

ABSTRACT

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Due to a historical legacy of purposeful differentiation from the domestic foodwork of women, the profession of chef has been defined by its hyper-masculinity and military organization. Women have therefore had a hard time gaining acceptance into this field, and previous sociological analysis has examined the inequalities they face via a reliance on categorical analysis. This paper uses both queer and postcolonial theoretical frameworks to ask whether women chef-restaurant owners operate businesses in opposition to the norm, replicate it, or some combination of both. It also asks what an analysis of women chefs looks like without the reliance on such categories. I conducted and analyzed interviews with ten North Carolina women chef-restaurant owners and found that all consciously constructed both businesses and occupational identities in contradiction to industry norms, and they did so via different forms of carework. This paper focuses on three types specifically: familial care of staff, educational/cultural care of customers, and ethical care of both the natural and social environments. Rather than carework being repressive, I found that in this professional setting, it was rather an opportunity for agency and active identity formation. Future research could use this theoretical framework to examine the normative slippages in cis male, trans, or nonbinary chefs to examine how they navigate the gender norms of their profession.

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Building a Better Back of the House: North Carolina Women Chef-Restaurant Owners Crafting
Identities and Organizations via Carework

by
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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my participants who were so generous with their time and knowledge and to my family for their continual and enthusiastic support.

BIOGRAPHY

Heather Leigh Johnson grew up around the Midwest and received her Bachelors of Arts in Philosophy and Spanish from the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. She now resides in Raleigh, North Carolina with her partner Ryan and their two children, Fiona and Berit.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1	1
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	5
<i>History of the Profession of Chef</i>	5
<i>Chef Identity and Culture</i>	8
<i>Gender in the Professional Kitchen</i>	10
<i>Moving Beyond Previous Analysis</i>	15
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	16
<i>Queer Theory</i>	16
<i>Postcolonial Theory</i>	21
<i>What Queer and Postcolonial Perspectives Have in Common</i>	23
<i>Methods</i>	25
FINDINGS	28
<i>Familial Care of Staff</i>	29
<i>Cultural/Educational Care of Customers</i>	35
<i>Ethical Care of the Social and Natural Environment through Local Sourcing</i>	41
DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION	47
REFERENCES	54
APPENDIX	59

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The restaurant world is changing, as evidenced by widespread media coverage of the increasing pushback on industry norms of racism, sexism, homophobia, and institutionalized violence. This debate between the old and the new played out in the 2017 online exchanges between chefs Preeti Mistry and Christopher Kostow, which were detailed by food journalist Korsha Wilson in her *Eater* article, “Dear White Chefs: Stop Talking, Start Listening.” Mistry, a queer woman of color, explained that she had once held up the white male giants of the profession, like the French Laundry’s Thomas Keller, as culinary gods. Yet she has since become disillusioned with an industry that preaches the gospel of diversity while appropriating the dishes and cheap labor of marginalized populations. Kostow, a straight white man, countered in an Instagram post, “There are few workplaces in the world as diverse as the kitchens and dining rooms of many of these restaurants. Perhaps the food media should be less cavalier in trying to tear people like @chefthomaskeller down, and stop relying on outdated and thinly researched beliefs to draw conclusions from.”

So who is right? Has the industry as a whole turned a corner toward inclusivity, or are hierarchies of racial and gender/sexual privilege still being replicated? If so, is anyone taking measurable action to challenge it? Talking with women who own restaurants and gaining their perspective could possibly help us to answer these questions.

Though such inequalities are common, if not endemic, to the structure of nearly all workplaces (Acker 2006), this is particularly true of the professional kitchen and the occupational identities of the chefs who inhabit them (Fine 1996; Harris and Giuffre 2015). Professional kitchens emerged in eighteenth and nineteenth century France, when the former

cooks of the waning aristocracy required new employment. The prototypes for the first Western restaurants utilized highly regimented job positions known as the kitchen brigade based on a French military-inspired vertical structure of power (Rosset 2004). Also similar to the military and other institutions at the time, the profession consciously excluded women; in order to gain legitimacy, the men leading the charge for professionalization differentiated restaurant cooking, done exclusively by men, from domestic cooking performed by women and servants. This overt distinction allowed the professional male chefs to retain their masculinity while performing traditionally feminine foodwork¹ (Ferguson 2004; Spang 2000). Most Western restaurant kitchens (especially those retaining some connection to haute aesthetics) are still at least partially based on this model, which puts women and racial minorities at a distinct disadvantage, and despite their ubiquity in restaurant kitchens, less than 20 percent of chefs or head cooks are Latino, and less than 9 percent are black, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (Borelli 2012). Because a woman chef (or indeed, anyone who is not a white, heterosexual, aggressive male) cannot fulfill the historical conception of the ideal worker in this context, women's job performances and professional identities are both routinely questioned and interpreted via gendered stereotypes. But the industry and public perception of chefs are changing. Although women chefs make up only 19.1 percent of their occupational workforce ("Chefs and Head Cooks," Data USA) and only 8 percent in fine dining (Sutton 2014), they are increasingly visible in the restaurant industry and food media, and have been the subject of recent interest, both scholarly (Harris and Giuffre 2015; Johnston et al. 2014; Swenson 2009) and popular (Druckman 2010).

¹ I am choosing to use *foodwork* versus *food work* and *carework* versus *care work* because although both appear in the sociology of food literature, the singular terms are perhaps slightly more common and more succinct (Cairns and Johnston 2015).

Recent research on the gendered expectations placed on and upheld by chefs has brought inequalities based on race, gender, and sexuality under much-needed sociological scrutiny (Swenson 2009), laying the groundwork for further sociological analysis. Harris and Giuffre (2015) detail women's historical marginalization in the profession and the ways in which media coverage of women chefs reproduces and naturalizes inequality. They also argue that women chefs take up gendered management styles to navigate unfair leadership expectations and that these mechanisms can preclude advancement. The authors conclude their book by calling for a more intersectional sociological analysis of the inequalities they found in both media coverage (which tends to associate women's culinary accomplishments with less prestigious domestic foodwork) and leadership expectations (the authors argue only three gendered forms of management are available to women chefs, with varying levels of internalization of industry norms and heterosexual/hegemonic expectation of femininity). While Harris and Giuffre (2015) articulate the challenges women face on the job from male superiors, coworkers, and subordinates, Johnston et al. (2014) focus on how gendered and racialized personas are reproduced by famous chefs in the media when those chefs do gain celebrity status. They posit that the more culturally recognizable a persona is (i.e., the more seamlessly it fits into previously-held conceptions of what a white woman or a black man should look and behave like), the more likely the chef will be to connect with an imagined audience. Here, I argue that while the use of identity categories in the aforementioned projects can be useful in identifying patterns of systemic discrimination and oppression, it obscures powerful moments of agency and hybridity, and researchers can inadvertently reinforce inequalities through the use of such analysis. I offer an expansion of the previous literature which moves beyond categorical analysis (for my purposes, analysis based on researcher-created identity categories).

In this thesis, I critically analyze the interviews I conducted with ten women chef-restaurant owners in North Carolina in the summer of 2018. I eschew categorical analysis by consciously using both a queer and postcolonial theoretical lens through which I look to destabilize identities and highlight intra-category differences. This project answers the following questions: are the work environments constructed by these women a rejection or internalization of the masculine, military style of the traditional kitchen brigade? And relatedly, what does an analysis of this look like when conducted via queer and postcolonial theoretical frameworks? It is worth noting that my aim is not to deny that identity categories exist or that their use shapes the navigation of everyday life. I simply wish to foreground their social construction (Valocchi 2005), the fluidity of their boundaries (Browne 2016), and the unequal privileging of those they describe.

I find that all the chefs in my study consciously resist replicating the traditional management styles and occupational identities that they posit marginalize them, yet they also variously uphold some hegemonic occupational, cultural, and gender norms. Because the feminine gender norms to which women are held are by definition at odds with those of the profession, I argue that my participants are essentially “redoing” gender with respect to their occupation rather than undoing it (West and Zimmerman 2009). That is to say, rather than rejecting the existence of sex or gender norms, these chefs’ presence and actions push the boundaries of what is considered to be appropriate behavior for a woman in this field.² I also find that the same opportunities for identity construction, financial gain, and ability to engage in carework are not uniformly available to all. I demonstrate this by describing how the chefs

² Kelan (2010) argues for the existence of two approaches to “(un)doing gender,” the second of which is based in Butlerian poststructuralist performativity in which the boundaries of what is considered acceptable gender behavior are shifted. I find this formulation to be similar to my interpretation of “redoing” gender, but prefer the language of redoing since I find gender norms are not abolished but merely redefined.

construct their identities and operationalize them as carework performed along three dimensions: familial care of staff, cultural/educational care of customers, and ethical care of the social and natural environment via social justice work and sourcing practices, respectively. While care expressed through food by women has been historically marginalized and devalued (Cairns and Johnston 2015; DeVault 1991), I argue that in my sample, it also offers opportunities for agency (which DeVault [1991] also acknowledges as well) and resistance to oppressive norms.

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of the Profession of Chef

Even though they may not be conscious of it or cook French food, especially in today's increasingly omnivorous food culture (Johnston and Baumann 2015) in which even casual restaurants take up the aesthetics of haute cuisine to various degrees (Pearlman 2013), many chefs are still heavily influenced by the evolution and subsequent domination of French haute cuisine (Trubek 2000). Marie-Antoine Carême, considered to be one of the founders of modern gastronomy, prioritized three things above all others when it came to his food: that the preparation and presentation of food be a rationalized and codified endeavor, that aesthetics feature heavily into questions of cuisine, and that these unique methods and features should be identifiably French (Ferguson 2004). The scientific principles that undergirded Carême's cuisine were a way to set it apart. He and his followers considered it superior to both domestic cooking and that of other cultures, drawing a clear line between what was true cuisine and what was not: anything not following Carême's specific techniques and flavors was immediately that of the "Other" and therefore inferior (Ferguson 2004).

Carême imagined the ideal chef to be “the culinary performer, the scholar, the scientist, and the artist” (Ferguson 2004:57). The legacies of these occupational expectations exist today due to a continued privileging of European cultural norms (Rossent 2004), even as chefs sometimes use haute aesthetics in novel contexts (Pearlman 2013). One of Carême’s other legacies is the kitchen brigade, for restaurant kitchens have typically been structured in hierarchical ways with rigidly defined positions of varying levels of prestige originally based on the French military (Druckman 2010; Ruhlman 2009). Carême also began the long tradition of comparing cooking in the professional kitchen to engaging in battle, with chefs as soldiers-in-arms under the command of a supreme leader in charge of dictating strategy and enforcing standards of aesthetics and behavior. This conception of the chef as warrior is no accident, as it further distinguished between cooking done in the public sphere for fame and culinary glory and cooking done in the home by women and servants (Ferguson 2004). Although modern kitchens are changing, the ideal of the head chef as commander and subordinates as obedient soldiers is persistent in the industry (Ruhlman 2000).

As my project is an explicitly sociological examination of chefs, I argue that the parallel and mutually reinforcing epistemic realms of the canons of both sociological and culinary knowledge are worth noting. Both arose in the context of European (and American) imperial/settler-colonial expansion, and as the profession of chef was becoming standardized, the discipline of sociology also fought to gain legitimacy from the vantage point of Western European (and later American) metropolises. Though today the discipline rejects many of the once-acceptable ways of gazing and analyzing “new” and “exotic” populations from the Orient and Africa (i.e., juxtaposing “savage” or primitive ways against the superiority of Western Enlightenment rationality), researchers must both acknowledge this very specific geographic and

temporal context in order to defamiliarize their preconceptions (Prasad 2003). Many of the initial tenets and priorities still pervade both fields today, for both early sociological analysis as well as haute cuisine depended upon problematic categories that perpetuated and normalized colonization and exploitation (Crosby 1986). Such categorical, bifurcated thinking shapes everyday life outside of academia as well. It is an evolutionary cognitive shortcut that frees up mental capacity for other more complex mental tasks, though it does so at the expense of generalizing about others based upon snap aesthetic judgements (Reskin 2002). To this point, the popular conception of “chef” tends to be an ideal type of white, western, hegemonic masculinity, and new chefs are judged against this standard by their industry, patrons, and themselves (Druckman 2012), though, as I show, degrees of agency and hybridity can be found throughout my sample.

French culinary discourse was and is intimately tied to national identity (DeSoucey 2016) and distinguishing itself from other locales’ culinary offerings (Ferguson 2014), and modes of thinking permeate the ways in which the profession’s management practices and workplace cultures have evolved. Binaries and rigid identity categories are frequently taken for granted in the traditional workplace literature, as well as in the workplace itself (Williams and Giuffre 2011). This can be seen in the lived experiences of chefs’ occupational identity, organizational culture, management styles, gendered behavioral expectations, as well as the analysis of these phenomena by sociologists. I show how eschewing such categories for my sample allows me to engage with and expose instances of agency and hybridity.

Chef Identity and Culture

Categories of identity such as gender and race are often the basis for pervasive harassment and discrimination, and identity and occupational culture are interrelated. A strong occupational culture among chefs produces a strong collective occupational identity, which is fostered through an extended process of socialization characterized by sexually explicit banter, bullying, and even violence (Cooper et al. 2017). Head chefs consider their work to be integral to their identity outside of the kitchen, and they willingly endure burns, cuts and verbal harassment to signal their group belonging (Palmer et al. 2010). Perhaps unsurprisingly, one study finds that as a cohort, chefs are more aggressive than the general population (Meloury and Signal 2014). This means that the profession and its actors socialize new chefs into perpetuating extreme workplace behavior and culture along norms of hegemonic masculinity. Occupational identities are constrained and shaped in response to this. The bullying and abuse that are common in professional kitchens have come to be an expected part of the profession due to its historical ties to the military and explicit departure from feminine foodwork (Bloisi and Hoel 2008; Ray 2016). In fact, in professional kitchens, fear of reprisal reproduces institutional stability (that is, norms are upheld). It promotes conformity and restricts creativity, for fear causes workers to reproduce the norms of their occupation as opposed to deviate from them. “Fear work,” or behaviors such as threats and violence, connects individual behavior to the reproduction of institutional norms, and fear itself is built into the very fabric of the production of haute cuisine (Gill and Burrow 2018).

Chefs cope with and adapt to these labor conditions in a number of ways. Though the work itself can be challenging and exciting yet degrading and mundane (Burrow et al. 2015), certain factors can mitigate dissatisfaction. Having a degree of control over one’s participation in

the labor process as well as a clearly-defined occupational culture can increase job satisfaction and investment in work (Blauner 1964). If the product of labor (in this case, food) is made with a noticeable level of individual involvement and creativity, it can become integrated into the maker's personal identity and thus decrease workplace alienation (Blauner 1964).

Another way in which a chef can gain more pleasure and derive more meaning from their labor is through the possession of insider knowledge of their field. This is occupation- and industry-specific insight gained from extended time at a particular job that can help a worker navigate the power dynamics particular to their workplace (Hodson 1996). On-the-job games can also boost employee morale. So long as productivity does not suffer and chefs adhere to organizational/industrial standards, these games actually engender employee consent to the labor process while quelling dissent (Burawoy 1979). Yet given the historically high level of tolerance for violent, racist, and misogynistic behavior in the professional kitchen (Bloisi and Hoel 2008), the games chefs play there can be inherently problematic. In this way, a strong workplace culture that perpetuates and reproduces these behavioral norms can have negative consequences (Blauner 1964), not the least of which is high pressure to conform and to induce others to conform (Cooper et al. 2017; Gill and Burrow 2018).

The sociological literature on management can also inform the analysis of how head chefs or chef-restaurant owners run their kitchens. Chefs responsible for hiring typically rely on norms in appearance and communication style to establish trust and reliability for potential employees, and the appearances generally deemed most trustworthy (i.e., promotable) match those that have historically held leadership roles in professional kitchens: white, male, clean cut (Kanter 1993), aggressive (Bloisi and Hoel 2008; Cooper et al. 2017), and with a pedigree of techniques based in the standards of haute cuisine. This normative cycle continually reproduces

itself as managers calibrate their occupational identity with respect to how well they fit in with the workplace (and to a lesser extent the industry as a whole) (Cooper et al. 2017).

Gender in the Professional Kitchen

Given the inherently and stereotypically masculine characteristics of the prototypical chef, gender shapes the nature of this work and how these individuals relate to their peers and subordinates. The profession socializes workers into accepting antisocial “extreme workplace behavior” (Burrow et al. 2015:673) which normalizes hegemonic masculinity. Relatedly, the signifiers of culinary greatness are masculine (creativity, autonomy, competitiveness), while women have been associated with more homey, domestic cooking and therefore do not reap the same rewards (neither financial nor prestige) (Druckman 2010). In fact, this traditional bifurcation of foodwork reifies and normalizes hegemonic gender roles (Swenson 2009). This contributes to the production and reproduction of stereotypical behaviors and expectations (Huppertz 2012) which privilege masculinity in workplace structure and social interactions, and this in turn maintains and normalizes gender inequalities. In this way, the workplace marginalizes and penalizes women and stereotypically feminine traits, in terms of both economic and social capital (Acker 1990). However, industry also penalizes women for taking on gender norm-breaking traits, creating a no-win situation (Frye 1983; Rudman et al. 2012).

In the professional kitchen and in other workplaces, women face challenges based on assumptions that others, within the industry and without, make about their gender. As subordinates, the control techniques to which groups of men and women are submitted in the workplace differs, and this has effects on worker dignity. Based on qualitative data from 155 work groups, Crowley (2013) finds that men find their satisfaction and autonomy increased

through “persuasive ‘bundles’ of control” (1209), while women are less often persuaded to adhere to organizational norms than coerced by techniques like direct supervision. This indicates that the gender composition of the workforce/groups can affect the sorts of control utilized on workers and how they experience their work environment. Relatedly, women also have less access to occupational mobility and are more likely to be mismanaged (Hodson 2001). Though mismanagement can lead to cycles of leaving inhospitable work environments which results in shorter tenure and slowed pay increases (Pudrovska and Karraker 2014), women also leave the workplace or “opt out,” not because they prefer to stay home with their children but because the inflexibility of their jobs makes work-life balance untenable. This is a “choice gap” (Stone 2007:14): there is a discourse of freedom surrounding a woman’s place in the workforce, but this is tempered by the reality in which she feels (or is made to feel) as if she is failing both her maternal and her occupational identities.

Peers and subordinates also subject women leaders to negative feedback for exhibiting traits thought to be non-feminine and appropriate only for men (e.g., assertiveness, dominance). The “status incongruity hypothesis” posits that women are punished for these transgressions because they pose a threat to unequal power dynamics between men and women, and women who attempt to challenge the status quo risk sabotage by employees (Rudman et al. 2012). Women in positions of authority are also more likely to be depressed than those in subordinate positions due to the structure of the workplace, which places significant social stressors on women attempting to manage workers (as opposed to a man, who is ideally thought to inhabit roles of authority). Tenure also has consequences for networking purposes, but when companies recruit through an open process, more women come to hold a greater percentage of positions; a reliance on informal networks privileges male candidates. In this way, formalizing the hiring

process results in a more diverse workforce (Reskin and McBrier 2000). Given women chefs' inherent outsider status in the industry, it is worth exploring the effects of both gender and type of cuisine on employment and leadership opportunities.

Besides the aforementioned challenges women face in the workforce, they face additional difficulties when they become entrepreneurs. Some actually cite opening their own businesses as a way to become better mothers due to increased flexibility and autonomy (Göransson 2016), and other researchers find that women, but not men, turn down jobs when self-employed due to familial constraints (Thébaud 2016). Chasserio et al. (2014) find that women entrepreneurs' occupational identities are inseparable from their personal identities and that they use this continuum of identity to both challenge norms and uphold them. Women entrepreneurs therefore navigate and utilize competing discourses of the masculine professional and feminine personal to construct their occupational identity (Lewis 2011).

Women struggle to identify themselves as entrepreneurs because of misalignments in dominant discourses, which precludes them from establishing stable occupational identities (Orlandi 2017). Thébaud (2010) also finds that although the gender gap in entrepreneurship (i.e., that it is dominated by men), rather than being solely determined by structural constraints, can also be attributed to women's negative self-assessments and holding themselves to stricter standards than their male counterparts. Too, discourses of womanhood are not consistent with those of entrepreneurship, and this forces women to construct their identities differently by 'doing' and 're-doing' gender in this context. However, this process is not homogenous given the variability of factors such as race and class within the population of women entrepreneurs (García and Welter 2011). Business interactions are therefore not gender neutral but women must consciously and strategically make decisions about how to enact gender while doing business.

Relatively little sociological analysis has been devoted specifically to how women chefs navigate these challenges. However, two notable studies, with slightly different foci, contextualize and explain contemporary women chef's identities. First, Johnston et al. (2014) analyze a sample of 98 cookbooks by 44 celebrity chefs, and they find that the culinary personas of successful professional chefs are highly gendered. The authors argue that the public more easily connects to recognizable social types, so chefs' personas which adhere to gendered norms are viewed as more legitimate. Given the historical association with women and domestic foodwork, the authors find that the homebody persona, exemplified by chefs like Rachel Ray and Sandra Lee, focuses not on classic techniques but ease of preparation and adherence to budgetary constraints. The home stylist, on the other hand, is similarly focused on the home but has greater artistic flair and economic resources with which to construct her home and culinary offerings. Martha Stewart is a notable example of this persona. Finally, the pin-ups, represented by chefs like Nigella Lawson, purportedly use their sex appeal and decadent ingredients to gain culinary authority. The only gender outlier in the sample was chef Anne Burrell, who was labelled a chef artisan. She is, according to the authors, also the most masculine-presenting woman chef in the sample.

Harris and Giuffre (2015) use similarly gendered categories to describe the management styles of women chefs in *Taking the Heat: Women Chefs and Gender Inequality in the Professional Kitchen*. In addition to conducting a content analysis of how the media covered women chefs versus men, they interviewed thirty-three women chefs about their experiences navigating the professional kitchen, and they write that the gendered leadership identity options available to women chefs are either the bitch, girly girl, or mother figure. The bitch attempts to emulate aggressive, top-down forms of rule enforcement, though given her status incongruity as

woman filling a traditionally male role, her actions are viewed as aberrant and not appropriate for her gender. The chefs in the sample are roundly critical of the girly girl, who appeals to other workers through what they view as weakness and vulnerability and reticence to engage in hard physical labor. Finally, the authors conclude that the last management identity of mother results in the most egalitarian workspaces, though it does require greater expenditure of emotional labor than the others.

Both studies highlight inequalities and challenges faced by women as managers attempting to construct occupational identities, but it is my wish to expand this previous research and use analysis that does not rely on such identity categories. Johnston et al. (2014) point out the danger that “celebrity chef personas may serve to naturalize status inequalities” (1), and identity categories can naturalize these inequalities as well. The authors also say that legitimacy or culinary authority is constructed via the discourses the chefs employ, though they begin with a *nota bene* from a previous study on artistic personas, warning that “great care must be taken not to reify these [persona] labels as descriptions of how artists really ‘are’, especially since doing so may reify stereotypes of sexuality, race, and gender” (4). This danger, however, is endemic to the use of categorical analysis. I endeavor to build upon the extant research and demonstrate how performing ostensibly domestic foodwork in a professional/paid/public sphere is inherently more complicated than the identity categories can demonstrate. Similarly, Harris and Giuffre (2015) note that their gendered frames “could still be perceived as problematic as they still drew from essentialized notions about gender and leadership” (160). They in fact conclude their book by noting the need for a more intersectional analysis of women chefs. These authors demonstrate that categorical analysis reveals patterns of abuse and discrimination based on ascribed identities, but these categories can also obscure agency and hybridity. How can we challenge essentialist,

homogenizing representations of gender with respect to chefs while still highlighting the challenges and constraints they face, while also staying attuned to moments of hybridity, resistance, and agency?

Moving Beyond Previous Analysis

It is one purpose of my project to challenge essentialism. As mentioned, Harris and Giuffre (2015) conclude their study of women's chefs by noting the lack of diversity in their sample and state that they were unable to fully explore the experiences of women chefs from an intersectional perspective. They also note, "It would also be fruitful to examine how these different groups of chefs support or resist gender essentialism and gender neutrality" (202). Relatedly, Williams and Giuffre (2011) argue that "researchers often unwittingly reify gender and sexual identities instead of recognizing the performative nature of all identities and the non-normative alignments of sex, gender, and sexuality that occur all the time," saying that researchers need to pay more attention to instances when identities and behaviors buck the norm.

Queer theory enables sociologists "to dismantle the gender and sexual binaries that undergird the world of work, and thus help to promote queerer organizations" (560). By paying close attention to the ways in which rigid identity categories predicated on assumptions of heterosexuality and whiteness reify relations of power in the workplace, researchers can use new methods of analysis that shed light on the ways in which stereotypes are reproduced (Bendl et al. 2009). If researchers do not take up this charge, we are in danger of reproducing old systems of analysis of both management styles and identity which reifies and reproduces these unbalanced power relations, which can result in exploitation (Prasad 2003).

Boundaries, though socially constructed, reinforce and naturalize inequality by justifying the unequal distribution of resources and opportunities (Lamont 1992). Therefore, I ask: Are the women chef-restaurant owners in my sample consciously resisting the norms of their occupation? My sub-questions are as follows: How do women chef-owners in North Carolina construct their occupational identities via food and their workplaces? What are the resources, both cultural and material, available to them? Are the businesses they run more queer and postcolonial (that is to say, more progressive/egalitarian/less hierarchical, less Eurocentric, and with better working conditions), or have the chefs internalized hegemonic industry norms, replicating the masculine, military style of the traditional Western kitchen brigade? What does an analysis of these phenomena look like when conducted via new theoretical frameworks (i.e., do we come to the same conclusions about identity, inequality, agency, and managements style, or are new insights gained)? Importantly, I call attention to the social construction of identity categories (i.e., boundaries), but I do not argue that this negates their effect on lived experiences. I simply wish to denaturalize, contextualize, and problematize their use.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Queer Theory

I frame my study as an expansion of the literature on women chefs, specifically as one that does not interpret their behaviors in the context of identity categories. I therefore employ theoretical frameworks that allow me to foreground the instability of identity categories as well as their social construction. Queer theory first emerged as a method of social critique in the 1990s; scholars Judith Butler and Teresa de Lauretis were two of the most notable proponents. Butler (1990) coined the term “heteronormativity” which describes a reality in which a certain

(dominant) version of heterosexuality is seen as normal and natural. Social norms divide humans based on a dimorphic conception of biological sex and gender (which are very often conflated) in which men hold more power and occupational roles are defined according to what is deemed appropriate for each group (Ingraham 2006). We construct our identity and understanding of the social world through language, and the stable identity categories most people identify with have arisen from dominant discourses, which both constrain and influence behavior (Mostenbacher 2013). Gay and lesbian studies have done important work highlighting discrimination of those that identify with those categories, but queer theory emerged as a reaction against its failure to challenge binary logics of dimorphic sex (De Lauretis 1991). While the use of identity categories can highlight imbalances in power, their origins and uses often go uninterrogated, for these binaries tend to stabilize each other, precluding the possibility that anything exists outside them (Motschenbacher et al. 2013). Queer theorists, on the other hand, wish to expose how the dominant language and culture create, reproduce, and maintain these modes of thinking in the first place (references).

Categories can cause us to essentialize identities and obscure the variation within them, so Toril Moi's (2015) feminist operationalization of Wittgenstein's ordinary language philosophy particularly useful in avoiding that when analyzing the chefs in my sample. Moi argues that a "craving for generality" or "contemptuous attitude towards the particular case" (p. 195) causes feminist researchers to attempt to formulate all-encompassing theories of identity, and in fact, like both queer and postcolonial thought, ordinary language philosophy does not propose a theory of any kind so much as a lens through which to examine linguistic choices we might find confusing. The three major pitfalls of indulging the craving for generality are the imposition of rigid boundaries on concepts or identities, a mimicry of the empirical standards of

the natural sciences, and a “demand for completeness” (196). In other words, researchers are in error in attempting to employ grand theories accounting for every possible instance of a phenomenon. Most importantly, this lens wants us to “think seriously about the particular case, about the ordinary, the common, the low” (193), for it is fruitless to search for a definition (of woman, African American, chef, etc.) that fully encompasses every case. This is the root of essentialism. Ordinary language philosophy, on the other hand, argues that definitions of concepts are more like “a complicated network of similarities overlapping and crisscrossing,” (197) and that the recognition of the unique definition of a concept in the particular context in which it is used is paramount. This is why it is ill-advised for this sort of qualitative research/framework to emulate the natural sciences: while replicability and “prediction of future occurrences” (199) might be desired in the laboratory or in quantitative sociological analysis, attempting to do so when it comes to closely examining lived experiences only makes the analysis more abstract and further removed from how we actually experience the world. This is not to say that identity categories are chosen randomly or have no impact on life chances and choices. Nevertheless, Moi (2015) points out that the “common practice today is to impose strong boundaries only to lament their existence and mount hugely abstract theoretical machinery to undo them is wrongheaded” (203).

Though some of the more radical theorists call for it, I do not argue that it is necessary to abolish identity categories in order to critique their use and origin (McDonald 2015). In fact, Love (2011) says we should rather consider identities to be “spoiled, partial, never fully achieved, but sticky, familiar, and hard to lose completely” (185). While I assert that the women I interviewed, their businesses, and their management styles cannot be fully encapsulated by previously used categories, I also acknowledge that ascribed identities do give lives meaning (as

well as constrain or afford opportunities) and have basis in material realities. However, if we acknowledge that categories of identity are socially constructed, there is no essential feature all share, and the borders and meanings of the categories themselves become blurry (Moi 2015), and because queer theory is also concerned with performativity (Butler 1990), it is not only applicable to interrogating hegemonic standards of sexuality but norms of all types.

This framework also helps me identify and critique the various levels of privilege within my sample, for queer theory also highlights the way in which society is ordered in binaries/rigid categories and who this social ordering privileges (Browne 2016), challenging dominant discourses which shape the very ways in which we understand identity/identity categories. It is those very discourses that have inspired the use of categorical analysis and that can make it difficult to see what might be missed when they are used (Browne 2016; Sedgwick 1990; Sullivan 2006). Categories of identity also regulate behavior and bodies (Valocchi 2005), and in this way, power is not solely repressive but also productive in that it produces discourses that have no authoritative origin or essence (Foucault 1990). Individuals constitute power differentials by participating in them, and this means that subjectivities are produced through the performances that these discourses inscribe. In thinking anti-categorically, researchers can question the process of broad categorization itself and instead focus on situational/contextual differences in power (Bendl et al. 2009).

Motschenbacher and Stegu (2013) write, “All identity categories are problematic because they regulate and exclude people who don’t fully meet their normative requirements” (523), so unique moments of both agency and oppression can be missed with this approach. I do just this via my theoretical framework, for it is consciously anti-normative and seeks to name and interrogate what is taken for granted in everyday life, placing analysis of those norms in

situational context (Browne 2016). The average behavior of those within socially constructed categories of identity is treated as a sort of “normative yardstick” which serves to both focus on differences between categories (instead of what they might have in common) and also stigmatizes those who don’t conform. (Motschenbacher et al. 2013). Rather than comparing rigid identity categories which flatten lived experience, this strain of queer theory advocates that rather “normativity [should be] the central organizing feature” (McDonald 2015:311) of a queer approach to differences in identity and behavior. For example, rather than making assumptions about how racial or sexual minorities are treated in a workplace, researchers should assess the norms of that individual organization and the processes through which power dynamics are justified through both formal and informal norms.

I also take up this framework because it encourages reflexivity in the research process itself, particularly in how we can reify and naturalize identity categories and assume them to be fixed or static (Brim and Ghaziani 2016). If we as researchers think that observation is a neutral enterprise and do not realize the extent to which our observation is affected by the categories of identity that others have constructed and we researchers take up in our analysis, we miss the nuance of actual lived experience.

I am also aware of the potential pitfalls in taking up such theoretical frameworks. Positivists frequently critique queer theory in that it (and postmodernism in general) is inherently critical, and its practitioners have not always prioritized generating solutions to the problems they identify in mainstream academic analysis. Due to its multiple and context-dependent formulations, it often does not indicate a clear direction for change. It has also been critiqued for being too white/middle class, driven primarily by the interests of white cis gay men (Cohen, 1997). Others claim that queer theory’s focus on deconstructing/destabilizing identity is also

counterproductive toward political mobilization. That is to say, without a clearly defined identity/sexuality like woman or lesbian, organizing to promote the interests of those to whom those terms might apply or who have been historically subjugated is difficult (Hartstock 1990). Critics also bring up the danger of divorcing the experience of material structural oppression (e.g., systemic discrimination based on race, gender, sexuality, etc.) from specific social, historical, and economic contexts (Richard et al. 2006). Too, queer theory in and of itself doesn't actually bring about changes in participants' material realities (Browne 2016). Simply identifying an inequality does not remedy it, though the same can be said about categorical identifications of inequalities as well. Deconstructing identity categories can also cause researchers to downplay or gloss over the ways in which we are all complicit in reproducing unequal power dynamics (Browne 2016).

Finally, queer theory is accused of dismissing the lived experiences of those who embrace stable identity categories and derive meaning from them (Namaste 2000). Relatedly, queer theorizing can become too abstracted from the ways in which people actually experience social reality. Finally, though I assert that fluidity remains one of queer theory's strengths, that very fluidity has been critiqued for making it difficult to ascertain exactly when something becomes queer in the first place. If everything (or many things) are or have the potential to be queer, is anything queer? I argue that this question itself relies on categorical/binary thinking and not the continuum that queer theory proposes (Motschenbacher and Stegu 2013).

Postcolonial Theory

While queer theory takes gender and sexuality as starting points for the blurring of the boundaries of identity, postcolonial theory critiques modes of thinking that privilege the western

epistemologies. Though radical intellectuals such as Franz Fanon (1963) had been questioning the impact of colonization on the peoples of empire for decades, it was the publication of Edward Said's (1978) foundational work *Orientalism* that truly initiated the Western academy's engagement with postcolonial forms of analysis. In it, Said exposed the ways in which European imperialism imposed not only physical occupation of other lands but intellectual colonization as well: in order to justify occupation, the European modes of thinking and cultural practices (i.e., the modern) only exist as such when contrasted with knowledges and rituals of an inherently inferior Other (i.e., the primitive) (Banerjee and Prasad, 2008). It is just this colonization that can lead sociologists to see their analysis as less biased toward western epistemologies than it actually is.

Because I am engaging with a relatively common form of qualitative analysis, it is important that I contextualize my research as well as that done previously in the historical evolution of the discipline in order to show how categorical analysis has not been widely problematized in mainstream literature (critique has mainly come from poststructuralist researchers), though this is changing (Williams and Giuffre 2011). Sociology as a discipline developed in this context of empire and its original practitioners positioned themselves as experts on the social realm, arguing for western enlightenment ideals as scientific and ostensibly objective knowledge (Go 2016). Postcolonial methodologies, however, are concerned with the way that research institutions exercise and reproduce epistemological power imbalances, and sociology's origins in enlightenment systemization/classification of social groups helped to reinforce social hierarchies and reified/shaped imperial power relations, the impacts of which can still be seen today (Smith 2012). This framework also recognizes that the subaltern can internalize the perspective of colonial powers and reproduce it, highlighting unequal

representations of power and how subjugated populations must fight for social authority, and the ways in which they might do so. It questions the hegemonic discourses that govern what is considered normal (Lazarus 2004). This is especially pertinent in the examination of why we privilege certain types of cuisines over others and the material impacts that has on those that are marginalized.

What postcolonial theory, when applied to sociology, means to do is question the assumptions of universality and neutrality of methods, though it and queer theory are accused of being

particularistic, subjective, and thus somehow inferior, as if dominant sociology has NOT been particularistic, subjective, interest laden, or rather, as if dominant white mainstream sociology has NOT been about me-search. Of course mainstream sociology has been provincial. All knowledge is socially situated. So ALL knowledge (including those sociologies that dress themselves up as universal) is particularistic, subjective, interest laden (Go 2017:196).

Postcolonial researchers therefore question positioning the west and western ideals as universal norms, as well as the idea that all others are endeavoring to mimic it. Of particular interest with respect to food and identity, it also highlights these instances of mimicry, as well as the resultant hybridity, which possibly points to avenues of agency for the subjugated (Prasad 2012).

What Queer and Postcolonial Perspectives Have in Common

All knowledge is socially situated and context-dependent, so the categories and theories we use to explain the world do in fact come from and reinforce a particular viewpoint, whatever

that may be (Go 2017). Both queer theory and postcolonial theory address issues of uneven distribution of knowledge of the Other. That is to say, the dominant group tends to know far less about the lives and perspectives of the subjugated group than vice versa (Smith 2012). Queer and postcolonial methodologies are not specific techniques or methods but are rather a way of framing those techniques and contextualizing the data they produce (Brim and Ghaziani 2016; Browne 2016; Smith 2012). This way of framing involves exposing inconsistencies and instabilities within socially constructed categories and interrogating the meanings and implications of those categories and how their use translates into differentials in power (Browne 2016).

Social norms and expectations exert normative power over individuals, so I argue that conceptual and theoretical similarities exist between the idea of Mudimbe's (1988) colonizing structure and Butler's (1990) heterosexual matrix. The former established colonial authority via a combination of violent appropriation of already occupied lands as well as subordinating local modes of thinking and economies (Lazarus 2004), while the latter "constructs patterns of masculinity and femininity as mutually excluding opposites which conjures a picture of stable identities that are intrinsic to the modern subject and establishes an understanding of 'two different kinds of human beings' with male as the norm (term A) and female as the other (term not-A)" (Bendl 2009:627; see also Butler 1990), inherently privileging those that conform. This reliance on binary categorization obscures "the complexity of community knowledge" (Love 2016:347) that exists in lived experience. Both lenses question the assumptions that undergird how research is conducted and the motivations for doing so (Prasad 2003, Smith 2012), and they also seek to integrate participants into the research process by sharing findings with them clearly

and incorporating their feedback into the project. It is also necessary to be constantly reflexive about the power differentials between researcher and subject (Browne 2016; Smith 2012).

Finally, both frameworks have roots in social activism and are not only interested in identifying unjust dynamics but giving tangible suggestions as to how to combat them (Brim and Ghaziani 2016; Go 2016). For postcolonialism, this includes visions of both racial and economic equality (Go 2016), and more specifically Brim and Ghaziani (2016) see “the mandate of queer methods” to be “to clarify, but not overdetermine, the conditions that make life livable” (19).

Methods

Previous studies predicated on categorizing behaviors and identities established that systemic discrimination pervades the restaurant industry, and it is indeed harder for minorities of all types to achieve success. However, I offer an extension to this literature using anti-categorical analysis (that is to say, I have created no categories of identity to explain behaviors), which allows for a closer examination of the moments of normative slippage, hybridity, and agency among women chefs. I therefore ask whether the chefs in my sample construct workplaces which replicate or challenge (or both) standards which put them at a disadvantage, and whether new insights are gained by analysis via novel frameworks.

Between June and August 2018, I interviewed ten chefs who identified as women and also owned their own restaurant or catering business. All participants reside and work within a hundred-mile radius of Raleigh, North Carolina. Each selected the time and place of our interview, which occurred either in a coffee shop or their restaurant. I made my initial contact with two chefs through a professor in the tourism department at North Carolina State University who is also involved in a documentary film project which encourages small farm tourism

through connecting local chefs and farmers. For six, I emailed prospective interviewees at the email addresses provided on their restaurants' or businesses' websites or called their restaurants, asking if they would be interested in a one-time, one- to two-hour interview at the time and place of their choosing. Finally, I contacted a local food blogger and inquired as to whether she could connect me with any local women chef-restaurant owners, and connections to my final two participants were made through her network.

I purposely sought out racial and sexual minority participants to increase diversity of perspectives. When inquiring about race/ethnicity, sexuality, and disability, I allowed participants to self-identify and recorded the responses as given. In my final sample of ten, two of the interviewees identified as white, three as Asian descent, four as black, and one as Venezuelan. Two women identified as gay, and eight reported some variation of straight or heterosexual (including "married to a man" and "married with five kids"). Nine participants said they had no physical or mental disability that impacted their work, and one disclosed a disability (deafness). All identified themselves as women and preferred feminine pronouns. The cuisines the women served in their restaurants were diverse as well, from both traditional and vegan southern food to Chinese steamed buns and Indian fare. Self-reported individual incomes varied (though some said their personal finances were so intertwined with both their partner and/or their business, it was difficult to say), with a range of \$25,000 to \$100,000. Two participants did not disclose their incomes, one because she did not know given she had just recently opened her restaurant, and one simply declined to provide the information.

I conducted one- to two-hour semi-structured interviews with each of the participants, and my interview guide was divided into five main sections. Section 1 consisted of basic demographic questions pertaining to the participant's race, income, and education level. Section

2 included questions about the participant's personal connection to and history with food, as well as what they hoped their food and business communicated to their customers and community. Section 3 asked them to define what a chef was, what the traits of good and bad chefs were, and whether they considered themselves to be one. Section 4 consisted of questions related to how these chef-business owners constructed their work environments and probed for their priorities with respect to managing their staff. Finally, Section 5 contained miscellaneous questions regarding media coverage of women chef, the restaurant industry in North Carolina, and where they saw the industry headed as a whole. Participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used for this project, and each interviewee was assigned a unique number and eventually a pseudonym by which they were henceforth referred in analysis. I recorded each interview with a hand-held audio recording device, after which each interview was transcribed and qualitatively coded in NVivo for emergent themes.

Researcher identity invariably shapes the nature of participant/researcher interactions (Burawoy 1998), which is one of the reasons I consciously used a queer theoretical lens at all points in the research process: I was not simply the aggregator of neutral data on the social world but I actively played a part in the data produced, recorded, and analyzed. I inhabit many privileged identity categories: though I am partially of Hispanic descent, I present as white due to my skin and hair color. I offered my credentials as a graduate student at a large research university as justification for asking my participants (strangers) questions about their personal and professional lives. Finally, although I identify as queer, my own sexual orientation never came up in any of the interviews, so I do not know if the two interviews conducted with individuals who identified as gay would have proceeded differently had I disclosed this. Nevertheless, I do believe this positionality gives me insight into the insufficiency of identity

categories and gendered behavior that many researchers take for granted, both in everyday life and the academy.

FINDINGS

The purpose of my study is twofold: first, to determine whether women chef-restaurant owners in North Carolina are reproducing, rejecting, or reconstructing the work environments that have been historically hostile to them; second, to ascertain whether using the theoretical frameworks of queer and postcolonial theories will yield new theoretical insights. I find that all of the women in my sample consciously construct workplaces in direct opposition to the industry standard of hierarchy, sexual harassment, and violence. Moreover, they operationalize this through the enactment of different sorts of carework. Women have historically performed food-related carework in domestic settings, where it typically requires a great deal of emotional and invisible labor and garners little prestige and recognition (Cairns and Johnston 2015; DeVault 1991). I argue that the culinary carework undertaken by these women in the public, paid sphere is far more complex than can be accounted for by the previously used identity categories.

I furthermore argue that rather than overtly rejecting (or undoing) gender, the chefs in my sample rather “redo” the gender norms of their occupation (West and Zimmerman 2009). That is to say, their increasing presence in the industry and failure to take up the standards of hegemonic masculinity (while neither necessarily succumbing to hegemonic femininity) is changing gendered occupational (as well as broader social, e.g. #metoo) norms themselves. For example, if researchers construe a chef’s management style as that of a mother (or take a participant at her word that an unproblematic definition of motherhood truly describes her work), they may miss out on the ways that her interactions with her staff do not in fact mimic maternal care. In some

ways, norms of hegemonic femininity are upheld, but in many others, they are challenged. I therefore argue that rather than being considered as repressive or constraining, much of the carework the chefs described evinced agency and active identity formation, as well as care for staff, customers, and the environment (both social and natural). I also argue that the fact that the chefs in my sample have consciously constructed workplaces in opposition to the hegemonic norm while employing men alongside women shows that they are aware that it is in fact processes of socialization and not biology that determine gendered behaviors and work environments. Despite this conscious construction, however, I demonstrate that even though all chefs challenged gendered leadership expectations, cultural and material resources are unevenly distributed across the sample for identity and business construction. These chefs transform the definition of chef and professional kitchen norms through three different forms of carework³: familial care of staff, cultural/educational care of customers, and ethical care of the environment around their restaurants, both social and natural.

Familial Care of Staff

Previous studies find that one of the ways women head chefs and their subordinates construe their management styles as that of a workplace mother (Harris and Giuffre 2015), and others argue that women chefs' culinary personas are rooted in domesticity and/or conceptions of hegemonic femininity and sexuality (Johnston et al. 2014). I find, that while discourses of family are frequently invoked by my participants, the true nature of these relationships is far more complex than a mother caring for her children against a backdrop of domesticity. Even those who explicitly describe themselves as work mothers follow this with examples of care not

³ I found many other forms of carework demonstrated than the three analyzed in this paper, such as dietary inclusivity, transference of knowledge and skills, and economic care beyond salary, to name only a few.

traditionally attributed to mothers, and when the chefs engage in broader discourses of family, it is more in a way to blur the personal with the professional and reject hierarchical management practices. One case, however, demonstrates that this blurring can go too far.

One of the differences I find in expressions of family among my sample is that rather than a hierarchy (e.g., a mother making decisions for her children), family is constructed along more lateral lines of shared power. Gabriela, who is 41 and Peruvian, does consider herself a sort of workplace mother, and she describes her relationship with her staff as “kind of work[ing] as a family.” She uses the language of motherhood when I ask her what influences her identity as a chef, saying,

It is probably colored by a lot of different things. But I think, right now, [it’s influenced] more by who I wanna be as a mother [to my two children]. That’s really kinda like guiding me more than anything, so I’ve kinda become a mother to everybody here.

In line with her intentional blurring of the personal and the professional, Gabriela’s prioritization of motherhood in her personal identity spills over into and informs her attitudes and actions at work, which is consistent with the findings of Chassserio et al. (2014). Indeed, previous studies have demonstrated how maternal identity can influence women entrepreneurs’ professional motivations (Göransson 2016). However, the work family she describes centers not on top-down care of helpless, infantilized employees but on a mutual respect and a realization that employees’ personal lives were not separable from work. She tells me,

Yeah, I’m gonna be in your business, and you’re gonna know my business, too. But it’s more of a – being in a place where we can actually really help each other, versus like, I just wanna be in your business because I wanna gossip about your life.

Gabriela cares about what is going on in her employees' lives because it affects their work, and they want to know what is going on in her life as well. She constructs an atmosphere of dialectic support in which everyone buoys each other, and this includes allowing the staff to have a great deal of input about their schedules. She realizes how tough it can be to balance a personal life with the demands of the industry, and that is integral to her care for her employees and herself.

How do we make this work? And sometimes it has, and sometimes it hasn't, but I think I've gotten really, really clear that being profitable in the business is about having a sustainable living environment for my employees, more than anything else.

What Gabriela frames as family and maternal care is really concern for staff well-being and sustainable labor conditions. Too, she also paints herself "a stable provider" for her staff, which connotes images of traditional roles of fatherhood rather than the unpaid domestic labor of a mother. Indeed, while she is cognizant of the emotional and relational aspects of her job, she realizes it is occurring in the public sphere and involves economic transactions.

The role of mother is also used in a way that challenges traditional conceptions of motherhood when no other language is available. Emma, who is 30 and identifies as both Chinese and American, also frames herself (and is framed by her staff) as a workplace "mom." They call her business partner the "funcle" (fun uncle) because Emma advises them on financial planning (she has a background in corporate finance), resume construction, and professional development, while her partner is more likely to joke around with the staff. Recounting conversations she has with them, she says she asks them about their retirement savings: "Like the deadline is now. Have you done this? Have you done that? What's your resume look like? Let me edit it for you. Do you need a reference] for your apartment?" She realizes that restaurant work is often a stepping stone for young people toward long-term careers in other industries, and as

much as she values employee retention, she also wants them to develop themselves professionally at the restaurant and then move on. While Emma says her staff see her as a “mom,” her description of her role does not align with traditional roles of motherhood; we typically think of fathers (or bosses, or financial advisors) as giving career advice, while mothers are associated with emotional care. Instead, her employees seem to use “mom” as a blanket term because “dad” would have seemed disaligned with Emma’s sex. The fact that there is gender disalignment in Emma’s female partner’s nickname indicates just how strongly the staff associate older female mentorship with motherhood. This form of mentorship is therefore coded as more professional or paternal in nature than maternal. Emma also says,

I don't know what it's like in any other restaurant, but here at our restaurant we are a family. We treat each other with respect. My front of house and back of house get along really well. It's never like, well that's not my job; I'm not going to do it. No. We're all in this together; we're all going to get through it together. And we're fairly close with all of our staff members.

Emma invokes the discourse of family again, but as with Gabriela, it is to highlight harmony and cooperation, not a staff of children under her maternal care.

Other times, however, the chefs acknowledge familial ties but explicitly reject the language of motherhood. Katie, 56 and white, says that her workspace is “professional with familial overtones,” and that although she fosters a compassionate work environment, she is not maternal. When an employee is sick, she says she tells them to stay home and rest.

[I do that] because of my knowledge of the food health code, not because I’m a woman and I feel bad and wanna nurse them. I have no interest in nursing them. I’m like, stay home and get better, and if I suspect that it’s because of drinking too much or doing

drugs, I actually call them on it. And so no, they don't treat me like their mom. I'm not – and nor do I behave like their mom. But I behave like I respect them. I think respect is more important.

If we were to stop at “professional with familial overtones,” when coupled with her age and warm demeanor, we might be tempted to categorize Katie's management style as that of a mom. Doing so, however, would shift the analytic focus to the ways in which her workplace interactions uphold normative versions of white, heterosexual American motherhood instead of recognizing her professional accomplishments and connection to the community as having nothing to do with hegemonic norms of motherhood. If we equate compassion and respect for her staff with the love of a mother, we infer that the empathetic, positive exchanges between a woman restaurant owner and her staff are inherently maternal. I argue that rejecting such categorization allows us to see that Katie fosters a workplace of compassion not because of a sense of maternal obligation but because, like Gabriela, she believes her staff are worthy of respect as human beings.

In some cases, however, the blurring of personal and professional boundaries in the name of family has negative consequences. I find this to be true for the workplace that Jennifer, 31 and Chinese American, describes. She talks about her business as “her baby” and says that her commitment to it causes strife with her husband. When she finally sits down with him at the end of the night, she says,

I don't really talk much to him because I talk so much with our customers. But I just really really really love people because they make me feel better, and I like to think that sometimes I make them feel better.

Jennifer has no relatives in North Carolina other than her husband's small family, so she imputes these relations onto her customers and staff. It is to them that she turns for emotional support and rejuvenation rather than her husband. She also fields calls from them late at night regarding personal problems: "I've had to tell one [employee] in particular, like it's 3 AM. I'll see you in three hours, please hold it together for three hours or four hours, and I'll talk to you in the morning." She also recognizes that although she is providing support for her employees, but that these blurred boundaries might not be universally positive for either party involved. While the other chefs I spoke with who framed continuity between work and personal life as positive, Jennifer acknowledges that this comes with negative consequences if no boundaries are set. Jennifer does enact a great deal of emotional labor with respect to her staff (which can be draining), but it is also self-serving in that it is buoying her mental health, even as it causes friction between herself and her actual family. Explicitly prioritizing her business over her husband and parents with respect to time and emotional energy indicates that she possibly prefers her constructed family to her actual one. This could be because it is not only an idealized version of a family over which she has more control but also because, as she told me, she consciously selects employees with emotional temperaments similar to hers. Jennifer, like the other chefs, has indeed constructed a workplace and management identity that has rejected the dominant hegemonic masculine norm, but her case shows that there are potential pitfalls in this model as well. While Gabriela's blurring of the personal and professional resulted in mutual respect and understanding, Jennifer's blurred lines caused both personal anxiety and stress on her marriage.

While multiple chefs in my sample engage with discourses of family, they do not generally uphold what is considered to be maternal care, and that even when motherhood is invoked, it indexed much more complicated feelings and actions than that of a woman to her

children. In fact, Steinberg and Figart (1999) argue that as the service economy has expanded, the lines between private emotional carework and that performed in public as paid labor are increasingly blurred. Increased diversity in what is considered to be a family has led to a greater array of carework to establish and maintain these connections, which “violate hegemonic conceptions of family life. Similarly, as we move emotional labor from the family to the workplace, it is required not only in meeting product and service objectives but also in building effecting and acceptable working relationships” (23). I find the concept of family and familial care to be both complex and challenging of hegemonic standards of family as well as organizations.

Cultural/Educational Care of Customers

Four chefs in my sample describe another form of carework they enact in their businesses, this time for their customers. This work involves measures taken by the chef in question to educate their patrons about cuisines they assume to be foreign to them. Chefs see themselves as cultural communicators who bridge a divide between far-flung societies and engender understanding and connection through food. Some chefs act as ambassadors for foods in cultures of which they are members, while others take the food of other cultures, interpret it, and introduce it to North Carolinians. I find that while enacting this sort of care, the chefs alternately use food as a way to manifest American/non-American hybrid identities, defend their place in mainstream American society, increase social and economic capital, and convey emotional connections.

Emma, 30, identifies as Chinese and Asian American, and her restaurant serves the cuisine of her heritage. She previously operated a food truck selling Chinese steamed buns

before recently opening a brick and mortar store. She talks about the restaurant's "food identity," and a large part of that involves introducing customers to new dishes.

People have become much more adventurous in their eating. Maybe some other venues have already experienced that, but I feel like our city is still getting to that point, and people are still nervous. I mean, on the truck it used to be almost every couple of days we got the question of what's a steamed bun? We don't get that question so much anymore, but I sort of loved that question too and that experience of getting to serve someone their very first steamed bun. And we go like, don't worry; it's nothing scary. It's like an Asian hot pocket, like we're going to enjoy this together. Let me know any questions that you have. It's not intimidating, right? Food is such an easy way to get to understand a different culture.

Emma sees food as bridging cultural divides and connecting communities. She considers herself equally Chinese and American and says that she and her business partner, who is also ethnically Chinese, both "joke that we are very authentically Asian American. We're not authentically Asian in any way; we're not American. We're not really anything other than the combined taste of everything that [my partner] and I grew up with." She feels that introducing her food to Americans who might not be familiar with it is a way to reconcile/unify what she sees as dual (though not competing) identities. However, this form of carework is not without pitfalls. The way that Emma frames her food indicates that she has internalized western norms about what is "normal" food and what is not: she unproblematically sees eating her steamed buns as "adventurous" for most of her diners and takes no offense that eating them might cause some to be "nervous." She indicates that she takes pleasure in making the experience "unintimidating," which means that she identifies or at least sympathizes with the ways in which (ostensibly white)

Americans might be put off by her food if it were presented in another manner. She also says it is a shame that not everyone can experience time spent in China eating the street food and that she is bringing that experience here to share.

My favorite food stalls are the ones that only make one thing. They've been doing it for 20 years; like everyone knows which one is the best stall in town for this specific thing. And it's just sacred at that point; it rises beyond any level of like what's on trend.

In this way, Emma simultaneously expresses her dual identities by sharing the "sacred" food of her heritage with other Americans. This is evidence for food's potential as a powerful form of expression of both hybrid identity (Gonçalves 2013, Marks 2015) and agency.

Food is also a means of "transporting" customers to faraway, perhaps unfamiliar lands without having to leave North Carolina, while educating them in the process. Ruwo also prioritizes using her food to connect her customers to her heritage. She is 40, black, and originally from Botswana but has resided in North Carolina since college. She managed corporate restaurants for years before starting a catering business, which led to her newly-opened restaurant. Her business features dishes and flavors from her homeland, and she talks about her customers being unfamiliar with African food and being excited that she can be the one to introduce it to them: "You transport people to Africa without them going to Africa. You transport people to...all places without them going there. I really like that. I really, really like that transformation." This is another very clear instance of hybridity and agency; Ruwo has found a place for herself and the cuisine of her home and, as there is a demand for it, she is able to make a living by selling it. She also tells me that she is not influenced by the greater restaurant industry in the United States and that her food is an expression of herself.

It's my take, you know? I couldn't care less [about the industry]...I'm empowered by what I do. I think also that stems from the feedback that I get from people. It empowers me to be original, to be very authentic not to make it what someone else doing and then try to copy them or try to look up to them. I want to bring in my own personality you know into the food and fight for it and defend it.

In using words like “fight” and “defend” with respect to her “own personality,” Ruwo anticipates resistance to her presence in America. Ray (2016) finds that mainstream (read: white) acceptance of “ethnic” foods does not necessarily translate into acceptance of ethnic minorities, and in citing Haley (2011), he points out that historically, “Dining at a Chinese restaurant did not undermine support for the Chinese Exclusion Act; eating spaghetti did not bring an end to nativism... Cosmopolitan dining had a limited influence on attitude towards immigrants because it was so self-centered” (89). Though historical precedent is not on her side and indeed her food perpetually risks becoming the next trend (even though it has been around for most likely centuries) and subsequently appropriated by more powerful social groups for cultural and economic capital gain, Ruwo views her food as the tool she chooses to use to combat discrimination.

Ruwo also plans to bring other cultural elements into her restaurant. She wants to feature African drum players and have the staff dress in traditional Botswanan attire. She says she faced discrimination in college when people found out she was from Africa, but she now sees her food as a solution to that ignorance and that eating can bring different cultures together. “People are getting more and more receptive to different cultures by eating the food from different cultures. People are getting more aware, and I think that's a good thing. [Food] creates cultural awareness ...It's educational.” There is a danger for those in the West, when consuming the food of the

Other, to equate the eating of “exotic” dishes to cultural understanding (Heldke 2003), but Ruwo actively attempts to combat this perception of Botswana as a static, foreign society halfway across the globe not just through her food, but her presence and conscious addition of other cultural elements to her restaurant.

Not all of the chefs acting as culinary cultural liaisons do so with the cuisines of their own heritage, however. Alex is 34, white, and owns and operates a restaurant which serves “gourmet” global street food. She says that when customers eat with her for the first time, she hopes they do not come in with preconceived notions about what to expect.

[I hope] that people walk in open minded, knowing that we’re trying to do something different and creative here. Then I hope that they take away that they’ve had an experience in which they got to taste things from various places around the world but in one location... You can come in and eat food from Morocco or India or the Caribbean and get to try different things, almost take a tour around the globe.

Alex has no cultural ties to the cuisines she features in her restaurant but rather “discovers” them and her take on them delicious and novel. This can be interpreted as what food philosopher Lisa Heldke (2003) terms “culinary adventuring.” As a form of cultural imperialism, white Euroamerican diners and travelers see the cuisines of the world (especially of those of marginalized cultures, often deemed as “exotic”) not as living, evolving forms of material culture but as resources for them to use, decontextualized and often reimagined through the lens of French haute cuisine, after which they become “elevated” or superior to their original forms (though authenticity and exoticism are valued in their own right, as Johnston and Baumann [2015] explain). Galvez (2018) also argues that as a traditional cuisine becomes less accessible to its population of origin, it is more likely to be appropriated by chefs with haute aesthetics (like

Alex) who value its scarcity. I consider the goals and processes of Alex's carework to be similar to that of Emma and Ruwo, though even within this label, there are differences in meaning and implication. Alex also wants to show care for her customers by introducing them to foods she is passionate about, expanding their palates. But she is expressing this care through a lens of culinary imperialism: she feels she has full access to these dishes, to mix and present how she wishes, and that her appropriation of them is unproblematic. Emma, on the other hand, was attempting to fuse what she saw as her dual identity, and Ruwo was trying to share the food of her former home with her new home.

The final way in which I saw chefs enacting cultural or educational care for their customers was through the cultivation of a culture of positive emotions. Jennifer, who is 30 and Chinese-American, says self-care and mental well-being is integrated into the structure of her business. She previously worked a corporate job in finance that she hated, and one evening in yoga class, the instructor told all the students to do what made them happy.

It felt like she was speaking to me and I had this emotional wake up moment, like I'm killing myself right now [at work]...Then I put in my 30 day notice the next day and pursued my passion for food.

In line with her strong association of food with emotions, her restaurant's walls are covered with positive phrases, and her sushi bowls have names like "thankful," "thoughtful," and "inspired." She says high schoolers make fun of the "cheesy" names, but that those words are very meaningful for her.

I wanted a space when I can incorporate my love of food and my love for positivity in yoga, which in a way is what saved me. Because it had gotten to a point where it was kind of bad I was having panic attacks more and more often. Since I've opened this

restaurant, I've only had like one panic attack, and it's usually out of the blue but not work related you know.

She also regularly brings in motivational speakers to talk about positive body images and healthy eating. I find that Jennifer's intense association of food with emotion has manifested in a business predicated on the maintenance and dissemination of positive feelings. In using this form of emotional carework, Jennifer is most in line with hegemonic ideals of feminine care for feelings and mental well-being. However, she is doing so in the context of her restaurant, which has material consequences for her customers as well as her employees.

While I consider the form of care these chefs provide to be related to the way in which foodie parents help their children to cultivate more sophisticated palates in order to establish class belonging and increase cultural capital (Cairns and Johnston 2015), the chefs also evince a strong wish to democratize and connect with their customers via food (Johnston and Baumann 2015). Though there are traditional associations of this sort of socialization with intensive mothering practices (Hayes 1998) and the cultivation of classed tastes (Fielding-Singh 2017), this carework through food is performed in the public sphere for economic gain. Too, this cultural care has different manifestations and motivations, for while some chefs attempt to legitimize their place in American society like Ruwo, others like Alex are more like ambassadors of trendy culinary aesthetics.

Ethical Care of the Social and Natural Environment through Local Sourcing

Though the chefs in my sample express care for their staff, customers, and environment in incredibly diverse ways (in which various patterns emerged), the final form I analyze is the care of social and natural environment through local sourcing, though as I will show, this is more

difficult for some than others. Though chefs can have similar goals of patronizing local farmers and using their produce in their businesses, this ideal is more easily attained when infrastructures are in place to facilitate it.

Local sourcing of ingredients is increasingly a cornerstone in and hallmark of culinary identity. Katie is 56, white, heterosexual and owns and operates a small Italian restaurant in a small town which revolves around local, seasonal produce. She lists sourcing as her first priority, and her incredibly close connections with and loyalty to a handful of local farmers form the basis for her business model and the food that she serves. She wants total transparency in both her sourcing and the preparation of her food, and she has an open kitchen which facilitates this.

We pay attention to sourcing. We pay attention to how we are in the kitchen and -- we don't scream and freak out at each other and yell. I believe in a hundred percent transparency, and that's why when someone walks in the door, they can see all the way to the back, to the kitchen, to the dishwashing area, like -- and I have much less interest in eating in restaurants that I can't see the friggin' kitchen.

Transparency with respect to sourcing is a priority because she finds many chefs are misleading as to where their ingredients from. She tells me, "You can't buy just like five mushrooms from somebody and then for the rest of the year have them on your menu as [a source]." Katie positions herself in direct opposition to those who would claim to source locally but not do so consistently or on a large scale and says that those who do not do so cannot truly claim to be local sourcers. To bolster this claim, during our interview, Katie pointed to the other customers in the restaurant and noted that nearly all of them were "her" farmers, the ones with whom she maintains longstanding ties. She rides with them through poor crops and misshapen produce, and in exchange for her loyalty, she usually has first dibs on any additional harvest that might be

produced. Katie's restaurant (as a place of business), her food, and her identity are heavily tied to this network of local farmers, and her inability to source from there would seriously disrupt both her business model and sense of self within the community.

Though Katie still struggles financially and had trouble securing funding through conventional lenders, she is better integrated/tuned into her local network of farmers to ensure this transparency than Michelle. Katie is proud of her connection to these farmers, and of the farmers she pointed out to me, all were white.

Carework via local sourcing can also be operationalized as care for one's own institutionally oppressed community by seeing food as an avenue for social justice. Although it is perhaps not as readily recognizable as carework⁴, I argue that in engaging with food in this way, Michelle manifests care for her social (as well as natural) environment. She is black, 49 years old, and runs a catering business which promises delicious but healthy soul food. Like Katie, she also wants transparency to be foundational to her business model, specifically with respect to pricing, but this has been an impossibility for her. During the time that she lived in a homeless shelter, she found an inspirational book that encouraged total transparency in all aspects of one's life. This weighed heavily on her, and when she began her catering business, she included two prices: what her actual cost was and the cost she charged her customers. She wanted everyone to know just how much the food actually cost to produce (including living wages) and how much money she was making off of it, as well as where she was getting her ingredients from.

However, at the time of the interview, she had just found a new kitchen space and was in the process of expanding her business. During this process and upon the advice of others, she decided to forego her pricing transparency due to the lack of black infrastructure in place to

⁴ There are of course exceptions to this. For example, Orme (2002) argues that care and social justice cannot be artificially bifurcated.

facilitate the sourcing and pricing she wanted. I argue that even though local sourcing and transparency at multiple levels was prioritized by both Katie and Michelle, because Katie's sourcing benefitted from local white agricultural infrastructure, she was better able to engage in transparency. Over the past century, black farmers have been stripped of their land through a combination of forced sales, systemic denial of access to government programs, and discriminatory lending practices (Gilbert et al. 2002), and in fact, the USDA recently settled a class-action lawsuit brought by fifteen thousand black farmers alleging they had been systemically denied loans and agricultural support (Alkon 2007). Michelle feels sourcing from local black farmers is an important part of her mission but is unable to do so due to the historical denial of land and opportunities to this group. She says,

What we make, we spend it, so it has been a challenge to be able to be really intentional about procuring some of our produce, all of our produce...from African American farmers. To go even further than that, any African American community in the United States, we don't have institutional infrastructures. We don't have like, I get my milk from here, I get my eggs from here, I have this trucking company...We're trying to create the networks to set that up.

Michelle sees this lack of infrastructure as widespread and detrimental to community cohesion and profitability. To help her community generate income, she tells me she and others have pursued collective economics as an alternative to mainstream financial institutions. She roots all of her talk of food systems and finance in the context of historical, systemic oppression, and says,

Collective economics means how can a group of people who have been historically oppressed figure out ways to produce and retain monies and resources inside of the

collective so that the collective benefits instead of everybody else. So that means hiring from within, procuring raw materials from other folks so that we can start to build an infrastructure.

Rather than financing her and other's businesses through traditional lending institutions, she prefers to work within her own community to build up capital and resources. But given this country's racist legacy, Michelle recognizes that the odds are stacked against her.

[The industry] is rigged to oppress...If people [are] investing in business, they need to have a 20 percent return on their investment, so that leaves 80 percent, right? And then if 30 percent is your cost of goods right and then 50 percent is our labor, then you're either squeezing the price of your cost of goods, right? Which means that you can't pay local farmers, you can't pay like you're trying to find the cheapest prices which means that then your cheap food or your dealing with the big conglomerates that are exploiting people. Then you squeeze your labor, right? And it's top-heavy with management so management's going to make sure they get a salary but the workers you're going to try to figure out how to pay them the least as possible. Also, investors can get their 20 percent return because everything is hinged on that that 20 percent it oppresses everybody else. So this is where the greed is so the whole formula is rigged for oppression.

Michelle recognizes that we need to "change that formula" in order to remedy institutional inequality in the food system, and she sees collective economics and building a self-sufficient black infrastructure as the way to do that. However, she has faced challenges to even participating in it in the first place, which indicates the difficulties those who wish to challenge the system face. Both Katie and Michelle want to care for their social and natural environments through sourcing from local farmers, but their opportunities to do so are shaped by historical

structural racism and discriminatory agricultural practices. This constraint is unfortunate, because although market solutions do not necessarily (or usually) contribute to social change, Cairns and Johnston (2015) find that “[e]thical consumption occurs within patriarchal structures where women experience less public authority and more expectations in the domestic realm. In this context, women may see greater potential for political change in the market as opposed to the state” (123). While voting with one’s individual dollar/fork may not be enough to effect structural change, if women-run restaurants demand local sourcing on an industry-level scale (as is the trend), this could potentially affect social change via market solutions. Frustratingly, Michelle, who has every reason to be angry about the state’s institutional discouragement of black agricultural infrastructure and thus could benefit from an alternative, collective market solution, is barred from doing so because of just these constraints.

Even though it occurs within the context of the market, carework via sourcing can also fall more in line with hegemonically feminine ideals than the previous two examples. Jennifer also has an explicit focus on local sourcing and heavy emphasis on composting sourcing, and though she tries to patronize local women farmers, the race of those farmers is never mentioned.

I feel so lucky to know strong women...I try to source my produce as much as we can from farmer’s local farmers and tell their stories to our customers. But that’s from having trouble, when a customer’s coming in for food, they just want their food, and they want to leave. How can I tell the story of the farmers? So I started putting showcases with their stories, and people started reading that. I wanted to take a step further and do more farm tours we did one last year but more farm tours and more community engagement. Because I feel like a lot of children, including myself, think, Mom pays for the food, I get the food. There’s a disconnect.

Jennifer wants to use her sourcing practices to enhance maternal foodwork through care, which does exemplify norms of traditional femininity. However, I argue that, as a business and possibly in concert with other restaurant owners, this sort of care does blur the lines between the domestic and professional and is not inherently burdensome. It is different than merely “voting with your fork.” In the world of ethical consumption, Cairns and Johnston find that “spheres of high prestige tend to be dominated by men” (128). I argue that because this carework occurs in the market, it crosses a threshold of prestige that individual/ domestic work does not contain.

DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

Analysis of women chefs via identity categories (like the workplace mother or home stylist) crafting their occupational identities and how they translate their motivations into management styles has been incredibly helpful for highlighting persistent inequality in the cheffing profession and the challenges women continue to face at work and as business owners. However, while I have argued that the strength of categorical analysis is to expose discriminatory practices based on ascribed identities (taking cues from Williams and Giuffre [2011]), it can serve to obscure both hybridity and agency of the individuals it describes. My analysis of the occupational identities and management strategies of women chefs without the use of identity categories makes visible instances of normative slippage and hybridity.

For my study, I therefore ask how women chef-owners of restaurants construct their occupational identities via food and their workplaces and whether they were aided or constrained by their material realities. I am also concerned with whether the businesses they run are structured in a more queer and postcolonial fashion (that is to say, more egalitarian/less hierarchical, and with better working conditions), or if they have internalized hegemonic industry

norms, replicating the masculine, military style of the traditional Western kitchen brigade.

Finally, I ask what an analysis of these phenomena look like when conducted via new theoretical frameworks and whether we come to the same or different conclusions about identity, inequality, agency, and management style.

While I find that across the sample the chefs consciously reject constructing workplaces predicated on harassment, violence, and rigid hierarchy, I also find that the ability to construct both identity and business was limited by material constraints, but that all the chefs constructed environments predicated on multiple forms of carework. Family is invoked frequently by the chefs, but the relations they describe in this context are far more complex than simply maternal care for employee “children.” In fact, two participants (Emma and Jennifer) speak of offering financial advice to their employees, which, in the context of family, indexes historically paternal forms of care. The chefs focused on cultural education express care for their customers through a wish to democratize and unite cultures, although this too is complicated in that some of the ambassadors are promoting food to which they had historical and ethnic ties, while others choose to sell dishes from other cultures. Finally, I find local sourcing to be a form of care expressed for both the social and natural environment to be integral to the business models of three of the chefs (Katie, Michelle, and Jennifer), but due to the systemic oppression of black farmers and the resultant lack of infrastructure, a white chef is able to fully integrate loyal, local sourcing into her business model, while a black chef who wishes to patronize black farmers is unable to do so.

Interestingly, while I find that the chefs in my sample do not replicate poor working conditions, my most masculine-presenting participant also most closely replicated masculine culinary aesthetic norms. Alex, 34 and white, has short hair, tattoos, and wore baggy jeans with a chain wallet and work shirt when I interviewed her. This masculine aesthetic preference extends

to her culinary priorities as well, for she is the only chef that listed visual presentation as her number one priority with respect to food, and when I ask about her influences, she says she looks to other progressive chefs in the industry as to what was on trend, saying this was a necessity for growth and business success (this is in contrast to nearly every other participant, who said they are influenced by themselves and their individual tastes or preferences). Dozier (2017) argues, “Being perceived as a man or a woman significantly influences work experiences due to gender inequality and persistent sex segregation in the workplace” (197), and in fact Alex tells me she has frequently been mistaken for a man, and that gender played no role in the dynamics of her kitchen. I argue that while she explicitly says she does not tolerate workplace harassment, this semi-masculine privilege could cause her to be either unaware or dismissive of many of the concerns of her minority staff.

These findings indicate that I have gained new insights by using queer and postcolonial theoretical lenses to examine the occupational identities and management practices of women chefs. Previous research has established that this population has faced barriers to success in their field, but by looking for the complexity within this group, I show that opportunities for identity formation and financial success are not uniform. I therefore expose moments of agency and hybridity and establish that the cultures created in these restaurants are in fact an improvement on the previous model. For example, Ruwo uses her food as a tool of self-expression, connection with her community in North Carolina, and as an assertion that she, as an African immigrant, has a right to be here.

Williams and Giuffre (2011) assert that social scientists frequently reify identity categories in their research, and that they must integrate aberrant behaviors and intra-category differences into their analysis. By using both a queer and postcolonial lens to view my data, I

was able to uncover instances of hybridity, agency, and challenge to hegemonic norms which have been the root of poor labor conditions for women chefs.

While categorical analysis can serve to identify marginalized populations and highlight the systemic barriers they face to equal treatment, it leaves too little space to examine normative slippages and instances of agency. By analyzing the attitudes and practices of the women in my sample more closely, I am able to see just how complex their lived realities are, how they are using their business to transform not just their employee's immediate work environment but the industry as a whole, but also how some face material constraints in doing so.

Given that my analysis, undertaken from explicitly queer and postcolonial perspectives, is particularly attuned to relations of power, the messiness and hybridity of lived experiences, I do not consider the level of complexity I uncovered in how the chefs articulated their businesses and identities to be surprising. However, some of the particular manifestations were surprising. For example, Emma uses her explicitly "inauthentic" Chinese food to express her hybrid identity, while Michelle uses her business to explicitly acknowledge and fight against the barriers of structural oppression.

While it is true that none of the women in my sample are nationally well-known (unlike the personalities analyzed by Johnston et al. [2014]), I argue that they construct culinary identities or personas as do well-known chefs, for though identities might have blurry borders or a degree of instability across time and context, they are rooted in material and socially-constructed realities. Given that all chefs in the sample are entrepreneurs, they had the choice (under various cultural influences and economic constraints) as to what sort of food they would serve. Too, given that their restaurants are the way in which they share their culinary priorities with the world, I argue that the food in their restaurants constitutes a significant part of their

general identity and the face they present to the public. Taking a cue from Goffman (1959), I consider food in this context to be a part of the presentation of self. The public face that the chefs want to present as representative of themselves, which will cause the least embarrassment (or loss of face), and which is reflective of internalized norms is the food that they produce in their businesses, and the food that they cook at home could be considered backstage work, conducted outside of public view and not subject to scrutiny. In nearly all cases, the foods the chefs prepare at home is different than that which they produce in their restaurants. Some of this is due to meeting the demands of picky children, but many cite lack of time and energy as the reason they did not prepare their restaurant's food at home. I argue, therefore, that the chef's restaurant food represents an idealized, face-saving version of their culinary identity that does not necessarily correspond to their culinary priorities when they are outside of the restaurant. This complicates the notion of traditionally gendered foodwork, because rather than upholding traditional norms of domestic foodwork as being top priority, nearly every chef focuses her energy on the foodwork she performs in the public sphere.

I chose not to engage in participant observation for this project, for I am most interested in comparing how women identify themselves and interpret their experiences as business owners and the shapers of their business' culinary identities. Future research could gain from both a participant observation perspective to see whether chefs' behaviors were congruous with their descriptions of it as well as including the direct reports from subordinates of their experiences. This would help correct what Jerolmack and Khan (2014) refer to as "the attitudinal fallacy" in which researchers assume that self-reported behaviors are more or less reflective of actual events and attitudes in real life (though in at least a few of my cases, at least some of what the participants claimed about their business practices and identity could be verified by media

coverage and general reputation). However, they also point out that articulating an interpretation of reality can have material consequences, and that “[b]y assessing actors’ life histories, stated beliefs, and folk theories of social structure, interviews offer a window into the normative and cognitive frames that actors use to explain their actions and anchor their identity” (189). Too, acknowledging contradictions between the description of actions and attitudes and how they are actually manifested may not be a problem at all, for in doing so, we see that “people are contradictory: they have multiple and conflicting loyalties, goals and commitments” (Pugh 2013:47), and different priorities might be foregrounded in different contexts. The study of this state of multiplicity contributes to a more holistic depiction of both the participant and the milieu in which they are situated. The lack of triangulation of my data could also pose a problem, but it has already been well-established that the media treats men and women chefs differently (Harris and Giuffre 2015), and generalizability was not the point of my study, but rather to outline sociohistorical processes through close examination of particular cases (Burawoy 1998).

Finally, I recognize that in consciously selecting my sample of women chefs, I am utilizing some of the very categories of identity that I mean to critique. However, I wanted to engage directly with and build upon the previous analysis, and for this reason, I wanted a common starting point. Future research could include the perspectives not only of cis men but trans or nonbinary chefs as well. I also acknowledged that my interpretations of their carework (and framing their actions as carework) is predicated upon my socialization in the West and education within the Western academy. Other sociologists could examine whether women chefs in other countries manifest their agency and hybridity in the same or different ways and draw upon a more diverse range of literature.

Korsha Wilson's article on the current debates of culinary authority and diversity within the profession called for those with historical power to sit back and listen to the experiences of the marginalized. In the piece, Chef Preeti Mistry points out that the industry is rooted in "a system steeped in oppression and hierarchy in which women, gays, and other minorities...are not treated the same." Categorical analysis can help us to expose these systems of oppression, but it is through dispensing with those categories that we can uncover just how the marginalized are evincing agency and changing the industry, systematically, one restaurant at a time, together.

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APPENDIX

Pseudonym	Age	Race	Sexual Orientation	Income	Education	Type of Cuisine
Gabriela	41	Peruvian/Hispanic/brown	Heterosexual	51-100	Bachelors	Mexican/Peruvian
Katie	56	Italian/Caucasian	Heterosexual	26-50	Masters	Fresh local Italian
Emma	30	Asian Amer/Chinese	Straight	26-50	Masters	Chinese steamed buns
Alex	34	Caucasian	Gay lesbian	prefer not to say	HS/Apprenticeships	Gourmet world street food
Lisa	59	African American	Really gay	51-100	Bachelors/Culinary	Southern/Soul Food
Jennifer	31	Chinese/American	Heterosexual	51-100	Masters	Sushi bowls
Neera	59	South Indian	Heterosexual	26-50	Masters	Fresh Indian
Ruwa(dzano)	40	Botswanan	Married to man	don't know	Bachelors	African
Michelle	49	Black African Amer	5 kids and married	51-100	1 yr college	Vegan/Healthy Jamaican food
Ruth	39	African American	Straight	26-50	Associates	Dairy- and nut-free world flavors