2017

Poutine, Mezcal And Hard Cider: The Making Of Culinary Identities In North America

Nicolas Fabien-Ouellet

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POUTINE, MEZCAL AND HARD CIDER: 
THE MAKING OF CULINARY IDENTITIES IN NORTH AMERICA

A Thesis Presented

by

Nicolas Fabien-Ouellet

to

The Faculty of the Graduate College

of

The University of Vermont

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science
Specializing in Food Systems

October, 2017

Defense Date: August 16, 2017
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ABSTRACT

Foodways, which in short refers to eating and drinking practices, are constitutive of personal and group identity. In this thesis, I explore the symbolic values of food and drink in group identification processes evolving across North America. Through the cases of poutine, mezcal, and hard cider, I investigate cultural identity formation, negotiation, and transformation; from everyday practices to global interactions. What I develop in this thesis is a rationale that can be actively used by members of a group, as well as by community development practitioners, governments, and industry stakeholders to bolster community capitals and agency through making, supporting or rejecting food and drink ownership claims.

In the first article, titled Poutine Dynamics, I explore both the culinary and social status of poutine. First, I identify poutine as a new(er) and distinct way to consume food that is increasingly adopted and adapted, and I propose a working definition of poutine as a new dish classification label in its own. Then, by coupling poutine’s sociohistorical stigma and its growing Canadization (that is, the presentation, not the consumption per say, of poutine as a Canadian dish), I expose two related situations: the ongoing culinary appropriation of poutine and the threat of Quebeccois cultural absorption by Canadians. In Poutine Dynamics, I problematize the notion of a “national cuisine” in the context of multinational and settler states. Although the focus is about cuisine, Poutine Dynamics provides elements of analysis regarding how the Canadian nationalist project is constructed and articulated today, in current celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Confederation in Canada.

The second article of this thesis, titled Strategic Authenticity: The Case of Mezcal, draws upon the recent major update to the mezcal denomination of origin certification (DO) that was long-awaited and requested by “traditional mezcaleros.” This tour de force in the modification of the mezcal DO leads me to identify the notion of authenticity in food as a powerful rhetorical strategy in social negotiation between groups. Through the case of mezcal, I assert that the tasting experience is the most legitimate group identification path and authentication boundary (as opposed to political, ethnical or religious boundaries) in terms of foodways.

The third article, titled The Identity Crisis of Hard Cider, looks at the ongoing cultural affirmation of hard cider from its European counterparts. So far, the research on hard cider in Vermont has looked at the low-level of cider-specific apple production in that state as a supply issue. Instead, I approach this problematic from a demand angle, specifically from the low demand for hard ciders made with cider-specific apples. In this study, I survey the Vermont hard cider industry stakeholders as to possible mechanisms in order to differentiate between hard cider styles, as well as strategies to boost the demand for hard ciders made with cider-specific apples. The implementation of a geographical indication (GI) label was of high interests among participating cider makers. In this study, I also suggest that the hard cider foodways found in Vermont are part of a broader emerging hard cider identity that is taste-based and which crosses political borders within the American Northeast.
CITATIONS

Material from this thesis has been published in the following form:


Material from this thesis has been submitted for publication to the Graduate Journal of Food Studies on August, 2, 2017 in the following form:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I first want to thank David, Amy, and Shoshanah for their guidance in going down the rabbit hole of authenticity. Anaïs, you’re the real deal. Merci de m’avoir permis de pousser l’analyse aussi loin, beaucoup de ce travail te revient. Lucie et Normand, merci pour la voiture qui m’a permis de faire les aller-retours Montréal-Burlington. Florence, merci de m’avoir guidé pendant ces deux ans à UVM. I also want to acknowledge the financial support received from both the University of Vermont and Fonds de recherche du Québec – Société et culture (FRQSC). Your support provided me the freedom to innovate and take risks in developing a thesis that has proved successful in transcending scholarly circles and reaching the public.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CITATIONS</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: THESIS INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Food and Alcohol in Group Identification</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Foodways Authentication Through Taste</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. Ownership Claim Studied in This Thesis</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: POUTINE DYNAMICS</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Abstract</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. Introduction</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 My Relationship with Poutine</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. Poutine’s Mainstream Appeal: Social and Dynamic</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5. Poutine: A New Dish Classification?</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6. Social Mobility of Foods</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7. The ‘Canadization’ of Poutine</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8. Cultural Appropriation of Poutine</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9. Conclusion</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 4: STRATEGIC AUTHENTICITY: THE CASE OF MEZCAL</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1. Abstract</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2. Introduction</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. Methodological Framework</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4. Performing Authentic Mezcal</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5. Authenticity</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6. Authenticity: Performing the Premodern</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7. Authenticity: Society’s Well-being</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8. Authenticity: The Tasting Experience</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8. Conclusion</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5: THE IDENTITY CRISIS OF HARD CIDER</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1. Abstract</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2. Introduction</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3. Literature Review</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4. Methods</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5. Results</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.6. Discussion</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.7. Conclusion</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6: THESIS CONCLUSION</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table | Page
---|---
Table 1: The three new mezcal categorizes, as defined by the NOM070 of the mezcal DO (see section 4.4.1-4.4.3 of the NOM. Author's translation from original Spanish). | 65
Table 2: GI certifications for fermented apple-based beverages. Data from the European Commision database and the Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants. | 102
Table 3: Methods used, and their associated research question and participants. | 103
Table 4: Summary of the interest of interviewees regarding the use of long-term formalized contracts in stimulating cider-specific apple production. | 111
Table 5: GIs interests and preferred based. | 114
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure 1: The classic regular poutine: fries, cheese curds and brown gravy. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 2: Published in 1987, this caricature renders how poutine was negatively perceived at the time, which is in drastic contrast with the current hyped status of the dish. Photographic Credit: the McCord Museum, M987.217.40.</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 3: Biiru’s Hyottoko’s Poutine: Sweet potato fries, white miso gravy, cheese curds, tempura flakes, teriyaki-glazed pulled pork, toasted sesame oil, kizami nori and togarashi. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 4: Thursday’s Montreal Poutine: Celeriac fries, cheese curds, miso BBQ gravy, fried onions, speck and homemade kimchi. Third place in the Judges’ Choices Montreal category of the 2016 Poutine Week edition. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 5: Siam Restaurant Penang Beef Poutine: fries, cheese curds and braised beef topped with a Panang curry sauce. Second place in the Most Creative Montreal category of the 2016 Poutine Week edition. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 6: Jack Saloon Poutine: sweet potato fries, smoked beef brisket, Gouda and Havarti cheeses with shrimp slaw. Third place in the Most Creative Quebec category of the 2016 Poutine Week edition. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 7: Canuck's Poutinerie: fries, cheddar cheese sauce, caramelized kimchi with ginger baby beef, aioli and cilantro sauce. First place in the Most Creative International category of the 2016 Poutine Week edition. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 8: The poutine menu of ¡Duino! (Duende), a snack-bar located in Burlington, Vermont, United States. Photographic credit: ¡Duino! (Duende)</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure 9: Raspoutine or ‘the call for the poutine race’. Photographic Credit: Raspoutine (1995) by Roland Berthiaume (Berthio), Fonds Roland Berthiaume, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, BAnQ Vieux-Montréal, P173,S5,P26-4-95.</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 10: Collage of poutine Canadization examples. Upper left: The Sporkful happy Canada Day post on Facebook. Upper Right: poutine flavoured chips with the Canadian branding. Lower one: Smoke’s poutinerie labeling poutine the Iconic Canadian dish. .......................................................... 45

Figure 11: Adolfo’s palenque. At the forefront the earth-pit oven used to cook the maguey piñas. On the left the palm leaves used to recover the maguey during the cooking process. .......................................................... 57

Figure 12: Mezcaleros cutting cooked maguey piñas. In the background the open vessels made of an entire cowhide where the crushed piñas are mixed with water for the fermentation process. .......................................................... 59

Figure 13: Mezcaleros crushing the cut pieces of cooked maguey piñas. ...................... 59

Figure 14: An example of autoclaves that can be used to cook maguey. Credit photo: Ben Olivares. Permission granted .......................................................... 66

Figure 15: An example of a mechanical shredder that can be used to grind cooked maguey. Credit photo: Ben Olivares. Permission granted .......................................................... 67

Figure 16: Adolfo showing us the now dusty glass jars in which his father and grandfather used to store and distribute their mezcal productions. .............................. 68

Figure 17: The label of the mezcal I bought from Adolfo. Some information was removed to ensure privacy .......................................................... 75

Figure 18: Hard cider production in the United States. Data prior of 2000s are from Watson (2013); data starting in the 2000s are from the TBB and account for the production of bottled hard cider for which taxes were paid: https://www.ttb.gov/wine/wine-stats.shtml .......................................................... 93

Figure 18: One of the hard cider AVA proposed: The Lake Champlain watershed area. Map from Google Earth .......................................................... 107
CHAPTER 1: THESIS INTRODUCTION

Foodways, which in short refers to eating and drinking practices, are constitutive of personal and group identity. In this thesis, I explore the constructive aspects and the symbolic values of food and drink in group identification processes. Through the cases of poutine, mezcal, and hard cider, I investigate cultural identity formation, negotiation, and transformation from everyday practices to global interactions. In doing so, I expose how claims of ownership over foodways are not of mere symbolic reach, but imply significant gain and loss on all types of community capitals\(^1\) (cultural, social, financial, political, human, natural and built), which in turn yields profound impacts on the agency and well-being of the groups in play. What I develop in this thesis is a rationale that can be actively used by members of any such group, as well as by community development practitioners, governments, and industry stakeholders to bolster community capitals and agency through making, supporting or rejecting food and drink ownership claims.

I selected poutine, mezcal and hard cider for their recent and sudden popularity outside their groups of origin. The current fast rate at which each is being consumed and adopted by others makes them rich sites to study cultural and social negotiations among groups. Through poutine, mezcal and hard cider, I contextualize present-day dynamics of cultural mixture, and its opposite tendency of cultural disjunction in relation to power dynamics between groups evolving in North America (a hemispherical entity deeply oriented towards cultural hybridization\(^2\)). Cultures are products of hybridization, and in this thesis I explore how some groups manage to seize opportunities and counter threats brought by rapid and massive cultural transformations.
Following a literature review where I unify the core concepts common to the three research papers, the thesis turns to *Poutine Dynamics*, which attracted much media and public attention upon publication. In this first article, I look at the growing poutine Canadization phenomenon (that is, the presentation, not the consumption per say, of poutine as a Canadian dish) as an instance of ongoing social negotiation—between Quebec and Canada—over the ownership of food. I further problematize the concept of a national cuisine in the context of Canada, a multinational and settler state. Also, through the concept of cultural appropriation, *Poutine Dynamics* provides a further instance of how national identities are regularly performed at the expense of minoritized groups. Although the focus is on cuisine, *Poutine Dynamics* provides elements of analysis regarding how the Canadian nationalist project is constructed and articulated today, in current celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

In the second article of this thesis, titled *Strategic Authenticity: The Case of Mezcal*, I draw upon the newly enacted and major update (NOM070) to the mezcal denomination of origin certification (DO) that was long-awaited and requested by “traditional mezcaleros” (traditional mezcal producers). Their struggle leads me to identify the notion of authenticity as a powerful rhetorical strategy in social negotiation between groups. I also touch upon the role that the notion of authenticity plays in stocks of community capitals. While in *Poutine Dynamics* I centered my analysis around nationalism, in *Strategic Authenticity: The Case of Mezcal*, I question food nationalism by deconstructing paths and boundaries for group identification in foodways. I propose that the tasting experience is the most legitimate identification path and boundary for
asserting authenticity and claiming ownership over foodways (as opposed to political, ethnical or religious paths and boundaries). It is interesting to note here that my article arrives at a time when a group of the world’s leading transnational alcohol companies have started over the past months to acquire ownership in well-established mezcal brands. *Strategic Authenticity: The Case of Mezcal* constitutes one of the first post-NOM070 mezcal study, as well as one of the first study which integrates the arrival of transnational companies in the mezcal industry.

In the third article, titled *The Identity Crisis of Hard Cider*, I look at the cultural affirmation of Northeastern American hard cider as it distinguishes itself from its European counterparts. In this article, I build upon notions developed in *Strategic Authenticity: The Case of Mezcal*, in that I apply the concept of authenticity as a performative process of group-differentiation as a marketing strategy for the Vermont hard cider industry. While studies on hard cider in Vermont have so far been focusing on the low-level of cider-specific apple production in that state as a supply issue, I approach it from a demand angle—specifically from the low demand for hard ciders made with cider-specific apples. In this article, I survey the Vermont hard cider industry stakeholders regarding the implementation of a hard cider geographical indication (GI) that would serve to differentiate between hard cider styles and boost demand for hard ciders made with cider-specific apples. I also suggest that the hard cider foodways found in Vermont are part of a broader emerging hard cider identity that is taste-based and which crosses political borders in Northeastern America.
Chapter 1 - Endnotes


2. Monika Kaup and Debra Rosenthal, Mixing Race, Mixing Culture: Inter-American Literary Dialogues (University of Texas Press, 2002).

3. In this thesis, the terms America and American are understood in their geographical meaning. US-American is used to identify people living in the United States.
CHAPTER 2: LITTERATURE REVIEW

Each of the three articles contained in this thesis is a stand-alone study, and as such, specificities of poutine, mezcal and hard cider will not be reviewed here as they are sufficiently developed within each article. Instead, this literature review provides the background theories common to the three articles, and situates the role of this thesis in the food systems scholarships.

2.1. Thesis in Context: Modernity and Globalization

In this thesis, modernization is understood as the process through which “science and technology, including networks of mass communication and transportation, reshape human perceptions.” The early stage of modern societies is commonly cited to be the 1500s, and the late nineteenth century (with the industrialization) is often viewed as the high tide of modernization. Without taking a stance on whether the world’s contemporary societies are organized around multiple modernities or around variations of the same “project of modernity,” this thesis acknowledges the view of multiple paths of modernization. The content of this thesis also reflects the view of tiempos mixtos (mixed times), which refers to a hybrid experience of time where premodernity, modernity and postmodernity exist simultaneously. Regarding globalization, it is important to mention that this term is understood throughout the thesis in its long-term historical form, as conceptualized by Nederveen Pieterse in Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange: “an ongoing process [part] of the formation of worldwide social relations.” As such, processes of globalization are understood as processes of hybridization that are being accelerated, not created, by processes of modernization.
2.2. Food and Alcohol in Group Identification

Group identities, often referred to as cultural identities or social identities, are viewed throughout this thesis as presented by Hall: “a ‘production’, which is never complete, always in process,”11 and “subjected to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power.”12 In this sense, identities are not viewed as fixed entities, but as identification processes “[that are] not determined in the sense that it can always be ‘won’ or ‘lost’, sustained or abandoned.”13 Once secured, like all signifying practices, group identities do not obliterate, but perform difference.14 Paths for group identification are multiple (e.g. race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, age, etc.) and intersectional in that they “operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally constructing phenomena.”15

The cultural hybridity framework provides further guidance on group identification processes through the way it approaches culture: “culture refers to behavior and beliefs that are learned and shared: learned so it is not ‘instinctual’ and shared so it is not individual. … Learning is always ongoing as a function of changing circumstances and therefore culture is always open. To sharing there are no fixed boundaries other than those of common social experience.”16 In sharing there is an implied notion of reciprocity, which, when absent, can amount to cultural appropriation in the context of an imbalance in power between groups.17,18 In cultural studies literature, cultural appropriation has been used to reference “acts in which aspects of marginalized/colonized/subordinated cultures are taken and used [without reciprocity, permission, and/or compensation] by a dominant/colonizing culture in such a way as to
serve the interests of the dominant (...) These instances often carry the connotation of stealing or of in some way using the culture of a subordinated group against them.”

In this thesis, the concept of cultural appropriation is of particular interest in *Poutine Dynamics*.

Foodways are among the constitutive elements of group identification. The term “foodways” refers to the total network of activities and conceptualizations relating to food habits and cookery in a group. Foodways encompass what members in a group eat, how they eat it, whom they eat it with, and how they source and prepare the ingredients, among other physical, social, cultural, economic, spiritual and aesthetic aspects of eating. Perhaps for their universality aspect and regularity at which people feed themselves, social scientists view food and drink as “building blocks in the construction of all social identities.” Phrases such as “[t]ell me what you eat and I will tell you who you are,” “we are what we eat,” “we are who we eat with,” “we are what we ate,” and “we are where we eat,” assess of the various angles foodways have been studied and considered as pillars in group identification. Ichijo and Ranta indicate: “the study of food is useful in bridging the gap between politics (political economy, security, propaganda, resistance of colonization, etc.) and anthropology (symbolism, values, cultures, etc.).” In the particular case of alcohol consumption, which is arguably of lesser universalism, Douglas indicates in *Constructive Drinking*, that “[d]rinking alcohol is essentially a social act, performed in a recognized social context,” and adds that “[d]runkenness also expresses culture in so far as it always takes the form of a highly patterned, learned comportment which varies from one culture to another.” Wilson
further indicates: “Drinking alcohol is an extremely important feature in the production and reproduction of ethnic, national, class, gender and local community identity, not only today, but also historically, with little prospect for this importance and the situation to change.”

As a result, group identification through foodways has been researched at different levels, from the regional, national, supranational, and transnational. Parts of this thesis problematizes the notion of a national cuisine in the particular context of a multinational and settler state, and other parts play with the notion of taste as an alternative path for group identification.

2.3. Foodways Authentication Through Taste

2.3.1. Authenticity

As expressed above, with group identification comes performing differences. The notion of authenticity regularly intersects with group differentiation processes and foodways. Contemporary philosophers, such as Taylor and Ferrara, suggest that modern life has entered the “age of authenticity.” Taylor claims that “there are at least as many definitions of authenticity as there are those who write about it.” Others such as Bell and Valentine or Cook and Crang argue that as all cultures change there is no existence of “pure” societies upon which concepts of authenticity can be based. Consequently, authenticity should be viewed as a social construct; some even argue as a simulacrum effect. Although authenticity is an effect—not a reality—it does not make the concept any less real. Indeed, for Varga and Guignon, authenticity has become “a last measure of value and a common currency in contemporary cultural life.” The conceptual nature of authenticity is rooted both in a “strong” existential meaning, and a
“weak” object-based meaning. Varga and Guignon detail that in its “strong” sense, existential authenticity is a characteristic of an individual “being one's own” and has been a prominent topic for existentialist thinkers of the 20th century. Hopper et al. indicate that in its “weak” meaning, object-based authenticity describes things that have been verified by external authority judges as being a truthful representation, as being genuine. Together, the existential sense and the object-based meaning create authenticity an aspirational ideal—a somewhat pervasive one—driving contemporary social and political thinking. One of the reasons authenticity is seen as a “pervasive” aspirational ideal is that it is one of those “plastic terms.” Bendix theorized “plastic terms” as terms which hold real power yet have no true definition as their meaning shifts according to places, times, settings and contexts. In other words, authenticity is in constant redefinition, which makes it a demanding—pervasive—ideal to pursue.

Varga’s performative model of authenticity, introduced in an article titled *The Paradox of Authenticity*, details how this plastic concept became a driving force of modern life. This model suggests that authenticity is an effect which is “bound to the ability to perform difference in a given situation ... [which] must, like capital, be invested, which means that it has to be reinvented with each new situation.” Varga uses Austin’s and Butler’s terminology to depict performances of authenticity as “non-referential”: performances of authenticity create and represent without reproducing; they do not report a fact, but create an effect as a process of self-creation or difference creation. Varga advances the argument that as authenticity has been economized, authenticity performance—and in turn authentic products—emerged as a new market demand. For
Cobb, accelerating processes of globalization have created an ever-increasing appetite for authenticity beyond individuals’ physical and virtual borders. Current processes of modernization and globalization have thus highly contributed in making authenticity “a last measure of value and a common [yet divisive] currency in contemporary cultural life” as expressed by Varga and Guignon. But performing authenticity, as Guignon warned, “...must involve the commitment to sustaining and nurturing the type of society in which such an ideal is possible... [A]uthenticity, like many other character ideals, carries with it an obligation to contribute to the maintenance and well-being of a particular type of social organization and way of life.” With regards to foodways, Martin suggests that “authenticity might be the process by which a culture makes and defines a particular way of doing things [food] as its own.”

2.3.2. Tasting Experience

Appadurai alludes in his letter titled On Culinary Authenticity: “Quality is typically the insider's concern, authenticity that of the culinary tourist.” The notion of authenticity is nonetheless regularly used to proclaim some sense of ownership on particular foodways, or food and drink products. In this thesis, the tasting experience is used as a path for group identification. As posited by Leong-Salobir et al. (who based themselves on the Mann et al. experiment): “taste not only exists on the tongue but is a dynamic social process that encompasses production, consumption, and reproduction.” The tasting experience can thus be understood as being composed of two dimensions: the taste “on the tongue,” and the taste as a dynamic social process. The establishment of taste as a dynamic social process comes from Bourdieu, who, in his seminal work
Distinction, compared nutritional and aesthetic practices between social classes in 1970s Paris. He investigated the working-class (who generally approached food as “fuel”) and the petit-bourgeois (who generally approached food less as a necessity, more as recreational) to theorize the concept of social capital, and to posit that taste is not innate, but instead a social construct which is used as a “social weapon” that maintains a social order. Tastes and associated foodways are thus defined by social capital in a given context, and how they are identified as authentic is not innate or spontaneous, but ultimately governed by the power dynamics of the groups in play.

Martin’s study of Cajun cuisine provides an instance of taste as a dynamic social process: “Go back further than the end of Reconstruction as a reference point, and there exists the danger of recreating an authenticity that would not be palatable, nor convincing, to either today’s tourists or Americanized Cajuns.” The case of Cajun cuisine in the United States is similar to the rise of the curry houses in the UK where “white customers” dictated the degree of spice levels, ingredients and overall taste of the meals. In his study on curry houses, Fielding states that “the effort to identify the ‘real’ cuisine is a larger struggle to create or bridge social boundaries.” The struggle associated with efforts to identify “real cuisine” or “authentic foods” is highly context dependent. In some contexts, taste is expressed as a way to build nationhood, as seen with how authentic Belizean food has been defined. As expressed by Leong-Salobir, taste also often transcends its national circumscription to form transnational identities. This was seen with the emergence of a transnational culinary identity dubbed “Basmatisthan”: a shared pan-South Asian culinary patriotism crossing the Indo-Gangetic Plain between
India and Pakistan that rose to protect the basmati taste heritage of the area. Taste has also been used as a way to reminisce on a nostalgic identity in transnational experiences, as Srinivas exposed in her work about South Indian mothers living in Bangalore and Boston. Without being linked to national or transnational identity, taste can be a proxy to express distinctiveness when a group feels that their foodways are being threatened by industrial mass culture’s homogenization of food, as done by the associations of pizzaiolos (pizza-makers) whose purpose is to safeguard what they purport to be the authentic taste of handmade Margherita and Marinara Pizzas.

In addition to using the tasting experience as a path for group identification, this thesis looks at power dynamics of groups, and the social mobility of foodways. Examples of social mobility in food were seen with lobster which, before becoming a regional delicacy of the Maritimes, was used as an agricultural fertilizer, and its consumption was seen as a shame, signaling that a family had nothing else to eat. The same pattern was found with kimchi: now globally considered as a super-food with a lofty culinary status, it used to be the repugnant and malodorous Korean ‘rotten’ condiment linked to poverty and embarrassment, a source of shame and self-contempt for Koreans. Even garlic was once a way to make Italian immigrants coming to the United States—pejoratively titled garlic-eaters—feel lower class, backward, and unsophisticated. Today, Italian cuisine is highly desired by US-Americans. Also recall how, despite its current incontestable prestigious haute cuisine status, Japanese sushi was an object of derision, ridicule and disdain.
2.4. Ownership Claim Studied in This Thesis

Three instances of group identification that are made through foodways are explored in this thesis. The case of poutine can clearly be classified as national identification. The case of mezcal and hard cider, although national in some sense, focus mostly on the “intra-foodways” dynamics of group differentiation. The case of mezcal looks at the identification processes of “traditional mezcal producers.” The case of hard cider looks at the differentiation among groups producing different hard cider style, as well as differentiation between producing regions of fermented apple beverages. Each case is further reviewed below.

2.4.1. Canadian “National Cuisine”

“Cuisine” refers to “the ongoing foodways of a region, within which active discourse about food sustains both common understandings and reliable production of the foods in question.” Ferguson specifies that “culinary preparations become a cuisine when, and only when, the preparations are articulated and formalized, and enter the public domain.” Lévi-Strauss adds that cuisine is “a language into which [a society] translates its structure, unless it reluctantly and no less unwittingly reveals there its contradictions.” Belasco summarizes cuisine as: a set of socially situated food behaviors comprising a limited number of ‘edible’ foods (selectivity); a preference for particular ways of preparing food (techniques); a distinctive set of flavours; textual and visual characteristics (aesthetics); a set of rules for consuming food (ritual); and an organized system of producing and distributing the food (infrastructure).
A preeminent figure who problematized the notion of national cuisine is Mintz who argued that “[a] ‘national cuisine’ is a contradiction in terms; there can be regional cuisines, but no national cuisines.” Nonetheless, top-down and bottom-up processes frequently force regional preparations to enter the construction of national identification. Common ways of building a cuisine as national are through cookbooks, institutional catering and conscription. Ichijo and Ranta documented how the building of a cuisine as national serves nationalist projects, which they summarized by “[t]he promotion of the nation’s food as a brand helps link together banal and everyday aspects of nationalism with the private sector, the state and international relations. It is also useful for the state as a means of exploiting its appeal for economic growth and trade and supporting its tourism industry.” Cusack has further documented national cuisine building in the postcolonial context.

In Canada, the construction of a Canadian “national cuisine” has only started to be researched in the past decade. What’s to eat? entrées in Canadian food history attempts to show how cookbooks and foodways that are evolving within the geography of Canada are creating a Canadian cuisine; some sort of overarching Canadian ethos. One of the chapters analyzes how the notion of a Canadian cuisine was articulated in the 1960s, in parallel to “larger issues related to the construction of Canadian nationalism.” Newman has continued the conversation of a Canadian national cuisine with Speaking in Cod Tongues, while acknowledging that “the current emergence of Canadian nationalism can be traced to effort to militate against both Quebec (..) and Indigenous sovereignty,” and quoting Cusack on “national cuisines are built by appropriating and assembling a
variety of regional or ethnic cuisines,”\(^{104}\) while declaring that “ours [the Canadian national cuisine] is no different.”\(^{105}\) So far, attempts at defining a Canadian cuisine have largely been driven by asserting the view of a Canadian national identity based on multiculturalism: “that multicultural diversity may be regarded as a defining characteristic of the nation.”\(^{106}\) The content of this thesis steers the discussion away from the discourse of multiculturalism to center it on the multinational aspect of Canada.\(^{107}\) By doing so, *Poutine Dynamics* complements the literature regarding cultural appropriation in national cuisines constructions\(^{108,109}\) by filling the literature gap in the context of the multinational and settler context of Canada.

### 2.4.2. Geographical Indications (GIs): Mezcals and Hard Cider

A foodways differentiation strategy used on global markets are geographical indication certifications (GIs). There are over 10,000 GIs currently in used in the world, generating an estimated trade value of more than US$50 billion.\(^{110}\) Some of the well-known GIs are Darjeeling tea, Bordeaux wine, Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, and Idaho potatoes.\(^{111}\) Appellation of origin (AO), denomination of origin (DO), protected designation of origin (PDO), protected geographical indication (PGI) are among the different legally registered that falls under the umbrella term of GIs.\(^{112}\) GIs are largely based on the notion of *terroir*. A *terroir* is summarized by Giovannucci *et al.* as: “(1) a delimited geographic space, (2) where a human community, (3) has constructed over the course of history a collective intellectual or tacit production know-how, (4) based on a system of interactions between a physical and biological milieu, and a set of human factors, (5) in which the socio-technical trajectories put into play, (6) reveal an
originality, (7) confer a typicality, (8) and can engender a reputation, (9) for a product that originates in that terroir.” For more information about terroir see Trubek (2008) and Spielmann and Gélinas-Chebat (2012). The overall purpose of GIs is to protect both consumers and producers against fraud: as registered labels are regulated by a code of practices that has been verified by authority figures, GI products generate effects of authenticity for consumers and guarantee that the product sought is the genuine one, and at the same time, GI assure producers against free-riding “imitators.” Registered GIs are instruments to facilitate free trade, and are as such regulated by international organizations like the Court of Justice of the European Communities and the World Trade Organization.

**Mezcal DO**

Tequila was the first product to be protected by a DO outside Europe (in 1974), and was used as a stencil for the mezcal DO introduced in 1994. There has been expressed concerns that the mezcal DO has been preventing the sustaining of biological and cultural diversity of the mezcal foodways. Bowen has documented how the mezcal DO implementation has been an undemocratic and unfair process, and that its management has potentially threatened the survival of “traditional mezcal producers.” In short, “traditional mezcal producers” is a label used to differentiate between mezcal producers using “traditional” from the ones using “industrial” techniques (terms are further defined in *Strategic Authenticity: The Case of Mezcal*). In February 2017, after years of demand for change, the Consejo Regulador del Mezcal (CRM, formerly known as the COMERCAM), which is the organization that oversees mezcal regulations,
published the new regulation “NOM070,” introducing three distinct DO categories (1) Mezcal, (2) Artisanal Mezcal, and (3) Ancestral Mezcal. It should be noted here that the exportation of mezcal on the global market has increased by 157% from 2011 to 2016. In February 2016, Diageo plc signed a distribution contract with Mezcal Union, in February 2017, Bacardi Limited became the minority owner of Ilegal Mezcal, and in June 2017 Pernod Ricard (Euronext: RI) became the majority owner of the Del Maguey Single Village Mezcal. Strategic Authenticity: The Case of Mezcal constitutes one of the first post-NOM070 mezcal study, as well as one of the first study which integrates the arrival of transnational companies in the mezcal industry.

**Hard Cider GI**

In the United States, there are over 900 GIs, 730 of which are wines, and 100 are spirits. However, there are still no hard cider GIs in place in, although the drink has seen a dramatic increase in production and consumption in the past decade. The production of hard cider has increased from 5.3 million gallons (200,600 hectolitres) in 1996 to 47 million gallons (1.8 million hectolitres) in 2016 with sales totaling $209.7 million in revenue in the U.S. Many well-established European equivalents of hard cider are protected by a GI such as the “Herefordshire cider,” the “cidre de Bretagne” or the “sidra de Asturias, to name a few.” Contemporary hard cider foodways are young and still in the process of defining a clear and distinguish identity. In Cider, Hard and Sweet, Watson indicates: “Even today, when interest in [hard] cider is high and sales of major commercial brands are soaring, many people don’t quite know what to make of
hard cider—what it should taste like, when to serve or drink it. [People in the United States], especially, are still in the process of reinventing a ‘[hard] cider culture’.”

With the sudden increase in hard cider production over the past two decades, some U.S. cider makers have expressed concerns over the limited supply of cider-specific apples in their regional markets. This concern and this supply-demand gap in apple sourcing has started to be researched in some apple-producing states such as Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Vermont. However, little research has been undertaken on the demand for hard cider made with cider-specific apples in the U.S. In one of the first study that looked at demand, Tozer et al., who studied the willingness-to-pay (WTP) of consumers for different hard cider taste profiles, noted: “Given that there are no well-defined standards to categorize [hard] cider styles, such as there are for wines, consumers are faced with a difficult task of making a [hard] cider purchase based on inconsistent information on the product label.”

In the 2017-2020 United State Cider Association Strategic Plan, the number one goal is listed as “grow demand for all styles of cider in the U.S. market. Establish a nationally-recognized consumer-focused cider lexicon with the explicit goal of helping consumers of differing cider knowledge identify cider styles and products they are most likely to enjoy.” Part of this thesis fill the gap in the literature concerning both the supply of cider-specific apples and the demand for hard cider made with cider-specific apples. On the supply side, The Identity Crisis of Hard Cider looks at several strategic partnership mechanisms to stimulate the production of cider-specific apples in Vermont, and on the demand side it surveys cider makers in
Vermont about their interest of working under three GI alternatives: one that is place-based, on that is process-based, and one that is taste-based.

Chapter 2 - Endnotes


4. Schmidt, “Multiple Modernities or Varieties of Modernity?”


10. Ibid., 67-97.


12. Ibid., 225.


14. Ibid.


19. Ibid., 477, 486.
24. Ibid.
27. David Evan Sutton, Remembrance of Repasts : An Anthropology of Food and Memory (Berg, 2001), 7.
29. Sutton, Remembrance of Repasts : An Anthropology of Food and Memory, 7.
30. David Bell and Gill Valentine, Consuming Geographies : We Are Where We Eat (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 1997).
33. Ibid.
36. Ichijo and Ranta, Food, National Identity and Nationalism: From Everyday to Global Politics.
37. Wilson, “Food, Drink and Identity in Europe: Consumption and the Construction of Local, National and Cosmopolitan Culture.”


44. Bell and Valentine, *Consuming Geographies: We Are Where We Eat*, 192.


46. More on the topic of authenticity in the tourism literature can be found in: Rebecca Sims, “Food, Place and Authenticity: Local Food and the Sustainable Tourism Experience,” *Journal of Sustainable Tourism* 17, no. 3 (2009): 321–36.


51. Ibid.


54. Varga and Guignon, “Authenticity.”


62. Ibid.


66 Varga and Guignon, “Authenticity.”


77. Ibid., 36.


94. Ibid, 19-81.


111. Ibid.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid., xv.


127. See the European Commision database: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/quality/door/list.html


CHAPTER 3: POUTINE DYNAMICS

3.1. Abstract

Taking everyone by surprise, poutine—an unpretentious Quebecois dish originally made of fries, cheese curds and brown gravy—found its way onto the Canadian State Dinner menu organized by the White House in March 2016. Drawing on my personal relationship with poutine, this paper intends to expose how poutine has managed to enact a form of social mobility. The tasting experience of poutine is first deconstructed through its taste ‘on the tongue’ and its taste as a dynamic social process, to investigate poutine’s palatability and mainstream appeal. Through this tasting analysis, poutine emerges as a new(er) and distinct way to consume food that is increasingly adopted and adapted. A working definition of poutine as a new dish classification label in its own right (just like sandwiches, dumplings, soups, flatbreads or sushi) is proposed. The social mobility of other foods (e.g. lobster, kimshi, garlic, and sushi) is further explored, before discussing how poutine is also connected to a stigma, which weakens the agency of the Quebecois. Using the social identity theory, it appears that Quebecois youth are dismissing this ‘poutine stigma’ through a revaluing approach, which resembles a reappropriation of poutine, not necessarily linguistically (as seen with ‘black’, ‘queer’, or ‘geek’), but rather in a culinary fashion. Coupling poutine’s sociohistorical stigma and its growing Canadization (that is, the presentation, not the consumption per say, of poutine as a Canadian dish), two related situations—the ongoing process of poutine culinary appropriation and the threat of Quebecois cultural absorption by Canadians—are exposed.
3.2. Introduction

On March 10, 2016, the White House Executive Chef Cristeta Comerford served poutine (pronounced [puːtsin]) during the first State Dinner between United States President Barack Obama and the Prime Minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau. If we set aside for a moment the classic version of poutine that consists of Quebec fries, cheese curds that often functions as a late-night beer sponge—Chef Comerford found a way to adapt the dish for the occasion and served “shavings of smoked duck and cheese curds finished with red wine gravy and served on delicate wafer fries: a one-bite canapé.”¹ The White House was a radical change of setting for this dish that came from initially modest intentions, and that was typically served in rural casse-croûtes (diners), urban greasy spoons and community arenas (skating rinks) across Quebec. The event was also an unexpected instance of social mobility for a dish that was, for a significant part of its existence, a means of stigmatization used against Quebec society, and later the flagship of junk food consumption shaming of the 2000s.² In this paper, I draw on my personal relationship with poutine to seek answers as to how this dish found its way into the White House—by deconstructing the poutine tasting experience and looking at the social mobility of foods, while also revisiting the poutine stigma through the social identity theory.

3.3 My Relationship with Poutine

Like many other Quebecois millennials, my upbringing was marked by a poutine ‘prohibition’. Halfway through high-school, around 2004, poutine was withdrawn from my cafeteria’s daily menu to be offered only on Thursdays. The nutritional arguments
that supported this measure by my school’s administration are compelling, and can be summarized by the following two words: salt and fat.\textsuperscript{3} The cafeteria’s restriction transformed Thursday’s 11:55AM lunch bell into a starting gun, signaling the start of the weekly sprint to the cafeteria to order poutine. Students used excuses to leave class early and found secret shortcuts so they could be first in line. Luckily for the hundreds of student sprinters, word eventually spread that the nearby skating rink was also serving poutine. Poutine was not only served at the rink daily, but it was also, in my opinion, a far superior poutine, mainly because of the crispier fries. This trick of getting poutine from another vendor lasted for some time, until Quebec’s community rinks had to abide by the \textit{virage santé} that occurred around 2000 (i.e. Quebec’s decision to implement healthier eating and food habits).\textsuperscript{4} Now that I am in my mid-twenties, my relation with poutine is unhindered and the dish has become my sought-after late-night meal that I crave after I’ve had a few beers. In other words, just like many other millennial Montrealers, poutine has become my ‘drunk food.’ However, if I go camping with my friends, we always make sure to stop along the way to experience new poutineries (places serving primarily poutine, but that may also serve other menu items). As such, I have always described my appetite for poutine as being context-dependent, shifting from an urban-nighttime meal to a rural-daylight snack. But what exactly explains the attracting, somewhat addictive effect of poutine—a dish many find unappealing at first sight, only to embrace it after they’ve had a bite?
3.4. Poutine’s Mainstream Appeal: Social and Dynamic

Poutine is a social dish; it is meant to be eaten with others, although in some instances, the act of eating poutine alone is accompanied by a sense of shaming. Poutine sociability is commonly taken as far as ordering the largest available poutine size (e.g. small, medium, large) and asking to have two, three or four forks so that everyone can have their own bite of poutine to eat. When I eat poutine with my friends, we always talk about how the quality of the poutine fares in relation to other restaurants’ or poutineries, or whether this version is better or worse than the last time we had the dish at the same restaurant. These discussions that animate our meals emerge because, as it will be discussed in the following sections, poutine is a dynamic dish, and this ‘dynamicity’ is what makes the dish intriguing, exciting and mouth-watering.
The dynamic aspects of poutine are found in every bite. Robert J. Hyde and Steven A. Witherly suggest that “the most highly palatable foods are likely to have higher levels of dynamic contrast (moment-to-moment sensory contrast from the ever-changing properties of foods manipulated in the mouth).” The sensory contrast they refer to relies heavily on texture, but temperature, viscosity and irritation (from spices, acids, or carbonation) are also cited factors. Think of how unappealing a warm and soggy bowl of cereal is—that is, they argue, mainly because of its low dynamic contrast. In their article, ice cream, cold carbonated beverages and melted cheese on pizza are used to detail the type of foods that have a high level of dynamic contrast. “Obviously, they have never sampled poutine,” as was once said in another context.

Figure 2: Published in 1987, this caricature renders how poutine was negatively perceived at the time, which is in drastic contrast with the current hyped status of the dish. Photographic Credit: the McCord Museum, M987.217.40.
In each bite, the crispiness of the fries compounded with the sound-texture ‘squeakiness’ of the room-temperature cheese curds are both gently melted down by the thick and hot gravy, which in turn makes the flavours merge and evolve. How does this drastic mix and deliberate evolution in textures, temperatures, viscosities and flavours not make poutine the epitome of dynamic-contrast? The dynamic-contrast model would explain why poutine aficionados are highly cognizant of eating at the right pace and keeping the correct cheese-per-bite ratio, either in their personal or shared poutine. That is, to not to be left eating a low dynamic contrast cold potatoes and gravy paste (which would be analogous to eating the warm and soggy cereal bowl). Dynamic contrast theory brings to light why traits of a superior poutine are the long-lasting crispiness of the fries, and the freshness of the cheese curds, which can be assessed by the cheese’s sound-texture ‘squeakiness’. 6 Topped with a thick and hot gravy that fuses flavours and textures from the three ingredients, the disparate ingredients are turned into a unified dish that is high in dynamic-contrast which—maybe to surprise—makes the poutine experience, not only pleasurable, but often memorable.

The dynamic aspect of poutine also lies in the fluctuations of its gastronomic experience—i.e., in its tasting. As posited by Leong-Salobir et al. (who based themselves on the Mann et al. experiment): “taste not only exists on the tongue but is a dynamic social process that encompasses production, consumption, and reproduction.” 7,8 Let me first isolate taste ‘on the tongue.’ Some foods provide a standardized culinary experience. Hot-dogs, for example, seem—regardless of the ingredients, methods, or individual cook—to always give your tongue what was somewhat expected in terms of taste. On the
contrary, the poutine taste ‘on the tongue’ is subjected to high fluctuations from one poutinerie to another: a whole array of different oils (vegetable to animal) can be used to deep-fry the potatoes; the cheese curds’ freshness and origin are subjected to variation; and every place has its own ‘secret’ recipe for its in-house gravy. In other words, each poutinerie offers a truly unique and distinctive poutine. Further, the poutine experience frequently varies from time to time, even if it is consumed at the same poutinerie. This is because it is common practice among the youth to eat their late-night poutine under the influence of alcohol or drugs, where the idea of social experience related to the act of tasting comes into question. From this practice of ‘eating under the influence’ often emerge myths about how this place or that place serves the tastiest poutine. Such bias expressed in the social sharing of poutine recalls—in addition to producing over-hyped poutinerie recommendations—makes one return to a poutinerie with great expectations, only to regrettably admit: “wasn’t that poutine better last time?” To me, these sensory (the uniqueness in ‘taste on the tongue’ of each poutinerie) and social (the regular taste mythification) dynamics that arise during the tasting experience explain my friends and I constant quest for novel poutineries, and why poutine eaters are constantly commenting, evaluating, comparing, and debating about the poutines they are sharing. These dynamics make the poutine tasting experience intriguing and unpredictable, and consequently highly attractive.

3.5. Poutine: A New Dish Classification?

The dynamic dimensions of poutine constitute my tentative explanation of why the odd combination of fries, cheese curds and brown gravy is gaining more and more
popularity outside its birthplace…even by people that once ridiculed the dish and used it as a way to mock Quebec society (a point that will be addressed more thoroughly momentarily). Since the early 2000s, poutine has been offered as a dish people can order in Montreal’s higher-end restaurants (for example the foie gras poutine featured on the Au Pied de Cochon menu⁹), and has been served by Quebecois in other unexpected places across the world.¹⁰ Today poutine is a celebrated dish in annual poutine festivals held in places like Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver, Chicago or New Hampshire. Interestingly, these poutine festivals, as well as the two located within Quebec, showcase the dynamic dimensions of poutine tasting, as each of them features a competition to find the best poutine of the year.

Figure 3: Biiru’s Hyottoko’s Poutine: Sweet potato fries, white miso gravy, cheese curds, tempura flakes, teriyaki-glazed pulled pork, toasted sesame oil, kizami nori and togarashi. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week
Figure 4: Thursday’s Montreal Poutine: Celeriac fries, cheese curds, miso BBQ gravy, fried onions, speck and homemade kimchi. Third place in the Judges’ Choices Montreal category of the 2016 Poutine Week edition. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week.
Figure 5: Siam Restaurant Penang Beef Poutine: fries, cheese curds and braised beef topped with a Panang curry sauce. Second place in the Most Creative Montreal category of the 2016 Poutine Week edition. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week.
Figure 6: Jack Saloon Poutine: sweet potato fries, smoked beef brisket, Gouda and Havarti cheeses with shrimp slaw. Third place in the Most Creative Quebec category of the 2016 Poutine Week edition. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week.
Figure 7: Canuck's Poutinerie: fries, cheddar cheese sauce, caramelized kimchi with ginger baby beef, aioli and cilantro sauce. First place in the Most Creative International category of the 2016 Poutine Week edition. Photographic credit: La Poutine Week.
Figure 8: The poutine menu of ¡Duino! (Duende), a snack-bar located in Burlington, Vermont, United States. Photographic credit: ¡Duino! (Duende).
What is on full display in these pictures is the gastronomic innovations now involved when crafting poutine. While it is the charismatic foie gras poutine that is likely to be remembered as the spark that ignited cooks’ and chefs’ curiosity regarding the dish’s culinary potential, it is now clear that poutine has long transcended its classical state of fries, cheese curds, and brown gravy to become a dish of elastic meaning. Menus are now featuring breakfast poutines with roasted potatoes, cheese curds, frankfurters, eggs and hollandaise sauce. Pierogi poutines, substituting pierogi for fries. Curry poutine, substituting the gravy with a curry sauce. Iced poutine, replacing the fries with chocolate wafers, the cheese curds with marshmallows and caramel popcorn, and the gravy with caramel syrup, all of it atop with vanilla soft-serve ice cream. Just like a California Roll is now presented as a sushi, these dishes are now presented as ‘legitimate’ versions of poutine, even if they have been significantly adapted from the original poutine ‘model’. While some see the elasticity in poutine's definition as bastardization,\textsuperscript{11} I will make the claim that poutine is not bastardized, but instead, through its worldwide adoption and adaptation, is emerging as a new type of dish classification in its own right. Just like sandwiches, dumplings, soups, and flatbreads are, or what sushi has arguably become, poutine is yet another label to classify how food is prepared, assembled, construed and consumed. Here is my working definition of poutine as its own dish classification:

**Poutine**: Minimum of three elements: (i) the crispy element (originally fries), (ii) the dairy element (originally cheese curds), and (iii) the liaising element (originally brown gravy). When served, each element has to be from different textures and temperatures, with the proper ratio so that all of them can be found in each bite throughout the course of the meal. The aim is to sustain the highest level of dynamic contrast possible per bite and over the course of the whole poutine tasting experience.
3.6. Social Mobility of Foods

Clearly, poutine has been following the same trend as other foods that went from being food items with a connotation of shame, be it to shame a culture or a personal identity, to being highly sought by foodies and then by the masses. For example, before becoming a regional delicacy of the Maritimes, lobster was used as an agricultural fertilizer, and its consumption was seen as a shame, signaling that a family had nothing else to eat. The same pattern was found with kimchi: now globally considered as a super-food with a lofty culinary status, it used to be the repugnant and malodorous Korean ‘rotten’ condiment linked to poverty and embarrassment, a source of shame and self-contempt for Koreans. Even garlic was once a way to make Italian immigrants coming to the United States—pejoratively titled garlic-eaters—feel lower class, backward, and unsophisticated. Today, Italian cuisine is highly desired by US-Americans. Also recall how, despite its current incontestable prestigious haute cuisine status, Japanese sushi was an object of derision, ridicule and disdain. In similar fashion, poutine has been used by many as a stigma and mocking stereotype of Quebecois society particularly by Anglo-Canadians and people from France (as documented by Charles-Alexandre Théorêt in Maudite poutine!). The stigma was also replicated by the many Quebecois who felt embarrassed and disidentified with the dish. Poutine’s shame-to-praise path is ironically exposed by this caricature published a few months before the 1995 Quebec referendum that asked Quebecois if they wanted to become a sovereign state.
The caricature renders how poutine has been used at times to tarnish Quebec culture and undermine its legitimacy of self-determination as a nation, and in their analysis, Théorêt goes as far as titling the drawing: *L’appel de la race poutine* (the call for the poutine race).\(^\text{18}\) In 2015, twenty years after the publication of the caricature, Ottawa—the symbolic fort of the 1995 ‘no campaign’ objecting to Quebec independence—held the first edition of its very own annual poutine festival: the Ottawa PoutineFest.\(^\text{19}\)
In *The Ethnic Restaurateur*, Krishnendu Ray theorizes the ‘global hierarchy of taste.’ Ray posits that the hierarchy of taste—for example people’s willingness to pay more for Japanese than Chinese food—is not linked to the food per say, but rather to the economic and cultural capitals associated to a particular group. The Japanese are associated as being part of a prestigious economic power, while the Chinese are seen as poor people, part of an economy built around creating cheap and crappy stuff. Maybe the rise in poutine consumption beyond its borders is a sign that the Quebec society is getting recognition, and that the Quebecois have successfully stopped being considered as ‘hewers of wood and drawers of water’ by others. It is hard to tell whether this represents a shift in Quebec’s economic and cultural capital flows, or people’s realization that poutine is an exceptional food tasting experience. One aspect, however, is undeniable: the Quebecois celebration of poutine is a new phenomenon. The Drummondville poutine festival is not even 10 years old, and the Montreal one is less than 5 years old. And this affirmation on part of Quebec poutine eaters has likely been facilitated by other people’s adoption of the dish, as exemplified by the history of other shaming foods.

### 3.7. The ‘Canadization’ of Poutine

On July 1, 2016, *The Sporkful*, a popular US food podcast hosted by Dan Pashman, wished happy Canada Day to their loyal Canadian listeners by posting on social media a picture of…poutine! On the website of famed U.K. chef Jamie Oliver, a 2014 recipe entry details how to make the perfect poutine: “[Poutine] is the unofficial official dish of Canada. In fact, if they could make it look good on a flag, the maple leaf’s
days might be numbered.” In a 2015 article from the BBC titled Why is Canadian English unique? we read: “poutine, Nanaimo bars, and butter tarts […] three of Canada’s great culinary gifts to the world if the world would but accept them.” While grocery shopping last week, I saw a new potato chip flavour offered by a company marketed worldwide: bacon poutine seasoned chips, with the subtitle ‘inspired by Canada’ with the word Canada written in big bold letters. And here is how the Ottawa PoutineFest, established in 2015, presents itself on its website: “we are the world of poutine festival celebrating the comfort food of Canadians.” So, should poutine now be presented as Quebecois or Canadian? As Quebec was recognized as a distinct nation by the Government of Canada in 2006, it would follow that Quebec’s and Canada’s culinary identities be seen distinct and conflation between the two, avoided.
Figure 10: Collage of poutine Canadization examples. Upper left: The Sporkful happy Canada Day post on Facebook. Upper Right: poutine flavoured chips with the Canadian branding. Lower one: Smoke’s poutinerie labeling poutine the Iconic Canadian dish.
3.8. Cultural Appropriation of Poutine

In *Maudite Poutine!*, Théorêt explains that the exact origin of poutine is still disputed and controversial, but on one fact there is consensus: the dish emerged in the late 1950s in the Centre-du-Québec area, where a large number of fromageries (milk plants that also produce cheese, including the cheese curds used for poutine) are located. Théorêt further details how poutine has become omnipresent in Quebec society, not only in its foodways, but in its overall culture and art, becoming part of Quebec’s national identity. In 2007, the newspaper Le Devoir surveyed Quebecois to vote for Quebec’s national dish. Surprisingly, Le Devoir explicitly specified that poutine could not be proposed as the national dish because it originated in restaurants instead of coming from familial origins, but also due to the fact that poutine is rarely cooked at home. Paté chinois, a layered dish of ground beef, canned corn and mashed potatoes, was elected. Desjardins posits how these dishes are both symbols of Quebecois culture, that equally, but differently, ‘translate’ discourses on Quebec’s identity; the paté chinois being linked to family, hospitality and conviviality, and poutine to festivities, youth and cultural pride. Théorêt specifies that for older generations, the very subject of poutine consumption is often avoided and the dish itself deprecated, as it is often seen as an embarrassing culinary invention that evokes an old complex of Quebec people’s inferiority. But today, Quebec youth are embracing the symbol and making it an object of pride.

Analyzed through the social identity theory developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner it is clear that the first Quebecois generations to live through poutine were using
individual strategies such as concealing and disidentifying when dealing with the poutine stigma. It also arises that the youth are instead opting for a group-based strategy of social creativity, in an attempt to alter the value of poutine assigned by others to their advantage, although it is still unclear if such a revaluing process is made in a concerted and planned manner. Revaluing poutine as a symbol of cultural pride to diffuse the stigma seems similar to the reappropriation of poutine by youth. Maybe not a linguistic reappropriation, as it was performed by other stigmatized groups with labels like ‘black,’ ‘queer,’ or ’geek,’ but rather a reappropriation in a culinary fashion. “Poutine, the prohibited ‘junk food’ that has long been used to bash our culture is now our pride,” Quebec youth seem to claim. The recent omnipresent association of poutine as a Canadian dish is likely to amplify such reappropriation claims. The seminal work Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization, of Arjun Appadurai helps to explain why:

“The central problem of today’s global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization […] But it is worth noticing that for the people of Irian Jaya, Indonesianization may be more worrisome than Americanization, as Japanization may be for Koreans, Indianization for Sri Lankans, Vietnamization for the Cambodians, Russianization for the people of Soviet Armenia and the Baltic Republics. Such a list of alternative fears to Americanization could be greatly expanded, but it is not a shapeless inventory: for polities of smaller scale, there is always a fear of cultural absorption by polities of larger scale, especially those that are near by.”
The rather unexpected (because of its sociohistorical connotation of shaming), but nonetheless on-going, rebranding of poutine as Canadian has incorporated poutine into Canada’s banal nationalism\textsuperscript{38} process—to the point that Canadians voted poutine as one of the “top-ten Canadian inventions of all time.”\textsuperscript{39} This Canadization of poutine (appropriation into Canadian food culture expression and construction of national identity) is likely to be performed at the expense of the Quebecois minority. Such a process has been seen with many foods—acutely with the falafel, which was appropriated from the Arab-Palestinian food culture and reinterpreted as Israel’s national snack\textsuperscript{40}; or, similarly, in the case of the Turkification of Kurdish restaurants in the U.K.\textsuperscript{41}. Examples like these contextualize the Quebecois fear of Canadization: the fear of cultural absorption by the nearby majority group that has long attempted to assimilate the minority,\textsuperscript{42} in this case by using poutine as an object of stigmatization to further weaken the agency of the Quebecois minority. This fear is likely to be what triggered Quebec youth to undertake the process of reappropriating poutine.

3.9. Conclusion

To me, poutine managed to find its way into the White House mainly because of its character as a highly dynamic dish, specifically with regard to the tasting experience described in the previous sections. These dynamic characteristics are responsible for making poutine so intriguing, exciting and so highly palatable. In addition to its dynamic characteristics, it is likely that poutine’s mainstream appeal, or even the hype surrounding the dish, was supported by a heightened perception of Quebec economic and cultural capital by others, which—as was discussed regarding the social mobility of other foods—
contributed to ‘freeing’ poutine from the connotation of shaming. With the example of poutine in the White House, one is left wondering where the humble dish might be served next. I would not be surprised if the State Dinner of March 10, 2016 is remembered as the event that gave poutine its legitimacy on a worldscale as a distinct dish classification and way of consuming seemingly disparate ingredients.

Unfortunately, the downside to the popularization of poutine, especially in State affairs such as the White House dinner, may only serve in further ‘Canadianizing’ poutine. To mitigate this fact, it is important not only to aim for the highest level of dynamic contrast in taste when creating poutine as a dish (a responsibility that would fall upon the shoulders of chefs), but also to sociohistorically contextualize the dish. Consumers of the dish must understand that it has been used as a form of stigma against a minority group that is still at risk of cultural absorption. Therefore, the dish should be, ideally, labelled explicitly as a Quebecois dish and not a Canadian one to further underscore the cultural context to which it actually belongs.

Chapter 3 - Endnotes


10. Ibid., 64-68.

11. Ibid., 121.


18. Ibid., 90.


27. Ibid., 11, 76-77, 138-151.
32. Ibid., 103-105.
33. Ibid., 11.
CHAPTER 4: STRATEGIC AUTHENTICITY: THE CASE OF MEZCAL

4.1. Abstract

This ethnographic investigation looks at narratives surrounding mezcal production, marketing and consumption to contextualize the reproduction of foodways through time. From this contextualization, I deconstruct authenticity in foodways as a performative effect generated by means of group differentiation. I further analyze the mezcal denomination of origin (DO) certification and the way traditional mezcal is defined to outline how performing the premodern generate augmented effects of authenticity for today’s moderns. I then identify the tasting experience—which includes both the taste “on the tongue” and the taste as a dynamic social process—as arguably the most legitimate boundary a DO can be based upon (as opposed to political, ethnic or religious boundaries). I also make the case that the main responsibility of DO certifications is not to protect food items themselves, but to contribute to the maintenance and well-being of groups in which foodways are embedded. Socially embedded foodways are documented as generating positive socioeconomic impacts compared to disembedded ones. In this paper, I explore how the locus of authenticity changes depending on groups power dynamics. It brings me to identify the concept of authenticity as a useful performative and rhetorical strategy in reproducing embedded foodways from one generation to another.
4.2. Introduction

In January 2016, my Food System Graduate Program cohort went to Oaxaca, a southwestern state of Mexico, to study the reproduction of foodways in the context of today’s modernization and globalization. The term “foodways” refers to the total network of activities and conceptualizations relating to food habits and cookery in a society.¹ Foodways encompass what members in a society eat, how they eat it, whom they eat it with, and how they source and prepare the ingredients, among other physical, social, cultural, economic, spiritual and aesthetic aspects of eating.²

During this 10-day fieldwork research, led by Dr. Amy Trubek³ and Dr. Teresa Mares⁴, we collaborated with the Mezcaloteca: a non-for-profit mezcal tasting and selling room located in Oaxaca City that seeks to protect, promote, and educate others about traditional mezcal foodways. According to the general manager of the Mezcaloteca, Silvia Philion, traditional mezcal is defined as “white, minimum of alcohol 45%, maguey piñas cooked in an earth oven, small-batch productions that are consumed in the towns in which they are made so they have historic taste. The smashing of the cooked maguey has to be by hand with wood hammers or using a stone mill; the fermentation is natural with high-quality water from the region (springs, wells, or rivers), and [the mezcal] must be distilled in clay pots or copper stills.” The traditional mezcal appellation is not one that is regulated by the mezcal denomination of origin (DO) certification. With Andrea, the bartender for the Mezcaloteca at the time, as our guide and translator, we visited “Adolfo”⁵: a traditional mezcaleros (mezcal producer) located in the Mixteca, a region north-west of Oaxaca City, from whom the Mezcaloteca sources some of their mezcal.
For Silvia, Adolfo’s mezcal is not only traditional, but one of the few still made the “old-way” in the state of Oaxaca, in contrast to “a lot of maestros mezcaleros [who] changed to the stone mill and copper stills because it’s cheaper to produce and you can produce more (…) of course the flavors that distillation in copper will give you are different from clay pots.”

As one of the few still making traditional mezcal the "old-way,” Adolfo is a mezcalero uniquely positioned to facilitate the investigation of the reproduction of foodways through time by exploring the dynamic intersections and tensions between preserving traditions and adapting practices; between the effects of authenticity and the inauthentic; between cultural stagnation and cultural hybridity; —all with regards to foods, modernization and globalization.

In this paper, modernization is understood as the process through which “science and technology, including networks of mass communication and transportation, reshape human perceptions.”6 The early stage of modern societies is commonly cited to be the 1500s, and the late nineteenth century (with the industrialization) is often viewed as the high tide of modernization.7,8 Without taking a stance on whether the world’s contemporary societies are organized around multiple modernities or around variations of the same “project of modernity,”9 this article acknowledges the view of multiple paths of modernization.10 The content of this paper also reflects the view of tiempos mixtos (mixed times), which refers to a hybrid experience of time where premodernity, modernity and postmodernity exist simultaneously.11,12,13 Regarding globalization, it is important to mention that this term is understood throughout the paper in its long-term historical form,
as conceptualized by Nederveen Pieterse in *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange*: “an ongoing process [part] of the formation of worldwide social relations.”¹⁴ As such, processes of globalization are understood as processes of hybridization that are being accelerated, not created, by processes of modernization.

Broadly, this research about traditional mezcal contextualizes the reproduction of foodways through time. From this contextualization, I expose authenticity in foods and foodways as a social construct and a performative process forged by social negotiations in tastes between groups. Further, I posit that denomination of origin (DO) certifications—or any other authenticating certification—must primarily aim at preserving societies where foodways are embedded (learned and shared), instead of focusing solely on food items themselves. The relevancy of the concept of authenticity in food is then established to be the support it can provide to some groups in reproducing their embedded foodways from one generation to another.

4.3. Methodological Framework

This paper is an ethnographic investigation of traditional mezcal production, marketing and consumption which uses the concept of authenticity. The methodological framework used in this research is premised upon a two-tier analysis. The first tier consists of a micro perspective built upon ethnographic elements collected during a 10-day research field trip conducted in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico. The ethnographic elements were mainly sourced from a day of fieldwork observing and interviewing Adolfo making traditional mezcal in his *palenque* (his mezcal processing hut) located in the village of Santa Maria Ixcatlán, in the Mixteca region. Another research site was the
Mezcaloteca, which is located in Oaxaca City, where supplemental elements surrounding traditional mezcal foodways were gathered from mezcal tastings and interviews with Andrea and Silvia. Additional post-fieldwork elements were obtained from email exchanges with both Andrea and Silvia. Elements of comparison between traditional mezcal and DO certified mezcal were found on the website of the *Consejo Regulador del Mezcal* (CRM): the organization in charge of regulating the DO. The second tier analysis consists of a macro perspective built upon secondary sources from literature in two disciplinary arenas: (1) literature on the subject of authenticity (cf. Varga & Guignon (2016)16; cf. Cobb (2014)17), and (2) literature on cultural hybridity (cf. Nestor Garcia Canclini (2005)18; cf. Nederveen Pieterse (2015)19).

**4.4. Performing Authentic Mezcal**

After a three-hour ride on the rocky back roads of the Mixteca, passing through deserted villages and arid mountainous landscapes, our group reached the village of Santa Maria Ixcatlán to witness how traditional mezcal is crafted the “old-way.” It was not yet noon, but Adolfo was keen to open mezcal bottles upon our arrival and for Andrea to organize a mezcal tasting. This 25-year-old mezcalero explained that he was freshly returned from almost a year working in the United States, and was now trying to revitalize his deserted village by reviving mezcal production. After completing the tasting, we followed Adolfo to see how he produces his mezcal. After a ten-minute walk facing a strong wind, the smell of dried earth gradually shifted to an aroma of cooked *maguey* (also known as agave). As we entered his *palenque*, we met two workers who had spent the morning chopping cooked *maguey piñas* (the heart of the *maguey* plant) in
the hut. The younger—a teenager—cut the cooked piñas with a large machete at a slow and steady pace, while the other—probably in his mid-thirties—was quick to pass a small glass to Adolfo, who filled it with some mezcal. After a sip, they all started to help cutting the piñas while proudly explaining what Andrea translated as being the art of making “authentic” mezcal. Adolfo began by saying that he currently buys wild maguey piñas from surrounding villages, and then talked about his “hundreds of thousands” of maguey plants that he planted on his fields to source his raw material autonomously.

Figure 11: Adolfo’s palenque. At the forefront the earth-pit oven used to cook the maguey piñas. On the left the palm leaves used to recover the maguey during the cooking process.
Once he acquires the piñas, they have to be cooked in an earth pit for 4 to 5 days (see Figure 11). The piñas are then cut into small pieces, which is what we saw take place at our arrival (see Figure 12). The ‘slipperiness’ of the juicy roasted piñas makes this task a lengthy process and presents the danger of cutting or severing a finger with the sharp machete. The next production step consists of crushing the piña’s pieces with a giant wooden pestle in a rock mortar (see Figure 13). In tandem, they act as human pistons, crushing the piñas with the pestle to make a paste that will release all the sugars and flavors of the maguey during the fermentation. As everyone took turns to mash the piñas, we laughed as we failed to lift the heavy mass in an attempt to mimic their movement and pace. The sound and tempo of the wood hitting the piñas punctuated the rest of the tour, which involved our group being introduced to the steps of fermenting and distilling.
Figure 12: *Mezcaleros* cutting cooked *maguey piñas*. In the background the open vessels made of an entire cowhide where the crushed *piñas* are mixed with water for the fermentation process.

Figure 13: *Mezcaleros* crushing the cut pieces of cooked *maguey piñas*. 
Adolfo explained that one of the distinctive characters of his traditional mezcal is largely attributed to the fermenting stage that occurs for 5 to 8 days in open vessels made of cowhide. The resulting fermented juice is called tepache. Unfortunately, we could not witness distilling because the fermented piñas had not sufficiently aged due to colder-than-usual temperature over the days prior. Adolfo then introduced another maguey-based drink named pulque which is made by fermenting the sap of the maguey instead of its roasted heart; a drink that was consumed well before the introduction of the distilling process, four centuries ago. In his description of the distilling step of mezcal, Adolfo explained that clay pots used in traditional distilling break easily and have to be changed after almost each round of production. Adolfo ended his demonstration by saying that only forty to fifty liters of mezcal are extracted from each production cycle. In other words, this labor-intensive process was not a seasonal endeavor, but an ongoing one.

On the way back to the city later that day, I wrote my field notes while sitting next to three five-gallon bottles filled with mezcal that Andrea bought on behalf of the Mezcaloteca. This meant that I was seated next to a full production cycle’s worth of mezcal. I was struck by how much labor these bottles represented. If Adolfo’s mezcal represents a standard for authenticity, as presented by the Mezcaloteca, I wondered then about the authenticity status of traditional mezcal produced by mezcaleros who stopped making mezcal the “old-way” to favor cheaper, less laborious processes. In this paper I investigate and contrast the use of the concept of authenticity in traditional mezcal narratives and the mezcal DO regulations.
4.5. Authenticity

Contemporary philosophers, such as Taylor and Ferrara, suggest that modern life has entered the “age of authenticity.”\textsuperscript{21,22} Taylor claims that “there are at least as many definitions of authenticity as there are those who write about it.”\textsuperscript{23} Others such as Bell and Valentine or Cook and Crang argue that as all cultures change there is no existence of “pure” societies upon which concepts of authenticity can be based.\textsuperscript{24,25,26} Consequently, authenticity should be viewed as a social construct\textsuperscript{27}; some even argue as a simulacrum\textsuperscript{28} effect. Although authenticity is an \textit{effect}—not a reality—it does not make the concept any less real.\textsuperscript{29} Indeed, for Varga and Guignon, authenticity has become “a last measure of value and a common currency in contemporary cultural life.”\textsuperscript{30} The conceptual nature of authenticity is rooted both in a “strong” existential meaning, and a “weak” object-based meaning.\textsuperscript{31,32} Varga and Guignon detail that in its “strong” sense, existential authenticity is a characteristic of an individual “being one's own”\textsuperscript{33} and has been a prominent topic for existentialist thinkers of the 20th century.\textsuperscript{34} Hopper \textit{et al.} indicate that in its “weak” meaning, object-based authenticity describes things that have been verified\textsuperscript{35} —by external authority judges\textsuperscript{36}—as being a truthful representation,\textsuperscript{37} as being genuine.\textsuperscript{38} Together, the existential sense and the object-based meaning create authenticity an aspirational ideal—a somewhat pervasive one—driving contemporary social and political thinking.\textsuperscript{39} One of the reasons authenticity is seen as a “pervasive” aspirational ideal is that it is one of those “plastic terms.” Bendix theorized “plastic terms” as terms which hold real power yet have no true definition as their meaning shifts according to places,
times, settings and contexts. In other words, authenticity is in constant redefinition, which makes it a demanding—pervasive—ideal to pursuit.

Varga’s performative model of authenticity, introduced in an article titled *The Paradox of Authenticity*, details how this plastic concept became a driving force of modern life. This model suggests that authenticity is an *effect* which is “bound to the ability to *perform* difference in a given situation ... [which] must, like capital, be invested, which means that it has to be reinvented with each new situation.” Varga uses Austin’s and Butler’s terminology to depict performances of authenticity as “non-referential”: performances of authenticity create and represent without reproducing; they do not report a fact, but create an effect as a process of self-creation or difference creation. Varga advances the argument that as authenticity has been economized, authenticity performance—and in turn authentic products—emerged as a new market demand. For Cobb, accelerating processes of globalization have created an ever-increasing appetite for authenticity beyond individuals’ physical and virtual borders. Current processes of modernization and globalization have thus highly contributed in making authenticity “a last measure of value and a common [yet divisive] currency in contemporary cultural life” as expressed by Varga and Guignon.

With regards to foodways, Martin suggests that “authenticity might be the process by which a culture makes and defines a particular way of doing things [food] as its own,” which is in line with the process of self-creation contained in Varga’s performative model of authenticity, as well as with Nederveen Pieterse’s definition of culture: “culture refers to behavior and beliefs that are learned and shared: learned so it is
not ‘instinctual’ and shared so it is not individual. … Learning is always ongoing as a function of changing circumstances and therefore culture is always open. To sharing there are no fixed boundaries other than those of common social experience.”

Using this understanding of authenticity and culture, effects of authenticity in foodways are analyzed in the next three sections by looking at (1) performing the premodern, (2) the contribution to the maintenance and well-being of the associated societies, and (3) the tasting experience.

### 4.6. Authenticity: Performing the Premodern

Fermented beverages, such as tepache and pulque inscribe themselves in the foodways that have long been embedded in pre-Columbian societies of Mesoamerica from in and around Oaxaca (e.g. Mixtecs, Zapotecs, Aztecs and their tributaries)\(^49,50,51\). There are some archives mentioning that the fermenting of pulque was often performed in cowhide vats,\(^52\) the same technique used by Adolfo for fermenting his mezcal. Interestingly, cows, along with sheep, goats, pigs and horses were all introduced to the Americas by the European settlers during the Columbian Exchange initiated in 1492.\(^53\)

The first European settlers who traveled to western Mexico in the 1500s referred to some types of maguey-based fermented beverages as “mezcal wine.”\(^54\) The introduction of the distillation process in Mexico—with earliest documented reference dating from 1619—enabled the distilling of such drinks to finally give birth to mezcal.\(^55,56\) Specialists on the topic indicate that mezcal production techniques emerged “with the different adaptations of the Filipino still, the later adaptations of the Arab still … and the blending of both the Asian and the Arab techniques.”\(^57\) In sum, mezcal was created through a *metizaje*\(^58\)
process—hybridizing Mesoamerican foodways, European materials and Arab and Asian technologies.

Since 1994, mezcal has been protected by a denomination of origin (DO): a legal designation, first developed by Europeans, that aims to guarantee an exported product’s “authenticity,” based on production techniques and linked to place—or terroir. Bowen's Divided Spirits provides caveats to the conception introduced earlier that the outcome of a self-creation process (or the process through which a culture defines something as its own, in this case through a DO) automatically generates effects of authenticity. Bowen is highly critical of how the mezcal DO has been implemented and managed. She explains that the mezcal DO development and implementation has been an undemocratic and unfair process for the profit of a handful powerful mezcal industry players, and that its management has potentially threatened the survival of mezcaleros like Adolfo. In fact, like most traditional mezcal sourced by the Mezcaloteca, Adolfo chooses not to certify his mezcal with the DO. Yet, traditional mezcals are seen as the most authentic, while many of the mezcals certified by the DO are perceived as inauthentic by mezcal connoisseurs such as Silvia and Andrea. As such, generating mezcal’s authenticity requires more than a collective agreement on how to produce the drink, and a recent update to the mezcal DO regulations provides answers on what other aspects are required.
Table 1: The three new mezcal categorizes, as defined by the NOM070 of the mezcal DO (see section 4.4.1-4.4.3 of the NOM. Author's translation from original Spanish).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mezcal DO (NOM070)</th>
<th>Mezcal</th>
<th>Artisanal Mezcal</th>
<th>Ancestral Mezcal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cooking</strong></td>
<td>- Pit ovens - Elevated stone ovens - Autoclaves</td>
<td>- Pit ovens - Elevated stone ovens</td>
<td>- Pit oven</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Can use maguey heads or maguey juice</td>
<td>Can only use maguey heads (no juice)</td>
<td>Can only use maguey heads (no juice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grinding</strong></td>
<td>- Tahona (stone wheel) - Chilean or Egyptian mill - Trapiche - Shredder - Series of mills - Diffuser</td>
<td>- Mallets - Tahona (stone wheel) - Chilean or Egyptian mill - Trapiche - Shredder</td>
<td>- Mallets - Tahona (stone wheel) - Chilean or Egyptian mill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Process may use maguey fibers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Process may use maguey fibers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distilling</strong></td>
<td>- Stills - Continuous stills - Columns stills</td>
<td>- Direct fire on copper stills - Direct fire on clay pots</td>
<td>- Direct fire on clay pots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stills made of copper or steel</td>
<td>Coils made of clay, wood, copper, or stainless steel, and process may include maguey fibers</td>
<td>Coils made of clay or wood, and process may include maguey fibers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an attempt to increase the number of *mezcaleros* that obtain and use the DO, the *Consejo Regulator del Mezcal* (CRM, formerly known as the COMERCAM), which is the organization that oversees mezcal regulations, published in February 2017 the new regulation “NOM070,” introducing three distinct DO categories (1) Mezcal, (2) Artisanal Mezcal, and (3) Ancestral Mezcal. By looking at NOM070 categories in Table 1, it is clear that the Ancestral Mezcal category is analogous to the way Adolfo is making his mezcal: *maguey* cooked in earth pit oven, ground with mallets, fermented in animal skin with fiber, and distilled in clay pots. The Artisanal Mezcal category is more forgiving of
modern techniques as it authorizes to cook in an elevated stone oven, to grind with a shredder, and distill using copper coils. The Mezcal category permits the use of many modern techniques used by the tequila industry: to cook *maguey* using autoclaves, to grind with a shredder or diffuser, to ferment in stainless steel tanks, and to distill using columns stills made of copper or steel. This is a gradation of authenticity which exposes three distinct hybridizing increments that can be outlined as: (1) before the use of copper distilling, (2) before the use of the autoclave, and (3) after the development of mass-producing industrial techniques.

![Figure 14: An example of autoclaves that can be used to cook *maguey*. Credit photo: Ben Olivares. Permission granted.](image-url)
The introduction of the three new mezcal categories thus implies that the “more premodern” the choices of materials and processes are, the “more authentic” the mezcal is perceived to be. This conception was also found in Adolfo’s narrative surrounding traditional mezcal authenticity where he—in a selective fashion—puts the authentic emphasis on all premodern techniques: earth-pit cooking, manual crushing, cowhide fermenting, and clay distilling. Meanwhile, he downplays the fact that he is moving away from using wild maguey, and that he is, unlike the generations before him who used glass jars, storing and transporting his mezcal production in five-gallon plastic water bottles.
Figure 16: Adolfo showing us the now dusty glass jars in which his father and grandfather used to store and distribute their mezcal productions.
In *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, Rosa explains what drives the widespread association between premodernity and authenticity: “territorial and social niches or oases of deceleration that have until now been partly or entirely left out of the accelerating processes of modernization [...] gain ‘nostalgic’ value and make more enticing promises the rarer they become.” Adolfo’s mezcal thus generates effects of authenticity as it acts as an “oasis of deceleration” safeguarded and safeguarding from accelerating processes of modernization. The current search for the authentic is likely a search on the part of contemporary moderns for some sort of connection to the premodern realm. As Martin pointed out in his study of Cajun cuisine, this would be somewhat of a paradox. This is because Cajun cuisine—like mezcal, and as Cook and Crang argued, all foodways—are themselves the products of active hybridization dynamics, therefore, they are not tied to a specific chronological era. The paradox comes from seeing a chronological era as being somewhat more authentic—somewhat “pure”—while hybridization processes has always been taking place at all epochs.

Although a paradox, performances of the premodern remain a core aspect for generating effects of authenticity in mezcal, as suggested by the new DO categories and traditional mezcal narratives provided by Adolfo and the Mezcaloteca. It is important to mention that this search for the premodern can lead to both favorable and unfavorable outcomes. On the one hand, this search for the premodern acts as a clear consumer demand for mezcal producers to capitalize on. On the other hand, the terminology and the practices surrounding “traditional mezcal produced the old-way” or “Ancestral Mezcal” are creating some sort of golden age myth; which implies that with the arrival of modern
techniques, mezcal authenticity only “went downhill.” Terms such as “old-way,” “traditional,” and “ancestral” explicitly evoke that golden age myth. Such “melancholia”, to retake MacCannell’s term, has the potential to fix mezcal and mezcaleros to a detrimental “museum of production” state, a risk of cultural stagnation carried by any food regulated by a DO.

4.7. Authenticity: Society’s Well-being

As Guignon warned, performing authenticity, “...must involve the commitment to sustaining and nurturing the type of society in which such an ideal is possible... [A]uthenticity, like many other character ideals, carries with it an obligation to contribute to the maintenance and well-being of a particular type of social organization and way of life.” As such, the success of the mezcal DO (or any other DO and similar certifications that intend to authenticate foodways) resides upon its contribution to the maintenance and well-being of its associated societies.

In her analysis of the mezcal DO, Bowen presents compelling reservations as to its ability to contribute to the well-being of mezcal producing societies. Bowen describes how the mezcal DO—just as notoriously was the case with the introduction of the tequila DO—has been homogenizing ingredients and techniques in a way that advantages mass-producing mezcal producers that do not employ the traditional mezcal making art described by Adolfo and Silvia. The mezcal DO, viewed as a mechanism for consumers around the globe to taste the culture of mezcaleros like Adolfo’s, might have been providing nothing more than a taste of the power of a few mass-producers aligned on homogenizing techniques. This homogenization has made mezcal increasingly
disembedded from societies where the mezcal foodways are learned and shared. Instead of “disembedded,” many would use the term “detrimentalized,” to describe how mezcal is increasingly operated “in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities.” To be consistent with the cultural hybridity view, I argue that instead of the terms “territorializon” and “detrimentalizion,” in the context of foods and foodways, the terms “embedded” and “disembedded” are more appropriate as they provide the means to refer to bonds between identities, cultures and foodways without imposing boundaries (political, religious, ethnic, etc.). Similar to how culture has been defined in this paper, foods and foodways that are embedded in a society are understood here to be learned (ongoing, changing, open) and shared (no fixed boundaries, based on common social experience) by its members.

Applying Guignon’s framework to DOs, it appears that a DO selling disembedded foods will struggle to generate effects of authenticity. That is because such foods have few or no links with the type of society in which their authenticity ideal is possible. Although a struggle, with the help of branding and marketing practices, it remains possible to generate some effects of authenticity while selling disembedded foods. The locus of authenticity then becomes the stage of power negotiations between groups (a phenomenon that will be explored in more details in the next section). As traditionally protected markets are opened up to global trade liberalization, the locus of authenticity is actually shifting away from producers like Adolfo, to concentrate in the hands of capital intensive and vertically integrated transnational firms. For example, on the website of Diageo plc, the world’s largest transnational alcohol company
(LSE:DGE, NYSE:DEO, ISEQ:GUI), their tequila is presented as follow: “Each drop of Don Julio Tequila is produced here and each bottle features our NOM number—our seal of authenticity—signifying where the tequila was made.”

Now that mezcal is trending (the exportation of mezcal on the global market have increased by 157% from 2011 to 2016), Diageo plc signed, in February 2016, a distribution contract with Mezcal Union. Recently, other world’s major alcohol companies have entered the mezcal industry: in February 2017, Bacardi Limited became the minority owner of Ilegal Mezcal, and in June 2017 Pernod Ricard (Euronext: RI) became the majority owner of the Del Maguey Single Village Mezcal. By acquiring mezcal operations, and by making their way into the mezcal DO management and development, these newcomers are placing themselves in a position where they have the opportunity to participate in defining the meaning of authenticity in mezcal. Without taking a stance regarding these recent acquisitions, it should be noted that socially disembedded food operations have been documented as decreasing food-producing societies’ socioeconomic, social fabric, and environmental well-being, whereas socially embedded ones as generating positive impacts on the same metrics. As such, regardless of the type of ownership, for the well-being of societies, there is a need to stimulate the reproduction of embedded foodways, and prevent that they turn into disembedded ones.

The challenge for DOs then becomes to avoid turning foodways into a museum of production built around a society that no longer exists, while also avoiding causing foodways to become disembedded from their societies. Though the new NOM070 categorization is an effort to differentiate the bottles of embedded mezcal produced by
mezcaleros like Adolfo, it is still too recent to measure what the effects will be. When asked about the future of mezcal, Silvia expressed reservations about the new DO categories: “The tendency in the [least regulated] category of Mezcal is more brands with worse mezcales; few projects are going to protect the cultural part of it and the biodiversity in plants.” It follows that the main purpose of any food certification that intends to generate effects of authenticity in foodways must primarily aim at preserving and contributing to the well-being of societies where such foodways are embedded—that is, societies from which a food culture or foodways can be learned and shared.

4.8. Authenticity: The Tasting Experience

The tasting experience can be understood as being composed of two dimensions: the taste “on the tongue,” and the taste as a dynamic social process. Here is how Andrea describes the taste “on the tongue” of the mezcal batch bought from Adolfo during our visit:

“The taste for me is very unique in that it is not very smoky due to the fact that they cover the oven with palm leaves and use oak to cook the plants and it is sweet due to the plants they use and the dry climate in which they grow. The leather fermentation gives it a unique, meaty aroma but I do not find it changes the flavor that much compared to other clay pot distilled mezcales from other regions. The clay pot distillation gives an earthy, clay like flavor and is what I would describe as a “round” mouthfeel, not as “clean” or direct of a plant flavor as the copper distilled mezcales.”
As a mezcalero interviewed by Bowen puts it: “I make good mezcal, and it doesn't make sense for me [to start the process of certification].” Interestingly, Adolfo’s mezcal, like most traditional mezcal sourced by the Mezcaloteca, is not currently certified by the DO either (although this might change with the new Ancestral Mezcal category introduced by NOM070, which Silvia sees as being analogous to the definition of traditional mezcal). It should be noted that DOs are ‘differentialist’ by design: they are mechanisms promoting and constructing boundaries—which is, more often than not, a problematic endeavor. For example, in the case of the territorial boundaries included in the mezcal DO, Ignacio Trevino, a biologist at the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO), considers them as “fictitious” and “based on political, not environmental, boundaries.”

For mezcaleros producing mezcal the old-way and for mezcal aficionados like the people at the Mezcaloteca, process-based and place-based certifications seem of secondary importance: the taste “on the tongue” is really the main attention. The focus on taste explains why most of the mezcaleros making traditional mezcal are not DO certified: as long as their mezcal provides a particular taste profile, their craft will be consumed. In this case, making traditional mezcal the “old-way” (or making Ancestral Mezcal under the DO) has for its primary purpose to provide a particular taste “on the tongue,” not to purely promote the use of premodern processes and materials just for their own sake. The taste “on the tongue” is therefore highly influential in what generates effects of authenticity in mezcal. As argued hereafter, the tasting experience is actually where the concept of boundaries in DOs has its purpose.
Adding the taste “on the tongue” dimension into the process of performing authenticity explains why cowhide fermenting, earth pit roasting, and clay distilling are important methods for Adolfo to value. As Adolfo mentioned during the demonstration, and as Andrea expressed in the tasting description of Adolfo's mezcal, the use of these processes strongly impacts the taste “on the tongue.” Similarly, having mezcal frequently
produced in small batches, a characteristic of traditional mezcal listed by Silvia, is important to value as it better captures the fluctuations in environmental conditions where mezcaleros produce and live. These fluctuations are reflected in taste variations, allowing the consumer to experience an embedded mezcal; which is also crucial in producing effects of authenticity. On the other hand, Adolfo’s use of domesticated maguey and plastic jars has little impacts on his mezcal’s authenticity value, the reason being their negligible influence on his mezcal’s taste. Although for the use of domesticated maguey, this remains true only if the breeding does not unfavorably impact the flavors of the maguey, as resulted with the domestication of other foods like tomatoes and strawberries. Likewise, temporary storage and transportation in plastic jars instead of glass has likely minimal effects on taste. If there was a significant impact, it is likely that Adolfo would still be using glass, even though plastic is sturdier. The mezcal golden age myth generated by traditional and Ancestral Mezcal discourses introduced earlier could very well be based on the taste “on the tongue” experience more than on boundaries such as process, material, geographical location, and/or mezcalero.

In its dynamics social process form, the tasting experience has influence on how groups choose to consume one food over another—say, Adolfo’s mezcal over pulque. As detailed hereafter through an analysis of other foodways, a reason why mezcal is currently preferred to pulque by many—even if mezcal is one hybridization layer further, arguably making pulque ‘more premodern,’ thus perceived by some as ‘more authentic’—is because mezcal arguably better aligns with the contemporary taste of influential groups than pulque does.
The establishment of taste as a dynamic social process comes from Pierre Bourdieu, who, in his seminal work *Distinction*, compared nutritional and aesthetic practices between social classes in 1970s Paris. He investigated the working-class (who generally approached food as “fuel”) and the *petit-bourgeois* (who generally approached food less as a necessity, more as recreational) to theorize the concept of social capital, and to posit that taste is not innate, but instead a social construct which is used as a “social weapon” that maintains a social order. Tastes and associated foodways are thus defined by social capital in a given context, and how they are identified as authentic is not innate or spontaneous, but ultimately governed by the power dynamics of the groups in play. In the case of *pulque* (fermented *maguey* sap), for more than four centuries it has been disregarded by the middle and upper Mexican post-conquest classes, as it was associated as a “lowly” indigenous drink, whereas mezcal (fermented, then distilled *maguey piñas* juice) has been embraced and consumed as a way of class distinction. In turn, *pulque* maintained a sense of unification and identity amongst indigenous and non-indigenous from similar lower social ranks (the poor, destitute and rebellious). The case of *pulque* and mezcal, considered along with other foodways cases contained in the next paragraph, exposes how the tasting experience, in its dynamic social process form, is a crucial dimension in performing authenticity.

Martin’s study of Cajun cuisine provides a further instance of taste as a dynamic social process: “Go back further than the end of Reconstruction as a reference point, and there exists the danger of recreating an authenticity that would not be palatable, nor convincing, to either today’s tourists or Americanized Cajuns.” The case of Cajun
cuisine in the United States is similar to the rise of the curry houses in the UK where “white customers” dictated the degree of spice levels, ingredients and overall taste of the meals.\textsuperscript{94} In his study on curry houses, Stephen Fielding states that “the effort to identify the ‘real’ cuisine is a larger struggle to create or bridge social boundaries.”\textsuperscript{95} The struggle associated with efforts to identify “real cuisine” or “authentic foods” is highly context dependent. In some contexts, taste is expressed as a way to build nationhood, as seen with how authentic Belizean food has been defined.\textsuperscript{96} In other contexts, taste is expressed as a way to safeguard an existing, but threatened national identity, as seen with the revaluation of poutine by Quebecois in the face of their Canadization.\textsuperscript{97} As expressed by Leong-Salobir, taste also often transcends its national circumscription to form transnational identities.\textsuperscript{98} This was seen with the emergence of a transnational culinary identity dubbed “Basmatichtan”: a shared pan-South Asian culinary patriotism crossing the Indo-Gangetic Plain between India and Pakistan that rose to protect the basmati taste heritage of the area.\textsuperscript{99} Taste has also been used as a way to reminisce on a nostalgic identity in transnational experiences, as Tulasi Srinivas exposed in her work about South Indian mothers living in Bangalore and Boston.\textsuperscript{100} Without being linked to national or transnational identity, taste can be a proxy to express distinctiveness when a group feels that their foodways are being threatened by industrial mass culture’s homogenization of food, as done by the associations of pizzaiolos (pizza-makers) whose purpose is to safeguard what they purport to be the authentic taste of handmade Margherita and Marinara Pizzas.\textsuperscript{101}
As Arjun Appadurai alludes in his letter titled *On Culinary Authenticity* (1986): “Quality is typically the insider's concern, authenticity that of the culinary tourist.” I would argue that this view remains valid until the concept of authenticity is used against the insider’s interests: until the embedded foodways of a group is threatened. This recalls what Claude Fischler (1988) said of identity: “The question of identity only arise when identity is disturbed.” In the case of poutine above, it is when poutine came to be identified as of Canadian ownership that the Quebecois started to oppose such appropriation by requesting that poutine be labeled as of Quebecois ownership. In the mezcal case, as embedded traditional *mezcaleros* felt excluded from the mezcal DO management, and that for the profit of disembedded mass-producers, the *traditional mezcaleros* became vocal in distinguishing themselves as the ones producing authentic mezcal. Doing so, they were ultimately able to influence the CRM in the modification of the mezcal DO who came up with the creation of the three mezcal categories previously discussed.

These other instances of foodways and the case of mezcal indicate how the notion of an authentic taste is central to group identities, and how it is negotiated by the social forces in play in a given context. In this sense, the tasting experience is arguably the most legitimate boundary a DO can be based upon (acknowledging the taste “on the tongue” dimensions whose outcomes are in part influenced by environmental specificities). The taste “on the tongue” dictates some territorial-environmental borders where a DO could be confined, and the taste as a dynamic social process further refines or expands such borders depending on the social powers in play. Such expansion of
borders was actually seen with the mezcal DO. The most recent account is in 2015, when
the state of Puebla was added to the eight other states in the mezcal DO region: Oaxaca,
Durango, Guanajuato, Guerrero, San Luis Potosi, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas, Michoacan.\textsuperscript{106}

Consequently, with regards to foods, performances of authenticity should be
understood as an outcome of a group self-defining process as suggested by Martin, but
also, as Ceccarini argues, one that is constantly in motion.\textsuperscript{107} But this motion is not
random; its locus changes according to the evolution of contemporary taste that is defined
by social capital and overall power dynamics of groups in a given context. In some of
these social negotiations, authentication—or performing authenticity—brings support in
reproducing embedded foodways through time—from a generation to another—; and this
is where the concept of authenticity becomes relevant, given that embedded foodways
contribute to societies’ socioeconomic, social fabric, and environmental well-being.

4.8. Conclusion

This paper has investigated accounts of mezcal production, marketing and
consumption to understand what currently confers, or rather constructs, its authenticity.
Authenticity has been understood as a concept that has no fixed definition, yet holds real
power as a context-dependent effect. In relation to foodways, authenticity has been
established as a performative effect which has for base a group self-creation project. In
the mezcal context, the traditional \textit{mezcaleros} identified themselves as the ones
producing authentic mezcal in order to be distinguished from the disembedded mezcal
producers.
The analysis of Adolfo’s and Silvia’s traditional mezcal discourses, complemented by the content of the three newly introduced NOM070 mezcal categories of the DO certification, has exposed the “performance of the premodern” to be a crucial aspect in generating effects of authenticity today. As traditional mezcal and Ancestral Mezcal perform the premodern, they provide an “oasis of deceleration” safeguarded and safeguarding from today’s accelerating processes of modernization, and are thus generating augmented effects of authenticity for moderns.

This article has further argued that the tasting experience is central to generating effects of authenticity. The tasting experience was conceptualized both as the taste “on the tongue,” and taste as a dynamic process and social construct that is negotiated by the social capital of groups in a given context. A section of the paper detailed how the mezcal taste “on the tongue” does influence its authenticity perception. However, by juxtaposing pulque and mezcal’s sociohistorical status to other foodways (such as the Cajun cuisine, the Quebecois poutine, the Belizean cuisine, and “Basmatisthan”), this research suggests that the effects of authenticity in foodways are not only driven by the taste “on the tongue,” but primarily defined by the outcomes of social negotiations in tastes between groups. In other words, the part of the paper about the “tasting experience” has revealed how the effects of authenticity in foods and foodways are the products of processes through which a taste is socially negotiated, which results in members of a food culture performing a particular taste as being their own.

Further, this paper has emphasized that the reproduction of foodways bears a responsibility to contribute to the maintenance and well-being of societies where such
foodways can be embedded; where they can be learned and shared. It follows that in the context of DOs, the maintenance and well-being of societies where foodways are embedded must be prioritized over the conservation of the certified food items themselves. Without a society to emanate from, the concept of authenticity in foodways loses its relevance, which is in its power as a performative and rhetorical strategy for groups to socially negotiate the reproduction of their embedded foodways through time.

Chapter 4 - Endnotes

2. Ibid.
3. Dr. Trubek is an Associate Professor in the Nutrition and Food Science department at the University of Vermont (UVM), and Faculty Director for UVM’s graduate program in Food Systems.
4. Dr. Mares is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at UVM.
5. Adolfo is a pseudonym used to ensure confidentiality.
9. Schmidt, “Multiple Modernities or Varieties of Modernity?”
15. Ibid., 67-97.


20. Whether distillation was a process used in Mesoamerica prior to the European Contact is still subjected to debates. For more information see Daniel Zizumbo-Villarreal et al., “Distillation in Western Mesoamerica before European Contact,” Economic Botany 63, no. 4 (December 1, 2009): 413–26, doi:10.1007/s12231-009-9103-6.


30. Varga and Guignon, “Authenticity.”

31. Ibid.


34. Varga and Guignon, “Authenticity.”


42. Ibid., 118.


46. Varga and Guignon, “Authenticity.”


51. Zizumbo-Villarreal et al., “Distillation in Western Mesoamerica before European Contact.”


55. See note 20 regarding the debate about distillation in Mesoamerica.


83. Bowen, Divided Spirits: Tequila, Mezcal, and the Politics of Production, 126.

84. Nederveen Pieterse, Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange, 60.


91. Kasiak, “Fermenting Identities: Race and Pulque Politics in Mexico City between 1519 and 1754.”

92. Ibid., 12.


95. Ibid., 36.


104. Fabien-Ouellet, “Poutine Dynamics.”


107. Ceccarini, “Food Bureaucracy and the Making of Authentic Pizza.”, 31
CHAPTER 5: THE IDENTITY CRISIS OF HARD CIDER

5.1. Abstract

In the past 5 years, the hard cider industry in the U.S. underwent a sudden and dramatic growth period. This boom has brought challenges on the cider-specific apple supply side, which have started to be researched, but issues on to the hard cider demand side are also emerging, and limited research has been conducted on the topic. This mixed methods study conducted in Vermont—a crucial player of the U.S. hard cider industry—fills the literature gaps both on the apple supply side and the hard cider demand side. On the apple supply side, a round of fourteen semi-structured interviews established that long-term formalized contract and cooperative (the two strategic partnership mechanisms used by world’s leading industries to manage cider-specific apple production) are currently ill-adapted to the Vermont industry context. On the hard cider demand side, the cider makers surveyed expressed high interest in working under a geographical indication (GI) label to develop consumers’ hard cider literacy and increase demand. This research project further indicates that as GIs can act as powerful economic development tools, introducing hard cider GIs could lead to tackling current hard cider industry issues both on the apple supply side and on the hard cider demand side.
5.2. Introduction

After years of exponential growth, the hard cider industry finds itself at a critical juncture to define its own identity. While European equivalents are mature industries offering well-defined products, like the “Herefordshire cider,” the “cidre de Bretagne” or the “sidra de Asturias” (to name a few), the hard cider industry in the U.S. is still offering products that lack clear and cohesive definitions. Currently, U.S. hard cider is constantly oscillating between the borrowed identities of beer and wine. This likely prevents the hard cider industry from reaching maturation, as it creates confusion and engenders difficulties in retaining customers gained in the last few years and in attracting new ones. The hard cider industry is aware of the issue as the number one goal contained in the 2017-2020 United State Cider Association Strategic Plan is listed as “grow demand for all styles of cider in the U.S. market. Establish a nationally-recognized consumer-focused cider lexicon with the explicit goal of helping consumers of differing cider knowledge identify cider styles and products they are most likely to enjoy.”¹ It should be noted here that there are two layers of differentiation at play in this goal: (1) affirming hard cider as a drink with its own identity, distinct from European ones, (2) differentiating between the diverse hard cider styles within the U.S. industry.

The sudden gains in production of hard cider has led researchers across producing states to study the challenges faced by the industry. The literature on the topic has so far focused on the lack of supply of cider-specific apples in the U.S. domestic markets. Virtually no research has been undertaken on the demand side of hard cider beside Tozer et al. who looked at the willingness to pay of consumers.² This research
uses mixed methods to fill the gap in the literature on both the apple supply side and the hard cider demand side. On the apple supply side, this study reports on interviews conducted with industry stakeholders, mainly apple growers and cider makers, on the use of long-term formalized contracts and cooperative to stimulate the production of cider-specific apples. On the hard cider demand side, this research reports on the interests of cider makers regarding the implementation of a geographical indication (GI) labeling system to differentiate between the different hard cider styles, and increase demand. In addition to documenting on strategies for coordinating cider-specific apple production, and for labeling hard cider, this research project provides the overall conclusion that efforts surrounding the planting of additional cider-specific apple trees must be preceded by an increase in demand for hard ciders made with cider-specific apples. This study focuses on the Vermont hard cider industry as cider makers from this state expressed the need to source more cider-specific apples from their area. The following literature review contains details on the current state of the hard cider industry in the U.S. and Vermont, as well as on ways world’s leading cider-specific apple industries manage their production, and differentiate themselves through GI certifications.

5.3. Literature Review

5.3.1. What is Hard Cider

In the United States the beverage classification “cider” needs an adjective in order to distinguish between beverages made of unfiltered apple juice (sweet cider), and alcoholic beverages made from the fermentation of unfiltered apple juice (hard cider). This distinction was created during the Temperance movement at the eve of the 18th
Amendment, passed in 1919, which led to the era of Prohibition. The composition of the apple juice used by U.S. cider makers today can be sourced from an array of apple cultivars, including lower-grade dessert cultivars (e.g. 'McIntosh', 'Cortland'), dual-purpose cultivars that can be grown both for the fresh or cider (e.g. 'Idared', 'Northern Spy'), as well as cider-specific apple cultivars like bittersharp (e.g. 'Kingston Black'), and bittersweet cultivars (e.g. 'Dabinett', 'Fillbarrel'). Cider-specific apples are apples with the unique flavors, high-acid qualities, and astringent tannin characteristics suited only to hard cider production.

In 2017, the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TBB), which regulates alcohol sales in the United States, classifies hard cider as a wine, and defines three tax classes of hard cider. “Artificially carbonated hard cider” is the tax class for hard cider artificially injected with carbon dioxide and containing more than 0.392 but not more than 0.64 grams of carbon dioxide per 100 milliliters. “Still hard cider” is the tax class for a hard cider containing not more than 0.392 grams of carbon dioxide per 100 milliliters. “Sparkling hard cider” is the tax class for hard cider containing more than 0.392 but not more than 0.64 grams of carbon dioxide per 100 milliliters of wine, resulting solely from the secondary fermentation of the wine within a closed container. Here are the TBB parameters listed for a “wine” to be eligible for the hard cider tax rate: contains no more than 0.64 grams of carbon dioxide per 100 milliliters, is derived primarily from apples/pears juice or apple/pear concentrate and water, contain no other fruit product, and contains at least 0.5% and less than 8.5% alcohol by volume. Non-fruit flavors (such as
ginger or spices) do not disqualify from eligibility for the hard cider tax rate. The TBB does not consider whether a hard cider is made with cider-specific fruits or not.

5.3.2. The Rise of the Hard Cider Industry

In *Cider, Hard and Sweet*, Ben Watson explores the origins of the hard cider in the United States. While many areas in Europe have their own version of the drink that draws on millennium heritages—such as the highly regarded producing regions of West Country in England, Normandie and Bretagne in France, Asturias and Basque in Spain—the apple, necessary to hard cider production, was only brought to the Americas a few centuries ago by European settlers. Hard cider shaped 17th-19th century colonists’ life in Northeastern America. In New England, by 1775, “one out of every ten [settler’s] farms owned and operated its own cider mill.” Watson indicates that hard cider quickly became the United States “national drink,” as both adults and children, the elite and working class people were consuming it.

As seen on Figure 18, by 1899, 55 million gallons (2 million hectolitres) of hard cider were produced in the United States. However, with the enactment of the 18th Amendment, the consumption decreased to 13 million gallons (492,000 hectolitres) in 1919, and the drink was slowly abandoned to the point that in 1990 only 271,000 gallons (10,000 hectolitres) were produced. But hard cider made a comeback and in 1996, the production increased to reach 5.3 million gallons (200,600 hectolitres). In 2015, the TBB reported 55 million gallons (2 million hectolitres) sold in the United States. This hard cider boom was in part attributed to the “craft beer” movement that drew consumers to experiment new “craft beverages.” Watson further indicates that the cider comeback
was largely driven by “large national or multinational brands, whose owners have the capital and the distribution channels to get bottles (and now cans) of their product onto store shelves.”\textsuperscript{16} In 2016, the production of hard cider went down to 47 million gallons (1.8 million hectolitres),\textsuperscript{17} and sales in the United States totaled $209.7 million in revenue.\textsuperscript{18} IBISWorld projects the recent U.S. declines in hard cider production to level off toward long-term stability, with a 1.2\% annualized growth rate in revenue over the next five years.\textsuperscript{19} Even after this dramatic increase in production, Petrillo indicates that the hard cider industry is not mature yet, but has passed the stage of quantity growth, and has entered the stage of quality growth.\textsuperscript{20}

![Figure 18: Hard cider production in the United States. Data prior of 2000s are from Watson (2013); data starting in the 2000s are from the TBB and account for the production of bottled hard cider for which taxes were paid: https://www.ttb.gov/wine/wine-stats.shtml.](image)

The rise of the hard cider industry in the United States is now confronted by challenges both from the apple supply side and the hard cider demand sides. With the dramatic increase in hard cider production, some U.S. cider makers have expressed
concerns over the limited supply of cider-specific apples in their domestic markets. This supply-demand apple gap has started to be researched in several apple-producing states such as Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Vermont. On the hard cider demand side, Watson notes that “[e]ven today, when interest in cider is high and sales of major commercial brands are soaring, many people don’t quite know what to make of hard cider—what it should taste like, when to serve or drink it. [US-Americans], especially, are still in the process of reinventing a ‘cider culture’.” However, little research has been undertaken on the differentiation of hard cider styles, and on demand for hard cider made with cider-specific apples in particular. In one of the first studies that looked at demand, Tozer et al., who studied the willingness-to-pay (WTP) of consumers for different hard cider taste profiles, noted: “Given that there are no well-defined standards to categorize [hard] cider styles, such as there are for wines, consumers are faced with a difficult task of making a [hard] cider purchase based on inconsistent information on the product label.” Such confusion likely hinders the hard cider industry to reach maturation.

5.3.3. Vermont Hard Cider Industry

In 2015 and 2016, the TBB has ranked Vermont as the state with the highest amount of bottled of hard cider on which taxes were paid (with 9.8% and 8.3% of total production respectively). Cider makers in Vermont are diverse in their profile ranging from independent cider makers who grow some of their apples (orchard-based cider makers), to independent cider makers who do not grow their apples (non-orchard-based cider makers), to the number two hard cider brand in the US with a market share of
23.3%, which is now owned by a transnational company: C&C Group plc (ISEQ: GCC). Vermont is also the state with the most ice cider producers (ice cider is a fermented apple-based beverage closely related to hard cider). As such, Vermont is a crucial and dynamic player of the U.S. hard cider industry.

On the apple supply side, Becot, Bradshaw and Conner (2016) documented that cider makers in Vermont highly value the sourcing of apples from their state or regional (New England) markets. However, as in other states, cider makers in Vermont are currently unable to source their desired cider-specific apples from these markets in sufficient quantity due to the limited volume currently grown in these areas. Because of the limited supply, Vermont cider makers who want to source more domestically grown cider-specific apples need to either enter or expand cider-specific apple production themselves, or enter strategic partnerships with apple growers that will produce the desired apples for their cidery. However, Vermont apple growers are still reluctant to produce the cider-specific apple cultivars desired by the cider makers. A major obstacle is said to be the current selling agreement scheme—largely based on “handshake agreements” between cider makers and apple growers—which creates little incentive for growers to undertake the long-term risks associated with orchard diversification toward ciders-specific apples. For apple growers established as dessert apples producers, the diversification of their orchards towards cider-specific production involves managerial, technical and financial challenges. Becot, Bradshaw and Conner described the diversification of Vermont orchards toward cider-specific production as a “long-term investment that entails significant risk,” mainly because of the limited number of...
potential buyers of cider-specific fruits, limited horticultural knowledge, and absence of guarantees regarding return-on-investment. Becot, Bradshaw and Conner further suggest orchards diversification for hard cider will bring socioeconomic gains in Vermont with an increase in entrepreneurial activity, the creation of jobs, the enhancement of investments, and the augmentation of the Vermont brand. To concretize these gains, the authors stated the need for research regarding long-term formalized contracts or other inter-organizational strategic partnerships that promote orchards diversification, while protecting both the growers’ and cideries’ interests. Inter-organizational strategic partnerships can take the form of a variety of governance mechanisms such as contracts, joint ventures, direct investment or cooperatives. This research project focuses on contracts and cooperative strategies, as these are the mechanisms used by world’s leading industries of cider-specific apples, as reviewed below.

On the hard cider demand side, the topic is undocumented in Vermont just as it is the case in the rest of the U.S. industry. It is worth mentioning here that in 2015, consumers present at the Vermont Cider Classic voted for a ginger flavored hard cider as 2015 Vermont’s Best Cider, and in 2017, a pumpkin flavored hard cider won the award. Just like in the rest of the industry, hard cider in Vermont is subjected to a very fluid definition that creates confusion for consumers. For example, Citizen Cider presents their Wits Up Cider as one that “drink like an ale,” and concurrently market another hard cider named the bRosé as a “lovely summer rosé style cider.” Stowe Cider presents some of their hard cider as “Chardonnay [and] barrel aged cider,” while Windfall
Orchard mentions that their Farmhouse Hard Cider is “…bottle condition for a natural bubble reminiscent of Champagne.”

5.3.4. Cider-Specific Apple Management by World’s Leading Industries

France and the United Kingdom are, with Spain, the three principal producers of cider-specific apples in the world. The U.K. is ranked second largest cider-specific orchard with 7,000 hectares that yield an average production of 200,000 tons of cider-specific apples per year. About 80% of cider-specific apples are managed under long-term contractual schemes that legally bind an apple grower and a cider maker. They can be established up to three years before trees are planted, and they last on average 20 years. These contracts prompt frequent and transparent communications between apple growers and cider makers, and frame the discussions about expected yields, quality standards, delivery of fruits, rejection of fruit, pricing, price adjustment, and payment. Some apple growers opt to contract their whole orchards to one cider maker, while others contract separate orchards’ blocks to several buyers. Major cider makers in Ireland and the U.K. source most of their apple under contractual schemes, but they also source some from their own orchards. For example, Weston’s Cider sources 80% of their apples from contracts, and 20% from their own 400 acres orchards. One of the many cider styles offered by Weston’s, named The Henry Weston, is a certified Herefordshire cider (more on this certification later) for which they source apples from 325 Herefordshire apple growers, as well as from their own orchards. Similarly, Bulmers cider (own by Heineken International: Euronext: HEIA; OTCQX: HEINY) sources 75% of their apples from contracts, and 25% from their own orchards; Thatcher’s cider sources 75% from
contract, 25% from their own orchards; Magners (own by C&C Group plc (ISEQ: GCC)) source 97% from contract, 3% from their own orchards. Long-term formalized contracts for cider-specific apple production is said to be a strategic partnership mutually benefiting apple grower and cider makers, and a strategy that forces both parties to work on solutions as a team.

France claims to have the largest cider-specific orchards with 8,700 hectares that yield an average production of 260,000 tons of cider-specific apples per year. The filière cidricole (France cider industry) is composed of 10,000 fruit producers—1,500 of which strictly grow cider-specific apples—mainly from Bretagne, Basse-Normandie and Haute-Normandie, with some located in Pays de la Loire, Picardie, Nord-Pas de Calais, Pays d’Othe and Savoie. Two cooperatives, Agrial and Les Celliers associés, manage 85% of cidre production in France. The rest of the production is assured by about 500 orchard-based cider makers, and 40 cider makers that are not orchard-based. Today, 80% of the cider-specific apples of the filière cidricole are produced under contracts. In 2004, Agrial made the acquisition of Cidreries du Calvados la Fermière (CCLF) and now owns France’s largest cidre brands: Loïc Raison, Écusson and Kerisac. In 2016, Agrial acquired Seattle Cider Company. In their 2016 annual report, Agrial described this U.S. acquisition as a positioning strategy allowing the cooperative to capitalize on the world market for “Anglo-Saxon cider style” that is currently booming. According to a 2016 report from FranceAgrimer, the acquisitions of major cideries by growers’ cooperative are “interprofessional” acquisitions that allow collective strategies to be put in place for the benefits and development of the whole filière cidricole.
5.3.5. Geographical Indication Certifications

Fermented apple-based beverage differentiation in the global market is nothing new. It should be noted here that “cider,” “cidre,” “sidra,” or “apfelwein” are not pure translations of terms used interchangeably to designating fermented apple beverages; they also connote different tasting experiences. For example, for the filière cidricole, cidre implies “France-style” (fermented beverage made exclusively from apple or pear juice, maximum of 50% concentrate, no added-sugar), and cider implies “Anglo-Saxon-style” (sparkling beverage, no limit on the use of juice concentrate, added glucose syrup) and is described as a “beer alternative.”

A popular differentiation mechanism used by fermented apple-based beverage industries is geographical indication certifications (GIs) (see Table 2). GIs intend to protect both consumers and producers against fraud: as registered labels are regulated by a code of practices that has been verified by authority figures, GI products generate effects of authenticity for consumers and guarantee that the product sought is the genuine one, and at the same time, GIs assure producers against free-riding “imitators.” As such, GIs provide a competing advantage to producers as it “create[s] an image of ‘exoticness,’ or scarcity that enables them to obtain premium prices for products that would otherwise be ascribed commodity status. The main source of this exoticness comes from unique quality differences that may be attributed to production in a particular geographical area based on quality characteristics associated with that location.”

In their review on the pros and cons of GIs, Giovannucci et al. provide the following conclusions: “[GIs can] be a unique and powerful tool when adequately
managed. GIs can offer a comprehensive framework for rural development since they can positively encompass issues of economic competitiveness, stakeholder equity, environmental stewardship, and socio-cultural value. Among the rural development potentials listed are: “better quality rural employment”, “foster business clustering and rural integration,” and increased tourism influx. They further indicate that the downsides of GIs are largely attributed to bad management: “badly managed GIs can be dominated by limited political interests or just a few enterprises. In some cases, GIs can exclude the poorest producers or even stimulate inappropriate outcomes such as the dissolution of traditional practices or the destruction of biodiversity.”

Through their review, they identify four essential components to the success of GIs: (1) strong organizational and institutional structures to maintain, market, and monitor the GI, (2) equitable participation among the producers and enterprises in a GI region, (3) strong market partners committed to promote and commercialize over the long term, (4) effective legal protection including a strong domestic GI system.

Registered GIs are instruments to facilitate free trade, and are as such regulated by international organizations like the Court of Justice of the European Communities and the World Trade Organization. However, Giovannucci *et al.* indicate that in the in the United States, “even unregistered GIs may be recognized as common law marks and thus be enforceable if they rise to the level of a “source identifier,” which they define as “[a] trademark term meaning the capacity of a sign to clearly distinguish the goods or services of one enterprise (including a collective group of producers) from those of another enterprise.” Florida Oranges, Idaho Potatoes, Maine Lobster, Napa Valley Wine, and
Washington State Apples are all examples of preeminent GI brands in effect in the United States. There are actually are over 900 GIs in the U.S., 730 of which are wines, and 100 are spirits, but none for hard cider.

Although GIs are largely based on places of production, they also regularly contain process-based regulations. For example, two categories of sidra are marketed under the Sidra de Asturias GI: sidra and sidra natural. Their differences are largely based on processes: official documentation indicates that ‘traditional’ techniques must be used to market under sidra natural, which are defined as: wild yeast fermenting, no-filtration bottling, no added-CO2, no added sugar among other differentiating process-based parameters. Overall, 93% of the Sidra de Asturias production are sidra natural which are made at 90% by independent orchard-based cider makers. As shown on Table 2, GIs are largely used in Europe. In America, Quebec launched in 2014 its own GI to certify their cider de glace (ice cider). In the United States, as already detailed above, hard cider is regulated as a wine by the TBB. The TBB regulation does contain some GI guidelines in its “Wine Appellations of Origin” section, but the regulations would not be adapted to the hard cider context according to several cider makers that participated in this research project. States and counties are authorized to label under the wine appellation of origin regulations, and several counties agreeing on forming the same wine producing area can be regrouped and registered as an American Viticultural Areas (AVA). As of November, 20th 2016, there are 239 established AVAs in the United States, 17 of which are multi-state AVA.
### Table 2: GI certifications for fermented apple-based beverages. Data from the European Commission database and the *Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Protected Product</th>
<th>Registered Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Gloucestershire cider</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Herefordshire cider</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Worcestershire cider</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Cidre de Bretagne</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Cidre Cornouaille</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Cidre de Normandie</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Pays d'Auge ; Pays d'Auge-Cambrem</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Sidra de Asturias</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Calvados</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>Hessischer Apfelwein</td>
<td>2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>Cidre de Glace du Québec</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>Traditional Welsh Cider</td>
<td>2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Verlados</td>
<td>In review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Euskal Sagardoa / Sidra Natural del País Vasco</td>
<td>In review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Cidre Cotentin</td>
<td>In review</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are other means of differentiating hard cider styles than by putting forward solely its place of production, or processes involved. Since 2014, cider makers in Bretagne hold an annual blind tasting contest where medals are given. In this year competition, 130 samples spread across 15 different categories were assessed by 88 judges.\(^{78}\) A point system based on pre-defined distinguishing criteria serve to determine which *cidre* will be honored a medal each year. The organization named *La maison cidricole de Bretagne* indicates that these distinctions act as true reference points for consumers.\(^{79}\) In the United States, the Great Lakes International Cider and Perry Competition (GLINTCAP) is organizing an annual competition that is not regional like the one in Bretagne, nor exclusive to U.S. hard ciders: it is an international competition.\(^{80}\) Such competition is thus not designed to distinguish between hard style in United States *per se*. Finally, it is important to mention that some differentiation mechanisms, like the
Sidra de Manzana Seleccionada certification (a certification that is supplemental to the Sidra de Asturias GI), mixes both place, process and taste regulations.

5.4. Methods

This study was conducted using a mixed methods approach. Through fourteen semi-structured and open-end interviews, the first part of the project renders both apple growers, cider makers, as well as other key industry stakeholders’ perspectives on stimulating cider-specific apple production in Vermont. Then, the second part of the project reports on an online survey that measured the interests of cider makers in Vermont to work under several types of GIs. Table 3 provides a summary of the methods used, their associated research question and participants.

Table 3: Methods used, and their associated research question and participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixed Methods</th>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews</td>
<td>Are long-term contracts and cooperative strategic partnerships suitable to the Vermont hard cider industry to stimulate cider-specific apple production?</td>
<td>5 apple growers 6 cider makers 3 other industry stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online survey</td>
<td>Are cider makers in Vermont interested in working under a geographical indication certification (GI) to differentiate their hard cider styles?</td>
<td>9 out the 14 Vermont cider makers listed by the Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.4.1. Interviews

For this first step, data were collected through fourteen semi-structure interviews conducted with Vermont hard cider industry stakeholders. The director of the UVM Horticulture and Research and Education Center acted as a key informant and provided the research with contacts. Maximum variation sampling was used to ensure a wide representation of stakeholders. For apple growers, the variation criteria were based on
orchards’ acres to assure all types of apple grower operations were represented in the study: from fewer than 15 acres focusing mainly on the “pick-your-own” market, to 200 acres in production and above focusing primarily on the wholesale market, as well as apple growers who are selling on both markets. For cider makers, the variation criteria were based on the types of operations (orchard-based cideries, and non-orchard based cideries) to capture the view of all types of operations and hard cider style. In total, five apple growers and six cider makers observing the variation criteria, as well as three other stakeholders (the former president of the Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association, one of the owners of an apple storage facility, and the executive director of the Vermont Fresh Network) were interviewed between February and September 2016. One cider maker and one apple grower selected were located just outside Vermont borders, but were included in the project as they were identified by many stakeholders as highly connected and influential in, and even as part of, the Vermont hard cider industry. Long-term formalized contracts and cooperative models were the two main strategic partnership mechanisms presented, although the semi-structure interview format allowed for other strategies to be discussed. For this research, the interview guides were inspired by the strategic partnerships that are in place in the well-established cider-specific apple industries of the United Kingdom (long-term formalized contracts), and France (cooperative). Eleven interviews were conducted in person and on site of production, two were conducted over the phone, and one by email exchanges. Interviews recordings last between 52 minutes of duration on average; the shortest one lasts 20 minutes and the longest one lasts 90 minutes. Interviews were transcribed verbatim for open-coding
analysis of emerging themes in HyperResearch 3.7.3. The codes created for the analysis were generated to link the data to the specific research objectives, \(^{84}\) namely to measure the interest of establishing strategic partnership strategies within the Vermont hard cider industry to stimulate cider-specific apple production in the state. In addition, sub-codes related to diversification barriers, infrastructure needs and hybridity of production were used to identify patterns in motives for being interested or not by the strategic partnerships discussed.

5.4.2. Survey

In November 2016, an online survey was sent to all fourteen Vermont cider makers listed by the Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Association to measure their interest in the introduction of a label that would differentiate and define between their different hard cider styles. The survey was built upon the GIs mechanisms used by world’s leading industries. Three types of labels were proposed: a place-based label, a process-based label, and taste-based label. Out of the fourteen reached, nine cider makers participated in the survey which was open from November 2016 to February 2017. The online survey was designed strictly to measure Vermont cider maker interest in working under different labeling basis (place, process, and taste). An open-ended question allowed participants to specify their answers. The survey was not designed to detail the establishment or management of the proposed labels. The intend of this research project is to foster further discussions and research about increasing demand for hard cider made with cider-specific apples in Vermont and the U.S.
As a place-based label, the Lake Champlain watershed area was proposed as a hard cider AVA (see figure 3), and the Vermont State borders were suggested to serve as an appellation of origin. The Champlain Valley and the Vermont State borders had been mentioned by several cider makers as their perceived apple growing region during the interview process of the research. The Lake Champlain watershed area—which encompasses the Champlain Valley—, was instead suggested as a way to make the largest number of cider makers in Vermont feel included in GI conversations, while keeping a narrative of a growing region based on environmental factors. In addition, some process-based principles were tested as a part of the GI to differentiate between hard cider styles within a chosen area. The process-based principles were also tested as a differentiating label of its own; as a certification strictly based on processes, regardless of areas of production in the U.S. The survey also asked Vermont cider makers about their interest to work under a taste-based label that would be built around blind tasting mechanisms designed to differentiate between their hard cider styles.
Figure 18: One of the hard cider AVA proposed: The Lake Champlain watershed area. Map from Google Earth.
5.5. Results

5.5.1. Interviews’ Results

Cooperative

Interviewees were for the most surprised by the idea of using a cooperative model for coordinating cider-specific apple production. The reason of the surprise was that about a decade ago an apple grower’s cooperative was shut down. The Shoreham Coop (1946-2002) was a storing, packaging and marketing hub that handled at its peak (in 1986) about half of the Vermont apple production. Mismanagement and the apple industry crash of the 1990s were provided by interviewees as factors that forced the coop to shut down. The relatively recent Shoreham Coop collapse brought the interviewees to distrust the strategy of forming a new one to facilitate cider-specific apple production by sharing infrastructure. Here is how an apple grower verbalized the matter: “Short term I think a lot of growers would be pretty apprehensive about entering in any kind of coop (…) there is still some bad feelings about the coop in Shoreham that felt apart, and guys might not be willing to… for some guys it is still very fresh to their memories so they are maybe feeling bitter about what happened there” (Apple Grower 1). As such, discussions about cooperative felt short with both apple growers and cider maker, and expressed interest was low.

Contracts

In Vermont today, most of the apple sales between apple growers and cider makers are made through what interviewees referred to be “handshake agreements.” Growers’ independence and flexibility toward marketing are traits making handshake
contracts embedded in the current apple agricultural practices of Vermont. Although several interviewees indicated that discussions have taken place on making handshake agreements more formal by making them written, the strong cultural ties of current apple growers to handshake agreements is a key factor preventing contract formalization in Vermont. An orchard-based cider maker reported: “[apple growers] prefer to remain independent … so our partnerships are built the good old fashion way, on relationship and a handshake, and on honoring of these commitments year over year” (Cider Maker 6). As detailed hereafter, orchards scale and cider-specific apple price are, with the handshake culture, the other two main elements preventing the formalization of contracts.

**Contract Scale**

Regarding scale, an orchard-based cider makers asserted: “Every time we sit down and try and think about structuring an agreement, the issues are: the scale is too small, what happens if there's a hailstorm? A big contract makes sense when you have like a Bulmers in Ireland that can guarantee a market for 2 million bushels of fruit” (Cider Maker 3). The ways orchards are operated in Vermont versus the ones Bulmers sources their cider-specific apples are vastly different. Apple growers expressed how growing cider-specific apples is an endeavor that requires means of production that are much different from how their orchards are currently operated for dessert apples: “I think that is the problem, right, it is a different culture for growing cider apples than the culture of growing conventional apples…an orchard with hard cider in mind, it has to be separate, it has to be its own entity. Either the cider block is like a detriment to your conventional orchard, or you are putting the same amount of money and you are cutting
your margins down” (Apple Grower 5). Some growers expressed fear of contamination from cider blocks to dessert blocks: “Replanting just cider-specific is not going to happen. Because I do not know any varieties that would not be obliterated by fire-blight” (Apple Grower 4).

**Contract Pricing**

About price within long-term formalized contracts, a non-orchard-based cider maker indicated that the same issue preventing culls (which designates low-grade dessert apples) contracting would arise with cider-specific apples: “It's something to look towards in the future, but right now there is really no value for a grower to be in a contract for cull pricing, nor is there for cider makers to agree to a price for culls, because they may swing widely” (Cider Maker 4). Apple growers stated that prices of cider-specific apples are uncertain on the long-term compared to the prices of dessert apples which they have been relying on for years. Many were skeptical that the current high value for cider-specific apples will persist as more and more growers start producing them. To balance financial risk and encourage orchards diversification, several apple growers and cider makers expressed the need for financial and technical support from University Extensions in creating a cider-specific growing program. Looking specifically at the cider makers’ view of the price issue in long-term formalized contracts, reluctance came from the low demand for hard cider made with cider-specific apples: “The problem is...this would all be easy if we could sell cider for $25 a bottle. This would go away. There is only 1% of cider makers who are selling hard cider for a price that can justify the contract, so this is completely theoretical in the U.S. market” (Cider Maker 4).
Table 4: Summary of the interest of interviewees regarding the use of long-term formalized contracts in stimulating cider-specific apple production.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Long-term formalized contract interest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apple Grower 1</td>
<td>for dual-purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Grower 2</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Grower 3</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Grower 4</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple Grower 5</td>
<td>for dual-purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cider Maker 1 (orchard-based)</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cider Maker 2 (orchard-based)</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cider Maker 3 (orchard-based)</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cider Maker 4 (not orchard-based)</td>
<td>eventually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cider Maker 5 (not orchard-based)</td>
<td>interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cider Maker 6 (not orchard-based)</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder 1</td>
<td>eventually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder 2</td>
<td>eventually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholder 3</td>
<td>no opinion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demand for hard cider made with cider-specific fruits**

What has emerged from these interviews regarding long-term formalized contracts is that the core issue preventing cider-specific apple production in Vermont is on the hard cider demand side, more than on the apple supply side. One non-orchard-based cider maker indicated: “Currently fruit-flavored ciders made from dessert apples are the dominant growth area for cider, along with the addition of hops and ginger” (Cider Maker 4). An orchard-based cider maker expressed how “there's nothing special about the apples in relationship to that cider and where the growth right now is in these ciders that are made from leftover dessert fruits, and boy those are apples that people know how to grow, they are already doing it (...) Where is the demand for super unique expensive fruit?” (Cider Maker 3).
Establishing completely new cider-specific orchards

The semi-structure format allowed for another strategy (other than long-term formalized contract and cooperative) to be discussed: the establishment of completely new orchards, operated strictly in a hard cider perspective. This solution was shared across all interviewee profiles, from orchard-based cider maker: “That would be a totally new orchard, and I think there is a lot to be said for that” (Cider Maker 1), to apple growers “To me that seems like the most clear-cut way to do it” (Apple Grower 5). Here is the view of a non-orchard-based cider maker about establishing new orchards: “We would have to partner or hire whole bunch of expertise that we don't currently have to do that, but you know, things change” (Cider Maker 4). One apple grower indicated that some newcomers have been testing the idea of partnerships for establishing cider-specific orchards: “there were some people that wanted to be partners and plant 100 acres of that hard cider apples (...) all mechanically harvested, so that they have virtually no labor. They would have a big press running 24 hours a day and machines picking the apples (...) they had 2 million dollars to start with” (Apple Grower 2).

Differentiating hard cider

From these interviews emerged that cider makers are adopting an affirmation rationale from their European counterparts. This differentiation narrative is essential in the development of convincing GIs labeling. The affirmation rationale observed is clearly articulated in the following quote taken from an interview conducted with a pioneer of hard cider revival in the American Northeast:
“But there was a time in the late 90s or about 2000 when people were tasting and we were just beginning to learn how to actually do sensory analysis, we have not got really far down that road, but we started to say to each other: we are encountering aromas and flavors and feels in this cider that we are making from this fruit grown here that we never encountered in England, France, or anywhere else. And then it was really just why the fuck are we trying to do something imitative. Why don't we just say: right, we are apple growers, we found some really good stuff that grows that we think make really good cider, and now we are going to make something that is delicious by our likes, and that we think that is reflective of our fruits, and the land on which is grown and what we do there” (Cider Maker 2).

**Apple Supply Summary**

In short, the interviews established that the current culture of handshake agreements, the relatively low volume of apples produced by apple growers, the price point, and the lack of cider-specific growing experience in the state means that the notion of long-term formalized is ill-adapted to today’s Vermont hard cider industry. The interviews also indicated that the recent collapse of the Shoreham Coop makes current hard cider actors distrustful from using this strategy to stimulate cider-specific apple production. A potential solution that has emerged from the interviews is the establishment of completely new orchards enterprises dedicated only to cider-specific apple production.
5.5.2. Survey’s results

Participating cider makers unanimously agreed that helping consumers differentiate between hard cider styles would benefit the Vermont hard cider industry. When asked which of the three proposed labels they would prefer to work under, five cider makers indicated place-based label, two indicated taste-based label, and one indicated process-based label. One cider maker did not specify any preference, and in fact rejected any place-based label. However, by analyzing the rest of the survey’s data—which reports on measured interest in each label instead of preference among the labels—, a taste-based label generated more consensus, followed by place-based and process-based. Below is the breakdown of the expressed interest for each proposed label.

Table 5: GIs interests and preferred based.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cider Makers</th>
<th>Place-Based</th>
<th>Process-Based</th>
<th>Taste-Based</th>
<th>Preferred Based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Interested (Champlain Watershed)</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>Place-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>Somewhat interested</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Process-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Interested (Other Disjointed Areas)</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>(no answer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Interested (Other Disjointed Areas)</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Place-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Very interested (Vermont state border)</td>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>Place-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Somewhat interested (Vermont state border)</td>
<td>Somewhat interested in Interested</td>
<td>Taste-Based</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Very interested (Vermont state border)</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>Place-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Interested (Vermont state border)</td>
<td>Not at all interested</td>
<td>Not at all interested</td>
<td>Place-Based</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Not interested</td>
<td>Somewhat in interested</td>
<td>Very interested</td>
<td>Taste-Based</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Taste-Based**

In the survey, a taste-based label was described as one that focus exclusively on the final taste “on the tongue” of a hard cider. Defined taste standards for different hard cider styles were not detailed, as these would have to be defined and certified by a panel of elected judges. All participating cider makers, but one, were either interested or very interested in having some of their hard ciders entering an annual tasting evaluation with a panel of judges that would assess whether some of their hard ciders qualify to be sold under a taste-based label. In the open-ended section of the survey, one of the cider makers interested by a taste-place label submitted an alternative labeling mechanism to an annual judging competition: “[a label that would have for visual] a multi-dimensional scale that would define standard levels represented by a label with a circle with 4 quadrants, where the quadrants have [a standard] indicator for sweetness, tartness, tannin, and fizz levels…such taste-based label is easiest to implement because it doesn't 'judge' quality of cider, and it does the most to help consumers identify a cider they will enjoy drinking…If we can all agree on a taste indicator, then it will have the full weight of all our cideries behind it.”

**Place-based**

A place-based label was described in the survey as one that performs difference by putting forward a story of the unique characteristics of a place—or terroir. Within the place-based label, two process-based subcategories were proposed to further differentiate between the hard cider styles produced within an area. Four cider makers expressed their interest in working under a label based on the Vermont state borders, one under a label
based around the Lake Champlain watershed areas, two under a label based around more
disjointed areas based on growing conditions, and two rejected the idea of working under
a place-based label. In terms of process regulations contained within a place-based label,
all participating cider makers (but one) agreed that under a place-based label, certified
hard ciders should be made 100% from apples grown within the chosen area—the one
who did not agree suggested a threshold of 75%. In addition, all participating cider
makers (but one) indicated that under a place-based label, certified hard cider would have
to be made 100% from fresh-pressed apples. Six cider makers also indicated that to be
certified, a ciderie would have to be located within the chosen area; two were unsure
regarding this parameter, and one was opposed. Further, five cider makers were in favor
of having two subcategories in a place-based label that would categorize hard cider by
styles by imposing processing standards.

Process-based

A process-based label was described in the survey as one that does not focus on a
particular area of production, but rather exclusively on the types of fruit and processes
used, in a way that such label could be used by any cider makers in the United States. The
different sets of standards that would serve to differentiate between hard cider styles were
not fully developed in the survey. Five cider makers indicated being either in favor or
strongly in favor of working under a process-based label, three indicated being somewhat
in favor, and one to be not at all in favor.
5.6. Discussion

The goal of this research project was to survey hard cider industry stakeholders on strategies to stimulate the production of cider-specific apples domestically, as well as on the introduction of GI labeling to differentiate between hard cider styles. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that before investing in planting cider-specific apple trees, there must be a strategy set up to increase demand for hard ciders made with cider-specific apples. Recent decline in hard cider production in the U.S. reinforces the need for marketing strategies that aim at retaining and growing consumer demand.

The interview part of this study focused on strategic partnerships mechanisms, specifically long-term formalized contract and cooperative, and established that both mechanisms are ill-adapted to the current Vermont hard cider industry context. Contrary to the U.K. and France, the current scale of the industry in Vermont is not conductive to using formalized long-term contract. Compared to the mature industries of U.K. and France, the hard cider industry is still emerging, which brings uncertainty on cider-specific apple value in the long-term, and in turn undermines the strategy of long-term formalized contract. Regarding cooperative, the context of the recent shutdown of the Shoreham Coop makes most stakeholders distrustful of a cooperative strategy. Establishing completely new orchards dedicated to cider-specific apple production was identified as an alternative to long-term formalized contract and cooperative that would allow to increase the production of cider-specific apples domestically.

The survey part of the study established that cider makers are ready to develop and introduce GI labels to differentiate between their hard cider styles, and increase
consumer demand and literacy for hard cider made with cider-specific fruits. The cider makers surveyed were unanimously in favor of establishing such differentiation mechanism, and both place-based and taste-based labels were identified as being of high interest. Process-based label was also of interest, but more as a complement to a taste-based or place-based label rather than as a label that stand on its own. Although no consensual area was identified for a place-based label, this research project provides useful data to inform and foster further discussions surrounding hard cider GI development. Researching and interviewing cider makers for the present project, it became evident that the hard cider culture in Vermont does not stand as its own, but actually inscribes itself into a broader hard cider culture that transcends Vermont state political borders.

As detailed in the literature review, GIs serve more than differentiation purposes; when properly managed, they can be a powerful economic development tool generating jobs, tourism, as well as rural business clustering. The hard cider industry possesses all the assets listed by Giovannucci et al., to initiate the development of successful hard cider GIs in the U.S. The first component of having a “strong organizational and institutional structures to maintain, market, and monitor the GI,” could be fulfilled by the United States Associations of Cider Makers, or a regional branch created specifically for the purpose of regulating hard cider GIs for an associated region. For the second and third assets listed by Giovannucci et al. (“equitable participation among the producers and enterprises in a GI region” and “strong market partners committed to promote and commercialize over the long term”), this research project indicates that cider makers from
all types of profiles are willing to work under the GI in the area of study. This strong interest, manifested by all types of cideries constitute a promising first step toward the inclusion of all actors in the development and management of hard cider GIs. For the last component (effective legal protection including a strong domestic GI system), there are already other GIs examples in place the U.S.

A GI for hard cider has the potential to succeed where long-term formalized contracts and cooperative appear to be ill-adapted in the Vermont context. Agarwal and Barone indicate that when GIs are introduced, “new entrants will enter the geographical area to take advantage of the brand equity residing in the GI.” As such, the stimulation of cider-specific apple production could come with the introduction of a hard cider GI, which will attract new cider makers and related businesses in the area. This has the potential to lead to the development of a cluster of orchard-based cideries eager to capitalize on the competitive advantage provide by the GI, and to bring enterprises with the capital to build completely new cider-specific orchards on the GI territory.

In all cases, a marketing campaign is likely to be needed if the hard cider industry goes forward with the introduction of GIs. Confronted to a decrease in demand for *cidre*, FranceAgriMer prepared a report for the *filière cidricole* in which it is suggested to increase the demand for *cidre* through a marketing campaign based around *cidre* distinguishing “authenticity,” that would differentiate *cidre* from the increasingly popular “Anglo-Saxon cider style.” A similar differentiating campaign is likely to be needed in the U.S., and the sociohistorical elements surrounding the reviving of a beverage that was
once labeled the “national drink,” provides a compelling narrative for such marketing campaign.

5.7. Conclusion

This research project has identified the establishment of a hard cider GI as the most promising solution—compared to long-term formalized contract and cooperative—to tackle both cider-specific apple supply issues and hard cider demand challenges. The focus of the GI strategy contained in this study was on the American Northeast, more precisely on Vermont and its surroundings, but implications for the whole U.S. industry were also discussed.

Although not all Vermont cideries have answered the survey, the rate of answers and the consensual interest expressed by participants for the introduction of a GI indicate that the hard cider industry evolving in the area of study is mature enough to initiate the development of a GI certification. The discussion section of this research paper has further established that the U.S. hard cider industry possesses all the assets required to the successful implementation and management of one—and potentially several—hard cider GI(s). This research project has also detailed how a GI can act as a powerful development tool to bolster community capitals. Measuring the interest of the rest of the U.S. hard industry would thus be valuable to locate other areas and additional cideries interested to be included in hard cider GI(s) discussions.

In addition to providing evidence on the right conditions for the establishment of a hard cider GI, this research project has provided the groundwork material to spark its development in the Northeast region. The views of participants have allowed to jump-
start the discussion regarding a legitimate basis for their GI (place-based, taste-based, or process-based). This study has detailed how such GI could mix different basis. From the results of the survey, one of the legitimate basis appears to be a hard cider GI that would be taste-based, with its taste associated to a particular area, and obtained through certain processes. Ultimately, it is up to cider makers and their associations to further develop the hard cider GI project and delimit potential tastes, areas or processes.

Chapter 5 - Endnotes


6. See 27 CFR 24.10 (Meaning of terms) : https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?c=ecfr&sid=506cf0c03546efff958847134c5527d3&rgn=div5&view=text&node=27:1.0.1.1.19&idno=27#se27.1.24_110

7. See 27 CFR 24.331 (Wine eligible for the hard cider tax rate) and 24.332 (Hard cider materials) : https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?c=ecfr&sid=506cf0c03546efff958847134c5527d3&rgn=div5&view=text&node=27:1.0.1.1.19&idno=27#se27.1.24_110


9. Ibid., 24-25.

10. Ibid., 25.

11. Ibid., 29.

12. Ibid., 29.

13. Ibid., 29.


19. Ibid., 5.

20. Ibid., 11.


27. Tozer et al., “Sensory Analysis and Willingness to Pay for Craft Cider.”


32. Ibid., 227.
33. Ibid., 221.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 227
36. Ibid., 221.
37. Ibid., 228.
38. Ibid., 227, 228.
44. FranceAgriMer, “Prospective Filière Française Du Cidre” (Montreuil, France, 2016), 6, http://www.franceagrimer.fr/content/download/45570/434561/file/Etude_Prospective_filiere_francaise_du_cidreDEF.pdf.
45. Ibid., 41.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
57. In France, the term *cidre* is used to distinguish from what they refer to as Anglo-Saxon cider style.
58. FranceAgriMer, “Prospective Filière Française Du Cidre,” 65.
59. Ibid., 5.
61. FranceAgriMer, “Prospective Filière Française Du Cidre,” 5.
62. FranceAgriMer, “Prospective Filière Française Du Cidre,” 6, 78.
67. Ibid., xvii, 3.
68. Ibid., xviii.
69. Ibid.
75. These numbers date from 2001; Francisco Muñoz de Escalona, “La Sidricultura Asturiana Como Incentivacion Turistica,” vol. 4, 2011, 5.
77. The complete list of AVA can be found on the TBB website:
https://www.ttb.gov/wine/us_by_ava.shtml#Table-2


83. The interview protocols were approved by the University of Vermont Committees on Human Subjects (IRB#16-358) and were classified as ‘exempt’.


85. Part of Lake Champlain watershed area is shared with Quebec. Due to taxes regulation, it would be difficult to have Quebec part of a U.S. hard cider GI.


87. FranceAgriMer, “Prospective Filière Française Du Cidre,” 107.
CHAPTER 6: THESIS CONCLUSION

Through the case of poutine, mezcal and hard cider, this thesis provides elements of understanding on the making of contemporary culinary identities in North America. Broadly, this thesis has worked to position the people from where foodways are embedded at the center of the benefits brought by their appeal. Poutine, mezcal and hard cider provide the context to appreciate how such benefits translate into community capitals (cultural, social, financial, political, human, natural and built), agency and well-being gains. This thesis has also displayed how cultures are hybrids, in that cultural elements are learned and shared. However, when the reciprocity dimension of sharing is not respected, the resulting behavior is not characterized by hybridity, but more often than not by processes of domination. The rationale contained in this thesis for making, supporting or rejecting food and drink ownership claims is thus one that intends to increase community capitals, agency and well-being by destabilizing social domination dynamics through cultural affirmation processes.

Three main overarching takeaways have emerged from the cases of poutine, mezcal and hard cider. The first takeaway is that the concept of authenticity in foodways serves as a rhetorical strategy useful in providing leverage to subaltern/minoritized groups in social negotiations with dominating groups. This strategy was the focus of both the cases of poutine and mezcal (considering that cultural appropriation draws heavily upon the concept of authenticity). The second takeaway regards group identification and food nationalism. With poutine, cultural appropriation was used to deconstruct food nationalism in the context of a multinational and settler state. Poutine provided the means
to understand “national cuisine” not as a mere contradiction in terms, but as part of a discourse instrumental to a broader nationalist project—in this case the Canadian nationalist project. The third takeaway is that although food nationalism can be useful in some contexts (as seen with reappropriation of poutine in Quebec), the sharing of a tasting experience constitutes the most legitimate path and boundary for group culinary identification (as seen in mezcal and hard cider). Overall, the study of poutine, mezcal and hard cider has suggested that when foodways are presented as authentic, the matter is less to measure how or by what means they are authentic than to assess for whom they are authentic by looking at the actors, powers and interests in play.

This thesis has laid the groundwork for further research on the cultural and socioeconomic ramifications of food and drink ownership claims. In particular, I see a pressing need to look at the effects of allowing a single entity to acquire and produce under several GI certifications simultaneously: for example owning and producing a Champagne, a Scotch whisky and a mezcal; or a cider, a *cidre* and a *sidra*. Are such ongoing behaviors useful to embed foodways into their host communities and increase their agency and well-being, or are they favoring the evasion of capitals (mainly financial and cultural), and a reduction of the host community agency? Current and emerging GI-based communities, as well as GI certification regulating bodies would greatly benefit from having these effects investigated.

**Media and public attention**

The publication of Poutine Dynamics has allowed the content of this thesis to transcend the culinary aspects of identities to aid in understanding how the overall
Canadian nationalist project is constructed and construed in its 150th anniversary of Confederation. Indeed, a few months after publication in *CuiZine*, the content of *Poutine Dynamics* caused heated reactions in the media, and gave rise to a public debate about Quebec-Canada relations. My study was first taken out from scholarly circles and brought to public attention by Jake Edmiston, a journalist from the National Post, who covered my work as I was presenting in Toronto at the 2017 Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences. From there, debates regarding Canada appropriating poutine from Quebec went “viral” on social media, and I gave over 30 interviews within 72 hours to journalists and radio shows from Quebec, Canada and the United States. What poutine provided is a proxy to discuss identity issues that are otherwise often too sensitive to debate publicly, such as the multinational characteristic of Canada hidden behind a multiculturalism narrative in the Canadian nationalist project. This public debate surrounding poutine provided rich material for further research on food and nationalism.

There is one aspect of the debate that I want to briefly detail here, as it has not been covered in *Poutine Dynamics*. The concept of cultural appropriation should not be conflated with cultural hybridization: in cultural appropriation, there is a power dynamic, a lack of reciprocity between the groups in play, and a harmful consequence incurred by the subaltern/minoritized group. Depending of contexts, cultural appropriation varies in form and shape, and implies various degrees of consequences. I do want to emphasize here, as I have done elsewhere, that there is in Quebec a plurality of groups, many of which are minoritized. The demands of these groups relating to cultural appropriation are, more often than not, of higher importance than asking that the cultural appropriation of
poutine be stopped, and it is up to the dominant groups to take responsibility when facing such demands.
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