.

Darina Allen is a member of the Consultation Council of the FSAI. She chairs the Artisan Food Council which liaises with the FSAI regarding the Artisan and Speciality food sector. Darina Allen is a member of The Taste Council of Ireland. She is a trustee of the Irish Organic Centre and a patron of Irish Seed Savers. She is also a member of Eurotoques (European Association of Chefs), the Guild of Food Writers in Ireland and the UK, and the IACP (International Association of Culinary Professionals). Darina Allen has written for *The Irish Examiner* newspaper since 1998.
Interview Guide One

• What were your personal motives or goals when starting up the business?

• What has been the *direct* local economic impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School?

• What has been the *indirect* economic local impact of Ballymaloe Cookery School?

• What is the Unique Selling Point (USP) or Point of Difference of the school?

• What other impacts has the school had locally?

• How can the success of the cookery school be measured?

• Before concluding the interview, is there anything you would like to add?