



Think 53: Food Talks

Dan Jurafsky & Yoshiko Matsumoto

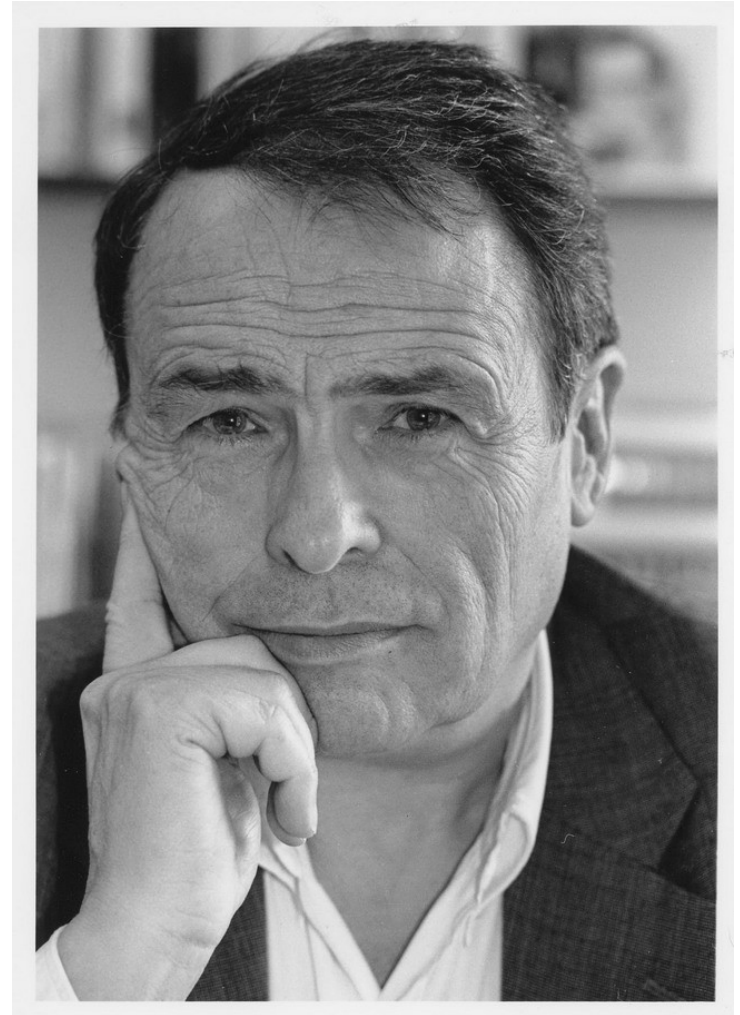
Bourdieu's Distinction

Tuesday, May 1, 2017

Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002)

French sociologist

Public intellectual



Josée Johnston
Professor of Sociology,
University of Toronto



Johnston, J., & Baumann, S. (2007).
Democracy versus Distinction: A Study of
Omnivorousness in Gourmet Food
Writing. *American Journal of Sociology*,
113(1), 165-204

Bourdieu on Kinds of Capital

Economic capital (what you have)

Cultural capital (what you know)

Social capital (who you know)

Economical capital



Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1977): “Instruments for the appropriation of symbolic wealth socially designated as worthy of being sought and possessed”

My translation: Knowledge, education, and skills which give social advantages/higher status in society, passed down by parents/schools/social groups

- Educational capital: educational credentials and experiences
- Social background: socialization (including knowledge or skills) from parents or group
- Cultural tastes themselves
 - Food and our practices around food consumption

Social Capital

Bourdieu (1986): “The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word”

Social Capital

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Social Capital

**possession of a network of relationships – memberships–
which provides each of its members with a ‘credential’**

- family,
- class,
- school,
- political party, etc.



All the capitals are linked together

“The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent thus depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected... [this network thus] exerts a multiplier effect on the capital he possesses in his own right.” Bourdieu 1986

Habitus

“Habitus is a system of *dispositions*, that is of permanent manners of being, seeing, acting and thinking. Or a system of *long-lasting* (rather than permanent) schemes or schemata or structures of perception, conception and action” (Bourdieu 2002, 27-28)

“Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them” (Bourdieu 1977, 72).



Habitus

It's the built-in, subconscious way that we perceive and categorize things in the world, because of how we were raised, without knowing that we're doing it, that structures our tastes and actions.

Bourdieu's question in Distinction

What are the “economic and social determinants of taste?”

(Distinction, 101)

- a question “which economists strangely ignore” (p. 101)

Distinction

“Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social **subjects**, classified by their classifications, **distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make**, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed. And statistical analysis does indeed show that oppositions similar in structure to those found in cultural practices also appear in eating habits.” (*Distinction*, Intro)

Bourdieu's claim: Everyday tastes are not arbitrary, but based on power and social status

“esthetic stances ... in cosmetics, clothing or home decoration are opportunities to experience or assert ones' position in social space, as a rank to be upheld, or a distance to be kept” p. 57.

Johnston and Baumann (2007) on Bourdieu: “the dominant classes affirm their high social status through consumption of cultural forms consecrated by institutions with cultural authority. Through family socialization and formal education, class-bound tastes for legitimate culture develop alongside aversions for unrefined, illegitimate, or popular culture.”



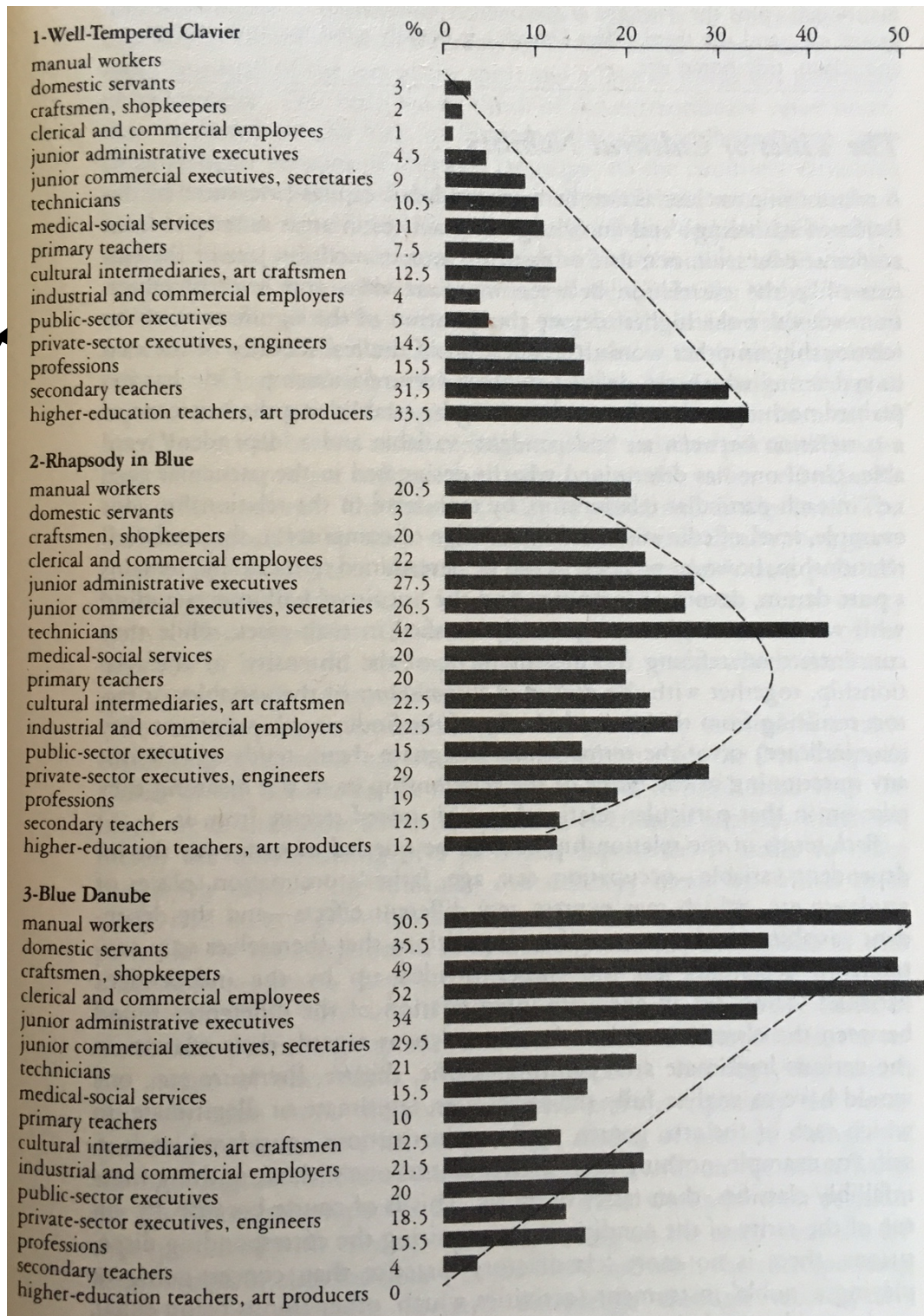
Bourdieu's Homology

Dominant/dominated class

High/low culture

Bourdieu on Music preferences

“Legitimized taste”



Bourdieu on 1960s food preferences in France

Working class:

- “the working class meal is characterized by plenty ... and freedom”
- Impression of abundance, especially for men
 - Plates are filled twice
- Abundant dishes brought to the table
 - Soups, pastas, potatoes, served with a ladle or spoon

Bourgeoisie:

- Strict form: sequencing of the courses
 - Fish, meat, cheese, dessert
- Healthy, less fatty

Bourdieu on 1960s food preferences in France

Working class:

- Preferences for charcuterie, pork, pot-au-feu, cassoulet,

Industrial and Commercial Employers, Foreman, Craftsman, Grocers

- Similar tastes as working class but more money
 - More wine, fois gras, pastry

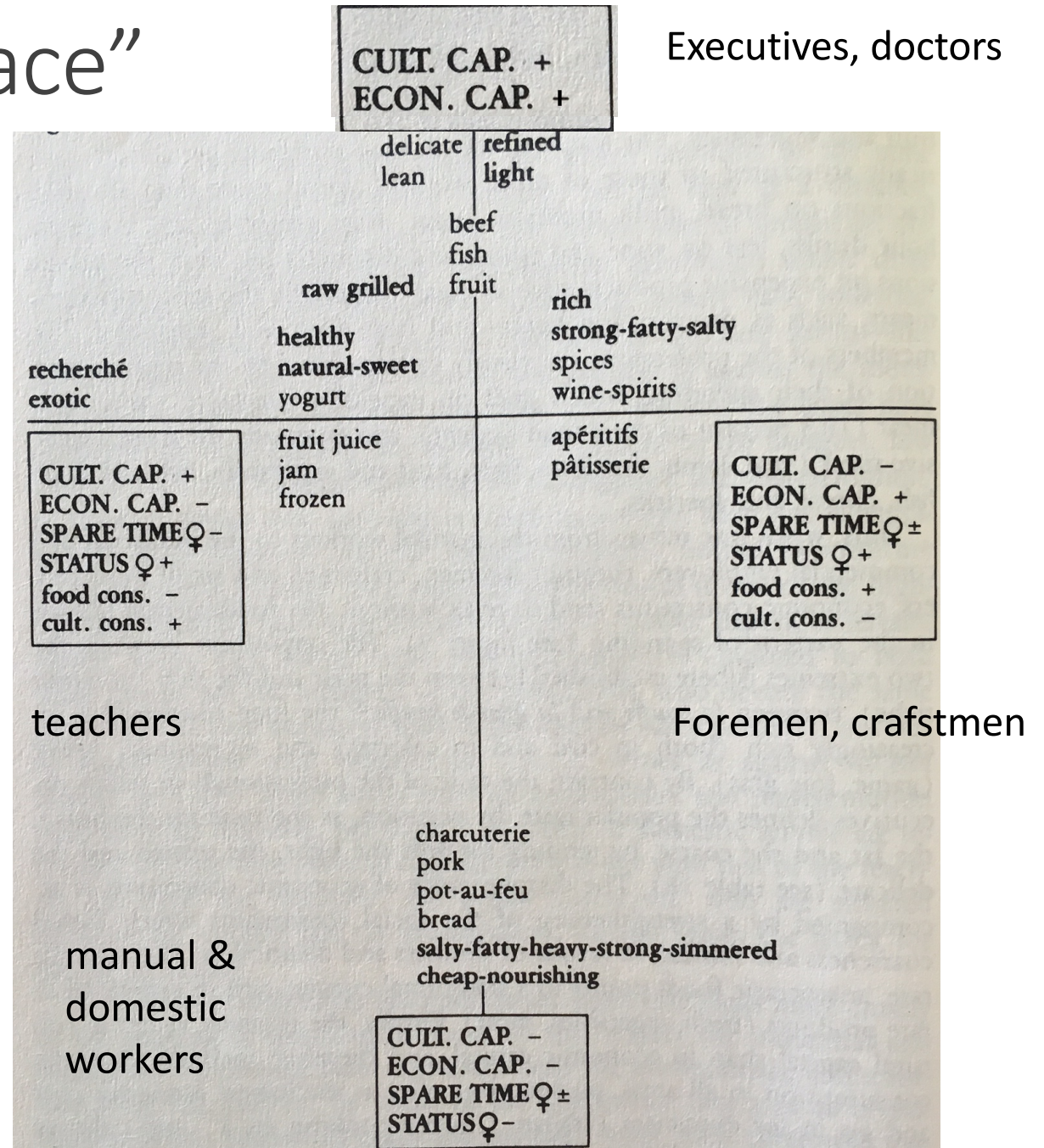
Professionals and Executives

- More meat, fresh vegetables, less fat,

Clerks, teachers,

- Exoticism: Italian, Chinese cooking, health food, curry

Bourdieu 1960s French "food space"



Bourdieu's position

"Curry" and "light meats" like beef are "legitimized"

Cassoulet and stews and "non-light meats" like pork are not

This is an arbitrary distinction

- Designed to assert/confirm status/power

Omnivorousness theory

Bourdieu: homology between “high” culture and dominant class

- high status: classical music
- low status: pop music

Peterson & Kern alternative: **omnivorousness**

- High-status cultural consumption is instead increasingly “diversified, inclusive, or omnivorous”.
- High status can draw from many cultural forms
 - Jazz
 - Hiphop
 - Bluegrass
 - Cuban music



Two views of omnivorousness

Positive: It's different, more inclusive, less centered on one culture

Negative: It's still just another kind of distinction, still associated with power



Rise of omnivorousness in US food



1900s: Fancy Menus are in French

Flounder sur le plat

Eggs au beurre noir

Fried chicken a la Maryland, half

Green turtle a l'anglaise

Sirloin steak aux champignons

French chefs and cuisine in 20th century US

Ritz-Carlton and Waldorf-Astoria

- run by French chefs like Auguste Escoffier

1941 opening of Le Pavillon

- French cuisine clear sign of high status

French still signs of high class true in the 1960s & into the 1970s

1970's menu guides advised to

- “Continentalize your menu”

Flaming Coffee Diablo, Prepared en Vue of Guest

Ravioli parmigiana, en casserole

Le Crabmeat Cocktail



But this began to change

Not completely clear why

- Perhaps partly as a result of the early foodie movement
- Outgrowth of the natural side of hippie movement.
- Alice Waters and the Berkeley counterculture



Fancy food now

Doesn't have to be French

We saw lots of signs of fanciness on menus on Tuesday

- Minimalism in menus
- Fancy words on menus

But with the rise of omnivorousness, what constitutes “high status” food now?



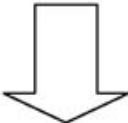
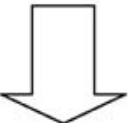
Authenticity

“when we take a closer look at many supposedly ‘authentic’ activities, such as loft-living, ecotourism, or the slow-food movement, we find a disguised form of status-seeking .”

Andrew Potter

Carroll at Stanford: many kinds of authenticity

Carroll, Glenn R., and Dennis Ray Wheaton. "The organizational construction of authenticity: An examination of contemporary food and dining in the US." *Research in Organizational Behavior* 29 (2009): 255-282.

<p>Type Authenticity</p> <p>Definition: Conformity to a code of expectations regarding the type assigned or claimed</p> <p>Examples: Morton's (steakhouse), Katz's (delicatessen)</p> 	<p>Moral Authenticity</p> <p>Definition: Interpretation of an object or service as imbued with moral meaning</p> <p>Examples: Moosewood, Grassfed Farms, Blue Hill at Stone Barns</p> 
<p>Craft Authenticity</p> <p>Definition: Application of advanced knowledge, skills, routines, tools and ingredients derived from a craft</p> <p>Examples: Charlie Trotter's, Anchor Brewing, Cowgirl Creamery</p>	<p>Idiosyncratic Authenticity</p> <p>Definition: Symbolic or expressive interpretation of aspects of an entity's idiosyncrasies</p> <p>Examples: McSorley's Old Alehouse, Billy Goat Tavern, Linie Aquavit</p>

Craft authenticity in wine

Beverland M. The 'real thing': Branding authenticity in the luxury wine trade. *Journal of Business Research*. 2006 Feb 28;59(2):251-8

Interviews with luxury winemakers: what makes wines authentic?

- historicity (stories of the founder, links to Burgundy wine auctions)
- relationship to place (*terroir*),
- traditional method of production
- focus on the ingredients
- downplaying of commercial motivations

Craft authenticity in beer

Michael B . Beverland, Adam Lindgreen, and Michiel W . Vink, “Projecting Authenticity Through Advertising,” *Journal of Advertising* 37, no . 1 (2008): 5–15 .

Consumers considered Trappist beer (Belgium, Netherlands) more authentic if it was:

- more historic or traditional
- related to a particular place
- small, handcrafted productions by artisans with little commercial motivation

Josée Johnston and Shyon Bauman 2007

Johnston, J., & Baumann, S. (2007). Democracy versus Distinction: A Study of Omnivorousness in Gourmet Food Writing. *American Journal of Sociology*, 113(1), 165-204



They examined articles in gourmet food magazines

Found framings of omnivorous food:

- Authenticity
- Exoticism

Authenticity in Gourmet Food Magazines

Johnston and Baumann 2007

SAVEUR
Savor a World of Authentic Cuisine

- creation by hand rather than by industrial processes
- local settings and anti-commercialism
- sincere expression, no calculation or strategy
- honesty, integrity, dedication to core principles
- closeness to nature + distance from institutionalized power

Authenticity in Gourmet Magazines

Discursive Strategies	Total Usage	% Articles with at Least One Usage	Median Usage	Average Usage
Geographic referent	1,408	100	10	13.7
Handmade/nonindustrial	385	89	3	3.8
Organic/naturally raised	47	24	0	.5
Personal connection	318	92	2	3.1
Historical connection	262	76	1.5	2.6
Rarity	30	19	0	.3

Locality

Johnston and Bauman 2007

highly specific places:

- Bologna, Italy; New Iberia, Louisiana; Lucknow, India; Mesa, Arizona; Cape Town, South Africa; Siglufjordur, Iceland.

“oysters from a particular spot on the Atlantic coast of France are like no others”

“on Phu Quoc, an island thirty miles off the coast of southwest Vietnam, the local fish sauce is sophisticated, nuanced, delicate, and unlike any other fish sauce commercially available”

Simplicity

Johnston and Bauman 2007

Unschoolled chefs:

- “‘It’s from my mama’s kitchen,’ she said. ‘I cannot tell you how to do it because she never taught me to measure anything. You just add seasoning and spice until it’s right’” (*Gourmet*, April 2004, p. 52).

“Simple” preparation

- “Top-notch tempura all comes down to simple things exquisitely done” (*Saveur*, December 2004, p. 84).

Non-industrial Harvesting

- Farmers who handpick their potatoes:, “...doing things the old-fashioned unmechanized way is what [they] care about” (*Saveur*, November 2004, p. 54).

“Simple” rural life

- eating among “a backdrop of rusted farm machinery and walls that aren’t perpendicular to the ground” rather than at “solemn” Michelin-starred restaurants with “stodgy” food (*Gourmet*, January 2004, pp. 46–48).

Authentic: chef as artist

Johnston and Bauman 2007

Chefs cooking in elite restaurant settings:

- Mostly men
- Mostly famous: Jean-Georges Vongerichten, Alain Ducasse, Alice Waters, and Thomas Keller

Chefs as culinary artists

- Creating authentic, original piece of culinary art
- As opposed to artless industrial food

Authentic because of historical continuity

Johnston and Bauman 2007

- *Cabrito al pastor*: whole goats have been roasted over hot coals in Monterrey, Mexico, since the 1700s (*Saveur*, June/July 2004, p. 44)
- Vietnamese rolls: “the Vietnamese were wrapping meat and seafood in greens before 100 B.C.” (*Saveur*, August/September 2004, p. 38) a
- Espresso and chocolate in Turino; this café has been operating since 1783 (*Gourmet*, May 2004, p. 171)

Exoticism: Foods

Johnston and Bauman 2007

“chevre *‘avec habitants’*—a cheese so ripe that little, maggot-type worms had taken up residence inside” (*Gourmet*, August 2004, p. 93).

mistela negra, new red wine dosed with brandy “though, we are told, it is not available in the United States” (*Saveur*, March 2004, p. 62)

ram horn nut, water caltrop (*Gourmet*, January 2004, p. 104);

brocciu, a fluffy sheep’s-milk cheese from Corsica (*Gourmet*, August 2004, p. 92).

O-a-chian, a Taiwanese dish of oysters with scrambled eggs (*Saveur*, March 2004, p. 37);

a Spanish chef’s foie gras with cotton candy and avocado-tomato sorbet (*Food and Wine*, May 2004, p. 74);

snoek, a hot smoked fish eaten on doughy bread and jam in South Africa (*Food and Wine*, May 2004, p. 169).

Exoticism: People

Johnston and Bauman 2007

Foods framed as exotic, associated with poor, rural people in developing countries.

“pasta made by women who measure weeks in flour and seasons in egg yolks and every fold and crevice of noodle can seem as eloquent as a sigh” (*Gourmet*, January 2004, p. 46).

“food that is produced and consumed in “a medieval Italian town” that “rises from oblivion in the mountains of Abruzzo”” (*Gourmet*, September 2004, p. 139).

Authentic and Exotic as the new “high culture”

Johnston and Bauman 2007

Bourdieu defines high versus low food culture as

- **legitimate** (endorsed by cultural authority) vs **illegitimate** foods

The omnivorous version:

- **Legitimate**: “authentic” or “exotic” cultural tastes
- **illegitimate**: popular, bland, familiar, accessible foods

How do we know this is high-culture?

Only available to those with \$\$\$\$!!

- Expensive ingredients
- Have to be able to travel around the world to find

Our study of restaurant menus: The Tiki Lounge effect

Dishes with these words are more expensive:
exotic, oriental, spices, spicy

exotic five spices

exotic blend of indian spices

island **spices** you crave: An **exotic**, delicious sauce.

oriental vinaigrette

Thai curry herbs and **spices**

kick of southwestern **spice**

spicy Santa Fe sauce

spicy garlic & lime grilled shrimp

Notice a class difference in kinds of authenticity

Krishenendu Rey 2016

Johnston and Baumann 2007

Poor chefs: Exotic, unfamiliar authenticity

- Cheap restaurants are authentic by having exotic ingredients
- By being “replicas” of food in impoverished settings or developing countries.

Rich chefs: Creative artistry authenticity

- Food in upscale restaurants legitimated as authentic through a representation of the personal artistry of an individual chef



What about Authenticity in Restaurant Menus?

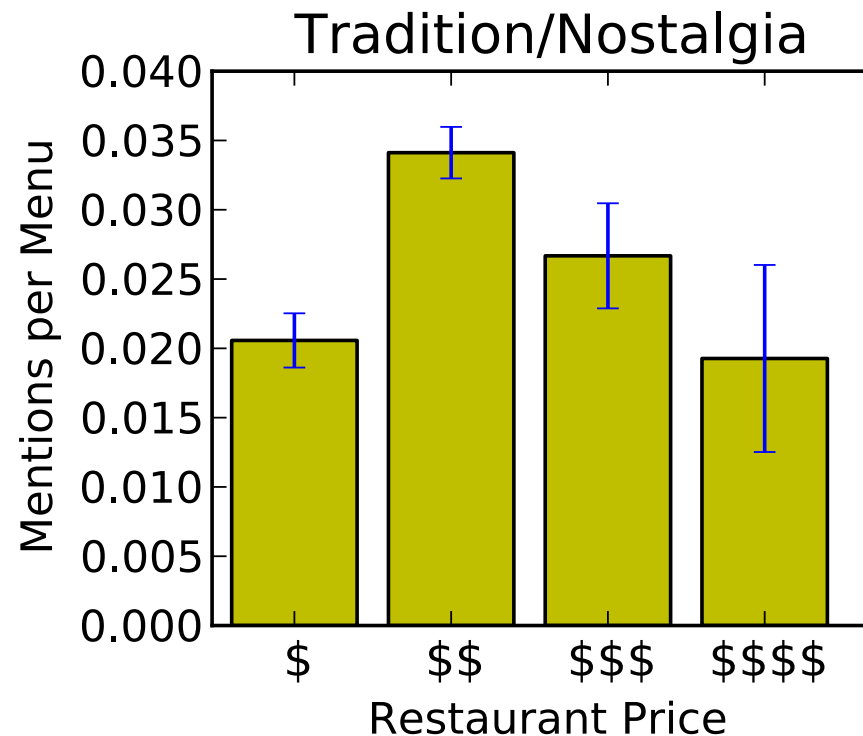
Traditional authenticity in \$\$ restaurants:

fresh **homemade** guacamole and chip

old fashioned beef stew

annie's famous pot roast homemade **just like mom's**

grandma minnie's fried chicken salad



Expensive restaurants use natural authenticity

HERB ROASTED **ELYSIAN FIELDS FARMS** LAMB

Eggplant Porridge, Cherry Peppers,

Greenmarket *Cucumbers and Pine Nut Jus*

GRASS FED ANGUS BEEF CARPACCIO

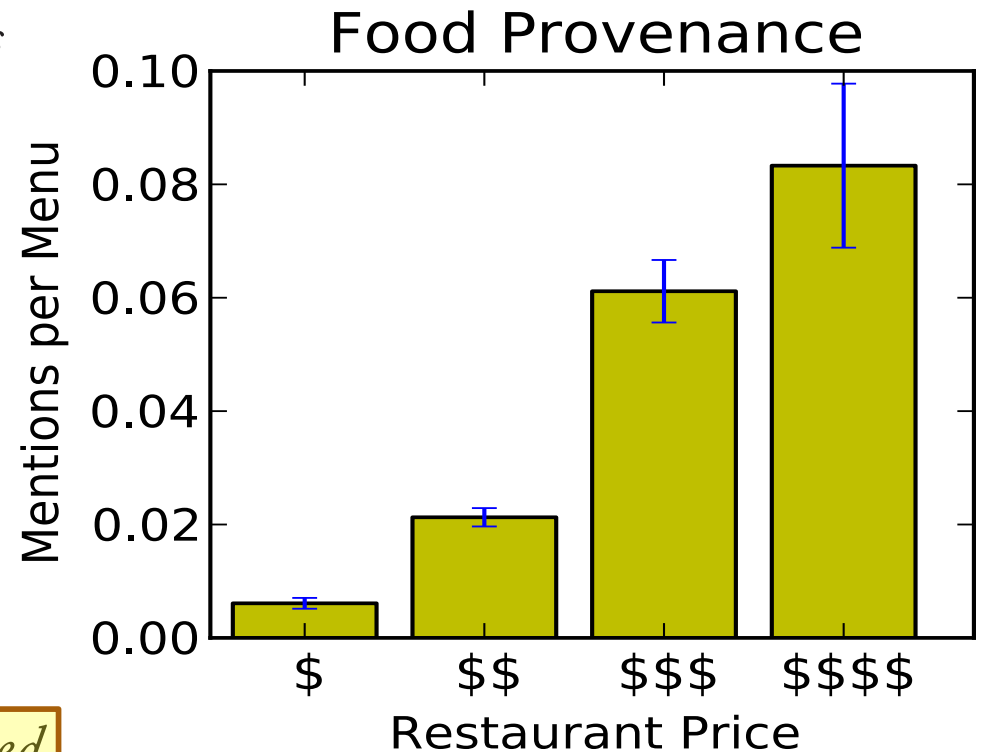
Pan Roasted King Trumpet Mushrooms

Dirty Girl Farm *Romano Bean Tempura*

Persillade, Extra Virgin Olive Oil

BISON BURGER

8 oz. **blue star farms**, **grass fed** & **pasture raised**,
melted gorgonzola, grilled vegetables





One final test of a Bourdieu claim

“the working class meal is characterized by plenty” (*Distinction*)

What about in restaurant menus?

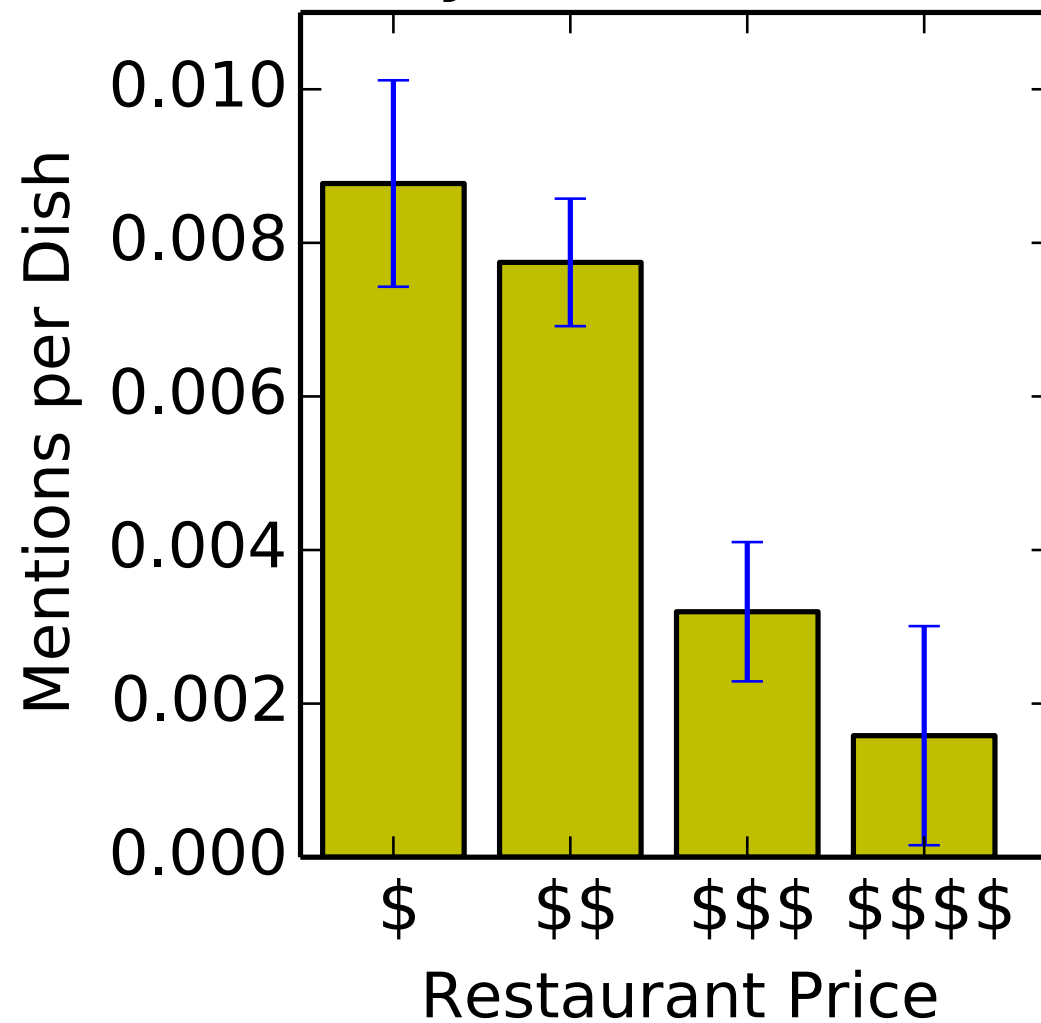
We looked in our 6500 menus



Words promising more food

hearty, enormous, plenty, loads, lots, hefty, gigantic, generous, generously, largest, heaping, refills, bottomless, unlimited, huge, big, bigger, biggest, ginormous, mega, largest, and more, with more, tons of, king sized, texas sized

Words for large portions



Summary:

Bourdieu in *Distinction*: Taste is all about status

- especially high versus low culture

Omnivorosity: High status is now expressed by knowing about lots of culture, not just one high culture.

Authenticity and Exoticism: It looks like high status is still reflected in modern omnivorous culture by versions of authenticity



Many possible methodologies, all applicable to final projects!

- Bourdieu interviewed people about their food preferences
 - And did anthropological studies in the field
- Johnston and Baumann coded articles in Food and Wine, Saveur, Gourmet
- We counted words on menus
- And words on the back of potato chip bags