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Conceptualizing Taste: Food, Culture and Celebrities

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Highlights

- We chart celebrity inheritance among the UK culinary elite, and the shifting production of habitus.
- We model the changing dynamics of culinary taste depicting popularization and legitimation.
- Bourdieu’s system of thought offers scope to further our understanding of taste and status systems.
- Society’s appetite for consumption of celebrity can transform cultural fields such as tourism.

Conceptualizing Taste: Food, Culture and Celebrities

Abstract

Tourism is a potent realm for theorizing broader issues of culture and taste. Exploring dining and culinary pursuits can shed light on the production and reproduction of gastronomic culture and broader struggles for authenticity. We explore the 'liquid times' of late modernity, and how the competing processes of popularization and legitimization contribute to the ongoing reconfiguration of tourism's field of taste within a context of culinary celebrification. Applying Bourdieu's theory of distinction to culinary elites, we develop a model that captures transitions in habitus. This model can be applied to any cultural context within the tourism industry to illustrate the impact of competing processes of taste. Implications of this model are that the celebrification of products and services can potentially narrow the field of production and undermine the cultural contribution tourism can make to society at large.

Keywords

Bourdieu, culinary taste, elite chefs, legitimization, habitus, taste formation

Conceptualizing Taste: Food, Culture and Celebrities

Tourism acts as a crucible for many cultural fields, including literature, art, cuisine and politics. The pursuit of tourism in itself is an act of cultural integration, where fields of distinction can communicate and influence one another. By virtue of this process, tourism emerges as a field of distinction in its own right, the bedfellow of other fields yet using its influence to serve as a driver of taste. This paper seeks to advance understanding of tourism management from a conceptual viewpoint using Bourdieu's framework of taste formation, responding in part to Ryan's (2009) call for papers that offer conceptual originality rather than technical ingenuity. Drawing on Tournier's (1970, p. 93) insight that "if beautiful landscapes could be eaten they would be photographed much less often" (Maclean, 2003, p. 26), we explore the embodied, practical and physical elements of tourism as experienced through cuisine, building on previous conceptualizations of tourism as an abstracted and objectified gaze (Urry, 1990). The link between gastronomy and tourism has been elaborated by Richards (2002), who posits that food and tourism have become inseparable, demonstrating a symbiotic relationship between the cuisine and cultural context of the destination and the culinary context and interpretation of the tourist.

The debates concerning the formation and judgment of aesthetics, taste, fashion and style permeate the social sciences, and are particular concerns of researchers interested in tourism, leisure and consumer culture (Harvey, Press, & Maclean, 2011). Pierre Bourdieu, a pre-eminent twentieth century French sociologist, authored the acclaimed text *Distinction* (1984), which deals with the formation of tastes in food, culture and presentation. His contribution to the taste debate has been particularly influential due to his appreciation of taste as a multifaceted concept: on the one hand, it is derived from the interplay between competition for capital between social agents located in stratified, segmented fields; on the other hand, many of the processes of taste formation result from ingrained dispositions, what Bourdieu terms 'habitus', implying that unconsciously existing social structures and status distinctions tend to be reproduced (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu's framework, broadly speaking, centres on a theoretical triad (Dobbin, 2008) which integrates the individual (habitus) with power relations (competition for economic, cultural and social capital) and social structure (the field).

Many aspects of tourism draw on the notion of authenticity and tensions surrounding commodification. A Bourdieusian lens sheds light on legitimization and popularization, and how consumption constitutes a site for struggles over legitimate, middlebrow and popular culture. Taste is both physical and symbolic, allowing an appreciation of the embodied, everyday practice of tourism to emerge, "a place that refuses the objectifying gaze" (Game, 1991, p. 184), consciousness or structure. In this paper, we outline how Bourdieu's theory sheds light on the shifting boundaries of the culinary field, and the role played by dominant agents who transgress these boundaries. We subsequently propose a conceptual framework for this process which captures the emergence of new dispositions and practices.

Elements of Bourdieu's theory have been applied selectively in tourism research, for example, by exploring how cultural or symbolic capital is accrued through destination consumption (Adams, 1992;

Andries van der Ark & Richards, 2006; Bennett, Lemelin, Koster, & Budke, 2012; Kim, Cheng, & O’Leary, 2007; Prentice, Guerin, & McGugan, 1998), or food (Chang, Kivela, & Mak, 2011); and social capital through tourism or touristic endeavors (O’Reilly, 2006; Park, Lee, Choi, & Yoon, 2012; Podoshen & Hunt, 2011; Pomfret, 2011; Richards, 1996). Habitus has been applied when examining the combination of idealized and realized dispositions affecting tour guides (Mak, Wong, & Chang, 2011). In this paper we aim to explore and to capture Bourdieu’s system of thought in a holistic fashion, offering a theoretically informed contribution underpinned by his concepts of field, habitus and capital theory.

Popularization and legitimization exist at opposing ends of the field of cultural production: popularization is defined by large-scale cultural production, where economic considerations are primary; legitimization is characterized by restricted production, where symbolic considerations come first (Bourdieu, 1985a). These two processes take place within all cultural fields, including the field of culinary production and consumption. On one side of the field, celebrities attempt to achieve legitimization by accumulating highly valued cultural capital and presenting a more esteemed, sought-after habitus. On the other side, the elite practice popularization by forsaking the pursuit of ‘disinterested’ restricted production, for more mass-orientated activities. Although Bourdieu’s theory emphasizes reproduction, we demonstrate in this paper how shifts in the conditions of reproduction can modify the habitus of dominant agents due to popularization and/or legitimation. We ask: what is the role played by these processes of popularization and legitimization in the long-term shifts in field-level capital configurations, especially in the positions of dominant agents? To answer this question, we use Bourdieu’s theory of distinction and apply it to culinary elites to develop a model that illustrates modifications or transitions in habitus. This model can be applied to any cultural context within the tourism industry to illustrate the impacts of competing processes of taste, including museums, cultural heritage, culinary tourism and destination positioning. We explore shifting dispositions and narratives of social change in cultural contexts, extending Bourdieu’s theorization of habitus by appreciating the role of field dynamics.

This paper now splits into five sections. We begin by briefly describing tourism and life in late modernity. Then, in section two, we present Bourdieu’s theoretical perspective focusing on the formation of taste. Bourdieu’s theory is then contextualized using the example of tastemakers in the culinary world. In section four we explore the celebrification of the field and present our model of ‘Changing Dynamics of Culinary Taste’ to illustrate the shifting habitus and the implications of the resultant narrowing of the field of production. Finally, we draw together the threads of our argument and present avenues for further research, before offering implications for the industry.

Tourism and life in late modernity

Tourism, and tourism research, is subject to what Adorno and Horkheimer (1979, p. 38) describe as the intermeshing of culture and entertainment, which they argue leads to a “deprivation of culture, but inevitably to an intellectualization of amusement”. Today, in the age of late modernity (Giddens, 1990, 1991), we live in what Bauman (2000, 2007) has described as ‘liquid times’. With “the world going at high speed and accelerating” (Bauman, 2004, p. 27), this is an era characterized by the disintegration of established orders and the accelerated liquefaction of existence. It is accompanied by fast and immediate consumption, the increasing transience of fashion, and the advent and omnipresence of social media, as exemplified by Facebook and Twitter. Their hallmark is the instantaneous gratification they

purport to provide – and, in the case of twitter, the direct and instant access to celebrity – consumers being seemingly no longer prepared to settle for deferred gratification in an unspecified future. The massification and popularization of culture discerned by Deleuze (1972) chimes with this notion of the commodification of taste. Simulacra provide accessible substitutes for consumers lacking the purchasing power to acquire more distinctive, original products (Harvey et al., 2011). Interestingly, in Deleuze's (1969) view, the imitation may enhance the original artifact instead of debasing it: "The simulacra is not a degraded copy, it possesses a positive power which denies both the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction" (pp. 302-3). In liquid times, however, the desire for fast consumption has shifted to the (ultimately cannibalistic) consumption of celebrity itself as Hyman (2008) notes:

Celebrity works at once to create class for the chef and to fundamentally undermine it...
The cannibal act of celebrity is an act of immaculate consumption, leaving no funny taste
in the mouth of the power and horror of the chef, the restaurant and the public act of eating
(p. 51)

The advent of celebrity chefs to the small screen confirms the aphorism that we eat with the eye first.

Researchers of modern consumption increasingly examine the concept of celebrity and spectacle, and the symbiotic relationship between these and the media (Kerrigan, Browlie, Hower and Daza-LeTouze, 2011; McCracken, 1989, 2005). Society is increasingly obsessed with images, so that "endlessly photographed tourist sites, such as the Eiffel Tower or the Taj Mahal, lose their meaning... emptied of reality and reduced to a stereotype of themselves by virtue of overexposure" (Maclean, 2003, p. 26). Celebrities in their turn are "destroyed by the adoring public, eaten alive by its insatiable appetite for pictures" (Maclean, 2003, p. 26). Celebrity is a global industry in itself, and celebrity status represents cultural agency that mediates between belonging and individualism (O'Guinn, 1991). As a celebrity, you are regarded as an individual, autonomous in your status yet by virtue of this status you are grouped with other celebrities. This group is metaphysical and does not necessarily translate to celebrities operating within a network that endows them with social mobility they previously lacked. The term 'celebrity' is abstracted from real networks and other fields of production. Fame involves becoming an object of reference for a community that is abstractly ascribed its status by the masses, but in reality is a diffuse network of individuals that occupy a liminal space between multiple fields (Redmond and Holmes, 2007).

Celebrity endorsement and the cult of the celebrity increasingly impact on consumption patterns in tourism; for example, in the promotional campaigns of Visit California, a panoply of international celebrities living in the state was used, including Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. Similarly, American Airlines have employed actor Kevin Spacey to endorse their products. These examples demonstrate the increasingly pivotal role that celebrity can have on tourism products. The contemporary definition of a celebrity too has changed. People can experience the celebrity multi-sensuously through activities such as dining at celebrities' restaurants or performing their recipes at home. Cashmore and Parker (2003, p. 215) describe this as "the commodification of the human form... the process by which people are turned into 'things', things to be adored, respected, worshipped, idolized, but perhaps more importantly, things which are themselves produced and consumed." This alludes to the presence of a tourism gaze in the abstracted, anticipatory, reflective and conjectural consumption of celebrities as well as the physical consumption of their cuisine.

Bourdieu's theoretical perspective and the formation of taste

Bourdieu's system of thought focuses the researcher on symbolic structures (Everett, 2002) and within tourism, his work on taste and status competition within cultural fields is particularly useful. The association between food and an individual's standing is a long-established tradition embodied in the claim by Brillat-Savarin (1986 [1825], p. 3), "Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are". Considerations of cuisine, such as those of de Pressac (1931), were that taste should not be confused with gastronomy:

... taste is the natural gift of recognizing and loving perfection, gastronomy is a set of rules which govern the cultivation and education of taste [...] The gourmet is his own gastronome [...] it is up to them to improve this rather minor genre by means of tact, restraint and elegant lightness [...] there is no such thing as bad taste [...] and persons of refinement know this instinctively. For those who do not, rules are needed.

All taste is dependent upon "the conditions of existence which are a precondition for a learning of legitimate culture" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 47), involving the suspension and removal of economic necessity, and the resultant capital and dispositions that one acquires. Taste is a social construction, the result of a political process where the structures that determine it are manipulated in such a way that the appreciation of culture appears to be natural and instinctual.

There is a symbiotic relationship between the field of production, referring to the economic world, and the field of consumption, which is the social world (Harvey et al., 2011). Tastes depend on the system of goods offered, which may influence changes in taste or alternatively, a change in taste may bring about a transformation in the field of production (Turner and Edmunds, 2002). In *Distinction*, Bourdieu's (1984) influential application of his social theory, he explores how cultural capital is articulated in social fields, and enacted in consumption fields through tastes and consumption practices (Holt, 1998). Bourdieu asserts that distinction depends on the basic opposition between the tastes of luxury and the tastes of necessity, whereby the dominant class distinguishes itself through the consumption of food, culture and presentation (Maclean, Harvey, & Chia, 2012a). For Bourdieu, the aesthetic has a primary role, as a vehicle through which distinctions are made, making consumption a creator of social distance. Bourdieu deals specifically with the consumption of food, and highlights food as an arena in which hierarchies of value exist amongst choices, those with cultural and economic capital using lifestyle choices and commodities to maintain and demonstrate their distinction.

Field, capital and habitus

Bourdieu's work also allows us to understand more about the culinary field, as a cultural field of production in which there is a competitive logic underpinning the behavior and dispositions of dominant agents, for instance specialized organizations, professionals and critics who engage in expert aesthetic discourse and create a hierarchy of cuisines and restaurants (Warde,

2004). Cultural intermediaries are important, as they shape both use values and exchange values, and exert cultural authority as determiners of taste and creators of new consumer dispositions.

Tastemakers and, by extension, celebrity experts have seized the opportunity to legitimize their role as bearers of aesthetic knowledge, as function is replaced by the expressive qualities of any object in terms of what it says about a sense of self or aspirational standing (Powell and Prasad, 2010, p. 117).

Cultural endeavors such as cooking, music and art are social arenas in which tastes are aligned within communities, and are constrained by faithfulness to culturally embedded principles and historical preferences (Harvey et al., 2011).

The three primary concepts Bourdieu draws upon in his social theory are field, capital and habitus. The field is defined as a “network or configuration of objective relations between [social] positions” which is structured by field-specific rules, norms, roles and scripts (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 99). Fields are also characterized by the volume and configuration of capital possessed by dominant and dominated agents (Bourdieu, 1990). Capital is broadly defined by Bourdieu (1986) as comprising: economic capital or conventional wealth; cultural capital which includes the formal and informal knowledge an individual acquires over their lifetime; social capital pertaining to resources that may be available to an individual by virtue of the relationships and reciprocal obligations they possess; and finally, symbolic capital, which denotes that the form of capital an individual possesses confers status and is recognized (or misrecognized) as legitimate by the field. The field can thus be thought of as a competitive arena in which agents vie not only for more capital *per se*, but where dominant agents struggle to ensure they can maintain their monopoly (Maclean, Harvey, & Press, 2006; Maclean, Harvey, & Chia, 2010).

Cultural capital mirrors in some ways theories proposed by Veblen and Simmel, in that taste is determined not only by material goods, but also by possessing the knowledge and time needed to appreciate and consume them (Harvey et al., 2011). Lin (1999) describes the process of creating cultural capital as “investments on the part of the dominant class in reproducing a set of symbols and meanings, which are misrecognized and internalized by the dominated class as their own” (p. 29). The cultural elite continuously refine and reinforce the status of their capital within the field. A durable system of reproduction emerges and in this regard, Bourdieu’s (1990) third key concept of habitus denotes a “durably inculcated system of structured, structuring dispositions” (p. 52) which is socially constituted and gained through experience (Maclean, Harvey, & Chia, 2012b). This implies that fields are defined by a certain conditioning culture, or ‘feel for the game’ (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 9).

Fields can be viewed in terms of ‘restricted production’, in which the cultural goods produced are destined for a public of producers of cultural goods, and where evaluation of production is conducted according to criteria internal to the field (Bourdieu, 1985b). An example of one such field is the literary field (Anheier, Gerhards, & Romo, 1995) where, despite competing effectively for economic resources, the producers of mass-consumption goods such as best-selling novels are unlikely to achieve high status. This is because status is determined by the field's cultural elite who have the right to classify and categorize literary work, and define who achieves status in terms of literary accolades and access to

prestigious groups. In relatively autonomous fields of cultural production, economic and commercial interests are refused, in favor of charisma, aesthetic intention and ‘disinterestedness’ (Bourdieu, 1983, p. 320). Fields of ‘generalized production’, by contrast, produce cultural goods destined for non-producers of cultural goods, i.e. the public at large, and are therefore not judged according to internal criteria. Of interest to our research is the tendency for the widespread field to influence or colonize the restricted field, making formerly restricted fields heteronomous (Everett, 2002). It is then likely that non-field specific capital, often commercial interests, will become dominant; or in the literary example, that authors writing bestsellers would emerge as the most powerful agents.

Tastemakers in the culinary world

The history of the culinary field and the elite production of taste relates to tourism which has been described as the "obsessional quest for the authentication of...an expression of taste" (Munt, 1994, p. 108). In this case, ‘taste’ is referred to in terms of concepts such as ‘cuisine’, a notion supported by Lash and Urry (1994) who note a relationship between taste and cultural capital. Bourdieu’s perspective on taste serves two functions, focusing on both social and economic foundations of “a hierarchized system of cultural preferences that are themselves generative of ideas defining patterns of legitimation in culture at large" (Prior, 2005, p. 126). Therefore, taste becomes the embodiment of concepts such as cuisine and by virtue of this process, tourist consumption and culinary consumption can be considered to have synonymous historical narratives. Lévi-Strauss (1970, p. 164) cites the culinary world as the "transition between nature and culture". He points to the chef as a cultural agent at the centre of the social order. Taste, therefore, whether it is perceived as a perceptual, cognitive or bodily sense, or as serving a symbolic or social function (Korsmeyer, 1999), has a central role to play in the activity and experience of tourism.

The culinary elite created a successful and lasting fashion over the last 300 years in the development of both cuisine and society. Predominantly French and almost exclusively male, figures such as Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826) and Alexis Soyer (1809-1859) have established a long-lasting culture and tradition of taste and cuisine (Cousins, O’Gorman, & Stierand, 2010). Below, we select some illustrative examples of the contemporary culinary elite, identified according to the Michelin guide, and use them to demonstrate some of the interconnections and orientations of some renowned culinary tastemakers. Among these recognized tastemakers, Ferran Adrià is considered to be a contemporary demi-god, engaged in the development of cuisine as an art form, a cultural pursuit that exists at a very abstracted level of refinement (Dougary, 2009). Adrià cites influences from the arts, literature, music and other cultural fields which orientate his habitus far beyond the preparation of simple food (Cousins et al., 2010). This habitus is formed within an apprenticeship under ‘greats’ of the culinary world and ‘time served’ in top kitchens over a considerable period. The habitus enables mobility around a restricted cultural elite that endeavors to explore the unknown for the sake of cuisine itself. Marco Pierre White is the youngest person to be awarded three Michelin stars, whose reputation was built on his quest to achieve three star status. Heston Blumenthal is renowned for his alchemical approach to cookery, using research labs and university facilities to ply his trade as much as a kitchen or larder. Blumenthal is notably considered a “chef’s chef” (Hollows & Jones, 2010, p. 47).

The field that these individuals operate within is highly restricted and, given the relatively small amount of three starred restaurants in the world, their mutual associations and perceptions are closely linked.

For example, the links among White, Blumenthal and Gordon Ramsay are remarkable: White (2006) recalls in his book, *White Slave*, being joined by a young Blumenthal in the renowned kitchen of Raymond Blanc. Ramsay is also famously one of White's great protégés. Gordon Ramsay also highlights his own relationship with White; despite their eventual differences, the respect garnered through mutual habitus and shared cultural capital precipitates Ramsay's willingness to acknowledge White.

An identity of culinary tastemakers is revealed that transcends personalities – one which is deeply structured and durably verifying for those that are accepted into it. Figure 1, Celebrity inheritance among the UK culinary elite, describes an illustrative section of the culinary elite network in the UK. There is complex interrelatedness among the Michelin starred elite, and the arrows indicate these relationships. Solid lined arrows denote the links to protégés with the progenitors of the contemporary elite depicted on the extreme left (Albert Roux, Michel Roux and Raymond Blanc) and the subsequent influence they have had on multiple successful individuals over time unfolding towards the right. Dashed arrows indicate influences and/or experience of working together, as in the example of Heston Blumenthal, who worked in Raymond Blanc's kitchen, but who was not his protégé. The notable associations among White, Ramsay and Blumenthal are depicted in Figure 1, alluding to their own 'offspring' who are effectively born into a more celebrified world, both through the changing nature of the environment and by virtue of their now-celebrity forefathers.

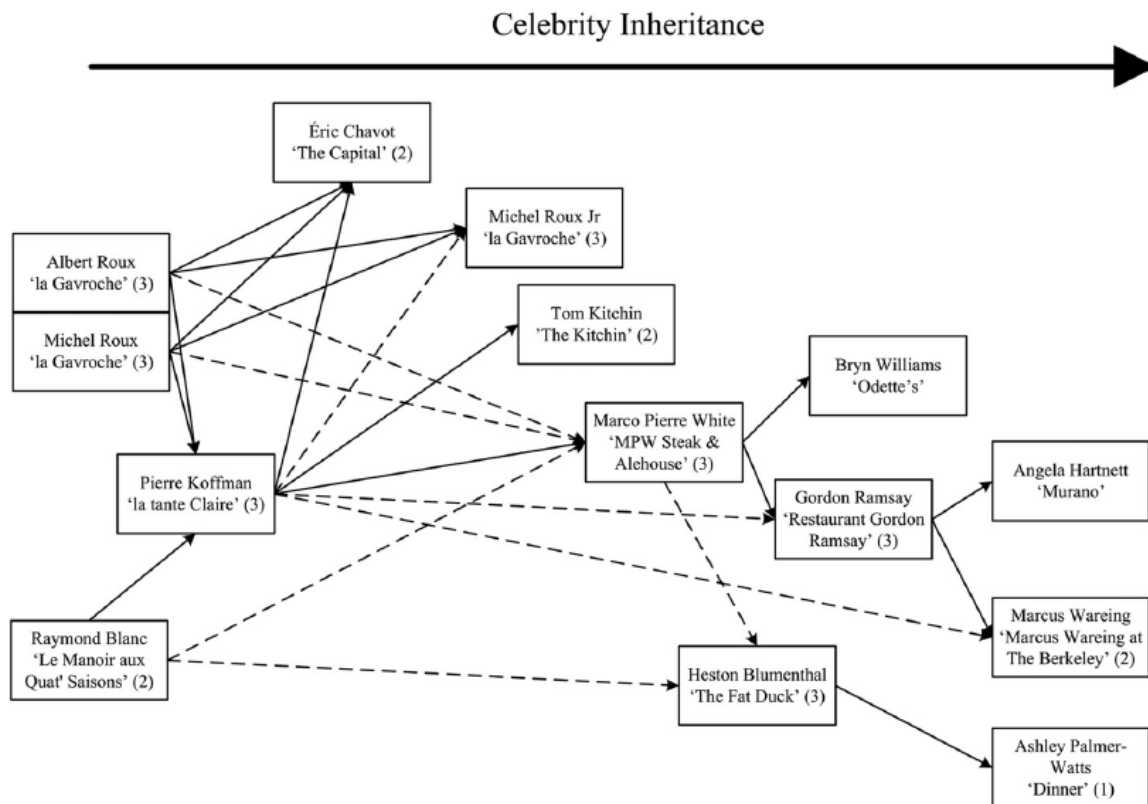


Fig. 1. Celebrity inheritance among the UK culinary elite.

Figure 1 reveals an unmistakable drift towards a celebrified world. Bourdieu's theory sheds light on this process from a competitive perspective, whereby internal struggle for dominance is complicated by

the additional need to acquire or maintain a celebrity profile. However, the progenitors achieve celebrity status because of those they have ‘produced’, in the same way that the most recent generation achieve it by virtue of those who ‘produced’ them. The field therefore self-affirms while drifting in the direction of a new habitus concerned with celebrity.

The celebrification of the culinary field

At the other end of the culinary field, the mid-nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of a mass market and capitalist culture which became increasingly important elements in the creation of taste. The cookery book moved into the realm of popular publishing, exemplified in *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* which “both represented and sought to create the material and discursive practices around food that distinguished English middle-class homes” (Beetham, 2008, p. 394). Despite being published over a century later, there are echoes of Beeton’s work in Bourdieu’s (1984) *Distinction*, where he writes that taste is:

... a class culture turned to nature, that is embodied, helps to shape the class body. It is an incorporated principle of classification which governs all forms of incorporation, choosing and modifying everything that the body ingests and digests and assimilates, physiologically and psychologically (p. 188).

In a similar vein, Mrs Beeton opines that the “the rank which a people occupy in the grand scale may be measured by their way of taking their meals” (Beeton, 1861, p. 905). To Mrs Beeton, dining was the privilege of civilization: the transformation of the natural into the social (dining). Likewise, Bourdieu (1984) noted that stylization in dining denies “... the crudely material reality of the act of eating and of the things consumed” (p. 95).

As it became less socially acceptable to declare high status based exclusively on wealth, social position or racial superiority, status was increasingly related to individual tastes and lifestyles that are constructed as sophisticated, savvy, and cosmopolitan (Bourdieu, 1984; Johnston and Baumann, 2007). Johnston and Baumann (2007) explore the broadening of cultural fields, labeled ‘omnivorousness’ (Peterson, 2005) within the sociology of culture, which explores the tension that exists between the inclusionary ideology of democratic cultural consumption and the exclusionary ideology of taste and distinction. Omnivorous consumption selectively draws from multiple cultural forms across the cultural hierarchy which “seems better adapted to an increasingly global world managed by those who make their way, in part, by showing respect for the cultural expressions of others” (Petersen and Kern, 1996, p. 906). Hierarchies between cultural genres have decreased and been replaced by hierarchy within cultural genres, where food is judged according to ‘authenticity’ and ‘exoticness’ which still require an aesthetic disposition that is brought to bear on a wider variety of foods.

The advent of television produced its own particular style of celebrity chef, an early example being Julia Child who made French food accessible to the masses, which to some observers signaled the end of the exclusivity, mystique and high status of French *haute cuisine* (Levenstein, 1989). Fantasia (2010) notes that in 1970s France there was a change in the relationship between gastronomy and the economic

field, as corporations purchased Michelin starred restaurants and the symbolic capital of the chefs. These individuals shifted from ‘chef de cuisine’ to ‘chef d’entreprise’ with their increasing endorsements, promotion and sponsorships of events and products.

Another key turning point has been the repositioning of cooking and dining in a celebrified taste project based on culinary heritage and lifestyle construction. Jamie Oliver’s television show, *The Naked Chef*, was one of the first to position food at the centre of a lifestyle narrative that could be effectively transferred to goods and services (Hollows, 2003). Using Bourdieu’s perspective, De Solier (2005) writes that Oliver positions cooking “in the distinction projects of twenty-something new middle class lads” (p. 477). Oliver, through adopting a ‘leisure identity’ repositions cooking into a leisure pursuit rather than domestic work. Whilst previous cookery programs often involved some aspect of lifestyle, the rise of today’s celebrity has accompanied a television format that increasingly makes lifestyle, and symbols of travel and exotic places its centerpiece. Celebrities draw on an assemblage of culinary and destination heritage to enhance their status. Viewers can choose which celebrity they want to ‘consume’ via their identifications and aspirations rather than cooking style or menu preference. Consumers’ tastes are structured around attaining glimpses of elite comforts and symbols of authenticity and travel in these programs (Holt, 1998, p. 20). Celebrity chefs both inform and are informed by “the symbolic value of commodities and lifestyle choices in the twenty-first century” (Powell and Prasad, 2010, p. 112), transmitting taste cultures and legitimizing the cultural status of certain fractions.

Celebrity chefs also have an identity comprised of class, gender, fame and power heralding new forms of class distinction and classification, and embodying “the story of how we construct ourselves through food” (Hyman, 2008, p. 43). The consumption of celebrity relies on a feeling of identification and perceived similarities, as well as making imagined connections with celebrity that forges bonds across members of a social group who share a common consumption (Turner, 2004). There is a distinct class element to the choices that we make, and therefore presenters tend to exaggerate or play down their accent and backgrounds: Oliver plays down his middle-class roots putting on a ‘mockney’ (mock Cockney) accent; Nigella Lawson and The Two Fat Ladies display their cultural capital through their speech and behavior, emanating the good taste they have acquired from their social circle and upbringing. Whilst it could be argued that these programs are democratizing, the field and habitus of the celebrity often remain separate (and hence unachievable) from that of viewers, which means they lend deference and cultural goodwill to existing social hierarchies (McRobbie, 2004).

There are, however, risks for those who are ‘classically trained’ who move into the lifestyle television format. Often these programs tend to underplay their skills and creativity, the very elements that underpin their culinary legitimacy and standing within the field of the professional ‘elite’ (Hollows and Jones, 2010). The most important quality required of cultural producers is a disavowal of economic interest, which works as an effective signal to prove one’s claim to authenticity (Bourdieu, 1993). *Haute cuisine* becomes consecrated through the acts of professionals, and cultural intermediaries and the language and philosophy associated with gastronomy give the field a degree of autonomy, governed by aesthetic rather than economic concerns (Fantasia, 2010). It also changes the object of consumption; as Hyman (2008) points out, people are increasingly anthropophagous, consuming the person's name, fame and power rather than the cultural capital they possess. Consuming the produce then becomes a vehicle for the consumption of the celebrity rather than a direct act of engaging with the position they hold. The

physical act of eating therefore exemplifies the privileging of consuming celebrity status over the cultural position of the chef.

An important consequence of the celebrification of the culinary field is that it now overlaps with the fields of politics, fashion, popular entertainment, marketing and tourism, to name but a few. The most valued capital in the field has changed as a consequence, moving away from culinary traditions to lifestyle attributes: we are as likely to see an ex-model or sports star become a celebrity chef as someone with Michelin stars. The culinary elite are also becoming more openly commercial: Marco-Pierre White's endorsement of Knorr stock cubes; Darren Simpson's recommendation of KFC; and numerous product range endorsements on housewares, including Ramsay, Lawson, and Oliver. Whilst celebrity status may offer greater financial reward, the symbolic capital they risk losing within the culinary field can be significant. As Bourdieu (1993, p. 75) notes:

Producers and vendors of cultural goods who 'go commercial' condemn themselves, and not only from an ethical or aesthetic point of view, because they deprive themselves of the opportunities open to those... who, by concealing from themselves and others the interests that are at stake in their practice, obtain the means of deriving profits from disinterestedness.

The economic field can easily undermine the artisanal and artistic bases and long-term accrual of symbolic capital of the haute cuisine and restaurants celebrity chefs established, in favor of short-term economic gains (Fantasia, 2010).

The celebrification of the culinary elite and perhaps what could be defined as the culinarianization of the celebrity world has precipitated transitions in habitus for both parties, approaching from two diametrically opposed positions. From a Bourdieusian perspective, shifts in narratives of social change can be seen as shifts in the conditions of reproduction itself. There is an emergent tension and competitive struggle between '*celebrity chefs*' and '*celebrity chefs*'. The field of restricted cultural production sees individuals taking risks orientated towards art, aesthetics, history, and literature rather than market demands. Yet they need to popularize their profile in order to defend new celebrity entrants from occupying their territory of identity, and as a result expand their activities orientated towards economic capital and mass consumption. From the opposite direction, celebrities enter the field with large-scale cultural production and economic and market success as their key aims. This is characterized by the desire for mass-appreciation and short-term economic gain. Figure 2, Changing dynamics of culinary taste, depicts this struggle and suggests the nature of a transitioning habitus within the culinary field. Elites pictured on the left of the figure are compelled to engage in more economically orientated endeavors to verify their positions as the elite in defense of the challenge from celebrities, who are moving from the right towards a more legitimized habitus that feeds off the pedigree associated with the culinary elite and culinary heritage. Social capital is also present within this dynamic: we posit that increased social capital naturally allows celebrities to be more mobile in the direction of the emergent habitus. However, social capital within the field will be negatively impacted for the culinary elite if they make a move towards economically-orientated activities. Therefore, a continuum of social capital is represented in each respective field.

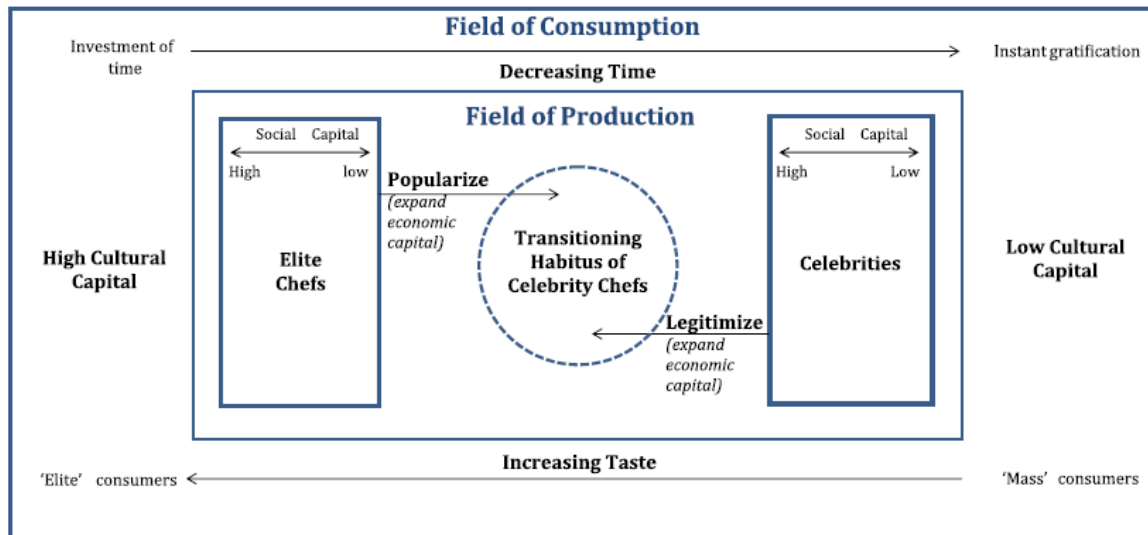


Fig. 2. Changing dynamics of culinary taste.

At one end of the spectrum, celebrities are attempting to move towards a more legitimized habitus and, at the other, the elite forsake the investment of time and pursuit of disinterested restricted production for more mass-orientated activities. Bourdieu's theory illuminates the processes of popularization and legitimization; however, the manner in which the habitus of dominant agents transitions as a result of popularization is a contribution of this paper, and indicates the subversive role that long-term shifts in field-level capital configurations can have on dominant agents. It is clear that the resultant adaptation in habitus would ultimately narrow the field of production and result in a more homogenous identity.

Bourdieu and the Tourism Industry

We present an alignment between the work of Bourdieu and the nature of the tourism industry. Moving beyond the objectification of the gaze, unpacking the formation of taste in this way allows us to understand leisurely pursuits such as dining as a stylistic mechanism that masks how the body is a vehicle for shaping the social body. As a practice, tourism management engages first and foremost with people through dimensions that sit beyond the realm of core institutional education and socialization practices, namely within normative cultural structures such as manners, aesthetic appearances, conviviality, art, music, literature, travel. Critics have proposed that Bourdieu's framework is overly deterministic, and focuses too extensively on reproduction rather than social change. However, we see much promise for his framework in explaining the disjuncture in cultural fields caused by the liquid times of late modernity. Our perspective accounts for the influence of society's appetite and consumption of the modern celebrity. Safeguarding authenticity is an important concern for tourism, yet the world of fast consumption and instant gratification requires compromise among the cultural elite to meet ever-increasing consumption demands. These demands are underpinned by a reduction in the time willing to be invested in the acquisition of taste and a consequent reluctance to accept deferred gratification in cultural pursuits. This would have fewer implications for the reputation and wider cultural mobility of tourism if it were not for the apparent alternative route to positioning one's self as a 'celebrity' expert.

The appetite for fame for the sake of fame, in and of itself, means that individuals that meet the criteria of celebrity yet do not possess elite pedigree are allowed to stand shoulder to shoulder (in the eyes of the public) with those eminent individuals. The emergent effects are a transition in habitus for the elite who need to act to defend their positions by adopting a more public presence and also an effort by celebrity personalities to appear more expert. The modification in habitus represents a struggle for dominance and power between two segments: those that are first and foremost celebrities and those that are essentially elites. The emergent habitus potentially reduces the power of the culinary elite who maintained positions as *bona fide* tastemakers with cross-field mobility to art, literature, and science *inter alia*. Cultural elites assimilate and disseminate distinction to drive the evolution of taste across these multiple fields. The narrowing of the field represented here through the shifting conditions of reproduction and transitions in habitus signposts the potential for tourism's cross-field engagement to be reduced. This highlights a more generic process within tourism: the erosion of over-popular environments, such as diminishing history and art through simulacra and simplifications to satisfy mass demand. This, of course, is not unique to tourism. Cultural dominance in general can be delegitimized through over-popularization. Our model helps to conceptualize and understand the risk of this shift. Chefs require an awareness of commodification and the risks associated with product endorsement, over-endorsement or over-stretching brands. Similarly, destinations need to be wary of their associations with celebrity culture, particularly if investing in the image of an individual celebrity.

It has been noted that there is an inseparable relationship between the culinary industry and tourism industry (Hornig et al., 2012). The sociology of taste contributes to our understanding of tourism management, particularly in the context of the increasing importance of culinary tourism (Long, 2004). With regard to policy concerning tourism products in particular, including destinations, planners must ensure keen awareness of the impact celebrity culture may have on the longevity (or otherwise) of a venture. Close alignment with a celebrity bears the risk of associating their potentially volatile reputation too narrowly with that of the destination. For consumers, the dilution of the authentic cultural elite, combined with myriad simulacra, means that discerning quality and pedigree is a more complex task. Tourism is a vast and wide-ranging industry. As a crucible for taste it provides a stage and setting for cultural development. It feeds off this to develop its own fields of distinction such as the culinary world. Tourism's legitimization as an appropriate platform from which to pursue the development of taste (for other fields) and as a field of distinction in its own right (through cuisine and other pursuits) is vulnerable to the over-popularization of taste through the celebrification of the cultural elite.

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