Culture on a Plate:
The Social Construction of Authenticity in Food Culture

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ABSTRACT

This study uses three case studies to show how authenticity is fabricated in food culture. Conceptualizing food as a cultural product makes possible the analysis of social processes through food. In doing so, food becomes a mirror reflecting the happenings within the broader social world. This study examines three empirical cases to sociologically understand food culture: southern barbeque, *Top Chef*, and ramps and quinoa. Southern barbeque allows the examination of the role of fabricated authenticity within food culture. *Top Chef* is evidence of how chefs actively produce distinction to legitimate their position and status within the field. Ramps and quinoa are examples of two ingredients that have been exploited from their original context to become elite and mainstream ingredients without concern for the consequences to the people who relied on them in the quest for the exotic. Together these cases provide examples of how research on the fabrication of authenticity and impression management can be expanded to include food.

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MOVING BEYOND HUNGER AND OBESITY: THE STUDY OF FOOD AS A CULTURAL PRODUCT

> "To learn what has gone on in the kitchen and the dining room—and what still goes on there—is to discover much about a society's physical health, its economic condition, its race relations, its class structure, and the status of its women" – John Egerton

Why do barbecue restaurants claim to be authentic? Why does it matter that confederate flags are flown at barbecue competitions dominated by white men? Why have television producers and audiences become obsessed with cooking competition shows? Do those shows have any impact on the chef participants? On the audience? Why have obscure ingredients that are available for less than a month and must be foraged cause a stir when they appear and how can they appear on menus in California when they are grown in the Appalachian Mountains? These are just a few of the multitude of questions we can ask about food, but the most important question is why should we study food? Ozersky explains "food is not just food anymore" (2010, p. 1). Food, as a cultural product, is embedded within a complex social and cultural structure, food culture, itself is nestled within and reflective of broader social and cultural contours of any given society. The study of food provides insight into broader social phenomenon.

The past twenty years have witnessed a rise in research on food, the birth of a dozen food studies programs, and the rise of multiple academic organizations whose sole purpose is to improve the study of food (Reynolds and Ageyman 2015). However, outside of these niches the study of food as an academic endeavor is almost always accompanied by a required set of justifications or explanations of why it is important to study food. Most recent food scholarship goes beyond research on hunger (Fox, Hamilton, and Lin 2004; Poppendieck 2010; Townsend et al. 2001) and obesity (Barnes 2010; Thomas 2008) to a more complete agenda of food as a cultural project embedded with local meanings and traditions. Southern scholars, through the Southern Foodways Alliance program housed at the University of Mississippi, dominate contemporary research on food as a cultural product. The expansive work undertaken by this organization has provided the foundation for other researchers to study food as a cultural product within and beyond the confines of the southern United States, with the overarching goal of being able to study food without having to first justify why food is a viable research topic (Edge, Engelhardt, and Ownby 2013).

This project aims to further this research on food as a cultural product by expanding the notion of a larger "food culture", taking significant cues from the sociological literature on culture and inequality. Grounding food culture in this broader literature facilitates the use of food as a mirror for broader sociological processes. Drawing from multiple empirical instances where food and food processes illuminate this larger food culture makes it possible to cover multiple forms of data, because food does not appear in one form. It is an omnipresent aspect of society that can be conceptualized in a multitude of ways ranging from local foodways, labor and agricultural problems, underlying inequalities in the production of food, to various health-related issues of having too much or not enough food. While it would be ideal to conduct a project addressing all of these issues at once, such a project is not feasible. Instead this project selects three cases exhibiting multiple underlying social processes and compares them to expand existing theoretical frames to include the production of authenticity via impression management within food culture.

Doing so allows us to gain deeper insight on social processes through the study of a cultural project that exists in everyone's life. Unlike other cultural projects people can live without music, art, or theater but no living thing can survive without food. Three individual cases will be studied based on the social processes they represent. The first, southern barbeque represents the balance between inequality and local foodways. This case is studied using oral history data collected by the Southern Foodways Alliance to examine how barbeque chefs discuss the uniqueness of barbeque and their experiences with inequality as chefs in the south. The second case study focuses on *Top Chef*, a cooking competition show, where the chefs work to distinguish themselves from their competitors through status markers and stylistic innovation to construct a layer of legitimation over their social positions. This case is studied by conducting a content analysis of three seasons of the show, to explore how chefs talk about their backgrounds, stylistic choices, and positioning to confer distinction on their work with food. The third case will focus on the rising popularity of two specific ingredients - ramps and quinoa - to explore how globalization and inequality shape the ease of access to varying ingredients used in mainstream food culture. To examine this case, an analysis of the rise of these ingredients will be conducted using periodical food writing about ramps and quinoa in order to trace to rise of these ingredients within the United States and around the world while accounting (or not) for the problems experienced by those who traditionally relied on these products.

FOOD AS A SOCIOLOGICAL CONCERN

Beginning in 1996, college and universities throughout the U.S. began creating Food Studies programs. Since then over a dozen institutions have created such programs or concentrations premised on the idea food is never reducible to what appears on a plate; it is a complex set of interactions around labor, culture, industry, inequality, etc., coming together to determine what we eat on a daily basis. These programs have gone beyond a purely academic focus to include involvement in the food movement, efforts to change school lunches, engaging questions of the relationship between genetically modified organisms and food insecurity, among many others. Analyzing food systems goes beyond understanding food system facts to developing a more complex understanding regarding the cultural processes and social problems coalescing around food (Reynolds and Ageyman 2015). To continue the advancement of Food Studies and create a deeper understanding of food system research we must connect the current state of food to the deeper underlying cultural processes reflected in food. A concept like food culture has the potential to advance interdisciplinary research and test established theories in innovative ways.

What is Food Culture?

Food studies faces the problem of how people think about food can have little to do with the food itself (Belasco 2002). Food as a cultural product has become a popular interdisciplinary approach to the larger project of researching foods. Food as an interdisciplinary research agenda is reflected in the multiple terms used to describe the relationship between food and society, such as foodies, food culture, and foodways. Research on food must go beyond what people eat to include "how foodies talk about food, write about food, use food in public culture, make social connections through food, and how food operates as a source of status and distinction" (Johnston and Baumann 2015; p. 30). Foodies go beyond food as a product to food as a lifestyle. This subculture seeks out the authentic and exotic food as status markers and relies on measures of what constitutes authentic food (Johnston and Baumann 2010). Foodies are part of a larger culture of food and address the multiple facets of food culture by revealing the social underpinnings of food.

A key to understanding food as a cultural product is to wrestle with the larger social and cultural world in which it is embedded - the "food culture." Exploring food culture involves developing an understanding of the product, social world, consumers, and producers coalescing to create a broader food culture. The "cultural diamond" is a tool used to study the interactions

between a cultural object, producers, consumers, and the social world. Each aspect of a food culture can be mapped onto the "cultural diamond" (Griswold 2013). Although the cultural object, consumers, and producers vary between cases the patterns and interactions occurring between each element shed light on the larger social processes at work in understanding the influence food has on social life.

Foodscape, foodways, and food culture each represent ways to conceptualize the role of food in the study of social processes. A foodscape represents "a dynamic social construction that relate[s] food to specific places, people, and meanings" (Johnston and Baumann 2010, p. 3) and foodways is "shorthand for cultural processes" (Engelhardt 2013, p. 2). The use of the term foodscape offers a guiding concept to structure the study of food culture. There has been a variety of work on food, including, but not limited to: the gender biases operating in professional kitchens (Harris and Guiffre 2015), the balance between omnivorousness and distinction amongst foodies (Johnston and Baumann 2007, 2010), the media's role in constructing food narratives (Collins 2009), the role of race in the foodways of the south (Harris 2011; Opie 2008), the connection between foodways and place (Engelhardt 2011; Ferris 2015; Fitzpatrick and Willis 2015), the role of French food in structuring a gastronomic field (Ferguson 1998, 2015), labor and industry problems (Nestle 2002; Shiva 2000; 2010) and the connection between food and health both in terms of hunger (Fox, Hamilton, and Lin 2004; Poppendieck 2010; Townsend et al. 2001) and obesity (Barr 2008; Thomas 2006). Such work offers disparate insights into food culture, coming, as each study does, from its own theoretical and disciplinary framework. The study of food as a cohesive research agenda is relatively new with a majority of research occurring in the past twenty years. The relative newness of food scholarship has forced researchers in the area to justify food as an acceptable research agenda.

Food as a Field of Study: From French Cuisine to Obesity

Why was French cuisine the only haute cuisine for centuries? How do food trends like cupcakes become popular? How do food writers shape food trends? What do California produce and Southern barbecue have in common? And what do any of these things have to do with the social problems surrounding hunger, obesity, and labor? In seeking answers to these and other questions the evolution of food as a field of study has traced a changing landscape of food scholarship.

The shift from haute cuisine to omnivorous cuisine began taking place during the post World War II period. Historically French cuisine was the standard for haute cuisine (Ferguson 1998). Prestigious restaurants in New York City were run by French chefs and being seen frequenting these restaurants conveyed social capital to those patrons who could afford it. For example, Le Pavillon run by French chef Henri Soule was considered one of the most prestigious restaurants run by the best fine dining chef in the country until Soule's death in 1966 (Kamp 2006). By this point there was a counterculture restaurant gaining public attention, Chez Panisse, run by Alice Waters in Berkeley, Waters was taking traditional French techniques and relying on local, seasonal ingredients. At the same time culinary giants Julia Childs, Craig Claiborne, and James Beard were taking their French training and altering it to fit American culture. French food was being replaced by this new take on American cuisine embracing innovation while also appealing to a wide range of people, unlike haute cuisine that was exclusively upper class (Johnston and Baumann 2007; Kamp 2006). The shift in food culture continued to move away from French cuisine in favor of regional dishes from around the country and the world. Ethnic restaurants sprang up across the country while patrons who historically would have sought out haute cuisine were now searching for authentic and exotic food in fine dining restaurants and unknown hole-in-the-wall restaurants alike (Johnston and Baumann 2007). Johnston and Baumann (2007) argue this shift to omnivorousness parallels the shift in musical (Peterson and Kern 1996; Peterson 2005) and artistic (DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004) taste away from traditional high and low brow distinctions in favor of more inclusive consumption patterns. Although there have been changes in consumption patterns, industry changes continue to influence consumption choices. All as part of the broader contours of food culture.

Sax (2015) refers to industry actors as "tastemakers" who work together to guide food trends from small-scale innovations to the nationwide trends consumers seek out as sources of cultural capital. Food trends range from cupcake bakeries to Anson Mills' heritage grains to health claims regarding new "superfoods." The presence of food trends represents food not only as a form of sustenance but "a fashion item, a status symbol, and a means of exerting power" (Sax 2015, p. xiii). Food trends are not isolated occurrences suddenly appearing in the mainstream. Instead they are the product of intentional interactions between innovators, professional chefs, and industry giants - and they can significantly influence a broader food culture. For example, each year the Specialty Food Association hosts a conference and presents

awards for innovative new products. The conference is attended by small-scale producers seeking recognition for their products, for example goat farmers bring caramels made from goat's milk; producers of ethnic foods, such as salsa from Mexico or hemp seeds from Canada. Each producer hopes to be picked up by a major retailer; and industry giants including Wal-Mart, Costco, and Whole Foods each seeking new products to feature in their stores. The specialty food market generates approximately $80 billion a year (Sax 2015).

Although industry giants impact the availability of food products, food writers or "gastronomes" work to theorize and propagate food trends that appeal to specific groups. Gastronomy, as a cultural field, negotiates the production and consumption of food products by using culinary texts to convert individual activity into the collective behavior of taste communities (Johnston and Baumann 2007; Mennell 1996). Food writing ranges from industry driven trends to professional critics to popular blogs aimed at finding the hottest new foodie destination. Industry driven trends focus on venues such as the Food Network or industry produced list of the hottest new superfoods for the New Year. These appeal to a wide range of audiences and in turn boost sales for the endorsed products. Professional critics are those featured in publications such as the *New York Times* or *Bon Appetite*, publications aimed at an educated upper middle class clientele who can afford to frequent fine dining restaurants and stores such as Williams-Sonoma (Johnston and Baumann 2007). This category also includes writers such as Michael Pollan and Eric Schlosser who have been responsible for steering food movements away from fast food and corporate agriculture (see *Fast Food Nation* (2012) and *The Omnivore's Dilemma* (2006)). Popular blogs are based on more inclusive principles because there are no specific criteria for posting restaurant reviews. Websites such as Yelp and Urban Spoon make it possible for anyone to post reviews of restaurants and can be seen by anyone who looks for information on those websites (Kovacs, Carroll, and Lehman 2014). Other websites such as Chowhound are aimed specifically at foodies seeking new restaurants (Johnston and Baumann 2010). Each venue works to shape the taste of specific social groups by highlighting food trends and restaurants that may not receive enough publicity otherwise.

Another aspect of food culture is the role of local foodways. Foodways are shaped by geographical location, for example Alice Waters relied on California produce and seasonality to emphasis the uniqueness of Chez Panisse mentioned above. Foodways are defined as "the practices and customs around providing, preparing, and sharing food" (Engelhardt 2011, p. 5)

and are a significant component of a larger food culture within a given society. The United States South provides a unique lens on local foodways because food is an integral aspect of a southern identity shaped by not only the geographical location but the agrarian history and role of slaves in developing southern foodways (Egerton 1987). Local foodways impact the type of food available in an area. For example the different styles of barbeque across the south is a product of the availability of specific animals and spices leading to a shared style of cooking with regional twists on what constitutes barbeque in specific states. For example, beef dominates Texas barbeque while Carolina barbeque is dominated by pork because those were the historically available meats (Harris 2011).

Food as a cultural product cannot be studied without also acknowledging previous research looking into the social problems related to food. Although the changes and trends in food culture mentioned above are important, they do not occur in a vacuum. Over time the large-scale changes occurring around food impact the appearance and shape of a food culture. As such, this section concludes with an important, albeit brief, discussion of research on hunger, obesity, labor, and industry related problems; as well as the social movements coalescing around these problems.

Food insecurity, the lack of consistent access to food, is closely linked to social inequality and negative health outcomes. In recent years these issues are becoming more problematic and increasing in both public and scholarly discussions. One heralded solution to food insecurity is finding a way for families with limited incomes to stretch their money for food expenditures. Governmental programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP), free and reduced price lunches, and Women Infants and Children (WIC) are all widely accepted, although politically contentious, programs aimed at reducing hunger and food insecurity for members of the lower class (Fox, Hamilton, and Lin 2004). Community-based programs including soup kitchens and food pantries are another alternative to improve food access to people at the community level. At the individual level, people are free to choose what food products they spend their limited money on. However, these choices are often made with narrow perspectives of how negative (and positive) health consequences can result from strictly financial decisions about food (French 2003).

There has been a significant amount of research addressing the link between poverty, food insecurity, and nutritional outcomes. Since poverty and food insecurity determine how

much and what types of food are available, a person's health is shaped by restrictive conditions, leading to negative health consequences, often those associated with obesity (Bhattacharya, Currie, and Haider 2004). Obesity has become a global problem and is associated with numerous leading causes of death. By 2008, over one third of children were overweight or obese in the United States. Obesity is defined as having a body mass index that is larger than 30. Overweight is defined as having a body mass index that is between 25 and 30 (Barr 2008). Childhood obesity in the United States has been increasing. In 1999-2000, 13.8% of females and 14.0% of males were overweight. In 2003-2004 childhood obesity increased to 16.6% for females and 18.2% for males. Obese children are 2 to 6.5 times more likely to be obese as adults (Thomas 2006). Obesity increases the risk for numerous health problems including diabetes and heart disease. Childhood obesity increases the risk for more health problems later in life. Recent efforts have been aimed at schools to promote healthy eating in attempts to reduce the epidemic. First Lady Michelle Obama has spearheaded a campaign called Let's Move aiming to reduce childhood obesity by ensuring access to healthy and affordable food and encouraging children to be more active. This parallels the efforts of a presidential task force to solve the problem of childhood obesity (Barnes 2010).

Aside from research on hunger and obesity there is also a stream of research addressing labor and industry related problems and the subsequent slow/local food movements emerging in response to those problems. Industrial agriculture has been continuously indicted for labor problems ranging from low pay to the horrific working conditions experienced by migrant workers. One prominent example of the connection between research and social movements is the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW). The CIW has been responsible for changing tomato, strawberry, and pepper harvesting practices in Florida through partnerships with large scale retailers, such as Subway, Whole Foods, and Wal-Mart. The basic premise is by charging customers a few pennies more per pound makes it possible to pay workers an adequate wage, compared to the wage they were previously receiving. Subsequently labor conditions have also improved (CIW website). These changes occurred along with the publication of Estabrook's (2012) *Tomatoland*, an expose of the labor practices employed in the tomato fields of Florida. The tomato case is just one example of how labor research and social movements have worked together to change the labor practices occurring in industrial agriculture.

Food as a Sociological Phenomenon

Although research on hunger, obesity, and labor has been explored the study of food can further research on a wide array of sociological concerns. Food can be used as a lens into broader sociological phenomenon. As such, the study of food provides insight into four main areas - distinction, consumption, health, and inequality - all important dimensions of any food culture.

Cultural tastes are rooted in education and social class. There is a conflict between different groups to determine which tastes are legitimate. Bourdieu (1984) identifies three types of taste, corresponding to class and education. Legitimate or highbrow tastes are those linked to higher classes and education levels. Middle-brow tastes are common in the middle class, and popular or lowbrow tastes are typically indexed to those with the lowest education and class level. Cultural tastes classify those who possess them because the possession of specific taste is connected to the possession of capital distinguishing groups. Different conditions produce different lifestyles, leading to differences in the habitus. These differences can be organized along class divisions. The rarest conditions have the highest value. Although food practices follow slightly different lines than music, art, and theater, differences in food tastes and practices map onto class differences. For example, taste for food is both defined and censored by the upper class. The upper class is privileged to focus more on form than substance while also forbidding fatness. Although cultural research has focused on high and low distinctions there has also been a stream of research focusing on the shift toward omnivorousness in cultural preferences (Johnston and Baumann 2007, 2010; Peterson and Kern 1996).

Johnston and Baumann's (2007, 2010) research on foodies focuses on the shift to omnivorousness within U.S. food culture and the reflection of democratic ideals in omnivorousness. Their research on foodies operationalizes the major trends in food culture revolving around authenticity and exoticism. Although foodies are a driving force in food culture they are not the only force. While Johnston and Baumann provide a foundation for further sociological research into food culture, this project expands on their research by examining how distinction and impression management operate across multiple cases to reproduce status and inequality within food culture.

Food, like other cultural objects, has become more global with the increasing globalization of society. The globalization of food culture occurs in multiple ways: industrial agriculture, ethnic restaurants, and ingredient exploitation. Industrial agriculture is dominated by monocropping practices decimating the vitality of land and sustainable practices of peoples in

the global south (Shiva 2000). There has been a rise in ethnic restaurants across the United States, with patrons seeking out the authentic form of exotic dishes. Thirty years ago pad Thai, sushi, Dim Sum, and ceviche were rarely seen in the U.S. now restaurants in urban areas across the country are dedicated to these types of cuisines and grocery stores regularly carry sushi in the deli section (Kamp 2006; Sax 2015). Along with the influx of cuisines there has also been the exploitation of products from the global south. For example, quinoa a whole grain cultivated in the Andes Mountains had humble beginnings as a peasant dish in South America, now it is a staple health food in the United States forcing the farmers who once relied on it as sustenance to sell their product to corporations while the farmers themselves can no longer afford to eat it (Wilk 2012). The popularity of quinoa peaked with The United Nations declaring 2013 'The Year of Quinoa' (UN website).

Overall the underlying thread across these areas, echoing Egerton's quote that began this chapter, is: to study food means to study the inequality within a society. Inequality occurs along class, racial, and gendered lines. Food provides insight into each of these forms of inequality in different ways. Class inequality impacts hunger and obesity with those in higher socioeconomic brackets affording healthy food as well as access to the elite restaurants and ingredients, unavailable to people without such disposable income. This group also has the ability to establish what types of food are highbrow while others, such as fast food are linked to the working class and negative health consequences, are not given the same status. Racial inequality appears not only in health disparities but also in the lack of acknowledgement given to black chefs, especially those throughout the history of the South, and the exploitation of countries across the global south. Gender inequality emerges in the imbalance between the status afforded professional male chefs in comparison to female chefs, as well as the domestic nature of cooking and shopping within the household often labeled as women's work (Harris and Giuffre 2015).

Food culture is made up of many things - distinction, consumption, health, and inequality are important components. The study of food culture must go beyond the current dominance of journalistic style pieces and ethnographic evidence to include a theoretical understanding of how and why these trends occur and what consequences are associated with the changing food trends and preferences. Previous research has done a phenomenal job of presenting data regarding the culture of food but without the theorizing that makes the culture of food sociologically important.

THIS STUDY

Since food culture can be conceptualized in a multitude of ways this project focuses on three specific cases of how food culture shapes inequality while also separating itself as an art form that can be studied using the same theories and methods used to study art, music, literature, and theater. Through these cases this project further research on the production of authenticity within food culture that can be implemented in future research to study the importance of changing foodways while also shedding light on broader social problems.

The first case in this study addresses the intersecting questions of race and authenticity through a study of Southern barbeque. Southern barbeque has a deep history unique to the U.S. South and despite its complex origins during slavery it continues to be a popular and iconic dish both within and outside of the states where it was created. This case analyzes the oral histories of barbeque masters across the South to highlight the role of commercialization and distinction within the foodscape of barbeque while also providing insight into the complex relations between food and inequality in the south.

The second case focuses on the role of elite chefs in legitimating status distinctions and the balance between branding and stylistic choices through the television show *Top Chef*. *Top Chef* was the first cooking competition show whose format was unique to the U.S. The show has aired for thirteen seasons with competitors' status improving after their appearance on the show as the brand has grown to encompass prestigious food events and brands. This case analyzes three seasons of the show to highlight how the world of competitive cooking shows has changed over the course of the ten years the show has aired, making it possible to generalize to broader changes occurring in the world of elite chefs.

The third case addresses the exploitation of specific ingredients and their connection to globalization and inequality. As chefs seek out new and inventive dishes other regions, cultures, and countries become sources of inspiration and exploitation making it possible to bring new ingredients to the tables of elite restaurants and attention of foodies across the U.S. However, the rising popularity of these ingredients does not account for the consequences of that ingredients newfound popularity for the people who originally relied on the ingredient. This case analyzes six newspapers to highlight the rise in popularity of ramps and quinoa, and how the changing popularity impacts how a product is discussed.

Each case will employ a similar three-step methodology deductively and inductively coding the study population: oral histories, *Top Chef* episodes, and newspaper articles. The first step will begin with an inductive read through with focus placed on the identification of sensitizing concepts. The second step requires another read through, identifying themes and constructing frames. The third step focuses on the form and frequency of themes and frames to facilitate comparing the study populations across time. This methodology is derived from Matthew Hughey's (2014) work on white savior frames that employs the same three-step coding process albeit with a different study population.

CHAPTER TWO
SOUTHERN BARBECUE:
FABRICATED AUTHENTICITY IN THE U.S. SOUTH

> Barbecue is kind of a tradition here and kind of an old South thing that they take a lot of pride in. It's neat to see the competitions between different places that have their own secret sauces and their secret ways of doing it and its very unique and very folksy, a lot of tradition. -Cheryl

Southern food has become popular in cities across the United States. Restaurants from coast to coast are advertised as providing "authentic" and "modern" southern food (Reed 2008). Yet, for whom is this food authentic and modern? Restaurants must navigate the balance between authenticity and modern constraints without losing the historical foundations of authenticity. Authenticity in food is often accompanied by some degree of cultural appropriation. As such, what is authentic reflects changing social boundaries (Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Southern food, like the South in general, has a complicated history of commercialization and exploitation, attempting to erase history in favor of a false collective past, making the South palatable to outsiders, especially tourist (Cox 2008; Huber 2008). The examination of southern food offers a lens for exploring the cultural boundaries between social groups. Studying food makes it possible to explore broader social phenomenon, such as inequality, health, and economic conditions (Egerton 1987). Therefore, food is an integral tool for understanding the South.

This chapter focuses on how barbecue restaurant owners navigate traditional claims of authenticity and modern economical constraints, by examining oral history data collected from barbecue restaurant owners across the South. Restaurant owners engage in impression management to justify changing conceptualizations of barbecue in an increasingly commercialized South. How do food, place, commercialization, and inequality interact to shape authentic barbecue? Why is barbecue a symbol of southern foodways and a representation of authenticity? How can barbecue provide an example of how social and cultural boundaries intersect, to fabricate authenticity?

[Table 2.1 about here]

Griswold's (2013) cultural diamond provides a methodological framework for focusing on the culturally important interactions occurring around southern barbecue. In this case the

cultural object is southern barbecue in its various forms. The producers of southern barbecue are the cooks who prepare it as well as the regional locations and styles that vary across the south. The consumers of southern barbecue are the customers who frequent barbecue restaurants as well as the guides and reviews that shape consumer preferences. All of these components interact within the broader social landscape of the South and the complex history of race and inequality around the quest for authentic southern food. The use of frames and themes makes it possible to draw connections across each point of the cultural diamond. In doing so the interactions between the cultural object, producers, receiver, and social world shed light on the more complex questions of how race and authenticity influence the construction of southern barbecue as a cultural product and, importantly, the food culture from which it, and other foods, emerge.

The study population includes 89 oral histories collected across seven states between 2006 and 2011 as part of the Southern Foodways Alliance Barbecue Trail. The oral histories will be coded in a three-stage process, for a detailed explanation of the coding process see Appendix A. The main themes that arose in the oral histories were style and art, commercialization, family business, historical foundation, inequality, and bureaucratic problems.

STYLE AND ART

Barbecue is one food with all the hallmarks of southern food. It began with the slave trade, traveled to the United States on slave ships, and was prepared by slaves then ate by white plantation owners. The cut of meat, style of sauce, and type of wood all identify barbecue with a specific geographical region, even though today those techniques have spread to other locations. The quest for authentic barbecue is based on preconceived ideas about style and regionality. Barbecue, in various forms, now appears on the Food Network and in the cookbooks and restaurants of elite chefs. Barbecue, like other southern foods, continues to change while remaining true to its history of place, inequality, and authenticity.

State Identity and Stylistic Choices

Distinctions in barbecue are rooted in geographic locations and the twist each restaurant adds to make itself stand out among its competitors. Sauce debates range throughout the region to include, ketchup, vinegar, mustard, or mayonnaise based sauces with regions often expressing dislike for the sauces they are not accustomed to. Claims of distinction oscillate between regional traditions and local variation between competitors, while also citing economic constraints as the source of changes to traditional styles. The different styles employed by restaurants are a

necessary adaptation to traditional conceptualizations of barbecue to ensure a restaurant's financial success by drawing different customers based on those variations. These variations reflect the individualistic nature of barbecue's slow preparation. This occurs in sharp contrast to the commercialization and standardization of the modern food system (Taylor 2004). The individualist nature of barbecue restaurants also conveys authenticity on the product because it is unique and simple, while remaining grounded in the historical traditions of the South (Johnston and Baumann 2007).

Barbecue has ingredients and styles unique to each state. Although there is overlap between choices of meats, sauces, and wood these decisions are grounded in an understanding of what barbecue means to a specific state or region. The differences employed by barbecue restaurants serve as markers of authenticity and distinction across each state and region:

> "In Western Kentucky, when we talk about barbecue, it's mutton—and lots of it." Jerry

> "They would cook with the pork shoulder because 'Hey, we're not going to waste the bacon and the ham. That has a use other than cooking barbecue.' So we settled in on cooking the pork shoulders, really they didn't know what to do with it." Chip

> "We use all parts of the hog…It really wouldn't be cost efficient for us [to use parts]." Angela

The use of specific meats in a region is grounded in what was historically available. For example, the popularity of mutton in Kentucky is rooted in the historical context of the geographic location. Historically pork was more expensive and not as widely available in Kentucky. Mutton was cheaper and easily accessible, making it the region's main choice for barbecue (Elie 2004).

The choices restaurant owners make are not confined to conforming to state identities; they are also guided by the prices associated with cuts of meat. However, it is important for restaurant owners to be able to justify their choices by either employing tradition, such as those who use a specific type of sauce because that is how it is done in that region or those who have adapted their practices as the prices of pork have risen.

> "Well, here in Memphis, all the restaurants I know, we use a ketchup base, and our sauce is a sweet tangy sauce." Andrew

> "South Carolina, from Midland to this area [Leesville] is mustard… Fifty miles [away], man they use mayonnaise and ketchup for sauce." Jackie
>
> "In Eastern North Carolina we use a vinegar based sauce. You know red pepper and vinegar mixed." Rudy

Style and place are inextricable linked, because people in a region grew up with a specific type of sauce and that style is what they expect from restaurants in the region.

Although there is significant overlap in the styles employed within regions, every restaurant has slightly different recipes to distinguish itself from other restaurants in the area. These differences have stark followings within the state. Claims of authenticity, which each region frequently engages in, combines the desire to conform to regional standards while also being unique. This balance between new and traditional stylistic choices helps restaurants sell their products as authentic barbecue. The popularity of these styles shows how successful restaurants are at marketing authenticity (Mohr 1998).

The debates surrounding modern barbecue are not limited to geographical differences; technological changes have forced chefs to negotiate new terrain to define themselves as authentic barbecue pit masters while balancing the economic challenges of running a small business.

Smoke is Real and the Cooker Debate

Barbecue was traditionally cooked over an open pit with wood coals providing the heat source. While this method still exists technology has lead to changes in barbecue techniques. Barbecue navigates a line between authenticity as defined by the presence of smoke and the risk and time required by an open pit with an open flame. Restaurateurs have begun to use electric cookers, smokers, and rotisserie style cookers while still claiming to be authentic and distinguish their product from others while citing the increased financial benefits and decreased fire risks as reasons for the switch.

Restaurant owners discuss the need for consistency as the reason for using an electric pit, while also mentioning the need to reduce risks:

> "[The pit is] gas so it keeps the temperature uniform…In the old days the pit would catch fire and blaze up, they'd go up, they'd go down. You couldn't get consistency." Doug

> "The risk of fire is quite minimal these days… Probably about ten years ago we started using these electric pits and mainly because the availability of the wood and the price was getting so intense" Tommy
>
> "The small pits we were using from 1960 to 1983—I mean, it was just a royal pain. It was tough. It was outside cooking. It was taking the wood and stoking the pit constantly." Randy

Small businesses are vulnerable to increased expenses, they are able to survive by managing these expenses (McMahon and Holmes 1991). The rising price of wood, coupled with the risk of fire, leads owners to electric cookers. It makes more financial sense to reduce costs by reducing the amount of wood used. The electric cookers also take less effort to manage because they have a controlled and easily regulated heat source ensuring a consistent product. Consistency is important for a restaurant's success. Customers will return to a restaurant if the food quality was high, since most restaurants depend on repeat customers for financial stability, ensuring consistency is essential for success (Namkung and Jang 2007).

Despite the need for managing expenses and consistency not all barbecue owners feel the same way about electric pits. The control granted by electric smokers does not compensate for the lack of taste and smoke, the hallmarks of high quality barbecue:

> "[Electric cookers] still don't taste like hickory-cooked barbecue. That's why everybody likes my barbecue… That coal you put on there when that grease falls and hits that coal it shoots right back up to that meat and that's why you call it barbecue. That's how you get the taste of hickory wood from that coal. That's the only way you can get it. If you cook with gas you can't get that because it don't hit it." Jackie

For some owners, the benefits of using an electric cooker do not outweigh the unique taste provided by a pit that is lost. The smoke rising from the coals is necessary for barbecue to have a smoky taste; this cannot be duplicated on an electric cooker because the smoke does not get into the meat, it just gets on the outside of the meat. Since an electric cooker does not put this flavor into the meat so it is not barbecue.

The debate over what type of cooker is preferred brings out a range of opinions across the South, but there is consistent emphasis placed on the smoke flavor characteristic of barbecue:

> Well I've—like a lot of other people, I've got modern. I've got [a rotisserie smoker]… and it's all automatic. I still cook with the hickory wood, and I use a lot of applewood when I'm smoking the whole pigs…It makes it more golden brown and you get a distinct flavor." Bud

Although Bud highlights the ease of cooking with a controlled heat source, he still recognizes the importance of hickory wood for creating the flavor iconic of barbecue.

Larry sums up the importance of smoke in judging the quality of a barbecue restaurant: "if you want to go to a place where they've got real barbecue, look for the smoke." Although, there are disagreements over the type of cooker or pit that is used the importance of smoke and wood, especially hickory, in barbecue is not questioned.

The debate over cookers coupled with the agreement barbecue is synonymous with smoke has divided restaurant owners across the south. Traditional techniques require long hours spent around intense levels of heat and smoke, with a high risk of fire while newer techniques do not possess any of these problems, yet both claim authenticity based on the finished product. Those who continue to use traditional style pits claim authenticity through their process as well as their product. While the oral histories do not provide insight into the consumers' response to these varying methods, both types of restaurants are still open so both have a consumer base despite their differing styles.

The debate over cookers shows how changes in the larger world, especially technological advances, can impact the culture surrounding barbecue. Technological changes have a consistent record of changing the cultural products around them (Peterson 1994). As the economy and technology continue to change barbecue restaurants will continue to navigate the balance between authenticity, achieved either through the process or the product while also balancing the financial pressures associated with small businesses.

The Meanings of Barbecue

No matter what style or technique a restaurant uses, they are engaging in impression management. Creating cultural products in an ever-changing world relies on fabricating the shared meaning behind them (Hughes 2000). Barbecue owners balance style and technique with shared understandings of barbecue's historical meaning.

Although there are debates across the South regarding barbecue styles and cooking techniques, there is also agreement over the importance of smoke and barbecue itself. Barbecue

gives meaning to a cooking style, transcending the product itself. Although there is little agreement across the region on meats, sauces, and cookers the meanings behind barbecue are often shared:

> "Barbecue might be a comfort food. You know, people look at their financial statements or something and say, 'Well, I'm going to eat me a barbecue to make me feel better.'" Hugh
>
> "Most people are drawn to barbecue restaurants because it takes them back to simpler times. Times when we were young. When we had no worries. Sitting outside cooking on the grill, laughing with family and friends." Teresa
>
> "Southern tradition is known for barbecue just like Texas is known for beef. The coast is known for the seafood. I think when people thing of South Carolina and Georgia and places like that they think of good ol' barbecue. And that's the way it's always been." Tony

Barbecue's long history in the South offers a comfortable outlet for people who are stressed, partaking in barbecue is a comforting experience because it has such a deep history that has not changed for hundreds of years. Barbecue is not only a product it is an experience taking consumers back to a time when life was seen as simpler. The gathering of family and friends around barbecue highlights the socialization aspect of barbecue, the time consuming process of preparing a meal brought people together for an extended period of time making it possible to solidify relationships with family and friends around a meal.

Barbecue is a hallmark of the South. Even though there are disagreements and each restaurant works to distinguish itself from others there is an underlying similarity: they are all barbecuing and upholding the history of barbecue in some way. This shared history allows restaurants to meet consumers expectations while also doing what is best for their business (Peterson 1997).

Barbecue as comfort, community, and family for anyone who consumes it is rooted in barbecue's history and the history of the South. John Shelton Reed (2004) argues it is not possible to understand the South without understanding barbecue. Good barbecue is rarely found in the metropolitans of the South, instead it is in the small towns and roadside stands decorating the less popular South. Barbecue is very localized and in a region with recurring issues of diversity, barbecue restaurants are one of the few places with a diverse clientele (Reed 2004).

Southern barbecue has been essential to the creation of identity and culture in the South. Barbecue has a strong reliance on place with various cooking styles, sauces, and parts being used depending on the location. Different styles of barbecue are unique to various locations and an affinity for a certain style of barbecue creates a sense of identity based on the location, such as whole hog and vinegar sauce in Eastern North Carolina (Veteto and Maclin 2011). Barbecue techniques are often linked to a particular place and are passed down through generations of people who continue to occupy the same space (Edge 2011; Opie 2008). Smith (2004) explains, the differences in sauces, wood, and type of meat was dependent on the price and availability of a product in a specific location. These differences continue to shape barbecue, but availability of products is not the changing factor a modern restaurant must navigate.

COMMERCIALIZATION

Although barbecue has a deep history it is not immune to the same economic pressures facing the restaurant industry today. The main problem is deciding whether or not to expand through franchising and wholesale accounts, while balancing the media and advertising in a society that rewards large business models and commercialization.

Franchising and Wholesaling

The decision to franchise is dependent on the context of a specific restaurant. Some owners embrace the concept, have multiple franchises across the South, and sell their sauces in numerous grocery stores; others are content to remain local, small businesses.

Randy L., a white restaurant owner from Mississippi, focuses on the importance of being present in the restaurant on a daily basis as a deterrent from franchising: "I've thought about franchising and opening up another restaurant somewhere else, but unless I can touch it at least once or twice a day and be there to be seen, a small business—the owner—people want to see the owner of a small business. That's just the way it is." Small businesses depend on the owner's close attention and patrons seek out the owner's presence as a conveyer of authenticity through the personal connection between the food and an individual (Johnston and Baumann 2010). For Randy expanding his restaurant would detract from the customers experience and make it more difficult to run his restaurant.

Franchised owners must deal with new sets of problems as a result of expanding. Among these are the lack of authenticity conveyed upon newly opened restaurants and the ability to keep a product consistent across multiple locations. Michael's family has four open franchises across

Georgia: “I think the perception of this place being the original and being the 1929 barbecue place that it is and people think that you can’t duplicate that in other places. You can duplicate the food, you cannot duplicate the atmosphere as easily.” Multiple locations call into question the authenticity of the products at the franchised locations. For some customers authenticity is rooted in the place, as well as the product, making it harder for subsequent restaurants to claim authenticity because of their location in newer buildings.

Other owners with multiple franchises over large distances have switched to large food companies to meet their needs of consistency and reliability across multiple locations. Michael’s franchising has forced him to seek out manufactures who can ensure consistency:

> We’ve expanded the concept with about—we have now 22 franchises…We’ve branched out with what we call proprietary items. We have a manufacturer that does all our sauces, and then we made some deals with national outfits like Sysco Company…for the products and the deliveries. Because when you go beyond a 300-mile radius, you’ve got to have somebody that’s able to fulfill your product development.

Switching from small batch production to large-scale manufacturing does not conform to the ideal of barbecue produced in small batches from family recipes. Franchising across large areas forces owners to turn to corporations to ensure consistency across every location.

Expanding business models to accommodate changing economic times is not reduced to franchising. Restaurants also market their products in grocery stores and online. Throughout the South restaurants are marketing their sauces as a way to expand their business models. Sauces offer an avenue for economic growth immune to the same problems as franchising. Instead of having to ensure consistency while claiming authenticity across multiple restaurants a sauce offers a way for customers to take an authentic product home with them from the restaurant or a grocery store that is still connected to a small local restaurant:

> “I want the Dancing Pig Barbecue Sauce to be known around the country or at least in this region. We’re already known in four or five states but we can go even further.” Eric
>
> “We mostly have our burgoo and our sauces, and we do some barbecue out in the frozen [section of grocery stores] and the restaurants.” Ken
>
> “We market our white sauce as well as our tomato sauce. I want everyone in the whole world to start liking white sauce.” Don

While the opportunity to mass market sauce is the largest, there are also opportunities to sell barbecue, hams, and cakes on a large scale. These offer owners a way to grow their business and increase their financial success without having to navigate franchising and the associated problems. Marketing sauces outside of narrow regions where they originated allows owners to spread the awareness that different sauce exists while making it possible for people to try them.

The chain barbecue restaurant is often met with disgust in the South. To take a food that is slow cooked and iconic of the small town localized South and place it on a commercial scale seems to contradict the essence of barbecue itself (Reed 2004). Yet the South as a whole uses tourism and commercialization to actively change the image of itself and distinguish the new modern South from the backwardness of previous generations while simultaneously offering a version of Southern history that can be purchased and taken home to remember the experience (Stanonis 2008). The expansion of barbecue restaurants must navigate the small business ideal with chain restaurant profit dreams.

Owners are forced to engage in impression management when they choose to franchise their restaurant. Consumers make inferences regarding barbecue restaurants based on the appearance of the restaurant and the people in the restaurant (Hughes 2000). Consumers judge authenticity based on the product being believable and original (Peterson 1997). Thus, owners must balance historical conceptualizations of barbecue with their own unique style, to be successful.

The Media and Advertising

Barbecue restaurants have been featured in a wide array of media outlets ranging from travel books, magazines, PBS specials, and the Food Network's variety of shows highlighting restaurants. All of these forms of media offer free advertising for the restaurants lucky enough to be featured by them:

> "It made the book [*Road Food*] and then all of the sudden I noticed people coming in with these books, and they're all ordering ribs and lemon pie." Van
>
> "*Southern Living* did an article and I had no idea as to what magazines could do for your business…[I had] to pick up meat to cook because we were sold out of everything we had." Randy

A restaurant featured by a popular magazine or travel book is given free advertising, increasing the customer base by spreading awareness of the restaurant outside of the local area.

While some restaurants have been written up in books and magazines others have been featured on television specials. Roger, a second-generation white restaurant owner from Georgia, was featured on a national PBS special: "[PBS] did a show in 2005 called *Atlanta's Best Barbecue Kissed by Fire*….And so I get a lot of customers even now people will come in and say 'I saw you on TV the other night.'" Television, like print media, offers free advertising for restaurant owners and gives them a larger customer base who is seeking out restaurants that have been given status by being featured on documentaries or sought out by elite chefs.

Adam's Memphis restaurant was featured on the show *Diners, Drive-ins, and Dives* and since the show aired 70 percent of his customers are from people who have seen the episode. Since it aired he talks about the benefits of being on the show:

> The guy from *Diners, Drive-ins, and Dives*—his name is Guy; he says all aboard the flavor train, you know. You can either hop on the train now and ride it, or watch the train pass you because we're really trying to take advantage of it. If we had to pay for this advertisement we couldn't afford it.

Endorsements from celebrity chefs lead to more profits for restaurants without taking on any financial burdens associated with advertising campaigns. Celebrity chef endorsements often ensure a businesses success by bringing in a larger clientele because a famous chef conveys higher status on a product.

Other restaurants use cooking competitions as a way to advertise their restaurants. Barbecue competitions are common throughout the South, ranging from the most famous: Memphis in May to smaller church competitions in Western Kentucky. Winning these competitions comes with media attention and trophies to display in restaurants conveying status and prestige to customers:

> "The people that have never heard about us—the men always comment about all those big trophies out front. We have a bunch of Memphis in May trophies." Don
>
> "They've retired from running their restaurants and this is what they do so they promote their restaurant through competitive cooking, which that's the main reason we still do it because its promoting your business." Craig

Those who participate in competition cooking are awarded status and free advertising. The trophies, which come with competition wins, serve as marketing tools to draw new customers into the restaurant.

Not all barbecue owners want to participate in competitive cooking. Although there is a large amount of media attention placed on competitions, amounting to free advertising, some owners focus on keeping their restaurant small and local:

> "I decided that it's best for me to be in my business and take care of my business than out trying—trying to out-cook some people." Randy W.
>
> "You see these barbecue contests, all of those guys have got sponsors, most of them. And you know we just wanted to be a family operation. We don't want the limelight, we just want the customers." James

For some restaurant owners seeking customers through competitions is not beneficial, because participating in competitions would take time away from focusing on their restaurant's success. Competitions and corporate sponsors are not inline with the family run image valued by some owners. Yet for those who do win, the trophies become status symbols displayed in restaurant windows to draw customers into what is seen as an authentic barbecue restaurant because they have won an award for their barbecue.

Media attention has important consequences for cultural products. While the media conveys authenticity to a product, restaurant, or chef an element of distinction is lost when a product becomes popularized (Bourdieu 1984). Restaurants are sought out by foodies based on the lack of media attention given to a restaurant. The lack of media attention suggests a restaurant is authentic and unique while media attention makes a restaurant more common and thus gives it a larger clientele base while losing its claim to authenticity based on originality (Johnston and Baumann 2010). The commercialization of the South forces restaurants to navigate impression management to be authentic without becoming mainstream, or low-brow.

FAMILY BUSINESS

Almost all of the restaurants in this sample are family owned establishments, some have been in a family for over eighty years while others have only been open a year. Original menus and recipes are common across the restaurants. However, the future of family run barbecue restaurants is questionable because the next generation has more career options.

Family Influences

Across the South barbecue restaurants navigate the meaning of being a family run business. Family-run businesses convey authenticity on their products because of the apparent personal connection between producer and product. Using menus and recipes originating from an

individual, such as a grandmother, give a product authenticity because it is a sharp contrast to the industrialized food system dominating society. Food produced by an individual or a family conveys originality and uniqueness mass-produced products lack (Johnston and Baumann 2010). While a majority of the owners pride themselves on the history of their restaurant, their secret family recipes, and their techniques the future of these restaurants is questionable.

While barbecue can be a self taught enterprise most of the restaurants in this sample are family endeavors employing multiple generations of the same family and using secret family recipes. The art of barbecuing is not isolated to one individual within the restaurant instead there is often a history of barbecuing within the family.

Richard, a white restaurant owner talks about his exposure to barbecue in the Tennessee farming community where he grew up: "All of them were farmers, most of them older type people who had been doing it for years. Every 4th of July each farmer had pigs they raised especially for the 4th of July." Watching these traditions is how he learned to barbecue a pig. Richard took a holiday tradition and turned it into a restaurant.

Learning how to barbecue is only the beginning of the family influences present in restaurants today. Recipes began at home during the early years of barbecue; at the time there were very few commercial barbecue restaurants. Instead, barbecue was a community activity often regulated to special events and holidays. Sauce recipes often remain the same over time:

> "The barbecue sauce we—my grandfather invented was in 1933 but they didn't use it; he didn't open a restaurant until '39." David
>
> "[His father] got this sauce recipe from his mother. His mother was just a home-wife, a house-wife, and you see this is back in the 1930's so people made their own sauce at home." Don
>
> "They were just family recipes, backyard recipes we incorporated into the restaurant." Walker

Across the South family influences can be seen in the techniques and recipes found in restaurants. Family recipes are proudly used in barbecue restaurants employing multiple generations.

The future of family run barbecue restaurants rests on the children or grandchildren's decisions to either follow in their family's footsteps and eventually take over the restaurant or to

seek other forms of employment. Some families see working in the restaurant as what is expected.

> "All my grandchildren started work when they learned how to talk and as customers left said thank you for coming in, come back again." Desiree
>
> "They [worked] right out high school, worked here, and basically the bottom line is out of high school until we drop dead." Billy

Across the South, family run restaurants have a long history spanning multiple generations and it is the responsibility of future generations to continue the tradition by taking over the restaurant.

Other restaurants have deep family roots with everyone in the family working in the restaurant, but times have changed; education is now the preferred choice for children. Latham, a second-generation white restaurant owner from North Carolina, explains who is with him at the restaurant: "My wife's sister—everybody. My wife's sisters work down here…of course, all my children worked down here when they were growing up." His son Larry continues: "that's the way it was from the very first conception of having a restaurant in downtown Ayden. It was a total family thing—family run it." Despite the family run model set by previous generations the restaurant will probably end with this generation because Larry says "we sent them [his children] to school, so they're educated. They'll go off and make a good living…Something with benefits, more money." Education is the preferred avenue for some families because it offers more stability, better pay, and benefits.

The hard work involved with running a barbecue restaurant is seen as a deterrent for younger generations. College is the alternative to working at the family restaurant, because it offers more opportunities not involving the same type of hard work characteristic of a barbecue restaurant.

Education offers the appeal of more money and stable benefits, but the decision is often left up to the next generation. Larry, a second-generation white owner from Tennessee, recognizes the limitations owning a barbecue restaurant poses from income and benefits but sees it as an honorable profession: "My daughter loves it. I mean nobody loves hard work but, like I told her 'You'll never get rich, and we don't like rich people anyhow. We was raised poor.' I said 'We're just working folks. You'll make an honorable living and don't change anything.'" For Larry, and his family, the restaurant and hard work associated with running it are better than earning more money in another profession.

The authenticity conveyed to family run restaurants because of the personal connection between product and consumer does not fit into the same category as most products. Small-scale products, produced by individuals or families often are accompanied by a larger price tag, making them popular among those with enough money to escape the industrial system (Johnston and Baumann 2010). Barbecue does not have an expensive price tag justifying the continued production of products. While some barbecue owners have large profit margins others make enough to get by. The differences in financial status, accompanied by the long hours and hard work, have lead some restaurant owners to push their children toward college instead of restaurant ownership. Changing economic times have made college a more stable venue to employment and status for children so they are able to lead better lives than their parents who run the family restaurants.

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

Although, famous chefs have been influential in shaping the perceptions of food culture throughout the United States, chefs of small, local and large, elite restaurants are also influential in shaping what is considered authentic food culture. Restaurants across the South choose to either remain traditional in terms of ingredients, techniques, and final products while others seek authenticity through modern adaptations of traditional dishes. This idea of the modern traditional restaurant balances regional dishes with other multi-ethnic influences. For example, at Empire State South in Atlanta, Georgia a Canadian chef from San Francisco cooks southern dishes with a European flair (Addison 2013). Mash-ups like this are occurring more frequently in the South as well as in urban areas around the country (Addison 2013; Edge 2013). While other restaurants are maintaining the same food, style, and almost the same menu since the restaurant's inception (Trillian 2012). Despite the seemingly drastic differences between the traditional and the modern, these two types of restaurants showcase how social and cultural boundaries are flexible and constantly changing (Anderson 2013; Reed and Reed 2004; Sauceman 2010). The dynamic changes are best illustrated through barbecue's complex history and modern adaptations.

Although the future of barbecue is unsure the answers to barbecue's lasting legacy can be found in the restaurant owners' decisions to carry on traditional techniques. Highlighting the presence of simple, fresh, and local ingredients helps draw customers, as these have become new culinary buzzwords, despite their deep history in barbecue. Owners endow their products with

authenticity by creating believable and original dishes, by drawing on tradition then adding their own style (Peterson 1997).

Tradition

Jimmy, from Georgia, explains the importance of barbecue to the South: "It's part of a Southern tradition and definitely a part of this area's tradition, and as long as I'm able to—to push forward, I think we'll keep it here. I mean we've lost so much heritage as it is, it's time to keep this particular heritage alive." Jimmy, had a group of Englishmen who were studying early 1800 houses come by his restaurant for "a taste of the Old South, You can see it but you haven't tasted it. They're getting a taste of how old fashioned barbecue was done while they're looking at the old late 1800 houses." Barbecue is rooted in the past but has survived, in slightly altered forms across the South. Jimmy sees barbecue as a way to immerse yourself in the past because barbecue has not changed significantly over time, making it a taste of history.

Claims of authenticity occur in multiple ways across the sample. Authenticity is rooted in traditional understandings of barbecue and the importance of the past in modern food. One way restaurants claim authenticity is by distinguishing where their recipes came from:

> "We make our pies the way our grandparents made them." Andrew
>
> "My Brunswick stew we still make it in an iron pot, and it's nothing automatic about it, we have to stir it constantly." Bug
>
> "Everybody should know how to make banana pudding…The new way is going out and getting some Jell-O Instant Pudding. That's not the good way. No, the old-fashioned way is the good way." Helen

The use of new techniques and processed ingredients is seen as less than authentic because it is not as good as doing things from scratch. Traditional techniques are a measure of quality and authenticity because those techniques have been past down from previous generations, establishing claims of authenticity via historical techniques and traditions (Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Authenticity is not only conveyed through recipes and ingredients, it is also established through menus that have remained unchanged for decades:

> "This is the original menu…We were fortunate to get all of the recipes and keep it the same." Jane

> "It's just a Southern tradition that everything started with around here and just continued over the years and, like I said if it's not broke, we're not going to fix it." Tony
>
> "Nothing is going to change if I have anything to say about it…because you don't find pit-cooked barbecue hardly anymore." Natalie

Each of these owners pride themselves and their restaurants on the lack of change occurring in their products. Relying on the same menus for decades establishes status and cements historical claims regarding their restaurants as authentic because they can trace almost everything at their restaurant to its original creator. This highlights the personal connection and historical tradition between the restaurants and the past conveying authenticity (Johnston and Baumann 2010). Traditional products and menus mange the impression consumers have of the restaurant by embedding the restaurant with authenticity through the personal connection with the past (Hughes 2000).

For some owners remaining authentic in barbecue is about remaining true to the past as Ed, from North Carolina, explains:

> I'm the old keeper of the flame, and I don't want anyone to forget that you did not take sausage out of the hog and barbecue those sausages and call it barbecue; you did not take ribs out of that hog and barbecue ribs and call it barbecue; you did not take shoulders out of that hog and call it barbecue. You first cooked the whole hog and everything derived from cooking the whole hog.

For Ed, the choices between types of meat or whole hog is rooted in the history of barbecue beginning with whole hog, it's not about cost or efficiency, it's about remaining true to tradition. The only way to remain true to the past is to do things the same way they were traditionally done.

Barbecue continues to change across the South but it remains true to the fundamental premise of meat slow cooked over smoke. Although there are differences across the region the foundation of barbecue remains rooted in the history of the South:

> "[Barbecue] wouldn't be here if it couldn't have survived segregation and competition from big giant corporations. And that's why all that is important is because all of that changed but the food—barbecue didn't change." Van

> "[Barbecue] never goes out of style and it's truly Southern and it's truly American and it's truly unique." John

Even though society has changed the importance of barbecue is a consistent because it remains the same.

Authentic food is determined based on an established set of standards and conventions rooted in traditional practices. Although there is room for creative and individual deviations the foundation of an authentic food, barbecue, must be in the past. Although this dynamic between tradition and creativity is most commonly found in the urban centers of the United States and Europe, the South offers a unique understanding of how these tenets of authenticity operate in other historical cuisines (Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Simplicity, Fresh, and Local

Culinary buzzwords like simple, fresh, and local have come to dominate food narratives in the past two decades as a response to the commercialization and industrialization of the food system (DuPuis and Goodman 2005). Cooking fresh, simple products with local ingredients is not uncommon for barbecue restaurants across the South.

Restaurant owners pride themselves on making things from scratch. Making their products is unique in a society characterized by the rise of chain restaurants and heavily processed foods:

> "I make my own sauces, I make my own slaw and I do my own potato salad and I do my own baked beans. Nothing is store bought." Liz
>
> "We make everything.... I've found if you always use the best ingredients, even though they may be more expensive… your product will end up good." Dale
>
> "The more complicated you get with stuff, it's just not as good. We really are trying to go down to basics and just keep it as simple as we can." Teresa

Although fresh, local, and simple have become current food trends these restaurants have been using those products for decades because that is how previous generations taught them to run their restaurants. Quality food had to come from quality products, and store bought products were not high quality.

Although there have been drastic changes in the industrialization of the food system there are still restaurants relying on homemade products using fresh, local ingredients:

> "[The owner] has a garden that he plants for squash and zucchini and broccoli and stuff for the restaurant…People come wanting fresh—everything fresh." Angela
>
> "Daddy grows his own collards. He always has…All our stuff is made from scratch with fresh ingredients." Larry
>
> "We keep [buying] our produce local here in Greenville." Judy

Local produce is important for these restaurants because it provides a higher quality product than its industrialized counterpart. The use of local produce has been an integral part of these restaurants since their inception.

Although the industrialization of the food system has become prominent, changes are emerging with customers demanding a return to local, fresh, and simple foods, not filled with chemicals. The desire for fresh, local products is not isolated to produce, it also encompasses meat. Crystal owns a slaughterhouse in Tennessee and explains the changes she is beginning to see in the industry:

> They want those chemicals out of those foods and everything so I think you're going to see a lot more people saying look: if we know its raised locally and we know the growth hormones and everything aren't injected in these…the public is becoming more aware and its making them more conscious of buying locally where they can go out in the field and see the farmer raising the cow and say yeah its being raised in a gentle matter.

The importance of locally raised foods taps into increasing health concerns regarding chemicals added by the industrialized food system to promote growth and increase yields. Although these chemicals were largely ignored there is an increased awareness of their presence as well as the desire to have food that has not been chemically altered.

Other owners have begun to seek out alternative pigs, not produced by the industrial system. Tommy explains his experimenting with hogs produced in line with more traditional methods:

> I refer to them as groundhogs because they were actually grown on the ground the way hogs used to be. And as opposed to these production hogs that we purchase today…It does provide a much more flavorful pig…The texture of the meat was much better and the quality of the meat just had a much, much better flavor to it instead of being so bland…There was a distinct difference in the taste of the meat.

Pigs produced in traditional ways have better quality and flavor than their industrial counterparts. Restaurants must deal with customer concern over food additives, such as growth hormones and chemicals used to increase crop yields (Gebremedhin and Christy 1996). The response to this is a resurgence of non genetically modified local food and heritage breeds. Indeed heritage breeds have become a bearer of authenticity rooted in traditional foodstuffs consumed across the country. However, as frequently mentioned in discussions of heritage breed pigs, this authenticity comes at a high price, unobtainable for most customers (Pollan 2006).

Culinary buzzwords like fresh and local have become markers of quality products. In broader food culture, consumers seek out fresh and local products because of their superior flavor and freshness as well as the political justifications underlying these words. For example, fresh, local food has traveled a shorter distance, produced less greenhouse gas, and puts money back into the local community by supporting local farmers (Halweil 2005; Johnston and Baumann 2010). Although culinary buzzwords have grown increasingly popular, in larger food culture, they have been foundational to barbecue. Barbecue, a hallmark of the agrarian South, was a way to survive during economic times by selling products raised on one's farm and sold at a roadside stand (Opie 2008). The resurgence of local and fresh products can be seen across the country, but barbecue offers insight into a culinary tradition that has done little to deviate from fresh products since its inception.

INEQUALITY

Food culture is subject to the same types of inequality impacting the rest of society. Barbecue must also grapple with the racial inequality that was a hallmark of the South and the forced kitchen labor of slaves on plantations.

Gender

Barbecue, and professional cooking in general, is traditionally a male dominated field. However, though few in number, there are women pit masters and restaurant owners across the South. Van explains how his mother came to own the restaurant, in Alabama, he runs today "women in business was not a popular thing then and the bankers didn't really care to loan money to women… But there was a man in town from the bank that realized [her reputation and loaned her the money]." It was difficult for women to get the loans necessary to start a business. Even though it is no longer uncommon for women to own businesses, women in barbecue is still rare:

"Margarita, she basically takes care of the pit. So she would be the main pit master." Jane

"My earliest memory I have of barbecue is my mother taking a tub and putting a screen over it and barbequing. I never saw men barbecue or heard of men barbequing until much later." Desiree

"It's definitely, definitely rare. I think my mom is one of the only ones in North Carolina to own a barbecue restaurant." Natalie

Although there were frequent gender distinctions with women serving as managers and cooks and men running the pit and owning the restaurant, these distinctions varied based on each family's experience with barbecue and within the restaurant.

Women continually face problems in professional kitchens. As chefs gained status as professionals they needed to distance cooking as a profession from domestic cooking. In doing so gender lines were drawn and men dominated professional kitchens. The reasons for this are the long hours, heavy lifting, and extreme heat making men more dominant in the professional kitchen (Harris and Guiffre 2015). Barbecue restaurants are subject to these same inequalities. Even though entire families run a majority of the restaurants the types of jobs afforded women in the family are often cooking and running the cash register while men are responsible for the pit.

Race

Despite the present day conceptualizations of barbecue, its past is steeped in racial oppression, because slaves prepared barbecue for large gatherings held on plantations (Opie 2008). Barbecue was a popular social aspect of plantation life in the South. Although whites used barbecues as a social gathering, slaves, typically male, were responsible for the preparation and cooking of the meat (Moss 2011).

Barbecue has a complicated history intertwined with race. Historically slaves were responsible for cooking barbecue for parties on plantations. Ed explains the evolution of the term Pit Master: "Back then they didn't call the Pit Master, they called them Pit Boys and the boys was synonymous for the meaning of who they were: African Americans and they weren't referred to as men." After slavery ended blacks found themselves in the kitchens of barbecue restaurants, often serving as the pit masters in segregated restaurants.

Jim explains the racial dynamics of barbecue, in his Tennessee neighborhood, growing up:

> Two blocks up in the white neighborhood you had Gus' Barbecue and we could get barbecue out of them. Of course we had to go to the back door and the kitchen help would bring it out to you…Most of them had all black cooks working there, so [the difference between white and black barbecue joints] it was pretty much the same.

Jim explains that although most of the restaurants employed black cooks as their pit masters and in the kitchen, blacks were not allowed to got through the front door into the restaurant to get barbecue, instead they had to go around to the back.

Other restaurants desegregated quickly, Debbie explains how the original owner, of her North Carolina restaurant, handled the Civil Rights Movement by desegregating in the early 1960's: "[The original owner] was one of the first business owners that ever let colored people come in the front door. He said he wasn't going to have them going to the back." Other restaurants were never segregated, Larry explains, "when the Civil Rights thing was going on and my mother, the—the black people always ate here and she welcomed them." Restaurant owners handled desegregation in a variety of ways ranging from never being segregated to taking years to desegregate.

Other barbecue owners see a stark racial difference in barbecue technique, Craig says: "To be honest, there is—it's—and I don't know how to say this without sounding racist but I'm not—black barbecue is wet—white style, dry; that's the way it's been forever and that is the difference between barbecue in my opinion. It's not regional." Craig reduces regional distinctions to racial differences in technique and style. John's father's restaurant was the first to sell ribs commercially in Tennessee, starting in 1954:

> [Ribs] were really a byproduct and with the exception of the African-American community, which you know the poorer people learned how to make things work with by products of animals because the people that have the money are getting the tenderloin and the chops…In those days there was just not a market for ribs. So when my father started—decided to try ribs for the first time ever you know I think they cost him 10 cents a pound.

The cut of meat was priced based on its desirability. This determined who could afford to buy the better cuts of meat while cuts like ribs were less desirable and associated with poor people of color. Although the desirability of different cuts of meat has changed over time there is still a

negative connotation, some segments of society, associated with barbecue because of the use of pork and its relation to slavery (Opie 2008).

The relationship between race and barbecue, and the larger food culture, ranges from stigmatized cuts of meat to who was cooking in restaurant kitchens and who was allowed to enter through the front door of that same restaurant. Southern food offers a unique balance between the commodification of the South through the creation of a false collective memory regarding what people ate and who cooked it that continues to both erase and reclaim selective parts of the past (Huber 2008). This calls into question what counts as authentic food when the past has been commodified to reflect a certain narrative dominated by white southerners (Stanonis 2008). Yet despite these problems southern cuisine is unique because of the presence of blacks and whites living together and interacting together (Reed 2004).

Class

Barbecue has two main relationships to economic inequality. The first is barbecue, at home, was a way to feed a family while barbecue, as a profession was a solution to economic troubles or unemployment during hard times. Andrew explains his early exposure, as a child in Tennessee, to barbecue: "We didn't go out to eat barbecue. We were too poor. My dad would get an old tub and put a rack out of the stove and put coals in it and barbecue there and we kind of picked it up from him." Jim was also exposed to barbecue as a child in Tennessee: "My dad had a garden in the back yard and he raised peas and corn and tomatoes. He raised hogs for meat. He had his own smokehouse… That wasn't a special occasion; it was about survival for nine kids and two adults." Both Jim and Andrew were too poor to go out to a barbecue restaurant as children, but they learned their techniques by watching their dads cook barbecue at home.

Opening a barbecue restaurant was a risky endeavor and families often relied on both parents working to survive. Desiree did not start working at her husband's barbecue restaurant until after his death: "I worked for Bell South and supported my husband and my children who ran the restaurant…I didn't work here until after he died." When Roger's mother opened a restaurant in Georgia his father continued to work at the mill until the restaurant could sustain their family: "Mother opened in '47 and she wanted him [his father] to come in with her right away. But he said 'Somebody has got to feed the family, so I'm not going to quit the mill until you make $100 in one week." In 1949 she cleared $105 and her husband joined her. Randy L, used his Mississippi restaurant as supplemental income: "I taught school for twenty-five years

and to supplement my salary I opened up a barbecue business." Jackie, also needed more income than his current job provided so he opened a barbecue restaurant in South Carolina: "My father and I went in the hardware business in 1968 and we stayed there until he passed away in '83. And I started this barbecue, it would have been '79 because I had four daughters to go to college."

The foundations of barbecue offer an interesting interplay between class dynamics. Historically barbecue was used as a party food for plantation owners and political gatherings. It was simultaneously used as a source of survival for poor farmers and farming communities who ate what they could grow (Bultman 2004). Over time barbecue went from being done on farms to a legitimate business venture. Barbecue remains unique because it does not work well as fast food and yet is unique enough to have its own following, reducing the amount of competition from other restaurants.

Although inequality impacts the cooks and owners of barbecue restaurants, the problems faced by a majority of the sample are predominately economical challenges. Small businesses must pay close attention to profit margins leading owners to navigate the balance between traditional conceptualizations of authenticity achieved through the process of barbecue and modern conceptualizations achieved through the final product produced in a more economical fashion.

BUREAUCRATIC PROBLEMS

Culture does not exist in a vacuum. Changes in the larger social world impact how food culture appears (Ben-Yehuda 1980). Changes in health and environmental codes impact how restaurants conduct themselves; while changes in the local economy impact the availability of customers. Restaurant owners must balance changing demands with producing an authentic product (Peterson 1994).

Health Codes and Environmental Laws

Changes in health and environmental laws have forced barbecue restaurants to remodel and pig farmers to go out of business. Small restaurants in old buildings are often a health code nightmare because as the codes change owners are forced to spend more money adapting to those new codes. Small pig farmers frequently close because they are unable to come up to the new environmental codes (Gebremedhin and Christy 1996). These changing laws place barbecue restaurants in a difficult position. They have to go through large-scale packing-houses that can

ensure quality but are not fresh or local in most cases. The restaurant owners also have to continually manage the changing prices of groceries with what their customers are able and willing to pay for their products.

Barbecue restaurants have been forced to deal with a variety of changes in health codes and environmental protection laws:

> "My father-in-law, started—originally he cooked under a shed with no sides on it. And [Department of Health and Environmental Control] told him he had to build a facility." Angela
>
> "The EPA come in, and said, 'You aren't grandfathered, Roger. You got to build a new cooker with the big chimney and all that.'" Roger

A restaurants' ability to adapt to changing laws is dependent on their financial stability. Building new pits and renovating restaurants take money from restaurants that may already have slim profit margins.

Despite the economic challenges, barbecue restaurants have also been a solution to changing laws and deindustrialization:

> "It was just a beer joint. The county went dry in 1952…We had to make a living selling food, those were lean times until barbecue came along." Larry
>
> "I had worked for a meat packer for about 20 years and they decided to leave the area, that's when we decided to open up a restaurant to try to feed the kids." Andrew
>
> "When I saw that no matter what the economy does you're going to eat and I was like, 'You know what? The food business is not a bad thing. I'm going to stick by this." Rodney

Barbecue restaurants were a way to support families in changing economic times. This connects to barbecue's past of poor farming communities using barbecue as a stable food supply.

Meat is also subject to changing health codes making it difficult for restaurants to source meat from anywhere except industrial packing-houses, almost putting an end to small farmers. Douglas, from South Carolina, explains: "[The hogs] got to have a stamp, because the inspection man if he catches us with one on [the pit] without a stamp he'll shut us down." This has also made it more difficult for small farmers to survive:

> "Big hog producers that raises thousands of head a year puts all of the little ones out 'cause they couldn't compete with it." Billy
>
> "But now as environmental laws have gotten more strict…[small hog farmers] just can't afford to come up to the environmental standards." Larry
>
> "We try and keep it local but with the prices and everything people are getting out of the business 'cause they just can't afford it anymore." Crystal

For Billy, and many other farmers like him, there is not enough profit in farming to make it possible for a small farmer to compete with large-scale industrial farms.

As farmers stop raising hogs restaurants are forced to source their pigs from corporate farms, losing part of the local aspect of barbecue traditionally linking barbecue to the agrarian South. Barbecue restaurants are constantly forced to adapt to changing laws, making it more difficult for small businesses to survive and compete with large-scale corporations.

Local Economy

Barbecue restaurants depend on the local community for clientele. Deindustrialization has impacted the South by causing a major loss in manufacturing jobs (Minchin 2009). Randy R., from North Carolina, explains how the loss of manufacturing jobs in the area has impacted his restaurant:

> We used to have a Wrangler…a lot of the jobs have been lost over seas…I mean you're talking about 300 to 400 jobs here, 200 or 300 jobs there and when you're talking about a town the size of 2,500 people…they're going to unemployment or a limited income and just like the economy is now, you got to cut every corner you can. Our business isn't like it used to be.

The loss of numerous jobs in small towns can destroy local businesses because an unemployed community does not have to money to go out to dinner. As deindustrialization continues across the South Randy R.'s experience becomes more common.

Randy J. explains how his Georgia based restaurant has been impacted by the loss of industry:

> The economy has slowed down, so that our business is off. We're kind of tied to the construction business up here a lot. It's off pretty good…We don't have any industry up here right now. A lot of our industry left several years really before the recession happened, so we're primarily based with a construction economy.

Even in communities that did not solely depend on industry the recession hit them hard, making it more difficult to survive.

The loss of industry coupled with the increase in competition has made it difficult for family-owned restaurants to survive. Sonny explains why so many barbecue restaurants have closed in the Lexington, North Carolina area: "Mean old word: competition; when we started there was no McDonald's, there was no Burger King, there was no Hardee's and now we got, gosh, I don't know how many. They're just everywhere." Not only is there more competition but the price of pork has risen making it harder to stay in business. Jane explains how difficult it has become to run her Georgia based restaurant: "What's killing us is the price of pork going up and trying to not—we've tried really hard not to increase prices but the meat going up, all the groceries in general, it's been tough." Competition coupled with rising prices have forced small family run restaurants to negotiate new terrain, leading to the balance between traditional techniques and more economical modern techniques while still claiming authenticity based on the final product.

Deindustrialization had a major impact on the South. Factories and businesses have left as small farmers have been forced to stop farming by high prices and low profits (Gebremedhin and Christy 1996; Minchin 2009). Restaurants, especially those outside of major tourist areas like Memphis have been hit by the economic changes occurring in their local communities. The ability to find authentic barbecue will become increasingly difficult as restaurants are forced to close because of changing laws and depressed economies.

CONCLUSION

Barbecue is produced and consumed within the larger social world. Commercialization, deindustrialization, and changing laws have all impacted the way barbecue appears today. As barbecue has adapted to changing social parameters, claims regarding barbecue have become more entrenched. Personal connection, historical tradition, geographic location, and simplicity are the dominant authenticity constructs (Johnston and Baumann 2010) appearing throughout these oral histories. This shows restaurant owners engage in the same claims and justifications of authenticity dominating food culture as a whole.

Determining the authenticity of food is difficult because once the product is consumed it is gone forever. As such, there are no experts on determining the authenticity of food, as there are in art. Instead, authenticity in barbecue, like country music, relies on being believable and

original. A believable, original product is connected to a specific historical model, but not imitative of that model. The meaning of authenticity evolves as interactions between consumers, producers, and technology evolve (Peterson 1997).

Together the analysis of barbecue cooks and restaurant owners shows how they actively engage in impression management within a commercialized society, by drawing on the imagined communities of southern barbecue. Southern barbecue is defined by smoke, sauce, and type of meat reflecting regional variations; the process is defined by cooking meat slowly over open pits so the smoke flavor from the burning wood can infuse the meat. It is widely acknowledged that authentic barbecue means smoke must be present. However, wood is increasingly expensive, open fires are difficult to control and regulate, and consumers are becoming more health conscious. The methods restaurant owners use to balance the changing landscape reflects the impression management occurring in light of increased commercialization across the South (Hughes 2000).

The process of impression management in barbecue occurs in how restaurant owners in how restaurants owners justify their decisions. Although many restaurants have adapted to the changing economy and consumer demands by switching to electric cookers or using cuts of meat with less fat. They still claim authenticity based on the final product by relying on well-established conventions of legitimate barbecue. Although there are a plethora of established barbecue restaurants across the South they are all relying on smoke, sauce, and meat to create the image of traditional barbecue that is expected from the South.

Authenticity facilitates the creation of a sense of solidarity and conformity to distinguish social groups (Hughes 2000). Authenticity, when employed by social groups, cements their ownership of cultural capital to distinguishing groups based on what they possess. Identity then ties people to these groups. Authenticity labels culture as belonging to a specific group, making it possible for a group to possess it (Bourdieu 1984; Johnston and Baumann 2007, 2010). Through processes of authenticity aspects of other cultures are borrowed and claimed as part of one culture (Harrison 2008). This authenticity is a balance between the fabrication of shared meanings and the creation of new products with historical roots (Hughes 2000; Peterson 1997).

Deindustrialization, commercialization, and economic constraints are not isolated to the South, so the way chefs and owners navigate changing structural landscapes is also not restricted to barbecue. The claims of authenticity in barbecue restaurant owners engage in are the same

claims and justifications of authenticity via historical tradition and innovation, dominating food culture as a whole. Although barbecue as a food culture sheds light on how authenticity operates in an entrenched food culture it does not provide any information on how authenticity operates on the other side of the food spectrum: the world of elite commercialized chefs.

CHAPTER THREE

TOP CHEF:

THE REFLECTION OF DISTINCTION, LEGITIMAITON, AND STYLE IN COMPETITIVE COOKING TELEVISION SHOWS

> "What does it take to make it as a chef?" Katie Lee Joel "Being a great chef is about perseverance and dedication. It's long hours and it takes years of training." Gail "It's hard to get recognized. You have to have valid credentials before you can get your own kitchen." Tom "Of the thousands that applied 12 of the country's most talented chefs sharpen their knives for battle." Katie "Top Chefs are working with knives and fire every single day and that's a lethal combination." Gail (season 1, episode 1, minute .25)

The rising popularity of the Food Network and other television programming dedicated to food has changed the appearance of modern food culture. Although food programming has been popular since Julia Child's show aired in the 1960's, 2005 saw the birth of a new type of food show: the cooking competition. Chefs were no longer giving instructions to people at home, the cooking competition show placed the audience in a spectator role, similar to a sporting event or a museum. The goal was not to instruct but to entertain (Collins 2009). As cooking competitions became more prominent throughout the late 2000's the chefs featured on these shows began to change and status markers began to dominate these shows to justify the contestants skills and the judges' legitimacy.

This chapter addresses how *Top Chef* evolved over the course of ten years while remaining rooted in the broader culinary world. How did *Top Chef* legitimate itself as a cooking competition? How do the chefs distinguish themselves from others throughout the series? How do experience, age, and gender shape experiences in the kitchen? How does a cooking show convey authenticity unto itself, its chefs, and their products?

Top Chef was the first, non-Food Network, cooking competition show to air in the U.S. Iron Chef had already been on the air for several months, but the model for Iron Chef was copied from a cooking show in Japan of the same name. *Top Chef* was the first uniquely American cooking show to air in 2006 and has been on the air for ten years and thirteen seasons. The changes occurring in the show are evidence of broader changes in food culture. With each passing season the chefs become more competitive, come from more prestigious backgrounds,

the branding on the show becomes more prominent, and the show continues to shape the career chances and opportunities of its finalist. The sample in this case is drawn from the first, seventh, and thirteenth seasons of *Top Chef*. Seven episodes were used from each season. The first, fourth, seventh, tenth, and thirteenth episodes were selected as well as the restaurant wars episodes (the only challenge that remained the same across every season), and the social issue episode (each season has one episode focusing on a social issue). The main themes that arose across the episodes were legitimation and distinction in the kitchen, constructed authenticity, social awareness, and branding.

LEGITIMATION AND DISTINCTION IN THE KITCHEN

The success of legitimating an art world depends on the collective nature of the field. Artists, alone, are insufficient to ensure the success of an art world; instead there are numerous actors who work within the field to assign value to products while also sustaining the legitimacy of the field. Claims regarding artistic status and the right to make such claims must be justified based on the field. The reception of the audience determines an art world's legitimacy and is a key measure of success (Baumann 2007). Although there is extensive work on the successful legitimation of art, music, theater, film, and novels there is very little work on the legitimation of culinary practices or food as a legitimate art form. What little work does exist isolates the field of culinary practices to France, at the exclusion of the rest of the world (Ferguson 1998).

Legitimating ideology, grounds artistic worth in a broader discourse continually shaping the field. A cultural field is focused on the interactions between producers and consumers. Cultural production must possess autonomy from other fields before a cultural product can constitute a field (Bourdieu 1993). Actors within a field compete for symbolic capital, the autonomy of a field isolates competition to actors who share a common cultural product and thus compete for the same symbolic capital. How does *Top Chef* employ symbolic capital to distinguish between competitors? How do guest judges convey status to distinguish *Top Chef* as a legitimate culinary competition?

Status Markers

The success of a cultural product depends on the opportunity space, characterized by an increase in high status patrons and the appearance of substitutes and competitors (DiMaggio 1992). A product's association with a high status audience works to legitimate the product. The combination of these factors occurring outside of an art world explains the shifts in cultural

products as art (Peterson 1994). In Baumann's (2001) study of film the creation of television and rise of post-secondary education work outside of the art world to alter the opportunity space for claims of film as an art form.

Within the world of elite chefs there are status markers bestowed on chefs and restaurants representing quality and prestige. These status markers include James Beard awards and nominations, features in magazines such as *Food and Wine*, and Michelin stars. These awards are recognized within the industry as status markers conveying prestige upon chefs who receive them. Accolades also signal to customers the quality of a restaurant. Status markers increase the cultural capital of chefs and attract consumers seeking out elite culture, as measured by prestige (Lane 2014).

Televised cooking competitions also use the same status markers to justify the competitors' positions on the show. Professional accolades communicate visible and stable categories to people within and outside of the food industry. As elite chefs work to distinguish themselves from less prestigious chefs, status markers become a professional tool to create and sustain reputations within the culinary world. The presence of established status markers, such as James Beard awards, facilitates the differentiation of chefs and restaurants (DiMaggio 1987).

Although accolades in the culinary industry were established in the mid 1970's with the creation of Michelin stars (Lane 2014) and James Beard awards in 1990 (James Beard Foundation 2016) their appearance on culinary competitions in the United States is more recent. During the first season of *Top Chef* the only person on the show to justify their position via the use of status markers was Tom Colicchio, the head judge of the series:

> "Watching their every move in the kitchen is our head judge and culinary giant Tom Colicchio." Katie "I've been cooking for about 25 years. I received 3 [Michelin] stars at the age of 26, recipient of 5 James Beard awards. I think that qualifies me to be a judge here." Tom "Joining us at the judges' table is Gail Simmons of Food and Wine magazine." Katie "She's a tough critic, she has my respect." Tom (season 1, episode 1, minute 1.20)

James Beard awards, Michelin stars, and positions at food magazines offer cultural capital to their recipients. These awards distinguish their nominees and awardees from the multitude of other chefs who have not received recognition. In turn these awards justify the judges' position on the show as superior to the competitors (DiMaggio 1987).

As the series progresses it begins to draw chefs of higher prestige. By the seventh season there are a few competitors with established status markers. “I’m pissed I wasn’t supposed to be going in to dinner. I’ve got a lot of recognition. I was [one of] *Food and Wine’s* best new chefs in America.” Andrea 28.30 (season 7, episode 4). The presence of accolades is used to distinguish one competitor from another, because within the culinary world accolades and status markers enforce a hierarchy, with those possessing the status markers having access to larger amounts of cultural capital and recognition than others. However, the use of accolades on the show attempts to bring the same hierarchy into the televised kitchen to justify a chef’s performance during the competition.

By the thirteenth season a majority of the chefs have received at least one status marker or are the executive chefs and/or owners of restaurants as compared to the first season where none of the chefs own their own restaurants or hold executive chef roles:

> “I’m a two time James Beard nominee and I just became the executive chef of the Spence, which was Richard Blais’s old restaurant. A reviewer said he liked my food better than Richard’s.” Wesley (season 13, episode 1, minute 7.05)
>
> “My name is Karen Kenowitz. I’m the chef and partner at Myers and Chang in Boston and I’m nominated for best chef Northeast.” Karen (season 13, episode 1, minute 3.26).

Chefs use the accolades they have received to justify their position on the show and to reinforce a hierarchy within the kitchen. James Beard awards and Michelin stars convey the status of professional to chefs to other chefs as well as consumers who are seeking out elite restaurants (Lane 2014).

Culinary Capital

The use of status markers such as James Beard awards and Michelin stars is not the only way for chefs to create a hierarchy amongst themselves. Social networks within the culinary world also actively distinguish chefs. Chefs do not begin their careers as elite chefs, they must first be trained by established chefs. Within the culinary world there are social networks based on who has worked for whom; their status becomes linked to the status of chefs they have worked for in the past (Fine 2009). The different experiences between chefs work to distinguish them from others who share the same positions and accolades (Mark 2003). Differences amongst chefs often occur in the form of style and technique. Elite chefs receive their status by perfecting one

type of cuisine. Historically, classic French cuisine was the only form of haute cuisine in the world. The post World War II era of Julia Child and James Beard focused on French trained chefs who gained status in the United States (Kamp 2009). The culinary world, like art, is not reducible to one trend. Since the 1960's there has been an influx of cuisines from around the world gaining elite status (Fine 2009).

Although status in the culinary world is often tied to elite chefs training younger chefs, this form of capital did not emerge on *Top Chef* until later seasons. Instead the first season of *Top Chef* relies on celebrity name recognition as a source of status instead of chef name recognition:

> "My name is Brian Hill. I'm a personal chef, I cook for celebrities like Eddie Murphy, Mary J Blige, Mariah Carey. People that can afford me." Brian (Season 1, episode 1, minute 3.12)
>
> "My name is Lee Anne Wong I'm currently the executive chef of Event Operations at the French Culinary Institute in Manhattan. I've had the privilege of working with some of the best chefs in the world and I'm confident in my skills." Lee Anne (Season 1, episode 1, minute 4.04)

Working for celebrities, in the first season, conveys more status than working for other chefs. This shows how televised cooking shows spent the early years navigating the balance between the culinary world and the media.

However, over time the show transitioned further into the culinary world. By the seventh season chefs were using their resumes of working with elite chefs to convey status upon their positions. Working with an elite chef offers social and cultural capital to the chef who could employ their name. "I'm the last person standing, but I have a kickass resume. I've worked for Todd English, Daniel Baulud, Don Antinore. So I know I'm a threat." Ed (season 7, episode 1, minute 17.30). The experience of working with an elite chef offers social capital that in turn can be used to convey prestige upon a younger chef.

By the show's thirteenth season contestants were not only working for elite chefs but they were also working for former *Top Chef* contestants. The difference between the two being elite chefs did not compete on the show but chefs who worked for them competed. Former *Top Chef* contestants entered their season without the amount of recognition they received after the show.

Their performance on the show awarded them cultural capital through name recognition and consumer recognition, common among televised food shows (Collins 2010):

> "A lot of people seem to be underestimating me. I've opened up my own restaurant and I've worked for Emeril Lagasse for 10 years and I'm a James Beard nominated chef." Isaac (season 13, episode 9, minute 6.05)
>
> "I used to work for Mike Isabella for quite a while. He was runner-up in *Top Chef All-Stars* and so I feel like I have to win." Marjorie Meek-Bradley (season 13, episode 1, minute 7.48)
>
> "I mean [Jean-George Vongerichten] has had guys on the show before, last season was Gregory he made it to the finale. I imagine if I don't make it that far he will be disappointed." Jeremy (season 13, episode 13, minute 33.10)

The experience contestants had prior to entering the competition working for elite chefs reinforces the culinary hierarchy created through the use of status markers. Elite chefs possess higher levels of capital: economic, social, and cultural via their position in the culinary world. Younger chefs do not have access to these forms of capital on their own, instead they rely on established chefs to help them gain access to status markers and recognition possessed by established chefs (Bourdieu 1984).

Guest Judges

The institutionalization of resources and practices within an art world, creates networks for the organization of cultural products as art. Although the artist is at the center of the network there are numerous collaborators to ensure a product retains its status as art (Becker 1982). Becker (1982) explains collective action is integral to the continued success of art through the creation of organizational structure and apparatus. Baumann's (2001) study of film identifies the creation of the Academy of Motion Picture Art and Sciences and the formal awards associated with the Academy as the impetus for the creation of other venues, such as competitive film festivals and rise of film studies programs, and shifts in director-centric production, to the continued success of film as an art form.

The contestants on *Top Chef* are not alone in working to distinguish themselves through the use of status markers. To ensure food retains its position as art guest judges actively interact with contestants to employ cultural capital and status markers to justify their position as a judge

on the show. The way contestants respond to the judges also conveys their position within the culinary world.

During the first season of *Top Chef* there is a range of quest judges but their experience in the culinary world varies dramatically. “Our guest judge is Marcy Blum, wedding planner to the stars.” Katie (season 1, episode 8, minute 21.40). Like the chefs in season one who work for celebrities there is an emphasis placed on celebrity name recognition instead of chef name recognition. This represents the early stages of creating a cohesive field, relying on celebrity name recognition reflects the need for a new medium to justify its existence. As the culinary media field became stronger the switch from celebrities to celebrity chefs occurred.

By the seventh season the guest judges are not only more renowned chefs but also former *Top Chef* contestants are beginning to appear as guest judges:

> “Eric Ripert is a guest judge. He’s like a seafood god. So I’m pretty nervous.” Jacqueline (season 7, episode 1, minute 29.58)
>
> “I see Spike [Mendelsohn], there’s Mike [Isabella], there’s Bryan [Voltaggio]. I hold a lot of respect for the past *Top Chef* contestants.” Ed (season 7, episode 4, minute 15.32)
>
> “Wylie [Dufresne] is known for using newer techniques, he’s a very inspirational chef. I’m very impressed to see him.” Kevin (season 7, episode 10, minute 3.25)

Guest judges are recognized based on their specialties, experience, or uniqueness. The guest judges’ presence shapes the challenges as well as how contestants react to them.

By the thirteenth season mentioning the chef’s name is accompanied by mentioning their accolades as well:

> “Welcome guest judge for this round acclaimed chef and restaurateur Art Smith.” Padma “Art Smith is kind of a big deal. Oprah’s chef, Chef for President Obama, multiple James Beard awards. I mean this guy is no joke.” Chad (season 13, episode 5, minute 16.55)
>
> “Michael Voltaggio, he’s a real bad mamajamma, really highly regarded here in LA and he’s the winner of *Top Chef* season 6, so he’s going to know exactly what we are going through.” Isaac (season 13, episode 7, minute 22.50)

The guest judges who appear on the show across the season are another method of conveying legitimacy upon the show. During the later seasons the guest judges’ voices and critiques are

heard more frequently lending more justification to the decisions made by the judges regarding the quality of the food prepared by the contestants.

Some guest judges have played recurring roles in the series. The first competition of season one took place at Hubert Keller's restaurant, Fleur de Lys, and the thirteenth series returns there:

> "Chefs, San Francisco is known to have some of the best restaurants in the world and one restaurant was at the top of that tier for several decades and for 28 of those years it was helmed by your next guest judge, Hubert Keller." Padma "Hubert Keller is a legend. He is an icon." Jeremy "Hubert hosted the very first quickfire at Fleur de Lys. French fine dining, highest standards in the world and we were right there in the middle of it." Tom (season 13, episode 13, minute 19.35)

The guest judges appearing on *Top Chef* offer credibility to the show in multiple ways. Their presence on the show conveys authenticity while also using the name recognition to lend legitimacy to the show itself.

Chefs who have already achieved elite status such as prior *Top Chef* winners, James Beard award winners, and chefs who are famous for new and innovative techniques, such as Wylie Dufresne, create legitimacy by pulling from established conventions to lend credibility to the show and its contestants. For the show and its contestants to be seen as legitimate guest judges are used because they have already achieved legitimacy within the culinary field and can infuse legitimacy into new products, shows, and chefs (Hughes 2000).

Kitchen Hierarchy

Within the kitchen there is a hierarchy, reflected in the type of jobs that chefs perform. Higher status cooks perform the highest status jobs and have the freedom to choose what type of job they will perform while delegating the remaining jobs to those with less status. For example, in a steakhouse the highest-ranking chef is in charge of butchering the meats and operating the grill while the lower status chefs are responsible for the vegetables and the preparation work occurring on the line. Status in the kitchen parallels the amount of control a kitchen station offers, cooking meats in a steakhouse involves the most control over the final product compared to vegetables or a fry station. Thus the chef cooking the meat has higher status than the chef cooking vegetables (Fine 2009).

There is a discrete hierarchy within a kitchen reflected in the label assigned to particular roles and the people who fill them. Within fine dining restaurants there is a distinction between the cooks and the chefs, the executive chef or *chef de cuisine* is the head chef, followed by the sous chef who supervises the daily running of the kitchen and supervises the *chefs de partie* who are responsible for each station such as fish, salads, and grill. Under those chefs are *commis* or cooks who are in the process of learning each station (Harris and Giuffre 2015).

The hierarchies dominating a professional kitchen are also apparent on the show *Top Chef*. During the first season most of the chefs who work in professional kitchens, only half of the contestants, are sous chefs or line cooks: "Working on a line in a kitchen is one of the most brutal jobs you can possibly do. You have to plate dishes, you do dishes, you have people screaming at you, it's a nasty job." Cynthia (season 1, episode 1, minute 7.10).

However, in the later seasons being a sous chef is the lowest position held by the contestants, with only one chef in the competition being a sous chef and the remaining fifteen chefs holding executive chef or chef de cuisine roles:

> "I'm the sous chef at Beau de Con, New York and being the only sous chef in this competition makes me feel really intimidated…I think I have the most advantage. Sous chefs are the bitches of the executive chef. We work harder. Executive chefs take the credit." Frances (season 13, episode 1, minute 6.05).

Working as a sous chef in a fine dining restaurant means that although the sous chef is responsible for the daily running and managing of the kitchen they do not receive the same recognition, accolades, or status markers as the executive chef.

The distinctions between positions within a kitchen are not unique to the United States or Europe. When season seven goes to Singapore for the finale, the kitchen hierarchy regarding tools and positions becomes evident:

> "Create your own version of Singapore street food using the most popular tool in all of Asia, the wok, and that will be your only cooking device" Padma "The guy that holds the wok will make or break your restaurant…in many cases chefs will not get to hold the wok until they've had 3-5 years experience. It's a great honor." Seeto (season 7, episode 13, minute 7.58).

Using a wok properly, in Singapore and more generally Asian cuisine, is a status marker that determines the success of a restaurant.

As *Top Chef* evolves over ten years the status of the show within the culinary world increases. The contestants on season one are sous chefs and personal chefs, by season thirteen the distinction is focused on who has been nominated for a James Beard award and who has not. The increasing status of the contestants and the guest judges lends more cultural capital to the show and establishes it as a legitimate aspect of the culinary world.

CONSTRUCTED AUTHENTICITY

> "If you think it's crowded with 17 chefs in 1 kitchen trying to stand out. Think about all of the thousands of restaurants that are in this country and the hundreds of thousands of chefs out there cooking. You think about the ones you hear about, read about, know about. They stand out for a reason, they stand out because they have great technique, they can take something simple and make it exciting, they are telling their own story. All those things together are going to win this competition and all those things make your restaurant stand out from a very crowded field." Tom (season 13, episode 1, minute 49.50)

Authenticity is a word rarely mentioned on *Top Chef*. Instead the measures of distinction arise in the judges' responses to the food. Distinction occurs in six main forms on *Top Chef*: sophistication, risk, modern, traditional, original, and exotic descriptions and critiques of the chefs' final dishes.

Cultural authenticity is not innate in any cultural product. Authenticity is constructed within a cultural field. Richard Peterson's (1997) work on country music shows how country singers balance self-expression and the established conventions of country music to produce an authentic product. Food is subject to the same constructed authenticity as music. Food is deemed authentic based on geographic specificity, simplicity, historical connection, personal connection, and ethnic connection (Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Place

Place plays an important role in how chefs source products and inspiration for their dishes. Food culture balances the desire for exotic and local dishes; both play on the geographic specificity rewarded by modern food culture (Johnston and Baumann 2010). The role of place in the creation of dishes showcased on *Top Chef* is a balance between inspiration sourced from a specific country or region and the location the show is being filmed. Inspiration sourced from the

filming location is evident in the unique challenges and ingredients. Geographic specificity can occur in either a global or local scope depending on the location:

> "Las Vegas is global, not just tourist but the chefs and the MGM is a great place to have the final challenge." Dave (season 1, episode 11, minute 4.15)
>
> "A delicious slice of toast. It's a craze that ignited here in San Francisco and has taken the nation by storm." Padma "Artisanal bread is a classic San Francisco item now." Tracey (season 13, episode 13, minute 4.25)

Season one's finale occurred in Las Vegas, a place without a concrete food identity, instead it is global in scope offering less restrictions for inspiration than season thirteen that travels up and down the California coast and draws inspiration from dishes unique to the region. The global identity of Las Vegas allows chefs to create a dish from around the world. Season thirteen is filmed in California providing the opportunity for chefs to draw on California flavors and ingredients, such as bread in San Francisco.

Chefs do not need to be in a specific location to draw inspiration from a geographic region. Other chefs draw inspiration from regions they have traveled to around the world:

> "The name of my team's restaurant is EVOO which is extra virgin olive oil because we want to extract true Mediterranean flavors." Angelo (season 7, episode 9, minute 16.00)
>
> "I'm doing some globe artichokes, oven roasted tomatoes and some marinated squash. I'm kind of going the Provencal route." Marjorie (season 13, episode 13, minute 13.01)

Place specific food affords more status to the final product than food lacking geographic specificity. A slice of toast in San Francisco or a dish drawing from Provencal flavors by using traditional ingredients uses geographic specificity to convey status through a balance of originality and tradition. Place specific food is unique because it cannot be found outside of a specific location, or the chef preparing the food must be connected to the location.

Geographic specificity endows a product with authenticity because a specific region has perfected the product or technique. Food linked to a specific place exists in contrast to mass produced, inauthentic food. For example, Parmesan cheese from Parma, Italy is more authentic than Parmesan cheese in the green container found in supermarkets (Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Personal Connection

The personal connection chefs have to food is also linked to place. Food, like other cultural products, draws status from the individual who produced the product. The connection between an individual producer and authenticity is achieved through uniqueness and originality. Connecting food to chefs' backgrounds highlights the relationship between ingredients and a place. A personal connection goes beyond place because a chef must be connected the product, not just sourcing ingredients from a region (Johnston and Baumann 2010). A product must reflect the producer's personal style to be seen as authentic:

> "I'm from DC so my game plan is utilizing something out of the Chesapeake. So I have a great piece of rockfish." Tim (season 7, episode 1, minute 20.42)
>
> "With my Italian nature I throw in lemon, capers, and arugula." Grayson (season 13, episode 1, minute 13.20)
>
> "I cooked Mawmaw Toup's Court-Bouillon" [Grandmother's Shrimp court-bouillon]." Isaac (season 13, episode 1, minute 32.28)

In the later seasons of *Top Chef* the personal connection to food becomes evident in how chefs explain their choices regarding what ingredients, techniques, and styles are reflected in their dishes.

A personal connection to food is not only based on the region a person is connected to, it also includes traveling the world to explore flavors and seek new inspiration. Although the early seasons of *Top Chef* do not reflect the same emphasis on regional inspiration for their dishes, there is still a desire to increase a chef's culinary repertoire by traveling abroad:

> "In my cooking life I haven't had the money or the opportunity to travel abroad to understand the origins of why I'm doing what I am doing or where these flavors come from…I would like to get to know my food on a deeper level." Tiffany (season 1, episode 11, minute 7.02)
>
> "Now I have to win, I feel like it's destiny. I spent a lot of time in Asia and it really made me passionate toward Asian cultures." Angelo (season 7, episode 13, minute 4.38)
>
> "I'm starting to learn that I really want to study other cuisines and see what they have to offer. Stop being so hard headed about doing French type food." Wesley (season 13, episode 5, minute 26.48)

Across the seasons of *Top Chef* traveling and learning about other culture's cuisines was a recurring desire. Traveling was described as a way to learn more about the origins of flavors, a source of passion regarding a specific cuisine, and a way to expand culinary boundaries.

The personal connection chefs have with their food conveys authenticity upon their food. In a society where consumers have a multitude of choices regarding restaurants and cuisines chefs who appear to be more authentic will have more customers because they stand out (Fine 2009; Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Sourcing Products

The use of fresh, local, and seasonal products is embedded with status because they possess better quality and flavor while also being politically favorable. The authenticity of food is also rooted in political and ethical choices reflected by the locavore movement. Chefs who source products along local guidelines, using a specific radius, convey status upon their products and consumers who support local and seasonal food will also frequent restaurants with the same goals (Johnston and Baumann 2010). The same trends driving food culture as a whole impact the trends appearing on culinary television. The desire for fresh, local, seasonal produce is not new to the culinary world. Across every season of *Top Chef* sourcing products plays a role in the contestants' choices:

> "[A gas station] isn't where I would shop normally because there is no fresh produce. I hope I'm not serving it to people that I know or like." Andrea (season 1, episode 4, minute 5.20)
>
> "Just based on principle I'm going to take the fresh stuff, even if it's of lesser quality because I know its fresh." Harold (season 1, episode 8, minute 15.40)
>
> "I'm making desert. I'm going up against Phillip. He is going with lime and mojito, so I'm like okay I'm going with grapefruit and tequila because I don't think the limes are very ripe right now." Isaac (season 13, episode 4, minute 18.55)

Using seasonal and local products conveys status and geographic authenticity to a product, but it is also detrimental when a chef does not follow through on the flavor of the final product:

> "It's a chilled sweet corn soup with Maryland blue crab salad." Kelly "Not a lot of corn flavor, there's no flavor in this dish." Tom "I do like that Kelly used crab so

there's this seasonal, localness and then there's the corn which isn't seasonal which is why I think it had no taste." Gail (season 7, episode 9, minute 29.25)

Using local and seasonal products is not enough to make a quality dish. Chefs must navigate using local products that may or may not be in season. Consumers who seek out those experiences reward a chef who successfully uses local, seasonal products.

Sophistication

High culture, elite, and gourmet trends in culture are being replaced by omnivorousness (Peterson and Kern 1996), or a democratization of culture (Johnston and Baumann 2010). No longer is high culture the only authentic cultural product. Instead society is becoming more open to a multitude of cultural products. Despite the shift toward omnivourousness there are still distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate cultural products (Bourdieu 1984; Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Food is no longer dominated by French cuisine and gourmet has lost its nuance as standard gourmet products become common. While these products come with a higher price than their mainstream counterparts they are no longer exclusive. Instead gourmet has been replaced with sophisticated cuisine (Kamp 2006).

Sophistication occurs when food appears to be simple, even though there is an extensive amount of work going into the dish (Johnston and Baumann 2010). Sophistication and refinement occur as authentic distinctions in season seven and thirteen, there was no mention in season one. Sophistication occurs when a chef takes something basic and elevates it to a new level:

"Angelo's dish has a refinement, that's very rare." Padma (season 7, episode 13, minute 37.40)

"This is really good, to me it's a lot of the flavors I had in the [Singapore food] market but refined." Tom (season 7, episode 13, minute 28.55)

"To take something as common as a carrot and make it artful and beautiful like this. I love that nice heat, that acid." Art (season 13, episode 5, minute 37.05)

In all of the above cases, recognition was given based on a chef's ability to take something simple and elevate it to an art form. Although there are mentions of sophistication and refinement when chefs elevate a dish beyond expectations, there are also examples of failures to elevate a dish:

"It's not wedding food. It's not elegant enough." Art 13.5

"A guy bending down at the podium pulling out a cocktail, that's insane." Tom "It came off as amateurish." Bill "Lack of subtlety." Padma 35.25 13.10

In both cases the contestant being critiqued was sent home for their failure to produce elegant and sophisticated cuisine.

The judges are not the only ones using sophistication to distinguish between the skills chefs possess. The contestants themselves are also employing the same terminology to distinguish themselves from their competitors:

"Isaac is amazing, but I think as the competition goes on we're going to be required to have a little bit more refinement in our cooking and I don't know how he's going to do with that." Marjorie (season 13, episode 7, minute 7.15)

"I've been seeing what's winning and its crudos and Asian flavors, I don't tweezerfy my plates not I'm sort of like am I not getting it? Is it me?" Isaac (season 13, episode 9, minute 1.42)

"I'm a little nervous I haven't touched some of these fancy tools. I have a mom and pop restaurant." Ed (season 7, episode 1, minute 20.29)

Although the first season has an equal representation of self-taught chefs and chefs who work as sous chefs in restaurants this distinction is completely gone by the thirteenth season and replaced by chefs who have won awards, are executive chefs, and owners of their own restaurants with those who are still sous chefs. The emphasis placed on sophistication during the thirteenth season reflects the changing background of the contestants and increasing status of the chefs featured on the show.

Sophistication on *Top Chef* increases as the legitimacy of the show increases. By season thirteen the contestants enter with higher status and are expected to create dishes reflecting the same level of status through the sophistication of the plate. A failure to do so results in being sent home or receiving scorn from both judges and fellow contestants.

Modern

Chefs work to find a balance between traditional and innovative cuisine. Standing out in the culinary world and being deemed authentic depends on the connection between food and a chef's identity. This can be achieved through the connection with traditional products or new food trends (Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Food relying on a historical connection is seen as true to its original form because a chef can connect the current dish to a dish from the past. The connection between dishes occurs in how chefs describe their food:

> "This is a throwback to the neoclassical California cuisine from the Wolfgang Puck era." Amanda (season 7, episode 1, minute 26.43)
>
> "I love how refreshing it was to eat, classic timeless French cooking." Gail (season 13, episode 7, minute 37.31)

Drawing on a personal or historical connection conveys legitimacy to a product. A food product is not authentic based on copying an established product, instead a chef, or artist, must draw on tradition by using their own artistic sensibilities to elevate the final product to something unique and modern while simultaneously rooted in tradition (Peterson 1997).

The failure to balance tradition and innovation is summarized by Gail's response to a dish: "I don't think all the flavors are bad, but there's very little originality in all these dishes." Gail (season 1, episode 1, minute 26.58). The lack of innovation is pronounced in season one, but it does reoccur across the series: "There was nothing about your dish that made it interesting, that gave us a point of view that could be yours." Gail (season 13, episode 1, minute 49.45). The contestants are trying to balance innovation with established traditions. The most pronounced failure to achieve authenticity is when a dish is compared to something commonly found in restaurants:

> "This is a [pork and veal meatball with spicy tomato sauce and gremolata] and parmesan." Grayson "This is like Jersey red sauce." Tom "Could I get this at my local pizzeria when I order a meatball sandwich, probably." Padma "And would it taste the same?" Grayson "Yea, and I think you could have done something more interesting." Padma (season 13, episode 1, minute 35.43)

Drawing on tradition is important but chefs, and artists must be able to instill their own point of view into a finished product. The failure to do so equates the product with something common, or popular culture, instead of the high status of elite chefs. This reinforces the status given to professional chefs by classifying their products as legitimate of highbrow (Bourdieu 1993).

Chefs also seek avenues to instill local products into their cuisine. This serves two purposes, a chef can connect to the social justice narrative surrounding local products and convey legitimacy onto the finished product by connecting a product to the style of a

geographical region (Johnston and Baumann 2010). Foods originating from a certain space have more legitimacy than placeless foods:

> "What we have is a selection of different vegetables all treated in a different manner: pickled 3 colors of cauliflower, a little avocado mousse, roasted radish, puffed amaranth, a little bit of shaved purple asparagus, a little bit of red grape, and some king crab. [California produce with flavors of the pacific]" Phillip "My only wish is I wanted more." Gail "When I think about California and the new California cuisine, that's it." Emeril (season 13, episode 1, minute 39.20)

Connecting the dish to California thorough ingredients and style conveys legitimacy and distinction upon the finished product.

Exotic

The desire for exotic cuisine also impacts how food is deemed authentic. A product can be authentic without being exotic and can be exotic without being authentic. An authentic exotic product must be connected with a specific place, often a region in the Global South. The search for exotic cuisine acts as a way to consume the most sanctified aspects of another culture, their foodways, without regard for the politics or social status of the region as a whole (Johnston and Baumann 2010; Said 1978). Seeking exotic food also conveys status and distinction unto those who are able to find authentic, exotic cuisines. Knowledge about exotic food offers cultural capital because the ability to try exotic cuisine depends on the possession of social and economic capital (Bourdieu 1984).

Top Chef handles exotic cuisine in two ways. The first is contestants draw inspiration from their travels and experiences with other countries to influence their dishes:

> "The most innovative cutting edge right now is Spain." Stephen (season 1, episode 7, minute 12.05)
>
> "I made a [spiced carrot soup] that represents where I live. I live in a predominately Middle Eastern neighborhood…I made a little soup spiced with some Turkish spices, some cumin, smoked paprika, garbanzo beans." Carl (season 13, episode 1, minute 36.58)
>
> "We decide we are going to do a Latin style flavor profile for our menu, the flavors will be bright and bold and spicy. It's perfect for this hot environment." Chad (season 13, episode 4, minute 16.47)

Exotic cuisine is also featured on *Top Chef* during the season seven finale in Singapore. This was the first international finale, since then there have been three international finales: Bahamas (season 8), British Columbia (season 9), and Guanajuato (season 12). The international finale provides chefs with an opportunity to travel abroad, explore new cuisine, and be tested on their understanding of international cuisine:

> "I'm thrilled what an amazing area of the world most of us would never have a chance to visit." Kelly (season 7, episode 12, minute 1.40)
>
> "Singapore is one of the most exciting and exotic food destinations in the world." Tom (season 7, episode 12, minute 2.49)
>
> "This is street food. This is how it was eaten originally [standing] no tables." Seeto (season 7, episode 12, minute 4.05)
>
> "You can taste the different cultures in 1 single dish. A dish that looks Chinese will have a Malaysian or Indian twist to it." Kelly (season 7, episode 12, minute 7.13)

The role of exotic cuisine on *Top Chef* offers insight into how professional chefs interact with exotic cuisine to please their consumers.

As food products from around the world become available in mainstream supermarkets and consumers have an awareness of world cuisine; chefs and consumers seek out the exotic in two ways. Culinary tourism allows chefs and consumers to travel abroad with the intention of trying regional cuisines. The second is consumers seeking out exotic food in their hometowns. However, as an exotic cuisine becomes widespread it is no longer seen as exotic, and authenticity becomes questionable. For example, prior to the 1980's sushi was only found in major culinary destinations with renown Japanese restaurants. Today sushi is served in the deli section of most supermarkets. Sushi can still be authentic, if ordered from an appropriate restaurant, but it is no longer exotic (Sax 2015).

SOCIAL AWARENESS

Chefs and the food they produce do not exist in a vacuum. They are subject to constraints from outside factors and influenced by the same social inequalities impacting society as a whole (Peterson 1997). Culinary television shows can both perpetuate existing inequalities and simultaneously work alongside social movements (Collins 2010). *Top Chef*, as well as other

culinary television shows have used their platforms to speak about social issues such as sexuality, the environment, and childhood obesity.

Sexuality

On June 26, 2015 the Supreme Court ruled in favor of gay marriage. Commitment ceremonies morphed into weddings and chefs were called upon to cater weddings. The culinary world is traditionally more welcoming of alternative lifestyles than other fields. *Top Chef* has also shown it's support for gay marriage by featuring two episodes where chefs had to cater a wedding for a same sex couple. The first took place during season one and said little about gay marriage or equality, other than the couple was of the same sex: "I see two grooms walk in instead of a bride and groom. It puts it into a different perspective we can be a little more flavorful and colorful." Stephen 4.00 (season 1, episode 8).

During the thirteenth season another wedding occurred, this time for twenty-five couples to celebrate the legalization of gay marriage. At the head of this wedding was acclaimed chef and LGBTQ activist Art Smith:

> "My husband and I are going to renew our vows. We deserve the right to love who we wish. Marriage equality is here to stay." Art Smith "I married my spouse a year ago this month. I grew up really never thinking that I would be able to marry someday the person that I loved. It was something that was off the table… I got married a year ago in Massachusetts where marriage has been legal for 10 years." Karen (season 13, episode 5, minute 18.08)

Although the wedding was for twenty-five couples there were several contestants who were also involved in same sex marriages; they voiced their experiences over the course of the season.

Although *Top Chef* is primarily a culinary cooking competition it also uses its positioning to speak on social issues: "Today was a proud moment in *Top Chef* history, marrying couples who 5 or 6 years ago couldn't even conceive of being married." Tom "It's bigger than a competition." Padma 44.15 (season 13, episode 5). The openness that is characteristic of professional kitchens can also be seen in the challenges and experiences featured on *Top Chef*.

Environment

Environmental concerns have also been featured on *Top Chef* during the most recent season. In the kitchen environmental concerns take two forms: heat sources and product

sourcing. Heat sources focus on using alternative energy sources such as wind or solar energy to power cooking devices:

> "Palm Springs capitalizes on clean energy, you may have noticed a few wind mills on the drive. That's clean energy at work. And this gentleman knows a little something about clean energy in the kitchen: Chef Jose Andres….For this quickfire challenge you'll have 30 minutes to create a dish using the cleanest energy there is: the sun. You'll cook your dishes using 1 of 2 cutting edge solar paneled cooking stoves brought by Jose Andres." Padma (season 13, episode 4, minute 4.05)

Another form of environmental concern occurs when sourcing a product. Culinary buzzwords such as organic, local, and sustainable have garnered attention in recent years as an alternative to the industrialized food system. Organic, local, and sustainable food is deemed superior in taste to conventional food. Although organic and sustainable foods are not mentioned out loud during the episodes when the chefs are shopping at Whole Foods local, organic, and sustainable signs are seen in the background of every episode.

The local food trend has replaced organic as a status marker because corporate agriculture has taken over a large section of the organic market. Chefs and consumers are now turning to local suppliers to reflect their social awareness of product choices. Although local and organic foods are anchored in ethical choices they also reflected the desire for simple and real authentic products (Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Health

The obesity epidemic has become another pressing social problem in society. To combat childhood obesity the First Lady, Michelle Obama, created the Let's Move campaign. Since the seventh season of *Top Chef* was filmed in Washington DC the show partnered with the white house chef Sam to cook a healthy school lunch:

> "The first lady launched her campaign Let's Move to end the childhood obesity epidemic within a generation. What we're trying to do is bring together chefs to do their part in this. So we are looking to do a school lunch." Sam "You'll be feeding students using the same restrictive budget our public schools have $2.68 per child, that's $134 for all 50 kids." Padma "Of that $134 I'm going to take $4 away because for the $2.68 schools have to serve lunch that includes labor,

> supplies, and anything it takes to get that food to the plate. So $4 is actually a real gift." Sam (season 7, episode 2, minute 12.15)

The ability to cook a healthy lunch for children while conforming to the restrictive school lunch budget posed a challenge for the contestants.

The need to target children to improve their diets meant avoiding voids foods high in fats and sugars: "They grow up tasting high fat, high sugar, high salt foods that's what they become accustomed to. We can impact them young, we're going to put them on a course for their lives." Sam (season 7, episode 2, minute 30.25). Preparing a healthy dish is also impacted by the choices chefs make regarding the ingredients they use:

> "I realized the bananas were starchy." Jacqueline "Did you find you have to add more sugar because the bananas were starchy?" Sam "I believe there was a total of 2 pounds of sugar." Jacqueline "That's what happens if we don't use good ingredients, we add a lot of sugar or fat to make them taste better." Sam 34.10 (season 7, episode 2)

Cooking healthy meals for children, as well as adults, is impacted by budget constraints and the quality of available produce. By dedicating an episode to healthy foods, *Top Chef* is able to use its platform to not only spread awareness but also increase its legitimation as more than just another reality television show.

Reality television is easily written off as pointless; watching a group of strangers compete for money is more inline with a sporting event than a social cause. However, food is omnipresent in social life both on television and off. Food also presents a problem not faced by any other cultural product: it is necessary for survival and the presence or absence of healthy food can have significant health consequences. Food shows, and the Food Network are able to address hunger and obesity in new ways by raising awareness, using donating surplus products to food banks, and providing a space for people to donate to charities addressing food related problems.

Gender

Although *Top Chef* provides a platform for social issues including gay marriage and childhood obesity, it is still subject to the same social inequalities dominating professional kitchens. Professional kitchens are white, male spaces. Women have traditionally cooked in the domestic sphere. To increase the status of professional chefs men worked to distance themselves and their tasks from those performed by women (Harris and Giuffre 2015). Within professional

kitchens and in food media women are not given the same respect or attention as their male counterparts (Collins 2009; Harris and Giuffre 2015).

Across every season there were multiple instances of gender inequality at work in the *Top Chef* kitchen. Across thirteen seasons there have been three women who have won *Top Chef*: Stephanie Izard (season 4), Kristin Kish (season 10), and Mei Lin (season 12). Gender inequality in the kitchen took multiple forms across the series. The first was a focus on women's appearance or behavior instead of their culinary skills:

> "Good morning sexy, look at you." Miguel to Candice (season 1, episode 4, minute 2.52)
>
> "Tamesha's really sexy." Angelo "Angelo's screwing around with Tamesha, she's young, she's green, she's right up his alley." Ed "She has an inner lion." Angelo "After that what are you doing?" Tamesha "You." Angelo "You wish." Tamesha (season 7, episode 4, minute 18.38)
>
> "'Hello, I'm Renee from Kansas City and I'm a sassy chef', who introduces themselves like that in a kitchen." Amar Santana (season 13, episode 1, minute 3.01)

Women were expected to behave the same way men did. When they did not they were criticized by their male counterparts. Women who were young and attractive were forced to deal with male chefs focusing on their appearance instead of their culinary skills.

Women in professional kitchens are seen as fitting into two categories. The first is the hard working chef who earns respect by her actions in the kitchen and the second is the chef who is seen as too attractive to be in the kitchen and is a romantic conquest instead of a colleague (Harris and Giuffre 2015). The second example of gender inequality on *Top Chef* is the different behavior expected by men and women in the kitchen:

> "She treats people like shit when she's in the kitchen, She's a bitch." Dave (season 1, episode 11, minute 5.20)
>
> "Not only speed but efficiency and poise and I want everyone to be like wow this guy is truly the alpha male." Kenny (season 7, episode 1, minute 13.17)
>
> "The bros over there are dropping an octave in their voice, fist bumping, and what not and I'm actually really glad we have 2 high powered ladies on our team, it's a wonderful balance they are both egoless and attitude less and I think that's going

to help us out a whole lot. We'll let those bros take themselves down." Isaac (season 13, episode 9, minute 19.02)

The professional kitchen is a male-dominated workplace. As such, men are presumed to possess leadership qualities that are rewarded in the business sector (Katila and Eriksson 2013). Women chefs who possess the same qualities and treat workers the same are labeled as bitches. They are also encouraged to be egoless and attitude less even though those traits will not go far in job advancement (Harris and Giuffre 2015).

Race

Although kitchens represent a variety of races and ethnicities, televised cooking shows and chefs are predominantly white. While there have been numerous races and ethnicities represented on *Top Chef* the racial composition of the winners across thirteen seasons are four Asians, one Black, and eight whites. Racial dynamics appear on *Top Chef* two ways:

"[I want to] be the first African American to win this bad boy in Obama's city." Tiffany Derry (season 7, episode 1, minute 2.15)

"I'm from the Dominican Republic. I love bold flavors. People make fun of me when I say I love yellow mustard." Amar (season 13, episode 1, minute 15.59)

"I'm from the Philippines, fresh off the boat…People don't understand the flavor profile of bitter melon, but its bitter melon. Duh it's bitter. I'll go with my Asian ingredients." Frances (season 13, episode 1, minute 21.50)

The desire to be the first black person to win *Top Chef* and dismantling ethnic stereotypes regarding what ingredients people from a specific region are supposed to like both reflect the role of race on *Top Chef* and in professional kitchens as a whole.

Professional kitchens typically employ people of color in less dominant roles, rarely as executive chef. The main exception to this is in restaurants with a clear ethnic identity. For example, a Mexican restaurant or televised cooking show is expected to have a Mexican chef at the helm (Collins 2009). The authenticity of an ethnic restaurant is based on the consumers' perception of the chef. Conforming to racial and ethnic stereotypes conveys more status and authenticity onto their restaurants because consumers assume only Japanese chefs make authentic sushi or only Mexican chefs make authentic tacos (Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Age

Age also plays a role in professional kitchens. Younger chefs are seen as having less status and less expertise because they are younger. The balance between status markers, such as James Beard awards and executive chef positions, and age came up across the later seasons of *Top Chef*: "I have a really great resume but I'm competing against people further along in their careers than I am, but that doesn't mean I'm not as good as they are." Amanda (season 7, episode 1, minute 8.28) Despite comments regarding age or experience, the kitchen offers a great equalizer: a chef is judge based on the plate of food they present:

> "I think you're the youngest one here." Tom "My age doesn't mean anything, my food does." Angelina "I like that" Tom and Emeril (season 13, episode 1, minute 25.22)

Age in the professional kitchen is a double-edged sword. Young chefs are seen as inexperienced and must train with established chefs if they wish to become elite chefs themselves. Older chefs are seen as too old to handle to heat and intensity of a professional kitchen (Bourdain 2010).

BRANDING

A discussion of *Top Chef*, or any other televised food show would not be complete without focusing on the role branding and advertising have within the show. Across the series the one consistent was the amount of branding featured on every episode. Advertising occurred in two forms. The first was a direct reference to a product or sponsor:

> "Welcome to the *Top Chef* kitchen as you can see it's been outfitted with top of the line Kenmore Elite appliances and Calphalon cookware." Katie (season 1, episode 1, minute 17.34)
>
> "Hilton has provided two fabulous prizes. One will get a six night trip for two and airfare to Venice, Italy at the Hilton…the other will get a trip for two and airfare to Barcelona, Spain at the Hilton…" Padma (season 7, episode 4, minute 36.31)
>
> "The winter of this quickfire will win a Rationale oven, valued at $16,000. The two chefs that serve the worst toast will face off in a sudden death quickfire and 1 will be eliminated." Padma (season 13, episode 13, minute 4.50)

Across every season a corporation such as Kenmore, Whole Foods, Hilton, or Calphalon always sponsored prizes, shopping opportunities, and cooking equipment. While these brand names were mentioned out loud during the explanation of challenges by the host there was also subtle product placement. Every episode featured between ten and thirty product placements. With the

label of a product facing the camera during the episode. Each product placement lasted between one and three seconds.

Branding in food media serves two purposes. First, it provides the studio with advertising money and more advertising for a product. Second, by featuring a brand or product on a cooking show consumers at home are able to see what products professional chefs use and can seek out those products to lend status and authenticity to their home cooking.

CONCLUSION

Top Chef is a lens into the world of elite kitchens and places it on national television for everyone to see. What goes on in professional kitchens is revealed through the food media. Chefs and judges work together to create a distinct cultural product with legitimacy in the broader culinary world. The study of *Top Chef* makes it possible to go beyond studying the producers and consumers within the field. Instead the interactions between contestants, judges, and corporate sponsors provide inside into how tastemakers structure the culinary field (Bourdieu 1993). Tastemakers reinforce hierarchies within the culinary field by making distinctions regarding authentic food and perpetuating popular trends (Sax 2015).

A field occurs when the production and consumption of a cultural product achieves autonomy over external constraints. The external constraints, both political and economic, are translated into new terms for the use of the occupants of the field. Fields operate based on their own values and norms, thus constructing an organization of producers and consumers whose behaviors and interactions are shaped by social, cultural, political, and economic situations (Bourdieu 1993). The use of cultural fields focuses attention on a tangible product instead of the abstract. Circumscribed fields are more adept for sociological analysis.

The use of fields makes it possible to overcome what has traditionally made food difficult to study; consuming food, unlike music or art, means the product must be destroyed. The temporality of food, like live music, means the product itself is not enough to constitute a cultural field. Instead the field is constituted through the interactions between producers, consumers, and the media to the cultural product (Griswold 2013).

Food culture within the U.S., comprised as it is from a complex array of actors, from professional chefs to consumers, is a multifaceted art world, subject to the same production and legitimation constraints as other forms of art and as such can be measured and tracked

accordingly. The use of distinction coupled with the legitimation process makes it possible to theorize food culture as a successful art world.

Food as a cohesive field or art world is subject to global influences. *Top Chef* provides some insight into how professional chefs interact with new ingredients:

> "[The] 3rd mystery box is ramps and passion fruit. What the f*** is that, I don't want that." Ed 7.44
>
> "I've never used a ramp. All I know it's like a scallion or chives. I'm not really sure if I'm supposed to use the leaf or the stem." Tiffany 7.54 7.10

The lack of familiarity with specific ingredients evolves over time. Ramps, a relatively unknown product in 2010 can become common among elite chefs by 2016, but how does this process take place and what does that mean for everyday people?

CHAPTER FOUR
RAMPS AND QUINOA:
THE EXPLOITATION OF THE EXOTIC WITHIN A GLOBAL WORLD

Food culture is not unique to the United States or to one particular region. As culture becomes more global, foodways across the world interact with each other in new ways. These interactions take several forms including culinary tourism, fusion restaurants, and the overlap of ingredients on menus throughout the culinary scene. This case study will focus on two ingredients: ramps and quinoa. Both ingredients have become popular across the United States but prior to the early 2000's neither ingredient was recognized outside of a narrow population. In 2013 the United Nations labeled it "The Year of Quinoa" (United Nations Agriculture Department). Ramps have been deemed the "new arugula," chefs are said to worship "the Church of the Ramp," and suddenly a plant that grows wild and has its own festivals in the mountains of West Virginia is appearing on the menus of elite New York City and Los Angeles restaurants, is for sale at Whole Foods, and represents the epitome of seasonality (Ozersky 2010; Thomson 2013).

What does this increasing popularity mean for people who consume these ingredients and why are two previously little known ingredients suddenly making headlines both within the U.S., in the case of ramps, and around the world, in the case of quinoa? And what does this tell us about the presentation of food cultures in major news outlets? The study of two specific ingredients on both a local and global scale, makes it possible to examine the influence of globalization and the constant pressures for new and innovative products, while also accounting for the influence these trends have on food producers.

A THEORIETICAL FRAMEWORK OF GLOBAL FOOD CULTURE AND EXOTICISM

Johnston and Baumann (2010) define the exotic based on the concept of distance. Distance includes social distance, or breaking traditional social norms. The reference point for defining social distance is based on white, wealthy, American culture. The goal is to avoid food seen as normal or socially close. The label of exotic draws attention to new things and conveys status through consumption. The exotic is rooted in maintaining the superiority of the Global North by stereotyping other countries for consumption. This distinction relies on globalization to introduce new products while reinforcing global inequality through the selective labeling of food culture (Johnston and Baumann 2010).

Johnston and Baumann (2010) define authentic food along five tenets. The first is geographic specificity: meaning the food should be consumed where it originated. The more precise the location, the more authenticity is embedded in a product. The second tenet is simplicity: simple conveys a degree of honesty and effortlessness associated with the origins of the food. This extends beyond the dish to include the production and processing of the food. The third is people are able to identify a personal connection with the individual who produced the food. The individual's intentions in producing the food play a role in the amount of authenticity embedded in food. The fourth tenet is history and tradition. This means the food is prepared according to traditional standards, including some artistic creativity during the production process. The final tenet is an ethnic connection. "An overt signal of the ethnicity of food's producers and consumers is an indicator of authenticity" (Johnston and Baumann 2010, p. 90).

The term exotic does not have to be used in culinary discourse to imply a quest for new socially distant foods. The desire for the exotic is an underlying theme that evolves based on the consumers' needs. This desire is part of the larger cultural discourse surrounding exotic experiences serving to distinguish between groups. The desire for exotic food is also part of the quest for authentic food experiences, but they are not equal terms. A product can either be exotic (mass produced Siracha) or authentic (heirloom vegetables), it can be both (hand crafted fish sauce made in Vietnam), and it can be neither (fast food restaurants) (Johnston and Baumann 2010). Exotic culinary discourse exists in an unequal power structure between the Global North and the Global South.

Said's (1978) seminal work, *Orientalism* offers a foundational look at the desire for the exotic in Western culture. Orientalist discourse argues the Orient was almost completely a European fabrication. The Orient was a far off place filled with romance, adventure, and exotic experiences. The East was characterized as irrational and inferior in opposition to the West that is rational and superior in knowledge and capital (Said 1978). The desire for the exotic is rooted in a desire to possess, or maintain superiority over, the other. This places certain, non-Western cultures, as the site of "projections of Western fantasies" (Rosseau and Porter 1990, p. 7). As such, the Global North can mine other cultures for products.

Coding other cultures as exotic facilitates Western colonialism through consumption of cultural products and experiences (Root 1996). The consumption of the exotic produces the other, but it also supports the superiority of the consumer (Langley 2000). The imbalance of

power extends to the essentializing of specific cultures that are expected to preserve their culture so it can be presented to the dominant group for consumption. This imbalance occurs despite the social and economic inequality welcoming a community's exotic food but not members of the same community (Abraca 2004). Viewing the quest for the exotic must occur within the legacy of colonialism and other current social and economic inequalities.

Seeking distinction through the exotic allows the knowledge of exotic products to bestow status and capital upon those with the resources to consume them (Narayan 1997). Exotic food products are a luxury item, but are more economically accessible than other luxury products, such as designer clothes and BMWs. Yet a degree of economic capital is still necessary to access these exotic products (Bourdieu 1984; Heldke 2003). As such exotic foods are not constrained by specific brands, in the same way as cars, jewelry, and clothes, making it possible for their popularity to increase among a wider segment of the population.

Although it is problematic, consumption of exotic products can also represent a step away from Eurocentric prejudices (Johnston and Baumann 2010). The question becomes, how can these exchanges be less exploitive while addressing existing inequalities and privileges? Globalization processes, commodity chains and migration patterns, have changed the boundaries of culinary consumption, creating interdependence between nations. Consumption of the exotic is a balance between the desire to possess the other and the global world making transmission of cultural artifacts more prominent. Although the transmission occurs in an unequal context it has the potential to increase awareness of global risk, such as malnutrition and climate change (Beck 2006; Johnston and Baumann 2010), but it can also worsen the impact of these risks throughout the Global South.

The Globalization of Food and Marginalization of Groups

There are two ways to explore the overlap between the desire for exotic foods and the marginalization of groups. The first is the desire for the exotic is a process of mining other societies for new trends in popular culture despite an absence of any desire to learn about the culture itself (Wilk 2012). Exotic food relies on social distance between the dominant group and the group deemed to be exotic. The dominant group, white upper class people in urban areas across the Global North, is the reference point for the exotic. This group is also responsible for determining what types of exotic products are considered authentic. Consumers establish and

convey their superior status through the consumption of the exotic (Johnston and Baumann 2010; Stanford 2012).

The second way of looking at this distinction is by examining the role of appropriation for creating authentic and modern foods from traditional dishes. Although these foods are not labeled as exotic they are seen as western despite the exotic origins. In this context, exotic means something not belonging to the dominant group. Brett defines appropriation as the "deliberate redefinition of foods, foodways, and cuisine by outsiders according to needs and criteria independent of local needs and concerns" (Brett 2012, p. 161-2). This appropriation is a method of changing the boundaries constituting authenticity (Finnis 2012). Place is essential to this conceptualization. Place determines the reference group for what is authentic. Although class appears to be consistent across nations with appropriation occurring across class boundaries the types of food and traditions being appropriated depend on the history of a certain geographical location.

Neoliberal global agricultural practices have jeopardized or destroyed the self-sustaining agricultural practices of peasants throughout the Global South. Food sovereignty has become a popular term for social movements and world organizations to combat these problems. Beuchelt and Virchow (2012) explain the goal of food sovereignty as the effort to ensure worldwide food security and poverty reduction; despite the goals of food sovereignty there are numerous problems, linked to globalization, limiting its effectiveness.

From the time agriculture entered the world trade market privatization and large international firms have slowly destroyed small farmers, the relationship between people (especially women) and the land, and the environment as a whole (Shiva 2012). Food sovereignty proponents argue for small, sustainable farms as a direct contrast to large industrial agriculture (agribusiness). Beuchelt and Virchow (2012) outline the challenges of food sovereignty. The right to choose non-local or counter-seasonal food, the right to choose food conforming to industrial standards and trade restrictions making imports more expensive, and the rise of prices would negatively impact the urban and working poor.

First, the desire for non-local and counter-seasonal food is securely located in the Global North. The rise in demand for fresh food all year is a product of increasing social standards in the United States and Europe. These changes are the product of a new postmodern diet demanding certain foods to conform to higher standards of living. This can only be achieved through the

exploitation of agriculture on a global scale. Small farmers have been forced to sell their products in order to feed their families instead of being able to eat what they grow. The consumption of fresh, counter-seasonal food is largely concentrated into the upper classes in the Global North while farmers and the lower classes rely on a heavily processed and commercialized diet (Friedland 1994).

Second, the right to choose food conforming to industrial standards and trade restrictions making imports more expensive are forms of neoliberal control over trade. The privatization of international trade has placed power into the hands of a few select capitalist. Privatization includes the use of certification standards and demands for flexible production to control the price of imports into countries. It also ensures countries will be economically indebted to industrial countries in order to facilitate the production networks (Shiva 2000). For example, organic banana production in the Dominican Republic is controlled by a certification program, too costly for most farmers to achieve forcing them to work for larger firms, thus breaking the relationship between people and the land in favor of industrial agriculture (Raynolds 2008).

Third, the rise of prices places the urban and working poor at a disadvantage because they will no longer be able to afford food is essentially a Global North problem. Prices are low in the Global North because of exploitation occurring in the Global South. Industrial agriculture creates low prices through the undervaluing of labor in countries producing food for export, often against their will. Women are often placed at the bottom of this chain of exploitation (Clelland 2014; Dolan 2004). These challenges also have significant negative impacts on the Global South, including malnutrition and worsening gender inequality.

Women have traditionally been integral to farming practices. Women were responsible for maintaining the balance between the land and food. “Scientific” agriculture has broken this holistic cycle and relied on corporations to provide seeds, pesticides, and fertilizers instead of allowing nature and women to perform their traditional roles. The balance of nature is being destroyed through the use of chemicals to ensure higher yields. Progress is measured through profit and growth of production benefiting a small number of farmers. This ignores the damage being caused to the land and the people in these areas (Shiva 2010).

Power (2008) offers an alternative conceptualization of food security. Cultural food security follows the same guidelines as food security but is tailored to the unique relationship indigenous groups have with the land. Food security needs to include access to traditional food

and land as well as market food. Traditional food security is threatened by the loss of land, the extinction of plant and animal species, and a decrease in traditional ecological knowledge. Food is a significant personal and communal source of identity. The maintenance of traditional foods is essential for the cultural identity of indigenous, or rural groups.

Food security and food sovereignty have a direct impact on the cultural identity of indigenous groups around the world. Industrial agriculture has threatened the food security of indigenous cultures and countries in the Global South in its quest for profit and growth. This system benefits people in the Global North through the exploitation of people in the Global South. Preserving alternative cultures means resisting or finding alternatives to industrial agriculture. As industrial agriculture threatens the food culture of the Global South what is deemed authentic ethnic/exotic food becomes a major draw for the transnational class.

Grasseni (2012) argues the rediscovery of traditional foods creates economic and cultural problems. Using traditional foods as a method to economically revitalize communities often hinges on privileging people who have the time and money to consume these new costly products. Instead of bringing a degree of equality by helping the local community it reinforces class distinctions. The process of rediscovery or reinvention of food has several problems. Local products are embedded in local culture. There is an established network of producers and knowledge unique to a specific group. Taking a local product and making it into a typical product is often accompanied by a degree of self-stereotyping. The process of making local food a symbol via iconization and the ritualization of consumption creates a need for authenticity. There is now social value attributed to knowing what is authentic and local within the mass market created by globalization. These processes often lose the original meaning and importance the food represented within the local community (Grasseni 2012).

Although the rediscovery of traditional foods can help ensure the continuation of the recipes and skills involved in the production of the product it forces local networks to adapt to becoming a commodity (Grasseni 2012). Although the food can remain unaltered the meaning and value are changed through the process of appropriation or rediscovery. Identity is often linked to one's foodways. The process of eating foods that are not typically included in the food culture of a group can be seen as a way of creating a sense of identification and incorporation with another culture (Brett 2012; Long 2004). Previous research has examined this process with sinoggi in Indonesia (Utari 2012), Pom in the Netherlands (Vaneker 2012), and Alpaca meat in

Peru (Markowitz 2012).

The globalization of food products and role of traditional ingredients becomes integral to understanding how major news outlets present exotic/ethnic ingredients. The globalization of culture works on two levels. The first is: "globalization is driven by a homogenizing mas media based culture, and that this threatens national and/or local cultures and identities" (Sklar 2002, p. 42). The second is the globalization of culture creates more opportunities to employ cultural capital as a means of distinguishing groups (Bourdieu 1977). Together these two understandings of global culture explain the variances in the rise of specific food products.

A GLOBALIZATION CASE STUDY: QUINOA AND RAMPS

The exotic is not isolated to geographic distance. Quinoa highlights the balance between the Global North and Global South, focusing on how the desire for the exotic functions across nations. Rural America is also presented as the other in culinary discourse. The social distance between urban and rural areas, specifically in the South, Southwest, and Midwest, are based on perceived gaps in cultural knowledge and economic capital presenting people who live in rural areas as uneducated and impoverished (Johnston and Baumann 2010). The study of ramps showcases this interplay between urban and rural regions within the United States. Although both products have experienced a rise in popularity in recent years this is attributable to different causes. Alongside the rise in popularity has been a rise in problems for people who rely on quinoa and ramps, however media attention to these problems is minimal.

Three main questions emerge surrounding the rise in popularity of quinoa and ramps. First, how do major newspapers frame quinoa and ramps? Second, how do the main frames impact the focus on a products origin? Third, how does the increasing popularity of a product influence the discussion of problems linked to global consumption?

The sample of articles for quinoa comes from *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The London Guardian*. From 2000 to 2015 there were 569 articles mentioning quinoa. The sample of articles for ramps comes from *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Charleston Gazette*. From 2000 to 2015 there were 186 articles mentioning ramps. During that time period there was a consistent rise in the mentions of quinoa, while ramps was steady across the same time period.

[Figure 4.1 about here]

The Framing of Ramps and Quinoa

A content analysis of the newspapers identifies seven frames for quinoa: health, global, restaurant, recipe, travel, origins, and identity and two additional frames for ramps: odor and forage.

Health. The first frame is the appearance of a health claim. Articles citing health claims rely on the protein or vitamin content of a specific food to justify why people should eat it. For example articles on quinoa focus on the protein content: "quinoa—a highly nutritious, protein-packed grain" (Sanjida O'Connell, The Guardian, 2011), or the importance of whole grains in a balanced diet: "Look for products that list whole grains as one of the first ingredients… other whole grains are brown rice, wild rice, bulgur, quinoa." (Sally Squires, The Washington Post, February 21, 2006). Articles on ramps focus on the vitamin content: "ramps, which are rich in Vitamin C were for many years the first potently nutritious edibles to rise up after the winter." (Alice Feiring, The New York Times, April 14, 2006).

Global. The second frame is the mention of a global, or exotic product. Articles mentioning the exoticness of a product often focus on how unusual a product is, instead of on where a product originates. For example, articles mentioning quinoa focus on the grain as a new exotic product "try unusual grains such as bulgur, whole wheat couscous or exotic grain-like substances such as quinoa and amaranth (Katherine Tallmadge, The Washington Post, July 28, 2004). While ramps are not global, they are an exotic product holding the same cache as a global product in urban areas. For example: "Who would have guessed? Ramps, those smelly harbingers of Appalachian spring, have gone from hick to hip…Wild ramps are no longer a regional delicacy. Web sites dedicated to gourmet foods now offer ramps alongside truffles and other wild foods." Martha Bryson Hodel, The Washington Post, May 18, 2003.

Restaurant. The third frame is the mention of a food product in connection with a restaurant review. For example: "Among the entrees… I'd go with that grilled branzino, the fish of the day, which came with grilled vegetables and quinoa salad." (Joanne Starkey, The New York Times, October 6, 2013). "I would be eager to eat again the crisped duck bedded on garlicky wild ramps." (Tom Sietsema, The Washington Post, July 21, 2002). The food product is part of an entrée served by the restaurant being discussed.

Recipe. The fourth frame is the mention of a food product as an ingredient in a recipe featured in the newspaper. Quinoa recipe articles often start with instruction for cooking the quinoa: "bring a small saucepan of water to boil, add the quinoa and simmer for 10 minutes"

(Yotam Ottolenghi, The Guardian, November 27, 2010). Ramp recipes offer ways to use the product with other seasonal ingredients: "combine three cups of dandelion greens with three wild onions or ramps, washed well and chopped" (Alyce Faye Bragg, The Charleston Gazette, March 27, 2010).

Travel. The fifth frame is the mention of the product in the course of an article about traveling, but does not specifically mention the origins of a product. For example: "In Lima…he woke up at 6 a.m. and he had canihua, a cereal of roasted quinoa." (Erika Kinetz, The New York Times, February 10, 2002.) Articles on ramps focus on traveling to ramp festivals: "Ramps, a pungent harbinger of spring in Appalachia, have been an excuse for a big feed in Richwood for 65 years. This year's Feast of the Ramps on April 26 drew more than 1,200 people from around the country…It brings a lot of people into town." Chris Dorst, The Charleston Gazette, May 11, 2003).

Origins. The sixth frame focuses on the specific origins of the product. "With the globalization of tourism, an authentic experience in a faraway country has become more difficult… Andean special interest trips include…a culinary package which features hands on cooking classes using traditional ingredients like purple potatoes, amaranth, and quinoa" (Hilary Howard, The New York Times, April 24, 2008). Ramps are also identified with a specific geographical region: "A friend who grew up in the Appalachian Mountain region said this weed was locally known as ramps and the small onion bulbs were much sought out and considered a spring delicacy" (Joan Lee Faust, The New York Times, April 2, 2000).

Identity. The seventh frame focuses on identity claims surrounding a food product. For example, as quinoa becomes more popular it acts as a comparison for other food products: "Chia is the new quinoa" (Marc Gunther, The Guardian, December 19, 2013), or a symbol of a person's identity: "your Republican father-in-law can now pronounce quinoa" (Alexandra Jacobs, The New York Times, November 7, 2010). Ramps identity is rooted in its seasonality: Following a poem about spring coming to the Appalachian Mountains Alyce Faye Bragg says "ramps (or wild leeks) are a longed for spring delicacy" (The Charleston Gazette, April 18, 2015).

Forage. The eighth frame only applies to ramp articles. Ramps mainly grow wild, thus numerous articles mention foraging in the woods for wild ramps. "Mountain people in North Carolina still hike miles to pick enough ramps, which tastes like a cross between garlic and

scallions, for special suppers during the four weeks or so that the plants show themselves each spring" (The Washington Post, May 3, 2005).

Odor. The ninth frame, also only applies to ramp articles. Ramps are identified by their pungent odor: "My fondness for ramps does not endear me to my significant other. Their smell, when raw, can be eye-wateringly painful to more delicate creatures. However, like garlic and onions, the pungency of ramps is greatly diminished when they are cooked" (John Brown, The Charleston Gazette, April 26, 2014).

Although there is consistent overlap in the frames used to discuss quinoa and ramps there are significant differences in the mentions of specific frames among quinoa and ramps (see table 4.1). Although the desire for new exotic ingredients impacts both products, their popularity is rooted in different attributes.

Interactions between Frames

Alongside differences in mentions, there are also significant differences surrounding how the frames interact with each other around a specific product.

In quinoa articles, health claims are negatively correlated with every other frame. Global claims are positively correlated with origins, but negatively correlated with recipes. Articles mentioning restaurants are positively correlated with travel, but negatively correlated with recipes and identity claims. Travel is positively correlated with origins, but negatively correlated with identity. Origins are negatively correlated with identity.

[Table 4.2 about here]

This suggests quinoa's popularity is rooted in its health properties. When health is the main focus of an article there is no need to employ any other themes. Articles focusing on restaurants or travel, mention quinoa in the scope of a review of a specific restaurant or location. In this case, identity and recipes are irrelevant. Quinoa's origin is mentioned within travel articles about South America, but is not linked to identity.

In ramp articles, global claims are negatively correlated with identity, but positively correlated with foraging. Articles mentioning restaurants are negatively correlated with origins and identity. Articles mentioning odor are positively correlated with origins and identity.

[Table 4.3 about here]

Ramps popularity outside of the Appalachian Mountains, as shown by articles mentioning the global popularity of ramps, is linked to their uniqueness rooted in growing wild

and foraging. Restaurant articles do not mention ramps' origins or identity; instead they focus on the dish ramps appear in. The link between odor, origins, and identity highlights the role of ramps within the region they grow.

Across the time period quinoa is associated with its origins during the early years, while ramps fluctuate, but consistently mention origins in a higher proportion of articles. There is a divergence of origins and health frames in quinoa articles. As health frames increase there is a decrease in frequency of origin articles (see figure 4.2).

Quinoa's popularity is linked to its health properties. When the product is new the origins serve to familiarize consumers with the product, but as the product becomes more popular the origins are superseded by health, which is more profitable because consumers consistently seek out new health trends in food (Sax 2014).

There is a convergence of origins and identity frames in ramp articles. Ramps are distinct because origin and identity are embedded together. Although there is an increase in consumption the seasonality of the product leads to elite consumption, outside of the geographical range where ramps grow. This elite consumption relies on origins and identity to establish the status of a food and provide culinary cultural capital to those who can consume it (see figure 4.3).

Mass consumption leads to less emphasis on origins. Quinoa's growth is focused on one frame, health, which increases its consumption. Although during the early years of a product there is more attention placed on origins as time goes on there will be a divergence of origins and health. Products consumed on a global level are more likely to lose their claims of being exotic or authentic as they become popular. Ramps are not as exotic as quinoa but they are rare and seasonal, thus making them authentic products that are marketable as a delicacy outside of the regions where they grow.

The popularity of quinoa and ramps has followed distinct trajectories over time. Health is consistently the most frequently mentioned frame in articles about quinoa. The only themes superseding health are restaurant frames in 2000, 2001, and 2009, origins frames in 2002, global frames in 2000, and identity frames in 2013 and 2014. This suggests quinoa began as an exclusive food found in restaurants in major urban areas or as part of feature pieces on countries in South America. However, after 2002 health claims represent almost 50 percent of the articles published in a year. Until, 2013 and 2014 when identity frames surpass health claims. Overall health claims account for 43 percent of the articles published between 2000 and 2015. The next

two dominant frames are identity, representing 34 percent, and restaurants, representing 29 percent.

[Table 4.4 about here]

This shows the emphasis placed on quinoa's health properties. During the early 2000's quinoa is still relatively new in the Global North. There are very few articles during that time period mentioning quinoa, it is not until 2005 that more than 10 articles are published each year. By 2011 there are 48 articles a year and by 2013 there are 92. The upward trend in quinoa is accompanied by increased attention to the health properties of the product. This suggests the health properties of quinoa are largely influential in its increasing popularity. This supports the emphasis placed on health trends within western culture.

Articles about ramps show less variance over time, compared to quinoa. Identity is the most frequent mentioned frame, representing 60 percent of the articles from 2000 to 2015. The first exception occurs in 2002, where identity was tied with global, restaurant, recipe, and travel, each representing 25 percent of the articles during that year. In 2006, the most dominant frame was origins and in 2012 the dominant frame was foraging. Overall, the origins, identity, and foraging were the dominant frames across the time period with 42 percent, 30 percent, and 30 percent respectively. The least mentioned frames were health, 3 percent, and travel, 4 percent.

[Table 4.5 about here]

This suggests ramps popularity is in part due to its rareness, the plant grows wild in the mountains for a few weeks each spring, making it a delicacy to chefs in major foodie destinations such as New York City.

Globalization Problems

Overall, only 2 percent of articles mention the problems associated with the global consumption of quinoa. Articles on the origins of a product are also the source of information regarding problems of the products rising popularity. "The demand for quinoa, an Andean plant…is soaring in rich countries as American and European consumers discover [it]… The surge has helped raise farmers' incomes in Bolivia…but there has been a notable trade-off. Fewer Bolivians can now afford it…hastening fears of malnutrition" (The New York Times, March 20, 2011).

Although slightly higher only 4 percent of articles mention the problems associated with increased consumption of ramps. While ramps are not faced with the same problems as quinoa

over harvesting can deplete the supply of wild ramps in the Appalachian Mountains. “Ramps are becoming harder to find in many areas because they’ve become so popular and people frequent all the festivals held in their honor…the increase in popularity over the years means that chic big-city eateries and their adventurous chefs are vying for the bulbs” (Shaya Tayfee Mohajer, The Charleston Gazette, April 11, 2007). In the case of ramps some states have begun to enforce laws capping the amount of wild ramps a person can forage.

As global culture becomes more widespread it also becomes more homogenous (Ritzer 2002). The economic disparities caused by the rise of quinoa consumption have lead to the rise of a highly processed diet in Bolivia. Thus a staple ingredient, quinoa, in South America is slowly replaced by a processed and commercialized diet, similar to that of the Global North because peasants can no longer afford to purchase a traditional staple of their diet. Over time malnutrition and obesity also become concerns when local diets disappear.

The over foraging of ramps does not have the same health implications, because it is a seasonal product, not a staple ingredient. However, the loss of ramps has ramifications for Appalachian identity. While ramp consumption is not widespread, it is currently isolated to elite consumption outside of the regions where it grows. Identifying a product as “hip” or as a “spring delicacy” reflects the increased desire for elite chefs to access ramps. This increased consumption threatens the autonomy of Appalachian culture.

The desire for exotic products has implications for cultural capital and the associated class domination. In both cases the consumption of new food products begins with the upper class thus creating opportunities for cultural capital through consumption of exotic products. The ability to purchase exotic ingredients remains a privilege of the upper class, thus disregarding the lived experiences of people who rely on a product for part of their identity (Robinson 2004).

CONCLUSION

The popularity of food products on a global and regional scale depends on the nature of the product itself. Products garnering attention based on seasonality are less likely to experience wide spread consumption because the cost is prohibitive to mainstream audiences. Instead these products remain elite ingredients sought out by foodies and others who seek out exotic products as a source of cultural capital. Other products that begin as exotic ingredients can reach mainstream popularity if they can be produced on a large scale and have health properties that

play in to the Global North's demand for new healthy superfoods. However, the negative impact of food products that reach mass consumption are greater for the countries of origin.

The study of exotic products also sheds light on the increasing fetishism of transnational production and consumers. As global culture fights to balance the local and the global, social actors work to distinguish between themselves based on social and cultural capital. The fetishism of transnational production masks the flow of capital, management, and faraway producers. This leads to the alienation of the producers. This is evident in the case of global food products where increases in global consumption worsens the lived experience of the producers. The fetishism of the consumer occurs when advertising presents consumers with the idea of agency, in reality the consumer is simple a chooser between products (Appadurai 1990).

Bourdieu (1984) offers a model for explaining how culture structures are evident in daily life. The doxa or habitus is aspects of life that are taken for granted. In this space food would include things of little significance and are typically an option a majority of people will eat. The heterodoxy is the space where people are forced to choose because options are seen as incompatible. These oppositions can occur along racial or class lines. Food in this category acts as a symbol of poverty or a racial group. For example chitterlings are often attributed with poor blacks in the United States (Miller 2013). There are similar occurrences throughout the world of foods linked to a non-dominant group and are therefore rejected by mainstream society. The orthodoxy space is where power is used to oppress alternatives. Foods in this space have extreme cultural significance and stand for group solidarity and place. It is possible for foods to flow between these spaces over time (Bourdieu 1984; Wilk 2012). Wilk (2012) adds a fourth space to Bourdieu's taxonomy. This space is occupied by foreign foods, just beginning to make an appearance in the dominant culture. These foods are accompanied by a sense of being "both foreign and expensive without having high status, so it brings little benefit at a high cost" (Wilk 2012, p 27). For example, Whole Foods is known for showcasing exclusive products from around the world at a high price. The draw of authentic ethnic/exotic food fits into these four categories. As ethnic/exotic food is forced into these categories problems arise for the people who relied on the product, however there is little attention placed on the negative impacts of a products rise in popularity.

CHAPTER FIVE:
PRODUCING AND CONSUMING AUTHENTICITY

Food does not appear in one cultural form, instead there are a multitude of issues surrounding food, and the current study broadened sociological conceptualizations of food as a cultural product. Issues surrounding food include hunger, obesity, labor, agriculture, and media representations, among many others. Although examining all of these issues is outside of the scope of this study, the use of multiple cases makes it possible to connect aspects of food culture through recurring themes. Inequality, distinction, and focus on consumers, three of the predominant topics in current food research, were not dominant in these cases. However, a different theme emerged: the pursuit of authenticity, in light of commercialization and appropriation, by producers to manage impressions, and continued success, of their products.

This study extends research on impression management via authenticity to food culture. Doing so allows us to gain deeper insight into how producers manage the impressions of their products through the study of food, a product that exists in everyone's life. Unlike other cultural projects people can hypothetically live without music, art, or theater, but no living thing can survive without food. It is an omnipresent aspect of society conceptualized in a multitude of ways ranging from local foodways, labor and agricultural problems, underlying inequalities in the production of food, and even various health-related issues of having too much or not enough food. While it would be ideal to conduct a project addressing all of these issues at once, the current project selected three situations exhibiting multiple underlying social processes of the production and consumption of authenticity within food culture.

The industrialization of society pressures producers and consumers to seek out products existing apart from the commercialization and industrialization dominating most of society. Claims of authenticity emerge as producers work to create niche markets, existing independent of commercialized markets. Consumers are forced to choose products from a variety of choices with incomplete information on most products. Producer's claims of authenticity create an impression of legitimacy, originality, and truthfulness consumers use in an attempt to identify the most authentic choice and subsequently buy the product because of those authenticity claims.

The situations in this study indicate how processes and rhetoric surrounding food products, and food culture as a whole, shape the food appearing on our plates, which can impact people's health as well as market dynamics. As chefs scour the globe for ingredients that can

enhance their dishes, rarely tapped regions, cultures, and countries simultaneously become sources of inspiration and exploitation; all in the quest to bring new ingredients to the tables of elite restaurants and the attention of foodies across the U.S. However, the rising popularity of these ingredients does not account for the consequences of the newfound popularity of ingredients formerly relied upon by the people where the ingredient originated. Although products do not have to be new or inventive to become popular, producers can also rely on claims of traditional ingredients and techniques for authenticity such as in the case of Southern Barbecue.

The commercialization of food culture across the situations presented in this study highlights the need for producers to justify their positioning in response to commercialization. Authenticity occurs in opposition to industrialization and is often heralded as an alternative to mass-produced products. Thus, when producers such as chefs and owners become more commercialized they must convey authenticity in new ways. The industrialization of society pressures producers and consumers to seek out products existing apart from the commercialization and industrialization dominating most of society. Claims of authenticity emerge as producers work to create niche markets, existing independent of commercialized markets. Consumers are forced to choose products from a variety of choices with incomplete information about most products. Producer's claims of authenticity create an impression of legitimacy, originality, and truthfulness consumers use in an attempt to identify the most authentic choice and subsequently buy the product because of those authenticity claims. Previous research has left this producer-market dynamic of food culture relatively untouched despite its centrality to authenticity claims and consumer consumption patterns.

This project sheds light on the rise and fall of food trends through in-depth analyses of multiple products and producers. Popular trends directly impact the food appearing on plates throughout the country and the world, but there is little attention on how those trends develop or who is at the heart of producing such trends. The situations present three examples of the rise of food trends through the concerted effort of their producers.

The fabrication of authenticity perspective argues, "authenticity is not inherent in the object or event that is designated authentic but is a socially agreed-upon construct in which the past is to a degree misremembered" (Peterson 1997: 5). Authenticity is the process of negotiation between producers, industry, and consumers. Over time, there is a consolidation regarding what

is authentic solidifies a genre, but there remains room for the evolution of a product to changing customer demands. 'Authenticity work' emerges through ethnic identity (Lu and Fine 1995), group membership (Urquia 2004), status identity (Fine 2003), experience seeking (Grazian 2004), technology (Ryan and Hughes 2006), and presentation of self (Hughes 2000). The cycle of authentication relies on the interplay between producers, consumers, and critics who are continuously seeking the authentic. Thus, destabilizing authenticity so it continuously evolves within a field (Engel and Lang 1993; Peterson 2005).

The current study examined how producers manufacture authenticity and convey authenticity through impression management within the cultural field of food. A variety of cultural products oversaturate the consumer world, making it difficult for consumers to make decisions regarding the legitimacy of a product they wish to purchase. Producers are tasked with infusing their products with status and legitimacy to ensure their market success. Producers rely on claims of authenticity to create a market for their products that may not fully exist or position their products within a current market, to increase their profit margins (Beverland 2005). From this work, it becomes possible to glean what consumers are seeking by the changes producers make to their products in response to consumer demands and sales. Previous research examined relationships between producers, consumers, and authenticity in music (Grazian 2004; Peterson 1997), art (Fine 2003), and television (Gray 2001); but limited research on authenticity and food exists (Johnston and Baumann 2010; Jordan 2015) with the emphasis on how consumers view food through the utilization of five dimensions of authenticity. Although these dimensions create a foundation for the consumption of authenticity in food, little knowledge exists about how producers fabricate authenticity (Beverland 2015; Jones, Anand, and Alvarez 2005).

In order to extend sociological analyses of food as an integral cultural product of everyday life, we must consider authenticity related processes. Why is the production of authenticity relevant to the study of food culture? To answer this question, I revisit Peterson's (1997) research on the production of authenticity in country music. Then, I incorporate Hughes' (2000) work on conveying authenticity through impression management. Next, I focus on the efforts of producers to manage the impression of authenticity surrounding traditions, appropriation, and distinction within their products, however the main emphasis of producers is to manage the success of their products in a market over saturated by consumer goods without

discussing consumers. Together these perspectives create the foundation for my work on how producers manufacture and convey authenticity to create a niche for their products.

FABRICATING AUTHENTICITY

The conceptualization of authenticity emerged from Peterson's (1997) study of country music. Authentic products must be believable or credible representations of a cultural form and original and sincere expressions. Peterson indicates how the evolution of a field of cultural production contains structural contexts based on two facets of authenticity: (1) a cultural product such as country music must be believable based on a model of legitimacy, and (2) represent the traditions surrounding the cultural product. For example, country music songs must be similar to what came before but new enough not to interfere with copyright laws. These similarities emerge in instruments, lyrics, and degree of a singer's accent. Although, there are conventions defining country music, these conventions are not static. Even though Hank Williams was considered the iconic country music artist in the 1950's, it is unlikely he would have been given a recording contract in the 1920's or the 2000's because the image of country music evolved over time (Peterson 1997).

The second facet of country music is its originality and sincerity. A sincere performance must be a reflection of the performer himself. The expressive equipment, such as type of hat and style of dress, used by the performer includes the appearance and mannerisms to create authenticity via impression management. The ability to claim authenticity in a musical product requires knowledge of musical conventions, such as voices and gestures, as well as performance aspects, including appearance and speech patterns. Each musician presents a different expression based on their background, but as Peterson (1997) notes, these backgrounds match the prevailing ideas surrounding country music at the time. Fabrication is constantly managed to ensure an authentic product (Peterson 1997).

Importantly, claims of authenticity are not reducible to original and legitimate cultural expressions; social position, or status identity, of artists also influences authenticity. Fine (2003) explores the link between the biographies of self-taught artists and claims for authenticity surrounding their work given their social position. Elites establish symbolic boundaries utilizing authenticity to facilitate their access to cultural capital while limiting out-group access (Bourdieu 1984). One method of delineating boundaries is to use the artist's biography to lend credibility to the cultural product. An authentic status identity becomes a way to claim differences between

cultural products; the moral credibility of the artist becomes key to claims of authenticity and subsequent valuing of both the artists and their product. The social position of the artists, not the art itself is key to authenticity. Self-taught artists exist outside of traditional markets and rely on others to establish their relationships with critics and patrons. They lack social capital and are typically members of marginalized groups: the poor, mentally ill, black, etc. These artists allow others to dictate their position in the market by setting the price of their work. Purity is key for the success of self-taught artists because the emphasis is placed on how removed an artist is from the influences of the market. The distance between mainstream conventions and self-taught artists is used as a justification for the superior creativity of their work. When the artist becomes too attuned to the market their authenticity is diminished (Fine 2003).

Peterson (1997) and Fine (2003) examine the connection between status identity, authenticity, and impression management within music and art. Their arguments parallel those of Lu and Fine's (1995) work on authenticity in Chinese restaurants. The emphasis on self-taught artists highlights the importance placed on the biography of the producer/artist by consumers to justify the importance of the product itself (Fine 2003). Authenticity within food emerges from the product and the chef, with chefs' biographies subject to the same critique as other artists. Value is bestowed on the product if the biography in question supports claims for authenticity. However, biography alone does not convey authenticity, the image of the product must also be deemed authentic. For example, the authenticity of ethnic restaurants is linked to the food as well as the appearance of the chef and waiters (Johnston and Baumann 2010; Lu and Fine 1995). Thus, a constant process of managing authenticity occurs for artists, critics, and consumers.

MANAGING AND PRODUCING AUTHENTICITY

Cultural industries are not only responsible for producing authentic products, but they also convey authenticity through impression management. Peterson's (1997) fabrication of authenticity elaborates how country music intentionally controlled its public image through the costumes, sets, and accents to create a shared image of country music rooted in the rural stereotypes held by consumers. This image evolves through visual manifestations of changes occurring throughout society and the culture industry. For example, the original dominant imagery in country music was an old-timer stringing a banjo or playing a fiddle. Over time this image was replaced by hillbilly and cowboy imagery and became more accepting of softer

accents and a variety of musical instruments. However, the artists necessarily altered their appearance and biographies conforming to the new dominate cowboy imagery (Peterson 1997).

Hughes (2000) expands this argument through the use of Goffman's (1959) presentation of self framework. Consumers and producers interact through the sale of cultural products, in doing so these interactions lead to normative expectations, shared by producers and consumers of an art world. The products of these interactions are embedded in future versions of the product. The purpose of fabricating authenticity, like the purpose of presentation of self, is to create a shared meaning of a social phenomenon. The success of this shared meaning makes it possible to further negotiate interactions between individuals or producers and consumers of cultural products (Hughes 2000). The use of this framework extends the production of culture perspective, has been criticized for not engaging with the meaning of cultural expressions. The application of impression management to the production of culture frame can highlight the emergence and transformation of meaning (Hughes 2000).

Given the information provided by social interactions is incomplete, participants must make inferences from the social situation to fill in the information gaps. These inferences, or impressions, develop from the appearance, behavior, and nature of a social situation and other social actors. Impressions can be intentional and unintentional expressions given off by a person. People use these impressions to make conclusions about other people, products, and social situations. Thus, impressions need to be managed and controlled. Goffman (1959) refers to this as a performance and it allows social interaction to operate smoothly.

Society relies on two principles to guide social interaction. First, possessing specific characteristics should guarantee the possessor is treated and valued a certain way by others. For example, the possession of a James Beard award or nomination suggests a chef has a certain skill set that should be respected by other chefs. Second, individuals who signal specific characteristics should possess them. For example, the success of Chinese restaurants is determined by if the ethnic appearance of chefs and waiters conforms to customers' expectations (Lu and Fine 1995). "In consequence, when an individual projects a definition of the situation and thereby makes an implicit or explicit claim to be a person of a particular kind, he automatically exerts a moral demand upon the others obliging them to value and treat him in the manner…expect[ed]" (Goffman 1959, p. 13). Although Goffman's work is centered on social interactions his findings are relevant to examining claims of authenticity in cultural products

(Hughes 2000). Moeran's (2005) study of Japanese advertising corporations indicates how non-Western producers rely on the reactions of European test groups to determine the authenticity of the advertising campaigns the corporation is creating. The management of impressions becomes essential for people or groups seeking to claim cultural authenticity.

In a society filled with a multitude of cultural products authenticity becomes a tool used by producers to manage the impression consumers have by claiming a product has intrinsic value rooted in its group/status identity, originality, and legitimacy. Therefore, producers are creating a niche in the market for their product, because it is more authentic than other products. Authenticity is not an innate aspect of any product, instead it is a socially constructed product of careful impression management on the part of the producers to create a product remaining true to an original ideal while also being innovative and attractive to consumers (Peterson 2005). To maintain authenticity a product and producer must remain connected to the reimagined past but be innovative to make a product unique. For example, the tourism industry in New Zealand capitalized on the release of *The Lord of the Ring*, by using the filming locations as tourist destinations (Jones and Smith 2005) and the creation of a Scottish highland tartan to represent a clan's identity (Trever-Roper's 1983). In both examples the past becomes reimagined in light of new cultural developments.

Authenticity is constantly evolving and so too is the impression of cultural products. Health concerns and larger societal concerns change the media's focus on popular foods as well. Through impression management producers present their products as an extension of themselves. Authenticity relates to a producer rationalizing choices reflecting technological and cultural developments in addition to constraints to modifying authenticity claims. For example, luxury wine makers in France advertise using traditional techniques while simultaneously obscuring industrial innovations making large-scale production faster and easier (Beverland 2005).

The study of food culture contributes to extending the production of culture frame to other products, and how impression management enhances the meanings of cultural products. The cases in this study indicate how processes and rhetoric surrounding food products, such as barbecue or quinoa reflect impression management. The rising popularity of quinoa shows how the media presents quinoa as a healthy superfood in the Global North while ignoring the negative impacts on people in South America who rely on quinoa as a traditional product. Barbecue restaurant owners also engage in impression management by using the same recipes, menus, and

decorations in restaurants since their inception. This creates authenticity through 'tradition' and a personal connection to reaffirm a shared meaning of a product: barbecue. This shared meaning of what barbecue is supposed to look and taste like guides future interactions between consumers and producers surrounding the product.

Each case in this study shows how producers manufacture and convey authenticity in food culture. Authenticity is a process of social construction embedding products with status through claims of identity, originality, and sincerity. Barbecue as a dish is not authentic without the impression management shaping it. Throughout the barbecue case, restaurant owners consistently mention the process used to cook their barbecue, the traditional menus and recipes, and the restaurant itself as authentic aspects of their barbecue. Although they rarely mention the word "authenticity", it subversively exists under their statements regarding their products' superiority over their competitors. The restaurant owners are conveying authenticity through impression management. Restaurant owners balance claims of authenticity with pressures to become more commercialized by navigating the decision to stay small or open multiple restaurants and sell their products in grocery stores. Barbecue restaurant owners must weigh the cost of franchising with threats to the legitimacy of their restaurants. The authenticity of barbecue is rooted in the tradition of small restaurants, while mass-produced barbecue is deemed inauthentic.

Authenticity becomes more difficult to manage as food culture becomes more commercialized, highlighted by the rise of mass-produced products and the Food Network. The industrialized food system and food media have changed the appearance of modern food culture. Collins (2009) documents how the rise of the Food Network in the early 1990's also shifted the roles within the food industry. Prior to modern televised food culture, the occupational careers of food producers ranged from cookbook authors, restaurant reviewers, and professional chefs. The birth of the Food Network created a new type of chef and reinforced distinctions between chefs and cooks. The shift in food culture can be seen in the dramatic differences in income between television chefs who control multimillion-dollar empires and chefs who have an annual earning of only $42,480 (Harris and Giuffre 2015). A televised chef must construct a persona to sell ratings, cookbooks, restaurants, and food products, which makes them a commodified version of a chef whose authenticity is questionable. The reliance on mainstream status markers such as

James Beard awards to convey authenticity in light of commodification offers a way for chefs to maintain traditional claims of authenticity by relying on a status/group identity.

Top Chef reflects how television shapes the experiences of professional chefs. The chefs and judges on the show rely on pre-established status markers such as pedigree, accolades, and employment position to justify their appearance on the show. *Top Chef* relies on industry accepted status markers to convey authenticity and manage the impressions of the show by making it seem more legitimate than other televised cooking competitions. Although, barbecue restaurants must distinguish themselves from other restaurants, *Top Chef* must distinguish itself from other cooking competitions and reality television shows. The use of recognizable judges and televised discussions of the products using specific words conveys authenticity upon the show itself. This approach also reifies the impressions of contestants as more authentic and legitimate chefs because they were selected to be on the show.

As globalization increases, the social and cultural aspects of a place become obscured by the homogenization of global culture (Peterson 2005; Ritzer 1993). Changes in authenticity lead to fluctuations in popularity forcing producers to rely on established status markers to maintain their position or create new claims of authenticity. The desire to seek out distinct and exotic products creates and reinforces a fabricated history because producing an authentic product involves new innovative ingredients sourced from around the world. The use of global products can increase the production revenue while also increasing existing inequalities around the world.

Quinoa and ramps highlight the globalization side of authenticity when new sources of production are brought into the fold. These products are both relatively new to urban areas in the Global North as quinoa is a traditional grain grown in the Andes Mountain region and ramps are a type of wild onion foraged in the Appalachian Mountains. These products have spread from humble beginnings to urban centers throughout the United States and Europe. Quinoa's authenticity is rooted in claims of its exotic origins and health properties. It started as an exotic grain that was so healthy and rare it could only be found in exclusive health food stores. At this point the market was narrow, but the product was expensive. Over time quinoa spread to mainstream stores to the point even Wal-Mart carries the product, and the price decreased, although it still remains more expensive than most grains. The popularity of quinoa rose to the point it became its own cultural reference point and new exotic grains are referred to as "the new quinoa". The rising popularity of quinoa was a product of careful impression management

focusing on the health properties of the grain, while ignoring the negative impacts increased consumption had on people in South America who relied on the grain as a staple of their diet.

Ramps have not reached a similar level of popularity as quinoa. Ramps do not have the same health properties but it is seasonal and rare, making it a consistently expensive ingredient in major urban areas. Ramp's authenticity is rooted in the seasonality and difficulty to domesticate, contributing to its rarity and uniqueness as an ingredient to include on the tasting menus of elite restaurants. The desire for the new and the exotic parallels Said's (1978) work on Orientalism. Exotic products are seen through the lens of middle and upper class whites, who have purchasing power in the Global North. Ramps and quinoa become authentic once removed from their origins and included in mainstream white food culture. The health claims of quinoa and seasonality of ramps make it possible to separate the product from its origins. This creates a new image of authenticity based on market demands for fresh, healthy, and seasonal foods.

The commercialization and commodification of food culture arise in each case. The commercialization of food culture, across the case studies, highlights the need for producers to justify their positioning in response to commercialization. Authenticity occurs in opposition to industrialization and is often heralded as an alternative to mass-produced products. Thus, when chefs and owners become more commercialized they must convey authenticity in new ways. Barbecue owners rely on the reimagined history of barbecue to claim authenticity and *Top Chef* contestants rely on industry accepted status markers to legitimate their positioning. The industrialization of society pressures producers and consumers to seek out products existing apart from the commercialization and industrialization dominating most of society. Claims of authenticity emerge as producers work to create niche markets, existing independent of commercialized markets. Consumers are forced to choose products from a variety of choices with incomplete information on most products. Producer's claims of authenticity create an impression of legitimacy, originality, and truthfulness consumers use in an attempt to identify the most authentic choice and subsequently buy the product because of those authenticity claims.

CONSUMING AUTHENTICITY

The study of how producers employ authenticity as impression management would be incomplete without an understanding of how authenticity is consumed. Producers are not solely responsible for the fabrication of authenticity. Claims of authenticity are a result of producers creating products consumers will buy and the market success of a product shapes future changes

and claims of authenticity (Peterson 2005; Ryan and Hughes 2006) An example of this cyclical relationship emerges in the study of how foodies and gourmet food writing employs evaluations of restaurants, ingredients, and dishes. Johnston and Baumann (2010) establish dimensions of authenticity in relation to food culture, which include geographic specificity, simplicity, personal connection, history and tradition, and ethnic connection. *Geographic specificity* relates to the ability to connect a dish or product to a specific region, such as champagne from the Champagne region of France is more authentic than brut from California. *Simplicity* reflects the purported honesty of production removed from common mass-produced products. Simple foods are linked to the farmer or artisanal producer instead of a company and factory. Such as homemade tortillas are considered simpler than tortillas sold in mainstream grocery stores. Personal connection is characterized by knowledge of the chef or artist who produced a product. For example, referencing a famous chef connects the consumer to the producer in a way mass produced food lacks. *History and tradition* locates authenticity in the past based on established standards. Banana pudding made from scratch is viewed as more authentic than banana pudding made using store bought pudding. *Ethnic connection* arises in deeming ethnic food, such as Thai or Indian cuisine, authentic only if the chef represents that ethnicity (Johnston and Baumann 2010). Although Johnston and Baumann (2010) establish clear dimensions for discussions of authenticity their research focuses on self-proclaimed foodies and gourmet food writing.

The current study focused on producers, and found each dimension of authenticity across each case, but the dimensions were not mentioned in connection with authenticity. The focus on producers and the media shows how they rely on these dimensions to justify their choices regarding the processes and products they produce, without invoking claims of authenticity. For example, the debate over electric pits or open pits in the barbecue chapter highlights how restaurant owners claim their product is authentic barbecue. Restaurant owners who use electric cookers claim authenticity based on the finished product, while owners who use open pits claim authenticity based on the process and the product. Although authenticity is instilled in a product based on the producer and process of production, claims of authenticity, such as those outlined by Johnston and Baumann (2010) are left to the consumers. Producers' claims of authenticity in the cases in this study are rooted in the process of cooking, status markers, and the interplay between traditional techniques and creative innovation. Similar to Peterson's (1997) work

authenticity, for producers, is grounded in original and believable expressions of an existing cultural form.

MOVING FORWARD

The case studies in this project present three separate aspects of food culture. However, food culture is not static and the continuous changes lead to overlaps in tradition, media, and exotic ingredients. The site of these overlapping elements becomes the battleground of authenticity. One example of this occurred in 2017 when *Top Chef* aired an episode featuring guest judge Rodney Scott, a renowned barbecue master, in a barbecue challenge in Charleston, South Carolina. This episode uncovered the problems when impression management fails: as Tom Colicchio stated at one point "It's southern barbecue and you guys added some Chinese ingredients and an Italian dish" (season 14, episode 5, 43.25). Although the chefs are drawing from their personal experiences they failed to provide the judges with authentic Southern barbecue. Although the food was cooked well, many of the chefs had lived and cooked abroad, and were experienced with Chinese ingredients, the use of those ingredients in a Southern barbecue dish failed to meet the standards of legitimate barbecue. The dish did not have an identity aligned with one of the Carolina styles of barbecue, and thus failed to manage the consumers' impressions. The dish was framed as inauthentic and inferior to the other teams who produced more authentic South Carolina barbecue.

Despite being a challenge about Southern barbecue one of the chefs, the same one who used Chinese ingredients in his barbecue sauce says: "I did not grow up barbecuing. I was working at a four star French restaurant…my food has been more refined, more farm to plate" Sylva (season 14, episode 4, 22.15). Throughout this episode, and other sites where food cultures intersect, chefs engage in impression management to convey why their food is more authentic, even though it does not conform to preexisting standards. The justification of French training as superior to Southern foodways and stereotyping farm to table traditions as outside of Southern culture as a whole, illustrates how chefs employ their status/group identity to claim superiority over other, less familiar food cultures (Ferguson 1998; Peterson 2005). Impression management is not always successful, and in this particular case, the combination of southern barbecue, hoisin sauce, Italian potato salad, and bland coleslaw, frequent accouterments to barbecue, sends one chef home because the meal did not support the traditions surrounding barbecue.

Conforming to these authenticity standards leads to success for chefs, even if they are only tangentially familiar with a particular cuisine. For example, food writer Gail Simmons, noted of another team's barbecue: "You took such strong inspiration from Rodney [Scott] and the tradition of barbecue and really elevated it and really showed us something different with every single aspect" (season 14, episode 5, 46.29). The chef from the best barbecue team who won the individual component of the competition drew inspiration from traditional barbecue masters to ground the product as a credible representation of barbecue while simultaneously being original and innovative. Producing successful dishes, by using authenticity to manage the impressions consumers have of a product relies on the balance between original and sincere impressions and believable representations (Peterson 1997). Food producers rely on the ability to engage in impression management surrounding claims of authenticity. The intersection of tradition, the media, and exotic ingredients sheds light on what happens when impression management fails to convey authenticity.

The current study of the fabrication of authenticity in food brings producers into the scope of sociological studies in food culture. The cases presented in this study offer examples of how authenticity and impression management allow producers to create and sustain market niches for their products. Southern barbecue, *Top Chef*, and ramps and quinoa enhance Peterson (1997, 2005) and Hughes' (2000) work on authenticity as impression management by moving away from country music to food, as the cultural product. Moving forward, the intersection of traditions, media, and exotic products in food offer a way to continue to expand on how authenticity acts as impression management, employed by producers to ensure market success in an evolving cultural market.

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APPENDIX A: Methodology

To understand any culture, including food culture, sociologists focus in on the interactions between consumers/receivers, producers, the social world, and cultural objects. Wendy Griswold's (2013) "cultural diamond," although not a theoretical schema, provides a framework necessary for examining the interactions between these four factors. The diamond also facilitates comparing and contrasting multiple cases across the four sides of the diamond. The cultural diamond begins with a cultural object that's shared significance is embodied in a specific form and thus tells a story, in this study that form is three aspects of food culture: southern barbeque, *Top Chef*, and two specific ingredients. The isolation of a cultural object makes it possible to grasp a piece of culture to study. All cultural objects are made by people and are a form of communication between the producers and consumers. The consumers are those who receive and experience the product. All of these are occurring within the social world and the diamond makes it possible to examine how the four factors link together (Griswold 2013).

Since food culture can be conceptualized in a multitude of ways this project focuses on three specific cases of how food culture shapes inequality while also separating itself as an art form that can be studied using the same theories and methods used to study art, music, literature, and theater. Through these cases this project furthers research on the production of authenticity within food culture that can be implemented in future research to study the importance of changing foodways.

The first case in this study addresses the intersecting questions of race and authenticity through a study of Southern barbeque. Southern barbeque has a deep history that is unique to the U.S. South and despite its complex origins during slavery it continues to be a popular and iconic dish both within and outside of the states where it was created. This case analyzes the oral histories of barbeque masters across the south to highlight the role of race and distinction within the foodscape of barbeque while also providing insight into the complex relations between food and inequality in the south.

The second case focuses on the role of elite chefs in legitimating status distinctions, gender inequality, and the balance between branding and stylistic choices through the television show *Top Chef*. *Top Chef* was the first cooking competition show whose format was unique to the U.S. The show has aired for thirteen seasons with competitors' status improving after their appearance on the show as the brand as grown to encompass prestigious food events and brands.

This case analyzes three seasons of the show to highlight how the world of competitive cooking shows has changed over the course of the ten years the show has aired, making it possible to generalize to broader changes occurring in the world of elite chefs.

The third case addresses the exploitation of specific ingredients and their connection to globalization and inequality. As chefs seek out new and inventive dishes other regions, cultures, and countries become sources of inspiration and exploitation making it possible to bring new ingredients to the tables of elite restaurants and attention of foodies across the U.S. However, the rising popularity of these ingredients does not account for the consequences of that ingredients newfound popularity for the people who originally relied on the ingredient.

Each case will employ a similar three-step methodology deductively and inductively coding the study population: oral histories, *Top Chef* episodes, and articles. The first step will begin with an inductive read through with focus placed on the identification of sensitizing concepts. The second step requires another read through, identifying themes and constructing frames. The third step focuses on the form and frequency of themes and frames to facilitate comparing the study populations across time. This methodology is derived from Matthew Hughey's (2014) work on white savior frames that employs the same three-step coding process albeit with a different study population.

The study population for Southern barbecue includes 89 oral histories collected across seven states between 2006 and 2011 as part of the Southern Foodways Alliance Barbecue Trail. The oral histories will be coded in a three-stage process. The first stage is a complete reading of each oral history while making note of recurring themes with a particular sensitivity to elements of food culture, including authenticity structures and inequalities. Each oral history represents one unit of analysis. The recurring themes, at this point, will be treated as sensitizing concepts that create the foundation for a more formal coding scheme. The oral histories will then be analyzed with a more refined lens. "Frames focus on what will be discussed and how it will be discussed," in comparison themes are "recurring typical themes that run through a lot of the reports" (Altheide 1996, p. 31). The third step will focus on the frequency of themes and frames that facilitate the comparison of oral histories across gender, race, age, and location.

Using the same three step methodology the study population for *Top Chef* and ramps and quinoa will be analyzed. The sample for *Top Chef* is drawn from the first, seventh, and thirteenth season. Every third episode is selected as well as the restaurant wars challenge, because it is the

only challenge remaining the same across every season, and the episode on a social issue such as LGBTQ rights or childhood obesity. The sample for ramps and quinoa was drawn from using the Lexus Nexus database to search all articles published from 2000-2015 with ramps and quinoa. The sample of articles for quinoa comes from *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The London Guardian*. From 2000 to 2015 there were 569 articles mentioning quinoa. The sample of articles for ramps comes from *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*, and *The Charleston Gazette*. From 2000 to 2015 there were 186 articles mentioning ramps.

APPENDIX B: Figures

Figure 4.1. Growth in mentions among quinoa and ramp articles, 2000-2015 (N= 755)

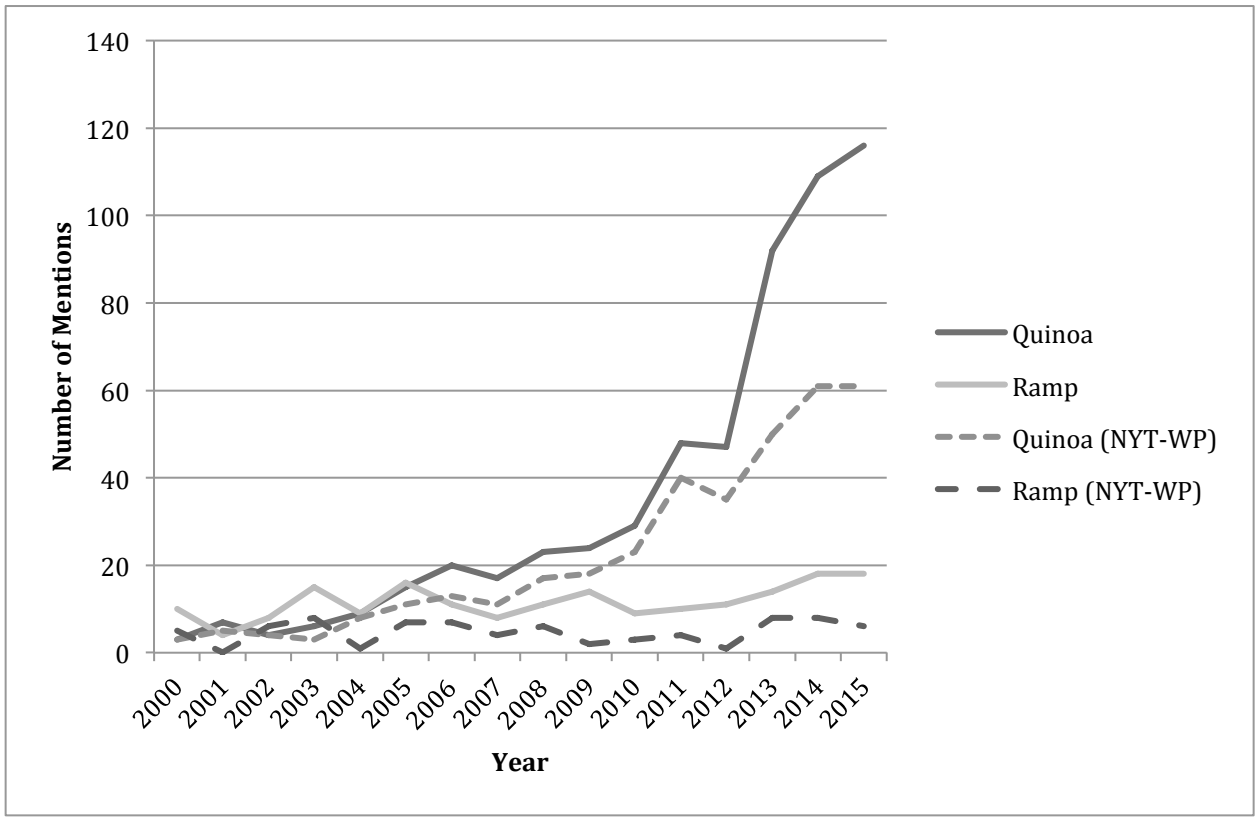


Figure 4.2. Divergence of Identity and Health Frames Among Quinoa Articles, 2000-2015 (N= 569)

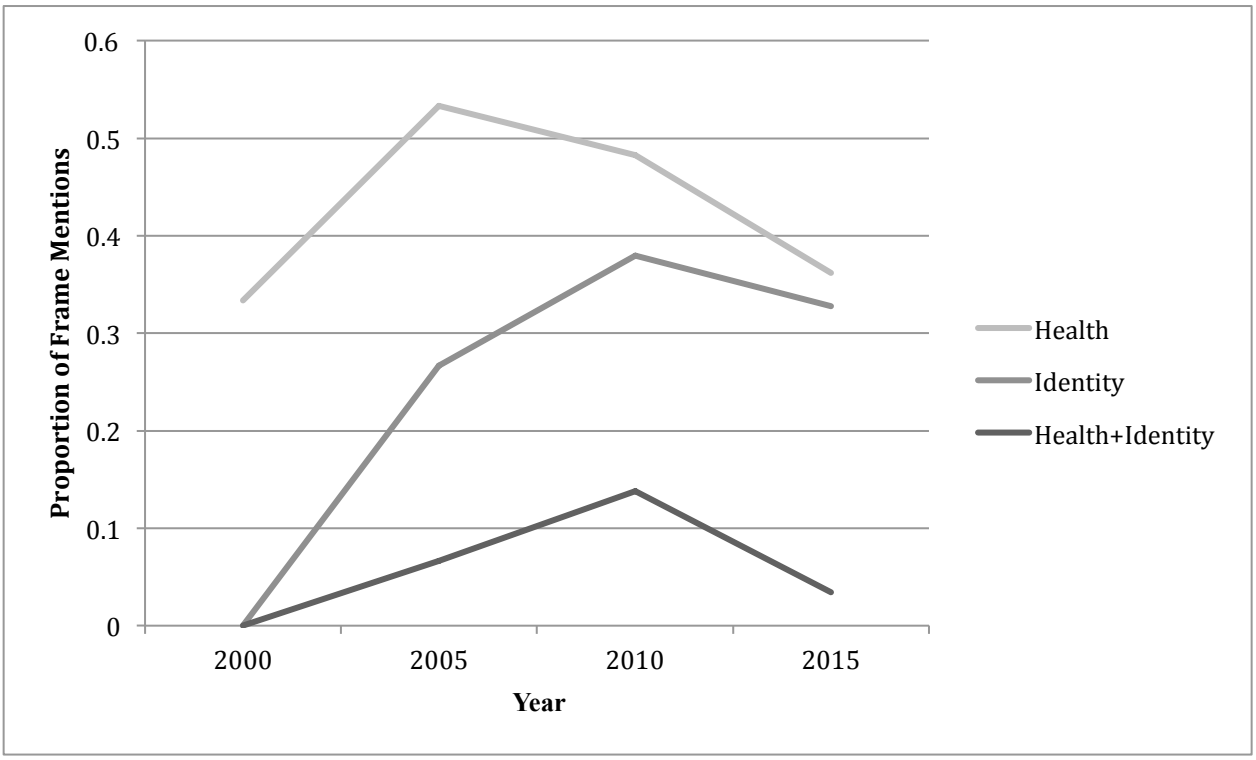
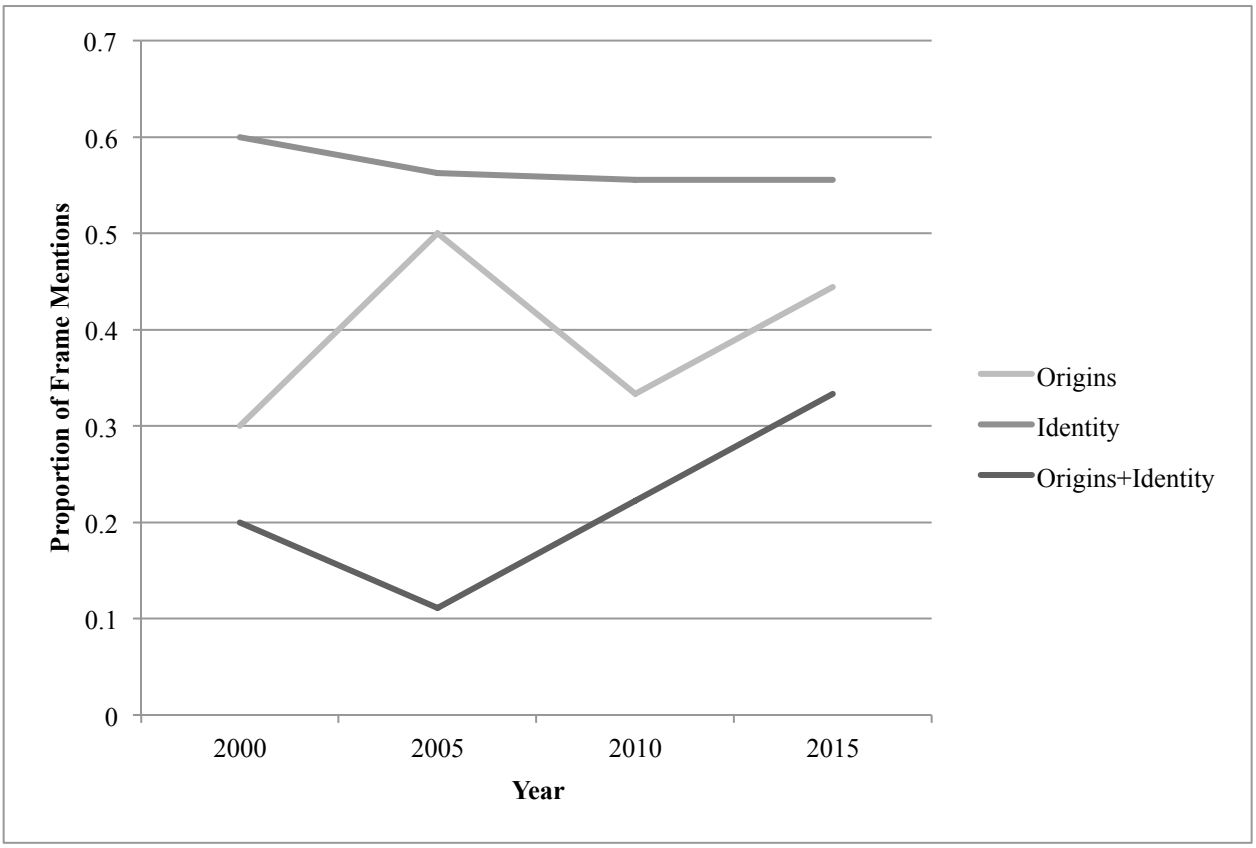


Figure 4.3. Convergence of Origins and Identity Frames Among Ramp Articles, 2000-2015 (N= 186)



APPENDIX C: Tables

Table 2.1 Oral History Participants

Name	Location	Gender	Age	Position	Years Open	Years in Family	Race
Angela B.	Kingstree, SC	F	37	2nd gen owner	26	26	W
Russell C.	Salters, SC	M	46	3rd gen owner	76	76	W
Tony K	Orangeburg, SC	M	45	3rd gen owner	50	40	W
Jackie H.	Leesville, SC	M	72	Owner	33	33	W
David B.	Charleston, SC	M	53	3rd gen owner	73	73	W
Jay A.	Buffalo, SC	M	45	2nd gen owner	71	71	W
Rodney S.	Hemingway, SC	M	40	2nd gen owner	41	41	B
Douglas O.	Holly Hill, SC	M	51	Worker	35	-	B
Judy D.	Greenville, NC	F	-	2nd gen owner	31	31	W
Dexter H.	Greenville, NC	M	44	Cook	31	-	W
Sonny C.	Lexington, NC	M	73	Owner	54	54	W
Latham/Larry D.	Ayden, NC	M/M	74/48	2nd/3rd gen owner	81	81	W
Randy R.	Windsor, NC	M	47	2nd gen owner	73	42	W
Debbie H.	Raleigh, NC	F	53	Owner	73	3	W
Brandon C.	Lexington, NC	M	41	Manager	42	42	W
Gerri/Stephen G.	Dudley, NC	F/M	67/76	Owners	26	26	B
Rudy C.	Farmville, NC	M	70	2nd gen	60	60	B

				owner			
Ed. M.	Wilson, NC	M	61	Owner	-	-	B
Tommy M.	New Bern, NC	M	60	2nd gen owner	66	66	W
William M.	Hookerton, NC	M	55	3rd gen owner	55	55	W
Larry/Brandon P.	Nahunta, NC	M	53/27	2nd/3rd gen owners	56	56	W
Donald W. / Kevin L.	Wilson, NC	M/M	65/41	2nd/3rd gen owners	65	65	W
Natalie/Chase R.	Shelby, NC	F/M	30/25	3rd gen owners	65	65	W
David/John W.	Reidsville, NC	M/M	68/38	2nd/3rd gen owners	62	62	W
Samuel J.	Ayden, NC	M	31	3rd gen owner	64	64	W
Chip S.	Greensboro, NC	M	44	3rd gen owner	81	81	W
Rodney B.	Vicksburg, MS	M	-	Owner	1	1	B
Deke B.	Oxford, MS	M	-	Owner	40	40	B
Randy W.	Vicksburg, MS	M	-	2nd gen owner	50	50	W
Randy L.	Pontoc, MS	M	53	Owner	14	14	W
Leroy K.	Greenwood, MS	M	53	Owner	7	7	b
Teresa C.	Meridian, MS	F	49	Owner	12	12	W
Tommy H.	Horn Lake, MS	M	65	Owner	28	28	W
James R.	New Albany, MS	M	70	Owner	23	23	W
Verna R.	New Albany,	F	70	Owner	23	23	W

	MS						
Roger D.	Jonesboro, GA	M	64	2nd gen owner	63	63	W
Christopher D.	Jonesboro, GA	M	42	3rd gen owner	63	63	W
Ellen Brewer	Flovilla, GA	F	61	2nd gen owner	79	63	W
Billy B.	Atlanta, GA	M	36	3rd gen owner	63	63	W
Buford H.	Douglasville, GA	M	74	Owner	39	39	W
Scott H.	Douglasville, GA	M	50	2nd gen owner	39	39	W
Jane J.	Chamblee, GA	F	57	3rd gen owner	34	11	W
George/Jimmy P.	Lexington, GA	M	76/51	2nd/3rd gen owners	81	81	W
Bud H.	Cherry Log, GA	M	76	Owner	40	40	W
Randy J.	Ball Ground, GA	M	44	2nd gen owner	36	36	W
Kevin J.	Ball Ground, GA	M	74	Owner	36	36	W
Andrew P.	Memphis, TN	M	63	Owner	25	25	B
Billy L.	Henderson, TN	M	69	Owner	30	8	W
Craig B.	Memphis, TN	M	46	Owner	8	8	W
John V.	Memphis, TN	M	60	2nd gen owner	60	60	W
Jack D.	Memphis, TN	M	74	Worker	-	-	W
Desiree R.	Memphis, TN	F	71	Owner	31	31	B
Curt B.	Lexington, TN	M	30	Owner	1	1	W

Walker T.	Germantown, TN	M	51	Owner	27	27	W
Doug W.	Bartlett, TN	M	48	Owner	29	2	W
Crystal/Derek N.	Lexington, TN	F/M	25/23	Owners	-	2	W
Helen T.	Brownsville, TN	F	53	Owner	28	12	W
Jim N.	Memphis, TN	M	71	Owner	28	28	B
Joe J.	Jack's Creek, TN	M	47	Manager	60	11	W
Dan B.	Memphis, TN	M	61	2nd gen	86	12	W
Liz/Ike K	Henderson, TN	F/M	69/71	Owners	11	11	W
Devin P.	Centerville, TN	M	39	Owner	8	8	W
Flora/Ron P.	Memphis, TN	F/M	61/20	1st/2nd gen owners	36	36	B
Richard H.	Bolivar, TN	M	65	Owner	30	30	W
Larry P.	Bluff City, TN	M	66	2nd gen owner	57	57	W
Ricky/Zach P.	Lexington, TN	M	46/17	Owner/ worker	32	19	W
Chris S.	Henderson, TN	M	33	Owner	~150	0.3	W
Frank/Eric V.	Memphis, TN	M/M	62/34	2nd/3rd gen owners	45	30	B
Charlie R.	Memphis, TN	M	59	Owner	40	20	W
Adam I.	Memphis, TN	M	43	Owner	50	13	W
Anthony B.	Millington, TN	M	35	Manager	10	10	B
George A.	Northpoint, AL	M	52	2nd gen owner	44	44	B
Don M.	Decatur, AL	M	65	3rd gen owner	81	81	W

Joe H.	Winfield, AL	M	69	Owner	18	18	W
Maxine/Van S.	Bessemer, AL	F/M	85/51	1st/2nd gen owner	49	49	W
Kyle G.	Winfield, AL	M	35	2nd gen owner	8	8	W
Chuck F.	Opelika, AL	M	61	Owner	30	30	W
Sam N.	Birmingham, AL	M	-	2nd gen owner	43	43	W
Michael M.	Irondale, AL	M	89	2nd gen owner	115	36	W
Susie H.	Dora, AL	F	85	Owner	55	33	W
Richard H.	Dora, AL	M	55	2nd gen owner	55	33	W
Cheryl L.	Hueytown, AL	F	47	2nd gen owner	26	26	W
Rudolph M.	Winfield, AL	M	62	Owner	9	9	B
Dale P.	Blount Springs, AL	M	57	2nd gen owner	54	39	W
Hugh K.	Grand Rivers, KY	M	53	2nd gen owner	44	44	W
Ken B.	Owensboro, KY	M	67	2nd gen owner	60	46	W
Irene R.	Waverly, KY	F	54	2nd gen owner	60	60	W
Jerry T.	Morganfield, KY	M	73	Church BBQ	-	25	W
Frank G.	Henderson, KY	M	51	Owner	69	15	W

Table 4.1. Themes Among Quinoa and Ramp Articles (N= 755)

Theme	Food stuff		Means test
	Quinoa	Ramp	(Q-R)
Health	.43	.13	.400***
Global	.12	.23	-.124***
Restaurant	.29	.19	.104**
Recipe	.07	.22	-.148***
Travel	.11	.04	.069**
Origins	.14	.42	-.284***
Identity	.34	.60	-.256***
Forage	----	.30	----
Odor	----	.22	----
N	569	186	

Table 4.2. Correlations of Food Distinction Frames for Quinoa Articles (N= 569)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Health	----						
2. Global	-.067	----					
3. Restaurant	-.234**	.017	----				
4. Recipe	-.050	-.098*	-.156**	----			
5. Travel	-.177**	-.009	.285**	-.095*	----		
6. Origins	-.139**	.302**	-.017	-.065	.184**	----	
7. Identity	-.286**	-.056	-.250**	-.163**	-.186**	-.144**	----

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 4.3. Correlations of Food Distinction Frames for Ramps Articles (N= 186)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Health	----								
2. Global	.110	----							
3. Restaurant	-.088	-.079	----						
4. Recipe	.127	.040	-.118	----					
5. Travel	-.039	.066	-.102	-.046	----				
6. Origins	.092	.130	-.158*	.086	-.073	----			
7. Identity	-.036	-.150*	-.165*	-.077	-.042	.121	----		
8. Forage	.082	.157*	-.101	.120	-.021	.094	-.020	----	
9. Odor	.127	.010	-.118	.140	.083	.298**	.270**	-.024	----

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 4.4 Proportion of Themes Per Year for Quinoa (2000-2015)

Article	Frame							
Year	Health	Global	Restaurant	Recipe	Travel	Origins	Identity	N
2000	.33	.67	.67	.00	.33	.00	.00	3
2001	.29	.29	.57	.00	.00	.00	.14	7
2002	.25	.00	.25	.25	.00	.50	.25	4
2003	.50	.00	.33	.00	.17	.17	.17	6
2004	.89	.22	.11	.11	.00	.22	.22	9
2005	.53	.27	.40	.00	.07	.20	.27	15
2006	.55	.15	.30	.05	.20	.10	.35	20
2007	.53	.18	.35	.18	.12	.12	.24	17
2008	.48	.09	.30	.04	.17	.13	.39	23
2009	.33	.08	.38	.08	.25	.13	.21	24
2010	.48	.17	.38	.10	.10	.07	.38	29
2011	.60	.17	.29	.04	.17	.17	.25	48
2012	.51	.06	.23	.09	.09	.11	.26	47
2013	.34	.12	.27	.08	.10	.14	.45	92
2014	.41	.12	.23	.05	.09	.17	.42	109
2015	.36	.06	.31	.07	.09	.11	.33	116
Average	.43	.12	.29	.07	.11	.14	.34	569