# Making change in the kitchen? A study of celebrity cookbooks, culinary personas, and inequality

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper, we investigate how cultural ideals of race, class and gender are revealed and reproduced through celebrity chefs' public identities. Celebrity-chef status appears attainable by diverse voices including self-trained cooks like Rachael Ray, prisoner turned high-end-chef Jeff Henderson, and Nascar-fan Guy Fieri. This paper investigates how food celebrities' self-presentations – their culinary *personas* – relate to social hierarchies. Drawing from literature on the sociology of culture, personas, food, and gender, we carry out an inductive qualitative analysis of celebrity chef cookbooks written by stars with a significant multi-media presence. We identify seven distinct culinary personas: *homebody*, *home stylist*, *pin-up*, *chef-artisan*, *maverick*, *gastrosexual*, and *self-made man*. We find that culinary personas are highly gendered, but also classed and racialized. Relating these findings to the broader culinary field, we suggest that celebrity chef personas may serve to naturalize status inequities, and our findings contribute to theories of cultural, culinary and gender stratification. This paper supports the use of "persona" as an analytical tool that can aid understanding of cultural inequalities, as well as the limited opportunities for new entrants to gain authority in their respective fields.

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## 1. Introduction

In 2012, *Forbes* magazine published its list of top-earning chefs, and it included a range of voices: white men like Gordon Ramsay (#1), Wolfgang Puck (#3), and Bobby Flay (#9) overpopulated the list, but two self-trained, white women were notably present – Rachael Ray (#2) and Paula Dean (#4). Esteemed Japanese chef, Nobu Matsuhisa (#8), also made the list, as did the working-class champion of diner food and greasy-spoons, Guy Fieri (#10) (Vorasarun, 2008). The presence of female, working class, and ethno-racial minority figures seems significant, even though we know that fame and wealth cannot be simply equated with high status in the food world. Emeril Lagasse's and Guy Fieri's populist appeal may have made them a lot of money, but has also made them clear targets for food critics (e.g., Salkin, 2013, pp. 192–93; Wells, 2012). Still, the highbrow/lowbrow, male/female convergence on the *Fortune* list suggests the continued importance of investigating the range of cultural inequality and hierarchy in the realm of food culture. Along with other scholars, we question whether we are witnessing a new area of culinary (and cultural) democracy in which the stereotypical white male French-trained chef no longer dominates, and new voices (e.g., fans of streetfood) gain culinary authority in the field (Johnston and Baumann, 2007, 2010; Naccarato and LeBesco, 2012). Sociological research suggests that although the traditional boundary between high- and low-brow culture is weakening, status hierarchies persist (Johnston and Baumann, 2007, 2010; Ollivier, 2008; Peterson, 2005). We know that even in an omnivorous era, the cultural products of some groups are valued more than others, reflecting hierarchies of class, race and gender. Certain cultural producers continue to be disadvantaged by the fact that critics, peers, and other key agents evaluate work based on race and gender characteristics, thereby creating inequality in cultural fields (e.g., Binder, 1993; Donze, 2011; Hyman, 2008; Li, 1994; Schmutz, 2009; Schmutz and Faupel, 2010).

Food celebrities – also known as celebrity chefs[1] – are relevant to a study of cultural personas and status inequality for several reasons. *First*, food celebrities have gained tremendous cultural influence (e.g., Bell and Hollows, 2011; Rousseau, 2012; Powell and Prasad, 2010), and persona-based brands dominate the food market. The number of persona-based culinary brands, including cooking personalities like Nigella Lawson and Gordon Ramsay who have achieved celebrity status, has doubled since 2008 and produces upwards of $4 billion in annual revenue (Hale, 2010; Hewer and Brownlie, 2009). *Second*, although food celebrities have varied culinary expertise, virtually all of them adapt recipes for the home cooking market through their cookbooks and television shows. This constancy across platforms allows us to take a look at more nuanced expressions of status distinctions between personalities. *Third*, the boundaries of the food world are marked by permeability: between high and low cuisine, between professional chef denizens and home-cooking experts, and between men and women (Swinbank, 2002; Powell and Prasad, 2010). More women are entering the world of professional cooking and, at least on the media stage, some men have entered home-kitchens (Hollows, 2003b; Swinbank, 2002). Although food television has been critiqued for its whiteness (e.g., Naccarato and LeBesco, 2012, p. 42), other work suggests that the depiction of racialized personalities is an important new development, although not beyond reproach (e.g., Cruz, 2013). As culinary boundaries shift, one might question the extent to which food celebrities are evolving to reflect equitable – or perhaps, essentialized – opportunities for participation.

To understand the significance of food celebrities, we begin the paper by theorizing the culinary persona and provide a brief accounting of relevant trends in the culinary field. We then report on the findings of our systemic interpretive analysis of persona-driven cookbooks, and identify seven distinct culinary personas: *homebody*, *home stylist*, *pin-up*, *chef-artisan*, *maverick*, *gastrosexual*, and *self-made man*. To foreshadow our findings, we argue that (1) culinary personas are highly gendered and organized around the traditional sexual division of labor and a split into market and nonmarket work; (2) feminine personas circumscribe their culinary expertise to the domestic sphere, effectively feminizing their cultural authority as devolved from unpaid foodwork; (3) masculine personas employ a wider range of discourses to legitimize their value as cultural producers both inside and outside of the professional kitchen; and (4) class and race-based distinctions intersect with gender to further

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[1] The term "celebrity chef" is often used to refer to both professional (credentialed) and amateur chefs who have become both a resource and a source of entertainment for everyday homecooks (Rousseau, 2012).

stratify culinary personas and shape strategies for legitimacy-seeking. We conclude that even though the contemporary culinary field is omnivorous, culinary personas are mechanisms that may contribute to the reproduction of status inequality in ways that prevent equivalent legitimacy for all artistic producers.

## 2. Food, celebrities and personas

### 2.1. Artistic legitimacy and culinary personas

Although food has an obvious utilitarian dimension, it reflects contemporary taste and esthetic hierarchies that are drawn upon by culinary professionals and consumers alike (Johnston and Baumann, 2007; Bourdieu, 1984; Parkhurst Ferguson, 2004, 2014). Understanding hierarchies within culinary discourse can be deepened by drawing from work within the sociology of culture on the social construction of artistic legitimacy, as well as processes of boundary formation and classification within different types of artistic production. Artistic legitimacy is a major stake in the field of cultural production; how culture is legitimized varies across groups of producers and fields, and involves varying degrees of artistic and economic factors (Bourdieu, 1993). One central factor for understanding the construction of artistic legitimacy is intellectualizing discourse, and the role played by critics who make decisions about artistic worth, value, and the artists' authenticity[2] (e.g., Chong, 2011; Baumann, 2007a,b; Lane, 2013; Shrum, 1996).

While scholars have given considerable attention to critics and their role consecrating culture and cultural producers as legitimate, in this paper we consider how established cultural producers construct their own legitimacy through the discourses used in their cultural products.[3] More specifically, we focus on how food personalities construct culinary *personas* through their cookbooks, and interpret the relationship between these personas and larger cultural frameworks of value, authority and culinary status. In this paper, we think about culinary *personalities* as individuals, and culinary *personas* as constructed types or categories of individuals. A persona represents the public identity of cultural producers, and is built upon the "creative synthesis" of personality, values, and lifestyle (Becker, 1982; Donze, 2011, p. 48; Peterson, 1997). A celebrity's persona can be understood as a "fabricated" identity that draws upon shared conventions of "biography, style, and attitude" to emotionally engage others and facilitate evaluation and may or may not be synonymous with the lived reality of the producer (Donze, 2011:48). To construct a persona, cultural producers cannot simply create one from out of nowhere, but must draw from existing cultural norms and conventions (Donze, 2011; Griswold, 1987; Peterson, 1997). As with other cultural products, personas are constrained by artistic conventions, as well as schematic understandings of race, class, and gender (Baumann and de Laat, 2012); in turn, personas constrain new entrants into a field, by limiting the options available to newcomers (Becker, 1982; Donze, 2011; Peterson, 1997; Schmutz, 2009).

While cultural producers may not be fully conscious of their influences and constraints, the goal is to create a persona that will resonate with consumers (Till, 1998). The existence of a financially successfully culinary persona is evidence that a general degree of cultural legitimacy is present. That said, personas are neither entirely predictable, nor pre-determined by market-forces, and there are important degrees of cultural legitimacy within a given population of food personalities. Producers exercise a degree of agency in their construction of personas, and the success of food personalities can indicate new avenues for achieving cultural legitimacy. As such, personas can be seen as a useful heuristic that generates insight into the dynamic terrain of cultural legitimacy within a field (Donze, 2011:50). While avoiding deterministic approaches is important, it is equally critical to avoid seeing personas in voluntaristic terms. If a newcomer's projected image does not align with established persona conventions, their success is highly uncertain. In addition, there are clear limits on the variety of cultural personas that are symbolically and commercially viable, and these limits relate to

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[2] The term "authenticity" is notoriously thorny, but we can think of it here as referring to a perception of genuineness, naturalness, and a relative prioritization of artistry and creativity over profits (Johnston and Baumann, 2007, 2010; Peterson, 1997, p. 211; Schmutz and Faupel, 2010).

[3] We acknowledge that genre imperatives (Becker, 1982; Till, 1998) and market dynamics (Hsu et al., 2009; Zuckerman et al., 2003) also shape cultural personas, however that is not the focus of this paper.

structural inequalities like gender inequality. For example, in her study of recording artists, Donze (2011) empirically illustrates the gendered parameters of popular music personas; she finds that not only are there fewer feminine personas overall, but they also tend to be highly sexualized and tied to peripheral musical genres (see also Schmutz, 2009; Schmutz and Faupel, 2010).

This paper builds on Donze's work on musical personas (2011), to explore how celebrity chefs are discursively represented, packaged, and legitimized as culinary personas. Knowing that producers with more focused identities are more likely to appeal to audiences, achieve acceptance and be successful (Hsu et al., 2009; Zuckerman et al., 2003), we investigate how culinary personalities craft their persona and how it relates to pre-existing cultural frameworks and hierarchies. By documenting and analyzing persona conventions, and relating these personas to literature on cultural stratification and the culinary field more specifically, we can better understand how personas reproduce inequality. For example, celebrity chefs vary in the priority they give to esthetic versus functional concerns in their sourcing of ingredients, cooking style, and method of presentation. From broader literature in the sociology of culture, we know that an esthetic disposition, one that is "freed from urgency" or "necessity", is more culturally valued, linked to class privilege, and forms an important dimension of artistic and celebrity authority (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 55; Powell and Prasad, 2010). In the culinary world, esthetic considerations hold a special place of esteem, and distinguish high quality cuisine from simple foods of necessity (Fine, 1996, p. 1270). Together, this leads us to question how food celebrities enact status hierarchies on a spectrum from 'food as necessity' to 'food as art'. More broadly, our goal is to better understand the range of culinary personas on offer, and study how the legitimacy and authority of these personas is culturally rooted and stratified.

Before proceeding with our discussion of celebrities in the food world, two caveats are in order. First, a study of culinary personas cannot speak directly to consecration by food critics, nor the reception of personas' legitimacy and culinary authority. Nonetheless existing literature on social hierarchies and legitimacy can be referenced to better understand the construction and stratification of culinary personas. In addition, our method focuses on the most popular and prominent celebrity chefs; as such, these figures are likely to embody cultural schemas that audiences generally recognize as legitimate. Put differently, we employ a baseline criterion for culinary legitimacy based on prominence within the culinary field (as described in the Methodology section, below). Second, it is important to note that no culinary personality single-handedly constructs their image. Cookbooks are a collective production, reflecting the labors of a celebrity chef as well as marketing experts, designers, management and possibly a ghostwriter to create a culinary persona (Rodney and Johnston, 2015). Like many other cultural and culinary phenomena (e.g., authenticity, exoticism, 'good' taste), personas are social constructs. The sociological study of personas usefully deflects attention away from what an individual celebrity is *really* like, to a study of key elements of their persona – how their image synthesizes specific values, images, ideas and lifestyles to their viewing public. As Donze notes in her study of musician personas, "great care must be taken not to reify these [persona] labels as descriptions of how artists really "are", especially since doing so may reify stereotypes of sexuality, race, and gender (2011, p. 54).

## 2.2. Celebrity chef cookbooks

Celebrities are not just popular individuals who rise to fame on their own charisma, but are media creations and commodities that assume value through their persona, much like a brand. As Cashmore and Parker write, celebrities represent a kind of commodified humans who are "turned into things, things to be adored, respected, worshipped, idolized, but perhaps more importantly, things which are themselves produced and consumed" (2003, p. 215). Celebrities arguably possess their own kind of capital – what Driessens theorizes as *celebrity capital* – that "finds its material basis in recurrent media representations or accumulated media visibility" (2013, p. 550). Thinking of celebrity as a form of Bourdieusian capital makes clear that the celebrity's power has a material basis as well as important cultural implications. Celebrities are not simply living, breathing brands, but icons that communicate social norms, stereotypes, and aspirations for the viewing public. Food celebrities are no exception; they communicate cultural values through mediated performances on television and through their cookbooks.

The first televised chefs addressed their audience as pupils by modeling a range of cooking techniques, as exemplified in Julia Child's landmark PBS show, "Mastering the Art of French Cooking". By contrast, today's culinary personalities focus not only on instruction, but on selling themselves as the trademark of a lifestyle. Celebrity chefs' television shows and cookbooks reveal myriad elements of their consumption habits and family dynamics, prompting Rousseau (2012, p. xix) to ask, "do you remember when chefs just cooked?". The contemporary celebrity chef is as much a part of the product on offer as their instructions for preparing a special dish. Put differently, the "Hollywood concept of stardom" has been "swiftly assimilated into the world of food" (Hansen, 2008, p. 53). Well-known figures like Nigella Lawson, Martha Stewart and Jamie Oliver enjoy tremendous name-brand recognition – these figures are often referred to on a familiar, first-name basis – that has allowed them to develop extensive product lines (Scholes, 2008, p. 45). Martha, Jamie or Nigella's products are valuable to consumers, but so is the aspirational element of what these food icons signify – a life of leisure, delicious foods, and time to cook them. As Chan (2003, p. 50) comments regarding Nigella Lawson, "the beautiful and curvy Lawson seems to have it all – she appears able to juggle career, kids, a husband, and three-course meals including dessert and still look fabulous." The cooking personalities of today thus offer lessons on idealized lives, where cooking is more about a stylish identity and delicious lifestyle than hard work (de Solier, 2013; Powell and Prasad, 2010; Ketchum, 2005; Rousseau, 2012).

While food celebrities now have a significant presence on our television screens, they maintain an enduring attachment to a more old-fashioned medium: the cookbook (Mitchell, 2010, p. 525). Indeed, the cookbook market is increasingly dominated by celebrity chefs (Maryles and Donahue, 1999; Rotella, 2013). Cookbooks have long been of interest to historians, and scholars have come to see them as important social texts that communicate much more than cooking instructions (e.g., Brownlie and Hewer, 2007; Dennis, 2008; Mitchell, 2010; Gvion, 2009; Larsen and Osterlund-Potzsch, 2014; Cusack, 2014). Thus, while cookbooks have an obvious instrumental purpose – to teach people to cook food – they have other, non-instrumental dimensions, like escapism, or aspirational consumption (Bower, 2004). As such, examining cookbooks as culinary texts provides a window into the symbolic, cultural and discursive dimensions of cooking and eating.

Besides being a rich cultural resource for understanding social ideals, pre-existing scholarship has connected cookbooks to the reproduction and reinforcement of social inequalities. While cookbooks have allowed some space for gender resistance (Neuhaus, 1999, pp. 543–545), cookbooks have also worked to perpetuate idealized, traditional gender norms (de Solier, 2013; Inness, 2001; Scholes, 2008). Brownlie and Hewer write that cookbooks can be seen as "coding instructions regarding acceptable forms of performing gender identity through culinary practices" (2007, p. 238). Of course, gender is not the only food identity enacted through cookbooks. Culinary knowledge is also interspersed with the construction of particular versions of ethnic identities (Appadurai, 1988; Cusack, 2014; Gvion, 2009). Gvion argues that in multicultural America, cookbooks have served selectively to draw borders of inclusion and exclusion around 'ethnic' cuisines (2009).

In sum, today's food celebrities have a prominent role teaching cooking skills, but also showcasing enviable lifestyles. These lifestyles are not restricted to professional French-trained, white male chefs, but give space to other kinds of food personalities. As mentioned above, the field of culinary personalities appears relatively porous, and is occupied by people with varying degrees of professional training, cultural capital, and race/class/gender privilege. Given these new possibilities, we ask the following questions: How do prominent culinary personalities occupy current cooking spaces and construct their culinary authority? How do their personas reflect, or challenge, traditional gendered practices in the culinary world? Given the rapid expansion of culinary personalities in the public realm, we believe there is a rich opportunity for systematically studying the range of personas occupying the current foodscape.

## 3. Methodology

The analysis in this paper is based on a dataset of cookbooks written by celebrity chefs with a significant television presence. In brief, we inductively studied a broad sample of food celebrity cookbooks to identify emergent themes relating to presentations of self and foodwork (e.g., culinary

authority; how food and foodwork are framed as desirable; lifestyles on offer). We then used these themes to identify overarching persona categories. We employed a qualitative approach that approached the data with an open mind, heeding our own biases as well as questions present in relevant literature on cultural legitimacy in the culinary field (Charmaz, 2006).

## 3.1. Sample

Our sampling procedure targeted culinary personalities with market prominence and commercial success. We aimed to identify personalities with a presence across multiple media platforms, and employed three selection criteria to construct our sample. *First*, culinary personalities had to feature prominently in a cooking show that created original episodes between 2009 and 2012 (re-run content was excluded). Travel shows, or those focusing on specialized culinary realms (e.g., cake-baking) were excluded (in order to focus on general culinary culture and taste hierarchies), as were food personalities who only made episodic television appearances. *Second*, we focused on culinary personalities with a regular television show on Food Network, Cooking Channel, a broadcast network (ABC, CBS, Fox, NBC) or a widely available cable network (e.g., Bravo, A&E). We deliberately excluded public television programming as our aim was to capture personalities with maximum commercial appeal.[4] *Third*, we selected culinary personalities that had published at least two cookbooks for the American market (soft or hardcover), or at least one bestselling cookbook[5] between 1996 and 2012.

We started with a sampling frame of 117 television celebrity chefs, and after applying the three selection criteria, our final sample totaled 44 food personalities. In our final sample, 18 personalities are women, and 9 are racialized minorities (see Table 1). In total, 98 cookbooks were analyzed and coded (see Table 2). The number of cookbooks analyzed per personality was determined by the number of books the celebrity chef had published. One book was analyzed for cooking personalities who had published 2–4 cookbooks, two were analyzed for those with 5–10 books and one more for every ten books after that. If cookbooks were published over a range of several years, books from earlier and later periods were analyzed, in order to get an overall sense of the general characteristics of a personality's culinary identity, and whether those had changed.

## 3.2. Analytical procedure

Textual analysis began with an inductive coding of the cookbooks. Our goal was to carefully study each celebrity chef personality to help us understand the constitutive elements of the culinary personas on offer. To begin, we posed two questions: (1) how do culinary personalities represent themselves as experts, and (2) how do they make cooking appear attractive and appealing to readers. This meant looking at the kind of recipes presented in the cookbooks, but more importantly, we studied how the cookbooks overlaid cooking instructions with personal narratives. Each cookbook we studied had some combination of recipes combined with personal narratives, and most of the cookbooks had an extensive array of visual images. Reading through each cookbook, we took note of significant narrative themes in the use of personal anecdotes, biographical information, visual layout, photographs, and other contextual information included in the cookbooks, considering how they contributed to the construction of the celebrity's chef's persona. We paid attention to how each food personality became involved with cooking, the meanings they attributed to cooking, if and how they saw cooking as a creative process, as well as their general culinary philosophies. We also coded each celebrity's demographics, like gender and race/ethnicity, as well as class markers (e.g., food ingredients, family background). To supplement our textual analysis, we watched at least one television show per personality to add nuance to our understanding and to ensure that our reading of each chef's persona had a reasonable resemblance to what was conveyed in the cookbooks.

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[4] While PBS offers a platform for cooks, it does not have the same consistent commercial impact as other networks in terms of its ability to create culinary "stars" (Danford, 2005).

[5] Determined using *Bowker's Global Books in Print* (RR. Bowker, 2012). 1996 was chosen as a start date based on the rise of food media personalities with celebrity status that began in the mid-1990s following the Food Network's launch in 1993 (Rousseau, 2012).

**Table 1**
Culinary persona typology.

| Gender patterns | Source of culinary authority | Culinary personas (N) | Key attributes | Demographics | Exemplar |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Traditional Femininity | Home cooking experience | Homebody (9) | Pragmatic, utilitarian concerns – *tastes of necessity* | All women (7 white; 1 Asian; 1 Latina) | Rachael Ray |
| | | Home stylist (3) | Esthetics and style – *tastes of distinction* | All women (2 white; 1 Asian) | Martha Stewart |
| | | Pin-up (4) | Self-gratification – *tastes of indulgence* | All women (3 white; 1 South Asian) | Nigella Lawson |
| Hegemonic masculinities | Professional skills | Chef artisan (12) | Spectrum from artistic genius to artistic craftsman | Mainly men (9 white; 1 Latino; 1 Asian; 1 white woman) | Marco Pierre White, Michael Symon |
| | | Maverick (5) | Unconventional sharing of (unique) food knowledge | All white men | Alton Brown |
| | | Gastrosexual (4) | Pragmatic, utilitarian esthetic and affective concerns; home-cooking with professional knowledge | All white men | Jamie Oliver |
| | | | *Gender boundary crossing | | |
| | | Self-made man (7) | Work ethic, status accumulation, love of Americana | Mainly men (3 white; 3 black; 1 black woman) | Jeff Henderson |
| | | | *Class boundary crossing | | |

After completing an initial process of open coding, we identified common themes that united various food celebrities, with the goal of identifying broader persona categories across the sample. From this analysis, we identified seven culinary personas in our sample: *homebody*, *home stylist*, *pin-up*, *chef-artisan*, *maverick*, *gastrosexual*, and *self-made man*. While there were several features that distinguished the cookbooks and culinary personas from each other, a dominant thematic presence was gender, and more specifically, the masculine and feminine traits associated with domestic foodwork (and carework) and professional cooking. This finding was somewhat surprising. Our initial impression was that gender divisions were becoming less salient, given the large number of financially successful female celebrity chefs and the prominence of voices like Jamie Oliver who focus on domestic cookery. However, a systematic analysis of our broad sample of celebrity chefs suggests that a key way personas are constituted is in relation to traditional femininity and hegemonic masculinity. By "traditional femininity", we refer to the Western notion of a sexual division of labor in which women are primarily responsible for unpaid domestic and childcare tasks (Hochschild, 1989; DeVault, 1991), and are also highly valued for their sexuality and physical attractiveness (Gill, 2007). "Hegemonic masculinities" corresponds to traits of manhood thought to be the most powerful for men today, including breadwinning, strength, control, and heterosexuality (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1994). These gender norms mapped on clearly (but not perfectly) to the sex of the culinary personality. For example, the masculine chef artisan persona was predominantly occupied by male chefs, but not exclusively.

While our analysis identified gender as a key way that culinary personas are constructed and differentiated from each other, this was not the only theme, as class and race also figured prominently in the construction of persona categories. In the analysis below, we relate the persona types to these dominant sources of structural inequality. While five of the seven persona types can be identified in relation to dominant gender patterns, two outliers were distinguished by their ability to cross

**Table 2**
List of culinary personalities, cookbooks, and persona type.

| Personality | Number of books reviewed | Primary persona | Secondary persona[a] | Notable television shows |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aaron Sanchez | 1 | Chef-artisan | | Heat Seekers |
| Alton Brown | 2 | Maverick | | Good Eats |
| Anne Burrell | 1 | Chef-artisan | | Chef Wanted With Anne Burrell |
| Bal Arneson | 1 | Homebody | | Spice Goddess |
| Bill Granger | 2 | Gastrosexual | | Bill's Tasty Weekend |
| Bob Blumer | 2 | Maverick | | Glutton For Punishment |
| Bobby Flay | 3 | Chef-artisan | | Throwdown |
| Cat Cora | 2 | Homebody | Chef-artisan | Iron Chef |
| Ching He-Huang | 1 | Home stylist | | Chinese Food in Minutes |
| Daisy Martinez | 1 | Homebody | | Viva Daisy |
| Deen Brothers | 2 | Self-made man | | Home for Dinner; Not my Mama's Meals |
| Emeril Lagasse | 5 | Chef-artisan | | Emeril Live |
| G. Garvin | 3 | Self-made man | Gastrosexual | Roadtrip |
| Giada De Laurentiis | 2 | Pin-up | Homestylist | Everyday Italian |
| Gordon Ramsay | 4 | Chef-artisan | Gastrosexual | Hell's Kitchen |
| Guy Fieri | 2 | Self-made man | | Diner's, Drive-ins and Dives |
| Ina Garten | 3 | Home stylist | | Barefoot Contessa |
| Jamie Oliver | 4 | Gastrosexual | | Jamie at Home |
| Jeff Henderson | 1 | Self-made man | Chef-artisan | Chef Jeff Project |
| Lisa Lillien | 2 | Homebody | | Hungry Girl |
| Marco Pierre White | 2 | Chef-artisan | | Hell's Kitchen |
| Mario Batali | 2 | Chef-artisan | | Molto Mario |
| Mark Bittman | 2 | Maverick | | The Minimalist |
| Martha Stewart | 11 | Home stylist | | The Martha Stewart Show |
| Masaharu Morimoto | 1 | Chef-artisan | | Iron Chef America |
| Michael Chiarello | 2 | Chef-artisan | | Easy Entertaining |
| Michael Symon | 1 | Chef-artisan | | Symon's Suppers |
| Nadia Giosia | 1 | Pin-up | | Bitchin' Kitchen |
| Nigella Lawson | 3 | Pin-up | | Nigella Kitchen |
| Padma Lakshmi | 1 | Pin-up | | Top Chef |
| Paula Deen | 3 | Homebody | Self-made man | Paula's Best Dishes |
| Rachael Ray | 4 | Homebody | | The Rachael Ray Show |
| Ree Drummond | 2 | Homebody | | Pioneer Woman |
| Robert Irvine | 1 | Maverick | | Restaurant: Impossible |
| Robin Miller | 2 | Homebody | | Quick Fix Meals |
| Rocco Dispirito | 3 | Gastrosexual | | Now Eat This! |
| Sandra Lee | 4 | Homebody | | Sandra's Money Saving Meals |
| Scott Conant | 1 | Chef-artisan | | 24 Hour Restaurant Battle |
| Ted Allen | 2 | Maverick | Gastrosexual | Food Detectives |
| The Neelys | 1 | Self-made man | | Down Home with the Neelys |
| Tom Colicchio | 1 | Chef-artisan | | Top Chef |
| Tyler Florence | 2 | Gastrosexual | | Tyler's Ultimate |
| Total books coded | 98 | | | |

[a] In a few cases, the cooking personality had prominent traits of a secondary persona type featured in their cookbooks.

traditional gender boundaries. The *gastrosexual* transgresses traditional boundaries of masculinity, while the *self-made man* upholds traditional notions of masculinity and family but crosses class boundaries by emphasizing an upward class mobility trajectory.

The seven personas accommodated all of the cooking personalities in our sample. Table 1 demonstrates how the personas were classified in relation to their primary sources of cultural authority (namely, the home kitchen or the professional kitchen), and their motivation to cook and create. To capture the chief characteristics of each culinary personality within this diverse sample, we sorted them into ideal-typical analytical categories based on how they were depicted as culinary experts in the texts (Weber, 1949). We focused on each chef's *primary* persona characteristics, noting

that some displayed traits of more than one persona, and we discuss these below (see Table 2). Space constraints prohibit an exhaustive presentation of the significant textual material underpinning these classifications. We use the sections below to describe each persona, relying on ideal-typical examples to provide a sense of the meaning conveyed in the cookbooks.

## 4. Persona attributes

### 4.1. Food and femininity

Our analysis reveals that in the world of food celebrities, women are slightly under-represented (18/44), and predominantly associated with the home kitchen and femininity.[6] Traditionally feminine personas represent a cultural and culinary realm where authority is strongly linked to feminine ideals around social reproduction, and "womanhood" is connected to home-cooking (see DeVault, 1991). For these feminine personas, creative authority is linked to mastery in the home-kitchen, and rooted in an ability to make quotidian domestic food work appear effortless, timesaving and delicious – and in some cases, stylish and sexually attractive. Female personas gloss over their culinary education and business acumen in lieu of an emphasis on domestic skills (see Druckman, 2010, p. 27). In terms of their motivation to cook or create, female personas exist along a continuum that centers on the joys of the domestic kitchen, but places emphasis on practicality and necessity (*homebodies*), food esthetics (*home stylists*), and food's potential to provide self-gratification and pleasure (*pin-ups*).

### 4.1.1. The homebody

While divisions of labor in household cooking have changed since the 1950s,[7] the homebody persona embodies associations between femininity and domestic foodwork. The homebody persona, the most traditionally gendered feminine culinary persona in our sample, was prominently on display in the books of nine female personalities in our sample: Rachael Ray, Ree Drummond, Robin Miller, Sandra Lee, Paula Deen, Daisy Martinez, Bal Arneson, Lisa Lillien and Cat Cora.[8] Homebody cookbooks are written in casual, reassuring, often humorous tones that address readers directly. They tend to have limited text and photos, instead offering the reader copious recipes for easy meals. In *Robin to the Rescue* (2008, p. 2), Robin Miller states that her goal is "giv[ing] you a variety of strategies for getting weeknight meals to the table without fussing, stressing, or spending a lot of time doing it". The recipes are approachable, assume a low level of cooking skill, and often contain processed or ready-made food ingredients – as epitomized in Sandra Lee's *Semi-Homemade* (2009), where recipes call for ingredients like canned goods and deli meat. The homebody persona empathizes with the reader and assures them that she is facing similar struggles. For example, Robin Miller offers the home cook a series of "family-pleasing" recipes that she got from her sister who is "like most of you – a busy working mom" (2008, p. 271). The homebody encourages a casual and utilitarian approach to cooking that is geared toward getting dinner on the table with minimal complication, and without concern for precision. Rachael Ray's recipes include measurements like "pinches" and "palmfuls" and she is unconcerned with teaching formal culinary techniques, or making complex food. In her words: "Don't measure with instruments. Use your hands. You're not baking or conducting experiments for the government – just feel your way through" (1998, p. 21).

Generally, homebodies do not work to educate their audience in the finer points of preparing challenging, or high-status foods. The homebody persona emphasizes quotidian concerns such as time constraints and cooking on a budget, while de-emphasizing status displays, wealth, and cultural

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[6] Druckman (2010, p. 28) argues in her *Gastronomica* essay, "Why are there no great women chefs?", that the problem is not a deficit of women chefs or a "lack of airtime"; instead, the difference lies in *how* female chefs are portrayed: "as pretty faces who do meals for families or casual parties."

[7] Although change has occurred, women's still do the majority of domestic housework tasks including foodwork (Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard, 2010). According to 2012 US time use data, on the average day 39% of men did some food preparation and cleanup compared with 65% of women; men's daily average of cooking and cleanup is .28 hours, while women's average is .75 h (US Department of Labor, 2013).

[8] The books of Iron Chef Cat Cora displayed some elements of the chef-artisan category, but qualities of the homebody persona were most prominent. It should also be noted that Lisa Lillien's cooking focus on "light", "low-calorie" recipes was unique in our sample.

capital. For example, Rachael Ray explicitly distances herself from the cultural and economic capital displays of Martha Stewart (who embodies the *home stylist* persona, described below), and makes a gesture of solidarity to those living on a low income:

> It's about can-do cooking…anyone can cook. You need not have a kitchen like Martha's [Stewart] to enjoy fine food and a rich life…. Think about the most creative people you've ever met. It's a good bet that many of them came from poor or lower middle-class backgrounds. When the money is tight, all we can give is of ourselves. (*30 Minute Meals* 1998, pp. 19, 126)

Besides distancing herself from the snobbish, upper-middle class "Martha", the homebody also dis-identifies from the professional cooking world to solidify her solidarity with home cooks. This persona frequently emphasizes that she is part of a longer line of generations of women passing down recipes and knowledge. Ray, a former pub manager who flaunts her non-professional status, firmly establishes her culinary authority in the private realm of home cooking. *30-Minute Meals* (1998, p. 1) pronounces: "Rachael Ray is not a chef. She is a cook schooled in a home kitchen run by her mother". Homebodies such as Ray generate authority from, and continually reference, the everyday 'woman in the kitchen' trope (DeVault, 1991; Hochschild, 1989), and play on the authenticity conveyed by hard-working, lower-class, domestic femininities.

In sum, the homebody persona is embedded in assumptions about women's primary responsibility for domestic reproduction – a responsibility that is taken on willingly and happily, imbuing women with a sense of worthiness and pride. Homebodies are oriented toward Bourdieusian "tastes of necessity" (1984, p. 55), and their focus is on everyday domestic foodwork. High-earning homebodies like Rachael Ray may be popular and financially successful, but they appear to operate on the less artistically legitimate, dominated end of the culinary field. For example, prior research has shown that people who consider themselves serious "foodies" make derogatory references to Rachael Ray, and distance themselves from her 'easy', non-authentic cooking style (Johnston and Baumann, 2010).

### 4.1.2. The home stylist

The home stylist persona includes cooking as part of a larger home-management project, and offers advice on how to transcend the mundane and the ordinary. The domestic cuisine on offer is rarified, classy, and linked closely to 'tastes of distinction' in line with an elite esthetic disposition toward food that requires effort and study to acquire (Bourdieu, 1984, pp. 55, 278). Home stylists emphasize elements of their lives that reflect high status and cultural capital, bringing added value to everyday culinary concerns and bolstering their culinary authority through their class positioning and idealized vision of upper-class domestic life. Three celebrity food personalities in our sample prominently displayed features of the home stylist persona: Martha Stewart, Ina Garten and Ching He-Huang. Reading the author biographies of the home stylists, it is notable that all have previous experience owning upscale food preparation businesses and it is assumed they bring associated skills to helping readers create an idyllic life. However, their professional backgrounds and business acumen are not substantially referenced beyond the book jacket.

In keeping with the cultivation of an esthetic disposition, home stylists take a serious and pedagogical tone when imparting their domestic knowledge. Martha Stewart notes that her book, *Martha Stewart Cooking School* (2008, p. vi), "has been designed and written as a course of study, very much like a college course in chemistry, which requires the student to master the basics before performing more advanced experiments". While the culinary instruction is serious, the home stylist's tone is never forbidding, but is instead aspirational. The home stylist wants the reader to do more than simply *survive* the daily grind of meal preparation – she provides advice on how to use food to create a sophisticated and beautiful lifestyle.

Upper-class domestic lifestyles feature heavily in home stylists' cookbooks. In *Barefoot Contessa: Back to Basics* (2008), there is a two-page photograph of Ina Garten's new "barn" where she entertains dinner guests – a barn that more closely resembles a multi-million dollar vacation property than a rustic abode for farmyard animals. Garten (2008, p. 27) also mentions an apartment she owns in Paris, and references her "fabulous house in Provence". As with other presentations of class privilege in food writing, "geographical referencing is one of the contemporary shorthand ways of speaking class"

([Skeggs, 2003](), p. 15). Likewise, [Martha Stewart (2011, book jacket)]() details the numerous properties she owns and the implicit understanding that readers must engage in considerable consumption in order to emulate homebodies' recipes and style:

> Martha Stewart welcomes you into her world, where she entertains in the expressive and beautiful style that she has made so famous. Whether a simple blueberry breakfast on a Sunday morning in Maine or a more lavish holiday dinner at Bedford, each of the gatherings is equally memorable, for what Martha cherishes above all is spending time and sharing delicious food with her family and friends.

While the home stylists' upper-class lives may seem out of reach, the reader is given the impression that with the right knowledge and domestic training, they too can offer stylish culinary entertainment.

Besides the exacting standards for stylish, authentic food, the home stylist tends to reproduce traditional maternal ideals of domestic care ([DeVault, 1991]()). As with the homebody persona, the assumed reader of home-stylist cookbooks is a woman looking to emotionally nurture others with food. Husbands and guests similarly provide inspiration for culinary success, and their happiness is framed as resting on being provided with comforting foods associated with feminine domesticity:

> [Food is] about more than dinner. It's about coming home and being taken care of. It's about Mom. I actually think that the food our mothers made may not be what we are nostalgic for. It's more an emotional picture of a mother who was always there, knew what we needed, loved us, let us run free when we wanted to explore. Food is about nurturing: not only physical but also emotional nurturing ([Garten, 2008](), p. 21).

The home stylist persona thus presents a doting mother who inhabits a fabulous lifestyle and the idea that with careful application of expert instructions, home cooks can bring aspects of these privileged styles of consumption into their own home. As such, this persona appears to possess greater artistic legitimacy than the homebody persona given its greater distance from necessity. With sophistication, high-quality foods (along with ample resources), and a cultivated esthetic disposition ([Bourdieu, 1984]()), one can impress family and friends with beautiful foods and perform a particularly classed version of domestic femininity.

### 4.1.3. The pin-up

The pin-up persona embeds food and cooking in a lifestyle of leisure, entertainment, and sensual pleasures and was the primary persona type conveyed by four food personalities in our sample: Padma Lakshmi, Giada De Laurentis, Nigella Lawson, and Nadia G.[9] As with the homebodies and home stylists, the association of women with cooking for others in the domestic realm is taken for granted. Most strikingly though, the pin-up persona cookbooks feature the author's beauty and sensuality explicitly – in vivid photographs, luscious descriptions of food experiences, and through sexual innuendos in the text. The pin-up can be thought of as a sexier version of the homebody or home stylist, as in Freud's classic seductress/mother dichotomy of female character ([Rieff, 1979]()).

Similar to the homebodies, the pin-ups maintain a focus on the quotidian concerns of meal preparation including, in the words of Nigella Lawson, the "ordinary domestic concerns of budget or storage" (2001, p. 58). Unlike the homebodies though, the pin-up persona moves beyond tastes of necessity to create tastes of distinction that are eminently pleasurable and relaxed – a taste profile that we think of as tastes of indulgence. [Lawson](), an English heiress and food journalist, features a recipe for Elvis Presley-inspired fried peanut-butter and banana sandwiches (2002) and describes her crème brulee as "voluptuously, seductively easy to eat" (2001, p. 192). While the pin-up persona may mention the importance of caring for others through food, their indulgent food choices are justified by a foremost commitment to their own pleasure. Nadia G. emphasizes this theme of self-pleasure in her chapter introduction to "The Single Life" (2009, p. 2), which is worth quoting at length:

> Being single is great! Doing what you want, when you want; flirting with hot strangers; feeling that tingle in your loins as you wait for your STD results…Most of the time when you're single,

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[9] Nadia G.'s last name is Giosia, but she consistently refers to herself as "Nadia G." in her cooking work.

you just don't make the time to cook a good meal for yourself. And that's what this chapter is all about: celebrating the single life with food! (Some people call this "emotional eating". Pfft. What do they know)…if you really think about it, who deserves a homemade feast more than you? Not only do you pay the bills, you're the only one who can give yourself an orgasm in under thirty seconds. Nuff said.

Unlike the other traditionally feminine personas, the pin-up is motivated by her own pleasure and self-satisfaction, traits that have been linked to feminine foodie identities (see Cairns et al., 2010), and that differ from traditional ways of "doing gender" by serving others (West and Zimmerman, 1987).

The pin-ups' pleasurable approach to cooking is partly enabled by their privileged, leisure-focused lifestyles – a feature they share with the home stylists.[10] However, the pin-ups' self-gratifying approach to food indulgence is not only fanciful, but characterized by a laissez faire technique. Lawson reminds readers that cooking is "not a test of your worth and acceptability; it's just dinner" (2001, p. 178). The pin-up persona also performs boundary work to distinguish her foodwork from the impracticalities and formalities associated with professional restaurant kitchens. Lawson tells readers in a section of *Nigella Bites* (2001, p. 123) entitled, "Trashy Food" that "enjoying food, enjoying eating, isn't about graduating with honors from the Good Taste university" stating that "there is surely a place – and in my heart a very fond one – for a bit of kitsch in the kitchen". Nadia G. takes the embrace of kitchen "kitsch" to new heights in *Bitchin' Kitchen*, using chapter headings like "Gold Diggers Inc", and "One-Night Stand Breakfasts" (2009, p. v). In contrast, Giada De Laurentiis' sexuality is relatively restrained when compared to Nadia G, but she too distances herself from formal cooking and professional kitchens:

> Much as I appreciate the artistry of a chef…in a home-setting it can seem over the top…I'm always mindful of the fact that turning a home-cooked meal into something straight out of a restaurant negates the warmth of the setting and the fact that I've decided to open my home and share my family (2010, p. 11).

Overall, we suggest that this sort of dis-identification from the formality of the high-brow culinary field at the hands of the pin-ups is part of a larger thematic tendency to identify with the domestic realm, and to balance their beauty and sexuality with accessibility and approachability.

The sensuous food indulgences advocated by pin-ups are accompanied by the explicit sexualization of the women themselves and the food they create. Lawson is famous for generating buzz about the phenomenon of "gastroporn" (Chan, 2003; Dennis, 2008). Food is presented as appealing in glossy close-up photographs throughout the pin-ups' books and is styled in a messy, drippy, dynamic manner as if begging the reader to take a bite. The cherries that appear on the cover of *Lawson's Feast: Food to Celebrate* (2004) for example, are depicted as freshly rinsed and bursting with ripeness. But it is not only the food that is appealing in the pinups' cookbooks. The women themselves are sexualized, as in the front cover of *Nigella Bites* (2001), where Lawson performs what has been called "symbolic fellatio" on a bite of food (Andrews, 2003, p. 193). These types of photographic themes are repeated multiple times within the cookbook, where she is depicted in a robe and wearing a Playboy bunny t-shirt.

In summary, the pin-up persona consists of women who reject both the rigidity and snobbishness of restaurant cooking as well as the associated drudgery of the domestic kitchen. Embracing the sensuous pleasures of food, the pin-ups are depicted in ways that heavily feature physical appearance and self-gratification embedded in a lifestyle of class privilege, pleasure and leisure. Like the homebody and the home stylist, the pin-up is responsible for the care of others through domestic food work, but she reconciles competing demands on her time by emphasizing personal satisfaction, in a particularly postfeminist version of domesticity (Hollows, 2003a).

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[10] In contrast to the upper-middle class life demonstrated by Giada de Laurentiis, Padma Lakshmi and Nigella Lawson, Nadia Giosia's *Bitchin Kitchen Cookbook: Rock Your Kitchen – And Let the Boys Clean Up the Mess* (2009) is an intentionally lowbrow, campy presentation of a sexualized, food-focused lifestyle.

## 4.2. Culinary masculinities: professionals in control

The meta-category of food masculinities connects food to hegemonic masculinity, as well as a range of masculine behaviors and associations (Connell, 1995; Kimmel, 1994). These persona types represent a culinary realm wherein authority and legitimacy is derived from the creative inspiration of an artistic genius, as well as from knowledge and power gained through formal training and earned credentials. These personas are motivated by sharing professional knowledge and inspiration and are linked to traditionally masculine occupational roles such as the genius-artist, the skilled artisan, and the knowledgeable scientist-expert. While cooking may not technically constitute either a "profession" or an "art", these identities are nonetheless status markers frequently used by chefs (Fine, 1996). Like the feminine persona types described above, the food masculinities category is linked to a gendered dichotomy between domestic home cooks and professional chefs. Just as there is no singular 'feminine' food persona, there is no singular masculine persona type. Instead, we identify four personas that connect masculinity and cuisine in diverse ways: the chef artisan, the maverick, the gastrosexual, and the self-made man. Most of the personalities in our sample that strongly feature these personas were men, with one major exception (Anne Burrell).

In regards to the dominance of men in these persona categories, it is worth noting that professional restaurant kitchens are predominantly staffed by men, and often described as hostile and incompatible work environments for women (Harris and Giuffre, 2010). As worksites, restaurant kitchens can be seen as "homosocial environments," in which men use their masculinity to connect with each other and gain status (Kimmel, 1996, p. 7). While our data cannot speak to the issue of women's marginalization in professional kitchens, our sample does suggest that the exclusion of women from professional status is reproduced, and ideologically bolstered by the masculine tendencies of professional food personas available for celebrity chefs. (For example, this mapping of feminine and masculine persona types can help explain why a highly successful female food professional, like Lidia Bastianich, is predominantly framed as a "homey chef", a "great cook" and a "nonna" figure who "cooks with love", rather than a "Great Chef" (Druckman, 2010, pp. 26–27).)

### 4.2.1. The chef-artisan

The chef-artisan persona firmly occupies the world of professional cooking and fine dining. Chef-artisans are exemplars of culinary success. They are formally trained and associated with one or more successful high-end restaurants. The *chef-artisan* term is inspired by Kimmel's (1994, p. 87) "heroic artisan" archetype, denotes a model of manhood built on pride in craftsmanship, independence, self-reliance, honesty, and a masculine appreciation for quality products. The chef-artisans' cookbooks emphasize these qualities through attention to hard-earned skills, credentials, expertise, knowledge, education, professional experience, and devotion to high-quality food.

While we have chosen the term "chef-artisan" for ease of use, this persona type sits on a spectrum: one end is represented by the ideals of "art", and the other end represents the related ideals of artisanship. The contrast between the two ends of the spectrum resembles that of Becker's (1982, pp. 14, 232) mythical artist who has "special talents, gifts or abilities" and the "integrated professional" (read: artisan), who uses learned "technical abilities, social skills and conceptual apparatus" to make art. Marco Pierre White's cookbooks demonstrate artistic elements of this persona type most pointedly in our sample, although Gordon Ramsay and Tom Colicchio's cookbooks also display a significant number of these characteristics. Most celebrity chefs in this category are situated at the artisan end of the spectrum, and included the following (mainly male) chefs: Mario Batali, Michael Chiarello, Scott Conant, Bobby Flay, Emeril Lagasse, Aaron Sanchez, Masaharu Morimoto, Michael Symon and Anne Burrell. We suggest that this relatively strong focus on artisanship (rather than art) in our sample may be because the cookbook market has an inevitable connection to replicability and practicality. (In other words, cookbook sales would likely be hampered by an exclusive focus on dishes of artistic genius that readers cannot replicate.)

All chef-artisan personalities are rooted in professional kitchens and to varying degrees, celebrate creativity in the kitchen. However, the "artist" end of the spectrum tends to treat creativity as an innate quality held by a select few who prioritize originality and devotion to their craft above all else (Becker, 1982; Glaveanu, 2009). A culinary artist is not explicitly interested in pedagogy, but instead

uses cookbooks to offer readers a backstage view of culinary creativity. In the words of Tom Colicchio (2007, p. 21), the cookbook's goal is to teach the reader how to "think like a chef" and "give insight into [the] creative process".

The artistic elements of this persona are most fully embodied in Marco Pierre White's iconic cookbook, *White Heat* (2009 [1990]). *White Heat* features a grainy, black-and-white profile shot of White's weathered face on its cover. The first recipe does not appear until page 56, belying its categorization as a cookbook. Instead, the pages of *White Heat* are filled with artful allusions and colorless photographs of White, his dishes and his restaurant. White's (2009, p. 84) cooking style is described as "graphic" and "classical", he recounts how dishes sometimes come to him in dreams, and of his favorite dish (deboned pig trotter) he says: "If it had been a painting, it would hang in the Tate." Scholarship on artistic authenticity suggests that legitimation is achieved not only through one's talent and creativity, but also through a 'true' artist's disinterest in commercial matters (Bourdieu, 1984; Grazian, 2003). White's (2009, p. 115) economic disinterest is conveyed by the strength of his reaction to compromising artistic standards for profit, demonstrated by his disdain for a chocolate dessert served at his own restaurant:

> This is disgusting; it's a horrible dish. It's vulgarity pure and simple. It's a dish invented for suburbia...Why do we serve it? Because we're commercial. Because at the end of the day you have to please the customer. And this does.

The emphasis on artistic inspiration and originality intrinsic to the construction of the chef as an artist provides a stark contrast with the quotidian world of home-cooking and traditional "recipe books". White (2009, p. 8) writes, "You're buying White Heat because you want to cook well? Because you want to get Michelin stars? Forget it. Save your money. Go and buy a saucepan."

In contrast to the chef-artist's emphasis on pure creativity, chef-artisans more commonly present culinary skills and creativity as formidable but learnable traits – traits of a serious professional who devotes themselves to their craft and passes on knowledge to cookbook readers. Chef-artisans primarily depict themselves as craftsmen who worked diligently to earn their status. Michael Symon reveals that when he told his father he wanted to be a chef, "I was essentially telling my dad I wanted to be a tradesman (which I still consider myself to be and am very proud to be)" (2009, p. 11). Revealing the close connection between chef-skills and the noble traits of skilled artisanship, Michael Chiarello informs readers that he named his restaurant "Bottega", because in Italian a bottega is "an artist's workshop, a haven where a craftsman can work to perfect his trade" (2010, p. 1).

The chef-artisan's emphasis is on the professional kitchen, and photos of these personalities in chef coats or working in restaurants are prevalent. Chef-artisans describe the kitchen metaphorically as a masculine space, denoting competition, strength and power. Chiarello (2010, pp. 8–9) alludes to these qualities when he describes cooking as an "extreme sport", or a physical challenge:

> I think of Bottega as more of a workout space, a gymnasium. It's where get to flex my culinary muscles. If you want to make a dish Bottega style, get your game on. You can forget about sipping Champagne while you lean against the counter and occasionally stir.

Chef-artisans' books also prominently feature stereotypically masculine elements such as meat-eating, toughness and aggressiveness (Sobal, 2005). Michael Symon's aptly titled *Live to Cook* (2009) includes photographs of his many tattoos, his bulldog, and presents an entire chapter on making charcuterie at home. Likewise, chef-artisans are associated with the acerbic behavior demonstrated by Gordon Ramsay, well-known for his verbally abusive comments on the television show *Hell's Kitchen*. In *Kitchen Heaven* (2005, p. 107) Ramsay refers to incompetent staff as "idiots", and claims, "the stronger the bollocking, the quicker you learn."

The one woman who exclusively exhibited chef-artisan traits – Anne Burrell – also emphasizes many of these masculine qualities. In *Cook Like a Rockstar*, Burrell (2011, pp. 13–14) details the dedication required to become a chef in the homosocial world of male-dominated kitchens:

> When I started out in the food world, there weren't many women in restaurant kitchens...in New York, from Lidia Bastianich, I learned how to be a girl chef in what is still mostly a man's

world . . .from the beginning of my career, my mantra was "I will work harder than any guy" . . .I worked like crazy to prove myself.

Burrell highlights the years of apprenticeship required for chefs, something also emphasized by men chefs as underlying their success. Despite the chef-artisans' confidence in their abilities, their talents were not portrayed as ethereal gifts from above, but as cultivated through hard work. The chef-artisans' professional food world is consistently contrasted with the domestic kitchen and an assumed reader who has limited skills, is tempted by shortcuts (e.g., store-bought stock), and who may not be up for the challenge of serious cooking (e.g., making crème fraiche, a task which Michael Symon (2009, p. 139) describes as all "part of the fun").

In summary, at one end of the chef artisan spectrum, the culinary artist displays an ephemeral process of expressive creation that can never be fully taught, and offers readers a glimpse of creative genius. At the other, more commonplace, end of the spectrum, the chef-artisan emphasizes that the professional kitchen is a place of skillfulness, craftsmanship and hard work. Chef-artisans prominently display the tough-skinned masculine perseverance required to move from humble culinary student to high-end restaurant success. The reader is offered insights into the serious world of culinary professionals, but is given few assurances and no guarantees that they can replicate this workmanship in a home-kitchen.

### 4.2.2. The culinary maverick

We borrow the term "maverick" from Howard Becker's (1982, p. 233) typology of artists. Culinary mavericks are united by the persona's unorthodoxy – they all present food in a decidedly unique fashion. Mavericks define themselves as outsiders who derive creative authority from their defiance of custom or their ability to draw insight from worldly outside sources – whether that be science (Alton Brown), research-based journalism (Ted Allen[11]; Mark Bittman), surrealism and adventure (Bob Blumer), or militarism and adventure (Robert Irvine). These cultural traits are linked to hegemonic forms of masculinity (Kimmel, 1994; Connell, 1995).

Bob Blumer, a former music manager now known as "the Surreal Gourmet", is a maverick with no formal chef training who made his culinary debut by cooking in a silver trailer retrofitted to look like a giant toaster. Blumer (2010), who has multiple food-related Guinness World Records (e.g., most pancakes flipped in an hour), is described on his book jacket as the hypothetical "love child" of Anthony Bourdain, Nigella Lawson, and Salvador Dali if they "had a ménage a trios." As explained in *Glutton For Pleasure: Signature Recipes, Epic Stories and Surreal Etiquette* (2010, pp. 10–11) the "Toaster-Mobile" was a creative solution to avoid the conventional "hot plate and crappy electric oven found on the sets of most TV morning shows" while still "functioning as a serious professional arena." The absurdity of the Toaster-Mobile is representative of the eccentric impulse that can drive the maverick but also represents the importance the maverick places on being taken seriously despite not working in a professional kitchen (Becker, 1982).

In spite of the mavericks' quirkiness, their culinary authority is affirmed by references to professionalism of various kinds. Former video cinematographer Alton Brown, who appears on the cover of *Good Eats: The Early Years* (2009) in a lab coat holding a stethoscope to an egg, draws upon the legitimacy of scientific discourses to separate himself from the femininized home kitchen. In his cookbook, which he calls an "instruction manual", ingredients are listed as "software" and cooking instructions as "procedure". Despite the book's sardonic tone, Brown's professional authority is bolstered through ubiquitous references to the masculine realm of facts and science; his expertise comes from his ability to dissect, experiment and master the fundamental principles of cooking.

Like the other mavericks, former Navy officer Robert Irvine's resume is also idiosyncratic and autodidactic. In *Mission: Cook!* (2007, p. viii), he describes his self-taught skills and nomadic lifestyle as "not unlike the freelancers of medieval European chivalry or cowboys for hire on the open range in the American West." Irvine embodies the maverick ethos that finds traditional artistic institutions confining, instead valuing creative autonomy. Irvine (2007, p. viii) assures the reader of his

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[11] Ted Allen launched his career on a television show that stereotypically portrayed gay men as culture experts (*Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*) but his more recent television work (*Food Detectives, Chopped*) positions him as both a food authority and scientific investigator.

professional authority by emphasizing his "wide-ranging acquaintance with classical technique and world cuisine" and his experience cooking "for royalty, celebrities, politicians, and ambassadors of high rank." Irvine demonstrates a mobility also seen in Blumer's books, emphasizing an adventurer-discourse which effectively removes the maverick's cooking practice from the both the home-kitchen as well as the standard culinary apprenticeship integral to the chef-artists. While it is possible for a woman to demonstrate similar discourses and occupy the maverick persona category, we did not observe this in our sample.

### 4.2.3. The gastrosexual

We use the term "gastrosexual" to refer to a relatively gender-transgressive, yet masculine persona type. These professional cooking personalities fully embrace cooking at home – both in terms of their actions and their affect. The gastrosexual builds on the category of the "metrosexual"[12] – a man who rejects some aspects of traditional masculinity by attending to grooming and fashion (pursuits commonly associated with women). In some ways, the gastrosexual persona can be seen as displaying elements of the feminine cooking personas discussed above (such as caring for others by feeding them), but the gastrosexual also works to signal his professionalism and heterosexual masculinity. While gastrosexuals are often physically attractive male chefs (what industry insiders referred to as "chunks" – synthesis of chef and hunk (Salkin, 2013:217)), their professional status is never in doubt. The gastrosexual persona was prominently displayed in the cookbooks of four male chefs in our sample: Bill Granger, Jamie Oliver, Rocco Dispirito and Tyler Florence.

For the gastrosexual persona, cooking in the home is not 'second-best', but is framed as a highly desirable and serious location. Former New York chef Rocco Dispirito goes so far as to suggest that his domestically honed chef skills actually exceed those in restaurant kitchens (2011, p. 10), and Tyler Florence declares that "the best restaurant in town is my house!" (2008, p. 8). Tyler Florence's *Dinner at My Place*, features a photograph of Florence with his son on the floor playing with pots and pans and he declares, "[m]y home is my sanctuary and the kitchen is the nucleus, the lifeblood of my household and my chosen medium of communication with the world" (2008, p. 6). Along with a passionate embrace of home-cooking, the gastrosexual also expresses stereotypically feminine feelings about caring for others with food, as demonstrated by DiSpirito in *Now Eat This: Diet!* (2011, pp. 10, 75):

> A man cooking for a woman is the ultimate gesture of love, care and generosity. When a man cooks, it shows his maternal, nurturing and sensitive side. . .my mother was always cooking or offering us something to eat. . .that gesture was the most warm, maternal thing I could imagine. It was her absolute expression of love and one of her supreme ways of fulfilling her life's destiny. . .to nurture her family and take care of other people.

It is striking that Rocco refers to food provision as a deeply maternal act, yet he also affirms men's adoption of emotion-laden carework. For gastrosexuals, carework even extends outside the family, as in the case of Jamie Oliver, who lovingly tends to his home gardens in *Jamie at Home* (2008) and endeavors to provide all English citizens with "good, honest, affordable food. . .to change the health and future of the country" in *Food Revolution* (2009, p. 9).

The gastrosexual's embrace of home cooking and caring does not mean that the boundaries between the professional and domestic kitchen are completely dissolved. The traditional historical divide continues to assert itself (Harris and Giuffre, 2010), especially as gastrosexuals explicitly harness their professional skills and success to bring restaurant standards and inspiration to the home-kitchen. Dispirito (2005, pp. 1, 5) recollects questioning whether "a chef can find happiness without a restaurant", a conflict he reconciled with the discovery that he could use his professional-level organizational skills to "liberate" and "empower" home cooks from the doldrums of daily kitchen work. Similarly, Florence offers advice on how to make a special dinner "your favorite restaurant would be proud to serve" (2008, p. 45). The gastrosexual attends to the task of home cooking, yet relates to the domestic kitchen as a professional chef first and foremost. Bringing professional

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[12] The term "metrosexual" deliberately challenges the more traditional, and stifling aspects of hegemonic masculinity. We do not use the term "gastrosexual" derisively, but rather as a way to capture behaviors that contradict the separate spheres ideology which shuts men out of the home kitchen.

standards to the domestic kitchen unequivocally signals gastrosexuals' relation to the world of restaurant cooking, allowing them to benefit from the legitimacy of chef status while simultaneously embracing the home kitchen (Swenson, 2009).

Another way that some gastrosexuals synchronously embraced yet distanced themselves from the de-valued feminized status of the domestic kitchen was through compensatory references to masculinity, something Hollows (2003b, p. 229) refers to as constructing cooking as "recognizably manly". In The Naked Chef (2000, pp. 60, 183) Oliver recollects eating extra-large lamb kebab after a night of drinking with pals when he's "a bit bevvied" and includes an anecdote about getting advice from a baker to treat dough like a woman, something he suggests has "improved my bread-making skills as well as my sex life!". Similarly, Tyler Florence rationalizes his "game night" menu as follows: "Now don't get me wrong – above all else, I am a family Man. I have a gorgeous home, three beautiful kids, and a loving wife. . . but sometimes I just want to have the boys over for some good food and a few laughs" (2008, p. 59).

In sum, gastrosexuals embrace the domestic kitchen and the care work that takes place therein, but they enter on specific terms: as highly trained professionals who use their skills to inspire and empower home-cooks. They occupy the less-culturally valued realm of the domestic home kitchen, but they bring along the cultural legitimacy that comes with professional ties to the world of restaurant kitchens (and in the case of Jamie Oliver, to a vast food/restaurant empire). The gastrosexual persona type echoes and extend Swenson's (2009, p. 50) observation that men's presence in the media space of domestic cooking is often offset by a compensatory emphasis on other masculine traits (e.g., athletic prowess, scientific knowledge, or the status of professional cooking), a tendency that may indirectly reinforce the "binary between the genders".

### 4.2.4. The self-made man

The self-made man persona is the most significant outlier in our sample; masculinity features prominently, but this persona is notable primarily for its narrative of upward class mobility, and an over-representation of black food personalities. While other culinary personalities reference their humble roots (e.g., Michael Symon), the self-made man centrally features a rags-to-riches tale of rising from poverty through foodwork. The democratic and meritocratic impulses driving these stories are key characteristics, akin to Kimmel's (1996, pp. 16–17) archetype of the "self-made man", a model of American manhood reflecting wealth and status accumulated in a modern capitalist society. In food terms, the self-made man (or woman) rises from poverty through hard work in the restaurant industry, usually without formal training or financial security. This persona transgresses class boundaries, and emphasizes work ethic, devotion to family, gender traditionalism, and commitment to American comfort food. The cookbooks of four black personalities prominently featured the self-made man persona (Jeff Henderson, G. Garvin, Pat Neely, Gina Neely), and three white personalities (Guy Fieri and the Deen brothers, sons of southern food star, Paula Deen). Gina Neely, the only woman in this category, co-authors cookbooks with her husband that highlight his personal tale of overcoming poverty.[13]

The self-made man persona is exemplified by Jeff Henderson, whose redemptive narrative is summarized on the book jacket of In the Kitchen With America's Inspirational New Culinary Star (2008): "Raised in South Central Los Angeles, he became a successful drug dealer. He made a lot of money. He got caught. But what happened next wasn't the same old story: Jeff changed. He found a passion in prison kitchens and taught himself to cook." The book chronicles Henderson's dramatic life trajectory, which is reinforced by constant references to his hard-knock upbringing alongside visual and textual reminders that he is now a well-respected professional chef (e.g. photographs wearing a chef jacket). Henderson's culinary authority is rooted both in his current success and in the distance he traveled to achieve professional and financial success. Henderson may have worked at numerous high-end restaurants, but he positions himself as strongly connected to his working class roots, for example including recipes that use box cake mixes, and saucing tacos with ketchup.

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[13] Analyzed on her own, Gina Neely displays secondary elements of feminine persona types that we lack space to explore here. For an analysis of the race, gender and sexual dimensions of the Neelys, see Cruz (2013).

The books of all personalities who are categorized as self-made men display these life-changing, food-related narratives of upward mobility. In Guy Fieri's case, as an average Joe who watches NASCAR and appreciates lowbrow food, being crowned winner of the "Next Food Network Star" competition was a pivotal moment in his life. In *Diners, Drive-ins and Dives: An All-American Road Trip* (2008) Fieri details his rise from modest restaurant worker of simple means to restaurant-owner whose television program is about "capturing Americana" (2008, p. 1). In *Down Home with the Neelys: A Southern Family Cookbook* (2009), Pat and Gina Neely talk of experiencing "rough beginnings": Pat Neely's father died when he was 11-years-old, after which he subsequently supported his mother by working seven days a week at his uncle's barbecue restaurant. Life hardships led the Neelys to develop "a strong work ethic early on, out of necessity" and "fall in love with the chaos and hard work of the restaurant business" (2009, pp. 8–9). The Neelys' life changed when Paula Deen's sons came across their restaurant (Neely's Bar-B-Que) while looking for dishes to feature on their television show. Reflecting on where they are now, Pat (2009, p. 13) writes: "[N]ever in our wildest dreams did Gina and I imagine that we would have our own cooking show!"

The existence of the self-made man persona suggests that some cultural space is available for marginalized groups – working class whites and blacks – to achieve culinary celebrity. However, it is notable that this persona relies so centrally on a 'rags to riches' narrative, rather than a straightforward story of artistic culinary genius, or craftsmanship. Black chefs seem less likely to be presented straightforwardly as artist-chefs or artisans, and instead represent the possibility of achieving the American dream (Hochschild, 1996). Although all of the persona categories in this study speak strongly to the persistence of a gender binary (man/chef; women/homecook), the self-made man persona suggests that marginalized race and class groups have minimal flexibility when seeking to create a viable, commercially successful culinary image (Skeggs, 2003).[14] This persona is especially significant given the underrepresentation of racialized groups in our sample (9/44 personalities), and the "ghetto" that is created in the self-made man persona for working-class and/or black food personalities.

## 5. Discussion: the power of personas

Building from previous studies on personas (e.g., Donze, 2011; Peterson, 1997), this paper has used a systematic, interpretive reading of celebrity chef cookbooks to showcase the range of commercially successful food personas on offer. We foreground hierarchical structures of gender, race and class in order to assess how particular discourses used in cookbooks produce or reproduce power relations. Particular elements within cookbooks provide certain chefs with more symbolic power and authority (and more potential for culinary legitimacy) in terms of their social locations. Our mapping of culinary personas is important for understanding the opportunities and barriers to participation in the culinary field. Celebrity personas convey important values about what kinds of culture and cuisine are appropriate for different kinds of celebrity chefs. Studying the scope of culinary personas on offer can help us make sense of the persistence of cultural inequality. This has implications for other cultural fields where personal narratives become essential to the creation of cultural products (e.g., art, music, literature, comedy), and for developing a better general understanding of celebrity and celebrity capital (Driessens, 2013). Future research on food celebrities' culinary legitimacy should study how critics and others with authority in the culinary field evaluate celebrity chef products (e.g., restaurants, cookbooks) as well as investigate how these products are received by consumers.

Even in a time of cultural openness and shifting gender norms, our study of celebrity chef cookbooks and culinary personas uncovers surprisingly stereotypical gender patterns. While there are some important exceptions, most of the culinary personalities in our sample demonstrated their cultural authority in ways that echo the historic binary between the less-valued female home-cook (who exists in both a working class and an upper-middle class variety) and the publicly celebrated male chef. These gendered and classed culinary personas have implications for cultural legitimacy,

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[14] Reflecting on the continued salience of race, class and gender inequalities, Skeggs argues that "certain bodies and peoples are inscribed with worth (both moral and economic)", and "this process of inscription makes entitlements and fixes limits, enabling some groups to *propertize their personhood* and others to be beyond appropriation" (2003:26).

since their predominant traits map onto, and reinforce existing status hierarchies and patterns of cultural legitimacy. This helps us make sense of why Rachel Ray receives little culinary respect despite her vast financial fortune; meanwhile, Marco Pierre White remains a reference point for culinary artistry, even though he is not a major household name.

All three of the feminine personas – the homebodies, home stylists, and pin-ups – described cooking in the context of domestic cooking and caring for others. They shared tips and recipes from their personal lives to help fellow women who are responsible for foodwork. The feminine personas' roles as consumers and home producers were related to social expectations of taking care of the family and home; that is, their cooking was largely presented as a form of domestic reproduction rather than cultural production in the public sphere. The historical construction of women as consumers and producers within the home has been established elsewhere (DeVault, 1991; Parr, 1999), and appears to be reinforced through these feminine culinary personas. To be sure, one important variation on this trend is the feminine pin-up persona. Although the pin-up persona trades on conventional notions of women as sexually attractive and sexually available, the emphasis on self-satisfaction and pleasure suggests some degree of deviance from cultural schemas of traditional, self-sacrificing femininity (see Cairns et al., 2010; de Solier, 2013). This is a trend that deserves further study. Feminine personas like the homebody, whose work portrays traditional, working-class femininity, represent the dominated end of the culinary field. Homebodies are unlikely to receive critical legitimacy as cultural producers, since the practical utility of their food efforts are emphasized (e.g., quick dinners using canned ingredients and pantry staples), as well as their disregard for style or self. Put differently, a female celebrity chef who understands culinary creativity in terms of addressing time or money limitations with quick and easy recipes will not likely be awarded status and prestige as a culinary 'artist', especially since her efforts are primarily situated in the home kitchen. This leads us to argue that domestic culinary authority is best understood as a pigeonhole for female food celebrities like Rachel Ray, albeit a well-paid one, rather than a launch pad to high culinary status.

In contrast to the feminine personas, masculine food personas have an easier time being understood as artistically legitimate since they discursively represent their creative process in ways that tie in with intellectual discourses around art, creativity and craftsmanship. Our study reveals that masculine personas not only explicitly present themselves as creative, hard-working, professional success stories, but these persona types are also much more likely to be enacted by male chefs and linked to other masculine traits (e.g., the scientific knowledge of Alton Brown, the bravado of Robert Irvine, or the professional skills of Tyler Florence). Masculine personas are anchored in cultural producer roles, and tend to reaffirm their professional status and affiliation with restaurants – even in the case of the gastrosexuals who bend gender norms. For masculine food persons, food writing tended to be more inspirational than practical, offering more aspirational recipes as well as critical distance from readers. Masculine persona types, especially the chef artisan, are theoretically open to female chefs who exemplify their characteristics. Indeed, we expected to find multiple instances of professionally-oriented female chefs in this persona type. Instead, we found that only one woman in our sample – chef Anne Burrell – could be primarily categorized as displaying a chef artisan persona.

Our analysis of culinary personas not only suggests a surprisingly stark gender bifurcation in the field of celebrity chefs, but it also demonstrates how race, class and gender work together to limit possibilities for cultural producers from disadvantaged social locations. Put simply, there are a greater number of culturally authoritative persona types available for men – especially white men. In contrast to various persona possibilities for white chefs, there was just one for blacks – the 'self made man'. This persona type offers the possibility of upward social mobility for poor whites and black chefs, while simultaneously suggesting that black food personalities have less flexibility when it comes to occupying high-status culinary roles. Not only do white male chefs have a greater number of legitimated personas to occupy, but male culinary personalities appear to have much more "mobility" across persona types. Consider Gordon Ramsay, whose personality vacillates between the *enfant terrible* chef-artist, to a more affable and hard-working artisan-chef, and even an occasional gastrosexual who valorizes efforts spent in the home-kitchen. In contrast to Ramsay's fluidity, consider professional chef Cat Cora, who despite her tremendous professional success and esteemed status as an "Iron Chef", is depicted in her cookbooks as a motherly, nurturing figure whose cookbook is revealingly titled, *Cooking from the Hip.* Professional male cooks with artistic legitimacy have the

freedom to move into home-kitchens, yet the same degree of mobility, or professional authority, appears less available to food personalities disadvantaged by class, gender, and race.

Reflecting on these findings, we want to rephrase our research question: what is the relationship between culinary personas and cultural inequality? As we know, artistic categories are not neutral labels, but help constitute cultural hierarchies of status and prestige (Peterson, 1997; Baumann, 2007b). We believe that culinary personas are a key way that status inequalities are naturalized and reproduced, even as it appears that the door is now wide open for women and ethno-racial minorities to become celebrity chefs. Certainly, culinary personalities have some agency to shape their self-presentation (and thus alter their cultural legitimacy), but existing social hierarchies are reproduced through culinary personas, and this limits who can be perceived as an authentic representation of a particular persona type. We argue that personas indirectly perpetuate status inequalities in the culinary field by limiting the number of culturally legitimated categories women and people of color may reasonably and authentically occupy. Our research thus supports previous literature indicating that privileged groups are better able to "propertize" their identity and market a culturally legitimate, high-status version of themselves (Donze, 2011; Skeggs, 2003).

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